

# *"It is well that war We should grow*

Thursday, February 14, 1985

THE GREENVILLE ADVOCATE 1-C, 67

By Gene Hardin

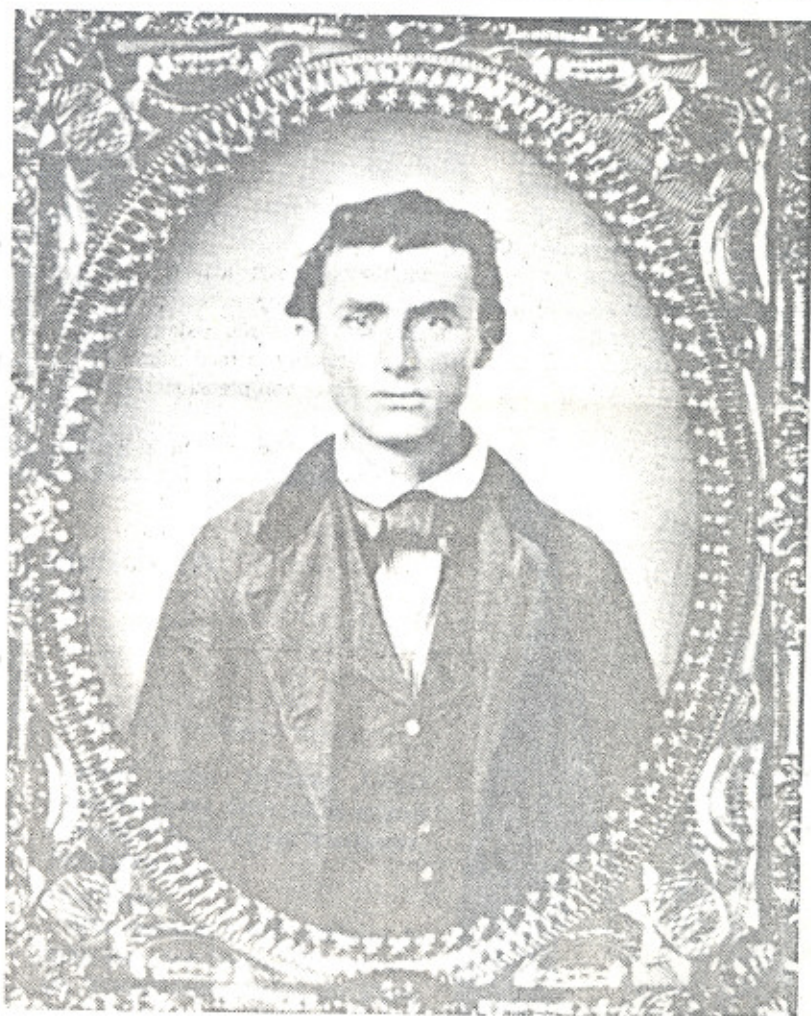
U. S. Highway 31 traverses the length of Butler County and at one time was the main North-South link between Chicago and New Orleans. Interstate travel with its straight-line-between-two-points concept has reduced "foreign" travel on the local stretch, but at one time the Butler County portion of 31 was well-traveled as any segment of the road.

South of Greenville, in the Chapman Community, you could spot the out-of-staters as they invariably slowed to admire the spacious grounds and lovely home of the McGowins. The white-painted wooden fence gave promise of a special sight long before the home and grounds were visible.

Earl Mason McGowin, and his lovely wife, live in the stately two story home. A sister, Mrs. L. K. Larson, lives across the highway and the homes of the late N. Floyd McGowin, Sr., and Julian McGowin, are in the "compound" with the original McGowin home.

Rhodes scholar Earl McGowin, came back to Chapman after completing his college career to work in the company business, as did the other sons of the late Greeley McGowin. He has served in the State Legislature and was director of the Alabama State Docks in Mobile. He has compiled a brilliant career in state service and now manages the family business from his office on the home grounds.

Earl McGowin could, and probably will be, subject matter for another feature story in this newspaper, but this article concerns itself with his grandfather and great



**ALEXANDER MCGOWIN**

(Alex)

1835 - 1914

pany D.

He was never married.

JAMES MCGOWIN was born February 9, 1838, in Teddy, Alabama, and died November 23, 1897, in the same community. He

get timbers to the Pensacola markets.

Educational opportunities were limited, but Alex McGowin was self-educated and a very precise man. Speaking of his grandfather, Floyd

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grandmother who made the terrible sacrifice of five dead sons in the war.

The McGowin families moved into Alabama in the early 1800's, part of the large migration of people from Georgia and South Carolina into what is now Alabama and Mississippi.

Many settled in what was known then as Monroe County and included what is now all of Conecuh, Monroe and Escambia Counties. Sparta was the county site. The group was often referred to as the "Scotch invasion" as there were family names like McDuffie, McMillan, McCorvey, McIntosh and McLeod.

Samuel Lewis McGowin was born in Georgia on May 13, 1805, and moved with his family to Alabama at an early age. He died and was buried in Escambia County in 1892. He married Martha Mason near what is now the community of Brooklyn and they were the parents of thirteen children.

Seven sons were in the War Between the States - five never returned.

—CSA—

PETER McGOWIN, the oldest son, was born October 24, 1833, and died at the age of 30 years on December 19, 1863. He was buried in the Foshee Cemetery near Grab Mill, Alabama.

Peter died during the war of typhoid fever in a Confederate camp near Mobile. An epidemic of typhoid roared through the camp and many soldiers died. The widows of Peter McGowin and a Dixon soldier went to Mobile and brought their husbands home to be buried.

Peter McGowin left a widow, Nancy Floyd McGowin, and three children.

ALEXANDER McGOWIN, the next oldest son, was born January 16, 1835, and died at the age of 79 in Mobile on July 19, 1914.

Alexander was the grandfather of Earl, Julian, Floyd, Sr., and the other McGowins of Chapman. He was the more prolific letter-writer during the war and he, too, served in Company D, 16th Alabama Woods Brigade.

He married Peter McGowin's widow after his return from the war and they had six children, the second oldest being Greeley McGowin.

SAMUEL (SAM) McGOWIN, was born in Escambia County on November 11, 1836. He was 26 years old when he died in Camp Okolona, Mississippi, of measles on July 14, 1862. He was also a member of Com-

pany D from the War Between the States until some six months after the fighting was over. It was thought that he had been killed.

He returned home late one afternoon. One of the old slaves who had been with the family was in the barn milking the cow when she saw James McGowin coming up that path to the house. She dropped her bucket of milk and ran to the house calling her mistress, say, "Lord, Lord, I think I see the ghost, but it could be Mr. James."

Everybody rushed out to meet him with open arms.

James married Martha Ghent at Milton, Florida, and they had five children.

JOSEPH McGOWIN was born April 22, 1839, and was a member of Company D, Alabama Woods Brigade, Shardeas Division. He was unmarried.

Joseph was killed during the war at the Battle of Murfreesboro, Tennessee at the age of 23 years, 8 months and 9 days.

Some of his comrades, among them a Battle Parker, ran in the midst of the fighting to bury him so that he would not be stripped of his clothing and personal belongings.

ANTHONY LEWIS McGOWIN was born October 11, 1840. He did not marry.

He died February 23, 1864, of pneumonia while in camp at Dalton, Georgia.

THOMAS McGOWIN was born August 13, 1842, and died October 6, 1890. He was married to Amanda Bryant and they had ten children.

Thomas and his wife lived in the house with his father and mother two years after they were married. He owned and operated the ferry seven miles south of Brooklyn, Alabama.

JOHN CHARNIC McGOWIN was born November 12, 1843, and died on July 29, 1862, at the age of 19 years in camp at Gainesville, Georgia.

—CSA—

Samuel McGowin and his wife, Martha (Patsy) Mason McGowin, lived comfortably and were not known as wealthy people. The family was engaged in the lumber business and did some farming.

Timber had to be cleared for building and cultivation. There were limited markets for timber at that time as trees were everywhere. There were some markets along the coasts for shipments overseas and the McGowins used waterways to

My grandfather was a great man. He was very old when I first remember him but I have never forgotten talking to him. He was small in stature and had a very decided brogue, and was a dynamic character. He farmed and ran a country store. He also taught school at one time. He was a great student of the Bible, knowing many passages, and liked to argue religion. He was a Universalist. He was also a student of English grammar, was a stickler for proper pronunciation, correct phrasing, and spelling. He was a very meticulous person, having a place for everything and everything in its place. It was said that he could hitch a horse or do any chores around the barn in the dark as he knew exactly where to put his hands on every article there. He was industrious and thrifty. The family would always tell me that I was like him and that my penchant for grammar, proper pronunciation, et cetera, came from him. I remember on one of his visits to Chapman I said to him, "Grandpa, they are building a new depot for us across the tracks." He replied, "How will the trains get by?"



The following letters, printed in part and in whole, and some reproduced from the actual letters, indicate that the spelling was excellent for young men without formal education.

Letters we have set in type are done so for easier reading. As nearly as possible, the words and phrasing have been copied as they were written to family and friends more than a hundred years ago.

The salutations in most of the letters were similar in that the phrasing was full-blown and this was accompanied by words to the effect that there was no news, but the letter would be written anyhow.

Similarities between these letters and those seen from servicemen in later wars indicate that the need for mail from home was paramount with men in the services away from home.

Some of the following letters are striking in that the soldier, though suffering from the lack of food, clothing and shelter, does not blame the Confederacy or the army

I set myself this morning to write you a few lines to inform you of my situation. I'm not specially well sick, but I am very well so Lewis is charging about as usual fact all the boys are in fine shape.

We will go to Richmond when we leave here. I can't say when we start. It may be a week or a month don't care when. There is not much to write about the war but we have heard.

I reckon I would be glad to see you all but there is no hope of seeing you without piece, then I am going to see you all.

When I get to Richmond I will write you a full letter then I will come to write. There will be a chance my receiving it.

Girls take care of yourself. I will do all I can for you and for you. Tis said that absence conquers but, oh, believe it not.

