

# Marion M. Brigham

C.S.A.

Private, Co. C, 33rd Tennessee Infantry, CSA

September 13, 1861 - May 1, 1865

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**Marion McDonald Brigham** (b. Apr. 21, 1840) was the 6th 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; **Albert Clausel Jr.**, b. Feb. 1, 1838; **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 born somewhere in District No. 8 near Lick Creek (now Byrd Creek), Stewart County Tennessee and next to the Tennessee River, in what is now Land Between The Lakes National Recreation Area (LBL). **Marion M. Brigham** 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 CSA service documents, **Marion McDonald Brigham** enlisted in the 33rd Tennessee Infantry in Union City, TN on Sept. 13, 1861 along with his older brother, **James H. Brigham**. Since Calloway County, KY is directly across the Tennessee River from where the **Brigham** family lived in Stewart Co. TN, it does not seem to strange to see that they both enlisted in Co. C of the 33rd Tennessee Infantry, commanded by **Captain Wm. Frank Marberry** -- Co. C was made up almost entirely of men from Calloway Co. KY. Staying at home to fight, another brother of **Marion M.** and **James H. Brigham**, **Albert C. Brigham, Jr.**, enlisted in **Captain Jesse Taylor's Co. B**, 1st Tennessee Artillery at Ft. Henry, TN with his cousins **George W. Byrd**, **Marion M. Bailey**, and **Thomas M. Bailey**.

**Pvt. Marion M. Brigham's** service records indicate that he was present with the 33rd Tennessee Infantry during Mar. 1-July 1, 1862; July 1, 1862-Jan.1, 1863; Jan. & Feb., 1863; Mar. & Apr., 1863; July & Aug., 1863; Sept. & Oct., 1863; Jan. & Feb., 1864; Mar. & Apr., 1864; June, 1864; and at the muster roll of April 28 and parole of May 1, 1865. We can be fairly certain that he was a participant in the battle of Shiloh along with his brother, **Pvt. James H. Brigham**, and at battles that occurred during the dates he is recorded as being present. After reorganization following Shiloh, **Pvt. Marion M. Brigham** as a member of the 33rd Tennessee Infantry likely saw action at Corinth MS (April-June, 1862), Perryville KY (Oct. 8, 1862), Murfreesboro TN (Dec. 31, 1862-Jan.3,

1863), Chickamauga GA (Sept.19-20, 1863), Kennesaw Mountain GA (June 27, 1864), and probably at Bentonville NC (Mar. 19-21, 1865).

During the battle of Perryville KY, **Pvt. Marion M. Brigham** and the 33rd Tennessee Infantry was under the direct command of **Colonel Warner P. Jones** and in the brigade of **Brigadier General A.P. Stewart**. Also in **Stewart's Brigade** were the 4th, 5th, 24th, and 31st Tennessee Infantries together with **Stanford's** Mississippi Battery; this brigade was in the Division of **Major General Benjamin F. Cheatham** and the Right Wing of the Confederate Army of The Mississippi, commanded by **Major General Leonidas Polk**. Overall command of the Army of The Mississippi was by **General Braxton Bragg**. On this day, **Cheatham's Division** numbered about 4,500 men; **Stewart's Brigade** (aka the 2nd Brigade) contained roughly 1,400 effectives, like the other two brigades (**Maney's** and **Donelson's**) also in the Division. **General Bragg** determined that the Federal Army of The Ohio, commanded by **Major General Don Carlos Buell**, was vulnerable to attack on its left flank, located northwest of Perryville and west of Doctor's Creek. At about 11:00 a.m. on Oct. 8, **Bragg** sent **Cheatham's** entire division on a circuitous route out of Perryville, looping around to the northeast, then back toward the Chaplin River. **Cheatham's** movement was shielded from Federal observers by a series of hills and isolated patches of forest so the Federals were unaware of this massive buildup near their left flank.

