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Biographical Sketch of G. W. Gordon
Written by himself

I was born in Seneca County, Ohio Dec. 7, 1834. In 1871 when but 8 years old came to Ind. And was reared in Butler Township, Dekalb County. I was one of the young pioneers passed my youth almost in the woods with ax, maul and wedge, crosscut and hand spike, boiling sugar and black salts, plowing among stumps and roots, helped to range many log cabins for pioneers. Helped to cut out roads and bridges that are now main thoroughfares, was said to be best chopper in the neighborhood as was proved by many chopping races. Was expert with the rifle and many wild turkeys, squirrels, coon, possum, woodchuck, pheasant and other game were my victim. Wolves and bear were plenty but I never killed any of them. Would relate many amusing incidents if space would permit. Purchased school books with proceeds of racoon and skunk fur. I assisted in clearing and cultivating two farms and endured all the privation and hardship incident to pioneer life. I received a good education for those days attending district school in the log school house. During winter months passed common branches then taught, was a good speller and in attending numerous spelling (??) If I did not spell down went home disappointed. Attended select school in Noble County studied higher branches and in 1884 and 1888 attended the Methodist College at Fort Wayne with intention of graduating but after ten months broke down and health failed by too incessant study. Returned home and engaged in farming summer months and school teaching winter months till the breaking out of the rebellion.

Enlisted Sept 25th 1861 as a private in Co K 44th Ind. Assisted in recruiting and organizing the company, furnished at the organization 28 men and in all about one fourth of the company. At the organization was elected 2nd Lieut by an almost vote but was cheated out of the commission by the intregues of Freemasonry and appointed 2nd sergt with promise of promotion. All the officers of the co. and regt were masons. Finally in 1862 a vacancy occured in the co., Parks resigning, and I was agin elected 2nd liet unanimously as was expected was again cheated by th masons. This brought me up to orderly serg. During the winter of 1863 a vacancy occurred and I was again the choice of my company for 2nd lieut and the men thought that I would certainly receive what I was entitled to at the organization col's son, the 5th sergt was promoted overe all of us (col's name S. Aldrich) This nearly caused a mutiny in the company but I advised the men to submit, that masonry was to strong that we would whip the rebels and attend to those fellows afterwards. I will state now that these men are all dead many long years ago except Col H. B., G. W. McConnel and W. S. Bennet. Mat Caltel? received my place in the organization and is now a broken down pennilss hulk in the far west. During the fall of 1863 I was ordered before a Board of Examiners for examination and promotion and being well drilled passed a successful examination and was offered a captain's commission 44 ?? colored Infantry if my memory serves me right of c a ? This I refuse preferring to r

with my company until my enlisted time ran out. But here, I think, I made one of the mistakes of my life. The 44th Colored proved to be a fighting regt. Had I accepted the commission I would have been in line of promotion and as near as I could learn afterward the oldest commission and first for promotion was offered me. At the reorganization and reenlistment of the 44th due in the winter of 1864, I concluded no to re-enlist on account of poor health and tyranny of Col. Aldrich but who was now at home in Angola, Ind. I had hard work to refuse. The Major (Curtis) called me to his tent one day three times and begged me to re-enlist promising that I should have justice that he would state the facts to (?). That I had been abused and amends must be made but I had made up my mind and would not swerve. But a short time later Col. Aldrich died. Could I have foreseen this I would certainly re-enlisted notwithstanding poor health. Now for our campaigns (??). We left Fort Wayne November 23, 1861, remained at Indianapolis a few days to uniform and equip, then went to Evansville, Ind. By way of Terra Haute and Vincennes. Camped in Evansville three weeks then marched to Henderson, Ky. I was left in charge of sick and baggage with orders to join regt by steam boat first opportunity. This I did the next day. We were now in Dixie, frequent skirmishes took place, beating the long roll was not infrequent. January 2, 1862 8 companies of the regt. Was ordered to Calhoun, Ky. We were attached to (??) Division, Company K and G. Were left to garrison. We have not space to mention numerous incidents, notably among which were negro sales, slavery still being in force. It was hard work to keep the soldiers from interfering. Bodies of rebels were constantly in the vicinity. Reinforcements came from Evansville several times to be on hand for expected attacks. Mar 8th 62 K & G on orders to join the regt boarded boats for down the Ohio. Were placed on the lower deck and the officers monopolized the cabin. This did not suit the boys who thought they were as good as officers. I was then acting orderly of Co. K ordered to form and fix bayonets, Co. G falling out also. A demand to be admitted being refused an advance overcame the guards at the foot and top of stairs and possession was taken of the cabin. Here we found Generals, Colonels, and a score of officers of lower rank, together with a number of ladies. Orders to clear the room were met with curses and spreading of blankets on the carpet for a night's rest. We held the position to the end of the journey at Paducah. Here we changed boats for up the Tennessee. Arrived at Ft. Henry Mar 10th. Here we found the army of the Tenn Who were victors of Fort Donaldson The river was filled with transports loaded with troops and munitions of war. Started up the river the 11th arrived at Savannah the 18th. Here we found an immense fleet, the entire army being concentrated at this point. Here we joined regt. (?) OF March 18th at dawn found the 44th Ind. With co K and 4th Ohio on board. A boat steaming up the River Tenn. In two hours landed at Pittsburg Landing, the 44th was the first to land on that historic ground.