Joseph McGowin  
Samuel McGowin

—CSA—

Churchwell Camp near Knoxville, Tenn.

Sept. 23, 1861

Dear Sister,

I am scarcely able to write but will scribble a little for my fingers about black now with the measles but improving. Jo. has the measles but I do not know how he is getting. He is at the hospital and I am at my private home.

Sarah it is hard times here. I tell you just how hard and you judge for yourself. There was 85 in our company and now there is nary one in camp. They are all at the hospital. The measles has killed several but doctors say they die of too much water. The doctors say measles will relapse 6 weeks afterwards and I say if that is the case there will be many more relations think in 6 weeks for then snow will high on the ground.

I will quit for now if you do not write. I think it ashame for you to treat me in such away. I would be glad to hear from any wheres at home. Keep my old fiddle strung well.

A. L. McGowin

—CSA—

Knoxville, Tenn., Tuesday 29th

Dear Brother,

I write you a letter in answer to your most kind and affection letter.

Your letter found Jo. and I in good

# at war is so terrible — grow too fond of it.”

GREENVILLE ADVOCATE 1-C, Greenville, AL. 36037.

General Robert E. Lee



for his present state of being. The young men's grasp of maneuvers from his army as well as that of the enemy is remarkable.

You will note that the husband writes a letter to his wife and signs it "affectionately yours, etc." In all instances the tone and flavor of the letters comes through to the reader even though we have not copied all the material in every letter.

While there is some repetition you must remember that the young men were stationed together at times and experienced the same joys, trials and tribulations. The letters are placed in chronological order and as the days pass and the war drags on you will note some change in outlook from these young warriors.

health.

Sam I have nothing of importance to write more than to let you know Jo. and Is is verry harty and I truly think we and the rest of the river boys will make good soldiers. The reason why I know I sead them tried further last evening than usual. There was a little fracas in town yesterday evening and the Colonel sent word out to camp for his men to march in town and we bravely shouldered our arms and marched into town. We marched up and down the streets and boasted and cried out huraw for Jef Davis and the Confederate States. And Sam I assure you we was as eager to see a Linkonuite as you was ever to hear the dishes rattle when you was hungry.

We marched up the streets and guarded each corner till each house was searched for Linkonites but after all we did not succeed in finding them. Before we got there they might have left town and we could not find them as it was getting dark.

(The way it first started there was some Linkonites run a foul of three of our soldiers and beat them severe-

wounded on the field with a few exceptions. We lost one Lt. in the fight. I do not know exactly where our Regiment is at this time.

Times here very exciting. We are very sure to have fighting to do in these parts. I am very glad of it. The sooner the better for it is certain to be some. There is going to be fighting to keep the Devils over-running our country.

You must squeeze them girls to keep their waist from growing too large.

Your friend, John Moore

—CSA—

Camp Okolona, Mississippi  
July 15, 1862

(A. L. McGowin writes of Samuel's death)

Dear People,

I will drop you a few lines if I am able to do so, though it almost shocks me to think of what I have to write. You need not look for no news in here that would interest you.

Samuel and I was sent from camp



GOWIN

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d, but Alex McGowin was self-  
ed and a very precise man.  
ing of his grandfather, Floyd  
win was quoted as saying:

Montgomery, Alabama  
August 12th, 1861  
Dear Brother



grandfather was a great  
 He was very old when I first  
 ber him but I have never for-  
 talking to him. He was small  
 ure and had a very decided  
 e, and was a dynamic  
 ter. He farmed and ran a  
 y store. He also taught school  
 time. He was a great student  
 e Bible, knowing many  
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 situation. I'm not specially well, nor  
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 fact all the boys are in fine spirits.

We will go to Richmond when we  
 leave here. I can't say when we will  
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 to write. There will be a chance of  
 my receiving it.

Girls take care of yourselves. I  
 will do all I can for you and country.  
 Tis said that absence conquers love,  
 but, oh, believe it not.

Joseph McGowin  
 Samuel McGowin

—CSA—

Churchwell Camp near Knoxville,  
 Tenn.

Sept. 23, 1861

Dear Sister,

I am scarcely able to write but I  
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 He is at the hospital and I am at a  
 private home.

Sarah it is hard times here. I will  
 tell you just how hard and you can  
 judge for yourself. There was 85 men  
 in our company and now there ant  
 narry one in camp. They are all at  
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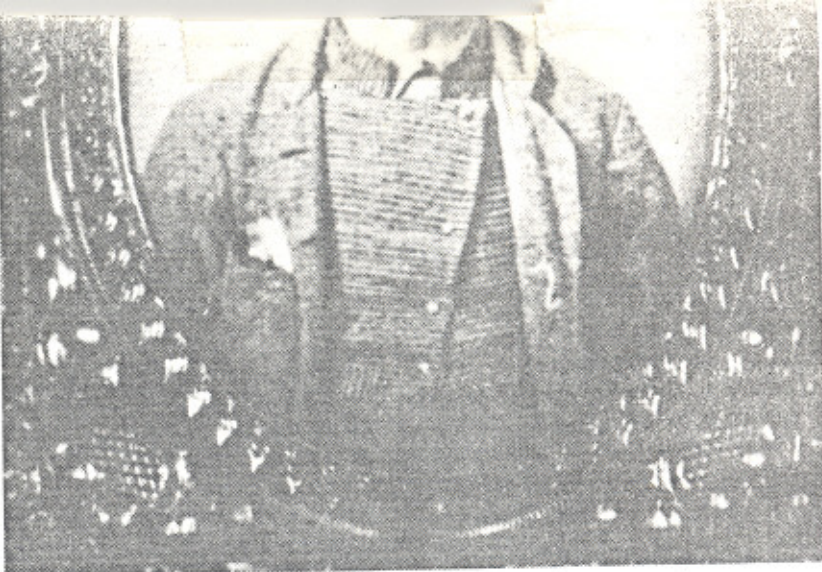
—CSA—

Knoxville, Tenn., Tuesday 29th

Dear Brother,

I write you a letter in answer to  
 your most kind and affection letter.

Your letter found Jo. and I in good



**SAMUEL McGOWIN**  
 (Sam)  
 1836 - 1862

ly.) Our officers are all looking for a  
 fight and say there is a quantity of  
 Unionists drilling on the other side of  
 the river from here. They say they  
 are going to try to take the magazine  
 from us. Although the talk around  
 here for three days is that we will  
 leave tomorrow night I don't know  
 what will be for privates don't know  
 whats going on till the time comes.

You can tell our folks all our  
 clothing reached us safe. Tell Pa I  
 was glad to get the overcoat. I stood  
 gard last night and put it on to keep  
 out the cold wind. Tell him not to ex-  
 pose himself and tell him he must  
 get him another overcoat or he will  
 take cold.

I remain your Brother till death,  
 A. L. McGowin.

—CSA—

(Portion of a letter from John W.  
 Moore to Sam McGowin)

Columbia Hospital, Tenn.  
 Feb. 10th, 1862

Friend Sam,

Late this evening I seat myself to  
 drop you a line informing you of  
 matters and things in general. Your  
 brother Joseph is here with me and  
 had the typhoid fever. I had the  
 mumps. The others had a bad spell  
 of disentery or bowel complaint  
 from exposure and eating beef  
 without salt. We were engaged in a  
 fight. 4100 of us with the enemy con-  
 sisting of 40,000 but only 16,000 of the  
 enemey were engaged. We fought  
 them three hours drove them back  
 three times but was compelled to  
 retreat at last leaving our dead and

on the 4th day of this month to this  
 place on the account of sickness.

Sam parted with me yesterday  
 morning. We will meet no more on  
 earth but I hope we will all meet in  
 heaven. His eyes were closed at 2  
 oclock A.M. His disease was  
 measles.

I had him fixed away as good as I  
 could. I wanted to carry him home  
 but the doctor told me to leave it  
 alone until fall and then I could take  
 him home. The graveyard is about  
 one mile from this place. The doctor  
 would not let me go to see him bar-  
 ried but he said when I get stronger  
 he would fix away for me to go and  
 see his grave.

I had his head board marked  
 Samuel McGowin Co. D 10th Ala.  
 A. L. McGowin

—CSA—

(Alex writes of John's death)  
 Chicamauga P. O. Tenn.  
 Aug. 6th 1862

Dear People at Home:

We write you again to let you know  
 how and where we are. We arrived  
 at this place (which is almost 12  
 miles from Chattanooga, and within  
 a few miles of the line of Georgia) on  
 the 3rd. We are all tolerable well,  
 though I was quite sick on all the  
 route and several days before leav-  
 ing Tupelo.

Lewis of course will tell you how  
 all were up to the time of his leaving  
 us, but he, nor we had not heard  
 from brother John in a good long

*Continued On Page 2*



**JOSEPH MCGOWIN**  
1839 - 1862

time. Cousin Jos. McGowin arrived in camp last night directly from Gainesville, Ala., and brings us the sad news that brother John died on the night of the 29th about 10 o'clock.

He died very easy, not saying any thing at all concerning his people or any thing else shortly before dying. He died as though he had gone to sleep. He was buried tolerably nicely and his grave was designated by his name, the name of his Co. and repeated on the headboard. Truly these are trying times, but it seems as if there is no remedy in this life, but I hope the dear ones who have left us have found peace in another world. Joseph brought some of John's clothes with him, and also his pocketbook 3 to 4 dollars. He says John was taken tolerable good care of but we know at best, from a head

(Letter from Anthony Lewis McGowin to his sister Sarah written November 18, 1862 from Winchester, Tennessee.)

Dear Sister,

This morning I will endeavor to write you a few lines to inform you of our whereabouts, health, etc. These few lines leaves us all in good health and still thriving. I truly hope this may reach and find you the same.

We hav better health in camp at this time than ever before since we hav bin out. Alex and Jo. look as well as could be expected. As for myself I can say with safety that I look 50 percent better than I did on leaving home.

