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James R. Fleming. *Band of Brothers: Company C, 9th Tennessee Infantry*. Shippensburg, Penn.: White Mane Publishing, 1996. xiii + 155 pp. \$24.95 (paper), ISBN 978-1-57249-003-1.

Reviewed by Connie Slaughter (Wilson's Creek National Military Park)
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Band of Brothers—a compilation of memoirs and wartime correspondence of five members of Company C, 9th Tennessee Infantry, Confederate States Army—offers a unique insight into the lives of ordinary men during an extraordinary time. What makes this book appealing is that the author has a personal connection with these men; they were his uncles. Where would historians be without the personal correspondence, journals, and diaries of men who were actually there? James Fleming, a descendant of sixty-one known Confederate veterans, has nicely incorporated the wartime correspondence, memoirs, and obituaries of members of Company C to tell their impressive story.

The 126 men of Tipton County, Tennessee, who made up the ranks of Company C, were known as the “Southern Confederates” in the spring of 1861. Tipton County was mainly farm country, but the men of Company C were neither poor nor uneducated. At least one-third of the 126 were either college graduates or had come directly from college to enlist. There were five teachers, four clerks, two ministers, and a doctor in the group, plus the usual contingent of farmers and laborers. As many as twenty-six sets of the brothers entered military service under the “Southern Confederates” banner, but, by the spring of 1865, they were all brothers.

What would make men like these go to war? Captain Wood answered that question eloquently at the presentation of Company C's flag as he stated:

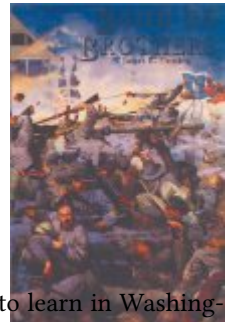
The rights, equality and justice for which our fathers fought have been denied us, our overtures for peace and justice have been treated with contempt; our arguments and entreaties have been met with insults, and we are now menaced with invasion. There is no alternative left us but to meet the fanatic on the battlefield and teach

him a lesson which he has refused to learn in Washington City. It does not become us here to boast of valor yet to be shown, of deeds of daring yet to be performed ...“ (p. 17).

These men fought in most of the battles and campaigns of the Army of the Tennessee; battles such as Shiloh, Chickamauga, Chattanooga, Perryville, Atlanta, Franklin, Nashville, and Spring Hill. Twenty-seven of the original 126 were killed in battle, fifty-five wounded (fifteen of which later died), four were prisoners of war, and fourteen deserted, leaving only eleven of the original members to be present at the surrender four long years later.

The personal accounts and reminiscences of Captain James Hall, including his history of Company C written in 1895, provide the most information about the unit and its travels and battles. It is a miracle that Hall survived the war. When he was wounded at Perryville, Confederate doctors pronounced his wound mortal, and he was listed as mortally wounded in southern newspaper accounts of the battle. This “dead” man went on to survive two more wounds at Chickamauga and Atlanta, and lived to be eighty-two years old.

Other firsthand accounts provide a glimpse of the horrors of war. In a letter to his sisters, Private Samuel McCreight wrote, “They were in close contact & our soldiers fought them with bayonets and knives. There were 45 Yankys kild there in one pile besides the wounded. They were buried in one grave. I have seen the place. I did not see it until 2 da. after. It looked like a pen where hogs had been killed the Blood ws thick all about over the ground for several hundred yds. around. The enemy at this place was completely routed and run like sheep almost in every direction they dropped their knapsacks &



overcoats & haversacks & run like wild turkeys to their boats” (pp. 107-108).

In a letter to his sister, George W. McDill told of the loss he felt after searching for members of his old mess: “but after the battle when we were ordered to fall into line and march on to Nashville, I looked for my old comrades, but they were all gone. I shed tears and wished I had died with them” (p. 124).

Nothing brings an event alive more than the words of the actual participants. *Band of Brothers* is certainly

a must read for anyone interested in the history of Tennessee troops in the Civil War. Also this book details the effects the war had on the men that actually pulled the trigger. This is their account of the horror and humanity of war. Fleming has put together a well-documented tribute to his Civil War ancestors.

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