

JACOB SMITHS - Sorting Them Out

CIVIL WAR: WEST VIRGINIA

By Linda Cunningham Fluharty.

The name "Jacob Smith" appears in records of quite a few West Virginia Civil War regiments. In addition to all of those, my own Jacob Smith – Jacob Conrad Smith – was in the 133rd West Virginia State Militia and died while a POW at Andersonville Prison.

The research into some of the Jacob Smiths ensued when James Jeffery, III asked for assistance to determine if his gr-gr-gr-uncle of that name was entitled to one of the two unclaimed Civil War medals held at the West Virginia State Archives.

The two unclaimed Civil War medals are for Jacob Smith, Company "F" 2nd W.Va. Cavalry and the other is for Jacob Smith, Company "H" 1st W. Va. Cavalry.

Mr. Jeffery also wanted to confirm that his relative was the man who died while aboard the *General Lyon*, a steamer that was carrying many paroled and discharged soldiers. On its way from Wilmington, North Carolina, to Fortress Monroe, Virginia, it burned to the waterline off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina at the end of March 1865.

Mrs. Blanche Jerrine Jeffery, mother of James Jeffery, III, did research about her great uncle, Jacob Smith, who was born in Wood County, (W) Virginia, the son of German immigrants, Michael and Catherine (Ewinger) Smith. She believed that her Jacob Smith was entitled to one of the unclaimed medals at the West Virginia Archives and she submitted an application in 1998. However, her application for either of the two medals was rejected.

I did not look at the historian's summary or any of the other documents submitted to me by James Jeffery. Instead, I decided to start fresh and I obtained SIX relevant Service Records and a Widow's Pension application from the National Archives. The widow was married to Jacob Smith of Fayette County, Pennsylvania.

SERVICE RECORDS

Jacob Smith in Captain George W. Gilmore's Company 1st WV Cavalry.

- Born in Fayette County, PA
- Age 26
- Laborer
- Volunteered 25 Aug 1862 at Morgantown, WV
- Hazel eyes, black hair, dark complexion, 5' 8"
- Court Martial of Jacob Smith, Gilmore's Co., 1st Cav.; desertion 15 Oct 1862; not guilty; arrested at Fayette County, PA - No confusion about this

This independent company was formed early in the war, no company designation, and became Company "L" 2nd WV Cav. Many of the men were from PA.

Jacob Smith, Private, Companies "L" & "F" 2 WV Cavalry

- Born in Fayette County, PA
- Age 26
- Laborer
- Enlisted 25 Aug 1862, Morgantown
- Hazel eyes, Black hair, dark complexion, 5'8"
- Court Martial of Jacob Smith, Gilmore's Co., 1st Cav.; desertion 15 Oct 1862; not guilty; arrested at Fayette County, PA
- Wounded & captured by enemy at Wytheville 18 July 1863
- Casualty sheet in file saying he perished on General Lyon

Jacob Smith, Private, (NO Company), 1 WV Cavalry

- Enrolled 25 Aug 1862 at Morgantown
- Court martial and one page of muster are all that is in this service record
- Seems to be the same man as the two above

Jacob Smith, Private, Company "H" 1 WV Cavalry

- Born in GERMANY
- Age 38
- Boatman
- Volunteered 20 Feb 1864 at Wheeling; m/i 23 Feb 1864, Wheeling; credited to Bellville, Wood Co., 1st Sub Dist 26.
- Blue eyes, dark hair, fair complexion, 5'8"
- **ONE** card in service record says born in Wood Co.; age 20, tanner, complexion sandy, eyes hazel, hair, sandy, 5'7." I think this card is **MISPLACED**. It does **NOT** seem strong enough to cancel out the info on the enlistment record. And tanner could have been miscopied from "farmer." It is the card for the man in Company "C".
- Additionally, he mustered out July 8, 1865. – So NOT on the General Lyon and NOT dead.

Jacob Smith, Private, Companies "E" & "D" 2 WV Cavalry

- Born in McConnellsville, Muskingum County, Ohio
- Age 23 or 19 (both given)
- Farmer
- Volunteered 20 Nov 1863 in Company "E" at Charleston
- Blue eyes, light hair, light complexion, 6' 1"
- Transferred from "E" to "D" Nov 1864
- Court Martial of Jacob Smith, Gilmore's Co., 1st Cav.; desertion 15 Oct 1862; not guilty; arrested at Fayette County, PA
- March 1865 missing from remount camp City Point, VA
- Casualty sheet in file saying he perished on General Lyon
- Later (1888, Ohio) received a pension, so did NOT perish

Jacob Smith, Private, Company "C" 1 WV Cavalry

- Born in Wood County, WV
- Age 20 years and 9 months [Age 7 in 1850 census, Wood Co. , as the son of Michael.]
- Farmer
- Volunteered 10 March 1864 at Wheeling
- Grey eyes, dark hair, sandy complexion, 5' 6"
- No casualty sheet but card saying he (Co C 1st Cav) perished on General Lyon. Back of card says the man on the General Lyon was the one in Gilmore's Independent Co., 1st Cav.

