

## 8. The Martin Brothers in the Civil War

Lewis R. Martin, son of Joseph and Rachel Schauss Martin, was born on Aug. 25, 1805 in Shelby County Kentucky. Sometime between 1818 and 1824, the Martins moved from Kentucky to the Indiana Territory with their ten children. Another daughter was added to the family in the Indiana Territory.

Phebe Skelton, daughter of John Skelton and Elizabeth McCarty, was born on Feb. 27, 1809 in Tennessee while her parents were making the trek from Shenandoah Valley VA, where they had been born, to the Ohio River to pioneer in the Indiana Territory. They settled in Clark County, which is across the river from Kentucky.

Lewis Martin and Phebe Skelton were married on Dec. 23, 1828 in Washington County, Indiana. Five children were born in Washington County: Julia, Joel, Pauline, Elizabeth and Cynthia. Around 1838, they moved to Morgan County where four more children were born – Amanda, Thomas, William, and James. They moved to Illinois around 1848 where the tenth child, Samuel was born. Thomas died in 1854, leaving Lewis and Phebe with nine children. In 1860, Lewis and Phebe were living in Woodford County Illinois with five of their children, the four older ones were on their own by this time.

Joel Thompson Martin married Ruth Briggs Andrews in 1854. Joel made his living as a farmer in Olio Township in Woodford County. Joel and Rachel become the parents Charles in 1855, John in 1858, and Joseph in 1860.

As discussed in the story of John Henry Williams in Chapter 6, there was a big push in Illinois during the summer of 1862 to recruit additional volunteers for the war effort. William S. Magarity, who had been the first man elected to serve as Woodford County Sheriff in the 1840's, was recruiting in the Eureka and El Paso area of Woodford County, Illinois. On August 6, 1862 Joel went to Eureka where he volunteered to serve in the Union Army. The following day, his younger brother William Franklin Martin, also signed on to serve. It is not known whether William was coerced, encouraged, or inspired by his brother's actions but their parents surely felt anxiety at the prospect of two sons heading off to war – especially after losing their son, Thomas, a few years earlier when he was only twelve years old. James was only fifteen at the time so he was not eligible to serve but it would be interesting to know if he was envious and longed to join them – especially since he does enlist shortly after reaching his eighteenth birthday a few years later. The Martin brothers had at least two ancestors who fought in the Revolutionary War, great-grandfather Peter Martin and great-grandfather John Skelton.

On August 27, Joel and William, along with 94 other Woodford County, men were mustered in as privates into Company A of the 86<sup>th</sup> Illinois Infantry Regiment at Camp Lyon in Peoria. William Magarity was appointed Captain of the new unit. Joel was 31 years old with light hair, gray eyes and fair complexion and stood 5 feet 9-3/4 inches tall. He left behind a young wife and three young sons. Although Joel may not have been aware, Ruth was three months pregnant with their fourth child at the time.

William, at 18 years old, was slightly shorter at 5 feet 9 inches and was described as having dark hair, black eyes and a dark complexion. He left his parents and two younger brothers and perhaps two sisters still living at home.

An enlistee was promised pay of thirteen dollars per month. At the time of his honorable discharge, he would be paid travel expenses of 25 cents for every 20 miles from the muster out location to his home plus \$100. In the event he died while in service, his family would receive the sum of \$100. These rates were established by the Adjutant General in May 1861 at the beginning of the war.

The 86<sup>th</sup> Infantry was stationed at Camp Lyon until September 7. The camp was established when the Civil War began in 1861 for training Union soldiers. 7500 men were trained there over the course of the war. It was located in Peoria, approximately a mile west of the Illinois River, just west of the present-day Glen Oak Park and Peoria Zoo.