Tell mother that I think she has no idea how well I do look. Tell her if I

Camp near Triune, Tenn.  
Dec. 21st, 1862

Dear Sister Sarah,

Christmas is drawing near and I am afar from home so I was last Christmas. I was in Ky. and this year without a doubt I will be in Tenn. And now Sarah guess where I will be next Christmas or if you cant guess for my sake say you wish that all of us boys could be at home so we could eat taters and sop and enjoy ourselves together.

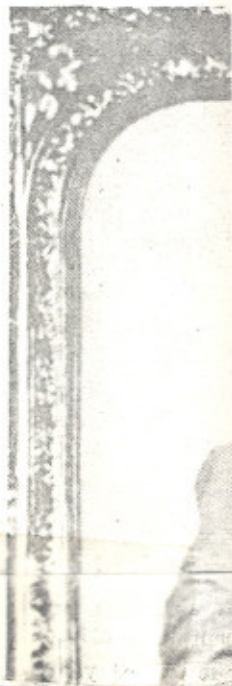
We are close enough to the Yanks to keep them on their guard all the time or else we will slip up on them before you know it. We may be engaged before always. We have to keep too days rations in our haversacks in order if we will be called on so we could be ready at a moments warrent to fall in a line of battle.

Gen. Buckner has left us and gone to Mobile. When he left us he bid us goodbye and said he would protect our homes as long as posably. You need not dout him as I think he is a good Gen. as we have any where. We now belong to Claibon's Division.

A. L. McGowin

the Chattanooga railroad 45 miles from at a little village in Tulehoma which is providing we stay here idea we will long. I chance I have had to the battle and its a I have never been still have not thought what came here this eve leave tomorrow for a Blacksher wishes you ple know that he esc not now write. All c tances are unhurt w mentioned. We are a no doubt for we ha weather like brutes I weeks and how rain, yet.

Pa, Lewis says you us have Bill or Tolov and he is now anxious you think proper you if he is willing to cor not left I think we c enough for you to hire work in his place. I s other boys pay for an them - this they are would rather not tak if we could get any but know we could r \$80 which I wish you way for nothing here. more soon as I ge Farewell for this tim Alex and A. L. Mc



as those old hospitals. Jos. was his nurse in past. It is my desire for you to remove Sam's and John's remains home. It is said you will be permitted to as soon as cool weather.

I have nothing more to write of any importance. I know not how long we will be at this place, or what is next to be done. I do not know how near a Yankee army we are. I do not expect to stay here long for I should not think we would come this distance for nothing and I do not think the Yanks are coming here.

We are now at a very pretty camp ground. It is shady, and we have a fine stream of water and a good creek for washing.

We are living very hard at present as heretofore, but can not see why we could not get more, and something better now as there is plenty of green corn, peaches and apples in this part of the country. We found some watermelons and other fruit in Montgomery, and all through Georgia it is plenty. We bought several melons paying from 1 to \$2 each for them 25 cts. a doz. is the common price for very poor apples and peaches. We would give all we can for fruit, and other good things to eat, such as milk and butter and etc. but we could not buy anything in camps if we had millions of money. We are not allowed to go out in the country to get anything.

We wonder if there is a better day coming, a day when we can have a home or a place to stay at in a land where there is no war or strife among the people.

We wish you to think but little about us as is can do no good to any whether dead or alive. Though we hope to see the end of this war and which is to terminate soon, yet, we do not desire to be out of the army until all are freed. I am no more tired now than before entering the service. I have been much aggrieved ever since our troubles began, but have never felt as though I could do but little more than sympathize but I hope yet to do a good part in delivering our Country from her present trials.

You may write us at this place; should we be gone letters will be forwarded. I shall not prepay on my letters as you can do it as well at home, then if they do not get through there will be less lost. I shall continue to write when I can, and wish you to write us often if you please. Give all our love and tell them to write.

To Home Alex McGowin

keep on growing like I hav bin since I left home till peace is made I will be so big she cant hardly make me behave myself. I am getting so big now it seems I cant hardly get enough to eat though we make out toberably well for we have learnt how to hash beef.

I tell you you ought to jest see us. As for making big homeny thats nothing. We can have that every meal if we want to for we dont burn nothing but oak wood. We can boil the ashes and make as much lie as we want to lie to our mommy with. There ant so much foolishness on the other side of this page.

We drew some money yesterday though it wont do us much good for there is nothing here scarcely for us to buy with it. Though what little there is it costs us about 5 times what it is worth. We bought a peck of dried peaches the other day and pade 4 dollars for them. Apels is 50 cts per dozen. Pork is 35 cts per Lb. Everything else in accordance.

I will have to quit writing for this for I will have to go for cooken orders has come for us to cook 2 days rations. Therefore I judge we will have to march soon though I hav no idea where we will go.

Nothing more only as ever your Brother until Death.

A. L. McGowin



(Letter from A. L. McGowin to his mother from Shelbyville, Tenn., written November 29, 1862)

(in part)

Dear Mother,

I tell you we are getting anxious to hear from home. I will tell you and then you can judge for yourself. We have not had a letter from home since I left there and that has bin a good while.

Apparently you may not get any letters from us though some of us writes every week.

We are getting anxious to hear from our Brothers who has left their dear home. I cannot help studding about them. You must write to them and tell them they must guard against homesick for I had rather

hav the typhoid fever.

Camps near Winchester Tenn.  
Jany. 7th 1863

Dear Father, Mother and People all,  
I write at this time with feelings much mortified and know too that you will be much pained to hear the sad news which this contains unless you have heard.

Joseph is no more with us in the world and I sorrow. He was killed in battle at Murfreesboro on the 31st ult. he fell at his post like a man. At the time he was shot I was not exactly by his side though within a few steps. My attention was called to him immediately and he breathed no more, nor moved. He was shot through the brain.

We had fought hard nearly all day before he fell and had he escaped a few minutes longer he would have been through all the hard fighting that our regiment was in and beliefs he would have been safe.

On the second night after the fight of Moore, James McG. and B. Parker went and found his body; though we could not then bury him in order, there was no coffin to be had for any body. Therefore, they who were brought to that place were laid side by side so I learn. I could not see him buried for I had to leave at daylight for the battlefield. We lay in line of battle a whole week. Our Regiment commenced fighting at Tryune which is about 16 miles from Murfreesboro. We were there for the purpose of guarding the road and to check the enemy when they came so that they could be met properly at Murfreesboro. When they came against us in force we had to give way though we fought them considerable. After getting to Murfreesboro we were not engaged for the first day though hard fighting was going on. Every day the enemy were driven back until they they had gone a considerable distance. We had to drive them no farther but waited for them to come against us again, which they did not. On the night of the 3rd inst we left, why I do not know but suppose the enemy were reenforcing to strong for us again to fight them.

Our loss was great of course, I have no idea what but I am sure that of the enemy was much more. You can learn from the papers.

Our first Lieut Jackson was killed and wounded. Jacob Manning

was slightly the arm. we are now on

Camp near Tullahoma, T  
Jany. 11th, 1863

Dear Father and Mother

As I mentioned in my Lewis has taken a notion I not get along without a ne us. But for Lewis I had without than take one of home. I think you may there though I am willin all I make to add anyt comfort.

We generally have a ha camp as also in marchin camp we have to drill and sand things so that we c chance to wash our clo cooking properly.

Whether in camp or ma are never permitted to lea any house to procure anyt that is fit to be eaten (in ca but little and that v generally)

Those who have serv them out in the countr whatever there is to be had a servant I expect have to pay for all that he of, both clothing and vict should make him clothe he could make plenty to more to.

While in camp anythi smart negro can make dollars a week by washin ing his other work. In negroes make money as f can count it by bringing and and apels for sale. W soldiers are not allowed to sight on any occasion, b can go where they please they behave. Just use pleasure as regards me.

You might lose your ne, might at home but he woul near so much danger as I

of battles neg left behind



near Triune, Tenn.  
 t, 1862  
 ter Sarah,  
 nas is drawing near and I  
 from home so I was last  
 as. I was in Ky. and this  
 hout a doubt I will be in  
 id now Sarah guess where I  
 ext Christmas or if you cant  
 my sake say you wish that  
 boys could be at home so we  
 t taters and sop and enjoy  
 s together.  
 e close enough to the Yanks  
 hem on their guard all the  
 else we will slip up on them  
 ou know it. We may be  
 before always. We have to  
 days rations in our haver-  
 order if we will be called on  
 uld be ready at a moments  
 to fall in a line of battle.  
 uckner has left us and gone  
 . When he left us he bid us  
 and said he would protect  
 es as long as posably. You  
 dout him as I think he is a  
 . as we have any where. We  
 g to Claibon's Division.  
 McGowin

the Chattanooga & Nashville  
 railroad 45 miles from Murfreesboro  
 at a little village by the name of  
 Tulehoma which is our P. O. pro-  
 viding we stay here, but I have no  
 idea we will long. This is the first  
 chance I have had to write you since  
 the battle and its a poor one for we  
 have never been still long enough. I  
 have no thought what we will do. We  
 came here this evening and may  
 leave tomorrow for all I know. David  
 Blacksher wishes you to let his peo-  
 ple know that he escaped as he can  
 not now write. All of our acquaint-  
 ances are unhurt whom I have not  
 mentioned. We are all worn out and  
 no doubt for we have lain in the  
 weather like brutes for the last two  
 weeks and how rainy and cold it is  
 yet.

Pa, Lewis says you promised to let  
 us have Bill or Tolover if we wished  
 and he is now anxious to get one so if  
 you think proper you may send one,  
 if he is willing to come if Berry has  
 not left I think we can pay money  
 enough for you to hire aother hand to  
 work in his place. I should have the  
 other boys pay for anything done for  
 them - this they are willing to do. I  
 would rather not take one from you  
 if we could get any other good one  
 but know we could not. Joseph left  
 \$80 which I wish you had it is in my  
 way for nothing here. I will write you  
 more soon as I get the chance.  
 Farewell for this time.

