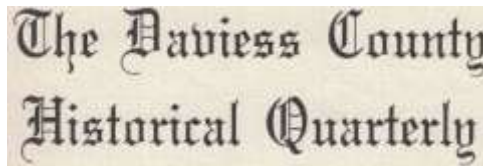


# Private John A. Kile (c1840-1862), CSA

By Jerry Long  
c.2024



In the following articles the passages hilited in blue are notations by this writer – Jerry Long.



**“The Death of Private Kyle: A Civil War Atrocity At Owensboro”, by Lee A. Dew, The Daviess County Historical Quarterly (Daviess County Historical Society, Owensboro, KY, Vol. III, January 1985, No. 1) pp.14-16:**

In the old section of Elmwood Cemetery on a hilltop overlooking Old Hartford Road stands a granite monument honoring the memory and marking the grave of a Confederate soldier from Louisiana whose death and treatment at the hands of the Union Army rank as a major atrocity in a war marked by mistreatment of prisoners on both sides.

An inscription on the stone reads as follows:

This monument is affectionately dedicated by the citizens of Owensboro, Daviess Co., to the memory of A. Kyle, C.S.A., Co. C., 18th La. Vol. Regt. Who was taken prisoner at Shilo, April 17, 1862. He died on a Federal gun boat, and was put on shore at this City, where his remains were tenderly laid to rest by Southern Sympathizers. A slip of paper on which bore these words was found on his person: What more can a man do, than to die in defense of his Country.

**[Note: Here in Dr. Dew’s article is a reprint of an article from the 27 January 1889 issue of the *Owensboro Messenger*. The 1889 article follows on pages 7-8.]**

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The Tyler family plot at Elmwood is the last resting place for Dr. Gustavus Brown Tyler, 1821-1896, an Owensboro physician and one of the first members of the American Medical Association from this area his wife, Nina R. Tyler, 1837-1888; and their four children. But, in addition to Kyle, there is another grave in the Tyler plot. Standing next to Private Kyle's marker is

another stone, engraved "In memory of our faithful old Nurse, Aunt Sallie. Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joys of the Lord. By Nina R. Tyler."

It is hard to imagine a more poignant monument to the "Lost Cause" than here on a hillside in Owensboro—the last resting places of a Confederate soldier and a beloved slave—with both of their stones facing southward.

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A solemn ceremony was held at Elmwood on July 11, 1891, when the monument to Owensboro's Confederate soldier was unveiled. The stone, bought by the Confederate Association, was dedicated during a program which featured speeches by Capt. C. N. Pendleton and Major Joe Haycraft. Following the speeches, Miss Heart Tyler and Miss Maggie Rudy drew the cords that let the veil covering the stone fall, exposing the "handsome monument" to view.

The Owensboro Messenger expressed the emotion of the time in its comment on the occasion:

The erection of this tribute to the memory of a stranger is a beautiful exemplification of the lofty feeling that fills the breast of the true soldier, and speaks more plainly than any studied oration the sentiment that fills the heart of every man who deems it an honor to fight and die for the cause his soul holds dear.



The monument to A. Kyle, C.S.A. in Elmwood Cemetery which stands today as a symbol of the emotional outrage felt by Owensboroans toward the callous treatment of this dead soldier by Union forces. Photo by Joseph Hix.



# The Daily Delta.

The Daily Delta, New Orleans, LA, Monday, 14 April 1862, p.1:

Report of the killed, wounded and missing  
of the 16th Regiment, Louisiana Volunteers,  
in the actions of the 6th and 7th April:

[Note: In a lengthy list of killed, wounded and missing that follows the preceding is listed – John Kile, missing.]



Louisville Journal, Louisville, KY, Friday, 18 April 1862, p.3  
(three separate articles on this page contained references  
to the steamer E. H. Fairchild and its passengers):

## RIVER AND STEAMBOAT MATTERS.

The river is falling at this point with seventeen feet water in the canal last evening. The weather cloudy with light rains yesterday.

We are pained to announce the death of James B. Hughes, one of our oldest citizens and one of our most skilful river pilots. The funeral will take place from the family residence, on High street, below Twelfth, at two o'clock to-morrow afternoon.

**The E. H. Fairchild arrived from the Tennessee river yesterday with a large number of wounded and sick soldiers from the battle-field at Pittsburg Landing.**



**The following wounded rebels died on the Fairchild:** J. J. Rutledge, of Arkansas, buried at Pittsburg; Matthew Anderson, of Arkansas, buried at the same place; E. J. Hocker, was buried at Evansville; **an unknown Louisianian was left at Owensboro.** Lieut. Lee was sent by mailboat to Carrollton, Kentucky; Lieutenant Dayton was left at Paducah; Frederick Foreman died here, his body is in charge of Capt. Dillard; David McDonald, of Pine Apple, Wilcox county, Alabama, and R. F. Gardiner, of the Eighteenth Louisiana, with one arm, is also in a dying state.



Another Sad Freightage – **The E. H. Fairchild has returned from Pittsburg Landing, bringing 288 sick and wounded soldiers**, 100 of whom are from Kentucky, 60 from Ohio, 15 from Tennessee, **29 from Louisiana**, 9 from Alabama, 21 from Indiana, 20 from Illinois, 13 from Michigan, 6 from Texas, 5 from Arkansas, 2 from Mississippi, 1 each from Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota, and 5 regulars. Among these are 76 Confederates, 10 of whom are Kentuckians. We subjoin a complete list:

[Note: List of Union soldiers aboard the E. H. Fairchild was included here but was not reproduced for this article. The Union list was followed by a list of 70

**Rebels transported on the E. H. Fairchild – one of whom was J. A. Kyle of the 18th Louisiana Regiment.]**

LIST OF REBEL PRISONERS AND WOUNDED BROUGHT BY THE FAIRCHILD.

<p>Edmund Hemley, 47th Tennessee.  Wm. Fargeson, 24th Tennessee.  D. A. Moore, 17th Alabama.  N. F. Rives, 54th Tennessee.  P. O. Brassens, 18th Louisiana.  M. Brown, 83d Tennessee.  T. M. Erving, 11th Louisiana.  C. McMather, 18th Louisiana.  H. L. Smith, 1st Arkansas.  Jerry Lynch, 15th Tennessee.  J. P. Grier, 12th Tennessee.  Wm. Beckman, 2d Lexington Rangers.  Wm. Garnett, 24th Tennessee.  Henry Bardwell, 8th Arkansas.  James Bruce, 26th Alabama.  John A. Barrow, 27th Tennessee.  George Lawler, 4th Kentucky.  S. K. Lillard, 4th Kentucky.  Charles Dow, 4th Kentucky.  David McDonald, 18th Alabama.  George Stigall, 2d Mississippi.  William Cunningham, 54th Tennessee.  George Fletcher, 5th Tennessee.  Cyrus Hope, 2d Texas.  James Wilson, 18th Louisiana.  Cornelius Cotter, 18th Louisiana.  Mike McCullough, 1st Louisiana.  Henry Wnithby, 21st Alabama.  Thomas Foley, 18th Louisiana.  Sergeant E. Laundry, 18th Louisiana.  <b>J. A. Kyle, 18th Louisiana.</b>  Jacob Mooney, 18th Louisiana.  John Munich, 18th Louisiana.  Robert Calaway, 21st Alabama.  Corporal Henry S. Plum, 21st Alabama.  Lieut. B. E. Allen, Louisiana.  ___ Smith (speechless), Arkansas.</p>	<p>Wm. Hyeronamus, 4th Kentucky.  Lieut. W. E. Hill, 19th Alabama.  J. M. Cook, 5th Tennessee.  F. M. Champion, 17th Alabama.  Richard Hollinsworth, 8th Texan Cavalry.  J. H. Tilford, 9th Tennessee.  G. W. Homan, Crescent Regiment,  Louisiana.  Paul Lacroix, Crescent Regiment, Louisiana.  Lieut. Francis Morins, Crescent Regiment,  Louisiana.  Wallace S. Riggon, Crescent Regiment,  Louisiana.  D. Messner, Crescent Regiment, Louisiana.  Lewis J. Doolittle, 4th Kentucky.  A. J. Russell, 4th Kentucky.  B. F. Walker, 6th Arkansas,  Lucien Lagrapes (?), Crescent Regiment,  Louisiana.  H. A. Robbins, 38th Tennessee.  Robert Jackson, 33d Tennessee.  C. W. Burgess, 5th Tennessee.  Sergeant M. L. Palmer, 38th Tennessee.  L. R. Lafonta, Crescent Regiment, Louisiana.  Edgar Wood, 16th Mississippi.  Lieut. D. Jenkins, 4th Louisiana.  R. T. Gardive, 18th Louisiana.  Ed. Kahon, 18th Louisiana.  J. B. Gilis, 18th Louisiana.  J. M. Burnett, 3d Kentucky.  J. W. Massy, 4th Kentucky.  Lieut. L. Lebroeuf, 18th Louisiana.  P. Ganel, 18th Louisiana.  Corporal J. B. Bruce, 31st Alabama.  S. H. Mansfield, 4th Kentucky.  James Riley, 9th Tennessee.  Charles Fitzherony, 4th Kentucky.</p>
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**[Note: The unknown Confederate soldier from Louisiana, who died on the Union steamer, E. H. Fairchild, and was set ashore at Owensboro for burial, was Private John A. Kile / Kyle, of the 18th Louisiana Regiment. Private Kile died aboard the Fairchild between**

