



Witnesses to Battle

Accounts of the Home Front

Margaret Lawrence Lindsley, known as Maggie, was a twenty-four-year-old woman who lived near Nashville. She and her family supported the Union, while most of their neighbors cheered for the Confederacy. Many Union officers visited the Lindsleys during the war. Maggie had ten brothers and sisters. In her journal entries on the next page, she mentions two of her brothers, Jamie and Van.

Read the excerpts from Maggie Lindsley's 1864 journal on the next page and then answer the questions below.

- 1) How do Maggie and her family know that the battle is taking place?

- 2) What do she and her family do during the battle?

- 3) What specifically makes Maggie feel less nervous during the battle?

- 4) Whom does Maggie praise after the battle is over?

- 5) How does Maggie's brother Van react to his visit to the battlefield?



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Journal entries of Maggie Lindsley during and after the Battle of Nashville in December 1864 (from "*Maggie!*" *Maggie Lindsley's Journal*, privately printed by Muriel Davies Mackenzie, 1977, pp. 38-41).

December 16th

The cannon has been thundering all day yesterday and all today. The battle evidently is raging at last, and will certainly be a furious one under the circumstances—the rebels in sight of their homes will fight with desperation.

Jamie has not been out to see us for several days, nor Pa—and we have only had the daily papers, which however are silent on this one point of course--any statement of the actual condition of affairs being prohibited. Captain Lamotte and Lieut. Torry called this morning, but they are still on our side of the bridge—they said that yesterday for the first time the rebs returned our fire. Every report shakes the whole house—but we do not mind it, but keep quiet around roaring fires,—for it is bitterly, bitterly cold—and try to read as usual, but it is rather difficult with such an accompaniment ringing in our ears....

But really it is wonderful how we could have become so accustomed to this state of affairs as to take it so quietly as we are doing today! I remember when two years ago the battle was raging as far off as Murfreesboro, how excited we all were, and how I started and trembled at the faint, far off sound—so indistinct as to be merely suspected in fact—and was too unnerved to do anything but think of the horrible carnage then going on: while today when the deadly work is going on within a mile of our own doors, within sight indeed!—when the artillery is deafening, we sit before the fire quietly, read, chat & laugh! And when I grow too nervous for anything else I seek relief in writing in my journal—for it does relieve me in a measure.

December 18th

Sunday again and with it peace and quiet. The battle is over. Confederates have retreated, General Thomas pursuing. Last night our army was at Franklin. Glorious Thomas! (I cannot speak his name without tears, and from that I know I am pretty well shattered by all the recent excitement.) Countless blessing rest on his noble head!

Captain Lamotte and Dr. De Graw spent today with us—they had visited the battle-field yesterday, and described it as they saw it, still covered with the dead and dying. I don't care to write or to think of what they told me of what they saw. I sicken to think of all the changes since I was at beautiful Belmont a few weeks ago! And now this terrible dread of who are lying dead out there on that battle-field hangs over us! Van went out to the field yesterday—but he is sick at heart—boy as he is--and will say nothing but that he is haunted by the terrible sight, and would give everything to blot it out, and have his mind as clear as it was 24 hours ago!