

# Unplanned Discovery Corrects Source of Historic Quote

## Researchers Seek Source Of Historic Quote

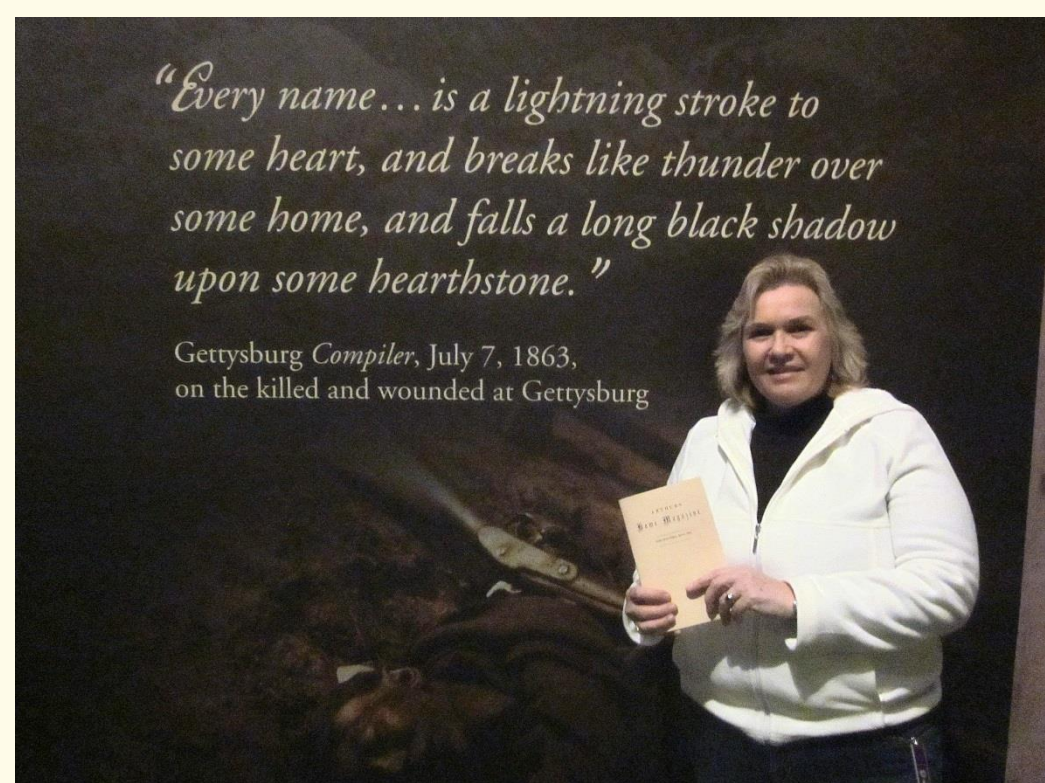
Visit Historic Battlefield

Gettysburg, PA, January 4, 2014—Researchers from the Penn State University Libraries are seeking the source of an historic quote inscribed on a mural at the Gettysburg National Military Park Museum and Visitor Center.



Researcher Cheri Banks at the Gettysburg National Military Park Museum and Visitor Center.

The quote, "Every name... is a lightning stroke to some heart, and breaks like thunder over some home, and falls a long black shadow upon some hearthstone," is attributed to the *Gettysburg Compiler* of July 7, 1863, on the killed and wounded at Gettysburg.



Librarian Sue Kellerman considers the quote inscribed on the mural at the museum.

The search was prompted by a call to Sue Kellerman, Head, Digitization and Preservation Department, from a Civil War historian, who asked Kellerman to confirm the source of the quote. The historian felt confident that the *Compiler* was the source of this heart-felt sentiment published following the Battle of Gettysburg. "When a researcher called to verify the existence of a quote from a Civil War era newspaper," said Kellerman, "I had no idea of the journey I was about to begin."

### Searchable Text Opens Door to Discovery

Optical Character Recognition (OCR), a technology that enables the conversion of different types of documents, such as scanned microfilm or paper documents, PDF files or images captured by a digital camera into editable and searchable data, has opened the door to new research discoveries. When confronted with the challenge of confirming the source of an historic quote, Kellerman immediately logged into Penn State's digitized newspaper repository with its OCR enabled keyword search capabilities.

