



*Pvt. Ladd wrote this moving letter in the last hours of his life:*

*Dear Wife and Children:*

*I take my pen with trembling hand to inform you that I will be shot between 2 and 4 o'clock this evening. I have but a few hours to remain in this unfriendly world. There is six of us sentenced to die because of the six Union soldiers that were shot by Reeve's men. My dear wife, don't grieve for me. I want you to meet me in Heaven. I want you to teach the children piety, so that they may meet me at the right hand of God. I can't tell you my feelings but you can form some idea of my feelings when you hear of my fate. I don't want you to let this bear on your mind anymore than you can help, for you are now left to take care of my dear children. Tell them to remember their dear father. I want you to tell my friends that I have gone home to rest.*

*I want you to go to Mr. Connor and tell him to assist you in winding up your business. If he is not there, get Mr Cleveland. If you don't get this letter before St. Francis River gets up, you had better stay there until you can make a crop, and you can go in the dry season. It is now past 4 a.m. I must bring my letter to a close, leaving you in the hands of God. I send you my best love and respects in the hour of death. Kiss all the children for me. You need have no uneasiness about my future state, for my faith is well founded.....*

*Good-by Amy,*

Amy, it is said, never got the letter, particularly the part that warned her to wait out high waters on the St. Francis River. She loaded two wagons. One of the wagons tipped over crossing the flooding river and all its cargo, including the family Bible, was washed away. She ended up raising her children in Arkansas without ever seeing her husband's last words.

Asa Valentine Ladd, a farmer, enlisted in the Confederate army March 10, 1861, in Stoddard County. He took with him two horses and left behind a wife, Amy, and seven children. He served a mostly undistinguished military career and was involved in no general engagements. He was captured in Sedalia Oct. 16, 1864.

Yet some still wonder why southern people can not forget, why we honor our fallen and why we cherish memories both good and bad.