

**Wooden Grave Marker from Battlefield**

This is an original headboard from the grave of Confederate Soldier A. W. Speight, 3rd North Carolina Infantry.

Wood, brass.

Antietam National Battlefield, ANTI 13477

Curved bayonet used to drag bodies for burial., Metal. Antietam National Battlefield, ANTI 13958. This bayonet, curved into a hook, found on the field after the battle, matched the description of bayonets bent and then used to drag bodies into mass graves.

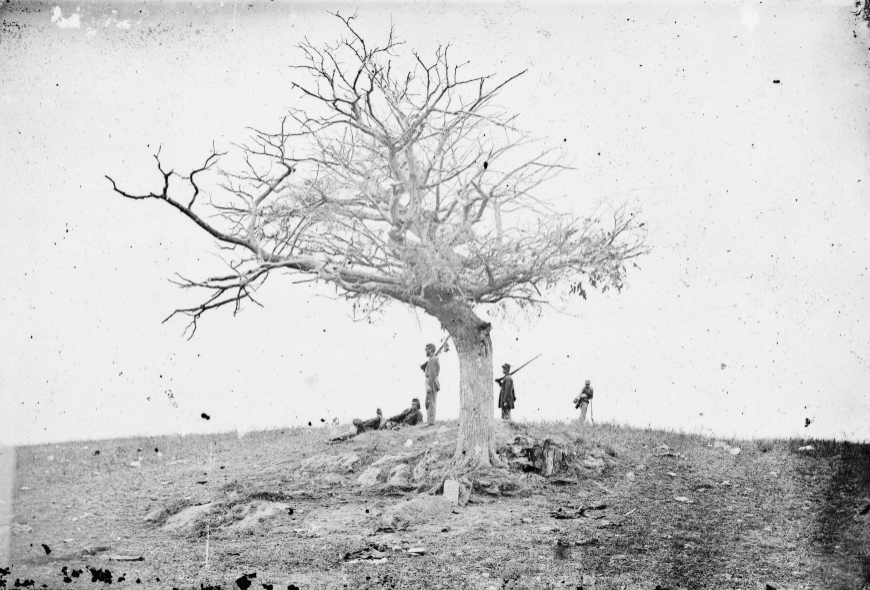
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Antietam Battlefield

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Antietam National Battlefield
P.O. Box 158
Sharpsburg, MD 21782



Lesson Three: "This is Not the way we Bury Folks at Home"

Under the dark shade of a towering oak near the Dunker Church lay the lifeless form of a drummer boy, apparently not more than 17 years of age, flaxen hair and eyes of blue and form of delicate mould. As I approached him I stooped down and as I did so I perceived a bloody mark upon his forehead...It showed where the leaden messenger of death had produced the wound the caused his death. His lips were compressed, his eyes half open, a bright smile played upon his countenance. By his side lay his tenor drum, never to be tapped again. *Pvt. J. D. Hicks, Company K, 125th Pennsylvania Volunteers John P. Smith, "History of the Antietam Fight," in Scrapbook of J. P. Smith.*

I recall a Union soldier lying near the Dunker Church with his face turned upward, and his pocket Bible open upon his breast. I lifted the volume and read the words: Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.' Upon the fly-leaf were the words, 'We hope and pray that you may be permitted by kind Providence, after the war is over, to return.' *Charles Carlton Coffin, Army Correspondent, Boston Journal "Antietam Scenes," Battles and Leaders. Vol II, p. 685.*

"Sometime relatives would travel great distances in search of the bodies of their loved ones. James Weeks traveled from Illinois to Maryland "in search of his brother-in-law, William Cullen Robinson of the 83th NY. On September 23 at the "School House Hospital" in Keedysville, he found him. In a letter home James wrote: *I arrived at the hospital about an hour after he died... They said he must have fired a great many rounds as his lips were very black from biting the cartridges off... When I got here the Surgeon had sent his knapsack containing his wallet, letters, his watch, and in act all his effects. I found a match box in his pocket and one of his comrades gave me his knife...I bought a rough coffin (the best I could get) and washed his face and neck and combed his hair smooth and covered him round with a large clean sheet and they dug a deep grave on a little knoll on the bank of the Antietam Creek. And I buried him there...It was almost impossible to bring him home with me as I should have had to come way back to Baltimore and purchase a metallic coffin (for him as they wouldn't allow any other to pass over the line) and by the time I should have got back he would have been so much decayed that they would not keep him for me."* Stotelmyer, Stephen. *The Bivouacs of the Dead*, Baltimore: Toomey Press, 1992. p. 14."

"among the many who came to visit the Battlefield was a young wife whose frantic grief, I can never forget. She came hurriedly as soon as she knew her husband was injured in the battle, only to find him dead and buried two days before her arrival. Unwilling to believe the facts that strangers told her - how in the early morning they had laid him beside his two comrades in the orchard, she still insisted upon seeing him. Accompanying some friends to the spot, she could not wait for the slow process of removing the body and in her agonizing grief, clutched the earth by the handfuls where it lay upon the quiet sleeper's form and when at length the slight covering was removed and the blanket thrown from off his face, she needed but one glance to assure her that it was all too true. Then, facing the reality of this crushing sorrow, she made preparations to take body back to Philadelphia. Taking his remains with her, she left the next day to return to her desolate home." Ernst, Kathleen. *Too Afraid to Cry: Maryland Civilians in the Antietam Campaign*. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1999. p. 176.