This repository, Pennsylvania Civil War Era Newspapers, was first launched in 2003 and serves as the most comprehensive source of digitized Pennsylvania newspaper from the Civil War era - pre-war, war time and post-war covering 1830 to 1870. Today, the repository contains over 80 Pennsylvania newspapers titles with hundreds of thousands of key-word searchable newspaper pages from small-town rural areas to major urban centers.

By typing the exact phrase "lightning stroke to some heart" as the search query in the advanced search function, Kellerman found six newspapers that had published the quote. The *Compiler* published it on October 19, 1863, but the July 7, 1863 issue was not found. The earliest newspaper found with the quote was the July 10, 1862 issue of the *American Presbyterian* published in Philadelphia—a full year before the Battle of Gettysburg. The *American Presbyterian* cited the *Home Magazine* as the source of the quote which was embedded in an editorial entitled "Wounded and Killed".

See [Quote Traced](#) page 1 column 5

### Quote Went Viral

The search broadened to other online newspaper databases including *Chronicling America*, *NewspaperArchive*, and *America's Historical Newspapers* by Readex. Researcher Cheri Banks found the quote published 22 times in newspapers in both the North and the South.

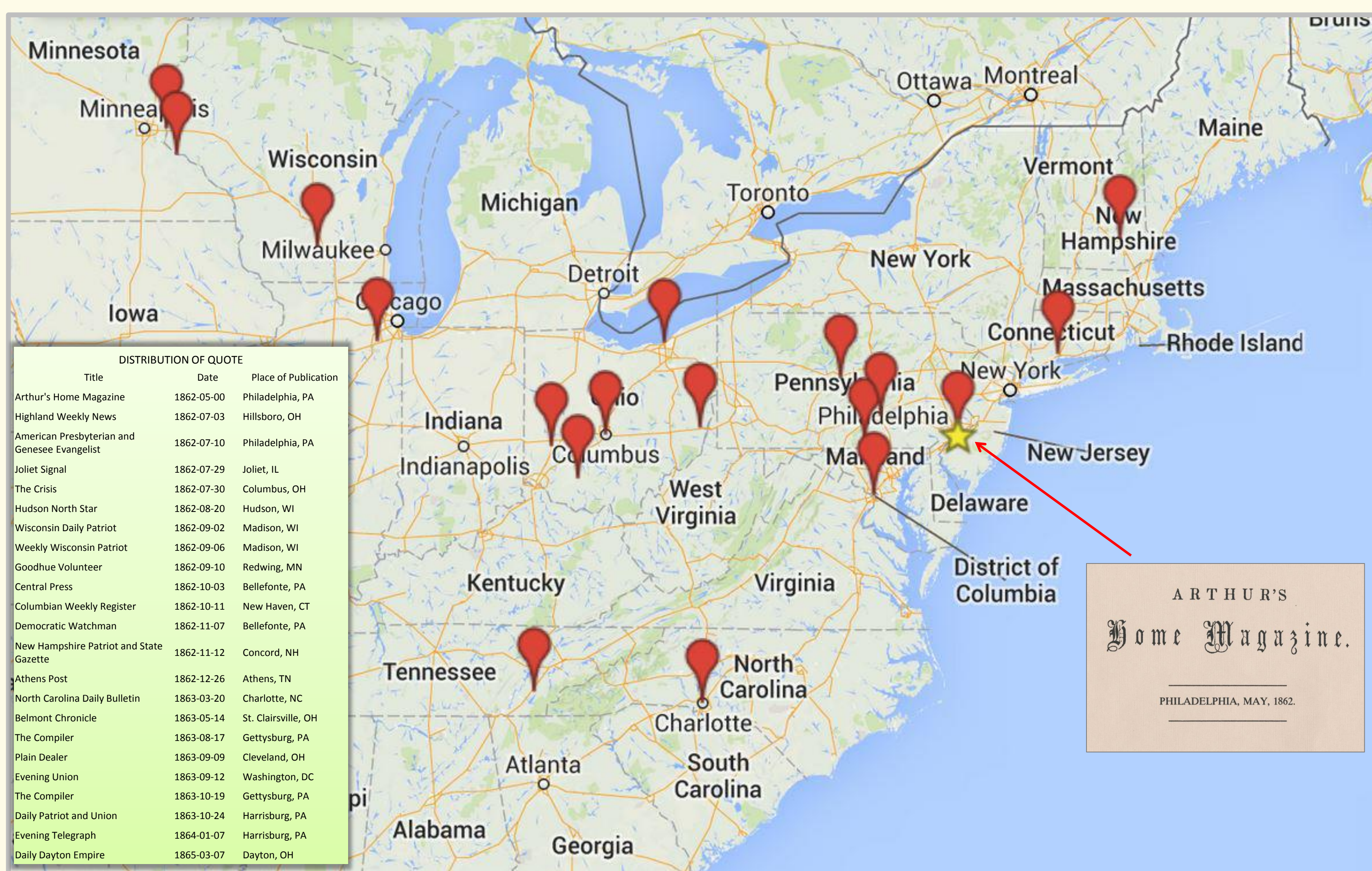
Inscribed on a mural at the Gettysburg National Military Park Museum & Visitor Center

