

## NEW ORLEANS NOSTALGIA

*Remembering New Orleans History, Culture and Traditions*

*By Ned Hémard*

### **Two Fallen Soldiers**

The American Civil War is America's bloodiest conflict, accounting for more than 620,000 deaths. With other casualties (those injured, killed or missing), the number exceeds one million. Although New Orleans, the largest Confederate city, was spared after its capture in April 1862, its citizens were not immune to the grim realities of the battlefield. This is the story of two local warriors, one in gray and the other blue.

André Cailloux (1825 – May 27, 1863) was a New Orleans-born Union Army officer. Before his entering the service, he had lived his entire life in and around the Crescent City. Born a slave in Louisiana, he was one of the first black officers in the Union Army to be killed in combat during the War Between the States. He died heroically during the unsuccessful first attack on the Confederate fortifications during the Siege of Port Hudson, Louisiana.

Prior to the Civil War, Cailloux became a "free man of color" in 1846 when his owner supported his former possession's petition for manumission. By 1860, the "*gens de couleur libres*" community in New Orleans was between five and ten percent of the population. André married, apprenticed to learn his trade as a cigar maker and he and his wife had four children (three of whom survived to adulthood). He eventually organized his own cigar making business. Though his earnings were modest, André Cailloux was looked upon as a leader within the free African Creole community of New Orleans.

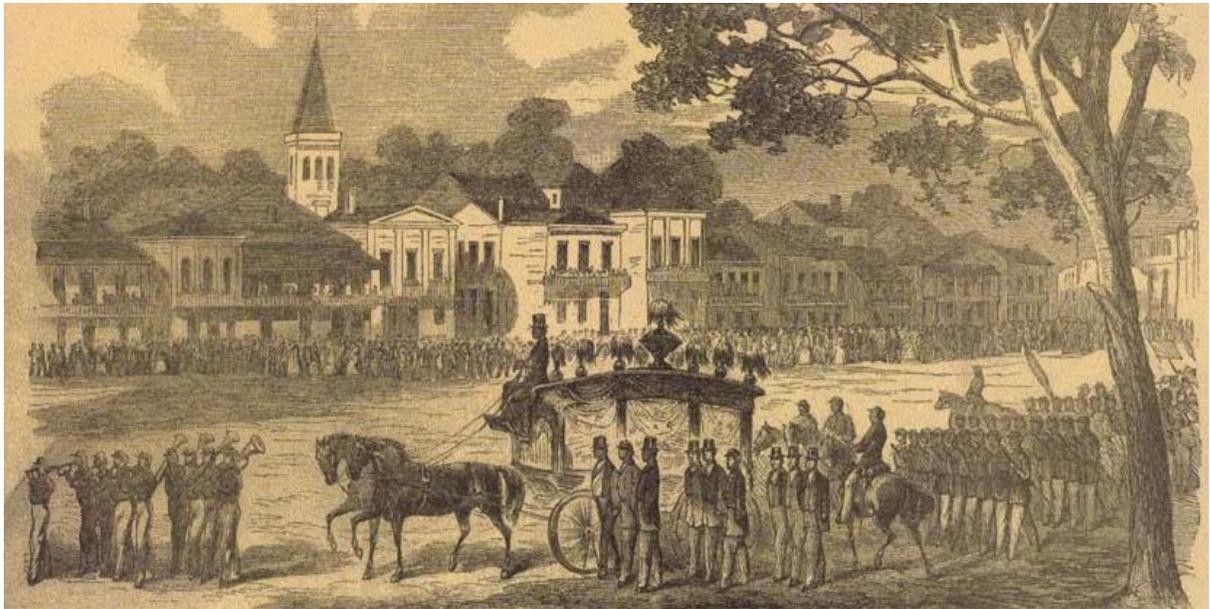
He was also one of the best boxers in town, and many admired Cailloux as quite the fighter. Besides his pugilistic pursuits, he also found time to actively support a school for orphaned black children known as at *Institute Catholique*.

Soon Louisiana seceded from the Union and war broke out in 1861. Cailloux became a lieutenant in Louisiana's Native Guard, the Confederate regiment organized to defend New Orleans from attack. None of the Native Guard units, however, were ever called to active

duty. They were disbanded before Union Admiral David Farragut captured the city. In September 1862, Union General Benjamin F. Butler, military commander of the Department of the Gulf, formed an all-black Union Army 1st Louisiana Native Guard, this time in blue uniforms. André Cailloux joined this regiment and was made captain of Company E (one of the best drilled units of the entire Native Guard). General Nathaniel P. Banks replaced Butler in December 1862, and (with additional troops) he had the responsibility of attacking Port Hudson while General Ulysses Grant laid siege to Vicksburg.

