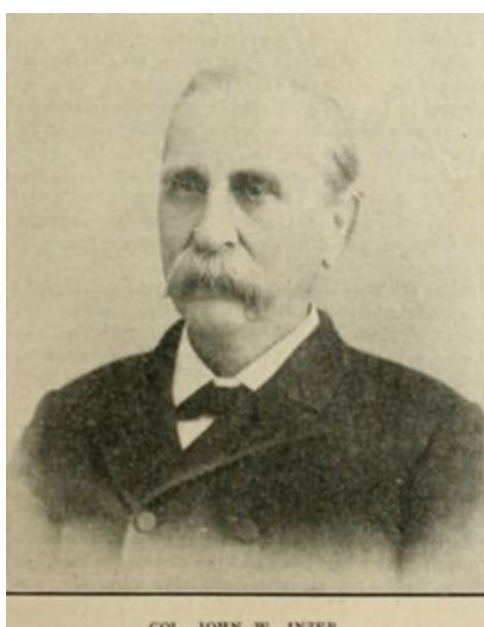




## John W. Inzer: Gallant Confederate Veteran and County Leader

by Norm Dasinger



Inzer in his later years

Born January 9, 1834, in Georgia, John Washington Inzer arrived in Ashville Alabama, St. Clair county, in 1856 in order to practice law. He was the youngest man in the state, age 26, elected to serve as part of the 1861 Secession Convention. Before leaving for Montgomery in January of that year, he remarked to citizens of his county, *"I told the people of St Clair, I was in favor of cooperation."* True to his word, Inzer did not vote for secession but, once passed, did sign the Ordinance of Secession after exclaiming, *"... Should Alabama secede... I would go with her... I am for Alabama under in any and all circumstances."*

In 1862, Inzer joined the Confederate Army and later helped form the 58th Alabama Infantry Regiment. He was appointed lieutenant colonel in August of 1863 and was slightly wounded at the battle of Chickamauga, Georgia, September 19, 1863.

The 58th Alabama was one of the most distinguished regiments to come from this horrific battle and lost 148 of its 259 men. The 58th was cited for having captured 4 pieces of the enemy's artillery and General William B Bate, the units brigade commander at Chickamauga, personally saluted the 58th while serving in the field that day. In a report of the battle, the 58th Alabama's commanding colonel remarked... *"Lt Col. Inzer behaved with conspicuous gallantry during the battle and rendered much valuable aid by words and example ..."*

In September 1863 Inzer was wounded and then a few months later was captured at the battle of Missionary Ridge, Tennessee, November 25, 1863. He was imprisoned at Johnson's Island, Ohio until June 27, 1865. During the war, Inzer kept a diary which was edited and published in 1977 under the title, *"Diary of a Confederate Soldier: John Washington Inzer"*

Upon his return to Ashville, Inzer bought the former Dean House in 1866 and was appointed probate judge that year. He was also appointed a trustee of Howard College (now Samford University) in 1871 and was instrumental in seeing it moved from Marion, Alabama to its present campus in East Lake near Birmingham. In 1874, he was elected as a state senator, reelected again in 1890 and in 1907 served as circuit court judge for St. Clair County finally retiring from public service well into the 20th century.

Inzer died January 2, 1928, at age 93, the last surviving member of the Alabama Secession Convention.



The Inzer home in Ashville, Alabama. Open now as the John W. Inzer Museum

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