**"Every name... is a lightning stroke to some heart, and breaks like thunder over some home, and falls a long black shadow upon some hearthstone."**

Quote attributed to the *Gettysburg Compiler*, July 7, 1863, on the killed and wounded at Gettysburg

## Historic Quote Went Viral

A map showing the source and distribution of the newspapers that carried the quote.

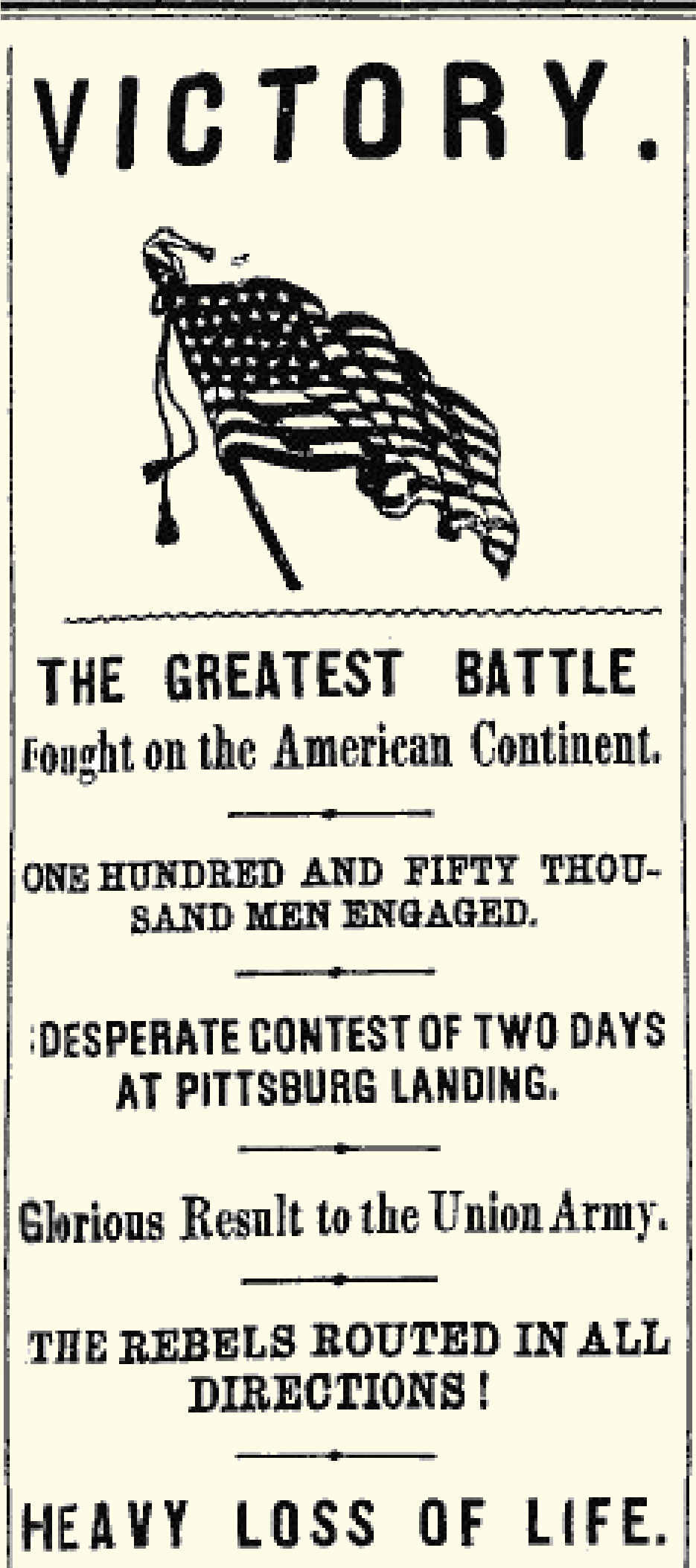


Quote Found In Editorial – "Wounded and Killed" – Attributed to *Home Magazine*  
Published in Philadelphia, May 1862 ----- Three weeks after the Battle of Shiloh, April 6-7, 1862

