

16th AL

REC'D 6-25-76

STONES RIVER NAT'L  
BATTLEFIELD  
M'BORO, TN 37130

EARL M. MCGOWIN  
EDGEFIELD

CHAPMAN, ALABAMA 36015

June 23, 1976

TELEPHONES  
BUS. 205-376-2271  
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SUPT. \_\_\_\_\_  
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TECH. \_\_\_\_\_  
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MAINT. \_\_\_\_\_  
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Stones River National Battlefield  
Route 2, Old Nashville Highway  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37130

Attention Mr. Thomas Turner

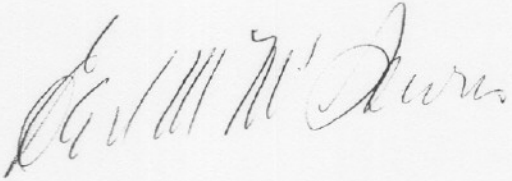
Dear Mr. Turner:

I enjoyed my visit to the Stones River Battlefield last week and appreciated all of the courtesies shown me.

My grandfather and four of his brothers were in Company D, 16th Alabama Regiment, Woods Brigade, although two of the brothers had died from disease in camp prior to the engagement at Murphreesboro. The remaining three were in the battle and one of them - Joseph - was killed in action. We have letters from my grandfather and his brother A. L. (Lewis) telling of the battle and I am attaching copies of one or two of them which you might find of interest.

I also have a photograph of Joseph in Confederate uniform and could have a copy made for you if you would like to have it in your archives.

Sincerely yours,



EMMcG/o

Camps near Winchester Tenn Jan 7<sup>th</sup> 1863

Dear Father, Mother & People all,  
I write at this time with feelings much mortified &  
Renew to 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 the sorrow. He was killed in battle at  
Murfreesboro on the 31<sup>st</sup> ult. He fell at his  
post like a man. At the time he was shot,  
I was out stably by his side though within a  
few steps. My attention was called to him  
immediately & he breath no more, nor moved,  
He was shot through the brain.  
We had fought hard nearly all day before he  
fell. & had he escaped a few minutes longer he  
would have been through all the hard  
fighting that our regiment is in and  
belief. He would have been safe.

On the second night after the fight J. Moore  
Jas Mc G. & 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 mean. I could not see him buried for  
I had to leave at daylight for the  
battle field. We lay in line of battle a whole  
week. Our Regiment commenced fighting at Tipton  
which is about 16 miles from Murfreesboro.  
We were there for the purpose of guarding the  
road & 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 tried  
to drive them no farther but waited for them

to come against us again, which they they did not  
On the night of the 3rd inst we left, why I do not  
know, but suppose the enemy were ve ing 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 &  
wounded. Jacob Manning was slightly

The arm. We are now on the Chattanooga &  
Nashville railroad 45 miles from Murfreesboro at  
a little village by the name of Tulehoma which  
is our P.O. providing 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 & 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 & may leave tomorrow for all I know.

David Blacksher wishes you to let his people  
know that he escaped as he can not, now write  
All of your acquaintances 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 & how rainy &  
cold it is yet.

Pa Lewis says you promised to let us have  
Bill or Toldier if we wished & he is now anxious  
to get one, so if you think proper you may  
send on, if he is willing to come, if Berry has  
not left I think we can pay money enough for  
you to hire another 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 & A. L. McGowan

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 bad news which this contains unless you have already heard.

Brother Joseph is no more with us in this world of pain and 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 he would have been safe.

On the second night after the fight J. Moore, Jas. 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 anybody, 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 battle field. We lay in the 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. Where 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 had gone a considerable distance. We tried 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 re-enforcing too 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. Jacob Manning was slightly wounded in the arm. We are now on the Chattanooga & Nashville railroad 45 miles from Murfreesboro at a little village by the name of Tulehoma, which is our P. O. providing we stay here, but I have no idea we will long. This is the first chance I have had to write you a letter since the battle and this 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 wish's you to let his people know that he escaped, as he can not now write. All of your acquaintances 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 raining and cold it is yet.

Pa Lewis says you promised to let us have Bill or Tolaver 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 another 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 \$85.00 which I wish you had, it is in my way for nothing here. I will write you more as soon as I get the chance. Farewell for this time.