On September 7, 1862, the men of the 86th Illinois Volunteer Infantry marched out of the gates of Camp Lyon through the streets of Peoria down to the railroad depot. There they were joined by the men of the 85th Illinois, who had been mustered into service at Camp Peoria. Together at the depot, the men of the 85th & 86th Illinois boarded trains bound for Camp Joe Holt, in Jeffersonville, Indiana and reached their destination on September 9<sup>th</sup>.



Illinois 86<sup>th</sup> Volunteer Infantry  
Battle Flag

Camp Joe Holt was a Union base located on the Ohio River across from Louisville, Kentucky on land that is now part of Clarksville, Indiana. The camp was opened in June 1861 and built on land leased from Colonel S. H. Patterson. It was named in honor of Joseph Holt who became President James Buchanan's Secretary of War for the last 60 days of his presidency after John B. Floyd resigned. Holt strongly supported the Union. (Holt was the main prosecutor in the Lincoln assassination trial a few years later.)

Colonel Lovell Rousseau opened the facility in order to recruit Kentuckians, mostly from Louisville, into the Union Army. The Camp was built in Indiana due to fears that recruiting camps in Kentucky would encourage Kentucky to secede to the Confederacy. Camp Joe Holt would serve as a rendezvous hospital in 1862 until February 1864 when Jefferson General Hospital was opened in Port Fulton, Indiana, 1.5 miles upstream. It then reverted to a camp until the end of the war.

While at Camp Joe Holt, the new recruits drilled almost constantly as they were quickly learning to be soldiers. On September 14, they crossed the Ohio River into Louisville where they continued to drill and go on extended marches despite very hot weather.



Camp Joe Holt – 1862<sup>1</sup>

About the 1st of October of 1862, the men of the Illinois 86<sup>th</sup>, along with the Illinois 86<sup>th</sup> and 125<sup>th</sup> and the Ohio 52<sup>nd</sup>, were assigned to the 36th Brigade, which was being commanded by Colonel Daniel McCook of the 52nd Ohio, also part of the 36th Brigade, and they were sent into Kentucky in pursuit of Confederate troops in Kentucky. These four regiments remained together throughout the war.

On Oct. 8, 1862, McCook's Brigade caught up with those Confederate troops and were engaged with them in the Battle of Perryville, Kentucky, the largest battle to take place in Kentucky during the war. The first engagement for the Illinois 86<sup>th</sup> was a true baptism by fire for them. The Battle of Perryville, also known as the Battle of Chaplin Hills, was one of the bloodiest battles in the civil war – the casualties for both sides totaled 7677, one fifth of the total involved in the conflict. The 86<sup>th</sup> was not spared; the unit suffered its first of what would be many casualties in the conflict – one man killed and thirteen wounded.

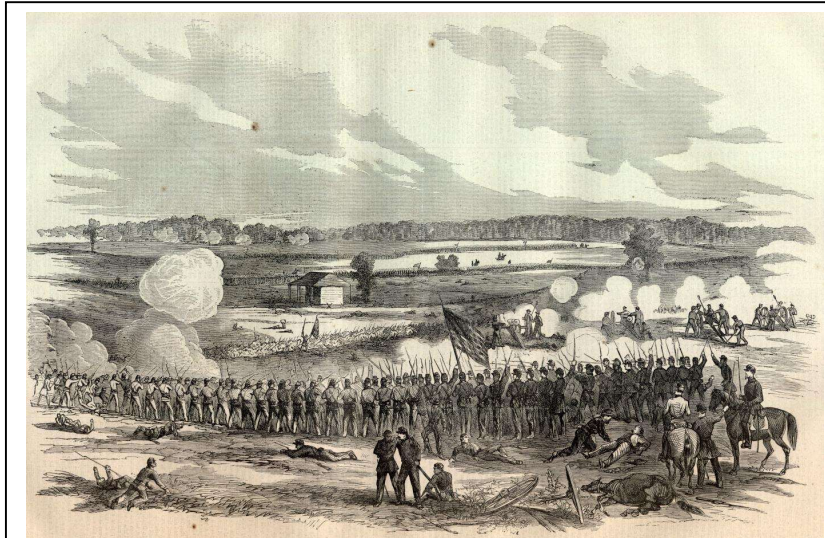
The outcome was technically a draw with neither side gaining the upper hand. *Private Sam Watkins, of the 1st Tennessee* summed it up this way:

