

III

Who Was Leon H. Jordan?

Samuel Jordan, Jr., Leon H.'s older brother, was the only young man in Lincoln High School's first graduating class of four in 1885. His brother Leon H. graduated from Lincoln two years later.¹⁴ In 1891 the alumni of Lincoln organized in support of the school and Leon H. Jordan became president of the alumni association. *The American Citizen* noted: "The young men of Kansas City are entitled to a great deal of credit for their energy and push. Mr. Leon Jordan is one of the leaders in keeping young men in the front." That same year Leon H., in addition to acting opposite his future bride in *The Last Loaf*, also acted as David Leslie in *Clouds and Sunshine*. Then he publicly played the violin for the benefit of *The American Citizen*. The next year the paper published an etching of the handsome young man and added:

Mr. Leon Jordan whose cut we present to our readers is the only choice the colored voters of this Congressional district have for delegate to the National Convention. Mr. Jordan is a strong man in the Republican party and highly deserves the place if a man from this

¹⁴ The school board made an interesting comment on this first graduation from a black Kansas City high school: "This graduating class marks a new era in the history of the colored schools of this city. If twenty-five years ago a man had dared to say that to-night a colored class would have been thus honored, he would have been declared a fit subject for the lunatic asylum. But the world moves. Freedom, education and industry will break down all hindrances and open the doors of labor to all alike in time. The Board pledges itself to the colored people of Kansas City to furnish them the same school advantages that it does to any other class of children under its charge. The rest remains for you."

district is to have it. He is by far in advance of any black man who up to date has come out for it.¹⁵

C. H. J. Taylor moved to Kansas City, Kansas, and became editor of *The American Citizen*, assuming part ownership of the paper that same year. Taylor was already a national black leader in the Democratic party. He had served as Minister to Liberia in the previous Cleveland administration. Although he was unhappy in that post and served only briefly, he did not hesitate repeatedly to remind his subsequent audiences that he had held that distinguished position. He was active in the second Cleveland campaign and once Cleveland was elected, began seeking the prestigious position of Register of Deeds in Washington, D.C., an office traditionally reserved for an eminent national black leader.

In Kansas City, Kansas, Taylor quickly became aware of the Jordan family. His paper recognized their achievements, their travels, their illnesses, and their marriages. The black communities of Kansas City, Kansas, and Kansas City, Missouri, then often were part of a single shared community. In November, 1893, after Cleveland was elected, Leon H. Jordan called on C. H. J. Taylor with a friend, Mr. Murry. The paper reported and in effect recruited: “Mr. Jordan is always a welcome visitor. The country is destined to learn some day that the most progressive Negro born in Missouri is this young man. Watch and see.” Taylor probably eventually shifted Jordan’s allegiance from the Republican to the Democratic party.¹⁶

Taylor’s struggle to be named Recorder of Deeds in Washington, although ultimately successful, was protracted and difficult. Meanwhile another high profile patronage battle worked its way to a successful conclusion. In February, 1894, the *Kansas City Star* announced General

¹⁵ *The American Citizen*, November 29, 1889; April 3 & May 15, 1891; February 23, 1894; February 20, 1891; April 15, 1892.

¹⁶ *American Citizen*, March 3, 1893, May 26, 1893, November 24, 1893, January 12, 1894; *Kansas City Star*, March 13, 1893, November 11, 1893.

Jo Shelby was appointed U.S. Marshall for Western Missouri. Shelby was immensely popular in Missouri at this time. He had been a distinguished Confederate Cavalry officer, often dubbed the only Confederate General that never lost a battle. He had been under Price's command at the Battle of Westport, but his troops probably did not confront Lt. Samuel Jordan. When the confederate cause was lost, Price led his troops to Mexico in a much celebrated romantic gesture offering his and his army's services there.