The SIX Service Records from the National Archives were carefully reviewed. There is no question that the service records of these men are forever entwined and some aspects may never be sorted out. However, the enlistment information is NOT so ambiguous, as shown above.

In addition to these men in the 1 & 2nd Cavs, there were other Jacob Smiths in WV Regiments. One was in the 2nd Infantry, which became the 5th Cav and subsequently was designated the 6th Cav. At least one of his records is co-mingled in one of these six files. (He received government pension, certificate 349.158).

It appears that THREE of the SIX Service Records are for one man, the Jacob Smith born in Fayette County, Pennsylvania. The one file is actually quite small. He was in the early company of the 1st Cavalry that was organized by men from PA; it became Company "L" of the 2nd Cav.

The court martial of the Fayette County man is in files it should not be in but I think the identity of the man is very clear: The Court Martial record at Kanawha County states that **he was arrested in Fayette County, Pennsylvania and was in Captain Gilmore's Company.** (Acquitted.)

Jacob Smith married Sarah A. Cunningham 6 May 1857 in Fayette County, PA. Their children were Harriett, born 8 Feb 1858; Sarah C., born 20 June 1860; Jacob Lincoln Smith, born 6 Mar 1863. They later applied for money and faced all of the confusion in the files.

Widow paid \$208 by the US Treasury Dept 13 Apr 1867 for death of Jacob Smith, "a Private in Captain Gilmore's Company, 1 Va Cav" 18 July 1863.

Widow applied for pension 13 June 1867 while residing in Uniontown, Fayette County. She stated that late husband was a private in Captain G. [George] W. Gilmore's Company in the 1st WV. She said that husband died on or about 18 July 1863 "in the hands of the Rebels." Widow Certificate #298.442

From pension file: AGO noted **17 May 1870**: "Co L 2 WVa Cavy, formerly known as Captain Gilmore's Co. 1st West Va. Cavy." -- Pension office, **26 July 1883**: "Jacob Smith swore into Gilmore's Independent Co. 1st Regt WVa Cav Vols 25 Aug 1862 at Morgantown. Designation changed 15 Feb 1864 to Co L 2d WVa Cav - transferred to Co F 2d WVa Cav July 1864. - Also one Jacob Smith Co C 1st WVa Cav swore into service at Wheeling, W.Va, Mch 10, '64. Missing in action Cedar Cr Oct 19 '64."

The mention of the man in Company "C" is indicative of the mess they found as they tried to sort this out...but he is easily distinguished, in my view. A card in one of the files - even if the wrong file - clearly states that MICHAEL SMITH, father of Jacob Smith in Company C 1st WV Cav, received \$240 from the Treasury Dept. 29 Jan 1887. -- Same date is payment of \$175 to Sarah A. Smith, widow of Jacob Smith, Co. "L" 2 WV Cavy., Widow's cert #298.442. - It seems like they sorted this out - somewhat.

WEST VIRGINIA UNCLAIMED MEDALS:

The medals are for the men in Company "H" of the 1st Cavalry and for the man in Company "F" of the 2nd Cavalry.

The medal of the man in **Company "F" 2nd WV Cavalry** was clearly struck for the Jacob Smith whose last service was in Company "F" of the 2nd Cav. And that would be the man from Fayette county, PA, husband of Sarah A. and father of Harriett, Sarah and Jacob Lincoln Smith.

And, despite ONE errant card in the file of the 38 years old man born in Germany, the other unclaimed medal is for him. He mustered out at the end of the war.

However, since the enlistment of the man in **Company "H" 1st WV Cavalry** (age 38) was credited to Wood County, if not an error (which is very possible), perhaps he is related in some other way to Michael

Smith. Clearly, he was too old to be the son of Michael Smith and he did survive the war, unlike Michael Smith's son.

GENERAL LYON:

ALL but one of these SIX Service Records, as well as the widow's pension file, mentions the death on the General Lyon. The exception is the man in Company "H" 1st WV Cavalry.

