

RECORDS OF THE CONFEDERATE HISTORIAN

Patrick McCawley

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ARCHIVES AND HISTORY
Printed in the United States of America

PAMPHLET ACCOMPANYING
SOUTH CAROLINA MICROCOPY NUMBER 16

Citation

The following form for citations to documentary material on the microfilm is suggested:
Records of the Confederate Historian, Roll of Honor,
page 1 (South Carolina Archives Microcopy
Number 16 or Sc-Ar M-16).

INTRODUCTION

This six-roll microfilm publication reproduces seven volumes that represent one of South Carolina's efforts to honor its soldiers who served in the Confederate Army between 1861 and 1865. The first two volumes are the result of an early attempt to compile the names of South Carolina's war dead; the remaining five result from later attempts to compile rosters of all units raised by the state during the war. Although the volumes and records associated with the effort are part of the Confederate Historian record group (RG 127), the work involved several state and private organizations as well. Despite the work done between 1862 and 1905, the records filmed here are incomplete and cannot be said to be unconditionally accurate. They can be used, however, as an alternative source for documenting Confederate service and, as such, are a useful companion to the compiled service records created by the federal government.

Background

This story begins during the war. The Convention of the People of the State of South Carolina, still meeting twenty-one months after passing the Ordinance of Secession, passed a resolution on 17 September 1862 authorizing the governor to collect the names of South Carolina's deceased soldiers and to record the names in a suitable book "as a token of respect to their memories and a legacy of inestimable value to their friends." In a December message to the General Assembly, Governor Francis W. Pickens announced the appointment of William B. Johnston to the task—an action the legislature concurred with in January of the new year.¹

Johnston, the editor of a Columbia newspaper and a school master, addressed circulars to regimental commanders asking for names of and details about fallen soldiers. He also placed notices in newspapers throughout the state, asking friends and family for information. By November 1863, Johnston could report to the legislature that he had compiled over 4,000 names, which had been arranged and placed in the legislative library.²

The General Assembly became disenchanted with Johnston the following year when the committee assigned to review his work found several glaring errors. The most notable had General Maxcy Gregg dying on 17 September 1862 at Sharpsburg, Maryland, instead of on 13 December 1862 at Fredericksburg, Virginia. As Johnston's replacement, the committee recommended William J. Rivers, a professor at South Carolina College and a founding member of the South Carolina Historical Society. The full General Assembly approved the appointment on 23 December 1864. Rivers quickly appealed to the citizenry for help, but General William T. Sherman's march through South Carolina closed down the postal service and forced Rivers to flee. When postal service resumed at the end of the war, Rivers wrote to company officers asking for lists of dead from their commands. Their response encouraged Rivers, and he reported in November 1866 that he had recorded over 9,000 names. He also said that the 7,000 names collected by Johnston had not been turned over to him, although he had even offered to pay for the material. Johnston remained in Columbia, serving as editor of Columbia's *Phoenix* and winning election as Richland County coroner and magistrate in 1868. He died in Chicago, Illinois, in 1870.³ The roll he had compiled seemed to have vanished.

In 1867 Rivers solicited the help of tax collectors and several ladies' memorial associations, which had sprung up in parts of the state.

Rivers compiled the information he received into two lists. His primary list—the one he considered the more accurate—recorded names he had received from company officers or family and friends of deceased soldiers. His second list recorded names taken from published adjutant reports, burial lists, and other Confederate government records—sources he thought needed verifying. Rivers intended to publish both lists; he planned to arrange the names alphabetically and to supply an introduction, which would include a chronological account of the raising of state troops, a brief history of each unit, statistical tables of deaths, and a list of engagements in which state troops had participated.⁴

The new state government established under the Constitution of 1868 ended state funding for Rivers's project. He, however,

used his own resources for the next several years to continue the work. In 1869, the Survivors Association of South Carolina organized to preserve historical material relating to the war. It asked Rivers to become its librarian, and although he declined, he gave it much of his material in the summer of 1870. He also supervised its conversion of his primary list into a carefully-inscribed Roll of the Dead and prepared an appendix to the Roll that listed the names he had not verified.⁵

