A Visit to General Tracy At Vicksburg

Frances C. Roberts

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General Edward Dorr Tracy’s monument in Vicksburg National Military Park, Vicksburg, Mississippi.

One of Huntsville’s own generals in the Civil War is honored in the Vicksburg National Military Park at Vicksburg, Mississippi, just off U.S. Highway 80. Brigadier General Edward Dorr Tracy is the only Confederate officer from Alabama so honored.

Born November 5, 1833 in Macon, Georgia, he was educated at the University of Georgia where he studied law and graduated at the early age of 17. After leaving college, he taught at a school for boys, and at the age of 20 began his practice of law. In 1855 he moved to Huntsville where he joined the firm of David C. Humphreys. In 1860 he served as an elector for the state at large on the Breckinridge presidential ticket, and made an outstanding reputation for his support of the Southern Democrats.

When it became apparent that war was inevitable, he was made a captain of the Fourth Alabama Infantry Regiment, Confederate States Army. On July 17, 1861, he was appointed major of his own regiment and participated in the first Battle of Manassas. On October 19, 1861, he was promoted to lieutenant colonel of the 19th Alabama Infantry Regiment and served under Colonel Joe Wheeler at the Battle of Shiloh in April of 1862. In July 1862 he went with McCown’s Division from the Army of Mississippi to east Tennessee to reinforce General Edmond Kirby Smith’s forces in defense of Chattanooga. The following August (1862) he was
commissioned brigadier general and placed in command of five Alabama regiments. At the Battle of Port Gibson, Mississippi (May 1, 1863), he was in command of this group when he was killed instantly by a minie ball.

Since the National Military Park commemorates the Union victory at Vicksburg on July 4, 1863, most of the monuments tell of the bravery of many Union troops from various northern states. General Tracy's monument stands out among the more than 1260 memorials, tablets, statues, bronze portraits and monuments that honor the officers and enlisted men who participated in the Vicksburg campaign.

Only in recent years has a memorial been placed at Vicksburg honoring the Alabamians who gave their lives in the unsuccessful defense of Vicksburg, a major turning point in the outcome of the war.

The Alabama Monument.