

SONS OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS

Fort Blakeley Camp 1864

MAIL CALL



FORT BLAKELEY
GARRISON FLAG

Baldwin County, Alabama

April 9, 2010

Volume 11 Special Edition



Special Edition



Battle of Fort Blakeley April 9, 1865

SCV - REMEMBERING AND HONORING

FORT BLAKELEY

From the Editor -

Our membership has really grown the last couple of years and I got to thinking that maybe there are some members that doesn't know a whole lot about Blakeley and Fort Blakeley, the name of which our camp is so named. So, I have researched some sites on the internet and went by the park and collected some information from park ranger Richard 'Dick' Sheely and I have combined this information to present to camp members and receivers of MAIL CALL in this special edition.

I have dedicated this special issue to the first county seat, the ghost town and Fort Blakeley which was so named during the WFSI. The next time you and I talk to someone about our camp and our camp name, we can now give out the right information.



APRIL IS

CONFEDERATE HISTORY MONTH



The Town of Blakeley



House of Two Cities, Circa 1820

The Town of Blakeley is the oldest continuous town in Baldwin County and one of the oldest towns in the State of Alabama. Chartered in 1814 by the Mississippi Territory; re-chartered in 1818 by the Alabama Territory; and, chartered once more by the State of Alabama in approximately 1820... this municipality is still in existence today. Blakeley reached its zenith in the 1820's when its population hovered around 4,000, larger than its competitor city of Mobile across the bay. There were hotels, stores, churches, blacksmith shops, majestic homes, and the first Courthouse of present day Baldwin County settled beautifully down by the Tensaw River.....a bustling seaport town.

Today, the land has been reclaimed by nature. Not a brick, nor plank of wood remains. Not a sign of human habitation. 400 year old oak trees grace the boulevards that used to be. The horned owl hoots through the silence. There is nothing there to indicate that Blakeley was once a major player on the Alabama scene. It is considered by many to be "the South's loveliest ghost town."

Settled by Josiah Blakeley and others from New England in 1814, the streets and lots were laid out in such fashion with avenues named after Presidents and streets named fruit trees. The Blakeley Sun, published and printed down in the town, was one of Alabama's earliest newspapers. Blakeley was a prosperous and thriving entity. However, as often happens, the tide turned and by 1830 Blakeley's physical status began to ebb. Yellow fever epidemics and rampant land speculation turned the population movement towards Mobile.

With less than one hundred inhabitants Blakeley slowly began to die out. She was temporarily resurrected again during the Civil War years and was transformed into Fort Blakely (spelled this way during the Civil War years) housing an army camp of upwards to 4,000 soldiers. Her last day of the war saw a contingent of 20,000 men fighting the last major battle of the War Between the States. After 1865 Blakeley was no more. The land stood idle for better than 100 years until Historic Blakeley State Park was created in 1981.

In 1995 Blakeley was added to the Civil War Discovery Trail that links more than 300 sites in 16 states to inspire and to teach the story of the Civil War and its haunting impact on America.

CONSIDER THESE INTERESTING FACTS:

Largest National Historic Register Site east of the Mississippi River - encompassing 3800 acres nestled beside the Tensaw River.

Abounds with Prehistoric Indian mounds

Last major battle of the Civil War fought here at Fort Blakeley (5 1/2 miles of unspoiled breastworks where 26,000 soldiers met)

10.5 miles of magnificent nature trails, bicycle and horse paths

The South's most beautiful Ghost Town - 1814 City of Blakeley

FORT BLAKELEY – An Historical Perspective

1519-1702 Early Spanish Exploration

1704-1764 French Colonial Period –
Blakeley is site of French plantation (Louisiana Territory) Apalachee Indians live at Blakeley

1765-1783 British Colonial Period

1783-1813 Spanish Rule -
Spain rules everything south of the 31st parallel
1806 Josiah Blakeley arrives in Mobile (Spanish West Florida)

1813 United States Rule Begins with Capture from Spain
April 13, 1813 U.S. captures Mobile from Spain
July 1813 Josiah Blakeley buys 2,280 acres at \$1500 from Dr. Joseph Chastang

1814-1817 Mississippi Territory
Jan. 14, 1814 Josiah Blakeley charts Town of Blakeley, laying out streets and lots
February 1815 Josiah Blakeley dies, burial site unknown.

1817-1819 Alabama Territory -
created March 3, 1817. Building boom at Blakeley includes hotels, warehouses, docks, churches and stores. Baldwin County established with present boundaries: population 504 whites, 667 slaves.
Dec. 12, 1818 *Blakeley Sun* is one of the first Newspapers in the state.

1819 Alabama Statehood -
Alabama admitted as a state December 14, 1819
At Blakeley, Brown & Bell builds first successful Steamboat in Alabama – “The Tensas”
Blakeley and Mobile are established as ports of Entry for Alabama-Tombigbee basin

1820-1868 Blakeley serves as Baldwin County’s

First County Seat -

December 16, 1820 Blakeley selected as county seat
Judge Toulmin holds court in old Jury Oak before Courthouse is built.

1821-1828 Blakeley is a Thriving City -
With 4,000 settlers, Blakeley rivals Mobile. Yellow Fever epidemics and rampant land speculation dooms Blakeley. *Mobile Commercial Register* reports May 24, 1828 – “Blakeley has fallen to decay.”

1861-1865 Confederate States of America
April 9, 1865, the last major battle of the WFSI is fought at Blakeley.

1865-1974 Ghost Town
Blakeley is uninhabited and undisturbed for more than a century.

1974 - Blakeley Preservation

- 1974 Alabama Historical Commission places on National Register of Historic Places
- 1975 Mary Y. Grice begins efforts to preserve Blakeley
- 1976 Historic Blakeley Foundation formed. Mary Grice – Director. First gift of land to foundation
- 1981 Alabama Legislature established Blakeley State Park creating Historic Blakeley Authority, Mary Grice named Director
- 1990 International Paper gives 1,000 acres to Foundation
- 1993 Congress designates Blakeley “Class A Civil War Site”
- 1995 130th anniversary reenactment of the Battle of Blakeley
- 1996 Blakeley placed on Civil War Trail by the National Civil War Trust
- 1997 Mary Y. Grice retires as Director, becoming a permanent part of Blakeley’s history.
- 1998 420 acres of Blakeley land dedicated by *Forever Wild* – managed by Blakeley Park

POINTS OF INTEREST

This is a list of points of interest for the following map.

