

Clay Family Members in Service During the War

The Civil War in Kentucky not only divided communities, turning friends and neighbors into foes, it also tore many families apart as well. The Clays were no exception. Henry Clay once said that he hoped he would never live to see his beloved Union torn apart by Civil War. Henry Clay got his wish. Unfortunately, his family was not so lucky.

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Lieutenant James B. Clay Jr., CSA

Grandson of Henry Clay. The last act of the Confederate Department of War was to accept Jimmy's resignation, making him the last Confederate officer.

Captain Henry Clay III, USA

Grandson of Henry Clay. Henry wrote of his fear of meeting his brother on the field of battle and his relief that his brother was a prisoner of war. Henry died of typhoid in 1862 at the age of 28.

Lieutenant Thomas Julian Clay, CSA

Grandson of Henry Clay. Tommy was captured at the surrender of Ft. Donelson and imprisoned at Camp Chase. Tommy died of typhoid in 1863 at the age of 23.

Lt. Colonel Eugene Erwin, CSA

Grandson of Henry Clay. Eugene served in the Vicksburg campaign and is the only Clay family member to die in battle. He was shot dead leading a charge on June 25, 1862. A promotion to the rank of General was waiting for him had he survived.

Captain Harry Boyle Clay, CSA

Grandson of Henry Clay. Harry served under General John Hunt Morgan. Harry was captured in a raid on September 4, 1864 and forced by the commanding Union officer to identify the body of his commander.

"Major" Henry Clay McDowell, USA

Grandson-in-law of Henry Clay. McDowell served first as a Captain under General Rousseau, then as a U.S. Marshal for the state of Kentucky. McDowell ended the war as a Lt. Colonel in the 62nd Kentucky Militia. For unknown reasons, he was always known as Major McDowell.