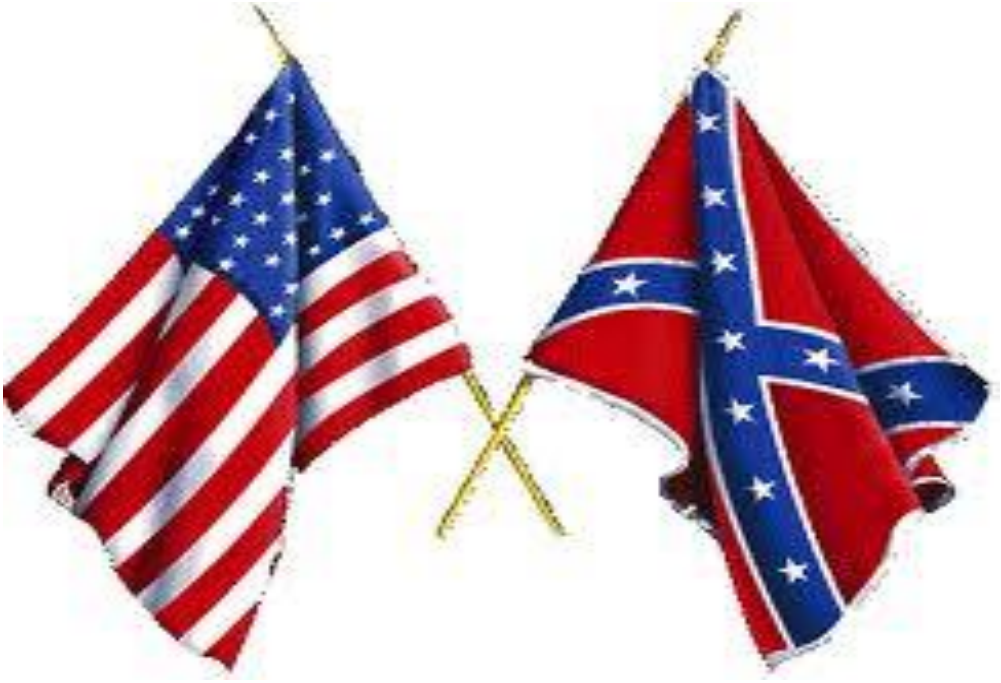
The Controversies Over America's Last Civil War Veterans

BY Garry Victor Hill



2014

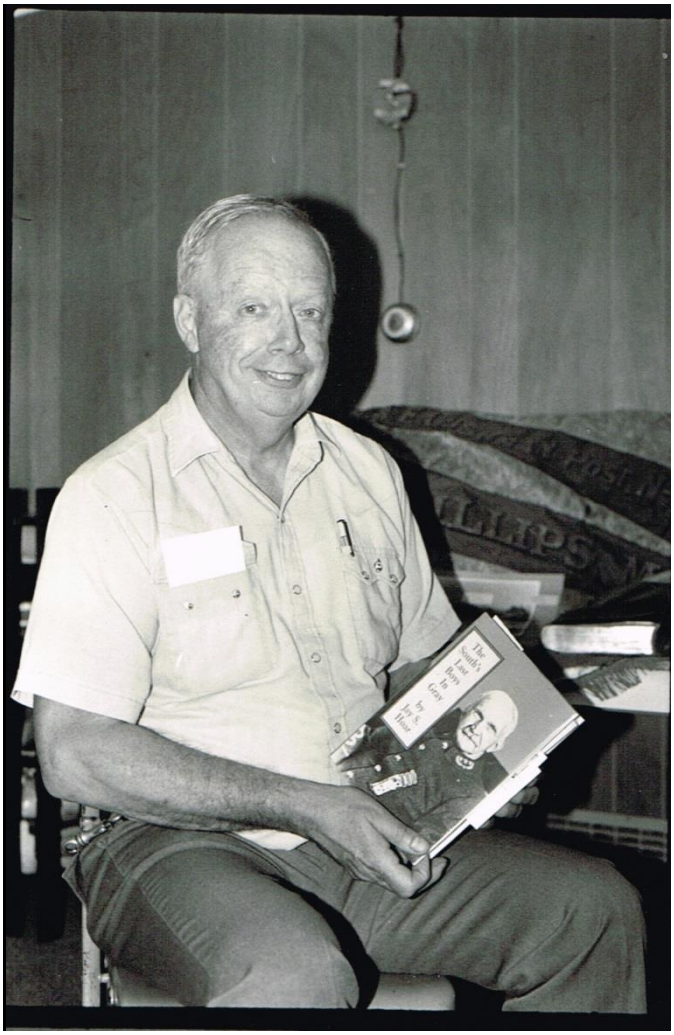
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Dedication

Jay S. Hoar (1933-)

Dedicated to Professor Jay Sherman Hoar without whose help this book was unfortunately written. This mistake was corrected in *America's Last Civil War Participants: An Investigation* (2015) Professor Jay S. Hoar is the pioneer in the study of America's Civil War Veterans. His three volume elegy will remain the definitive collection.



Author's Note:

This is Version One of a work in progress. Much more research is needed on several individuals: unfortunately this looks like months of work, not only to find and collate primary source material, but to assess its veracity, and worth. Secondary sources are also needed, they clarify much. Another more detailed version America's Last Civil War Participants: An Investigation *has been published in 2015. Even so the verdict on the last surviving veterans is not set in stone, I'm looking forward to evidence that will verify them.*

While realising that continual hedging with "probably" "possibly" "uncertain" "likely" "seems" and "dubious" are wearying and create a longing for definite conclusions, a major point is that too many people writing on this issue have been definite on issues – and have been wrong. When evidence is ultimately inconclusive I still go with the evidence.

With sources I have not usually credited muster rolls and censuses in source notes because they and the individual or organization referred to are mentioned in the text. There is no list of works cited: this ensures that plagiarists do some work. The on screen option Navigation: Search Documents makes an index obsolescent. Permission to quote is okay with acknowledgements Garry Victor Hill Website "Controversies Over America's Last Civil War Veterans." 2014.

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Cherri Butler of Fitzgerald Georgia for her work on William J. Bush,

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Wade H. Dorsey, a South Carolina History archivist for work on Arnold Murray.

C. Michael Anderson of Prospect, Connecticut for good advice on texts and information about Sarah Rockwell and advising me to contact Professor Hoar.

To Harold Ott for his help with the Loudermilks.

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Other illustrations are used with permission. Two of Jay S. Hoar and some 1860s picture frames have been cropped. Not one illustration has been coloured, but some are enlarged or diminished.

Permission to quote from the text and captions is with acknowledgement: Garry Victor Hill Website The Controversies of America's Last Civil War Veterans. 2014. *Or* garryhill7@bigpond.com *Copies of this book are stored in the archives of the UNE Library, Armidale, The Virginia Historical Society and the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. Copies have been sent to Professor Jay S. Hoar, Andrew MacKenzie, the Australian National Library, and the Library of Congress and to the Mitchell Library Sydney.*

No suggestion of fraud, racism or deceit is made against any individual. Where claims have not been fully verified this is due to a lack of conclusive evidence or conflicting evidence.

Written Without Predjudice A Note on language

Although many of the quotations are in American English, the computer is based in English English. This leads to inconsistencies in spelling and the use of some terms. I have not corrected grammar, spelling or syntax in quotations.

Introduction



As comments on the previous page imply, this is a preliminary work. A later, larger and more in depth version is *America's Last Civil War Participants: An Investigation* is also available free on my website. Use Google and go to the white type in bar at the top left hand corner, type http://garryvictorhill.com.au/ (without underlining)

This later work goes over 82,000 words. This version is over 46,000 words and has far fewer illustrations, perhaps not even half. This work deals with twenty one claimants to Civil war service while *America's Last Civil War Participants: An Investigation* examines twenty-eight claimants and goes into much more detail with almost all of them. That version also looks at their post-war lives in more detail.

There is also a shift from seeing them as veterans, a word which conjures up an image of a tough, seasoned fighter. Few of the people examined in this version were like that image: many were non-combatants, most were very young and did

some small service to their side. Even so, they were participants in the war effort – or claimed to be.

As the title of the two different works suggests, the first focuses more on the controversies concerning the issue and the second puts the controversies into the background, focusing more on the investigating process.

America's Last Civil War Participants: An Investigation is definitely the longer, more informative, more detailed read, but for those who dislike minute examinations of documents, who want quicker answers, and a briefer read, this is the book.

In comparison to *America's Last Civil War Participants: An Investigation* this work does serve other purposes. One is to disprove the fallacy that everything that can be said about the war has been said. While writing this book, in less than a year, the following primary source material relating just to the last veteran's question became computerised public knowledge and was incorporated into the new work:

The Civil War era photo of William J. Bush (included here)

The 1913 reconstruction group photo which had Arnold Murray and perhaps Thomas Evans Riddle.

An 1863 soldier's diary in which Riddle is mentioned.

Arnold Murray's 1910 census.

Simultaneous mention of both men named William A. Kinney in the 1860 census. The long accepted argument was that there was only one man with this name in Kentucky and that he was born in 1861 so Kiney could not have been a Civil War soldier.

Kiney's 1863 enlistment document in the 10TH Kentucky Cavalry.

An 1863 Alabama enlistment for A. Witkowski. Felix Witkoski, frequently described as a fraud claiming to be a veteran, said this was where was in 1863.

A 1949 newspaper interview with W.W. Alexander, who briefly described his Civil War service.

A war record of Thomas Edwin Ross

Ross's affirmation of Civil War service in the 1910 census

Murray's and Loudermilk's affirmations of Civil War service in the 1930 census

Red Cloud's brief description of his time in the Civil War, given in a 1950s interview.

Obituary articles for James E. Ewin and W.W. Alexander and the latter's brief account of his war service.

Only some of this evidence is in this work, but all are in *America's Last Civil War Participants: An Investigation.*

Yet another reason for examining this work is that most of it was written without the help of Professor Jay S. Hoar, the world's leading expert on the topic of Civil War veterans and that war's child soldiers. Most of this work was even written without any knowledge of his writings. This is not boasting, for this work, when compared with *America's Last Civil War Participants: An Investigation* shows how vital his work is for any student, writer or reader interested in this topic. Rather than mislead I have included two sections from his work, those on Ross and Kiney. Each of these have a section written using other sources, but without using Professor Hoar's work. Compare my effort and his and see how easy it is to go astray. Richard A. Serrano writing about the last two Civil War veterans in 2013, rightly suggested that Professor Hoar's work was the place to start.[1]

This is because Professor Jay S. Hoar wrote much of the pioneering work on this topic in his epic three volume study *Sunset and Dusk of the Blue and the Gray.* This trilogy starts with *The North's Last Boys in Blue Volume I.* This investigates those Union veterans still alive between 1940 and 1946 while Volume II continues on with those living between 1946 and 1971. The final volume *The South's Last Boys in Gray. Volume III* does the same for the Confederates alive from the 1940s to the end of the 1950s. He also covered new ground on the related topics of the boy soldiers in *Callow Brave and True: A Gospel of Civil War Youth* (1999) and the world of Civil War nursing and the role of Blacks in several articles. This writer only found out about his writings as the second edition of this work was being finished, so he was unused as a source and an influence. On one level missing Professor Hoar's work was a big mistake, showing my work to be

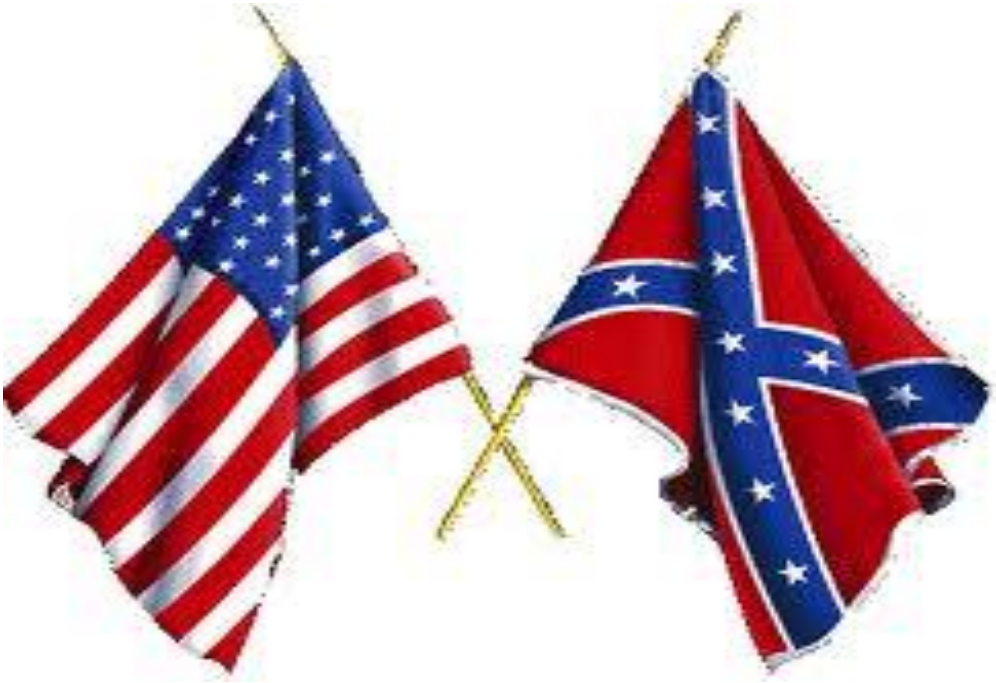
[1] Richard A. Serrano, *Last of the Blue and the Gray: Old Men, Stolen Glory, and the Mystery that Outlived the Civil War.* Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2013. p203.

rudimentary and missing much. With information not only was much taken from his work, but his books led me to other sources. Of the seven claimed participants added to the list in *America's Last Civil War Participants: An Investigation* six were found in Professor Hoar's work. Some of his photographs have been incorporated into this work, but not the text, except for the two sections mentioned.

On the other hand, rudimentary or not, my discoveries, research, work, conclusions and outlook, despite help with sources from many, indications of where to look and information, were essentially my own. The larger, later version owes very much to Professor Hoar. Apart from his works abounding with information, he was extraordinarily generous with his knowledge, publications and time.

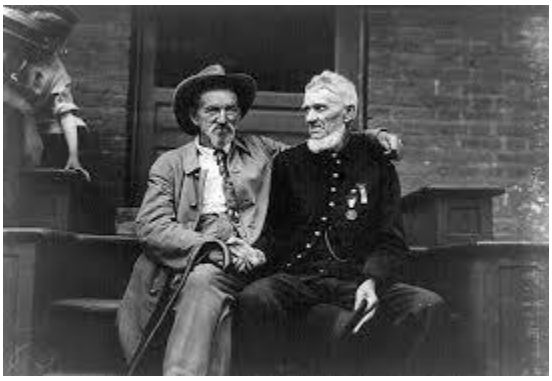
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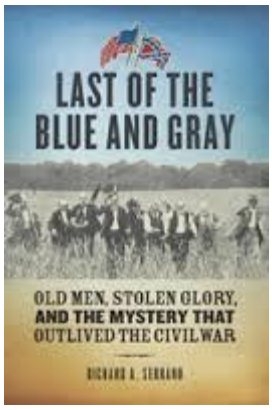
Part One



The American Civil War is one of the world's most written about events, yet in *Last of the Blue and the Gray: Old Men, Stolen Glory, and the Mystery that Outlived the Civil War* journalist and historian Richard A. Serrano has found underused aspects. He gets away from the plethora of books about generals, politicians, battles and campaigns to look at two aspects of the war, the more detailed of these aspects concerns the lives of those two men who were stated to be the last veterans for each side. The second is the American fascination with their last few veterans. Both aspects are rapidly becoming extremely controversial in this war full of controversies.

My focus is on the aged last veterans after 1951, but readers should be aware of the public fascination has shaped the evidence and how we perceive it. There is another reason: reconciliation and unity. From Appomattox onwards American governments have emphasised these factors, bringing the South back into the Union and one way was through Civil war reunions where veterans from by sides met in amity. This put a focus on the old men which became more individualised and intense as they became fewer in number.





Serrano's book is very welcome, not only because it is well written, fair and interesting, but because it brings new knowledge to a much vexed question. Serrano is clear and cautious in his opinions and unlike many, does not give total credibility to veteran's claims or supposed exposès or census documents. Two of those he writes of with scepticism, William J. Bush and William Townsend, have from my viewpoint and research stronger cases for verification than he gives. I agree with many but not all of his conclusions on other matters, wish he had dealt with more of the 1950s claimants and think he underuses a few presented facts, but

these are minor matters in a vitally important book for anyone already interested in the topic.

If this fascination and wish to believe were not enough of a problem in resolving who the last veterans were, strong motives for faking emerged in the 1930s: poverty and hunger. During the Great Depression many in the South falsely claimed the pensions given to Confederate veterans.[2] It was a common practice for old fakers to attest to each other's service record. Supporting statements by two other veterans and a declaration were usually considered enough evidence. Often old men would gather and exchange testimonies.[3] The fines were often fairly light in relation to the rewards: in Virginia fines ranged from twenty five dollars (which was equal to a month's pension) to one hundred dollars with the possibility of imprisonment.[4]

Despite absolute certainty about his exact age and a few dubious memories such as meeting Abraham Lincoln, Albert Woolson of Minnesota is now universally credited as the last survivor of the Civil War, dying in August 1956, over three years after the last undisputed veteran. Official records show that he served as he said he did, mainly as a drummer and bugler in Tennessee. His service lasted a year, beginning in October 1864. Many also list him as the last survivor of the Civil War, and in terms of accepted, undisputed verification they are right. Woolson did not fight; the last Union soldier usually credited with a battlefield record was James Albert Hard of New York, who enlisted in the infantry in May 1861. He died in March 1953. As with Woolson, different census records give different birth years for Hard. Actually there are very good reasons for considering another fully verified soldier who died later in 1953 for that title. Another probable combatant also died later that year and very controversial claimant outlived Hard by just over a year. The last plausible claimant died as late as 1971.

The controversy and the mystery starts with who were the last Confederate veterans. Most historians now consider the last verified Confederate

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[2] Brian Hughes, 'Special Report: Who was Uncle Bill Lundy? The Man behind the debated Crestview Monument" *Crestview News Bulletin* November 14th 2013 pp1-3.
[3] Mark Curenton, Previous Citation. p3.
[4] *Pension Application for a Confederate Soldier*. Act 1928 Amended 1930. The warning is on the side. See online catalogue for Confederate and Widows Pensions. Library of Virginia Archives.

veteran to be Pleasant Crump.[5] As this work will conclusively show at least three Confederate veterans with verified enlistment documents, William J. Bush, William Daniel Townsend and William Albert Kiney outlived him. Two of these men also had other verified military documents, more than most soldiers. William Murphy Loudermilk probably also served, but unlike the others just mentioned had no enlistment papers. Several others living in the 1950s also had some evidence for service.

In the 1950s Pleasant Crump was considered the last Alabama veteran, not the last Confederate, as twelve others were claiming to be surviving Confederates and many of them were drawing pensions. Serrano investigates the claims of five of these, focusing particularly on the last three.



Pleasant Crump.



With his wife outside their home.

Crump was an Alabama farm boy who aged sixteen travelled north in 1864 to serve in the Army of Northern Virginia. He served as an infantryman experiencing fighting at the battle of Hatcher's Run in 1864 and afterwards as the Army of Northern Virginia endured the winter and then the last Virginian campaign. Serrano identifies him as the last eyewitness to the Appomattox surrender.[6] After the war he returned to the family home, becoming a farmer and a

[5] See for example Tony Horowitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches From the Unfinished Civil War*. Rydalmere: Spectre, 1998. p9.
[6] Richard A. Serrano, p90 Crump quoted.

preacher, noted for using his rocker so much that it and the porch suffered damage. He died in the last hours of 1951, a week after his a hundred and fourth birthday.[7]

Death came just as the hoopla that was starting to surround the last veterans started. They would be made colonels in fantasy units such as the Nebraska Navy or the Confederate Air force. Men who scrawled under floors to scrounge saltpetre or stole chickens were made generals. Perhaps they never wore Confederate uniforms at all, but Hollywood made a replica of the uniform Lee wore at ceremonies for veteran W.J. Bush, who declared he would be buried in it.[8] Lee himself disliked such finery, usually wearing a colonel's dress coat.[9] The old men were declared generals, given parades, flights, tours of jets, testimonial dinners, and memorials and interviewed. It was quite a show and they seem to have enjoyed it: at times Albert Woolson, William Bush and Thomas Riddle got carried away with the euphoria and made some wild, self – satirizing or exaggerated claims. Few questioned those statements and few questioned the veteran's records: with several of the 1950s veterans they should have.

This changed in the early 1990s after a two page article denouncing all those claiming to be Confederates living after Pleasant Crump as frauds was published. It was a necessary corrective to the uncritical acceptance of old men's stories, but like most exposés was very definite on little evidence and sometimes goes too far in the opposite direction. While having some sympathy with another Civil War investigator who does not unthinkingly accept majority viewpoints, disagreements are inevitable and not over the merits of the Confederacy, states rights or slavery. I also come from a different angle, more defence, than investigator and found this article to be weak evidence. Two pages assessing twelve men and a nurse as frauds cannot carry much detailed evidence - and what exists there is not irrefutable. Although this brief article itself is now extremely difficult to find in its original form (I have got most of it from quotes) it has created a fixed image which when

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[7] *Ibid*, pp90-92.

[8] Serrano, p92. A picture of Bush in his uniform is on p93; Other comments from Bush about being buried in his uniform and it being modelled on Robert E. Lee's dress uniform are from 'The Chaplain's Report' by Tom Fortenberry. Web page, *The Rankin Dispatch.* Newsletter of the Rankin Rough & Ready's Vol. Issue 4 Brandon Miss.

[9] Gary Gallagher, "When Lee was Mortal." *Great Commanders.* Leesburg, Va.. Primedia, 2005. p24. Gallager reproduces the 1864 description given by an unnamed fellow train passenger; Mark Adkin, *The Gettysburg Companion: The Complete Guide to America's Most Famous Battle*. London: Aurum, 2008. p1 of an insert section

taken up by websites and an encyclopaedia ran it for about twenty years, perhaps longer, so has been widely quoted, repeated and unquestioningly accepted.

The evidence is outdated. Over twenty years have passed and much more primary source material such as that mentioned in the introduction appears now. Abundant older evidence for any reasonable assessment shows that this article was always wrong. Pleasant Crump was not the last genuine Confederate.

The majority view still remains that after Pleasant Crump died in 1951 those remaining old men claiming to be Confederates were at best possible, but their claims were usually listed as debunked, unknown or taken on no evidence. William J. Bush's case was the only one listed as "probable." Supposedly the reason for most to make false claims was as mentioned previously to gain veteran's pensions in the hard times of the 1930s. The main way of disproving the claimants was by age: differences between their census documents and enlistment records or statements supposedly proved their claims to be debunked. Others supposedly have no known record or conflicting records. A few are not listed where they say they served. For these reasons many writers or bloggers either reject them outright or set them aside without considering evidence.

Twice I tried to correct encyclopaedia entries on these last Civil War veterans with evidence. The first time they had a point when rejecting my effort. This manuscript was unknown, I messed up their template and they responded stating that they do not accept original work. The second time more careful work was correctly presented with a good deal of primary source material as evidence: muster rolls, census documents, diaries, references to photographs, books by participants and collections of documents, parole lists and eyewitness accounts - all things most would accept, but they deleted my contribution. They did this because I was supposedly not using reputable sources. While I did not time it, their inspection time for many documents and these other sources lasted about an hour after I submitted them, maybe less. Perhaps their assessors are speed readers?

A third attempt got somewhere. It should have. The sources listed above were reinforced with sources from several of the most respected historians in the field, with enlistment documents certified as verified by America's adjutant-general and by new books relevant to the topic. For a few months in 2014 the three encyclopaedia entries this writer had written stayed and the three Confederates who survived beyond Pleasant Crump with verified enlistment documents were listed as verified. Others who had been listed as debunked were given a range of

ratings from unlikely to dubious, then up to possible and if not verified to probable with cited evidence for these conclusions.

Then on website publication day for *America's Last Civil War Participants: An Investigation* I checked the encyclopaedia article to find that everything had been wiped in the most detailed entry. In another entry claimants were listed as having insufficient evidence. This supposedly insufficient evidence included verified enlistment documents and other verified Civil War era documentation and even a Civil war era photographic portrayal.

The main entry was even worse than what it had been, as individual ratings were wiped, all the claimants were now described as discredited and supposedly most of them were frauds out for the pension on faked grounds. The individual circumstances for each claim had detailed source notes in the individual's section. These were all wiped.

Of the thirteen mentioned as frauds out for the pension at least two could not have possibly claimed benefits as they were from Kentucky, which did not pay pensions to those who lived out of state, as they did.[10] Three others also lived in northern states: no evidence has emerged that they received Confederate pensions. With Richard William Cumpston, apparently living in Virginia, no evidence for a pension claim apparently exists. Seven out of thirteen claiming the pension is not all or even almost all of the claimants claiming the pension as the entry states: it is just over half. This is basic primary school maths. What amazes is that an encyclopaedia rejected such obvious maths, such an obvious need to check statements and the lack of evidence about the replacing statement they printed.

My immediate reaction was that because this happened on publication day someone who knew of the book was playing a practical joke. Three things tended to support this. The tone of the new entry seemed a parody of the attitude I had been attacking. A former acquaintance had previously joked about having once planted archaeological evidence ("borrowed" skulls from her university museum by her own account) on her estranged husband's dig which made him look like a total turkey. The second reason was the amazing state of the new entry. After discarding basic maths, primary source material and respected writers as

[10] Details about each claimants pension claims or the lack of them are dealt with in each claimant's section in Part Two.

unreliable, they were replaced with unsubstantiated statements and such sources as an article from a flying saucer investigation magazine.

Although other sources such as muster rolls were mentioned, most were not quoted or used in source notes: apart from one writer and censuses, little was.

My second response when realising that the two entries were genuine, was to suspect that the whole thing was a litigation set-up and that enraged, I was supposed to launch an attack so that I could be sued. On that suspicion publication was delayed while sections were rewritten to avoid the litigation possibility. While it is usual to credit sources, crediting a website cover name for someone who might be using other writers in ways they do not know of or may dislike, is definitely a can of worms best not opened. If they wish to reveal themselves to their discredit they will cause themselves a problem: steps have been taken by this writer to conceal them and the publication involved. Their name and the internet pseudonym of a census believer has been removed from the pre-publication manuscript and this publication. There are also no hints, puns or double-entendres. If it were not that these websites, encyclopaedia entries, and articles have such an important part in the controversy they would be totally ignored.

Even the encyclopaedia involved soon revealed doubts about their sudden amazing new entry, adding the correct opinion that some of the veterans had cases still being investigated and were unproven and that instead of all of them being pension frauds almost all were. A third entry stayed the way I wrote it, perhaps because the entry's editor had previously refused even me permission to change my additions to that entry, fair enough.

The encyclopaedia method of acceptation or rejection for verification here seems to be to go for the evidence against, accepting given ages if it is in a census and then if the date chosen makes them too young to fight by modern standards, they label someone's claim as fraudulent, impossible, a hoax or debunked. This is the encyclopaedic mind at work, official statistics are the ultimate proof; they are absolute truth.

By these standards no Union veteran among the last five verified could pass encyclopaedia standards for verification, but they do. The standards are not applied evenly, as examining the Union soldier's records in Part Two reveals. Few Civil War participants could prove their service by these standards.

The problems described so far go beyond this encyclopaedia (which many educators warn students about) to encyclopaedias in general. Despite the best intentions and verification checking, some problems are inherent in both the structure and public expectations and attitudes. This attitude appeals to people who have to find facts fast or do not wish to evaluate evidence. This is neither research nor history, but simple information and at times misinformation. Encyclopaedias are full of fallacies, simplifications and certainties over uncertain matters. Controversies and minority opinions rarely appear in any depth, if at all.

One example of how evidence was not accepted by some amongst those believing censuses concerns Arnold Murray.[11] Although Arnold Murray or someone else supplied five different birthdates on census forms 1842, 1846, 1847/1848 1854 and 1854/1855 they list the second as a claim (which it is) but say the last was believed to be his real birth date. Why that date? The last date is actually the most dubious because according to different censuses one boy named Arnold Murray was born in Charleston in 1854, another also in Charleston with the same name was born a year later and a third, Arnold Murry was also born there in 1855. Even if they do refer to one person (and that remains unproven) they are obviously muddled and impossible evidence and the least likely to be true, so why accept that possibility over three others more likely that came from the same source?

The person who perhaps supplied that same date of 1854/55, who may or may not have used a controversial encyclopaedia as their source, referred to it vaguely, mentioned it could be a mistake by an illiterate and also mentioned Murray's claim to be seventy-two in the 1920 census. The supposed 1854/55 birth date is the most likely to disprove military service, but the fact that the Confederates had infantrymen as young as ten, that two men named A. Murray were on a muster roll where Murray said he served, that he attended a veteran's reunion in 1913, had a photo of himself as a boy in a Confederate uniform and described his age when enlisting as being when he was "a youngster" – not one of these facts is mentioned, let alone assessed. For those who believe census figures, the 1870 census listed him as born in 1854 and aged sixteen that year. That should at least put his supposedly real birthdate at 1854, not 1854/55, but this census is unused. The untrustworthiness of census forms filled out by probable illiterates, speaking to politically appointed census takers who were apparently little better

[11] As this information is repeated on the section dealing with Arnold Murray the source notes will not be repeated here.

with their literacy levels and the many and massive contradictions among censuses dealing with the same people all remain unmentioned.

As this work will show, the American censuses before 1940 are extremely unreliable, contradictory, full of errors and contain impossibilities. With most of the evidence in Murray's favour census believers either went on one piece of unlikely evidence or do not mention others that they may have: they describe Murray as debunked, a fake. My rejected effort in presenting the evidence incidentally was not to get Murray verified, but to raise his status from debunked to possible. As this work will show, the example of Murray is typical of those claimants alive after Pleasant Crump.

The encyclopaedia entry which others took up in assorted publications and websites listed only twelve white men as the last survivors. Sometimes only one was picked out for debate. With some variations, contractions and expansions on websites, web forums, in magazines and books the list of last Confederate survivors usually went something like this:

Pleasant Crump	died December 31st 1951	*verified*
Felix M. Witkoski	died 3rd February 1952	debunked or fraudulent
Thomas Edwin Ross	died 27th March 1952	unknown or dubious
Richard William Cumpston	died 5th September 1952	no evidence
William Loudermilk	died 18th September 1952	no evidence or faker
William Jordan Bush	died 11th November 1952	probable or dubious or faker
Arnold Murray	died 26th November 1952	debunked or faker
William Townsend	died 22nd February 1953	possible/ or a debunked fraud
William Albert Kinney	died 23rd June 1953	debunked or a faker
Thomas Riddle	died 2nd April 1954	possible /no evidence or faker
William Lundy	died 1st September 1957	debunked or dubious
John B. Salling	died 16th March 1959	debunked or dubious
Walter Williams	19th December 1959	debunked dubious or fraudulent

Although Sylvester Magee, (1841-1971) a conscripted slave and Sarah Rockwell (1844-1953) a Richmond nurse, were both well known of to Civil War historians,

they were not mentioned in these lists. Less well known and also unmentioned were another Richmond nurse Hattie Cook Carter (1834?-1956), James Edelbert Erwin (1851?-1953) and W.W. Alexander, (1856?-1954)

Oddly nothing like this happened for Union claimants

Detailed reasons for these conclusions and my usually different and more favourable conclusions that alter this table will be given later in the text. The firm conclusion of "debunked" must be avoided because insufficient evidence exists for fraud, given the problems with the major source, census rolls. As will be shown these census rolls are more dubious than the claims made for service. Not one of these people should or could be convicted for defrauding the government's pension scheme on the evidence given for "debunked." Perhaps some of them were desperate scamps lying to survive – and some were men who lived by the southern code of honour and would be horrified to see their reputations besmirched. Many comments on websites reveal that many descendants intensely dislike having their great-grandfather or their family name besmirched on dubious evidence – and quite rightly.

*

The two columns represent the conclusions. In this first effort *The Controversies Over the Last Civil War Veterans* is shown in the 2014 column and the second column 2015, is borrowed from the more researched version, *America's Last Civil War Participants: An Investigation.* Faced with either being misleading by omission or briefly breaking with my attempt to show only the earlier version, I made a brief break. Those listed in blue with asterisks are not dealt with in this work but are assessed in *America's Last Civil War Participants: An Investigation*. As comparing the 2014 and 2015 conclusions show, not all research lead to verification or even higher levels of credibility. Where there is no change the 2015 column stays blank.

As the same evidence or confusion therein should apply to both sides I have added the last ten Union claimants but apparently nobody questions them, despite age and name mix-ups, census evidence, factual contradictions and historical errors - all of which are rightly referred to as frequently applying to Confederate records.

The Last Claimants to Civil War Service 2014 2015

Pleasant Crump died December 31st 1951 CSA *verified*

Felix M. Witkoski died 3rd February 1952 CSA extremely dubious dubious

Thomas Edwin Ross died 27th March 1952 CSA unclear/ conflicting evidence/ possible

Douglas T. Story died 22nd April 1952 *Union* *accepted*

Israel Aaron Broadsword died July 25th 1952 *Union* *accepted*

Richard William Cumpston died 5th September 1952 CSA no evidence

William Loudermilk died 18th September 1952 CSA *verified* very probable

William Jordan Bush died 11th November 1952 CSA *verified*

Arnold Murray died 26th November 1952 CSA probable possible

William Allen Magee 23rd January 1953 *Union* *accepted*

James Albert Hard 12TH March 1953 *Union* *accepted*

William Townsend died 22nd February 1953 CSA *verified*

William Albert Kiney died 23rd June 1953 CSA uncertain/evidence needed *verified*

**James E. Erwin* died 16th November 1953 CSA contradictory sources/ possible/probable 2015 ONLY

Sarah Frances Rockwell died 24th November 1953 nurse CSA no evidence *verified*

**Frank H. Mayer* died 12th February 1954 *Union* *accepted* 2015 ONLY

**W.W. Alexander* died 16th February 1954 CSA ambiguous evidence/ possible/probable 2015 ONLY

Thomas Riddle died 2nd April 1954 CSA *a strong possibility* possible

**Hattie Cook Carter* died 11th January 1956 CSA, insufficient evidence/probable 2015 ONLY

Albert Woolson died August 2nd 1956 *Union* *accepted*

Louis Nicholas Baker died January 1957 *Union* impossible

William Allen Lundy died 1st September 1957 CSA unlikely unlikely in parts

John B. Salling died 16th March 1959 CSA dubious possible/ evidence problems

Walter Williams died 19th December 1959 CSA dubious unlikely in parts as stated

**Maude Nicholls Jones* died 1962 CSA only legendary stories/no evidence/unlikely 2015 ONLY

**Red Cloud* died 4th October 1962 *Union* possible/probable 2015 ONLY

Sylvester Magee died 15th October 1971 Union & CSA possible possible/probable

**Charlie Smith* died 5th October 1979 *Union* unauthenticated/conflicting evidence/unlikely 2015 ONLY

Primary Source Problems

Before going on to assess the merits and demerits of each individual's claim, the problems with sources need to be examined.

