



Reno/Reneau Review

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LAST CALL

**2009 Reno/Reneau Reunion
Staunton, VA Oct 9-11, 2009**

Important Notice...

Deadline extended!:

We must receive your order or reservation by the following dates:

Shirts/totes/caps – September 1 (deadline extended)

Banquet – September 1 (Contact Brenda directly if you plan to attend! She can update the list.)

Hotel Rooms – September 9

The sooner you get the reservations to us the better we'll feel, as not many people have made the commitment yet. Contact Brenda Rose at (540)885-9618 or e-mail rosebl@comcast.net so that we will have an idea of how many to prepare for (seating, favors, activities, etc.). We hope to see many of our cousins from around the country. Remember, Virginia was the starting point of the Reno/Reneau family in America!

Brenda, Don, and Mary, Your 2009 Reunion Team

Reno/Reneau's Got Talent!

Bring your musical instrument, your voice, or other talent to the Reunion---We will have a segment for Reno/Reneau Descendants to strut their stuff! Should be a fun time for all!

Bring your Memories!

We will have the Conference Room at the Reunion from 5PM Friday to 5PM Saturday. There will be space to display family history, memorabilia, albums, photos, etc. We will also have printers and copier available to make copies.

Silent Auction!

We are excited to have this fundraiser at the Reunion. Please bring an item for the Silent Auction Table! We already have a selection of fine wines from Reneau Vineyards thanks to Dick Reno in NY. Other items include stationery, books, jewelry. We appreciate anything you can bring to help continue All Reno/Reneau Reunions!

Mississippi University for Women— to be renamed for Sallie Eola Reneau!

There are still some hoops to jump through before the University name change is approved (through the State Legislature, etc.) but the announcement has been made by the University: *Kristin Mamrack is a staff reporter for The Commercial Dispatch. She reports:*



**Reneau chosen
as new name
for MUW
August 10, 2009**

It's Reneau.

Mississippi University for Women President Dr. Claudia Limbert announced the school's choice for a new name this morning at a faculty/staff convocation. And received a standing ovation from a full-house at Nissan Auditorium. While the announcement ended a months-long process of committee work, it touched off another months-long process that will require the approval of the state Institutions of Higher Learning Board of Trustees and the full Mississippi Legislature....

If approved by the IHL, the name will be submitted for approval to the state Legislature.

MUW officials said Reneau University refers to Sally Reneau, who, in the late 19th century, lobbied the state Legislature for the school to be built.

Limbert this morning called Reneau — who was 18-years-old when she first lobbied the Legislature for the creation of the first state-supported female college in the United States — a “remarkable woman.” For complete article: online at

www.cdispatch.com/news/article.asp?aid=2463

See pages 3-8 for a reprint of an article about Sallie Eola Reneau and her family written by Dollye McAlister Elliott for the Reneau Book of Memories.

We Remember Rachel Elliott Pressly Day



Rachel Elliott Pressly Day, Kerrville, TX, passed away at her home on July 7, 2009. Rachel was born April 19, 1922 in Tampa, Florida to The Rev. Henry E. and Mary (Bradley) Pressly, Presbyterian missionaries to Mexico. The family lived in Valles, Tampico, and Cuernavaca, Mexico. Her education included schools in Mexico, followed by high school in Due West, South Carolina, and then the University of

Texas.

Rachel married Clyde W. Day on October 6, 1943, who was serving in the U.S. Navy in WW II. The couple had four children: Neill, Margaret, Henry and Elizabeth. Rachel was a loving wife and mother, also devoting herself to volunteer work for the church and community. Additionally, she taught school for 20 years as a bilingual Kindergarten teacher of underprivileged children in Houston.

She and Clyde moved to Kerrville in retirement, where she remained active in church, serving as Elder, Stephen Minister, Enabler for Presbyterian Women of the Hill Country Cluster of Mission Presbytery, Chair of Annuities and Relief for the Synod of the Sun. She tutored children after school, visited shut-ins, was a volunteer of the Heart of the Hills Hospice, and called every member of her church on their birthdays.

Rachel Day is survived by her husband of 65 years, Clyde W. Day of Kerrville; her children Neill W. Day of Kerrville, Margaret R. Day of Tehuacana, Henry P. Day and wife Vicki of Scottsdale, Arizona, and Elizabeth B. Day of Austin. Her grandchildren include Rebecca Day, Lawrence Koenig and wife Kerri, May Koenig, Jennifer Day and husband James Cameron, Geoffrey Day, Rachel Holan, and Samuel Holan.

