John Irwin Kendall, Lt. Colonel, F&S, General Walthall’s Brigade, C.S.

1841  January 10: Kendall was born in Grenada, MS to William and Mary Irwin Kendall.

1850  September 14: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in Jackson County, MS showed eight-year-old John I., living with his parents and siblings. His father, William, was a Lawyer.

1860  July 11: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in Jackson County, MS showed 19-year-old John living with his parents and siblings. His father was a lawyer.

His mother Mary owned one slave, a two-year-old little girl.

1861  October: Enlisted in the C.S. Army and mustered into Co. C, 4 LA Infantry.

    In 1861 Mr. Kendall was employed as a clerk in the custom-house at New Orleans. Immediately upon the secession of Louisiana from the union he joined the Jefferson Davis Cadets, and was elected junior lieutenant, but resigned soon after and enlisted in the Delta Rifles, of which H.M. Favorot was captain, and which formed part of the Fourth Louisiana Regiment, under command of Colonel Robert J. Parrow. The regiment was stationed at Ocean Springs, and was, later detailed to Brashear City, La., to protect the approaches to New Orleans by the Atchafalaya river. The Fourth Louisiana remained at Brashear City until March, 1862, when orders were received to proceed at once to Jackson, Tenn., where the regiment was mustered into the army of Tennessee, under General Albert Sidney Johnston. The army moved April 4. Its destination being Corinth and Pittsburg landing, and on the morning of the 5th the regiment of Louisiana boys received its baptism of fire. Thrice they charged the enemy, and after great loss succeeded in driving them back, but the next day the federals were re-enforced and regained their former positions.
After one year's service, Mr. Kendall and the remnants of the Fourth Louisiana re-enlisted for the term of the war. Mr. Kendall was made corporal, and was assigned to the command of a 20-pound Parrott gun on Fort hill, Vicksburg.

From Baton Rouge the Fourth Louisiana went to Port Hudson. General Banks, with 30,000 federal troops, 150 pieces of artillery and a large number of ships, laid siege to Port Hudson, which was defended by 3000 Confederates. General Banks demanded the surrender of the town, but General Gardner peremptorily refused to give in. On the 26th of May the union army made an assault, and were repulsed, with a loss of about 2000 men. Between that date and July 9, several other assaults were made, and federals were repulsed with great slaughter. On the 9th of July Port Hudson surrendered.

1863 July & August: Company Muster Roll. Remarks “Lt. J. I. Kendall was taken prisoner at the surrender of Pt. Hudson but is reported to have escaped from the New Orleans custom House. Ran the blockade and is now said to be at..” [reverse side digital copy of muster roll missing]

Lieutenant Kendall was made prisoner and was taken to New Orleans, and held a prisoner in the custom house. He and his brother officers were confined in the United States courtrooms, and as the place was then in process of construction, the rooms were not very desirable for lodging. After twenty-one days' imprisonment Lieutenant Kendall escaped, and took refuge in the house of a friend. Securing the passport of one Harry Wells, who had taken the oath of allegiance to the United States, Lieutenant Kendall boldly presented himself before the provost marshal and succeeded in getting a pass to go down to Plaquemines parish. The adventurous confederate found passage aboard a sloop bound for Biloxi, Miss., where he was arrested, on suspicion of being a Yankee spy, but as his father lived at Ocean Springs, a few miles distant, and as several residents of Biloxi identified him as “John Kendall” he was allowed his liberty.

He went to Ocean Springs, saw his father and then left for Mobile, where he rejoined his command.


Soon after his arrival the regiment was ordered to Georgia to join General Johnston's army. Lieutenant Kendall reached the army in time to take part in the battle of Dalton. Not long after he was made lieutenant colonel, the highest rank attained by him during the war, and was appointed to duty on the staff of General Walthall, of Mississippi.

1864 May to September: Company Muster Rolls. Remarks “Promoted 1 Lieut. 25 May 1864.”

He participated in the battles of Chickamauga, Lookout, Missionary Ridge, New Hope church, Kennesaw Mountain, Atlanta.

During the campaign in Georgia, Lieutenant Colonel Kendall, commanding a small body of picked men, captured the little town of Calhoun, which was held by a large detachment of federals. The enemy ran away without showing fight, and
confederates found in the deserted camp a large quantity of arms and a big storehouse filled with provisions.

November 30: Fought at the Battle of Franklin.

December 16: Captured at the Battle of Nashville and sent to Johnson’s Island, OH.

Lieutenant Colonel Kendall was in the disastrous march to Tennessee, with Hood’s brigade, and was in the fights at Spring Hill, Franklin and Nashville: at Franklin turnpike he was wounded in the right shoulder and was made prisoner. He was placed on a train of box cars with hundreds of confederate officers and transported to Sandusky, Ohio. It was mid-winter, and the ice had formed to a considerable thickness over lake Erie. The prisoners were marched over this ice four or five miles to Johnson’s Island, where they were imprisoned.

1865 June 16: Signed Oath of Allegiance and released from prison.

On his return to New Orleans Colonel Kendall took a trip to Mexico, and entered upon a career which was destined to be the work of his life. He was offered the position of telegraph agent of the Mexican Central Railway, and for eight years spent most of his time in that country.

1872 April: Kendall married Mary Elizabeth Smith in New Orleans, LA.

1880 June 1: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in New Orleans, LA showed John I., clerk in store, and Mary living with several children.

November 10: Wife, Mary, died “…and since that date, during Mr. Kendall’s frequent trips to Mexico, the family has been under the loving, careful charge of Miss Mamie L. Kendall, his sister.”

1893 He next was a resident of Chicago, as an agent of the Mexican national Railway, and in 1893 accepted the responsible position of general agent for Mexico of Waters-Pierce Oil Company, large exporters of oils from Mexico, with headquarters at Mazatlan.¹

1898 October 14: John Irwin Kendall died in Mazatlan, Mexico.

¹ The Times-Picayune, New Orleans, LA Sunday 16 Oct 1898, pg. 10