Confederate records became scarce in the war's later stages and many did not survive the war's end. Due to the Union blockade paper became scarce in the Confederacy and when Richmond burned in April 1865 many documents burned with it.[12] When looking at Sherman's record of burning whole cities, including state capitols were many important archives were stored, we are left wondering what records went up in flames. In the West Confederate muster rolls were burned at Shreveport before the surrender of May 1865.[13] As early as the 1880s one historian wrote as if a minority of Confederate naval records escaped destruction.[14] How much is truly lost among the sources remains uncertain a hundred and fifty years on. Primary source material still turns up: an Arkansas muster roll found among old paper, Pemberton's account of his actions, watercolours depicting the Union Army at Antietam, a Georgia private's account of war service written in 1916...

Two of the best records of those who served the Confederacy is the parole lists from Vicksburg's surrender and that made of those who surrendered at Appomattox, even the latter must have omissions, as many soldiers dropped out exhausted or deserted just before the surrender. Many units did have complete muster rolls, but even when still existent, massive problems emerge. In the chaos of the Confederacy's last year, they were conscripting seventeen year olds.[15] Over the last year of the war they seemed to have frequently taken anybody who would serve, including jailed prisoners and cadets - in the one Georgia Unit!

If seventeen year olds are being conscripted, even younger boys volunteering were likely to have been regularly accepted, especially for non-

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[12] Nelson Lankford, *Richmond Burning: The Last Days of the Confederate Capitol.* 2002. New York, 2003. Three newspaper offices and stored legal documents were burned. Twenty blocks near the Capitol building were burned. pp135-145.

[13] Confederate Research Sources. *War Between The States. An Ancestry Community,* kee 46@msn.lom

[14] J. Thomas Scharf, *History of the Confederate Navy*. 1887. New York Gramercy Books, 1996 Preface. n.p.

[15] Shelby Foote, *The Civil War: A Narrative. Vol.3 Red River to Appomattox.* 1992. London: Pimlico, 1993. pp125-126. James M. McPherson. *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988. p719.

combatant roles, as so many of those who claimed to have been amongst the last survivors stated.

The military enlistment rolls were usually very basic for both sides. What individual entries contained depended on a commander's wishes, the size of a page, the supply of paper and ink and the fussiness, energy and literacy levels of the clerks. Some entries recorded no more than a soldier's first initial, surname, company and unit. One example is an 1863 Vicksburg parole document:

W. Townsend, Company B, 27th Louisiana Infantry.

If the record in Baton Rouge which apparently reads as below (with extra information in italics) was easily found, identification would have been much easier:

Private William *Daniel* Townsend *also known as W.W. Townsend*

Born: April 12th 1846 *Meridian Mississippi*

Resident: Ruston Louisiana

Enlistment: Norwood September 8th 1861 Company B, 27th Louisiana Infantry.

However there are also other problems. Fortunately few entitled soldiers written up as W. Townsend appeared on lists for Louisiana Confederates. Such mercies are rare. One Union man and ten Confederates named William Loudermilk appear in the Official Records and another unlisted in the Official Records as William is probably J.W. Loudermilk. Even so he is named in a primary source document as William Loudermilk.[16] This William Loudermilk is mentioned for heroic behaviour; another for desertion – and it is possible they are the same man. Because ten such names appear this does not mean ten such men existed – or more are unmentioned, they are frequently listed by their initial. The man who is included in this investigation may not even be among them!

Sticking with all the Confederate Loudermilks is worthwhile to illustrate an essential point to all genealogists, historians and researchers of the Civil War – just how incomplete and confusing even computerised Civil War muster rolls and

[16] Report of Lieutenant-Colonel George M. Edgar, Twenty-sixth Virginia Infantry Battalion. White Sulphur Springs W. Va. August 29th 1863. Posted on *Arkansas in the Civil War* by Evelyn Rard 5/1/2009.

records are. Anyone sensible must be unwilling to dismiss any claim to service because a man's name is not on the muster rolls.

Even the *Official Records* are not as complete as they may seem and they admit it. The Official Records list seventeen Confederates with a surname Loudermilk. *The Civil War Soldiers Database* lists twenty-four, including a non-existent Raven Loudermilk. Neither database list those recorded as officers in Georgia and North Carolina alone. Although the Official Records do mention him in their regimental histories section, Captain John Loudermilk, of the 36th Georgia (Boyles) who was later promoted to Major two months before his death in 1864, is unlisted in the individual soldiers' section. Also unmentioned there are Captain G.N Loudermilk enlisted 17th July 1862 in Thomas's Legion and 2nd Lieutenant Garner M. Loudermilk of Cherokee County who enlisted June 17th 1861 and resigned in November 1861. With the enlisted men brief research reveals at least four who do not appear in either computerized version: Elkanah, B. Loudermilk, (probably Benjamin) M.M. Loudermilk and Hugh W., These four are not part of the problem about the use of just initials for identification. For example M.M. Loudermilk who is not in the computerized listings, is mentioned as enlisted in a North Carolina Regiment on November 15th 1862. One other Loudermilk with the Initial M is listed in a database as serving in Confederate forces. He was Marion Loudermilk. He appears on the Georgia 36th Regiment muster roll as serving from March 11th 1862 until July 1863, so they could not be the same man.

At least three officers and at least four enlisted men who should be on the computer lists are not there. That is one quarter of the total who are shown. They were found in computerised sources after a brief check covering records in only two Confederate states. My sources for these seven unlisted soldiers are not obscure or tucked away in titles that are unlikely to be noticed or have titles that seem irrelevant. They are from John W. Moore's four volume 1882 *North Carolina Troops in the War Between the States,* the family tree of the Loudermilks and Lillian A. Henderson's five volume collection originally compiled in 1959-1964 *Roster of the Confederate Soldiers of Georgia*. Both books are computerised and provide much more information for free, such as full names, date and place of enlistment and discharge, paroles, transfers, hospitalisation and resignations and casualties. Henderson's work does list desertions and absences, but Moore's does not.

Not all problems are sins of omission

Runaways and deserters changed names and ages. Henry Ervine Loudermilk who was captured for a second time heard that if a Confederate was exchanged for a second time he was shot on his return – so he changed his name to hide himself with the gloriously conspicuous title Raven Loudermilk – and returned or was forcibly returned to his old unit where going by records, apparently both men served.[17] With absences without leave, runaways, desertions, freed jailbirds, escaped slaves and odd reasons like those of Raven, the records are permeated with falsehoods.

While this probably does not apply to any of the Loudermilks, until December 1863 Confederates paid bounties for men to enlist and some made a career of enlisting, then deserting and enlisting again, probably leaving a paper trail of false names.[18] Elvis Presley's maternal great-great-grandfather was one such.[19] Others were discharged, then reenlisted or were conscripted into different units. Others simply transferred and it is not always clear what they did after – or even if they transferred.

Another example is Felix Witkoski. Nobody named Witkoski turned up in Confederate service in the official and much used databases, but on that basis and census records one encyclopaedia debunked him and even gave him his own personal entry – for being a fraud. Even so, someone with an almost identical surname was listed by a clerk with low level language skills as being in Alabama's Coffee County Home Guards. This was the state where Witkoski said he had served. In *Official Records* two Confederate Georgians named William J. Bush appear. However in the "Georgia Civil War Soldiers Index" four men named William J. Bush appear, all of them in different Georgia units. Two more appear in the Ramah Guards, William H. Bush and W.J. Bush, who is William Joshua Bush. This looks like being helpful, but it is quite possible this man appears three times in different units. He is definitely both William Joshua Bush and William Jordan Bush. Only three of these men are definitely NOT William Jordan or William Joshua Bush. This is by no means the most confused, confusing and contradictory example.

Like *Official Records*, the census records are often used as the benchmark to prove or disprove claims, but they are also often very brief, contradictory on

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[17] *Loudermilk Lineage*. http://www.eloudermilk. Com/Loudermilk.htm 1. No author credited.
[18] James M. McPherson. pp431-432.
[19] Albert Goldman, *Elvis.* London: Allen Lane, 1981. pp55-56.

individuals and are full of errors. The first problem with the census that led to so many others was the collectors. One little noticed problem is that nineteenth century census collectors were usually not trained professionals. In his *Governmentality and the Mastery of Territory in Nineteenth Century America* (2000) Michael C. Hannah writes that before the Civil War some Americans were unhappy with census errors and wanted trained statisticians - and with good reason as "staffing the Census Office was a matter of political appointment" and that "the system was not immune to patronage."[20] Referring to census taking during the Reconstruction era Hannah writes that "Republican initiatives were almost wholly given over to patronage."[21] Even after legal attempts corrected some government employment abuses, in 1883 the hiring in the census department was still "exempt from regulation" and hiring was concerned with "ever more intense political pressure."[22]

In an article about estimations of Civil War casualties *The New York Times* reporter J. David Hacker also refers to then contemporary comments about the patronage system's harmful effects on the accuracy of the 1870 census.[23] He states that even President Grant found the 1870 census so unlikely that he ordered recounts in the cities of New York and Philadelphia.[24] Hacker quotes the 1890 census office to the effect that the 1870 census was flawed; estimates of by how much vary, the census apparently undercounted the South's population by around 10% and nationally by around 6.5%.[25] Although the 1870 census was apparently the worst, others were unreliable. The range of census undercounts between from 1850 onwards and 1880 varied form 6% to 3.6% in 1880, when some level of training was introduced.[26] On other issues there was also great unreliability.

Given the combination of inadequate and simple collecting methods made by probably very inadequate collectors, even all of the last verified Union veterans still alive after 1951 had problems with their real age and documentation. Marriage records, birth certificates employment records and children's birthdays also disprove at least some of the census data about veterans, unless we believe that

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[20] Hannah, p35 p54.
[21] Hannah p35
[22] Hannah, p54.
[23] J. David Hacker, 'Recounting the Dead' *The New York Times*. September 20th 2011. P3. The Opinion Pages http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/0920/recounting-the dead/? _ r=0
[24] Hacker, p2.
[25] Hacker, p2 p3 p4.
[26] Hacker p3.

they are fathers by thirteen and working on long distance emergency rescue trains aged seven.

The earlier major federal census was taken every ten years, apparently recorded ages only in years and how precisely ages were calculated is uncertain. At least three of the supposed Civil War survivors, Arnold Murray, John Salling and William Townsend admitted to being illiterate or close to it, but apparently filled out the census forms.[27] Birthdays and middle names may or may not have been recorded. A descendant of Thomas Evan Riddle claims he was born in 1853 going by the fact that 'Thomas Riddle' was seven in the 1860 census, yet even here on this website we are given at least two birthdates. 11th April 1858 is apparently for a son Thomas (father Elias) one year old in April 1860 and then a son Thomas (father also Elias) is seven years old in April 1860. [28] Are they the same person? What is not mentioned here is the crucial information that Thomas Evans Riddle had an 1850 census reference dating his birth as April 1846. His age however, varies by a range of twenty-three years in different documents. If this much confusion and an omission is on a website…

There is also a problem known to all genealogists: ancestors/descendants, grandfathers, fathers, sons and cousins will frequently all have the same name. It sometimes happens that a younger son will be given the same name as a dead sibling.

The census records are often another morass, rather than a strong and clear pathway through the problems with primary sources.

Not only documents create problems: people can. To make a comparison, Australian history students at High School level were given the task of interviewing World War One veterans from at least the 1960s into the middle 1980s. I interviewed my grandfather in 1966 and checked a student's interview twenty years later. However things changed by 1989, when as a teacher I was told the interviews were over. The veterans who could remember in the 1960s usually

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[27] Serrano mentions Salling p136 and Townsend p75; JD Block (posted) Nancie O'Sullivan researcher Irvin Shuler writer "ARNOLD MURRAY Confederate Veteran Living in 1950." p1. http://*genform.genealogy*.com/sc/orangeburg/messages/415.html

[28] David Autry *Our Family.2/8/2009* "Above information from the research of Margret Gilbreath." File C:My documents /My Pictures/david's family pictures/autry/Thomas evans riddle and family.jpg

could not remember things very well anymore, were embarrassed by that and did not want to recall the horrors and dreariness they had endured.

The frequently erroneous, or fragmentary and sometimes vague nature of recalled veteran's memories both in Australian WW1 veterans in the 1980s and Civil War veterans in the 1950s demonstrates this point. Rarely in the 1950s did Civil War veterans give a coherent, very detailed, long account that goes from enlistment to war's end. Few speak of the realities of actual warfare in detail. The mind blocks out details that were too horrific to remember or recalls them briefly and then goes elsewhere. Bush seems to have done this in his 1949 interview when asked did they have target practice in training. He replied that bullets were too scarce and were kept for killing Yankees, but most of the fighting was done hand to hand. His interview then went elsewhere. Unlike this example veterans were often interviewed in reunions that were celebratory and conciliatory: hardly the right place to discuss enduring dysentery, burying cholera victims, burning homes or bayoneting the enemy.

Many were not just victims, they would have wanted to pass over what they had done or for a time became. Thomas E. Ross (not the Kentucky cavalryman or the naval powder monkey/marine cadet) probably started out believing he was joining the Home Guard to do just what that organization's title suggests. He ended up a guard at Salisbury Prison, one of the most brutal, worse even than the notorious Andersonville. A 1990s estimate of the fatalities there was 11,700 and many were shot by their guards on the slightest pretext.[29] Union boys Magee, Mayer and Broadsword started as patriots and ended up as men forcibly dispossessing Indians. To put that in nineteenth century parlance, they enlisted to free the Black Man and soldiered on to enslave the Red Man. The aged, modest Kinney who liked playing dominoes and who quietly took part in his Bible study class was once one of the feared Morgan's Raiders. As an 1860s teenager Albert Woolson enthusiastically learned to kill with a musket so he could hopefully serve in the infantry: in old age he delighted in entertaining children with music. Similarly, popular William Townsend who in old age loved to dance and play the fiddle at socials and entertained hospital patients with his music to cheer them, stated that he once rode for the Ku Klux Klan in the Reconstruction period. His statement is ambiguous: does that mean he rode for them only once and then

[29] Horowitz pp20-21.

renounced them or that once, long ago, he rode with the Klan?[30] Whatever his mistakes he seems among the most honest and consistent. He admitted that he thought of leaving the war and he described its misery and that he was not reconciled to "the Yankees" until a 1951 get together.[31]

The veterans however, were supposed to present an image of mutual respect and forgiveness. Interviewers were also either sensitive to the feelings of the elderly veterans or sensitive to their to their reader's desires: the clientele of small town papers usually did not want to read unpleasant stories about war and they did not.

These were the problems with primary sources.

Problems with Secondary Sources:

Interesting, informative articles appear that seem to solve all the problems – until one looks for their sources and finds nothing. Lack of sources leads to wishful thinking that develops into opinions that are then presented as facts.

Another problem is how we see their world. Childhood ended early in the nineteenth century. Among the sceptics the age factor keeps coming up. Loudermilk, Bush, Murray, Rockwell, Salling, Williams and Townsend are continuously rejected as being too young to have been in the war, as if proving their age disproves their war record. This is seeing the Civil War world through the eyes of the twenty-first century Western world. We are horrified by the idea of child soldiers, but were Americans in the 1860s?

In 1863 Susan R. Hull, noting the enlistment of boy soldiers, started collecting information on them which in 1905 was published as *Boy Soldiers of the Confederacy.* She wrote in her introduction that one boy soldier was eleven and several were twelve or thirteen and she quotes information about another ten year

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[30] An unsigned Obituary Article *Lewiston Evening Journal* Feb 23rd 1953. Computer Edition. Google News Archive Search; Serrano, p74; His popularity and behaviour at socials was mentioned a few years ago in a now vanished website. It also mentioned the hospital visits Serrano refers to. Hoar also mentions this and reproduces a photo showing Townsend entertaining veterans at a Shreveport hospital Vol. III p1699; See also Eric C. Brock. "Shreveport's last Confederates" undated newspaper story. *Ancestry .com* William Townsend Collection Type for date: 1953 type for place: Louisiana.

[31] Unsigned article, *Lewiston Evening Journal* Feb 23rd 1953. n.p.

old, George Lamkin.[32] She mentions about a hundred individuals, excluding groups and while the majority are from around sixteen to eighteen, she mentions many younger than that. This tendency to take the young worsened as the war dragged on. The use of child soldiers was widespread and not limited to non-combatant roles. The role of Virginia's cadets at the battle of Monocracy is well documented, although other groups and units acted similarly, as Hull documents many times. The 1st Arkansas was recruited in the age group of fourteen to nineteen with their parent's approval – and this was early in the war.[33] This was no home front unit; from First Bull Run to Johnston's surrender this regiment was continually fighting. Hull's cousin, eyewitness and example Thos D. Ranson assisted with information, giving several examples of boys in the fighting who were under fifteen. He also stated Baker's Light Horse was made up almost entirely of boys at first and concludes his letter with "I hardly ever saw a fight without seeing boys at the front." [34]

Reading through Susan R. Hull's collection of primary source material on this topic, the usual Confederate responses include admiration and family pride as much as mourning, but never horror or disapproval, outrage or a questioning of why the boys had to suffer or die. This was apparently not because of fears of being labelled disloyal or suffering the severe punishments and ostracism frequently dealt out to those suspected of disloyalty in the Confederacy. Hull published her work fifty years after the Confederacy fell. They lived in a world where duty, courage and honour were almost everything and self-sacrifice led to glory.

Several scattered in passing references to Confederate boy soldiers in relation to other events show how they were seen differently to how we see them. David Bailey enlisted in the 6th Georgia Cavalry in 1861, aged barely eleven and stayed three years. This was before Georgia was invaded and there seemed no dire necessity. The comment was that "Little Dave" made a good soldier.[35] A seventeen

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[32] *Susan R. Hull*, Intoduction p14 *Boy Soldiers of the Confederacy.* New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1905.She reproduces accounts from the war years that mention a ten year old, George Lamkiin p228.
[33] *Ibid* quoting contemporary accounts p231.
[34] *Ibid,* Ranson's letter of 1904 pp150-151.
[35] D.B. Freeman "little Dave Our Youngest Soldier" *Civil War Family*. 14 January 2014. He had at least one ten year old rival for that title, George Lamkin.

year old spy was hanged.[36] Union general Dahlgren was shot by "a mere boy."[37] General Joseph Johnston, realising he would soon surrender, pardoned the last deserter with his army facing execution, a fourteen year old. The memoirs of fourteen year old runaway and Missouri soldier Johnny Wickersham are a primary source.[38] One of the last two Confederates killed on the day Lee surrendered was also fourteen.

The gallery of photographs below illustrate the point made by Hull and repeated more recently by several others in new books on the subject: boy soldiers were common and as the uniforms and weapons show, many were fighters in infantry and cavalry.

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The Boy Soldiers



Arnold Murray, a teenager of Charleston

[36] *Ibid*,
[37] Susan R. Hull, *Boy Soldiers of the Confederacy.* New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1905. p15.
[38] Uncredited seller's description. Johnny Wickersham, *Boy Soldier of the Confederacy: The Memoir of Johnny Wickersham* 1915. New Edition Ed. Kathleen Gorman. n.p.: Southern Illinois University Press, 2006. www.walmart.com/msharbor/ip25663374



This photo of a Confederate in cavalry outfit was taken in Nashville, which probably means early in the war as the city fell to Grant in early 1862.

The photos below are of unknown Confederates. The first is unmistakeably an infantryman. The good state of his equipment and uniform suggests that he is about to leave for the front, probably in the war's early stages





An unknown Confederate. The stylish wide brim hat, cravat and neat jacket suggest he came from a well off family.



The wide brim hat with fur or feathers, the pistol and sabre all show that he is a cavalry man.

An Unknown Confederate boy soldier





Union drummer boys and a fifer. As each infantry regiment usually had a band they number of boys serving must have been high. How many adult enlistments are listed as drummers, fifers, buglers or trumpeters?

A young Union soldier, possessing a pistol suggests he was a cavalryman





This nine year old boy ran off to serve in his father's Kansas regiment. He was kept on as his father's orderly and was fortunate to survive malaria.



Private Edwin Jemison of Louisiana, aged about sixteen at the time of his death. He was killed at the battle of Malvern Hill in July 1862. This image is often used to demonstrate the tragedy of the Civil War – and rightly.



An unknown Confederate. The strong shoulder straps and collar suggest an officer, but the jacket looks oversized, did he want to impress?



James Carson Elliot



A North Carolinian Infantryman



Not all boy soldiers were enthusiastic volunteers.



Captain Marcellus Jerome Clarke. A Kentucky raider, he was hanged aged twenty in March 1865 after four years of service to the Confederacy.

In this technologically advanced age children and adolescents lying about their age will usually be found out in minutes by pressing a few computer buttons. Back then both armies were contained many runaways lying about their age, as even the Union veterans among the nine examined in this work show – and how could people check back then? Letters or riders were the only form of communication and took weeks. A second problem is that who wanted to check when the South's manpower resources were running down and they were fighting for their survival?

After the battle of Griswoldville in November 1864 a union colonel walked among the Confederate dead and concluded that they were either old men or boys under fifteen.[39] The average age for Confederate soldiers is usually put at nineteen to twenty-six, given the descriptions of elderly men in the militia, this widens the lower end of the range considerably. The website "Images of Confederate Boy Soldiers" displays well over forty individuals who are obviously boys in their middle teens or younger, a few who are usually but not always drummer boys, look

[39] Richard J. Lenz, *The Civil War in Georgia, An Illustrated Traveller's Guide*. Colonel Charles Wills quoted p2.

around ten or younger. While even rough estimates of how many boy Confederates served are difficult to make, clearly there many.

Rejecting Felix Witkoski, William Murphy Loudermilk, William J. Bush Arnold Murray, Sarah Rockwell, John B. Salling and Walter Williams as being too young to have been in the war because they were born between the late 1840s and the first half of the 1850s does not square with the reality of the war.

We also see a lack of records or imprecise records as suspicious, but few among those investigated filled out a census every decade and fewer were consistent with birthdates and their age. The census collectors may have been rushed, or given misleading information or being of low abilities just did not get it, then as now people do not like government prying into their lives. While researching even the 1940 census it was amazing to see how many elderly people would place "about" before their birth year. Away from the towns, books, paper, clocks and calendars were rarer than we might appreciate and people valued daylight and seasons for productivity more than dates. Children were valued workers and schools were often rare and not compulsory. These factors made for high illiteracy rates and rare and basic records that were often inexact.

A bigger more current problem is the increasing commercialisation of history, along with everything else in life. Several of the claimants dealt with here could have had more detailed information, but access to computerised documents is becoming increasingly a business, making history a rich kid's game I refuse to play. The implications of this commercialisation are enormous. Now that the primary sources are owned, how long is it before companies own the facts they contain and we must pay for them or be sued for stealing "their" copyrighted facts? In a world where seeds are copyrighted and advertisements target three year olds anything becomes possible. Once corporations own the basis for writing history, how long will it be before all history reflects the corporate mentality? Lee also had a point, back in the 1860s, he saw the beginnings of the commercialisation of Civil War history: when asked to write his memoirs he said that he refused to profit by the sufferings and death of his men.

Objectivity must indeed be a problem but the effort must be made. On u tube, in interviews and books, several of the claimants come across as likeable and endearing; who *wants* to expose them as liars and frauds? Not me. I take their claims seriously, but do investigate, hoping to find the evidence needed to prove them to be what they said they were. Even so, a tendency to be biased in their

favour stays under control. Unlike some enthusiasts on some websites I want more proof than their say so and will not ignore, belittle or downplay evidence against them, but also take such evidence seriously. Like most I dislike giving credibility to con-artists: if the proof was irrefutable I would say so, but not one of them in this work has that definite proof against them so far.

Of the Confederate claimants after Crump whom Serrano investigates, two at least must have served in the war. They provide more evidence than many other accredited enlisted men. They are William Jordan Bush of Georgia and William Daniel Townsend of Louisiana. Serrano suggests that both are uncertain and on that point I disagree.

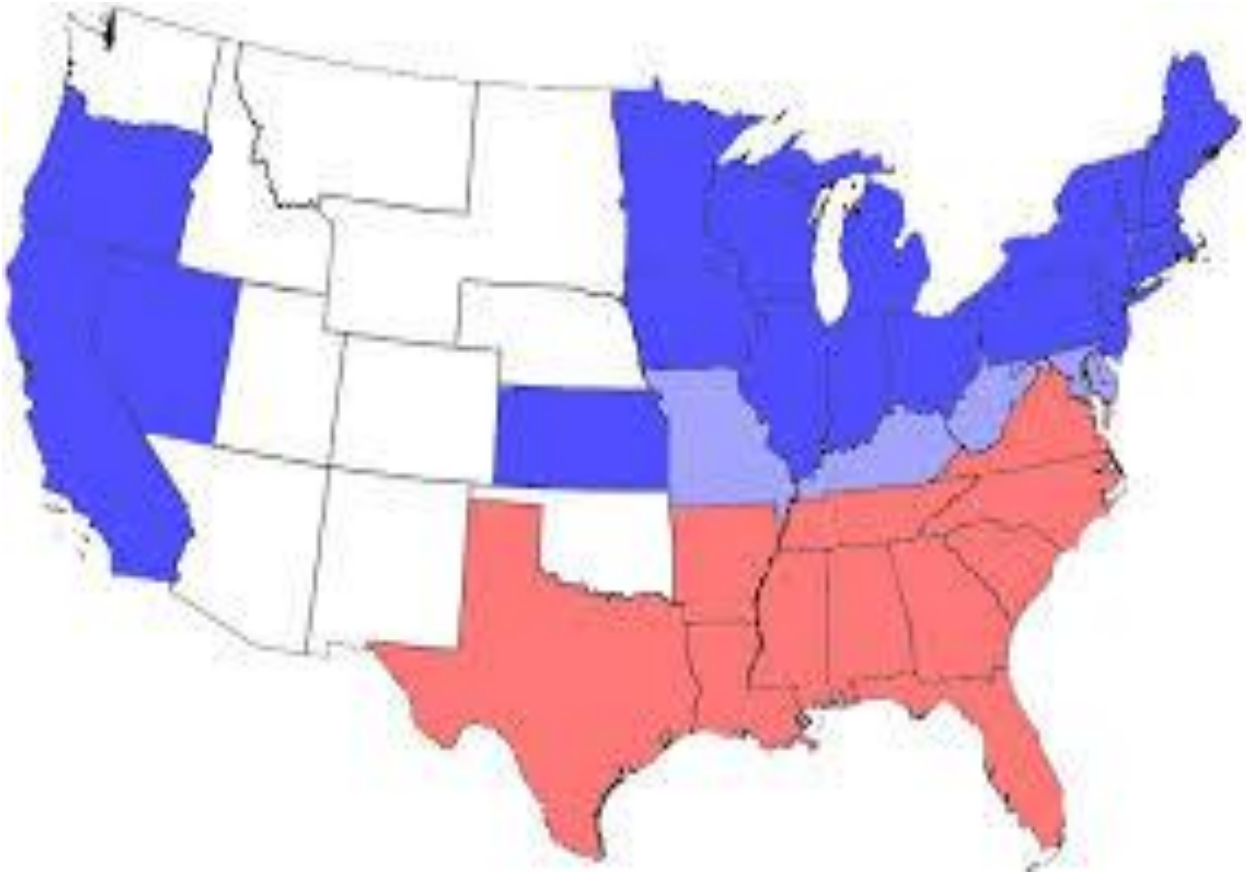
Part Two is the new list, expanded updated and assessed in depth.



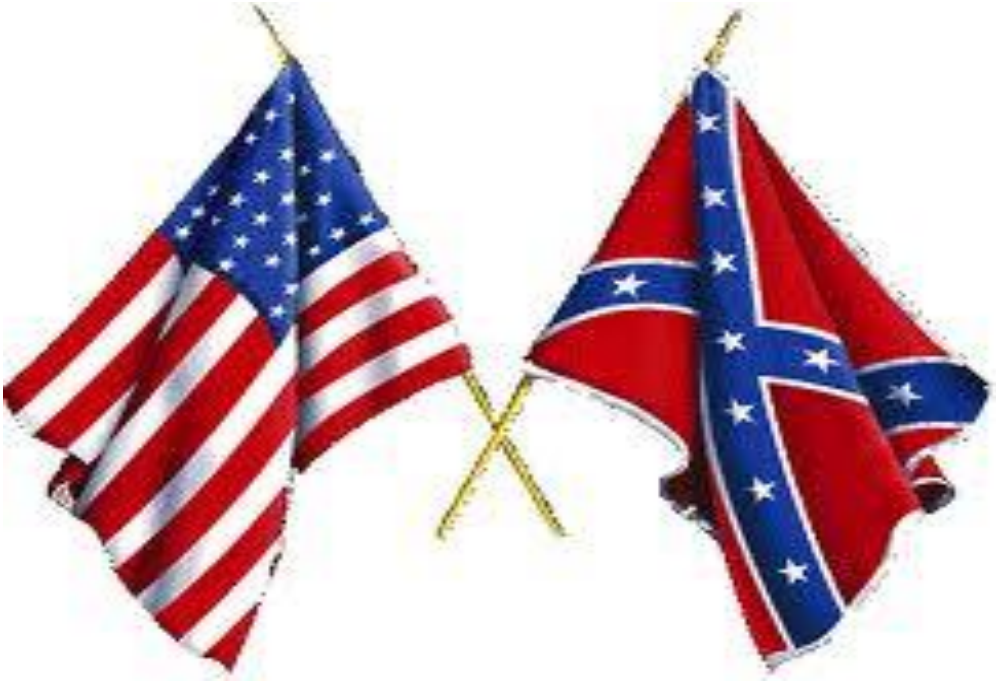
An early version of the Confederate national flag. It served as the battle flag for the first few months until Confederates mistook it for the Union flag at First Bull Run. Beauregard and Joseph Johnston designed the Confederate battle flag. In March 1865 the battle flag on a white backdrop became the national flag.

This map is a typical representation of how America divided in the Civil War. The Indian Territory (Now Oklahoma) and New Mexico (including what is now Arizona) were divided and saw some fighting. Perhaps as many as 180,000 Southerners sided with the Union. In Kentucky and Maryland for every Southerner who chose the South two fought for the Union. Among those in regular units in Missouri it was three out of four, although mass imprisonments and irregulars there make numbers uncertain. Many Unionists were in the Appalachian sections of Tennessee and North Carolina. Around 32,000 Tennesseans fought for the Union as did 12,000 North Carolinians. Winston County, northern Alabama was one of these Unionist regions and actually succeeded from the Confederacy. Jones County Mississippi was also strong for the Union. West Texas and Union occupied sections of Florida each raised cavalry regiments for Lincoln.

Some of the evidence goes the other way. West Virginia is usually depicted as solidly Unionist: in reality one third of the soldiers that fought there were for the South. They included Stonewall Jackson and Jubal Early. Delaware had several hundred soldiers on the Southern side.



Part Two



Felix M. Witkoski.



Result: His Confederate Service is dubious.

Date of Birth: given as January 1850, but this is dubious.

Date of Death: 3rd February 1952 in California

Age at enlistment: uncertain, twelve or nine

Rank: water boy and then perhaps a private or a sharpshooter (claimed)

Unit: 53RD Alabama Infantry (which was actually a cavalry unit) the 53rd Partisan Rangers

Service: He claimed to be a water boy from 1863 and eventually a scout a soldier and a sharpshooter.

Combat Experience: he claimed combat experience from the battles for Atlanta till the war's end. He claimed that he was wounded in the stomach at the battle for Atlanta.

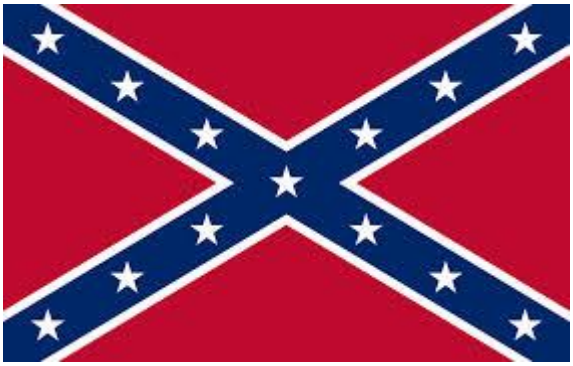
Evidence of Service apart from his own accounts. His name does not appear in *Official Records*, *The Civil War Soldier's Database*, known muster rolls or anywhere else, but an A. Witkowski does appear in an Alabama Home Guard service record.

In census documents Felix Wotkoski claimed to have been born in Texas in 1850 to Texan born parents, but this is dubious - unless his parents left him behind when they went on a trip to Poland and then returned after his brother was born in Poland in 1864, in time for the 1870 census. He gets a whole encyclopaedia entry - but as a fraud. This article however also rests on thin evidence.

No evidence that he ever claimed a veteran's pension has emerged. In the 1930 census he left the military service question blank.

No record anywhere so far, has revealed his exact name as a Confederate soldier and several reputable databases and muster rolls had been checked, including both units called the 53rd Alabama. I had him written up as debunked when quite by chance, while researching William Allen Lundy, I came across an A. Witkowski in the muster rolls of the Alabama Coffee County Volunteers, written up on March 14th 1864 by someone with a low level of English, let alone Polish. Beside Witkowski's name was a single entry "gone." Even though the initial and a letter in the surname are different, this removes the certainty of his debunked status. How many Poles with virtually the same name were in Confederate Alabama just where and when Felix Witkoski said he was? Long coincidence?

*



Thomas Edwin Ross

Result: His Confederate Service is possible. More clarification is needed.

Date of Birth: given as 16th July 1850. Source 1 19th July 1850 Source 2

Date of Death: 27th March 1952 in California

Rank: probably private or then a marine and sometime powder monkey

Unit: probably 14th Kentucky Cavalry OR the marine regiment including some naval service.

Service: probably January 19th 1863 to 30th November 1864. Perhaps also August to October 1862. Or 1862 -1865 for the naval Ross.

Combat Experience: uncertain but claimed.

Evidence of Service. Uncertain/conflicting

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Once again the original version must be developed. A Kentucky cavalry enlistment for Thomas E. Ross came so close to verifying him, but the type of service he claimed in the Confederate marines and what the documentation revealed lead to two irreconcilable records of service. As two documents show three days difference given for the birthdate of the Thomas Edwin Ross born in Kentucky in July 1850 it is possible that they were two different men, perhaps related.