Evansville and Owensboro circa 17 April 1862 of wounds suffered in the Battle of Shiloh. The battle had been fought on 6-7 April 1862. The steamer, E. H. Fairchild, was a supply vessel, and was transporting 70 Confederate prisoners of war to a Union prison camp in Louisville. Thirteen other soldiers of the 18th Louisiana Regiment were also aboard the Fairchild as well as about 218 sick and wounded Union soldiers.]



**Louisville Journal, Louisville, KY, Tuesday, 29 April 1862, p.2:**

A rebel soldier named A. Kyle, belonging to Company C, 18th regiment Louisiana volunteers, was wounded at Pittsburg Landing, and while being conveyed to this city died of his wounds. His body was left at Owensboro for burial. The Southern Shield, of that place, says it was placed in a box three inches too short for it, a circumstance mentioned querulously, but explained by the fact that he was of the extraordinary height of six feet three inches. The Shield also says :

A meeting was called by the Southern citizens of this town and preparations made for a suitable burial at one o'clock on Thursday. Long before the appointed time our streets were thronged with people from all sections of the county, who had come to witness the solemn ceremony. At two o'clock the remains were conveyed to the Methodist Church, where an impressive and eloquent funeral oration was delivered by Rev. Dr. Nicholson. The number of spectators at the church was variously estimated at from 1,000 to 1,500. After the exercises at the church were concluded, the procession repaired to the cemetery, where they deposited the remains of the brave but unfortunate soldier who died while nobly battling in defence of *his* country and *his* country's cause.

It may be some consolation to the friends of the deceased to know – though buried amongst strangers in a strange land – that he was interred in a manner becoming his cause, and that thousands sympathizing tears were shed over his grave he loved ones at home, and many a fervent prayer offered up to God for his safe deliverance to that haven of rest where strife, dissensions, and abolitionism never enter, and where peace and harmony reign forever.

Soldier rest, thy warfare o'er,  
Dream of fighting fields no more:  
Sleep the sleep that knows no breaking,  
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

We learn in addition to the above that he was buried with a rebel flag around his coffin. The comments of the Owensboro' paper explain and go far to justify the recently-promulgated order forbidding the burial of the rebel dead in our State. When such occasions are made the scenes of ostentatious display, and rebel flags are placed as marks of honor on the coffins; when the dead are declared to have died in defence of their country although killed in armed rebellion against the government; and when it is boasted that they were buried in a manner becoming their cause, it is no wonder that the proper military authorities forbid the enactment of each scenes. We feel all human sympathy for the misguided masses who have been deluded into the secession ranks, and our hearts are pained when we reflect that many of the sons and relatives of our once-dear friends in the far South are victims to the civil war, but we cannot recognize the propriety of these unusual honors to those who have paid the deserved penalty of their high crime against their country, and whose lives are forfeited by its laws. Neither propriety nor necessary respect exacts these ostentatious rites. Sir Sohn Moore is as honored in his humble, unknown grave, over which "no

soldier discharged his farewell shot,” as if a mausoleum had been erected over him or cannon had pealed over his burial place. We would not undertake to write the epitaph of poor Kyle of the Louisiana volunteers, for the same reason that we are unwilling to have the heresies of secession preached over his grave or hear rebel papers daring to proclaim that he died in defence of his country. Let each as he be “laid down slowly and sadly” with tears and lamentations as befits such melancholy scenes, but every interest of our nature proclaims against the flaunting of rebel flags and the congregation pf rebel abettors around their graves.



**The Daily Picayune, New Orleans, LA, Sunday, 18 May 1862, p.4:**

*Honors to the Dead.* – The following touching , instance of enlarged charity we copy from the Owensboro (Ky.) Shield, of the 19th inst. As such, and also with the hope of its meeting the eye of the relatives of the deceased, we give it a place in our columns :

A Confederate soldier, who was wounded at the battle of Pittsburg Landing, and who was being conveyed to Louisville as a prisoner, died of his wounds between Evansville and Owensboro, and, after being stripped of all his clothing, was thrown into an old wooden box which was about three inches too short for him, and left on the wharf-boat to be buried by our citizens. A meeting was called by the Southern citizens of the town, and preparations made for a suitable burial at one o'clock on Thursday. Long before the appointed time, our streets were thronged with people from all sections of the country, who had come to witness the solemn ceremony. At two o'clock, the remains were conveyed to the Methodist Church, where an impressive and eloquent funeral oration was delivered by Rev. D. Nicholson. The number of spectators at the church was variously estimated at from 1000 to 1500. After the exercises at the church were concluded, the procession repaired to the cemetery, where they deposited the remains of the brave but unfortunate soldier.

It may be some consolation to the friends of the deceased to know – though buried among strangers in a strange land – that he was interred in a becoming manner, and that thousands of sympathizing tears were shed over his grave for the loved ones at home, and many a fervent prayer offered up to God for his safe deliverance to that haven of rest where strife, dissensions and abolitionism never enter, and where peace and harmony reign forever.

Soldier rest, thy warfare o'er,  
Dream of fighting fields no more:  
Sleep the sleep that knows no breaking,  
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

The name of the soldier was A. Kyle. It was stated that he belonged to Company C, 18th regiment Louisiana volunteers. He was of dark complexion, had black hair and eyes, and was well formed. He was six feet three inches high.



**Messenger and Examiner, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 24 January 1889, p.3:**





Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

The name of the soldier was A. Kyle. It was stated that he belonged to Company C, 18th Regiment, Louisiana Volunteers. He was a dark complexion, had black hair and eyes, and was well formed. He was six feet three inches high.

[Note: The original editions of the newspaper, *Owensboro Monitor*, prior to August 1862 are now missing.]



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 26 April 1889, p.4:**

A WORK OF LOVE.

A Handsome Headstone to be Placed Over the  
Grave of an Unknown Confederate Soldier.

