



William Thomas Overby 1840 - 1864

4th Cousin of William Epps Overby, who served in the 5th VA Cavalry

My 4th Cousin – Four times removed – by David Arthur

He volunteered for the 7th Georgia Infantry of the Confederate States of America, called the Coweta Guards

He later joined the 43rd Battalion, Company D, Virginia Cavalry, also called Moseby's Rangers



Pvt William Thomas Overby

Birth: 1840
Death: Sep., 1864

Overby, William Thomas
Known as "The Nathan Hale of the Confederacy."
April 1840-1864
Co. D 43 Bn. Va. Cav.
CSA

Residence Coweta County GA;
Enlisted on 5/31/1861 as a Private.
On 5/31/1861 he mustered into "A" Co. GA 7th Infantry
(date and method of discharge not given)

He was listed as:
Wounded 8/30/1862 2nd Manassas, VA
POW 9/23/1864 Front Royal, VA
He also had service in:
"D" Co. VA 43rd Bttn Cavalry

~Offered his life in exchange for betraying his comrades. Refused and was hanged as a spy
September 1864~

~~~~~  
born in Newnan, GA

Overby was one of the six Mosby's Men executed at Front Royal by orders of General George Custer on Friday, September 23rd, 1864. Overby and Love, were hung to a tree in sight of the town of Front Royal, and a paper pinned on the breast of one read: "Such is the fate of all of Mosby's gang."

The remains of the Mosby's Ranger often called the "Nathan Hale of the Confederacy" lie once again in the soil of his native Georgia. William Thomas Overby was given a hero's reburial January 5, 1997, in Oakhill Cemetery in Newnan, Georgia, southwest of Atlanta.

His body had lain the past 132 years in a rural Virginia Cemetery near where he was hanged on September 23, 1864, for refusing to reveal the whereabouts of the headquarters of his commander Confederate Cavalry Colonel John Singleton Mosby.

Overby was the son of a Coweta County, GA, planter, and was wounded at 2nd Bull Run while with the 7th Georgia Infantry.

In 1864 he was a 27 year old member of Company D, of Mosby's Rangers. He was captured near Front Royal, VA, with 5 other rebels. All six were executed, and Overby was one of the last two to die. His captors offered to spare his life if he would reveal Mosby's whereabouts, but he was refused and was hanged from a walnut tree. His last words were reportedly: "Mosby will hang 10 of you for every one of us."

Mosby did indeed retaliate: he hanged seven captured Union troops, attaching a note to the body of one of them with words to the effect that he would hang no more prisoners if Yankee commander George Custer desisted from hanging anymore captured Confederates. The hangings ceased.

Overby was buried in Markham, Virginia, in the family cemetery of one of the other men executed that day, according to the Atlanta Constitution. The Sharpsburg Sharpshooters Chapter of the Sons of Confederate Veterans in Coweta County made numerous attempts in recent years to have Overby's body returned, but without success. They finally got permission when the owner of the Virginia graveyard died and the new owners, descendants and judges in both states were amenable.

Overby's few remaining bones were retrieved on the weekend of December 20-21, 1996, by members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV), and returned to Newnan, GA. There, they were placed in a pine period coffin and lay in state on January 4, 1997, in the Coweta County Courthouse. The coffin was draped in a Confederate flag and topped with a framed photo of Overby under a pair of Confederate swords. An honor guard of Confederate reenactors stood vigil, wearing black armbands over their left sleeves. The following day, a Sunday, Overby's casket was transported to Oakhill Cemetery via a horse-drawn artillery caisson, accompanied by more than 300 reenactors while about 300 spectators looked on.

(reported by Joe Kirby, for the Civil War News, Route 1, Box 36, Turnbridge, VT

This is a second monument on the Courthouse Square in Newnan, GA. and is erected in memory of William Thomas Overby, Confederate Hero. He enlisted May 31, 1861, into Co. A 7th Ga. Infantry. He was wounded at second Manassas, Aug. 30, 1862, then joined Co. D, 43rd Batln. Mosby's Rangers. They raided within Federal lines to embarrass the enemy, causing U. S. Grant to issue the order that "when found Mosby's men were to be hanged without trial." William Overby was captured at Front Royal, Va. on Friday, Sept. 23, 1864. He was offered his life if he would reveal the hiding place of Mosby's men. This he refused, and was executed without trial. A federal said "He was the Nathan Hale of the Confederacy." Scott said, "He was a famous soldier and died unafraid." A lady, present at his death said, "He died a Christian-unafraid." William Overby suffered death rather than betray his friends. He is buried in Markham, Va. The monument reads: "Erected 1956 by Alfred Colquitt and Newnan Chapters UDC, Inscription by Col. Thomas Spencer. At the top of this granite Boulder are crossed battle flags.

