

Paul Shirley
December 19, 1820- November 24, 1876

Section 28.52 # 280313

Paul Shirley was born in Glasgow, Kentucky, on December 19, 1820, the son of Paul and Sarah Caperton Gibson Shirley. The family moved to Nashville where the Paul Shirley Sr. became a successful merchant. He died at Whites Creek Springs in Davidson County on April 16, 1834. His funeral was held at his home on Vine (7th Avenue North) and Church Street.

Navy Department Records in 1876 detail the naval career of Paul Shirley (Jr.). On July 25, 1839, he was appointed Midshipman and sent to the West India Squadron in October. During the Civil War, he was in command of U.S.S. *Cyane*, U.S.S. *Paul Jones* and U.S.S. *Suwanee*. He was promoted to Captain on September 19, 1870. (Naval records do not show promotion to Admiral).

Shirley Family Reunion was held in Memphis on April 27, 1872, at the home of Paul Shirley's sister Mrs. Mary Shirley Rice. Of special interest was the meeting of the two brothers who had fought on opposing sides during the Civil War: Paul Shirley for the Union and John T. Shirley for the Confederacy. John T. Shirley was a riverboat captain and designer of ironclads for the Confederacy including the *CSS Arkansas*. John T. Shirley and his wife were struck down during the Yellow Fever Epidemic in Memphis in September 1873.

Paul Shirley was married to Margaretta Guinn Stanley. At the time of his death, in 1876, they were living in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. According to the testimony, given on January 25, 1877, by his son James R. Shirley, Captain Paul Shirley had died on a railroad trip near Dennison, Ohio on November 24, 1876 and further that he accompanied his father's remains to Nashville for interment. This letter was filed in the Navy Department records with his widow Margaretta Shirley's Pension Application which was granted on February 27, 1877.

In the Shirley lot at City Cemetery were buried five members of the family: Paul Shirley, merchant, died 1834 at Whites Creek Springs, Davidson County; James A. Shirley, aged 22, son of Paul & Sarah died 1847 in Nashville; Mrs. Sarah Shirley, widow of Paul, died January 1876, in Bowling Green, Kentucky; Captain Paul Shirley died November 1876 in Ohio; Miss Cirilla Shirley, age 90, daughter of Paul & Sarah Shirley and sister of Captain Paul Shirley, died 1918 in Varner, Arkansas. In 2017, all have tombstones except Miss Cirilla Shirley.

At this time it is not known who had "Admiral" inscribed on Paul Shirley's tombstone at City Cemetery. When Captain Shirley died, his wife, his sister Mary Shirley Rice, his sister Cirilla Shirley and his son James R. Shirley were living. In her 1918 obituary, Miss Cirilla Shirley was identified as "the sister of the late Admiral Paul Shirley."

Sources

Navy Department Records. Career and death of Paul Shirley

Shirley Association Genealogical Research. On-line

Memphis Daily Appeal, April 28, 1872. Shirley Family Reunion in Memphis. On-line

Obituaries. Shirley, Paul, Mrs. Sarah, James A, Captain Paul, Cirilla. City Cemetery website

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