Evidence of service 1: Cavalry:

The 1952 death certificate lists his service as being in the 5th Kentucky Cavalry. When filling that certificate out, did someone, somewhere in Los Angeles in 1952 try to find his record, and finding someone in that cavalry unit with the same name, birth year and state of origin, lead themselves or someone else into a misidentification? Or did Ross have unknown reasons for claiming Marine service

when he was really in the cavalry? Yet this might be his true record. Morgan's Raiders were feared and at least two other aged veterans of that unit, William Kiney and John M. Bradley, did not seek recognition.[40] A Thomas Ross of West Liberty Kentucky enlisted as a private in August 1862, but was mustered out for unknown reasons that October. Another (?)Thomas Ross enlisted in the same place in January 1863 in Company B of the 14th Kentucky Cavalry and was mustered out on November 30th 1864 and is listed as surviving the war. *Ancestry.com* puts him at the top of the list as the soldier most likely to be Thomas Edwin Ross. Identification comes by that full name in a modern computer introduction to an index of paroled Confederates. Is this because of either unrevealed information or because the word Edwin appears elsewhere? This man was captured on June 19th 1864, was he exchanged to be mustered out? Many prisoners were so weakened as to be useless for further service. This index was typed out in 1980 and he is listed as Thomas Ross: the unit designation and Kentucky address are a perfect match.



A realistic portrayal of a Kentucky cavalryman by Moses Hamblin.

[40] Professor Hoar has a segment on Bradley. Vol. III p1621. Kiney is dealt with in detail in the segment about him.

Evidence of Service 2*:* Naval.

In Professor Hoar's *The South's Last Boys in Gray* Thomas Edwin Ross of Los Angeles, (born July 19th 1850 and died on March 27th 1952) is described as a naval man who started out as an eleven year old powder monkey and who was aboard the *Merrimac* during its famous duel with the *Monitor* in 1862.

This is from Ross's account. He also claimed to be at the battle of the Crater in 1864 and to have spent the later period of the war in a torpedo boat, the *Wasp* of the James River Squadron, located in east Virginia. He identified the captain and master's mate in command there. [41] His birthdate is three days after that of the Kentucky cavalryman: are they different people?

All these naval claims are possible, but it all initially sounds like too many varied forms of service for one person. Evidence however, shows the incredibly diverse uses this small unit was put to. 'The Confederate States Navy Marine Corps' was not a corps in the army sense of consisting of two divisions and supporting units which usually totalled around twenty thousand men. It was really a regiment, at its peak apparently consisting of 840 enlisted men, and 149 other ranks with eighty–two more being enlisted in October 1862. [42] Historians and eyewitness show that they were much in demand and in ways that support Ross's statements. Confederate naval officer J. Thomas Scharf in his 1888 *History of the* C*onfederate Navy* states that:

> One squad of marines that fought at Drewry's Bluff had previously formed a part of the ship's company of the *Virginia* and had helped work her guns in the battles of Hampton Roads. (p771)

Scharf also states that marine detachments were "ordered to other stations and to vessels preparing for sea, or for coastal defence" this fits in with Ross's statement about the torpedo boats. His claim to be a powder monkey and to working machines, which sounds more a naval service than a marine one, is also explained in Scharf's next passage:

> Because of the great lack of trained seamen in the Confederacy, the veteran marines were of inestimable value on board the ships to which

[41] Hoar, Vol. III pp1686-1687.
[42] Scharf, quoting the official Confederate directions for the marine's establishment.p769.

> they were attached, and they were made use of in numerous capacities that embraced the duties of sailors. (771)

Ross's knowledge of these matters, as well as his seemingly odd and overdone claims being backed by near contemporary evidence, adds to his credibility upon investigation. His recollection of being at the battle of the crater is a separate issue. Ross did state that he was without a ship for months after the *CSS Virginia* was blown up. The Petersburg lines were thinly manned, so possibly detachments of marines were used there until the next boat was ready in late 1864. It is also possible that an individual marine was nearby for personal reasons and rushed to serve in the sudden emergency at the crater, but no marine detachment appears in the Confederate Order of Battle.

One factor that does count against him is that the crew list of the *CSS Virginia* is reproduced in detail with individualised notes in John V. Quarstein's history *The CSS Virginia: Sink before Surrender* (2012). Ross's name does not appear in the crew list. He is also absent from the list Quarstein reproduces of those others who volunteered and so served in some capacity, or in the listed detachment of fifty-four marines who served on the ship.

This is not saying that Ross deceives about this. As previously mentioned, most Confederate marine records were destroyed. An odd fact that strongly suggests that Ross was telling the truth was that he kept his distinctive Confederate blue-jacket uniform. This may have been of the type issued to the navy or the more distinctive frock coats worn by the marines of both sides.[43] His habit of wearing a Confederate naval blue-jacket to church probably got him noticed as a former Confederate.[44] Another fact in his favour must be that no evidence emerges that he applied for the pension: he would have had to live in Kentucky to get it and he had been living in California for decades.

He apparently did not want publicity. Little of his life is known of before 1920. After working as an engineer he settled in Los Angeles and worked as a car dealer. The Californian Daughters of the Confederacy had to search for him and arrange urgent medical help and then arrange his 100th birthday celebrations. His last four years were spent in a sanatorium as his physical health declined. [45]

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[43] 'Uniform of the Confederate State Military Forces.' *Wikipedia*; See also the website 'Images of Confederate Marines.'
[44] Hoar, Vol. III pp1686-1687.
[45] *Ibid.*

Although he was not mentioned in the 1949 *Life* or the 1951 *Denver Post* articles, he was listed as one of the last surviving Confederates in the 1951 Virginia Reunion program.[46]

In April 1910 a Thomas Ross of Pacadah, aged 59, affirmed Civil War service on the census. His given age matches exactly with that of the aged claimant. Proving that this man, born in Kentucky in 1850 is the same man who died in Los Angeles in 1952 remains difficult without more evidence. Proving that he served with a Kentucky cavalry unit, or with the navy or marines in Virginia becomes more than difficult.

Too many Thomas Ross's, appear, nearly forty, but each has too little information. Most were infantry privates. Two have the initial E. but none use the full middle name. The most likely of these "E. Ross" soldiers served in Home Guard units from 1862 onwards and Howard's Company of prison guards in North Carolina. Another was in the 42nd Regiment North Carolina.





Two versions of an enlisted Confederate marine's frock coat. Ross at one time would have had one. Did he wear it in old age in Los Angeles?

[46] Mason, p8.

Three enlisted men named Thomas E. Ross are on muster rolls. Three others named Thomas Ross are listed as Confederate Kentucky cavalrymen. One who is not listed is the most likely, the quiet naval man.



The Confederate marines, depicted by Don Troiani



Ross's surviving naval jacket may be something like this wartime relic The Virginia *attacking predominates in the background painting: he claimed to be in this battle.*



*

The original entry without Professor Hoar's research

The problem with this is the original comment still stands – despite over forty Confederates being listed as Thomas Ross. Most of them are infantry privates. Although two have the initial E. none use the full middle name. The most likely of these "E. Ross" soldiers served in Home Guard units from 1862 onwards and Howard's Company of prison guards in North Carolina. Another was in 42nd Regiment North Carolina. The 1940 census lists a Thomas E. Ross was living in Los Angeles who gave his birth year as about 1853. Is this the same man?

*





Douglas T. Story also known as Douglas T. Storey

Result: accepted√

Date of Birth: 24th November 1846.

Date of Death 22nd April 1952 in California.

Age at enlistment: eighteen

Rank: private.

Unit: 136th Illinois Volunteers

Service: infantryman He enlisted on May 20th 1864 and was mustered out on October 22nd of that year.

Combat Experience: Probably only dealing with raids, but no major battles

Evidence of Service apart from his own accounts: *Official Records* and the 136th Illinois muster rolls both list him by first name initial and surname

Douglas Story ran away from home twice trying to enlist and succeeded on the third attempt. He served in the 136th Illinois Volunteer Infantry, a unit that was formed for 100 days service, but lasted a little longer. They were given garrison duty in Tennessee and tried to capture Nathan Bedford Forrest and his command.[47]

[47] Official Records 136TH Illinois Infantry Regiment; *the Illinois Civil War Project.* Org/history/135html; *136TH Illinois Infantry Regiment.* civil warillinois genweb.

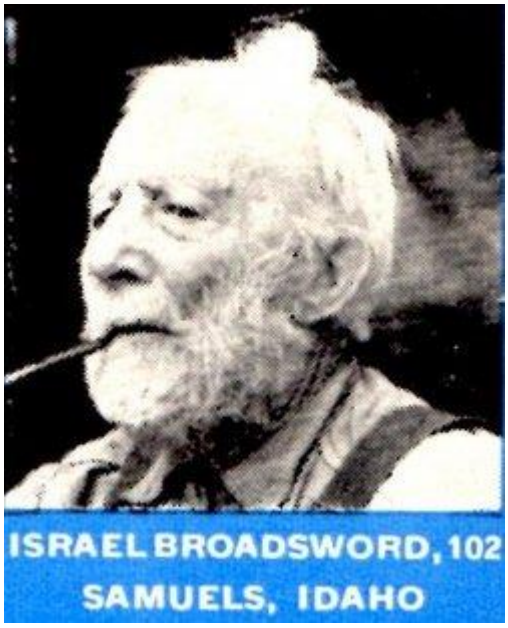
When the regiment was disbanded Story was discharged and seems to have lived quietly, most often working as a carpenter. Even *Official Records* lists his name as having an alternate spelling and notes the fact.

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Israel Aaron Broadsword aka Israel Adam Broadsword





Result: accepted√

Date of Birth: 23rd December 1846.

Date of Death 25th July 1952 in Idaho.

Age at enlistment: officially eighteen in 1865, perhaps fourteen in 1861

Rank: private.

Unit: 51st Missouri Infantry (known)

Service: Infantryman. Probably his first service was in the summer and autumn of 1861. He definitely enlisted on April 4th 1865 and was mustered out on August 31st of that year.

Combat Experience: Very little that can be traced. Probably much more

Evidence of Service apart from his own accounts: *Ancestry.com* has replicas of his several documents for voluntary enlistment. These include a declaration, company enrolment, hospitalisation, a transfer and mustering out. *Official Records* got a triple check and does not know of him.

While he has some of the most traceable statistics among those veterans alive after January 1st 1952, confusion exists over his middle name. His 1860s



Broadsword after the 1949 Life *magazine story brought him fame Aaron Broadsword is second from the right in the top line. He is wearing the gift of a replica Civil War uniform which he loved.*



military documents do not give him one. His family, writes Adam, newspapers say Aaron. This time these trails all lead to the same man.

He is among the few in the twenty-eight claimants in this book to have an undisputed birth date. Broadsword joined the Troy Kansas Home Guard in 1859 and he would experience the violence of the Kanas conflict before the war began.

By Broadsword's account, repeated in newspapers and also in the recollections of one of his sons, he ran away from home aged fourteen to fight and was in Missouri's battle of Lexington in September 1861. Soon after this his parents found him and took him home, but realised he would only run away again, so with their permission at age sixteen he enlisted.[48] This would put his second enlistment between the end of 1862 and the end of 1863. This fits with his son William's account, who recalled that his father saw action several times against Quantrill, who was active in Missouri in those years but had moved to Kentucky by spring 1865.

However all his official documents have him enlisting aged eighteen on April 4th 1865. He would have seen very little if any fighting while on garrison duty at Saint Joseph Missouri as he was hospitalised on April 30th for an unspecified period. In the twilight days of the war the last Confederates active in Missouri were bushwhackers and isolated cavalry units, so while possible, it seems unlikely that Broadsword was a fighting soldier – at least at this point in time, but definitely after and probably before.

His previously cited newspaper interviews recall some details apparently from his earlier enlistment. In one an officer told the men not to abandon a cannon to the enemy and when another man asked how much it was worth and was told three hundred dollars, he suggested that they let the Confederates have it, all chip in and give the replacement cost to the government! Broadsword also mentioned the terrible taste of scarce buffalo meat.

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[48] This account of Broadsword's life is based on his enlistment documents and on two newspaper accounts. The first newspaper source is an unsigned article, 'Civil War Veteran Lives Peacefully On Idaho Farm.' In *The Register Guard* May 4th 1951. p57. The second is an obituary article in *The Spokesman Review* July 26th 1952 p57. The Broadsword Family Tree. *Ancestry.com* was also used.

Unfortunately more of his earlier experiences are at this stage, undocumented. He was mustered out on August 31st 1865, but re-enlisted in Company H, 19th Kansas Cavalry in 1868 where he reached the rank of Sergeant and became an Indian fighter under Custer's command, probably at the Battle of Washita River in late 1868. The most famous representation of this battle is in Arthur Penn's 1971 film *Little Big Man.* While this film accurately captures the ruthless savagery and the unexpected nature of the attack and many of the more bizarre aspects; it does not depict that the Seventh Cavalry were tracking a raiding party returning to the village. This group had been raiding settlers and brought Custer's ferocious destruction to the apparently unknowing villagers.[49] A kidnapped white woman had also smuggled out a note pleading for rescue for herself and her toddler, they were among the fatalities, but it remains unclear who killed them.[50]

To what extent this surprise attack on a sleeping village where an American flag flew could be called a battle was at the time controversial and still remains so. Of the hundred and three Cheyennes Custer supposedly killed, only eleven were warriors and Custer lost nineteen cavalrymen. Custer would claim in his official report that he had killed a hundred and eleven warriors, but Evan S. Connell in his *Son of the Morning Star* names all eleven killed Indian warriors and states that the other ninety-two were women, children and the elderly.[51] James Donovan also mentions Custer's claim on casualties, but concludes that he was overstating, while Cheyenne estimates of thirty to forty fatalities of which half were warriors, were understatements.[52]

Broadsword's role in this is unknown, he may not have even been there, but this man who loved army life resigned soon after. However he clearly admired Custer as his first child, born in 1885, was named George Custer Broadsword.[53] Comparing his earlier sense of injustice concerning a female slave to what happened to Cheyenne women at the Washita shows what war can do to people, or

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[49] The raiding party is mentioned by James Donovan in his *A Terrible Glory: Custer and the Little Big Horn: The Last Great Battle of the American West.* New York: Little Brown and Company, 2008. p63, p65.
[50] Evan S. Connell, *Son of the Morning Star: General Custer and the Battle of the Little Big Horn.* 1984. London: Pan Books, 1986. pp181-182. The note is reproduced.
[51] O'Connell, p187.
[52] Donovan, p65.
[53] The Broadsword Family Tree. *Ancestry.com*

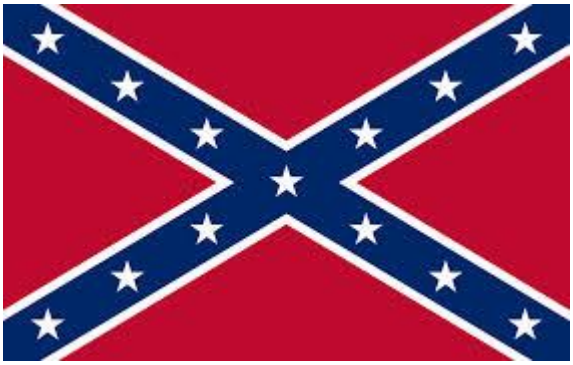
can possibly do. As a child Custer could not tolerate bullies and defended those attacked.

In 1870 Broadsword was employed as a wagon train scout, but quit over a wage dispute around halfway through the journey. After hauling freight for a time, he returned to farming and family life, having married in 1871. A physically strong man, he had a resilience and a toughness about him that not only got him through the 1850s border wars, the Civil War and the Indian War of the 1860s, but also the world of freighting and farming. The Broadswords had to battle prairie fires, hailstorms, drought and grasshopper plagues: despite this Israel Broadsword never gave up, never suffered a crushing defeat and showed the resilience that so many veterans, North and South, possessed. His son William recalled how after the death of his wife in 1900 he moved to Colorado, taking up farming there and around 1929-1930 he retired to live with his sons in Idaho. He took part in the 1949 *Life* magazine story which seemed to gain him public notice and he stayed in general good health until his last years. He is credited with being Missouri's last Civil War veteran and the last living veteran in the North-West states. He would have also been among the last Indian fighters. Ten days before he died he was rushed to Spokane Hospital and his death was much noted in the North West media. Widely respected, at his funeral, the largest building in his town could not hold not even half of the mourners present.



*

Richard William Cumptson

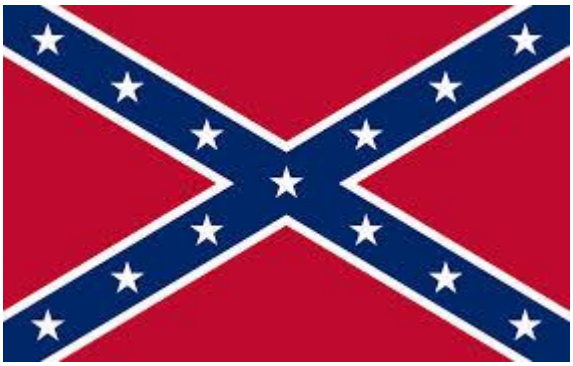


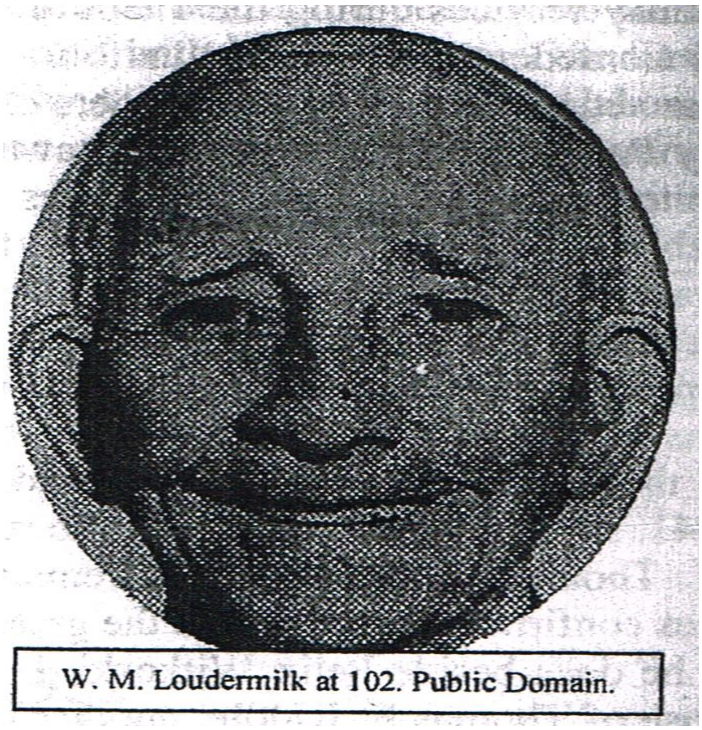
An encyclopaedia noted that he was born on 23rd May 1841 and died on the 5th September 1952, being of Virginia. Archivists in Two Virginia departments searched diligently and found nothing. Nobody seems to know why he was even listed amongst the last surviving Confederates. As no evidence has yet emerged for his existence in Virginian government records, he almost certainly could not have been faking for the pension.

Official Records list a William J. Cumpston as having served in the 47th Virginia Regiment. An R. J. Cumpston served in the 1st Georgia Cavalry and a James Cumpston served in the 12th Missouri. Several Cumpston's served in the West Virginian Unionist forces. That was all that was known then and the situation is essentially the same at present.

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William Murphy Loudermilk





W. M. Loudermilk at 102. Public Domain.

Welcome to the morass

Result: His Confederate service is very probable, but much more clarification about it is needed.

Date of Birth: 27th October 1847 but 23rd October 1848 about 1850, 1851 or 1857 have all been claimed.

Date of Death 18th September 1952.

Age at enlistment: uncertain, thirteen to sixteen with the latter most likely

Rank: Like Witkoski he started as a cavalry water boy and then a bugler, a private and a sharpshooter in the Atlanta Campaign.

Unit: uncertain, possibly the 36th Georgia (Boyles) or what is more likely, the 6th North Carolina Cavalry.

Reasons Against Verification: Nearly every writer who mentions calls him a fake and uses or refers to the 1900 census where his age is given as forty-nine and his birth year as 1851. After earlier research on the censuses made me doubt their veracity I checked the 1910 census and got the obviously impossible birth year figure of 1857 and nearly joined the deriders. In vexation I tried the 1920 census which came up with "about 1857".

No chance exists that these census dates come from one of the other William Loudermilks. In the 1910 census he gives his full name and the Jonesboro Arkansas locale which matches the other censuses. The Kerrer's Chapel Cemetery staff where Loudermilk and his wife were buried were apparently so bewildered by all these date confusions that they used the internet to put out a public appeal for help – and got it. With information about the census records from 1900, 1910, 1920 and 1930.[54] His surname is misspelled way off four times out of four and in three different ways. His birthdate in 1900 is written as 1841 not 1851 but his age is listed as 49 not 59. If this appears as not bizarre enough, he reverse ages so that he becomes younger in 1910 when his age is listed as 43. To believe the census so far we must believe that Loudermilk found the fountain of youth. However like Ayesha in Rider Haggard's *She* this life giving elixir can be treacherous and age the taker with impossible ferocity as poor Loudermilk ages twenty years in ten by the 1920 census. Here he is supposedly sixty-three and ages another nineteen years in the next decade. Finally the 1930 census taken in the middle of the year, gets his age of eighty-two right and came close to his real birth year, giving 1848, but his middle initial stays wrong. His wife suffers similar impossibilities with her birthdate and name, so she did not fill their census out.[55] For some reason the Loudermilk's missed the 1940 census.

In the response blog to the cemetery request one typo involving Loudermilk's birth year appears and the suggested ancestry disagrees with the main family version. Even so, much of what was put here, (such as differing birth dates) matches the computerised census rolls. The computerised version of the 1930

[54] Melanie Atkins, posted response to *Kerrer's Chapel Cemetery Need Help*. October 28th 2007.
[55] *Ibid.*

census notes the original errors and corrects. Other bits elsewhere seem tidied up with records being computerised. One fact worth noting is that the census records show that he did not alter his age to get a pension, he applied in 1949 or 1950.

Loudermilk has been labelled a fraud on the basis of his age in the 1900 census: this seemed so, but it is remarkable what investigations reveal. Misspelling his own name three times and in two different ways? Lowering and raising his age? Writing out a different name for his wife on four different censuses? The censuses were the strongest evidence that Loudermilk was a fraud, but as evidence for anything - for or against, they are worthless and would be laughed out of court, assuming a fool took them there.

This immediately raises the question of why make obviously impossible and contradictory statements on census forms? Did someone else fill out the forms for him, perhaps two different people? Was the census official a foreigner without much English? Was he illiterate and mixed up his numbers? Loudermilk does not sound addled or senile in the 1949 and 1951 newspaper coverage, let alone fifty years before. The answer was probably the patronage system for loyal party members, jobs for the boys, regardless of ability. With the evidence against his Civil War service discredited, what evidence goes towards verification?

Evidence for Verification: Hoping to find in the 1880 census evidence about his birth and typing that and his name in got the *Descendants of George Washington Loudermilk* website. I had already investigated some Loudermilk genealogy websites and found nothing that answered my questions, but in this massive work compiled by Aline Loudermilk Jones which was finished in 2007, William Murphy Loudermilk appears. His parents, his birthdate, siblings, marriage, bequest in a will, move to Arkansas and his burial are all correctly mentioned. So his Civil War life with the tantalizingly brief "he served the CSA." and "See Aline's File"[56] That file does not appear in her genealogy and she remains unfindable at this point, although enquiries are underway.

The authenticity of this genealogy appears obvious. Well over a thousand people are listed in Aline Loudermilk's work, many of them in great and prosaic detail and the information comes from family bibles, military records, land sales, births, marriages, wills, bequests, death registers and yes - censuses. William Murphy Loudermilk had a life cursed buy censuses. Although his siblings are in

[56] Aline Loudermilk Jones, *Descendants of George Washington Loudermilk.* 2007. www.roots web. ancestry .com gaunion/gw/text entry pp38-40

the 1860 census in the genealogy he is not listed with them by name, but curiously is recorded as an unnamed male aged twelve. Did he presciently avoid the census taker or being in a sullen mood refuse to give his name? Was not being listed with the others a punishment for a sibling squabble? Or were parents disputing what his name should be? Whatever the reason other documents show that nobody else could be there. Among Daniel's children he appears as listed with his siblings with his October 1847 birth date and mentioned with the other siblings as Daniel's children. William Loudermilk gets a specific mention again in his father's1900 will.

Websites listed him as a fraud because he had no evidence: now we have abundant evidence. The family genealogy can only be considered strong evidence for verification, but precise details of his service are a morass.[57] Even his middle name or initial takes time to find. Two journalist's accounts from the 1950s give us L or W. His full name was William Murphy Loudermilk and if he ever signed his name that way on enlisting our lives and his would have been easier. His birthdate is even more confusing. October 27th 1847 is on his tombstone and a personal memorial, and in the Loudermilk genealogy tree, while October 17th is on the same *Find a Grave* memorial site that has the photos of the tombstone and the memorial. It also reproduces a brief September 18th 1952 New York Times article that states he died aged a 104 years.[58] The *Arkansas in the Civil War Message Board* website gives his birthdate as October 23rd 1848

Only the 1847 birthdate works with his professed age on enlistment and his given battle record. He said he volunteered at sixteen, so if he was born in October 1848 he must have been a soldier in October 1864 at the earliest. This means he could not have been in any of the battles he claimed, excepting Nashville, fought that December.

One web site lists him as serving in the Twentieth Virginia Cavalry. They had a William Loudermilk, who had no middle initial and that unit was never in the fight against Sherman where William Murphy Loudermilk said he served. The claim on the memorial stone states that he was a private in the North Carolina Cavalry. William A. Loudermilk served with the 2nd North Carolina, but he enlisted in June 1861 and was discharged in February 1863 with a disability. He

[57] *Ibid.*
[58] Pvt William Murphy Loudermilk (1847-1952) *Find A Grave Memorial*.

was a cousin, being listed in Aline Loudermilk Jones's massive genealogy.[59] This man with the wrong initial apparently was born in 1841 and lived to 1950. His regiment did not serve anywhere near where William Murphy Loudermilk said he served and he never mentioned being disabled. He enjoyed good health into advanced old age.[60] There was a training unit with the 2nd North Carolina, Company F, their junior reserves. Their muster rolls show that most of them were also born around 1847 like Loudermilk and like him, were usually North Carolinians. After training and presumably maturing more in North Carolina they were sent to fighting units, including apparently their own, but no Loudermilk appears on their roll. Even so, William Murphy Loudermilk training here sounds a likely possibility.

Another strong possibility for his unit is the 6th North Carolina Cavalry, which was the only North Carolina cavalry unit that did serve on the Western arena when and where William Murphy Loudermilk said he was serving in the cavalry. The unit was with General Johnston from August 1863 onwards and then continuously with Hood and Johnston again until his surrender. This regiment were recruited in Loudermilk's area, western North Carolina. Folk's 6th North Carolina Regiment (65th) was an amalgamation of forces that had served before its formation in 1863. There was also an untidy and incomplete amalgamation of the muster rolls of those assorted forces. In the modern introduction to the new unit's roll it is made clear that those rolls were muddled, incomplete, left out a group stationed away from camp and some parts are no longer existent. There are no Loudermilks listed here, but he may have served with the 6th regiment and it would explain why no record of him could be found – and why he has that memorial.

In a 1951 newspaper interview William Murphy Loudermilk claimed to have enlisted aged sixteen in 1864. He said he served as a water boy in Hood's cavalry, then became a bugler and then been promoted to sharpshooter and fought in the battles of Chattanooga, Marietta, near Atlanta and Nashville, staying in the army until the end, five months later.[61] Chattanooga was a siege that ended in late November 1863, so William Murphy Loudermilk seems to be misremembering,

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[59] Moore, *Vol.2* Muster Role of the 19th North Carolina Cavalry. p114.
[60] Evelyn Rard, Posted to *Arkansas In The Civil War.* 5/1/2009. This was written in 1949 and for the Jonesboro *Sun.* No author is credited. It describes Loudermilk still gardening and walking a distance.
[61] *Civil War Men in Ranks Archive* org/stream 5 civilwarmeninranks. This website is a collection of snippets from newspapers and magazines in the early 1950s about aged veterans.

but it is possible that some cavalry actions continued on in the area in 1864. What is more likely is that eighty-six years later his chronology was confused. Some infantry regiments recruited in Western North Carolina were in most of these battles and one, the 39th North Carolina, contained several soldiers named Loudermilk, mostly cousins, including one with his first name and initial.

It would seem that the four Loudermilks from North Carolina who appear on the 'Arkansas in the Civil War' noticeboard would be the place to start, but one died in the war, another was discharged for being too old and of the others, the youngest William M. who enlisted in September 1861 was born April 16th 1834 according to a Georgia census.[62] All that is clear from Moore's record is that along with his brothers and cousins Leander, Ben, Allen and several others, he transferred companies within the 39th North Carolina.

This William M. Loudermilk is not the same man who survived to 1952, but a cousin to William Murphy Loudermilk. They have different entries on the family tree, where he is listed as a deserter. So were his brothers Allen Lafayette and Leander A.M. but those two Loudermilks returned with the spring in 1863. As Margaret Mitchell describes in *Gone With the Wind* many in the Army of Tennessee deserted in the autumn and winter months when fighting usually stopped, but then many of these frequently returned to their units after harvesting crops at home. William M. vanishes from the war before late February 1863 and from the family genealogy in the first half of 1863. The latter records him as a deserter on June 30th of that year: he was not returning to fight in the summer campaign. He may not have had his return recorded, being a returned deserter was a dangerous game and could lead to execution, as reading or seeing Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain* vividly depicts. The other seven William Loudermilks in official records and the family tree were in units placed elsewhere, Virginia and Missouri mainly.

There was also a William M. Loudermilk born in the summer of 1850 from the Randolph County branch of the Loudermilks. They were black and apparently emancipated. While the birth year matches those in one census and there were black Confederates, for this to be the man described as the one who lived until

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[62] Loudermilk Jones gives his birthdate and his military record. *William Loudermilk 1848-1952* e-mail 4/30/2009 *The Arkansas in the Civil War Message Board*; Moore Vol. 3 Muster Roll of the 39th North Carolina Regiment p92 p102.

1952 he must have misremembered his age for enlistment and the evidence for his being the son of Daniel Loudermilk must be disregarded or disproved.

Unacknowledged enlistment in the 6th North Carolina Cavalry for William Murphy Loudermilk is the most plausible and easy answer, it does cover the phrase about being in Hood's cavalry, and their history places him where he claimed, but it leaves much unanswered.

Although the date of enlistment and its locale is not where it was expected another likely claimant who could be William Murphy Loudermilk has been found. If someone can prove that he was a fifty year old from Savannah called Washington Mathew Loudermilk, fine, but until something like that happens or proof that he was in the 6th NC Cavalry turns up, he looks good. While negatives are not firm proof it is interesting that apart from the deserter cousin already mentioned, no other W.M. Loudermilks emerge in Confederate service against Sherman in the massive North Carolina genealogy or the one for the Georgia cousins or the extremely detailed Loudermilk notice board; so who is this man if not William Murphy Loudermilk?

This discovery would plausibly explain much, particularly removing three of the biggest barriers to believing Loudermilk, his absence from *Official Records,* the water boy story when no record of his enlistment in a cavalry regiment is known, and why an adolescent wandered a long way from home, seeing Sherman's havoc in Georgia, but is not already in the army. He said he joined Hood's cavalry after seeing Sherman's devastation, this caused him to enlist.[63] As he claimed to be in the battles around Atlanta, this would put his enlistment as after Hood's promotion in mid July 1864, if he is remembering correctly. Hood did not command cavalry till then or is this another misremembering?

The unit muster roll he appears in is reproduced in Lillian A. Henderson's 1959-1964 Collection. *Roster of the Confederate Soldiers of Georgia*. This has an introduction that explains much. Captain John Loudermilk applied to raise a force of cavalry from East Tennessee, Northern Georgia and Western North Carolina where he was from; the latter being of course William Murphy Loudermilk's home area. Apparently he recruited among his relatives who could very likely see the appeal of being commanded by one of them. Robert was his brother, Allen

[63] Mark Polston, *William Loudermilk: The Last Confederate.* www.couchgenweb.com/civilwar/cwvet.htm

Lafayette his nephew, other have the same names as cousins[64]. However they were not given government permission and so while probably initially assembling and training as cavalry, did not become cavalry. Eventually were accepted as infantry, Company D the 36th Georgia (Boyles).[65] Is this what William Murphy Loudermilk meant when he said he started as a water boy in Hood's cavalry but became a sharpshooter? He may have misremembered the bit about Hood or emphasised that they ended up with Hood. He may have also misremembered his age as sixteen not fourteen or not considered being a water boy a real enlistment. It is the only snag, or perhaps not: was he also still a water boy when Hood took command two years later and then he enlisted as a fighting soldier? If it happened that way did he consider that to be his enlistment, perhaps with Folk's 6th North Carolina Cavalry?

Loudermilk gave no precise dates for his enlistment or for how long he was a water boy for. Historians were often looking for two different units, one cavalry, and one infantry and not finding Loudermilk's name in any, believed it to be a story. The situation with Company D fits and so does a name in that Company, Private W.M. Loudermilk.

In fact there are eight other Loudermilks also enlisted on March 11th 1862. These men are distant relatives of, but not members of the Georgian Loudermilk family who supplied six soldiers for the Confederacy, four of that family were with Lee in Virginia and another enlisting in December 1863.[66] This gathering of same day enlisted Loudermilks provides a plausible explanation that fits in with William Murphy Loudermilk's statements about his age. His father Daniel was with the 29th North Carolina and as the eldest child he had no older brothers, but of the others with this W.M. Loudermilk three (apart from their commander) have the names of cousins and uncles from Cherokee County, North Carolina. They are specifically mentioned in the family genealogy as serving in the 36th. Another, Seymore is just listed by his initial and gets written up as "served CSA" like several of the Loudermilks. With so many men away this probably left no one to look after him

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[64] Aline Loudermilk Jones.

[65] Lillian A. Henderson, Introduction to the Company D Muster Roll 955.*Roster of the Confederate Soldiers of Georgia*. Hopeville: Congina and Porter, 1959-1964. Five Vols. Computer Edition by the Hathi Trust.

[66] *Loudermilk Lineage* 1. Previous Citation*; Patriot Ancestor Album* United Daughters of the Confederacy. An e-book Paducah: Turner Publishing Company, 1999. This book lists the Georgian Loudermilks and their service in Virginia. p126 .*The Civil War Soldiers Database* also lists them as serving there.

or he did not want to be excluded from the other family males, so he was taken along and given a safe job as water boy when he was fourteen.

This would explain why he was in Georgia when he did not go there to enlist. What is known is that along with A.L. Loudermilk this W.M. Loudermilk was given a sick furlough which specified "in Georgia" in July 1862 and has "no later record" – with that unit. Three other Company D Loudermilks also have this "No later Record' and another's entries stop in June 1862. These entries are all without a suggestion of desertion. Two others are listed as "absent without leave" and another, James is listed as a deserter.[67] Desertion and prolonged absence are usually listed. However of the ten Company D Loudermilks, three have nothing for after mid-1862 and the recorded events for all thin out for after August 1863. Only four record anything for 1864 and the one entry for any Loudermilk in 1865 concerns a prisoner of war. The 36th Georgia were doing a lot in the later stages of the war, yet little seems recorded. Does this reflect combinations of a lack of time, paper and/or clerks? Or does this mean that W.M. Loudermilk like several others, stayed with the 36th for the duration of the conflict, but did nothing remarkable or worth officially recording? This must be very possible. His claim about serving in battles from Chattanooga to Nashville and lasting to the surrender makes sense as this regiment was in all these battles and it was part of Johnson's surrender in April 1865.

