

Despite lengthy search, grove site of drummer boy a mystery

"Daily are we called upon to record the names of grave men who have fallen a sacrifice on their country's altar, that gives us pain, but how much keener is the anguish, when the tidings reach us that a child of such tender years has been made a victim by some rebellious hand. He was a true little hero..."

On Oct. 4, The Jeffersonian reported, "We regretfully state that little Charley King, died from the wound he received at the battle of Antietam. The ball, we understand, passed through his lungs, and he survived but a day or two. When his father, Pennell King, went on to take care of him, as he supposed, he found the grave only, in which his son's remains were deposited. We should be glad, if we were able, to write his epitaph. Very young, quite small, yet manly, kind, affectionate, quiet, trusting, yet proud and ambitious, and a superior musician."

It isn't known where Charley King's final resting place is. Available records don't show whether his father brought his body back to West Chester. No cemetery records in the West Chester area mention him and he is not among the known soldiers buried at the National Cemetery at Sharpsburg.

The Village Record stated Charley "has done his duty and died nobly" and he "rests new at the feet of Jesus."

"He was a remarkable boy," according to the Jeffersonian, "and truly may it be said of him, that 'he was not as other boys.'"

The emergency corps of 1862 served less than three weeks. Pennell King was a private in Company D of the militia's 2nd Regiment. The unit was mustered in between Sept. 6 and 13 and was stationed in reserve of the Union army in Maryland, not far from Sharpsburg. The regiment was discharged between Sept. 28 and 29. Pennell King then returned home to West Chester where the sad news of his son awaited him.

CHARLEY KING'S death was mentioned in West Chester newspapers in October 1862.

The Oct. 7 Village Record stated,