

Report of Mr. C.B. Ruggles, Nashville, Tenn. Jan. 4, 1865
***The Sanitary Reporter* (January 15, 1865)**

Mr. J.S. Newberry, [*Secretary*] Western Dept., U.S. Sanitary Commission

Dear Sir:

... On the arrival of our forces at Franklin, I was sent to that post in the hands of the enemy, and others who might be left there. I succeeded after three day's efforts in getting through two teams loaded with Sanitariums [*health supplies*], Dec. 20th, and remained at that post till January 2d... I found the place full of wounded. There were in the hands of the Confederates after the battle of Franklin, two hundred and twenty-three men, according to their account, with J. Isleron, [*Assistant Surgeon*] 129th Ind., in charge. 121 of these were placed in the Presbyterian Church, 70 were at the Cummins House, 32 were at a small house with two rooms called Park's Hospital, from a citizen surgeon [Dr. J.S. Park] who took charge of them.

Besides these enumerated [*listed*] above, there were quite a number in private houses whom the Confederates in their haste [*hurry*] were compelled [*forced*] to overlook. Many died while they were prisoners, reducing the number when I arrived to less than 185 men. Among the deaths were twenty-three whose names or regiments could not be ascertained [*discovered*]

...The hospitals were in a deplorable [*horribly bad*] condition even after our men had held possession two days. The wounded were mostly lying on the floor with a little straw beneath them, and such things as they could get for covering—most of them with the same clothes on that they wore the day of the battle, Nov. 30. The Confederates had taken from them many blankets, boots, and shoes, and in some cases their money. The Confederates surely were in need of such things, for they robbed the dead of all clothes not spoiled by wounds; and I am told by many witnesses that they stripped the bodies of their own generals, six of whom lay dead on the battlefield the day after the fight.

When I first looked into the church where most of our wounded were, I found Mrs. Courtney and her daughter, Miss Fannie, endeavoring to give the men breakfast with what coffee, biscuit, and boiled beef they were able to get. Two barrels of our butter crackers added greatly to their repast [*meal; feast*], and I am sure the pleasantest work I ever performed, was to give every man crackers till he said "enough." Every Federal hospital was supplied as fully. And then came the clothing, shirts, drawers [*underwear*], and socks. How many blessings were pronounced on our dear mothers, wives, and sisters up in "God's country." Every man got a change, who needed it, so far as the cases could be learned. The box of quilts, too, (twenty-seven in number) were soon distributed to the most suffering...

The Christian Commission were in the field with several noble working men. I offered them the free use of any stores of which they might find the men in need, and they cordially accepted the offer, and rendered great assistance in seeing that our stores were faithfully distributed. A large addition of Sanitary goods came Dec. 21st, among which 10 [barrels] ale, and several boxes of whiskey. A good share of the ale was distributed by the Christian commission, and also much of the whiskey, which the ladies put in the form of milk punch and eggnog.

The wants of our own men somewhat relieved—those of the Confederates were not forgotten. There were some fourteen hundred of them in this place, and in accordance [*agreement*] with the wish of Dr. Hewitt, and advice of Dr. Woods, who had taken charge of all the wounded the day of my arrival, I issued to the Confederate surgeons as many goods as we could spare. They

seemed most thankful for all goods given them, which, without a doubt, saved many lives, besides softening the bitter feelings which they had cherished in their hearts for years.

The necessities of the case required the issues of stores to be very irregular. Ladies were cooking at their own houses of both Federals and Confederates, therefore sanitary goods were given them, as they reached the soldiers easier than by any other method...

Too much cannot be said in regard to the untiring exertions [*works*] of the ladies of Franklin—nearly every family have labored as their inclinations [*preferences*] led them, either for Union men or Confederates...

Mrs. Hoffman took three Federals and one Confederate to her own house, placed them on separate beds, and nursed them herself through the full month of December, still laboring at the hospitals as she was able to till our forces came back. Mrs. Priest cooked for fifty of our wounded all the while the Confederates held the place; never once giving a morsel to a Confederate soldier, although they came to her house repeatedly and attempted to force her to do so. Her reply was, "go to your friends, there are plenty of them here who are able to feed you."

The Confederates searched her home twice for stores which they supposed some Federal Quartermaster [*officer in charge of food and supplies*] had left in her possession. The Colonel who came on this mission asked her if she was a Yankee woman; her reply was, "yes sire, I am, and I am raising recruits for the Yankee army," pointing to her three boys who clung to her dress...

Mrs. Eliza Courtney, a widow lady, and her fair daughter, Miss Fannie, have not done less than those mentioned above. They have stood fast by the "old flag" through evil report and good report, and when our boys were in want they were ready to sacrifice their all for their comfort. Aided by one or two servants, these two ladies cooked for and distributed food among near one hundred men for twenty days, much of the time furnishing provision [*supplies*] from their own larder [*food supply*]. At all hours of the day, till late in the evening, they were in the hospital, either distributing food or [*taking care of*] the wants of the men. Mrs. C. had her beds brought up to the church for some of the worst cases, and also furnished all the bedding she had not actually in use. Both these ladies used linen from their own wardrobes for rags and bandages. Miss Fannie, when the linen gave out, took her dresses...

There are also many who have labored hard for the Confederate wounded, using their bedding and provisions freely for their comfort. The two armies going through the place twice have taken nearly all the provision, and unless aid and comfort come to these people from our overflowing Northern homes, much suffering must occur before harvest. Surely those ought to be supplied who have so heroically stood by our forces in captivity.

The season of the year prevented my doing anything with the bodies of our boys buried by the Confederates. I trust at some future day they may be interred and decently buried, when, without a doubt, many may be recognized and their bodies forwarded to such as may desire it...

Yours Respectfully,
C.B. Ruggles,
Relief Agent U.S. San. Comm.

Source: Warwick, Rick. *Williamson County: The Civil War as Seen through the Female Experience*. Nashville: Panacea Press, 2008. Used with permission.