Confederate cavalry reports suggested that the Federals were extending their left flank more to the north, so **General Bragg** directed **Major Generals Polk** and **Cheatham** to place their force on the east side of the Chaplin River, in an area called Walker's Bend. Here, at Walker's Bend, **Cheatham's Division**, including **Pvt. Marion M. Brigham** and the 33rd Tennessee Infantry, were hidden by high bluffs on the western bank of the Chaplin River, and amazingly enough, still undetected by the Federal forces! **Polk** and **Cheatham** stacked the three brigades of **Donelson**, **Stewart**, and **Maney** in that order, from front to back, and waited for orders to begin their attack. At about 2:00 p.m., **Donelson's** men moved across the shallow Chaplin River and climbed the bluffs; at this time, the only Federal activity involved their periodical shelling of Confederate cavalry just west of Walker's Bend. At 2:30 the battle formally began with **Donelson's** advance regiments (15th and 15th Tennessee) making first contact with members of the 123rd Illinois and 33rd Ohio regiments. The Federals responded quickly and began shelling the advancing Confederates from two placed batteries: **Parson's** to the north and **Harris'** to the south. As he led his Division, **Major General Cheatham** exhorted the advancing Rebels to "*Give the Yankees hell!*" Alongside him was **Major General Polk**, an ordained Episcopalian minister, who supposedly added "*Give them what General Cheatham says, boys! Give them what General Cheatham says!*" **Maney's** brigade zeroed in and advanced upon **Parson's** battery while **Donelson's** soldiers made for **Harris'** battery -- **Stewart's** brigade and the 33rd Tennessee Infantry was at this time, about 2:45 p.m., directly behind **Donelson's** brigade.

According to **Dr. Kenneth Hafendorfer** in his book, *Perryville - Battle for Kentucky*, by 3:00 p.m. **Donelson's** brigade was actively assaulting the position of **Harris'** Indiana Battery while **Maney** was going against **Parson's** Battery to the north. **Stewart's** Brigade, including **Pvt. Marion M. Brigham** and his brother, **Pvt. James H. Brigham**, in **Colonel Jones'** 33rd Tennessee Infantry, was moving at a right oblique and aiming for

a gap between **Donelson's** and **Maney's** commands; at this point the 24th, 5th, and 4th Tennessee Infantries made up the first row of **Stewart's** assault, with the 31st and 33rd Tennessee forming the second row immediately behind them. A member of the 33rd Tennessee Infantry described the contact between the 5th Tennessee and the 80th Illinois thusly: *"..on they (5th Tennessee) went as the volleys from the guns would mow a swath of brave fellows from their ranks; they would close up their ranks and keep on that dead run."*

The 33rd Tennessee was then ordered forward by **General Stewart** once his first row (24th, 5th, 4th Tennessee) was fully engaged on the crest of the so-called Open Hill; as the soldier in the 33rd Tennessee recounted this moment: *"Orders were passed down the line, "reserve your fire," and we got up running, not a double-quick but on a dead run."* Here the 33rd Tennessee was going directly against the 50th Ohio, 24th Ohio, and 80th Indiana regiments and actually approached to within about 400 feet of **Lt.-Colonel Silas Strickland's** 50th Ohio Infantry -- the 33rd Tennessee and 50th Ohio stood and exchanged volleys at each other as **Harris' Battery** continued to blow canister at both the 33rd and 31st Tennessee men. At this point in the battle, about 4:00 p.m., repeated attacks and counterattacks surged back and forth between the Rebel and Yankee combatants. By 4:30, **Stewart's Brigade** was falling back in an orderly fashion and exchanging volleys with the 50th Ohio and 80th Indiana as they retreated. **Colonel Jones' 33rd Tennessee Infantry** had lost 10 killed, 65 wounded, and 7 missing during this relatively brief, albeit intense, encounter. As far as can be determined, neither **Pvt. Marion Brigham** nor his brother was seriously injured this day. Total Confederate casualties at Perryville were 3,396 (**Cheatham's Division** had 43% of this total) and Federal casualties were 4,211.

At Murfreesboro TN (Dec. 31, 1862 - Jan. 3, 1863), **Pvt. Marion Brigham** and fellow-soldiers in the 33rd Tennessee Infantry were consolidated with members of the 31st Tennessee (due to casualties at both Shiloh and Perryville) and commanded by **Colonel E.E. Tansil**. The 31st/33rd Tennessee Infantry was once again in **Brigadier General Alexander P. Stewart's** 2nd Brigade, **Major General Benjamin F. Cheatham's** 1st Division and the Corps commanded by **Lieut.-General Leonidas Polk**; overall command of the Confederate Army of Tennessee was again by **General Braxton Bragg**. The night before battle, both Federal troops (Army of the Cumberland, commanded by **Major General William S. Rosecrans**) and **Bragg's** Confederate soldiers could see each other's campfires; a poignant "battle of the bands" took place as both Yankee and Rebel musicians all joined in playing *"Home, Sweet Home"* to the assembled armies.