Our advance and maneuvering that day was cautious. That night Co's K & G were on picket being the first union pickets at Shilo. One of the officers being absent I was ordered by the Col. To lay aside my gun and act as leut. In this capacity I had charge of the picket post on the main road from the landing to Corinth. We were assigned to Hubert's division 4th Laurmans Brigade 2 Army of the Tennessee. The 16th went into camp one mile from the landing. April 2nd participated in a grand review and for the first time saw our commander, Gen. Grant. Skirmishing at the front constant. The evening of the 4th outpost attacked in force. The long roll was greeted with cheers, the entire army in line of battle. The 44th was soon with the brigade to find the enemy repulsed and in retreat. The morning of April 6th 1862 while the 44th was at breakfast the battle opened. I was a short distance from the company at the spring filling my canteen. I was soon with my company but instead of my sword I took my gun. The first position we took was in the hornets nest. Here my regt made a record that has gone into history. Never did men do harder or more effective fighting. The regt formed under fire as it did repeatedly during the two day battle. We did not retreat until 4 o'clock in afternoon after we had fired the last round of ammunition and we could get no more. We took carbines from our dead comrades. The 44th never wavered from morning till night. Charge after charge did not break our line. We passed that awful night near the landing supporting heavy seige guns. We were engaged the following day 7th and were on the advance line till the enemy retreated. Were to tired to follow the enemy but went directly to our camp. If space would permit much could be stated that would be interesting. I was with my company till close of fight and was not hurt. Came out of the battle with only a number of bullet holes in my clothing. The army soon started for Corinth, the location of the rebel army, We were almost constantly on duty and much sickness prevailed. Provision was plenty but hardly fit, weather being damp and musty. When near Corinth I was taken sick first with diareha and then with typhus fever and came near pegging out. The Regt making an advance everyday. I was left in the rear, I lay one day and one night on the ground with a burning fever, without medicine or anything to eat or drink, without no cover but a blanket and raining all the time. One of the Regimentals Drs. Being sick, the other one had more than he could attend. When they came for me and others with an ambulance I could not walk. I thought it was all day that we jolted over corduroy bridges to the regt. The doctor