An order was placed with Mischel Bros. yesterday for a headstone to be placed over the grave of an unknown Confederate soldier, who is buried in Elmwood cemetery. The history of the dead soldier is largely conjecture, but his death in a strange land under circumstances of peculiar sadness touched many hearts, and his grave was watched over and cared for by tender hands since his burial. Recently a movement took shape for the erection of a monument over his remains and Dr. G. Tyler and Mr. Morton Watkins raised \$65 for this purpose. Messrs. Mischel Bros. generously contributed \$25 worth of work, and Dr. Tyler has guaranteed \$50 more, making the total cost of the stone \$140. It will be of Georgia granite, of a beautiful design.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 18 July 1889, p.1:**

The stone for the grave of the dead Confederate soldier at Elmwood has arrived and will be put in place in about ten days. There is still due about \$50 on the work. Contributions are solicited from 25 cents up. Money may be left with the banks, at Dr. Tyler's or with Morton Watkins.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 30 October 1889, p.4:**

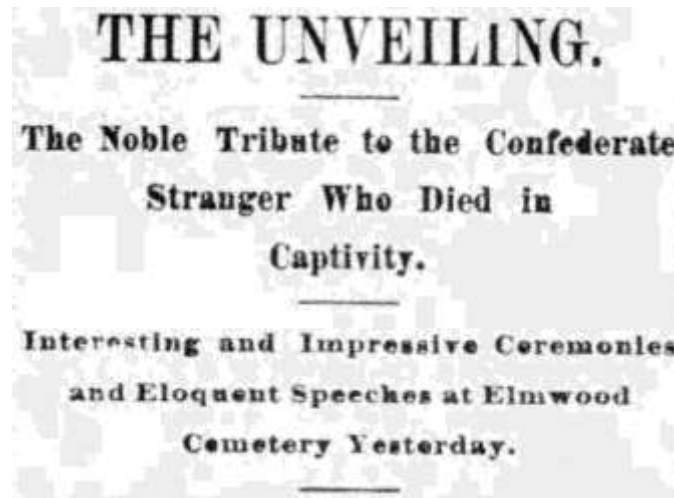
The Unknown Confederate's Monument.

The monument for the unknown Confederate soldier was ordered of Mischel Bros. last June in great haste. They exerted every effort and had the shaft ready within five weeks, but have never been able to induce anybody to furnish them the inscription for it. Winter is now coming on and it is in their way in the shop. Those who originally interested themselves in this matter should furnish the inscription at once.





Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 12 July 1891, p.1:



The unveiling of the monument to the memory of William Kyle, the "unknown" Confederate soldier, took place at Elmwood yesterday afternoon at 3:30 o'clock. The Confederate Association, which erected the monument, met at the court-house at 2:30, and after some preliminary proceedings, repaired in a body to the cemetery. Here feeling addresses were made by Capt. C. N. Pendleton and Maj. Joe Haycraft.

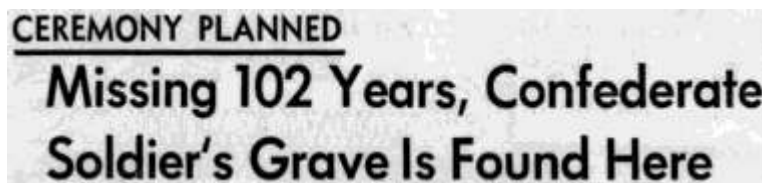
A history of the unfortunate soldier was related so far as it was known. There was nothing of this save that his name was William Kyle, and he was a member of a Louisiana regiment. He was a prisoner on a Federal gunboat and was being taken North. He died on the passage and his body was put off here. Sympathizers with the cause took his corpse and gave it a decent burial, marking the grave so that it has remained known until now.

The ceremony of the unveiling was very pretty. At a given signal Misses Heart Tyler and Maggie Rudy drew the cords that let the veil fall to the earth, and exposed the handsome monument to view.

The erection of this tribute to the memory of a stranger is a beautiful exemplification of the lofty feeling that fills the breast of the true soldier, and speaks more plainly than any studied oration the sentiment that fills the heart of every man who deems it an honor to fight and die for the cause his soul holds dear.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 24 May 1964, pp.1A & 3A:



By Bob Sensenbrenner,  
Messenger and Inquirer Staff Writer

On June 3, Confederate Memorial Day, the "Yankee" Vanderburgh Court House Civil War Round Table of Evansville, Ind., will pay tribute to the memory of a Louisiana Confederate soldier who has been officially missing since the Battle of Shiloh in April of 1862.

Pvt. J. A. Kile of Co. C., 18th Louisiana Volunteers, was actually found buried some time ago here in Owensboro at the Elmwood Cemetery by Hugh O. Potter, general manager of radio station WOMI and commanding general of the Evansville. Civil War Round Table.



SOLDIER, REST thy warfare is o'er. . .  
Hugh Potter, general manager of Radio station WOMI and historian, looks over the grave marker of J. A. Kile, a confederate soldier who was buried here in Owensboro with a unique story behind him. The Evansville Civil War Round Table will hold special ceremonies here June 3, Confederate Memorial Day, at 6 p.m. to honor him. Messenger and Inquirer Photo By Bob Sensenbrenner.

Potter wrote : a letter explaining his find to T. Harry Williams, professor of history at Louisiana State University. Williams turned the letter over to the Civil War Commission at Baton Rouge who in turn advised Potter that Pvt. Kile had been officially missing for 102 years. The last record they had on him was February, 1862.

The inscription on the grave marker has his name spelled Kyle but Louisiana records show it to be Kile.

Potter started gathering bits of information and putting them together and from this information found a rather unique story.

Kile was enroute to the Louisville prison hospital on a federal gunboat after being wounded at the battle of Shiloh. However, he died while making the trip up the Ohio River. His body was put ashore here in Owensboro for burial in a box which was too short for his 6' 3" height.

A meeting was called by the Southern Sympathizers of the then small town of about 3,000 persons, and preparations were made for a suitable burial.

According to the Southern Shield, a newspaper which was published in Owensboro during that time "long before the appointed time our streets were thronged with people from all sections of the county who had come to witness the solemn ceremony." It said between 1,000 and 1,500 attended funeral services at an Owensboro church, and the minister made an "eloquent address."

The coffin was covered with a Confederate flag. And after the exercises at the church were concluded, the story said, "the procession repaired to the cemetery where they deposited the remains of the brave soldier who died while nobly battling in defense of his country and his country's cause."

The Louisville Journal reprinted the Southern Shield story and said: "The comments of the Owensboro paper explain and go far to justify the recently promulgated order forbidding the burial of the rebel dead in our state."

The inscription on the monument in the old southeast section of Elmwood Cemetery is as follows: "This monument is affectionately dedicated to the Memory of A. Kyle, C.S.A, Co. C., 18th La. Vol. Reg't, who was taken prisoner at Shilo, (exact spelling on stone) April 17, 1862. He died on a Federal gun boat and was put on shore at this city where his remains were tenderly laid to rest by Southern Sympathizers. 'What more can a man do than to die in defense of his country.' This last phrase were the words written on a slip of paper which were found on his person.

The Louisiana Civil War Centennial Commission has been quite impressed with Kile's story and Elaine V. Johnson, secretary-treasurer of the commission, is sending flowers to be placed on the grave during the Confederate Memorial Day ceremonies.

Potter said that the idea behind the ceremony is "the North is going to pay tribute to the South as evidence that hostilities are over. Even after 102 years there are some who are still fighting the War."

The Evansville Civil War Round Table has sent a special invitation to the Daviess County Historical Society and the John C. Breckinridge Chapter, United Daughters of the Confederacy. Also invited is the Civil War Calvary parade unit from Evansville who will be in full dress regalia.

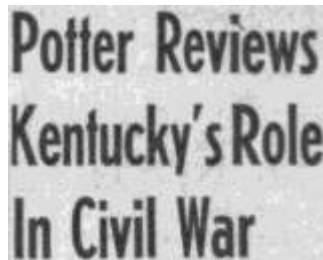
None of Kile's family or relatives has been located.