A memorial service was held to celebrate her life on Monday, July 13, at 2:00 P.M. at the First Presbyterian Church of Kerrville. Memorials may be sent to the Mary B. and Henry E. Pressly Scholarship Fund at the Austin Presbyterian Seminary, to the Peterson Hospice, or to the charity of choice.

Rachel's Reneau heritage came through her husband Clyde Wickliffe Day. His Reneau lineage is Mary Elizabeth Reneau Day, Joseph Wickliffe Reneau, Isaac Tipton, John, Charles Reno/Reneau, John Reno, Lewis Jr., Lewis Sr.



Clyde and Rachel Day and family

The couple celebrated their 64th Wedding Anniversary at the All Reno/Reneau Family Reunion in Fort Worth, TX, in October 2007. It was a very special occasion, with all their children present for the celebration!

Joseph Benham, Kerrville journalist, described Rachel's "life as both long and well-lived. So, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.' You blessed us by being among us." We all miss her.

We Remember Carroll Elizabeth Kemp Reneau



Carroll Kemp Reneau, 73, a resident of Irving, Texas, passed away on Monday, July 13, 2009, at Baylor Medical Center at Irving after a short illness.

Carroll was born April 24, 1936, in Sophia, West Virginia, the daughter of the late Wyatt and Ruby Kemp of Charleston, W.Va. Carroll graduated from DuPont High School in 1954.

Carroll married Ellis Leon Reneau. Ellis was one of nine children, born Feb 5, 1930 in Anthony, Harper County, KS to Samuel Craig Reneau and Velma Louise Nelson Reneau. Ellis died July 25, 1992 at age 62 in Wakita, Grant County, OK.

Carroll continued to put family first and enjoyed large family get-togethers with her extended Reneau family. She enjoyed working at the computer and kept in touch with many Kemp and Reneau cousins by email.

Carroll is survived by her two sons, Dale L. Reneau of Dallas, Texas, and Roger R. Reneau and wife Cindy of Round Rock, Texas and their children, Sam, Harley and Sarah; and sister, Mrs. Helen K. Wilson of Charleston. She was preceded in death her brother Harold Kemp of Charleston, WV.

Carroll was a member of the Plymouth Park Baptist Church of Irving and United Daughter's of the Confederacy Chapter in Irving, Texas.

A memorial service was held at 10:00 a.m., Thursday, July 16, 2009 at Plymouth Park Baptist Church. Donnelly's Colonial Funeral Home in Irving was in charge of arrangements.

Carroll's Reneau heritage came through her husband, Ellis Leon Reneau. His Reneau lineage was Samuel Craig Reneau, John Michael Eagleton, Samuel Russell, William

Michael, John Reno, John David, John, Lewis Jr., Lewis Sr.

Carroll, son Roger, wife Cindy and children Sarah, Harley and Samuel attended the All Reno/Reneau Family Reunion in Fort Worth, TX, Oct 2007.



Carroll also has special visiting time with John David Reno descendants

Sue Reneau Damewood, Bonnie Reneau Cox, and Elaine Reneau Snow pictured with Carroll at right.



We will all miss Carroll's warm friendship, love and dedication to family.

Nathaniel Smith Reneau
William Edward Reneau
Sarah "Sallie" Eola Reneau
by Dollye McAlister Elliott

**A FACTUAL ACCOUNT OF A VERY
REMARKABLE, TRAGIC RENEAU FAMILY**

When Anita asked me to write an article on this family, I had a choice to make: whether to write it as a story, easy to read and digest, or one based on documentary evidence and fact; I have chosen the latter.

The father of this family was Nathaniel Smith Reneau,¹ born July 10, 1814, in Cumberland County, Kentucky, the fifth son and fifth of 10 children of John and Elizabeth (Thurman) Reneau. According to Nathaniel, he left home at the age of 13, about 1827, probably to go to school, as he appears to have been an educated man, as were others of John Reneau's children.

The next record we have of Nathaniel, or Nat, is on December 28, 1835, when he married Eliza Darwin Rawlings in Somerville, Tennessee. Eliza had been born in Edgecombe County, North Carolina, but later had been living in Grenada, Mississippi, where she had many kin. Nat and Eliza had two children: Sarah (Sallie) Eola Reneau, born at Somerville, 1 August, 1836, and William Edward Reneau, born December 23, 1842, after the family had moved to Grenada, Mississippi. Eliza may have died in childbirth; in any event, soon after her son was born.

