Maria Munson & Silas Strickland

Clan William

Stricklands of the South

by Lori Hahn

Capt Thomas Munson > Samuel Munson > Samuel James Munson > **William Munson** > William II Munson > William Munson > **Olive Maria Munson m. Silas Strickland**

Today's story takes us into the Deep South. Not a lot of Munsons headed down south in the early days of pioneering, but headed west. The first big contingent of Munson descendants were descendants of Olive Maria Munson (1801-1866) and became part of a vast family of Southern Stricklands.



Trail of Tears

Silas Strickland was born somewhere in New York in 1802. According to the Munson Genealogy, he was "of Connecticut." Silas married Olive in Georgia in 1829. It appears that Silas began farming in Georgia at Young's Valley, Talbot, Georgia before 1830 (Harrall's Valley). In 1834, Strickland purchased 202.5 acres of land in Talbot County by auction for $361. There is also some indication that Strickland participated with the Hamilton's Co. I of the Georgia Militia in the "Cherokee Wars." Then president Andrew Jackson wanted the land east of the Mississippi for settlement and commerce. To that end, a federal law was passed in 1830 which called for the movement and removal of Indians (Indian Removal Act) from lands east of the Mississippi. Despite the Cherokee leaders calling upon Washington for help, by 1838, the U.S. government started forced removal of the native populations, including the Cherokee in Georgia. Thus began the lamented "Trail of Tears," a tragedy-filled mass movement of First People.

By 1840, the Stricklands were living in Russell, Alabama. According to the 1840 Census, the household was made up of seven members, and they had a whopping nine slaves.

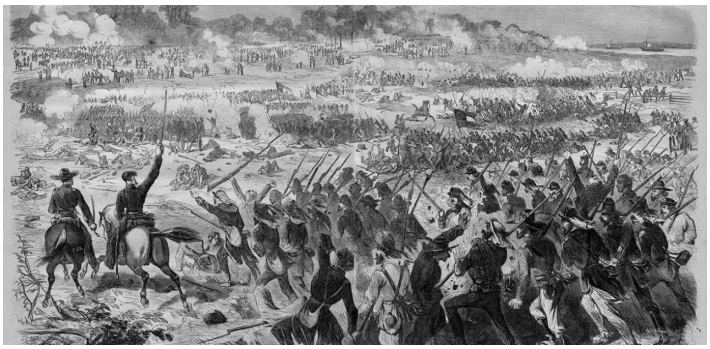
That kind of shocked me. Slaves!

That year was also the year that Silas was selected to be a delegate for the Democratic Party for the State Meeting during the election year.

Silas wasn't long for this world though, and died in 1841 in Russell County. He left five living children and his wife, Olive Munson Strickland. Olive remarried to Carter Jackson in 1845. I have found nothing of note about him except he was 80 years old in 1860 and she 59. She was obviously not listed with him in the 1880 Census, when she lived with family at Warrior Stand, Macon County, Alabama.

Youngest son Van Buren Strickland, who was probably born in Russell County, Alabama was not the only son who served in the Civil War. Big brother Thomas Jefferson served as 1st Sergeant for the 37th Alabama Regiment, Company B. On July 1, 1861, "Buren" left his mother's house and went to war, fighting with the 15th Alabama Infantry Regiment, Company C. The regiment was organized in August 1961 at Fort Mitchell in Alabama. The regiment had 11 companies. According to the National Park Services, the regiment consisted of 900 members from Russell, Barbour, Dale, Henry, Macon and Pike counties into 11 companies. This regiment saw heavy action. It moved from Tennessee to Virgina and then became part of Trimble's Campaign.

Later, it served under the Army of Northern Virginia. Battles included Suffolk, Chickamauga, and Knoxville. It also fought at Petersburg, Appomattox, Cross Keys, the Second Manassas, Port Republic, and in the Wilderness Campaign. The group took heavy casualties throughout the war. When the unit finally surrendered at Appomattox, it surrendered with a mere 15 officers and 204 soldiers.



Confederate infantry attacking Union artillery during the Battle of Malvern Hill Library of Congress See the full size map of Malvern Hill here

For Buren, his last stand was at Malvern Hill. The competing armies battled that week on ground that gave an giant advantage to the defenders—in this case McClellan's

Army of the Potomac. With the security of the James River and the powerful U.S. Navy at his back, McClellan elected to stop and invite battle.

The Confederates, thrilled by their victories, were totally frustrated by their inability to achieve truly decisive battlefield results. The modest hill itself an elevation about 2 ½ miles north of the James River. It had great fields of fire. Gently sloping open fields lay in front of the Union position, forcing any Confederate attacks against the hill to travel across that wide-open space. McClellan set up as much artillery as he could at the crest of the hill, facing in three directions. Nearly 70,000 infantry lay in support, most of them crowded in reserve on the back side of the hill. General Lee recognized the power of Malvern Hill.

The Confederate bombardment failed, but Lee's infantry attacked anyway, thrown into the charge after a series of misunderstandings and bungled orders. Lee himself was absent when the heaviest fighting erupted. He was away looking for any alternate route that would allow him to bypass Malvern Hill. But once the attack started, Lee threw his men into the fray. Twenty separate brigades of Southern infantry advanced across the open ground at different times.

As the Confederate leaders had feared, the Federal batteries proved dominant. Late in the day, a few Union brigades and some fresh artillery raced to the hilltop in support. But in fact only a small segment of the Army of the Potomac saw action at Malvern Hill. The dominance of the position enabled less than one-third of the Union army to defeat a larger chunk of the Confederate army at Malvern Hill.

Malvern Hill had demonstrated the power and efficiency of the Union artillery in particular. Confederate leaders and soldiers alike could look back on poor command and control as the principal cause of their defeat. The casualty totals were more balanced than expected for a battle in which the outcome never was in doubt. Slightly more than 5000 Confederates fell killed and wounded, while roughly 3000 Union soldiers met a similar fate.

Buren was promoted to 1st corporal in late 1861. Then, he fought at Winchester, Virginia and Creek Stand in early 1862. Buren would find his last battlefield to be Cross Keys in early June of 1862. That battle was part of the Seven Days Battle, which culminated at Malvern Hill. Buren lost his fight with his battle injuries on July 7, 1862. He was 23 years old.

According to the testimony of his surviving siblings, all Buren had in the world was a share of the property on which his mother resided. His mother, O.M. Jackson, received his Confederate pension. The testimony of his sister Mary Strickland Renfroe was provided to the probate court. His mother Olive died on 02 Nov 1886.

Recommended reading:

Malvern Hill, Run Up To Gettysburg: The Tragic Struggle by Nicholas Santoro
Lee Builds an Army: From Malvern Hill to Second Manassas (The American Civil War) by Air Command and Staff College
Trail of Tears: The Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation by John Ehle
George B. McClellan: The Young Napoleon by Stephen W. Sears

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