A noted historian and prominent Charleston attorney, Edward McCrady, Jr., played a leading role in the Association through his service as founder and later as president of the local Charleston chapter and chairman of the executive board of the state chapter. Under McCrady's leadership, the Association urged surviving officers and others to prepare rosters of their units and began to collect original reports, letters, and other papers relating to military operations in the war. The executive board also tried to obtain subscriptions to publish the Roll of the Dead—but without much success. In the late 1870s, despite McCrady's continued interest in compiling and collecting Confederate records, the activities of the association declined.⁶

On 23 November 1881, McCrady, now a member of the South Carolina House of Representatives, introduced "A Bill to Provide for the Preparation of Rolls of Troops Furnished by the State of South Carolina to the Army of the Confederate States, and of the Militia of the State in Active Service during the War between the Confederate and United States." The House Military Committee quickly rejected the bill because of inadequate funding. Undeterred, McCrady reintroduced the bill the following January. This time, after McCrady and several other legislators:

"made the appeal that the State should at least do them [the veterans] the trifling justice to hand down to posterity the names of those who with such heroic fortitude bore the suffering and with willingness gave up their lives for the cause they loved so well,"⁷

the House accepted the bill almost unanimously.

Ratified on 30 January 1882, the new act authorized the adjutant and inspector general to prepare for eventual publication rolls and

brief sketches of each regiment, battalion, or independent company that had served during the war. Adjutant and Inspector General Arthur M. Manigault, a rice planter, former Confederate general, and member of an old and wealthy family, began almost immediately to compile and prepare the rolls. McCrady and the Survivors' Association gave Manigault a considerable amount of the material they had collected, and Manigault himself purchased for \$12.50 a roll of deceased soldiers—the origin of which, then unknown, would be identified later as the long-lost Johnston roll. In 1885, Manigault received from Rivers, who was living in Chestertown, Maryland, material Rivers still had from his work on his roll of deceased soldiers.⁸

Manigault appealed for help through correspondence and newspapers, and he found abundant and valuable sources for names and other information in the increasingly popular reunions. In 1883, he was able to report that he had completed 60 percent of the rolls. His sources dwindled, however, when local reunions began to devote more time to social affairs than to the time Manigault thought they should be spending on the compilation of rosters. To fill gaps, Manigault asked the War Department in Washington for information, and he suggested printing the rolls already collected to send to veterans for correction. Manigault died in 1886, and his death slowed work considerably. The new adjutant general, M. L. Bonham, Jr., had no interest in the project. He reported in 1887 that because he lacked time and money, he had done little work on the rolls, which, he expected, would never be completed.⁹

In 1891, Adjutant and Inspector General Hugh L. Farley, noting an increase in the research use of the rolls, recommended printing them cheaply, distributing the cheap copies for correction, then publishing corrected versions as a book. Both Governor Ben Tillman and the state veterans association urged the General Assembly to act upon these recommendations. The legislature acted in late 1892 by appropriating eight hundred dollars to complete the rolls. Although the passage of time created difficulties, General Farley lauded the zeal shown by surviving veterans and reported a steady and diligent effort by his office.¹⁰

Farley recommended publishing the rolls and selecting someone to edit the compiled material and supervise the preparation

of short historical sketches of each unit as called for in the Act of 1882. He estimated the cost for publication at between \$3,000 and \$8,000. In a joint resolution passed on 20 December 1893, the General Assembly appointed J. B. Kershaw, an ex-Confederate major general and former state legislator, to prepare the rolls and historical sketches. Unfortunately, Kershaw died in April 1894 without accomplishing much. With General Assembly authorization, the governor appointed the recently-retired General Farley to the position in December 1894. Farley was the first to use the title "Historian of Confederate Records."¹¹

