



Notes for Robert Kurtz Staton/Staten:

## ROBERT'S ANCESTRY

The ancestry of Robert Kurtz Staton can presently be traced back to Philadelphia , Pennsylvania when Fabian Kortz arrived from Germany on September 30, 1774. Michael Kortz was on the 1782 tax list for Louisa County , Virginia . Either one could have been the father of John Kortz, grandfather of Robert. John Kortz was born between 1770 and 1780 in Virginia . The earliest Tennessee record of John, a blacksmith, was in the Washington County, Tennessee deed book dated August, 1807. John and his wife Margaret had a son, Martin, born 1800-1810 in Virginia and a daughter Emaline. John was a member of Leesburg Presbyterian Church which was organized in 1818 by the Reverend John Whitfield Doak, son of Samuel Doak. During the War of 1812, John Kortz was a sergeant in Captain William McLin's Company (October 12, 1813 to February 8, 1814) of the East Tennessee Militia under the command of Colonel William Lillard.

John's wife, Margaret, died on April 5, 1843 in Washington County , Tennessee . John died about 1850. His will was dated 1849 with the estate being settled in 1851. His daughter, Emaline, who married Uriah Staton on July 27, 1838, was the principal beneficiary of the John Kortz will. Uriah and Emaline Staton had five children, two boys and three girls; William C. (1839), Robert K. (August 8, 1841), Elizabeth D. (1843), Mary C. (1846) and Margaret J. (1848). All five children were born near Leesburg , Tennessee .

At sometime during the Civil War, the spelling of Kortz was changed to Kurtz and Staton to Staten by several families.

## THE WAR BREAKS OUT

Although East Tennessee voted not to secede from the Union , almost 2 to 1, the rest of the state did on June 8, 1861. Therefore, when the State of Tennessee joined the Confederacy, 115,000 joined the Confederate Army and 38,000 joined the Union Army.

At the age of 21, Robert joined the Confederate States Army at Jonesborough on May 3, 1862. He was assigned to Fain's 74th and sent to Knoxville. On July 30, 1862, Fain's 74th was reformed to be the 63rd Volunteer Tennessee Regiment. He was a private in Company "D" and his brother William joined Company "K" of the 60th Tennessee.

On August 23, 1862, Robert came back home and married Isabella Tennessee Gilley. He then returned to the War. While at Tullahoma, Tennessee, Robert wrote the following letter to his wife:

“June 30, 1863

Dear Wife,

I write you a few lines to let you know where I am. We left Cumberland Gap (the) 17th and after 7 days have marched after the Yankees that was at Knoxville. We reached this place and we saw over them one day and took the [railroad] cars for this place. There is said to be a force of Yankees in four miles of this place 60,000 strong and there will be a big fight here in a few days.

There has been very much fighting going on here for several days but the big fight is to come off yet and I think it will come off shortly and I think our Regiment will be in it. I hope that I will get through safe, but a great many will have to fall. I may be one of them, but I hope God will spare me to return home once more to those that is so dear to me. But if I should not and should fall on the battlefield, I will meet you all in heaven. I have not more to write at this time. I am well and in good health.

I must close. Give my love to Mother and family and accept the same for yourself woman. But write soon.

Your affectionate husband until death.

Robert Staten

Direct your letters to:  
Robert Staten  
Company "D" 63rd Regt. Tenn. Vols.  
Gracie Brigade  
Tullahoma, Tenn."

As mentioned in his letter, Cumberland Gap was one of the key passages to the South from the Northeast. General U.S. Grant felt if he could strike a blow to the South by sweeping to Atlanta, it would end the War.

The big fight yet to come mentioned in the letter happened on September 19th and 20th, 1863 at Chickamauga. Robert's Brigade (Gracie's Brigade) was involved in the charge to take Snodgrass Hill. This proved to be the key that won the battle at Chickamauga, but not without a great cost. The Confederate Army loses were 2,673 killed, 20,950 casualties. The Federal Army lost 1,656 killed, 9,749 wounded and 4,774 missing for a total of 16,179 casualties. Each side lost approximately one third its number.

Robert survived the battle but while on guard duty November 26, 1863, he accidentally shot off his right index finger. He was sent to the hospital at Loudon, Tennessee and treated by Doctor Mathias Knead and Doctor Blair. He was there for a week or so but was captured on December 3, 1863. Robert later told his son Buford that he and his fellow soldiers were starving. All he had at the time of his capture was a piece of corn bread in his pocket. He took the cornbread out of his pocket, threw it into the river and said, "Little fishes, this one [meal] is on old Dixie!" He was then sent to the Federal Prison at Louisville, Kentucky.

