

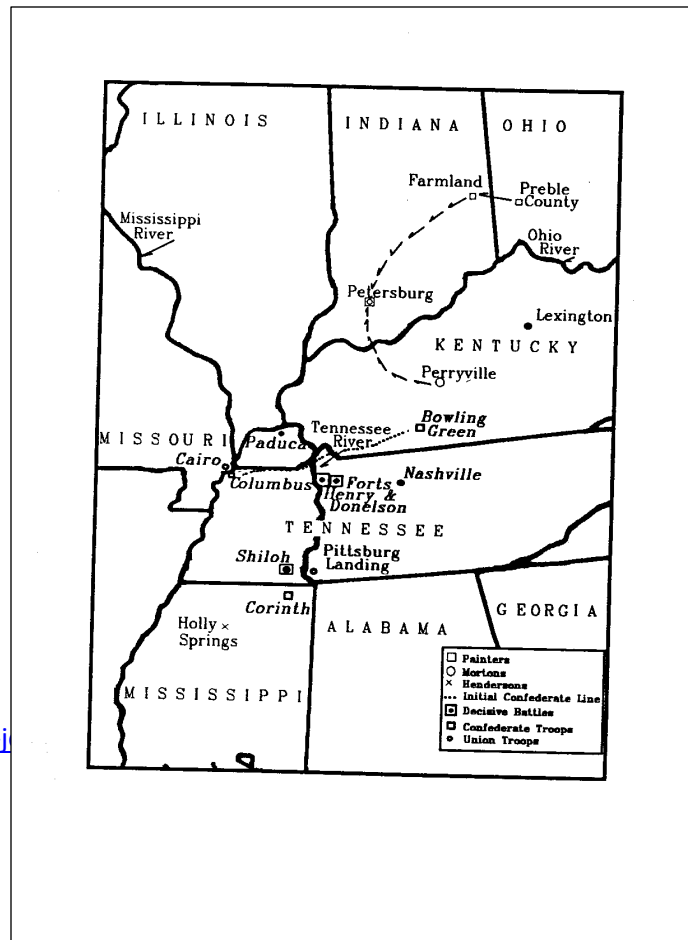
## Frank Ficklin IV and Milledge Ficklin in the War between the States

A month after that Francis eldest son, Milledge Ficklin joined the Rankin Greys in Company I under Col. John J. Thornton at Brandon, Mississippi. (fn3) Dr. Thornton, the only member of the Confederate Constitutional Convention who refused to sign the ordinance of secession had been commissioned as Captain of the Rankin Greys and had risen to battalion command by the time the war started. By October 1861 the regiment was ordered to Bowling Green, Kentucky where Coll. Thornton took command of the Kentucky Second Brigade, First Division. As soon as it reached Kentucky typhoid and measles epidemics hit the regiment reducing it to 150 men, ten to fifteen per company.<sup>1</sup> Milledge Ficklin survived. General Hardee was to move on Bowling Green and Thornton was to follow.

The Governor of Kentucky sympathized with the Confederacy but his policy toward the war was one of armed neutrality. He was determined that the war not be fought on Kentucky soil. Ulysses S. Grant was sitting just across the northwestern border at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers at Cairo, Illinois. On September 3, 1861 Confederate General Leonidas Polk arrived and occupied Columbus, Kentucky twenty five miles south on the Mississippi. On September 6 General Smith moved into Paducah at the confluence of the Ohio and Tennessee fifty miles east. On October 7 General Sherman arrived at Bowling Green to save Kentucky for the Union. Within the state more and more pro-Union troops were raised. On September 10 the Indiana Brigade arrived and on the fourteenth the Rankin Greys under Thornton showed up in Union City just below the border in Tennessee awaiting orders to follow General Hardee to take Bowling Green.

Six thousand union troops were deployed from Cairo on five steamers convoyed by two gunboats on November 6.<sup>2</sup> The Confederate troops were camped at Columbus protected behind the timbered high banks of the Mississippi. The Union troops landed on the low flat western shore at Belmont. The battle raged across the river all day but in the end little could be said except that several hundred soldiers had

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been wounded or killed. The Confederates still held important fortifications on the Tennessee, Cumberland and Mississippi in Kentucky and Grant was determined to drive them out and take Bowling Green and Nashville.

Fort Henry, Kentucky was an entrenched camp set in a heavily forested region riddled with creeks and ponds. The Federals opened fire on it on the sixth of February from gunboats positioned on the Tennessee while infantry struggled through swollen creeks, swamps and muddy roads and steep hills to gain the rear of the camp. In less than two hours the fort surrendered and its defenders had fled. With such an unexpected and easy victory, the Union forces moved on through the rugged forests to Fort Donelson on the Cumberland just twelve miles away. On February 14 Commodore Foote opened attack on the impressive fort sitting high above the river. The attack was repulsed and the damaged gunboats retreated. That night it began to snow and at three in the morning under cover of darkness the soldiers within the fort attempted a sneak attack on the Union lines. But Grant was prepared and surprised the attackers instead. So men on both sides faced off in the blizzard engaging in hand to hand combat under a deluge of snow, shell and grape shot. The battle continued all next day up and down the treacherous terrain, first one side gaining advantage, then the other.