Alex and A. L. McGowin

the wagons and teamsters where  
 bullets cannot reach them so they  
 are safe is not captured.

If you know of anything relative to  
 Jos. you must say what it is. We got  
 his clothing which was with the  
 wagons and divided among us. He  
 had his new suit of jeans on. We all  
 carried a blanket pack with us in the  
 field. Jos. was stolen off him before  
 we could get to his body. He had the  
 blanket which Lewis had at home.

I would like to eat dinner with you  
 today. We have only a little meal to  
 cook. We had two days rations stolen  
 this week.

Your son, Alex

— CSA —

Tullahoma Tennessee Feb. 22nd 1863

Dear People at Home,

Not having a more pleasant way to  
 spend this Sunday evening, I will  
 endeavor to write you a short letter  
 thinking it may afford some, or  
 perhaps all, of you pleasure to hear  
 from us.

It is true I have nothing to write  
 except what relates to our health  
 and welfare, that I would expect  
 would interest you particularly for  
 doubtless you know more about war  
 matters and things in general than I  
 do or could know, even should I try,  
 which I do not, for I believe but little  
 that one can hear in camps, and we  
 have an opportunity of seeing

home and I close until tomorrow.  
 Well this morning I am not feeling  
 very well. I have a cough and cold.  
 The weather is cold, cold, but it is  
 now fair once more and I think it will  
 moderate soon.

Berry brings us good news from  
 you, he tells us all are well, doing  
 well and he brought what you sent to  
 us, and says you desire us to think of  
 you when we are making use of it so  
 we will and at all other times we also  
 feel thankful for your kindness to us  
 in sending us such delicosies, for we  
 cannot get such things, though we  
 have fared more sumptously since  
 coming here than ever before in the  
 army. We think of all who have ex-  
 hibited any regard for us and even  
 those who have not, for we presume  
 all have their affecting on their  
 nearest friends who are in need of  
 sympathy.

We received letters by Berry from  
 various persons. I got but one, which  
 was from home, Sarah Jane. It did  
 very well but might have easily been  
 better. Why I say this is because she  
 says we may not expect to get letters  
 from home often, as you have  
 nothing to write. I would like to know  
 what she calls something. I finish on  
 another sheet.

Mother you send us word by Berry  
 that you would write if you could,  
 this I know full well, therefore we  
 pardon you with all our heart. If  
 Sarah J. will not, I wonder if Martha  
 or Ann Eliza will not. If none of them  
 will I suggest that you get Rebecca  
 to assist you in writing to us. If Ann  
 Eliza, Martha, or Sarah J. or all of  
 them will correspond regularly with  
 me I assure you they will never be  
 sorry for it though they might take  
 no pleasure in reading my letters. I  
 know that either would improve  
 rapidly in reading, writing, and  
 spelling from the practice. We have  
 written hundreds of letters and I can  
 not learn whether you get one in fifty  
 of them though I believe you get all  
 from the fact that others receive the  
 letters that are written them. I shall  
 continue to write as heretofore,  
 believing you desire it. Some time  
 since we sent some money by Maj  
 Blount. Berry says it had not been  
 delivered when he left, I have writ-  
 ten you concerning it before and will  
 say but little now. I suppose you will  
 get it if not it can go like all the rest  
 of my earnings.

Pa, do you think what Gene Mor-



near Winchester Tenn.  
in 1863

father, Mother and People all  
at this time with feelings  
fortified and know too that  
be much pained to hear the  
s which this contains unless  
heard.

is no more with us in the  
and I sorrow. He was killed in  
at Murfreesboro on the 31st  
ell at his post like a man. At  
he was shot I was not exact-  
s side though within a few  
y attention was called to  
mediately and he breathed no  
nor moved. He was shot  
the brain.

and fought hard nearly all day  
he fell and had he escaped a  
utes longer he would have  
rough all the hard fighting  
regiment was in and beliefs  
d have been safe.

the second night after the fight  
re, James McG. and B.  
went and found his body;

we could not then bury him in  
there was no coffin to be had  
body. Therefore, they who  
ought to that place were laid  
side so I learn. I could not see  
ried for I had to leave at

for the battlefield. We lay in  
battle a whole week. Our  
nt commenced fighting at  
which is about 16 miles from  
sboro. We were there for the  
of guarding the road and to

the enemy when they came so  
y could be met properly at  
sboro. When they came  
us in force we had to give  
ough we fought them con-  
le. After getting to Mur-

ro we were not engaged for  
t day though hard fighting  
ng on. Every day the enemy  
iven back until they they had  
considerable distance. We  
drive them no farther but  
for them to come against us  
which they did not. On the

the 3rd inst we left, why I do  
ow but suppose the enemy  
eenforcing to strong for us  
o fight them.

loss was great of course, I  
idea what but I am sure that  
enemy was much more. You  
rn from the papers.  
first Lieut Jackson was  
nd wounded. Jacob Manning

lightly the arm, we are  
now on



## ANTHONY LEWIS McGOWIN

1840 - 1864

Camp near Tullahoma, Tenn.  
Jany. 11th, 1863

Dear Father and Mother,

As I mentioned in my last letter  
Lewis has taken a notion that he can-  
not get along without a negro to help  
us. But for Lewis I had rather do  
without than take one of yours from  
home. I think you may need them  
there though I am willing to spend  
all I make to add anything to my  
comfort.

We generally have a hard time in  
camp as also in marching. While in  
camp we have to drill and do a thou-  
sand things so that we cannot get a  
chance to wash our clothes or do  
cooking properly.

Whether in camp or marching we  
are never permitted to leave to go to  
any house to procure anything to eat  
that is fit to be eaten (in camp we get  
but little and that verry poor  
generally)

Those who have servants send  
them out in the country and get  
whatever there is to be had. If we  
had a servant I expect we should  
have to pay for all that he made use  
of, both clothing and victuals, but I  
should make him clothe himself as  
he could make plenty to do it and  
more to.

While in camp anything like a  
smart negro can make 10 or 12  
dollars a week by washing after do-  
ing his other work. In fruit time  
negroes make money as fast as they  
can count it by bringing in peaches  
and and apels for sale. We poor old  
soldiers are not allowed to get out of  
sight on any occasion, but negroes  
can go where they please so long as  
they behave. Just use your own  
pleasure as regards me.

You might lose your negro as you  
might at home but he would not be in  
near so much danger as I for in time

nothing but the same old thing  
forever unless some very painful  
thing occur, such as Mr. Bragg's  
having to shoot one of his boys for  
bad conduct, our having to face the  
hated foe and see them destroy the  
lives of own dearest on Earth.

We are now enjoying ourselves  
comparatively well. We are in good  
health, well clad, and getting plenty  
to eat. We also have some shelter  
from the cold rains and snow, which  
has been very common, and a little  
straw to sleep upon and more than a  
plenty of time to sleep. All of these  
things we ought to know how to ap-  
preciate as we have, since coming  
into the army, lived without the  
blessing of either.

How long our present state of  
blessedness will continue the Lord  
only knows, but we hope that it may  
last until we have a change for the  
better, and that this may soon come.

We, like most other people at  
home and in war, convert many of  
our blessings into curses. This I am  
sorry to have to say nevertheless it  
is true and truth is divine. We do not  
always attend preaching when we  
have a chance, though we have very  
fine preachers with us who preach  
for our benefit on Sundays when the  
weather permits.

We have more wrangling in our  
mess than is commendable, but it  
seems to be inavoidable, so  
heretofore I expect to keep my board  
in a family who will attend to their  
business when it concerns me and let  
me and my affairs alone when they  
cannot rightly meddle.

All of the dissatisfaction in our  
mess proceeds from laziness for  
which there is no remedy and of  
which I do not profess to be clear. I  
am too lazy to support others in their  
laziness.

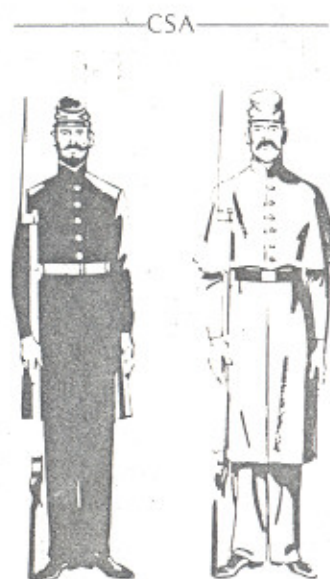
think so you need not mind telling  
me for it makes but little difference  
to me, for I scarcely ever expect to  
enjoy it I have it. Though if you could  
secure it I would be glad.

We do not look for any end of this  
war, if it ever was well, if not I am  
sorry for it. We are doing all we can,  
and this is but little I fear.

I am anxious to go home or  
somewhere else, where more  
pleasure is to be found and I am  
tired of the war, yet I ever will be. I  
must close, you must not think  
strange of so long a letter, just at-  
tribute it to my ignorance.

Farewell. Goodbye each and all  
till I see you. I hope it may not be  
long. Give all my love.

Alec McGowin



Tullahoma, Tennessee  
January 30th, 1863

Father, Mother, Brother, Sisters  
and Dear People,

We received a letter from Jas. and  
Peter last evening which gave us  
much pleasure to read and hear that  
he and Peter was well. He said also  
all was well at home furthermore he  
stated that Pa had been down to see  
them (in Mobile). Furthermore he  
said that Pa carried them something  
good to eat. That was joyful. It  
seems like some of you could carry  
them something good to eat every  
constant. They would be glad if you  
could do so. I know for I have ex-  
perienced such like. It seems I would  
give every dollar I possess for  
something good to eat. I will close  
and let other use other side.

A. L. McGowin to His People,  
Good Bye.

I hear about little from the enemy.

lightly the arm, we are  
now on

of battles negroes are  
left behind with

At this time Berry  
comes from

con'd on page 7





I suppose they are back towards Murfreesboro where we left them. We gave them a decent flogging, but fearing that they would reinforce too strong for us we left.