The ceremony will take place at graveside at 6 p.m. June 3, Confederate Memorial Day. To append an article from the Owensboro Monitor edited by Thos. S. Pettit, May, 1862...

"It may be some consolation to the friends of the deceased to know – though buried amongst strangers, in a strange land – that he was interred in a manner becoming his cause, and that thousands of sympathizing tears were shed over his grave for the loved ones at home, and many a fervent prayer offered up to God for his safe deliverance to that haven of rest where strife, dissensions and abolitionism never enter and where peace and harmony reign forever.



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Monday, 25 May 1964, p.1B:**



Hugh Potter, general manager of Radio Station WOMI, told the assembled members of the Daviess County Historical Society in a recent meeting that in spite of a sincere effort to maintain neutrality during the Civil War, Kentucky suffered much from the actions of the Union and Southern forces.

Beginning with the secessionist movement in 1860 Potter traced the actions of local residents of Western Kentucky through to the final surrender of the Confederate forces in 1865.

Of interest at least to the Owensboro area was the stationing of the Federal gunboats Lexington and Conestoga in Owensboro to protect the city from, rumored Secessionist invasion, and the battle of Sutherland Hill on the present site of Sutherland School on Highway 431.

The Southern forces actually captured Owensboro by striking from three directions, but later withdrew, and the battle in the Sutherland community resulted.

The bloodiest battle fought in the boundaries of the state took place near Perryville, Ky. on Oct. 8, 1862. Losses on both sides were heavy, and monuments erected on the site honor the dead of both armies that fought courageously for the cause they believed was right.

Many atrocities were committed in the name of justice. Potter displayed a picture of the stone marking the graves of two confederate soldiers shot by order of General Burbridge in reprisal for a robbery committed by Rebel sympathizers in Henderson.

A bloodless victory for the Union Forces was scored in 1864 when N. B. Forrest raided and captured Paducah. Forrest had stationed his reserves in Mayfield. and when he heard of reported outbreak of smallpox in the Mayfield area, he quickly withdrew his troops from Western Kentucky.

John Hunt Morgan was possibly one of the most colorful officers to fight in Kentucky. Many local men volunteered to follow this dashing officer, and Ben T. Field was with Morgan when he was captured and imprisoned in Ohio.

One of the cleverest ruses used to influence an enemy, was employed by Colonel Adam Johnson in the capture of Newburgh, Ind. Mounting stove pipes and charred logs on wagon wheels, Johnson had them wheeled to a position across from the town. He then rowed across the river, and accepted the surrender of the town by threatening to shell it with his "artillery". Johnson loaded two wagonloads of arms, and sent them to the Southern forces before he was forced to withdraw.

Potter closed his account of war in our state by recounting the discovery of a soldier missing in action 102 years. Potter had discovered a memorial in Elmwood Cemetery to J. A. Kyle.

In checking on this soldier, he discovered that the body had been left in Owensboro, and that Southern sympathizers had given it a burial in the cemetery. In notifying his home state of Louisiana, it was found that the soldier was officially listed as missing in action. Now 102 years, the official file on Pvt. J. A. Kyle may be closed.



**Evansville Press, Evansville, IN, Monday, 25 May 1964, p.13:**

**Louisiana To Honor Johnny Reb,  
A Native Son, at Kentucky Grave**

Slowly the Federal gunboat inched into the wharf at Owensboro, Ky.

A half-dozen men of the crew heaved and shoved a large wooden box over the side, onto the dock.

"What's that?" inquired a bystander.

One of the crew sneered and shot a scornful glance at the crate. Then he turned away. The wharf - loafer sauntered over and took a closer look. Crudely painted on the box were two words that identified its contents:

"Dead Rebel."

Inside cramped into the crate were the remains of black-eyed, black-haired, six-foot-three Private A. Kyle of Company C, 18th Louisiana Volunteers. That was April 17 1862.

For 102 years the young Confederate soldier was listed on the military rolls of his home state as "Missing in Action at Shiloh."

On Kentucky's Confederate Memorial Day, June 3, the State of Louisiana will decorate the century-old grave of A. Kyle in Owensboro, Ky., and correct its records to read:

"Wounded at Shiloh, taken prisoner, died aboard Union gunboat on Ohio River en route to prison hospital in Louisville, buried in Owensboro, Ky."

Though the story of the Southern boy's interment is well - known among Owensboro historians, no record of it has been found in Louisiana. It is believed neither his family nor his comrades ever knew what happened to him.

They must have assumed he had been killed in battle and buried in one of the many unmarked graves at Shiloh.

Last November Mrs. W. E. Daniel addressed the John C. Breckinridge Chapter, United Daughters of the Confederacy, in Owensboro on "Unknown Confederate Dead."

From research through the files of the Owensboro Messenger she had learned the story of A. Kyle.

Certainly, the fates were kind to him when they arranged his demise just below Owensboro. At least here he was given a funeral of unusual stature with full military and religious ceremonies.

At Evansville on the other hand, he would probably have joined the 24 Johnnie Rebs who had also been wounded at Shiloh captured and died en route to prison. Their bodies, dropped off here by Federal boats, were given little more than passing notice before being buried unceremoniously in Oak Hill cemetery.

But Owensboro, then a town of about 3500 people, was well supplied with Southern sympathizers. The unannounced arrival of the remains of one of "their boys" aroused considerable excitement among them.

A Mr. Barbee superintendent of the gas works, took charge of the thing without delay. He got mighty hot under the collar when he opened the crude box that had been dumped there.

The Confederate's body had been stripped of everything but a red flannel shirt and a gold finger ring. His remains had been jammed into a box that could hardly have accommodated a man six inches shorter than tall A. Kyle.

In his shirt pocket they found two slips of paper. On one was written his name, his company and his regiment. On the other, in another handwriting, possibly his own, was a question. It became his epitaph.

Mr. Barbee had no trouble raising a fund to provide the lad with a decent suit of clothes for burial and a coffin long enough to fit him. The family of Dr. Prince would provide a lot in their section of the old East Fifth Street Cemetery.

Funeral services would be held at two o'clock the following Tuesday afternoon. An hour before the rites Owensboro streets were jammed with people. By two a crowd estimated at between 1000 and 1500 emotionally worked up Secesh filled and overflowed the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Union officials, observing all of this from office windows grew uneasy. They'd had trouble with these Rebs before and at any moment they might have a Civil War Junior right here in their home town.

After the graveside services, however, the crowd dispersed without incident.

It was peculiar, in thinking back on it, that though contemporary reporters wrote that "countless tears were shed over the grave" and fervent prayers were offered for the lad's soul and for his people back home, no one thought to send the word back to Louisiana.

For ten years the grave lay undisturbed. Then the old cemetery was closed, its occupants transferred to other locations and its site put to other use.

At the request of a Mrs. Dr. Tyler, the body of A. Kyle was moved in 1872 to Elmwood Cemetery in Owensboro.

A frequent visitor to the grave has been Hugh O. Potter, manager of Owensboro's radio station WOMI and current "commanding general" of the Civil War Round Table of Vanderburgh Court House. In preparing an illustrated lecture on "The Civil War in Kentucky" for the Evansville-based Round Table, he took photos of the grave and inquired into the story behind it.

He learned among other things, that young A. Kyle had been in a regiment commanded by Col. Alfred Mouton of Louisiana and that he had enlisted on October 5 1861 in the "Natchitoches Rebels" company.

From correspondence with noted historian T. Harry Williams of Baton Rouge and the Louisiana Civil War Centennial Commission secretary, Miss Elaine V. Johnson, he learned that A. Kyle's war record there stopped with his mysterious disappearance during the Battle of Shiloh on April 6 and 7 the following year.

"We've been looking for this boy for a hundred years" Miss Johnson told Potter. "Now that you have found him for us the least we can do is to decorate his grave."

