

Sam Watkins
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Sam Watkins

Essential Question: What Role did Sam Watkins and Company H of the First Tennessee Infantry play in the Civil War?

Samuel Rush “Sam” Watkins was born June 26, 1839, in Mount Pleasant (Maury County), Tennessee. Sam Watkins was born into a planter class family. Sam’s father Frederick owned more than 100 slaves on two plantations in Maury County. The Watkins family was the 3rd wealthiest family in Maury County.

Sam Watkins enrolled in Jackson College in Columbia, Tennessee, but at the age of 21 enlisted in the Confederate Army after Tennessee seceded from the Union in 1861. Watkins originally enlisted in the “Bigby Greys” of the 3rd Tennessee Infantry in Mount Pleasant. However, in the spring of 1861, Watkins transferred to the “Maury Greys” of Company H of the First Tennessee Infantry. Sam Watkins served as part of Company H throughout the duration of the Civil War. Company H was involved in many of the Civil Wars most important battles including: Shiloh, Corinth, Murfreesboro (Stones River), Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge (Chattanooga), Atlanta, Franklin, and Nashville. Sam Watkins was one of only seven of the original 120 soldiers enlisted in Company H still part of the unit when General Joseph E. Johnston’s Army of Tennessee surrendered to General William Tecumseh Sherman in North Carolina in April, 1865.

Sam Watkins is best known for his memoir *Company Aytch: Or, a Side Show of the Big Show*. Written in 1882, *Company Aytch* is a personal narrative following Watkins’s involvement in Company H throughout the Civil War. Some historians question the accuracy of some accounts within the book because it was written nearly 20 years after the Civil War. Despite these questions, *Company Aytch* has remained one of the best primary sources about the common soldier’s Civil War experience. Watkins’ memoir gained new fame when Ken Burns used sections from it in his acclaimed series *The Civil War*.

Source: “Sam Watkins.” *Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park*. National Park Service, n.d. Web. 21 July 2014.
<<http://www.nps.gov/chch/historyculture/sam-watkins.htm>>

Sam Watkins “Co Aytch: Retrospective”

Of the 120 men who enlisted in Company H of the Army of the Tennessee, Watkins was one of only seven still alive when General Johnston surrendered in 1865. Watkins took part in a number of major battles including, Shiloh, Chickamauga, Franklin, and Nashville. Watkins memoir is considered to be one of the best by a common soldier in the Civil War.

CHAPTER I

RETROSPECTIVE

"WE ARE ONE AND UNDIVIDED"

About twenty years ago, I think it was--I won't be certain, though--a man whose name, if I remember correctly, was Wm. L. Yancy--I write only from memory, and this was a long time ago--took a strange and peculiar notion that the sun rose in the east and set in the west, and that the compass pointed north and south. Now, everybody knew at the time that it was but the idiosyncrasy of an unbalanced mind, and that the United States of America had no north, no south, no east, no west. Well, he began to preach the strange doctrine of there being such a thing. He began to have followers. As you know, it matters not how absurd, ridiculous and preposterous doctrines may be preached, there will be some followers.

Well, one man by the name of (I think it was) Rhett, said it out loud. He was told to "s-h-e-e." Then another fellow by the name (I remember this one because it sounded like a graveyard) Toombs said so, and he was told to "sh-sh-ee-ee." Then after a while whole heaps of people began to say that they thought that there was a north and a south; and after a while hundreds and thousands and millions said that there was a south. But they were the persons who lived in the direction that the water courses run.

Now, the people who lived where the water courses started from came down to see about it, and they said, "Gents, you are very much mistaken. We came over in the Mayflower, and we used to burn witches for saying that the sun rose in the east and set in the west, because the sun neither rises nor sets, the earth simply turns on its axis, and we know, because we are Pure(i)tans." The spokesman of the party was named (I think I remember his name because it always gave me the blues when I heard it) Horrors Greeley; and another person by the name of Charles Sumner, said there ain't any north or south, east or west, and you shan't say so, either. Now, the other people who lived in the direction that the water courses run, just raised their bristles and continued saying that there is a north and there is a south. When those at the head of the water courses come out furiously mad, to coerce those in the direction that water courses run,

and to make them take it back. Well, they went to gouging and biting, to pulling and scratching at a furious rate.

One side elected a captain by the name of Jeff Davis, and known as one-eyed Jeff, and a first lieutenant by the name of Aleck Stephens, commonly styled Smart Aleck. The other side selected as captain a son of Nancy Hanks, of Bowling Green, and a son of old Bob Lincoln, the rail-splitter, and whose name was Abe. Well, after he was elected captain, they elected as first lieutenant an individual of doubtful blood by the name of Hannibal Hamlin, being a descendant of the generation of Ham, the bad son of old Noah, who meant to curse him blue, but overdid the thing, and cursed him black.

Well, as I said before, they went to fighting, but old Abe's side got the best of the argument. But in getting the best of the argument they called in all the people and wise men of other nations of the earth, and they, too, said that America had no cardinal points, and that the sun did not rise in the east and set in the west, and that the compass did not point either north or south.

Well, then, Captain Jeff Davis' side gave it up and quit, and they, too, went to saying that there is no north, no south, no east, no west. Well, "us boys" all took a small part in the fracas, and Shep, the prophet, remarked that the day would come when those who once believed that the American continent had cardinal points would be ashamed to own it. That day has arrived. America has no north, no south, no east, no west; the sun rises over the hills and sets over the mountains, the compass just points up and down, and we can laugh now at the absurd notion of there being a north and a south.

Well, reader, let me whisper in your ear. I was in the row, and the following pages will tell what part I took in the little unpleasant misconception of there being such a thing as a north and south.

THE BLOODY CHASM

In these memoirs, after the lapse of twenty years, we propose to fight our "battles o'er again." To do this is but a pastime and pleasure, as there is nothing that so much delights the old soldier as to revisit the scenes and battlefields with which he was once so familiar, and to recall the incidents, thought rifling they may have been at the time.

The histories of the Lost Cause are all written out by "big bugs," generals and renowned historians, and like the fellow who called a turtle a "cooter," being told that no such word as cooter was in Webster's dictionary, remarked that he had as much right to make a dictionary as Mr. Webster or any other man; so have I to write a history.

But in these pages I do not pretend to write the history of the war. I only give a few sketches and incidents that came under the observation of a "high private" in the rear ranks of the

rebel army. Of course, the histories are all correct. They tell of great achievements of great men, who wear the laurels of victory; have grand presents given them; high positions in civil life; presidents of corporations; governors of states; official positions, etc., and when they die, long obituaries are published, telling their many virtues, their distinguished victories, etc., and when they are buried, the whole country goes in mourning and is called upon to buy an elegant monument to erect over the remains of so distinguished and brave a general, etc.