When the Mexican War began, Nat went to Memphis Tennessee, and on June 9, 1846, joined the 1st Regiment Tennessee Cavalry, Capt. Sneed's Company, as a Private to fight in the war. He was discharged on April 10, 1847, at Vera Cruz, Mexico, on a Surgeon's Certificate, his disability originating from disease contracted in the line of duty in Mexico (probably malaria). On June 2, 1847, Brigadier General Gideon Pillow signed a statement concerning Nat's Mexican War service, so Nat could be paid money due him. The Document states, in part: "Said N.S. Reneau ... is thirty years of age,² five feet eight inches high, fair complexion, blue eyes, dark hair, and by occupation a merchant."

In the 1850 Census of Mississippi, William Reneau, age 11, is shown living in Panola City (Batesville), Panola County, Mississippi, in the home of A.D. Patton, Sardis, his uncle (probably the husband of Eliza's sister).

On January 7, 1854, Nat, in a gracious reply to a letter from a Reneau female cousin whom he had not previously known, tells about his family; that he lived in Memphis for 16 years, mentions a miniature he had just received from his "little daughter", Sallie Eola, and remarked on her likeness to her "12 years lamented mother" (1842); that Sallie is a pupil at Franklin Female College at Holly

Springs, Mississippi, and will graduate "first of July next", a little over 14 years of age; that his "little son" is a pupil at Chalmers College, in his 13th year of age, "but will continue in college". Nat writes that Sallie is one of the most devout Episcopalians [Methodist] he has ever known" and as good a Whig", which, he states, fully accords with his own religious and political sentiments.⁴

When Sallie Eola Reneau graduated, she began a campaign to establish a state-supported institution for higher education of women in Mississippi, "equal in every respect to that which has been provided at the University of Mississippi for Men." Her petition had the endorsement of Governor McRae and was introduced in the Mississippi Legislature in January, 1856, as "An Act establishing a State Female College to be located in Yalabusha County". The Bill was approved February 20, 1856. However, no appropriation was made for the school.

In the winter of 1857, Sallie visited U.S. President Buchanan and presented him with a copy of her petition for a bill in the U.S. Congress to endow the Mississippi College with 500,000 acres of unsold public lands in Mississippi. Sallie read the petition to President Buchanan, who complimented Sallie and gave her "great encouragement". Congress did not act on the Bill, but it remained on the Congressional Calendar.

A Chancery Court Record, Coffeerville, Yalabusha County, Miss., shows that on August 17, 1857, N.S. Reneau was in general merchandise business in Grenada, Mississippi, with E.C. Penn. The entry also mentions N.S. Reneau's son, Edward.⁵

In 1862, the Civil War had begun, and Nathaniel S. Reneau was captured, apparently in New York City, by Union troops and interned as a prisoner of war in Fort Lafayette, New York City Harbor. He was not there long and was released on his Parole, his word that he would not bear arms against the Union. Upon his release, Nat went immediately to Tennessee and

¹ Cumberland County was later split and the part the Reneaus lived in became Clinton County.

² He would be 33 in July, 1847.

³ The copy of the letter is discolored on one margin and part of the margin is damaged so that the first words or two of line are indecipherable.

⁴ From the letter, it appears his correspondent was the daughter or descendant of Lewis Reneau of East Tennessee. Nat had accidentally met him in the Tennessee Senate at Nashville some years before.

⁵ General Docket, Chancery Court 1872-1890 GWD, Coffeerville, Yalabusha County, Miss., Book 2, p. 352.

became a volunteer aide to Brigadier General R. W. Richardson, Commander of West Tennessee Forces, CSA. Nat kept his word: he did not bear arms.

Before March, 1864, young William Edward, age 21, had also joined the Confederate Army, first, as 2d Lieutenant with Co., I, 17th Tennessee Cavalry.⁶ By March 5, 1864, he was a Captain and assistant-inspector-general on the Staff of General Richardson, stationed at Yazoo City, Mississippi.⁷

General Richardson wrote a letter, dated March 6, 1864, to Col. Coates, commanding the Union Forces at Yazoo City, regarding Confederate dead and casualties captured by Union troops. The General states: "Capt. W. E. Reneau, assistant inspector-general on my Staff, with escort of men and ambulance train, will bear this communication under flag of truce." (Col. Coates refused to release the Confederate casualties.)⁸

General Richardson wrote his report, March 7, 1864, of the battle with the Union troops on the Yazoo River. In the report, he states: "I cannot close this report without mentioning in terms of commendations the promptness to carry my orders and the gallant bearing throughout the day of Capt. W. E. Reneau, assistant inspector-general on my staff."

