

# The Military Memoirs of a Confederate Line Officer

Captain John C. Reed's Civil War  
from Manassas to Appomattox

William R. Cobb, Editor

SB

Savas Beatie  
California

Advance Unedited Digital Galley

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## Foreword

**John** Calvin Reed was a young man of 25, a lawyer by profession, when the war broke out in the spring of 1861. He was an educated man (three years at Princeton) with a gift for chronicling in compelling narrative the period leading up to the war, his observations throughout his military service up to the surrender at Appomattox, and of the war's aftermath.

Swept up by the fervor of the times, he enlisted in a local company called the Stephens Light Guard and became one of its lieutenants. This company shortly thereafter became Company I of the 8th Georgia Volunteer Infantry, a regiment that would earn fame as part of George T. Anderson's Brigade. Reed served throughout the war in this company, and by the end was its captain. During his service Reed participated in virtually every engagement in which the 8th Georgia was involved, including the Knoxville and East Tennessee campaigns. His journal captures his experiences and observations in vivid detail as only a participant can tell, and provides rich and compelling accounts of his regiment's actions and those of its sister units (the 7th, 9th, and 11th Georgia regiments and, for shorter periods, the 1st Georgia Regulars, 10th Georgia Battalion, and the 59th Georgia Regiment).

His narrative is sprinkled with ancillary stories of his personal observations and experiences, some humorous and others painful (e.g., the death of his brother), that are often overlooked in most books covering this period. He tells these stories in a clear and compelling manner that is both informative and engaging.

Reed's detailed account of First Manassas is unparalleled and by far the best and most accurate narrative of the actions of Bartow's Brigade that day. It also corrects the errors in Gen. Joe Johnston's report of the regiment's actions at Mathews Hill. Reed supplements his description with a detailed map of the regiment's movements. It is a shame this was the only map he provided in his journal.

In addition to his account of military events, Reed provides an insightful picture into the minds and feeling of Southerners in the years leading up to the war, particularly on the issue of slavery, and his firsthand thoughts on the issue and experiences as one whose family owned slaves.

Reed's journal, published here for the first time with excellent annotations by William R. Cobb, is a must-read for anyone interested in the Civil War and the perspective of Southern soldiers who lived through it.

— Lieut. Col. Henry W. Persons, Jr., US Army (Ret.)

## Introduction

**John** Calvin Reid, the author of this manuscript, was born on February 24, 1836, in Lexington, Georgia, the county seat of Oglethorpe County. His father was John W. Reid, born in North Carolina in 1804.

The father, John W. Reid, was the founder and principal of the well-known Reid Academy in the nearby community of Woodstock, Georgia, also in Oglethorpe County. The Reid Academy was a boarding school for boys that was known throughout the Southeast as one of the finest educational institutions of its time. John W. Reid was also the minister of the Presbyterian Church there, and he owned a moderate size plantation of 490 acres. As of 1860 he owned 14 slaves, ranging in age from 50 to 5 years, who lived in three slave houses he had built on the plantation. John W. Reid's net worth listed in the 1860 census was \$4,800 in real estate and \$20,200 in personal estate, which was mostly the value of his slaves.

John Calvin Reid was raised in the glory days of Southern aristocracy, and he enjoyed all the advantages and privileges it provided. In 1851, at the age of 15, he was sent to Princeton University in New Jersey, where he was encouraged by his father to prepare for the ministry. After graduating in 1854, John returned home to Lexington and taught at the Reid Academy until 1857.

Having felt no calling to the ministry, John C. Reid spent the three years from 1854 to 1857 "reading all the Greek and Latin," and studying the law under Thomas R. R. Cobb, Georgia's premier legal scholar at the time. John C. Reid was then "called to the Bar" on April 21, 1857, and began the practice of law in Lexington. In the same year Princeton University awarded him a Master of Arts degree, presumably for his continued independent studies in Greek and Latin literature, as well as history and law.

Soon after Georgia's secession in 1861, John C. Reid joined the Confederate service as a 2nd lieutenant in the Stephens Guards, a volunteer unit formed in

neighboring Greene County, where he had moved his law practice. This unit later became Company I of the 8th Georgia Volunteer Infantry in the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia. Reid served in this regiment throughout the war, beginning before the First Battle of Manassas and continuing through the surrender at Appomattox. He rose through the ranks to captain, and commanded Company I in the last year of the war. He also served as chaplain for the company after the death of its former chaplain at the Battle of the Wilderness in May 1864, although this was not an official position.

