In May 1861 Milas A. Kirkpatrick, at the age of nineteen, enlisted in Company L 16th North Carolina Regiment. This was the first company of volunteers to be organized in Haywood County to uphold the rights of secession and was under the leadership of R. E. A. Love, Captain, Alden Howell, Jule Welch and George Rogers Lieutenants. There was no railroad west of the Blue Ridge so it was necessary for Company L to hike to Morganton where it was picked up by the North Carolina railroad and carried to Raleigh. Here it remained in training camp until the following September. This camp was located in Lovejoy Grove which was then only a vacant field but is now near the center of Raleigh containing Meredith College, the home of the Governor of the state, and other handsome improvements.

This regiment was sent in September to Stanton Virginia by rail and then across country to Valley Mountain West Virginia for the winter of '61 and '62. This was a very hard winter and from epidemics of measles, typhoid and other causes several members of Company L died including two brothers Lawson and Leander Kirkpatrick. Early in the spring of '62 the regiment was sent back into Virginia in the direction of Richmond. At Acoquan Bay the regiment was reorganized with Champ Davis being made Colonel, and R. G. A. Love Lt. Col. Alden Howell was promoted to Captain of Company L with Jule Welch, George Rogers and Tom Ferguson Lieutenants.

The first real engagement of "The 16th North Carolina" came in May '62 at the famous Battle Of Seven Pines. During this engagement the casualties were very heavy including Champ Davis, Colonel of the regiment. The fight lasted on into the night, a night of intense darkness, rain, and horror. The Confederates, greatly outnumbered, were in retreat, being hotly pursued by the victorious Yankees. During this mad rush of the two opposing armies Milas A. Kirkpatrick was shot down by a bullet passing through his left thigh just above the knee joint. After he had fallen to the ground his cries for help mingling with those from a battle-field strewn with wounded and dying men, soon became recognized by an old comrade and friend from boyhood, Lt. Tom Ferguson who rushed to his side and attempted to carry him from the field. Lt. Ferguson knew nothing of the methods used in modern warfare of handling wounded men on the field and so it was necessary to get help. After calling on a number of Confederate soldiers with no avail this young Lieutenant, becoming almost desperate, drew his sword on a Yankee soldier-boy, threatening to cut his head off if he refused to help him remove this wounded man from the field. The boy obeyed the order and the two men
carried him to the side of the road and laid him on a pile of rails where he remained from nine o'clock that night until ten o'clock the following morning without food, medicine or water. Then he was loaded onto an ambulance and hauled nine miles over a corduroy road into Richmond.

In Richmond he was taken to a Georgia hospital. Since there was no North Carolina hospital there. This Georgia hospital had only one vacant bed, this being in a third story ward, so, as there was no elevator, he had to be carried up two flights of stairs with the broken leg dangling from the wound made fourteen hours before, and yet no medicine had been administered to alleviate the pain. When the doctors came and examined the shattered thigh they all decided it best to amputate except one (a young Dr. Campbell, later of Augusta, Georgia?) He interceded saying, "That boy doesn't want to lose his leg if it can possibly be saved, and I believe it can". Soon the wound began to heal and in about six weeks he was discharged from the hospital and came home.

He remained at home about a year teaching school and helping with the farm work. In the meantime Company L had been transferred as Company E in Thomas's Legion. This regiment was doing picket duty in Western North Carolina and East Tennessee. This crippled soldier was not able to do full duty but he returned to his old command where he was made commissary sergeant in charge of a wagon train, which scouted the country for supplies. On one trip in search of provisions, he told about going to Ashe and Watauga Counties where he found a man living on a dirt floor who had over six hundred bushels of corn in his crib, and when he was made to divide with the army he shed tears over it. On another trip of this kind he told about finding a wagon loaded with flour broken down in the river and he and his men waded out into the river and got flour which they made bread of without even soda or salt.

WILAS A. KIRKPATRICK THE PRIVATE CITIZEN.

At the age of seventeen Wilas A. Kirkpatrick happened into the court house in Waynesville one day and found old Professor "Billie" Wilson holding the teachers institute for county certificates. It was all oral so this boy joined in with the classes and he received the highest grades given on the examination. He taught school that year at Fines Creek at a salary of twelve dollars per month.

He didn't have the opportunity of even a common school education yet he was in reality a well educated man. In hundreds of his letters there is not to be found a single misspelled word, and his punctuation and English are of a very high order. Also he was very fond of figures and took great delight in solving the old Arithmetic problems.

Quite contrary to most farmers of his day his interest was not in making money nor in obtaining notoriety. He possessed the qualifications to have filled creditably any office in the county and many in the state yet he was too modest to ask for such. His interests were in other directions. His chief ambition was to educate his large family and to this end almost everything else was sacrificed, while he obtained his own personal pleasure out of reading good books. He was a profound student of Shakespeare being able to quote accurately hundreds of passages from Hamlet, Macbeth, The Merchant Of Venice, King Henry VIII etc. "Bobbie" Burns was also a great favorite and he could speak the Scotch dialect fluently. His library contained all the volumes of Sir Walter Scott and Charles Dickens and many of these particularly Oliver Twist, Pickwick Papers and others had been many times re-read.
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1903

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