



WALTON RELATIONS

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Walton County Genealogy Society

March 2014

History Fair, March 8

Please visit the Walton County Genealogy Society's table at the History Fair during Antiques Day at the Walton County Fairgrounds on Saturday, March 8, from 9:00 AM until 3:00 PM. As in previous years, Antiques Day will be a three-prong event with the History Fair, the Wearing 'o the Green Antique Car Show sponsored by the Chautauqua Cruisers, and tractor pull competitions sponsored by the Walton County Fair Association. There will also be displays of antique farm equipment and tractors behind the fairgrounds building.

Heritage Books

The Heritage of Walton County, Florida (popularly known as the big blue book) was published in 2006 and is out of print. We are compiling a list of those who are interested in purchasing a copy. If there are enough people willing to order the book, the publisher will make a second printing. To be added to the list, please contact Wayne Sconiers by writing to WayneSconiers@embarqmail.com.

WCGS Meeting

There will not be a meeting on March 8 because we will be at the History Fair!

Gone But Not Forgotten Reunion Information

The families of Alice Creek, New Home, and the surrounding area will hold their reunion at Southwide Baptist Church (off Coy Burgess Road in DeFuniak Springs) on Saturday, April 12, from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Please bring your own drinks and a covered dish to share. For more information, call 850-548-5353 or 850-897-2145.

Walton County Heritage Museum

Open Tuesday - Saturday: 1:00 - 4:00 PM

1140 Circle Drive, DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435

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www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org

HeritageMuseum@centurylink.net

Who Was Confederate Soldier A. H. Cook?

By Sam Carnley of Bascom, Florida

In March 2013, a group of Walton County metal detecting enthusiasts unearthed a dog tag at the spot where a Confederate soldier lost it a hundred and fifty years ago.

Rance Wibbing discovered it when he and “History Detectives” Bruce Cosson and Don Perring were searching for artifacts on his property at the site of the Civil War era post office of Gentsville, south of Lake Jackson (known then as McDade’s Pond), near present day Paxton.



Remarkably well preserved, the medal bears the inscription: “A. H. COOK. CO E, 2ND, ALA” (photo above). There are two possibilities as to the meaning of “2ND, ALA.” It could refer to the Second Regiment, Alabama Infantry, or the Second Volunteer Militia AND Second Infantry¹. The Second Volunteers appeared to be a unit of, or attached to, the 2nd Alabama, so the inscription could have referred to either or both of them.

The name, A. H. Cook, does not appear in the records of either of those units, but that does not exclude him from having served in one of them. It is well established that extant Confederate service records are incomplete due to loss from various causes. To put it succinctly, they, like many soldiers they represented, were casualties of the war. The dog tag is evidence that a soldier of that name enlisted in one of the units. The absence of his name in the records of the unit is evidence that his were lost.

Extant records, however, do include two soldiers named A. H. Cook in units other than those. One was a private in Company K, 61 (also known as the 59th) Regiment Alabama Infantry formed at Pollard (a Confederate encampment near the site of present day Brewton, Alabama) in September 1863. From Butler County, Alabama, he enlisted on 13 October 1863. On 11 February 1864, he received a disability discharge due to “organic disease of the heart.”²

The other was a private in Company C, 7th Regiment Alabama Cavalry. He enlisted on 2 January 1864 in Greenville, Alabama³. The 7th Cavalry was stationed at Pollard during that time period.⁴

In early March 1864, a body of troops from Pollard departed on a scouting expedition to the east of Pensacola. Known accounts of the expedition come from two different sources. One is attributed to the *Mobile Daily Advertiser and Register* of April 17, 1864, titled “Colonel Holland’s Expedition. Camp Section of Tarrant’s Battery. McDade’s Pond, Florida, April 7, 1864” (uncredited). The other comes from reports of Union Brigadier General Asboth at Fort Barrancas, in Pensacola, Florida, the same month.