But in the following pages I propose to tell of the fellows who did the shooting and killing, the fortifying and ditching, the sweeping of the streets, the drilling, the standing guard, picket and videt, and who drew (or were to draw) eleven dollars per month and rations, and also drew the ramrod and tore the cartridge.

Pardon me should I use the personal pronoun "I" too frequently, as I do not wish to be called egotistical, for I only writ of what I saw as an humble private in the rear rank in an infantry regiment, commonly called "webfoot." Neither do I propose to make this a connected journal, for I write entirely from memory, and you must remember, kind reader, that these things happened twenty years ago, and twenty years is a long time in the life of any individual.

I was twenty-one years old then, and at that time I was not married. Now I have a house full of young "rebels," clustering around my knees and bumping against my elbow, while I write these reminiscences of the war of secession, rebellion, state rights, slavery, or our rights in the territories, or by whatever other name it may be called. These are all with the past now, and the North and South have long ago "shaken hands across the bloody chasm." The flag of the Southern cause has been furled never to be again unfurled; gone like a dream of yesterday, and lives only in the memory of those who lived through those bloody days and times.

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY-ONE

Reader mine, did you live in that stormy period? In the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and sixty-one, do you remember those stirring times? Do you recollect in that year, for the first time in your life, of hearing Dixie and the Bonnie Blue Flag? Fort Sumter was fired upon from Charleston by troops under General Beauregard, and Major Anderson, of the Federal army, surrendered. The die was cast; war was declared; Lincoln called for troops from Tennessee and all the Southern states, but Tennessee, loyal to her Southern sister states, passed the ordinance of secession, and enlisted under the Stars and Bars. From that day on, every person, almost, was eager for the war, and we were all afraid it would be over and we not be in the fight. Companies were made up, regiments organized; left, left, left, was heard from morning till night. By the right flank, file left, march, were familiar sounds. Everywhere could be seen Southern cockades made by the ladies and our sweethearts. And some who afterwards became Union men made the most fiery secession speeches. Flags made by the ladies were presented to companies, and to hear the young orators tell of how they would protect that flag, and that they would come back with the flag or come not at all, and if they fell they would fall with their backs to the field and their feet to the foe, would fairly make our hair stand on end with intense patriotism, and we wanted to march right off and whip twenty Yankees. But we soon found out that the glory of war was at home among the ladies and not upon the field of blood and carnage of death, where our comrades were

mutilated and torn by shot and shell. And to see the cheek blanch and to hear the fervent prayer, aye, I might say the agony of mind were very different indeed from the patriotic times at home.

CAMP CHEATHAM

After being drilled and disciplined at Camp Cheatham, under the administrative ability of General R. C. Foster, 3rd, for two months, we, the First, Third and Eleventh Tennessee Regiments--Maney, Brown and Rains--learned of the advance of McClelland's army into Virginia, toward Harper's Ferry and Bull Run.

The Federal army was advancing all along the line. They expected to march right into the heart of the South, set the negroes free, take our property, and whip the rebels back into the Union. But they soon found that secession was a bigger mouthful than they could swallow at one gobble. They found the people of the South in earnest.

Secession may have been wrong in the abstract, and has been tried and settled by the arbitrament of the sword and bayonet, but I am as firm in my convictions today of the right of secession as I was in 1861. The South is our country, the North is the country of those who live there. We are an agricultural people; they are a manufacturing people. They are the descendants of the good old Puritan Plymouth Rock stock, and we of the South from the proud and aristocratic stock of Cavaliers. We believe in the doctrine of State rights, they in the doctrine of centralization.

John C. Calhoun, Patrick Henry, and Randolph, of Roanoke, saw the venom under their wings, and warned the North of the consequences, but they laughed at them. We only fought for our State rights, they for Union and power. The South fell battling under the banner of State rights, but yet grand and glorious even in death. Now, reader, please pardon the digression. It is every word that we will say in behalf of the rights of secession in the following pages. The question has been long ago settled and is buried forever, never in this age or generation to be resurrected.

The vote of the regiment was taken, and we all voted to go to Virginia. The Southern Confederacy had established its capital at Richmond.

A man by the name of Jackson, who kept a hotel in Maryland, had raised the Stars and Bars, and a Federal officer by the name of Ellsworth tore it down, and Jackson had riddled his body with buckshot from a double-barreled shotgun. First blood for the South.

Everywhere the enemy were advancing; the red clouds of war were booming up everywhere, but at this particular epoch, I refer you to the history of that period.

A private soldier is but an automaton, a machine that works by the command of a good, bad, or indifferent engineer, and is presumed to know nothing of all these great events. His business is to load and shoot, stand picket, videt, etc., while the officers sleep, or perhaps die on the field of battle and glory, and his obituary and epitaph but "one" remembered among the slain,

but to what company, regiment, brigade or corps he belongs, there is no account; he is soon forgotten.

A long line of box cars was drawn up at Camp Cheatham one morning in July, the bugle sounded to strike tents and to place everything on board the cars. We old comrades have gotten together and laughed a hundred times at the plunder and property that we had accumulated, compared with our subsequent scanty wardrobe. Every soldier had enough blankets, shirts, pants and old boots to last a year, and the empty bottles and jugs would have set up a first-class drug store. In addition, every one of us had his gun, cartridge-box, knapsack and three days' rations, a pistol one each side and a long Bowie knife, that had been presented to us by William Wood, of Columbia, Tenn. We got in and on top of the box cars, the whistle sounded, and amid the waving of hats, handkerchiefs and flags, we bid a long farewell and forever to old Camp Cheatham.

Arriving at Nashville, the citizens turned out *en masse* to receive us, and here again we were reminded of the good old times and the "gal we left behind us." Ah, it is worth soldiering to receive such welcomes as this.

The Rev. Mr. Elliott invited us to his college grove, where had been prepared enough of the good things of earth to gratify the tastes of the most fastidious epicure. And what was most novel, we were waited on by the most beautiful young ladies (pupils of his school). It was charming, I tell you. Rev. C. D. Elliott was our Brigade Chaplain all through the war, and Dr. C. T. Quintard the Chaplain of the First Tennessee Regiment--two of the best men who ever lived. (Quintard is the present Bishop of Tennessee).

ON THE ROAD

Leaving Nashville, we went bowling along twenty or thirty miles an hour, as fast as steam could carry us. At every town and station citizens and ladies were waving their handkerchiefs and hurrahing for Jeff Davis and the Southern Confederacy. Magnificent banquets were prepared for us all along the entire route. It was one magnificent festival from one end of the line to the other. At Chattanooga, Knoxville, Bristol, Farmville, Lynchburg, everywhere, the same demonstrations of joy and welcome greeted us. Ah, those were glorious times; and you, reader, see why the old soldier loves to live over again that happy period.