With his staunch confederate credentials, Shelby, upon appointment as U.S. Marshal, became a surprising force for racial reconciliation, even if he could not escape being a little paternalistic. One of his first deputy appointments was that of Lee Jackson, an African American. The appointment brought Shelby severe criticism from his white supporters, but Shelby responded: "The young man is competent to render effective service in lines where white men cannot do as well, perhaps, as he will do. I appointed him for efficiency, and have no patience with that sentiment that gropes among the tombstones instead of coming out into that bright light of existing life and conditions. The negro was always faithful to his people when a slave; he has been no less faithful to his friends since he has become a free man. He is becoming useful in ways never dreamed of before the war, and it is unmanly to deny him the right to do for himself everything that will improve and better his condition. I trust that this is the last I shall have to say in defense of my official action. I am right in what I have done, and by the right I propose to stand."

Jackson was not the last black appointed by Shelby. He also added Leon H. Jordan as a deputy soon after becoming U.S. Marshal. *The American Citizen* noted that Jordan in April, 1894, was making quite a record as Deputy Sheriff. But Jordan served in this position only a few months. In July that same year he left for Washington, D.C., to join Taylor's office as an

assistant Recorder of Deeds. He lived in Washington for about a year, first in a house on 10th St. NW, run by a widow, Mrs. Hill, later in a house run by another widow, Mrs. Thompson. Col. Shire, white, was deputy recorder. Daniel Brooks and a man named Johnson, both colored, were fellow clerks. Cora Nero, who later became Mrs. Cora Moton, a neighbor living at 1218 Vine street, was yet another clerk. Even later she moved to Jefferson City with her husband, who became a professor at Lincoln University.

In December, 1894, Jordan returned to Kansas City for the holidays, and *The American Citizen* reported him “looking well the very picture of health. Few young men have gained prominence and distinction in such a brief public career as this young man. He has in a few years stepped into the front ranks and of him the people expect the coming representative of the west.” Both Jordan’s mother and his sister Callie remembered that Taylor did not keep his end of the bargain that took Jordan to Washington. He himself remembers deciding rather suddenly while home on vacation during the summer of 1895 that he had had enough and did not return to Washington. He resumed working for his father in the barber shop and sometimes on his father’s farm near Horniff Station, Kansas.¹⁷

This is a realistic account of the first two claims made in the *Kansas City Sun* tribute to Leon H. Jordan: “As a deputy United States marshal under the distinguished Confederate General Jo Shelby, Assistant Recorder of Deeds under the famous first Negro Democrat of note, C.H.J. Taylor, Captain in the Spanish-American War, seeing service in the Philippine Islands, he made a record so brilliant that it will live in the minds of men for years to come.” An examination of his service in both the Spanish-American War and in the American occupation of the Philippines is far more damaging.

¹⁷ *Kansas City Star*, February 5, 1894; February 14, 1897; *American Citizen*, April 20, 1894; July 20, 1894; December 20, 1894; January 11, 1896; *Army and Navy Journal*, October 14, 1899; affidavits from Leon H. Jordan, Kate Jordan, and Callie Edwards in Jordan’s pension application, LJC.

But between leaving his employment by Taylor and enlisting in the Spanish-American War, Leon H. Jordan quietly married Lena Rivers. A more public wedding might have called attention to the fact there was no publicly acknowledged father to give the bride away. Early in 1895 *The American Citizen* had described Lena as one of Kansas City's prettiest girls. Besides her beauty she is also a very graceful dancer and a charming conversationalist." In April she was baptized at St. Augustine's and a year later, April 8, 1896, she married Leon H. Jordan at St. Augustine's. They took up residence in the home of her mother and stepfather at the beginning of their marriage.¹⁸

When the battleship *U.S.S. Maine* exploded in the harbor of Havana on February 15, 1898, it ignited a popular American fever for war. On March 9, Congress allocated fifty million dollars to build up military strength. On March 28, the U. S. Naval Court of Inquiry found that the *Maine* was blown up by a mine, presumably Spanish. Subsequent meticulous investigations have failed to confirm that finding, but belief in the original suspicion spread like wildfire with the considerable help of William Randolph Hearst. On April 21, President McKinley, who had assumed office a year earlier, ordered a blockade of Cuba and four days later the U. S. declared war on Spain.