Throughout the war Reid wrote home often, made careful contemporaneous notes of battlefield incidents, and created memories of his fellow soldiers, his commanders, and adversaries. Over a period of approximately 35 years beginning shortly after the war, Reid wrote of his wartime experiences and ultimately assembled these writings into a manuscript. In 1888 he suggested the title *From Manassas to Appomattox* for his manuscript, but it was never published. After his death, it somehow found its way into the Alabama State Department of Archives and Military History, where it was filed as “The Journal of John C. Reed,” and lay unnoticed until the latter part of the 20th century—over 100 years after the end of the war.

At some point prior to 1875, John Calvin Reid changed the spelling of his last name to Reed. The reason for this is unknown, and documentation of an official name change was not found in the public records. It is evident that Reed was his intended legal spelling as early as 1875, as John C. Reed filed official documents that year as executor of his father’s estate in that name with the Oglethorpe County Probate Court. In this filing he also used Reed as his father’s surname. After 1875, this spelling was used exclusively by John C. Reed in all correspondence and official records, including his time of service on the Atlanta City Council. Even his son, Prentiss Bishop Reed, born in Atlanta in January 1882, was given the surname Reed rather than Reid.

A possible cause for the incorrect filing of the manuscript in the Alabama Archives is that Reed died at his son’s home in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1910, although his remains were transported back to Atlanta for burial in the Westview Cemetery.

Another possible reason for the erroneous filing of his manuscript in Alabama rather than Georgia likely arises from Reid’s changing his surname to Reed. All the Georgia Confederate records listed him with his original surname, Reid, and there is no other soldier named John C. Reed to be found in the Compiled Confederate Service Records of Georgia.



An additional contributing factor might have been that there were two soldiers named John C. Reed who served in the Alabama Infantry, one in the 18th Regiment and one in the 58th Regiment.

Since its discovery in the Alabama archives, Reed's manuscript has been distributed among historians and researchers of the Civil War, but never published in its entirety. Some authors have referenced parts of the manuscript in their work, and some have reproduced chapters within their own publications. Criticisms of the manuscript have centered mostly on its lack of uniformity in depth and focus. Reed wrote very detailed accounts of some battles he participated in, covered some battles with only a few paragraphs, and then left out other very important battles altogether. His focus was much broader than most military historians look for in a military history or memoir. A large part of Reed's text described very personal experiences, both humorous and serious, and sometimes drifted into philosophical ideas. Reed also complicated the reading of his manuscript with extensive references to classical literature and history that are not immediately recognized by the modern reader.

Reed's views on the issues of race and slavery are those expected of a classically educated pre-Civil War aristocrat from the South. By current standards, his writings on the subject of race and ethnicity are abhorrent, and it is important for the reader to understand that neither the editor nor the publisher endorses the views he expressed. Reed's views do, however, illustrate the prevailing thoughts of the pre-Civil War era and for that reason are presented without abridgment.

Despite its shortcomings, Reed's manuscript deserves to be published in its entirety for the modern reader to judge on his own. There is much to learn from Reed's military and personal experiences. There is also much to contemplate in Reed's philosophical discourse, even though the modern reader will disagree with the tenets of his belief system. As Plato taught centuries ago: "Knowledge of evil is not evil, but good."<sup>1</sup>

Only minor editing has been done to Reed's manuscript, principally the re-paragraphing to remove many page-long paragraphs in the original text. Extensive footnotes have been added to explain Reed's use of archaic English terms and analogies from classical literature and military history. Footnote biographies are included for politicians and officers of both armies that Reed mentions. Brief

1 Plato, as paraphrased in James V. Schall, *Another Sort of Learning* (San Francisco, 1988), 105.

biographies and military service descriptions for soldiers and citizens that Reed describes are also footnoted where possible.

— John C. Reed, Esq. (ca 1900)  
courtesy *The Atlanta Constitution*

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John C. Reed (ca. 1900). *The Atlanta Constitution*

# Chapter I

## Until the First Manassas

The men and women of Washington's generation in the South regarded slavery as a monstrous evil. But resistless influences wrought a complete change in their descendants. The negro was unselfish and tractable without parallel; reading those around him at a glance, his own conduct and words were always pleasant and flattering responses to each change of his master's mood; and nearly every slave, whether he toiled in the field or loitered around the garden, kitchen or table, had the merry making faculty that is the staple out of which Shakespeare develops his immortal clowns.

