

JAMES THADDEUS AND MARY ANGELINE MCMILLEN CEARNAL

A good deal of time, though and effort over the past twenty-five years have been devoted to attempting to determine the parentage and ultimate fate of James Thaddeus Cearnal. I can only conclude that if anyone every knew where he came from or how he got to Dade County, that information is long forgotten. As to what became of him, we can only rely on family tradition and the very meager records till in existence.

By way of background, the name come to us from the Old French and designated a place on the wall of a castle where men with crossbows were stationed. Men so placed were called Carnels. The spelling of the name varies from Cearnal to Cearnel, Carnel, Carnal, Carnell, Carnall, Kirnel, Kirnal and Cernal to name but a few.

It would appear that all of the Cearnals in this country descend from one or possibly two immigrants from England who settled in Virginia and North Carolina, the family then migrated to Tennessee and ultimately to Missouri. There are no listings for Cearnal or any variant spelling in the 1830 Census of Missouri. The earliest record I am able to find is of a marriage of Jesse Carnal to Mahala Blankenship in Ralls County in 1832. By the 1840 Census there are families with the surname in Coles, Jackson and Howard Counties. I can connect James Thaddeus Cearnal with none of these families.

The 1850 Census of Dade County, Missouri shows Mary Angeline McMillen in the household of her father, Robert D. McMillen. The first evidence of James Thaddeus is found in the land records of the same county. On September 6th and November 24th 1854, he purchased a total of 180.32 acres of land in Section 5, Washington Township. The land lies south and east of Lockwood. The purchase price of 425.00 was secured by two notes, the first to William Snadon for 80 acres (the September transaction) and the second a Trustees Deed to Richard S. Jacobs for the total purchase price of both parcels. Both fell due in March 1856 with the deed to Jacobs entailing "two yoke of oxen, my wagon, 2 log chains, all of the corn I now possess, say about 150 bushes, all my prok and stock hogs, all my household and kitchen furniture and all my farming utensils."

On April 19, 1856, the land and presumably the other items were sold to Newton H. McClure for 550.00 by John Wetzel, trustee. The record ends with a relinquishment of dower rights by Mary A. Cearnal, wife, for the sum of 125.00

We have next to deal with family tradition. James Robert Cearnal told his children that he remembered his father coming to "Grandpap McMillen's house" where they were living in the uniform of a Confederate cavalry man sometime after the start of the Civil War. According to his account, Grandmother met him at the yard fence where they talked for a very long time, (my grandmother always said two hours), at the conclusion of the conversation he rode away and never returned. The story goes that at the close of the War Between the States, he accompanied General Price to Mexico and took part in the abortive attempt to colonize at Carlotta. Following the failure of that enterprise, he returned to Texas where he started another family.

Although Mary Angeline Cearnal lived to be over eighty and was close to

her grandchildren, especially Uncle Volney and Aunt Monia, she never confided what was discussed on that day. Her son, James Robert was bitter toward his father all of his life.

A cousin, Maude Morris Finley remembered that her mother who was a niece of Grandmother Cearnal's, told her that Grandpap McMillen "ran James Thaddeus off" for being mean to his wife.

A further twist to the story lies in the knowledge that a photograph of James Thaddeus in a Confederate uniform on horseback was known to exist into this century. Last believed to be in the possession of Mary Lealon Morris who married and moved to Vinita, Oklahoma where she died. The picture has disappeared.

THE OFFICIAL RECORDS OF THE WAR OF THE REBELLION and the National Archives five further details on the career of this most elusive ancestor. Sometime in 1861, he entered the service of the State of Missouri in Newton County as drillmaster and was later appointed Inspector General of one of the divisions of the Missouri State Guard. Following the Battle of Wilson's Creek (Oak Hill) on August 10, 1861, he was appointed Aide-de-Camp to General Sterling Price, "in recognition of his gallant conduct and valuable services as a volunteer aide". During the Battle of Pea Ridge (Elkhart Tavern), March 6-8, 1862, he led the advance up the Telegraph Road, his command capturing the first Federal prisoners. He was listed as "severely wounded" in this engagement but survived to collect 370.00 in back pay during October of the same year.

Indications of his whereabouts follow and are included in their entirety.

Near Sylamore, Arkansas
April 5, 1863

GENERAL MARMADUKE:

Sir:

From the best information I can get, there are three regiments of enemy foraging in and about Berryville, carrying with them four pieced of artillery. They surpirsed my command under Colonel Woodson, on the night of the 2nd, recapturing a number of wagons and mules which had been captured three days before.

My command is now encamped on Buffalo, about 50 miles from this point. I will dispatch to you again as soon as I reach my command, giving you all the particulars as to the numbers and object of the enemy.

Respectfully,

J.T. CEARNAL, Colonel Commanding

Camp near Lunenburg Ark.
June 11th, 1863

To: Maj. Tho. L. Snead
AA. Gen.
Gen. Prices Div.
Trans. Miss. Dept.