But the Yankees are advancing on Manassas. July 21st finds us a hundred miles from that fierce day's battle. That night, after the battle is fought and won, our train draws up at Manassas Junction.

Well, what news? Everyone was wild, nay, frenzied with the excitement of victory, and we felt very much like the "boy the calf had run over." We felt that the war was over, and we would have to return home without even seeing a Yankee soldier. Ah, how we envied those that were wounded. We thought at that time that we would have given a thousand dollars to have been in the battle, and to have had our arm shot off, so we could have returned home with an empty sleeve. But the battle was over, and we left out.

STAUNTON

From Manassas our train moved on to Staunton, Virginia. Here we again went into camp, overhauled kettles, pots, buckets, jugs and tents, and found everything so tangled up and mixed that we could not tell tuther from which. We stretched our tents, and the soldiers once again felt that restraint and discipline which we had almost forgotten en route to this place. But, as the war was over now, our captains, colonels and generals were not "hard on the boys;" in fact, had begun to electioneer a little for the Legislature and for Congress. In fact, some wanted, and were looking forward to the time, to run for Governor of Tennessee.

Staunton was a big place; whisky was cheap, and good Virginia tobacco was plentiful, and the currency of the country was gold and silver.

The State Asylums for the blind and insane were here, and we visited all the places of interest.

Here is where we first saw the game called "chuck-a-luck," afterwards so popular in the army. But, I always noticed that chuck won, and luck always lost.

Faro and roulette were in full blast; in fact, the skum had begun to come to the surface, and shoddy was the gentleman. By this, I mean that civil law had been suspended; the ermine of the judges had been overridden by the sword and bayonet. In other words, the military had absorbed the civil. Hence the gambler was in his glory.

WARM SPRINGS, VIRGINIA

One day while we were idling around camp, June Tucker sounded the assembly, and we were ordered aboard the cars. We pulled out for Millboro; from there we had to foot it to Bath Alum and Warm Springs. We went over the Allegheny Mountains.

I was on every march that was ever made by the First Tennessee Regiment during the whole war, and at this time I cannot remember of ever experiencing a harder or more fatiguing march. It seemed that mountain was piled upon mountain. No sooner would we arrive at a place that seemed to be the top than another view of a higher, and yet higher mountain would rise before us. From the foot to the top of the mountain the soldiers lined the road, broken down and exhausted.

First one blanket was thrown away, and then another; now and then a good pair of pants, old boots and shoes, Sunday hats, pistols and Bowie knives strewed the road. Old bottles and jugs and various and sundry articles were lying pell-mell everywhere. Up and up, and onward and upward we pulled and toiled, until we reached the very top, when there burst upon our view one of the grandest and most beautiful landscapes we ever beheld.

Nestled in the valley right before us is Bath Alum and Warm Springs. It seemed to me at that time, and since, a glimpse of a better and brighter world beyond, to the weary Christian pilgrim who may have been toiling on his journey for years. A glad shout arose from those who had gained the top, which cheered and encouraged the others to persevere. At last we got to

Warm Springs. Here they had a nice warm dinner waiting for us. They had a large bath-house at Warm Springs. A large pool of water arranged so that a person could go in any depth he might desire. It was a free thing, and we pitched in. We had no idea of the enervating effect it would have upon our physical systems, and as the water was but little past tepid, we stayed in a good long time. But when we came out we were as limp as dishrags. About this time the assembly sounded and we were ordered to march. But we couldn't march worth a cent. There we had to stay until our systems had had sufficient recuperation. And we would wonder what all this marching was for, as the war was over anyhow.

The second day after leaving Warm Springs we came to Big Springs. It was in the month of August, and the biggest white frost fell that I ever saw in winter.

The Yankees were reported to be in close proximity to us, and Captain Field with a detail of ten men was sent forward on the scout. I was on the detail, and when we left camp that evening, it was dark and dreary and drizzling rain. After a while the rain began to come down harder and harder, and every one of us was wet and drenched to the skin--guns, cartridges and powder.

The next morning about daylight, while standing videt, I saw a body of twenty-five or thirty Yankees approaching, and I raised my gun for the purpose of shooting, and pulled down, but the cap popped. They discovered me and popped three or four caps at me; their powder was wet also. Before I could get on a fresh cap, Captain Field came running up with his seven-shooting rifle, and the first fire he killed a Yankee.

They broke and run. Captain Field did all the firing, but every time he pulled down he brought a Yankee. I have forgotten the number that he did kill, but if I am not mistaken it was either twenty or twenty-one, for I remember the incident was in almost every Southern paper at that time, and the general comments were that one Southern man was equal to twenty Yankees. While we were in hot pursuit, one truly brave and magnanimous Yankee, who had been badly wounded, said, "Gentlemen, you have killed me, but not a hundred yards from here is the main line." We did not go any further, but halted right there, and after getting all the information that we could out of the wounded Yankee, we returned to camp.

One evening, General Robert E. Lee came to our camp. He was a fine-looking gentleman, and wore a moustache. He was dressed in blue cottonade and looked like some good boy's grandpa. I felt like going up to him and saying good evening, Uncle Bob! I am not certain at this late day that I did not do so. I remember going up mighty close and sitting there and listening to his conversation with the officers of our regiment. He had a calm and collected air about him, his voice was kind and tender, and his eye was as gentle as a dove's. His whole make-up of form and person, looks and manner had a kind of gentle and soothing magnetism about it that drew every one to him and made them love, respect, and honor him. I fell in love with the old gentleman and felt like going home with him. I know I have never seen a finer looking man, nor one with more kind and gentle features and manners. His horse was standing nipping the grass, and when I saw that he was getting ready to start Iran and caught his horse and led him up to him. He took the reins of the bridle in his hand and said, "thank you, my son," rode off, and my hear twent with him. There was none of his staff with him; he had on no sword or pistol, or

anything to show his rank. The only thing that I remember he had was an opera-glass hung over his shoulder by a strap.

Leaving Big Springs, we marched on day by day, across Greenbrier and Gauley rivers to Huntersville, a little but sprightly town hid in the very fastnesses of the mountains. The people live exceedingly well in these mountains. They had plenty of honey and buckwheat cakes, and they called buttermilk "sour-milk," and sour-milk weren't fit for pigs; they couldn't see how folks drank sour-milk. But sour-kraut was good. Everything seemed to grow in the mountains--potatoes, Irish and sweet; onions, snap beans, peas--though the country was very thinly populated. Deer, bear, and foxes, as well as wild turkeys, and rabbits and squirrels abounded everywhere. Apples and peaches were abundant, and everywhere the people had apple-butter for every meal; and occasionally we would come across a small-sized distillery, which we would at once start to doing duty. We drank the singlings while they were hot, but like the old woman who could not eat corn bread until she heard that they made whisky out of corn, then she could manage to "worry a little of it down;" so it was with us and the singlings.

