

First Hurrah: Child Patriots Learned Their Education In The Field

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Review

FIRST HURRAH

Child patriots learned their education in the field

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Hoar, Jay S. *Callow Brave and True: A Gospel of Civil War Youth.* Thomas Publications, ISBN 1577470451

In **Callow Brave and True**, Jay S. Hoar brings welcome relief to anyone who ever has struggled to substantiate reports about a particular great-great relative who was thought to be a Civil War drummer boy or a certain local burial site that allegedly contains the remains of a Civil War hero. This work gives the reader 48 extensively researched profiles related to children -- some brothers -- who served under their respective flags during the War between the States. The inclusion of Susan Haines Clayton, who at the age of 10 was nursing wounded soldiers at Camp Carrington in Indianapolis, adds a special touch and meaning to the unique heroism of these young people.

Some names, such as Willie Johnston and John L. Clem, might be generally recognizable. But most are introduced to the reader for the first time. The profiles contain excellent family information, service chronologies when appropriate, and, for survivors of the battles and camp life, histories of their lives after the guns were silenced. Each personal story is enhanced, where possible, by the written words of veterans, comrades, family members, descendants, historians, or newspaper stories prepared in celebration of heroism or deeds remembered.

Readers will find further reward in appendices entitled: "The Youngest to Serve," "Soldierboy Casualties," and "Youngest Who Earned the Congressional Medal of Honor."

Hoar's presentation is a start. It is, hopefully, the first of many volumes specifically dedicated to this fascinating subject. I say this only because the author himself acknowledges that "numbers of standouts among those who were

exceptionally young Yanks and Rebs are absent from this review." He follows that statement with a special call for assistance from readers. The generosity of this invitation promises future works complementary to the spirit and purpose of this volume.

The use of language is scholarly and, at times, intense. Reading requires full concentration. The reward is more than simple appreciation. We hear the drums and feel the human side of our Civil War from a very unique perspective. Patriotism is personified. Dedication and bravery are given special emphasis.

As the words are read it is sometimes difficult to keep in focus the tender age of these citizens. We empathize. We also think about today's children who live with civil war in many areas of the world. In like manner, we are amazed.

Callow Brave and True is a story book and a reference book. It deserves a spot on the shelves of both modest and extensive Civil War libraries.

George McNamara is editor and publisher of The Children's Chronicle and The Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Newsletter.