

What about our Gray ancestors in Atlanta 1864??

This week I have been studying the Presidential Election of 1864, the Civil War Battle of Atlanta, and wondering where were our Gray ancestors (from Atlanta) were at the time of this important battle.

Going into the election of 1864, things were not looking good for Abraham Lincoln's re-election. Nine presidents in a row had only served one term. The war was very unpopular, and things were not going well for the North or for President Lincoln. I doubt if any nation had ever held a free election in the midst of a Civil War before. But then, everything changed on September 6, 1864 when General Sherman won the Battle of Atlanta. As he seized Atlanta, the Civil War turned decidedly in the North's favor, and Lincoln won re-election easily.

But what about our Gray ancestors in Atlanta?

We know that William Henry Clay Gray was born in Atlanta in 1844, and that he worked and lived in Atlanta in the 1870's and 1880's, and that he died in Atlanta in 1889. We know that William Henry Clay Gray and Easter Hicks Gray had a son Samuel Gray in 1876, and that he was born in Atlanta. And that Samuel Gray and Anna Molloy Gray eventually had a son Clarence Gray in Atlanta in 1898.

So, I was curious to know what our ancestors were up to during the 1864 Battle of Atlanta. And I was also curious about the name William Henry Clay Gray.

Well, William Gray was born in 1844. This was another Presidential Election year. And during 1844 one of the key people running for President was Henry Clay. This was not the first time that Henry Clay ran for President. He ran in 1824, 1832, and 1844. He also tried to become his party's candidate in 1840 and 1848. Anyway, it is likely that our ancestor got his middle names from this famous Senator who never became President.

Although he never became President, Henry Clay was very influential and was known as the Great Compromiser. He was a key player in two major events in helping to design a compromise between North and South to resolve the increasingly dangerous slavery question. He was a key player in the 1821 Missouri Compromise, and the Compromise of 1850.

So, that probably explains where William Henry Clay Gray got his interesting name. It is interesting that Henry Clay's died in 1852 and his tombstone reads:

"I know no North—no South—no East—no West."

So, where were the Gray's during the September 1864 and the Battle of Atlanta? They were NOT in Atlanta then. The Gray family was in Monroe County Tennessee during this time.

It appears that William Henry Clay Gray joined the 3rd Tennessee Mounted Infantry Regiment in Summer 1861. He was a Private when he joined in 1861, and a Private when we left the service in 1865. He was a member of Company C of the 3rd Tennessee, and mostly in the Monroe County TN area.

Monroe County TN is where Easter Hicks was born in 1845. Easter Hicks and William Henry Clay Gray were married in Tennessee in 1864. They had a daughter Isabella in TN in 1866. They had another daughter Annie in TN in 1867. And then they had two sons in Atlanta. (1871 William, and 1876 Samuel).

So it looks like they were in Atlanta for all of the Civil War, and then eventually back in Atlanta at least by 1871.

You can read about William Henry Clay Gray's regiment by researching the following names: The 3rd (Lillard's) Tennessee Mounted Infantry, 3RD (VAUGHN'S) TENNESSEE INFANTRY REGIMENT, the 3rd Tennessee Cavalry Regiment. He was in company C.

Gray, William H.C.

BATTLE UNIT NAME:

[3rd Regiment, Tennessee Mounted Infantry \(Lillard's\)](#)

SIDE:
Confederacy

COMPANY:
C

SOLDIER'S RANK IN:
Private

SOLDIER'S RANK OUT:
Private

ALTERNATE NAME:

FILM NUMBER:
M231 ROLL 17

PLAQUE NUMBER:

NOTES:
none

CONFEDERATE TENNESSEE TROOPS

3rd Regiment, Tennessee Mounted Infantry (Lillard's)

OVERVIEW:

3rd Infantry Regiment Provisional Army was organized in May, 1861, at Knoxville, Tennessee, and mustered into Confederate service in June at Lynchburg, Virginia. Its members were recruited in the counties of Knox, Monroe, Jefferson, Polk, Blount, McMinn, Meigs, and Sullivan. The unit was engaged at [Manassas](#), then during February 1862, returned to Tennessee. It then fought at Tazewell and Cumberland Gap and later was involved in the Kentucky operations. It moved to Mississippi and East Louisiana, it was captured at [Vicksburg](#) on July 3, 1863. Exchanged and reorganized as cavalry, the regiment was assigned to Vaughn's Brigade. It participated in the Knoxville Campaign, fought at Piedmont and with Early in the Shenandoah Valley, and skirmished in East Tennessee. In April, 1865, it moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, and became part of President Davis' escort, until surrendering at Washington, Georgia, on May 9. This unit reported 4 casualties at [First Manassas](#), 187 at [Raymond](#), and 47 at [Piedmont](#). In May, 1864, it had 199 officers and men fit for duty.

The field officers were Colonels Newton J. Lillard and John C. Vaughn; Lieutenant Colonels David C. Haskins, John J. Reese, and Samuel Tool; and Majors Joseph C. Boyd, William C. Morelock, and George W. Morgan.