From this time forward, we were ever on the march--tramp, tramp, tramp--always on the march. Lee's corps, Stonewall Jackson's division--I refer you to the histories for the marches and tramps made by these commanders the first year of the war. Well, we followed them.

CHEAT MOUNTAIN

One evening about 4 o'clock, the drummers of the regiment began to beat their drums as hard as they could stave, and I saw men running in every direction, and the camp soon became one scene of hurry and excitement. I asked some one what all this hubbub meant. He looked at me with utter astonishment. I saw soldiers running to their tents and grabbing their guns and cartridge-boxes and hurry out again, the drums still rolling and rattling. I asked several other fellows what in the dickens did all this mean? Finally one fellow, who seemed scared almost out of his wits, answered between a wail and a shriek, "Why, sir, they are beating the long roll." Says I, "What is the long roll for?" "The long roll, man, the long roll! Get your gun; they are beating the long roll!" This was all the information that I could get. It was the first, last, and only long roll that I ever heard. But, then everything was new, and Colonel Maney, ever prompt, ordered the assembly. Without any command or bugle sound, or anything, every soldier was in his place. Tents, knapsacks and everything was left indiscriminately.

We were soon on the march, and we marched on and on and on. About night it began to rain. All our blankets were back in camp, but we were expected every minute to be ordered into action. That night we came to Mingo Flats. The rain still poured. We had no rations to eat and nowhere to sleep. Some of us got some fence rails and piled them together and worried through the night as best we could. The next morning we were ordered to march again, but we soon began to get hungry, and we had about half halted and about not halted at all. Some of the boys were picking blackberries. The main body of the regiment was marching leisurely along the road, when bang, debang, debang, bang, and a volley of buck and ball came hurling right through the two advance companies of the regiment--companies H and K. We had marched into a Yankee ambushade.

All at once everything was a scene of consternation and confusion; no one seemed equal to the emergency. We did not know whether to run or stand, when Captain Field gave the command to fire and charge the bushes. We charged the bushes and saw the Yankees running through them, and we fired on them as they retreated. I do not know how many Yankees were killed, if any. Our company (H) had one man killed, Pat Hanley, an Irishman, who had joined our company at Chattanooga. Hugh Padgett and Dr. Hooper, and perhaps one or two others, were wounded.

After the fighting was over, where, O where, was all the fine rigging heretofore on our officers? They could not be seen. Corporals, sergeants, lieutenants, captains, all had torn all the fine lace of their clothing. I noticed that at the time and was surprised and hurt. I asked several of them why they had torn off the insignia of their rank, and they always answered, "Humph, you think that I was going to be a target for the Yankees to shoot at?" You see, this was our first battle, and the officers had not found out that minnie as well as cannon balls were blind; that they had no eyes and could not see. They thought that the balls would hunt for them and not hurt the privates. I always shot at privates. It was they that did the shooting and killing, and if I could kill or wound a private, why, my chances were so much the better. I always looked upon officers as harmless personages. Colonel Field, I suppose, was about the only Colonel of the war that did as much shooting as the private soldier. If I shot at an officer, it was at long range, but when we got down to close quarters I always tried to kill those that were trying to kill me.

SEWELL MOUNTAIN

From Cheat Mountain we went by forced marches day and night, over hill and everlasting mountains, and through lovely and smiling valleys, sometimes the country rich and productive, sometimes rough and broken, through towns and villages, the names of which I have forgotten, crossing streams and rivers, but continuing our never ceasing, unending march, passing through the Kanawha Valley and by the salt-works, and nearly back to the Ohio river, when we at last reached Sewell Mountain. Here we found General John B. Floyd strongly entrenched and fortified and facing the advance of the Federal army. Two days before our arrival he had charged and captured one line of the enemy's works. I know nothing of the battle. See the histories for that. I only write from memory, and that was twenty years ago, but I remember reading in the newspapers at that time of some distinguished man, whether he was captain, colonel or general, I have forgotten, but I know the papers said "he sought the bauble, reputation, at the cannon's mouth, and went to glory from the death-bed of fame." I remember it sounded gloriously in print. Now, reader, this is all I know of this grand battle. I only recollect what the newspapers said about it, and you know that a newspaper always tells the truth. I also know that beef livers sold for one dollar apiece in gold; and here is where we were first paid off in Confederate money. Remaining here a few days, we commenced our march again.

Sewell Mountain, Harrisonburg, Lewisburg, Kanawha Salt-works, first four forward and back, seemed to be the programme of that day. Rosecrans, that wiley old fox, kept Lee and Jackson both busy trying to catch him, but Rosey would not be caught. March, march, march; tramp, tramp, tramp, back through the valley to Huntersville and Warm Springs, and up through the most beautiful valley--the Shenandoah--in the world, passing towns and elegant farms and

beautiful residences, rich pastures and abundant harvests, which a Federal General (Fighting Joe Hooker), later in the war, ordered to be so sacked and destroyed that a "crow passing over this valley would have to carry his rations." Passing on, we arrived at Winchester. The first night we arrived at this place, the wind blew a perfect hurricane, and every tent and marquee in Lee's and Jackson's army was blown down. This is the first sight we had of Stonewall Jackson, riding upon his old sorrel horse, his feet drawn up as if his stirrups were much too short for him, and his old dingy military cap hanging well forward over his head, and his nose erected in the air, his old rusty sabre rattling by his side. This is the way the grand old hero of a hundred battles looked. His spirit is yonder with the blessed ones that have gone before, but his history is one that the country will ever be proud of, and his memory will be cherished and loved by the old soldiers who followed him through the war.

ROMNEY

Our march to and from Romney was in midwinter in the month of January, 1862. It was the coldest winter known to the oldest inhabitant of these regions. Situated in the most mountainous country in Virginia, and away up near the Maryland and Pennsylvania line, the storm king seemed to rule in all of his majesty and power. Snow and rain and sleet and tempest seemed to ride and laugh and shriek and howl and moan and groan in all their fury and wrath. The soldiers on this march got very much discouraged and disheartened. As they marched along icicles hung from their clothing, guns, and knapsacks; many were badly frost bitten, and I heard of many freezing to death along the road side. My feet peeled off like a peeled onion on that march, and I have not recovered from its effects to this day. The snow and ice on the ground being packed by the soldiers tramping, the horses hitched to the artillery wagons were continually slipping and sliding and falling and wounding themselves and sometimes killing their riders. The wind whistling with a keen and piercing shriek, seemed as if they would freeze the marrow in our bones.