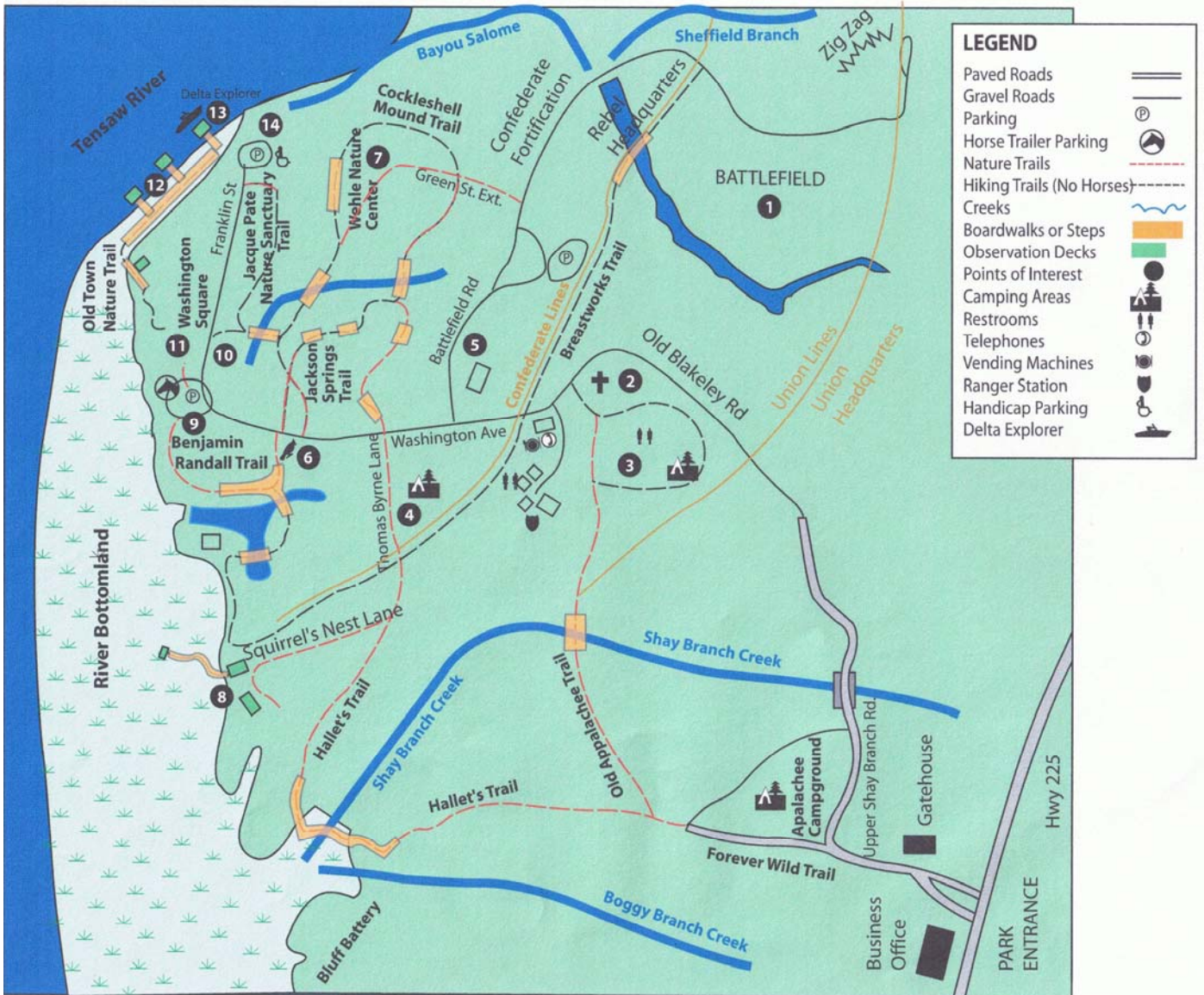
1. Battlefield: Scene of the last major battle of the Civil War.

2. Blakeley Cemetery: Old cemetery where many of the original Blakeley settlers, victims of yellow fever, were buried.

3. Campground.

4. Small Group Campsite.
5. Old House site: Now a cover picnic area.
6. Birding Kiosk.
7. Gatra L. Wehle Nature Center.
8. Squirrels Nests: Rustic shelters for weekend rental.
9. Nature Classroom: Open air classroom.
10. Old Courthouse site: Site of the first courthouse and jail of present day Baldwin County.

11. Washington Square: Once the heart of Blakeley, now an octagonal pavilion for meetings, weddings, etc. The *Hanging Oak* was said to have been the site of a hanging after the first court session at Blakeley.
12. Riverfront Boardwalk and observation decks.
13. Boat Dock for the “Delta Explorer”
14. Hiding Tree: Confederate soldiers was said to have hidden around the roots of the hollow base.



There is something wrong with this map – do you see it?

BLAKELEY BATTLEFIELD SELF-GUIDED TOUR

1. **WILKIN’S CROSSING** – Site of the first State road which connected Claiborne with Blakeley by 1820. During the war, it was called the Stockton or Telegraph Road because it led north to Stockton and was paralleled by a telegraph line. From this point the road

led due north and is now abandoned in its stretch across Baptizing Creek Swamp.

2. **CONFEDERATE CAMPS** – For most of the siege southern troops were on continuous duty with little rest, fighting all day and repairing the damaged works at night. The only shelter they had was whatever pieces of canvas they could put up in the trench with them.

3. **REDOUBT #4** (Stockton Road Redoubt) – The strongest and most prominent of the nine redoubts protecting Blakeley built in 1864-65. This fort held 4 field guns, a mortar, and a 7” rifled cannon that was never used due to its incomplete carriage. The men that manned these works were remnants of the First Missouri Brigade, a unit famous since the Vicksburg Campaign. The veteran cannoneers here were from Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee. This work is being restored to its wartime appearance.