### Battle of Shiloh

April 6-7, 1862  
Pittsburg Landing, TN

Headlines from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 10, 1862



### "Wounded and Killed"

Editorial Reprinted by  
*Weekly Wisconsin Patriot*  
September 6, 1862  
citing *Home Magazine*

Retrieved from Readex – America's Historical Newspapers

**WOUNDED AND KILLED.**—It takes but little space in the columns of daily papers; but O! what long household stories and biographies are every one of these strange names, we read over and forget!

"Wounded and killed!" Some eye reads the name to whom it is dear as life, and some heart is struck or broken with the blow made by the name among the list.

It is our Henry, or our James, or our Thomas that lies with his poor broken limbs at the hospital, or white, still, and ghastly face on the battle field. Alas! for the eyes that read; alas for the hearts that feel!

"He was my pretty boy, that I've sung to sleep so many times in my arms!" says the poor mother, bowing in anguish that cannot be uttered. "He was my brave, noble husband, the father of my little orphan children!" sobs the stricken wife. "He was my darling brother, that I loved so, that I was proud of," murmurs the sister, amid tears; and so the terrible stroke falls on homes throughout the land.

"Wounded and killed!" Every name in that list is a lightning stroke to some heart, and breaks like thunder over some home, and falls, a long black shadow upon some hearthstone.—*Home Magazine.*



Detail, "Battle of Gettysburg" Cyclorama At Gettysburg National Military Park.

Painted by Paul Dominique Philippeaux. First shown in Boston in 1884.

### Wounded and Killed at Shiloh

*Philadelphia Inquirer*  
April 10, 1862

The casualties are numerous. General GRANT is wounded in the ankle, slightly. General W. H. L. WALLACE, killed. General SMITH, severely wounded. Colonel HALL, Sixteenth Illinois, killed. Colonels LOGAN, Thirty-second Illinois, and DAVIS, Fifty-first Illinois, wounded severely. Major HUNTER, Thirty-second Illinois, killed. The killed, wounded and missing are not less than five thousand. Colonel PEABODY, Twenty-fifth Wisconsin, is also severely wounded.

### Other Recent Battles

*Philadelphia Inquirer*  
March 31, 1862

### Additional List of Killed and Wounded at the Battle of Winchester.

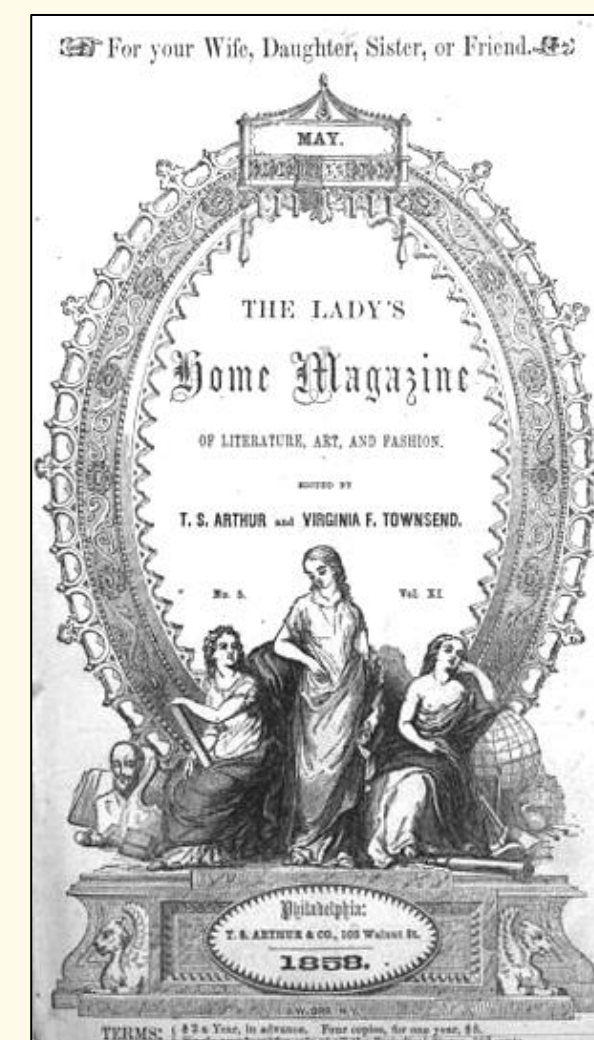
Special Correspondence of the *Inquirer*. WINCHESTER, March 29, 1862. The following are the additional names of the killed and wounded in the late battle at Winchester, Sunday, March 23— EIGHTY-FOURTH PENNSYLVANIA. WOUNDED.

