

Cornelius J. Coiner

Cornelius Jerome Coiner was the son of James H. and Mary Adaline Keller Coiner. He was born Sept. 2, 1848, at the old Coiner homestead about two miles north of Fishersville, Va., and spent most of his life in Augusta County.

In September of 1864, when just sixteen years old, he joined Co. C, 43d Battalion, Virginia Cavalry, better known as Mosby's Rangers. This command was then operating in Loudoun and Fauquier Counties, and young Coiner's first engagement occurred early in December at Berry's Ferry. Mosby had learned that the Federals sent a daily scouting party of 100 men from Winchester to Berry's Ferry by way of Millwood and back by White Post, or vice versa. Capt. Chapman planned to attack these men, and divided his force to watch both roads. Capt. Richards' division of 30 men, including Mr. Coiner, first spied the enemy who were members of the 14th Pennsylvania Reg. led by Capt. Myers. They had been warned of the Rangers' presence by a Negro servant, and sent out an advance guard of 20 men.

Richards mistook these for the main scouting party and attacked before he realized he was between the detachments. This brought on a hand-to-hand fight in which the Rangers, outnumbered nearly four to one, killed and wounded 26 Federals and captured 54 prisoners and 80 horses – all without a single loss to the Confederates.

C.J. Coiner served until the end of the War without being wounded or captured, and was paroled at Staunton, Va., May 12, 1865. He began farming and raising stock on Long Meadow Run, where he lived until 1875 when he moved to a larger farm near Swoope. On Oct. 15, 1872, he married Miss Viola Long of Stuarts Draft, and they had one child, Hallie E. Coiner.

Mr. Coiner was a member of Hebron Church for many years, serving it often in official capacity, but transferred his membership to First Presbyterian Church of Staunton when he moved to that city in 1903. There the same year he joined the Stonewall Jackson Camp of United Confederate Veterans in which he held the offices of Sgt. Major and 3rd Lt. Commander.

In 1926, the Staunton press announced the death of Cornelius J. Coiner, 78 years old, 'prominent farmer and cattleraiser of Augusta County.' He died of a heart attack shortly after returning home from a church meeting. "Scores of friends who held him in high esteem for his excellent character and Christian faith" attended his burial in beautiful Thornrose Cemetery, the scene of summer concerts by the celebrated Stonewall Band of Staunton.

Hallie E. Coiner, son of Mr. Coiner, willed his Staunton home to the Stonewall Council of Boy Scouts, and the rest of his estate (appraised at a total of \$82,000) in trust for "the relief, help, health and comfort" of the needy of Augusta County.

Profile by Cornelius J. Rosen's great nephew, D. Coiner Rosen, and first appeared in *Southern Cavalry Review* January 1986. The late Mr. Rosen was a member of the Society.