Major: I have the honor to respectfully submit the following report of affairs in this vicinity and on and near the border; viz: That owing to the spirit of Jayhawking and robbing, recruiting has become a very stale business--in fact there is no chance to recruit here without an armed force could be sent here to remain. What few men I have recruited are unarmed and the consequence is that I cannot enforce any order, or discipline and my men are leaving me every day and joining those bands of thieves. I have but few men I can depend on and I do not hold them with any certainty--in fact unless I can be sustained by a cavalry force I had as well give up the idea of getting men in this country.

This country is in deplorable condition--a man is not safe if it is known that he has ten dollars in his pocket--the men committing these depredations are men who claim to be Missourians and Southern men. They rob indiscriminately with regard to age, sex or party. The consequence is that a great portion of the men coming out of Missouri prefer joining these parties to going into the regular service.

I would respectfully beg leave to suggest that a few companies of Cavalry be sent here to put down this worst of all practices. If two or three companies with the proper men as officers, (that is men who would see justice done) could be sent to this country it would relieve the people and the country of this the worst curse that could befall it.

If this cannot be done I would respectfully ask to be ordered to duty elsewhere as I am doing nothing here and fee that I am not acting in good faith to remain here any longer.

I am sin (cerely)
with great Respect
Your Obdt., Serv--t
J.T. Cearnal, Lt. Col. and
Recruiting Officer.

On July 10th, 1863, he is mentioned in a dispatch as having 60 or 70 men and being near Salem, Arkansas

The last concrete evidence of James Thaddeus Cearnal is a mention of him serving with Tyler's Brigade which on November 20th, 1864 was camped 30 miles west of Fort Towson, Cherokee Nation (Oklahoma) and which had been ordered to proceed to Clarksville, Texas.

I will continue to work at unraveling the mystery of this man but with few realistic hopes of success. Many veteran's of the Confederate Brigades out of Texas were named Cearnal. None are mentioned in the MEXICAN TIMES, the newspaper published by the Confederate colonists in Mexico. To my knowledge there isn't a single scrap of evidence linking James Thaddeus

Cearnal to any group or family other than his wife and children in Missouri.

Grandmother Cearnal never again had a permanently settled home, she lived at various times with her brother Johnse McMillen and in her old age stayed with her children. She apparently had hard times, since there is evidence that some land she owned was sold for taxes owed in the amount of 5.00. Leota Voorheis of Miller, Mo. writes "Aunt Sis McMillen Cearnal as we called her...Bud's mother. She used to come to my parents home visiting. She always wore a long black dress and a black hood and I can remember she would put her hand in a pocket of her dress and put something in her mouth to chew on. I didn't know then it was snuff."

Her grandchildren remembered her sitting in the orchard smoking a little clay pipe.

She lies between her father and brother in an unmarked grave in the City Cemetery in Greenfield, Missouri



FAMILY OF JAMES R. AND SARAH CORDELIA MORRIS CEARNAL
Almer May, Robert Ellis, Volney Ray, Lula Edmonia, Harriet Louise
James Robert Cearnal, George Vest, Benton Elvis, Sarah Cordelia Morris Cearnal

Della May _____ Harold
m. Sam Voorhees

Mary Ellender _____ Monte Glenn, Ruby Ellen,
m. Edmund B. _____ Mable Marie, Freda Bourbon,
Stafford _____ Verle Agnes

Hayes _____ Ralph, Dora, Hayes
m. Neva

Harriet P.
Cearnal m.
Robert G.
Archer

Nannie Belle _____ Eugene, Arthur
m. Leonard Loop

Seth Thomas _____ Harriet
m. Inez Hill Burton

Fred _____ Herbert, Marguerite, Robert
m. Mary Pearl Towner Mary Katherine, Virginia

Robert Johnson
m. Erma Bumgarten

Bessie Vide _____ Oma
m. ENnest Smith

Olive E. _____ Virgil, daughter
m. Harry Mitchel

Russel
m. May Davis

Mary Gertrude

Donald Boyd

Lula Edmonia _____ Frances Jewel, Homer Allen,
m. Homer Sherrel _____ Wendell Ervin, Donald Boyd,
Mary Louise

Volney Ray _____ Calvin Raymond, Cordelia May,
m. Vola Meadors _____ Paul Woodrow, Jewel Arlene,
Kathryn Louise, Helen Nadine
Volney, Thaddeus, James Riley

Robert Ellis _____ William, Jackie Lee

m. Hazel Frick _____ Robert Ellis, Leroy Ellsworth,
Constance Alene, James Edwin

Harriet Louise _____ Charles Marvin, Harold Laverne
m. Charles Teeter _____ Mary, Martha Louise

Almer May _____ Phyllis Maxine, Ardith Louise
m. Alva Ingle _____ Garret Wayne

George Vest _____ Ceola, Hubert Dale, Lorraine,
m. Lucille Hall _____ Dorothy Jean

Benton Elvis _____ Monia Kathleen, Donald Clyde
m. Ethel Ritchart