

The Piedmont Historical Society

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Union, Nov. 20 - Union county's last link with the gallant army of the Confederacy has been broken with the recent death of W.Y. Dillard, Sr., the last of the county's Confederate veterans.

Mr. Dillard passed away Oct.28 at the ripe old age of 89 at his home at Belmont after an illness of about a week of pneumonia. He was laid to rest in the family cemetery near his home.

Mr. Dillard was born Feb. 26, 1848, in Laurens County, the third child of Seaborn Dillard and his wife, the former Catherine Hunter Craddock. In 1855 his father moved to the present home on old Belmont Hill, whose ancient roof has up to now sheltered five generations of the family.

Home Is Landmark

Over a span of 81 years, Mr. Dillard and his father have been in possession of this old Belmont home, which has long been a historic landmark of the surrounding section.

In the fall of 1864, Mr. Dillard volunteered with the 18 year-old boys who shouldered arms in the War Between the States. He belonged to Company A, 4th Regular South Carolina Infantry, was in service about six months on the coast -- Adam's Run. He received his discharge at Greenville at the end of the war.

Many thrilling tales has he recounted of those troublous times of Reconstruction, of the riot in Laurens, the exciting capture of two Union soldiers in this section of Wade Hampton's Red Shirts. Many an interesting event did he witness.

Married in 1885

In 1885, he was married to Kate May Gregory, a daughter of Warren Simpson Gregory, and Frances Parmelia Gregory, a prominent Union county family. From this union were born eight children, five of whom are still living: Mrs. Reese Eden, Latta; Mrs. Bruce Stribbling, Clemson College; Douglas Gregory Dillard, Cross Anchor; Warren Gregory Dillard, Cross Anchor; and Frank Gregory Dillard, Anderson. He is also survived by his widow; one sister, Miss Laura Dillard, Cross Anchor; and two brother, J.B. of Cross Anchor and A.J. Dillard, Jr., Spartanburg.

Mr. and Mrs. Dillard celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in 1935. Mr. Dillard was a member of Belmont Methodist church of Cross Anchor for many years.

Member of Masons

Since 1874, he has been a faithful member of the Masonic lodge of Cross Keys and served as master for several years.

Until three years ago, he had attended every annual Confederate reunion held in the Southern States, when his declining health forced him to forego the pleasure of talking over the past with his former comrades. Among his effects is a box containing a double handful of badges which he brought home from such conventions.

Mr. Dillard would have been 90 years of age on his next birthday, Feb. 26, 1938

Two Sons in War

Two of Mr. Dillard's sons, William Y., Jr., and Douglas G. Dillard, served overseas during the World war. One of these sons, William Y. Dillard, Jr., a graduate of Wofford college, was in the first training camp for officers at Fort Oglethorpe, intending to be into aviation but changing to coast artillery he finished at Fortress Monroe, Va. In January, 1918, he sailed from New York to France, landing at Brest. He was engaged in many offensives under Pershing. He received his discharge in the summer of 1919. He succumbed to an attack of

pneumonia at Richmond, Va., on September 13, 1922, and was buried in Belmont cemetery, Union county.

Douglas G. Dillard, the other son, served overseas in France in Company D, 31st Engineers, which company reached France in time to be incorporated in the first all-American army for about two years. He received his discharge after being in Germany more than 12 months.

Managed Farm Here

For a period of several years, Mr. Dillard was manager of the large holdings at the Burnett, Thompson and Dillard Co., Fernwood Farms, at Spartanburg, and has a large family connection there.

The veteran was a prosperous and progressive farmer for many years, as well as a prosperous business man. His example and advice to farmers were factors in giving definite objectives to improved agriculture in this county and in the state. Indeed, his advice and counsel were sought by many of his neighbor farmers.