The soldiers in the whole army got rebellious—almost mutinous--and would curse and abuse Stonewall Jackson; in fact, they called him "Fool Tom Jackson." They blamed him for the cold weather; they blamed him for everything, and when he would ride by a regiment they would take occasion, *sotto voce*, to abuse him, and call him "Fool Tom Jackson," and loud enough for him to hear. Soldiers from all commands would fall out of ranks and stop by the road side and swear that they would not follow such a leader any longer.

When Jackson got to Romney, and was ready to strike Banks and Meade in a vital point, and which would have changed, perhaps, the destiny of the war and the South, his troops refused to march any further, and he turned, marched back to Winchester and tendered his resignation to the authorities at Richmond. But the great leader's resignation was not accepted. It was in store for him to do some of the hardest fighting and greatest generalship that was done during the war.

One night at this place (Romney), I was sent forward with two other soldiers across the wire bridge as picket. One of them was named Schwartz and the other Pfifer--he called it Fifer,

but spelled it with aP--both full-blooded Dutchmen, and belonging to Company E, or the German Yagers, Captain Harsh, or, as he was more generally called, "God-for-dam."

When we had crossed the bridge and taken our station for the night, I saw another snow storm was coming. The zig-zag lightnings began to flare and flash, and sheet after sheet of wild flames seemed to burst right over our heads and were hissing around us. The very elements seemed to be one aurora borealis with continued lightning. Streak after streak of lightning seemed to be piercing each the other, the one from the north and the other from the south. The white clouds would roll up, looking like huge snow balls, encircled with living fires. The earth and hills and trees were covered with snow, and the lightnings seemed to be playing "King, King Canico" along its crusted surface. If it thundered at all, it seemed to be between a groaning and a rumbling sound. The trees and hills seemed white with livid fire. I can remember that storm now as the grandest picture that has ever made any impression on my memory.

As soon as it quit lightning, the most blinding snow storm fell that I ever saw. It fell so thick and fast that I got hot. I felt like pulling off my coat. I was freezing. The winds sounded like sweet music. I felt grand, glorious, peculiar; beautiful things began to play and dance around my head, and I supposed I must have dropped to sleep or something, when I felt Schwartz grab me, and give me a shake, and at the same time raised his gun and fired, and yelled out at the top of his voice, "Here is your mule." The next instant a volley of minnie balls was scattering the snow all around us. I tried to walk, but my pants and boots were stiff and frozen, and the blood had ceased to circulate in my lower limbs. But Schwartz kept on firing, and at every fire he would yell out, "Yer is yer mool!" Pfifer could not speak English, and I reckon he said "Here is your mule" in Dutch. About the same time we were hailed from three Confederate officers, at full gallop right toward us, not to shoot. And as they galloped up to us and thundered right across the bridge, we discovered it was Stonewall Jackson and two of his staff. At the same time the Yankee cavalry charged us, and we, too, ran back across the bridge.

STANDING PICKET ON THE POTOMAC

Leaving Winchester, we continued up the valley. The night before the attack on Bath or Berkly Springs, there fell the largest snow I ever saw. Stonewall Jackson had seventeen thousand soldiers at his command. The Yankees were fortified at Bath. An attack was ordered, our regiment marched upon top of a mountain overlooking the movements of both armies in the valley below. About 4 o'clock one grand charge and rush was made, and the Yankees were routed and skedaddled.

By some circumstance or other, Lieutenant J. Lee Bullock came in command of the First Tennessee Regiment. But Lee was not a graduate of WestPoint, you see.

The Federals had left some spiked batteries on the hill side, as we were informed by an old citizen, and Lee, anxious to capture a battery, gave the new and peculiar command of, "Soldiers, you are ordered to go forward and capture a battery; just piroute up that hill; piroute, march. Forward, men; piroute carefully." The boys "pirouted" as best they could. It may have been a new command, and not laid down in Hardee's or Scott's tactics; but Lee was speaking plain English, and we understood his meaning perfectly, and even at this late day I have no doubt

that every soldier who heard the command thought it a legal and technical term used by military graduates to go forward and capture a battery.

At this place (Bath), a beautiful young lady ran across the street. I have seen many beautiful and pretty women in my life, but she was the prettiest one I ever saw. Were you to ask any member of the First Tennessee Regiment who was the prettiest woman he ever saw, he would unhesitatingly answer that he saw her at Berkly Springs during the war, and he would continue the tale, and tell you of Lee Bullock's piroute and Stonewall Jackson's charge.

We rushed down to the big spring bursting out of the mountain side, and it was hot enough to cook an egg. Never did I see soldiers more surprised. The water was so hot we could not drink it.

The snow covered the ground and was still falling.

That night I stood picket on the Potomac with a detail of the Third Arkansas Regiment. I remember how sorry I felt for the poor fellows, because they had enlisted for the war, and we for only twelve months. Before nightfall I took in every object and commenced my weary vigils. I had to stand all night. I could hear the rumblings of the Federal artillery and wagons, and hear the low shuffling sound made by troops on the march. The snow came pelting down as large as goose eggs. About midnight the snow ceased to fall, and became quiet. Now and then the snow would fall off the bushes and make a terrible noise.

While I was peering through the darkness, my eyes suddenly fell upon the outlines of a man. The more I looked the more I was convinced that it was a Yankee picket. I could see his hat and coat--yes, see his gun. I was sure that it was a Yankee picket. What was I to do? The relief was several hundred yards in the rear. The more I looked the more sure I was. At last a cold sweat broke out all over my body. Turkey bumps rose .I summoned all the nerves and bravery that I could command, and said: "Halt! who goes there?" There being no response, I became resolute .I did not wish to fire and arouse the camp, but I marched right up to it and stuck my bayonet through and through it. It was a stump. I tell the above, because it illustrates a part of many a private's recollections of the war; in fact, a part of the hardships and suffering that they go through.

One secret of Stonewall Jackson's success was that he was such a strict disciplinarian. He did his duty himself and was ever at his post, and he expected and demanded of everybody to do the same thing. He would have a man shot at the drop of a hat, and drop it himself. The first army order that was ever read to us after being attached to his corps, was the shooting to death by musketry of two men who had stopped on the battlefield to carry off a wounded comrade. It was read to us in line of battle at Winchester.

SCHWARTZ AND PFIFER

At Valley Mountain the finest and fattest beef I ever saw was issued to the soldiers, and it was the custom to use tallow for lard. Tallow made good shortening if the biscuits were eaten

hot, but if allowed to get cold they had a strong taste of tallow in their flavor that did not taste like the flavor of vanilla or lemon in ice cream and strawberries; and biscuits fried in tallow were something upon the principle of 'possum and sweet potatoes.