The Mobile newspaper story provides more details of the expedition as it was written by an unidentified person having first-hand knowledge of the events. Excerpts of the story read as follows:

Just one month ago, Mr. Editor, we left Pollard, Alabama, on a scout to the bayous and bays of the Gulf of Mexico, forming the Florida coast east of Pensacola. The command consisted of about 400, to-wit: a part of the 37th Mississippi Regiment of Infantry, one company of Cavalry and a section of Tarrant’s Battery - Sergts Turner’s and Lawrence’s pieces under Lieutenant Tarrant. The cavalry was commanded by Lieuts. McCurdy and Fitzpatrick, and the whole command under the orders of Col. (Orlando S.) Holland of the infantry....On the night of the 12th (of March), by a forced march, we arrived at Gentsville, on McDade’s Pond, the smooth and placid surface of which, with its crescent form, render it as beautiful a sheet of water as the classic little lake of Como, and worthy of a name as euphonious. If Spanish and Seminole history were examined, no doubt

such a name could be found. It covers about 2,000 acres, and is said to contain a variety of fine fish. Here we remained quietly until the 18th.....⁵

An excerpt of General Asboth's report is as follows:

Pensacola Florida, Barrancas, April 4, 1864

GENERAL: I have the honor to submit, in connection with my report of March 8, No. 138, the following additional information in regard to the affairs in my neighborhood, received from refugees and deserters. The rebels have concentrated a considerable force at Pollard, Ala., estimated at from 8,000 to 10,000 men, principally re-enforcements sent during General Sherman's raid, from Johnston's army to Mobile. They are also concentrating a force about 2,000 strong, infantry, artillery, and cavalry, in Walton County, Fla., headquarters at McDade's Pond, between Yellow and Pea Rivers, scouting down the Boggy Bayou, opposite East Pass and upward on the north side of the Choctawhatchee Bay to the Four-Mile Landing....⁶

Both accounts identify the components of the expedition, *i.e.*, infantry, artillery and cavalry. The newspaper account names the infantry and artillery units but not the cavalry. At that time, the 7th Alabama was one of two cavalry regiments at Pollard. The other was the 15th Confederate.

According to the newspaper article, the cavalry was commanded by lieutenants McCurdy and Fitzpatrick. A search of the Confederate service records yielded a Lieutenant Fitzpatrick but not a McCurdy whose records, like those of A. H. Cook, apparently were lost. Second Lieutenant Benjamin Fitzpatrick enlisted in Company F, 7 Regiment Alabama Cavalry on 4 June 1863 at Tuscaloosa, Alabama.⁷

A 7th Cavalry Roster card in Private Cook's file dated 14 April 1864 reads as follows: "There have been no formations or vacancies in this command since that of Lt. Col. Livingston and the other formations occasioned thereby. Co. C. - This Co. is detached. Election returns have not been received."⁸ Why a lieutenant from a different company was in command of Co. C. was not revealed, but there is no doubt they had their reasons.

Presumably, the word "detached" in Private Cook's file refers to the McDade's Pond expedition, and this confirms that a soldier of that name was a member of the unit at the time of the expedition in March 1864, making him a prime candidate as the owner of the dog tag. The only question remaining is why, at the time the records place him there, he was a member of a unit other than that identified on the dog tag.

A review of the history of the Second Alabama may help with the answer. It was organized at Fort Morgan, Alabama (near Mobile), in April 1861 with an enlistment term of 12 months. It remained in garrison there until March 1862, serving as infantry and manning the heavy artillery. It was then ordered to Fort Pillow, Tennessee, where the term of service expired in April and the regiment disbanded. Two or three companies joined other organizations almost intact, but most of the men distributed themselves among new regiments.⁹

If Private Cook's enlistment in the 2nd Alabama expired in April 1862, and he did not join the 7th Cavalry until January 1864, where was he during the intervening 19 months? Did he simply go home and bide his time until the risk of arrest as a deserter made it prudent for him to re-enlist, or did he re-enlist immediately after the 2nd Alabama disbanded in another unit whose records were also lost? The answer is unknown.