He carried us in his strong arms to enjoy all the fancies of babies—the nursing pigs and puppies; the wantoning calves and lambs; the dear little horses, as we called the colts; the craw fish on the sanded bottom of the spring that he caught with a bent pin for a hook; the lever of the gin gearing<sup>1</sup> on which another steadied us in our seats as he pulled and gave us the ride, around and around, that was always too short; the patriarchal he-goat that far up on one of the two sloping arms of the packing screw looked solemnly down upon the sights below. In the next stage of infancy, daily we went with him to his trap, or coop, or snare; and how wildly our hearts would beat as we approached; with what triumph we clasped prizes of

1 Gin gearing: Among the 40 or so gears that ran a typical 1850s cotton gin was a large horizontal gear positioned a few feet off the ground which resembled a merry-go-round. Nearby was a lever that controlled the mechanism. The seems to be a reference to a dangerous practice of allowing young children to “ride” around on this gear as it turned, when done under supervision of an adult slave.

grouse, quail, or hare; and at night he took us where we heard from some old aunty or uncle such doings and sayings of fox, bear, rabbit, coon, possum, hawk, and buzzard as made all fairy tales read to us from books poor and sorry. Further on in boyhood he taught us to swim, to fish and shoot; in our manhood he cared for our household; and he nursed us with the extreme of devotion and daftness, in sickness, in old age, and on the death bed. Add to all the foregoing, that with something like the bounty of a parent, opulent and fond, he subsisted us luxuriously by his labor which was hardly superintended at all and enriched us quickly by his natural increase.

And thus the word *slavery* had lost all repulsiveness to ears of Southerners of my day. The slave had become a part of the family, and he was loved as such. In 1886 my mother wrote me a long letter the most of which was the outpouring of grief over the death of Abby, a colored woman who had been one of our house servants from childhood. Abby left her at the end of 1865, the year of emancipation; and she had lived much of the intervening time in the neighborhood. In 1887, Aunt Charlotte, Abby's mother, died. This old negro was born the property of my maternal grandfather, had grown up at his house with my mother; and when the latter married my father she came with her, and was our cook until President Lincoln discharged her. After that she had lived on or near my father's plantation, never resuming her occupation except that in my short summer vacations spent at home during the life of my mother after my removal to Atlanta in December, 1881, she would regale us with the incomparable cookery of the Old South. Her death brought the keenest grief to my mother, who said she knew she should, in her old age, soon be without contemporaries. And I, and my sister, sorrowed with her over our loss; but we expect to rejoin the good old darky in the happy land to which father and brother went long ago, and mother in 1893.

The potency of the domestic affections must be fully allowed for, to understand the tenacious hold that slavery had on the South. As abolition grew it but prompted a defiant and deeper love for the slave and slavery. The compensated emancipation proposed by Northern patriots was felt by the Southern people to be very like an insulting offer to buy their children. And to understand how the South became aroused for the war larger place must be given in the account to an unreasoning, almost instinctive forecast than to ratiocination<sup>2</sup> and passion combined.

2 Ratiocination (archaic): reasoning.

Our fathers began to feel strongly rather than to see clearly how the adjacent public lands were soon to affect slavery. The Georgia Platform of 1850<sup>3</sup> shows that their vision was not then perfect. That document became from the time of its adoption the bible of Southern Whigs and democrats alike. It was mainly a resolute stand against certain acts therein enumerated of hostile interference with slavery as then existing; and it only squinted at the importance of gaining ground in the west by denouncing a refusal of any future congress to admit a new slave State. It was not until 1860, 10 years later, that the call was made on congress to protect slavery in the territories. The convulsion of 1850 was one of excitement and anger; and the course of the advocacy of slavery on to 1860 was, as it seemed to contemporaries, in hot blood and not at all in cool calculation; but the only actual support of slavery then possible against the rapidly swelling population of the North was to give the owners full opportunity to carry their slaves into the West in order to form out of the public domain a new slave for every free state; and the instinctive discernment by the South of the need of expansion, as shown in the demand made for protection in 1860 just alluded to, was as sure as the anticipation of a severe winter by the beaver.

An imperceptible change leading on to the unforeseen catastrophe had been working. If the institutions of the North—and especially the league of States against slavery—grow, by appropriating the public domain, so should the league of our States for slavery grow—that was the sub-conscious feeling in the Southern people. Some, not all—I am not sure the greater number of the elder people, were improgressive; but the entire body of men and women under 40 were riper for Southern independence when the policy of secession was seriously presented than they had believed.