The General seems a busy letter-writer as, on April 23, 1864, he wrote a long, involved letter addressed to "His Excellency the President of the Confederate States" [Jefferson Davis], concerning the General's commission. In the letter, he refers to "N.S. Reneau, volunteer aide on my staff".

A unit in the West Tennessee Brigade was named the Reneau Company, for whom, I do not know; it may be that N.S. Reneau had recruited the men.

We do not know exactly what happened to William Edward Reneau. It appears he died in or soon after the War, whether from disease or wounds we do not know. The legend is that he was killed in action at the Battle of Chickamauga in East Tennessee, September 1863, but we see that he was still alive and very active in the Spring of 1864 in West Tennessee. I think the confusion arose from a letter Isaac Tipton Alexander Reneau wrote May 18, 1924, to some kinsmen, in which he states that Nat's son "Thomas" was killed in action in the Battle of Chickamauga, while his, I.T.A.'s brother Thomas was fighting on the Union side. There may well have been a Thomas Reneau killed at Chickamauga, but Nat's son was named William Edward and we know he was living after that battle, but this version of Thomas Reneau spread in the Reneau families. William Edward Reneau died unmarried.

In any event, I find no more references to William Edward after the Civil War.

I do not find records of this family from 1864 to 1872. Obviously, the War had torn up their lives, as it had so

very many other people's. Nat would have had the grief of burying his only son, perhaps by the side of his wife in Batesville? Then he would have begun to repair his financial situation. As for Sallie, she resumed her mission to establish a state-supported college for women in Mississippi. Her activities for this over the years had brought the question to the people of Mississippi and resulted in the founding of the Mississippi State College for Women, which became a prestigious college in the South up to at least the time of World War II, to my knowledge. In addition to the usual college courses, the college had the reputation of also inculcating in the students the values of traditional Southern womanhood.

Sallie's reputation was established as an educator. A group of civic-minded citizens of Germantown, Tenn., near Memphis, wrote and asked her to come live at Germantown for a time and help them establish and organize a school there. Sallie went to Germantown, where she lived in the home of Postmaster and Mrs. Miller. The school was planned, organized, pupils enrolled, and Sallie returned to her home in Mississippi in July, 1878.

In 1878 the terrible Yellow Fever Epidemic broke out and swept across the South like wildfire. Germantown was one of the early areas struck. When Sallie heard about this, she went back immediately to Germantown, July 1878, to do whatever she could to help organize relief and to help with the victims. She also wrote news articles about the ravages of the epidemic, published in Tennessee and Mississippi newspapers, in an effort to obtain volunteers and aid for the stricken communities.

I have a copy of the last letter Sallie wrote to her father, dated September 28, 1878. It is in Sallie's handwriting (she was apparently left-handed). Excerpts here can show something of the great tragedy of the epidemic in only one small town, but this was repeated in thousands of towns and cities of the South.

"September 28, 1878. My dear Father, I sent you a postal card yesterday and six papers today, and I do not know that I could say more in a letter than I have said in the card and papers. ... I am very anxious to see frost⁹ and be rid of all this dreadful excitement.

⁶ *Tennesseans in the Civil War*, published by the State of Tennessee, listing units, Confederate and Union soldiers from Tennessee.

⁷ See Battle of Vicksburg, Mississippi.

⁸ *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series I, volume XXXII, Part 1 – Reports, p. 329 and p. 285.

⁹ Not known at the time, but yellow fever virus was carried by the anopheles mosquito.