The "general" ordered that fitting ceremonies be arranged for June 3. The Round Table will attend the 6 p.m. exercises in a body. Arrangements are being made for the coming of a drill team in both Union and Confederate uniforms from Fort Knox and a unit of Evansville's "First Indiana Cavalry."

"It was no surprise to me," said Gen. Potter "to learn that about the time of A. Kyle's funeral here an order was issued that 'henceforth it shall be forbidden to bury any Confederate dead in Kentucky soil.'

"After all Kentucky was officially in the Union."

But for a hundred years after the Kyle incident stirred up the Secesh in Owensboro the mortal remain of the "Dead Rebel" have rested quietly in Kentucky earth.

And visitors to Elmwood Cemetery have paused often at his tombstone to reflect on the tragedy. Few are unmoved when they read his epitaph, copied from the slip of paper found in his pocket:

"What more can a man do than die in defense of his country?"



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 2 June 1964, p.1B:**

**Confederate Soldier To Be Honored Here**



A 17-year-old Owensboro girl, Miss Ellen Lape, who was born at Shreveport, La., will represent her native state Wednesday and place a wreath on the grave of a Louisiana Confederate soldier who had been listed until recently as missing for 102 years on official Confederate records. Miss Lape is a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Willard O. Lape, 1838 Fieldcrest Drive.

The placing of the wreath, which is being sent to Owensboro by the Louisiana Civil War Centennial Commission, will be a part of a 6 p.m. Confederate Memorial Day observance at Elmwood Cemetery. It will be sponsored by the Vanderburgh Court House Civil War Round Table of Evansville.

The memorial ceremony, in which representatives of the Civil War study group from a Northern state will honor the memory of a long - dead and officially long lost Southern soldier, has been planned as a symbol of the long - forgotten hostility between the residents of the two long - since reunited parts of the nation, which were engaged in a bitter war a century ago.

In addition to representatives of the Evansville Civil War Round Table and a uniformed Yankee Cavalry group of Evansville, members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the Daviess County Historical Society, and interested members of the public are expected to witness the brief program.

The Confederate soldier, who died on a Federal gun boat following the Battle of Shiloh in April of 1862 and was placed ashore at Owensboro for burial, is identified by his grave marker as A. Kyle, a member of the 18th Louisiana regiment, Confederate States of America. The records at Baton Rouge, La., list him as "Private J. A. Kile".

Private Kile's place of burial was communicated to the Louisiana Civil War Centennial organization in a letter written by Hugh O. Potter of Owensboro, presiding officer of the Evansville Round Table. Potter's letter asked whether the records showed the soldier had died behind Union lines and had been given a large public funeral in Owensboro.

Subsequently an official of the Louisiana organization telephoned and asked Potter whether flowers would be placed on the grave if sent to Owensboro by that group. The caller said the last notation on Kile's official record was dated in February of 1862.

Following the call, Wednesday's ceremony was arranged.



**Evansville Press, Evansville, IN, Monday, 8 June 1964, p.13:**

### He is No Longer 'Missing in Action'

About 5:45 p.m. the people began to gather in Owensboro's Elmwood Cemetery.

These people had come to witness the placing of a wreath of flowers on the grave of a Louisiana boy who had died as a wounded prisoner aboard a Yankee gunboat on the Ohio River.

For 102 years the name of A. Kyle was listed on Louisiana's Civil War rolls as "Missing in Action."

Recently advised of the facts surrounding young Kyle's death and burial the Civil War Centennial Commission of his home state had sent North a large floral wreath for his grave.

The people of Owensboro and several carloads from Evansville — numbering nearly 200 — visited quietly together as they awaited the start of the brief but impressive little ceremony.

The bright sun, about two hours before twilight, shown through the springtime trees and created a pattern of dancing shadows on the people, the gravestones, the lush and well-trimmed Kentucky grass.

There was no trace of personal sadness on the faces of those present nor was there evidence in their voices of undue jollity. They chatted in quiet good humor or walked among the graves pausing now and then to examine a stone. A half-dozen little tads scampered and ran and laughed and romped in this place which was a perfect natural for a game of hide-and-seek.

Suddenly the roll of an authentic Civil War drum brought the people together at the grave of A. Kyle.

Hugh O. Potter, historian, manager of radio station WOMI in Owensboro and “commanding general” of the Civil War Round Table of Vanderburgh Court House in Evansville, welcomed his Hoosier friends to Kentucky soil in the name of the several historical societies and units represented there.

He outlined briefly the purpose of the gathering.

He presented your correspondent here who made a few remarks he hoped would be fitting to the occasion. Then from behind the grave came a contingent of the 8th Indiana Cavalry in full Yankee trooper uniform.

They escorted to the grave a pretty and well poised 17-year-old girl with sunny blonde hair and a pleasing smile. She was Ellen Lape, born in Shreveport, La., and now a resident of Owensboro. With the aid of Sonny Brown and his troopers, she placed the wreath of Louisiana upon the grave of another native of that state.

A troop of Boy Scouts bearing both American and Confederate flags filed into position behind the stone. The Yankee cavalrymen stood at attention. Dr. Dan Woodson blew Taps on his bugle. The troopers fired a salutary volley.

The service was over.

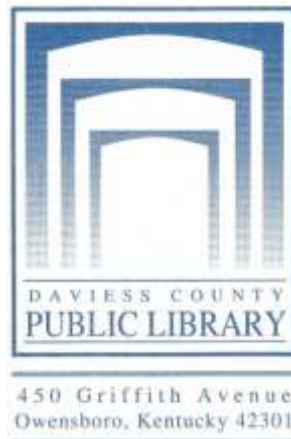
Some people, observing this exercise, might think we were all slightly batty but I don’t think so.

There was something mighty stimulating to the insides in this little ceremony. Aside from the touching personal story of the mortally wounded Southern boy in enemy hands, there was the strong reminder that here was a lesson for Americans, paid for at great price but even yet not quite learned.

No human problem can be solved by violence and bloodshed.



## **Descendant of Private John A. Kile Discovered**



Ginny Tobin  
203 Hwy. 495  
Cloutierville, LA 71416  
Nov. 13, 1995

Dear Mrs. Tobin:

I certainly enjoyed speaking with you on the phone last week. I do hope you will get to visit Owensboro soon. I will enclose a tourist brochure for you to review.

I have enclosed articles pertaining to private Kyle and a copy of the Owensboro & Daviess County History by Hugh O. Potter. Please send your check for \$14 to the Owensboro Public Library. This amount covers the cost of the book, copy cost, and postage.

I spoke with Dr. Lee Dew after our conversation and he was very excited to learn of a descendant of Kyle. He and his wife, Aloma, teach classes on the Civil War and Kentucky History at Kentucky Wesleyan College. Dr. Dew asked that I give you his address : 2015 Griffith Place E / Owensboro, KY 42301 / (502) 685-2034. Dr. Dew is also the President of the Daviess County Historical Society.

I look forward to seeing the information that you have on your husband's great-great-grandfather [sic – should be great-grandfather].

Sincerely,  
Sheila E. Heflin  
Kentucky Room  
Owensboro - Daviess County Public Library  
450 Griffith Avenue  
Owensboro, KY 42301



**The Leesville Daily Leader, Leesville, LA, 29 December 1996, p.5B:**

## The Challenge of Genealogy

By Marie Wise

John A. KILE was born 1840 in Natchitoches Parish just south of Cloutierville, the son of Jacob and Sarah (Airhart) Kile who had migrated the year before from Monroe County, Tennessee. Traveling with them were Sarah's parents, Nicolas and Sarah Airhart, her brother, Alexander, and sister, Margaret Lee and family.

Friends and neighbors of the Kiles were Francois and Sarah Elizabeth (Wrinkle) Adle. Following the deaths of Sarah Kile and Francois Adle in 1856-1857, the widowed Sarah Elizabeth Adle and Jacob Kile were married.

