



Freeland Culley, ca. 1861
2nd Kentucky Infantry, CSA
KHS Collections, 2011.35

Putting a Face with a Collection

KHS ACQUIRES AMBROTYPE OF FREELAND CULLEY



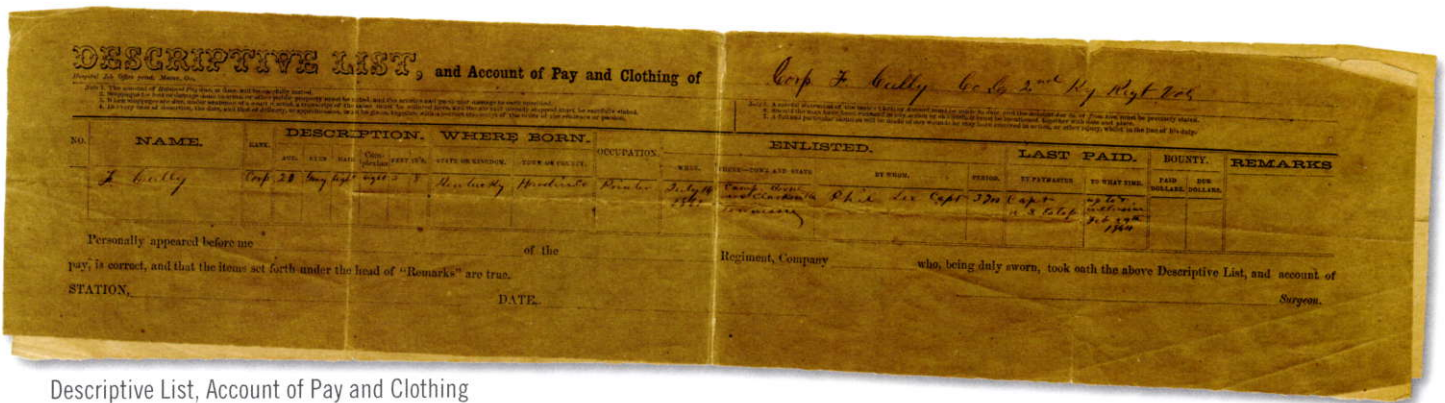
Confederate 1st National Flag, 2nd Kentucky
Infantry, CSA carried by Color-Sergeant
Freeland H. Culley of Co. C
Donated by John Cully, 1939.186

Until recently, the Confederate 1st National Flag from the 2nd Kentucky Infantry, Confederate States of America (CSA) only had an associated name, Color-Sgt. Freeland H. Culley, of Elizabethtown, Ky. Culley was color-bearer of Company C, 2nd Kentucky Infantry (CSA). But the Kentucky Historical Society (KHS) did not have an image of him—until now!

That changed recently when KHS was contacted about an opportunity to acquire an ambrotype of Culley. An ambrotype is a negative image on a glass medium, and when inverted and placed in front of a dark background, a positive image is produced. This was one of the primary forms of photography from the early 1850s through the 1870s, and a popular form during the Civil War. The image of Culley has a handwritten note from the family stating, “Freeland Culley – Age 16 – 1861, Grandfather of Alice, Eugene and Will T. Matthis. Served 4 years in the Civil War. 2 as color bearer & 2 in cavalry – Died Age 51.” The inside case also has a handwritten message stating the year taken and that the image is of “F H Cully.” Thanks to the Kentucky Treasures Fund of the Kentucky Historical Society Foundation, this acquisition has become a reality and will now be preserved for future generations.

KHS also has four related items in special collections, including an original “Application for Furlough under General Order No. 227,” which describes Culley in March 1864 and has the accompanying furlough on the reverse. Culley was a printer prior to the war and is “aged 20 years, 5 feet, 9 inches high, light complexion, grey eyes, and light hair.” Culley’s “Descriptive List, and Account of Pay and Clothing,” “Oath of Allegiance,” and “Soldier’s Hospital Certificate” are also in the KHS collection.

