

1. Amy Gresham's Blue and Gray Ancestors

The American Civil War left a lasting mark on our history. More Americans died in this war than in all other wars in the history of our nation combined. Seasoned soldiers and green recruits answered the call to serve their country, some to preserve the union and some to preserve their way of life in their newly formed country. Arguably, no family was untouched. Some families were divided and most families sacrificed; many had a member who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Amy Gresham has many ancestors who either fought in the war or said goodbye to their sons as they marched off to war. Most of these were very young with no military experience. They came from Pennsylvania, Illinois, Wisconsin, Texas, Indiana and Tennessee and they fought on both sides of the conflict. These men are representative of some of the Americans who fought in the war but don't cover the spectrum. Only two were officers¹ and neither of them served as officers for very long: Davis Enyeart didn't become an officer until the war was essentially over and William Melton only served a short time because of his age. None of them had made the military their career and all of them that survived returned to civilian life after the war. None of them was famous and it is unlikely that anyone will read about any of them in any other work except in a discussion of their units. Each did his part, some noble and some ignoble, and all served as they were able.

Most of them had ancestors who fought in the revolutionary war which probably served as an inspiration to them regardless of their loyalties. The Union soldiers surely considered they were fighting to preserve the nation their ancestors fought to create. The Confederate soldiers must have recalled the independent spirit of their forefathers and their sacrifice to secure freedom and the right to self-governance. Horace Greeley, a northern newspaper editor who was strongly opposed to slavery, wrote, "That may be very old-fashioned doctrine, but we actually believe in it. And we cannot help seeing that, if it justified the Colonies in revolting from Great Britain, it equally justifies a fourth of the Union in cutting loose from the rest, for reasons which to them shall seem sufficient."² If a Yankee could reason that secession was justified, it must have been easy for a southern soldier to justify fighting for the confederacy based on history and patriotism.

Many on both sides also felt a divine imperative to fight in the war. Clergymen, political leaders, military leaders and the soldiers who followed them felt justified in their cause based on scriptural grounds. Scripture was used to condemn and defend slavery

¹ George Edgar Grisham, a cousin, served as a Captain in the Eighth Tennessee Cavalry. .

² Thomas N. Bonner, "Horace Greeley and the Secession Movement, 1860-1861." *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 38, No. 3, (Dec., 1951), pp. 425-444.

and as proof texts to justify various positions on the issues surrounding the war. Men in both blue and gray uniforms fought with the conviction that they were fighting on “God’s side.”

The following pages tell the story of these men³, at least as much as can be gleaned from family and historical records. This collection is not a history of the civil war; it is a story of these young – and a few not so young – men. It contains history because the historical context helps to tell their stories and provide glimpses into their motivations and inspirations. More is known of some than of others and as much as is known is included. Every attempt has been made to be accurate and factual but some speculation probably comes through. Their stories are told without taking sides or making judgments but the author couldn’t help but convey admiration for their courage and patriotism, regardless of their side in the conflict.

³ George Edgar Grisham and Nathan Shipley are cousins who served in the Eighth Tennessee Cavalry. Their story has been added to the book – even though they weren’t a grandfather or uncle – simply because it is an interesting one.