Farley sought and received the support of the newly-formed United Confederate Veterans. A UCV committee consisting of General C. I. Walker, Edward McCrady, and Farley petitioned the General Assembly for \$3,000 to print the assembled rolls and distribute them throughout the state for corrections. Once the rolls had been corrected or revised, Farley planned to publish them with a history of the state in the war, including the sacrifice of the people in general, a collection of brigade histories and histories of the independent commands. The General Assembly responded by appropriating \$1,000 in 1896 to print the rolls for distribution and correction—enough to print only 49,525 names, leaving 12,000 to 15,000 names still to be printed. Farley received additional appropriations for 1897, but his death on 30 September of that year again left the project incomplete.¹²

Governor William H. Ellerbe appointed Colonel John Peyre Thomas to Farley's position on 9 October 1897. Thomas, a former instructor and superintendent of the Citadel, set to work to recover the rolls still out for correction and collected Farley's accumulated material from his brother and from the adjutant general's office. Fifteen months later, he told the legislature he had corrected rolls for all Confederate units raised by South Carolina as well as numerous rolls for companies of troops raised solely for state service. Thomas realized the rolls lacked complete information on each soldier, but he believed they were as accurate as possible. In early 1899, Thomas bound the corrected rolls in five large volumes. At this point, Thomas thought he had discharged his legislative mandate. He urged the General Assembly, however, to publish the rolls in book form and to

accompany them with an appropriate historical sketch. The legislature neither responded nor appropriated money to continue Thomas' work.¹³

Despite this, Thomas kept his office open and continued to collect material for the historical sketches. Using a manuscript written by Professor Rivers after the war and the rolls that had been collected, Thomas prepared an account of the way South Carolina organized and raised troops for Confederate service. In his report to the legislature on 20 December 1899, he included this account, again urged publication of the rolls and sketches, and provided several cost options for consideration. At this time, Thomas resigned, citing the lack of financial support shown by the legislature.¹⁴

The collected material returned to the adjutant general's office for storage. The rolls and sketches remained there for several years gathering dust, while the adjutant general urged the General Assembly to publish or in some way preserve them. In March 1903, the War Department, under a Congressional mandate, began to create what are now commonly called the compiled service records. M. P. Tribble, a member of the legislature, received a gubernatorial appointment as the state agent in this federal project. He took possession of the material in the adjutant general's hands and issued a state-wide call for information to supplement the state-compiled rolls. The War Department interpreted the legislation as a call only for original or contemporary documents. Tribble reported to the 1904 General Assembly that he had added eighty-seven original rolls to the other material. Sometime in 1904, Tribble packed and shipped the material to the War Department in Washington, DC. The length of time the records remained in Washington is unknown. What is known, however, is that of the over 850 rolls in Tribble's possession, only 241 were original documents.¹⁵

Support for a separate publication on South Carolina's troops still existed. In 1905, the General Assembly gave the recently-revamped South Carolina Historical Commission responsibility for compiling and publishing the rosters of South Carolina's Confederate units. The adjutant general turned over to the Historical Commission all the Confederate material in its posses-

sion. A. S. Salley, secretary of the commission, began indexing the rolls on card files that are still in use in the Reference Room of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History and asked the General Assembly for money to publish the rolls. Salley soon discovered many discrepancies between the rolls compiled by the state and photostats of original muster and pay rolls, which he acquired from the War Department. He eventually published three volumes of *South Carolina Troops in Confederate Service* between 1913 and 1930, but these volumes only covered infantry regiments one through five. Salley based the volumes almost entirely on the material he received from Washington.¹⁶

Although the project envisioned by William Rivers, Edward McCrady, Hugh Farley, and John P. Thomas never fully materialized, the volumes and other records compiled over the years remain and provide a valuable source for both genealogical and historical researchers.