Amazingly enough, both **Bragg** and **Rosecrans** decided on the same strategy -- feint towards their opponent's right flank and strike quickly to the left; campfires were built up on the right side of both armies' lines to deceive the opponent. The Confederates struck first, however, surging out of the fog toward the Federal right at 6:22 a.m., Dec. 31 and moving in a gigantic wheeling maneuver towards the right; this in order to force the Federals against Stone's River and cut off their escape route on the Nashville Pike. By 7:00 a.m. **Cheatham's Division**, including **Pvt. Marion M. Brigham** and the 33rd Tennessee Infantry, was in movement and encountered serious resistance by Federal soldiers commanded by **Brigadier General Philip H. Sheridan** near the Wilkinson Pike at about 9:00 a.m. **Christopher Losson** in his book, *Tennessee's Forgotten Warriors - Frank Cheatham and His Confederate Division* (1989), describes **Major General**

**Cheatham** personally leading the charge of **Stewart's**, **Withers'**, and **Anderson's Brigades** against **Sheridan's** stronghold near the Harding House -- a feat all the more amazing since, according to several eyewitnesses on both sides, he was almost certainly drunk at the time! By noon, the cedar thickets and rock outcrops had broken up the integrity of **Bragg's** right-wheel, and isolated pockets of Yankee resistance bought time for **Rosecrans'** retreating Federal soldiers. One such pocket was at the so-called Round Forest, near the intersection of the Nashville & Chattanooga RR and the Nashville Pike; here, repeated assaults were made by **Cheatham's** men against massed Yankee artillery and muskets commanded by **Colonel William B. Hazen**. On this day at Murfreesboro, **Cheatham's Division** (5,859 effectives) suffered 1,939 killed/wounded/missing, a 35% casualty rate.

According to his Compiled Service Record documents, three days before receiving some new clothing on June 30, 1864, **Pvt. Marion M. Brigham** and his brother, **James**, were positioned with their comrades in the 33rd Tennessee Infantry on so-called Cheatham Hill during the battle of Kennesaw Mountain GA. Here the 33rd Tennessee was in **Brigadier General Otho F. Strahl's Brigade** within the division of **Major General Benjamin F. Cheatham**, **Lieut. General William J. Hardee's** Corps of the Army of Tennessee, commanded by **General Joseph E. Johnston**. On this day, Federal **Major General William T. Sherman**, impatient and frustrated by the numerous flanking and retreat maneuvers of **Johnston**, launched a massive assault against the strongly entrenched Confederates. **Cheatham** placed the brigades of **Vaughan**, **Maney**, **Carter**, and **Strahl** on a ridge of Kennesaw Mountain; he also placed and camouflaged several artillery batteries (10 guns in **Phelan's**, **Perry's**, and **Mebane's** batteries) along this ridge. **Strahl's Brigade**, including the 33rd Tennessee Infantry, was approximately 3,000 feet southeast from a 45 degree salient held by **Vaughan's** and **Maney's** brigades, this salient was soon to be named the "Dead Angle" by the bloodied Yankee soldiers.

At about 9:00 a.m. on the morning of June 27, after 40 minutes of Federal artillery fire, **Sherman** ordered forward his Divisions against **Johnston's** entrenched men. Federal brigades under the command of **Colonels Daniel McCook** and **J.G. Mitchell** moved against **Cheatham's** ridge. **Cheatham's** men were ordered to hold their fire until the Federals were within 60 yards of their position; the Rebels' initial volley almost completely wiped out the advance column of the advancing Federals. Obstacles constructed by **Cheatham's** men impeded the Federal assault, making them easy targets for the Confederate soldiers. The masked cannons on **Cheatham's** ridge opened up only when the remaining Union lines advanced upon their position, this time only 50 yards away. Federal **Colonel Mitchell's** brigade (113th Ohio, 121st Ohio, 98th Ohio, 78th Illinois) were enfiladed by **Cheatham's** cannons and muskets of **Carter's** and **Strahl's** men as the beleaguered Yankees struggled up the inclined slope of the salient. One Ohio regiment lost 153 men in about 20 minutes as the noise rose to a level so loud that **Cheatham's** men relied on their rifles' recoils to let them know when their guns fired. Afterwards, **Sherman** estimated his casualties at 3,000 but **Johnston** placed total Federal casualties at a number twice that of **Sherman's** tally. **Cheatham** counted at least 350 Federal dead just in front of the Dead Angle salient; **Cheatham's** total casualties were 26 dead and 169 wounded or captured. On June 29, during an arranged truce for removal of Federal casualties, **Pvts. Marion** and **James Brigham** may have witnessed several Yankee soldiers approach **Major General Cheatham** and ask for his autograph, which