Well, Pfifer had got the fat from the kidneys of two hind quarters and made a cake of tallow weighing about twenty-five pounds. He wrapped it up and put it carefully away in his knapsack. When the assembly sounded for the march, Pfifer strapped on his knapsack. It was pretty heavy, but Pfifer was "well heeled." He knew the good frying he would get out of that twenty-five pounds of nice fat tallow, and he was willing to tug and toil all day over a muddy and sloppy road for his anticipated hot tallow gravy for supper. We made a long and hard march that day, and about dark went into camp. Fires were made up and water brought, and the soldiers began to get supper. Pfifer was in a good humor. He went to get that twenty-five pounds of good, nice, fat tallow out of his knapsack, and on opening it, lo and behold! it was a rock that weighed about thirty pounds.

Pfifer was struck dumb with amazement. He looked bewildered, yea, even silly. I do not think he cursed, because he could not do the subject justice. He looked at that rock with the death stare of a doomed man. But he suspected Schwartz. He went to Schwartz's knapsack, and there he found his cake of tallow. He went to Schwartz and would have killed him had not soldiers interfered and pulled him off by main force. His eyes blazed and looked like those of a tiger when he has just torn his victim limb from limb. I would not have been in Schwartz's shoes for all the tallow in every beef in Virginia. Captain Harsh made Schwartz carry that rock for two days to pacify Pfifer.

THE COURT-MARTIAL

One incident came under my observation while in Virginia that made a deep impression on my mind. One morning, about daybreak, the new guard was relieving the old guard. It was a bitter cold morning, and on coming to our extreme outpost, I saw a soldier--he was but a mere boy--either dead or asleep at his post. The sergeant commanding the relief went up to him and shook him. He immediately woke up and seemed very much frightened. He was fast asleep at his post. The sergeant had him arrested and carried to the guard-house.

Two days afterwards I received notice to appear before a court-martial at nine. I was summoned to appear as a witness against him for being asleep at his post in the enemy's country. An example had to be made of someone. He had to be tried for his life. The court-martial was made up of seven or eight officers of a different regiment. The witnesses all testified against him, charges and specifications were read, and by the rules of war he had to be shot to death by musketry. The Advocate-General for the prosecution made the opening speech. He read the law in a plain, straightforward manner, and said that for a soldier to go to sleep at his post of duty, while so much depended upon him, was the most culpable of all crimes, and the most inexcusable. I trembled in my boots, for on several occasions I knew I had taken a short nap, even on the very outpost. The Advocate-General went on further to say, that the picket was the sentinel that held the lives of his countrymen and the liberty of his country in his hands, and it mattered not what may have been his record in the past. At one moment he had forfeited his life to his country. For discipline's sake, if for nothing else, you gentlemen that make up this court-

martial find the prisoner guilty. It is necessary for you to be firm, gentlemen, for upon your decision depends the safety of our country. When he had finished, thinks I to myself, "Gone up the spout, sure; we will have a first-class funeral here before night."

Well, as to the lawyer who defended him, I cannot now remember his speeches; but he represented a fair-haired boy leaving his home and family, telling his father and aged mother and darling little sister farewell, and spoke of his proud step, though a mere boy, going to defend his country and his loved ones; but at one weak moment, when nature, tasked and taxed beyond the bounds of human endurance, could stand no longer, and upon the still and silent picket post, when the whole army was hushed in slumber, what wonder is it that he, too, may have fallen asleep while at his post of duty.

Some of you gentlemen of this court-martial may have sons, may have brothers; yes, even fathers, in the army. Where are they tonight? You love your children, or your brother or father. This mere youth has a father and mother and sister away back in Tennessee. They are willing to give him to his country. But oh! gentlemen, let the word go back to Tennessee that he died upon the battlefield, and not by the hands of his own comrades for being asleep at his post of duty. I cannot now remember the speeches, but one thing I do know, that he was acquitted, and I was glad of it.

"THE DEATH WATCH"

One more scene I can remember. Kind friends--you that know nothing of a soldier's life--I ask you in all candor not to doubt the following lines in this sketch. You have no doubt read of the old Roman soldier found amid the ruins of Pompeii, who had stood there for sixteen hundred years, and when he was excavated was found at his post with his gun clasped in his skeleton hands. You believe this because it is written in history. I have heard politicians tell it. I have heard it told from the sacred desk. It is true; no one doubts it.

Now, were I to tell something that happened in this nineteenth century exactly similar, you would hardly believe it. But whether you believe it or not, it is for you to say. At a little village called Hampshire Crossing, our regiment was ordered to go to a little stream called St. John's Run, to relieve the 14th Georgia Regiment and the 3rd Arkansas. I cannot tell the facts as I desire to. In fact, my hand trembles so, and my feelings are so overcome, that it is hard for me to write at all. But we went to the place that we were ordered to go to, and when we arrived there we found the guard sure enough.

If I remember correctly, there were just eleven of them. Some were sitting down and some were lying down; but each and every one was as cold and as hard frozen as the icicles that hung from their hands and faces and clothing--dead! They had died at their post of duty. Two of them, a little in advance of the others, were standing with their guns in their hands, as cold and as hard frozen as a monument of marble--standing sentinel with loaded guns in their frozen hands! The tale is told. Were they true men? Does He who noteth the sparrow's fall, and numbers the hairs of our heads, have any interest in one like ourselves? Yes; He doeth all things well. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without His consent.

VIRGINIA, FAREWELL

After having served through all the valley campaign, and marched through all the wonders of Northwest Virginia, and being associated with the army of Virginia, it was with sorrow and regret that we bade farewell to "Old Virginia's shore," to go to other fields of blood and carnage and death. We had learned to love Virginia; we love her now. The people were kind and good to us. They divided their last crust of bread and rasher of bacon with us. We loved Lee, we loved Jackson; we loved the name, association and people of Virginia. Hatton, Forbes, Anderson, Gilliam, Govan, Loring, Ashby and Schumaker were names with which we had been long associated. We hated to leave all our old comrades behind us. We felt that we were proving recreant to the instincts of our own manhood, and that we were leaving those who had stood by us on the march and battlefield when they most needed our help. We knew the 7th and 14th Tennessee regiments; we knew the 3rd Arkansas, the 14th Georgia, and 42nd Virginia regiments. Their names were as familiar as household words. We were about to leave the bones of Joe Bynum and Gus Allen and Patrick Hanly. We were about to bid farewell to every tender association that we had formed with the good people of Virginia, and to our old associates among the soldiers of the Grand Army of Virginia. _Virginia, farewell!_

Away back yonder, in good old Tennessee, our homes and loved ones are being robbed and insulted, our fields laid waste, our cities sacked, and our people slain. Duty as well as patriotism calls us back to our native home, to try and defend it, as best we can, against an invading army of our then enemies; and, Virginia, once more we bid you a long farewell!

