(Capt.) Lewis Guion

Lafourche Parish, Louisiana

Guion, Capt. Lewis, attorney, Vicksburg National Military Park Commissioner, son of Judge George Seth Guion, and Caroline Lucretia Winder, his wife, was born in Lafourche parish, La., near the town of Thibodaux, La., Aug. 8, 1838.  George Seth Guion was the son of Maj. Isaac Guion of the United States army in the Revolutionary war, and native of New Rochelle, N. Y.  He took part with Wolfe in the capture of Quebec in 1759. He held a commission as captain, signed by George Washington, and was afterwards made major.  Being well educated, he had a thorough knowledge of French, and frequently interpreted for the French officers who were helping the Continental forces.  He was present at and took part in the siege of Yorktown.  When Jefferson effected the Louisiana purchase, he was one of the officials who came south in connection with the transfer.  It was through this that the family became identified with the South.

George Seth Guion spent his youth near Natchez, Miss., where he was born.  He had 3 brothers, 2 of whom were officers in the United States army, Capt. Walter of the topographical engineers, and Lieut. Frederic Guion. A third brother was Judge John I. Guion, a prominent lawyer and judge, and at one time governor of Mississippi.  George Seth Guion was appointed by Gov. Isaac Johnson of Louisiana as parish judge, and lived for a number of years at Vidalia, opposite Natchez.  Later he moved to Lafourche parish, and acquired property, which afterwards became a sugar plantation, and on which the remainder of his life was spent, and where he died Oct. 8, 1861.

Lewis Guion was educated, first at St. James college, not far from Hagerstown, Md., and near where the battle of Antietam was fought.  In Jan., 1855, he entered the freshman class at the University of Mississippi, at Oxford, and was graduated in 1858 with a degree of A. B.  The following year was spent in a law course at the University of Virginia, and the succeeding two years he attended the law department of the University of Louisiana, afterwards Tulane university.  On account of the impending war, he left the class and, before the Supreme court, passed an examination which admitted him to practice in Louisiana.  When his classmates graduated, Jan. 26, he was given a diploma without an examination, for he was already a lawyer.

On Jan. 26, 1861, the state of Louisiana seceded from the Union, and ordered the raising of 2 regiments, 1 of infantry and 1 of artillery.  Mr. Guion applied for and was given a commission as second lieutenant in the 1st La. infantry, and in April he was sent to Pensacola.  On this trip he arrived in Mobile the day Fort Sumter was fired on.  He remained in Pensacola until the death of his father in the fall of 1861.  There being no one else to care for the property, Lieut. Guion resigned from the army and qualified as administrator of his father's estate.  After remaining at home 3 months, in arranging the affairs of his father's estate, in Feb., 1862, he assisted in organizing the  26th La., commanded by Col. De Clouet, and with his regiment, in which he was first lieutenant, and afterwards captain, went to Vicksburg and took part in the battle of Chickasaw Bayou, and the siege of Vicksburg until its surrender, July 4, 1863.  During the greater part of the siege Mr. Guion acted as assistant inspector general on the staff of F. A. Shoup, commanding a Louisiana brigade, and was so acting at the time of surrender.  All the prisoners were paroled.  Afterwards they were exchanged and Mr. Guion assisted in re-organizing the 26th La. regiment, which operated in the trans-Mississippi.  A portion of that time Mr. Guion was on the staff of Gen. Allen Thomas as assistant inspector general.  This regiment continued in service to the end of the war, and was finally disbanded May 19, 1865, near Mansfield, La., and all its members went to their respective homes.

Capt. Guion then went back to the old home and commenced the work of making a sugar plantation, and also practiced law. Afterwards, with his brother-in-law, Gen. Francis T. Nicholls, he became owner of the old plantation, which they cultivated for several years.  He finally gave it up and came to New Orleans, where he practiced law.  In 1893 he was appointed by Pres. Cleveland as melter and refiner at the New Orleans mint, and served in that capacity over five years.  From 1900 to 1908 he was attorney in charge of the criminal cases before the Supreme court for his brother, Atty.-Gen. Walter Guion.  In 1908, after the death of Park Commissioner Gen. Stephen D. Lee, Pres. Roosevelt appointed Capt. Guion to that position, which he holds at the present time.  Cap. Guion is a member of the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity of the Universities of Mississippi and Virginia; Hermean society, University of Mississippi; Jefferson society of the University of Virginia; is a member of the association of the army of Tennessee, La. division, and for one year was its president.  He was also a director of the Soldiers' Home; chairman of the history committee of the United Confederate Veterans association, for 9 years.  He served as president of the Louisiana Historical association for 3 terms.

Many years after the war he married the widow of Dr. James A. Lanier, a surgeon in the Confederate army.  In politics Capt. Guion is a democrat.

During the trying times of reconstruction he was a member of the Knights of the White Camelia, and was a prominent figure in opposition to the unjust acts that were being done under the carpet-bag regime.  He enjoys the distinction of having been condemned by name in an act passed by the notorious Kellogg legislature.

**Fortier, Alcee, *Louisiana: Comprising Sketches of Parishes, Towns, Events, Institutions, and Persons, Arranged in Cyclopedic Form*, volume 3, Madison, Wis.: Century Historical Association, 1914, pp. 56-758.**

**Transcribed by Mike Miller**