

SAMUEL CATAWBA LOWRY
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When the Civil War broke out 14-year-old Samuel Catawba Lowry was itching to join. Finally, he enlisted after "obtaining the consent of my parents, after worrying them out begging them; and having two uncles in the company...." Lowry's uncles were Capt. William B. Wilson and Lieut. J. W. Avery. The family also sent along Henry Avery, a slave, as Samuel's body servant.

Samuel Lowry kept a record of his experiences. In the flyleaf he wrote: "I wish this book to be kept inviolate. Remember this! Do not disfigure it but keep it sacred. I desire to keep it as long as I live, for certain reasons. When I am away, guard it with care, if you love me. This is my wish."

In the second battle of Manassas, August 1862, Lowry was wounded in the thigh. He described himself as hobbling off the field and lying down until the battle was over. Very weak, he got up again and hobbled further, thinking how grateful he was that the leg was not broken.

Fortunately, he met William Clark of his company who helped him bind up the wound and gave Lowry his blanket and oilcloth. Lowry said of Clark, who later died at Sharpsburg, "I will never forget his kindness."

There was a farmhouse in the area and Lowry went to it and crawled into the cellar. Again, he was fortunate for it rained that night and "it is not pleasant to lie among the dead and the dying. A fellow soldier got him a canteen of water to wash out the wound. Lowry did not speak of pain but said that night he was "perfectly easy and contented."

After a long search, his uncle, Lieutenant Avery, found him. A young Virginia doctor dressed the wound. The next morning Lowry was placed on a litter and carried to a hospital. He could hear shrieks of agony coming from the battlefield and in the morning fog saw some of the 10,000 dead that "bespotted the earth."

Lowry was taken to a crude field hospital and placed in a shack in the woods along with his cousin, W. Dunnivant and Lieutenants, Logan and Moore. After 3 or 4 days the group were moved to Warrenton, Virginia. When he was able to travel, Lowry was sent home and discharged because he was under age.

His parents sent Samuel to the Arsenal in Columbia, a military school that was the forerunner of the Citadel. He promptly organized the cadets into a volunteer unit for Virginia. When the heads of the Arsenal found out something was afoot, they called the cadets out and demanded to know who the instigator was. Lowry immediately stepped forward with 26 other young cadets one step behind him. All were dismissed from the school.

Samuel Lowry went to the home of his maternal grandfather, Edward Avery, a well-to-do plantation owner. There he tried to organize a cavalry unit but failed, so he and 3 others joined Col. F. W. McMaster's Company. Only one returned from the war.

On July 20, 1864, his diary entry was "It is feared that the enemy are tunneling under our line." The last entry, on July 25, was "All quiet. Go back to the ditches tonight."

Five days later, July 30, Samuel Catawba Lowry was acting captain of his company. All of the officers had been killed or wounded, including his uncles. He was 19 and 1/2 years.

He was killed in the "Great Explosion" of the Battle of the Crater. When the battle was over, Henry Avery, the servant, found Lowry's body and, somehow, got the body and Lowry's diary home.

The story of the boy captain was later told in the "Confederate Veteran" along with an epilogue. The journal said that when the Lowry family met the train bearing the body, Samuel's dog was with them and seemed to understand what had happened. The next morning the family found Major's dead body at the door of Samuel's old room.