

James A. Clark, C.S.A. Jefferson County, Georgia Military Service Record

~ Janice Cox Brown, Tyler, Texas

"It is a bad cruel & wicked war. Ancient History never has told of such a war as this before."

On September 10, 1861, James A. Clark of Jefferson County, Georgia, the son of David and Elizabeth Clark, enlisted in a company of soldiers being raised by James G. Cain, who became the captain. This company became known locally as the "Jefferson Greys," sometimes called the "Jeff Greys." James Clark was friends with many of the boys who also enlisted, including James Stapleton, the second lieutenant. The group was mustered in under Major Calhoun at Camp Stephens, Georgia for the period of the war.

James was later appointed 4th Corporal of the Jefferson Greys and on July 20, 1862 was made Color Corporal and was listed as a Color Guard in both May and June of 1863. It is likely that he served in that capacity for that entire time period; July 1862 to July 1863, and possibly beyond that.

The Jefferson Greys became Company I, attached to the 28th Infantry Regiment. The 28th Infantry Regiment, organized at Big Shanty, Georgia, during July and August, recruiting members from Irwin, Sumter, Washington, Crawford, Cherokee, Stewart, Toombs, Jefferson, and Emanuel counties. When it was ordered to Virginia in April 1862, the unit contained 518 soldiers, and served in General Featherston's and Colquitt's Brigade. It participated in the various campaigns of the Army of Northern Virginia from Williamsburg to Chancellorsville, then moved to Charleston, South Carolina, and later to Florida where it fought at Olustee.

Sent back to Virginia, it was active at Drewry's Bluff, Cold Harbor, and the Petersburg trenches north of the James River. Of the 371 engaged at Seven Pines, the unit lost thirty-two percent. It reported 73 casualties during the Maryland Campaign, 34 at Chancellorsville, and 95 at Olustee. In 1865 the regiment saw action in North Carolina and surrendered with the Army of Tennessee.

The field commanders were Colonels Tully Graybill and T. J. Warthen; Lieutenant Colonels James G. Cain, William P. Crawford, George A. Hall; and Major James J. Banning.

The last date he was known to be alive was from a letter he wrote his sister-in-law, Martha Ann (Law) Clark that said: Camp of 25th GA, Baldwin, Fla., dated April 1864, and mentioned that he was expecting to leave any hour for somewhere about Charleston or Savannah.

As reported by Ken Legendre, a volunteer for the Civil War Message Board, who has been compiling a listing of Confederate Color Bearers and Color Guards for over 20 years, he told me that: "The last notice I have for him is a casualty list that appeared in the *"Augusta (Ga) Daily Constitutionist"* of June 16, 1864. It states that James was wounded "severely in left hand" in battles occurring between June 1st and 7th near Gaines Mill, Va." (*Perhaps additional research or by ordering his military record from the Georgia State Archives, I can discover exactly when, where and how he died.*)



In presenting the letter below written by James Clarke, virtually no corrections were made as to spelling and punctuation, and then only to a limited degree when necessary for ease in reading. For the most part though, certain peculiarities and inconsistencies of spelling and punctuation, as well as other aspects of style, have largely been retained in order to preserve the flavor of the original document.

Janice. Brown

Civil War Letter of James A. Clarke

Letter given to Janice Cox Brown by my great-aunt, Gladys Altman, after her death in Pampa, Texas, December 19, 1973. The letter below was written by James Clark to his sister-in-law, Martha Ann (Law) Clark during the Civil War. James was the younger brother of Martha Ann's husband, Thomas Clark, who enlisted in the war in Hamilton County, Florida, where he and Martha were living. At the time the following letter was written by James, his brother, Thomas had died of wounds suffered at the Battle of Sharpsburg, Maryland (called Antietam by the Yankees).

Camp of 25th GA Regt.
Baldwin, Fla.
April 18th, 1864

Dear Sister

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your kind favor, bearing date April 7th which gave me grate pleasure to heare from you & to hear that you was still enjoying the grate blessing of health for it is one of the gratest blessings that ever was bestowed upon people.

Dear sister, I have no news worth communicating to you at preasant. only the report here is that the Yankees are all gone from here & we are now cooking with Rations. to leave we donot know where. but it is supposed that we will go some where about Charleston or Savannah & I expect we will have to march it too. If we do I will not like it at all for they have sent some off on the Train & I think we are as much entitle to go on the Train as any of the Troops. but such is the fruits of war.

I supposed Dear Sister you said you hope that I would get the chance to come & see you before I left the State, but I will not get to come as we will leave here soon. probably today. or tomorrow. Not withstanding, I would like to see the girls you spoke of. I can imagin that I could have a nice time with them. I also would like to see your little child you spoke of. it would give me grate pleasure indeed to see you all. I know I could have a nice time. If I could only get there. but I don't expect that I will ever get there until the war ends if I am so fortuneat as to be one of its servivers which I hope I will Oh, what a happy time it will be when this war ends. Though it is hard to tell when it will end. I hope this summer will end it – I trust the good Lord will speake peace to the land as he did when he was in the ship on the

sea in a storm for it seames that this war has lasted long enough. it is a bad cruel & wicked war. Ancient History never has told of such a war as this before.

as I have no news, I will close hoping to here from you soon. you can direct your letters to Lake City until I write you to change. I am as ever your true & affectionate brother.

James Clarke

