

Jefferson Soldiers of 1836

Who Braved the Indians in the Old Days
Valuable Historical Sketch, Containing Many Familiar Names

Written to The Birmingham Age-Herald by Thomas M. Owen
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To the Age-Herald:

It is now almost fifty-six years, over half a century, since in the spring of 1836, Jefferson County equipped and sent out a brave and gallant company of mounted infantry to assist in protecting the inhabitants of east and southeast Alabama from Indian Savages and depredations. In the swift transit of the years its members have all gone to their last resting places, save one; and though brave in word and deed, loving their country and fighting for its protection, history contains no record of them, save in the following paragraph, which appears in a short sketch of Jefferson County, by B. E. Grace, Sr., one of Jefferson County's oldest and most honored citizens, vis:

“About the year 1836 great excitement was caused in Jefferson County in consequence of the hostile attitude of the Seminole and Creek Indians, especially the latter. The treaty which had recently been concluded between the general Government and Indians, for their removal to the west, caused a great dissatisfaction among a large portion of them, and several murders were committed between Montgomery and Columbus, Ga., and other outrages, which finally resulted in a state of war. The Governor made a call for volunteers, and Jefferson County, as usual in such cases, responded promptly, and a company of near one hundred men was soon raised, and James McAdory was elected captain. I forgot the names of the other officers, or I should gladly give them, as they were a gallant set of boys and spent a hot summer in the sickly climate, at that time, of South Alabama, serving faithfully till the object of the campaign was accomplished and the hostile Creeks were captured and sent via Montgomery and Mobile by water to their new homes. The captain and most of his men returned, but several contracted disease which finally proved fatal.” The only survivor referred to above is Mr. John Thompson, a farmer living in Shade's Valley, a few miles southeast of Bessemer, through whose and many facts and incidents concerning this company are rescued from perishing.

Elyton was the county site, and the center of public spirit and intelligence as well, of Jefferson County; and when the call for volunteers was received, immediate steps were taken to call together those willing to enlist and lend assistance. The call was distributed and the meeting to consider it was held at the county court house about April 1st, 1836, when, after perfection arrangements and election officers, all returned home to make ready for again assembling in Elyton preparatory for leaving. The next week found a large number of men assembled, each one mounted on his own horse, ready for the march. No one, not even the officers wore a uniform; but almost every one wore a wool hat, linsey shirt and a suit of substantial homespun jeans. They remained one night in Elyton, a part lodged in the old Mallory Tavern, and a part were scattered around the hospital homes of Colonel John Martin, Williamson Hawkins and others. Just before leaving, Captain McAdory marched his company up to the home of Mr. James Mudd, when Miss Mary Mudd, on behalf of the citizens of Elyton, presented his command with a beautiful flag.

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The captain accepted in a few words; and soon afterwards they road away, leaving and hearts behind them but followed by a good wishes and earnest prayers.

Their route led along the old Montevallo road until the town of Montevallo was reached, when they were joined by their surgeon, Dr. Mardis (brother of S. W. Mardis, at one time member of congress), and where they camped the first night. Each man carried his own rations, which had been prepared for him by loving hands before setting out from home. Leaving Montevallo, they went direct to Montgomery, camping out one night, where they were received by the authorities and assigned to duty. Here they were given arms and ammunition, and in a few days were on a rapid march for the Creek country.

Their service in the war was short, for the war itself wsa of short duration, being only three months, the term for which they had enlisted. The character of the service was in no respect different from that of ordinary frontier service; and there is no record of any particular acts of heroism accredited to this company or its members. But they were in several brief engagements, underwent without complaint, several forced marches, and several of its members were commended as skilled and brave in the execution of special duty assigned them. The company lost none of its members by death, but unused to the sultry sun of the southern part of the state, in many were planted the germs of fatal disease that made itself felt years afterward. They received as a reward for their services, the sum of ten dollars per month and their food. At or near Montgomery they were mustered out of service, and in stagging bodies, returned home, having tasted the glories of war and found it more dreadful than inviting.

No record has been found anywhere of a roster of this company, but by the aid of Mr. Thompson a partial list has been prepared (his memory recalling no other names than these), showing their calling and their places of residence or settlement, together with the names of the officers as follows:

Captain	James McAdory	planter	Jonesboro
First Lieutenant	Harrison W. Goyne	speculator	Elyton
Second Lieutenant	Lemuel G. McMillion	teacher	Elyton
First Sergeant	Walter W. Sherror	merchant	Elyton
Sergeant	Riley Pierce	farmer	Stoney Lonesome
Sergeant	Jacob Bagley	farmer	Elyton
Surgeon	Dr. Mardis		Montevallo
	William Abernathy	farmer	Jonesboro
	Thomas Allender	farmer	Shade's Valley
	Milton Barksdale	farmer	Jonesboro
	Benjamin Baggett	saddler	Elyton
	Nathan Byars	farmer	Shades Mountain
	Wiley Byars	farmer	Shade's Mountain
	William Brown	farmer	Bethlehem
	Abner Clayton	farmer	Clayton's Cove
	John Clayton	farmer	Clayton's Cove
	Avery Couch	farmer	Warrior Hills