The war on Spain and the sudden new need for troops again created a special opportunity for black Americans to serve in the military. That opportunity particularly appealed to Leon H. Jordan. He remembered drilling in the 1880's with the Jordan Guards. The commanding officer of the Guards was Capt. Louis Tompkins. Edward J. Young, who was well acquainted with Jordan, also remembered drilling with this group. He remembered *Captain* Tompkins being in charge, and he also remembered young Sam Jordan drilling, but not Leon H.

¹⁸ *American Citizen*, February 15, May 24, 1895; St. Augustine Church Records, LJC.

In May, 1898, Congress empowered President McKinley to organize “an additional volunteer force of not exceeding ten thousand enlisted men possessing immunity from diseases incident to tropical climates.” The resulting ten infantry regiments became popularly known as the “Immunes.” Six of these regiments were to be white, four black, the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th. African Americans were broadly and falsely assumed to be immune from “diseases incident to tropical climates.”

In June, Capt. E. A. Godwin passed through Kansas City on his way to Memphis where he was going to organize a regiment of immunes for the war in Cuba. His orders were to recruit men from Missouri, Arkansas, and Western Tennessee to make up the 7th Immunes. He was recruiting men “who have had the yellow fever, or have been exposed and escaped, or those who have been acclimated in tropical climates.” He offered this inducement: “We will go to Cuba as soon as we can organize, and will be the last ones to leave. Even after a declaration of peace, soldiers will be required for garrison duty on the island, and the Immunes will be the ones to remain behind. Men who enlist with us join the United States army, not the militia, and there will be no governors to despoil our organization with politics.”¹⁹

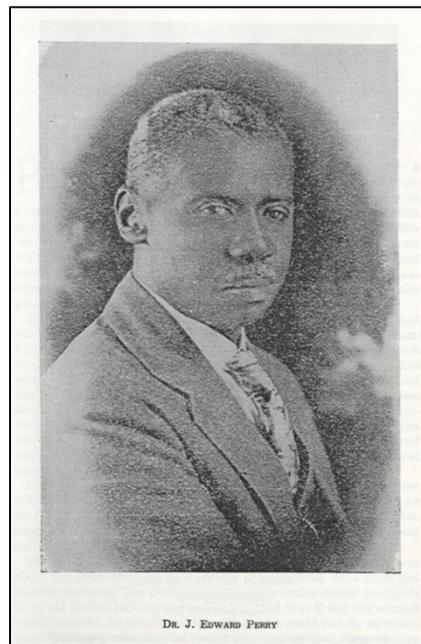
Jordan became a member of Co. K, 7th U. S. Voluntary Infantry Regiment, July 1, 1898. He remembered being examined with the whole company at the Post Office in Kansas City, and then going to Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis. St. Louis, rather than Memphis, became the organizing center for the 7th Immunes. He claimed on his army application to be a graduate of Oberlin College with two years of military training while at the college. On other documents he claimed to be a graduate of Lincoln Normal University in Jefferson City. Oberlin has no record of his enrollment there. John Rone, who graduated with Leon from Lincoln High School,

¹⁹ Edward D. Young’s affidavit for Leon H. Jordan’s application for a military pension, LJC; *Kansas City Star*, June 4, 1898.

remembered going with Leon to Lincoln, but there is no evidence that he graduated from there either. Jordan's mother remembered his only being away from Kansas City for a year or so at Jefferson City to attend Lincoln and for the time he was a clerk in the Register of Deeds Office in Washington, D. C. Claiming to be an Oberlin graduate would not be the last of Jordan's false claims. He was granted a commission as 1st Lieutenant, probably more for being a Jordan than any other achievement. Being African American was sufficient for his being considered immune from tropical diseases.

For Jordan the war provided an opportunity to prove his leadership capabilities and to receive good pay. He did not seem particularly interested in the international implications of the war. The war with Spain was essentially over almost as soon as he enlisted. Unexpectedly quick naval victories first in Manila Bay and later in Cuba proved decisive. By August 12, 1898, a Peace Protocol ended hostilities between Spain and the United States. The Spanish Cortes ratified the protocol September 13.