I was 22 years old in 1858, and that year I declared in a speech to a crowd attending a public examination—as it was called—of a school, that if the stubborn resistance by the North to the spread of slavery was not soon ended, I hoped the South would learn wisdom from the fathers of '76, and make her own 4th of July and Declaration of Independence; and the sentiment was cordially applauded. We had noted that Lincoln had pronounced that this country could not remain permanently half slave and half free, and that the North could only rest when she saw slavery was hemmed from progress, and where its future extinction was sure;

3 The Georgia Platform was a statement of qualified support for the U.S. Union among Georgia conservatives following the U.S. Compromise of 1850. Adopted by a state convention at Milledgeville on Dec. 10, 1850, the Georgia Platform consisted of a set of resolutions accepting the Compromise of 1850.

and when he was elected president the majority felt that the hour for Southern independence had come. The sanguine—men like the Cobbs—believed that secession would be peaceful; the great body of young men—those who had the war to wage if it came—why we said, let it come if it must.<sup>4</sup>

Another well-known cause of human action must be suggested, and that is when we conceive ourselves wronged we are ready to fight. The conviction prevalent was that slavery is our affair, and we have the same right to expand it in the territories as the North has to expand her free population there. If this right is denied we will withdraw from the Union and divide the territories; and if we are resisted, why our cause is the defense of the very life of the South, and we stand by that to the death.

After the secession of Georgia, there was much sign of preparation for war on all sides. Young men suddenly began to study Gilham and Hardee.<sup>5</sup> On every public occasion, in a village or town, you would see the parade of a volunteer company. But somehow I belonged to the listless. We said, if war does come we shall go at the very first, but we hardly think it is coming. Fort Sumter fell, and the consequent action of Mr. Lincoln occurred. The blindest saw that at least a short war was at hand.<sup>6</sup>

By a spontaneous movement, a new company of volunteers rapidly formed in Greene county, where I was then settled as a lawyer. At its organization, we named ourselves the Stephens Light Guard, in compliment of Hon. A. H. Stephens,<sup>7</sup> and

4 Howell Cobb (1815–68) and his younger brother, Thomas Reads Rootes Cobb (1823–62), were both influential Georgia attorneys and planter-statesmen who strongly supported slavery but initially favored staying in the Union. After secession they supported the Confederacy and became generals in the Confederate Army. Howell Cobb served as a U.S. congressman (1843–51; 1855–57), speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives (1849–51), governor of Georgia (1851–53), and secretary of the treasury (1857–60). Following Georgia's secession from the Union in 1861, he served as president of the Provisional Confederate Congress (1861–62). Thomas R. R. Cobb was one of antebellum Georgia's foremost legal authorities and most outspoken advocates of slavery. He was killed at the Battle of Fredericksburg in 1862.

5 William Gilham, *Manual of Instruction of Volunteers and Militia of the Confederate States* (Richmond, VA, 1861) and W. J. Hardee, *Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics* (Memphis, TN, 1861). These were the standard manuals for military instruction of volunteers and militia.

6 Fort Sumter is an island fortification located in Charleston Harbor, SC, originally constructed in 1829 as a coastal garrison. The bombardment of U.S.-held Fort Sumter by the Confederate Army on Apr. 12, 1861, officially started the Civil War.

7 Alexander Hamilton Stevens (1812–83), vice president of the Confederate States from 1861 to 1865. He later served as the 50th governor of Georgia from 1882 until his death in 1883.



elected our officers. Among these, Oscar Dawson,<sup>8</sup> a son of William C. Dawson,<sup>9</sup> formerly a U.S. senator from Georgia, became captain and I first lieutenant. So many companies had already been organized in the State that Gov. Brown<sup>10</sup> had but a small supply of arms left, and this was diminishing every day. We had delayed organizing until fighting was certain—so we said proudly to ourselves—and now we must have arms.

At a late hour in the afternoon I was deputed to secure them. I hastened to the livery stable in Greensboro, and, hiring the only horse to be had, I was soon driving across the country to catch the first train from Eatonton, as that was the quickest route to Milledgeville, then the State capital. Night overtook me long before I reached the town. I had never gone the road. And so soon as it was completely dark I discovered that my horse was blind. But I used my eyes only the better, and I kept up a staving gait. I caught the train, and got to Milledgeville without detention. There by the exercise of some address and great importunity I obtained the desired number of smooth bore muskets. I had them shipped to Greensboro, and returning to Eatonton drove my blind horse back to the stable.

