



New Exhibit:

Texas Ranger Captain George W. Arrington

The Collections Department recently installed an exhibit on Captain George W. Arrington for the Lone Star History Conference. Covering the life and career of the Frontier Battalion Captain, it features artifacts and photographs from the Civil War to the 20th century.

The Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum is grateful to the Arrington family for making this exhibit possible.

The family of A.R. Hoghland, Jr, grandson of Captain Arrington, generously donated a large collection of artifacts and archival material to the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum in 2014. Mike Arrington, the great-grandson of Captain Arrington, has also loaned a Winchester rifle and brass knuckles to the museum for the exhibit.



Shelly Crittendon, Collections Manager, installs the Arrington Exhibit. Photograph courtesy the *Waco Tribune*. Please see (click) http://www.wacotrib.com/news/writer-releases-texas-ranger-bio-joins-historians-for-weekend-lone/article_e9c95400-f76c-5a84-9f6d-3db057bff7b4.html



Biography: G.W. Arrington

John Cromwell Orrick, Jr. in his Confederate Uniform
[Later known as George Washington Arrington]

Early Life (1844 – 1870)

George Washington Arrington was born John C. Orrick, Jr. in Greensboro, Alabama, on December 23, 1844. His father John Orrick, Sr. died in 1848 when he was just a young child. His mother Mariah (Arrington) Orrick remarried a dentist named William Larkin Williams who was later killed in the Civil War. In 1860, prior to the outbreak of

the Civil War, young Orrick enrolled in Greensboro's Southern University, where he was expected to receive a superior education, but left early and enlisted in the Confederate Army on April 13, 1861 at the age of 16. He served as a private in Captain J.W. Williams' Company D of the 5th Regiment of Alabama.

Orrick participated in many battles during the war, including the Confederacy's first victory at Manassas, Virginia, known as the Battle of First Manassas or the First Battle of Bull Run (the name used by Union forces). He was captured at Gettysburg, but managed to escape his Union captors by jumping off the train delivering prisoners. During the war, Orrick served under Colonel John S. Mosby, who was known as the "Grey Ghost" of the Confederacy. Mosby was the commander for the 43rd Battalion, 1st Virginia Cavalry, also known as "Mosby's Rangers." His unit became well known for their fast raids, as well as their ability to avoid capture by seeming to disappear, often by blending in with locals. Under Colonel Mosby, Orrick gained notoriety as a scout and undercover spy, skills that would no doubt enhance his later law enforcement career.

At the close of the war, young Orrick headed home, where he worked as a merchant for a couple of years. Growing bored, the battle-scarred veteran craved new adventures, so he traveled to Mexico to join Emperor Maximillian's army as a mercenary. Many Southerners were sympathetic to Maximillian's cause, but Orrick had arrived too late to join his ill-fated plight and so returned home to Greensboro.

The years following the Civil War were difficult at best. Race relations were a continuous struggle as both whites and freedmen came to terms with a changing society. In May of 1867, thousands of former slaves poured into Greensboro to hear speeches from delegates to a recent freedmen's convention in Mobile, Alabama and learn more about the political status of black people under the Reconstruction Acts just passed by Congress.

Alex Webb, a politically active black businessman, was a recently elected voter registrar for the district. On June 13, 1867, there was a confrontation on the streets of Greensboro between Mr. Webb and John Orrick, Jr. Orrick drew his pistol and fired three rounds, killing Webb almost instantly. Various sources dispute the reason for the confrontation, but the *Alabama Beacon*, dated June 15, 1867, reported that "*something had previously been passed between them through a third party, which was particularly offensive to Orrick.*" Other sources state that Orrick swore he would never be registered to vote by a black man. The *Alabama Beacon* goes on to state that Alex Webb "*was a man of good character, and had a large family dependent upon him for their support. The affair is most deeply regretted by the community. The Sheriff, who was in town at the time, promptly summoned a number of men and made a search for Orrick, but did not find him. There was, we understand, a good deal of excitement among the colored people, some of them threatening to set fire to the town.*"

Orrick eluded capture and fled to Central America. Seeking to escape his troubled past, he adopted the name George Washington Arrington and returned over the years to the States and arrived in Texas in 1870. After landing in Galveston, he worked for the Houston and Texas Central Railroad in Houston, working briefly as a farmer in Collin County and a cowboy in Brown County.

In the Frontier Battalion (1874 – 1882)

Arrington enlisted in the newly formed Frontier Battalion of Texas Rangers on August 31, 1874. He quickly distinguished himself as an accomplished leader, and his abilities to track fugitives and outlaws prompted Major John B. Jones to promote him from Sergeant to First Lieutenant in 1877. In 1878, Arrington was made Captain of Company C, stationed at Coleman. In his position as Captain, he quickly earned the nickname "Cap." In July of 1878 he was ordered to Fort Griffin to deal with the vigilante activities that had sprung up in the settlement that was then bustling with buffalo hunters, businessmen, cowboys, outlaws, gamblers, gunfighters and painted ladies, and was well-known for its lawlessness.



Captain G.W. Arrington,
Frontier Battalion,
May 1878

During the summer of 1879, Arrington and his company of Rangers were moved to the Panhandle to investigate depredations at area ranches. He established Fort Roberts, the first Ranger camp in the Panhandle, near modern day Crosbyton. During the first two months of 1880, Arrington led his men into a harsh area of eastern New Mexico, little known by Anglos. He had intended to locate Indian watering holes known as the Lost Lakes so that he could intercept Comanche and Apache raiding parties. The Rangers also charted the area from Yellow House Canyon to Ranger Lake in New Mexico. Although the journey treacherous, and the elements harsh, the efforts of Arrington and his men opened up a vast area of land for ranchers.

G.W. Arrington resigned in the summer of 1882, and turned over command of his Company C Rangers to Sergeant John Hoffar.

Later Life (1882 – 1923)

Arrington left his Ranger career to take advantage of ranching opportunities in the Panhandle. After helping area ranchers break up a major rustling ring, he was elected Sheriff of Wheeler County and the fourteen surrounding counties. During this time he also met Sarah Burnette, who was visiting her sister Jane (Mrs. Henry Eubank) at the Connell-Eubank Ranch. Arrington and Sarah were married in her hometown, Westboro, Missouri, on October 18, 1882. The

couple returned home to Texas, where they resided in the county jail in Mobeetie during his years as Sheriff. The couple had three sons and six daughters; the first son died in infancy.

Arrington served as county sheriff until 1890. During his years as Sheriff, he acquired ranchland on the Washita River in Hemphill County. After first living in a dugout, he built two cabins as his home and headquarters and in 1885 registered his CAP brand. In 1893, he was appointed manager of the 250,000 acre Rocking Chair Ranch, a ranch owned by British investors. During his tenure as manager of the ranch, he was able to make considerable improvements, including paying off accounts that had become overdue because of the poor previous management. Arrington remained manager of the ranch until 1896, when the Continental Land and Cattle Company purchased the Rocking Chair Ranch lands. For his services to the ranch, Arrington was awarded the Rocking Chair brand. The Arrington family still uses the brand today.

Arrington assumed management of his own ranch in 1896. He was a Mason and Shriner, and became more involved in the civic affairs of the town of Canadian, where his family lived for seven years in the former home of Cape Willingham. Later, the Arrington family built a new house at the ranch and helped establish a rural school.

Toward the end Arrington suffered from arthritis and would make frequent trips to Mineral Wells for therapeutic hot baths. He was stricken with a heart attack during one of these trips and was taken to his home in Canadian where he died on March 31, 1923. He is buried in the cemetery at Mobeetie.