*“I was in every battle, skirmish and march that was made by the First Tennessee Regiment during the war, and I do not remember of a harder contest and more evenly fought battle than that of Perryville. If it had been two men wrestling, it would have been called a “dog fall.” Both sides claim victory—both whipped.”*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=46430925>

Although Perryville was not technically a decisive victory for the Union, the outcome was significantly in its favor strategically. The Confederacy was rebuffed in their attempt to advance into northern territory. This is similar to the Battle of Antietam in the



Harper's Weekly image of Battle of Perryville  
(Civil War, Kentucky, USA) from November 1, 1862.

eastern theater just a month earlier where the battle was also considered a draw yet the South was forced to retreat to Virginia and was unable to move into Pennsylvania. The Confederate army was never able to advance north and the Union maintained control of Kentucky throughout the war. The only advance north of the Mason-Dixon line was at Gettysburg the next summer where they were defeated.

Some historians believe that Confederate victories in these conflicts would have skewed the results of the 1862 elections toward the democratic party. This would have resulted in more difficulty in securing congressional backing for the war effort and could have prolonged the conflict or threatened the ultimate Union victory. Consequently, some consider the Perryville and Antietam outcomes to be a significant turning point in the war.

President Lincoln took advantage of these “victories” as a justification for issuing the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863, enlarging the scope and purpose of the conflict.

Major General Don Carlos Buell, the commanding general of the Battle of Perryville and the Union Army of the Ohio, made a half-hearted attempt at pursuing the retreating Confederate forces and returned to Nashville rather than pushing on to East Tennessee as the Lincoln administration had wished. The Western departments were reorganized two weeks later and Buell was assigned to the Department of the Cumberland under Maj. General William Rosecrans. Again, this parallels the situation in the east where Lincoln replaced General McClellan because of his failure to pursue Lee’s army after the Battle of Antietam.

The 86<sup>th</sup> Illinois, along with the others in the 36<sup>th</sup> Brigade marched to Nashville, arriving on November 7, 1862 where they would spend the winter of 1862/63. They remained at Edgefield until November 23<sup>rd</sup> and then marched to Mill Creek and entered camp at a place known as Camp Sheridan.

On December 4<sup>th</sup> the regiment was ordered to advance upon a force of the rebel cavalry which was maneuvering near the camp. Company A, of which Joel and William were a part, along with Company B were sent out as skirmishers, while the remainder held back. The enemy was soon dispersed, and the regiment returned to camp.

On December 9<sup>th</sup>, the regiments marched to Nashville, camped there, and took on duty around the city. Conditions in the camp were poor. Approximately twenty men would live in the same tent, cooking from a kettle swung in the middle of it. They made their beds on damp ground. Many fell ill due to exposure and the hospitals were inadequate. More died during this time than at any other time during the war. They kept busy doing duty around the city and occasional skirmishes in the area.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of March 1863, the Eighty-sixth was marched to Brentwood, where only a few hours before, the garrison there was surprised and captured. The regiment was sent to provide assistance but arrived after the rebels had already escaped. They returned to Nashville, settling down again to its old business of picketing and guarding. On April 8, the brigade was again sent to Brentwood, which was within supporting distance of Franklin. The conditions at Brentwood were much better than in Nashville; they

were able to make comfortable quarters there and were finally able to sleep on bunks.



They constructed a fort called Fort Brentwood. It was triangular in form, having embrasures in the corners of the triangle for guns. Much time and labor was expended on this work only to be completed that it might be demolished. A change in the situation of army affairs compelled the evacuation of the fort. Details were made, and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June the fort was demolished. On the evening of the same day the brigade returned to Nashville.

