

John Rankin found two "G." Blackburns in the 1880 census. Rankin asserted that the "G." in the soldier's name was for Gabriel. This was based on the fact that the names of people who the census records showed living near Gabriel Blackburn could be recognized as family names of people who lived in the area that is now the arsenal.

In an e-mail written July 21, 2002, Brian Hogan concurred with this finding. He also stated:

The soldier is Corp. Gabriel R. Blackburn, Co. B, 14th Regiment, U.S.C. infantry. He applied for an Invalid Pension on June 10, 1887 and was granted same. Certificate # 1021428.  
His name appears on the African-American Memorial, Plaque # B-31

The inscription on the tombstone opens the door to discovery of extensive information about the duties and the postings of the 14<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the U. S. C. I. during the Civil War. This information can be reviewed in the "Official Records of the War of the Rebellion", in many volumes. It tells of where the unit was stationed at various times, what duties were performed, engagements undertaken, recruiting, and disbanding. Individual service records for the soldiers are also available for a fee from the government archives.

Gabriel Blackburn's own words were recorded in Thomas Henry Kenny's *Slave Genealogy*: Gabriel Blackburn was recorded on September 14, 1868 as saying:

I was born in Madison County, Alabama and I am 20 years old. My father is Anthony Blackburn and my mother is Ann Blackburn. I have two sisters: Minerva and Ellen. Ellen is married to Levi Talley and has two children. During the War I served with Company B of the 14th Regiment. I work as a farmer and live on the Lipscomb plantation.

In his records search, John Rankin found that Gabriel Blackburn had been a depositor in the Freedman's Savings and Trust Co. in Huntsville (Source: Fred Charles Rathburn, *Names from Huntsville, AL* (HPL Call # H976.197 v.1, v.2). He also found that Gabriel R. Blackburn filed for an Invalid Pension on June 10, 1887 and was awarded the same (Certificate No. 1021428). No application was made for a widow's or minor's stipend.

Rankin found Gabriel Blackburn listed in the Madison County census of 1900. By then he was shown to be living as a divorced man with a Mary J. Smith (also divorced), who was several years younger than he or his first wife, Elvira, with whom he was listed as living in the 1880 census. Mary Smith was shown as the mother of five children, of whom only two were still living at the time of the 1900 census. One of her children is enumerated in the household headed by Gabriel Blackburn.