

Field and Staff, 120th Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry, 9th Division, 13th Army Corps



Photo Credits: Bill Miller at [Find a Grave](#)

Chaplain W. A. G. EMERSON entered service 17 Oct 1862 at age 46. He resigned 5 Feb 1863.

Birth <1818> District of Columbia

Marriage: Winifred Catherine ATKINS

Death: 1879 Ohio

Cemetery: Ashland Cemetery, Ashland Co OH

William Alfred Griffith EMERSON.....?????born 12 Jul 1816, died 11 Nov 1879...Info from [Find a Grave](#)

1850 Census, District North Ashland, Ashland Co OH, Dwelling 180, Family 195: Rev. W A G EMERSON, age 32 District of Columbia, Lutheran minister; Catherine, age 29 VA; James, age 14 OH; John, age 11 VA; **Mary E, age 9 OH**; Maria L, age 6 OH; Irene V, age 5 OH; William R, age 3 OH; Nancy MACKREL, age 16 birth unknown.

1860 Census, Worthington, Richland Co OH, Dwelling 46, Family 47: William EMERSON, age 43 DC, Lutheran minister; Winifred, age 47 VA; James, age 30 OH, theological student; John, age 21 VA, cabinet maker; Mary, age 19 VA, common school teacher; [next page] Mariah, age 16 OH; Virginia, age 14 OH; William, age 12 OH; Luther, age 9 OH; Hemarelda [female], age 6 OH.

The Ashland Union, [Ashland OH] 18 Feb 1863, page 1:

Letter from Rev. W. A. G. Emerson. 120th Reg't O. V. I., on board Jesse K. Bell, Miss. river, **Jan 19, 1863**.

J. J. Jacobs, Esq. -- My Old Friend -- Since I left home I have not until now written to you to say any thing about our doings or whereabouts, though no doubt you have been well informed on the subject, and the only apology I have to offer is, neglect on my part.

Since we left home, we have been most of the time on the move, and have been and now are, far, far from home and friends, away down in the land of Dixie.

We left Covington about the 24th day of November, and were ordered to report at Memphis, which we did about 17 days after we left our camp at the former place. While at Memphis, we were brigaded with the 65th Indiana and 118th Illinois. Col Shelden, of Ohio, is our Brigade Commander; Gen. Morgan Division Commander. After remaining at Memphis, which is quite a beautiful Southern city, we embarked for Vicksburg, in the great Mississippi expedition. You would be surprised to see the beauty and extraordinary specimens of Mechanism and taste at Memphis, after hearing so much up North about the ignorance and want of judgment in the South, as you would also in seeing the taste of the Southern planter.

In passing up and down the river, we see but few of the white inhabitants, especially females, they seem to be nearly all gone and have left their plantations mostly in the hands of the slaves, and in fact we do not see a very large number of the latter, only as we see them following the army. There are large numbers of them at Cairo and Helena, but I was not out at their camps. Poor creatures, it will be hard with them, unless God in his mercy should incline the government and the people to take pity on them when this unnatural war should come to a close. About this question you know my views, and I need not say anything farther about it.

Of our attack on the fortifications of Vicksburg, you no doubt have heard, and that we were not successful.

Our loss in that battle I am not exactly apprised of. Some of our regiments suffered considerable loss, among them the 16th Ohio -- the 120th had 16 men wounded but none killed. It did its duty nobly, led on by its noble and gallant Colonel.

We left the Yazoo on Friday, and on the next Friday evening we stopped near Arkansas Post, about 75 miles up the Arkansas river, and on Sabbath, with gun boats, batteries and infantry, attacked a fort at that point containing from four to five thousand troops, so I was informed by one of the rebel Captains, and after a few hours tremendous and incessant firing, the fort then surrendered to the Federal army. In this battle the 120th Ohio took the lead. It advanced up to within 45 rods of the fort and by the order of Colonel French, were made to lay down and by so doing, escaped the fire to a great extent from the fort. If the men in the fort attempted to raise high enough to shoot at them, they would then expose themselves to the cross fire of our own men. This successful manoeuvre was the result of good military skill upon the part of Col. French, who not only knows how to fight but also knows how to take care of his men. To the honor of the 120th, it was the first regiment in the fort, and her colors were the first to float on its ramparts. Gen. Morgan, who was the first General to enter the fort, congratulated the regiment and sent his respects to Col. French and giving him command of the prisoners. Our loss as a regiment in this fight was 4 killed, 8 wounded, and nine missing. Among the killed was Mr. Brown from Jackson township, Ashland county, a member of company F, Capt. Buck [said about Brown]: he was a brave man and faithful soldier, and loved his country. When it was known he was killed, the remark was made by those who knew him, 'one of the best men in our company has fallen.' I understand he has left a wife and seven children to mourn his loss. *[Note: William Brown, Private, Co F, 120th OVI, burial not found.]* May God in his mercy take care of his wife and orphan children, this he has promised to do, and will, and I appeal to those who are at home to remember them in kindness by attending to their wants at once. We laid them all side by side upon the banks of the Arkansas with the rights of christian burial, to sleep until the resurrection--there they lay in a land of strangers, the winds of winter and the summers' zephyr, will sing their requiem [sic, requiem], the wild flowers will spring over their sleeping dust, and the stars will keep vigil over their graves until their dust shall be raised to immortality and life. Another who fell in the battle was a young man from Hayesville, named Stephen Davis, a good soldier and a splendid young man. Mr. Editor, in after years when the passing traveller [sic] shall visit the spot where our companions in arms sleep in death, he will sigh in regret and pity, as he will say, this is the result of a nations folly. *[Note: Stephen Davis, Private, Co C, 120th OVI, burial not found.]*