We have built us a chimney but have no house or even a tent, but have fly to spread over us. The oak smoke, cold wind and glittering of the white snow has made our eyes so sore that we can hardly see our way.

We are drawing our money in a day or two with no chance to buy anything.

Alex

—CSA—

Tullahoma, Tennessee  
April 8th, 1863

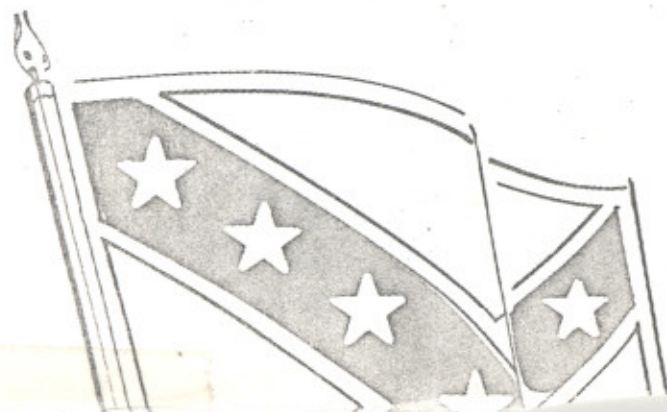
Dear Sister,

W. Moore's death was very sudden. He was taken with a chill on the 1st day inst. in the evening and died next morning about sunrise. We buried him on a very beautiful spot of ground. It was in an old field in an apple orchard.

We are afraid the smallpock will get among us. There has been narry a case in our Regiment yet though there has been several cases in the 45th Ala. Regt. which is camped about 2 hundred yards of us. If it do get to ragen among us it will be too bad for camp is bad enough at best. We are about out of money though if we had ever so much it would do us but little good. Everything is so dear here we could not afford to buy. Pinders is all the thing we really want to purchase and they cost from 50 cts to a dollar per quart.

As ever, A. L. McGowin

—CSA—



(Letter from Peter McGowin to his wife)

Fort Gindrat June 14th 1863

Mrs. Nancy McGowin,

Dear wife as the boat is about to start to the post office I hasten to write to you a few lines to inform you that we will leave this place tomorrow morning for Mobile, where it is said we will be stationed at a fortification called a redout, about two miles above the city on the Mobile and Ohio railroad.

I am glad we are going to leave here because it is the most uncomfortable place I ever was at "I believe", the quarters are as hot as a fire room and the mosquitoes so bad one can't rest.

I have been a little unwell, since I wrote to you last, but not seriously ill. I am taking medicine now and feel like I will soon be as well as ever.

I have not had a letter from you yet, since Mr. Chesnut was down but I hope to get one to day. Yours as ever

Direct your letters Peter McGowin Co. I 17th Ala. Regt. Mobile, Ala.

(Peter died exactly six months later, in the camp near Mobile, of typhoid fever.)

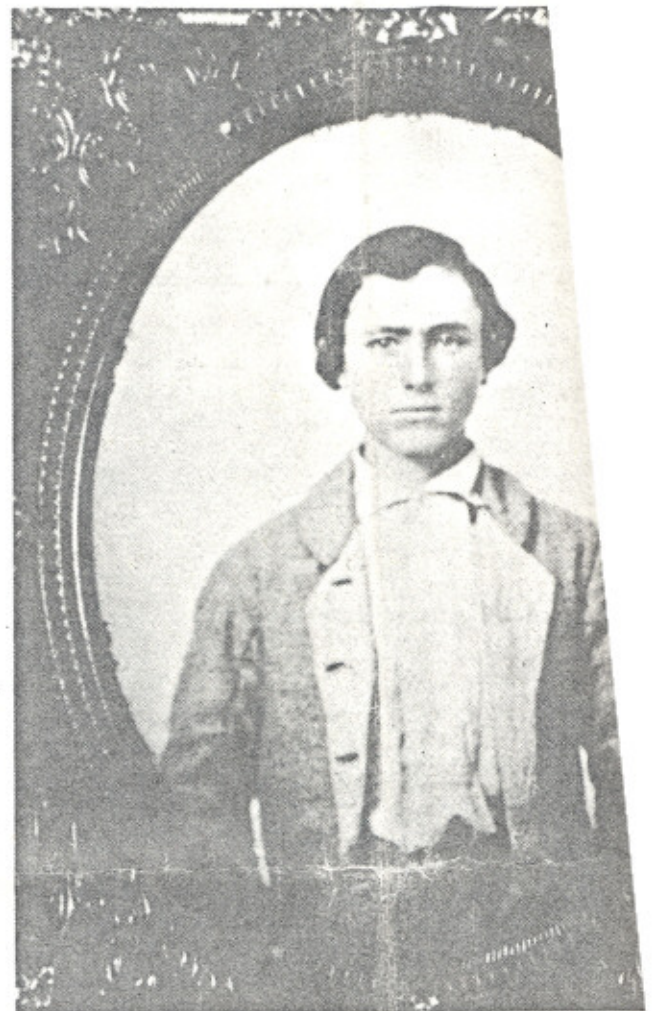
—CSA—

Camp at Tyner's Station on railroad nine miles east of Chattanooga, Tenn., July 13th, 1863

Mr. Thos. McGowin, Dear Brother,

I suppose of course that you have heard of our retreat and I will say but little about it in this letter.

I feel very lonesome and badly even worse than usual. We have



JOHN CHARNIC MCGOWIN

1843 - 1862

and we three are crouched under blankets stretched for shelter from the rain. One blanket makes the dwelling and smoke house, kitchen, dairy and all.

The paper upon which I write is some that brother Joseph bought at Tupelo, Miss., before we left there last summer and had it on hand when he was killed at Murfreesboro. I have a little of it left and it is the best of paper.

As ever your affectionate brother,  
Alexander McGowin

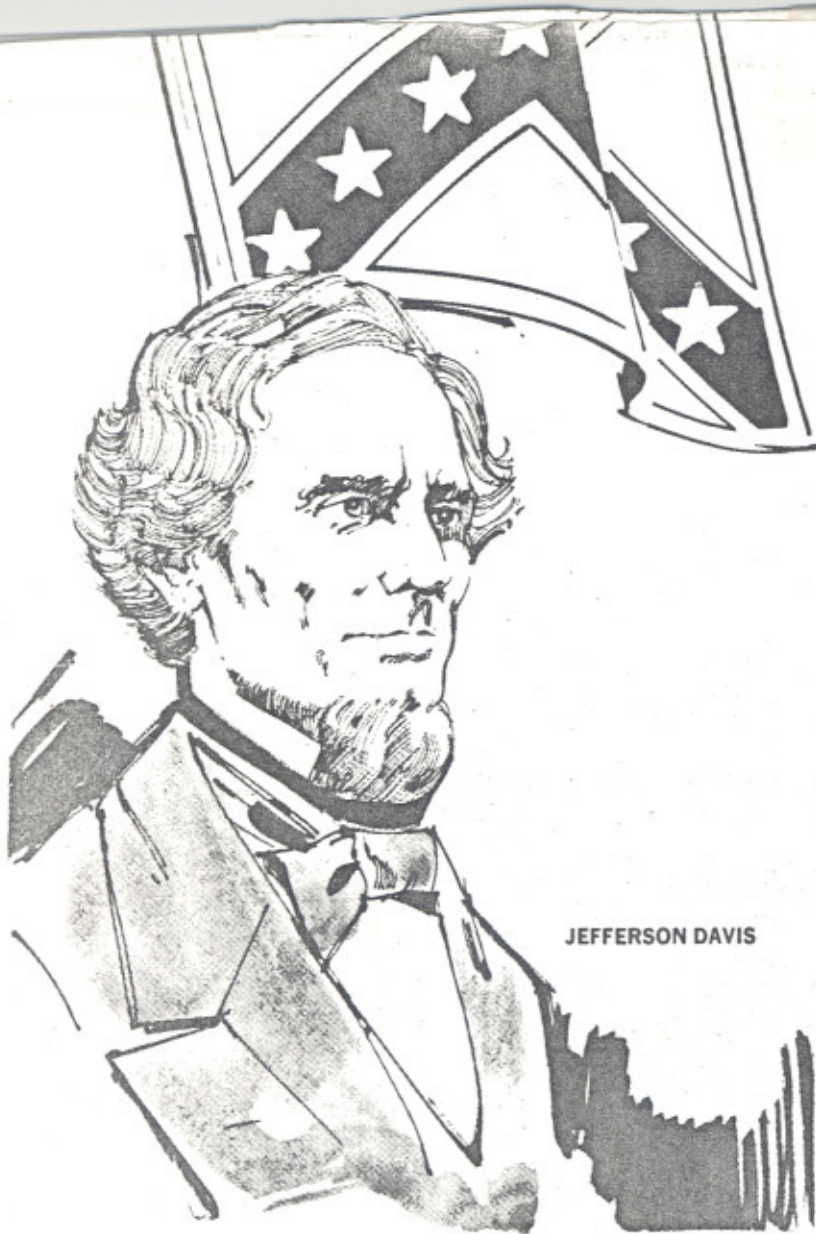
—CSA—

Harrison, Tenn. August 12th, 1863

Sarah J. McGowin, Dear Sister

kind of breaking up of here. Our Regt. except companies in charge of the batteries, has been relieved here and it is a ballance of us will be in a dont know the cause of. Some say it is to have the regiment improved relieved from here we about 8 miles from the city I dont know what will be.

You remember I wrote have for myself and Jas. shoes made and I believe I mention the size, we want him if he has not yet had it so as soon as it is convenient should be ordered.



JEFFERSON DAVIS

From Anthony Lewis McGowin to his sister Sarah:

Wartrace, Tennessee May 3rd, 1863

"Sarah every time you write to me you speak of some of them butter-milk boys down at Pollard like you love some of them. I believe if I was you I would not notice none of them beefeaters down there for I think I could pick out several boys in our company that would suit you better than them. Conscript doggers down there though they may be some very good young men there but they are like some young men I have heard pa make remarks about they are good for nothing. When they come to see you if you do not wish their company and want to get shet of them just ask them how many battels they have been into. They are very apt to say narry one. Then you can tell them they are not worthy of you. Tell them you want some of those boys who are in Tenn. fighting for your country and home."