Did these men they make their way home from Georgia to western North Carolina or join the 39th because they had relatives in it or because their regiment was amongst those besieged in Vicksburg? Four of the other Company D Loudermilks were listed as paroled at Vicksburg, so W.M's company was there, but he was not. Not one of those Loudermilks paroled there appears on the 39th N.C. Muster Roll. Being sick from July 1862 until at least September 1863 seems a stretch, but perhaps he was kept on somewhere - as a water boy? If W.M. Loudermilk stayed in Georgia on a long furlough or returned to the 36th after July 1862 it was after such memorable battles as Murfreesboro, Champion Hill, the Vicksburg siege, and Chickamauga, events unlikely to be forgotten, but unclaimed by William Murphy Loudermilk. Or did he return home only to be eventually be part of another unit? Did he transfer? He is not listed as a deserter, absentee, transfer or a prisoner on the 36th Georgia rolls.

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[67] Henderson, *Muster Roll of Company D* 36th *Regiment Georgia Volunteer Infantry Army of Tennessee CSA Bartow County Georgia* pp960-961.

Another strong piece of evidence that he stayed on with them is that William Murphy Loudermilk said he was in the Chattanooga campaign. The 36th Georgia (Boyles) was in that campaign in Cummins Brigade, in Carter Stevenson's division. Like the 6th NC Cavalry, the 36th Georgia was always fighting where William Murphy Loudermilk said he fought, but was W.M. Loudermilk there?

Are William Murphy Loudermilk, his cousin the deserter and W.M. Loudermilk two or three different people? Is it possible that W.M. of the 36th Georgia who enlisted two weeks after the deserter's transfer is the same person? The 39th was sent to Knoxville hundreds of miles away in February 1862 and then went on to the war in Kentucky. Is it possible that William M. rushed away to join the 36th as W.M. Loudermilk? No record of a desertion emerged until months later. That stretches the plausible! Those two men were almost certainly different people. Perhaps he was not William Murphy Loudermilk, but why are there no other findable records of him in pensions, genealogies and military records?

Apart from the census mess this double or triple identity confusion probably caused William Murphy Loudermilk (1847-1952) to be often considered a fake. Officials may have found nothing for him but found the records of his cousin, the other William M. and probably assumed he was lying on age grounds alone – and/or they refused to pay a deserter. It would also explain the contempt William Murphy Loudermilk would have got from some townspeople if the story got out in Jonesboro. It may well explain why an ancient old man left home and travelled extensively and doggedly around North Carolina trying to find people who could verify his claim amongst his many records. As his cousin William A. of the 2nd Cavalry lived until 1950, perhaps he hoped he could verify.[68] Travelling over a thousand miles and spending months trying to clear his reputation would have cost considerably and meant more than the pension. Surely a deserter or a fraud would have quietly slunk away hoping for no exposure, but an honest man proud of his service would strive as he did to prove himself.

There are other problems with creditability and Loudermilk. Chattanooga was an 1863 battle and WML said he was there but he also said he joined in 1864. Locals where he lived laughed at his Confederate claims and baited him over it.[69] Why? Did the pension rejection and its reasons become common knowledge? Three resemblances to Witkoski may be coincidence, but they are long ones.

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[68] Aline Loudermilk Jones,
[69] Polston p2.

As his records remain unfound or unpublicised, the best evidence for his service remains that of W. M. Loudermilk of the 36th Georgia, at least for a time.

These factors all make a detailed verified history conjectural, but there is that family tree that explains so much. He was very probably the last North Carolinian Confederate soldier, the last Confederate living in Arkansas, the last Confederate cavalryman and among the last three living men to have fought for the Confederacy.

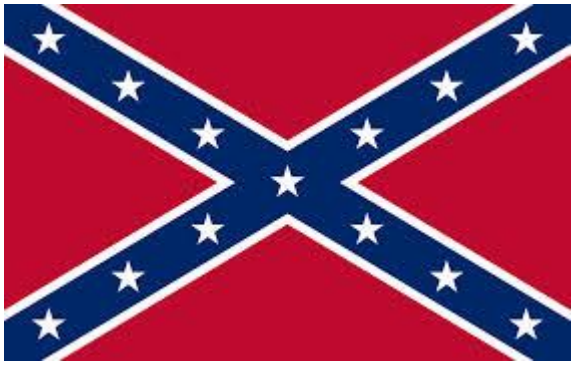


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Professor Hoar who had substantial contact with Loudermilk's family and did much original research, has extra information, muh of it referring to primary resources in his The South's Last Boys in Gray pages. 1688-1690

Thomas Jordan Bush also known as Thomas Joshua Bush





Result: His Confederate Service is verified √

Date of Birth: usually given as 9th July 1845 but perhaps 1844 or 1847. The most likely is 9th July 1846. Some censuses also give 1849 or even 1850.

Date of Death: 11th November 1952

Age at enlistment: One day before his twelfth, fifteenth or sixteenth birthday.

Rank: Private.

Unit: Company B. The Ramah Guards 14th Georgia Infantry. July-October 1861. Then the 2nd Georgia Militia from July 1864 is likely. The Georgia Militia from October 1864 until April 1865 is verified. Inconclusive evidence exists for military service between August 1863 and October 1864.

Service: Infantry in the Army of Northern Virginia and then the Georgia Militia.

Combat Experience: Military records show that he claimed to have fought at Cross Keys. This battle occurred in Virginia in June 1862 but this is probably a mistake with Cross Lanes August 1861 or what is more likely East Macon 1864 being intended. He fought against Sherman's invasion perhaps from late 1863 and

definitely from October 1864 until the war's end. He also claimed to have fought at Gettysburg, Atlanta and Duncan's Old Field. Some conjectural evidence for the latter exists, but evidence for being at Gettysburg and Appomattox goes against the record.

Length of service: By official records he was an 1861 volunteer and was there at the war's end, although perhaps he was out of service from October 1861 until October 1864.

Evidence of Service apart from his own accounts. At least two different units as listed above recorded his service. This alone should be enough to verify his military record. Several other verified Civil War documents explicitly applying to him are in the files of *ancestry.com.* A Civil War era photo of him was posted on the web in 2014. This is more evidence than most soldiers have and why his record is disputed is a mystery. William J. Bush may be the third last surviving Confederate combatant.

However although he served, there are problems with his record and statements, Almost certainly initially caused by trying to remember details from seventy years past and then by his tall stories meant as jokes.

Once again census records cause problems. The birthdate on his tombstone and in most accounts is 10th July 1845.[70] Apparently Bush lied to get in by adding a year to his age in 1861 and then made errors when filling out a form in the 1930s. He was ninety or more at the time and frequently could not recall requested details, but he admitted this and after over seventy years of time passing, who could blame him?[71]

A William Bush is shown as born in Wilkinson County in about 1849 in the census of 1850. This is the county where Bush was supposedly born in 1845.[72] Census records show no other males called William Bush born there except for one born in 1841. This is probably the evidence indirectly referred In 'Fakers' which

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[70] *Southern Graves: Telling the Tales of Tombstones.* 6th September 2010. 'The Last Confederate of Georgia: William Joshua Bush.' HTTP:/blog.southern graves.net/2010/09/last-confederate-of-georgia-general.html. This source contains a picture of his gravestone.

[71] Serrano pp94-95; *Bush William Joshua: Confederate Pension Applications.* August 1936. http:/sos state ga.us 20 11cdm/co,poundobject/collection/TestApps/id/149449/rec/1

[72] Robert Calhoun, "Last Georgia Civil War Veteran Dead' *The Montgomery Monitor Mount Vernon*. November 13th 1952; Wilkinson Family History & Genealogy Message Board. http//boards. Ancestry.com thread.aspx?mv.

states that Bush was fifteen when the war ended and so could not have been in the war.[73] Before disputing that logic it is worthwhile looking at the Georgia 1850 census. A William J. Bush (the only one to use the correct initial) was born in Laurens Georgia in "about 1847" and two other Georgians named William Bush are listed. One was born in Stewart in 1847, the other in Houston Georgia in 1848.

Several other Georgians have this name but with an initial that exclude them as being William J. Bush. He is incidentally described as marrying on December 29th 1861.[74] Married at twelve?!! *!? Even if that marriage date is wrong (and it probably is) and Bush was born in 1849, this does not necessarily exclude him from Confederate service. He said twice once in his 1936 pension application and again in a 1949 interview that he was discharged from the regular army because he was too young. He also said that he was in the Georgia State Militia in 1864 - and they were taking boys. Union soldiers at the battle of Griswoldville found Confederate boys "not over fifteen years old" among the dead. Bush was at this battle. A first reading of Bush's Confederate service using his accepted dates gives an impression that he was discharged in 1861 for being too young at fifteen or sixteen. Being too young at eleven or twelve is also possible – but how did this short statured man initially fool them?

Other problems with Bush's credibility soon emerge. The middle name on his tombstone and some documents is Joshua, not Jordan. These factors alone cause uncertainty and Bush's faulty memory cause more. In his last years Bush claims to have been Lee's bodyguard, to have been at the battles of Cross Keys, Gettysburg, Atlanta and an unknown battle called Duncan's Old Field and then at the surrender at Appomattox. He initially seems to have no record of himself in a unit for any of these battles.

In three of these battles research here provides plausible explanations. He made vague and seemingly implausible supportive statements for his veteran's pension claim. At that time, Bush said he served in the war for about six months, and then wrote what is apparently "don't remember of discharge" in bad handwriting next to that. When asked for his militia units name he wrote that he was in the Georgia State Militia but could not remember exactly but they were called Joe Brown's Pets. This was a derisive nickname applied to all those units in Georgia held back for the defence of the state by the Governor Joe Brown, not to a

[73] Kevin Randle, *Fakers!* A Different Perspective. Sept 8th 2007. p4.
[74] *William Joshua Bush (1845-1952)* Find A Grave Memorial. August 21st 2006. p2.

single unit. However accounts of the Georgia State Militia after Atlanta's fall list it as just that, Bush remembered their name correctly but assumed it was descriptive, not official and that they had some other title he did not know. There were no grand titles or small designations for the 3,500 old men and boys that made up that one unit. The most that was done was to later label them the "1st" or the 2nd Regiment. At the battle of Griswoldville which was their biggest fight, they were called Joe Brown's Pets.[75] Bush stated that he had not been allowed to re-join the army because he was too young and to have served in the Georgia militia and surrendered with them at the war's end. At one stage in one application document he said he had stated all that he could remember of his war service.[76] He may have been trying to recall the 2nd Georgia Militia Regiment, a unit of ninety men that were part of the militia division that were in the battles for Atlanta: a William Bush, probably from Laurens County, was enlisted in their ranks in Company A in July 1864. This would explain why Bush was adamant that he fought at Atlanta, where this unit fought. They also fought at Griswoldville, (referred to as Duncan's Old Field) both were battles where Bush also claimed to have fought.

A 1949 interview with him 'Georgia's Last Confederate' by Wylly Folk St John clears up some of this uncertainty.[77] He admitted to lying to enlist, serving in Company B 14th Georgia Infantry, and said he would have lied to get out, then contradicted himself saying he served until the end and would do it again. He stated he spent much of the war under General Gordon (which apparently meant service in Virginia sometime between 1861 and 1865) and some of it under General Johnston. This meant service in Virginia in 1861-1862 and /or Georgia from late 1863 to July 1864 and perhaps also eastern Georgia and the Carolinas in 1865. The computerised muster roll typed up in 1963 of 'The Ramah Guards' Company B. 14th Georgia Infantry gives information that ties in with some of his statements given in the 1936 pension claim, but also raises more confusion. It gives his war service as lasting from enlistment on July 9th 1861 (the day before his twelfth, fifteenth or sixteenth birthday) to a discharge on 22nd October that year.

Enlistments were for 90 days and he may have been found out to be under aged as he said. He must have returned to Georgia for some time after this. His war record lists Cross Keys as his first battle, which is odd, as this was fought in

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[75] See footnote 29

[76] *Bush William Joshua: Confederate Pension Applications.* Pages 1-5 computer reprint

[77] Wyilly Folk St. John. 'Georgia's Last Confederate' April 24th 1949. William Joshua Bush (1845-1952) Memorial.

Virginia in June 1862 and was followed by another battle the next day at Port Republic, which is not listed on his record. In his August 1936 pension application he denied ever being wounded or captured, so why wasn't he at the next day's battle? This makes for a gap of two years four months in his war record. His unit did serve at Gettysburg where he said he was, but unlike other battles, Gettysburg is not in his muster roll war record list.

However there are other serious problems with what he says. The Georgia regiments who fought at Cross Keys in June 1862 were the 12th Georgia infantry and the 21st Georgia infantry. Bush does not seem to have been enlisted in either. Although the handwriting is nearly illegible at times his records then seem to refer to being mustered out in April 1862. If Bush served in this theatre of war after being discharged in October 1861 there seem to be no trace apart from the word Cross Keys on his record.

One possible explanation of two could be that when the 14th Georgia were in the Kanawha Valley in 1861 under the command of General Floyd, they were one of three regiments and supporting units that were part of Floyd's force of several thousand.[78] They may have taken part in the Battle of Cross Lanes on August 26th 1861. There were only forty Confederate casualties and at least twice that for the Union, but the thousands involved would have made Cross Lanes looked like a major battle to Bush.[79] The larger, more famous Cross Keys battle made more of an impression. The two locales in north-western Virginia were in fairly close proximity to someone travelling up from Georgia.

However there is another battle that is the most likely explanation among the three possibilities. Historically it is known as the Battle of East Macon. It occurred near Macon Georgia on July 30th 1864, was part of the Atlanta Campaign and the Confederate unit most heavily involved in the fighting were the Georgia Militia. This was where and when Bush said he was involved. The village of Cross Keys was very close nearby and in the way of the Union attack. [80] Rebel militia man Sam Criswold recalled the battle for a magazine article in 1909. He located their militia "on the left of the road to Cross Keys" where they came under artillery bombardment, but eventually routed the enemy and captured its commander after

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[78] *Official Records* History of the 14TH Georgia Infantry Regiment

[79] *Wikipedia* "The Battle of Kessler's Cross Lanes The alternative title is just Cross Lanes. A fairly detailed account is *7th Ohio Volunteers at Kessler's Cross Lanes.* www.oberlinheritagecentreorg/research/lear/kesslers

[80]Scaife and Bragg p37.

taking around eighty casualties.[81] The militia were then placed in the defences of Atlanta, where they stayed until the city fell. They were praised for their stoic courage for enduring regular "close fire of the enemy mostly night and day" during much of that time.[82]

Another similar confusion that can be explained seems to be over General Gordon. The 14th Georgia was formed at the locale of Gordon, but apparently did not serve in General John B. Gordon's famous Georgia Brigade, nor was he the 14th Georgia regiment's colonel or its brigadier, at least officially. Its brigadiers were Floyd, J.R. Anderson, and E.L. Thomas at Gettysburg and after.[83] Bush may have been confusing the famous General John B. Gordon with the officer George W. Gordon, who was in the fighting in Georgia and Tennessee, rising to the rank of brigadier. Bush may have served under John B. Gordon in some unknown unit if he was mustered out in April 1862.

Bush lists other battles that were fought in Georgia in 1864, including a battle listed as 'Atlanta' which was actually a series of battles fought in July–August 1864. Bush's militia enlistment however, dates from October 1864 to the militia surrender in Georgia in 1865. Margaret Mitchell, a journalist before she was a novelist, spent years doing her homework using family stories, history, eyewitnesses and documents before *Gone With the Wind* was published.[84] Bush himself said the movie was like being there.[85] She also mentions the paper shortage being so bad that replies were written between the lines of the first letter, so how many records were kept in Georgia in 1864?

She writes of Georgia at this time, sinking into destruction and chaos, where youngsters try to enlist, jails were emptied as prisoners were made recruits and elderly gentlemen marched in the infantry. She had it right; historically prisoners and cadets were joined in Confederate units as boys were accepted.[86] From the viewpoint of history Samuel Carter III tells a similar story in his *The Siege of*

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[81] *Ibid*, pp37-38 p340 s/n p51.
[82] *Ibid*, p39. The authors give a long passage from a contemporary report by the militia's commander, General Gustavus W. Smith p39.
[83] *Official Records*. History of the 14th Georgia Infantry.
[84] Anne Edwards, *The Road to Tara: The Life of Margret Mitchell.* 1985. London: Coronet/Hodder & Stoughton, 1985. pp136-137 and passim through the first half of her biography.
[85] Serrano p94.
[86] *Wikipedia* "Joseph E. Brown" quoting a long highlighted passage from *Georgia Land and People.* (1919) by Frances Letcher Mitchell

Atlanta 1864, as does Shelby Foote in his sections dealing with the 1864 Georgia campaign in *The Civil War; a Narrative. Red River to Appomattox.* Daniel Cone's recent *Last to Join the Fight: The 66th Georgia Infantry* is a well-researched history of the last Georgia regiment. William R. Scaife and William Harris Bragg do the same with the whole militia in *Joe Brown's Pets: the Georgia Militia 1861-1865.* The second half of General John Bell Hood's memoir *Advance and Retreat* is permeated with his concern about the desperate situation, manpower losses, recruitment and their replacement. The expressed concerns were shared by the state government and acted upon with diligence. All of these works recount in detail the desperate scouring for recruits and the determined and ruthless effort to stave off defeat.

Given the way that the state government scoured Georgia for every able white man from their early teens to their sixties, then used them to face Sherman's brutal invasion and that Bush already had military experience, he was almost certainly doing what he claimed: fighting at Atlanta and Cross Keys Georgia months before his written up enlistment date – or perhaps it was written up in any one of the three units which took part in those battles and had a William Bush enrolled – in the 2nd Militia Regiment, (the most likely) the 63rd or the 66th. With every available white man under the conscription edict, with Bush's 1861 service and his age, what strains credibility is that he would *not* have served somewhere. The questions become where? For how long? And what was his service like?

In itself Bush's muster roll record would have proved that he was among the last genuine Confederates. His accepted,very probably incomplete war record looks like this:

Enlisted, serving in Company B 14TH Georgia Infantry, 9th July to 22nd October 1861, when he was discharged. Listed as at the battle of Cross Keys. Militia Service from October 1864 to April-May 1865.

He had his enlistment recorded in the Georgia Militia in October 1864. This was when the militia were reassembled at Macon as militiamen were returning from a furlough granted for harvesting.[87] Redoing or adding to the muster rolls was a likely part of this reorganising and so Bush was enrolled, whenever his service started. It lasted till the militia's surrender at Stephens Station, near Macon.

[87] Scaife and Bragg, p43.

His listings include taking part in the battles of Cross Keys, Atlanta Milledgeville and Duncan's old Field.[88] Milledgeville is mentioned, but probably as a mustering point or garrison duty as there was apparently little resistance when Sherman invaded the town and burnt it. Bush could have been part of that scant resistance or skirmishes or battles fought near there.

Duncan's Old field sounds an odd reference; it does not show up on listed detailed civil war battlefield lists. However one of the few battles fought by the militia was called the battle of Griswoldville fought on November 22nd 1864 and although it was named for a nearby town, the Georgia State Militia charged across open farm fields at Duncan's Farm, towards Duncan's Ridge.[89] After this the militia were involved in preparing and manning Savannah's defences. They were involved in evacuating that city just before Christmas and then guarding Macon, Georgia's new de facto capitol. The surrender there was on April 20th.

The Confederate forces there were held captive at a stockade nearby at what had been a Union officers' prison.[90] Governor Brown gave the formal surrender followed by paroles on May 8th. However other statements cannot possibly be true: being Lee's bodyguard, and being at Appomattox. Others are dubious or ambiguous. His statement about serving six months, when even the records we have clearly show at least nine combined and indicate much more, his vagaries and omissions, the confusion over his birthdate and middle name and some of his delight in his celebrity role in old age initially change a certainty into a probable for many. Virtually every writer on the topic treats his war record as probable, but he could not fabricate two muster rolls, a Civil War sickness record, his 1861 discharge papers or a payslip, all of which have been verified by the American Adjutant General in 1953: he was there.[91]

Other conjectural evidence fills in several gaps, revealing his vagaries to be essentially accurate. Bush may have understood the word "serve" in the departmental question of how long did he serve? He may have taken that as

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[88] Bush, William Joshua*: Confederate Pension Applications*

[89] "Griswoldville _The Gettysburg of Georgia' Stewart "Goober" Douglas *ACWS Newsletter* Spring, 2012. http://www.acws. Co.uk/archives/history/Gettysburg – Georgia.php.; Richard J. Lenz, *The Civil War in Georgia, An Illustrated Traveller's Guide*. p2. All three sources make some reference to Duncan's Farm or Duncan's Ridge.

[90] Scaife and Bragg, p159.

[91] These verified original 1861 documents can be viewed in William j. Bush'e file in *Ancestry.com*

meaning "serve in actual fighting conditions" not train in uniform or lie sick in hospital. If that is so his reply makes more sense, for his continuous militia service comes to six months. Alternatively he could have meant army service and discounted the militia service, and/or time in hospitals or furloughs. He wrote on his pension application that he could not remember many details and given explanations, this seems true.[92]



Bush loved to flirt, but he has gravitas and respect in the late 1940s photo.

Professor Hoar had substantial contact with Bush's family and did much original research, has extra information in his The South's Last Boys in Gray pages. 1691-1695

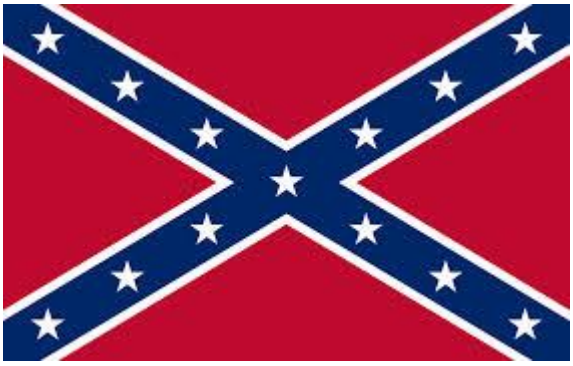
[92] Letter to Dan Askews 22nd August 1936; *Confederate Pension Applications*



This copyrighted photograph of William J. Bush is courtesy of Richard Menard. The original in different sizes and also other Civil War photographs can be viewed by going to the website "Images of William Joshua Bush' and then clicking 'open' on the small image, then follow the links.



Arnold D. Murray



Result: His Confederate Service is possible.

Date of Birth: given as 10th June 1846 perhaps 1847/1848 possibly as late as 1854/1855.

Date of Death: 26th November 1952

Age at enlistment: One newspaper in an obituary notice said he was fourteen, another eighteen and another stated he was a teenager. He said he was "a youngster."

Rank: Private

Unit: 11th South Carolina Infantry. (claimed)

Service: Training and Garrison on the coast of South Carolina.

Combat Experience: No combat experience

Length of service: "Late in the war" until just after Joseph Johnston's surrender in late April 1865

Evidence of Service apart from his own accounts. Private A. D. Murray of Company K 11TH South Carolina is listed in the muster roll where Arnold Murray of Orangeburg said he was. He also had a photograph of himself in Confederate uniform. Although he did not usually call himself Arnold D. Murray, he did so in the 1930 census. He had a photograph of himself in Civil War uniform. He correctly named his unit's commanding officers. On May 28th 1913 he attended a Confederate Veteran's Reunion in Tennessee, in his Confederate uniform, the last place where any faker with a grain of sense would go.[93]

In September 2014 in a posted discussion about Arnold Murray a relative by marriage stated that they had proof of his enlistment, his Confederate medal and letters he wrote (or dictated?) home during the Civil War. This information has yet to be sighted and verified.

This initially looks like a strong case, but this time even whacky census records and military enlistments have a strong point against verification of Confederate service.

Reason for being listed as debunked: Every ten years the federal census supposedly counts every American. A researcher points out that he does not appear in the 1850 census, therefore he could not have been born before 1850.[94] In the same note this researcher mentions that all the census records they have for Arnold Murray show that he was "born in the area of 1854-1855." This is vague for a census, which usually relies on precise ages or states otherwise. There may be confusion with others. For a start there are two Arnold Murrays listed in the later census documents, and an Arnold Murry, all three apparently born or raised in Charleston. Given the census levels of unreliability it is entirely possible that all three different entries are not for three people but for one. The misspelling Murry also appears in a later census document applying to Arnold Murray, who said that

[93] This is apparent from a group photo with names on the back in a computer catalogue specialising in Confederate antiques. Among the others are Pleasant Crump and a Thomas E. Riddle of Texas who is more likely to be a doctor of that name than Thomas Evans Riddle. TennRebGirl.com 3/4/2014 6

[94] JD Block posting in reply to Nancie O'Sullivan "Arnold Murray Confederate Veteran Living in 1950." http:/*genforum.genealogy*.com/sc/orangeburg/messages/415.html dated August 5th 2005

he was born near Holly Hill and Monks Corner before counties were drawn up.[95] This suggests there may be no records and that he might not have known his birth date, he was apparently illiterate or close to it.

The first Arnold Murray born in 1854 is listed in the 1870 census and is the man who claimed to be a veteran, but is the birth year right? It does however preclude the 1855 date. The other two males are born in 1855 and listed in the 1880 census as being in Charleston. Arnold Murray moved to Orangeburg in the Reconstruction era.

In 2010 one of the descendants of Arnold Murray's brother went into the 1870 census lists and found the Murray family. She found both of Arnold Murray's parents, and four of his siblings, giving full names which match those all correctly named in *Ancestry.com.* This website lists such reliable sources as assorted censuses, obituaries, grave stones, family photos and voter registration lists.[96] Arnold Murray appears there with his family, listed as sixteen years old around June to September 1870. One document lists his birth year as *about* 1854. Even if the survey was taken before he may have turned seventeen in 1870 (assuming June to be his birth month) he could have at the most, turned twelve the month after the war ended and may have been as young as ten, nearly eleven. This assumes that the family and the census taker were literate and filled out the forms correctly. Arnold was illiterate, were his parents? The census takers owed their position to patronage and political connections, not ability.

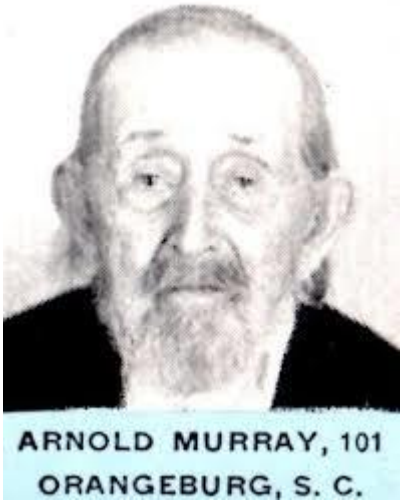
If the claim that he was born in 1854 proves to be true, the photograph which shows a young man who looks like he is in his early teens becomes evidence going more towards against his service than for it. It is possibly the photograph of a boy of at the most just turned twelve. However this seems unlikely, even if at the war's end, South Carolina Confederates took them this young for infantry – and they probably did. "Big for his age" applies to William Townsend and may apply here, but to give some idea of the odds consider some personal observations. I went to an all-male school of over a thousand students and have taught High School and some primary for over twenty-five years, that makes for contact with thousands of adolescent boys and the "big for his age" "mature looking for his

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[95] Unsigned report "S.C. Mourns Last rebel Soldier." *Charlotte Observer.* Nov 27th 1952.
[96] Louise Murray-Pino, "Re: Arnold Murray, the Last Confederate Veteran of the Carolinas died in 1952. January 3rd 2010. Genforum /Genealogy.com. In reply to JC Block. http://genforum.genealogy.comsc/messages/23787.html; *Ancestry.com* Note: Arnold Murray's mother was Elizabeth Olive Murray (nee Groom) His father was George Edward Allen Murray.

age" is fairly unusual. As a rough and generous estimate I would consider it applies to around four hundred out of several thousand I have taught or gone to school with. I did teach one such boy recently, turning twelve that year, he was continually taken for around sixteen or seventeen. He could, in a Confederate uniform, be the twin of the boy in the photograph. That makes me more receptive to the idea that Murray was a boy soldier than many.

Possibly both the census birth year of 1854 and his military service are true, even allowing for his youngest possible age. As previously mentioned, two Confederates soldiers were verified at ten and Susan R. Hull mentions coming across records of several aged eleven or twelve – and she did not launch a systematic search for them. Arnold Murray did say he enlisted as a youngster. After finding the 1870 census document evidence has to be given a favourable interpretation to make his claim possible. Considering the alternative must be to give a respected man who told people to always be honest the reputation for fraud, caution and charity are the best options. This can and should be done as despite serious doubts the majority of evidence goes towards verification. Conjecture leaning towards Murray is very probably justified: where Sherman marched Southern youngsters enlisted and officers were desperate for recruits. What does put his credibility into question more than the census is his insistence that he was born in June 1846 after whoever filled out the 1870 census gave him a later birth year. Or did he fill it out the 1870 document himself but not know his numbers?



Arnold Murray made (or others made for him) other statements that seem to knock his 1846 birthdate out, but still make him old enough to have served. Other census documents go in Murray's favour. The same supplier of the 1854/1855

probable birthdate quote a 1920 census document gives his age as seventy-two. In the 1930 census he also gives his birthdate as about 1848. The 1940 census gives the precise 1846 date. Was this because pension requirements demanded it so he searched through records? The birth dates 1848 to 1854 do not preclude Confederate service on age; it means he would have been as old as the frontline boy soldiers and teenagers of the Georgia State Militia when his war ended.



The identifying list attached to the 1913 reunion photo.

The 1913 Reunion photo while strong evidence, is not as good as it could have been. Annoyingly the names of the men at the 1913 reunion who were in the photo total eight but only six are in the photo. Their names are on paper scraps that were with the photo; they do not indicate names in order. One of these the tallest, is probably Pleasant Crump. Among the six others one is identified as Renes Lee. Two others look more stocky than Murray. Another has a skull shape different to Murray's. That still leaves two possibilities. The last man in the line bears a very strong facial resemblance to the Arnold Murray who appears in the *Life* magazine story. If Murray was born in 1854 and so was probably too young to be the Confederate in the Civil War photo, he appears as too old still to be born in 1854 for the 1913 image, for all these men look like they are well past sixty. The shoe is now on the other foot: those wishing to disprove Murray on age will have a stretch to prove that any of these men are only in their late fifties.

Pleasant Crump, Thomas E. Riddle, Renes Lee, Unknown, Unkown, Arnold Murray



Use of Photo courtesy of Peggy Dillard of Website Tennrebgirl

This photo is strong proof for Murray's claim, for to attend such a reunion is very strange, motiveless and foolish behaviour for someone who is not a veteran. He would have been risking meeting men from the unit he claimed to be in or picked up as a fraud as soon as recollections started. He was praised for his honest ways and seems from his comments and life to have been level headed. It would take an extremely strange person to impersonate a Confederate for several days for no obvious reason.

The case of Arnold Murray provides examples of how unreliable records could be. Although records give his mother's exact full name and her maiden name next to the full name of her husband, in two records, she was listed as born in 1825 in one record and in 1829 in another.[97] In one census Arnold Murray misspelt his name Murry - or the census taker did. Either way in a house full of Murrays, the census collector did not pick up the error. Another stunning ambiguity was that Arnold Murray is listed as head of the household and a very large number are listed as a son or daughter, by implication even the nine year old was his when he was

[97] See *ancestry .com* Elizabeth Olive Murray (nee Groom) Wife of George Edward Allen Murray. Compare the first entry of the printout page 1 with the one on page 4.

ninety-four! Clearer 1950s accounts describe two daughters and a son and many grandchildren.[98] Only the 1870 census record seems reliable: the rest give possibilities, errors, and conflicting evidence. The 1870 census also reveals an Arnold Murray born in Shelbyville in 1840, he may have been the man who served in the 11th South Carolina Volunteers.

Although censuses are used to disparage his claim and label him a fraud, they are so erroneous as to be almost useless. Even though an abundance of errors has been presented here this is only a partial take of census errors concerning the Murray family. The more complete list of census errors, including the missing 1910 Murray family census is in *America's Last Civil War Participants: An Investigation.* More creditable and therefore more damaging information against Murray's claims comes from the military world. This is rarely used.



Murray's last resting place

[98] Unsigned Article, *Arnold Murray 1846-1952.* Wednesday July 18th 2007.http://sclohistorian.blogspot.comau/2007/07arnold-murray-1846-1952.html http://scloshistorian.blogspot.comau/2007/07/arnold-murray-1846-1952.html

The 1870 census also reveals an A. D. Murray born in Shelbyville in 1840, and earlier censuses also an A.F. D. Murray as a slave owner in South Carolina: either man might be the man who served in the 11th South Carolina Volunteers, but the Shelbyville resident seems more likely. His census and enlistment ages and his company designation all match. Two men with Arnold's initials and surname were known to be enlisted in the 11th South Carolina and both provide details that preclude them from being Arnold Murray. A.D. Murray aged twenty, enlisted in July 1861. He was serving on extra duties as a wagoner in April 1863 and was captured during the Virginia campaigns in June 1864, but stayed on the rolls till August 31st of that year.[99] He survived the war. On age and Arnold's statements about his service this cannot be him. The second man, initially enlisted in the 4th South Carolina Cavalry in September 1863 and transferred into the 11th South Carolina in February 1864. He was hospitalised in Richmond that May with a Minnie ball in the back and hospitalised again late that December and was paroled at Greensboro on May 1st of the next year, while Arnold Murray's 11th S.C. training unit were near Charleston. His service record appears as also very different to Arnold's account to the extent that they are unlikely to be the same person.

To disprove Arnold Murray's service historians must find a birth certificate from about 1855 or prove that he was rejected for his age. Searches so far have not found evidence for any of these factors. Murray's claim is very possibly true, but the age factor and the way he appears to be apparently unlisted means he needs further research or revealed information to verify him.



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[99] Confederate Abstract from the South Carolina Department of Archives & History. 22nd April 2014.

William Allen Magee





Result: His Union service is accepted √

Date of Birth: 19th August 1846

Date of Death: 23rd January 1953

Age at enlistment: seventeen (?)

Rank: Bugler and private

Unit: 12th Ohio Cavalry Regiment Company M

Service: Magee was in Sherman's army

Combat Experience: Magee stated that he was in Sherman's March to the sea, but his unit was engaged in activities in South Western Virginia so this recollection is unlikely.