Scraps of information gleaned from the records suggest that, although the 2nd Alabama no longer officially existed after April 1862, it appears to have continued in operation in some form after that. In a report dated 4 June 1864, General Asboth mentions the presence of five companies of the Second Alabama Infantry at Pollard¹⁰ nearly 26 months after its supposed disbandment. Colonel Harry

(Henry) Maury, commander of the 2nd Alabama during its brief existence, later commanded the 15th Confederate Cavalry at Pollard. Possibly, he reconstituted the 2nd Alabama subsequent to 1862, but its records applicable to that time period, like so many others, became lost.

Perhaps that explains where Private A. H. Cook was until he joined the 7th Cavalry, in which he served for the remainder of the war. Identified as 5 feet, 11 inches tall, with dark hair, blue eyes and fair complexion, he was paroled at Montgomery, Alabama on 8 June 1865.¹¹

Colonel Holland, identified as commander of the 37th Mississippi Regiment of Infantry¹² and under whose orders the expedition took place, seems to have been present at McDade's Pond prior to the arrival of the expedition there on 12 March as stated in the article. Evidence of this is a requisition bearing his signature and showing him stationed at Gentsville, Florida, from the 10th to the 31st of March. Beneath his signature appear the words: *Col. Comdg. Detachment*, interpreted as "Colonel, Commanding Detachment."¹³ As in the 7th Cavalry roster from Private Cook's file, the word "detachment" is presumed to be in reference to the expedition.

Due to the gaps in documentation needed to connect Private A. H. Cook of the 7th Alabama Cavalry to the dog tag, he cannot be positively identified as its owner. The best that can be said is that circumstantial evidence available from the records strongly indicates that he could have been.

1. Second Alabama, Second Volunteers and Second Alabama, Confederate Service Records, <http://www.fold3.com>.
2. Cook, A. H., Private, Co. K, Sixty-first Infantry (a/k/a 59th Regiment, Alabama Infantry), "Certificate of Discharge for Disability", 11 February 1864, Confederate Service Records, <http://www.fold3.com>.
3. Cook, A. H., Private, Co. C, 7th Regiment Alabama Cavalry, Company Muster Roll for April 30 to June 30, 1864, Confederate Service Records, <http://www.fold3.com>.
4. 7th Regiment Alabama Cavalry, Field and Staff Muster Roll, for March 1 to April 30, 1864, Confederate Service Records, <http://www.fold3.com>.
5. *Mobile Daily Advertiser and Register* - April 17, 1864, Colonel Holland's Expedition. Camp Section of Tarrant's Battery. McDade's Pond, Florida, April 7, 1864.
6. Pensacola Florida, Barrancas, April 4, 1864, Brig. General Asboth Report, The War of the Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, <http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu/>
7. Benj. Fitzpatrick, 2 Lieut., Co. F., 7 Regiment Alabama Cavalry, Company Muster Roll for August 31 to Oct. 31, 1863, Confederate Service Records, <http://www.fold3.com>.
8. 7th Regiment, Alabama Cavalry, Roster dated April 14, 1864, Confederate Service Records, <http://www.fold3.com>.
9. Second Alabama Infantry Regiment, <http://www.archives.state.al.us/>.
10. Report dated 4 June 1864, General Asboth, The War of the Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, <http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu/>
11. Cook, A. H., Private, Co. C., 7th Alabama Cavalry, Parole, 8 June 1865, Confederate Service Records, <http://www.fold3.com>.
12. Holland, O. S., Colonel, 37th Mississippi Infantry Regiment, 6 July 1863, Confederate Service Records, <http://www.fold3.com>.
13. Col. O. S. Holland, Requisition for Stationary, stationed at Gentsville, Florida, 10 March 1864, Confederate Service Records, www.fold3.com.

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Walton Relations is a publication of the Walton County Genealogy Society. Wayne Sconiers, President.
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