The Eighty-sixth Regiment remained in Nashville until the first of July, when it, along with the rest of the brigade, was marched to Murfreesboro. At this encampment they spent much time and labor on its campgrounds, but did not remain to reap the fruits of their labor; for in a few days it returned to Nashville, where it remained until August 20, 1863.

The Regiment left Nashville with the objective of repairing the Nashville and Decatur Railroad. (The Nashville and Decatur (N&D) ran from Nashville through

Columbia to Tennessee's southern border, where it connected with the Memphis and Charleston line and an Alabama railroad to Decatur.) They stopped for a short time in Brentwood and then continued the march to Franklin where they picked up supplies for repairing the railroad. The 86<sup>th</sup> moved to West Harpeth, about eight miles south of Franklin where it worked at chopping and hewing timber to be used to repair a bridge. It was not long until they received orders to discontinue the work and prepare for a march to Columbia. They reached Columbia on the evening of August 28.

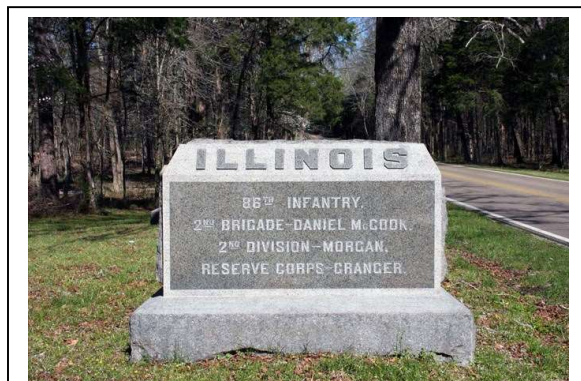
The 86<sup>th</sup> remained at Columbia after the rest of the brigade had left for Huntsville. They resumed the march, reaching intermediate destinations after their brigade had moved on, eventually catching up to the brigade in Rossville, just south of Chattanooga, on September 17. They were worn out after their long march and were anxious for a chance to rest. Unfortunately, this was not to be.

The confederates, led by General Bragg advance toward the federals, commanded by General Rosecrans, and skirmishing began on September 17 and increased on the 18<sup>th</sup>. The 18<sup>th</sup>, under the command of Colonel Dan McCook was sent out to burn a bridge at Chickamauga creek which they accomplished. They were nearly surrounded by enemy troops and a fight ensued. They lost several men but were able to return to Rossville on the evening of the 19<sup>th</sup>. From there they moved to Rossville Gap and remained in readiness all night. They engage in the battle on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

The battle was fierce, and the confederates were able to breach the union lines and were able to attack from the flank and the rear and this continued until they reached Rossville. Seven brigades, or about one-fourth of our entire force, were thus swept away in the battle. Although the loss in killed and wounded was not very heavy, they were effectively cut off from rendering further aid to the rest of the army during that day. The battle continued throughout the day with heavy fighting.

When night came, the battle ceased, everything becoming still and hushed. The enemy now fell back, leaving the field of battle. The troops withdrew about midnight to Rossville, where they arrived in good order. McCook's brigade was the last that left the field, and the Eighty-sixth, the last regiment. It was after one o'clock at night when it passed the Rossville Gap and went into camp.

The next day, the 86<sup>th</sup> took up a position on the right of Rossville Gap in order to keep back the enemy until the army could fall back to Chattanooga. The enemy opened fire on them with cannon fire throughout the day. They held the line until evening and then withdrew to Chattanooga, arriving there very late that night. The brigade remained



This Monument to the 86th Illinois Infantry Regiment is located on the side of Reeds Bridge Road in the Chickamauga National Battlefield. It marks their location from Saturday, September 19, 1863.

in Chattanooga three days, during which time it was formed in line and held as a reserve. The enemy was hourly expected to pounce upon our forces and attempt to regain the place but they did not.

