

MY CIVIL WAR HEROES

by

Gordon Whitaker

SCWRT Member

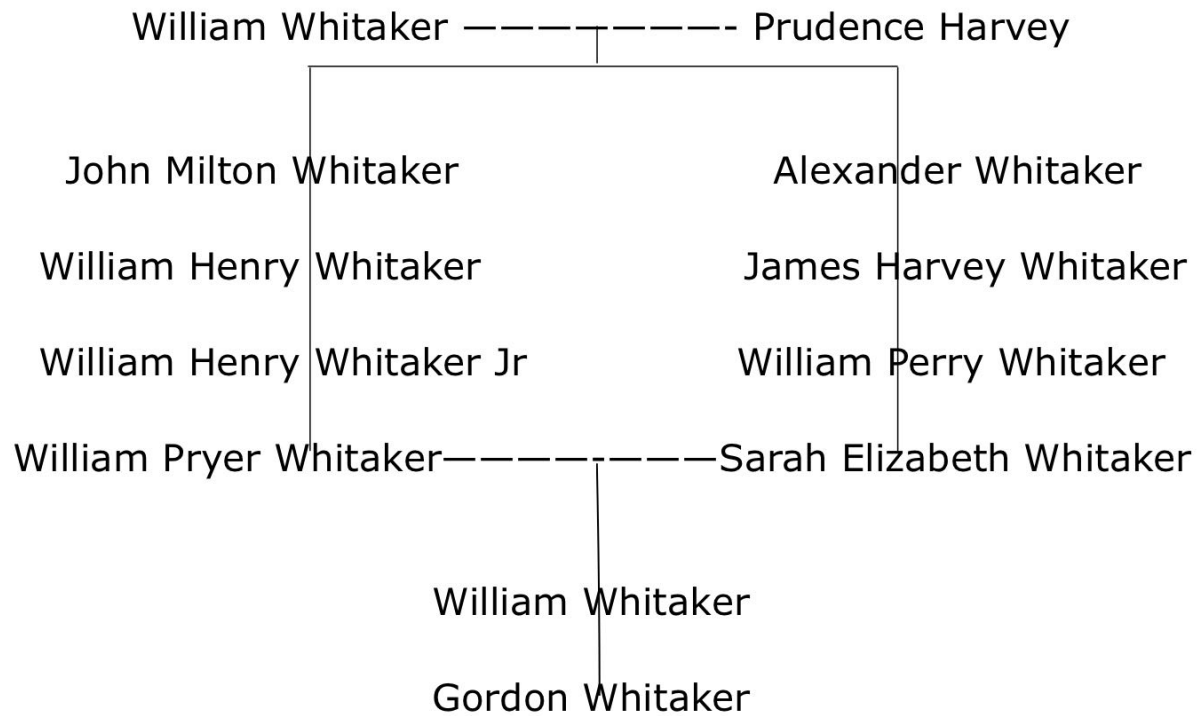
My ancestors, William Perry Whitaker and William Henry Whitaker, joined the Union's 12th Kentucky Regiment in December 1861. They fought through the entire Civil War until 1865 and finished with General Sherman in North Carolina. Their regiment lost 41 killed or mortally wounded and 198 died of disease.

They fought earlier under General Thomas at Nashville when he demolished Confederate General Hood's army. General Hood made tragic errors that were disasters for his army. He let my ancestor's army Division, under General Rousseau, slip by to reinforce General Thomas at Nashville. On the way to Nashville, my ancestor's Division dug in at Franklin. In spite of his Confederate General Cleburne's protest, General Hood ordered his frontal attack on the entrenched Union lines at Franklin. Cleburne and thousands of his soldiers were killed. My ancestors were with the two Kentucky regiments that stopped the Confederate attack in the center. It was said they charged on their own when the line was breaking.

Prior to the Nashville battle, William Perry and William Henry fought under General Schofield in the many bloody battles for Sherman's army to capture Atlanta. They were part of the unsung common soldier hero that provided victories for the famous Generals. For example they marched almost 300 miles from the Shiloh area to Louisville to stop General Bragg's invasion of their home state, Kentucky. They survived freezing rains and sleeping on the ground such as at their first battle at Mill Springs, Kentucky in January 1862. There, Confederate General Zollicoffer was killed when he mistakenly rode into Union lines. I visited the "Zollicoffer tree" where he was killed and where dozens of Confederate soldiers were buried in an earthen pile grave.

I am proud and am very fortunate to have these ancestors and their offspring, William Perry's daughter, my grandmother, and William Henry's grandson, my grandfather.

Whitaker Family Tree



Neil Whitaker (the son of SCWRT member, Gordon Whitaker) with his Great Great Grandfather, William H. Whitaker's gravestone.

Please note in the background behind Neil, the gravestone of William H. Whitaker's first wife, Susan Poynter Whitaker, Neil's Great Great Great Grandmother.

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