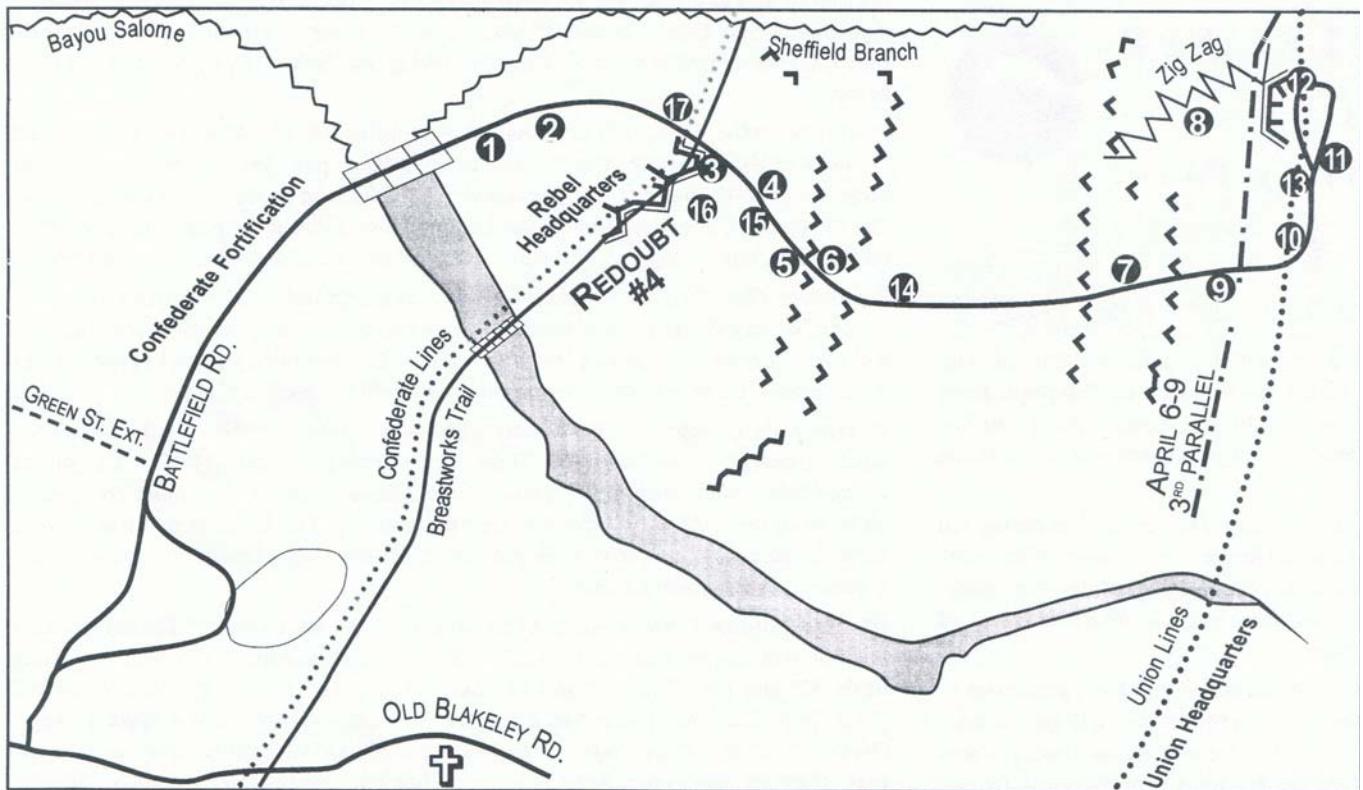
4. **OBSTRUCTIONS** – Redoubt #4 was protected with two rows of abatis. These lines of abatis were continuous across the whole front and were laid out 200 and 300 yards in front of the Confederate works. Other obstructions included telegraph wire strung from stump to stump along the abatis, a row of sharpened stakes 35 yards from the works and the ditch fronting the redoubt was filled with brush and briars.

rations of corn, crackers, water and plenty of ammunition with them.

6. **SORTIES** (Attack Parties) – On the nights of April 6 and 7, Confederates conducted sorties at the signal of a blue flare, through the ravine in front to break up working parties and to discourage the enemy’s efforts, especially in the effort to construct a position for the cannon of the 15th Massachusetts Battery. Though most of the efforts failed favorable results were obtained by making the Yankees overly cautious in their advances.

7. **UNION RIFLE PITS** – The advanced skirmishes of the 3rd (Moore’s) Brigade, 2nd (Andrew’s) Division, and 13th Army Corp occupied these pits. These pits were advanced in front of the main Union line (3rd parallel) as a precaution against night sorties.

8. **BOYAUX** (Zig Zag Approach) – The zig zag



5. **CONFEDERATE RIFLE PITS** – These pits were occupied by an average of five soldiers. The pits were about 20 yards apart covering the entire front in two rolls 50 yards apart. They were placed 200 yards from the main works. The soldiers were placed here to break up sorties, work parties, and to keep the enemy out of the ravine and at a respectable distance. Soldiers remained in the pits all day or all night taking their

approach was advanced under the cover of battery fire and was prepared as a covered approach to the advanced rifle pits, and ultimately to a new trench line if necessary. The zig zag trenches were engineered to protect the soldiers from enfilade musket fire.

9. **TORPEDOS** (Land Mines) – Subterra shells, a recent invention of the war, were much discussed by the Yankees at Blakeley. Consisting of explosive 12

and 24 pound cannon balls with a pressure triggering device, these weapons were more concentrated between the Yankee rifle pits and their main trench. The location of the shells was coincidence considering they were planted before the siege. During the assault many a Yankee troop “strolled lightly.”

10. MAIN UNION TRENCH – The 3rd Parallel of 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division – This position was developed by details of Moore’s Brigade, Andrews Division consisting of the 83rd and 114th Ohio, 20th and 34th Iowa, and the 37th Illinois. This position is 500 yards from the main Confederate line of resistance – within rifled musket range. (Note: The 2nd and 3rd parallels or trenches, were 200 and 400 yards respectively to the east. They are now non-existent like most WFSI trenches in the nation, fallen to 100 years of plowing.)

11. FEDERAL CAMPS – Though not so near as this – the original camps were another 200-500 yards to the east in every ravine and depression, anywhere that offered protection from shell fire and mini balls.

12. 15TH MASSACHUSETTS BATTERY – Constructed April 6th of gabions, logs and earth by work parties, this position held three 12 pounder Napoleons that pounded Redoubt #4 at 500 yards. At daybreak on April 7th, the guns in this position were silenced by the superior shell fire of Confederate Artillery.

13. ASSAULT OF THE 3RD BRIGADE, 2ND DIVISION, 13TH ARMY CORP – APRIL 8, 1865 - Due to the capture of Spanish Fort on the night of April 8th, the 14,000 besiegers of Blakeley were reinforced by elements of the 16th Corp, and orders were issued to take Blakeley by assault. The general advance began in front of Redoubt #9 at 5:25 pm and moved by echelon to the right. In front of Redoubt #4, the 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division began the assault at 5:45 pm with the 83rd Ohio leading the way as a skirmish line. The Brigade had prepared for the advance by occupying the 3rd parallel. At the command “forward<” the 83rd Ohio jumped out and moved quickly toward the ravine in front but began taking casualties after having left the trench 20 yards. The remainder of the Brigade waited for the initial results, and the word to move.

