

The Letter

by Marcella Tapia

It was the year 1862. I haven't slept in weeks; if you look at my worn out eyes you will see nothing but sadness. Looking deep enough, you will see that each wrinkle on my old worn out face has its own little story behind it.

Today, I received a letter from my youngest, but also my only son E. R. Boles. He is fighting in the Civil War in New Mexico along with my husband and I haven't heard from them in months. I even think at times that maybe they have gotten killed because I haven't heard a word from anyone returning from the war about them in such a long time. My son is only a boy, but they handed him a gun to protect us. I don't even want to think of all that goes on, but its reality so I will read the letter that my son E. R. Boles has written to me. The letter read as follows:

February 22, 1862

Dearest Mother,

I take this opportunity to write to you today. Yet this letter is with great sorrow that I tell you of the deaths of so many of our friends who have fallen in the battle we have fought in this worthless Territory. The Battle of Valverde which also means Green Valley is one that was fought by us. It is situated five miles above Ft. Craig on the Rio Grande. On Sunday we were to march up the Rio Grande from twelve miles below Ft. Craig. We marched within three miles of the fort when a large force of cavalry and infantry came to meet us. General H. Sibley led his forces of men across the Rio Grande River and up the east side of the river to the fort at Valverde, north of Fort Craig, New Mexico, hoping to cut Federal communication between the fort and military headquarters in Santa Fe. Our troops left Fort Craig to prevent the Confederates from crossing. We only had a few men, I suppose about 1,000 men. There the Confederate troops came to do battle with us. They charged on our men and fired on us.....

(As the tears filled my eyes, I had to stop reading for I lost total vision. My heart was beating faster than ever before having this indescribable sick, aching pain along with it. I knew deep in my heart that the words I was about to read would affect my whole life forever. I have to know though, so I will continue to read this letter.)

Mom, I wish there was another way I could tell you this but I must be blunt.

Father was hit and died at his post not even a few hours after the battle began. I could never forget this date. February 21, 1862, the day I saw my father die.

(As the tears rolled down my face. I fell to my knees. I spoke to God and told him of all the hurt I felt. "Why do you take the life of the one I've lived for? All I asked for was the safe return of my husband and my son. Was that too much to ask of you?" As much as I didn't want to continue the letter I had to. I needed answers so I read once again.)

Mother, father asked me to let you know that he loves you very much and he will wait in the heavens for you. Mom, it hurts so bad. Will the pain ever end? I am so confused and alone. I apologize for ending this letter so soon but I have no more time; my candle is glimmering. I have not yet told half of what needs to be said. The battle of Valverde lasted nine hours. The Confederate troops won the Battle of Valverde. We will soon be moving towards Glorieta to fight another battle that is located in the Santa Fe and San Miguel counties. Don't worry mother; I will soon be home once again. I can't wait to see your beautiful face. I promise to write when we arrive in Glorieta.

P.S.

I Love You

Your son,

E. R. Boles