

# Gilbert Moxley Sorrel cased photograph

## Descriptive Summary

<b>Repository:</b>	Georgia Historical Society
<b>Creator:</b>	Unknown.
<b>Title:</b>	Gilbert Moxley Sorrel cased photograph
<b>Dates:</b>	circa 1863-1864
<b>Extent:</b>	0.05 cubic feet (1 folder)
<b>Identification:</b>	MS 1717

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## Biographical/Historical Note

Gilbert Moxley Sorrel was born in Savannah, Georgia, in 1838. He was the son of Francis Sorrel, one of the wealthiest men in Savannah. He grew up in the Sorrel Weed House, one of the finest examples of Greek Revival architecture in the United States and one of the first two homes in Georgia to be designated as a state landmark. In his early 20s, Sorrel left his clerk job in the banking department of the Central of Georgia Railroad to join the Georgia Hussars. He was a private in the Georgia Hussars, serving at Skidaway Island and at Fort Pulaski during its capture. In 1861, his unit had not yet been officially accepted into the Confederate Army and he was anxious to make his way to the front lines. With letters of introduction from General P.G.T. Beauregard's staff (a friend of his father) he headed north to Virginia to join General Longstreet's staff at Manassas. Within a few weeks, he was appointed Longstreet's adjutant and later advanced to the rank of captain, major, and lieutenant colonel in 1863. In 1864, Sorrel was appointed brigadier general and commanded a brigade of Georgians attached to William Mahone's division. Sorrel participated in nearly all of the major battles during the Civil War including Manassas (Bull Run), Seven Pines, Seven Day's battles, Second Manassas, Sharpsburg (Antietam), Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, and the Petersburg siege. At Hatcher's Run, he was shot in the lung and his impending death was so certain the *New York Herald* published his obituary. Needless to say he recuperated from his wound.

After the war, he returned to Savannah and served on the city council from 1873-1875. He also served as acting vice president of the Georgia Historical Society for several years and as chairman of the board of managers of the Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences. In addition, he managed the Ocean Steamship Company and the Georgia Export and Import Company, both located in Savannah.

Soon after Sorrel's return to Savannah, he became ill and relocated to Virginia to be closer to his brother. He died in 1901 near Roanoke, Virginia. His body was returned to Savannah and buried at Laurel Grove Cemetery. During his illness, Sorrel wrote *Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer*, which was published posthumously in 1905.

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## Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of a rare, unpublished image of Sorrel as a senior officer under Lt. General James Longstreet. Sorrel is wearing a colonel's double-breasted gray uniform coat with three stars on the collar and no braid on the sleeve. He is wearing regulation headgear with a braid and riding gauntlets (tinted bright yellow). His belt rig includes a Model 1851 Federal sword belt plate with an eagle and silver wreath. The photographer applied gold paint to all of the buttons and insignia in the image.

The photograph is a 1/6th plate melainotype (a variety of tintype) that was created between 1863 and 1864. The image is under a brass mat and housed in an octagonal gutta percha case.

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## Index Terms

Cased photographs.

Confederate States of America. Army--Officers.  
Sorrel, G. Moxley, (Gilbert Moxley), 1838-1901.  
Tintypes (prints)

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## **Administrative Information**

### **Custodial History**

Purchased from Heritage Auction Galleries, Dallas, Texas.

### **Preferred Citation**

Gilbert Moxley Sorrel cased photograph, MS 1717, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.

### **Acquisition Information**

Purchased, 2006.

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## **Restrictions**

### **Access Restrictions**

Collection is open for research.

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## **Container List**

Gilbert Moxley Sorrel cased photograph, circa 1863-1864