

VARDAMANS WHO SERVED IN THE CONFEDERATE ARMY FROM ALABAMA

by

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PREFACE

James Vardaman of Newberry Co., SC, had 3 sons, William, Thomas and Joseph. These were the three Vardaman brothers who married three Vining sisters in Jefferson County, GA, ca 1801-1803. William and Thomas eventually settled in Alabama with all of their families including those of their grown sons. Joseph stayed in Georgia and one of his sons and several of his grandsons served with the Confederacy in Georgia units.

Thomas had 3 sons: Edwy Lyles (my gg-g'father), born 1804,
Thomas Jefferson, born 1823 and
Peter Lafayette, born 1830.

Please note that the first son, Edwy L., was old enough to have been the father of his two younger brothers.

William had 2 sons: Porter Ratcliffe, born 1806 and
James Washington Bennett, born 1810.

James Washington Bennett may have had additional given names.

Of the above 5 cousins, Thomas Jefferson and Peter Lafayette were both young enough to have served in the War and both did.

Now, to the 3 older cousins:

Edwy L. Vardaman had 3 sons: John Forsythe (my g-g'father), born 1835
William Sanford, born 1840 and
James Mathis, born 1842.

Porter Ratcliffe had 3 sons: Washington Bennett, born 1836,
Thomas W., born 1838, and
Pinckney W., born 1845.

Washington Bennett had 4 sons: Daniel Sanford, born 1833,
James Ira, born 1837,
Thomas R., born 1843, and
Washington Bennett, Jr., born 1849.

Except for Washington Bennett, Jr., who was too young, all of the above Vardaman cousins served in the War. Together with the two younger sons of Thomas (uncles of Edwy L.'s boys), this makes a total of 11 Vardaman men who served in the War -- all from Coosa or Talladega County.

The three sons of Edwy L. Vardaman were second cousins of the children of Porter R. and Washington Bennett while Edwy's two brothers, uncles of his sons, were first cousins-once removed of the sons of Porter R. and Washington B.

SERVICE RECORDS FROM THE ALABAMA ARCHIVES

VARDAMAN, A.: *Pvt., Co. F, 6th Ala. Inf. Regt (sometime K and J).*

Without additional information, I cannot identify this person. He is not a son or grandson of Joseph Vardeman who remained in GA. All of Joseph's grandsons who were not too young for the War, as well as one of his younger sons, can be identified as serving in Georgia units. I don't believe that this person can be a son or grandson of either Joseph, Thomas or William Vardaman as all have been identified otherwise.

I do not believe that this is Ayers A. Vardaman of the Mississippi Vardamans who is extensively documented and accounted for in Mississippi CSA records.

VARDAMAN, DANIEL S.: *Co. K 10th Ala. Enlisted July 1, 1862, continued until reaching Selma where on examination was rejected. Afterwards was subject to orders of conscript camp at Talladega, AL and paroled at Talladega in Spring of 1865. Discharged July 4 1865.*

This is Daniel Sanford Vardaman, oldest son of Washington Bennett Vardaman and Elizabeth Roberson. After two earlier marriages which didn't last (we don't know what happened to these first two wives), he married - much against both family's wishes - his own double first cousin, Narcissus C. Vardaman, daughter of Porter Ratcliffe Vardaman and Matilda Roberson. They lived in the Pell City area of St. Clair County where they raised a large family. We don't know when Daniel and Narcissus married (reportedly they eloped to Georgia) but their first child was born in April of 1865.

Daniel S. Vardaman died May 7, 1915, at his home near Cropwell in southern St. Clair Co, AL. He is buried at Evening Star Baptist Church Cemetery (in southern St. Clair Co. near the shore of Logan Martin Lake) and is credited as the founder of this Church in 1914.

VARDAMAN, T. W. R.: *Pvt., Co. K, 10th Ala. Born in Talladega Co. Recruited by Col. Jno H. Forney at Montevallo, Ala. on the 4th of June 1861. Killed at Spotsylvania C.H., Virginia, May 18, 1864. Buried in Confederate Cemetery, Spotsylvania C.H. (Orange Co.), VA.*

This is Thomas R. Vardaman, son of Washington Bennett Vardaman and Elizabeth Roberson. He was killed in the War (Spotsylvania, VA) and was not married. He is buried in the confederate cemetery at Spotsylvania C. H., Virginia.