In 1860, John A. Kile married Rosanna Francine, one of the six daughters of Sarah Elizabeth; and they lived near Cloutierville where the following year a daughter Sarah Alease, was born.

Six weeks later John. A joined Co. C (The Natchitoches Rebels) of the 18th Louisiana Infantry, Confederate States Army. In his first military action, at the age of 21 or 22, John A. was critically wounded, captured and soon after died on a Federal gun boat on the way to a prisoner-of-war camp at Louisville, Kentucky.

His remains left on the wharf at Owensboro, KY were buried by sympathetic citizens and a monument erected to the memory of this "unknown soldier".

## NATCHITOCHE GENEALOGY

*The Natchitoches Genealogist*, twice a year publication of the Natchitoches Genealogical & Historical Association, in its 1996 No. 2 issue, includes the interesting family history above in an article, "John A. Kile", by Ginny Tobin whose husband, Ted, is a direct descendant of John A. Kile, whose daughter, Sarah Alease (see above), married John William Tobin in 1876 at Kisatchie, LA.

Rosanna Francine, John A.'s widow, married 2nd Edmond Bush in 1866 they moved to Navarro County, Texas had 9 children.

Another very interesting article in this issue is "Log of Hunting Party" from the "diary" of Upshur P. Breazeale, first printed in a 1905 Natchitoches Enterprise newspaper about his deer hunting trip "on the Kisatchie" with Morris Aaron and M. E. Prudhomme.

Some 35 Notes following add important genealogy information to this six-page "how it used to be" personal account.

This issue includes also about 30 other features: Group Sheets for Leach-Tompkins, Martin-Vigneau, Trahan-Brun, Brun-Brot, and Trahan-Delonges families; cemetery inscriptions from Choctaw Island Baptist south of Clarence, Demery off Holden Road and Killingsworth west of Goldonna; and 1943-44 records from the First National Funeral Home of Natchitoches.

Also: "John Heard Burns and the Freedmen's Farm Contract" of 1865 in Caddo Parish. Natchitoches Parish Court Suits of 1844-1871, Physicians of Sabine Parish 1921, Natchitoches Parish Police Jury Members 1906, excerpts from the *Sabine Index* newspaper at Many and from the *Natchitoches Times*, Book Reviews, Queries, etc.

The *Genealogist* is softcover, 8 ½ x 11 in., about 50 pages, indexed, available with \$15.00 annual membership in the Association, P.O. Box 1349, Natchitoches, LA 71458-1349.

Publications reviewed in this column are given to the Erbon and Marie Wise Genealogical Library, Louisiana State Archives, Baton Rouge.



### **Notes on Family of Private John A. Kile by Jerry Long**

This syndicated column was carried in several Louisiana newspapers. Eleanor Genevieve Williams Tobin, "Ginny" (1928- ), historian & genealogist, was the editor of the periodical Natchitoches Genealogist, published by the Natchitoches Genealogical & Historical Association and was a volunteer at the Association's library in the Old Natchitoches Parish Courthouse in Natchitoches, LA.

Ginny Tobin's husband, Tommy Ted Tobin (1928-2003), was the son of – Samuel Edmond Tobin (1888-1947) & Minnie Leach (1893-1971); grandson of – John William Tobin (1851-1916)

& Sarah Alease Kile (1861-1927); and great-grandson of Pvt. John A. Kile (c1840-1862) & Rosanna Francine Adle (1843-1928).

John A. Kile (c1840-1862) was the son of Jacob Kile (1816-1883) & Sarah Ann Airhart (1814-1856), who were married in Monroe County, Tennessee on 7 April 1839. John, age 10, born Louisiana, is listed with his parents in the 1850 census of Natchitoches Parish, LA. John A. Kile, age 20, is listed in the 1860 census of the same parish. His age in these two censuses suggest he was born during 1839-1840. Several family trees on genealogy websites give his birthday as 1 June 1840 but I was unable to find an original source that establishes this.

Private John A. Kile died on board the steamer, E. H. Fairchild, between Evansville and Owensboro. On 17 April 1862 his body was set ashore in Owensboro for burial. He was initially buried in the Rural Cemetery along East Fifth Street in Owensboro. Burials in this cemetery were discontinued in 1868. In 1872 Private Kyle's remains were reinterred at the new city cemetery, Elmwood Cemetery.

John A. Kile married Rosanna Francine Adle on 6 September 1860 in Natchitoches Parish, LA. Their daughter, Sarah Alease Kile was born 31 August 1861 LA. Sarah Lise Kyle, age 8, is listed in the home of her grandfather, Jacob Kyle, in the 1870 census of Natchitoches Parish, LA. She married John William Tobin in 1876. She died 16 January 1927 in Natchitoches, Natchitoches Parish, LA, where she was buried in the Catholic Cemetery.

In December 1995 Ted & Ginny Tobin, of Cloutierville, LA, visited the grave of his great-grandfather, Private John A. Kile, at Elmwood Cemetery in Owensboro, KY. It was 133 years after the death of Private Kile.

The article by Ginny Tobin that follows contained no picture of Private John A. Kile (c1840-1862). An Internet site referred to a picture of him that Mrs. Tobin has. On 6 June 2024 I called the Natchitoches Genealogy Library, Natchitoches, LA (318-357-2235) to ask if they knew of any picture of Private Kile. The archives has no picture of him. The librarian promised to contact Ginny Tobin and ask if she knew of any picture. On June 20<sup>th</sup> the librarian called and said that Mrs. Tobin does have a picture of Private Kile but does not want to release it.



**The Natchitoches Genealogist, Natchitoches Genealogical & Historical Association, Natchitoches, LA, October 1996, pp.27-30:**

JOHN A. KILE  
By Ginny Tobin

In October of last year, I remarked in a conversation with Mike Marshall, that I would like to go to Owensboro, Kentucky to try to find John Kile's grave. Mike asked if I had talked with anyone up there. No, I had not - it never occurred to me to do that. Mike picked up the telephone and called the Daviss County Public Library and spoke with Shelia Heflin in the Genealogy Department. He explained to her that we were trying to find where John Kile is buried and did they have records that would help us? She replied - "Yes, he is our Unknown Soldier," and told Mike that John is buried in the historic Elmwood Cemetery. How simple! How amazingly simple! I was speechless, that Mike found out in ten minutes what I had contemplated trying to find out for several years. This proves you can't be too timid in looking for leads in a genealogical puzzle. Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do by telephone today. If not for Mike's initiative in making that call I would still be saying "Some day I'm going to Owensboro- - -."

\* \* \* \*

Jacob Kile and his wife Sarah (Airhart), came to Louisiana from Monroe County, Tennessee about 1839. Traveling with them were Sarah's parents Nicolas and Sarah Airhart, her brother Alexander and sister Margaret Lee and family. Jacob and Sarah settled in Natchitoches Parish, just south of Cloutierville, and it was there in 1840, their first child John A. Kile was born. Sarah died about 1856 and is buried in an unmarked grave some where near Cloutierville.

The Kiles were neighbors and friends of Francois and Sarah Elizabeth (Wrinkle) Adle. Their children were playmates. When Francois died, March 8, 1857, Jacob was administrator of his estate. On April 1, 1858 Jacob and Sarah Elizabeth were married.

Sarah Elizabeth had six daughters, one of whom was Rosanna Francine. The childhood friendship between John and Francine blossomed into love and on September 6, 1860, they were married at Cloutierville by Justice of the Peace Adam Carnahan. John was twenty years old and Francine was seventeen. They set up housekeeping near Cloutierville where John worked as overseer, possibly for his stepmother. As a result of their marriage, and that of Jacob and Sarah Elizabeth, Jacob was both father-in-law and stepfather to Francine, and Sarah Elizabeth was mother-in-law and stepmother to John.