The CSA won this battle but the cost to both sides was high. Approximately 65,000 confederate troops fought in this battle with total casualties of 18,454 – 2,312 killed, 14,674 wounded and 1,468 capture or missing. Approximately 60,000 union troops fought with total casualties of 16,170 – 1,657 killed, 9,756 wounded and 4757 captured or wounded. The 86<sup>th</sup> Illinois lost one killed, four wounded and one captured.

On September 25, the 86<sup>th</sup> crossed the Tennessee River, marched six miles up the river, and guarded a ford near the mouth of North Chickamauga creek. They suffered much from hunger as the troops were not supplied with even half rations, because the transportation of the army was insufficient. On November 23, the Regiment assisted General Sherman to float his pontoons down the river at night, cross his army, capture a rebel post, and make the attack on the north end of Missionary Ridge; then marched in pursuit of Bragg to Ringgold, Georgia.

On November 29, marched for Knoxville, Tenn., to the relief of General Burnside, and then returned to Chattanooga. They crossed the Tennessee River and occupied the old campground, six miles above Chattanooga, on December 18. The division did not remain at North Chickamauga long; on the 26<sup>th</sup> of December, it crossed the Tennessee River, taking up camp at McAfee's church, on the left of the Chickamauga battlefield and six miles from Chattanooga.

In February, 1864, the Regiment joined in a reconnaissance, going as far as Buzzard Roost, where it took part in the engagement of that name, losing one killed and seven wounded. Then returned to camp where it stayed until March 6, when marched to Lee and Gordon's Mills. They remained there until May 3 and then marched to Ringgold, where General Sherman was concentrating his grand army for the march upon Atlanta. They left Ringgold on the 5<sup>th</sup>, and arrived at Tunnel Hill on the 7<sup>th</sup>.



Lee and Gordon's Mills

They encountered the enemy at Tunnel Hill and after a skirmish, pushed them back to Buzzard's Roost Gap. They maintained this position until the 12<sup>th</sup>, with only minor skirmishing but the confederate position gave their snipers opportunity to continually harass the 86<sup>th</sup>, but only one man was wounded in this encounter.

From Buzzard's Roost, they moved to the right through Snake Creek Gap, and on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> participated in the battle of Resaca, Ga., losing four wounded and one

missing in that battle. The battle at Resaca resulted in a Union victory insofar that the CSA was unable to stop the advance of the Union forces although the outcome is often considered to be inconclusive.

The regiment moved from Resaca on the 16th and arrived in Rome, Ga. on the 17<sup>th</sup> where they engaged the enemy in the fight, losing five killed and 12 wounded. On May 24 they marched from Rome to Dallas; had a skirmish, having one man wounded and one man accidentally wounded. They then moved through Ackworth and arrived at Kennesaw on June 15, losing while in front of Kennesaw lost one killed and seven wounded during the trek to Kennesaw.

While at Kennesaw it rained almost continually for three weeks, making movement very difficult. General Sherman decided to make a direct assault on the Rebel position rather than a flanking maneuver they had been employing during the current campaign. Kinnear (Ref. 12) describes the scene as follows.