—CSA—

been at this particular place only three days, but have been through with our retreat for a week or more. I was very, very sorry to have to make a backward movement but I judge it was all for the best. It is much harder work to retreat than to fight, but discretion is the better part of valor.

We retreated in very good order, but the road being so very bad, we had to throw away a great deal of baggage. We now have no tents and but few cooking utensils, etc. We had plenty to eat all the time, but still we suffered a great deal for want of sleep and from being so much in the rain and excessive heat.

I got a pass and went out into the neighborhood a day or so ago and got a good dinner by paying 90c. I also got some collards and Irish potatoes to bring to camp for the boys and myself. Potatoes are worth \$10 per bu. and everything else in proportion. In fact there is but little a soldier can get hold of.

A very hard shower is just over

It is again that I embrace myself of the present opportunity to write you a few lines in answer to yours which I received yesterday. My motive for writing these few lines is simply to let Mother hear from us as she asked us to write very constant on her account.

After this I shall quit writing except when I get a letter. I will answer it so when you want to hear from me, write and you will assuredly hear. Shall I tell you what we get to eat. We get meat and flour but nothing what to shorten it with. We get four days rations of beef in the week the balance in bacon. To give you a further history of it, we get rosenyears three times a week. I believe I could make a joke of it if I was to say we got two years of corn and one bundle of fodder at a bate. No more foolishness.

Sarah if you have any watermelons I want you to eat one good mess for me for there is but little chance to get it here. What few there is here they sell from 5 to 12 dollars, peaches from one to two dollars per dozen.

I ought to write a verry interesting letter being as I have the best position for writing that I ever had since I have been in the war. I am writing in the Academy on a good desk.

I think we will stay here to guard the river. We have such good water to drink and we can go in bathing every day if we choose which a soldier ought to do every day.

You said the black family sent hooddy to me. Tell them I havent forgotten them yet nor do I expect to do so.

Tell Jim I am afraid he has got to be a bad boy and loven the gals too hard. Tell him he must raze me a good horse by the time I get home.

I remain as ever your brother, A. L. McGowin.

—CSA—

Camp Pelahm near Mobile, Ala. Sept. 13th, 1863

Mrs. Nancy McGowin, Dear Wife,

I seat myself this evening to inform you that I am well except cold, sore throat which is getting better.

I received Thos' letter and also the box Mother sent the same day. The box contained all it started with judging from the nails in it. We were not needing the stuff though we are very glad of it. Those cakes were so good and butter and taters. I have made a lot of potatoe and butter custards today; they are, I believe, the best I ever ate before. If only I had thought to put in a little salt.

It seems that they are having a

should like to have shoes - though I do not sent far from here. that I would try to things, but not having concluded to put it of which I have been ex days - in the meantir what you want. I will dollars to spare wh pay, which will cert The captain has pro will endeavor to get i visit home when we when he finds out whe moved or not.

Jacob staid with us a night. His company is 12 miles from here.

I can think of notl write so I must come l

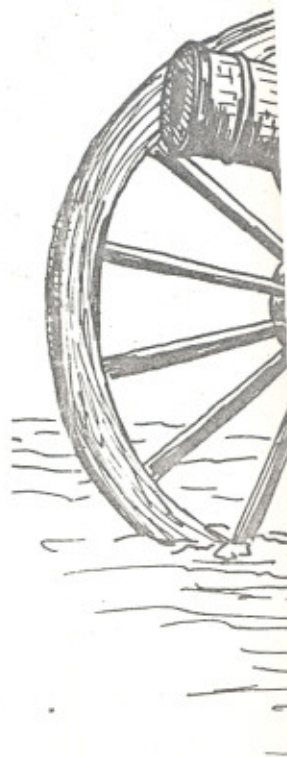
Affectionally yours, McGowin

—CSA—

Near Chattanooga, Ten Sept. 27th, 1863

Dear People at Home,

I know you are all an how we came out in the last Saturday and Sunda for your satisfaction, if y before heard, that all the settlement except Th came out sound and safe killed instantly on Sund inst. He fell at his post ha nobly all the while. We loss. He was one of our m and Lewis' bedfellow. He





**JOHN CHARNIC MCGOWIN**

1843 - 1862

we three are crouched under  
nets stretched for shelter from  
rain. One blanket makes the  
living and smoke house, kitchen,  
and all.  
The paper upon which I write is  
that brother Joseph bought at  
Mo, Miss., before we left there  
summer and had it on hand  
he was killed at Murfreesboro.  
A little of it left and it is the  
of paper.  
Ever your affectionate brother,  
Alexander McGowin

kind of breaking up of troops about  
here. Our Regt. except those com-  
panies in charge of the water bat-  
teries, has been relieved from its  
duties here and it is said that the  
balance of us will be in a few days. I  
don't know the cause of the change.  
Some say it is to have the health of  
the regiment improved. When  
relieved from here we will go out  
about 8 miles from the city to camp.  
I don't know what will be our duty.

You remember I wrote to pa to  
have for myself and Jas. a pair of  
shoes made and I believe I forgot to  
mention the size, we want No. 7. Tell  
him if he has not yet had it done to do  
so as soon as it is convenient; for if  
it should be ordered off this fall I  
should like to have it.

me when he was shot, the ball pass-  
ed through his head.

None of the other boys but myself  
was touched and I received a very  
slight wound on the jaw which is  
about well. I thought when the shot  
first struck me that my jaw was  
broken as it broke one of my teeth  
and as it gave me a very severe  
shock, but soon found out better.

It is thought two others of our com-  
pany received mortal wounds but I  
hope they may all recover. Out of 29  
men of our mess who went into the  
battle, 15 were killed and wounded.

Gen. Bragg has whipped and run  
the Yankees back to Chattanooga  
which place they now hold. Our  
forces had Chattanooga fortified  
before leaving it and the Yanks are  
busily engaged fortifying and have  
been ever since they got possession  
of it.

We followed them back here and  
are in position all around the town on  
this side of the river. We may have  
to attack them in their fortifications  
in Chattanooga but I hope not for if  
we were I fear it would cost us too  
much life. We are lying in line of bat-  
tle on an elevation where we can see  
the Yanks all the while though we  
are two or three miles off.

We are faring well. Our rations  
are cooked by men several miles off  
and sent to us and by the time it  
reaches us there is none of it. We get  
about a pound of cornbread a day  
and hardly any meat.

I must close  
Alex

—CSA—

**Near Chattanooga, Tenn.**

October 3rd, 1863

Miss S. J. McGowin, Dear Sister,

I am happy to say to you that I  
have been spared to acknowledge  
the receipt of yours. I received yours  
on the 20th ult at night after fighting  
pretty much all day. I was so tired  
that I could not read it to any satis-  
faction therefore I have forgotten  
what all you wrote about.

Oh how much we have been  
fatigued since I wrote to you last.  
There is no tongue that can tell you  
how much we have suffered since we  
left Harrison's Landing.

in the Army, but I had rather risk a  
negro here than any where else for I  
never have known a negro to die in a  
camp yet and in time of battle they  
are sent to the rear.

As ever your brother, A. L.  
McGowin

—CSA—

**Camp near Chattanooga, Tenn.**

Nov. 3rd, 1863

Miss Sarah J. McGowin, Dear  
Sister,

We are still here in close quarters  
with the Yanks, but we don't have  
much fighting going on at present.  
There is some shelling every day but  
there is no fighting with small arms.

Ours and the Yanks picket posts  
are about two hundred yards of each  
other. We have to go on picket every  
fourth day. I was on picket the night  
before last and when light came  
there was several Yankees standing  
in about one hundred yards of me.  
They wanted to swap papers with  
me. If I had not had strict orders  
about shooting it would have been  
good to have killed one of them. But I  
had orders not to shoot them unless  
they advanced on me. They say they  
are willing to make peace but don't  
say on what conditions.

I think we will fight before very  
long provided the Yanks don't fall  
back. I will change the subject.

Our rations is a little better than  
they was awhile back but they  
scarce enough now. I fear people  
down there don't know what to  
charge for a meal of victuals unless  
they knew what Confederate money  
sold for here. You cannot buy as  
much as you can eat here for less  
than five dollars. Oh that I could be  
at home now to eat sweet potatoes. I  
have not seen but three potatoes this  
season and they sold for one dollar a  
piece. I want you to send me some  
socks for they sell for four dollars a  
pair.

I shall send all my letters to  
Brewton. A. L. McGowin

—CSA—

Dear Sister,  
It is again that I embrace myself  
the present opportunity to write  
a few lines in answer to yours  
which I received yesterday. My  
gratitude for writing these few lines is  
amply to let Mother hear from us as  
she asked us to write very constant  
in her account.

After this I shall quit writing ex-  
cept when I get a letter. I will  
answer it so when you want to hear  
from me, write and you will assured-  
ly hear. Shall I tell you what we get  
to eat. We get meat and flour but  
nothing what to shorten it with. We  
get four days rations of beef in the  
week the balance in bacon. To give  
you a further history of it, we get  
meat three times a week. I  
think I could make a joke of it if I  
was to say we got two years of corn  
in one bundle of fodder at a bate.  
How foolishness.

Sarah if you have any  
termelons I want you to eat one  
and mess for me for there is but lit-  
tle chance to get it here. What few  
are here they sell from 5 to 12  
dollars, peaches from one to two  
dollars per dozen.

I ought to write a verry interesting  
letter being as I have the best posi-  
tion for writing that I ever had since  
I have been in the war. I am writing  
the Academy on a good desk.

I think we will stay here to guard  
the river. We have such good water  
to drink and we can go in bathing  
any day if we choose which a  
liar ought to do every day.

You said the black family sent  
aaddy to me. Tell them I havent  
gotten them yet nor do I expect to  
so.

