

A Country Divided



A letter from Private William Jackson,
Army of Tennessee, Confederate States of America

November 23, 1863 Chattanooga, Tennessee

Dear Family,

We just came back from East Tennessee, where we finally got some food. I had been starving for so long that I forgot what it was like for a poor soldier to have potatoes, meat, and bread. We may not have much on our small farm at home, but at least we never went hungry.

I wish I was there with you now, for it is getting late in the evening, and I have had nothing to eat since breakfast. We are already out of food again, and there's no telling when we'll get more since we left our supply wagons behind in our rush to get to this place.

Don't feel bad for me, though. I am willing to suffer to keep the Southern states independent and send the Yankees back North where they belong.



The enemy still holds Chattanooga, but we have surrounded the city. My company is on top of Lookout Mountain, and it is very cold. We look down upon both sides facing each other below. They say you can see five states from here.

Please forgive the shortness of this letter, for I have written in great haste. We think the fighting will start up again tomorrow. Write me a long letter when you can. I am eager to hear from you.

William



A letter from Private Arthur Carter,
79th Pennsylvania Infantry, United States of America

November 23, 1863

Chattanooga, Tennessee

Dear Mother,

I am writing to let you know I am well. Around suppertime, the order came for us to prepare to attack in the morning. The Rebels seem determined to fight to the bitter end for their cause, as wrong as it may be.

My arm is about the same. I try to keep it clean, but the wound doesn't seem to heal. Still, I can't complain. We have enough to eat in camp, and the weather has been dry.

When I consider my situation here, I take comfort in knowing that my enlistment was of service to our family. If a rich man is willing to pay \$600 for me to fight in his place, I'm happy to do so instead of waiting to be drafted into service. Hoping you and my sister are well and that tomorrow will see the right side come out the victor.

Missing you and home,

Arthur

The Battle of Chattanooga

From November 23 to 25, 1863, Union forces pushed back Confederate forces that had taken up positions around Chattanooga, Tennessee. During a series of battles at Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, approximately 6,600 Confederate soldiers were killed or wounded, compared with about 5,800 Union soldiers. The Union victory forced the Confederates to abandon their positions outside Chattanooga and retreat into Georgia, marking a turning point in the Civil War.

