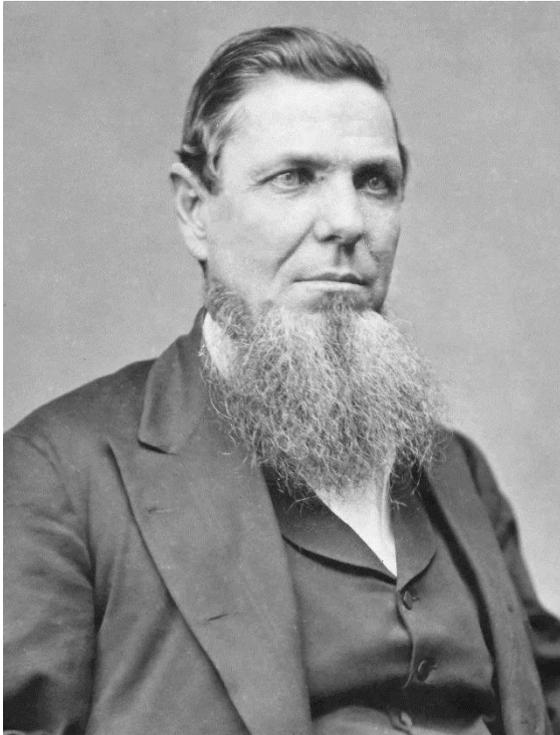


Brigadier General Andrew Jackson Hamilton

By Brian Hogan



 It is not known when the Hamilton family arrived in Madison County as there are no records available prior to 1809. An 1809 census of Madison County, Mississippi Territory, conducted by the surveyor Thomas Freeman, named James C. Hamilton as head of the household, however it listed only the number of others in the household, i.e., three white people and four free slaves. James C. Hamilton was a lawyer, and was admitted to the Twickenham Bar in 1810.

James C. Hamilton, born in 1785, was married to Jane Bayless. Their son, Morgan Calvin Hamilton, was born in 1809, and perhaps he was the third white member of the family

when the census was taken. Andrew Jackson Hamilton, the subject of this story, was born in Madison County on January 28, 1815.

On October 7, 1813 the citizens of Madison County were alarmed by a report that a large body of Creek Indians was within a day's march of Huntsville. Just five weeks earlier, several hundred soldiers and members of their families were killed by Creek Indians in the Ft. Mims Massacre about 35 miles north of Mobile. With the horrible details still fresh in their minds, a panic spread throughout the areas.

The report proved to be a false alarm, but it prompted many able-bodied men to organize a militia force. Among them was James C. Hamilton, who recruited a company of mounted guards in November, 1813 and became their captain. His company was ordered into service by Colonel Peter Perkins, Madison County, Mississippi Territory and assigned to Andrew Jackson's army. The company appears to have mustered out on July 13, 1814.

A Huntsville Historical Marker notes that General Andrew Jackson came through Huntsville on October 11, 1813, en-route to the Creek Indian Wars. The culmination was the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, where Jackson's army soundly defeated the "Red Stick" Creek warriors in March, 1814. This battle basically ended any further Indian uprisings. General Andrew Jackson went on to

defeat the British in the Battle of New Orleans in January, 1815.

It would seem obvious then that when James Hamilton's second son was born in 1815, he was named Andrew Jackson Hamilton, after the Hero of the South.

Andrew Jackson Hamilton, after attending the common schools, studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1841. He practiced law in Talladega until late in 1846 when he joined his brother in Texas. He practiced law in LaGrange, Fayette County for three years before he moved to Austin. His brother, Morgan Calvin Hamilton, moved to Texas in 1837 – the same year that their father died.

In 1849, the Governor appointed him Acting Attorney General – the beginning of his political career. Hamilton represented Travis County in the State House of Representatives from 1851-1853, where he aligned himself with a faction of the Democratic party that opposed secession, reopening the slave trade and other Southern extremist demands. In 1859, he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. He was the last Texas representative to leave Congress, preferring to remain in his seat even after Texas officially left the Union.