Descriptive notes

Roll of Honor

William B. Johnston compiled the Roll of Honor between his appointment in December 1862 and his dismissal in December 1864. Originally housed in the legislative library, the volume disappeared on Johnston's dismissal and did not reappear until purchased by the adjutant general in October 1882. The adjutant general and subsequent officers in charge of compiling the Confederate rolls mistakenly considered this manuscript volume to be the work of Professor Rivers—a mistake perpetuated until December of 1993 when this author, on the basis of errors cited by the House Military Committee in December 1864, identified the volume as Johnston's.¹⁷

The 6,344 names in the volume are inscribed on blue-lined paper measuring 22½" x 17⅛". The volume is no longer in its original binding, for the pages were laminated and placed in a post binder in 1967. Each letter of the alphabet has a section that lists soldiers who died through December 1863, evidently the names Johnston reported submitting to the legislature the same month. For letters A through M, there is an additional section,

which includes the names of some soldiers who died in 1864—apparently Johnston had not finished inscribing the names he had collected during 1864 when the General Assembly dismissed him. In each section, the names are arranged lexicographically by the first three letters of the last name. The handwritten column headings are titled Name, Rank, Regiment, Company, Date of Death, and Cause of Death.

Roll of the Dead

Professor William J. Rivers compiled the names in this volume between his appointment to succeed Johnston in December 1864 and 1870, when he turned his list over to the Survivors Association. The volume achieved its present form in the summer of 1870, when the Association hired the widow of a Confederate officer to arrange and inscribe the names under the supervision of Professor Rivers. Edward McCrady, a member of the executive board of the Association, had possession of or access to the Roll through the mid 1870s. On 21 April 1947, J. H. McGee, a vice president with the South Carolina National Bank, stumbled across an unidentified roll in the bank's vault in Charleston. McGee, unaware of its provenance, offered the manuscript to the U. S. War Department. The War Department accepted the gift and placed it with the other Confederate records in the National Archives. In 1993, this author identified the volume, which the South Carolina Department of Archives and History had acquired on microfilm in 1985, as the work of Rivers. The National Archives returned the original manuscript to state custody in June 1994.¹⁸

The Roll of Dead is a loose manuscript that lists 13,138 names in two sections. The first section contains 316 pages measuring 11 3/8" x 17 3/4". The pages were preprinted with the heading "ROLL OF THE DEAD"; the subtitle "South Carolina Troops, Confederate State Service" beneath; and column headings titled Name, District, Age, Rank, Company, Regiment, Date of Death, and Cause and Place of Death and Remarks. The 9,559 names in this section are arranged alphabetically by last name. The third page, covering names between Adkinson and Alford, is missing from both the original manuscript and the 1985 microfilm copy.

The second section, in Rivers' handwriting, contains ninety sheets, which list 3,579 names. The 12" x 18 1/8" paper in this section is of noticeably lesser quality. Like the names in the first section, the names in this section are arranged alphabetically. Handwritten across the top of the first page for the letter "a" are the words "to follow after the Official list of A," and beneath those are the words "Appendix—Chiefly from printed reports of casualties." The column headings follow the same style for each letter of the alphabet and though handwritten, they are essentially the same as those for the first section. About 32 percent—or 1,139—of the names in this section are crossed out. These elided names, however, are included in the first section—sometimes spelled slightly differently and sometimes accompanied by variant information.

Roll of South Carolina Volunteers in the Confederate States Provisional Army

Colonel John P. Thomas put these five large folio volumes together in January 1899 from what he considered the most complete company rolls he had. The 599 individual rolls that make up these folios list infantry, artillery, and cavalry companies and field and staff rosters for all South Carolina's Confederate units and general officers. They also include 81 rolls of companies in state service and other state military organizations—like the quartermaster, commissary, and blockade runners. The names included number 66,531. A never-completed card index to some of these names is available in the Reference Room at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

The roll includes handwritten, typed, and printed pages. Most are about 16 7/8" x 25 1/8", though some vary in size and color. Few of the company rolls contain the date of compilation, but the date for some is implied by the information they contain. The roll of Company G, 2 SC Infantry, for example, was probably compiled in 1898 or shortly thereafter because individuals still living in 1898—but not after—are noted. Similarly, the compilation for the roll of Company A, 12 SC Infantry can be dated about May 1886. Some rolls include corrections that were added after the rolls were bound. The roll for Company K, 13 SC Infantry, for example, provides information that was current up to 1898, but it

also includes one death date of 26 December 1907, which is entered in different ink.

