

A.W.T. PAPERS

Misc. Papers
Poems 1

"Old Willey"

Who cares in this world what a Homer says
Of the warring men of ancient days;
What matter it now to you or me
Though the Iliad or Odyssey
May tell of the time when a Trojan crew
Was tramped by the feet of a Grecian hero;
Though the epic song of the bard may state
How Achilles fell at the Scæan Gate,
But it startles a world that I can come down
To tell of a man of my native town:
Of a man unknown, obscure and plain,
But who once belonged to the 11th of Maine!

When Slavery pressed by Freedom's hand
Fired up the heart of a Beaujeant,
And the first red shot on Sumter fell,
And the Eagle screamed like a screech from hell;
When her shriek went out over vale and crag
And she clung like death to the dear old flag,
And the first kind look she got was one
From a man named Robert Anderson,
I felt somewhere and I wrote and said
That we had a big old trouble ahead,
With all my faith in God and such,
With all my religion, and that wasn't much,
My faith wasn't clear and my hope wasn't bright
Bill Daniel E. Willey went into the fight.

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They called him "Old Willey" up there, I'm sure
It is a term of used when our clothes get poor -
He said the wall and he sawed the wood
For me and others in the neighborhood;
He never could lecture and never could speak
One word of grammar, and he couldn't read Greek,
Though he dwelt in the old school-house, his town,
Where the old road butts on the avenue,
Through his leaky boots he you could see his feet
As he toiled for his daily food to eat;
For many a pail can never hold
The ordure dark that is scraped from gold,
Though he felled the trees and he tilled the lands
With his brazen arms and his horny hands,
It never entered a soldier's brain
That Willey would ever fight or train,
And never getting a draft or call,
He sawed the wood and he said the wall,
One day to my village two men rode down
Yes, both came over from Stetson town,
And one was General Hill, I believe,
He had it on then that empty sleeve;
I could told them quick that he wouldn't yield
For a one right arm on the Deep Run field,
And the other fellow with Hill they say
Was General Pleisted who talks to-day,
This Willey and I were standing over
(He sawing wood) near my office door,
As the man from Stetson town rode by
A neighbor of mine was standing nigh,

With his traitor lips to the startled air
 He hissed the flag that ^{was} floating there.
 Like a granite post Old Willey stood
 And his old saw dropped from the half-^{wood;} sawed,
 Then he hoisted the straps round his big broad hips,
 And he crumbled the pipe 'neath his firm ^{lips;} blue,
 And his burnt tanned face gave a fiendish smile,
 But never a word he uttered the while
 Till he glowered at the man hard by and when
 He taunted that Union flag again,
 Then his tortured nerves like a serpent coiled
 And these tough words from the old man boiled;
 Says he, "Did you hear how that devil hissed;
 By Jesus, Squin, I'm going to cut it!"
 Though he split huge logs he couldn't stand
 The thought of a rift in his native land,
 And he did cut it, for the brave old soul,
 With his name on the gallant Plaistats' roll,
 For the cash of a die, for a loss or gain,
 With the gory, famed old 11th of Maine,
 For a mortal fray with his kith and kind
 Left a dying wife and a child behind,
 Marched out to the front where he fought ^{and bled,}
 And he came back unaided and he was dead,
 With his folded arms he lies so still
 In a cold sound sleep on the "Crowell Hill"
 I wish I knew if he felt the leech
 As he felt when our "Fathers' flag was hissed;
 For he slumbers now 'neath a beating cross
 By the side of the one who hissed the flag.

As we go all pale, with the boatman, 'as
 In our final voyage to the other shore,
 'Mid the fearful surge of the rolling tide,
 Sometimes you know
 That friend and foe
 Will crouch and cuddle down side by side.

In the best reviews, somewhere beyond,
 Of the world's grand army train,
 When the books are read to the anxious throng
 And they call for the 11th of Maine,
 And the Judges come to Willey's case,
 Looking so wise and grim;
 Unless by some strange force they rout
 And crush this life's remembrance out,
 Or blot these scenes of warring strife
 When battling for a Nation's life,
 And from my soul wipe every trace
 Of love for Country, Home and Race;
 If any part of me is there,
 In the face of every power I swear
 If Willey funds no credit given
 Behind those balance sheets of in Steam,
 For fighting in the 11th of Maine,
 And reaps thereby no single gain—
 Although a spirit death I die
 With loss of immortality,
 Should I find his case is going hard
 I'll help the old man "run the guard"
 Ere the golden gate swings on him,

David Barker

OLD WILLEY.

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Of the warring men in the ancient days;
What matters it now to you or me
Though the Illiad or Odyssey
May tell of the time when a Trojan corse
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With all my religion, and that wan't much,
My faith wan't clear and my hope wan't bright
Till Daniel E. Willey went into the fight.

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'Tis a term oft used when our clothes get poor--
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For me and others in the neighborhood;
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One word of Grammar, and couldn't read Greek,
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Where the old road butts on the avenue.
Through his leaky boots you could see his feet
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The sordid dust that is scraped from gold.
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Marched out to the front where he fought and bled,

And he came back maimed, and he now is dead.

With folded arms he lies so still

In a cold, sound sleep on the "Crowell Hill."

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As he felt when our father's flag was hissed;

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In our final voyage to the other shore,

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