Source: Watkins, Sam. *Co. Aytch or Sideshow of the Big Show*. Project Gutenberg. 2014. Web. 3 July, 2014. <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/13202/13202.txt>>

Sam Watkins on the Battle of Chickamauga

BATTLE OF CHICKAMAUGA

Sunday morning of that September day, the sun rose over the eastern hills clear and beautiful. The day itself seemed to have a Sabbath-day look about it. The battlefield was in a rough and broken country, with trees and undergrowth, that ever since the creation had never been disturbed by the ax of civilized man. It looked wild, weird, uncivilized.

Our corps (Polk's), being in the engagement the day before, were held in reserve. Reader, were you ever held in reserve of an attacking army? To see couriers dashing backward and forward; to hear the orders given to the brigades, regiments and companies; to see them forward in line of battle, the battle-flags waving; to hear their charge, and then to hear the shock of battle, the shot and shell all the while sizzling, and zipping, and thudding, and screaming, and roaring, and bursting, and passing right over your heads; to see the litter corps bringing back the wounded continually, and hear them tell how their command was being cut to pieces, and that every man in a certain regiment was killed, and to see a cowardly colonel (as we saw on this occasion—he belonged to Longstreet's corps) come dashing back looking the very picture of terror and fear, exclaiming, "O, men, men, for God's sake go forward and help my men! they are being cut all to pieces! we can't hold our position. O, for God's sake, please go and help my command!"

To hear some of our boys ask, "What regiment is that? What regiment is that?" He replies, such and such regiment. And then to hear some fellow ask, "Why ain't you with them, then, you cowardly puppy? Take off that coat and those chicken guts; coo, sheep; baa, baa, black sheep; flicker, flicker; ain't you ashamed of yourself? flicker, flicker; I've got a notion to take my gun and kill him," etc. Every word of this is true; it actually happened. But all that could demoralize, and I may say intimidate a soldier, was being enacted, and he not allowed to participate. How we were moved from one position to another, but always under fire; our nerves strung to their utmost tension, listening to the roar of battle in our immediate front, to hear it rage and then get dimmer until it seems to die out entirely; then all at once it breaks out again, and you think now in a very few minutes you will be ordered into action, and then all at once we go double-quicking to another portion of the field, the battle raging back from the position we had left.

General Leonidas Polk rides up and happening to stop in our front, some of the boys halloo out, "Say, General, what command is that which is engaged now?" The general kindly answers, "That is Longstreet's corps. He is driving them this way, and we will drive them that way, and crush them between the 'upper and nether millstone.'" Turning to General Cheatham, he said, "General, move your division and attack at once." Everything is at once set in motion, and General Cheatham, to give the boys a good send-off, says, "Forward, boys, and give 'em h—I." General Polk also says a good word, and that word was, "Do as General Cheatham says, boys." (You know he was a preacher and couldn't curse.)

After marching in solid line, see-sawing, right obliqueing, left obliqueing, guide center and close up; commence firing—fire at will; charge and take their breastworks; our pent-up

nervousness and demoralization of all day is suddenly gone. We raise one long, loud, cheering shout and charge right upon their breastworks. They are pouring their deadly missiles into our advancing ranks from under their head-logs. We do not stop to look around to see who is killed and wounded, but press right up their breastworks, and plant our battle-flag upon it. They waver and break and run in every direction, when General John C. Breckinridge's division, which had been supporting us, march up and pass us in full pursuit of the routed and flying Federal army.

AFTER THE BATTLE

We remained upon the battlefield of Chickamauga all night. Everything had fallen into our hands. We had captured a great many prisoners and small arms, and many pieces of artillery and wagons and provisions. The Confederate and Federal dead, wounded, and dying were everywhere scattered over the battlefield. Men were lying where they fell, shot in every conceivable part of the body. Some with their entrails torn out and still hanging to them and piled up on the ground beside them, and they still alive. Some with their under jaw torn off, and hanging by a fragment of skin to their cheeks, with their tongues lolling from their mouth, and they trying to talk. Some with both eyes shot out, with one eye hanging down on their cheek. In fact, you might walk over the battlefield and find men shot from the crown of the head to the tip end of the toe. And then to see all those dead, wounded and dying horses, their heads and tails drooping, and they seeming to be so intelligent as if they comprehended everything. I felt like shedding a tear for those innocent dumb brutes.

Reader, a battlefield, after the battle, is a sad and sorrowful sight to look at. The glory of war is but the glory of battle, the shouts, and cheers, and victory.

A soldier's life is not a pleasant one. It is always, at best, one of privations and hardships. The emotions of patriotism and pleasure hardly counterbalance the toil and suffering that he has to undergo in order to enjoy his patriotism and pleasure. Dying on the field of battle and glory is about the easiest duty a soldier has to undergo. It is the living, marching, fighting, shooting soldier that has the hardships of war to carry. When a brave soldier is killed he is at rest. The living soldier knows not at what moment he, too, may be called on to lay down his life on the altar of his country. The dead are heroes, the living are but men compelled to do the drudgery and suffer the privations incident to the thing called "glorious war."

A NIGHT AMONG THE DEAD

We rested on our arms where the battle ceased. All around us everywhere were the dead and wounded, lying scattered over the ground, and in many places piled in heaps. Many a sad and heart-rending scene did I witness upon this battlefield of Chickamauga. Our men died the death of heroes. I sometimes think that surely our brave men have not died in vain. It is true, our cause is lost, but a people who loved those brave and noble heroes should ever cherish their memory as men who died for them. I shed a tear over their memory. They gave their all to their country. Abler pens than mine must write their epitaphs, and tell of their glories and heroism. I am but a poor writer, at best, and only try to tell of the events that I saw.

One scene I now remember, that I can imperfectly relate. While a detail of us were passing over the field of death and blood, with a dim lantern, looking for our wounded soldiers to

carry to the hospital, we came across a group of ladies, looking among the killed and wounded for their relatives, when I heard one of the ladies say, "There they come with their lanterns."

I approached the ladies and asked them for whom they were looking. They told me the name, but I have forgotten it. We passed on, and coming to a pile of our slain, we had turned over several of our dead, when one of the ladies screamed out, "O, there he is! Poor fellow! Dead, dead, dead!" She ran to the pile of slain and raised the dead man's head and placed it on her lap and began kissing him and saying, "O, O, they have killed my darling, my darling, my darling! O, mother, mother, what must I do! My poor, poor darling! O, they have killed him, they have killed him!" I could witness the scene no longer. I turned and walked away, and William A. Hughes was crying, and remarked, "O, law me; this war is a terrible thing." We left them and began again hunting for our wounded. All through that long September night we continued to carry off our wounded, and when the morning sun arose over the eastern hills, the order came to march to Missionary Ridge.