The volumes break down as follows:

Volume 1

- Staff of General Officers from South Carolina
- Staff of state Engineer's Department
- Staff of state Adjutant General's Department
- Staff of state Quartermaster Department
- Staff of state Commissary Department
- Confederate Medical Officers from South Carolina
- Confederate Chaplains from South Carolina
- Organization of South Carolina Brigades
- Sketch of Hagood's Brigade

Volume 2

- Staff and Company Rolls for 1st Infantry Regiment through the 16th Infantry Regiment

Volume 3

- Staff and Company Rolls for 17th Infantry Regiment through the 27th Infantry Regiment, and the same for
 - 1st (Orr's) Rifles
 - 2nd (Moore's) Rifles
 - Hampton Legion (Infantry only)
 - Holcombe Legion (Infantry only)
 - Palmetto Sharpshooters
 - 3rd (James') Infantry Battalion
 - 7th (Nelson's) Infantry Battalion
 - Manigault's Infantry Battalion
 - Brooks' Infantry Battalion

Volume 4

- Staff and Company Rolls for all Cavalry and Artillery units

Volume 5

- Company Rolls of State Troops, Reserves, Militia, and Independent Organizations

- Officers in the Confederate Navy
- Officers of the Signal Corps
- Officers of the Iron-clads
- Blockade Runners and their Captains
- List of Armament of SC Artillery Batteries
- Roster of General Officers appointed from SC
- Field Officers of the Artillery
- Charleston Units in the War
- Alphabetical List of Field Officers in SC Units
- Organizational List of Field Officers in SC Units
- Individual Records

Related Records

The following records are related to the efforts to compile the rolls included in this micropublication. Researchers should also consult the *Guide to Civil War Records: A Guide to the Records in the South Carolina Department of Archives and History* by Patrick McCawley (Columbia: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1994).

Confederate Historian, Recordbooks of Deceased Soldiers, 1864-1867, 3 v.

These volumes are the notebooks kept by Professor Rivers to record the names of deceased soldiers. Volumes A and A-2 contain the names that appear in the first section of the Roll of the Dead. Volume B contains the names that appear in the second section—Rivers' appendix.

Confederate Historian, Scrapbook, n.d., 1 v.

This volume contains newspaper clippings related to John P. Thomas's work as confederate historian. The clippings are not identified by newspaper or date.

Confederate Historian, Miscellaneous Records, 1864-1903, 14 c.

This material consists primarily of handwritten and printed rolls accumulated through the various efforts of the Survivors Association, the adjutant general, and the confederate historian.

Confederate Historian, Miscellaneous Historical Sketches, 1866–1898, 1 a.

This group of loose manuscripts are remnants of historical sketches collected by the various officials charged with compiling the Confederate rolls. Additional sketches collected by Tribble are listed separately in the *Guide to Civil War Records*.¹⁹

Adjutant General, Letterbooks, 1882–87, 5 v.

These letterpress copies of correspondence from the adjutant generals relate to their responsibilities in compiling the roster of Confederate soldiers. They consist mostly of requests for information or for the return of completed rolls.

Adjutant General, Recordbooks, 1882–86, 2 v.

These volumes track the collection of Confederate rolls under the adjutant general. The information recorded includes the names of persons receiving blank rosters, the date of mailing, and the date of return.

Notes

1. *Journal of the Convention of the People of South Carolina, Held in 1860, 1861, and 1862* (Columbia: R. W. Gibbes, Printer to the Convention, 1862), 440–41; *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of South Carolina Being the Session of 1862* (Printed annually by various printers), 166 (hereafter called House Journals); *Reports and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, 1862* (Printed annually by various printers), 209 (hereafter called Reports).
2. *Reports, 1863*, 141–45.
3. *Reports, 1864–1865*, 33–34; *Reports, 1866 Extra Session*, 13; Brent Howard Holcomb, *Records of Deaths in Columbia, SC, 1859–1877* (Columbia: Brent H. Holcomb, 1986), 113; Mss. letter, Rivers to McCrady, 16 July 1870, Papers of the Survivors' Association (11/481), South Carolina Historical Society (SCHS), Charleston.
4. Notations on inside front cover of Volume A, Recordbooks of Deceased Soldiers, Records of the Confederate Historian, South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH), Columbia.
5. *Proceedings of the First and Second Annual meeting of the Survivors' Association of the State of South Carolina* (Charleston: Walker, Evans, & Cogswell, 1870), 23, 25, 27.

