

SAMUEL P. DAVIS

Abt. 1818 – September 10, 1861

Captain John Baggs' Snake Hunters - (Subsequently Co. "A" 11th W.Va. Infantry)

Researched & Written by Linda Cunningham Fluharty, 2017

Note: When my friend, Joe Parriott, did his Parriott genealogy books, he knew that Nancy Ann Parriott (ca 1784 - 1851) and James Davis (ca 1770-80 - 1849) had a son named Samuel, born about 1818. He also knew that a Samuel Davis had died during the Civil War, but perhaps thought his Samuel was too old to be the man who died in service. A few years ago, when I came across the fact that the Samuel who died in the war was his relative, I sent Joe the information.

SERVICE RECORD of SAMUEL P. DAVIS

SAMUEL P. DAVIS is found in the 1850 & 1860 Marshall County census records. He was the son of James Davis and Nancy Ann Parrott, the daughter of Christopher Parrott and Martha Clarke. According to family genealogies, the soldier's middle name was "Parrott" or "Parriott." Joe Parriott's genealogy indicates that Samuel was first married to Catherine Krontz. Their children were John "Jack," Ella A., and William Bruce. His second wife was Elizabeth Guthrie and their children were John D. and Nancy Ella.

1850 Census

DAVIS (97)

Samuel...Farmer...28-M...VA

Catherine...21-F...PA

John D...2-M...VA

E. A....1-F...VA

Wilson, Margaret...20-F...MD

1860 Census

DAVIS (701)

Samuel P...40-wm...day laborer...VA

Elisabeth...20-wf...VA

John...13-wm...VA

William B...8-wm...VA

Nancy E...2-wm...VA

At age 42, Samuel enrolled for three years to serve in Captain John Baggs' Independent Scouts, famously known as the "Snake Hunters." He mustered in at Wheeling on June 29, 1861, which was **before** Lieutenant Colonel John Castelli Rathbone began organizing the 11th W.Va. Infantry in October 1861. Samuel Davis was **dead** on September 10, 1861, **before** the Snake Hunters became Company "A" of the 11th West Virginia Infantry in the spring of **1862**. He had served for 74 days. – His death occurred **very** early in the war, before most of the 3-year regiments were organized.

The Snake Hunters were described as “daring and fearless” and they played an important role, especially in the early months of the Civil War, as they acted as advance guard to the army.

(1) *Daily Intelligencer*, 22 July 1861: Captain Bagg's Snake Hunters In The Field -- We learn through Dr. Capehart who has just returned from the advance of Gen. Hill's command, that the Snake Hunters are doing valuable service acting as the advance guard to the army, dogging the rear of the retreating rebels and picking up all the stragglers who are unable to keep up with the main body. This company merits great favor at the hands of the new State Government of Virginia for by their services in connexion with the Ringold Cavalry, a company of mounted scouts from Washington county, Pa., who have covered themselves all over with glory in the campaign in Western Virginia by the valuable knowledge they have furnished our army of the rebels' position, and the topography of the country. It has been freed from the danger of surprise by masked batteries or concealed forces. All honor is due to those brave fellows, who are sometimes twenty miles in advance of the column.

(2) *Daily Intelligencer*, 5 Sept 1861: The Snake Hunters - It seems that Capt Baggs and his "Snake Hunters" were in the recent fight at Cross Lanes where Col. Tyler was defeated. A correspondent of the Cincinnati *Commercial* makes mention of him as follows: Captain Baggs of the "Snake Hunters" was in the fight, but seeing the immense force of the enemy, rushed back to save the trains. The Sutler's department (owned by Mr. Sam'l Hatch of this city) was all saved through the exertions of Mr. Edward Halsted, connected to Mr. Hatch. When Baggs gave the alarm, Halstead started his wagons, four in number and seizing a carpet sack containing \$15,000 in Government orders, from one of the cheats, rode twenty miles on the tail of a wagon, anticipating the enemy, and awaiting an opportunity to disappear into the woods upon their approach.

