

Albert C. Brigham

C.S.A.

Private, Co. B, 1st Tennessee Artillery, CSA

November 21, 1861 - February 27, 1865

Albert Clausel Brigham Jr. (b. Feb. 1, 1838) was the 5th oldest son of **Albert Clausel Brigham, Sr.** (b. Feb. 10, 1800; prob. in Sullivan Co. TN - d. Nov. 30, 1875, Stewart Co. TN) and **Mary "Polly" Byrd** (b. 1810 - d. Aug. 17, 1892, Stewart Co. TN). He, along with his 13 brothers and sisters (**Horse Ann Caroline**, b. Mar. 25, 1827; **Mary**, b. Jan. 27, 1828; **Thomas L.**, b. Oct. 11, 1829; **Samisa**, b. Dec. 19, 1830; **Quintus C.**, b. Feb. 4, 1832; **Harriet A.**, b. Mar. 25, 1834; **James H.** b. Jan. 26, 1836; **Marion McDonald**, b. Apr. 21, 1840; **Minerva Jane**, b. July 29, 1842; **Constantine Polk**, b. Sept. 27, 1844; **Arcanthus Missouri**, b. Aug. 17, 1845; **John Wesley**, b. Mar. 7, 1848; **Elizabeth Tennessee**, b. Apr. 15, 1851) was also born in District No. 8 near Lick Creek (now Byrd Creek), Stewart County, Tennessee and next to the Tennessee River, in what is currently Land Between The Lakes National Recreation Area (LBL). **Albert Clausel Brigham Jr.** was also the nephew of **Luna Louisa Brigham Byrd** (b. 1797, Sullivan Co. TN - d. Dec. 5, 1875, Stewart Co. TN) and therefore first cousin to her sons who also served in the CSA, **George Wesley Byrd** and **Robert Payne Byrd**.

According to his CSA service and Tennessee State Pension documents, **Albert Clausel Brigham Jr.** enlisted in **Captain Jesse Taylor's** Co. B of the 1st Tennessee Artillery (AKA the Rock City Artillery) on Nov. 27, 1861 and at Ft. Henry, TN -- only a few miles south of his home in District 8 of Stewart Co. He enlisted on the same day as his cousin, **Pvt. George Wesley Byrd**; but two other cousins, **Marion M. Bailey** and **Thomas H. Bailey** had enlisted in the Rock City Artillery earlier that summer. It is assumed that **Pvt. Brigham** and his cousins helped construct fortifications and practice artillery drills during this time before the battle of Ft. Henry on Feb. 6, 1862.

After the battle of Ft. Henry on Feb. 6, CSA service record documents indicate that the three cousins of **Pvt. Albert C. Brigham** -- **George Wesley Byrd**, **Marion M. Bailey**, and **Thomas H. Bailey** --were all taken prisoners by Federal soldiers, but **Pvt. Brigham's** name was not among them. A report written by a **1st Lt. Mortimer Neely**, Co. K, 5th Iowa Cavalry (Curtis Horse) and printed in the O.R. (Ser.I, Vol.10, Pt.1, page 46) states that **Pvt. Albert C. Brigham**, Co. C (Taylor's) of the 1st Tennessee Artillery was captured by his Federal patrol on Mar. 25, 1862 and "...at the urgent request of the Union citizens..." of the area. An undated document for "*Albert C. Brigham, Col. Heinman's [sic] Regt*" indicates that he was received at "*McDowell's College (St. Louis, Mo), April 4, 1862*" as a "*Prisoner of war*", being captured "*Mar. 28, 1862*" at "*Stewart*

Cy. Tenn.” McDowell’s Medical College later became the well-known and infamous Gratiot Prison.