The company regarded this success of mine as a great military exploit; and I was pronounced worthy to be second in command. But nobody knew anything of

8 George Oscar Dawson, captain, Co. I, 8th GA Vol. Inf. Enlisted May 16, 1861. Wounded at Second Manassas, VA, Aug. 28, 1862. Elected major Dec. 16, 1862. Wounded at Gettysburg, PA, Jul. 3, 1863. Assigned as commandant of post at Columbus, GA, June 10, 1864. Applied to secretary of war for assignment to military court of General Hampton, CSA, Mar. 28, 1865.

9 William Crosby Dawson (1798–1856) was a lawyer, judge, politician, and soldier from Greene County, GA. From 1834 to 1835 he served as a state senator. In 1836 he was captain of volunteers under General Winfield Scott in the Creek and Seminole Indian War in Florida. He served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1836 to 1841 and in the U.S. Senate from 1849 to 1855.

10 Joseph Emerson Brown (1821–94), known as Joe Brown, was an attorney and politician serving as the 42nd governor of Georgia from 1857 to 1865, the only governor to serve four terms. A slavery and states' rights advocate, he nevertheless defied the Confederate government's wartime policies, resisting the military draft and believing that local troops should be used only for the defense of Georgia. He also challenged Confederate impressment of animals and goods to supply the troops, and slaves to work in military encampments and on the lines. After the war, Brown was appointed chief justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia, serving from 1865 to 1870, and then became president of the Western and Atlantic Railroad. He amassed great wealth from coal mining ventures in Dade County, GA.

tactics. Dawson fell in with Blackwell,<sup>11</sup> a young man of Cobb county who had taken part of a course in the Georgia military school,<sup>12</sup> and he accepted my offer to resign in his favor. He was elected in my place, and I at once elected second lieutenant, a vacancy of that office having been provided for me by general consent. We stayed at the old Liberty campground, in Greene county, for some days, and Blackwell soon had us familiar with the manual of arms and the company drill.

I myself became able to carry the company through the common evolutions, and was beginning to feel much less regret that I had not received a West Point education. We believed that there was nothing more to be learned at drill. We longed and prayed for marching orders. They came. We were to go by rail to Richmond. Our joy made us wild, for now it seemed probable that we should participate in a battle before the close of the war.

I went to Woodstock<sup>13</sup> in Oglethorpe county, in those days the most beautiful of country villages, hidden completely by forest trees until one was really in it—to tell my parents goodbye. My only brother, two years at my junior, was already at the front, in the 6th Georgia, as the first lieutenant of a company from Hancock county.<sup>14</sup> My father and mother—especially the latter—were very serious and sad. Buoyant with the eagerness of beginning manhood, and aflame with the zeal which had made the South a great camp, I felt chilled by their evident lack of sympathy. I can understand now what I could not then. It was a bitter cut to them to send at once their only boys to a war which they both believed would be long and bloody. But

11 Thomas J. Blackwell enlisted as 1st lieutenant, Co. I, 8th GA Vol. Inf. at Greensboro, GA, on May 16, 1861 (Age 21). Wounded at Garnett's Farm, VA, June 28, 1862. Elected captain Dec. 16, 1862. Killed at Battle of the Wilderness, VA, May 6, 1864.

12 Cobb County is northwest of Atlanta. The Georgia Military Institute in Marietta was established in Jul., 1851. It was the principal source of education in Georgia for new engineers and teachers in the years prior to the Civil War. The school buildings were burned by Sherman in 1864 when Marietta was occupied after the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain. It was never rebuilt.

13 Now known as Philomath. When the Oglethorpe County community of Woodstock petitioned the U.S. government for a post office after the Civil War, a name change was required to avoid confusion with the city of Woodstock in North Georgia. Citizens chose the name Philomath, meaning "love of knowledge," as suggested by Alexander H. Stephens, likely because of the reputation of the Reid Academy. Philomath still exists today as an unincorporated community.

14 James M. Reid enlisted as 1st lieutenant, Co. A, 6th GA Vol. Inf. on Apr. 22, 1861. Appointed adjutant May 27, 1861. Wounded at Seven Pines, VA, May 31, 1862. Died of wounds at Richmond, VA, June 20, 1862.

they blessed me and gave me up. It pains me now to recall how hopeless and stricken my mother looked as she could not speak her goodbye.

I took my farewell of the slaves. I had not had a long separation from them since 10 years before, when I started to Princeton to take my three years' course. Uncle Henry and Aunt Charlotte and their children lamented aloud, and gloom bespread the faces of all. But they and I felt that I was going to fight for them; and as I might never return our parting was the saddest and with many tears. I flew to Lexington, the county seat of Oglethorpe, to take leave of Gennie James, my sweetheart. A descendant of General Moultrie,<sup>15</sup> she had been named Eliza Moultrie. When she began to talk, people jocularly called her General Moultrie, and gradually they gave her the name of Gennie; and this took the place of Eliza. She always spelled it with the hereditary G. She glowed with the fire of South Carolina, the State of her ancestors; and she had just written me that she was so proud to discover that she was the only girl of Lexington—a village of a few hundred inhabitants—who had a soldier lover. Our meeting was complete communion, and when we parted I knew that her tears were the sweet tears of joyous trust in the distinction I was sure to win.