Tell Jim I am afraid he has got to  
be a bad boy and loven the gals too  
much. Tell him he must raze me a  
new horse by the time I get home.  
I remain as ever your brother, A.  
McGowin.

CSA

Up Pelahm near Mobile, Ala.  
Dec. 13th, 1863

Nancy McGowin, Dear Wife,  
I seat myself this evening to in-  
form you that I am well except cold,  
my throat which is getting better.  
I received Thos' letter and also the  
Mother sent the same day. The  
letter contained all it started with  
coming from the nails in it. We were  
needing the stuff though we are  
very glad of it. Those cakes were so  
good and butter and taters. I have  
eaten a lot of potatoe and butter  
cakes today; they are, I believe,  
the best I ever ate before. If only I  
thought to put in a little salt.  
It seems that they are having a

should like to have a good pair of  
shoes - though I dont think we'll be  
sent far from here. I wrote to you  
that I would try to send you some  
things, but not having much money I  
concluded to put it off till I get some,  
which I have been expecting several  
days - in the meantime write to me  
what you want. I will have 40 to 50  
dollars to spare when I draw my  
pay, which will certainly be soon.  
The captain has promised that he  
will endeavor to get me a permit to  
visit home when we get settled, or  
when he finds out whether we will be  
moved or not.

Jacob staid with us a week ago last  
night. His company is camped 10 or  
12 miles from here.

I can think of nothing more to  
write so I must come to a close.

Affectionally yours, etc., Peter  
McGowin

CSA

Near Chattanooga, Tenn.  
Sept. 27th, 1863

Dear People at Home,

I know you are all anxious to hear  
how we came out in the late battle of  
last Saturday and Sunday. I will say  
for your satisfaction, if you have not  
before heard, that all the boys of our  
settlement except Thos. Garner  
came out sound and safe Garner was  
killed instantly on Sunday the 20th  
inst. He fell at his post having acted  
nobly all the while. We regret his  
loss. He was one of our mess and my  
and Lewis' bedfellow. He fell against

for Harrison. I could put up with it  
better but it dont look like there is  
any prospects for better times short-  
ly. We are still in line of battle and  
have to take the weather as it comes  
rain or shine. We dont know what  
moment we may be fired on by the  
enemy.

We fought the battle on Saturday  
the 19th and the following Sunday. I  
think I am the only one but what had  
the sine of a bullet in the evening  
when the battle ceased. Those that  
never got wounded got holes shot in  
their clothing somewhere. Alex was  
shot in the jaw but is about well now.  
I have only one consolation that is I  
think I killed and wounded some of  
them though I do not know. It was so  
smokey after the firing commenced  
that I could not see.

Sarah I would be glad to tell you  
something about the sights of a bat-  
tle field but is is such an affel sight it  
would not be any satisfaction to you.  
There was any quantity got killed,  
wounded and burnt up. There was  
such heavy fighting it sot the woods  
on fire.

I will quit writing shortly as my  
mind is roving so much.

About my clothing if you send any  
you need not send me any drawers  
or shoes. I would like to have some  
boots but I reckon they are hard to get  
holt of.

We would like verry much to have  
some boddy here to do our cooking  
and washing. Tell Pa if he will let  
Bill come to cook for us we will pay  
the hire of another to work in his  
place, let it cost what it may. Some  
people dont like to risk their negro



Camp Canty near Mobile, Ala.  
Dec. 10th, 1863

Messrs. A & A. L. McGowin,  
Dear Brothers,

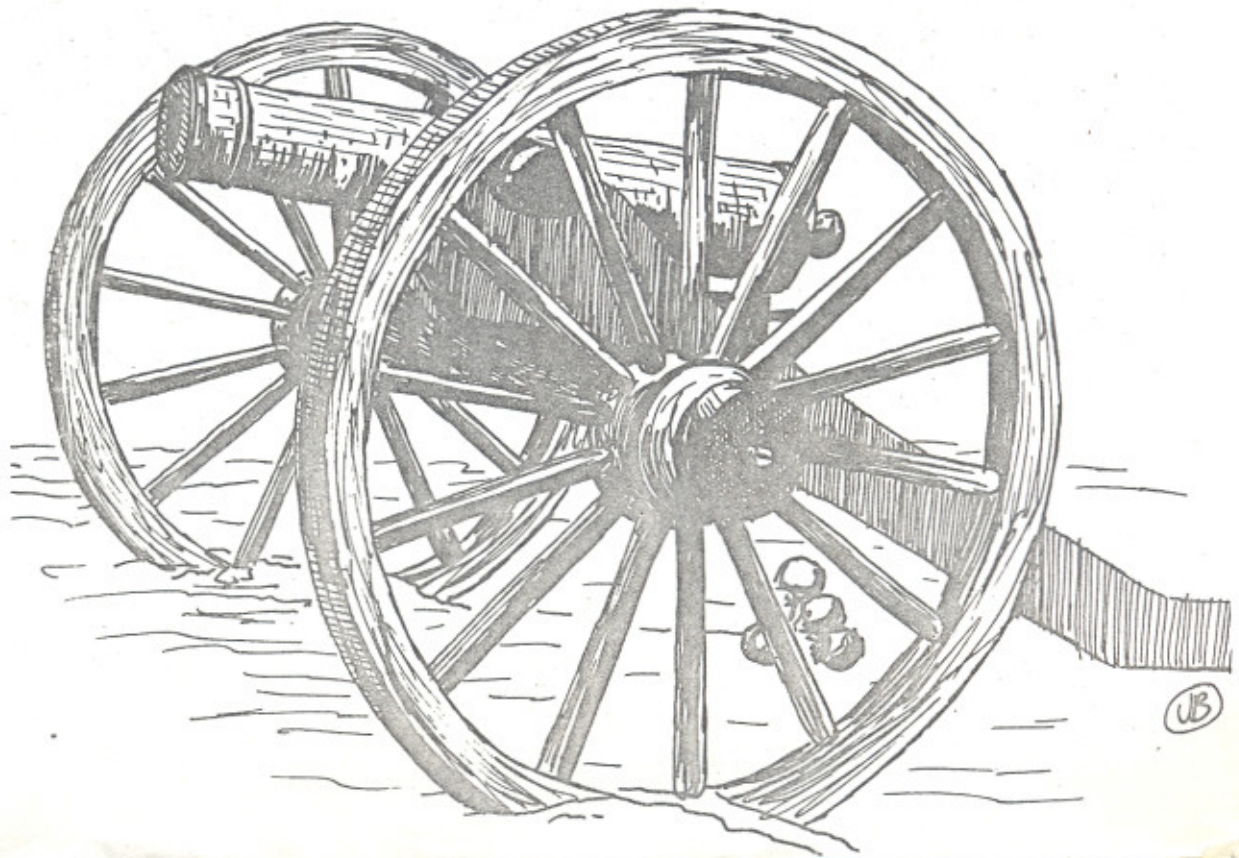
I am in tolerable health though for  
some time past I have been on the  
puny order. My stomach has been  
considerably damaged some way.  
Nothing I eat seems to agree with  
me. I have the heartburn a great  
deal and very bad. Jas. is in good  
health but has a rising in one of his  
hands caused from using an axe. We  
have been building us a shanty to  
live in which is now about complete.  
If we stay here all winter we will be  
very comfortably situated.

Our rations are very poor and  
scanty but as long as we stay here I  
expect to get things from home to  
keep from suffering.

I was home from the 14th til the  
23rd ult. Pa was suffering very much  
with the rheumatism in his right  
knee.

You requested me to give you all

*Continued On Page 8*



the war news I have but I have none more than you know. My opinion about the war is that if it continues twelve to eighteen months more we will achieve our independence. That is if we hold out prospectively that long they I think will give it up. But if they succeed I think it will be brought to a focus in six months, though I know nothing and my opinion is worth nothing.

Your loving brother, Peter McGowin

P. S. When I came from home I brought three shoats to camp and they are doing as well as you could expect on the slop and stuff gathered about camp.

CSA

Camp 16th Ala. Regt.  
Tunnel Hill, Ga.  
Sunday Morning  
Dec. 27th, 1863

Mr. Alex McGowin, Dear Brother,

It being Sunday and I am at leisure I will devote a few moments in writing to you. We are still in this place and enjoying good health. Tell Pa and Mother that I am enjoying better health at this time than I ever have before since I first entered the service.

Christmas is past and it is now Sunday morning. There was nothing lively going on here Christmas but we spent the day very well. We had plenty to eat on that day. Christmas we drew flour, sugar, molasses, lard and mutton for that day.

We are all tolerably flush with money at the present. We drew our commutation and I feel like I was able to pay for a recruit. I drew one hundred and eleven dollars. If there should be any person in that neighborhood that are fit for service I would be more than proud if you could get him to recruit up. If there should be any person there that would come as a recruit for pay get him for me. I would be perfectly willing to pay fifty dollars for a recruit and if there be no other possible chance I would pay one hundred.