Pvt. Brigham was then sent to POW prison at Camp Douglas in Chicago, IL. A National Archives (NARA) microfilm document (microcopy #M-598, Roll #54, Vol. #189) of Camp Douglas POWs describes the following: “*No. 789 Brigham, A.C. Private Rock City Artillery Captured at home. Captured Feb. 16, 1862. Sent to Cairo for exchange Sept. 7, 1862.*” This same microcopy lists another cousin of **Pvt. Albert Brigham**, **Pvt. Alfred J. Byrd**, Co. F, 50th Tennessee Infantry having been captured at Ft. Donelson at Feb. 16, 1862 and sent to Cairo IL for exchange on Sept. 5, 1862. In another microfilm document, **Pvt. A.C. Brigham** is documented as follows: “*I was prest (sic) in the Confederate Army in November 28, 1861 and was at home the time Fort Henry was taken and remain (sic) there untill (sic) I was taken prisoner and am willing to take the oath of allegiance.*” “*Respectfully referred to Major McConnell, comdg (?) City (?) Guard, D.M. Rossadein (?), Capt. Comdg.*” This document appears to be dated April 5, 1862 and may not be **Albert C. Brigham’s** handwriting since his Tennessee State Pension documents indicate he could not write.

There appears some confusion in the documents kept by the Confederate and Federal authorities: **Pvt. Albert C. Brigham**, Co. B, 1st Tennessee (Rock City) Artillery seems to have been mixed up with a certain **Richard A. Brigham**, **R.A. Brigham**, or **A.R. Brigham**; however, the O.R. and microfilm documents described here along with the Tennessee State Pension documents for **Albert C. Brigham, Jr.** allow the puzzle to be solved. Apparently paroled with other Confederate POWs at Camp Douglas in September of 1862, **Pvt. Brigham** eventually ended up in Vicksburg MS where the paroled/exchanged Confederate soldiers were received. On Sept. 30, 1862 **Pvt. Brigham** and other exchanged members of the Rock City Artillery were stationed at Jackson MS until they were formally declared exchanged in November; the battery was then moved to Port Hudson LA.

At Port Hudson, **Pvt. Albert C. Brigham Jr.** was apparently a member of **Captain F. J. Weller’s** Co. B, 1st Tennessee Heavy Artillery Battalion and commanded by **Lt.-Colonel Paul F. DeGournay**. At Port Hudson, **Captain Weller’s** Co. B of the 1st Tennessee Heavy Artillery Battalion, including **Pvt. Albert C. Brigham Jr.**, was apparently part of Battery No. 7, “the Hot Shot Battery”, that may have been alternately commanded by **Capt. Weller** and **Capt. J.M. Sparkman**. The “Hot Shot Battery” consisted of two 24-pounder cannons which had an oven to bake solid shot to a white heat; **Pvt. Brigham** and his mates used wads of wet hay or hemp to prevent premature ignition.

As part of the Port Hudson garrison under the overall command of **Major General Franklin K. Gardner**, the men of Battery No. 7, including **Pvt. Albert C. Brigham Jr.**, were called to their stations by “the long roll” alarm of the Confederate drummers at about 11:25 p.m. on Mar. 14, 1863. The Federal flotilla under the command of **Fleet Admiral David G. Farragut** was approaching from downriver and about to run the Rebel batteries. Immense bonfires were lit on the west side of the Mississippi River in order to illuminate the Yankee ships and give the Confederate gunners clear targets to

shoot at as **Farragut's** mortar schooners rained high-arching shells upon the Rebel positions. According to **David C. Edmonds** in his 1983 book *The Guns of Port Hudson, Volume 1, The River Campaign*, the Hotshot Battery (No. 7) opened the Confederate barrage upon the lead ship, **Admiral Farragut's** own flagship, the *USS Hartford*; the other 10 batteries followed suit. **Farragut** had prepared his fleet well by lashing smaller steamboats to the port-side of his larger warships in case the larger craft ran aground while running the batteries; in addition, he had covered the exposed starboard-sides of his warships, including their boilers, with heavy chains for additional protection. In addition, the admiral placed a Mississippi River pilot in the top of the mizzen-mast directly above **Farragut's** station on the poop deck of the *Hartford* so he could see above the anticipated smoke and fog; from there the pilot would communicate with the helmsman via a long acoustic tube and give steering directions. These techniques had worked well during **Admiral Farragut's** earlier assault against New Orleans during April of 1862.