Length of service: October 1863 to 1898

Magee ran away from home to enlist and the records put his enlistment age at eighteen, while his birthdate according to *Wikipedia* puts his age at sixteen. *Wikipedia* notes the discrepancy as two years, another error to top off his. This is topped by *Find a Grave* which after giving his birthdate correctly as 1846 but then

tells us that he ran away aged thirteen "to become a bugle boy with Gen. Sherman in his march to the sea." Two years before the Civil War even began?[100] He also states that he took part in Sherman's march to the sea, but a history of his unit does not have them in that campaign but in South-Western Virginia and adjacent areas.[101] By the standards applied to Confederates all these errors would make his record dubious at least, but he is accepted. He appears in *Official Records* as a trumpeter in the unit he claimed to have served in. Magee stayed in the army fighting in the Indian wars, in the Dakotas and in the Spanish-American war, providing a continuous record.

His statements and his photograph reveal a man of strong and stalwart character, modest, but totally loyal to America and confident of American military strength.[102]



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[100] *Sgt. William Allen Magee, (1846-1953) Find A Grave* Memorial March 20th 2004
[101] *Official Records* History of the 12 Ohio Cavalry Regiment.
[102] See Citation 73



William Daniel Townsend, William J. Bush and John Salling together at the 1951 Confederate reunion in Richmond. The three men got on well together and Townsend and Bush would met up in New Orleans in the following year. Their facial expressions here go against the reports of them enjoying the festivities, but perhaps they were tired when the cameraman arrived.

William Daniel Townsend also known as William W. Townsend, Uncle Eli and Billy Dan Townsend





Result: His Confederate Service is verified √

Date of Birth: given as 12th April 1846. Censuses disagree

Date of Death: 22nd February 1953

Age at enlistment: Fifteen

Rank: Private

Unit: Company B. 27th Louisiana Infantry.

Service: Training, 1862 campaigning in Mississippi and the siege of Vicksburg.

Combat Experience: Wounded at the siege of Vicksburg. Although sick in late 1862, given his regiment's record, his combat experience started before the siege, during Vicksburg the campaign.

Length of service: September 1861 to July 1863

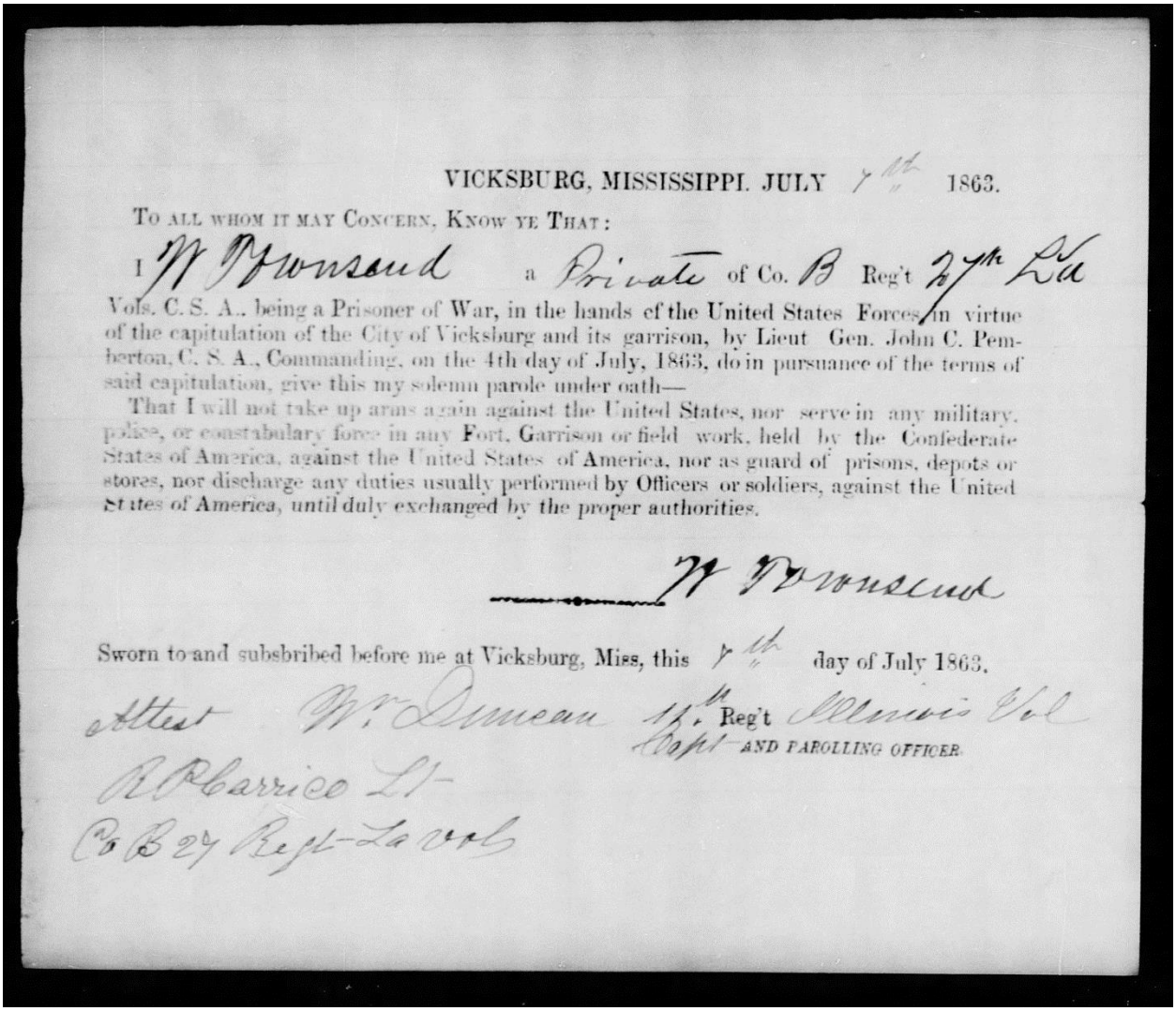
Evidence of Service apart from his own accounts. He appears in the muster rolls of the 27th Louisiana Regiment in some detail due to health problems and enquiries.[103] He also appears in the Vicksburg parole lists as captured on July 4th and paroled four days later.[104] When applying for a pension in the 1930s he was asked who could vouch for him. He named four individual soldiers by surname and first name. By surname and initials they were listed in muster rolls, parole lists, official records and Booth's records as being at the siege of Vicksburg.[105] These may have been men he met during either of his hospitalisations as they are from different units and one was a hospital attendant. He also gave the full correct name of another Confederate and eventually found another listed veteran who signed an affidavit that they remembered him.[106] Documents at the Baton Rouge statehouse are mentioned in his 1953 obituary as proving his age and enlistment.[107] His original enlistment papers, sickness documentation, clothing allocation, record of capture and his parole can all be viewed in his file which was signed as verified by the Adjutant-General in August 1953. These six documents are all listed with *Ancestry.com* and can be found under the entry 'William Daniel Townsend (1846-1953)'

William Daniel Townsend, born on 12th April 1846 and was initially from Meridian Mississippi, but his family moved to Louisiana when he was young. He claimed to have run away from home to enlist aged fifteen in 1861[108]. His records which correctly show him being from Mississippi show that he was enlisted in Company B of the newly formed 27th Louisiana Infantry on 9th August 1862. He was granted a sickness furlough for pneumonia and general disability that November.[109] He said he served two years, being captured during the siege of Vicksburg and was paroled because a bullet tore open his right arm and left it gangrenous. He did have a very faint scar there in old age.[110] Someone called

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[103] Company B 27th Louisiana Infantry Muster Roll 27TH *Louisiana Infantry Data Base* p5 of 14 pages in computer image numbering. http:/www.shepherd.edu/gtmeweb/LA27th/1203HTM
[104] Federal Rolls of Prisoners of War Captured and Paroled at Vicksburg July 1863; Andrew B. Booth, *Military Records of Louisiana Confederate Soldiers and Louisiana Confederate Commands.* New Orleans: N.P. 1920 archiveorg>e book and texts Allen County Public library
[105] *Ibid:* Serrano gives the names p76. I looked up those names in the Vicksburg Paroles, Booth, *Official Records* and Confederate Muster Rolls.
[106] Serrano p76.
[107] Unsigned Obituary Article *Lewiston Evening Journal* February 23rd 1953. n.p.
[108] *Ibid*
[109] Company B 27th Louisiana Infantry Muster Roll.
[110] Serrano p74.

William W. Townsend was enlisted in the company Townsend claimed he served in and was again listed in that same unit when Vicksburg surrendered and thousands of Confederates were recorded on the parole lists. The scant details in records fit with what Townsend claimed.



VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI. JULY 7th 1863.

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN, KNOW YE THAT:

I W Townsend a Private of Co. B Reg't 27th La Vols. C. S. A., being a Prisoner of War, in the hands of the United States Forces, in virtue of the capitulation of the City of Vicksburg and its garrison, by Lieut Gen. John C. Pemberton, C. S. A., Commanding, on the 4th day of July, 1863, do in pursuance of the terms of said capitulation, give this my solemn parole under oath—

That I will not take up arms again against the United States, nor serve in any military, police, or constabulary force in any Fort, Garrison or field work, held by the Confederate States of America, against the United States of America, nor as guard of prisons, depots or stores, nor discharge any duties usually performed by Officers or soldiers, against the United States of America, *until duly exchanged by the proper authorities.*

W Townsend

Sworn to and subsbribed before me at Vicksburg, Miss, this 7th day of July 1863.

Attest W. Duncan 11th Reg't Illinois Vol
Capt AND PAROLLING OFFICER.
R Harrico Lt-
Co B 27 Regt-La vols

Townsend's 1863 Parole document. The second initial does not match the first as a W and could be a D. After surrendering there was no need for pseudonyms

Although the commissioners did not quite say it, Townsend was a man desperate for Confederate pension money and insistent for it. This probably counted against him, but who in the USA in 1935 was not financially desperate? Suspicions that he was not that same man as W.W. Townsend when he claimed his pension in 1935

were probably influenced by his hunger for money, but also based on the following facts which Serrano mentions.[111]

By official records he was supposedly only thirteen when he enlisted and so was too young. The other evidence against him is that:

He could not prove his age.

William W. Townsend was listed in his unit, not William Daniel Townsend.

He named a Captain Gus Cobb as his commanding officer. No record of him could be found.

He named five Confederates as former comrades who could vouch for him, John Orr, Jim Orr, Lum Knox, B. Russell and Dave Seats. The commission quite seriously claimed they could not find them.[112] This was in the later 1930s, over seventy-two years after the siege ended!

They should have looked at muster rolls and then very closely in the list of paroled Confederates at Vicksburg's surrender. Annoyingly only first initials were usually written on that parole list, but there are two J. Orr's, an L. Knox and a hospital worker B. Russell. All were Louisianans except one of the Orrs, a Tennessean officer. The only Dave Seats on muster rolls anywhere was a Texan cavalryman who spent some of the first half of the war in Louisiana. Knowing one name might be a coincidence or passed on knowledge, but five? Eventually a Louisiana veteran, Alfred Fuller was found who signed an affidavit stating that he remembered Townsend and then he got his pension.[113] While no "Gus" Cobb turned up in the records, the 26th Louisiana had a first Lieutenant George Cobb and another Lieutenant Charles Cobb was nearby in the Crescent Regiment, the same unit as L. Knox. Was Gus a nickname?

The difference of the middle initial on his records looks suspicious – until his muster roll record is read. It notes that after the Vicksburg surrender the *Union* provost general was enquiring after a William D. Townsend. It may have been that his parents contacted the Union officials about their runaway son. He may have committed some atrocity that justified a Union investigation. Whatever the reason that note on his record reads like a tip-off.

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[111] *Ibid* pp75-76.
[112] *Ibid* p76.
[113] Serrano, pp76-77.

The point about his age seems weak and apparently the officials should have looked in the archives at the capitol. In a 1953 obituary article documents at the statehouse that prove his 1846 birthday and his enlistment are referred to as valid.[114] Many teenagers served and photos of Townsend show a very tall man who could have passed for older than his age, as he claimed. He made no contradictory, outrageous or unlikely claims and recalled prosaic details of army life such as standing guard for thirty-six hours and eating mule meat.[115] Like William J. Bush he talked of wanting to leave the war but stayed.[116]

With so many prisoners taken at Vicksburg Grant paroled them on their word of honour not to re-join Confederate forces; many reneged, but Townsend kept his word. In old age he said he could not remember taking the oath of allegiance to the Union, but if he did so it was under duress.[117] He became a farmer near Olla, and by his own account he once rode with the Ku Klux Klan in the reconstruction era.[118] He admitted to not being reconciled to "the Yankees" until the 1951 veteran's reunion. In one of his last interviews he stated that he saw the war as being caused by a personal power struggle between Lincoln and Davis, then more sensibly said that the North should have bought the slave's freedom and so averted the war but although they could afford it, they would not pay the cost. In the South people saw slaves as an expensive investment and were reluctant to part with them for nothing. He added that his family owned forty-four slaves.[119]

Like Albert Woolson, family, music and veteran's affairs became big parts of his life, he was a popular figure playing at dances.[120] Even after turning a hundred he would still visit hospitals to play tunes and to give patients cheer.[121]

Much more primary source evidence for Townsend's service exists than exists for many accepted veterans.[122] He should be recognised for what he was.

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[114] *Lewiston Evening Journal* Previous Citation
[115] Serrano 74
[116] *Lewiston Evening Journal* Previous Citation
[117] *Ibid*
[118] *Ibid*
[119] Anon. *Statesville Daily Record.* 23rd December 1952.18
[120] This was on a website that has since vanished. Like Serrano, the writer mentioned the hospital visits. Serrano, p74
[121] Serrano, p74

Those who wish to dismiss his claim and say that the W. W. Townsend of the 1860s documents is a different person are the ones with a difficult case to prove.

From the proven accepted evidence available at this point in time he was the second last living man who *definitely* fought for the Confederacy and the third last man to fight in the war. He died suddenly on February 22nd 1953, only eighteen days before James Hard, the Union's last fighting soldier who is widely if incorrectly considered the last man to fight in the Civil War.

*



*

James Albert Hard





Result: His Union Service is verified √

Date of Birth: 1841 or perhaps 1842 or 1845. This is uncertain as census and enlistment dates contradict.

Date of Death: 12th March 1953

Age at enlistment: given as nineteen but possibly younger

Rank: Private

Unit: 37th New York Volunteers. Company K and E

Service: Infantry

Combat Experience: extensive, from Sumter till after Chancellorsville

Length of service: April 1861 to June 1863

Evidence of Service apart from his own accounts. He is listed in *Official Records* and in his unit's muster roll. He went on to hold high office in the Union veteran's association, the Grand Army of the Republic.

James Albert Hard has the usual problems with age/census/ enlistment verification and contradictions. Several sources give his birthdate as 1841, but three census statements give 1842 and 1843. He claimed to be nineteen when he enlisted four days after Fort Sumter fell, but may have been seventeen. He also claimed to have met Lincoln at a White House reception.[123] Accessibility to Lincoln by ordinary citizens was extremely open.[124] Even so, this sounds odd for one of the millions of privates like Hard who came from an undistinguished family. He was at both the Bull Run battles, but saw only some fighting towards the end at both.[125] He also fought in the 1862 Peninsula Campaign, Antietam and two parts of the Chancellorsville battle, Second Fredericksburg and Salem Church. His obituary and some accounts state he was at the battle of Fredericksburg, but this is probably confusing the May 1863 battle with the first. David George Martin states that he was on sick leave from October 29th 1862 until the year's end.[126] His two year enlistment expired and he left the army on June 9th 1863[127] He was a man

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[123] Unsigned Obituary 'Hard Oldest Veteran, Dies at111; He Spent Boyhood in Windsor' *Binghamton Press* Fri. March 13th 1953 12

[124] David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln.* London Jonathan Cape, 1995. p311.

[125] David George Martin, *Second Bull Run Campaign July-August 1862* .Google Books n.d. 250 http:/com.au/books?id+o7g2DQoIFm EC&PG

[126] *Ibid.*

[127] I*bid.*

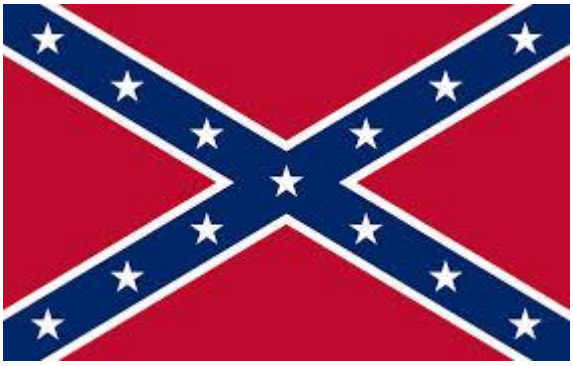
of the most extraordinary luck, never being wounded and missing both Fredericksburg and Gettysburg by fortuitous circumstances. After his discharge he worked for the army in construction and ended up as an attorney concerned with pensions.[128]



James Albert Hard would have worn a Union Infantryman's uniform like this.

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[128] Unsigned Obituary 'Hard Oldest Veteran, Dies at111; He Spent Boyhood in Windsor' *Binghamton Press;* Martin p250



William Alfred Kinney

Author's note: The paragraph below is the standard viewpoint which I also initially believed. As Kiney was the last verified veteran he deserves a more thorough check. What that check reveals and using the crucial work of Professor Hoar as a bedrock shows how wrong encyclopaedias and scholarship based in a brief examination of censuses can be.

Wikipedia lists his claimed birthdate as 10th February 1843, although it states that it was probably that same date, but in 1861 and states that he died on June 23rd 1953. He was of Indiana. His claim is listed as debunked. There were thirteen Confederates named just William Kinney and another William A.C. Kinney. More evidence is needed.

*

Professor Hoar who had substantial contact with Kiney's family and did much original research, has extra information in his The South's Last Boys in Gray pages. 1700-1703



Ex-Cavalryman, C. S. A., Wm. Albert Kiney at age 106 in 1952 playing solitaire. Courtesy of Derrick R. Kiney of Chicago, Il



William Albert Kinney aka William A. Kiney

Result: His wartime service is verified√

Date of Birth: 10th February 1846 is most likely. Although the same day and month in 1843, 1845 or 1861 are sometimes credited. About 1848 and 1864 are also mentioned, but cannot be.

Date of Death: 23rd June 1953

Age at enlistment: uncertain, probably fifteen

Rank: Private

Unit: Company G 5th Kentucky Mounted Infantry and 2nd Kentucky Cavalry Company D (claimed by others, no documentation evident yet and 10th Kentucky Cavalry Company L. from November 1863

Service: Mounted Infantry and Cavalry

Combat Experience: Extensive. He claimed service at Shiloh. The 5th and 2nd Kentucky Cavalry was heavily involved in Morgan's raids and the war in the

western theatre. The 10th focused on raiding in Kentucky. He claimed to have "fout nigh the whole wahwa."

Length of service: uncertain: enlisted 1st-5th November 1861 for a year. He was at least fighting until after Shiloh in April 1862 and (as above) claimed to have been in most of the war. His enlistment in November 1863 bears this out.

In Professor Jay S. Hoar's massive and comprehensive account of the last Confederate veterans *The South's Last Boys in Gray: An Epic Prose Elegy. Volume III* (2010) he proved with irrefutable evidence that Kiney was the last fully verifiable combat veteran of the Civil War, and yet this gained little recognition. This writer's segment here only adds similar primary source evidence to what Professor Hoar found four years before this work began.

Professor Jay S. Hoar has found, compiled, published and explained much about Kiney in a three page entry on the man in his *The South's Last Boys in Gray: Last Living Chapter of the American Civil War.* My responsibility for finding sources here includes all the census documents except that of 1850, the work record of the ash felt worker, comments on the 1920 marriage certificate, *Official Records* and the 10th Kentucky Cavalry document and history, the work on Morgan's Raiders and on *Little Big Man* and the illustrations and captions. All the other evidence presented here comes from Professor Hoar's entry 'William Albert Kiney Feb.10th 1846 - June 23rd 1953.' (pages 1700-1703) The mentioned possibilities are my conclusions.

William A. Kiney initially seems a fraud and for decades that has been the way he has been treated. The case against him initially seems irrefutable, but has been re-examined with crucial evidence against him now irrefutably disproved. This writer, initially a sceptic on Kiney, found that the censuses, seemingly the source of almost all the evidence against Kiney, prove his verification.

To present the case for fakery first:

Summary: It is stated that William A. Kiney faked Confederate service to get the Confederate pension. He claimed to be born on February 10th 1843 but he was really born on February 10th 1861 because two censuses, those of 1900 and 1920 show him living in Louisville and his given age is 59. The census estimates that he was born in about 1861. A March 1920 marriage certificate for William A. Kiney shows him living in Indianapolis and somebody wrote on it that he was born on February 10th 1861. The birthday gives away the connection and shows that they

are the same man: therefore he is a fake as proved by three different primary source documents.

None of this mixture of evidence and seemingly probable conjecture has been systematically questioned.

It is if only one man named William A. Kiney, William A. Kinney, William Kiney or William Kinney existed in Indiana and Kentucky during Kiney's lifetime. In fact the 1880 census just for Kentucky alone shows that there were at least eleven men born with one of these names between the middle of the 1830s and the first half of the 1870s. Adding those born with the same name from later censuses taken from within that same time frame of 1835-1875 gives a very conservative estimate of at least thirty-three men with a name close to or identical to versions of that name. This applies only to those resident in Indiana and Kentucky.

Nobody ever searches for evidence of the supposedly claimed, much mentioned pension that supplies the motive for fraud. Nobody examines the 1920 wedding documents in detail. There is no mention of the strong and clear proof in two consecutive censuses showing him as born in the middle of the 1840s, or his two enlistment documents or all the links that show that the man who died in June 1953 was the Confederate veteran. Cynics repeat the evidence for fraud but rarely examine, let alone question the documents: they should.

Evidence against service in detail:

William A. Kiney of Indianapolis when filling out his marriage certificate, gave his birth date as February 10th 1861.[129] Detractors have reproduced other information from these 1920 marriage records. These give Kiney's age as 56, his birth year as 1864 and his birthplace as England. Oddly, amongst the evidence Professor Hoar gives is the fact that Kiney told his granddaughter that he was born in America but conceived in England.

Apart from this apparently damning evidence another problem is that he seems to be a difficult man to trace. He may have filled out a census in 1870. If he did it was apparently his only one after childhood. One photo and one newspaper story are all that can be said to exist with certainty on the internet. Several men

[129] As the major website concerning this information is no longer easily available this writer is unable to contact the writer for permission. The records do bear out what is said. Similar information is also included in 'Fake and Exaggerated Claims' (October 2009) www.grg org/Adams g2 filestab strip.

with slight variations of his name were born in the 1840s in the upper south. Several others migrated from England and Ireland, settling in the mid-west. *Official Records* lists thirteen Confederates named just William Kinney and another William A.C. Kinney, but none are in the 2nd Kentucky Cavalry. Apart from Company F, a group of mostly Mississippians who kept "skimpy records" the 2nd Kentucky are believed to have had no muster roll.[130] Kiney's name does not appear on that company's roll. So where does that precise information on the tombstone come from?

Like Felix Witkoski, W.W. Alexander, Thomas Edwin Ross, James Erwin, Frank Mayer, Red Cloud, Sylvester Magee and Richard William Cumpston, he was not included in the 1949 *Life* story of the last Civil War soldiers or the similar May 1951 *Denver Post* story. For verification more details of military service and an explanation about the marriage certificate and the two censuses must be found or presented.

Assessing the evidence: Dismissing him seems reasonable, and many have. Before doing so consider the duplications in nomenclature and the long coincidences given so far on others. If these factors work against verification with Ross, they work against debunking with Kiney/Kinney. After a platoon of forty named Thomas Ross, four of them being Kentucky cavalrymen, after all the different men who were all Private William M. Loudermilk, two of them Confederate infantry privates with the same middle name from Cherokee County; after all the Georgians entitled William J. Bush, after two Confederate Texans being Thomas E. Riddle bearing some physical resemblance, after two couples George and Elizabeth Murray, both in Charleston and after the Witkoski/Witkowski/Mitoski chaos, dismissal on similar nomenclature cannot be easily done. We must consider that the Kinney born in 1861 was someone else or a red herring, but was not the Kentucky cavalryman born in the 1840s. Another consideration is that Kiney, far from forging evidence to make himself seem a Confederate, may well have left a false trail with his journalistic/enlistment age, his later birthdate and changing the spelling of his name. While honest, he had plausible and traceable reasons for not wanting public attention. Those reasons will be assessed in his war service record.

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[130] Unsigned, Cover note to the *2nd Kentucky Cavalry CSA.* Website. ; Company F is dealt with in detail by Jim Power *The Iron Man and the Mississippi Raiders.* n.p. Author House, 2009. The quote comes from p163.

Evidence for service:

Once again one census contradicts another. The censuses reveal more to suggest different identities and that the 1861 date must be wrong. The 1850 census has a William A. Kinney living in Braken County Kentucky, aged four.[131] His parents are listed as Isaac and Jane in the census and they also appear by those names as his parents in a 1991 letter to Professor Hoar by William Kinney's granddaughter. She had heard their names in Kiney's reminiscences and apparently did not refer to, or perhaps did not even know of the 1850 census. This makes this clearly the same man.

The 1850 census also names a twin or adopted sister Melisa and six others. In the 1860 census this Kiney family are located in the town of Moultrie, Missouri. They are clearly the same family as that of the 1860 census as Jane and Isaac are the parents. Some of the older children have gone and three were born since the 1850 census are added, but William A. Kiney and Melisa are still there, although her name is now spelled Mallissa and their sister, initially named Milden aged 10 in 1850 is (apparently? perhaps?) Milley aged 12 in 1860! Typical census! William A. is now aged twelve as he is now supposedly born about 1848. Despite the usual census errors with ages and spelling this is clearly the same family.

In that same 1860 census, a different Kinney family, from Ireland, reside in Henderson Kentucky. The parents are William R. and Fanny and they have two children Willis J., and Wm. A. This boy was born about a month before the census was taken on June 4. The 1860 census alone shows that they can only be two different people and the different names of both sets of parents makes their movements and careers unambiguous and traceable.

This Irish Kinney family excepting Willis, turn up in Louisville in the 1910 census. The names are the same and as is usual in censuses the ages do not quite match. The parents being 24 and 25 in 1860 and both are 71 in 1910, but they are still from Ireland and a William A. is on the same page but with other families interposed between him and his perhaps/probable parents. The problem here being that his age is 39, so his birth year is 1871, and this birth year for him is repeated in the 1930 census, with his parents now from Kentucky. Is he their son or is a

[131] This information was found by Professor Hoar and also by Jim Wells in communication with him.

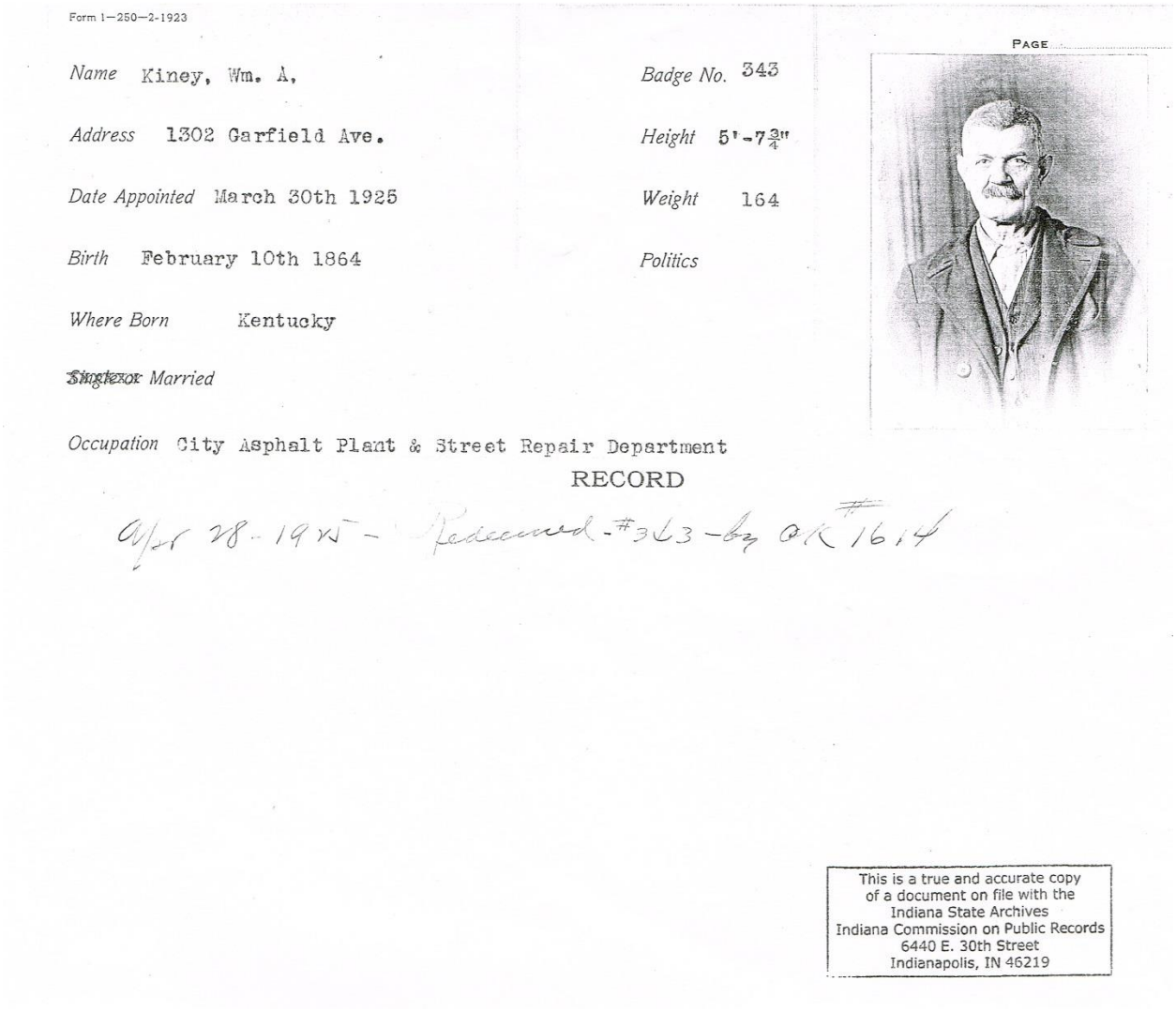
bachelor lodger in Louisville, also William A. Kinney, supposedly born in about 1861 their son?

The censuses of the bachelor who lived in Louisville had his parents from Kentucky in one document and one from Kentucky and one from Virginia in another. Did he mean where they were living when he was born? Kiney said his parents migrated from England. Recent computerised census comments state that the Louisville man was also known as William Spivey and also as William Kumey. After seeing the cramped, tiny handwriting these may not really be aliases, just difficult to decipher handwriting. In 1900 he listed his occupation as a farmer: Kiney never claimed to be a farmer. Why should a man change his surname twice and why should a farmer continually live in a boarding house? If any identity theft happened Kiney looks like the victim, not the perpetrator. While Kiney's detractors do not mention it, the Louisville lodger also was in the 1910 and 1930 censuses. In all four, from 1900 to 1930 he was a Louisville lodger, a bachelor born about 1861. His last listed occupation was in 1920 and 1930, running a picture show. For three decades he apparently lived and worked in Louisville, while Kiney lived and worked in Indianapolis from 1870 until his retirement in the 1940s. He is not known to have returned to Kentucky even briefly, let alone for the long periods of time needed to farm or run a picture show. In contrast to the Louisville Kinney being a bachelor for decades, Professor Hoar states that the Indianapolis Kiney was married four times. As his son Wallace was born in Iowa in January 1898, he was probably married when the Louisville Kiney was still a bachelor. How can a bachelor regularly living in Louisville for decades be married to a woman living in Indianapolis? How can he be a bachelor in the 1930 census while Pauline Dinkins was married to a William Kiney from 1920 until at least 1940?

To this writer the issue of a possible Kiney marriage in 1920 that shows his supposed real age is a red herring, but as it is often used to clearly disprove his record, it must be assessed.

What is not clear is that the man who said he was a Confederate veteran is the man with the same name who married in March 1920. Because this marriage has someone named William A. Kiney stating that he was born on February 10th 1861, this supposedly proves that Kiney did not fight in the Civil War. Even accepting that this groom is Kiney, all that this definitely proves is that at the most, he did not tell the truth on a marriage certificate. His enlistment documents and census references prove that like David Story and William Townsend, like

thousands of others he altered his age upon enlistment. Mayer, Woolson, William Allen Magee and Bush all said things that cannot be so, yet all these individuals had enough evidence for verification: so does Kiney.



Form 1—250—2-1923

PAGE

Name Kiney, Wm. A, *Badge No.* 343

Address 1302 Garfield Ave. *Height* 5'-7¾"

Date Appointed March 30th 1925 *Weight* 164

Birth February 10th 1864 *Politics*

Where Born Kentucky

~~Single~~ or *Married*

Occupation City Asphalt Plant & Street Repair Department

RECORD

Apr 28-1925 - Released - #363 - by OK #1614

This is a true and accurate copy
of a document on file with the
Indiana State Archives
Indiana Commission on Public Records
6440 E. 30th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46219

Is this the Confederate Kiney in 1925, the man who married Pauline Dinkins or one of Indianapolis's many other William Kineys?

While one of Kiney's marriages was perhaps in March 1920 and another did come after that, in 1942, he was also a married man in 1932 and probably married during the time between the censuses of 1900 and 1930. In the information Professor Hoar has collected Kiney seems to have lived regularly in Indianapolis apart from visiting family members in Chicago. Apart from the name and the 1920 marriage birthdate matching his, all evidence known of at this point clearly proves

that the man in Louisville who is supposedly Kiney the Confederate faker, must really be someone else.

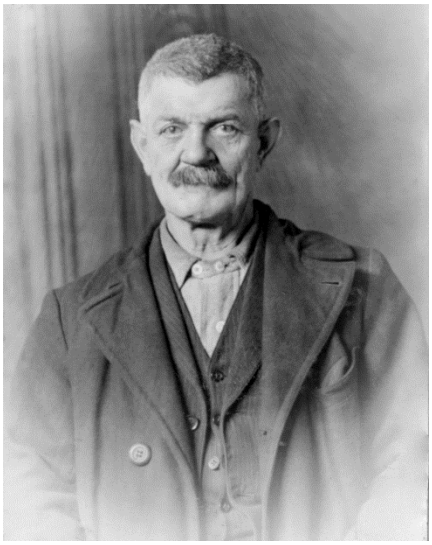
Even after stating that, the balance of evidence goes against this 1920 groom being the Civil War veteran. Apart from their errors with Kiney's birth dates and spellings, the marriage documents do reveal several big and insurmountable differences that block concluding that they are the same man.[132] If he told his granddaughter that his parents were named Isaac and Jane, if descendants say that and the 1850 and 1860 censuses record the same, why are the groom's parents listed as Mary and G.W. Kiney on the marriage certificate documents? Was this the man from Louisville marrying in Indianapolis? This is already unlikely as the parents' names are different from his as well. What becomes even more unlikely is that the groom could be either Kiney when more evidence is assessed. In three marriage documents connected to the bride Pauline Dinkins, she is given a wide range of ages from 56 to 59 and her name is misspelled. So how reliable is the groom's given and differing ages? 1861 or 1864? The documents give us a choice. As mentioned, documents state that the groom was born in England in 1864 when strong evidence shows that Kiney was born in Kentucky and was an enlisted cavalryman in 1864.