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Benjamin Couch	farmer	Warrior Hills
Mathew DeJarnette	farmer	Elyton
Stephen Dupey	planter	Elyton
Henry Gill	stage driver	Elyton
Moat Gill	farmer	Elyton
Downs Green	farmer	Warrior Hills
Andrew Gayne	farmer	Stoney Lonesome
Moses Kelley	farmer	Elyton
James P. Lacey	farmer	Elyton
James Logan	farmer	Carrollsville
William McFalls	farmer	Jonesboro
John McLaughlin	farmer	Jonesboro
Samuel Nabors	planter	Carrollsville
John Nellum	planter	Shade's Valley
Daniel O'Bar	farmer	Cahaba Valley
James Pierce	farmer	Stoney Lonesome
James Rice	farmer	Shade's Valley
John Salter	farmer	Warrior Hills
Abner Saunders	farmer	Carrollsville
Washington Scott	farmer	Carrollsville
Nathaniel Self	farmer	Clayton's Cove
Thomas Sparks	farmer	Shade's Valley
Edward Strange	farmer	Cahaba Valley
William Tarrant	public man	Jonesboro
John Thompson	farmer	Jonesboro
Dock Ware	farmer	Carrollsville
Thomas J. Wright	merchant	Elyton

This list, imperfect and incomplete as it is, contains the names of many men, then leading and prominent in every department of life and business in the country, and whose descendants today live here, honored by all and high in social and public life.

There was great enthusiasm manifested among all classes of citizens over the prospect of getting to assist in fighting the Indians. Dr. Joseph R. Smith says he remembers distinctly the mustering in of the company, and how ardently burned the fires of patriotism in the breasts of the sons of Jefferson. In it were many mischievous characters - men who loved a good joke, could tell one and who were ready at all times to play every sort of prank. The first sergeant, Walter W. Sherron, was a splendid accountant and scribe, and an expert draughtsman of legal papers. It is said of him that while the company was in Montgomery at the end of its service, waiting to get "paid off", he astonished the whole department by the marvelous rapidity with which he could dispatch business, and it was largely through his assistance that the company received its pay at an early hour. Mr. Abner Saunders was not a volunteer, but a substitute for Mr. John Smith, the latter being anxious to aid his country, but unable, owing to the size of his family and the importunities of his friends, to go, hired and sent Mr. Saunders in his stead. Mr. B. E. Grace says that Thomas J. Wright purchased the horse upon which he rode from him, and for express use in

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this service. But, apart from all of this, who were these men, what of prominence did they achieve and what became of them?

Of these Harrison W. Goyne, 1836, and Moses Kelley, 1843, 1847, 1851 and 1853, represented Jefferson County with credit and honor in the State senate, Mr. Goyne, 1831, Mr. Kelley 1836 and Lemuel G. McMillion, for several years, set for Jefferson County in the House of Representatives; Mr. Kelly was twice sheriff; Mr. Goyne and Jacob Bagley were clerks of the county court; Mr. Bagley was judge of probate, 1850-56 and Mr. Kelly, 1856-62; besides almost every one at some time or other of his life had held the position of justice of the peace or commissioner of roads and revenue. Mr. McMillion, in addition, was a colonel in the Creek war under General Jackson; while in service under Captain McAdory was transferred and became a Major in the regiment commanded by Colonel Frazier, and he subsequently became a General of militia. Captain McAdory subsequently became a Colonel of militia.

The Clayton's were the sons of Charles C. Clayton, who came to the county at an early day and gave his name to the beautiful little vale in which he settled - Clayton's cove; Thomas Sparks is remembered in the name of Spark's gap, his farm lying just beyond; and Self's beat is the community which was first settled by the family of Nathaniel Self.

After the return home, the Pierce brothers, James and Riley; the Goyne brothers Harrison and Andrew, nicknamed "Cull"; Walter Sherror, Matt DeJarnette, Dawns Green, James Lacey, John Nellum, Daniel O'Bar, Washington Scott and Edward Strange all moved away, some to adjoining counties, some to adjoining states and some to the far west. What became of Milton Barksdale and Benjamin Baggett is not known.

The only living member of this command, John Thompson, was born February 25, 1818, and hence will soon be in his seventy fourth year. His grandfather, Joe Thompson, came to Jefferson County in the very early days, about 1817, along with the McLaughlins, the Hawkins, the Nabors and the Jones. Mr. Thompson's father did not reach Jefferson County until about 1833, coming from Clarksville, Tenn., on the Cumberland river, to Nashville, thence to Huntsville, and thence by the way of the old Huntsville road to Jones Valley, where he settled on the eastern valley road, between the homes of Thomas McAdory and Thomas Owen, just below New Jonesboro. Mr. Thompson is still hale, and hopes to live years.

The remainder of the company lived and died in this county, and many of their descendants see in the homes of their fathers.

Thomas M. Owen