

## WRIGHT SMITH HACKETT – 16th Tennessee Infantry



W. S. HACKETT.

Born in Washington, TN, in 1834. It was a river port on the Tennessee River, in Rhea county. It's not much now, but it was a busy port, bustling with activity in his day.

His father was a Sheriff, and a Justice of the Peace. Our family farm was on a bend in the Tennessee River, about six miles east of where Dayton is today, but there weren't many other people living in that area back then.

He was a good student and first went to school at the Tennessee Academy. He went on to further schooling at Tusculum College, where he graduated in 1855. He was then accepted to the Harvard Law University, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, class of 1857. But he left Harvard after only one year, along with half the class. They could feel the tension building between Northerners and

Southerners. He decided to head back home and learn law by apprenticeship. After a brief time of apprenticeship in Nashville, he moved to McMinnville, and became a Law Partner of Mr. John Spurlock.

1861 started out as a year of turmoil. Tension was mounting between secessionists and unionists. He first joined the 16th Tennessee Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company C, as a Private soldier. His brother, John Hackett, joined the 60th Tennessee, to go defend Virginia. A few weeks later he was elected 1st Lieutenant.

He served in the capacity of 1st Lieutenant through the Battle of Shiloh. Then in May of '62, at Corinth, Mississippi, he was elected Company Captain. He did not want to be an officer, but preferred the rank of private, so as to have more time to study his law books. He resigned his commission, and Captain Spurlock, a brother of his pre-war law partner, was elected instead. Hackett was a Private again.

At Perryville, Kentucky, his Regiment was shot to pieces while leading the Confederate assault. They retreated back into Tennessee, but got into another heavy fight at Murfreesboro, TN, on December 31, 1862, Captain Spurlock was killed in General Donelson's assault on the "Round Forest". Hackett was ordered to take command of the company, and ordered to take command of the Regiment later in the day, while under two hours of the heaviest fighting he would see the whole war. He was offered the position of Captain, again, and I turned it down, again.

On August 6th, 1863, he was told that my brother had been wounded in the Battle of Gettysburg in the previous month, and was granted a furlough to visit him in a hospital up in Virginia. He was less than half way there, when he found out that his brother John had died on August 2nd, four days before I had been told that he was wounded. He returned to his Regiment just in time to see more heavy fighting at Chickamauga, and later in the battles around Chattanooga.

In February of 1864, at Dalton winter camp, while preparing to defend Atlanta, the Colonel asked him to serve as the Regiment's Adjutant. He did so for a few weeks, but resigned as Adjutant to be a Private again to have more time to study his law books.

His Regiment was sent out on the picket line, somewhere outside of Atlanta. Picket duty could be frightening to a soldier. They stood as guards, in a line, with anywhere from 3 to 25 yards between the man on either side. From a distance, men on a picket line looked like a human picket fence. At least in a battle, you could see your enemy, but when on the picket line, you were a human target waiting to be shot at from an unseen enemy.

That is exactly what happened. As he was standing guard on July 22nd, a minie ball struck him in the gut. He was still conscious as he was moved to a hospital in Griffin, Georgia, but only for a few days. On August 6th, one year to the day that he found out about his brother being mortally wounded at Gettysburg, Wright Smith Hackett died. He was buried in Griffin, GA.

In 1889, his remains were moved here to Chattanooga from Griffin, GA, along with General F.M. Walker. There was a memorial service held for them at the First Presbyterian Church in Chattanooga. Walker was re-interred at Forest Hills, and Hackett was planted here.

“In camp fire consultations his opinion always preponderated,” a comrade later remembered Hackett. “His standard of honor and cleverness was the rule of his mess-mates, and his merry laugh and gloom dispelling jokes were sure antidotes to all affections of the blues. We all loved him.”

