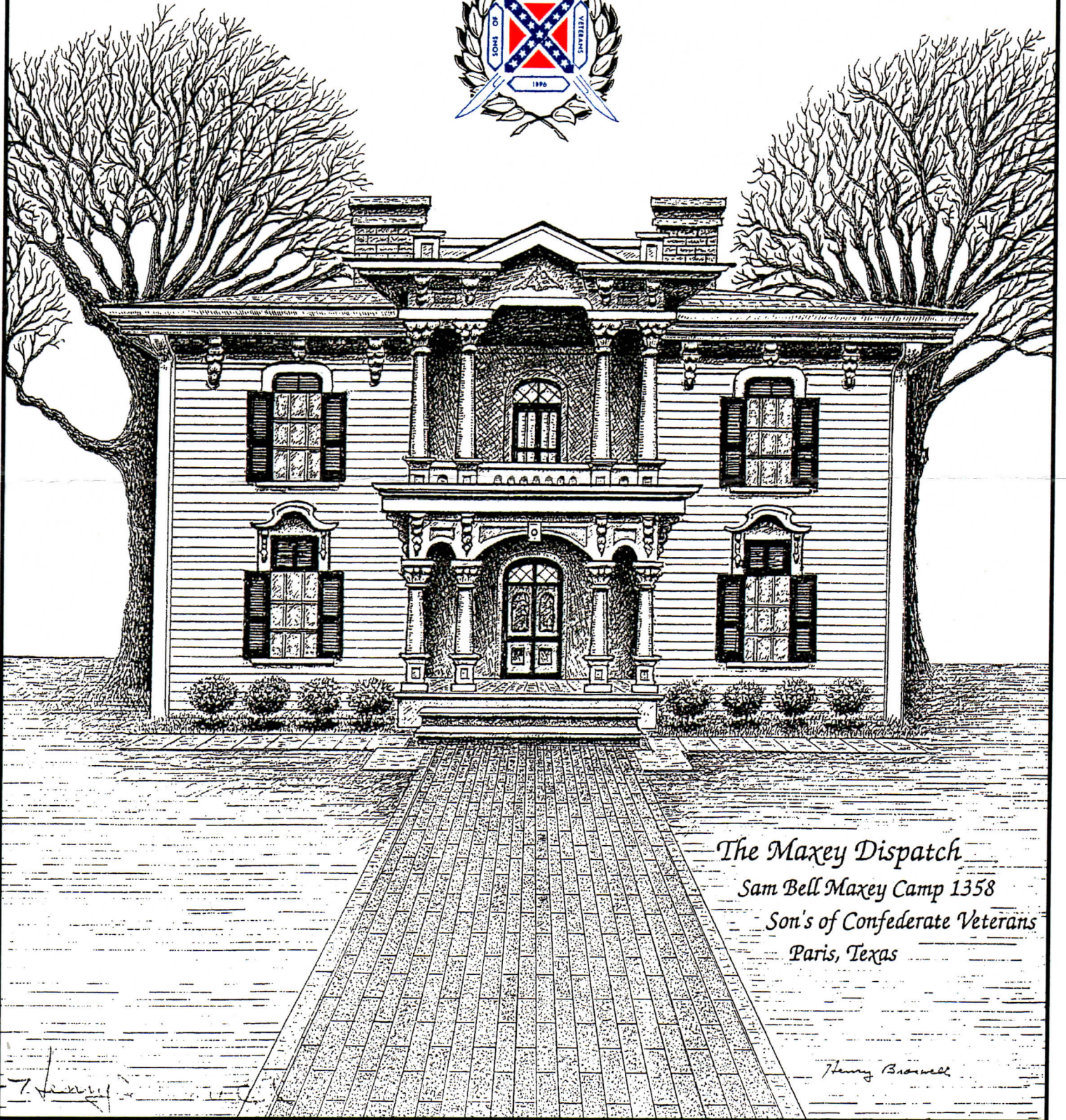


TEXAS



The Maxey Dispatch
Sam Bell Maxey Camp 1358
Son's of Confederate Veterans
Paris, Texas

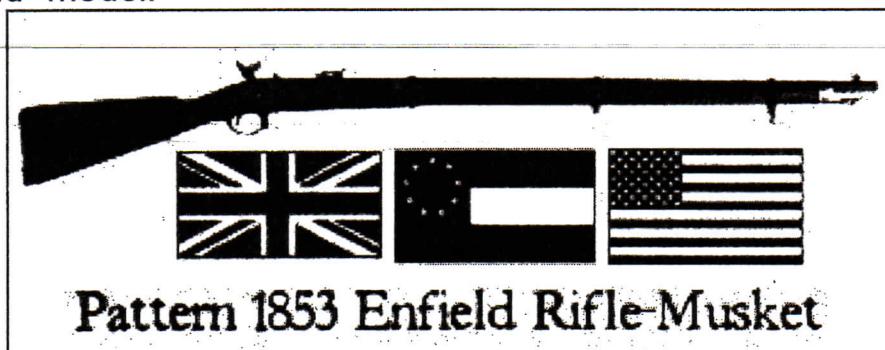
Sam Bell Maxey House - Paris, Texas - By Judge Henry Braswell

THE MAXEY DISPATCH
The Newsletter of the Gen. Sam Bell Maxey Camp 1358
Sons of Confederate Veterans, Paris, Texas
Dispatch # 321 May, 2022

Adjutant's Report/Editorial:

There was no official April, 2022 meeting. This was the first meeting in over two years that I missed. I texted the "never miss" members that "the Coker's" would not be there. We had a family commitment that superseded the camp meeting. I am not sure who showed up at the library, if anyone, but I will be there this month.