Meanwhile at Jefferson Barracks Jordan quickly came down with fever and there met Lt. J. Edward Perry, a medical doctor from Columbia, Missouri, who treated his illness. Perry later explained his own motives for enlisting: "I could assist in proving to my superior officers that there were some Negroes capable of holding positions of honor and trust, second, sufficient funds could be saved to go abroad and possibly satisfy my yearnings." Both officers would be disappointed that the promise of lengthy service Capt.



Godwin held out in Kansas City would soon be negated by the unexpected quick end to the war with Spain.²⁰

Perry wrote with pride of a parade the 7th Immunes performed while at Jefferson Barracks. A few days later he reported being told by a fellow officer, who almost certainly is Jordan, “I would like to see a man like you in Kansas City. You could do something for the people. I cannot. If you ever take a notion to come, remember I am friend number one and will do everything possible to assist you.’ That was my first thought of ever being a resident of Kansas City.” In another context Perry wrote that he and Jordan were close friends from the time they met at Jefferson Barracks until their discharge in Georgia. Five years later, in September, 1903, Dr. Perry moved from Columbia to Kansas City and purchased a home at 1214 Vine street, next door to Kate Jordan’s home, and just a few doors from her son’s at 1232 Vine. Perry’s home on Vine would later become Perry’s Sanitarium, which became the forerunner of Provident-Wheatley Hospital. Leon H. Jordan played a key role in Perry’s coming to Kansas City and becoming one of the most important doctors in its black community. That is a credit he deserved, but went unmentioned in the *Sun*’s tribute.

The 7th Immunes moved to Lexington, Kentucky, late in September. They traveled by train from St. Louis to Louisville. Jordan continued to suffer from a fever that was assumed to be malaria. Their camp in Lexington consisted of tents in an open field, and was not suitable for winter. Perry continued to treat Jordan privately, but Jordan was hospitalized in Lexington for 20 days. After he recovered he was given active command of his company from October 30 to December 6.²¹

²⁰ Leon H. Jordan’s military record; and affidavits of Leon H. Jordan, John Rone, Kate Jordan, and Dr. J. Edward Perry, for Leon H. Jordan’s application for a military pension, LJC; J. Edward Perry, *Forty Cords of Wood*, p. 226.

²¹ In *Forty Cords of Wood*, Dr. Perry describes two incidents of telling racial interest: 1. The black officers traveled from St. Louis to Louisville in plush Pullman cars. In Louisville, the Colonel from the 7th Immunes, a native

But by November the 7th Immunes were moved to Camp Haskell in Macon, Georgia. In January, 1899, Jordan was appointed to provost duty for S. O. #6, Headquarters 2nd Separate Brigade, 2nd Corps. Lena Jordan joined her husband at Camp Haskell. His health was good enough that he did not need more medical help from Perry, but Perry acknowledged treating Lena without specifying her need for treatment.

The racial scene in Georgia was in sharp contrast to that in Kentucky. Tension was high when the 7th Immunes arrived. The 6th Virginians had arrived a week earlier and reacted to the story of a man being recently lynched on a particular tree in a nearby park. The troops had given the keeper of the park a thrashing, chopped down the tree, cut it into pieces, and distributed the pieces among the men as mementos. As assistant quartermaster in charge of the first contingent of troops, Perry was proud of keeping them in order under the circumstances.

Early in January Perry noted an article in a cosmopolitan paper in the South announced the decision that the ratification of the treaty with Spain would signal the release of the colored troops of the Immunes. Their early release was bad enough news, but Perry and the other men found the disparaging comments on the performance of the Immune troops both wrong headed

Virginian, led his officers to an elegant hotel to register. There the Colonel was told, "Colonel, we have breakfast for you, your staff and captains but we cannot feed your lieutenants." Black officers were the of no higher rank than Lieutenant in the 7th Immunes. Dr. Perry describes what happened next: "The expression of surprise on the colonel's face was embarrassing, though he well controlled his emotions.

"He then slowly looked at the ceiling, then the beautiful furniture and finally said, 'You have a beautiful place here.' "The clerk responded by saying, 'Yes, we have a nice place and take pride in keeping it that way.'

"The answer of the colonel would not look well in print, but he concluded his remarks by saying, 'I will not eat any place where my colored officers cannot eat. Come on boys, we will try to find a restaurant and if they will not feed us we will go back to the cars and eat 'hard tack' and drink coffee together.'