There has been a new order issued for furloughing. One man out of

Columbia Hospital Tenn 15th/62  
I am well to day. I will leave here in a week or two. Times very hot here fighting nearly every day not far off. Fightin now at Ft Donilson in this state. The Yankees have a large force, Knoxville to be attacked shortly by the enemy. Our men have their hands full & we have a over whelm army to contend with, but if they dont mind somebody will get the write to me immediately at this place. Send this to Sis. My love to all your Brother! Jos McGowin

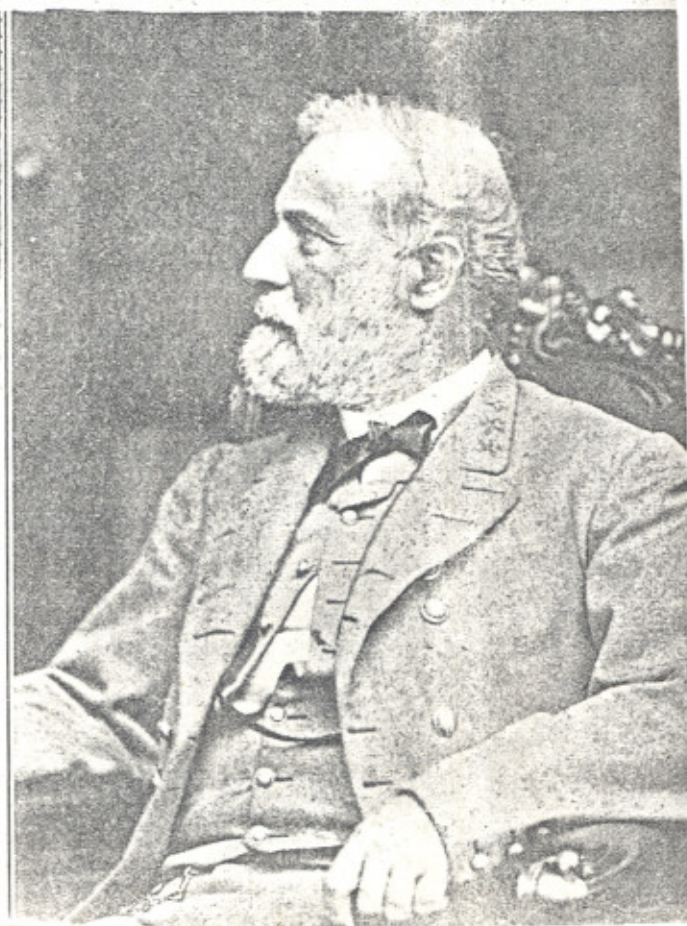
Columbia Hospital Tenn 15th/62

I am well to day. I will leave here in a week or two. Times very hot have fighting nearby every day not far off. Fightin now at Ft. Donilson in this state. The Yankees have a large force, Knoxville to be attacked shortly by the enemy. Our men have their hands full now. We have a over whelm army to contend with, but if they don't mind somebody will get hurt. Write to me immediately at this place.

Send this to Sis. My love to all your brother, Jos. McGowin

this army that I have heard therefore I will give you no army news. I wish you not be uneasy about Lewis for it would do no good and I do not think he is dangerously ill. I will write you often and hope in a few days to be able to say that Lewis and all are well.

Well Sarah this is not a suitable time for me to jest, therefore I can add nothing more of interest. We were glad indeed to hear from home and proud to know that Pa was some better. I hope he's still improving and that all the rest may be enjoying good health.



Company dont get anny one on that order. There are just men enough in our Regt. for 9 furloughs.

Tell Bill to make me a bully pair of shoes and send them to me.

As every your brother, A. L. McGowin

Affectionately your brother, Alec

To Mother I shall write a word specially to you but can say nothing that would give you any pleasure as I know therefore I do not know what to say.

I suppose you have already heard from us since I came back, if so you have heard about all that. I could tell you about my trip back and how I found all here. Our major who is or was in command of the regiment complimented me for returning at the appointed time, and said I was worthy of a furlough at any time I wanted one - said I was the first to return promptly since he had commanded. I shall never regret coming back when my leave was out, although I was as glad to see home as any one could be and hated to leave as bad. If I should per chance, ever be permitted to return home after this war I desire to carry with me at least as good a name as I left there and you may be assured that I would at this time do so, and hope to hold out faithfully to the end. I can say as much for Lewis if it would afford you any plesure to hear it from me. I can safely say that none of my kinsmen or particular friends in this company have disgraced the name they left behind them, it affords me much pleasure to be able to say this both for the living and the dead of our settlement at home.

I shall say no more this time. If nothing happens I will mail this tomorrow morning. I will then put in a word or two more.

We have a plenty to eat are well clothed. Be not troubled about whether sick or well, it could do no good. We know that you both do all for us that you can therefore we wish you forever well. Affectionately your son, Alex

Jan. 29th

Lewis is very much the same this morning. There is an excitement up in camp tonight we having received orders to be ready to move at any time. I suppose the Yanks are moving.

CSA



CSA

Camps at Tunnel Hill Ga. Jany 8th, 1864

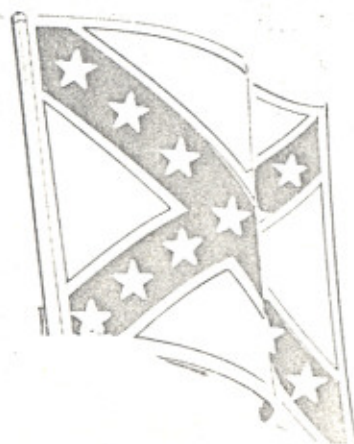
Dear Sister;

We received yours of the 19th inst two days ago. We were then well except myself, I was just recovering from a very painful earache and am not yet exactly well of it but am about.

Lewis has taken sick on yesterday - the first symptoms of his disease were those of ague and fever, but today the Dr. pronounces his case pneumonia. He has been suffering apparantly a great deal but this evening he seems to be resting more easy. The Dr., I think, will do the best he can for him, so will I and the other boys and I hope he will soon recover.

The weather is very fair and warm and has been fair for the last two weeks or more and growing gradually warmer. I was fearful that such weather after so much cold wet would cause sickness since it seems that my apprehensions were well founded. I hope it will rain soon and that we will have no more such warm dry weather until it comes to continue.

There is nothing late going on in



General Robert E. Lee

(Confederate.)

McG

16

A

A. L. McGowin  
Privt., Co. D., 16 Reg't Alabama Inf

Appears on

Company Muster Roll

of the organization named above,

for Aug. 9 to Aug. 31,  
Dated Oct. 22, 1864

Enlisted:

When Aug. 9,

Where Montgomery, Ala.

By whom J. L. Calhoun

Period For the War

Last paid:

By whom Never Paid

To what time

Present or absent Present

Remarks:

(Pay Record of A. L. McGowin)

Book mark :

E. Leger

*a Hospital Evorn 13<sup>th</sup> 1862*  
*I will leave here in a*  
*very hot here fighting*  
*far off. Fightin now at*  
*late! The Yankess have a large*  
*to be attached shortly by*  
*have their hands full now.*  
*an army to contend with,*  
*and somebody will get hurt.*  
*ately at this place*  
*My love to all your*  
*ever!*  
*Got McGowin*



Tunnel Hill Ga.  
 Jan. 17th, 1864

Mr. Thos McGowin  
 Dear Brother,

So Battle is a going to start home today I will drop you a few lines in order to let you and all know that I am in good health. I truly hope these few lines may find Pa's health improving, it appears like if he was well I would not want to go home so bad. It appear like sometimes I would give anything in the world to go home. But there are no chance on earth unless I could get a recruit and from what Alex tells me that is hopeless. He said that it appears like all the recruits want to go to Mobile, but it appears like if I was a recruit I would rather come up here where I would see something. If you can get a recruit to come and join our company in order to give me a furlough I will inshore him \$150 - one hundred and fifty dollars bounty. I would think Thos. Bryant and Gos. White was about old enough to go to the war. You must look around and see if you can get me a recruit if you can - Lt. Parker will bring him back with him.

I will write no more this time. I send \$150 dollars by Battle to home. If you or any of the rest of you at home wants to spend it do so. You must buy a whole lot of paper invelopes and ink and write to me once a week and tell the rest to write to me. I am afraid you don't direct your letters right is the reason they don't come. I will show you how to direct.

A. L. McGowin  
 Co. D. 10th Ala. Regt.  
 Lowreys Brigade Cleburns Div.  
 Army of Tenn.

You need not direct to any post office. Write soon. Tell all to write. Ever your Brother, A. L. McGowin

Camp at Tunnel Hill, Ga.  
 Feb. 8th 1884

Dear People,

I presume you will have heard of brother Lewis' death before you get this as I wrote you a few days ago.

I rolled his clothing up in a small bundle covered with a white cotton

came to this place on our way we thought to Ala or perhaps Miss. We thought perhaps our division would go to Mobile. All of our division except our brigade had left on the way down the country but I now understand they are returning to this place.

I presume we would have gone on had not the enemy commenced an advance before we got off. Fighting is now going on in the front and has been for the past 24 hours but a genuine engagement has not yet commenced. The firing seems to be many miles off as yet but I rather look for a big fight in a day or two.

In the Front, Feb. 27th

Since writing the above we have been hastened to the front where considerable fighting was then going on. It was the evening of the 25th, but the enemy turned in the direction from which they came before. We had a little picket fighting but I do not know how far back the enemy have gone. They may try their hand again very soon and I think our Generals expect it as we are kept there in line of battle. I think all of our Division that had left has returned. Some of them had got as far as Montgomery and whether we have any more fighting here now or not I do not expect to go where we had started. We learned the Yanks in Miss. have moved back recently. There is no knowing what will be done therefore you must not take for granted that which I conjecture.

Yours in love, Alex McGowin

(This was the last letter in the collection)

—CSA—

## Only A Soldier's Grave

By S. A. Jones  
 Aberdeen, Mississippi

Only a soldier's grave! Pass by,  
 For soldiers, like other mortals, die.  
 Parents he had — they are far away;  
 No sister weeps o'er the soldier's  
 clay;

No brother comes, with a tearful  
 eye:

It's only a soldier's grave — pass by.

Company dont get anny one on that order. There are just men enough in our Regt. for 9 furloughs.

Tell Bill to make me a bully pair of shoes and send them to me.

As every your brother, A. L. McGowin

CSA



CSA

Camps at Tunnel Hill Ga.  
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Dear Sister;

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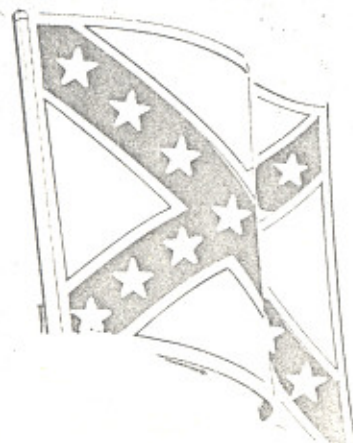
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