shook his head and gave me some medicine which he said would kill or cure pretty quick, I thought this poor encouragement, in two or three hours he repeated the dose and so on, but the beam tipped in my favor and the fever was broken but left me in terrible shape, my joints became stiff rheumatism set in and I was sent to the hospital at Hamburg Landing and in a few days to field hospital at Savannah, suffered terribly with diareah and rheumatism and sometime in July was loaded on hospital boat and started north and in about ten days landed at Keokuk, Iowa. After I was in the hospital there about ten days was attacked with lung fever and palpitations of heart. I concluded again my service for country was ended, but I again rallied which I think was owing to willpower and grit. My convalescence was very slow, I was finally able to hobble around hospital on crutches, I was constantly under the drs. care and did not begin to feel like myself till November and as soon as I was able to walk without crutches I applied for permission to join my Regt. This the Dr refused saying I could not live long if I attempted to go, but he offered me the position of hospital steward stating I would probably never be able for active duty and I could hold this position as long as the war lasted, but I had become so completely sick of hospital that I refused. About the last of Nov. I succeeded in getting a discharge from the hospital with orders to report to Board of Examiners at St. Louis, Mo. I drew two days rations and started down the Mississippi. The river above the mouth of the Missouri was low and the boat repeatedly ran on sand bars and it was five days before we arrived at St. Louis. I reported at once and was ordered to convalescent camp being pronounced unfit for duty. I determined not to go if I could get down the river. I was to go to the camp next morning. In the early morning when those that were ordered to their regiments started for the landing I managed to be with them and as soon as the boat left the wharf I was all right not knowing they would not land for one soldier. Arrived at Cairo, Ill. In good time and being tired of boat riding I applied to the commander of post for transportation to New Albany, Ind. By rail after considerable skirmishing succeeded. Started next morning by way of Centralia, Ill., Vincennes, Ind. to New Albany.

Arriving 1.00 a.m. slept in depot till morning, crossed the Ohio to Newport, walked 4 miles to Louisville. My objective point was Nashville where my regt was in camp. I went to the Louisville and Nashville depot but when I attempted to board a train for Nashville found a guard at every car door with orders to pass no single soldier in without a pass. This I did not have after I left St. Louis. I had no pass or document of any kind to show where I belonged. My orderly sgt. Stripes had carried me through so far but not to board a train that day. My plan was to avoid the barracks and convalescent camp and get to my regt without delay as I knew they were about to advance on Murfreesboro. Toward evening I found I had to give up boarding a train being hungry, foot sore, tired and half sick. I went into the city and reported knowing when once in the building it would be difficult to get away without orders. Was assigned to quarters in exchange barrack in a large building on Main Street. Here I found a comrade of the company, Frank Cornell, who had left the regt sick before I did and was also on his way back. He was pleased as I to have company the balance of the journey. We tried again and again to get orders to go to the front but failed in every attempt. Finally after two weeks chafing and growling an order came for a thousand me to guard sections of a train to Nashville we were in that thousand. We were drawn in line in the street armed and organized. I was placed in charge of a company, forget the letter in fact. I did not pay much attention to my command, the men all being strangers to me. I told them they might all be brigadier generals if they wished. But our sport changed to anxiety when 6 miles from Mumfordsville Ky. Halted and we could hear firing from the front. We heard from the guards at the post that Morgan had made a raid and had torn up the RR track beyond the town and perhaps attacked the place. We prepared for action. The train cautiously to within about one mile of town where we marched in without firing a shot. The next day, after a hot skirmish, Morgan withdrew finding the place too strongly guarded. We remained here till RR was repaired and then started for Nashville arriving there at 10 at night in a drenching rain. We found great excitement caused by report the rebels were about to attack the city. We were marched thru mud and water to fortifications to find the report false. We then about 2 AM marched to city and quartered in Jollicoffer building. Here my comrade and myself were examined by surgeons, marked unfit for duty and ordered to report at convalescent camp. We determined not to do so. During the day we accidentally heard of a hundred men to guard an ammunition train to start at 2 AM This we concluded was our opportunity. Being on the alert we were on hand and when the men filed out of the building we were with them. Left the city at dawn of day. We found walking in our weak condition anything but pleasant. Soon fell in the rear. Couriers from the front told us we were in danger of