On the 24th of June, General Sherman ordered that two assaults should be made on the 27th, one by General McPherson's troops near Little Kennesaw, and another by General Thomas', about one mile further south. This came wholly unexpected to his troops, all believing that he would put "the flanking machine" in force whenever he made a demonstration on the enemy's position, but Sherman resolved to execute any plan that promised success. These two assaults were made at the time and manner prescribed in the order, and both failed. General Thomas chose the 2nd division of the 14th Corps to aid in the work along his line, and early on the morning of the 27th it was massed preparatory to a charge. The 3rd, brigade, Colonel Dan. McCook commanding, was on the left of the division; the 2nd brigade, Colonel Mitchell commanding, was on the right, and the 1st brigade, General Morgan commanding, was held in the rear as reserves. The signal for the charge was given at 8 A.M., by the simultaneous discharge of a battery of guns; the lines advancing slow and steady, passing over our line of works, descending a hill over a small stream, then crossing an open field, ascended the acclivity on which the enemy's works were built, when a desperate rush was made upon them with all the fortitude and heroism of men under a most galling fire of cannon and musketry. The brigade on our right failing to come up, we had to receive the crossfire of the enemy. It was too withering, the men falling before it as the grass before the scythe. When the works were reached by those who did not fall in the attack, they were too weak and too few in number to effect a breach in them, the men lying down in front of the works and up against them, until the order to fall back was given. When the order of retreat was given, it was hard to obey, being attended with a greater slaughter than the assault, the enemy having the chance of taking cool and deliberate aim. Thus, our broken lines fell back, again taking position only thirty yards from the enemy, and in the most difficult manner threw up a line of works, at the same time hugging the ground for dear life, and where we remained in defiance of the exultant rebels. This was our darkest day of the war. The loss of the brigade on this occasion was truly severe. Colonel Daniel McCook fell mortally wounded, and Colonel Harmon succeeding him, survived his command but one moment, when he was carried off the field a corpse.



In making a charge on Kennesaw on June 27, the Illinois 86<sup>th</sup> suffered 96 total casualties. Company A suffered the largest losses with 11 killed, 7 wounded and 6 missing. They maintained their position until July 2, losing 2 more killed in action and 7 wounded.

Among those wounded on June 27 was Private William Franklin Martin, who was severely wounded in the right side. The doctors in the field hospital did all they could but William was soon on his way north to a General Hospital. He eventually arrived at Jeffersonville, Indiana in Clark County. He died from his wounds on July 16, 1864, just three days before what would have been his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The Battle of Kennesaw Mountain was technically a Confederate Victory but they were still unable to turn back Sherman's advance. This failure, and the subsequent withdrawal of the confederate position a few days later, led CSA President Jefferson Davis to relieve General Joseph Johnston of his command on July 17, 1864.

On July 3, they marched after the enemy to the Chattahoochee River, losing 2 men wounded, where it arrived July 10. They remained in camp in favorable conditions along the banks of the Chattahoochee River near the railroad and wagon bridge across the river in order to obtain a much-needed rest. While there, some of the more adventurous soldiers would go near the banks of the river to gather blackberries despite the continuous fire of the rebel pickets on the opposite side.

On July 18, moved up, crossed the river and went to Peach Tree Creek. and skirmished with the enemy and then engaged in battle on the 19<sup>th</sup>. The Union losses were heavy in this victory but the losses for the 86<sup>th</sup> were relatively light, losing 4 killed and 11 wounded.

They marched in front of Atlanta on July 22 and were held in reserve during the Battle of Atlanta in which the Federal Army inflicted heavy losses on the Confederates. The brigade maintained their position around Atlanta, engaging in numerous minor skirmishes until August 27.

Sherman's entire army withdrew from Atlanta on August 27. The Illinois 86<sup>th</sup> proceeded to march to Jonesboro. They arrived and engaged the enemy in battle on September 1, losing 2 killed and 13 wounded.

The brigade was assigned the duty of transporting 1600 prisoners to Atlanta on September 4<sup>th</sup>. They remained in Atlanta until the end of the month. During this time, they



Monument to Illinois Soldiers at Cheatham Hill, Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park

were under almost constant fire from the enemy and the 86<sup>th</sup> participated in eight separate engagements with the confederates. These efforts were not successful and the Union maintained control of Atlanta. Shortly after the siege, Sherman ordered all noncombatants to leave Atlanta. Around mid-September, there was an armistice and most of the citizens of Atlanta travelled to the south of Atlanta and there were exchanges of prisoners.