On May 27, 1863, Banks launched his forces against the well-fortified Confederate positions at Port Hudson. Cailloux was ordered to lead his company of 100 men forward in an almost suicidal assault, and his troops suffered severe casualties. Cailloux courageously cheered his men on in both French and English, leading several increasingly futile charges. But on his last charge, a Minié ball (a conical-cylindrical soft lead bullet named after its co-developer, Claude-Étienne Minié) ripped through his arm, leaving it dangling uselessly by his side. Severely wounded, Cailloux continued on undaunted until a Confederate artillery shell finished him off.

Banks and his forces went on to be victorious at Port Hudson in early July 1863. Numerous accounts of Cailloux's almost mythical heroism were reported in the press, and his bravery became a powerful recruiting tool for attracting African-Americans into the Union Army. Cailloux's funeral was held in New Orleans that same month on July 29, 1863, and was attended by thousands of mourners.



*Cailloux's funeral procession with brass band and horse-drawn hearse*

André Cailloux was laid to rest in St. Louis Cemetery #2, which is located some three blocks back from St. Louis #1, bordering Claiborne Avenue. Cailloux's widow, Felicie, struggled to eventually receive a small pension from the United States Government. It was not very much, and she died in poverty in 1874, working as a domestic for the Catholic priest who had delivered her husband's eulogy at the funeral.

Another fallen soldier was the very first in New Orleans to answer the call of arms made by the Confederate Government, just three days after the surrender of Fort Sumter. He was also the first Confederate field officer killed during the war. His name was Charles Didier Dreux, and he was descended from numerous prominent Creole families in the city (many familiar to this day). Born May 11, 1832, Charles Didier Dreux was (according to Grace King in *Creole Families of New Orleans* "the son of Guy Dreux and Léontine Arnoult, and grandson of Didier Dreux and Mathilde Enould de Livaudais (daughter of Jacques François Enoul de Livaudais and Marie Celeste de Marigny)."



*Charles Didier Dreux*

Prior to the Civil War, Dreux had served as district attorney and a member of the state legislature. He was descended from Mathurin Dreux (1698 - 1772), who (along with his brother Pierre) carried the title of "Sieur de Gentilly".

Charles Didier Dreux left his hometown for the battlefield as Lieutenant Colonel of the Louisiana Guard Battalion. He commanded Dreux's (1st) Battalion, composed of the first five companies that volunteered from Louisiana. Three months later, he died at Young's Mill (Warwick, Virginia, now Newport News, Virginia) while on a failed mission to capture Union officers who often ate breakfast at Smith's Farm. Grace King wrote, "he fell at the head of his command, with the words on his lips, 'Steady, boys! Steady!'"

Dreux's body was brought back home, and over 30,000 mourners attended his funeral in New Orleans amid "martial music", "draped flags", "flag-draped coffin" and "solemn files of soldiers in gray uniform".

The body of Charles Didier Dreux is buried in Metairie Cemetery within a beautiful tumulus (a mound of earth raised over a grave or graves). The word *tumulus* is Latin for "mound" or "small hill", from the Proto-Indo-European root *teuh* (also found in "tumor", "thumb", "thigh" and "thousand"). The Latin word *tumēre* means "to bulge or swell up".

*Tumuli* are also known as barrows and burial mounds. New Orleans versions of this ancient burial structure are usually topped by a figure, representing the sponsoring society or organization (like the Elk in Greenwood Cemetery). Dreux is interred in the tumulus of the Army of Tennessee, Louisiana Division Memorial. The officer on horseback surmounting the Army of Tennessee tumulus is Confederate General Albert Sidney Johnston, who was killed on the first day of the Battle of Shiloh. He was the highest-ranking officer, Union or Confederate, killed during the entire war. The horse that was chosen as the model for the statue came from the same bloodline as the general's horse, Fire-Eater. Johnston is not buried here, but in his native Texas.

This tomb is one of the earliest of the larger monuments in the cemetery. The Benevolent Association of the Army of the Tennessee, Louisiana Division, laid the cornerstone of this impressive burial mound on March 31, 1883. It was dedicated April 5, 1887, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Battle of Shiloh.

The equestrian bronze figure of Albert Sidney Johnston and the marble orderly sergeant standing tall at the right with the roll of the honored dead are both from the designs of sculptor Alexander Doyle. The life-sized statue represents a Confederate officer about to read the roll of the dead during the Civil War. It was modeled, it is said, after Sergeant William Brunet of the Louisiana Guard Battery, but is intended to be a symbolic representation of all Confederate soldiers.



