

## William Edward McCoy Diary, 5th Georgia Clinch Rifles

### Background Information

The was written by William Edward McCoy, Co. A 5th Ga "The Clinch Rifles". He was born in Augusta GA November 14, 1840. He and his younger brother Charlie joined the local militia unit the Clinch Rifles. This unit later became Co A of the 5th Ga regiment and was sent to Pensacola FL to Camp Stevens. This is where he started his diary. They took part in the Battle of Santa Rosa. William was even personally mentioned in the newspaper article about the battle. The 5th Ga was part of Jackson's Brigade, Gen John King Jackson was also from Augusta Ga. They were involved in several battles in the Mississippi Tennessee Theater. The diary specifically mentions the battles of Farmington and Stones River. After the battle of Stones River he for some unknown reason stopped writing in this diary.

After the war he came back to Augusta and became a clerk for the Graniteville Company. The owner, James Gregg was murdered by a former employee, a story which was made into a motion picture, "The Gardner's Son". William served his boss one last time as pall bearer. Not terribly long after this William married Mr. Gregg's widow, Catherine Hammond Gregg. She was the daughter of SC Senator and former Gov. James Henry Hammond. By the time she married William she was already hopelessly addicted to opium. William moved away with her to New York for a while but eventually returned to Augusta to try his hand at running his own cotton mill.

He purchased a small manufacturing firm on the Savannah River and built it up into the largest cotton waist mill in the Southeast. In post-Civil War Georgia it was not accepted to hire black workers. The newly freed slaves had great difficulty finding gainful employment. William opened what would become Riverside Mills in an area of Augusta known as Springfield Village. Springfield was a free black community that dated back to the 18th century. William went against the norm and only hired black workers. Riverside Mills was the first major company in Georgia to offer jobs to blacks after the Civil War.

William went on to live a long successful life. Catherine passed away in her early forties. William had her buried beside her first husband James. He later remarried, this time to another widow from Pennsylvania. She had children from her previous marriage but William never had any of his own. William passed away from pneumonia November 17, 1919, just three days after his 79th birthday. He is buried in Summerville Cemetery, a few blocks from his home, alongside his brother Charlie and two of his nieces. He had lived a long and successful life, becoming president, owner, or serving on the board of directors of many successful business in Augusta Ga.

[image: William Edward McCoy]

[image: William Edward McCoy's head stone]

### William Edward's Diary

Tuesday Dec 2nd 1862

Train due yesterday at 1 o'clock did not arrive till 9 o'clock last night on Board of which was Miss Jones and Bro. Miss J is sister in law of A. L. Deming?. They had to sit up all night under a shed it raining without any fire. Had we known it, we would have given up our tent. This morning they warmed by our fire and I escorted Miss J to the Boat. I will write to Mollie Swear today.

Thursday Dec 11th 1862

Genl [sic] Jos E Johnston and staff passed down the road this morning.

Friday Dec 12th 1862

Pres't [sic] Davis passed up the road this A.M. He proceeded unaccompanied. A salute was fired by Pritchards [sic] Battery. Also Father came on the down train. He had been sick and was even then very [illegible]

Dec 12/62 Cont'd

I crossed the river with him and procured a seat. If nothing happens he will arrive at home Sunday morning.

Dec 27/62

Left Bridgeport for Murfreesboro through kindness Capt [sic] O.C. Myers [illegible]. The Regiment were transported in open stock cars while the Horses belonging to the staff were put in good Box cars.

Sunday Dec 28/62

Marched out and formed line Battle extreme right of Reserve Corps.

Tuesday Dec 30th

Bivouacked last night in an open field just off Lebanon Pike 2 miles from town. Rained nearly all night. All day yesterday there was considerable skirmishing on left. This morning it has approached to center. Considerable cannonading going on.

Wednesday Dec 31/62

Changed our position several times moving on the right. About noon we were ordered to center. Moved there at a double quick to that post and were ordered to charge a Battery [sic] of 12 guns. Made charges but being unsupported had to fall back losing 2 killed, [illegible] and Morgan, and 5 wounded, Steed, [illegible] Walton, Holt, Milner and Miller. Fighting about 1 1/2 hours, I escaped with a slight scratch on the neck caused from a

fragment of shell. After fighting we moved back to rear about 3/4 miles and slept for the night.

Thursday Jany [sic] 1/63

Rested all day on the ground we occupied last night. I walked out to the field where Genl [sic] Rains was killed and in one place I counted 27 dead Federals.

Friday Jany [sic] 2/63

Early this morning we were ordered to the left to support Gen Claibourne. [sic] Laid on our arms all day. Very heavy fighting going on the Right and considerable skirmishing in our front. One time our pickets drove in the yankee [sic] pickets.

Saturday Jany [sic] 3/63

Last night about 12 o'clock we were ordered to move away as quick and quietly as possible. We marched about 2 1/2 miles down the pike and formed line battle. Raining very hard. I was almost frozen. After a good deal of trouble we succeeded in starting a fire. We remained in this place (just where the railroad crosses Stone [sic] River) until 8 o'clock, when we moved up on the Right. Here again we were put to a good deal of trouble making fires, it still raining. We remained very quiet all day but just about dark the enemy commenced shelling our camps. When our battery opened [sic] on them 3 different brigades at 3 different times charged it and were [illegible] times repulsed. The firing continued about 2 hours and finally ceased except occasionally stray shots.

Sunday Jany [sic] 4th 1863

This morning about 2 o'clock we commenced our retreat. We marched to Murfreesboro and took the Manchester pike and marched steadily on. About daylight one of the Riders of Washington Artillery let me take his place. My feet were blistered very badly. I then had a ride until we stopped for the night. 1st night we camped 15 miles from Murfreesboro.

Monday Jany [sic] 5/63

Still on march. Passed through Beach Grove and camped for the night at Manchester.

Tuesday Jany 6/63

My feet being very sore from blisters the Doct [sic] excused me from marching. The sick squad staid [sic] in Manchester all day till dark when we took the cars and proceeded to Estell Springs where we spent the night.

Wednesday Jany [sic] 7/63

Took the top of a hospital car and after waiting all day till 5 o'clock in the evening at Cowan proceeded to Bridgeport where we arrived about 9 o'clock at nigh