Company A.—John Brooks, seriously; Michael Farrell, slightly; Felix Mellin, slightly. Company B.—Second Corporal Jackson Hollinback, slightly; Joseph Pinkerton. Company C.—Third Sergeant Charles W. Curry, Fifth Sergeant Silas White, seriously; First Corporal William C. Hileman, seriously; Henry Grimes, slightly; Martin Young, slightly; Robert Taylor, slightly. Company D.—Michael Fitzharris, slightly; J. Proser, mortally. Company E.—Color Sergeant Hugh Smith, seriously; Joseph Leiger, seriously; Wm. Gallagher, seriously.

## Quote Traced to Arthur's Home Magazine

Philadelphia, PA  
May 1862

University Park, PA—With the realization that a historic quote was embedded in an editorial in *Home Magazine*, researchers at the Penn State University Libraries honed in on finding the magazine. A search of Google, Wikipedia, and ProQuest's American Periodicals online database, lead to *Arthur's Home Magazine* published in Philadelphia by Timothy Shay Arthur from 1852 to 1898. The magazine was designed for women and children with the inclusion of patterns for fancywork, puzzles for children, poems, and literature that espoused high moral values.



The entire "Wounded and Killed" editorial was printed in the May 1862 issue, volume 19, page 320 and was penned by V.F.T. On closer examination of the editorial, it becomes apparent that newspapers did not reprint the last two paragraphs in which V.F.T. expressed hope that the war would soon be over and the nation "unbroken, united and free!"

But who was V.F.T.?

## Author of Quote Identified

Virginia Frances Townsend

University Park, PA—Virginia Frances Townsend was identified as the author of the editorial "Wounded and Killed" by researchers at the Penn State University Libraries.

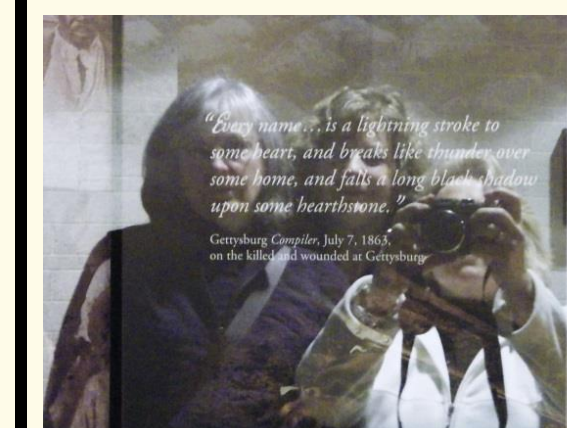


Virginia Frances Townsend 1836-1920

The infamous quote "lightning stroke to some heart" embedded in the editorial was penned by the 26 year old editor of *Arthur's Home Magazine*. Beginning in 1856 as the magazine's editorial assistant at age 19, Townsend along with publisher Timothy S. Arthur, who described her as his "very capable assistant," wrote most of the serials and many of the short stories.

Her editorial mentions the lists of wounded and killed that had been published in the newspapers for the past year. This led researchers to seek out the papers Townsend may have been reading from Philadelphia. A free, online database of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* Civil War Archive yielded news about recent battles that moved Townsend to write her editorial.

The most recent news was about the heavy casualties suffered by Union troops at Pittsburg Landing, TN in the Battle of Shiloh on April 6-7, 1862. And the lists of wounded and killed in the Battle of Winchester, VA on March 23, just two weeks before Shiloh, were still being published.



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