14. THE SURGE TO THE RAVINE – As the 83rd Ohio hastened toward the ravine, they immediately drew fire from the Confederate rifle pits. As the 83rd passed over their own rifle pits, the men detailed to them joined in the advance. The Yankee soldiers then drove over the first line of the enemy’s pits and

disappeared in the ravine. At this point the remainder of Moore’s Brigade jumped out of the trenches and followed.

15. CONFEDERATE SKIRMISHERS – When the Confederates in the rifle pits saw the massive array of bluecoats running at them, they held their position and continued firing. As the Union line neared, those in the pits not killed or wounded, surrendered or fled to their main line of works. This caused fire from Redoubt #4 to pause (so their fellow soldiers could pass) just as the 83rd Ohio came out of the ravine and began breaking open the abatis obstructions.

16. RESISTANCE CRUMBLES IN RE DOUBT #4 – Holding their fire until the fleeing pit men were out of the way, the Confederates reopened effective musket fire, but the cannons could not be de-elevated quickly enough. When the 83rd Ohio broke open passage in the abatis, the whole of the Yankee Brigade charged the works. The Southerners stood up and continued firing as if they intended to repulse the attack. But, as the Federals neared, some defenders broke ranks and ran to the woods. The Confederates remaining in the works surrendered quickly or were killed on the spot as 2500 Yankees mounted the works or charged up from the flanks. As the Confederates in the woods kept firing, the Yankee troops were ordered to push on to the river.

17. VICTORY AND DEFEAT – The Yankee troops followed up the victory of their charge by pressing down to the town site of Blakeley and mopping up continuing resistance. The Yanks in the attack on Redoubt #4 suffered about 25 deaths and 35 wounded. The Southern troops lost about 12 killed and 20 wounded. About 400 were captured in the works and another 400 were captured in the woods or swamps beyond. The total loss on the whole Blakeley front during the siege and assault were:

Confederate (estimate) - 100 killed, 300 wounded, 3050 captured.

Union (reported) – 116 killed, 655 wounded, 4 missing.

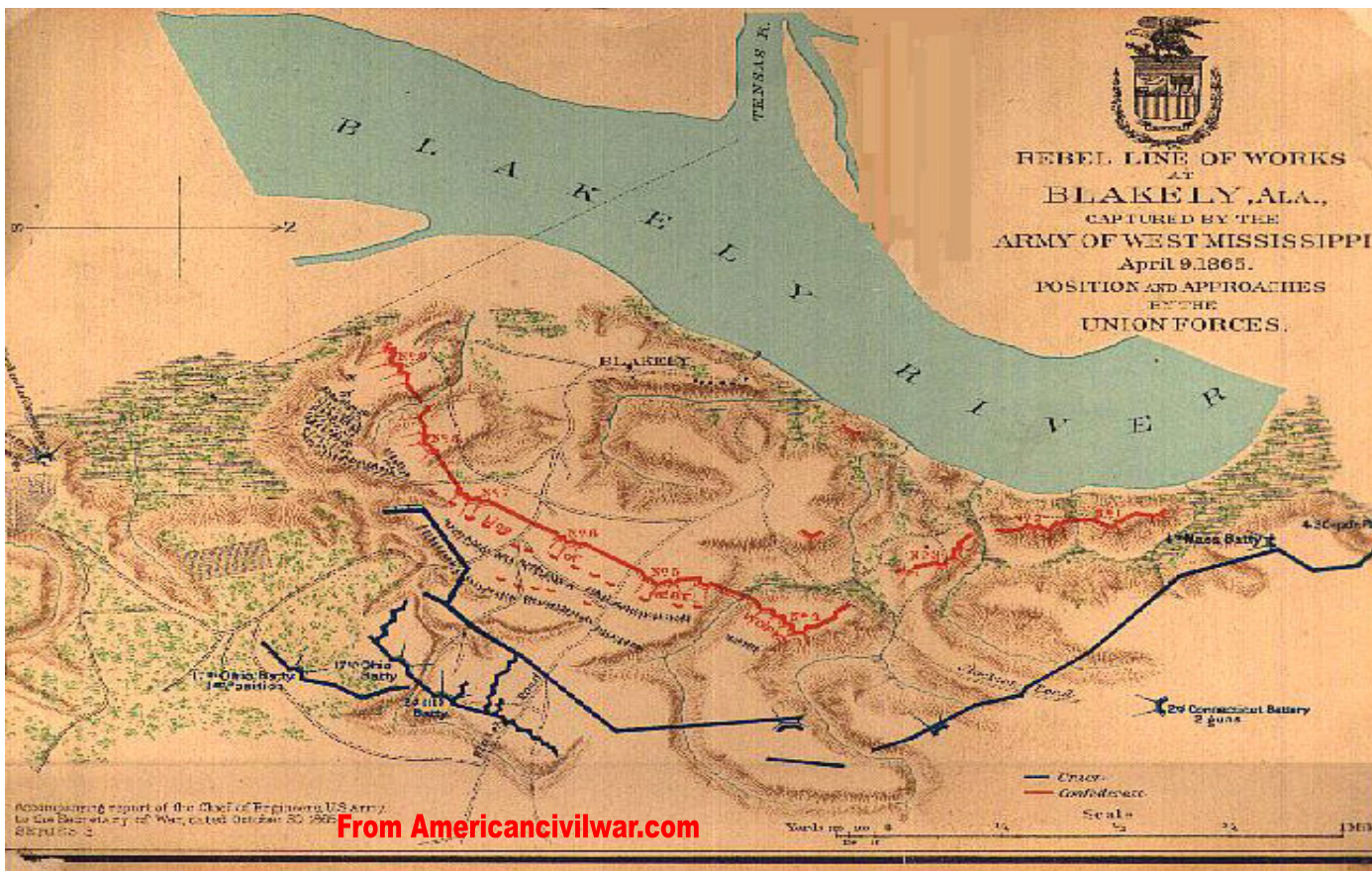
Mobile fell April 12th to the Yanks, the last major city of the Confederacy to fall. The Confederate POW’s were first sent to Ship Island, then to Vicksburg for exchange.

Information for this article came from single page handout from Fort Blakeley, compiled by Roger B. Hansen, Pascagoula, MS.

HISTORICAL BLAKELEY STATE PARK is operated by the Historic Blakely Authority of the State of Alabama. Located at 34745 State Highway 225, Spanish Fort, AL 36577, 251-626-0798. Park Director is Joann Flirt.