Source: Watkins, Sam. Co. *Aytch or Sideshow of the Big Show*. Project Gutenberg. 2014. Web. 3 July, 2014. <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/13202/13202.txt>>

Sam Watkins on Battle of Franklin

FRANKLIN

"The death-angel gathers its last harvest."

Kind reader, right here my pen, and courage, and ability fail me. I shrink from butchery. Would to God I could tear the page from these memoirs and from my own memory. It is the blackest page in the history of the war of the Lost Cause. It was the bloodiest battle of modern times in any war. It was the finishing stroke to the independence of the Southern Confederacy. I was there. I saw it. My flesh trembles, and creeps, and crawls when I think of it today. My heart almost ceases to beat at the horrid recollection. Would to God that I had never witnessed such a scene!

I cannot describe it. It beggars description. I will not attempt to describe it. I could not. The death-angel was there to gather its last harvest. It was the grand coronation of death. Would that I could turn the page. But I feel, though I did so, that page would still be there, teeming with its scenes of horror and blood. I can only tell of what I saw.

Our regiment was resting in the gap of a range of hills in plain view of the city of Franklin. We could see the battle-flags of the enemy waving in the breeze. Our army had been depleted of its strength by a forced march from Spring Hill, and stragglers lined the road. Our artillery had not yet come up, and could not be brought into action. Our cavalry was across Harpeth river, and our army was but in poor condition to make an assault. While resting on this hillside, I saw a courier dash up to our commanding general, B. F. Cheatham, and the word, "Attention!" was given. I knew then that we would soon be in action. Forward, march. We passed over the hill and through a little skirt of woods.

The enemy were fortified right across the Franklin pike, in the suburbs of the town. Right here in these woods a detail of skirmishers was called for. Our regiment was detailed. We deployed as skirmishers, firing as we advanced on the left of the turnpike road. If I had not been a skirmisher on that day, I would not have been writing this today, in the year of our Lord 1882. It was four o'clock on that dark and dismal December day when the line of battle was formed, and those devoted heroes were ordered forward, to

"Strike for their altars and their fires,
For the green graves of their sires,
For God and their native land."

As they marched on down through an open field toward the rampart of blood and death, the Federal batteries began to open and mow down and gather into the garner of death, as brave, and good, and pure spirits as the world ever saw. The twilight of evening had begun to gather as a precursor of the coming blackness of midnight darkness that was to envelop a scene so sickening and horrible that it is impossible for me to describe it.

"Forward, men," is repeated all along the line. A sheet of fire was poured into our very faces, and for a moment we halted as if in despair, as the terrible avalanche of shot and shell laid low those brave and gallant heroes, whose bleeding wounds attested that the struggle would be desperate. Forward, men! The air loaded with death-dealing missiles. Never on this earth did men fight against such terrible odds. It seemed that the very elements of heaven and earth were in one mighty uproar. Forward, men! And the blood spurts in a perfect jet from the dead and wounded. The earth is red with blood. It runs in streams, making little rivulets as it flows. Occasionally there was a little lull in the storm of battle, as the men were loading their guns, and for a few moments it seemed as if night tried to cover the scene with her mantle. The death-angel shrieks and laughs and old Father Time is busy with his sickle, as he gathers in the last harvest of death, crying, More, more, more! while his rapacious maw is glutted with the slain. But the skirmish line being deployed out, extending a little wider than the battle did--passing through a thicket of small locusts, where Brown, orderly sergeant of Company B, was killed--we advanced on toward the breastworks, on and on. I had made up my mind to die--felt glorious. We pressed forward until I heard the terrific roar of battle open on our right. Cleburne's division was charging their works. I passed on until I got to their works, and got over on their (the Yankees') side. But in fifty yards of where I was the scene was lit up by fires that seemed like hell itself.

It appeared to be but one line of streaming fire. Our troops were upon one side of the breastworks, and the Federals on the other. I ran up on the line of works, where our men were engaged. Dead soldiers filled the entrenchments. The firing was kept up until after midnight, and gradually died out. We passed the night where we were. But when the morrow's sun began to light up the eastern sky with its rosy hues, and we looked over the battlefield, O, my God! what did we see! It was a grand holocaust of death.

Death had held high carnival there that night. The dead were piled the one on the other all over the ground. I never was so horrified and appalled in my life. Horses, like men, had died game on the gory breastworks. General Adams' horse had his fore feet on one side of the works and his hind feet on the other, dead. The general seems to have been caught so that he was held to the horse's back, sitting almost as if living, riddled, and mangled, and torn with balls. General Cleburne's mare had her fore feet on top of the works, dead in that position. General Cleburne's body was pierced with forty-nine bullets, through and through. General Strahl's horse lay by the roadside and the general by his side, both dead, and all his staff. General Gist, a noble and brave cavalier from South Carolina, was lying with his sword reaching across the breastworks still grasped in his hand. He was lying there dead. All dead!

They sleep in the graveyard yonder at Ashwood, almost in sight of my home, where I am writing today. They sleep the sleep of the brave. We love and cherish their memory. They sleep beneath the ivy-mantled walls of St. John's church, where they expressed a wish to be buried. The private soldier sleeps where he fell, piled in one mighty heap. Four thousand five hundred privates! All lying side by side in death! Thirteen generals were killed and wounded. Four thousand five hundred men slain, all piled and heaped together at one place. I cannot tell the

number of others killed and wounded. God alone knows that. We'll all find out on the morning of the final resurrection.

Kind friends, I have attempted in my poor and feeble way to tell you of this (I can hardly call it) battle. It should be called by some other name. But, like all other battles, it, too, has gone into history. I leave it with you. I do not know who was to blame. It lives in the memory of the poor old Rebel soldier who went through that trying and terrible ordeal. We shed a tear for the dead. They are buried and forgotten. We meet no more on earth. But up yonder, beyond the sunset and the night, away beyond the clouds and tempest, away beyond the stars that ever twinkle and shine in the blue vault above us, away yonder by the great white throne, and by the river of life, where the Almighty and Eternal God sits, surrounded by the angels and archangels and there deemed of earth, we will meet again and see those noble and brave spirits who gave up their lives for their country's cause that night at Franklin, Tennessee.

A life given for one's country is never lost. It blooms again beyond the grave in a land of beauty and of love. Hanging around the throne of sapphire and gold, a rich garland awaits the coming of him who died for his country, and when the horologe of time has struck its last note upon his dying brow, Justice hands the record of life to Mercy, and Mercy pleads with Jesus, and God, for his sake, receives him in his eternal home beyond the skies at last and forever.

Source: Watkins, Sam. Co. *Aytch or Sideshow of the Big Show*. *Project Gutenberg*. 2014. Web. 14 July, 2014. <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/13202/13202.txt>>