On August 21, 1861, a daughter was born to John and Francine. The country was in the grips of the Civil War and John, along with his boyhood friends from Cloutierville, was anxious to get into the struggle. On September 9th of that year Capt. John D. Woods organized the Natchitoches Rebels at Cloutierville, but his baby daughter was only nineteen days old and John did not feel he could leave Francine at that time. (1) According to family legend he named the baby Sarah Alease, possibly for both grandmothers, Sarah Airhart and Sarah Elizabeth Wrinkle (Adle).

When Sarah Alease was six weeks old John bade farewell to his family and traveled to Camp Moore where on October 5, 1861 he enlisted in Co. C (The Natchitoches Rebels) of the 18th Louisiana Infantry. From there the company went to New Orleans where three additional companies joined them, completing the regiment.

In mid-February 1862, the Eighteenth Louisiana Regiment left New Orleans for Corinth, Mississippi, to defend the vital railroads in that area. Without these railroads the south would have been virtually helpless in receiving supplies and moving men and equipment. Initial attacks by Union forces had failed to destroy the railroads. However, in early April, General Beauregard received word that Buell's army was marching to Pittsburg Landing to join forces with General Grant for a combined assault on General Albert Sidney Johnston's army at Corinth. After consulting his staff Beauregard ordered an immediate attack on Pittsburg Landing, hoping to catch the Union forces by surprise.

Early the morning of April 3rd, the Confederates began marching out of Corinth. Due to confusion over the proper roads to take, improper communications, and the poor conditions of the narrow wagon trails (rain had made them virtually impassable), it took three days to cover the twenty-three mile march to Pittsburg Landing. Wagons and artillery became mired in the muddy roads, slowing the marching troops, however, on the night of April 5th they camped near the little log church that would give this bloody battle its name - "Shilo." General Johnston told his men that night, "The eyes and hopes of eight millions of people are resting on you." Although campfires were forbidden, they blazed throughout the Confederate camp. Shouts, drum rolls and bugle calls echoed in the night. For many young soldiers this would be their first taste of battle and they looked



upon the coming fight as a great adventure; for many it would be their last battle and Pvt. Kile was one of them.

The noise of the men and the blazing campfires caused Generals Bragg and Beauregard (2) to consider calling off the entire operation. They feared the Union forces had been alerted and would be entrenched and waiting for the coming attack. Nevertheless, Johnston was adamant, declaring, "Gentlemen, we shall attack at daylight tomorrow." General Sherman on the other hand was convinced the Rebels posed no real threat and did not prepare for what was about to happen.

On Sunday, April 6, 1862, just as the sun was rising, the piercing blood-curdling Rebel yell startled the Union troops as the Confederates swept down upon their camps. As one Confederate soldier remarked, that yell "drove all sanity and order from them and inspired the men with the wildest enthusiasm." So began the Battle of Shilo (or Pittsburg Landing) and two days of fierce fighting that were the bloodiest ever fought on American soil up to that time.

Capt. Woods's Company of the Eighteenth Louisiana Regiment went into battle at Shilo with fortytwo men; twenty-six were killed or wounded. Among the wounded was Pvt. John A. Kile. He, along with other Confederate prisoners was put aboard a Federal gun boat for transport to a prisoner-of war camp at Louisville, Kentucky, but during the trip up the Ohio River he died of his wounds. His body was deposited on the wharf at Owensboro, Kentucky, clad only in a red undershirt and stuffed into a box too short for Kile's tall frame. The only identification was a scrawled note - "Dead Rebel, A. Kile, 18th Louisiana Regiment."

The citizens of Owensboro were so incensed over the lack of respect shown a fellow human being that they had a proper casket made and saw to it that Pvt. Kile had a decent Christian burial. A law had been passed forbidding the burial of Confederates in the cemeteries of Owensboro, or the state of Kentucky for that matter, so Dr. Gustavus Brown Tyler donated a section of his family plot for the burial of the young soldier. A local photographer took a picture of John Kile and it, along with a newspaper article about the funeral service was sent back to Louisiana, and eventually to John's family. The picture and article were kept in Jacob Kile's bible.

The newspaper article read: "*A Confederate soldier who was wounded at the Battle of Pittsburg landing and who was being conveyed as a prisoner, died of his wounds between Evansville and Owensboro, and after being stripped of his clothing, was thrown into an old wooden box which was about three inches too short for him, and left on the wharf boat to be buried by our citizens. A meeting was called by the Southern citizens of the town and preparations made for a suitable burial at 1 o'clock on Thursday. Long before the appointed time our streets were thronged with people from all sections of the county, who had come to witness the solemn ceremony. At 2 o'clock the remains were conveyed to the Methodist Church, where an impressive and eloquent funeral oration was delivered by Rev. Dr. Nicholson. The number of spectators at the church was variously estimated at from 1,000 to 1,500. After the exercises at the church were concluded the procession repaired to the cemetery, where they deposited the remains of the brave but unfortunate soldier, who died while nobly battling in defense of his country and his country's cause.*

*It may be of some consolation to the friends of the deceased to know - though buried among strangers in a strange land - that he was interred in a manner becoming his cause, and that thousands of sympathizing tears were shed over his grave for the loved ones at home, and many a fervent prayer offered up to God for his safe deliverance to that haven of rest where strife, dissensions [sic] and Abolitionism never enter, and where peace and harmony reign forever.*

*Soldier rest, thy warfare o're  
Dream of fighting fields no more;*

*Sleep the sleep that knows no breaking,  
Morn of toil nor night of waking.*

*The name of the soldier was A. Kyle. It was stated that he belonged to Company C, 18th Regiment Louisiana Volunteers. He was of dark complexion, had black hair and eyes, and was well formed. He was six feet three inches high."*

The editor of The Louisville Journal showed his displeasure with the showing of Southern sentiment and the report of the funeral in the Owensboro newspaper by angrily commenting in The Journal, "The comments of the Owensboro paper explain and go far to justify the recently promulgated order forbidding the burial of the rebel dead in our state."

The citizens of Owensboro placed a monument at John Kile's grave. It is an obelisk, four feet high. On it they had engraved:

"The citizens affectionately dedicate this monument of Owensboro, Daviess County, to the memory of A. Kyle, C.S.A., Co. C 18th Louisiana Volunteer Regiment who was taken prisoner at Shilo April 7, 1862. He died on a Federal gunboat, and was put on shore at this city, where his remains were tenderly laid to rest by Southern sympathizers. A slip of paper on which were these words was found on his person: "What more can a man do than to die in defense of his country."

John A. Kile, or A. Kyle as stated on his tombstone, is called the "unknown soldier" of Owensboro, Kentucky. They knew his name (or thought they did) but nothing else about him. My husband and I visited his grave in December of last year and on it we placed an arrangement of Boxwood, pine cones and red ribbons. We met and talked with Mrs. Elaine [should be Brenda] Little who conducts tours of historic Elmwood Cemetery, telling stories about the famous and not so famous people buried there. She told us that when she conducts a tour of school children she gives each child a carnation and tells them if they are especially touched by one of the stories they hear leave their flower on that person's grave. She said most of the flowers are always left on Pvt. Kile's grave.

John's wife Rosanna Francine married again to Edmond Bush on the 21st of October 1866, and moved to Navarro County, Texas. (3) His daughter Sarah Alease married John William Tobin in 1876 at Kisatchie, Louisiana. (4) They were the grandparents of my husband, Ted Tobin, and John Kile was his great grandfather. Ted has John Kile's photograph and Jacob Kile's bible in which is pasted the original newspaper clipping.

#### NOTES

1. Some of the men who enlisted from the Cloutierville area were: Capt. John D. Woods, the local doctor, W. P. Owens, Theodule Lattier, Felix Sers, L. P. Fontenot, Charles Bertrand, Jr., three Hertzog boys, six Rachal boys, A. B. Cunningham. Regimental Color Bearer, and W. A. Jenkins, Musician.