Robert remained at the Louisville Prison until January 17, 1864 until he was transferred to the prison at Rock Island, Illinois. Robert was housed in Barracks 39 as prisoner number 636 and remained

there until March 6, 1865. He was then sent to Richmond, Virginia for a prisoner exchange which occurred on March 10, 11 and 12, 1865.

At Richmond, 3,499 Confederate prisoners were exchanged and paroled. On March 12, 1865, Robert was sent home to Jonesborough where he took and signed the Oath of Allegiance on April 8, 1865.

Robert may not have known it at the time, but he was lucky just losing a finger in the War. Many others in the 63rd Tennessee were not as fortunate. While Robert was in prison, they went on to Knoxville, Bean's Station, Dandridge, Port Walthall Junction, Swift Creek, Drury's Bluff and Petersburg. At Petersburg, Virginia, they lost their Brigade Commander, General Archibald Gracie, Jr. at the breastworks, killed by a Union shell. Colonel Abraham Fulkerson, Commander of the 63rd Tennessee Infantry Regiment was captured along with their Regimental Flag.

On April 9, 1865, at Lee's Surrender at Appomattox, all that was left of the 63rd Tennessee Regiment was 75 men, consisting of one officer, and 37 cannons. The day of the surrender, the lone officer was sick and the order to "Ground Arms" was given by Sergeant Robert Rhea of Blountville, Tennessee. Once a mighty Regiment, they were barely a company.

#### FARMING AND RAISING A FAMILY

Once the war was now over, Robert returned home to his wife Isabelle, took up farming and raising a family. He was a cobbler (a trade learned as a teenager in Leesburg, TN), a stone mason in addition to being a farmer.

Robert and Isabelle had eleven children, six boys and five girls. The children were: Rufus, Martha Ella, Jeanetta Florence, Charlie, Dora Belle, George, Edgar Burns, Noah Bolton, Fannie Mae, Winnie Davis and Thomas Clayton.

Isabelle Tennessee Gilley Staten passed away on July 2, 1894 at the age of 48 and was buried at Pleasant Hill Cemetery in Greene County, Tennessee. Robert and his sons carved the headstone for her grave which still stands today.

Robert remarried on July 7, 1895 to Lucinda Jane Taylor, daughter Elizabeth Taylor. They only had one child, which made Robert "an even dozen" of course was Buford Guy, born on April 8, 1896. Later in life, Lucinda Jane said while she was growing up, she despised that old man (Robert) and then ended up marrying him.

Lucinda Jane's father, David Taylor, was in the Civil War also except he was a Union Soldier and a Private in "H: Company of the 4th Tennessee Cavalry. He served from August 3, 1863 to July 12, 1865.

In Robert's later years, he and David would sit around and reminisce about the War with statements as 'We kicked your tails at so and so!' "Yes, but we got you back at so and so!" Although they were on opposing sides in the War, they ended up as friends.

The miseries of War and poor health finally caught up with Robert. His skin had yellowed, his stomach had distended and his heart was enlarged and had an irregular beat. Rheumatism had set in causing swelling and loss of motion in his right knee. On Thursday, June 24, 1915, Robert Kurtz Staten lost his battle with cancer. In the final days before his death, doctors prescribed opium to ease his pain. He was buried beside his first wife Isabelle at Pleasant Hill Cemetery. His sons made his tombstone since he had taught them his stone mason's trade.

#### EPILOGUE

Robert Kurtz Staten was 5'9" tall and had blue eyes and light brown with a slightly reddish cast to it. He wasn't a war time hero that we are aware of, but was typical of the men of his day. He did what he had to do and went on about his business.

Growing up in his day was very hard physically by today's standards. If you wanted food, you grew it. If you wanted a house, you built it. If you wanted to travel, most of time, you walked.

Robert must have been scared when he made the charge at Snodgrass Hill at the Battle of Chickamauga. He was probably worried when he shot his finger off about infection and amputation. He must have wondered if he would ever see his wife Isabelle again as he sat in prison since so many men died of disease. And imagine, Robert was only 21 or 22 years of age at the time.

Raising a large family was no easy task. As was normal in his day, families were large which helped with all the work that had to be done. Just when the older children were able to ease the labor chores for Robert and Isabelle, she passed away when she was 48 and he was 53 years old. For most people, it would have been a time in their lives to enjoy the fruits of their labors. Unfortunately, it was not to be for Robert.

Robert drew a small pension for serving in the War from 1907 until his death in 1915. His wife Lucinda Jane drew a pension from 1929 until 1935. She had a very difficult time getting the Widow's Indigent Pension accepted since she was not his first wife. The pensions at that time amounted to about \$30.00 per month. It wasn't much money but was better than none since the average annual income was \$440.00 during that time.

Although Robert, his wives and children have all passed on, he still should not be forgotten. He was our ancestor that lived during a very difficult time in our nation both politically and economically. He was just a good and ordinary man. He was a father, a farmer and a soldier.