I have several replicas of Confederate long arms in my collection; one of which is the Enfield Pattern 1853, "three-band". The Enfield Pattern 1853 rifle-musket was a .577 caliber, rifled musket, used by the British Empire from 1853 to 1867. The barrel had three grooves and was fastened to the stock with three metal bands, so that the rifle was often called a "three-band" model.



The Enfield 1853 rifle-musket was used by both the Union and the Confederacy during the Civil War and was the second most widely used infantry weapon in the war, surpassed only by the Springfield Model 1861 Rifled Musket. The Confederacy imported more Enfields during the course of the war than any other small arms, buying from private contractors and gun runners. It has been estimated that over 900,000 Enfield Pattern 1853s were imported into America and saw service in every major engagement from the Battle of Shiloh (April, 1862) and the Siege of Vicksburg (May 1863), to the final battles of 1865. The gun was highly sought after in the Confederate ranks. According to a survey taken by

British officials during the early stages of the war on the arms of the Confederate Forces, nearly 70% were armed with smoothbore arms, such as the Model 1842 Springfield. Later in the war the same survey was taken and they found that more than 75% of Confederate Forces had acquired a rifle; mainly the Pattern 1853 Enfield. The Pattern 1853 Enfield's capabilities were largely lost by the lack of marksmanship training by both the Union and Confederacy. Most soldiers were not trained to estimate ranges or to properly adjust their sights to account for the "rainbow-like" trajectory of the large caliber conical projectile. Unlike their British counterparts who attended extensive musketry training, new Civil War soldiers seldom fired a single cartridge until their first engagement.

The rifle's ammunition was prepared paper "cartridges" that contained 68 grains of black powder and a lead projectile (bullet) called a "ball". The ball was typically a "Pritchett" type, hollow based, 530-grain "Minie ball". The ball was undersized for easy loading and the hollow base would expand upon firing to engage the rifling. The Enfield Pattern 1853 could also fire the U.S. 1861 .58 caliber cartridge used by Union Forces in the U.S. 1861 Springfield Model rifle, making it very versatile on the battlefield. I make replica cartridges for both rifles.



Pattern 1853



U.S. 1861

Loading the weapon required soldiers to tear open the paper cartridge by biting open the prepared cartridge, pouring the gunpowder contained within down the barrel, snapping off the greased end of the cartridge containing the bullet at the muzzle, ramming it home, replacing the ramrod, bringing up the rifle to the hip, replacing the percussion cap, readying the rifle by setting the sights and moving it to full cock, then presenting the rifle, marking the target and squeezing the trigger. The rate of fire for a well-trained soldier was three to four rounds per minute.

However, in the heat of battle things did not work out so well. There are recorded incidents of after action reports where rifles were found without ramrods; these being fired down-range because they were not removed after ramming a round. Rifles were found with several "charges" (Powder and Bullet) on top of each other; the step of adding a percussion cap being forgotten. Poorly trained soldiers make mistakes in battle. I can attest from personal experience that during battle you either are highly/hyper focused or completely confused.

Once all of a soldier's ammunition was depleted, the Enfield Pattern 1853 became an impact weapon; and if equipped with a socket bayonet, an edged/spear like weapon. The Civil War Bayonet was a sharpened piece of steel with a ring on the end that slid over the barrel of a rifle; it was then turned and locked into place. The effectiveness of the Civil War bayonet was more psychological than physical. Seeing hundreds of soldiers coming at you with large knives on the end of their rifles had a pretty frightening effect. While hand to hand combat did occur, more often the enemy would run away before bayonets could be used. Only about 1% of Civil War casualties were actually a result of a bayonet wound. The vast majority of battlefield deaths and wounds were caused by the Minie ball fired from a rifle.

The Enfield Pattern 1853 rifle-musket was a versatile, battle proven weapon of the time of the Civil War. It was the "State of the Art" weapon of the time. It should be memorialized for future generations as an example of a functional weapon that can be utilized today for self-preservation and defense.

Deo vindice.

Clayton Coker: Adjutant

The next meeting will be Tuesday 3 May, 2022 at the Paris Public Library at 6:00 pm.

**Stand firmly by your Cannon
Let ball and grapeshot fly
And trust in God and Davis
But keep your powder dry!**