Let me give you a few instances connected with our fight at Arkansas Post, and one in which I was connected. On Sabbath morning I mounted my horse to go up and take some things to my regiment, which was laying within half a mile of the fort, I did not go up there to fight, as you know that is not my business, but almost without design of getting so close, I came up in front of the fort, that however would not have been so exciting had not two grim war monsters carrying each a 120 pound ball, been pointing their threatening muzzles down the river. About the time I emerged from the woods on my return, firing commenced in another direction, I saw the white smoke curl up, and I tell you my old friend, I was very well satisfied that those large cannon to which I have referred, kept their mouths closed until I got out of the way.

Another; while laying on the ground at one time, the firing from the fort ceased, the Col. ordered Adjutant Slocum to the rear with some order. It was a dangerous undertaking to rise up in full view, and exposed to the fire from the fort, but the brave Adjutant resolved to do his duty, and up and at it he went, and bang, bang, went the musketry from the fort, but the wily adjutant not choosing to be shot at without trying to save himself, showed them how they could lay a worm fence, escaped without any injury.

Permit me to tell you of a Providential escape we made just as we were leaving the Yazoo. When all the boats had left the point where Gen. Morgan and a part of his command were laying, consisting of only 7 transport boats and a few gunboats, the enemy advanced on us with their skirmishers among the tall briars until they reached perhaps ½ mile or more in length, they came up leisurely and in good order though it looked dangerous. -- They were supported in the rear by columns of soldiers, up they came and we stood looking at them until they approached within a few hundred yards, when they commenced firing. I had left the deck, but returned again and got my head a little above the hatch, when bang went a gun from the shore and the boys, some of them, began to fall upon the deck for protection, and I hastily concluded, and I did not study long, that I would return or fall back, which I did in good order. The gunboats with a battery on the shore opened upon them and they soon skedaddled. We cut loose and went down the river, and left them and the gunboats to fight it out.

Permit me to say Mr. Editor, that the 120th Ohio is as well officered as any regiment that has left that State, and far better than many. Our Col. French is a true and faithful officer, always at his post, not only to lead his men in a battle, but to take good care of them. He is beloved by his entire command, both officers and men, and we do admit that he is second to any other officer commanding a regiment. I have never heard him use profane language since I have been in the service with him.

Beekman, is Charley on the spot, always on hand. Adjutant Slocum is popular in his regiment, and never fails to do his duty, both in his office and in the field. Our officers are good men; the privates are not to be surpassed. I may say that the 120th is not surpassed by any regiment from Ohio.

So far as I know I have the good will of every officer and man in the regiment. I leave to them to say what kind of a Chaplain they have.

A large number of our regiment are sick here and in the hospitals where they are, perhaps nearly half our men unfit for duty. I myself do not feel as well to-day as I have, but through a kind Providence I have enjoyed my health well for me since I left home, but I am getting tired of this, and shall, if I can[,] get home before long. I see many things I do not like and can not approve of, but such are the results of war, this at least. Many of our Regiment are tired of this war, and were there an honorable peace accomplished, would rejoice with exceeding joy, and if those gentlemen, up there, who sit about the stores and offices, discussing about the war, and then on to Richmond, would just change positions with us here, they would soon get enough of it. On to Richmond, and would soon call upon their friends to use their influence in form of peace.

This country wants peace, they need peace, and every citizen should honorably in the fear of God strive for it; every christian and every Church should pray for it, and every voter should vote for it. Let us all do the best we can to restore our beloved Union and bring an honorable peace to our country.

Yours, W. A. G. Emerson, Chaplain 120th O. V. I.

N. B. -- Some kind friend should get up boxes of provisions for the sick and send them by some trusty hand. I tell you they are much needed, you cannot get things down here for the sick.

I have but one three cent postage stamp, and 5 cents in money, will you be so kind as to pay this letter.  
W. A. G. E. "

1870 Census, Just have not found.

Ohio, Deaths and Burials, 1854-1997: W A G Rev. Emerson died 1879 in Ohio.

1880 Census, Florence District, Boone co KY, Dwelling 123, Family 128: Moses R. TANNER, age 39 KY, carpenter, parents born KY; Mary E, wife, age 38 WV, parents born VA; Roberta I, daughter, age 8 KY; Robert E, son, age 6 KY; Merritt C, son, age 2 KY; Winifred EMERSON, mother -in-law, age 64 VA, parents births not filled in, widow; Delia EMERSON, niece, age 15 OH.

Pension Card: William A. G. EMERSON, Chaplain. Field and Staff 120th OH Inf. Widow applied 17 Feb 1888.

Pension Index: Widow Winefred C EMERSON applied in KY. Application 368193, Certificate 273335

Not on 1890 Veterans Schedule.

Daughter:

Kentucky Death Records: 1911-1961: Mary Eliza TAMER died 1912 at Boone Co KY. Father W A G EMERSON. Mother Catharine ATKINS. [Note: no image available, but this is probably TANNER.]

Research by Susie Holderfield, 2001-2016 [120researcher@gmail.com](mailto:120researcher@gmail.com)