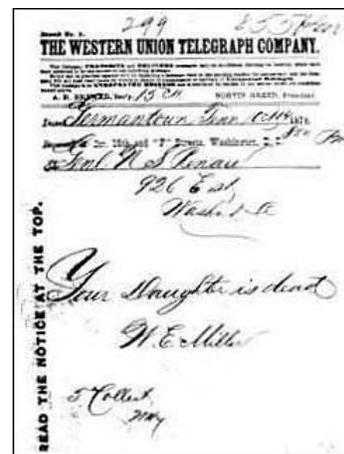
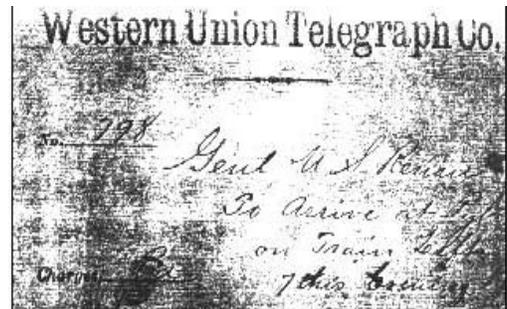
I am tired, I'm so tired of it. It has been two long months of continual fear and excitement, which is as much as human nerves can stand. If it had begun a month earlier, I don't believe there would now be a living man, woman or child in the whole section. There have been at least ten thousand deaths from this disease ... and it has scattered gloom and distress all over the land. ... Mrs. Bucter is gone; Mrs. Kent is gone, and I fear her husband will soon follow her. ... Two more of my good friends, Dr. McKay and Mrs. Gorman, will go soon; they are all three very, very sick. Mr. Edmonson is also sick. ... I have never felt so entirely helpless as now. Who is there to look to but God? God help us! And send us frost. ... There are now six sick ones in Mr. Hurt's house and he is reported to be dying. There are five sick at Mr. Gorman's and his wife reported dying; he buried his little daughter two days ago. Six at Dr. McKay's, and he can scarcely live. ... I am low spirited, distressed. After all, I had rather be here than at Batesville, I had rather die here. I am glad that I came. I will write again as soon as I can. Write. God bless you! Good night. Your affectionate child, S.E. Reneau

An article from an Ohio newspaper, probably Cincinnati, reads:

AN INCIDENT OF THE YELLOW FEVER

“The Pittsburg Evening Chronicle contains a very affecting episode relating to the Southern plague, which affects in the deepest degree a parent now in this city. But we will allow the Chronicle to tell the tale in its own language: ‘On the arrival of the 8:11 train from Washington at the Union Depot in Pittsburg on the morning of the 15th instant, one of the Western Union Telegraph messengers stood in the doorway of the dining-room, holding in his hand an envelope addressed to General N.S. Reneau. The telegram was claimed by the anxious hand of a venerable looking gentleman in the shady paths of life, whose grief on learning of the death of his daughter, the only remaining member of his family, by yellow fever, at Germantown, Tenn., early this morning, can be better imagined that described. Miss Sallie Eola Reneau, niece of Rev. Dr. Reneau of Clinton Co., Ky., and of A.D. Patton, Tampa County, Miss., and cousin of Hon. Allen C. Thurman of Ohio, was making her temporary home at Germantown, as volunteer nurse and as historian of the ravages of the disease for the State of Mississippi as her published accounts and reports of the ravages of the disease and feeling comments on the death of friends now before us testify. She was a leading spirit in the organization and management of all relief and charitable movements of the place where she had voluntarily determined to do her best for those who suffered around her. The General, while on business in Washington City, received word of her illness through the postmaster at Germantown and was hastening to her side

when confronted with the announcement of her death. He telegraphed to have her remains tenderly laid away, and her effects taken care of until his arrival, which, now that there is nothing for him to go for, will not be until the fever has abated. The home of General Reneau is at Batesville, Miss.’”



A copy of the telegram delivered to Nathaniel Smith Reneau

There are two notices of Sallie's death, one in a Mississippi paper, no date, and one apparently from Commercial Appeal, Memphis, again no date.

The Mississippi paper: “The many friends of Miss Sallie Eola Reneau, of Mississippi, will be shocked to hear of her untimely death from the plague on the 14th instant, at Germantown, Tenn., where she has been temporarily residing. She was the daughter of General N.S. Reneau, of Batesville, Miss., fell in the meridian of life, and enjoyed for many years a great reputation in the South as one of its finest writers. She had devoted her life to the education of her sex, rich and poor, having been a distinguished scholar and educator.

“The Legislature of the State of Mississippi paid the highest tribute to her character and qualities by giving her name to the Reneau Female University of Mississippi, declaring her to be the first president of the same, and that State will always be proud of her, not only for her devotion to her sex in contributing her life to the elevation of women, but

also to her great self-denial and her Christian character displayed by remaining in the plague districts to aid and comfort the sick and dying.

“Of Miss Reneau, said Mississippi’s Senator Alcorn: ‘The State of Mississippi’s great educator, Christian, scholar, and artist, to the power of whose pen I, with due deference, bow.’

“The State of Mississippi, at the earliest session of her Legislature, should erect over her remains some monumental record worth of this great scholar and of the State of which she was proud to have been a daughter.”