The Battle of Blakeley was a major news event in the ongoing coverage of the WFSI. The drawing at the top of MAIL CALL is a well-known artist's

drawing of the battle and is from the *Harper's Weekly* of May 27, 1865. A quoted from the paper states, "Probably the last charge of his war, it was as gallant as any on record." I encouraged everyone to visit the park. From Spanish Fort on US Hwy 31, turn north on Alabama 225. It will be on your left. Watch for the large entrance sign.

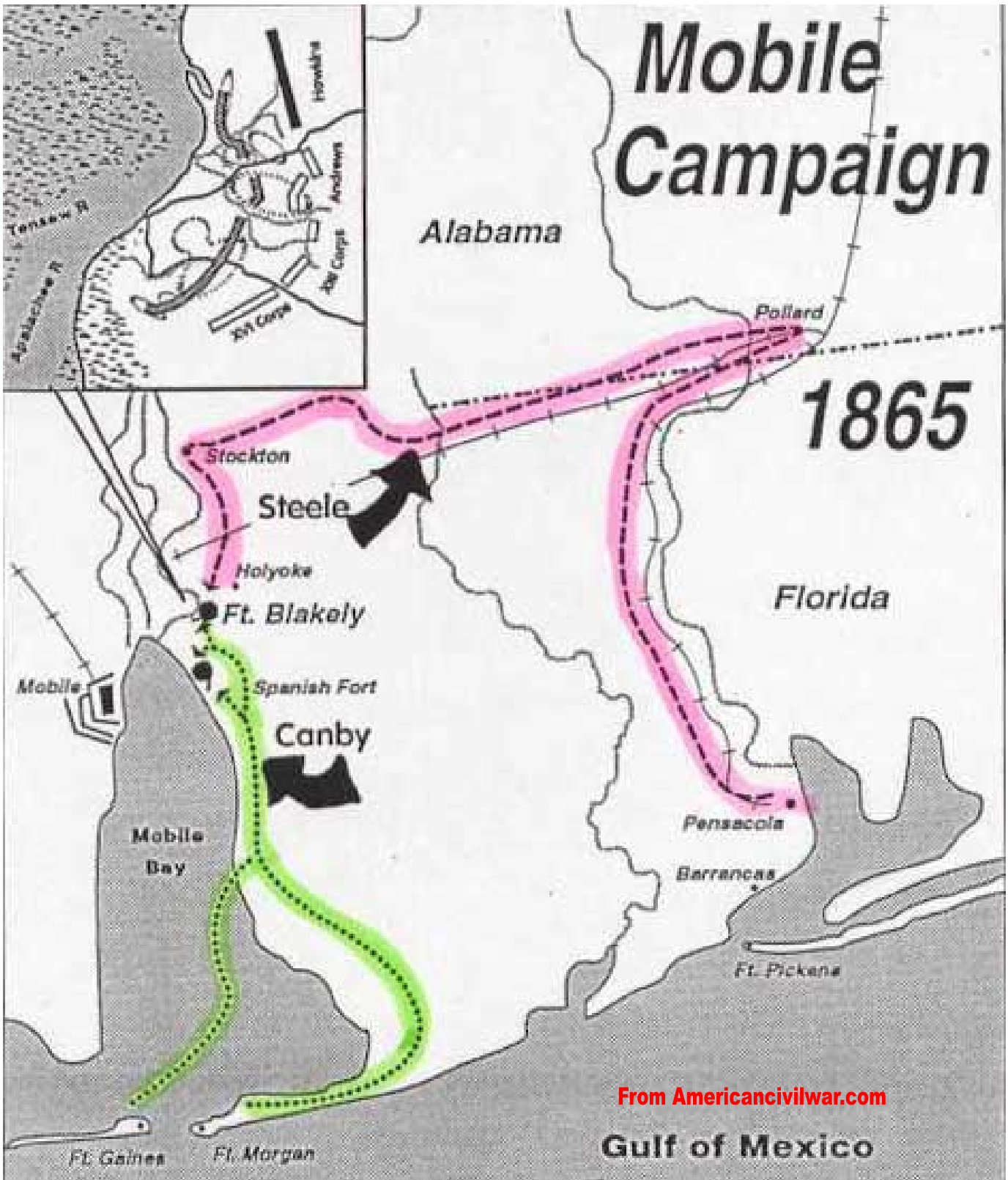


Blakeley Cemetery



The Hanging Tree

This is a map of the Yankee movement to consolidate their 20,000 troops to defeat the 4,000 at Fort Blakeley. It was almost a fair fight! 14,000 wasn't enough, they had to have 20,000.



From Americancivilwar.com

Answer to question on page 4. The author has "Union Headquarters" and he has "Rebel Headquarters. It should be Confederate Headquarters. When presenting something that is supposed to be unbiased, then it should be unbiased. Yes, I know – but, my newsletters are biased. It's pro-confederate all the way.

Union and Confederate Military Units Participating in 1865 Mobile Campaign

Approximately 55,000 soldiers marched through Baldwin County during the months of March and April of 1865. The number is considerable as one realizes that there were less than 8,000 inhabitants living in the county in the census of 1860. 10,000 Confederates were stationed throughout the Mobile area, some 2,500 defending the City of Mobile while the rest were found at Fort Blakely and Spanish Fort. The 15th and 16th Confederate Cavalry, and 6th and 8th Alabama Cavalry were off roaming around Baldwin County, scouting the area for the movement of the Union troops.

32,000 Union soldiers marched through the entire length of Baldwin County up the eastern shore while 14,000 Union troops came out of Pensacola, traveled due north, then turned back south in a surprise movement to invest Blakeley.

I. Confederate Military Units which participated in operations in the vicinity of Mobile, Alabama January 1, 1865 to May 1865:

ALABAMA

Artillery

1st Alabama Battalion
2nd Alabama Battalion
Ala. State Artillery
Bush's Battery
Dent's Battery (Robertsons)
Wood's Eufaula Battery
Fowler's Battery (Phelan's)
Garrity's AL Battery
Gid Nelson Battery
(Selden's/Lovlace's)
Homer's Battery
Lumsden's AL Battery
Tarrant's AL Battery
Tobin's Artillery

Cavalry

Meador's Company
Lewis' Battalion
6th Alabama
8th Alabama
Keyser's Detachment

Infantry

18th Alabama
21st Alabama
32nd Alabama
36th Alabama
38th Alabama
58th Alabama
62nd Alabama (1st Reserves)
63rd Alabama (2nd Reserves)
3rd Alabama Reserves

Taylor's Command

City Battalion

Special Services (4 co.s)
Pelham Cadets Battalion

ARKANSAS

Artillery

Owen's Battery
Thrall's Battery

FLORIDA

Artillery

Marion Light (Perry's)

GEORGIA

Artillery

Columbus Battery
Massenberry's Battery
Stephen's Light Battery
Young's Battery

KENTUCKY

Artillery

Cumberland Battery
Green's / Quisenberry's

LOUISIANA

Artillery

12th Battalion
1st Louisiana Artillery
ELLIS COMPANY, A
ROBERTSON'S CO., B
LEMON'S COMPANY, C
BRUCE'S COMPANY, D

AGAR'S COMPANY, G
COMPANY 1

Fenner's Battery
Holmes Battery
Selle's Company, 22nd LA
Gibney's Co., 22nd LA
Slocomb's Battery
WASHINGTON ARTIL., 5th Co.