This writer's extensive research of Captain John P. Baggs is found on the Marshall County WVGenWeb site:

[CAPTAIN JOHN P. BAGGS & HIS SNAKE HUNTERS](#)

THE DEATH OF JOHN P. DAVIS

Before the Snake Hunters were designated Company “A” 11th Infantry, Samuel P. Davis, according to original entries in his Service Record, “Died at Gallipolis, Ohio, Sept. 10, 1861, of a broken neck, while in a state of intoxication.” “Died Sept. 10, 1861 at Gallipolis, Ohio. Disease Drunkenness.”

Daily Intelligencer, Oct. 7, 1861, reporting on the Snake Hunters: “...and the man, the favorite of the company, named Samuel Davis, accidentally fell down at Gallipolis, whilst intoxicated, his head striking a stone, his neck was broken and he died.” - And that was the state of his Service Record until **1886**.

In 1875, a child of Samuel applied for and received a government pension. He had been married twice and had several children, some of whom were minors at the time of his death. No application was made for a government pension until this one in 1875 and it is not known by this writer which child applied.

NAME OF SOLDIER :					<i>Davis, Samuel</i>				
SERVICE :					<i>Late rank, Pvt. Co. A, 11 Regt. W. Va. Inf</i>				
TERM OF SERVICE :					<i>Enlisted _____, 1 _____ Discharged _____, 1 _____</i>				
DATE OF FILING.	CLASS.	APPLICATION NO.	LAW.	CERTIFICATE NO.					
	<i>Invalid,</i>								
	<i>Widow,</i>								
<i>1875, Dec. 8</i>	<i>Minor,</i>	<i>243,500</i>		<i>235,566</i>					
ADDITIONAL SERVICES :									
REMARKS :									
<i>W. Va. Inf.</i>					<i>Died _____, 1 _____, at _____</i>				

A gravestone was obtained from the U. S. Government in 1879 for "Village Cemetery," now known as First Street Cemetery, Moundsville. He was reburied at Mt. Rose Cemetery after Civil War soldiers were removed from First Street Cemetery in 1899.

<i>Davis, Samuel</i>	
<i>Pvt. Co. A, Regt. 11</i>	
<i>W. Va. Inf.</i>	
Cemetery <i>Village</i>	
City or Town <i>Moundsville</i>	
County and State <i>Marshall, W. Va.</i>	
Grave <i>—</i>	
<i>died Sept 10 1861.</i>	
Headstone supplied _____ 18	
by <i>S. J. Bridges</i>	
Contract dated <i>Nov. 29 1878</i>	

There was a War Department revision of Samuel's Service Record in 1886, 25 years after his death: "He died at Gallipolis, Ohio, Sept. 10, 1861 of broken neck, caused by a blow to the head, from some person unknown, received while assisting to quell a riot in obedience to the orders of his superior officer."

The pension file has not been reviewed to ascertain the circumstances of the change in the official record.

The following is the original article about Samuel's death:

is desired.
Oct 7-11* Oct 7, 1861 W. B. SIMPSON,
Secretary.

RETURN OF CAPT. BAGGS AND THE SNAKE HUNTERS.—The Snake Hunters, Capt. Baggs, who have acquired considerable celebrity since the commencement of the war in Western Virginia, returned to this city about 12 o'clock on Friday night, and went over to Camp Carlile.—They are direct from Sewell Mountain, Gen. Rosecrans' head quarters, and most of the men are completely worn out by their dangerous and arduous service. They came by way of the mouth of Gauley river, Charleston and Gallapolis, and were sent home by Rosecrans to recruit and improve their physical condition. Capt. Baggs took forty men, and brings back twenty-seven. Some have been killed in the woods, some captured, two deserted, and one man, the favorite of the company, named Samuel Davis, accidentally fell down at Gallapolis, whilst intoxicated, and his head striking a stone, his neck was broken and he died. The body of Davis was brought to Moundsville, where he resided. Capt. Baggs says he didn't want to come back home just now, but Rosecrans ordered him, and as that officer ranks him, he had no alternative. The Captain wants to fill up his company here. He says he wants men who have no fondness for gilt-edged clothes or office—men who expect to fight on principle. The Captain says he does his own court martialing with a club, so that all who desire to enlist, need have no fears of imprisonment or delay on this account, as punish-