Confederate shot and shell splintered the oaken decks of the *Hartford* with these wooden shrapnel killing and wounding Federal sailors, yet **Admiral Farragut** did not flinch as he concentrated on the task at hand. At about midnight, the mizzen-mast pilot could not see through the darkness and immense clouds of cannon smoke and the *Hartford's* compass indicated that she was heading directly towards the bluffs directly under Battery No. 1. Despite stopping engines, the *Hartford* ran aground and was now depending upon the gunboat lashed to her port-side, the *USS Albatross*, to pull her free while Rebel shells and now musket fire raked both ships from stem to stern. The heavy smoke prevented the Confederate artillerymen, including **Pvt. Albert C. Brigham**, from taking full advantage of the *Hartford's* predicament, however, and she soon slid free and escaped around the bend to the north. The second warship directly behind *USS Hartford* was not as fortunate; the *USS Richmond* was mercilessly pounded by the Confederate batteries commanded by **Lt.-Colonel DeGournay** and possibly angered because the *Hartford* had successfully passed them. The *Richmond* was struck repeatedly, wooden splinters impaling sailors and Marines alike; at one point decapitating one Marine and sending his head and flaming debris onto the deck of the *USS Genesee*, lashed to the *Richmond's* port-side. A direct hit upon the steam safety valve of the *Richmond* soon resulted in her loss of power while the *Genesee* struggled to steer both ships while putting out a fire of her own; amazingly, neither ship sank as they drifted back downstream defeated by the Rebel bombardment.

At about 12:30 a.m., the *USS Monongahela* grounded opposite the heaviest of Confederate shore batteries, including **Pvt. Brigham's** Battery No. 7, the Hot Shot Battery. For the next 30 minutes, Rebel shot and shell racked both the *Monongahela* and the consort ship lashed to her port-side, the *USS Kineo*. The *Monongahela* suffered two 32-pounders amidships knocked out and an eleven-inch pivot gun as well; her bridge was destroyed, killing 3 sailors in the process. One shell-burst knocked her Acting Master's Mate overboard before the *Kineo* managed to reverse engines and drag the damaged warship free before casting off from the *Monongahela*. Once moving again upstream, however, the crankpin of the *Monongahela's* forward engine overheated, forcing the engines to stop. The doomed warship drifted into the eddy opposite **Pvt. Albert Brigham's** Battery No. 7, within 30 yards of the bluff. Fortunately for the Yankee seamen, the steep bluffs prevented the Confederate gunners from depressing the cannon

muzzles enough to blast the disabled craft, but heavy batteries north and south of that position rained havoc upon the ship as Rebel sharpshooters joined in. Twelve double-charges of grape and canister swept the deck of the *Monongahela* until a voice aboard the warship screamed “*Cease your firing; I surrender!*” Unable to board the shattered craft, the victorious Rebels watched as the burning boat drifted downstream with the current of the river.

The last Federal warship in line, the *USS Mississippi*, passed the lower batteries unscathed but grounded and heeled over to port just above the *Monongahela*, once again in close proximity to **Pvt. Brigham** and his comrades in the Tennessean-manned Hot Shot Battery No. 7. For the next 35 minutes the *Mississippi* strained to back off the shoal but to no avail as Confederate gunners blasted her repeatedly. A hot shot from **Pvt. Brigham’s** Battery No. 7 ignited a fire in the forward storeroom of the *Mississippi* as then **Lieutenant George Dewey** (future admiral and hero of the Spanish-American War) prepared to abandon ship, giving orders to crewmen to away lifeboats and row to shore. **Captain Melancton Smith** ordered his engineers and sailors to demolish the warship’s machinery and throw all small arms overboard to prevent their capture/use by Confederates; fires started by Federal sailors were extinguished after 3 new holes were punched in the hull by Rebel cannon fire. Two new shells tore through the *Mississippi* shortly after that time and ignited some turpentine and oil, spreading flames throughout the doomed ship. As the flames rose and engulfed the *Mississippi*, the bluffs above erupted in loud cheers as the abandoned warship lit up the sky with its pyrotechnics. **Lieutenant (later Admiral) Dewey** later said that he “...lived five years in an hour..” during the attempted passage of Port Hudson that night. Total Federal losses were 75 men killed or missing (most from the *USS Mississippi*) and 38 wounded; Confederate cavalry captured 37 of the *Mississippi* crew. Confederate casualties were 3 killed and 22 wounded. The Federal army under **Major General Nathaniel Banks** would now have to complete the task of reducing Port Hudson from the land.