Infantry

4th LA Battalion
1st Louisiana
4th Louisiana (Strawbridge)
13th Louisiana
16th Louisiana
19th Louisiana
20th Louisiana
22nd Louisiana (Heavy Artil.)
25th Louisiana
30th Louisiana
14th Sharpshooters (Austin's)

MARYLAND

Artillery

Ritter's Battery, 3rd Artil.

MISSISSIPPI

Artillery

Abbey's Battery
Turner's Battery
1st Mississippi Artillery
Vaiden Battalion
Cowan's Battery

Cavalry

17th Battalion (Steede's)

Picture is of Confederate works.

Armistead's Battalion
(12th Regiment/16th Conf.)

Infantry

7th Battalion
4th Mississippi
35th Mississippi
36th Mississippi
39th Mississippi
46th Mississippi

MISSOURI

Artillery

St. Louis (3rd Battery)
3rd Mo. Light (Catron's)

Cavalry

1st Missouri (dismounted)
3rd Missouri (dismounted)

Infantry

1st Missouri
2nd Missouri
3rd Missouri
4th Missouri
5th Missouri
6th Missouri
22nd Infantry (Heavy Artil.)

NORTH CAROLINA

Infantry

29th North Carolina
39th North Carolina

SOUTH CAROLINA

Artillery

Palmetto Battalion
(Culpepper's Battery, C.)

TENNESSEE

Artillery

Rice's Heavy Battery
Lookout Battery (Barry's)
Phillip's Battery (Mebane's)
Tobin's Battery
Winston's Battery

TEXAS

Artillery

Douglas' Light Battery

Cavalry

10th Texas (Dismounted)
14th Texas (Dismounted)
32nd Texas (Dismounted)

Infantry

9th Texas

VIRGINIA

Artillery

Coffin's Virginia Battery

**CONFEDERATE
REGULARS**

Engineers

Hutchinsn's Company
Vernon's Co., 2nd Engineers

Cavalry

15th Confederate Calvary
16th Confederate Calvary

Marine Corps

CSMC, Squad "D"

Confederate States Navy

C.S.S. Nashville
C.S.S. Morgan
C.S.S. Huntsville
C.S.S. Tuscaloosa
Crew-Gun Boat *Gaines*

**II. Federal Military Units which participated in operations in the vicinity of Mobile,
Alabama January 1, 1865 to July 1, 1865**

CONNECTICUT

Artillery

Connect. Light, 2nd Battery

FLORIDA

Cavalry

1st Florida

ILLINOIS

Artillery

Illinois Light, Cogswell's Battery
2nd Illinois Light, Battery G

Calvary

2nd Illinois

Infantry

8th Illinois
11th Illinois
28th Illinois
29th Illinois
33rd Illinois
37th Illinois
46th Illinois
47th Illinois
58th Illinois
72nd Illinois
76th Illinois
81st Illinois
91st Illinois
94th Illinois
95th Illinois
97th Illinois
99th Illinois
108th Illinois
114th Illinois

117th Illinois
119th Illinois
122nd Illinois
124th Illinois

INDIANA

Artillery

1st Indiana Heavy Artil.
(Co's B,C,H,I,K,L. & M)
Indiana Light (1st Battery)
Indiana Light (3rd Battery)
Indiana Light (14th Battery)

Cavalry

10th Indiana
12th Indiana
13th Indiana

Infantry

24th Indiana
26th Indiana
47th Indiana
50th Indiana
52nd Indiana
69th Indiana
89th Indiana
93rd Indiana

IOWA

Artillery

Iowa Light (2nd Battery)

Infantry

8th Iowa
12th Iowa
19th Iowa
20th Iowa
21st Iowa
23rd Iowa
27th Iowa
29th Iowa
32nd Iowa
33rd Iowa
34th Iowa
35th Iowa

KANSAS

Infantry

10th Kansas

LOUISIANA

Cavalry

1st Louisiana

MAINE

Cavalry

2nd Maine

MARYLAND

Cavalry

3rd Maryland (6 Companies)

MASSACHUSETTS

Artillery

Mass. Light 2nd Battery, B
Mass. Light 4th Battery, D
Mass. Light 7th Battery, G
Mass. Light 15th Battery

Infantry

31st Mass. (Mounted)

MICHIGAN

Artillery

1st Michigan Light (Battery G)
6th Michigan Heavy
(Batteries C, E, F, H, & I)
6th Michigan Heavy
(Batteries B, D, and G)
6th Michigan Heavy
(Batteries A and K)

MINNESOTA

Infantry

5th Minnesota
6th Minnesota
7th Minnesota
9th Minnesota
10th Minnesota

MISSOURI

1st Missouri Light (Battery F)

Infantry

11th Missouri
21st Missouri
30th Missouri
33rd Missouri
40th Missouri
44th Missouri
49th Missouri

NEW JERSEY

Cavalry

2nd New Jersey

Infantry

34th New Jersey

NEW YORK

Artillery

NY Light 18th Battery
NY Light 21st Battery
NY Light 26th Battery

Cavalry

2nd New York Veteran

Infantry

161st New York
178th New York

OHIO

Artillery

Ohio Light 14TH Battery
Ohio Light 17th Battery

Infantry

72nd Ohio
77th Ohio
83rd Ohio (48th Consolidated)
95th Ohio
96th Ohio
114th Ohio

TENNESSEE

Cavalry

4th Tennessee

U.S.C.T. (US Colored Troops) only 9 units at battle.

Infantry

47th U.S.C.T.
48th U.S.C.T.
50th U.S.C.T.
51st U.S.C.T.
68th U.S.C.T.
73rd U.S.C.T.
76th U.S.C.T.
82nd U.S.C.T.
86th U.S.C.T.
96th U.S.C.T.
97th U.S.C.T.