VARDAMAN, J. I.: *Co. E, 10th Regt., Ala. Volunteers. Enlisted 1861 at Montevallo. Discharged 1865.*

Pension papers show him as having been a Pvt., Co. K, 10th Ala. From 1861-1865 was in Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania. His widow: Mrs. M. J. (Martha Jane) Vardaman.

This is James Ira Vardaman, son of Washington Bennett Vardaman and Elizabeth Roberson. He survived the War and married Martha Jane "Matt" Campbell in 1866. They lived in the Fayetteville/Talladega Springs area of Talladega County where they raised a fairly large family.

James Ira Vardaman died June 6, 1908, at his home in Fayetteville, Talladega Co., AL, and is buried with his wife at Fayetteville Memorial Cemetery in southern Talladega Co.

VARDAMAN, JAMES M.: *2nd Musician (age 20). Coosa Co. M. G. Slaughter's Co., Hilliard's Legion, Co. C, Cavalry Battalion.*

This is James Mathis Vardaman, youngest son of Edwy L. Vardaman and Lucinda Mauk. Although the archives information does not include this, I can tell you that he died below Petersburg, VA, March 30, 1865, just 10 days before the end of the War. How sad! He was never married. While we do not know for sure, I assume that he is buried somewhere in that area of Virginia.

VARDAMAN, JOHN F.: *Sgt., (Age 26, Coosa Co.), Co. C, 10th Conf. Cavalry Regt. His widow: Julia.*

This is my great-grandfather, John Forsythe Vardaman, son of Edwy L. Vardaman and Lucinda Mauk. He is the only one of their 3 sons to survive the War. He married Julia Flynn in 1865. They lived in the Goodwater area of Coosa Co. where they raised their family. I have quite a bit of information on his service in the War.

John Forsythe Vardaman died July 17, 1906, at his home just north of Goodwater in Coosa Co., AL, and is buried with his wife at Smyrna Cemetery near Goodwater.

VARDAMAN, PETER L.: *Pvt., Co. B, 34th Regt., Ala Volunteers. Widow: Susan M.*

This is Peter Lafayette Vardaman, youngest son of Thomas Vardaman and Annie Vining. He married Susan Matilda Durham in Harris Co., GA, in 1854. He survived the War and returned to his home in the Mt. Olive area of Coosa Co. where he and Susan raised their family.

Peter Lafayette Vardaman died September 9, 1903, at his home at Mt. Olive, Coosa Co., AL, and is buried with his wife at Mt. Olive Baptist Church Cemetery.

VARDAMAN, J. T (THOMAS): *Co. B, 60th Ala. Regt. Detached into the employ of Daniel Wallis of Talladega, AL. Died in the war, July 16, 1864. Widow: Nancy A. of Mt. Olive.*

This is Thomas Jefferson Vardaman, second son of Thomas and Annie Vardaman. He married Nancy Ann Newman on Nov. 24, 1853. They lived at Mt. Olive in Coosa County, AL. He was a Justice of the Peace and performed many marriages himself. You will find his name mentioned often as the presiding official in the Coosa Co. marriage records prior to 1864. At one time he had been a Lieutenant in the Alabama State Militia

He died as a result of the War on July 16, 1864. While his name is on a gravestone in the Mt. Olive Baptist Church Cemetery, Coosa Co., AL, along with his wife, no one seems to know the circumstances of his death or how he came to be buried at home (Mt. Olive). I have conjectured that he probably became ill while serving with the troops, possibly in Talladega Co. or another local area and returned home to die. You will note that he was only 41 years old when he died.

It may be of interest to know that his only son, John L. Vardaman, who lived at Mt. Olive, was the father of Claude O. Vardaman of B'ham who was a noted Republican Party politician and Eisenhower's Alabama campaign manager in the 1950s.

Also, one of Thomas J. and Nancy's daughters, Frances F. "Fannie" Vardaman, married George W. Adair and they were Geneva Easterwood's grandparents. She knew and well remembers both George and Fannie.

VARDAMAN, T. W.: *Pvt., Co. K, 15th Regt., Ala. Volunteers. Enlisted by Lt. Jno Oden at Selma, Ala., Aug. 24, 1862. Killed at Petersburg, VA, Oct. 2, 1864, while on picket.*

This is Thomas W. Vardaman, son of Porter Ratcliffe Vardaman and Matilda Roberson. He was killed at the siege of Petersburg, Oct. 2, 1864. I assume that he, too, is buried somewhere in the Petersburg, VA, area. He was not married.