Source:

[http://www.cowetaguards.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=4&Itemid=3](http://www.cowetaguards.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4&Itemid=3)

Family links:

Parents:

[William Overby \(1811 - 1869\)](#)

[Mae Overby](#)

Burial:

[Cokes Chapel United Methodist Church Cemetery](#)

Sharpsburg

Coweta County

Georgia, USA

## SENATE RESOLUTION 260

By: Senator Price of the 28th

## A RESOLUTION

1- 1 Designating the William Thomas Overby Memorial Parkway and  
1- 2 the Buddy Reddick Parkway; and for other purposes.

1- 3 WHEREAS, William Thomas Overby was born in Brunswick County,  
1- 4 Virginia, around 1840, the third child of William and Martha  
1- 5 Overby, who were among the first families to settle in  
1- 6 Coweta County, Georgia; and

1- 7 WHEREAS, he volunteered for the 7th Georgia Infantry of the  
1- 8 Confederate States of America, called the Coweta Guards, and  
1- 9 was wounded in the Second Battle of Manassas; and

1-10 WHEREAS, he later joined the 43rd Battalion, Company D,  
1-11 Virginia Calvary, also called Moseby's Rangers; and

1-12 WHEREAS, he was captured by Union troops in Fort Royal,  
1-13 Virginia, and hanged without a trial; and

1-14 WHEREAS, originally buried on a private farm in Markman,  
1-15 Virginia, he was respectfully exhumed in December, 1996, and  
1-16 returned home to Coweta County, Georgia, and was reinterred  
1-17 in January, 1997, among the Confederate graves of Oakhill  
1-18 Cemetery in Newnan, Georgia; and

1-19 WHEREAS, he was the only Georgian who received the  
1-20 Confederate Medal of Honor.

1-21 WHEREAS, Harry Cleveland "Buddy" Reddick lived a life that  
1-22 touched so many people from September 19, 1950, when he was  
1-23 born in Peach County, Georgia, to the sad day of his death  
1-24 in the town that loved him, Fort Valley, on March 31, 1996;  
1-25 and

1-26 WHEREAS, Mr. Reddick attended Georgia Southern University  
1-27 and later Georgia Southwestern where he earned a degree in  
1-28 business administration and met his lovely wife, Becky; and

1-29 WHEREAS, Mr. Reddick owned Reddick Hardware in Fort Valley,  
1-30 was past president of the Kiwanis Club and of the Peach  
1-31 County Chamber of Commerce, was past president of the  
1-32 Community Unity Group, past chairman of the Development

-1-

2- 1 Authority, and involved in Sunday School and coaching little  
2- 2 league football; and

2- 3 WHEREAS, Buddy received the Durwood Gassett Award in 1996  
2- 4 for his accomplishments; and

2- 5 WHEREAS, the list of his public accomplishments and civic  
2- 6 contributions is certainly long, but Buddy's major  
2- 7 contributions were as a friend to anybody who knew him.  
2- 8 Buddy was unforgettable because he loved his community and  
2- 9 all those in it; and

2-10 WHEREAS, on this the one-year anniversary of the month of  
2-11 Buddy's death, it is only fitting and proper that a  
2-12 beautiful stretch of road in the community dear to his heart  
2-13 be honored with his name.

2-14 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY that  
2-15 the members of this body designate that portion of Georgia  
2-16 Highway 154 from Sharpsburg to the intersection of Georgia  
2-17 Highway 154 with U.S. Highway 29 as the William Thomas  
2-18 Overby Memorial Parkway, in honor of William Thomas Overby,  
2-19 courageous and distinguished Confederate soldier.

2-20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of this body  
2-21 designate the bypass around the City of Fort Valley from  
2-22 Georgia Highway 49 North to U.S. Highway 341 as the Buddy  
2-23 Reddick Parkway to honor this great man.

2-24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Transportation  
2-25 is authorized and directed to erect and maintain appropriate  
2-26 signs designating the William Thomas Overby Memorial Parkway  
2-27 and the Buddy Reddick Parkway.

2-28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of  