*Equestrian Statue of Albert Sidney Johnston atop tumulus*

Vaults within the tumulus contain the remains of Creole General Pierre G.T. Beauregard, who ordered the first shot fired on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861. Beauregard had called for the surrender of Major Robert Anderson and the Union garrison. Their refusal prompted the bombardment of Fort Sumter. Unable to counter the siege, Anderson surrendered the Union garrison and the Civil War had begun. A reporter in New Orleans' *Daily Picayune*, February 4, 1861, wrote, "South Carolina evidently thinks, that, the more wild and rash and unscrupulous and ferocious and bloody-minded she shows herself, the more anxious other States will be to tie themselves to her nether appendage."

As his second-in-command, Beauregard replaced Albert Sidney

Johnston on the Shiloh battlefield. An article printed in New Orleans' *Daily Picayune* on April 8, 1862, praised Johnston, who "fell in the very hour of victory". It said, "he was leaving a name from which all clouds were dispersed."

Beauregard was not pleased with the Army of Tennessee Benevolent Society's decision to place General Johnston's statue atop the tumulus. Not due to any failing of Johnston, although his tactics were criticized in the Southern press, the proud Creole probably envisioned himself "king of the hill". Nevertheless, he still selected it as his burial site, and was laid to rest there after his death on February 20, 1893.

In addition to Beauregard and Charles Didier Dreux, Lieutenant General Richard "Dick" Taylor (1826 - 1879), the son of President Zachary Taylor, is also buried here. In 1864, Taylor defeated Union General Nathaniel P. Banks (of Port Hudson fame) in the Red River Campaign with a smaller force, commanding the Confederate forces in the Battle of Mansfield and the Battle of Pleasant Hill. Taylor was given command of the Army of Tennessee after John Bell Hood's disastrous campaign into Tennessee. Back in 1850, Taylor convinced his father (then President of the United States) to purchase a large sugar cane plantation in St. Charles Parish known as "Fashion". The President died soon after in July 1850, and Dick Taylor inherited "Fashion". General Taylor Street in Uptown New Orleans is named for this Confederate general.

Metairie Cemetery is also home to an Army of Northern Virginia tumulus, which bears a statue of General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson on a 38-foot high column. Like Johnston, he's not buried within the tumulus - he's buried in Lexington, Virginia. With 57 crypts, it was established in 1881. Confederate President Jefferson Davis was temporarily interred here after his death in New Orleans on December 6, 1889. The Army of Northern Virginia (originally the Army of the Potomac) was the principal Confederate army operating in the Eastern Theater of the Civil War.

The Army of Tennessee (originally the Army of the Mississippi) was the primary Confederate force operating between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River, fighting in most of the significant battles in the Western Theater. After Shiloh, on November 20, 1862, it was renamed the Army of Tennessee. Named for their primary areas of operation, these Confederate armies contained soldiers from numerous states (including many from Louisiana).

Louisiana's Charles Didier Dreux is described, wrote Grace King, "by those who knew him as a man of great personal magnetism; brilliant, eloquent, dashing. His picture shows him to have been, indeed, truly noble if not royal in appearance. His widow, on the fall of the city to the Federal forces, sought refuge in Havana, where their only

child died." His brother, "Pierre Edgar Dreux, who married Célestine Sanchez, was also killed in battle during the first years of the Civil War."

Colonel Charles Didier Dreux is descended from Robert the Great, fifth son of Louis VI, King of France, made the *Comte de Dreux*. "The name," explained Grace King, "transplanted from France over two hundred years ago, still maintains its freshness and vitality in New Orleans" with a "proud lineage" that still connects "the old families of the past with those of the present. The descendants of Mathurin Dreux are to be met to-day in society and the business world, under the names of Beauregard, Dugue, Verret, de la Vergne, Livaudais, Jumonville, Destréhan, Fazende, Villeré, LeBreton, Déléry, and Soniat du Fossat."

There is an additional monument to Charles Didier Dreux on Jefferson Davis Parkway, dedicated on the 61st anniversary of Dreux's departure for the Civil War front. The sculpture was created by Victor Holm, and the pedestal was designed by Albert Weiblen.

Two fallen soldiers who fought bravely and died early, one true to the Union Army and the other to the Confederacy. Native New Orleans sons, they were both missed, revered and honored in their time. Today they remind us of the sadness endured by so many families during and after one of America's greatest tragedies.

## **NED HÉMARD**

New Orleans Nostalgia  
"Two Fallen Soldiers"  
Ned Hémard  
Copyright 2012