"Just a half block down the street, we entered a palatial restaurant where we were cordially received and sumptuously fed."

2. Apparently while Jordan was in active command of his company, the Immunes were ordered to take a march of nine miles out and nine miles back. Arriving at division headquarters they had to walk another mile and a half to find their assigned place. Perry describes what followed:

"When the 7th Immunes passed the reviewing officer, bedlam broke loose among the observers. Those Kentucky white women threw up their umbrellas, hats, flowers and everything in their grasp as an expression of appreciation for our music and perfect alignment. We were awarded the prize on this occasion, which, considering customs and traditions, we appreciated more than under ordinary circumstances." Pp. 221-222 & 224-225.

and a blow to their pride. He noted a bit of retaliatory humor. A private had artistically illustrated and framed the following statement and hung it on a post for the men's amusement: "Our Father, who art in Washington, William McKinley be thy name; thy kingdom has come with fife and drum, so to hades with the kingdom of Spain. Give us this day our daily rations of hard-tack and salt horse, and forgive us of our ill manners, as we forgive our commissary. Lead us not into battle, but take us home to our friends, for thine is the power over the 7th Immunes for the next two years, unless we are shot or discharged sooner."

The troops were given their final pay at discharge: regular salary, plus one extra month, and travel pay, computed as a day's pay for every twenty miles by direct line to the soldier's home. A soldier was then supposed to walk twenty miles per day. Perry probably spoke for Jordan as well as himself when he wrote, "Our hopes for foreign service were blasted and the desire for two years military contact as we anticipated had terminated. It was one of those disappointments in life which makes one wiser for the experience."²²

Perry returned to Columbia. Leon and Lena Jordan returned to Kansas City. After returning to Kansas City Jordan began managing the Autumn Leaf Club. The Club announced a Christmas reception at the Music Hall as early as 1899. During the nineties it sponsored other

²² *Library of Congress/Spanish-American War, Introduction* [website]; affidavits from Leon H. Jordan, Lena Jordan, Kate Jordan, Dr. Edwin Perry in Leon H. Jordan's application for a military pension, LJC; Leon H. Jordan's military service record, LJC; "Kansas City's African American 'Immunes' in the Spanish-American War," pp. 141-158; *Forty Cords of Wood*, pp. 236-241; These last pages also tells this revealing story: President McKinley came to review the troops in the middle of January, and the Macon papers praised the performance of the colored troops. All the white troops at Macon were discharged before the 7th was discharged on February 28. Just before the discharge two rowdy soldiers were intercepted by civil authorities. The private on post called the corporal of guards. Usually those arrested were turned over to military authorities. The corporal of the guards arrived and assumed the position of port of arms, gun diagonally across his chest. The civil authorities present considered his taking this position as drawing a gun on an officer and arrested the soldier. A thousand people surrounded the building where the guard was housed. "The captain of the guard who was white was not molested. The officer of the guard was placed in jail. Reasons were not given. Eight or ten men were incarcerated for first one excuse and then another. Finally, a trial was held. It was too ridiculous and humiliating to recite. Suffice it to say the fine aggregated \$750, paid by the officers of the regiment. Why the quick change in the attitude of the citizens was to us a conundrum."

well publicized dances and formal social occasions. At some point what started as a social club acquired a fixed address and began to host regular gambling and drinking as well as special celebrations. Jordan remembered hiring William J. Trusty, a longtime acquaintance, as steward for the club, then located at 706 E. 12th street, when he returned from Georgia. Trusty's memory seems more uncertain. He first agreed with Jordan, then corrected himself to say he began work for Jordan at the club while Jordan was in the Philippines. In any case Jordan began managing the club either between his two enlistments or during his second and it would become his economic mainstay for the rest of his life, although he would explore several other business and political ventures as well.²³

But the American defeat of Spain not only brought independence to Cuba, but brought American imperial ambitions into the South Pacific. Hawaii and Guam were annexed, and a curious charade in Manila marked the change of roles for American forces from liberators to new colonial governors. There was a spasm of protest from the American Anti-imperialist League, led by an extraordinary coalition of luminaries, Andrew Carnegie, Mark Twain, William James, David Starr Jordan, Samuel Gompers, and George S. Boutwell, but following the signing of a treaty in Paris, President McKinley's policy of "beneficent assimilation" prevailed. Now instead of troops to safeguard the independence of Cuba, America needed troops to quell the insurrection in the Philippines. The War Department, in the fall of 1899, decided to recruit black volunteers into the Forty-eighth and Forty-ninth infantry regiments for this purpose. Officers were to be selected from those who had distinguished themselves in Cuba or from state volunteer units with impressive service records.