Alex and A. L. McGowin

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

Dear Father & Mother;

Having an opportunity I write you again, though it has been but a few days since writing. I and Lewis are about but not very well. Lewis is often complaining, it seems that he is unsound ever since last winter. All of our men went through all the battle, though Lewis and John were sick, and quite so too, all the while. All of us were in bad condition after lying in the wet, cold weather for a whole week, and being run hard part of the time and having but little to eat, and little sleep. As I presume you will get my other letter I will only say of Jos. that he was killed on the 31st ult. He was within a few steps of me but I did not see him fall, but was told that he was dead and I went to him but he could not speak or move, for, as I soon learned, he was shot through the brain. The balls were then flying thick around me, and the men falling fast around me. Soon after Jos. was killed three others fell immediately by my side, two of them dead. Although we lost many men the enemy lost many more than we from what I saw. They lay thick where we followed them.

Our company has but few men in it now, nor any of the rest in the regiment. There is a talk of having the Regt. filled with conscripts. I do not know how long we will be here or where we will go, perhaps we will have another fight before going far or any where.

As I mentioned in my last Lewis has taken a notion that he can not get along with a negro boy to help us. But for Lewis I would rather do without than take one of yours from home, for I think you may need them there though I am willing to spend all I make to add any thing to my comfort. We generally have a hard time in camps, as also in marching. While in camps we have to drill and do a thousand other things so that we can not get a chance to wash our clothes or do our cooking properly. And whether in camp or marching we are never permitted to leave to go to any bodies house to procure any thing to eat that is fit to be eaten (in camp we get but little and that very poor generally). Those who have servants sent them out in the country and get what ever 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. While in camps any thing like a smart negro can make 10 or 12 dollars a week by washing after doing his other work. In fruit time negroes made money as fast as they could count it by bringing in peaches and apples 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, so you might lose your negro, so you might at home, but he would not be in near so much danger as I, for in time for battle negroes are left behind with the wagons and teamsters where bullets cannot reach them so they are safe if not captured. It is Sunday and a pretty day it is. Our Chaplain is delivering a sermon, but fearing I might not get another chance to write I have declined going to hear him today. If you wish to know any thing 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

each with us on the field. Jos. was stolen off of him before we got his body he had the blanket which Lewis had at home. You must write if you will. We never hear from home at all. Direct any where. Most where you think we are; letters will follow. I would like to have dinner with you today. We have only a little meal to cook. We had two days rations stolen this week.

Your Son

Camp near Tullahoma, Tenn.  
Jany. 13th 1863

Dear brothers;

Yours of the 30th ult. came duly to hand on yesterday and found me and Lewis tolerable, but Jos. poor brother he is no more with us in this world of trouble; he fell a martyr to our cause on the 31st ult. at Murfreesboro in battle. He fell at his post fighting manfully. He was killed instantly with a ball which went directly through his brain. Hard fighting commenced on Tuesday the 30th and continued three days. We fought hard only on the 31st.

A portion of our brigade was in advance 16 miles and the enemy came against us in force when we fought them all we could and fell back to Murfreesboro. We had to retreat fast to keep out of danger of being taken and when we got to Murfreesboro we were quite broken down, but we had to continue a whole week to fight or lye in line of battle, and our suffering was great as the weather was very cold and rainy.

After driving the yanks back a considerable distance we held them there, or at any rate they did not come against us again so long as we remained there. Perhaps they were reenforcing, of this I know nothing, or the cause of our leaving. We left on Saturday night after the battle, and have fallen back perhaps 40 miles. We are now on the Nashville & Chattanooga R. R. Jos. was buried after a day and night after the manner usual among soldiers - without a coffin I mean.

We have had a very hard time but hope for better in the future. Our first Lieut. Jackson was killed and there 9 others wounded. I suppose we had not more than 25 or 30 men of our company engaged; and from what I learn the others of our regiment suffered in proportion, and perhaps the whole brigade and division. We now belong to Claiborn's division.

Jacob Manning was slightly wounded in the arm. I do not know where he is now. All of your acquaintances, so far as I know, whom I have not mentioned escaped unhurt. I have not received a letter from home since writing you. They will not write at all. In fact I have no correspondent, as you well know, I have nary sweetheart, nor am I anxious for one at this time, for, as I conceive, it would only add fuel to the flame.

On yesterday I enjoyed myself the best of any time since going to the wars. I and Jas. McG. got a pass and went out into the country, and was fortunate enough to find a plenty of kind people who had fine things to eat and drink, and pretty fields to grace the whole. You cannot imagine how good a glass of milk is to me, and we got plenty. God bless all such people is my prayer.

I must conclude having nothing more to write. You must write me often, both you and Jos. I love to write when I have a chance, which I can not always have, for we are marching nearly all the time, or have been.

Farewell, Dear brothers. We hope to meet you again at any darly day.

Direct at this place, letters follow  
us if we move.

Yours in love,  
ALEX & A. L. McCOWIN