The first reaction to the different names of the groom's parents from the names of both the Louisville Kiney and the Indianapolis Kiney was 'Why is one of them creating fictional parents?' But they were not. The marriage documents show that these parents of the groom were actual people. They are listed as residents in the same house as the bride and groom. Kiney coaxing or hiring people to pretend to be his parents, in some connection to an approaching wedding, combined with lying about his birthdate and pretending to be English would be far-fetched. This scenario should be filmed from a particularly preposterous locale in sit–com land.

Although the birthdate of February 10th is initially only a one in 365 chance of being coincidence and goes into much higher odds as they are in the same city, coincidence is the most plausible explanation. This becomes more plausible when the number of men named William A. Kinney or Kiney or William Kenney are found in Indianapolis, elsewhere in Indiana and in Kentucky. One who had the 1861 birth year was accepted for this examination with the surname Kine. This

[132] The marriage documents for both William A. Kiney and Pauline Dinkins are findable through *Amncestry .com* by using their full names the date 11th March 1920 and the keyword Indianapolis.

writer limited himself to those with the first name William without an initial or having the initial A and did not accept those with birthdates below 1857 or over 1875. Only a few were surnamed Kenney and those included were listed because they had some reason that increased their chances of being the man, such as being born in 1861 or being a resident of Indianapolis in the 1920s. I only trawled through the first 500 Indiana or Kentucky located men named Kiney/Kinney/Kenny on the web and found among them thirty-three who could be Kiney within these limitations. Only a few had wives alive during Pauline Dinkins known marriage years of 1920-1940, but the rest were eligible with the largest cluster of birth dates were between 1860 and 1864 and the largest grouping was in Indianapolis.





Ex-Cavalryman, C. S. A., Wm. Albert Kiney at age 106 in 1952 playing solitaire. Courtesy of Derrick R. Kiney of Chicago, Il

On the right is perhaps the only known photograph of William Albert Kinney 1846-1953. This dates from 1952. This was given to Professor Hoar by Kiney's relatives and used here with his permission. On the left is a photograph probably dating from 1925 of an Indianapolis street repair worker definitely named William A. Kiney. The photographs are taken twenty seven years or more apart: are they of the same man? Almost certainly not. Their hair and moustaches are different, the man on the left has hair that looks more bristly while the other has soft looking hair. Their ears look different, one has rounded ears, one pointed. Their moustaches shape very differently. In the 1925 photo the man has a widow's peak and receding hair, while the man on the right has a straighter fuller hairline. Hair rarely grows back. Even so the faces are slightly similar. The beard could hide what might be an age line but looks like a knife scar, perhaps a battle scar, on the younger man's cheek.

The ash felt worker and the Louisville lodger were each listed only once although they were listed several times in records. Those who wish to lengthen the odds further and have time to trawl through around half a million listings of Kinneys/Kineys/ Kenneys and related names are welcome.

One of the most enigmatic among those who might be Kiney also listed his birthdate as February 10th but in 1864, not 1861. Employment records from 1925 of this other William A. Kiney of Indianapolis show a man working for the asphalt plant and street repair department. This sounds like the English groom, but as the records show, this man claimed to be born in Kentucky. Another or the same man with the name, who was working in Kentucky as a labourer with tobacco, was born in 1864. This could also be the groom and/or the city road worker Kiney. This man could also be the Confederate Kiney, the birthdate and birthplace strongly suggests this, but he was not known to be employed by the city in ash felt work in 1925. He did not work as a carpenter in the later 1920s as this man did. The photo comparison goes against the idea that this is the Confederate veteran, but that this is the man remains a thin possibility. Ultimately the photographic evidence must be considered leaning against fraud but it remains inconclusive.

City directories show that the city road worker Kiney lived at the same address in Garfield Avenue from at least 1921 until at least 1926. Whichever of the Kiney's she married Pauline Kiney was with him until at least 1940 when street directories reveal that they lived in another locale in Indianapolis, N. Pine Street. W. A Kiney (1846-1953) lived at 348 East Norwood Street in 1942. Kiney is a hard man to locate for long.

W. A Kiney (1846-1953) the veteran was known to change his age for enlistment, so perhaps he changed it to gain employment. His true age would have meant at the best, employment for less than a year as seventy was the usual age for retiring government employees. Was he found out and sacked? His employment badge was redeemed within weeks. Does this tie in with the wedding birthdate? It would be easy to assume so, but the parents' names ….

This is the evidence against his military record. What is in his favour? A good deal and the evidence is much less convoluted and ambiguous.

The story of his enlistment is familiar: being under-aged, he added the needed years. He was really only fifteen when he was accepted for enlistment on November 5th 1861, supposedly aged eighteen. This would later cause confusion over his real age, getting the mistaken 1843 date into some records. His enlistment

was at Pound Gap Virginia and into Company G, Fifth Mounted Infantry captained by James M. Carey with his enlisting officer being Lieutenant R.B. Thomas. As Professor Hoar notes, copies of these enlistment papers have been kept by Kiney's descendants and the enlistment is also printed up in *Kentucky Adjutant General's Report – Confederate Volunteers 1861-1865 Vol. 1.* [133] Kinney's enlistment appears listed here on page 254 under number 80. In *Official Records* in computerised form he is listed as 'Kinney, William. 5th Regiment, Kentucky Mounted Infantry.' As two others surnamed Kinney, Henry and Juo W. enlisted in the same company on the same day, he was obviously staying close to his male family members. His first battle was probably just three days after being accepted, for the regiment was in the battle of Ivy Creek on November 8th 1861. This regiment was recruited in the mountains of eastern Kentucky and South-West Virginia, where slavery was rare and the isolated local people were fiercely independent and suspicious of the federal government and Abolitionists.[134] These characteristics would lead to a mutiny and a disbanding of the regiment in October 1862, when the troopers refused to retreat from Kentucky with Bragg's Army, so the unit was disbanded.[135] Their commander gave them a three way choice, honourable discharge, joining another cavalry unit or re-joining a reformed 5th Regimental unit.[136]

Between the disbanding of this 5th regiment and November 1863 Kiney's whereabouts and service seem unknown. This period could be when he served in the Second Kentucky Cavalry before transferring, for a regimental muster roll shows that on November 18th 1863 he enlisted in Company L of the 10th Kentucky Cavalry as William A. Kiney, interestingly without a designated rank.[137] This unit had been formed in late 1862 and early 1863 by officers wishing to keep the Confederate presence in Kentucky alive.[138] They were nominally still part of Morgan's cavalry division, but distance and enemy units would have separated

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[133] Linda Anderson, Cover Letter of December 6th 1982 sent to Professor Hoar and an attached photocopy of the Company G roll with Kiney's name listed in alphabetical order.
[134] John B. Wells III & Jim Pritchard, *The 10th Kentucky Cavalry CSA: The Yankee Chasers.* Gateway Press, 1996. This source note comes from a computerised excerpt without page numbers civilwar.morganco.freeservers.com
[135] *Ibid.*
[136] *Wikipedia.* 'The 10th Kentucky Cavalry.'
[137] Muster Roll of Diamond's 10th Kentucky Cavalry CSA. www.potterflats.com. 10th Ky.html. This computerised version is also taken from the book *The 10th Kentucky Cavalry CSA.: The Yankee Chasers.*
[138] Wells & Pritchard, previous citation.

them from regular communication. They fought on by raids and skirmishes until disbanding in April 1865.

In a rare or perhaps unprecedented discussion on his war experiences in a 1952 interview he stated that he could not remember much about the war, especially units and their details, but he recalled he was in the Kentucky cavalry. This could easily be forgetfulness after seventy years, but it could also not wanting to remember horrible realities. Even by Civil War standards. Kentucky during the Civil War was horribly savaged by both sides and by bandits with tenuous ties to either side, if that. Some of these units were outlaw gangs who would attack anyone who came in range: even Morgan's Raiders suffered their sniping and hit and run attacks in the Cumberland Mountains.[139] The gangs there considered "normal business" to be theft, rape and murder.[140] Some gangs even contained



With recent attitudes being like this, how would Confederate raiders been treated in Kentucky after the Civil War?

[139] William R. Brooksher & David K. Snider, *Glory at a Gallop: Tales of Confederate Cavalry.* Washington: Brassey's 1993. p20.
[140] *Ibid,*

deserters from both sides.[141] Kentucky during the war was a paradise for psychopaths, firebugs, sadists and marauders eager to live by plunder.[142] Those forces supposedly committed to protecting the state, both the predominantly Union aligned Home Guards and the predominantly Confederate State militia, were among the worst marauders.[143] Confederate guerrillas prowled the roads looking for civilians to plunder and unarmed civilians would sometimes be summarily executed for suspicion of loyalty to the other side: armed civilians could be killed for possessing weapons.[144] This was in a land where most males used hunting to eke out food supplies.



This 1863 Union newspaper illustration gives a vivid idea of Morgan's devastation in Salem, Indiana

Morgan himself and his deputy, friend, brother in law and eventual successor, Basil Duke, were not personally like this. Duke warned the notorious Champ Ferguson against killing prisoners and Morgan gave orders not to violate private property.[145] When an enemy commander, a childhood friend who had

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[141] Bryan S. Bush, "Guerrilla Warfare in Kentucky." *Bryan S. Bush Books* A website. www.bryanbush.com/hub.php?pages articles & layer a0807
[142] *Ibid.*
[143] *Ibid.*
[144] *Ibid.*
[145] Brooksher & Snider, pp24-25.

surrendered was held accountable for Morgan's brother's death, the only punishment Morgan gave was that the Union officer had to inform Morgan's mother of her son's death.[146]

Their troops however, were not necessarily the same as their commanders. They disobeyed Morgan's restrictions on private property.[147] While not as psychopathically murderous as the worst gangs, Morgan's raiders were involved in massive destruction, which in the Indiana town of Corydon alone totalled over half a million dollars in 1860s values. [148] The same value was placed on plundered supplies at Tompkinsville, there they took four hundred prisoners, twenty wagons, fifty mules and rifles for all.[149] They also sometimes took ransoms and inflicted some loss of civilian life.[150] One eyewitness to that raid stated that they killed three civilian men defending their homes and she then described them as "a herd of horse thieves."[151] They also had an impromptu extortion racket going where buildings would not be destroyed upon payment of a substantial fee.[152] A contemporary Union account describes their activities thus:

> The lower counties of Kentucky suffered chiefly from their ravages. Property was stolen, outrages of every sort were not infrequently perpetrated upon Union citizens, bridges were burned, and even the friends of the Confederacy did not escape the lust of these desperadoes for plunder. The most successful of these expeditions was one undertaken by John Morgan, the most noted guerrilla leader of the war. *Harper's Weekly* p307.

This is not an exaggeration. Morgan's great raid left the following casualties, damage and destruction:

> 34 bridges destroyed.
>
> 60 railway locations destroyed.

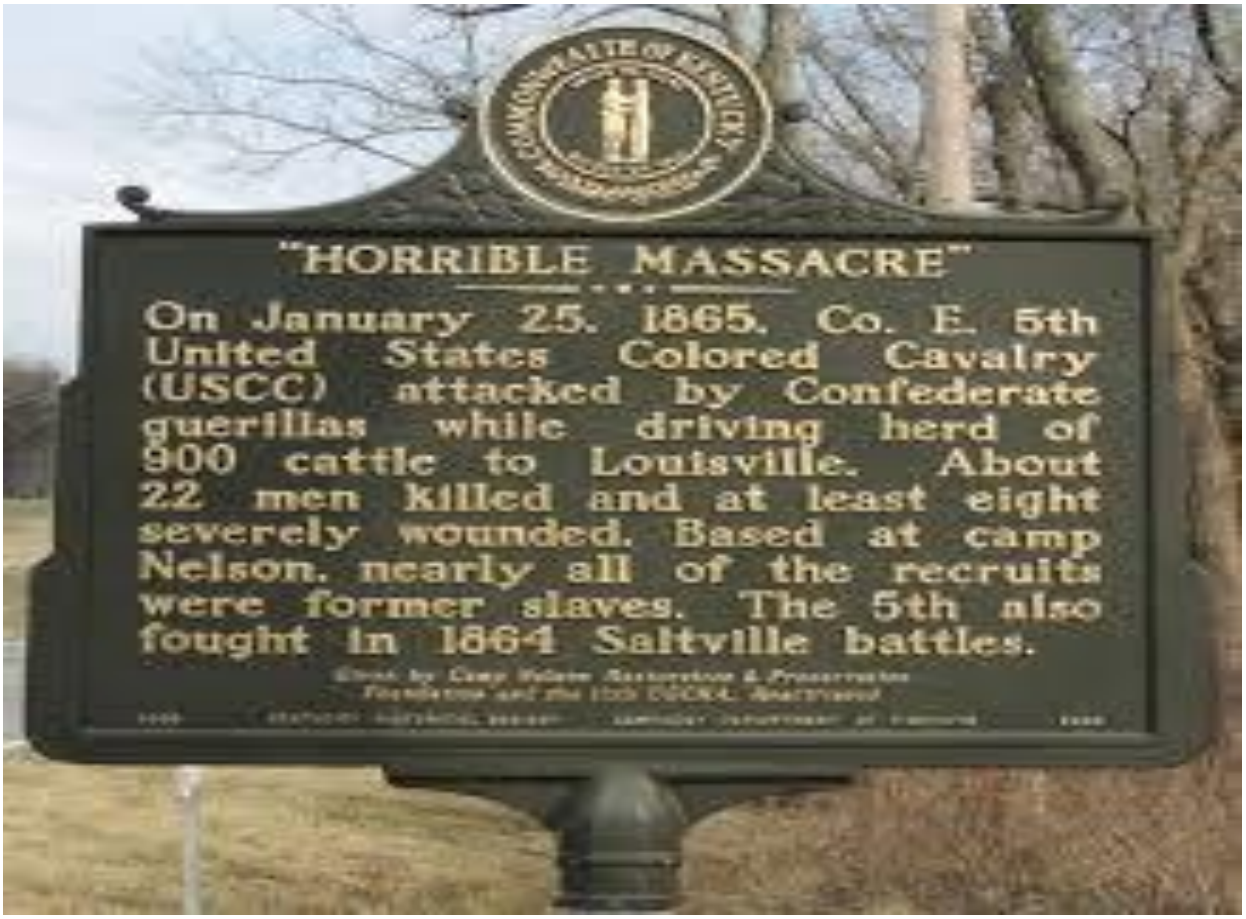
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[146] *Ibid.*
[147] *Ibid*, pp24-25.
[148] Zuzanna Balewski and Maya Fraser, "The Invasion of Indiana: Morgan's Raid and the Battle of Corydon." *Moment of Indiana History* (sic) posted 2nd August 2010.
[149] Brooksher & Snider, p23.
[150] Balewski and Fraser.
[151]Quoted from an 1863 letter by Altia Porter, "A Young Girls Brush With The Civil War." By the staff of the Indiana Museum. *Moment of Indiana History* (sic) posted 14th November 2011.
[152] "In Morgan's Wake Without a Break" By the staff of the Indiana Museum. *Moment of Indiana History* (sic) posted April 29th 2013.; Brooksher & Snider, p162.

Assorted warehouses trains, factories, boats, depots, wagons, destroyed.

6,000 Union prisoners were taken and 127,000 militia were mustered to deal with the raid.

Most cyclones are less destructive. Indianapolis during Morgan's 1863 raid was a centre of resistance: church and fire bells were incessant, while home guards frenziedly prepared as Morgan was expected to raid the city to free its Confederate prisoners.[153] Clearly causing panic, devastation and misery in 1863 meant that former raiders would not be welcome there.



The reality of raiding. The raiders mentioned here were commanded by Captain Taylor. A man of that name and rank was one of Morgan's Raiders. In other accounts of this incident nearly thirty black soldiers were killed and only their white Commander and two Blacks escaped by hiding.

[153] Brooksher & Snider, pp162-163.

Courage, dash, élan, audacity and stoic loyalty to a losing cause were among the qualities many Kentucky cavalrymen clearly possessed. However their capacity for destruction, havoc, ferocity, cruelty and ruthlessness were equally common. Mercy, forbearance, and justice were rarely evident. What role Kiney had in this horrible world remains unclear. Both the Second Kentucky Cavalry and the reformed Fifth were in Morgan's raid on Indiana.[154] While it is possible that Kiney was absent, on furlough, suffering sickness or between enlistments during the raid, it is more likely that he was there. From around 1870 on he worked in the Indianapolis railways, where militiamen who had been mustered to deal with Morgan's raid also worked, is it likely that he would have deliberately made enemies in his workplace by revealing his past? Either as participant or eyewitness he had good reasons for letting all this pass. Just to be enlisted in a rebel Kentucky Cavalry unit would have been enough to cause hostility, regardless of individual actions. Whatever he did do, he did not lie about it or brag.

Finally in 1952 Kiney did state that Shiloh was his most severe fight and although Kiney did not clearly state it, Morgan's Raiders were there. This legendary unit was akin to the units of Mosby and Quantrill. To many, all of them were essentially bandits. Admitting being one of them would have sounded a tall story or if believed, would have caused hostility.

Is this why Kiney said little about the war before 1952 and perhaps changed his birth year and surname? Much of his life after the war remains little known. He apparently did not fill out censuses, have photographs taken, attend reunions and may not be in street directories. Even his marriages are difficult to trace.

In March 1867 a William A. Kiney married in the town of Reynolds, Kentucky. In 1870 this man or another of that name aged twenty-five filled out a census in Kentucky, naming a wife and two baby children. At the recalled age of twenty-eight in that same year Kiney moved to Indianapolis and seems to have stayed there. He worked at different jobs, with the railways for twenty years, then as a saddle maker and also as a cabinet maker.

A dramatic moment came into his now prosaic life when he was involved in transporting equipment by rail from Indianapolis to fight Chicago's great fire of 1871. Family members recalled how his recounting details of this matched information revealed many years later in the media. His story here has no

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[154] *Ibid*, p20, pp157-158.

motivation, no gain for fabrication. Why would he lie about this to his family? For those who believe the 1860s birthdates, this presents a problem. Seven year olds do not work on trains in emergency situations. They do not rush to travel hundreds of miles away from parents and home. They are very rarely employed in government departments.

He married four times, having several children. Two, perhaps three of the wives names are known, but not Pauline Dinkins. His last marriage was at the age of 96! After his last wife's death in the summer of 1951 he went into a home where he was popular. He liked playing dominoes, card games and attending Bible study.

Nearly two years later he suffered broken bones in a fall, dying on June 23rd 1953 and being buried two days later. In Thomas Berger's 1964 novel *Little Big Man* these are the exact dates and the exact year that, Jack Crabb, a 111 year old Indian fighter originally from Indiana, now existing in an old people's home, dies. This writer was actually planning a clarifying letter on this matter to Thomas Berger when news of the novelist's death appeared. Whatever the origins of his idea, it is now lost.

Although he is a Wild West character, Crabb feels hostile to the Union cavalry. Like Kiney, Crabb also outlived four wives. Like Kiney, Crabb has a credibility problem in verifying his long distant and violent past during interviews in an old people's home. Real life inspiration? Art imitating life? As coincidence this would have to be in the millions to one. Like the 1920 marriage information this point needs investigation even if the fictional Crabb, lecherous, bloodthirsty and cynical in old age appears as the opposite to Kiney. Hoar's work shows that that Kiney's death and funeral happened on the days given here, eleven years before the novel was published. The reproduced death certificate and the reproduced funeral director's letter means there can be no doubt on this.

It has been alleged that Kiney was a fraud trying for the Confederate pension, but although he knew of that pension, he did not apply. In the 1952 interview he explained that Kentucky only paid pensions to its residents and he was not moving back there. He did not publicise or deny his Civil War service, gain any known aid from the Southern charities that cared for veterans or get himself feted by assorted organisations. A polite, modest and quiet man with no taste for attention, he had no motive for pretending to be a Confederate.

To be a fake he would have had to fake the 1850 and 1860 censuses and two separate enlistment documents. Forgeries do not easily get into Adjutant's records,

muster rolls and into America's *Official Records*. Supposing that somehow this happened or somehow identity theft occurred, why someone who was not odd, did not want government money, attention or aid should put them there or thieve another's identity becomes an implausible puzzle. Assuming they did manage that, or knew of them and pretended to be this person, why then insist on being born in 1861 or 1864 on other official records? Doing this would clearly make Kiney seem a fraudulent liar, a lunatic or a fool. In the recollections of his granddaughter he casually recalled seeing soldiers march off to war in 1861. Why lie to her? If he was Dinkin's groom or the ash felt worker did he want to seem younger to his bride or his employers than he was?

The odd answer to this odd puzzle may well be the third possibility raised at the beginning of this segment: exactly the reverse of what those following his lead or believing the 1861 date thought: Kiney may have been a genuine veteran trying to avoid confirmation of that fact. Giving a birth year that precluded him from being in the war would obviously do that. This may also be why he changed the spelling of his name. Why hide?

Morgan's raiders were legendary heroes in the South, but they were something else in the North and Kiney was living in the North. They caused death and devastation in Kentucky and some northern states. They murdered civilians. He was working with Union veterans. Did he deliberately give a birth date that would preclude Civil War service and hence avoid ostracism? Did he change his name to avoid detection and live in a Northern state and avoid veteran's organisations for the same reason? Or did he find himself in a northern state for other reasons, but came to the same attitude? A raider who perhaps killed, stole or destroyed among civilians would be treated differently to a regular army soldier who fought against other soldiers.

During the war in Kentucky enemy combatants were given two categories, Confederates and guerrillas. The latter were considered outlaws who could be executed and at least three were, two of them months after the war.[155] One of these raiders, Champ Ferguson, admitted to assorted atrocities and killings, but said everybody did this.[156] Another, John M. Bradley, only escaped execution by killing his sleeping guard and escaping.[157] When Morgan and hundreds of his men were

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[155] Unsigned web contributions from *Executed Today.* www.executedtoday.com/
[156] *Ibid,*
[157] Hoar, Vol. III p1621.

captured, they were jailed, not sent to a prisoner's camp. Even being a regular Confederate did not guarantee regular treatment if caught. In 1863 it was reported as far away as Virginia that Confederate officers had been hanged by General Burnside for merely trying to recruit in Kentucky.[158] While this does not sound like the usual image of Burnside, Confederates believed it.





Captain Clarke, a Confederate officer in Morgan's Command was hanged as an outlaw. This poster suggests that Morgan and his raiders were seen more as outlaws than soldiers, a good reason never to be identified with them.

In 1863 did Kiney get a taste of jail experiences he never wanted repeated? Or did he hear of what had happened to his compatriots? Things that he would never want to happen to him? Raiders were likely to face retribution in some form: execution, vigilante justice, legal prosecution, compensation payouts or ostracism were all possibilities. Captain Clarke's trial served as a warning for others and hardly inspired confidence in Kentucky's justice towards Confederates. Clarke was not allowed defence witnesses, his Confederate enlistment was ignored, the gallows were being built while the trial proceeded and no appeal was allowed.[159]

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[158] John B. Jones, p265.
[159] Unsigned web contributions from *Executed Today.*

Like many soldiers, (perhaps the majority?) did Kiney become disillusioned with the military world, the Confederate government or racism? Or did he dislike feeling guilt and stress when asked about horrors he preferred to forget? Is this why he left Kentucky, apparently to never return? Kentucky was predominantly Union and Reconstruction Era life there would have been difficult for a man seen as an enemy causing death and devastation. In Indiana he could make a new start, keep quiet about the war and be unknown, especially with a new surname, and the new birth date year of 1861 or 1864 would disconnect him from the war.

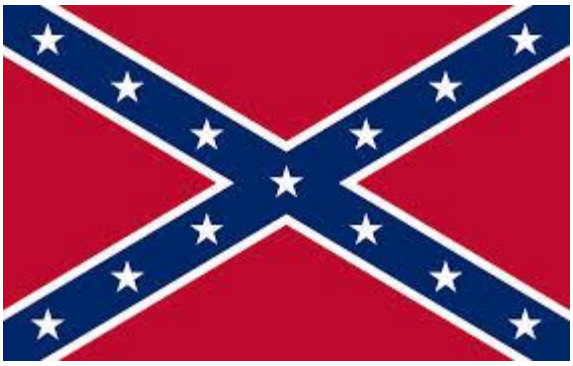
Even these possibilities are just that. Ironically among those claiming to be the last Civil War combatant, the last adult who probably was that man did not want either the title or the attention. Unlike those who lived after him he was the last confirmed combatant.



*



Sarah Frances Rockwell (nee Pearce) aka Fannie Rockwell



Result: verified

Date of Birth: Very probably October 25th 1844. A range of other dates give 1842, 1843 1847 1850 and 1854, but all of these other census birthdates, especially the last two, are probably erroneous. 1843 is possible.

Date of Death: 23rd November 1953

Age at enlistment: at seventeen or eighteen she volunteered for nursing

Rank: no known rank was given but she worked as a nurse

Sarah Frances Pierce was born in Richmond Virginia, but her birthdate is disputed. An 1850 census, taken sometime between June and October or possibly November, gives her age as six. The *Find-a-Grave* entry gives the birthdate date October 25th 1843. In an October 1952 interview she is described as celebrating her 108th birthday.[160] Her tombstone gives the 1844 date and descendants believe this to be accurate.[161] Some web entries give just the year 1844.[162] Other census and government document dates give birthdates as late as 1854, and the 1920 census gives three birthdates 1842, 1847 and 1850! As she is recorded under her parent's name in the 1850 census aged six, the dates showing her being born in 1850 and after that year cannot possibly be correct, although two writers who insist she is a fraud use that date – and apparently do not know of the 1850 census. The census birth dates 1842 and 1847 are also extremely unlikely. The following account is heavily based on her November 1953 obituary in the *Danbury News –Times*, the *The New London, Conn. Evening Day* October 1952 interview, census records, and e-mails from one of her descendants were invaluable. As continually referencing these sources would lead to almost as many source notes as text sentences, I recommend that that they be read in full.

Civil War history tends to focus on the accounts of officers, politicians, legendary figures and military units with others, such as slaves, blockade runners, intelligence gatherers and medical staff gaining less attention. Several nurses did keep diaries or wrote recollections, but their accounts, while valuable, tend to be about local experiences. Sarah Rockwell does not seem to feature in any of them. Another problem with primary sources involves censorship, both of the official kind and self-censorship. Graphic accounts of the reality of Civil War nursing would have affected recruiting and morale. Such accounts also went against the idea of what was proper. Similarly, they also told of what people did not want to know about. When Mathew Brady exhibited his photographs of dead Union soldiers in New York after the initial shock there was an uproar – and for images that were not gory and are more sad than graphic. As recently as the filming of

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[160] Unsigned article, *The New London, Conn. Evening Day.* Oct 24th 1952 p5.
[161] C. Michael Anderson, e-mail to the author 12th July 2014.
[162] Danbury Obituary Article.

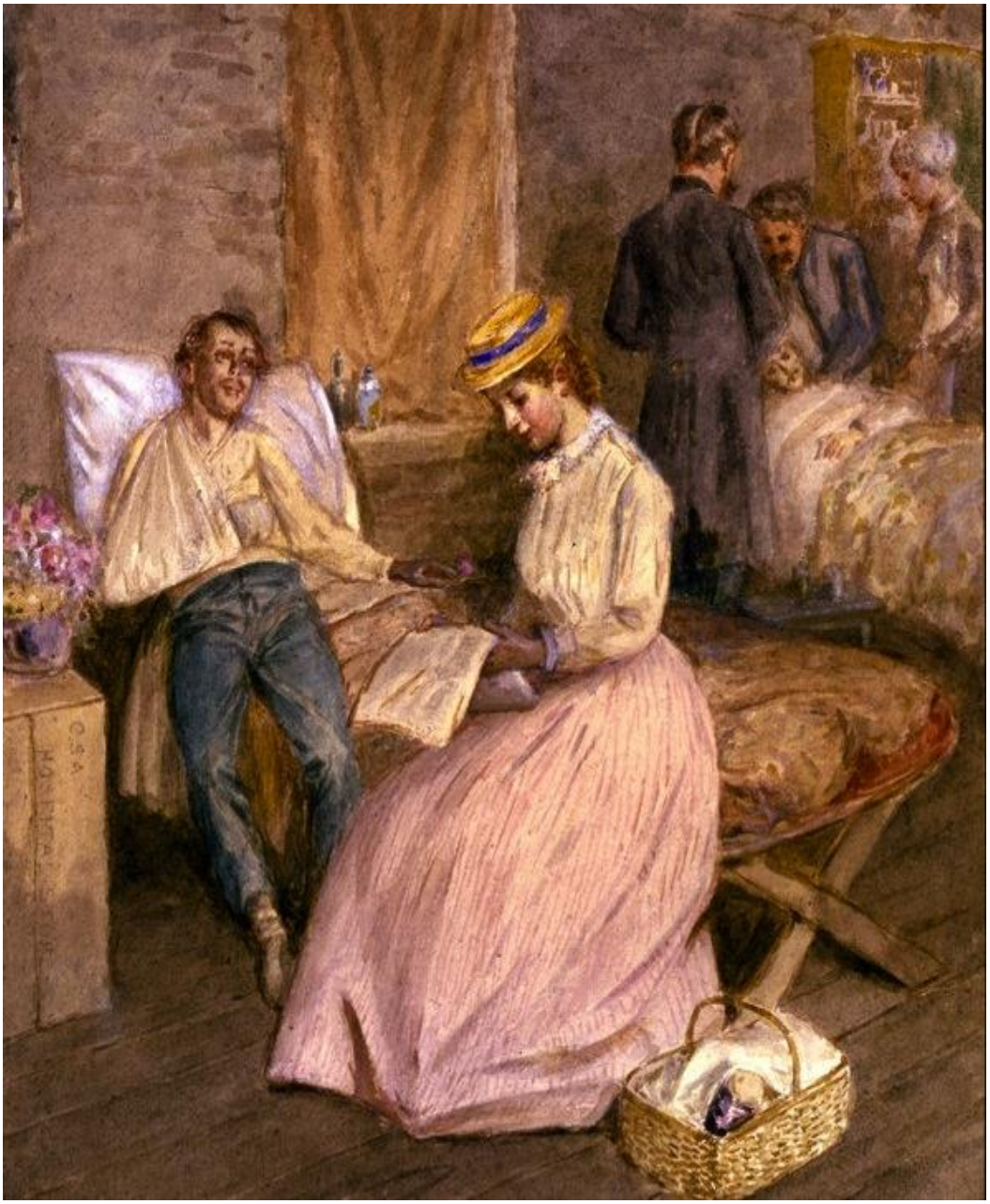
Lincoln audiences were disturbed by the hospital scenes, especially when amputated limbs were being piled up in trenches. Obviously such sights would have been more distressing in reality, especially for those who had contact with the soldiers. This comment would apply to Sarah Rockwell. Her family tradition is that she met her fiancé John McWilliams before the war; he enlisted on the same day as her brother John and in the same regiment, the 15th Virginia Infantry.[163] With two men so close to her in the fighting, she must have worried that they would have such a fate.

Sarah Rockwell's early life was definitely not preparation for the horrific world of nineteenth-century wartime nursing. In old age she stated that she had always been averse to eating lamb because she believed the poor things deserved a fuller life. Soon after her mother's death, years before the war broke out, she and her sister and brother were sent to a strict seminary school until her father remarried. They then returned to another school. This cloistered her from the war until she was seventeen or eighteen, when her life dramatically changed.

Richmond was besieged and the school closed. Although she does not give a precise date, this was probably in the spring or early summer of 1862, during the peninsula campaign when the Army of the Potomac tried to capture Richmond and got within a few miles of the city. If she was eighteen during the later siege of Richmond in 1864 she must have been born in 1845 or 1846: that goes against all known evidence. Between July 1862 and May-June 1864 Richmond was not under siege: this was when she was aged between seventeen and nineteen. The second siege was a siege at Petersburg's trenches rather than of Richmond: this started in the summer of 1864. Her descendants support the October 1844 birthdate with good evidence, so she may have begun nursing in the middle of 1862, months before turning eighteen that October. This appears to be the most likely option. The urgent need for nurses in the 1862 siege also suggests the earlier date.

Before Florence Nightingale revolutionised nursing in the 1850s nurses were usually either family members looking after a relative, nuns or low life camp followers. Nightingale has become a controversial figure, but whatever her real achievements, she did give nurses a new image. One stereotype rapidly replaced another: nurses rapidly became the saintly, self-sacrificing "angel of the battlefield." This romantic cultural image of military nursing that still exists. Sarah

[163] C. Michael Anderson, e-mail to the author 12th July 2014.



Nursing in Richmond Virginia 1861. This is a very romantic view, yet early in the war before casualties increased and supplies dwindled, it had a basis in reality. It could be a scene set in Lily Logan Morrill's parlour. Due to the war Richmond had one of the world's largest hospitals at that time, the Chimborazo, one of many in the city. This was less than a decade after Florence Nightingale had started modernising nursing during the Crimean War and while Clara Barton was modernizing Northern nursing and Jean Henri Durant was forming the Red Cross in Europe.

Rockwell may have initially believed it. In this stereotypic image stoic, noble, handsome officers who seem incapacitated by wounds that never permanently incapacitate, facially scar or leave the gallant captain mentally broken are healed by love. He heals under the heroine's loving care as they share a peaceful, clean and spacious environment. If Sarah Rockwell had anything to do with such nursing she did not describe it.

It would be 1929 before Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* revealed the more common realities to an accepting public through his ironic treatment of a nurse-soldier romance. Even so, the earlier sentimental image had some elements of truth. It was not so much a fabrication as a presented picture of the best possible aspects of wartime nursing. Both as a possibility and a contrast to what is known of her nursing reality this image is worth examining.

Virginian nurse Lily Logan Morrill lived that romantic reality and her story was retold in 1932 when her daughter edited and introduced her 1890 recollections in *My Confederate Girlhood.* Her family mansion near Richmond took wounded Confederates and she was flirtatious with a handsome officer, a casualty who had an injured arm. Every morning he would lie on the front parlour lounge basking in the sun, being fanned, while Lily or her mother rebandaged his arm and fed him delicacies, chatted or read to him. This scenario was repeated when a Colonel Logan, a man she was already attracted to, was wounded and she made sure he would survive by getting him out of Richmond's hospitals and into her home.

In *My Confederate Girlhood* her documentation and photographs bear out a fairy tale. Rich, respected and incredibly handsome, he became one of the Confederacy's youngest generals. After their marriage in May 1865 they had a successful civilian life together lasting almost fifty years. However even in this seemingly rosy account more distasteful realities briefly emerge. Lily's brother Edwin returned home to be nursed – and died a day after Christmas 1861. His body was laid out in the same parlour where more idyllic images were played out. Lily was very aware that the men who recovered under her care had much less chance of recovery in Richmond's hospitals, where in her accurate view, there was more suffering and less healing.

