

Benj. S. Sirmans¹ of Rays Mill GA was a witness to the application dtd Sep 23, 1903.

In brief, he indicated that he knew W.H.H. Outlaw and was a member of the same military unit. He further stated that at the end of the war, Outlaw was home on furlough approved by the unit commander. In summary, he stated that Outlaw was “totally infirm from wounds and other causes contracted during the war which wholly incapacitated him for labor of any kind.”

¹ In this paragraph on the identification of “Benj. S. Sirmans,” I say a lot, but not much.

This is the entry from Henderson, Lillian (Director of Compilation). 1959-1964. Rosters of the Confederate Soldiers of Georgia. Vol. 5 Longinia and Porter, Hapeville, GA, pg 674 (the page immediately following Outlaw’s entry, i.e., in Co. E, 54th):

Sirmons, Benjamin—Private May 6, 1862. Roll dated Feb. 28, 1863, only roll on file, shows him present. Wounded, right shoulder permanently disabled at Morris Island, S. C., in 1863. Unfit for further service. (Born in Ga. in 1828. Died in Berrien County, Ga. Sept. 22, 1913.)

And, this is the entry from Lastinger, L.E. (1928) *The Confederate War. A Compilation of the Confederate Soldiers, going from Berrien County, Georgia*. Reprinted, 1975, by the Berrien Press, Nashville, GA. (When Mr. Lastinger published this list, he was the sole survivor of Co. K, 29th.)

85. B. Sirmans, Private May 6, 1862.

Please note that neither Henderson nor Lastinger provide a middle initial; however, clearly, the statement shows the middle initial to be “S.” The witness could not write his name, so depended on Ordinary Patterson. I looked further.

There have been many many Benjamin Sirmans (Sirmons); those I know all descend from Josiah Sirmans ([Feb 5, 1937, Clinch County News](#)). For a longer and better, though still imperfect, read, see Huxford’s History of Clinch County, which can be downloaded (160 MB) from this [great site](#). One Benjamin Sirmans, for example, has been recorded ([Holtzendorff, D. undated, Sirmon Family Documentation, Genealogy Report](#) as a half-brother (dob 1828) of my 2d greatgrandfather Mark R. Watson while another was his stepfather’s brother; another married the sister of my greatgrandmother Betsy nee Boykin Watson. There are filters that one can apply (death before the witness statement, age at time of the American Civil War, e.g., eliminating the Benjamin Sirmans (died 1877) who was the son of Benjamin Sirmans (> 60 years old at war’s beginning) who was the son of Josiah Sirmans). Using the dates provided by Henderson to search Findagrave, this [return](#) is given. The birth and death dates match, no middle initial is given, but it is imo incorrectly identified as Benjamin Hill Sirmans. Incidentally, this grave is in Pleasant Cemetery, where Outlaw is buried; in the wild west of genealogy, this grave is also attributed to yet another Benjamin Sirmans, Benjamin J. Sirmans. In the 1910 FC, a Benjamin Sirmans, dob 1828—who could neither read nor write (cf. statement)—with spouse Nancy is enumerated, and immediately below, a Benjamin H (his son, as indicated by the 1870 FC). The Georgia Property Tax Digest (1883-1887) lists Benjamin H Sirmans and Benjamin S. Sirmans on the same page ([link](#) if you have an Ancestry subscription). A possibility is that the witness, Benjamin Sirmans, was the son of Jonathan Sirmans and my 3d greatgrandmother Martha “Patsey” Rouse, and that his middle initial was indeed “S.” just as shown on the statement (this possibility, of course, means that the [list of children](#)—which has been called into question before--on Martha Rouse’s grave is incorrect). A more limited and almost certainly valid conclusion is that Benjamin S. Sirmans was descendent of Josiah Sirmans, as I suggested in the beginning, and maybe that is as far as I am willing to go, given the conflicting information. On the positive side, we do know where our Benjamin lived and what he owned (tax digest) and where he is buried.