VERMONT

Infantry

7th Vermont

WISCONSIN

Cavalry

4th Wisconsin

Infantry

4th Wisconsin
8th Wisconsin
11th Wisconsin
14th Wisconsin
20th Wisconsin
23rd Regiment
27th Wisconsin
28th Wisconsin
29th Wisconsin
33rd Wisconsin
35th Wisconsin

Picture is of Union works.



According to Sayer's family, this flag flew over the Mobile Court House and was surrendered to Daniel Sayer when the 8th Illinois Infantry entered Mobile after the fall of Fort Blakely. Sayer brought the flag home with him to Charleston (Coles County) IL, and it remained in the

family until it was donated to the State by Rockwell T. Sayer, son of Daniel in memory of his father. The flag was accepted by Governor Small of Illinois in 1925.

Fort Blakeley Garrison Flag Report

Prepared by N.D. Warren with the assistance of F.H. Skinner

Until recently, it has been commonly accepted, that a specific "Garrison" size Confederate 1st National Flag housed at the Military History Museum in Springfield Illinois is the "Headquarters" Flag from Ft. Blakely Alabama.

Flag description:

Measures 167 x 109". The material is cotton bunting. The canton measures 72" on the staff by 63 1/4" on the fly. Each of the seven 5 pointed stars is 9 1/2" in diameter. The stars are set in a 10 1/2 diameter circle with the stars sewn on the reverse and the dark blue bunting cut away on the obverse to expose the star. There are three whipped eyelets that pierce the 1 3/4" white canvas heading.

There seems to be speculation on the true origin and provenance of this Flag. Noted is a description offered by an independent website in Illinois.

According to the Illinois Adjutant General's records this flag was captured at the battle of Mobile Bay by Co. C of the 8th Illinois Infantry, commanded by Major Daniel Sayer of Chicago and Charleston, Illinois.

This story is a second hand account offered by a descendant of Major Daniel Sayer of the 8th Illinois Infantry. Based on this story, the Flag did not come from Ft. Blakely but was surrendered to Major Sayer when the 8th Illinois Infantry entered the City of Mobile after its surrender. Further it is noted that the Sayer story mentions the Flag coming from the Courthouse in Mobile.

After much research, it is my determination that the Sayer story may hold some elements of truth. However overall there seems to be a number of flaws in taking it verbatim.

The Adjutant General of Illinois does possess a report that indicates this Flag was taken during the final assault on Ft. Blakely on the afternoon of 9 April 1865. It is further believed that this Flag was captured by Captain Henry Miller of the 8th Illinois Infantry in the vicinity of redoubt 4. The common story is that Captain Miller after involvement in the over-run attack at redoubt 4, lowered the Flag and sent it via courier to Major Sayer "with his compliments".

Miller was recommended for the Congressional Medal of Honor for his capture of this Flag. He subsequently received the medal in Mobile in June of 1865.

In part, this is the information regarding Captain Miller-

Prepared by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs U.S. Senate for the 93d Congress in 1973. The document is titled "Medal of Honor Recipients" 1863-1973. Page 171 of the document list Captain Henry A. Miller as a Medal Of Honor recipient with the following text: Rank and organization: Captain, Company B, 8th Illinois Infantry. Place and date: At Fort Blakely, Ala., 9 April 1865. Entered Service at: Decatur, Ill. Birth: Germany. Date of Issue: 8 June 1865. Citation: Capture of flag.

"Captain Miller was born in Germany. The 8th Illinois was heavily German - Their original commander was German (military experience fighting in Revolution of 1848, after which he & a lot of other liberals emigrated to the U.S.). The commander later gave up command because he realized it would be Better for the regiment to have a native-born commander.

This is one example of numerous other documents that verify that Captain Miller did capture a Flag at Ft. Blakely. Several other Illinois soldiers also captured flags at Blakely and subsequently received the Medal of Honor. However based on research there is a direct link (beyond the Illinois Adjutants report) between Sayer and Miller. Sayer was one of Millers fellow officers and commanded Miller. These facts cannot be disputed.

Speculations regarding Major Sayers Story

It is believed that for whatever reason, Sayer after receiving the flag from Miller did not follow Army Regulations by turning the Flag over to the War Department.

I refer to portions of Article 108- Prisoner of War – Captured Property – US Army Manual of 1861-1862

“ A return of all captured should be made by the commanding officer of the troops by whom such capture is made, the Adjutant General at Washington,

in order that it may be disposed of according to the orders of the War Department. “

Regardless of the Flag it is clear that Major Sayer did not declare his possession of this Flag pursuant to regulations. It is obvious he treated the Flag as a souvenir and retained personal ownership. This conduct is far from unusual and probably in the final days of the War Between the States was quite common.

This is pointed out however under belief that Sayer realizing that since a CMH was recommended and issued in connection with this Flag; he technically would have been required to surrender it to the War Department. It may have become more convenient to gloss over the true history of the Flag after the fact. Further, there has been no way to associate ANY cataloged Flag held by the War Department with Millers Actions at Ft. Blakely. This would further lend credence to the origins of this specific flag.

Truth in the Sayer Story

” According to Sayer's family, this flag flew over the Mobile Court House and was surrendered to Daniel Sayer when the 8th Illinois Infantry entered Mobile after the fall of Fort Blakely.”

It is believed that this Flag did come from the vicinity of a Courthouse but it was NOT the Mobile Courthouse. It is believed to have come from the Courthouse located at the Town of Blakely.

This Courthouse has been identified on several period diagrams and maps. Further a map prepared by General Canby in June of 1865 indicates that a structure (likely the Courthouse) used as a Federal Headquarters from April 9th to April 15th 1865.

Additional references on the location of the Town of Blakely may be seen at

<http://www.rootsworld.com/~ilcivilw/scrabpk/blakeleybattleg.html>

This map clearly identifies that a structure in Blakely was being used as a Headquarters by General Liddell CSA up to 9 April 1865. Further documents indicate that THIS area was THE Headquarters element for the Confederates during the Battle.

Therefore it is VERY likely that the Garrison Flag was flying in the vicinity of the BLAKELY Courthouse that afternoon 9 April 1865.

However, how do we reconcile the reports that indicate that Captain Miller had taken the Flag in the vicinity of redoubt 4 ? After calculating distances, it would appear that redoubt 4 is roughly 1000 yards in a linear position to the Courthouse.

It is apparent that Miller after the over-run attack in the area at redoubt 4 would have clearly been able to observe the Flag and ascertained the significance as well as desire to capture it.