To break the stalemate General Grant ordered a charge along the whole line. They moved relentlessly up against the Confederate fire without firing in return until they reached the works and then made a deadly bayonet charge. The rebels retreated inside the fort and the Union forces kept a vigil all night. In the morning as they prepared to advance again, they saw that the fort had raised the white flag of truce. Grant allowed no conditions to the surrender, so the south suffered an humiliating defeat when it surrendered the fort and thirteen thousand soldiers and a million dollars-worth of artillery and equipment.

The battlefield was littered for two miles with the bodies of 3,000 wounded and dying. Grant had secured Kentucky. General Johnson evacuated Bowling Green and fell back to Nashville and then Murfreesboro. The citizens began to flee Nashville in terror of Union soldiers. The town was nearly deserted. Looters moved in and the city was in chaos. When the Federal troops finally arrived they imposed martial order and brought the city under control. Grant's army of 35,000 men moved up the Tennessee River and occupied Pittsburgh Landing and prepared to attack Corinth, Mississippi twenty miles away.

## Shiloh

The Confederate forces had move back to Corinth and prepared to attack Grant's army at Pittsburgh Landing. Captain Thornton's Sixth Regiment was deployed to serve with Cleburne's Brigade of Hardee's Corps. They marched the short distance up the road to the border of Tennessee and crossed into the forested hills along Snake and lick Creeks where Grant had deployed five divisions. The morning of April 6 dawned a lovely sunny spring day. Birds sang, fleecy clouds doted the sky, a gentle breeze rippled the leaves outside the little log church named Shiloh. Then Federal troops in a line extending in a curve five miles long opened fire on Hardee's Corps.

General Hardee ordered an advance. Milledge's Sixth Mississippi charged the Union line but were repulsed. Again and again the Sixth charged until 300 out of 425 men had been killed or wounded including Co. Thornton himself. Despite the severe losses, sixty of the men reformed and rejoined the battle.

Elsewhere on the battlefield the forces of the Confederate General Johnson overwhelmed the Union camp taking much of it by surprise in the early morning, forcing them to abandon camp and retreat to the woods. The Confederates moved into the camp capturing battery after battery and driving remaining brigades to the river. By day's end the Confederate victory seemed assured. The Union army had been driven back to the bluff at Pittsburgh Landing and had suffered severe losses.

Then as dusk fell the Army of General Buell arrived on the east side of the river as much a welcome surprise and relief to the Union generals as it would be a bewildering shock to the Confederate generals in the morning. Stealthily all night the preparations were made for a surprise dawn attack.

The new battle opened the next morning, the seventh of April, with an hour-long artillery contest, followed by pursuit across corn fields and hand to hand combat in the woods. General Buell led lead a frontal assault and reclaimed the camps lost the day before. Johnson's forces retaliated with an advance of ten thousand men. Little by little on all fronts the Union prevailed. Not until 3,342 men had died, and 16,754 had been wounded or reported missing, did the battle end. What remained of the Sixth Regiment, including Milledge Ficklin, returned to Corinth. The Union army did not pursue them.

By June 1862 the Confederacy was battling for its survival at the western front. It was essential that it protect its connection to Louisiana, Arkansas and Texas. The great Mississippi River stood as the absolute link to the western allies of the south. The Confederates had already lost Memphis; only Vicksburg remained as a stronghold on the river. Jackson, the capitol of the state, was only fifty miles east of Vicksburg, and Morton, the home of the Ficklins, was only 200 miles eastward.

Young men in the north might choose to volunteer to serve in the war—or not. Some states resorted to conscription but others easily filled the ranks with volunteers.

Boys in Mississippi had no choice. Their homes were the battleground. Milledge Ficklin had already served two years when his younger brother, Frank Ficklin IV enrolled. His home in Morton, Mississippi was in the line of battle. Frank enrolled on April Fools Day 1863 at Jackson in Captain Collum's Company C, known as the Johnston Avengers, of Co. W. B. Shelby's 39<sup>th</sup> Mississippi Regiment.<sup>3</sup> It was about this same time that his brother Milledge's brigade was sent to Port Hudson in Louisiana and thence back to Jackson and from there to Grand Gulf on the Big Black River below Vicksburg where it flows into the Mississippi. There General Bowen commanded a force of 5,000.