They left Atlanta on September 29, on the railroad cars to Chattanooga, Tennessee, then on to Stevenson, Alabama. From Stevenson they travelled to Athens, Alabama. The Illinois 86<sup>th</sup> was sent on an expedition against General Forrest who had been making demonstrations against the railroads, having destroyed much of the Nashville and Decatur railroad lines. (The railroad the 86<sup>th</sup> had worked to repair a year earlier.) Forrest's troops were crossing the Tennessee River at Florence so General Morgan ordered the Brigade to march to Florence rapidly. Despite swollen creeks and rivers due to torrential rain, they reached Florence in two days, a distance of about forty-five miles. They reached a point a few miles from Florence on the evening of October 5 and then entered in on October 6 without opposition. The enemy had already crossed the river.

The decision was made to follow the confederates no further but rather to return to Atlanta. They left Florence on October 10 and marched to Athens, arriving on the 12<sup>th</sup>. They boarded the train to Chattanooga, arrived in the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> and went into a camp that had neither wood nor water.

On the 18<sup>th</sup>, they marched from Chattanooga to Lee's and Gordon's Mills. Then moved after Hood's Army to near Galesville, Alabama; then marched back to Rome Georgia, arriving there October 29. On October 31, they marched to Kingston, Georgia. On November 8, started for Atlanta, marching along the railway and arrived there on November 15.

On November 16, the 86<sup>th</sup> took part in "Sherman's March to the Sea," sharing in all its perils and privations, reaching Savannah December 11, with the loss of one man wounded and 6 captured.

They left Savannah on January 20, 1865 and marched to the Savannah River and crossed into South Carolina. They passed through Brighton and Barnwell District, arriving at Williston on February 12. Williston was a small town on the Charleston and Augusta Railroad. They crossed the North Edisto River on the 14<sup>th</sup> on February 17 they crossed the Saluda River near Columbia, South Carolina and then crossed the Congaree River in the evening; arrived at the Catawba River February 24. They camped at Rocky Mount on the banks of the river for four days.

They resumed the march on February 28, crossed the Catawba River; crossed the State line into North Carolina March 4. The march continued through North Carolina and engaged the enemy in a battle near Averysboro (Averasborough in some references) on March 12. Two were killed and three were wounded in this battle with neither side achieving a clear victory, but this battle was merely a prelude to the battle of Bentonville.

The Battle of Bentonville was fought March 19 - 21 with the Union commanded by General Sherman defeating the confederates commanded by General Joseph E. Johnston. The Union outnumbered the Confederates by almost a factor of three and the confederate losses were substantially higher and were defeated. During the night of March 21, Johnston withdrew his army across Mill Creek and burned the bridge behind him, leaving behind a cavalry detachment as a rearguard. The Union army failed to detect the Confederate retreat until it was over. Sherman did not pursue the Confederates, but continued his march to Goldsboro where the troops were given a well-deserved rest and were outfitted with new supplies. Having marched over five hundred mile in the current campaign, the men were in desperate needed of boots.

The regiment marched from Goldsboro to Raleigh, arriving on April 13. From there, they followed General Johnson to the Cape Fear River. They remained until April 21, when it marched to Holly Springs. Following Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House on April 9, Johnston surrendered to Sherman at the Bennett Place, North Carolina on April 26. The regiment marched back to Raleigh and arrived on April 29.

On May, 1 they started on march for Richmond, Va., arriving there the 7<sup>th</sup> and then left Richmond on May 11, arriving at Washington, D.C., May 19. On May 24, they participated in the Grand review, and camped near the Soldiers' Home.

The Illinois 86<sup>th</sup> infantry was mustered out on June 6, 1865, having participated in twenty-two engagements, not mentioning many others in which it rendered assistance by supporting, guarding flanks, or protecting rear. It marched thirty-five hundred and thirty miles, and was transported by railroad about two thousand miles, making a total distance of five thousand five hundred and thirty miles.

