



Boy Soldier of the Confederacy: The Memoir of Johnnie Wickersham

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Johnnie Wickersham was fourteen when he ran away from his Missouri home to fight for the Confederacy. Fifty years after the war, he wrote his memoir at the request of family and friends and distributed it privately in 1915. *Boy Soldier of the Confederacy: The Memoir of Johnnie Wickersham* offers not only a rare look into the Civil War through the eyes of a child but also a coming-of-age story.

Edited by Kathleen Gorman, the volume presents a new introduction and annotations that explain how the war was glorified over time, the harsh realities suppressed in the nation's collective memory. Gorman describes a man who nostalgically remembers the boy he once was. She maintains that the older Wickersham who put pen to paper decades later likely glorified and embellished the experience, accepting a polished interpretation of his own past.

Wickersham recounts that during his first skirmish he was "wild with the ecstasy of it all" and notes that he was "too young to appreciate the danger." The memoir traces his participation in an October 1861 Confederate charge against Springfield, Missouri; his fight at the battle of Pea Ridge in March 1862; his stay at a plantation he calls Fairyland; and the battle of Corinth.

The volume details Wickersham's assignment as an orderly for General Sterling Price, his capture at Vicksburg in 1863, his parole, and later his service with General John Bell Hood for the 1864 fighting around Atlanta. Wickersham also describes the Confederate surrender in New Orleans, the reconciliation of the North and the South, and his own return and reunification with his family.

While Gorman's incisive introduction and annotations allow readers to consider how memories can be affected by the passage of time, Wickersham's boy-turned-soldier tale offers readers an engaging narrative, detailing the perceptions of a child on the cusp of adulthood during a turbulent period in our nation's history.



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