

Program set on state's last Confederate

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Throughout the latter half of the 20th century, several people claimed to be the last surviving veteran of the Confederate Army.

As it stands now, Pleasant Riggs Crump (1847-1951) almost certainly holds the title for Alabama's last Confederate, and probably the last one anywhere.

Crump's life will be the topic of a presentation by Larry R. Hathcock, a retired teacher from Michigan with roots in Alabama and a strong interest in Civil War history and genealogy. Hathcock's presentation will be Jan. 15 at Talladega's Armstrong-Osborne Library, and the event is open to the public.

According to Hathcock, Crump was born in Crawford's Cove, northwest of Ashville in St. Clair County, son of Robert and Martha Hathcock Crump. Several of his friends and relatives joined the Ashville Guards when war broke out in 1861. Crump joined up in the fall of 1864.

The Ashville Guards became Company A of the 10th Alabama Infantry Regiment and was sent to fight in Virginia in July 1861. By the summer of 1864, the unit was involved in the siege of Petersburg, Virginia.

"In October 1864, one of Pleasant's neighbors came home on leave from Petersburg," Hathcock said. "When his leave was up, 16-year-old Crump decided to return to Petersburg with his neighbor and join Company A. He spent most of his time in the Confederate trenches at Petersburg, but in February 1865, his regiment fought at the three-day battle of Hatcher's Run."

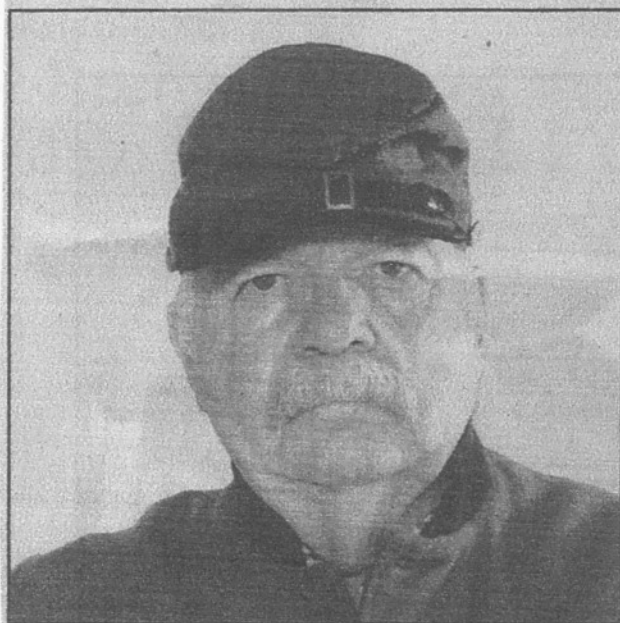
According to civilwar.org, the Battle of Hatcher's Run took place when Union Gen. U.S. Grant attempted to "block Robert E. Lee's supply route on the Boynton Plank Road and ... to take control of the last remaining railroad furnishing Petersburg."

Lee sent two divisions against the federal troops.

"Fighting in wooded terrain, the forces pushed each other back and forth between Dabney's sawmill and the Vaughn Road," the site said. "Although the federals did not achieve their goal, they were now able to extend their entrenchment lines to the Vaughn Road Crossing of Hatcher's Run ... Grant sent 34,000 men on this expedition and was stopped by about 14,000 southerners.

The Confederates lost about 1,000 men, while the federals had 171 killed, 1,181 wounded and 187 missing. This battle was called by one Confederate soldier 'preliminary skirmishing on (Feb.) 5, a sanguinary on the (Feb.) 6, followed up by the enemy feebly on the 7th.'

Hathcock said "In April, 1865, Lee decided he could no longer hold Petersburg, so he decided to retreat toward North Carolina, where he planned to join Gen. Joseph Johnston. For a week, Lee's army marched west toward Appomattox Station, where the



Larry Hathcock

Confederate supply trains were waiting.

"Unfortunately for Lee, the Union cavalry captured and burned the supply trains. Facing strong Union forces, he decided to surrender to Gen. Grant.

On April 12, 1865, Crump and his regiment marched up to the McLean House and stacked their arms.

After the surrender, the men received their parole slips and they were able to return home."

Crump is also a contender for the last living witness of the surrender at Appomattox.

After the war, Crump returned to St. Clair County before finally settling down in the Lincoln area. He married Mary in the 1870s and farmed land given to them by her father in Talladega County. Pleasant and Mary had five children together.

Mary died in 1901, Hathcock continued. Crump married his second wife, Ella, four years later. This marriage lasted until she died in 1942.

"In 1915, Crump applied for a Confederate veteran's pension and received a check until his death," he said. "He continued to work on his farm until after World War II."

Crump died eight days after his 104th birthday, on Dec. 31, 1951.

He's buried in the Hall Cemetery across from Refuge Baptist Church, which he helped establish.

Hathcock has not only had a long interest in the Civil War, but also has a personal connection to Crump.

"His mother was my great-great grandfather's sister," he said. "I was born about three miles away from where he was, in Ashville.

Although an Ashville native, Hathcock moved to Michigan with his family when he was a 9-year-old,



Pleasant Ridge Crump

and has lived there ever since. He is a veteran of the U.S. Navy.

Since 2011, he has served as president of the Michigan Regimental Civil War Round Table in Farmington. He is also a member of the Northeast Alabama Genealogical Society in Gadsden.

"I've been a Civil War re-enactor since the 1980s," he said. "I have Confederate and Union uniforms, (and) in 1992, I participated in the filming of the movie 'Gettysburg.'"

Some 25 members of his family fought in Lee's Army during the actual battle of Gettysburg, and he had family members serving on the Union side as well.