being captured, the country being full of guerilla. To them we paid no attention. After passing Laverne 1 mile could go no further. We slept that night in a cotton gin. Next morning before day and after breakfast of coffee and hardtack we were on the march. This day we were not alone. A constant stream of wounded and prisoners were met on the way to Nashville. We marched to the music of cannon. At Stone River, arrived on the battlefield about 12 AM Jan 2nd 1862. We soon found our company and regt. I was greeted as coming from the grave. The boys never expected to see me alive again. Jan 4th marched to Murfresboro and camped east of the city on Leabarron Pike. Remained here during forepart of summer. Made frequent foraging expeditions and reconnesence. July 4 started with division (??) For Mewinnville (???) . Three days march brought us to the city. Half hour shelling drove the rebels out of the city. Camped here building rifle pits and forts till Sept 2. Started for Chattanooga crossed Cumberland Mountains into Sequah Valley. Marched down this fertile valley via Dunlap Jasper Battle Creek to Bridgeport, crossed into Alabama thence through mountains over roughest roads we had yet seen to Lookout Mountain. Crossed nose of the mountain and halted in Chattanooga Valley the rebels having evacuated the city. After the distribution of three days rations and extra ammunition the 44th gave three cheers and with Evitenden Corp started after the foe. Passed Rossville at sunset and when at the foot of Missionary Ridge musketry was heard at the top. We went up the ascent double quick time to find the rebels on the retreat. That night we camped on what was later a part of Chickamauga Battle Ground. The following day captured Ringgold Ga. After a brief fight, mainly artillery the 44th the 44th being the first regt to enter the city, we continued our advance skirmishing at long range. Found all the RR bridges in flames. Many rebels fell wounded fell into our hands. Camped near Tunnel Hill. At three AM ordered to counterattack in quick time, officers having found that the rebel army lay between our corps and that of Thomas and McCook. This was a hard march. We passed over Chickamauga Battlefield and at night arrived at Lee and Gorders Mills. The next day our division (Cleves) made a reconnsance south of the Mills to Snow Hill the enemy retreating and fighting as we advanced. We were under fire all day, rebels sometimes shelling us mercilessly. At dark withdrew and camped again at the Mills.

Next day being Sept 16th 1863 division marched west past Crawfish Springs and deployed across Lookout Valley. The 17th camped at Crawfish Springs and enjoyed a needed rest. The 18th about 2 PM while we were cooking dinner the rebels opened up with artillery in front right and left seemingly for miles. We were not aware that the battle had commenced and that we were on the battleground and that Murnas and McCook's Corps had not arrived. Our division was hurried to the vicinity of Lee and Crowders Mill then in the possession of the enemy, formed in line of battle under fire and received a tremendous view of artillery duel. At dark heavy fighting with musketry and artillery was heard about a mile to our left. Gen. Wilder cavalry at left wing of corps was hotly engaged -- enemy trying to get in our rear. All communications being cut off the 44th and 56th Ohio were ordered to advance and open communication. A mile march found the brigade of cavalry retreating in confusion. The two regiments left the road and advanced into the woods and soon found the enemy. Here we had a mighty fight hot and heavy. The woods looked like a torchlight procession, we were fighting perhaps ten to one, had the rebels known we were but two small regts we would have been gobbled in. The darkness favored us. We frequently changed positions. The boys said we formed line of battle 13 times before midnight. Firing ceased about that time. At 3 PM orders were given in a whisper to fall back to the road. Our videtts were not more than 30 feet from our line and rebel videtts? about the same distance from ours. The two regiments were the first infantry engaged at the Battle of Chickamauga. After falling back we threw up breastwork till daylight. At that time Thomas Corps commenced passing to our left. We now knew that the army had concentrated but would hardly have time to get in position before rebel attack. Soon the battle commenced with tremendous cannoning. Division after division was soon thrown into action. The spot of our last night fight was now a scene of awful carnage. As Van Cleve's division passed we fell into our place in the brigade and in a few minutes were in the midst of the fight. Space forbids a description of scenes and incidents that day. Evening found the battle undecided with advantage of the rebels. The 20th found us in the fight all day long. Evening found us on the ????? the key to battlefield. Here we repulsed the enemy time and again. My gun became so hot I had to cease firing and let it cool off. Here I saw Gen. Garfield and a dozen generals urging