From the Tennessee newspaper: “Gen. N.S. Reneau, of Batesville, Miss., is well-known in Washington in connection with Mexican affairs. He had large international interests there and for some months past has enjoyed close relations with the president and the Mexican Minister, in regard to diplomatic relations with that country. Most recently, the General has been notable for efforts for the relief of the unfortunate people of the South, but more especially for those of Mississippi. Every few days Gen. Reneau would exhibit a letter from his daughter, Miss Sallie Eola Reneau. He would use her eloquent and touching descriptions of the trouble that was around her, as his excuse for most urgent appeals for help; and now his fair correspondent and daughter herself is dead. There are no words by which we can express our regret for the loss of this gifted and useful young girl, or our sorrow over the affliction which has befallen our friend.” [Sallie Eola Reneau was 42 at the time of her death.]

Nat had been interested since the Mexican War in building railroads in Mexico and in Mexican silver. He had become friends with the President of Mexico, to whom he had presented his railroad plan. But Mexico, after the Mexican War, needed roads more than railroads, and there was no money to back railroads. Nat had formed a Syndicate in Washington, getting capitalists to invest in building Mexican railroads. The Mexican President had apparently given Nathaniel Smith Reneau the courtesy title of “General”, which would help in Washington with his work. There are two partial pages of a newspaper, possibly *The Monitor*, copies of which I have, dated May 23, 1880. Articles in the newspaper are on Panama, Costa Rica, England, the Mexican Minister to the U.S., Mexico, an anecdote about Mark Twain trying to establish a newspaper in Mendocino County, California. It also contains a long article headed “The Railroad Question – Another”, and reads: “*The Monitor* of the 18th inst. contains a communication from Gen. N.S. Reneau, the representative of a syndicate of the leading capitalists and railroad men in the United States, in which he proposes in the name of his associates a project for

railroad construction in Mexico.” Some of the associates mentioned are Jay Gould and Russel Sage of New York “of world-wide fame as millionaires”, Thos. A. Scott of Philadelphia, Railroad King; Jno. O. Brown, Governor of Tennessee, who inaugurated and completed the railroad system in Tennessee; Stanley Mathews, U.S. Senator from Ohio; and others.

A J. C. Guzman of Oaxaca, Mexico, wrote to Nathaniel in St. Louis on January 12, 1887, reporting on gold and silver mines Nat had asked him to check on, which he will try to secure for Nat “for your return”. Two Mexican Generals [whose names I cannot decipher] and Guzman’s wife “send you their compliments”.

Nathaniel, in low spirits after the death of his family, went to Europe and traveled in Spain and elsewhere. I cannot find dates for this trip, so it may be that Sr. Guzman was not referring just to Nat’s return to Mexico, but to America.

A frequent letter-writer was John (W. or M.) Butler of the Treasurer’s Office, Mission of Methodist Episcopal Church in Mexico City.¹⁰ He wrote on August 5, 1888, telling Nat bad news about how much money he would have to put up, \$800,000 to \$250,000 [sic] on property in Guanajuato. Mr. Butler remarks on “when you return in September, trust you had a pleasant trip home”

On January 2, 1889 [mis-dated 1888], this same John Butler wrote a letter to Berry Jordan Reneau, telling him of Nathaniel’s death on December 5, 1888, from pneumonia, in Mexico City, and that Butler had immediately notified “Rev. Doctor Reneau”,¹¹ also “our mutual friend Mr. Miller of St. Louis”, and the American Consul in Mexico City. The letter tells that Nathaniel had come to Mexico City in December and, while waiting to arrange some business with the Mexican Government, contracted a severe cold that turned into pneumonia. Butler says he had to leave the city and, when he returned, Nathaniel was in the hospital. Butler arrived at the hospital about 5 minutes before Nathaniel died. N.S. Reneau was laid to rest in the American Cemetery, Mexico City, and Butler suggests a gravemarker be put at his grave. Butler’s letter also tells us that for some two years Nathaniel had been interested in securing a concession for gold mines in the State of Oaxaca, which he had under bond, to expire February 1, 1889, “if none of his friends come

¹⁰ Letters from Butler are typewritten, but some letters are damaged and some letters are confusing; for example: the u’s look like v’s, while the v’s also look like u’s, etc.

¹¹ The telegram had been returned to Mr. Butler; Isaac Tipton Reneau had died.

down before then”; otherwise, the property would be lost, together with several hundred dollars invested in it; that Nathaniel’s last trip was to secure concessions in Guanajuato, which had now been granted. “Your brother represented a Syndicate in Chicago, of which Samuel Chandler ... is President” and that Chandler is expected in Mexico soon.