he kindly gave them. One of the Union gawkers from Illinois described **Cheatham** thusly: *"He wore nothing but a rough pair of grey pants tucked under the tops of an unpolished pair of boots, a blue flannel shirt and rough felt hat completed his attire. He had neither coat or vest and was without any....manner to indicate his rank. He looked as if he had made his headquarters in the ditch with his men..."*

Recently, members of the Stewart County Archives discovered a partial letter written by **Pvt. Marion M. Brigham** which confirms his participation in CSA **General John Bell Hood's** 1864 Tennessee Campaign (Nov.-Dec. 1864). The original document is in the possession of the Stewart County Archives, Stewart County, TN. Its transcription by members of the Stewart County Archives appears here:

*...left Decater on the 29th and went to Cortland and staid all night left next morning and went to Tuscumbia Ala whear we are now the first day of November we expect to cross the Tennessee river to morow at Florence if we leav hear don't know yet whether we will leav hear or not to morow or not*

P S

*I hav heard of the Soldiers living on parched corn in the ancient wars but never believed it but now I cant dout it for for we hav had the meial of it. I no that men can live on corn a week or to I can for one if they will carry me to Tennessee and think that they are doing well to do that parched corn and beef eats fine but corn alone is ----- eating but it is the case very offen on this campaign that we could not get nothing to eat when we was on the mountain whear the was nothing but bush whackers living Ive expected to see hard times crossing that mountain we are getting plenty of bread and beef now. I expect to live hy if we get into Tennessee if we come in fifty miles of home you may look for me to come home with out a furlow for I no the head officers ont grant one – but if ther is a thousand officers wants to go home they can go and stay as long as they please and I hav bin hear as long as any body and I consider my self as good as the officers and dun as much for the confederacy as most of the privats dun as much duty as -----  
----- that this regiment has bin in to and I am going to come home if the army goes in Tennessee which I think it wil tel all the co[nn?]ection howdy for me I would like to write them all but it is getting dark I hope to be with you all a Christmas a few days if I live and --- well but I trust in God the war will end by Christmas and let all go home.*

*Your brother M- M- Brigham*

This poignant letter, possibly written to one of his younger sisters back home in Stewart County, starkly reveals the tremendous hardships suffered by the Confederate soldiers in the Army of Tennessee just before the battles of Spring Hill, Franklin, and Nashville. It is truly amazing that both **Marion M.** and his brother **James H.** survived to come home.

**Pvt. Marion M. Brigham** was surrendered as a member of Co. G, 3rd Tennessee Consolidated Infantry on April 26, 1865 by **General Joseph E. Johnston**; like his brother **James**, he was also paroled on April 1, 1865 at Greensboro NC. In the 1870 Federal census for District No. 8, Stewart Co. TN, **Marion** is shown living with his

parents, brother **James**, and his other brothers/sisters back home in the “Land Between The Rivers”, along the banks of the Tennessee River.

According to Stewart County TN estate settlement documents, **Marion M. Brigham** died sometime in 1904; he is buried in the Brigham Cemetery, Land Between The Lakes NRA with his brothers **James H. Brigham** and **Albert C. Brigham Jr.**



Photo image by  
**Kenneth E. Byrd**,  
taken March 2015

August 29, 2015 (updated)

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

<sup>1</sup>Fifth cousin of **Pvt. Marion McDonald Brigham**; 4<sup>th</sup> great-nephew of **Albert Clausel Brigham, Sr.**; 3<sup>rd</sup> great-grandson of **Luna Louisa Brigham Byrd**.

<sup>2</sup>Third cousin of **Pvt. Marion McDonald Brigham**; great-granddaughter of **Luna Louisa Brigham Byrd**.