

PRIVATE JAMES HC RODGERS 10th REGT IND INF

It seems that James HC was indeed a military man. As previously recorded he fought for the United States in the Mexican War when he was a very young man, not yet even twenty years old, and saw battle in both Old and New Mexico. When Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States in November of 1860, South Carolina began the debate as to whether or not they should remain a part of the United States and on December 20th, 1860 made official notice that they were withdrawing from the Union. By February 1861, most of the other southern states had followed suit and formed the Confederate States of America. The outgoing President Buchanan was powerless to prevent this. Before 1933, the President-Elect did not take office until March, which further tied the hands of the government to do anything productive to save the Union. Finally, On April 12th, 1861, only one month after President Lincoln took office, South Carolina militia fired upon Federal troops stationed at Fort Sumter and took the fort into Confederate hands.¹ The Civil War had started.

On April 15th, 1861 President Lincoln declared insurrection in the South. He called for 75,000 volunteers for three months service to stop the Southern insurrection.² James HC Rodgers was one of these volunteers. With his wife pregnant, and five other children at home, James HC enlisted in Company F, 10th Regiment Indiana Infantry on April 25th, 1861 and left for duty.³ James HC's third son was born while he was fighting for the Union in and around what is today West Virginia. James HC's youngest son, John Ray Rodgers was born July 7th, 1861.⁴

¹ Bailey, Thomas. Pgs 416-417

² Giese, James. Pgs 145 and 149

³ [James HC Muster In Company F, 10th IN Regiment](#)

⁴ [James HC Handwritten Dates #2](#)

According to the official's adjutant files, the 10th Indiana Infantry were mustered in and ordered to duty near Evansville, Indiana, until June 7, presumably for training purposes. They were then ordered to Virginia on June 7 and attached to Brigadier General William S. Rosecrans' Brigade which was a part of Major General George B. McClellan's Army of Virginia and fought for and occupied Buckhannon, Virginia by June 30, 1861. The so-called "West Virginia Campaign" came next from July 6-17, 1861. But, most importantly James HC participated in the Battle of Rich Mountain on July 11, 1861. The Battle of Rich Mountain secured a vital railroad line for the Union, but because of its strategic location, the winning of the battle allowed for the creation of the state of West Virginia a few months later as Confederate troops no longer had any access to the western part of Virginia. James HC would stay in the region and serve at Beverly, Virginia until July 24, 1861. James HC apparently did his three months service and then returned home to Jennings County, Indiana being mustered out on August 6th, 1861.⁵

James HC would spend very little time after his first round of service for the Union in Jennings County. I would also argue that he had changed some of his ways by this point in time. There are no circuit court records on James HC Rodgers from 1862-1864 charging him with any crime whatsoever. Considering how many times he was charged in Missouri, I found this to be somewhat remarkable. Rachel Wilkens⁶ did say that James HC and his family were down on their luck in Jennings County, but just by the lack of legal paperwork filed it would seem that James HC might have been a different man. What precipitated the families' next move remains to be seen, but by late 1863

⁵ Dyer, Frederick H.

⁶ [Rachel Wilkens to Polly Sprout letter \(Transcribed\)](#)

James HC Rodgers and his family had left Jennings County and arrived 253 miles away in Moultrie County, Illinois.⁷

⁷ [James HC Rodgers Plat Map Moultrie County, IL](#)