Finding My Tipton County

Civil War Ancestors

By

John C. McColley

George McColley

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Leonard Burkhardt

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The purpose of this article is to explain to others how to do the research about their Tipton County and other Indiana Civil War ancestors by describing my research method. I am not presenting more general family tree research.

In the early 1960s my grandmother, MARGARET LONG MCCOLLEY, told me the story of my great, great grandfather, GEORGE MCCOLLEY, who was a Captain in the Union Army during the Civil War. Then, in about 1981 an elderly lady who, when she was young had been the neighbor of my great, great grandfather, LEONARD BURKHARDT, told me the story regarding his service in the Union Army.

These conversations started my interest in learning more about my great, great grandfathers, and I began to research them a few years ago. After going down the wrong path a few times, I discovered that the primary and secondary source research is not difficult after you learn how to do the research and that a great deal of information can be obtained from public sources, including from the Tipton County Public Library.

My great, great grandfathers came from very different backgrounds but had common experiences during the Civil War. GEORGE MCCOLLEY was born in Rush County Indiana in 1836, grew up on a farm near Southport Indiana as part of a large family,

attended school until he was 14, enlisted as a Sergeant in the 51st Indiana Volunteer Infantry and was promoted through the ranks to Captain. LEONARD BURKHARDT was born in Bavaria in 1840, arrived in America as an orphan at about age 13, enlisted in the 39th Indiana Volunteer Infantry and later the 8th Indiana Cavalry, remained a Private and according to an elderly lady referenced above, he remained " very German" into his old age. What they had in common is that they were both in most of the battles in the Western Theatre including Shiloh, Stones River and Missionary Ridge. GEORGE MCCOLLEY was also at Franklin and Nashville. LEONARD BURKHARDT was also at Lookout Mountain and on the part of Sherman's March from Savannah, Georgia to North Carolina. They were also both Prisoners of War. GEORGE MCCOLLEY was held at Belle Island, and LEONARD BURKHARDT was held at Richmond, Andersonville, Camp Lawton and Savannah, Georgia until Sherman's Army freed him when it took Savannah. After the Civil War, they both became farmers in Tipton County Indiana, and George McColley's son married Leonard Burkhardt's daughter. They were my great grandparents, GEORGE MCCOLLEY and IDA BURKHARDT MCCOLLEY.

In the process of doing my research, I discovered that HENRY B. MCCOLLEY served as a Corporal in the 51st Indiana Volunteer Infantry with his uncle, GEORGE MCCOLLEY. After the Civil War, HENRY B. MCCOLLEY became a farmer in Tipton County and lived near GEORGE MCCOLLEY.

In the process of doing my research, I also discovered that two brothers of my great, great grandfather, Tipton County resident WASHINGTON P. GATES, served in the Union Army: Sergeant PETER M. GATES and Private WESLEY GATES served together in the Indiana Zouaves for three months in 1861. Sergeant PETER GATES then served in the 47th

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Indiana Volunteer Infantry, and Sergeant WESLEY GATES served in the 75th Indiana Volunteer Infantry.

-The first step in the Civil War service research requires a trip to the Indiana State Archives in Indianapolis, Indiana, which has duplicates of the Civil War Enlistment and Service Cards on microfilm, alphabetical by the name of the soldier. The original cards were duplicated by volunteers in the early 20th century. The information is partially typed and partially handwritten. The information includes: the full name of the soldier, his regiment number and company letter, the date and place of his enlistment, the officer who enlisted the soldier, the date and location were the soldier was mustered into the regiment and the officer who mustered the soldier into the regiment; a detailed physical description of the soldier; the dates of the soldier's promotions through the ranks; and the date, place and location where the soldier was mustered out of the regiment.

-The second step is to use a set of books found at the Indiana State Archives to find additional information, The Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana, which was compiled by Adjutant General Terrill in 1865 and 1866. In one volume, you can find a list of the officers in the regiment and a brief history of the regiment, and in another volume you can find a list of enlisted men by regiment and company.

-The third step is to go to the website of the United States National Archives Official Site and print "Form 86, National Archives Order for Copies of Military Service Records." You can fill out the form by hand and return it to the National Archives by mail with a nominal fee. Their staff can then locate the records and return as copies to you. Such records provide many pages of documents that provide detail regarding the soldier's service. If you determine from such records that the soldier applied for and/or received a

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pension, you can print and mail with the fee "Form 85, National Archives Order for Copies of Federal Pension or Bounty Land Warrant Applications." The fee for these records is more expensive, but the records may provide detailed family history information. You may be able to find additional information on the Library of Congress website in its Newspaper Archive.

Using the above research method, I was able to find Civil War information about Tipton County family members, GEORGE MCCOLLEY, HENRY B. MCCOLLEY, LEONARD BURKHARDT, PETER M. GATES AND WESLEY GATES. For reasons discussed below, I did not find any records about SAMUEL W. LONG.

-The fourth step is to use the resources of the Tipton County Public Library to supplement your research to more fully understand the service of the soldier and how it fits into the larger family history. I found this to be one of the most rewarding parts of my research. A few examples are set forth below. There are many other resources I used or that may be relevant to your research.

As to GEORGE MCCOLLEY, in a Landowner Atlas I found a plat map that showed the location of his farm in Tipton County in about 1870. I was able to compare the plat map to the current map and visit the site of his farm.

As to LEONARD BURKHARDT, in the Tipton County Public Library online Newspaper Archive, I was able to find information about how after the Civil War he found his siblings from whom he had been separated shortly after arriving in America. In a local history book, Tipton County, Her Land and People, I found a narrative about Leonard Burkhardt including his Civil War service. In a Landowner Atlas, I found a photograph of LEONARD BURKHARDT and his wife, MARY ELLEN VAN BUSKIRK.

MARGARET LONG MCCOLLEY, my grandmother, told me the story of her uncle, SAMUEL W. LONG who joined the Union Army when he was about 13 years old. He was the son of my great, great grandfather, JOHN LONG, who owned a hotel in Tipton after the Civil War. Due to SAMUEL LONG's young age, it was more difficult to research his service but resources at the Tipton County Public Library provided the answers. I found information regarding his Civil War Service in the vertical files located in the Tipton County Public Library Genealogy Department. There, I found a booklet entitled, the "*Short History of the Longs.*" It stated that no records regarding his service existed because he was too young to serve in the Union Army. It also confirmed the story I had been told about his service.

For all of the above, I was able to use the census information found on Ancestry.com to identify when and where each person lived in Tipton County and other locations. I was also able to identify my eight great, great, grandparents who lived in Tipton County: GEORGE MCCOLLEY and NANCY SEWELL MCCOLLEY; LEONARD BURKHARDT and MARY ELLEN VANBUSKIRK BURKHARDT; WASHINGTON P. GATES and LOUISA JACKSON GATES; and JOHN LONG and NANCY WILLIAMS LONG.

It is my hope that this narrative may be useful to persons wishing to research their Tipton County Civil War and other Indiana Civil War ancestors.