

WRIGHT,JOHN W

Name WRIGHT, JOHN W
Rank PVT Company H Unit 101 IL US INF

Personal Characteristics

Residence FRANKLIN, MORGAN CO, IL Age 20 Height 5' 7 1/2 Hair DARK
Eyes DARK Complexion DARK Marital Status SINGLE Occupation FARMER
Nativity FRANKLIN, MORGAN CO, IL

Service Record

Joined When AUG 6, 1862 Joined Where FRANKLIN, IL
Joined By Whom J M FANNING Period 3 YRS
Muster In SEP 2, 1862 Muster In Where JACKSONVILLE, IL
Muster In By Whom N/A Muster Out N/A
Muster Out Where N/A Muster Out By Whom N/A
Remarks KILLED IN BATTLE OF PEACH TREE CREEK GA JUL 20, 1864
No pension files found.

He is listed on the Jacksonville Civil War monument.

Killed With Furlough In His Pocket

Anything can happen in the war, and usually does. But who ever heard of a soldier being killed fighting in the front lines with a furlough home in his hip pocket?

It probably never happened before and perhaps never will again but in the battle of Peach Tree Creek, Ga., 100 years ago tomorrow, Private John W. Wright of Co. H, 101st Illinois Infantry, was carrying a furlough home to "Franklin when a Confederate rifle ball killed him instantly.

He was the son of "Col. Jack" and "Aunt Pol" Wright, who kept the tavern and stage coach station in Franklin for many years.

A Military Family

John P. Wright won his title as a colonel in the Illinois militia. His father served in the Revolutionary war for seven years and was one of that zany and fearless group led by Mad Anthony Wayne that captured the British fort at Stony Point, N.Y., in 1779. They took the stronghold at night, with bayoneted, but unloaded muskets.

In 1800 the family joined the westward trek through the Cumberland Gap and settled in Kentucky. In 1829 the entire family moved to Franklin precinct, Morgan county.

John W. Wright and his brother, William S., enlisted in the Franklin company raised in August, 1862, by Capt. Joab M. Fanning. William S. was elected First lieutenant of Co. H.

Dies In Franklin

While training at the Morgan county fairgrounds William S. contracted typhoid fever and he died in Franklin Oct. 6, 1862, the very day that the regiment left Jacksonville for Cairo and active service.

"Col. Jack" contracted the disease and died three days later. "Aunt Pol" was a distressed and lonely woman as she tried to carry on the tavern by herself. She wrote often to her son and to her special friend, Chaplain James B. Seymour of Hart's Prairie.

During the summer and early fall of 1864 every Illinois chaplain was granted a furlough home. Things didn't look too good for the Union cause and especially for the Republican cause. Chaplain Seymour was a Democrat, but he was also a 100% Union man and his presence in Morgan county served to bolster the candidacy of the Union commander-in-chief.

In Front Of Atlanta

Chaplain Seymour asked for a furlough for Private Wright so he could go home to see his mother. It was slow moving through channels and the chaplain was already on his way to Illinois when Wright's furlough came to the regiment in camp just south of Peach Tree Creek, about five miles north of Atlanta.

Eight companies were resting in camp, with Co. E, Jacksonville, and Co. F, Murrayville, on the scrimmage line. They were hit hard in the surprise rebel attack.

Private Wright was shaking hands and saying farewell to his comrades when the gunfire to the south told of the attack. A courier came riding in to order the regiment to the front "on the double-quick". Wright put his furlough in his pocket, grabbed his musket and yelled, "Wait for me, boys, I'm coming along."

Returned to Franklin

After the rebels were driven back to their fortified lines in front of Atlanta the Morgan county boys buried Private Wright and carefully marked the grave. When the war was over a cousin, James B. Wright, went to Georgia and returned the body to Franklin, where it was buried next to his brother in Franklin cemetery.

The Enfield rifled musket carried by Private Wright had a walnut stock of unusual grain and beauty. Corporal Archibald Norris of Co. D, Jacksonville, picked it up on the battlefield and carried it throughout the remainder of the war.

(Cecil Tendick, Journal Courier, Jacksonville, Ill., July 19, 1964)