The tombstone of Nathaniel Reneau reads:

GENERAL
N.S. RENEAU
BORN
July 10, 1814
DIED
Dec 5 1888

As to Nat’s possessions, Butler writes that he has in his safe (at the Mission) \$100 American cash, and \$200 in checks sent by Mr. Chandler, which were sold at 36.25% [exchange rate], a gold watch and chain that had belonged to Sallie and returned to Nathaniel after her death, \$20 in American gold, and \$7 in Mexican silver, “all these, except expense for sickness and burial, still in my safe at the mission”. Butler says he paid out for Nathaniel’s hotel bill, physician, and burial, telegrams to U.S. \$125.69 Mexican money, “leaving a trifle over \$200 American money” still in Butler’s hands, “which Mr. Chandler may consider his”. He also has Nathaniel’s small valise, which contains one or two changes of clothing and “quite a number” of papers. The letter suggests the gravemarker may be paid for out of the money in Butler’s hands. Mrs. M. E. Stillings¹² wrote a letter to John Butler on July 18, 1889. I do not have a copy of her letter, but, on July 26, 1889, Butler replied to her letter, addressed to her at Sparta, White County, Tennessee, acknowledging her letter to him of July 18. Butler enclosed in his letter to her a copy of the letter he had written to Berry Reneau on January 2, 1889. Butler explains to Mrs. Stillings that Nathaniel’s property could not be released to any one of the family without written authorization from “all the heirs” to release the property to one of them; that, if this if not done, he will have to turn the property over to the American Consul in Mexico, who will send it to Washington, where the family will have to claim it and pay a commission. Butler strongly

suggests the family send an authorization to Mexico City, where the only expense would be mailing charges to whomever the heirs designated the property be sent. Butler goes on to say that Nathaniel’s mining interests “fell through” because the time to exercise them expired. His letter enclosed a picture of Nathaniel’s gravemarker, which Butler had chosen and had erected at Nathaniel’s grave. He says he has sent several copies of the photograph to “Barry” and can send more if others want them, which can be charged against the effects that are still in his hands. Butler writes that Berry seems angry and insists Butler send everything to him but that he cannot without the signed authorization from all the heirs.

Mrs. M. E. Stillings received this letter and, at the bottom of the copy of Butler’s letter to Berry Jordan Reneau, Mrs. Stillings wrote a letter to her brother I.T.A. Reneau, dated May 3, 1992(?). The copy I have of her handwritten letter is faint, difficult to read, but appears to be about some of the family should try to obtain Nathaniel’s property.

I have a copy of a letter from Isaac Tipton Alexander Reneau, son of Rev. Isaac Tipton Reneau, dated May 18, 1924, to three Reneau kin who were planning to go to Washington to visit Nat’s grave (mistakenly thinking the grave was in the “National Cemetery in Washington City”) and see if they could recover Nat’s belongings. I.T.A. Reneau writes to Mrs. Mary C. Moss Bonham Texas, Joseph Reneau, “address unknown” [Bowling Green, Ky., son of Millard Fillmore Reneau], and Mr. and Mrs. W.W. Roland of Hobart, Oklahoma, [Mary Pitsy Depp Rowland, granddaughter of Isaac Tipton Reneau] urging them not to waste their money going to Washington. That he had gone to Mexico about 16 years before [circa 1908], visited Nathaniel’s grave and inserted a note in a “crevice” in the slab covering” the grave. I.T.A. Reneau writes that he had gone to one of the mine sites about 250 miles southwest of Mexico City, as far as cars could go, then by foot. So his advice to these kinsmen is not to waste their money going to Washington, D.C., and to stop payment to any attorney or other person to investigate, “for it is money thrown away”.

The story of the Nathaniel Smith Reneau family is a tragic one, but it is also the story of great achievement through the efforts of one woman, Sallie Eola Reneau, to establish the Mississippi State College for Women, now the Mississippi University for Women, the oldest state- supported college for women in the United States today.

¹² Margaret Eunice Stillings, daughter of Isaac Tipton Reneau, niece of Berry Jordan Reneau, Nathaniel Smith Reneau, and other children of John and Elizabeth (Thurman) Reneau.



In 1929, in honor of Sallie Eola Reneau, (photo on left) the State of Mississippi built Reneau Hall on the campus of Mississippi State College for Women. The building has been renovated to bring it up-to-date for modern usage; the four-story building underwent a \$2.7 million renovation in 1998. A formal re-Dedication Ceremony was held there April 17, 1999, the

Program for which tells about the Hall built “in honor of Miss Sallie Reneau, pioneer advocate of state-supported higher education for women in Mississippi”. The Program tells us that “Reneau [Hall] was built during a 10-year construction program initiated in 1920 when the Legislature appropriated a grand total of \$1,545,000.”