2-29 Representatives is authorized and directed to deliver a copy  
2-30 of this resolution to Mrs. Becky Reddick.

AMERSONY  
**RANGER**

## Overby Day Honors Dixie Nathan Hale

A Georgia hero known as the Nathan Hale of the Confederacy will be honored Tuesday, the anniversary of the day he was hanged by Federal troops.

Gov. Marvin Griffin has proclaimed Tuesday William Thomas Overby Day in Georgia. Overby, who lived between Newnan and Fayetteville, was hanged without trial 94 years ago because he would not disclose the hiding place of his fellow troopers in Mosby's Rangers.

Overby volunteered for the Confederate Infantry from Coweta County May 31, 1861. He was badly wounded at the Second Battle of Manassas and upon recovery from his wounds joined Company D, 43rd Battalion of Virginia Cavalry, Mosby's Rangers, Army of Northern Virginia.

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**MOSBY'S RANGERS** were daring, fast-riding raiders who made repeated forays behind Federal lines, capturing or destroying supplies, and once capturing a Federal general.

John S. Mosby was commended by Gen. Robert E. Lee more than any other officer in the Confederacy.

Overby rode as a ranger until Sept. 23, 1864, when he was captured in the town of Front Royal, Va. The Federals offered him freedom if he would tell where Mosby and his men were hiding.

\* \* \*

**THE ALTERNATIVE** given him was death by hanging. Overby chose to die rather than betray his comrades.

Gov. Griffin's proclamation calls Overby a "magnificent Georgian" and the state's "number one hero" of the War Between the States.

A granite monument to William Thomas Overby was placed at Newnan in 1956 through joint efforts of the Alfred Holt Colquitt (Atlanta) chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Atlanta, and the Newnan chapter of the UDC.



A sign designating the William Thomas Overby Highway is displayed by Sons of Confederate Veterans members, from left, David Corley, Bill Poe and Brad Maddox.

## Part of Hwy. 154 may honor William Thomas Overby

**Editor's Note:** When this article originally appeared in the March 15 edition of *The Newnan Times-Herald*, the word "Mosby" appeared in two places where the word "Overby" should have appeared. We regret this error.

William Thomas Overby, who was buried on a remote Virginia farm after being hanged by Union troops in 1864, remains in the news in Coweta County.

Overby grew up in Coweta County. Earlier this year, his remains were reinterred at Oak Hill Cemetery in Newnan.

Now, State Sen. Rick Price has entered Senate Resolution 260 recommending that part of Highway 154 be designated as the William Thomas Overby Memorial Parkway. Price's resolution calls for Highway 154 from Sharnsburg to Highway 29, be

named in Overby's memory.

Overby's family lived on a plantation near Sharnsburg. His father, stepmother and other family members are buried at Cokes Chapel United Methodist Church just off Highway 154.

Price's resolution refers to Overby as a "courageous and distinguished Confederate soldier." It calls for designation of the roadway for the Georgia Department of Transportation "to erect and maintain appropriate signs designating the William Thomas Overby Memorial Parkway."

Overby was born around 1814 in Brunswick County, Va., the third child of William and Martha Stith Overby. Price's resolution noted that the Overbys "were among the first families to settle in Coweta County."

William Thomas Overby, 1814-1864

united for the 7th Georgia Infantry of the Confederate States of America, called the Coweta Guards, and was wounded in the Battle of Bull Run," the document stated. "He later joined the 43rd Battalion, Company D, Virginia Cavalry."

The unit was more commonly known as Mosby's Rangers. Overby was captured, hanged at Front Royal and buried on a farm at Markham until his remains were removed late last year "to be reinterred among the Confederate graves" at Oak Hill, according to the resolution.

The document also noted that Overby was "the only Georgian who received the Confederate Medal of Honor."

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└─ Nicholas "The Imigrant" Overby b. 11-4-1628 d. 1691  
└─ Nicholas "Ye Younger" Overby b. 1659 d. 1739  
└─ Richard Overby  
└─ Richard Jr. Overby  
└─ Thomas Overby  
└─ William H. Overby  
└─ Martha Sykes  
└─ William Thomas Overby b. 1840 d. 1864  
└─ Martha Stith