

Thomas Jefferson Flack, Jr., 43rd Virginia Cavalry

Thomas Jefferson Flack, Jr. was born on December 20, 1841 in Baltimore, Maryland. He was one of five sons of Baltimore spirits dealer, Thomas Jefferson Flack and Anna M. Oliver. He was christened on March 9, 1846 in the Associate Reformed Church of Baltimore. In 1860, the Flack family was residing in Ward 14 of the city of Baltimore.ⁱ

Upon the outbreak of the Civil War, Thomas J. Flack, Jr. joined the Confederate Army. He enlisted on May 24, 1861 in Company C of the 1st Maryland Infantry Regiment. Flack was enlisted by Captain R. Carter Smith in Richmond, Virginia. At the time of his enlistment, he was identified as having the occupation of a clerk, being 5' 9" tall, and with a light complexion, blue eyes and hair of a light color. Flack was shown as "Present" on the 1st Maryland Infantry Regiment muster rolls for November and December, 1861. He was discharged on June 9, 1862 to become a clerk for Assistant Quartermaster, Captain (later Major) John Ambler. C.S.A Quartermaster Department records show Thomas Flack was a clerk in that department through November 1862.ⁱⁱ

There is no record of Thomas J. Flack's activities between November 1862 and when he is identified with a group of Mosby's men in Leesburg, Virginia on Friday afternoon, April 29, 1864. The group was lounging around the hotel, 'Pickett's Public House', when surprised by a detachment of Colonel Charles Russell Lowell's 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry Regiment. The partisans tried to escape but a number of them were captured. Thomas J. Flack, Jr. was shot in his efforts to get away from the Federals.ⁱⁱⁱ According to ranger James J. Williamson: "Ewell Atwell and _____ Flack rushed to their horses, mounted and dashed off, with the enemy in hot pursuit. Flack was shot on the edge of town."^{iv}

A resident of the outskirts of Leesburg, Thomas W. Edwards of 'Fruitlands', provided some additional details on the death of Flack in his letter a day later to Captain Henry O. Claggett of the Quartermaster Department. He wrote in part: "Some attempted to escape towards Swann's amongst them a very genteel young man from Baltimore by the name of Flack a Lt. sent by Mosby to superintend the hauling of corn from Grundles. He was upon a slow horse, and could not get out of the way, was shot through the head killing him instantly he was buried yesterday at the Cemetery. The ladies covered his grave with flowers."^v

Williamson, who had identified Flack as a member of Company D, also noted that one of his brothers came to Leesburg a couple of days later to claim the remains of his brother and return them to Baltimore for burial.^{vi} Thomas J. Flack, Jr. was buried at Green Mount Cemetery in Baltimore. A headstone was erected at the site of his grave which reads:

Killed
At
Leesburg, VA
Thos. J. Flack Jr.
In the 23rd Year
of his age.

Editors Comments: If Leesburg resident, Thomas W. Edwards, was correct about Thomas J. Flack's direction of escape out of Leesburg, he possibly was heading northwest out of town on the Waterford Road (current day route 698) as there had been three 'Swan' families residing in that direction.^{vii} Edwards was incorrect concerning Flack being a Lieutenant with Mosby as there is no record of his rank as such and, in fact, no official record of his enrollment with the 43rd Virginia Cavalry Battalion. Let us never forget the sacrifice of Thomas Jefferson Flack, Jr.

© Hugh Keen, February 2007

ⁱ "Associate Reformed Church, Baltimore, Baltimore, Maryland (1812 -1864) Births or Christenings." A-Z, 1977 Computer Printout; National Archives, Washington D.C. Record Group 29, Records of the Bureau of the Census. 1860 Census, Baltimore County, Maryland, Series M653, Roll 164, page 259.

ⁱⁱ National Archives, Washington, D.C. Record Group 109, War Dept. Collection of Confederate Records. Compiled Military Service Records for soldiers serving in the 1st Maryland Infantry Regiment, Microfilm Series M321, Roll 15, record #301; National Archives, Unfiled Papers and Slips belonging in the Confederate Compiled Service Records, Microfilm Series M347, Roll #130, "Thomas J. Flack, Jr."

ⁱⁱⁱ Keen, Hugh C. and Mewborn, Horace, *43rd Battalion Virginia Cavalry Mosby's Command*. Lynchburg, VA: H. E. Howard, Inc., 1993, pages 120-121.

^{iv} Williamson, James J., *Mosby's Rangers*, Second Edition, New York, Sturgis & Walton Co., 1909, page 159.

^v Letter, Thomas Washington Edwards to Capt. H. O. Clagett dated April 30, 1864. Typescript copy from the John E. Divine collection.

^{vi} Williamson, James J., *Mosby's Rangers*, page 160.

^{vii} Taylor, Yardley. *Map of Loudoun County, Virginia from Actual Surveys*. Philadelphia, Pa.: Thomas Reynolds & Robert Pearsall Smith, Publishers, 1853.