

## A Poem by Daniel Richard Phelps

Shown below is a poem written by Daniel Richard Phelps during the Civil War. It was written on the back of a "tract" the likes of which were available to soldiers who were encouraged to pick one, copy and send home to their family. The title of the tract that Daniel picked was, "Just Before the Battle, Mother. It is well documented in war psychology that when the going gets really rough, we often want the comfort of our mother. The poem has "No. 3" on it indicating that this poem to his mother was not his first. However, we do not have copies of the others.

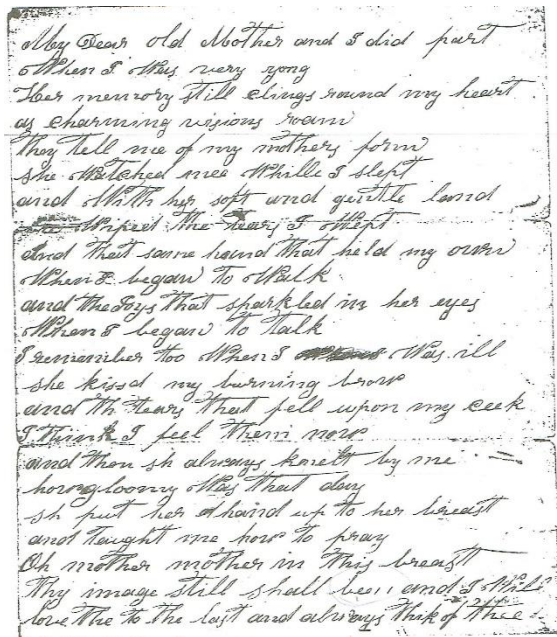
The poem was probably written in the Sherman's forces was marching on about April until September when his unit to catch and destroy CSA General John Tennessee. And destroy it they did at bath on both sides and we can be grateful Tennessee River 40 miles west of river. Otherwise there might not have



spring or summer of 1864 when his unit as part of Atlanta. We know he was in the thick of it from was assigned to General Thomas whose job it was Bell Hood's army heading north for Franklin, TN in the Fall of '64. It was a blood that his unit was pulling guard duty on the Nashville about where I-40 crosses the Tennessee been any Blount County Phelps.

This and other writing by Daniel Richard have been very impressive, especially considering how little formal schooling he had. Even though the poem was most likely a copy, he did very well considering his lack of schooling. We think he only had three for four years at a school house or maybe a church building in the Middlesettlements area. One of our favorite samples of his spellings, is in one of his letters home, also to his mother, where he spells Nashville as "Knashville". It is presumed that he had seen Knoxville in print, but maybe not Nashville, so since they both have the same sound when spoken, he put a K in Nashville just like Knoxville.

Following is a copy of the actual 1864 document with our careful interpretation on the right:



My dear old mother and I did part  
When I was very young  
Her memory still clings round my heart  
As charming visions roam

They tell me of my mothers form  
She watched me while I slept  
And with her soft and gentle hand  
She wiped the tears I wept  
And that same hand that held my own  
When I began to walk  
And the joys that sparkled in her eyes  
When I began to talk

I remember too when I was ill  
She kissed my burning brow  
And the tears that fell upon my cheek  
I think I feel them now

And then she always knelt by me  
How gloomy was that day  
She put her hand up to her breast  
And taught me how to pray

Oh mother, mother in this breast  
Thy image still shall be and I will  
Love thee to the last and always think of thee.