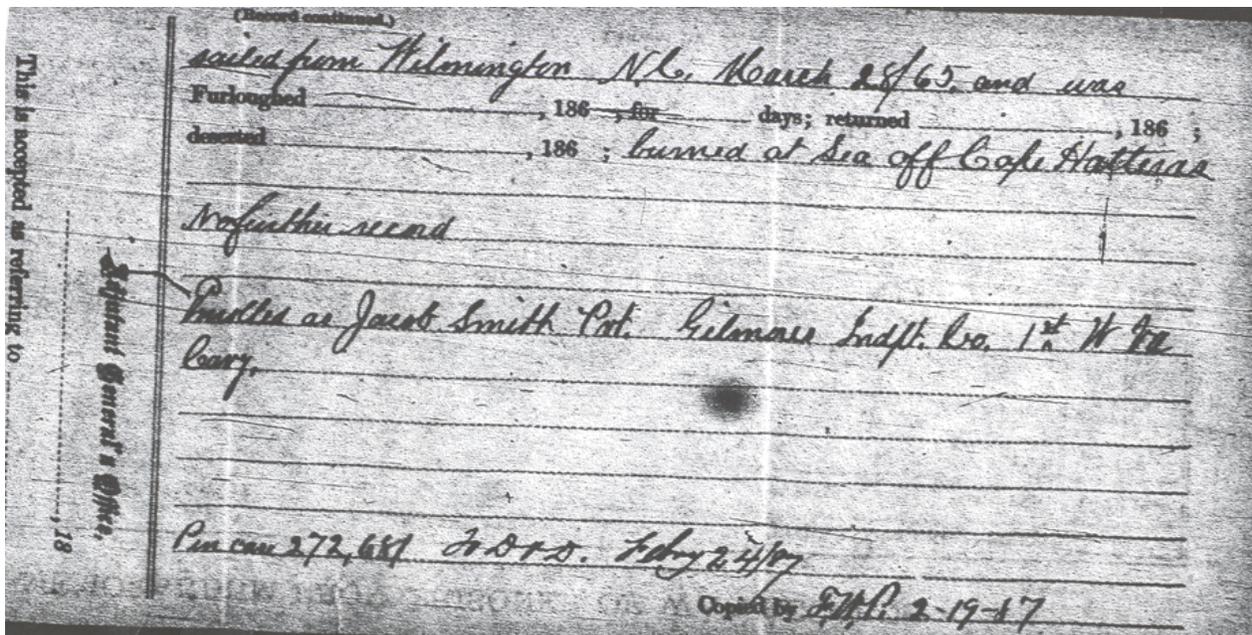
We may never know for certain who perished on the General Lyon but I think it is more likely that the victim was Jacob Smith, Company "C" 1st West Virginia Cavalry.

The man born in Fayette County, PA cannot be completely ruled out, however. Records of the incident seem to mention that the victim was either in the 1st or 2nd Cav. His service is unique because he was in this early, independent company of the WV Cavalry regiment that later became Company "L" of the 2nd Cav. He was finally in Company "F" – but never knew it because he was captured before the designation was changed to the 2nd West Virginia Cavalry. – His widow stated that he died "on or about July 18, 1863 in the hands of the rebels." It would be interesting to know when she learned of his death. According to the State of WV 29 April 1870: "Muster out roll of Co F, 2nd Regt WV Cav, shows Jacob Smith on the m/o roll as "Prisoner of war since 12 July 1863." – It just seems that he was dead long before the General Lyon disaster.

We know that Jacob Smith, Company "C" 1st WV Cav., enrolled at Wheeling 10 Mar 1864; mustered in at Wheeling in Co "C" 15 Mar 1864. Missing in action at Cedar Creek Va 19 Oct 1864. There is a POW card in his file that gives the correct information about his capture and says he was transferred to Salisbury Prison, N. C. The back of the card in his file states the victim was the man in Gilmore's Independent Cavalry, thus complicating matters further, but the information on the front of the card is **compelling** evidence, in that it puts him in North Carolina.

MEMORANDUM FROM PRISONER OF WAR RECORDS No. _____
(This blank to be used only in the arrangement of said records.)

NAME	RANK	ORGANIZATION				INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM				
		No. of Reg't	State	Army of Service	Co.	Source of	Vol.	Page	Vol.	Page
<i>J</i>	<i>Private</i>					<i>Kear</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>291</i>
						<i>Kear Roll</i>	<i>686</i>			
<i>Smith Jacob</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>WV</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>ORR</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>323</i>		
Captured at		<i>Cedar Creek Va. Oct 19</i>				<i>Brought from Lynchburg Va</i>		<i>Oct 23</i>		
Sent to Hospital at		<i>Salisbury N.C. Nov 4/64</i>								
where he died		<i>1864</i>								
Paroled at		<i>N.L. Ferry N.C. March 3</i>				<i>1865</i>		<i>reported at Camp Floyd, Md.</i>		
Paroled prisoner		<i>freighted on Steamer Genl. Lyon on or about March 29/65. which</i>								
<i>R 12</i>		<i>Kear 47-1866</i>				Copied by _____				



Back of card

The other Jacob Smiths CAN be ruled out as having been on the General Lyon:

The man in Cos "E" and "D" of the 2nd Cav is ruled out as because he received a government pension, certificate #556.593.

Again, the Jacob Smith in Company "H," 1st WV Cav mustered out at the end of the war on 8 June 1865. There is no indication that he met any other fate.