

JAMES HC RODGERS' MEMORIAL STONE

The last chapter of this story was written on August 22nd, 2007 in the Pleasant Hill cemetery where at long last I was able to honor my great-great-great grandfather, James HC Rodgers. Early in June of 2007, I was finally able to make an application to the Veterans Administration for a memorial marker for James HC. The rules for this type of situation were very clear and required much of the research you have read about in this composition. I first had to secure the service details of James HC from the National Archives in Washington, DC. The Veterans Administration requires the official service file of a soldier and proof that he was never provided an official military funeral or was buried in a mass grave. After I copied James HC's official files from the National Archives detailing his units in the Mexican and Civil War, I traveled first to Moultrie County, Illinois, which was his last residence. In Moultrie County, I copied his probate file in the courthouse to prove that his body was never returned home and that no funeral took place in Moultrie County.¹ After that, and in consultation with the Veteran's Administration, it was necessary to travel to where James HC died on May 6th, 1865, Little Rock, Arkansas.

In Little Rock, Arkansas I researched those last days of the war and found the exact location that James HC was last alive. Called "Regimental Hospital" in his death record, this building was originally a Confederate stronghold and taken over by Union forces near the end of the war. It was later named the Little Rock Barracks and was a federal arsenal for many years and General Douglas MacArthur was born there in 1880. It is now a museum to General MacArthur's life.² The original records of the Barracks are storied at the Butler Center for Arkansas Study in downtown Little Rock. It was here

¹ [James HC Probate](#)

² [Regimental Hospital](#)

that the information that James HC Rodgers was buried in a mass grave with many hundreds of other men who died in the last months of the Civil War as a result of disease and the terribly unsanitary conditions in the hospital.

Having all of this information I was then able to make copies and fill out all the paperwork to request a Civil War era tombstone be made for James HC Rodgers. The forms required me to state where the tombstone was going to be erected and it could only be delivered to a licensed funeral director, so I contacted Mr. Waldo McWilliams in Memphis, MO to request permission to put the stone up in Pleasant Hill Cemetery and where exactly that might be. I also secured delivery of the tombstone to Mr. Ronnie Tinkle, Director of Payne Funeral Home in Memphis, MO. All of these details secure, I sent in the paperwork to Washington, DC in early June, 2007.

On July 1st, 2007 I received a phone call from the Veterans Administration informing me that the request was very unique and one of the first of its kind in many, many years. The VA representative requested a couple of clarifications about James HC's Mexican War service and told me that once she confirmed the information in the archives she would get back to me.

On August 7th, 2007, I was informed that my request for a tombstone for James HC was approved and would be constructed and shipped to Payne's Funeral Home in Memphis, MO. On August 14, 2007, I received a call from Ronnie Tinkle that the tombstone had arrived. Finally, on August 22nd, 2007, my first cousin once removed Kevin Rodgers, his wife Becky, my wife Karen, and I picked up the tombstone and erected it at the Pleasant Hill Cemetery next to William Henry Rodgers who was James HC's son.³ I must say it was a little strange digging in a cemetery, but we were successful, and the memorial stone for James HC Rodgers is now in place for all time. I

³ [Kevin and Bruce](#)

am very proud of James HC and the sacrifices he made for our county and the incredible perseverance of his children surviving and being successful after losing their father at such a young age. Thank you for reading this story and please pass it on to all those who come after you for they are James HC's true legacy!