WAR IN MISSISSIPPI,  
 1863

(Confederate)  
 39

*Francis F. Ficklin*  
 Co. C (Johnston A.)  
 39 Regt. Mississippi Va

Company Muster Roll  
 the organization named above,  
*Mich. F. A. P.*

listed:  
 Name *Apple*  
 Name *Jackman, Wm.*  
 by whom *Capt. Collins*  
 dated *3 years*

not paid:  
 by whom *Capt. Magee*  
 & what time *Dec 31*

present or absent *Present*

Remarks:

FRANK FICKLIN  
 MUSTER-IN

## Seige of Vicksburg

By May 14, 1863 Grant had essentially surrounded Vicksburg, cut it off and held it under siege. The people of Vicksburg held out for forty days. Milledge's Sixth Regiment moved on to Big Black Bridge and then to Vicksburg on down Baker's Creek and finally marched to Jackson. The battalion under Major Stevens continued on active duty during the entire siege of Vicksburg.

Finally after this stubborn show of resistance, the people had to surrender the city which they did on the Fourth of July 1863, one day after the confederate defeat at Gettysburg. Meanwhile Milledge Ficklin had been released in a prisoner exchange on June 12 and rejoined his regiment in July as it retreated to Jackson.

By this time Frank Ficklin's regiment had been sent to Port Hudson, Louisiana, the last Confederate port o the Mississippi. There the 39<sup>th</sup> had defended the garrison where on June 14 Col. Shelby lead an assault on the Federal forces inflicting severe losses on them, severely wounding their General. The fighting continued until July 8 when Port Hudson was surrendered. So after only two months of service, Private Frank Ficklin was taken prisoner. Fortunately for Frank the General was able to obtain parole for the privates within three days and Frank was released to rejoin his unit.

Back in Mississippi the Union troops were continuing to push into the heart of the Confederacy and held Jackson under siege from July 9 to the 16<sup>th</sup>. Milledge's Sixth Regiment withdrew from Jackson on July 16 to the Ficklin's hometown of Morton.

The next Union objective was Chattanooga. Confederate forces were forced to withdraw from

Chattanooga September 7. It was during the campaign of the Union General Rosecrans that Milledge fell ill and returned to Morton to recuperate.

Confederate	
Fr	6 Miss
Milledge Ficklin	
Pvt Co. I. 6 <sup>th</sup> Regt. Miss. Inf.	
Appears on a	
Roll of Prisoners of War	
at Nashville, Tenn., captured by forces under Maj. Gen. Thomas, commanding Dept. of the Cumberland, and forwarded to Capt. S. E. Jones, Ad'l A. D. C., Louisville, Ky., Dec. 18, 1864.	
Roll dated Headquarters Dept. Cumberland, Office Provost Marshal General, Nashville, Tenn., Dec. 18, 1864.	
Where captured	Nashville, Tenn.
When captured	Dec. 15, 1864.
Remarks:	

## Sherman's March

On February 1, 1864 Union General Sherman marched across Mississippi from Vicksburg to Meridian passing through Morton.

Meanwhile Milledge's unit was sent on a mission to purge deserters from the Lower Pearl River. Frank's unit was deployed to Mobile and then Selma, Alabama. In May 6 Milledge's unit was ordered to Rome, Georgia the same time

[www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSK3-3?i=100&cc=200](http://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSK3-3?i=100&cc=200)

Frank's unit, attached to General Polk's army, and ordered to Rome on May 8. Frank was captured on May 10 at Rome and imprisoned. One day later on May 11 Milledge arrived with his regiment at Resaca fifteen miles east. They held the line against the advances of the Federal troops and three days later Frank's regiment arrived at Resaca. At that time Frank was released and rejoined his unit to fight at New Hope. He was recaptured on the 24<sup>th</sup> at Dallas and sent to prison in Illinois.

Milledge's regiment was deployed to Kenesaw Mountain where General Polk was killed. Under continual heavy fire the Thirty-Ninth and the Sixth among the other units held on tenaciously for the next two months, in the battles of New Hope Church, Kenesaw Mountain, Lickskillet Road and Chattahoochee.

As Sherman continued his infamous march to the sea, the remaining members of Frank's Thirty-Ninth Mississippi now under Stewart's corps, moved north to destroy the railroad between Chattanooga and Atlanta. Milledge's Sixth moved north into Tennessee with Loring's Division where it continued to fight on to Nashville in December. On December 20, 1864, Milledge was captured and taken to Camp Douglass in Chicago. His regiment retreated to Tupelo and then moved east to the Carolinas where it finally surrendered in April 1865 at Durham, North Carolina.

After the war the Ficklin men returned to Morton to a devastated economy where life would never be the same again.

## **Footnotes**

1. Military Service Record, Pvt. Milledge Ficklin, Co. I, SixthReg. MS Vols, Mississippi State Archives, Jackson, MS.
2. Dunbar Rowland, *Military History of Mississippi*, The Reprint Company, Publishers, Spartanburg, SC, 1978.
3. Military Service Record of Frank F. Ficklin, Mississippi State Archives, Jackson, MS.