After his return to Texas in 1861, he won a special election to the State Senate, but his anti-slavery and anti-Confederacy stance led to plots against his life. In July, 1862, he fled to Mexico. Hamilton left Mexico with other Texas refugees aboard the American brigantine *N. Berry* and landed in New Orleans in early September, 1862.

As he made his way north, Hamilton spoke in many Northern cities about dis-unionists and the “slave power” that he believed was trying to subvert democracy and the rights of non-slave owners.

On November 14, 1862 Hamilton was commissioned a brigadier general by Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, and appointed Military Governor of Texas, headquartered in New Orleans. He was to “re-establish and maintain, under military form, the functions of civil government, until the loyal inhabitants of Texas shall be able to assert their constitutional rights and privileges.”

Hamilton had no military command, but Stanton instructed Major General N. P. Banks, commander the Department of the South, to support him by assigning a governor's guard, commanded by a competent officer.

The only military action he was involved in was the attempt to capture Galveston Texas, the main port on the Gulf from where blockade runners would transport cotton. He pushed the Army and Navy to mount an attack, which they did on January 1, 1863. The attack was unsuccessful and two of eight ships were lost. One was captured and the other was blown up, after it was grounded, to prevent capture. Three companies of 260 men of the 42nd Massachusetts Infantry, that had landed on December 24, 1862, were also captured by a Confederate force said to number 3000.

It has been claimed that some of Hamilton's “entourage” were cotton traders and that he had arranged

that they could accompany the expedition. There is no direct evidence of this but it could be true. General Banks's after-action report to Major General Halleck on January 7, 1863 includes the following:

"...General Hamilton is not a bad man, but he does not manifest great force of character, and is surrounded by men who came here...for base, speculative purposes and nothing else....He explains their presence by saying that in the North he became indebted to them for pecuniary assistance. I sent him notice that they would be required to leave the department if their course was approved by him..."

Hamilton spent the remainder of the war in New Orleans, serving no real purpose.

With the beginning of Reconstruction, President Andrew Johnson appointed Andrew Jackson Hamilton as the Provisional Governor of Texas in July, 1865.

In the *Handbook of Texas Online*, James A. Marten wrote:

"...[Hamilton's] career during Reconstruction was stormy and frustrating...he pursued a program of trying to limit officeholders to former Unionists, ratifying the Thirteenth

Amendment to the U. S. Constitution, and granting economic and legal rights (although not the vote) to freedmen. When the Texas Constitutional Convention of 1866 refused to enact most of his suggestions, he rejected presidential Reconstruction and promoted the harsher program of the Radical Republicans, (and) endorsed black suffrage and helped organize the Southern Loyalists' Convention in Philadelphia in September, 1866..."

Hamilton was defeated in the 1866 election for governor by former Confederate Brig. General James W. Throckmorton. Surely his defeat was a result of his policies. Ironically, Throckmorton was to last only one year. He was removed from office by order of Union General Philip Sheridan as "an impediment to reconstruction."

Hamilton's political views changed and he became one of the leading Moderate Republicans in Texas, opposing his own brother Morgan Hamilton, who was a leading Radical Republican spokesman in the U. S. Senate. Morgan Hamilton was elected in 1870 and served until 1877.

Andrew Jackson Hamilton again ran for governor in 1869 and lost to a Radical Republican. Hamilton would not seek public office again, but resumed his practice of law. He

died from tuberculosis on his farm near Austin on April 11, 1875. He is buried in Oakwood Cemetery there. He was preceded in death by his father, James C., who died in 1837

and his brother Morgan Calvin Hamilton, who died in San Diego in 1893.



The Narrative can be found in the TVCWRT book published in 2012 titled, *North Alabama Civil War Generals; 13 Wore Gray, the Rest Blue*. Complements of the TVCWRT.