

## HISTORY MINUTE

Presented by William George  
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### Mark and Kate Rodeffer

One man's journey to New Jerusalem ... and what did he find?

He was born in 1838 in Woodstock, Virginia.

He grew up in the Woodstock area and learned the trade of carpentry.

For some unknown reason in 1858 he journeyed by horseback to Jackson, Mississippi where he plied his carpenter's trade for a couple of years.

When war broke out in 1861, he enlisted in the Mississippi Militia, transferred to Pensacola, Florida to serve under General Bragg. Later he transferred to Stonewall Jackson's army and basically fought in the entire Valley campaign. His battles included McDowell, Cross Keys, Port Republic, Middletown, Kernstown, Winchester, and Chancellorsville. In the later part of the war, at Gettysburg in Jeb Stuart's horse artillery. He was wounded twice throughout his service. In the army, his best buddy was Americus Souder (Mec) of the Lovettsville Souder's. Mec brought him to Lovettsville while they were on leave where he would meet his future wife, Mary Catherine Souder (Kate).



I am talking about my great grandfather, Mark Rodeffer, and Kate Rodeffer, my great grandmother. In 1866 they were married by the Reformed Pastor, moved to Cedarville for a bit and then returned to Loudoun where they became faithful members of New Jerusalem. The stained glass window to my right is a memorial to them by their children (nine or ten). I call the window "my" window and I know when it comes the time to refurbish and replace the storm coverings I will be quickly reminded that it is "my" window! I share Mark and Kate with some of his great-grandchildren, in this church, Dick Hickman and Marilyn Edmondson. Dick and Marlyn's grandmother, Pauline and my grandmother, Lillian were sisters and, of course Mark and Kate's children. Out of the nine or ten they had.

So now the tie-in. We know, or suspect that New Jerusalem was probably an "anti-succession church" (siding with the north). We know that at least twenty-eight members of New Jerusalem joined the Loudoun Rangers as part of the northern army. We know the area was divided as we read about the fighting in Waterford where brother fought against brother as in the Snoots family. I have to assume that many of these Loudoun Rangers—twenty-eight—returned to the congregation, those who did not die or were not too severely wounded. And the rest of the congregation held their own thoughts as to positions on the war ended.

When great-grandfather walked in, did they welcome him? He was not "Lovettsville." Did they shake his hand? Did they speak to him? Did they even look at him? We do a lot of talking about welcoming congregations but as you know, talking the talk is a little easier than walking the walk! Just what did he find?

Finally, do I agree with his positions? Maybe, maybe not. It doesn't really matter. I am proud of him though. He actually stood up for what he believed in. Wounded twice to ratify that position. More than some of our leaders or we to stand for what we believe. And after the war, to his credit, he pulled out his "redemption card" we all carry. We can all attempt to right our wrongs and move on.

Ed tells me, in his research, that Mark's name is on many applications for war pensions helping both Northern and Southern army soldiers and their widows. I have a small picture here, probably around 1926 of great-grandpa Mark, aged 87, walking in an orchard with a union soldier, a Mr. Mark Yerger or Yarger, aged 83, both with her canes. I am convinced that without their canes they would be walking arm in arm to steady themselves. Two old soldiers, different sides, moving on, soon to their graves. Can we move on? Thank you very much!