The day of the departure in the company, June 3, 1861, had come. That morning I shaved, vowing to a companion that I should never shave again until the South had achieved her independence; and I have not broken my vow. The mothers, wives, sisters, aunts, and male relatives of the company assembled in Greensboro, and grief of the discerning old and triumphing joy of the unseeing young broke out stronger and stronger until our train arrived. But I should not prolong this part of my narrative. I need only say that the girls and young women waved handkerchiefs wildly at us until we had reached Harper's Ferry, where we were mustered into the service of the Confederate States, as company I, of the 8th Georgia, Bartow<sup>16</sup> being colonel.

15 William Moultrie (1730–1805) was a planter and politician from SC in the American Revolutionary War. Elected to the provincial assembly of SC (1752–62), Moultrie gained early military experience fighting against the Cherokee. A member of the provincial congress (1775–76) at the outbreak of the Revolution, he sided with the patriot cause and took command (Mar., 1776) of a fort he had built of sand and palmetto logs on Sullivan's Island off Charleston. He held the fort against heavy British attack on June 28, 1776, and it was named Fort Moultrie in his honor. He received the thanks of the Federal Congress and was made a brigadier general in the Continental Army that September.

16 Francis Stebbins Bartow (1816–61). An attorney turned politician and two-term U.S. House representative, he was a delegate from GA to the Southern Convention in Montgomery, AL, and became an inaugurating member of the Confederate Provisional Congress. Bartow was a colonel in the GA Militia, commanding the 21st Oglethorpe Light Infantry during the early

The boys from Oglethorpe county, many of whom I knew better than my own to our mutual satisfaction, were placed next to us on the extreme left as company K. Through the whole war I felt as much at home in the latter as in I. The Savannah boys, Bartow's own company, with their perfect drill, neat uniforms, and city ease and polish—to use a backwoods saying—took the shine off of all the other companies. Savannah, Atlanta, and Macon each furnished a company, Rome—or more correctly Floyd county—three, Meriwether, Pulaski, Oglethorpe, and Greene counties each one—the regiment consisting of 10 in all. Every company had a uniform conspicuously different from that of the rest—homespun being largely present even then. None of the officers but a few from the cities had respectable side-arms, and though their dress was somewhat more pretentious than the men's it was actually a burlesque of what it should have been. I never did get a decent sword or a Confederate uniform. As a whole, we were in appearance fantastic citizens playing soldiers. We never acquired any holiday gloss and show, but we did soon learn to march and fight.

I need not tell of the brief experience of the regiment at Harper's Ferry until the place was evacuated by our commander, General Joseph E. Johnston.<sup>17</sup> We were greatly disgusted that General Patterson<sup>18</sup> would not accept the offer of battle we made at Darkesville soon afterwards.

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months of the war, and was killed at the First Battle of Manassas, becoming the first brigade commander of the Confederate States Army to die in combat. A large marble obelisk to Bartow was erected Sept. 4, 1861, on the spot where he was killed, the first such Confederate monument of the war. It was smashed to pieces by Union soldiers around Apr. 29, 1862, and the fragments taken by them as mementos.

17 Joseph Eggleston Johnston (1807–91). A West Point graduate who resigned from federal service to become brigadier general of the Confederate Army of the Shenandoah in 1861. He was credited with the first important Southern victory at First Manassas. Severely wounded at the Battle of Seven Pines in May, 1862, he was replaced by his West Point classmate, General Robert E. Lee. Johnston later commanded the Confederate forces in MS at the fall of Vicksburg in 1863. He then commanded the Army of TN against General Sherman in the Federals' march through North GA until he was relieved of command in Jul., 1863, just before the fall of Atlanta. He was restored to duty in Feb., 1865, and took command of his old army, then in NC. He succeeded in delaying the advance of General Sherman at Bentonville, in Mar., 1865, but a lack of men and supplies forced him to surrender at Durham Station, NC, on Apr. 26, 1865. After the war, Johnston served in the U.S. House of Representatives (1879–81), and was named U.S. commissioner of railroads in 1885.