Did Miller have time to move from redoubt 4 to the town of Blakely in the waning daylight of 9 April? The troops that assaulted the area of redoubt 4 are documented to have made it all the way to the landing in the Town of Blakely on 9 April. According to General Veach the 8th Illinois DID make it to the landing.

"04/09/1865 - great detail of advancement, capture of prisoners [I.49.177] until 2 a.m., 8th Ills guarded ammunition & weapons gained in siege [I.49.172] 5:30 p.m. 1st Division advanced, 8th Ills as skirmishers advanced 600 yds., drove in enemy skirmishers, "the portion in front of them was immediately carried." [I.49.149]

"As the 8th Ills advanced, it received a very hot fire from the skirmish line, but with shouts and cheers it pressed forward over the rough ground and obstructions of fallen timber, captured the rebel skirmishers, and pressed forward through the double line of abatis to the enemy's main work The whole regiment dashed over the works led by their gallant officers, and captured 300 prisoners, and pressing forward were the first troops that reached the landing . . . The whole brigade deserves the highest credit for the splendid manner in which the charge was executed. No regiment could have done better than the 8th Ills. It was among the first, if not the very first, to plant its colors on the rebel works." Brig. Gen. James C. Veatch commanding 13th Army Corps [I.49.157]

An interesting excerpt that indicates Blakely was being used as a Headquarters is evidenced in a letter from Elias Moore of the 114th OVI. The letter is quite lengthy in its description of the Blakely assault it however does touch on being in Blakely the evening of the 9th.

"After charging and capturing these works we formed in line and went down to the landing, where we found the rebel hospital and commissary, but there was not much we wanted. I got a piece of meat, some corn meal and some shorts and brann crackers. Also several important orders and letters which I will send home. The charge was ordered at about six o'clock, in the evening. In less than an hour we were in the rebel works. After gathering up every thing we could find that we could use or send home. We commenced our return to this camp, where we had left our knapsacks and blankets, as we took nothing with us on the charge but our canteens and guns. We had reached the outer line of the rebel obstructions and were marching in single file, rejoicing over our evening's work, when we were startled, or almost struck dumb, by a thundering report, a flash, and the groans of wounded men. Soon I felt a shower of dirt falling over me. The report and flash were so unexpected and so near me that I was dazed for a moment, but was soon brought to my senses by the groans of three of our poor boys who had exploded a torpedo. Harrison Titrick (Teterick) was horribly mangled, one leg being blown off, the other broken and torn but still hanging to the body. Several pieces of the shell and metal had entered his bowels, and torn great holes in his body. His whole lower extremities were shattered and broken, his breast lacerated and his face horribly disfigured. He lived about two hours, was conscious most of the time and suffered very much. He called his near friends around him and sent messages to his parents. He was a brave soldier and a good boy. It was hard to see him die so."

There are numerous indications that a Battalion sized element (that included at least a company of the 8th Illinois did make it to the Town of Blakely. It is presumed that this element included Captain Miller and this is the likely location of his Flag Capture.

Another Flag captured in Blakely is currently in possession of the Massillon Museum in Massillon Ohio. A photo of this Flag is available at

<http://www.48ovvi.org/oh48blk.html>

It is believed that this Flag was captured by elements of the 83rd Ohio OVI. It is further clear to the trained eye that this Flag was likely taken from the Hospital mentioned in Moore's letter.

Problems with the Sayer Story

According to Sayer's family, this flag flew over the Mobile Court House and was surrendered to Daniel Sayer when the 8th Illinois Infantry entered Mobile after the fall of Fort Blakely.

After the fall of Ft Blakely, the forces under General Canby were poised to attack the City of Mobile. Before a combat action could commence in the forceful capture of the city, the Mayor of Mobile met with General Canby and facilitated surrender.

If we follow the rules of war of the period, upon surrendering, the City of Mobile would have taken down Confederate Flags flying within the city. Thus NO flag would have been flying at the Mobile Courthouse for Sayer to "take down".

If we follow the Sayer story verbatim and the Flag was somehow surrendered by the City Fathers of Mobile as a symbolic act of submission. This would have been VERY unusual as Military Officers presented their sword upon honorable surrender – Flags were not routinely turned over as a symbolic act of surrender. If this Flag had been part of an unusual symbolic ritual of surrender, it would have been turned over to General Canby during his meetings with the Mayor of Mobile. Major Sayer would not likely have been singled out by Mobile Officials for a ceremony to hand off a Flag.

Further, Union Troops entering Mobile came in on Bay Shell Road which is a considerable distance from the Courthouse. How is it that Sayer a lower level Staff Officer would divert from the point of entry to accept the surrender of this Flag?

There are other apparent problems with this story -

- 1) The Flag is of a Garrison size and specification. There is NO possible way to fly this flag on the pre-existing Flagpole of a Courthouse. This means that a Flagpole would have to be erected at the courthouse in order to accommodate the display of this flag. To what ends would this have been done?

- 2) The flag does show evidence of battle damage. There are no indications of hostile fire being directed into the City of Mobile. Had this flag been displayed at the Mobile Court-House and had the courthouse been within range of Federal Artillerists, it is likely they would have given it some degree of hostile attention.

- 3) In doing so, it is likely they would have leveled a good portion of not only the courthouse but surrounding buildings. There is NO evidence to support this. So a valid question does remain. How did the Flag receive battle damage?

Flying at the Courthouse in Blakely is a completely different proposition as this location was well within range of gunboats on the river.

Conclusion

Based on all the information at hand, starting with the citations and reports involving Captain Miller, it is obvious to me that Miller DID take this Flag in the vicinity of redoubt 4 (more specifically the Courthouse in Blakely).

The Flag was likely sent back to Major Sayer as a sign that the attack had been successful and is very much in the spirit of United States Combat Officers.

It is further obvious that Major Sayer for whatever reason maintained possession of this Flag. It is VERY HARD to determine what Sayer said to his son as to the provenance of the Flag. Perhaps he told him the entire story and a portion was lost in translation or memory by the son over the years. Perhaps he embellished the story as many a salty Veteran has done before.

Perhaps knowing that he should have turned the Flag in as it was related to the recommendation and issuance of a Congressional Medal of Honor, the story was altered. Circumstantially this is much more likely than the Flag being taken from the Courthouse in Mobile.

Deo Vindice --- "God will vindicate"



Ft. Blakeley Camp #1864
Meeting - 2nd Tuesday

Of Each Month at the
Blue Marlin Restaurant, Fairhope, AL
Meal 6 PM – Meeting 6:45 PM



SCV Ft. Blakeley Camp #1864
P.O. Box 845
Robertsdale, AL 36567



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