Richmond's hospitals became the world of Sarah Frances Rockwell (nee Pearce) and Hattie Cook Carter. In a cruel irony Sarah's conditions and life were the opposite of those of Lily Logan Morrill. She also intended to marry her

Confederate soldier in the spring of 1865, Corporal McWilliams, but he would be killed in action.



This photograph was taken at a Union casualty station after the battle of Savage's Station in July 1862. It captures the reality of wartime nursing - and for both sides. The tent was probably set up for operations.

The reality of home nursing also had another side: colloquially, Hemingway got it right. By the autumn of 1861 so many soldiers who were given home nursing had deserted that President Davis wanted to legally end private hospitals.[164]

Early in the war, just before Sarah began nursing, Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens tried organising medical services and in February 1862 he got a requested report on their state in Virginia. This individual who reported, Mary H. Johnstone, told him that the sudden and massive medical needs were hitting a society where people had little of the necessary experience and this was causing massive disruption. More practically, she told him that tented

[164] Rebecca Beatrice Brooks, "Captain Sally Tompkins: Nurse and Officer in the Confederate Army" *Civil War Saga A Blog of the American Civil War.* Posted June 11th 2013.

hospitals were inadequate for recovery, surgeons should be competent and temperate (probably meaning sober, but possibly just good-tempered) and that the soldiers deserved better treatment than they were getting from people owing their positions to friendly contacts, not ability.[165] Sarah Rockwell did not give a detailed description of her conditions in Richmond, but Nurse Constance Cary was there at the same time. She has left a vivid eyewitness account of Richmond at the beginning of June 1862, in the medical aftermath of the battle of Seven Pines. This was probably around the time Sarah Rockwell became a nurse and Cary was in almost exactly the same situation as regards class, age, attitude and locale.



A realistic view of a Confederate nurse at more common work.

Richmond, was at this time a city of approximately over eighty thousand residents, perhaps many more, as it had rapidly more than doubled in size due to the war.[166] In early June 1862 it was suddenly overwhelmed by massive numbers of wounded, as thousands were brought back and needed urgent medical attention.

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[165] Mary H. Johnstone, "Personal Observations at some of the Camps and Hospitals." Feb 3rd 1862. In *Heroines of Dixie: Confederate Women Tell Their Story of the War*. By Katherine M. Jones. 1955. New York: Smithmark, 1995. pp75-77.

[166] Nelson Langford, *Richmond Burning.* p19.

Many were suddenly deposited in disused buildings. Others went to homes and Cary describes how "the streets were one vast hospital."[167] She saw that in one hotel the wounded lay on boards with only blankets or haversacks for pillows, while churches supplied pew cushions sown together for mattresses. Women's groups sewed pallets and mattresses together as fast as possible. Cary and another young woman, also apparently with no previous medical experience, finding themselves standing in front of fifteen wounded soldiers, volunteered to surgeons to serve as nurses and were accepted immediately "as responsible nurses under direction of an older and more experienced woman."[168] This reads ambiguously. It suggests that as they were working with surgeons, they may have assisted in operations without prior training. Cary's story seems to be a rare account of how a Confederate Richmond nurse's career started and there was no enlistment for her or any suggestion that this ever happened.

War's traumas comes across clearly in her account as Cary describes herself and others searching among the dead and dying for loved ones and of fathers riding beside dying sons carried in carts and litters. She also describes the situation with funerals. So many died of wounds that funerals were also conducted at night, often to bands playing the Dead March. This was a city almost overwhelmed by casualties – in what was not one of the largest Civil War battles. At Seven Pines the Confederacy lost nearly six thousand in dead and wounded: a month later in the seven days battles Richmond dealt with over three times that many casualties.[169]

The more genteel and lucrative positions were reserved for upper and middle class ladies.[170] Even so, many of them like Cary and Rockwell did not shirk from the horrors of nursing. The combined stench of gangrene, gastric infections, and rooms packed with old, bloodied and puss infested bandages and unwashed men was often so powerful as to make healthy men faint.[171] Some nurses found the stench so bad that they would plug their noses with camphor soaked cotton balls. Disease was so common in hospitals that some nurses died.[172]

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[167] Cary in *Heroines of Dixie.* p146.
[168] *Ibid,* p147.
[169] John Macdonald, *Great Battles of the American Civil War.* London: Guild Publishing, 1988. p39, p47.
[170] Catherine M. Wright, "Women During the Civil War." *Encyclopedia Virginia.*
[171] Maggie Mclean, "Nursing in the Civil War South." *Civil War Women* posted 17th November 2006. civilwar womenblog.nursing-in-the-civil-war-south.
[172] *Ibid.*





The calico dress of a Union Civil War nurse. Human bloodstains remain. This is likely to be typical of nurse's clothing until later in the war when uniforms with aprons were common. The Civil War era nurse's kit was extremely simple, gauze, scissors, bandages, a sewing kit, tweezers and a knife

Confederate armies forbade women enlisting, although some paid women were listed as nurses in some set locales. Nurses were rarely enrolled, the regulars at Chimborazo were – and Sarah's name does not appear in documents, but then few do. Among those few who was Sally Tompkins, one of Richmond's highest placed hospital matrons. Jefferson Davis gave her the rank of Captain and as head of the Robertson Hospital, which she established and made one of Richmond's best, she gained fame. [173] Both fame and rank were unusual, from other accounts it

[173] Unsigned blog, "Captain Sally Tompkins Defends Top Civil War Hospital" *History Engine Tools For Collaborative Education and Research.* https.//historyengine.richmondedu/episodes/view/5595

seems that Confederate nurses were not usually enlisted, given ranks, or gained notice, let alone uniforms or fame.

This makes tracing Sarah Rockwell's service through official documents close to impossible: searching for evidence through computerised records by this writer has not found any existing record. In an introduction to *Confederate Medical Personnel,* a compilation of recently computerised records listing known medical staff and other information, DeAnne Blanton has written of the difficulties associated with the records of Civil War medical staff.[174] She also mentions Richmond's burnt records in April 1865 and the frequent Confederate tactic of burning their records as the war ended. Extant records are almost exclusively concerned with paid staff and she writes that it seems the Confederate government did not document work by medical volunteers.[175] Attempts by this writer to find mention of Sarah Rockwell or Hattie Cook Carter through these sources led myself and then the archivists nowhere. Even so, some mention of either nurse might still exist somewhere.

Richmond's Chimborazo Hospital was the world's largest at that time, so although many of the nurses were men, Sarah Rockwell perhaps worked there to some extent, but Chimborazo was more of a convalescent hospital than a casualty ward and she stated that she worked at improvised hospitals; these were often homes or unused buildings. According to Margaret Mitchell's research, unmarried women were often used to write letters home, read stories, and give religious consolation and to provide gifts such as clothing and food. This was also essentially the situation at Chimborazo.[176] More distasteful roles such as treating wounds, or anything involving revealed flesh were usually left to widows and married women or males. Slaves, the poor or lower class women were usually used for such tasks as cooking, washing, changing mattresses or the more grisly work.[177]

Even so, what Sarah briefly recounted to family members suggests that many of her experiences differed from the genteel image and the easier work as most of her time went into the urgent casualty wards. As Cary's account suggests, the staid and protective conventions must have withered quickly under the massive

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[174] *Confederate Medical Personnel* Spring 1994, Vol. 26 No 1. http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1994/spring/confederate-medical- personnel.html p1.
[175] *Ibid.*
[176] Unsigned Introduction *Chimborazo Hospital.* Internet Site.
[177] Wright, "Women During the Civil War."

influx of casualties from the spring of 1862 onwards, about the time her nursing career probably began. Sarah Rockwell recalled how the groans of wounded prisoners haunted those seeking to give comfort. She saw sufferings that stayed with her all her life.[178]

With Grant's onslaughts against Richmond in 1864 Sarah and her mother spent long hours attending to the scores of casualties who kept pouring into the city after each battle. Rather than the occasional idyllic image Lily Logan Morrill gave or the idealised painted image presented in this segment, the Atlanta hospital scenes from *Gone with the Wind* must be closer to her reality. Some scenes show upper class women writing letters for illiterate soldiers, others show bloody bandages being rewashed and rows of filthy, suffering men in ragged uniforms crowded into large rooms. In the most graphic scene a screaming man begging not to have his leg removed – and it is, without anaesthetic. William J. Bush, who was in Georgia in 1864, said the film was like being there. Few images as realistic as that film emerged from the war. Civil War era photographs of hospitals usually give us neat, orderly rows of hospital beds, clean floors and passive patients. It was an image governments wanted preserved and seventy years later they still did. So as not to affect recruiting *Gone With the Wind's* hospital scenes were censored out in some British Commonwealth countries with the film's release early in World War II. Sarah did not try to evade service: she went beyond probable expectations. Between battles she would bathe and feed Union prisoners crowded into Richmond's Libby prison.

In March 1865, the Pearce family fled Richmond to the safety of Lynchburg. Three weeks later her fiancé Corporal John McWilliams, was killed at the battle of Five Forks, two weeks before their marriage date.

After the war her family returned to Richmond to find their home devastated and that Richmond had little need for her father's profession, a hatter. They eked out a living there for nearly four years, selling their remaining furniture. As her brother, a former Confederate soldier, had already found work in Bethel years before, the family joined him and according to a census, she worked as a dressmaker. She married Charles Jay Rockwell, a blacksmith in April 1873. He gave her the nickname "Fannie" and it stuck. From 1875 onwards they spent much of her life in Danbury Connecticut.

[178] Danbury Obituary Article.





As these photographs show, tents could be poor protection from weather, being cluttered and cramped. Such conditions lead to the spread of diseases such as typhus, dysentery, diarrhoea, cholera, typhoid, pneumonia, malaria and influenza.

Disease killed almost twice as many soldiers as the battles. Note how few women are in the caring groups.



A Confederate field hospital at Antietam. Realistic images such as this of the often pitiful and makeshift hospitals were rare. The Union hospital pictured below was well behind the battle lines, intended for convalescents, This was probably as good as it got for casualties.





Sarah Rockwell at the family burial plot in September 1946.

She did return to Richmond briefly in 1909, but found the city so changed and so few old friends and acquaintances were left that she was disappointed and returned north. She preferring her memories of Richmond in the antebellum days.

Although she claimed to hold no bitterness over the war, she did say that the fact that her husband was a wartime civilian with sympathy to the South made their marriage easier. Their happy marriage lasted over forty-five years, until his death from a stroke in August 1918. Her life was centred on her family, her two daughters and their children and then grandchildren. Family recollections recall her tolerance and good humour, her love of cooking and family get togethers, her courtesy and cheer. Sarah Rockwell was a person of tremendous resilience, and lived in good physical and mental health for most of her life. Only in her last years when she had problems with her hearing and her sight did her body start to fail, but as the 1952 interview and her family's recollections both show, her mind stayed sharp. Almost certainly the media coverage of the Korean War recalled for her the horrors of her Civil War days and she fervently hoped she would live to see it end. She died four months after the July 1953 truce.

One article, (printed in a flying saucer and other paranormal events magazine) says that Rockwell and William J. Bush were fakes as they were only fifteen the summer the war ended. This supposed age is very emphatically stated but must be unlikely, but even if true (and detailed evidence apart from contradictory and unreliable censuses is needed) a fifteen year old could still nurse and several very young women did. Sarah Rockwell has been put into the "too young to serve" category like so many others because of a highly selective use of censuses. How could she have been born in 1850 if the census of 1850 shows her as aged six? Once again this idea of the censuses as reliable is disproved by examples and information from censuses and from primary sources.

Like Loudermilk there was confusion over her age and also in relation to her first wartime experience. Like Loudermilk she had no enlistment documents. However they differ in other aspects that get Rockwell over the line in verification, but just stop him. She was accepted by the Daughters of the Confederacy as genuine: he was rejected. She had no motive to fake: he did. He had so many relatives and namesakes who muddle his account, she did not.

Sarah Rockwell's accounts are creditable, she seems a strong character and had no Civil War pension, did not seek power or publicity and had no reason to deceive. We have census documents for her age, family records and

documentation, marriage documents, interviews, photographs, and a traceable life. No evidence goes against her statements. She made no outrageous or suspicious claims. No evidence of destroyed or missing documentation appears because almost certainly, none exists. She was a survivor.



*





Thomas Evan Riddle

The riddle of Riddle

Result: possible

Despite all the confusion Riddle caused, the service of a Thomas Evans Riddle must be genuine - but is he the same man with that name who lived to 107?

Date of Birth: disputed 1845 April 1846, 1847 1848 1853 1858 April 1860 1862 1864 and 1868 are all stated.

Date of Death: 2nd April 1954 (not disputed - one of the few things in his life everybody accepts)

Age at enlistment: disputed, probably fifteen or sixteen.

Rank: private (claimed)

Unit: confused, several possibilities emerge, but the 22nd Virginia Infantry (1st Konawa Regiment) has him enlisted under his full name and he was apparently the in the 33rd Virginia Infantry.

Service: four years in the infantry or eighteen months or twenty months.

Combat Experience: Plenty if true : the 33rd Virginia was usually in heavy fighting.

Length of service: uncertain: 1861 to 1865 in one account but from early in the war to Gettysburg in another

Evidence for service: He appears in an 1850 census which shows him to be born in Blount County Tennessee 1846. Seventy years later he correctly remembered within one letter the surname of the Captain who enlisted him, an obscure piece of information unlikely to be known unless he was there.

While not using his exact full name except in one case, several men called Thomas Riddle are recorded in units where he said he was enlisted. One of these, the 22nd Virginia (Kanawha) had him listed by his full name, Thomas Evans Riddle in a regimental history.[179] He also appears by name as Thomas Riddle in an excerpt from an 1863 diary written by a soldier in his company in the 33rd Virginia.

No other Thomas Evans Riddle appears in records to show that the man who served and the man who lived to 1954 are two different people.

Possible Evidence in his favour He may possibly have attended a 1913 Confederate veterans' reunion in Tennessee eighteen years before he applied for his pension, and took part in the previously cited and written about group photo where a veteran is described as "Thomas E. Riddle of Texas." To attend such a reunion appears as very strange, motiveless and foolish behaviour for someone who is not a veteran. He would have been picked up as a fraud as soon as recollections started. Linking him to Texas links him to the Thomas E. Riddle who spent his last years in Houston, he had lived in Texas since 1885. This would be almost certain proof for verification except for two others called Thomas E. Riddle, resident in Texas, one was born around 1847 and appears on the 1920 census. The other is Doctor Thomas Elam Riddle, a Confederate veteran. The photo shows six men. Two have Riddle's stocky, shorter than average physique and some facial resemblance, but one of these also bears a good resemblance to the doctor.[180] The youngest of these men look like they are in their late fifties at least, probably too old to be an imposter born anywhere between 1853 and 1868.

Evidence against service: His own outrageously impossible stories, claims by descendants that he was too young and some very contradictory genealogical

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[179] John McClure of the Virginia Historical Society. e-mail 1ST April 2014. http://www.vahistorical.org/ John McClure suggested double checking through national archive sources, a good idea underway.

[180] See source note 63 and for Doctor Riddle , see the photo in the finda-grave entry under his full name.

charts, census documents and his death certificate records are all strong negative evidence. There might be two men with identical names, one serving in the war, one far too young for it.

After reading the devastating assorted pieces that make up evidence against service I had thought myself charitable to keep his status "as possible/confusing evidence." All this negative evidence is here for those who wish to follow it after I establish why I have listed him as a strong possibility, but cannot go beyond that. The last paragraph summarises his importance. Not one of these documents that verify him comes from Riddle or could be a forgery. The first primary source is the 1850 census which lists him as being four years old, born in Miegs Tennessee in April 1846. This makes him old enough to have served in the war.

The second is due to the efforts of John McClure of the Virginia Historical Society. I had checked the Tennessee regiments where Riddle claimed to be first, and not finding him enlisted, believed the account by descendants who had stated that although he said he enlisted with the Tennesseans there was no record of him there. They said the same about his enlistment on the 22nd Virginia muster roll, so who was the Thomas Riddle there and in the 33rd and the 53rd? My double check with Mr McClure got a prompt response. He found a Thomas Evans Riddle was indeed enrolled in the 22nd Regiment under his full name as a published history of the regiment which contained muster rolls showed. This was the Loudermilk situation repeated. Riddle's full name did not show up in the computerised muster rolls that I used and the 22nd Virginia histories are out of print and at over a thousand dollars, too expensive.

To remake the point about muster rolls once again, they do not contain full conclusive proof, are full of unacknowledged double entries for individuals and have omissions for both basic information and for individuals who served. Even so, I have found them more reliable than the American censuses.

The 22nd served in the unsuccessful 1861 campaign to reclaim West Virginia where many of the regiment's soldiers were from, although some were from Tennessee. In early 1862 they were moved towards the front forming in East Virginia. Probably around this time Riddle joined the 33rd Virginia Infantry, a unit recruited mainly around Rockingham County. Their muster roll also has him listed as being in this regiment in the famed Stonewall Brigade. This unit would be in all the war's major eastern battles until Spotsylvania 1864 when it had taken so many casualties that it was merged into other units. While approximately 6,000 soldiers

served in the brigade during the war only 210 surrendered at Appomattox; their reputation was so high that they led the last parade at the surrender.[181] Riddle's claimed service gains more credibility by a third piece of evidence. This was found by me as an entry in a serialised diary where nothing was made of it. His move from the 22nd to the 33rd, was perhaps to be with probable relatives James and Harrison Riddle. John B. Sheets, also of Company I, kept a diary in which Riddle appears with Harrison. In February 1863 they were apparently absent without leave and returned to camp in chains. Riddle slipped out of the chains but returned voluntarily only to be locked up. Considering that Sheets records deserters being shot in this week Riddle was lucky to be alive.[182] Sheets also records the aftermath of Gettysburg and the sheer dreariness of war. It is a long way from Riddle getting presents from his relative Lee while they chat on the Riddle family farm.

Pleasant Crump, Thomas E. Riddle, Renes Lee, Unknown, Unkown, Arnold Murray Use of Photo courtesy of Peggy Dillard of Website Tennrebgirl



The last piece of evidence is the 1913 Reunion photo, already mentioned above and dealt with in detail on the section on Arnold Murray. While on facial

[181] Patrick Hook & Steve Smith, *The Stonewall Brigade in the Civil War*. London: Zenith Press, 2008. p101 p123.
[182] John B. Sheets, *The Diary of John B. Sheets*. Transcribed by Dale Harter, HRHS Archivist. Harrisonburg – Rockingham Historical Society. Volume 30. No1. 7 entry for Feb 26th 1863.

resemblance Doctor Riddle seems more likely and the other Texan TER is possible, Thomas Evans Riddle remains a possibility.

The MORASS

If the writing here seems convoluted, pedantic and a morass, please bear in mind that I am dealing with a man who managed to have nine different birth date years, be born in both Tennessee and Kentucky, have at least two military records and possibly more to come, perhaps parents in three sets who may have had several children decades before their marriage, indulged in a propensity for telling impossible stories, two disagreeing death certificates and two disagreeing tombstones. Presumably he is buried under one of them, but don't count on it. Why couldn't someone else have lived longer and so have been the last living Confederate soldier? Even the Loudermilks cause less confusion.

My account initially followed what unbelieving relatives wrote on the website "Our Family." According to them in 1931 Riddle was trying to get a Confederate pension and to do so initially stated he was in the 12th Tennessee Infantry which was soon merged. He was then in the 22nd Tennessee Infantry and that still appears on some websites. In 1931 the War Department could find nothing either. To that point I agreed with their sceptical outlook as I had checked and also found no reference to him there. Other Tennessee units were mentioned by Riddle, but then his descendants said he claimed confusion and to have served in Virginian units.[183] He presented a memorandum that had been written up by his wife about twenty five years before about his enlistment in the 22nd and said that he remembered he had served in the 33rd Virginia. Even by their account he got his captain's surname right within one letter, but they did not know of his named lieutenant. Government workers then told him that they could find no record of him in the 22nd Virginia, but did find him listed in the 33rd Virginia, so he was granted his pension.[184] Yet if he was a fake after a pension, how did he know the Captain's name and where he enlisted? The memorandum has since tied in with the other evidence that does not come from him.

At this point, following the evidence the record looked like this:

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[183] David Autry working from research by Margret Gilbreath. *Our Family* 2/8/2008. http:/Roots/web Project Our Family / The Last Civil War Vets.
[184] *Our Family.*

There was another (?) private, Thomas E. Riddle, who also turned out to be Thomas C. Riddle served in Company I 53rd Virginia Infantry. Like the 33rd, this unit was at Gettysburg and the Company identifying letter is the same with numbers easily confused, so perhaps he finally ended up here –or perhaps there were three Thomas Riddles in the Army of Northern Virginia.

His potential enrolments look like this:

12th Tennessee Infantry (merged)

22nd Tennessee Infantry (unlisted)

Other Tennessee Units (unknown)

22nd Virginia Infantry (apparently proven)

Company I of the 33rd Virginia Regiment (apparently proven)

Company I 53rd Virginia Infantry (unlikely)

The writers of "Our Family" faced with all this and without the evidence we now have, were quite right then to be sceptical about Riddle's military life, but focusing on the census morass gets Riddle's descendants and genealogists saying there can be no way that Thomas Evans Riddle could have served in the Civil War.

The morass caused by army rolls appears hard to beat, but the birthdate documents for Riddle manage to be worse. These supposed birthdates range from 1846 on an 1850 census to 1847 in Riddle's recollection and to 1853, 1858, 1860, 1862 1864 1868 in assorted census and death certificate records.

Not one of these birthdates has been backed by reference to a birth certificate. No birth certificate, baptismal record or date of birth from a marriage licence can be found on a computer website for Thomas Evans Riddle to the best of my knowledge. The sources of evidence that are known, the censuses and his death certificates are full of multiple contradictions.

If the genealogists and the census takers had stuck with one date within the range this would have made for a stronger case, but all this confusion lowers the credibility of the census records. He was born again and again and again and again and again and again if we believe censuses. I am not joking: we are offered nine birth dates. How can anyone take this seriously?

Some researchers say they have found original documents that prove that he was born on April 16th 1846.[185] Perhaps such comments refers to the 1850 census, but could be something else. This census clearly shows Riddle was born in Miegs Tennessee, when and where he said he born. His parent's names are not shown on the computerised issue here.[186] It makes him of the right age for Civil War service. After 1850 only one Thomas Evans Riddle shows up in censuses, death certificates and pensions – the man who died in 1954.The same census also lists two men with what some descendants claim was his father's name, Elias. One was born in 1805, the other in 1834, not old enough to be the father of the man born in 1846, but old enough to be the father of children born in the 1850s, including Thomas.

This is what the family tree record claims. [187] Put together in 2013 it does seem to rely on the 1954 death certificate and census data as it reproduces the 1870 and 1880 censuses. These give a Thomas Riddle (no middle name) ages of ten in the first and eighteen in the second. This site does reproduce all the usual dates so Thomas Evans Riddle lives from 1858 to 1954. However it also seemingly lists Elias and Mahala (Mahalia elsewhere) as his parents and as being born in 1834 (Mahalia about 1835 elsewhere) and then list Thomas Evans Riddle's marriages and children accurately. However this shows the parents of Thomas and several other children born in the 1850s and 1860s as being married in 1870, not before. This was possible, but unlikely to have been tolerated in nineteenth century society. The genealogical line does not make it clear that Thomas is their child. Censuses list Thomas as a household member, apparently but not necessarily their child. Clearly the man born in 1846 could not be the child of parents born in 1834/1835, nor did he claim these parents, although the wives and children shown on the genealogical tree agree with the death certificate information. This seems pretty much the case with another family tree which gives his birth year as 1860.

The death certificate issued by the State of Texas also accepts this 1846 date, but another document in the same collection from Wichita Falls records a birthdate

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[185] Judith McGuiness, "Riddle Wrapped in an Enigma: Civil War Veteran Buried in Burknett Cemetery Lived Extraordinary Life' *Times Record News.* Wichita Falls, Texas August 16th 2008. http://www. Times record news.com/news aug16/riddle-wrapped-enigma/? Print 1. McGuiness does say that these 1840s documents "supposedly attest" to Riddle's birth.

[186] *Texas Death Certificates 1890-1976.* Texas Confederate Home for men. Austin. *Family History and Message Board.* p4

[187] Jane Stewart, Ancestry ® Official Site.

of 1858 with the names of different parents to those on the first death certificate![188]

If this seems not confusing enough both sets of the parent's names have an assonance joined in gender, yet they might be different. Lyles Riddle and Hailey Brown were stated as being the parents of the Thomas Evans Riddle born in 1846 in Meigs County where several people surnamed Riddle lived. While several Americans named Lyle Riddle show up in the antebellum south, not one Lyles Riddle does and no Hailey Brown appears as married to a Riddle. The same maiden name would be a certain giveaway were it not so common. Both documents are talking about the same man as they give the same death date of April 2nd 1954. After nine birthdates he would manage two divergent death certificates, each one containing contradictions. Those death certificates also list his children. With a daughter Cora B Riddle, they list her father Thomas as born "Apr 1860 TN in Grayson County. 1900." These same documents state that Thomas Evans Riddle was born in Kentucky in 1868 and was living with his daughter Cora B. whom they name correctly.[189]

One descendant posted an initially devastating blog about Riddle's birthdate, quoting the 1860 census document that gave Riddle's birth year as 1853. They are not certain that his father was Elias and in one brief article they also produce different birthdates from the 1860 census for Thomas Riddle, April 11th 1858 and 1853.[190] They also apparently do not know about the 1850 census document. They were also wrong about his enrolment in the Virginia Regiments. That evidence appears as independent from Riddle's say so and comes from the time.

To worsen the confusion another Texan Thomas E. Riddle appears in the census records and are of the same vintage. The 1920 census gives a birthdate of about 1864 for one Texan Thomas E. Riddle and "about 1847" for another, but the wife's name is different, but neither husband may be Thomas Evans Riddle! One had a wife supposedly named California in some censuses, but then she - or another wife, appears as Virginia next time!

Somebody has just compiled documents relating to Thomas E. Riddle in a file without trying to make sense of them. They probably wanted to stay sane.

Strong evidence against Riddle comes from Riddle himself. The 1910 census lists Thomas E. Riddle in Clay County Texas and correctly lists his five children

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[188] *Ibid* one entry down.
[189] *Ibid* bottom of page and the top of the next.
[190] *Our Family.*

and place of birth. It gives his age as 48 and his estimated birth year as 1862. This matches the age of eighteen on the 1880 census record, even if they disagree with all the other documents. On the computerised version no accreditation for civil war service appears.

The 1846 birthdate has been accepted by many websites and makes more sense than the other census records. It seems the only precise birthdate from a primary source for a Thomas Evans Riddle that is computerised. If any record of Thomas Evans Riddle being born at any other date exists it should be displayed. Were it not for the fact that the information about Elias and Mahala with lifespan dates coming from somewhere else other than the censuses, I would declare Riddle verified, but they do and in some detail and so he cannot be their child and a Civil War veteran.

Riddle did not need bureaucracies, family members or anybody else to lower his credibility. His tall stories included knowing the James brothers and expressing his admiration for them and knowing that Jesse was not shot dead in 1882 but with Frank, took on a secret identity near Riddle's home. His Civil War anecdotes include being given a birthday gift of a pistol by Robert E. Lee while the general and his army camped out on the Riddle's Tennessee farm – not that Lee ever took his army into Tennessee in reality. Others include being oblivious to five bullets in the side until a general told him, about being related to Robert E. Lee and about burying all Gettysburg's fatalities, all thirteen of them! [191] Was he just joshing his visitors and merely wanted to stir them up and get some laughs? Or were these stories to cover the horrors of war and his less than glorious attempt to escape from it? Or were they a way of communicating that his whole claim was all bull? Only Riddle really knew the answers.

He certainly was a colourful character who loved to spin stories for guests as he spent his last years as the last Confederate in a Houston veteran's home. His large room was decorated with a battle flag and a portrait of Lee. He died on April 2nd 1954, just days before what was perhaps his 108th birthday.

Riddle needs more research, especially reliable information about his wartime service. Getting evidence for who his parents were will be crucial. The perhaps parents born in 1834 cannot be discounted without evidence. Much of the evidence that goes against his claims comes from him.

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[191] McGuiness p2.



Senator Lyndon Baines Johnson meets with Riddle in the 1950s. Ironically Johnson would be accused of getting voter's names off tombstones. Riddle looks like an honest man here.

Four pieces of strong evidence do indicate that he was perhaps the last man living to fight in the Civil War; all but one of those who outlived him all denied being in battle. The 1850 census record, and the enrolment in the 22nd and knowing the name and rank of the enrolling officer are strong evidence. Sheets diary which shows a Thomas Riddle being in the 33rd Virginia while less strong, backs this. No other Thomas Evans Riddle has ever been revealed to explain these obviously genuine references away. Maybe one will turn up. Were it not for the censuses, the death certificates, the family trees and his stories this would be ample to verify him.

He has supporters on the internet, but where is a historian who can be definite about believing him to be genuine? Most rightly mix caution and curiosity and at this point, he can only be listed as a strong and controversial possibility.





Even in death there are two of them, disagreeing into eternity.



Albert Woolson



Result: service record accepted

Date of Birth: disputed 1847 is the most likely, but 1848 or 1850 are mentioned

Date of Death: 2nd August 1956

Age at enlistment: disputed, but probably seventeen

Rank: private

Unit: Ist Minnesota Heavy Artillery

Service: bugler and drummer

Combat Experience: none

Length of service: October 1864 to October 1865

Albert Woolson is usually credited with being the last Civil War survivor. In his notes to *Last of the blue and the Gray* Richard A. Serrano lists several reliable sources for Woolson's service record and tells his life story.[192] Woolson served on garrison duty at Chattanooga and while he enlisted hoping to serve as an infantryman, because of his age he was made a musician. It was a love that never left him. After the war he worked at several different careers, many of them in manufacturing. In old age he lived in Duluth and became involved in veteran's affairs and he enjoyed being a celebrity, sometimes telling tall tales, at least one of these was impossible. Despite this and confusions over his birthdate, he has always been accepted, while Bush, in the same situation with the same type of proof, is not. Both had Civil War era photos of themselves and verified enlistment documents. Both were born between the second half of the 1840s and 1850. Woolson gains accreditation, but Bush does not: very odd.

As an invited guest he talked to schoolchildren about the war. One wonders if one of those Duluth school children was Bob Dylan. He seems to have been mourned as much for his likeable personality as for his status as the last living link to Lincoln's cause.

[192] Serrano, pp199-200.


Albert Woolson
Born February 11 1847 Watertown NY
Died August 2 1956 Duluth Mn.
Battery C
1st Minnesota Heavy Artillery
The Last Union Survivor





Louis Nicholas Baker

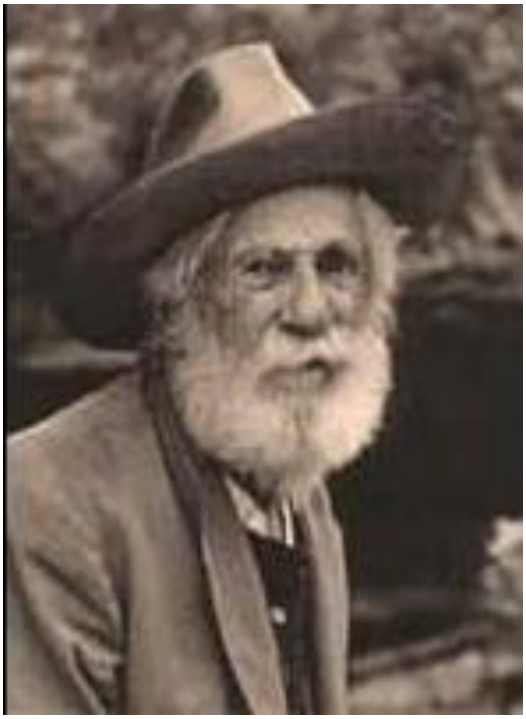
Result: service record extremely unlikely

When Albert Woolson died in August 1956 the townspeople of Guthrie Oklahoma heard that one of their senior citizens was suddenly claiming to be the last Union Civil War veteran. He was Louis Nicholas Baker and he supplied many details. His name came close to that of Louis I. Baker, a proven veteran and perhaps a relative who perhaps told him stories. Louis Nicholas Baker had verbally given unusual personal and military details of service very similar to those of Louis I. Baker. – but these were the details of a man who died in 1909. There were too many coinciding odd facts in the records for there to be two different men with the same record, but they could not have been the same man. In 1956 Louis Nicholas Baker also claimed to be 103, while Louis I. Baker would have been 124. This account is based on Serrano's in *Last of the blue and the Gray.*

Louis Nicholas Baker died in January 1957.

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William A. Lundy aka William Lunday





Result: his claimed service record seems just possible but parts are extremely dubious, lacking evidence that should exist.

Date of Birth: disputed April 1848, 1853 and May 1860

Date of Death: 1st September 1957

Age at enlistment: he claimed fourteen

Rank: private

Unit: Two units were claimed by Lundy for his service 'The Coffee County Guards' and 'Brown's Company D 4TH Alabama Cavalry'

Service: home guard and cavalry (claimed)

Combat Experience: he said there was none.

Length of service: March 1864 to May 1865 if statements are true.

Evidence for his war record apart from his account: He knew some details about the units he claimed to have served in, knew the last name of an officer in one of the units and did not tell tall tales. His account of what he did sounds very believable. The point about not being on one of the muster

rolls is explainable, they were written up before he said he joined in 1864 and going by the dates added to by those already enlisted, nothing was added to the rolls after New Year's Day 1864. Two men signed affidavits that he served.[193] He gave very detailed information about his birth and his units. Obviously this makes tracing easy, so a fraud would be unlikely to do this.

Evidence Against his claim: The census rolls show that he was too young, but do they refer to the right person? He said that his original surname was spelled Lunday, but he changed it because his school teacher was always at him to spell it correctly. Which name is on the census documents? Are they as exact as those who say they show him as a fraud say they are? He stated exactly where he served, but in both units there no record of himself or the two men who swore that he was there with them exists.

William "Uncle Bill" Lundy of northern Florida, who died in September 1957, was credited for years as the third last Confederate survivor: now in several different accounts many label him a fraud. Birth and census records reveal that he gave different birthdates. The earliest was 18th January 1848; another was 1853, but the later censuses show him as being born in May 1860. The same source that gives this information states he never claimed to be born in 1848 until he applied for the Confederate pension in the 1930s. He had trouble getting that. He claimed to have served in the Coffee County Guards, spending most of his time guarding the courthouse. He called one unit he supposedly served in "Brown's Company D 4th Alabama Cavalry" but Brown was not there, it was just Company D. Lundy said he came close to fighting near the war's end at Selma and expressed regret for not killing a Yankee, but he obeyed the orders of an officer who told him not to shoot.