Anticipating this, Confederate **Major General Gardner** ordered that several of the river batteries be redeployed to counter land attacks by the Federal soldiers. **Lawrence Lee Hewitt** in his 1987 book *Port Hudson, Confederate Bastion on the Mississippi*, documents that **Captain J.M. Sparkman** and members of the 1st Tennessee Heavy Artillery Battalion moved two 12-pounder Blakeley cannons from the river to Commissary Hill, within **Colonel I.G.W. Steedman’s** lines to the north. It is also known that another detachment of the 1st Tennessee Heavy Artillery Battalion manned two cannons in the center of **Brigadier General William N.R. Beall’s** lines to the east. It is not certain where, exactly, **Pvt. Albert C. Brigham** was during this time, but both **Captain J.M. Sparkman** and **Captain F.J. Weller** were casualties during Federal **General Banks’** assault of May 27, 1863 -- **Captain Weller** having his chest torn out by a Yankee shell. **Captain Sparkman** was mortally wounded while checking to see if he had correctly cut a fuse atop the breastworks of Commissary Hill; Vol. 1 of *Tennesseans In the Civil War* states that he died on June 4. **Lieutenant Oswald Tilghman** was in command of the 1st Tennessee Heavy Artillery Battalion at the time of surrender on July 9, 1863 -- this after 48 days of siege.

It appears that **Pvt. Albert C. Brigham Jr.** attempted to escape before the actual surrender of Port Hudson by **Major General Gardner** on July 9, 1863 -- "*A.C. Brigham, Pvt., 1st Tenn. Heav. Arty.*" appears on a list of POWs captured by Federal cavalry (1st Division) and "*...paroled by Capt. E.A. Hancock, Pro. Mar. Sent north.*" **Pvt. Brigham** next appears on a list of Confederate prisoners in Maysville, Alabama and dated Aug. 25, 1863; this list has the following description which confirms his identity: "*25 years, blue eyes, light hair, fair complexion, 6 feet tall, born: Stewart, Tenn., occupation: farmer.*" He next appears on a document dated Oct. 28, 1863 which describes his being received at Camp Morton, Indianapolis IN after discharge from the Military Prison in Louisville KY on the same day (Louisville KY Register No. 4, page 180) suggesting he was transported by train. **Pvt. Albert Brigham** endured the Winter of 1863-64 in Indianapolis (where the State Fairgrounds were; today a residential neighborhood) before being transferred to Ft. Delaware DE on Mar. 19, 1864 (*Camp Morton IN Register No. 1*, page 209) and arriving there on Mar. 22. **Pvt. Brigham** remained as a POW in Ft. Delaware for almost one year until being paroled and forwarded to City Point VA for exchange on Feb. 27, 1865 (*Ft. Delaware DE Register No.2*, page 122). At war's end on April 9, 1865 he was apparently on his way home to Stewart Co. TN since his Tennessee State Pension documents state that "*I was at Columbus, Mississippi when the war ended and came from there home.*" Ironically, the POW imprisonment of **Pvt. Albert C. Brigham Jr.** may not have occurred if he had not tried to escape on July 8, 1863 -- almost all Confederate Privates in Port Hudson were paroled at the time of actual surrender on July 9, only Confederate officers were sent to POW camps by the victorious Federals on that day.

Pvt. Albert C. Brigham Jr., Co. B, 1st Tennessee Artillery died on May 26, 1911. He is buried in the Brigham Cemetery, Land Between The Lakes NRA in Stewart County TN with his brothers **Marion M. Brigham** and **James H. Brigham**.



Photo image by
Kenneth E. Byrd,
taken March 2015

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by **Kenneth E. Byrd**¹, Indianapolis, IN and **Cleo Cherry Grogan**², Murray, KY (dec.)

¹Fifth cousin of **Pvt. Albert Clausel Brigham Jr.**; 4th great-nephew of **Albert Clausel Brigham, Sr.**; 3rd great-grandson of **Luna Louisa Brigham Byrd**.

²Third cousin of **Pvt. Albert Clausel Brigham Jr.**; great-granddaughter of **Luna Louisa Brigham Byrd**.