the bleeding men to hold their position and saved Gen. Sherman and we did it. While the rebels were making their last ground assault and we were fighting as never men fought before or since, we were overjoyed to see Gen. Steadman with his division coming in double quick to our aid and just in time. The enemy had gained the hill to our right. The division was soon in action, some of the regiments firing as they ran. Now the fight was awful but of short duration. The rebels were defeated and the battle ended. At ten that night we (Van Cleeves Division) were ordered to retreat to Chattanooga. This was an awful night for me tired, hungry and thirsty and no water. For 8 miles the road was one mass of men, ambulances. Dead and dying on all sides, wounded carried by their comrades. I passed the entire battle without hurt, piece of shell tearing off a part of my pants only. Arrived at Chattanooga sunrise and the 44th was almost immediately ordered east of town on Missionary Ridge to guard a gap on the road. Passed the day resting, eating and drinking. Morning of 22nd saw large cloud of dust towards Chattanooga Battlefield. Knew the rebel army was in motion, we quickly built a breastwork and ambush by covering with hazel brush. Plan of battle were formed, pickets were to hold their ground as long as possible and retreat slowly until near our position and then run past us down the hill and then come up to our line. It worked admirably, we did not open fire until the rebels cleared. Field in front of us was full of rebels up with a yell such a scampering was laughable. I believe that our first fire killed and wounded half their number. They came again with a stronger force and after an exciting fight were again repulsed leaving ground covered with dead and wounded. There never was a prouder set of men than the little remnant of the 44th Ind. About this time, cheer after cheer rent the air as volley after volley echoed over the hill. But the third time they came we were not so successful. They attacked front right and left, the crossfire drove us out of the position. We were ordered to retreat to the foot of the ridge but when half way down the regiment halted and concluded to go back and retake the breastworks. All were agreed to disobey orders, formed in line gave three cheers.

cheers and went to within thirty feet of breastworks now in possession of the astonished rebels. We remained long enough to fire two rounds. Here I came near being shot, a bullet passing through my hair just above the ear. Their artillery now in range opened on us and infantry charging on a run we lost no time till we reached the foot of the ridge. Here we found the 13th Ohio which also had been formed. A heavy skirmish and slowly retreated fighting all day in Indian fashion from behind trees, rocks and hillocks. Our orders were to keep the rebels back as long as possible in order to give the army around Chattanooga time to fortify. We could see red lines of fresh earth spring up from Lookout Mountain to the river above the city and below the ridge and knew that if a general attack was not made before night our army would be safely entrenched. About an hour before sundown we arrived at the RR track about 3/4 mile from line of army, skirmishes were thrown forward and rest of us were sitting or standing on track when the rebels, by some means, placed a small cannon on the track about 800 yards from us and whiz came a shell through both regiments. The explosion wounded several in 13th Ohio and before we had time to lay plans for its capture another shell followed the first. This one came so near my head it knocked me endways. I could not think for a minute where I was and when I recovered the regt was making a circuit through the woods to capture the cannon. I followed up and met three of the boys coming after me supposing I was killed. While I was telling them how dizzy I felt another shot passed within a few feet of us. We joined the regt which was now engaged in a brisk fight with infantry but we did not get the cannon, it next spoke from the woods beyond the track. We gained possession of the RR track and held it by hard work till ten o'clock at night when we were relieved by 19th Ohio and marched inside the fortification and for the first time in ten days had a good meal, hot coffee and nights rest. I did not get over the effects of the cannon shot for a month. We were now besieged by the enemy but were certainly on the watch--slept on our arms for a week. The 3rd night about 12 o'clock Palmers Division next to right of ours was attacked in force. The whole army was in the trenches in a minute expecting a general assault but the attack did not extend further than our part of the line. The fighting for 15 or 20 minutes was fierce, flame spurted from batteries and forts and lines ????? looking like lurid sheets of fire lightning up the whole valley. The rebels were repulsed with slaughter. During the next 2 months the scenes in and around Chattanooga were exciting almost a constant cannonading, shell dropping around us daily attracting little attention except when uncomfortable close.