Freeland was born to Judge James Dewitt and Elizabeth Lauretta (Buckner) Culley of Elizabethtown in 1844; he was one of seven children. At the outbreak of hostilities, he mustered into service as a private in the Confederate Army at Camp Boone, Tenn., on Aug. 16, 1861, where he served for three years. He served with the 2nd Kentucky Infantry (CSA), part of the Orphan Brigade, and later mounted infantry in late 1864. Culley saw action early in the war at Fort Donelson, where he was captured and made a prisoner of war on Feb. 16, 1862. He spent the next nine months at Camp Morton,



Descriptive List, Account of Pay and Clothing

a Union prisoner of war camp in Indiana, prior to being exchanged at Vicksburg, Miss., in November 1862 and soon returned to his regiment in Chattanooga, Tenn.

Culley participated in many major engagements in the western theatre during the Civil War, including Stones River, Chickamauga, Mission Ridge and the Atlanta campaign. He was promoted to color-colonel at Manchester in 1863. He was wounded on two occasions during his service, first at Stones River, as a part of Roger W. Hanson's Brigade where he received a slight wound to his arm and immediately returned to his regiment. He later received a severe flesh wound to his right leg near Jonesboro, Ga., on Aug. 31, 1864 and was admitted to Ocmulgee Hospital in Macon, Ga. His official record shows that he was present at his company's muster roll in September and October 1864. Culley would return to his regiment for the remainder of the war, until the 2nd Kentucky Infantry (CSA) surrendered at Washington, Ga. on May 6, 1865 as a color-sergeant. Culley swore his oath of allegiance to the United States on June 10, 1865 in Nashville, Tenn.

started the first post-war Elizabethtown newspaper, "The Weekly Banner." Freeland Culley sold his share of the firm a few months later and moved to Mississippi, where he and a new partner, B. B. Paddock, bought "The Fayette Chronicle" and unsuccessfully started another called "The New South." Culley is listed in the 1870 United States Federal Census for Fayette, Jefferson County, Miss., enumerated on July 21, 1870, as a printer and boarding with another family.

Culley married Mary C. Baldwin on Jan. 19, 1871 in Jefferson County, Miss. The 1880 U.S. Census shows the couple having three children, Clyde, Pearl B. and Carroll T. As late as the 1890 Veterans Census, Culley lived in Fayette, Jefferson County, Miss. It is unknown what happened to his first wife, as he is married again on Oct. 26, 1893 in Elizabethtown, Ky. to Sallie McDonald Bryan, the widow of James Hillary Bryan, a prominent local businessman. Culley sold the newspaper to his son, Clyde D. Culley in the early 1890s. He had spent most of his postwar years in Mississippi in the newspaper business, at least from July 21, 1870 until Oct. 26, 1893. A year and a half later, Culley died on March 23, 1895, and was laid to rest in St. James Cemetery in Elizabethtown.



Oath of Allegiance, June 10, 1865

However, Culley's story does not conclude with the end of the Civil War. Following the war, he returned to Elizabethtown, where he became the junior member of the firm Wood & Culley. The senior partner, Richard B. B. Wood, had married Freeland's sister, Lauretta Ellen Culley, on Oct. 7, 1862. They

Adding Culley's ambrotype to the KHS collection was an important acquisition because of its historical value. Identified Confederate ambrotypes are rare, especially of Kentucky Confederates and the state has no official records for the 2nd Kentucky Infantry (CSA).

Perhaps most important is that the ambrotype puts a human face on a collection of items that KHS already owns. Visitors need no longer try to imagine what Freeland Culley looked like, since KHS now has a "snapshot" of him from around 1861. This acquisition also makes the existing collection more complete, with several archival documents from his war service, the flag he carried with the 2nd Kentucky and now an image of Freeland Culley himself. ✨