His description of this reads oddly, as if he never reflected perceptively on why his officer would order him to do this, but still found it puzzling. It seems a story told by a man who knows less than he tells, which gives it a sense of veracity. Did the officer want to stop young Lundy from becoming a killer? Or to stop Lundy getting himself killed in retaliation? Or to save the life of a Union soldier

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[193] The account of Lundy closely follows Serrano pp126-133; Brian Hughes, Previous Citation; *Official Records*; William Lundy U-Tube; Wikipedia 'William Lundy'; and Janet Steadham *Civil War Pension APP. William Allen Lundy*, Okaloosa Co. Florida. This document consists of nineteen pages of correspondence between the bureaucracies, Lundy and involved people. It starts in 1931 and continues to 1965.
http://files.usgwarchives.net/fl/okaloosa/military/pensions/15300001.txt.

now that the war was almost over? This sounds real, and his absence from one roll can be explained, but the traceable evidence remains murky and the censuses, muster rolls and birth claims must raise strong suspicions.

The 1930s officials who checked the records he mentioned tried to be helpful with what must have been an extensive search as they came to the conclusion he was not listed anywhere in any Confederate unit designated by a 4th or a Company D.[194] My checking also reveals that he is not listed in the muster rolls of any likely unit, the Coffee County Guards, Captain J.C Brown's Coffee County Volunteers, Company D of Roddy's 4th Alabama Cavalry, Lowes 4th Alabama Cavalry Battalion, or Russell's 4th Alabama Cavalry. However the Coffee County muster rolls were made up before Lundy said he joined. The roll he should be on is Roddy's 4th Alabama Cavalry in Company D. This was added to in September 1864 and contains many enlistment details, but he is not listed anywhere in this regiment when he said he was there.[195] What applies to him applies to his claimed comrades in arms, and witnesses to his service, none of them were where they swore they were. If one man was off one roll credibility could be offered for reasons, but three men being off both rolls? However one thing here does supports Lundy; Company D was listed as a new replacement company as he said it was and Captain Brown did exist in his area and in command of the militia as he stated. However Brown did not go with the unit to serve with the regular army as Lundy also stated.

There were two Alabama militia units commanded by Captain's named Brown, one in Talladega County (Brown's Talladega County Reserves) and the more likely unit formed in 1860 as the Coffee County Volunteers and probably renamed Captain John Brown's Company Barbiere's Battalion of Alabama Cavalry.[196] A hint exists in one of Lundy's depositions that this could have become part of the 4th Alabama when he describes it as Company D. Coffee County Regiment Alabama 4th Cavalry in his original deposition. [197] One of Lundy's

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[194] Steadman quoting a letter by James F. McKinley Major General and Adjutant General War Department October 23rd 1933. p7.

[195] George B. Wright, *Roddey's Fourth Alabama Cavalry Confederate States of America*. 1987. www.geocities.ws/coh41roddey4thalcav.html. This is compiled from records in the National archives. Another version was used for a second checking *Roddey's 4TH Alabama Cavalry*. This also contained the Rolls for Russell's and Lowe's units. Northwest Alabama Genealogy webpage.

[196]Dennis Partridge, Alabama *Civil War Rosters* Access Genealogy A Free Genealogy Resource. www.acess genealogy.com

[197] Steadman Lundy's March 1931 deposition. p3.

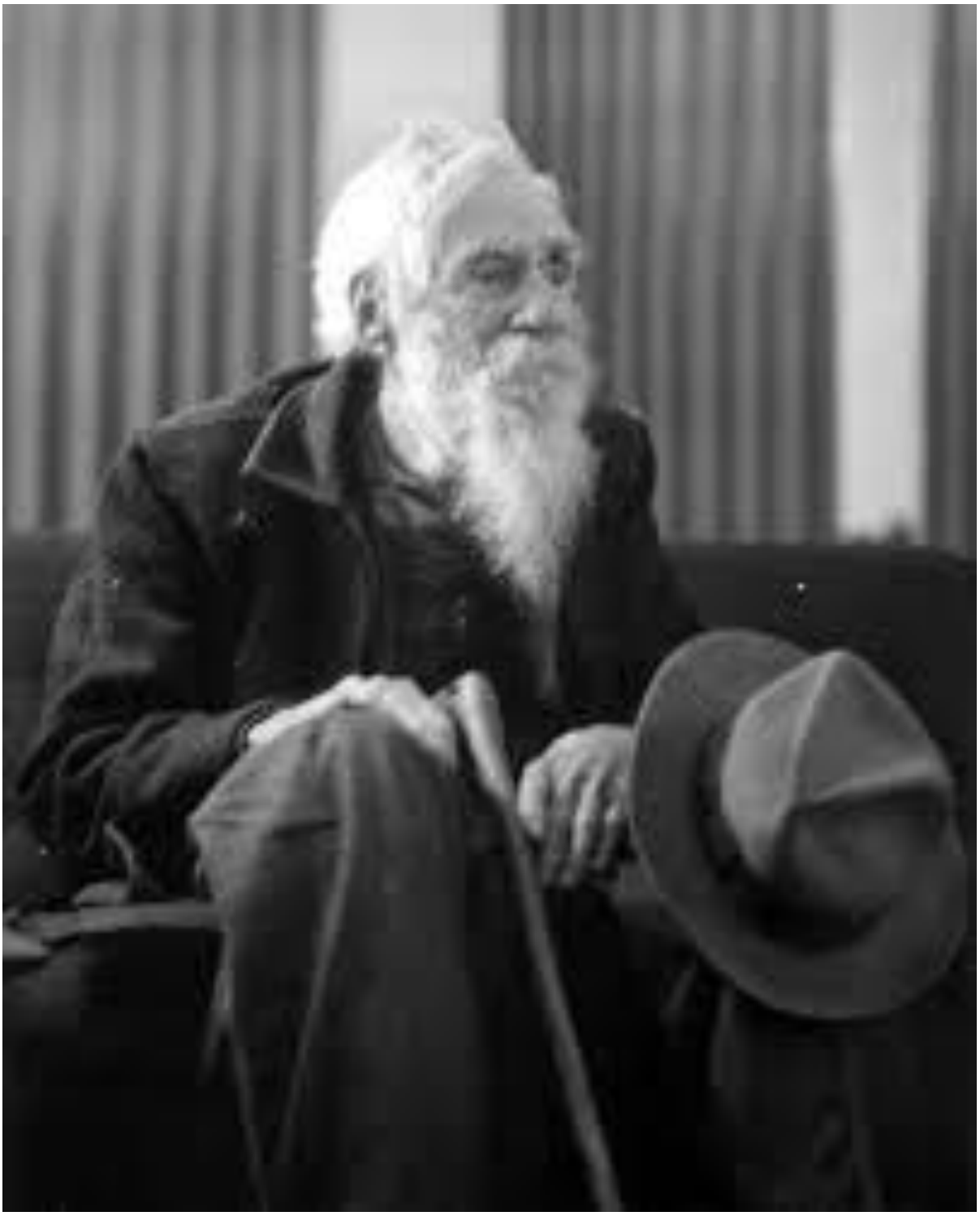
witnesses called it "Brown's Regiment." [198] However Brown had bought his way out with a substitute, and so he was not on any roll. Lundy and his witnesses and supposed fellow soldiers John Q. Adams and Henry M. Mason are not on the roll, but it was made up in 1863, before he said he joined, so their absence on this roll should not be held too strongly as negative evidence. Given the prominence of Captain Brown in the original militia unit, the unit's name change and the dating of the rolls, Lundy now starts to gain some creditability, albeit with considerable caution.

Lundy correctly stated where the 4th Alabama regiment ended up at the war's end and knowing about a local Captain named Brown, but the census birthdates and the non-existence of himself and his witnesses on Roddy's rolls or anywhere else likely are strong evidence against him. It is interesting to note that his witnesses Mason and Adams give different names to Lundy's supposed unit. *Official Records* show eighteen men named William Lundy served the Confederacy. One was in the 41st Alabama Infantry, but that regiment served in Virginia, as did a South Carolina Regiment that had the only William A. Lundy on its roll.

Uncle Bill Lundy comes across as a likeable, lively old scamp, full of inspiring laughter and energy. I wish I could verify him, but while ultimately remaining uncertain, the strongest evidence goes against him.

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[198] John Q. Adams, *Ibid* p2

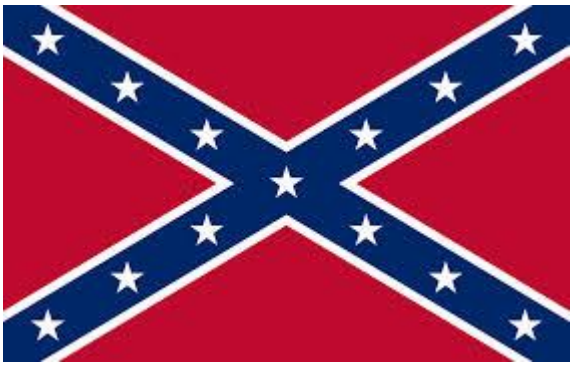


William Allan Lundy. While usually cheerful and optimistic, here he is in a pensive mood.


WILLIAM ALLEN LUNDY
CO D
4 REG
ALA CAV
CSA
JAN 18 1848
SEPT 1 1927

*

John B. Salling





Result: possible

Date of Birth: disputed May 1846 1856, 1858 1859 and May 1860

Date of Death: 17th March 1959

Age at enlistment: he claimed to be about thirteen or fourteen and then sixteen or seventeen

Rank: private

Unit: Company D 25th Virginia Infantry (claimed)

Service: scouring for saltpetre

Combat Experience: he said there was none.

Length of service: Salling stated about a year

The controversy over John Salling started in 1933 when he was initially refused a veteran's pension. The reason given was that he was not listed in the unit he said he served in, Company D 25th Virginia Regiment. Since then the controversy goes on and will probably always go on over the man who may have been the last person to serve the Confederacy.

He was given his pension because a James Salling vouched for him.[199] A J.W. Salling is listed in *Official Records* as serving in the 27th Virginia Infantry and

[199] Serrano, pp136-137.

this is probably the same man. John Salling also gave the name and title of his commander as Captain James Collings. This was close to the correct name and rank of the man in charge, Captain John Collins. A February 2014 posting to John B. Salling *Find A Grave* concerning investigations into the Scott County militia by "SixDogTeam" stated that Salling knew the names of six people concerned with the 27th infantry's saltpetre mining. One of the officials, Monroe J. McConnell was slightly muddled in his affidavit as J. Monroe McConnel and he knew two others by their first names when they were officially identified by initials. It remains unclear if four of these men were soldiers or civilians attached to the mining operation.

In Salling's recollections he had no uniform and spent his hours scouring saltpetre under floors. This sound honest. He also has the long, thin build of someone who would be given that task. This is the evidence in his favour.

Against this is another morass of census claims and Salling's statements about his age. Those who debunk him point out that in different census documents he gives his birth dates as 1856, 1858 1859 and 1860. Virtually every source about him mentions this and then the birthdate he gave as May 1846. They then state this proves Salling was a fraud or leave the matter blank with the implications there. The egregious question here must be why a fraud who is not imbecilic or senile should give the government census people four different dates when doing so could start an investigation leading to his prosecution? Senility and imbecility are not the answers. Salling sounds lucid in the interview which he gave that now exists on u-tube and imbeciles do not survive as household heads in Appalachia for decades. The probable clue that provides a more plausible answer is in his pension application. The handwriting is the same as the clerk's and Salling signed with an x, the accepted form for illiterates[200] Richard A. Serrano also states that Salling was illiterate.[201] Perhaps Salling incorrectly thought he knew his numbers better than his letters when he answered the census on different occasions.

An unsigned passage in "John B. Salling' also suggests that literacy was the problem and gives a hint about different ages: "John filed for a Confederate pension with the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1933 *stating* that he was 84 years

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[200] *Pension Application for a Disabled Confederate Soldier* March 11th 1933. Court of Scott County Virginia.

[201] Serrano137; Pension Application for a Confederate Soldier Previous Citation



The terrain where Salling lived and perhaps worked in the saltpetre mine.



of age." [202] (my emphasis) Stating is of course ambiguous: it could mean written, spoken or taken down by a literate person. There is less chance of an error than in the census with two out of three of these ways. There are other reasons for giving this date of 1848/1849 as his likely his birth year. It also gives credence to his

[202] 'John B. Salling 1846-1959' unsigned. *Find A Grave Memorial* http:/www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page+gr& Grid+49607043

statement that he was thirteen or fourteen when he spent a year scouring saltpetre under floors as his Confederate service after enlistment.[203]



Salling on the veranda of his mountain home in Slant Virginia. In his printed comments and recorded interviews he sounds a naturally happy person. He rarely left his home area but found he loved flying when he attended the 1951 Richmond Confederate Reunion.

That age range puts him serving in the war years. Unfortunately Salling himself knocks this theory askew when in the interview, now on u tube. The interviewer is not leading him into answers but does gently try to clarify with his questions. He treats him respectfully and kindly, relieving the pressure of war talk with songs they sing together. When asked if he was conscripted he affirms and then when asked if he was sixteen then he pauses and says seventeen clearly, but his tone sounds as if he tries to remember but feels a little uncertain.

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[203] *Ibid*, p135

That makes the May 1848 birth dubious as it would make him seventeen a month after Appomattox. In that same interview he says that he was born in 1846 and if he really was born then he could have been seventeen during the war years. Into the 1970s the Guinness book of Records listed him as one of the oldest men in the world. They also made an error, mixing up his March birthdate with May. The only evidence that he was not 112 at his death comes from Salling's contradictory statements in and out of the censuses.

In the same interview he also says that he enlisted. However he lacks enlistment papers or his name on the muster roll. These factors are not answerable with anything but conjectures, but are not strong grounds for labelling his stories false either. Captain Collins may not have wanted to see a boy of thirteen enlisted in case the company were called to battle service, a real possibility with Virginia invaded and facing a manpower shortage or perhaps he thought boys that young doing that work were unimportant, not real soldiers. Another possibility is that perhaps an embarrassed Salling hid his illiteracy by not technically enlisting in writing but gave a verbal affirmation. Perhaps he was not enlisted at all.

Despite the u-tube interview and against majority opinion I rate Salling's service as possible.

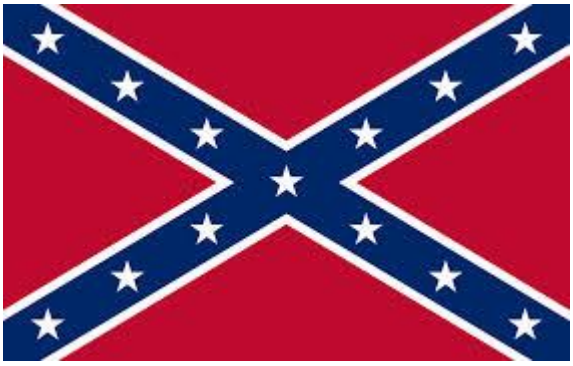


Salling assisting Bush at the 1951 Richmond Reunion. Although the people around them look happy the veterans do not.


IN MEMORY OF
"GENERAL" JOHN SALLING
VIRGINIA'S
LAST CONFEDERATE VETERAN
BORN MAY 15, 1846
DIED MARCH 15, 1959
BORN - LIVED - BURIED
AT
SLANT, VIRGINIA

*

Walter Washington Williams also known as Walter Green Williams





Result: possible but extremely dubious in parts

Date of Birth: disputed 14th November 1842 and the same day and month in 1843, 1846 1854, and 1856.

Date of Death: 17th December 1959

Age at enlistment: uncertain

Rank: forager

Unit: Company C 5th regiment of Hood's Texas Brigade (claimed)

Service: foraging for food and supposedly riding with Quantrill's guerrillas

Combat Experience: he said there was none, then he said there was.

Length of service: about eleven months (claimed)

Walter Williams may or may not have been the last Confederate, but he was certainly the world's most glorified food thief. [204] Williams himself described his service as stealing food.[205] Celebratory dinners, parades, the honorary rank of colonel from President Eisenhower, a five star general's ranking which promoted him above Lee, a general's uniform, birthday greetings from the president's wife, and bedside serenades from Johnny Horton were all given to him.[206]



This glorification did not stop with his death. A proclaimed national day of mourning by President Eisenhower and regretful statements were matched by five days in Houston with a lavish funeral. After his death his biography was published and he even had a statue erected at Gettysburg 'The Walter Williams Memorial'[207]

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[204] Williams described himself in an interview later printed as part of an unsigned, undated obituary article reproduced on the website *The Last Surviving Soldier: Walter Washington Williams.* Also Mark Blitz, 'The Last Veteran of the Civil War.'p1. Posted April 19th 2013; Serrano. pp65-68 pp145-146 pp168-169 p175

[205] *The Last Surviving Soldier: Walter Washington Williams.*

[206] *The Last Surviving Soldier: Walter Washington Williams.* www.confederatelegion.com The Last Soldier HTML; Nellie Taylor, *The Last Confederate* 1963.

[207] Walter Williams Memorial Gettysburg, PA Specific Veteran Memorials on Waymaking.com

Although photographs of Williams show a short, wiry man with a puckish grin and a wide mouth, the bronze nineteen feet three inches high statue shows a strong jawed regular featured banner man with the earnest face and physique of an athlete as he charges forward. This is not explicitly a portrayal of Williams, but gives that impression. Although the inscription "A Memorial to the Soldiers and Sailors of the Confederacy" is on the front, the back inscription gives details about Williams and his longevity on the other side.[208]

Until September 1959 Williams was universally acclaimed as the last survivor of the Civil War, then an investigation started. Initially it was based on two census dates. He said he was born in Itawamba County Mississippi. The 1860 census there listed him as too young for kindergarten.[209] In the 1870 census the Williams family were in Texas where he appears as a teenager.

It was also widely believed in the town of Franklin Texas where he lived for many years that he was an imposter.[210] Louis Bridwell, the reporter who exposed him on allegations coming out of the town, commented that the unit he claimed to have served in had disbanded before he supposedly joined it.[211] Bridwell had searched for evidence of Williams's war service but had not found "a scrap" [212] In the book J.B. Polley's *History of Hood's Texas Brigade* the muster roll for his supposed unit was reproduced, but Walter W. Williams did not appear listed, although there were three men with the surname of Williams there, one with the initials W.K..[213] In the 1910 census record, which had a column for designating Civil War veterans, Williams left no such mark.[214] After claiming never to have killed anyone Williams also claimed to have served in Quantrill's guerrillas and told a tale of an ambush where they killed a hundred Union men. [215] When his family asked for precise details of his service the state could not find any.[216] He had a way of changing the subject when people asked for precise details of his war

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[208] "Monument to the Soldiers and Sailors of the Confederacy."
'WWW.Confederate/soldiersSailorsphp
[209] Serrano, p155.
[210] *Ibid,* p155-156.
[211] Serrano quoting Lowell K. Bridwell pp156-157.
[212] Blitz, p1.
[213] Serrano, pp147-148 quoting Cooper K. Ragan
[214] Randle, 4; Serrano, p159.
[215] Serrano, p159.
[216] Serrano, p63 Quoting Williams and again p159.

service.[217] When his death certificate was being made out his doctor wrote that sometimes his middle name was Washington, and at other times Green.[218] This is the evidence for fraud which now leads to him being labelled as one.

Other evidence exists to show that Williams was genuine and this should also be assessed. Much of it is given by Richard A. Serrano, who concludes that the other side has the stronger case. Even so, the evidence he gives for Williams sounds strong.

Williams's youngest daughter quite reasonably pointed out that if the census records were correct then her father fathered a child at thirteen.[219] In the Jackson Mississippi archive a Private Walter W. Williams appears listed as being in Company O 5th Mississippi Cavalry.[220] The service branch, native state and number of the regiment all fit. The same applies to another Private Walter Williams of Company F. 5TH Virginia Cavalry. Either man could have been Williams with his home state of Mississippi being the more likely locale. Eleven other Confederates called Walter Williams are listed in *Official Records*, but only one has a G. after his name and none a W.. Serrano mentions a W.W. Williams who enlisted in Houston in July 1861, but his residence and dates of service do not match the stories Williams told.[221]

Two men had been willing to swear affidavits to his service, some people in Franklin believed him. Mrs G.W. Chambers of Dallas recalled her father talking about how he and Williams had served together in Hood's brigade in the war and seemed close friends.[222] When the 1959 controversy started Ethel Everitt, head of the Confederate Pension Fund, recalled that when he applied for his pension in 1932, two officials examined his record closely and examined documents at the state library to check if he had served and were satisfied. Perhaps the book they used was the one later found by a district attorney, an old history of Hood's Brigade that that listed a W. Williams in Company C of the 5th Regiment of

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[217] Serrano, pp159-160; I have also heard an interview where his response to Civil War questions was to sing and play a harmonica and the interview suddenly stopped. This website has now vanished.
[218] Reynda, 'Walter Williams, Last Civil War Vet' 3 Originally an obituary in the *Sacramento Bee* California 20th December 1959. http://genforum. genealogy.com /civilwar/messages/15941.html
[219] Serrano, p157.
[220] Blitz, p1.
[221] Serrano, p165.
[222] Serrano, 164.

Hood's Brigade, which was exactly where Williams said he was.[223] The same man stated that as Hood's brigade records had been lost after the fall of Richmond full proof was lacking. Another W.W.Williams of Hood's Brigade was found to be discharged for being under-aged, which might explain a lot. He served in Company D of the 4th Regiment.[224] Perhaps a ten year old boy, born in 1854 and eager to be with his brothers or perhaps just hungry, briefly served as a forager before some official found him and dismissed him.

The problem with Walter Williams is not in the military records: historians have an abundance of men who could be him based on written military words. The problems are threefold. His claimed age of 117, if verified with documentary evidence, would make him among the oldest men to have ever lived with documentation to prove it. Evidence for William's verification is unlikely: census evidence and his changes in his story make that clear. His own tall stories cause doubts.

He may have remembered stories from his brothers and added in Quantrill's raider's deeds – and may not have known his real age. Perhaps he served as he said he did. Perhaps he was one of the other Confederates named Walter Williams and wanted to big note himself by tying his service to the Legendary Hood's Brigade. Perhaps nearly deaf and blind others put words into his mouth that they wanted to hear.

Like all the other veterans he seems likeable, lively and full of fun, but as with so many others, the evidence stops verification.

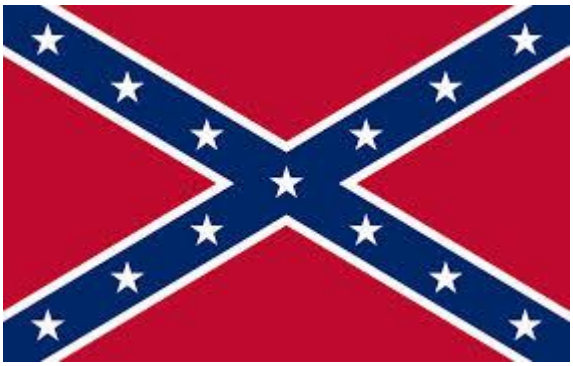
There is too much evidence against him to accept his claims, but enough in his favour to stop continual references to fraud and fake. He has gone from acceptance and reverence in 1959, when a National Day of mourning was observed, to uncritical calumny and contempt. Neither are deserved.

* *Professor Hoar who had substantial contact with Williams's family has extra information in his The South's Last Boys in Gray pages 1810-1813. See also America's Last Civil War Participants.*

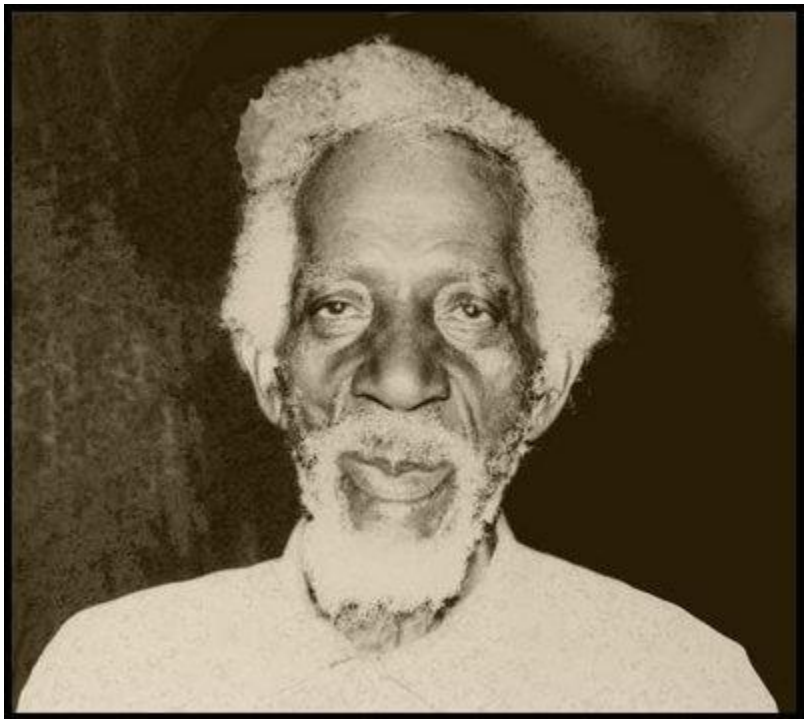
[223] Serrano quoting the district attorney. pp164-165.
[224] *Ibid*, p165.



Sylvester Magee







Result: possible/probable but more evidence is needed

Date of Birth: May 1841 claimed. By documentation he was alive in 1859.

Date of Death: 15th October 1971

Age at enlistment: uncertain

Rank: servant for his Confederate master. Soldier/labourer for the Union

Unit: unknown

Service: Both Union and Confederate

Length of service: Uncertain

Combat Experience: He claimed to have been wounded at the battle of Champion Hill and then at Vicksburg

What is certain about Sylvester Magee's early life is that he was alive in 1859, when his name appears on an official record, a will in which he is mentioned and bequeathed as property, along with his father Ephraim.[225] What his age was then remains unclear from documents, but he always insisted he was born on 29th May 1841. Originally from North Carolina, he was sold to the Magee family in Mississippi just before the Civil War and apparently accompanied his young master to the war. His master, Dickson Magee, was an officer in the 46th Mississippi Infantry.[226] Magee served him as his arms bearer, cook, and a go-between messenger between his master and the family plantation: this technically made him a Confederate, however reluctant.[227] Given that the Confederacy enforced conscription for whites in 1862 and forced blacks to work as auxiliaries, Magee's type of service was nothing unusual.

Contributions to the questions concerning Magee on *Genforum* bring up some interesting facts. These contributions are by people who knew Magee; descendants, one interviewer and acquaintances. Information would have come mainly from him or passed on family memories. While repeating much that has been already stated, they say that Magee was freed after Vicksburg's surrender. Some contributors claim that he was offered enlistment in the Union army, serving as a cook and a scout.[228] Media stories published not long before his death stated he could remember burying dead Confederates at Vicksburg, but it did not say which side he was working for.[229] He mentioned the Vicksburg Campaign, were he was wounded twice, once at the Battle of Champion's Hill and once at Vicksburg.[230] These battles were before Vicksburg's fall, so this contradicts what

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[225] Leahmon L. Reid & Bobie E. Barbee, 'Why 125 year old Husband Sues for Divorce." *Jet* 30th March 1967. p49. Apparently virtually every account of his life mentions this document. The documentation is in the probate division in the Court of Chancery in Covington County in the State of Mississippi, being dated February 1859. .

[226] Ben Magee, 'Sylvester Magee in Columbia MS' *Genforum.* posted July 7th 2000.

[227] *Look Around Mississippi.* A Television Current Affairs program. 25th January 2012 with a website: Ben Magee, 'Sylvester Magee in Columbia MS' *Genforum* posted July 7th 2000.

[228] 'Sylvester Magee in Columbia MS' Under this heading several contributions made over years appear. The interviewer is Bennet Strange. Ben Magee is descended from the white slave owner. Other contributors include Sylvester Magee's family members. *Genforum*

[229] *Trimblr*, text. See source 229

[230] *Wikipedia* 'Sylvester Magee.'

was said in *Genforum.* One wound was to his right arm, the other to his hip exiting through his abdomen; Magee would show the arm scar late in life.[231]

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In 1970 historian Mike Mulhern interviewed and filmed Magee. Here Magee shows him his battle scar from being in action. The small circle does look like what a Minnie ball that hit only flesh would do.

The round small scar looked like what a minnie ball would do. Apart from his scar other evidence in Magee's favour was his interview by historian A.P. Andrews. Magee impressed with his knowledge of the war's minor details and of the way he knew officer's names and their minor details.[232] He recalled the Union crossing of the Big Black River in strong detail.[233] As this complicated manoeuvre occurred before Vicksburg fell this suggests that Magee's account of fighting in the Union army in the Vicksburg campaign is the correct version. Andrews concluded that it would have been impossible for an illiterate man to have such

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[231] This wounding is also mentioned in both the text and the Mike Mulhern interview and filming of Sylvester Magee, made in the summer of 1970. This is on UTube and the *Tumblr* website.
[232] Uncredited obituary article *Jet* November 4th 1971. p10. Andrews quoted; Uncredited article Headed 'Sylvester Magee' 'The Civil War Parlor' in *Tumblr*. This segment is on this website. It contains two previously posted articles, videotaped interviews and filming of Magee and photographs.
[233]Trimblr, "The Civil War Parlour' uncredited text, front page.

detailed knowledge of such events unless he had actually been there.[234] Magee also referred to being in a unit that carried long rifles, a unit of 500 whites and 382 blacks where he comforted a weeping white boy.[235] Unfortunately he does not seem to have recalled the unit's designation. At this time black soldiers were just beginning to be accepted for combat roles and may not have been enlisted in regiments. Coloured regiments developed during the war's second half.

On the negative side there are the *Genforum* descriptions of what happened in July 1863, which if accurate makes his wounding in the Vicksburg campaign untenable. *Jet* also noted his claimed fatherhood aged 109 in 1950 and published a statement stating that Magee claimed that Abraham Lincoln released him from the Union Army.[236] If Magee was a father at 109 that is seventeen years past the verified world record.[237] His age remains the big question. If true it would make him one of the oldest men to have ever lived, fourteen years beyond the oldest documented male. Magee supposedly has broken two longevity world records.

Then the precedent of Charlie Smith causes doubts. Supposedly also a former slave, he could supposedly prove that he was born in Africa in 1842 and could remember riding with the James Gang. Government investigators and the general public initially believed his story. Just months before his death in 1979 his 1900 marriage certificate showed him as born in 1879. This might be unfair to Magee, but it does demonstrate a need for caution with claims. Magee also has no primary source documentation, but then for Blacks in 1863 there would have been little, if any. A massive time gap exists before Magee emerged as a veteran in the 1960s, but then what black would boast of serving the Union while living in Mississippi before the middle of the 1960s?

His life after the war showed that same resilience that many of the other last survivors demonstrated. He worked at sharecropping, farming and lumber for decades.

He was among America's last born slaves and among the last who could even remember the Civil war, let alone participate. He remains an enigma, and an ironic one, personifying very literally both the division of Unionist and

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[234] *Jet* previous citation.
[235] *Roadside America* 3rd May 2012 A news website.
[236] Leahmon L. Reid & Bobie E. Barbee. p48. This statement about Lincoln is in the caption to the photograph of Magee looking at a wax dummy of Lincoln. p49.
[237] Guinness World Records Website. 'World's Oldest Father.' 2015.

Confederate in the 1860s, their current unity and what the war was about.

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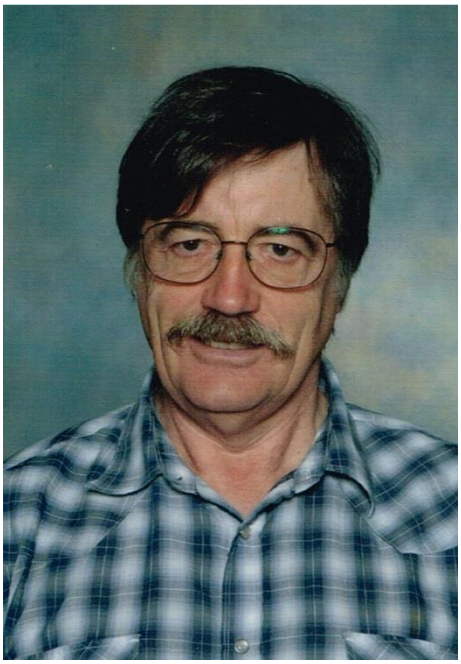
Afterword

Who knows what the future holds in history? Lundy, Salling and Williams were once unquestioningly accepted and even revered as the last living contacts to the Civil War. At the same time Sarah Rockwell, William Albert Kiney, and Sylvester Magee were little known. The picture changes in unexpected ways. Even while this work was written new primary sources and new possible new claimants emerged.

Somebody may find evidence to discredit someone accepted among the twenty-eight participants investigated here. Somebody else might find a twenty-ninth or a thirtieth. Just as photographs of Arnold Murray and William J. Bush have become public during the writing of this book, other evidence for those who still remain unverified may emerge. Who knows what is in the musty file? Or the uninvestigated attic, the newly found old diary…



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About the Author

The author's interest in the American Civil War veterans started in junior primary school days. After careers in heavy industry and politics he abandoned these disastrous choices and gained a double honours degree (English and Drama) with Modern History as a third. In 1995, by a fluke he became a tutor and defacto university lecturer/tutor, being the only person in the city qualified with a highly and needed specialised degree. He then worked in mainstream English for a term and then in university preparatory courses for indigenous students in English, Sociology, Education, Critical Literacy and Psychology. After government retrenchments in 1998 he returned to High School teaching and recently became semi-retired. Since 2008 he has been organising and playing community radio programs in the Folk and Celtic genres.

The following works are currently available on PDF at www.garryvictorhill@bigpond.com

Heirs to Ahmegodheho (an Australian family saga 1895-2005) novel (2010)

America's Last Civil War Participants: An Investigation (The e-book version is free, has illustrations reproduced in colour and has several corrections and three extra paragraphs. The soft bound printout is available at cost price plus postage. Garryhill7@bigpond com

We Are Motivated By Love (1988) play

Australia's Troubadour: Gary Shearston 1939-2013. (2013) biography

Algernon Swinburne 1837-1909. An Overview of Life and Poetry. (2013) biography

Caesar's Assassination: Who Gained? Who Lost? (2014) history

Lionheart: The True Story of England's Crusader King (Review) (2014)

The Culture of the 1920s: A Double Review of *One Summer America 1927* and *Constellation of Genius: 1922: Modernism Year One*. (2014)

Coming Up on the Website:

Early Days at Ocean Ridge (2011) novel

*Four Major Factors in the development of Ancient Greek Civilization (*essay) (2014)

The Kensington Stone Controversy (2010) history

The Myth of the Prophet: Trotsky and his Followers (serialised in 1985-1986, this needs revision) history

Looking Back to Fix The Future: W.B. Yeats and William Morris (1985. Revised)

Rhetoric, Romance and Reality: Maude Gonne and William Butler Yeats (1985. Revised))

From the 1775 Revolution to the Gulf Wars: Tradition and Change in the Concept of the American Military Hero 1895-1995 (2006)

Browning and his Poetry

Tennyson and his Poetry

Why Did the Norse Colony in Greenland Fail?

Why Did Cortez Conquer?

Akhenaten: Architecture and Art as evidence.

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