6. Ibid, 17; Yates Snowden, *History of South Carolina, Volume IV* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1920), 273–75; *Proceedings of the Third Annual Meeting of the Survivors' Association of the State of South Carolina* (Charleston: Walker, Evans, & Cogswell, 1872), 5.

7. *House Journal, 1881–1882*, 22, 134–35, 331, 489; *News and Courier* (Charleston), 20 January 1882.

8. R. Lookwood Tower, ed., *A Carolinian Goes to War: The Civil War Narrative of Arthur Middleton Manigault* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1983), ix–xiv; *Reports, 1882*, 1319–1320, 1328; Mss. letter, Rivers to Manigault, 27 July 1885, attached to 2nd page of Volume A, Recordbook of Deceased Soldiers, Confederate Historian, SCDAH.

9. *Reports, 1883*, 1075; *Reports, 1885*, 95–96; *Reports, 1887*, 1: 535.

10. *Reports, 1891*, 1: 149; *House Journal, 1891*, 57–58, 225; *House Journal, 1892*, 170–71, 333; *Reports, 1893*, 1: 3.

11. Ibid, 3–4; *House Journal, 1893*, 213, 414; *House Journal, 1894*, 114, 404.

12. *Reports, 1897*, 800–801; *Reports, 1896*, 1: 812–13.

13. *Reports, 1898*, 285–86; *Reports, 1899*, 1: 4, 11; Newspaper clipping of 10 January 1899, Scrapbook, Confederate Historian, SCDAH.

14. *Reports, 1900*, 1: 3–6.

15. *Reports, 1904*, 1: 207–9; Tribble only states he planned to ship the material to Washington in 1904, but the compiled service records for South Carolina soldiers contain some records credited as being in the office of M. P. Tribble, Commissioner for South Carolina. See the record of J. E. Cooper, Co. G, 2 SC State Troops, Roll 169, Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from South Carolina (M267), National Archives, Washington, DC.

16. *Reports, 1906*, 1: 856; A. S. Salley, Jr., *South Carolina Troops in Confederate Service, Volume I* (Columbia: R.L. Bryan Co., 1913), xii, xv.

17. A mss. letter from Rivers to McCrady dated 2 July 1870 speculates whether Johnston's volume survived the burning of Columbia and urges McCrady to approach Johnston through intermediaries for the purpose of obtaining the book if it exists. The records do not indicate from whom the Adjutant General purchased the book in 1882. For an account of the identification of the Roll of Honor and Roll of the Dead, see Patrick McCawley, "A Case of Mistaken Identity," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, Volume 95, No. 1 (Jan, 1994), 64–65.

18. Unfortunately, the records do not identify the woman hired by the association. The story of the roll's journey to Washington is documented in File 1069 (Confederate Records), Legislative and Policy Precedent Files, 1943-1975, Records of the Adjutant General's Office (RG407), National Archives, Washington, DC.

19. John P. Thomas included in his Annual Report of 1898 a list of 76 historical sketches and other papers contained in his office. Additional sketches were added after this report. An article in the *Lancaster Ledger* (30 January 1904) reports that many of the papers collected by Thomas appear to have been lost or mislaid at the State House. ■

Contents of rolls

Roll 1: Roll of Honor

Roll 2: Roll of Dead

Roll 3: Rolls of South Carolina Volunteers in the Confederate States Provisional Army , Volume 1: Field and Staff Officers

Roll 4: Rolls of South Carolina Volunteers in the Confederate States Provisional Army, Volumes 2 & 3: Infantry

Roll 5: Rolls of South Carolina Volunteers in the Confederate States Provisional Army, Volume 4: Cavalry and Artillery

Roll 6: Rolls of South Carolina Volunteers in the Confederate States Provisional Army, Volume 5: State Troops and Miscellaneous ■