In 1986, Reneau Hall was designated a Mississippi Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



RENEAU HALL

Mississippi University for Women

Copies of documents relating to General Nathaniel Smith Reneau, Sallie Eola Reneau, and Capt. William Edward Reneau in Dollye Elliott’s possession:

- Company Muster Rolls of 1st Regiment Tennessee Volunteers (Mexican War) for June 15 to October 31, show N.S. Reneau joined June 9, 1846, at Memphis.
- Company Muster Roll of Capt. Sneed’s Co., 1 Regiment Tennessee Cavalry (Mexican War), March and April 1847, showing discharge of Nathaniel S. Reneau on Surgeon’s Certificate April 10, 1847.
- Copies of statements, etc., relating to N.S. Reneau’s application for Mexican War payment due him, including statement of General Gideon Pillow, CSA.
- Handwritten letter of N.W. Reneau dated January 7, 1854, to an unnamed Reneau cousin he had not previously known, telling about his family, leaving home at 13, etc.
- Copy of title page and Pages 328-329 and 382-385 of *The War of Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series I – Vol. XXXII, Part 1 – Reports (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1891), re Captain W.E. Reneau.
- Letter of General R.V. Richardson to His Excellency the President of the Confederate States, dated April 23, 1864, in which he names N.S. Reneau as a volunteer aide on his Staff.

- Handwritten (last) letter of Sallie Eola Reneau to her father, dated September 28, 1878, from Germantown, Tenn., telling of the tragedies of the Great 1878 Yellow Fever Epidemic as it was in Germantown, Tennessee.
- Copies of excerpts from a newspaper. The name of the paper is missing, but the copy bears the date of July 23, 1880, No. 48, and has a long article about N.W. Reneau and his syndicate to build railroads in Mexico.
- Handwritten short letter in Spanish to N.S. Reneau, December 6, 1885? (not clear), from Mier Y. Teran of Oazaca, Mexico, with English handwritten translation by unknown translator (N.S. Reneau?) attached. It is mainly a short social letter.
- Typed letter to General N.S. Reneau in St. Louis, MO, from J.C. Guzman, Oaxaca, Mexico, dated February 12, 1887, in response to Nat’s letter. Subject is silver and gold mines in Mexico. Guzman’s wife and two Mexican Generals (whose names I cannot decipher) send their compliments to the General.
- Typed letter of John M. (W?) Butler, Treasurer’s Office, Methodist Episcopal Mission, Mexico City, dated August 25, 1888, to “My Dear Friend” [N.S. Reneau], acknowledging receipt of his telegram, re mines, property, costs, etc.
- Letter to Berry Jordan Reneau [“Barry”], Albany, Kentucky, from John Butler, dated January 2, 1888 [sic; 1889], telling him of death of his brother Nathaniel Smith Reneau on December 5, 1888, in Mexico City, of his telegram to I.T. Reneau, N.S. Reneau’s last illness, death, burial, his possessions left with Butler, suggesting erection of gravemarker, of steps necessary for family to recover Nat’s possessions from Mexico.
- On bottom of copy of this letter is a handwritten letter from Mrs. M. E. Stillings to her brother I.A. Reneau, dated May 3, ?1892, apparently about claiming Nathaniel’s possessions, but the copy is rather faint and I am unable to read the handwriting.
- Letter of John Butler, dated July 26, 1889, to Mrs. M. E. Stillings, Sparta, White County, Tennessee, in response to her letter to Butler. In his response, he sends her a copy of his letter to Berry Reneau, dated January 2, 1889, (above) and writes, again that property of Nathaniel cannot be sent to any one member of the Reneau family without the written consent of all the heirs; recommends this as, otherwise, the assets will have to be deposited with the American Consul in Mexico City and be sent to Washington, etc.
- Letter of Isaac Tipton Alexander Reneau, Broken Bow, Nebraska, dated May 18, 1924 to Mrs. Mary C. Moss, Bonham, Texas, Joseph Reneau, [Bowling Green, Ky.], and Mr. and Mrs. W.W. Roland, Hobart, Oklahoma, urging them to save their money and not go to Washington, D.C., as planned to visit Nat’s grave and try to recover his property there, that I.T.A., himself, had gone to Mexico 16 years before, visited Nathaniel’s grave and looked into his assets and mining property there.
- Original of program to Dedication of Reneau Hall at the University of Mississippi for Women on April 17, 1999, with some history of the Hall and it’s erection in honor of Miss Sallie Eola Reneau, 1929.