Approximately six months after returning to Kansas City from Georgia, on September 9, 1899, Leon H. Jordan applied to become a 1st Lieutenant in the 49th Infantry regiment. His

²³ Affidavits from William J. Trusty and Leon H. Jordan in Jordan's Petition for Military Pension, LJC.

application was accepted September 13. Originally he was asked to recruit ex-members of the Band of the 23rd Kansas Regiment. Then he was sent again to Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis. Lafayette Tillman, another former barber from Kansas City and an old acquaintance of Jordan, who served in the 7th Immunes, was also appointed a 1st Lieutenant. Tillman also preceded Leon H.'s son, Leon M., as a member of the Kansas City Police Department. He traveled with Jordan to Jefferson Barracks, and then in the middle of October by train to San Francisco. Alvin Jordan, Leon's younger brother, was working for the railroads at the time and he remembers joining his brother on the train as far as Cheyenne, Wyoming. Tillman and Jordan were then at the Presidio together until they were sent to Manila on separate ships, Jordan leaving December 4th and Tillman a few days later.²⁴

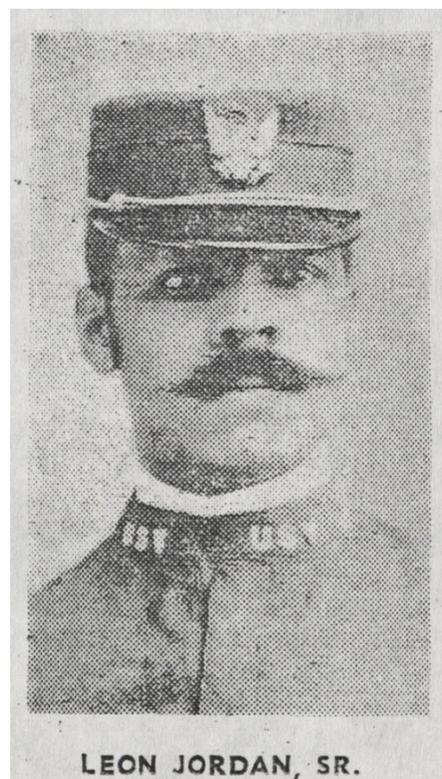
Jordan's temper got him into trouble almost as soon as he arrived in Manila. When a sergeant began unloading his luggage from a wagon after he arrived at camp he objected strenuously, "I'll be damned if he would put anything of mine off that wagon." Captain Gilbert C. Smith, then in command of the operation, rebuked him for using such language and informed him that if he had any unnecessary property on the wagon he would certainly put it off, such being his orders. With enlisted men present, Jordan then challenged Smith, by saying, "I don't know whether those are your orders or not."

Jordan was immediately arrested and began his stay in the Philippines facing a General Court Martial. Thus began a record of service far different from what he described after he returned to Kansas City. A trial was held on February 11, and Jordan was docked \$25 per month for four months from his salary. He then was returned to duty to participate in various scouting expeditions near Pamplona and Sanchez Mira. He briefly commanded his company from March

²⁴ *Library of Congress/Spanish-American War, Philippines* [website]; Affidavits from Leon H. Jordan, Lafayette A. Williams, Alvin Jordan, and William A. Brown in Leon H. Jordan's Petition for Military Pension, LJC.

24-28 in Abulug and then was placed on detached service April 11-25 in Pamplona. From July 26-December 30, he was in command of his company and commended for “honest and faithful” service.

