



The Sixteenth Mississippi Infantry: Civil War Letters and Reminiscences

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They fought in the Shenandoah campaign that blazed Stonewall Jackson's reputation. They fought in the Seven Days' Battles and at Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg, in the Wilderness campaign, and at Spotsylvania. At the surrender they were beside General Robert E. Lee in Appomattox. From the beginning of the war to its very end the men of the Sixteenth Mississippi endured.

In this collection of their letters and their memories, both historians and Civil War buffs will find the fascinating words of these common soldiers in one of the most notable units in the Army of Northern Virginia.

Gathered and available here for the first time, the writings in this anthology include diary entries, letters, and reminiscences from average Mississippi men who fought in the war's most extraordinary battles. Chronologically arranged, the documents depict the pace and progress of the war. Emerging from their words are flesh-and-blood soldiers who share their courage and spirit, their love of home and family, and their loneliness, fears, and campaign trials.

From the same camp come letters that say, "Our troops are crazy to meet" the enemy and, "It is not much fun hearing the balls and shells a-coming." Soldiers write endearingly to wives, earnestly to fathers, longingly to mothers, and wistfully to loved ones. With wit and dispatch they report on crops and land, Virginia hospitality, camp rumors and chicanery, and encounters, both humorous and hostile, with the Yankee enemy.

Many letters convey a yearning for home and loved ones, closing with such phrases as "Write just as soon as you get this." Though the trials of war seemed beyond the limits of human endurance, letter writing created a lifeline to home and helped men persevere. So eager was Jesse Ruebel Kirkland to keep in touch with his beloved Lucinda that he penned, "I am on my horse writing on the top of my hat just having met the mail carrier."

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