Two days later they boarded the train and passed through Baltimore, Harrisburg, and Pittsburgh on their way to Chicago. At Pittsburgh, they were escorted to city hall and treated to a fine meal while bands played music. The crowds along the streets cheered them as they returned to the station.

Upon arriving at Chicago on June 11, they were disappointed that no one was there to greet them. They were, however, given a reception a few days later with a meal and speeches by dignitaries including General Sherman. On June 21, the Eighty-sixth received their pay and final discharge and they left Chicago on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, arriving in Peoria on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Corporal Joel Thompson Martin (it is not known at what point he was promoted) returned to Olio to meet his son, Joel Franklin Martin, born while he was serving and to reunite with his wife, Ruth, and his other sons. Undoubtedly, there was a grand reunion with his parents, brothers and sisters upon his return. This was surely a bittersweet, gathering as William Martin would never return.

It may be possible that Joel learned, upon his return home, that his brother James had enlisted on April 13, 1865 while Joel was in camp at Raleigh, North Carolina. James had joined the Eighth Regiment of the Michigan Volunteer Cavalry.

The motivation or the mechanics of his enlistment are not known. One speculation is that James wanted to enlist when he reached the age of 18 on November 26, 1864, but his parents were not in favor of the idea, having already lost one son to the war. After waiting until winter had passed, he traveled to Kalamazoo, Michigan and enlisted despite the family objection. In current times, the driving distance from Olio to Kalamazoo is over 250 miles. Of course, it is not known whether he travelled by train, horseback or on foot. Of course, this is mere speculation.

James was mustered into Company H of the Eighth Cavalry on April 13, 1865 at Kalamazoo for one year. He was described as five feet ten inches tall with light hair, blue eyes and light complexion. The 8th Michigan Cavalry was organized at Mt. Clemens, Michigan, between December 30, 1862, and May 2, 1863, when they were mustered in. They entered service in Eastern Kentucky in June 1863: They fought in various battles in the Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia over the next two years. Their last major battle was the Battle of Nashville in December 1864. They moved to Pulaski, Tennessee on January 18, 1865 where they engaged in scouting the surrounding countryside, for the purpose of suppressing guerilla operations in that section of the country. They stayed in that area for the remainder of the war. James joined the regiment at Pulaski on May 6, 1865.

On July 20, 1865 the 11<sup>th</sup> Cavalry was consolidated with the 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry and the regiment retained the designation of the 8<sup>th</sup> Michigan Cavalry. James was transferred to Company D in this reorganization.

On September 22, 1865, they returned to Nashville, where they were mustered out of the service of the United States, then returned to Michigan on the 28th. there to be soon after paid off and disbanded, at Jackson.

James returned home and apparently helped his father with the farming. He is listed as living with his parents in the census of 1870. The 1880 census indicates that both he and his mother are living with his younger brother, Samuel. He married Harriet Sullivan in 1880 and they eventually had six children. He later moved to Nebraska, as did a number of his extended family. He died in 1926 at the age of 79.

Joel Martin returned to Olio and worked as a farmer. He and Ruth had three more sons. William, obviously named for his father's fallen brother, was born in 1867 in Illinois. Sometime later the family moved to Nebraska where Ulysses Grant Martin and James Martin were born. Joel died in 1892 at the age of 61.



8<sup>th</sup> Michigan Cavalry Regiment  
Battle Flag  
(From 8<sup>th</sup> Michigan Cavalry Regiment  
Organization Facebook page)

Private William F. Martin was probably initially buried in Jeffersonville, Indiana, but his mortal remains are believed to have been retrieved by the family and laid in the Martin Cemetery near Pattonsburg, Marshall County, Illinois.

The citizens of Olio Township erected a monument in the Olio Township Cemetery in 1868 to honor the 29 men of Company "A" of the 86th Illinois Infantry who were killed in action.



Monument to Company A, 86<sup>th</sup> Infantry



Monument Inscription

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