2. General Braxton Bragg and General Pierre G. T. Beauregard.

3. Names of children by this marriage: Isidora, Nancy Victoria, Rebecca Ann, James William, John Stephen, Edmond Arenton, Jr., Thadeous Cason, Christopher Columbus, and Roy Purdom.

4. The wedding was performed by Jacob Kile, Alease's grandfather. He was pastor and founder of the Kisatchie Union Methodist Church.



**Find A Grave Internet Site:**

The Journal of the Kentucky Division, Sons of Confederate Veterans  
Wednesday, March 25, 2009

By Joey Oller and Ginny Tobin

Owensboro, the county seat of Daviess county, has a distinctly southern atmosphere, which makes even the casual visitor feel welcome. The beautifully kept Confederate monument on the courthouse lawn speaks volumes of the pride of Daviess countians feel in their past and the soldiers who cast their lot with the Confederacy. The statue gleams brightly in the sun during the day and a spotlight is trained on it so that even the night does not hide it from the eyes of passersby. In an era when most Confederate monuments are falling in despair and talk of removing them in some locations, such care and concern is refreshing.

Also in the nearby beautiful Elmwood Cemetery lay more than fifty valiant Confederate soldiers -some who gave their lives in the great cause and others who outlived their country by many years. Each stone has a story to tell, each grave holds a hero.

Owensboro citizens are uniformly friendly and welcoming to strangers, and when reading the history of the area, it is tempting to believe that it has always been so—consider the story of "Private A. Kyle", whose tragic death was mourned by the city filled with people he had never met.

After the battle of Shiloh, captured Confederate prisoners were transported by river to Louisville Military Prison. The people of Owensboro saw many of these boats pass their shore on April 17, 1862. One of these prisoners never made it to Louisville, but was left on the shipping dock-dead.

A box was discovered on the dock with "A KYLE, CO C 18th LA. VOL. INF" and the words "DEAD REBEL" scratched on it. Inside the box was stuffed a soldier measuring over 6 ft. in height. The crew or Union guards apparently cared very little how the body was disposed of since it was abandoned in such a heartless manner.

Many Owensboro citizens were incensed by this action. They held a meeting to arrange a suitable burial for the dead soldier who was so far from home.

Dr. Gustavus Tyler donated a grave in his own family plot at Elmwood Cemetery. While preparing the body for burial, a scrap of paper was discovered in his pocket. It could have been written by Kyle as an inspiration before going into battle. Perhaps it was part of a letter some dear friend had given him or it may have been composed by a fellow comrade who watched the soldier die on the enemy prison boat. Whatever the origin of the note, the words touched the hearts of those who read the words: "What more can a man do than to die in defense of his country"

Private Kyle was not known to the citizens of Owensboro, but they made him one of their own as people gathered to watch the funeral procession. It was reported that 1,500 citizens in a city of 3,000 attended the services at a local church. A new coffin draped with a flag then made its way to its resting place. Dr. Tyler would later make it his duty to purchase a large marble monument inscribed with Private Kyle's story.

Louisville Journal Editor, George Prentice, a vocal opponent of the Confederacy, though both his sons were fighting in the Southern Army, printed the Owensboro paper's account of the funeral and added his own statement: "The comments of the Owensboro paper explain and go far to justify the recently promulgated order forbidding the burial of the rebel dead in our state" (This venomous remark makes one wonder how Prentice arranged the burial at Louisville's Cave Hill cemetery for his own son Courtland after his death at the battle of Augusta.)

More than 100 years later, the story of Private Kyle would again capture the heart of another Daviess countian. After reading the inscription on the Kyle monument, a local youth contacted Louisiana State University to search for more information on this soldier. It was discovered that the correct spelling of the soldier's name was Kile and that he had been listed as missing since the battle of Shiloh. A search for Kile descendants conducted by the University at the time failed.

On Confederate Memorial Day in 1964, a service was held for Pvt. Kile's gravesite in section A of Elmwood Cemetery. The Civil War Round Table, reenactors and the ladies of the Owensboro United Daughters of the Confederacy joined together to honor their adopted son. Among the floral tributes was an offering from Kile's home state of Louisiana.

In 1995, a Kile family genealogist, Ginny Tobin, made contact with a librarian in Owensboro, looking for the gravesite of a John A. Kile, who had been left on the dock in 1862. This connection after 133 years gave us the missing pieces of the puzzle for us and his descendants:

John's parents, Jacob Kile and his wife Sarah (Airhart), came to Louisiana from Monroe County, Tennessee about 1839. Jacob and Sarah settled in Natchitoches Parish, just south of Cloutierville, and it was there in 1840, their first child John A. Kile was born. Sarah died in 1856.

The Kiles were neighbors and friends of Francois and Sarah Elizabeth (Wrinkle) Adle. Their children were playmates. When Francois died, March 8, 1857, Jacob was administrator of his estate. On April 1, 1858 Jacob and Sarah Elizabeth were married.

Sarah Elizabeth had six daughters with Francois, one of whom was Rosanna Francine. The childhood friendship between John Kile and Francine blossomed into love and on September 6, 1860, the then technically step-siblings were married at Cloutierville by Justice of the Peace Adam Carnahan.

On August 21, 1861, a daughter was born to John and Francine. The country was in the grips of the War and John, along with his boyhood friends from Cloutierville, was anxious to get into the struggle. On September 9th of that year Capt. John D. Woods organized the Natchitoches Rebels at Cloutierville, but John's baby daughter was only nineteen days old and he did not feel he could leave Francine at that time. According to family legend he named the baby Sarah Alease, probably for both grandmothers.

When Sarah Alease was six weeks old John bade farewell to his family and traveled to Camp Moore where on October 5, 1861 he enlisted in Co. C (The Natchitoches Rebels) of the 18th Louisiana Infantry. From there the company went to New Orleans where three additional companies joined them, completing the regiment.

In mid-February 1862, the Eighteenth Louisiana left New Orleans for Corinth, Mississippi, to defend the vital railroads in that area.

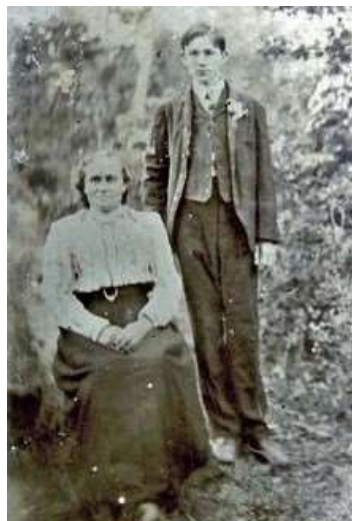
Capt. Woods' Company of the Eighteenth Louisiana Regiment went into battle at Shiloh on April 6th with forty-two men; twenty-six were killed or wounded, including Pvt. John A. Kile. He, along with other Confederate prisoners, was put aboard a Federal gun boat for transport to a prisoner-of-war camp at Louisville, but during the trip up the Ohio River he died of his wounds. His body was deposited on the wharf at Owensboro, Kentucky, clad only in a red undershirt and stuffed into a box too short for Kile's tall frame.

So now the tragic story of Pvt. John A. Kile is full circle, and though he is no longer unknown, he will always be Owensboro's adopted "unknown soldier" of the Confederacy, Louisianian in life, a Kentuckian in death.

---Sources for this article: Breckinridge Chapter UDC records, The Owensboro Messenger, The Confederate Veteran, The Daviess County Library.



Grave of John A. Kile in section A of Elmwood Cemetery, Owensboro, KY



Left, Rosanna Francine Adle Kile Bush (1843-1928), wife of Private John A. Kile (c1840-1862); right, Sarah Alease Kile Tobin (1861-1927), daughter of John A. Kile & Rosanna Francine Adle.