18 Robert Patterson (1792–1881) was an Irish-born Union major general who commanded the Army of the Shenandoah, and is chiefly remembered for inflicting an early defeat on Stonewall Jackson at the Battle of Hoke's Run, but later crucially failing to stop Confederate General

During the first of our stay near Winchester I saw an old captain of a Georgia regiment almost reproduce a memorable chapter in Longstreet's *Georgia Scenes*.<sup>19</sup> It is one of my most vivid memories of the time, and I must tell it.

We were in camp some three miles from the town. The limestone water, with its usual effect upon a new comer, had made me so weak that Dr. Miller,<sup>20</sup> the surgeon of the regiment, had ordered me peremptorily to stay off duty. During drill hours I entertained myself by watching the qualifications of the different officers. One day I was attracted by a captain who was putting his men through the manual of arms. He was evidently over 60. His once erect figure now had several permanent crooks in it, but he was still quite tall. He steadied himself against a large fallen tree, almost sat on it—and his company in front that ought to have been dressed into a straight line, had its flanks pushed forward, and had become a semi-circle. If any one of them was really in the position of a soldier I could not find him. The captain had on spectacles, secured by a cotton string passed through the hole in each temple and stretched behind his head, and the spectacles were of the poorest sort sold in country stores.

His suit was homemade jeans. He never gave a command until he had found it in the book, and as, after finding it, he would always throw his spectacles on the top of this head before giving it, the spectacles had to be readjusted when he returned to his book. And he dropped the book by his side when he was going to speak, and thus it always shut. I could not tell which was the most unmilitary, the pacificness of his blue eyes or the angelic blandness of the tone in which he gave his commands. Fancy the semi-circle at an aim, each man spitefully drawing a bead on the commander. They had been brought to it by prompting from the book. The book is swinging by his side, in his right hand, and the lackluster, non-combative eyes are

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Joseph E. Johnston from joining forces with P. G. T. Beauregard at the First Battle of Manassas. He is still blamed for the historic Union defeat at First Manassas.

19 Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, *Georgia Scenes, Characters, Incidents, Etc. in the First Half Century of the Republic* (New York, 1840). First published in 1835, this book is now recognized as the first important literary work ever published in GA. Longstreet (not related to General James E. Longstreet) was one of a group of humorists who wrote newspaper stories of tales they heard while traveling through the frontier territories of GA. Their sketches were realistic, bawdy, vulgar, and often brutal, but they were written in the language, style, and point of view of everyday people. These sketches constituted an impressive collection of what would prove to be classics of Southern humor.

20 H. V. M. Miller enlisted as surgeon, 8th GA Vol. Inf., June 6, 1861. Transferred to Medical Dept. of SC and GA, May 1, 1862. Received pay at Greensboro, GA, Sept. 19, 1864. No later record.

dully shining on them. The position soon becomes trying; for a man cannot make his aim long without a rest. The old warrior pulls his spectacles from his bare head down on his nose, raises his Gilham, opens it, turns the pages, and after some bungling finds the place. And he is provokingly slow. Having found the place up goes the spectacles, down goes the book, lazy flash of benevolence from the eyes again, and “Recover arms” is just audibly given. Arms are very quickly recovered. Then the long process with the book and spectacles, and though it is “Aim” in the book, “Take aim,” from the old time when he was a hero of the militia muster is given, just as he always says, “Make ready” for “ready.” I wish that I could convey by words the incongruous softness of the tone with which he almost whispered “Fire.” Then the hammers came down one at a time. The company is very large. I think there were nearly 150 at the first. Almost after every command, the old fellow says paternally, “Gentlemen, I don’t want to make any man muster what’s tired, just fall out.” About an average platoon would go every time. And at the last he had only three men before him, and they resolutely stand him out until the time for drill is past. It troubled him greatly to keep them busy.

I reported it all to a companion, who obtaining leave of absence witnessed the old gentleman’s performance the next day. Afterwards he confessed to me that I had not exaggerated them.

We spent some weeks near Winchester. The service was light, and I had much leisure. As I arrived at Harper’s Ferry I met Howell,<sup>21</sup> a classmate who sat beside me at morning and evening prayers for three years in Princeton, and I found soon afterwards, in the 4th Alabama, Simpson,<sup>22</sup> another college acquaintance. This led me to hope I should meet many more, but I never saw another. Jake Phinizy,<sup>23</sup> first lieutenant of company K of our regiment, became my best friend. He was a bachelor of about 35, and he lavished a care upon me that was a pleasant mixture of father and associate. I have a sad tale to tell of our parting later on. And I began other friendships.