The rebels burnt several supply trains. Our rations soon ceased coming, we could not get out to forage and came near starving. At one time in Nov. I went two days and two nights without anything to eat and the captain, cook and myself each stole an ear of corn which partly relieved our hunger. Soldiers picked up corn grains from gutters for food. Some days we drew 1/4 rations and again 1/8 some days nothing. Once I drew for the company, now 15 men, 1 tablespoon full of coffee and 2 crackers of the large kind. I counted out the coffee grains to the men each watching that none received an extra grain. The crackers I hammered to bits and made 15 little piles and called the men around that all might be satisfied that all the piles were all the same size. I then ordered one of the men to turn his back to the company. I took a stick, pointed to a pile and asked him whose pile is this. He named a comrade and so on till each man had his pile. The men were so near starved that they were unreasonable and some almost insane. About 1st of Nov the 44th ?????? larger than a full company almost wiped out by continuous duty at the front were detached by Gen Commanding for provost guards in the city and I will here state that the regt was on continuous duty in the city until muster out nearly a year later and close of war. About Nov 2nd Gen Grant arrived and assumed command of the army. The old hero soon made a change. The 23rd he made an attack on the rebel right. The 24th the Battle of Lookout Mountain was fought on rebel left. The 25th Sherman's Army attacked the rear of rebel right and Gen Thomas with Army of Cumberland assisted by 11th ??? Corps assaulted the center and stormed Missionary Ridge. These were the grandest sights I ever saw. After this we soon had rations. I now had easy times, nothing to do but make the details, draw rations, make reports and keep the company in trim. I will state right here that I often had entire charge of the company during my three years service, officers being on detached duty or at home or lounging around some unknown places. I often had to drill the company, take them out on detail duty, make out payrolls and lazy officers received the pay for services I performed. Jan 1st 1864 about 100 men of the regt reenlisted in veteran service and some started home on furlough and to recruit. I kept charge of the co. Quarters while they were absent in company with others who did not reenlist. The 1st of April I was granted a furlough of twenty days by Gen Thomas and went home for the first time since enlistment 2 1/2 years ago. Summer of 64 passed without any fighting. I passed the time between the company and provost Marshals office. At latter office I had charge of rations which I issued to recruits and convalescents going to the front and discharged men going home. Some days I issued rations to one or two hundred and perhaps next day to as many as a thousand. I was frequently ordered by Gen Steadman to detail men to guard straggling bodies of recruits and convalescents. One time I concluded to go myself.

????? for 1st Ohio ?????????????? Artillery bound for Knoxville Tenn. I took them up remaining there a few days to look at the country. When I returned this was the last except to ?????? around the city till my dscharge Nov 22nd 1864. I started home with about 50 of the regt. We remained at Nashville upwards of one week before we had an opportunity to settle with government. I was December before I arrived at home. I almost immediately went into the photographic business with intention of returning to Chatanooga ?????????? After I had my instruments purchased and about ready ?????? the war suddenly collapsed. ??? worked in the business in Fort Wayne about 1 year then concluded ?????????? that I would have better health on a farm. Moved to Butler Township, Dekalb County near my old home commenced farming. Taught my last school ?????? 66 & 67. After trying to farm for several years I found my health was so poor that I was compelled to quit. I sold -----to go into photographic business. In 1870 I ran for county auditor on the Republican ticket was defeated by a small majority-the entire Democratic ticket being elected. In 1871 I moved to Auburn, purchased a photographic gallery, was successful and prosperous till Sept. 20th 1872 was taken sick mainly caused by disease contracted in the army. I was in bed nearly 6 months and unable to carry on my business successfully for 5 years. Dec. 18, 1881 was approved postmaster of Auburn, Ind and commissioned by President Arthur. Served till Sept 10th 1884-3 years and 8 months when was suspended by democratic Pre. Cleveland for reasons unknown to me as I never heard of charges and received ?????? application to the president because I voted for Blaine. I have always been a Republican. Voted for Fremont, Lincoln, Grant, Hayes, Garfield and ?????? In my ??? year was elected clerk of Butler Township. Elected next year and served one year as Township master. Have been an Odd Fellow since '71. First member of Auburn Lodge and now ?????? Lodge 591. Have passed the chairs and been to Grand Lodge a number of times, served ??? terms as Deputy Grand Master and now treasurer of the lodge for the ninth term. I belong to Dekalb Post 67 G & R. Was its commander during year of 1885. Am a pensioner at \$12 a month. Was married to Mary C. Crouse Nov 20 1856. Have one daughter, Minnie now 13 years old. We have been members of the M. E. church since 1868.

Auburn Ind
Feb the 10th 1886