

# Company aytch: a confederate memoir of the civil war

[Business](#), [Company](#)



Writing Assignment : Company Aytch History 101/ Company Aytch is a book that depicts the idealistic memory of a young confederate of the Civil War named Sam Watkins. Some historians articulate towards Watkins having insufficiency of precise facts and sometimes alteration or exaggeration on certain issues. (Watkins & Inge, Introduction) However, it is important to appreciate that Sam Watkins was a survivor that has revealed his recollection of the battles as he has experienced them, and although some may believe his memory has some deficiencies he has a real life testimony that cannot be too farfetched from the reality of the life of a soldier during the Civil War. Sam Watkins was born on the 26th day of June on his father's farm in Columbia Tennessee where he worked during his youth.

There is not much told about other work experiences other than Sam working as a clerk in a local store until he enlisted with Company H of the First Tennessee Infantry in the year of 1861. Sam was only 21 years old, a young confederate, and at this time many signs of war were uprising between the North and the South. (Watkins & Inge, Introduction). His entry is the beginning of the memoirs told by Sam Watkins, an ordinary soldier, not of any high rank, which indeed gives the reader another perspective of the reality of the battles faced during the Civil War.

Furthermore, it broadens the view of the emotional triumph a frontline soldier and what they went through rather than focusing on the higher ranking officers. Watkins tells in great detail his experiences and writes of his historical remembrances years later, but he never hides the fact that he is writing solely on his memory and what he saw. In addition to him repeatedly

reminding the reader that he writes of his recollections only, he also reminds the reader that what he writes is true.

Furthermore, he encourages the reader to refer to history for other historical facts. Later in the report I will tell of an occurrence that gives the reader an idea of what Sam Watkins' soul is all about and directs one to believe in his testimony of truths. Sam Watkins shares with people so many different experiences during the war that it is hard to write what may have affected him the most. He writes of many things that he has been through like starving, suffering through harsh weathers, the triumphs and losses of each battle; he watched death occur repeatedly, he tells how he could feel the angel of death upon them, he talks of good friends, and speaks of his true love back home, he tells about fears he has, and also the pride of serving. In all of his writings it is hard to believe he can recall so much in great detail and it is understandable for one to question exaggeration or the precise details. For example, Watkins quoted poems, songs, and some speeches.

None of these were hard to believe because if his recollection was not exactly word for word it was probably pretty close to the point. This goes for his details during the battles as well. All in all his character speaks of loyalty to his troops, to his people, to his love and to God regardless of the circumstance. It is apparent that Watkins is affected by the deaths of several friends and leaders in every battle. He makes sure to speak of the men that lost their lives in very high regards.

He gives not only the great leaders honor, but he includes the ordinary soldiers with no rank, an extraordinary honor in his book. Also, in giving them

therespectby reiterating that these men were good and died for their people and they are now in heaven, Watkins gives explicit detail of how the men were injured and to the extreme they suffered. In doing this he makes the reader value what each man went through and makes their honor that much greater despite the reasons for the Civil War.

It appears that he tries to recollect at his best, the names of all he could, but explains that he does not write of the names he is unsure of, in order to keep correctness and credit to the places it was due, as he would not want to discredit any man. One particular incident that seemed to have struck Watkins with much emotion and must have had a huge impact on his soul was the hanging of two spies. Watkins explains he goes to the hanging to see to Yankee spies get hung; soon he realizes the spies were not Yankee men, but very young boys around the ages of 14 and 16.

He states this “ I was appalled; I was horrified; nay, more I was sick at heart” (Watkins, p. 74). This clearly makes him sick and reading about the two kids being hung, envisioning this incident is heart breaking. Could anyone imagine being there and watching this happen first hand and not having the means to do anything to stop it? This occasion that Watkins writes about depicts the impact that it had on him plus it shows the severity and harshness of the war.

The incident that tells so much about the morality of Sam Watkins is the story of the hog. After Sam and a few other men from his infantry ate with a poor lady, the other men killed and stole her hog while Sam was inside talking with her. Sam appears to help with this incident during the escape

back across the river, but he truly was not okay with this. This horrible theft weighed on Sam Watkins' conscience. He could not even eat the hog as he felt guilty for what had happened.

Sam then makes a special trip back to see the poor widowed woman so that he could repay her for what they had done. Although, the woman did not accept his offer at first, he insisted on making the situation right (Watkins & Inge, p. 108-110). This is the incident that really shows what kind of things impacted Sam Watkins. It was not only the life and death of the battles of the Civil War he cared and spoke about, but he had values and cared for others. This particular incident opened the readers view to see the honesty and sincerity of Sam Watkins' soul.

Finally the surrender of the Army of the South happened and Watkins was free of the physical Battles of War, free to be with his true love. Yet even the surrender saddens him to a degree and has an impact on him as he encompasses all of what took place during these four years of the Civil War from beginning to the end in which he eventually wrote about in the book that was read, *Company Aytch* (Watkins & Inge, p, 213-214). Reference Watkins, Sam R and Inge, Thomas M. (November 1, 1999) *Company Aytch: Or a Side Show of the Big Show*. Retrieved November 2012.