

Civil War soldiers are definitely of historic interest. The researcher asked John Rankin to help her delve into the identity of G.R. Blackburn. John perused the census records and also consulted Brian Hogan of Huntsville. Brian is a member of the Sons of Union Veterans organization, and he helps to assure that Union soldiers are commemorated in the area. He is quite knowledgeable about matters of the Civil War.

The results of the research took us from looking at a marker over a century old and surmising about it to being introduced, through historic records, to the Blackburn family in the community.



Photograph by John P. Rankin, March 2003.

The grave marker of Corporal G.R. Blackburn in Inman Cemetery is typical of the markers provided for military graves by the U.S. Veteran's Administration when a marker is requested by the family. The military listings of Black soldiers of the Civil War showed that the designation "U. S. C. I." was used to denote "United States Colored Infantry." Given that it was a marker for Civil War service, the census records of Madison County were checked for 1870 and 1880.

On July 12, 2002, John Rankin found an apparent match in the 1880 census. The Blackburn census information is presented below. The original historic document showing Gabriel Blackburn is presented on the following page.

Shown in Madison County Census of 1880

Census Place: Township 2, Madison County, Alabama

Source: FHL Film 1254021, National Archives Film T9-0021 Page 46D and 101C

HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD: PETER BLACKBURN, BLACK, MARRIED, AGE 48

Wife: Fannie Blackburn, Black, Age 33

Son: Shelby Blackburn, Black, Age 1

Son: Peter Blackburn, Black, Age 12

HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD: GABRIEL BLACKBURN, BLACK, MALE, AGE 32

Wife: Elvira Blackburn, Black, Age 27

Dau: Mary Ann Blackburn, Black, Age 8

Dau: Alberta Blackburn, Mulatto, Age 4

Son: Ephram Blackburn, Black, Age 3

Son: Hardy Blackburn, Mulatto, Age 3