VARDAMAN, W. B.: *Co. K, 10th Regt. Ala. Born Talladega Co., age 25. Enlisted by Col. John H. Forney at Montevallo, June 4, 1861. Killed May 6, 1864, Wilderness, VA.*

This is Washington Bennett Vardaman, oldest son of Porter Ratcliffe and Matilda Roberson. He was killed at the Battle of the Wilderness in Virginia on May 6, 1864, and is assumed to be buried somewhere in that area. He, also, was not married.

It is interesting to note that this Washington Bennett Vardaman was the nephew of the older Washington Bennett Vardaman who married Elizabeth Roberson. This latter Washington Bennett Vardaman named his youngest son (born 1849), Washington Bennett, Jr.

VARDAMAN, WILLIAM F.: *(Coosa Co., age 21) Pvt.. Co. G (The Hilliby Blues), 14th Ala. Inf. Regt. Enlisted Sept. 5, 1861.*

This is William Sanford Vardaman, second son of Edwy L. Vardaman and Lucinda Mauk. I don't know where the "F" in his name came from. It is probably a mis-interpretation of his correct middle initial "S". While it is not mentioned in the archives information, he died early in the War, on May 5, 1862, at the Battle of Williamsburg. He was not married. Again, we don't know where he is buried; however, I assume that it is in one of the many battlefield cemeteries located in the Petersburg/Richmond area.

VARDAMAN, WILLIAM P.: *(Talladega Co., age 18) Pvt., Co. K 10th Ala. Regt. Enlisted Sept. 5, 1863.*

This is Pinckney W. Vardaman, youngest son of Porter Ratcliffe Vardaman and Matilda Roberson. Note that he was not born until 1845 and so did not reach the age of 18 until 1863 which is when he enlisted. I did not previously know what the "W" in his name stood for. I knew him only as Pinckney W. It now seems clear that he was Pinckney William (or William Pinckney) Vardaman. His grandfather was, of course, named William.

He survived the War and was married twice -- first to the widow Oliver whom he met and married in Tennessee while serving with the Confederate Army. When the War ended and Pinckney did not return home, his father, Porter Ratcliffe Vardaman, went to Tennessee where he found his son married and living with his wife and step-son. He then brought them back to Fayetteville with him.

Pinckney married, second, Mary Frances "Fannie" Maherg Hosey, widow of Wylie Hosey who was killed in the War. Since he married Fannie on Nov. 23, 1868, it is clear that the widow Oliver had died prior to that date. He had one son by the widow Oliver, Thomas W., in addition to a step-son, Shelby Oliver, the widow's child by her first marriage whom Pinckney raised after the widow's death. We don't know just when Pinckney and the widow Oliver married but it was probably in 1865 since that is when the War ended. It was certainly prior to Oct., 1866, when Thomas W. was born.

Pinckney's second wife, a widow also, had no children from her first marriage to Wylie Hosey. However, Pinckney and Fannie had three children, one a son named Porter Ratcliffe who married Gertrude Childress.

Pinckney W. Vardaman died September 3, 1917, at his home near Fayetteville in southern Talladega Co., AL, and is buried with his second wife at the Fayetteville Memorial Cemetery in Fayetteville.

Although Pinckney and his family lived in the Fayetteville area of Talladega Co., his son, Porter Ratcliffe, moved his family to Bessemer near Birmingham where he raised his family. I, too,

was raised in Bessemer and, although I knew of this Vardaman family while a kid in school, all of Porter's older children were well ahead of me in school. I never knew any of them personally until just recently when I met one of the daughters at a Bessemer High School reunion.

That completes the list of Alabama Vardamans who served in the Confederate Army. Note the following coincidence: Edwy L. Vardaman had three sons, only one of whom survived the War (my g-g'father John F.). The other two sons died in combat. At the same time, Edwy's cousin, Porter Ratcliffe, also had three sons, only one of whom survived the War (Pinckney W.). The other two sons also died in combat.

Washington Bennett, brother of Porter Ratcliffe, also had 3 sons in the War. However, two of these three survived -- only one dying in combat.

Of the 15 Vardaman men living in the Coosa, Talladega, Tallapoosa County area at the time of the Civil War: 3 were too old to serve in the armed forces; one was too young; 6 died in the war (5 of these in combat); and 5 survived their service in the Confederate Army.

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Since writing this article, I have come to the conclusion that this is, indeed, Ayres Augustus Vardaman, son of Elijah & Margaret (Holliday) Vardaman, and grandson of William and Ann (?) Vardaman. This William was a son of John and Elizabeth (Morgan) Vardaman. JHV 12/12/99