But Jordan began his second year of service in the Philippines as he had his first, in a quarrel with a fellow officer. In this case the other officer was Capt. David J. Gilmer, who had recently been promoted from 1st Lieutenant. Gilmer said that when he had given Jordan an order, the latter “attempted to strike me with his fist & dared me with his fist drawn to open my mouth to him again saying if (*sic*) ‘I don’t give a dam for your rank.’” After Gilmer ordered Jordan arrested, Jordan supposedly said, “Dam you, and arrest too.” He then threatened Gilmer if he brought charges against him and stalked out of the quarters and into town for about three hours.



Gilmer immediately filed charges with Col. Beck, the regimental commander. Jordan was placed under close arrest. Gilmer, after a plea from Jordan was willing to withdraw his charge “for the sake of the regt.” But Jordan was arrested again in March and held for charges pending a court martial. On April 5, Capt. Woods wrote Col. Beck that Jordan was with him under arrest awaiting charges preferred by Gilmer, but “as time is so near at hand for the muster out of the regtl., kindly use your influence to settle this matter without a court martial. He had telegraphed Capt. Gilmer, but had received no reply. Jordan had preferred countercharges, but Woods would like to see the matter dropped. This time Gilmer would not sanction the

withdrawal of charges. In May, Jordan requested that Capt. William M. Hawkins represent him in the forthcoming court martial. Jordan's military record does not explicitly declare the result of the court martial. It is not clear when Jordan left the Philippines for San Francisco, but he was mustered out at the Presidio June 30, 1901.²⁵

Other than the capture of Emilio Aguinaldo on March 23, 1901, there was no great victory to celebrate the American troops coming home. The Philippine insurrection was gradually squashed by superior American military forces. President McKinley's policy of "benevolent assimilation" prevailed. Brigadier General Bell is credited with having said that "the army never had a more efficient organization than the 49th Infantry at the Presidio of San Francisco." There was no notice in the press of Jordan's return to Kansas City. Samuel Jordan, the patriarch of the Jordan family, was probably already suffering senility. He died July 30, 1901. Since Samuel Jordan, Jr. had passed earlier, Leon H. returned home to be present at his father's death and to become the head male of the Jordan family.

Perhaps feeling the need to stretch himself to step into the large shoes of his father, he brazenly lied about his service in the Philippines. He told of being cited for valor and consequently brevetted as Captain. This despite knowing that at least two of his fellow Kansas Citians, Lafayette A. Tillman, who served as a fellow officer in the 49th, and William A. Brown, who served as his company cook, knew better than the story he concocted. Neither publicly challenged his story. This probably can be attributed to the continuing power of the Jordan family in the community.

Leon H. Jordan was not only stepping into the shoes of his father, but he was creating the imposing bogus military figure his future son would come to know as his father. Leon M. Jordan probably never knew that Captain Leon H. Jordan, brevetted for bravery in the Philippines, was a

²⁵ Leon H. Jordan's military service record, Spanish-American War, LJC.

fraud. Only thirteen when his father died, it seems unlikely that either friend or family member would be cruel enough to tell the young boy the truth about his father. It seems far more likely that he took the public persona that Leon H. Jordan began to build from the moment he returned from the Philippines for its face value.

Leon H. did return home from the Philippines suffering from piles, an older term for what we now refer to as hemorrhoids. He suffered frequently from dyspepsia and for the rest of his life had to be careful of his diet. In 1902 he applied for a physical disability pension, and when his original application was denied, appealed that decision with the help of a Washington legal firm. This resulted in a rather extensive federal investigation of his claim with affidavits filed by friends, acquaintances, and family members. Tillman's affidavit makes it clear that he was well aware of Jordan's being twice court martialed. Brown's affidavit makes it clear that he was close to Jordan most of his stay in the Philippines. Jordan's application for pension was filed as a former 1st Lieutenant, and there is no indication in his record that he was ever considered for promotion to Captain. He had a more reasonable case for deserving a pension, although his application was ultimately denied because there was no evidence from army medical records at the time of his discharge supporting his claim.²⁶

²⁶ Samuel C. Jordan's death certificate, LJC; Affidavits from Lafayette A. Williams and William A. Brown in Leon H. Jordan's Petition for Military Pension, LJC.