21 Princeton University archives show no student named Howell in Reed’s Class of 1854, or in any of the classes that overlapped Reed’s time in attendance there.

22 Robert Tennent Simpson (1837–1912), Princeton Class of 1857. Captain, 4th AL Infantry. After the war he practiced law and then served in both houses of the AL legislature. He was elected to the AL Supreme Court in 1908 and served until his death.

23 Jacob Phinizy enlisted as 1st lieutenant, Co. K, 8th GA Vol. Inf. on May 15, 1861. Elected captain Aug., 1861. Killed at Second Manassas, VA, Aug. 30, 1862.

The incidents of camp life were so novel and entertaining. Regimental drill was a revelation; and the mounting of brigade guard, where Branch<sup>24</sup> of Savannah, the adjutant of our regiment, distinguished himself in the eyes of hundreds of spectators from other commands, and many ladies—that was a glory somewhat approaching to leading men in battle. And our blunders made us so merry when we talked them over. The sentinel who halted the walker at night, informing him that he could not pass unless he said “Potomac”—this went the rounds.

I recollect that in a meeting of jolly fellows about a month after my service began there was an agreement that each tell the greenest thing he had done. I forget now what the others told, but I remember that my tale was, that being regimental officer of the guard one night I was sent for by Col. Bartow, and instructed by him to dispatch an orderly with a message to the brigade officer of the guard, whereupon I returned to my headquarters and discovering, after looking over my list of sergeants, that there was not an orderly sergeant among them, I went to my company, waked up its orderly sergeant and got him to bear the message. As orderly is the military designation of a man detailed for some menial service, and as orderly sergeants are never detailed on any service that takes them away from their companies, what I told was highly relished.

It came to Bartow’s ears, and he was much amused. But it was specially diverting to Gardner,<sup>25</sup> our Lieutenant Colonel, an old army officer who could take in fully the blunder of confounding orderly with orderly sergeant. He rallied me over it, and said most pleasantly at the close that one who could tell so good a joke on himself would never lack courage to face the enemy.

The fun of camp, the living in the open air, the marching, the excitement of imminent battle, the grace and good words of the lovely women, my

24 Three Branch brothers of Savannah, GA, John, Hamilton, and Sanford, were members of Company B, the Oglethorpe Light Infantry, of the 8th GA Vol. Inf.. John died at First Manassas, and Sanford was captured there, having stayed on the field with his dying brother. Sanford was a Federal prisoner at Gettysburg, PA; Baltimore, MD; Ft. Delaware, DE; Morris Island, SC; and finally Fort Pulaski, GA, where he was released in Dec., 1864. After John’s death and Sanford’s capture, Hamilton transferred to the 54th GA and rose to the position of first lieutenant with Company F in 1862. He saw combat in the Atlanta campaign and also served under Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest in MS, AL, and TN. The extensive letters that the three brothers wrote to their mother during the war can be found in Mauriel Phillips Joslyn, ed., *Charlotte’s Boys: Civil War Letters of the Branch Family of Savannah* (Pelican Publishing, 2010).

25 William Montgomery Gardner, lieutenant colonel, enlisted June 8, 1861. Elected colonel Jul. 21, 1861. Wounded at First Manassas, VA, Jul. 21, 1861. Promoted to brigadier general Nov. 14, 1861. Surrendered at Augusta, GA, May 20, 1865.



Col. Francis S. Bartow

*American Civil War Museum*

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correspondence with Gennie—those all recur often in memory to remind how pleasantly the war began with me.

O, those halcyon days in the Valley, smiling its last beautiful smile! Every morning we found the camp more lively, the old people around us more like parents, and the girls dearer and fairer. How romantic and sweet it was to each of us to belong to the Southern army and be petted by such a people! We had all the luxuries of life in this land of plenty and hospitality except comfortable beds, and our mounting patriotism made the ground downy while we slept. But without ceremony we were thrust out of this paradise and hurried away from our camp in the oaks, the grove that was an island of delightful shade amid a sea of clover. The battle of Manassas was fought on Sunday. Monday Gennie heard that a great victory had been gained, and she sighed to think that perhaps it was so decisive that I should never see any fighting. But when she opened the paper Tuesday afternoon her eyes caught the headline,



COL. BARTOW KILLED, AND HIS  
FINE GEORGIA REGIMENT NEARLY ANNIHILATED

I could not find paper nor a place out of the rain to write her until Wednesday, and she shrank from questioning gaze on all sides and grieved in secret for her affianced as dead until Saturday afternoon when she received my letter.