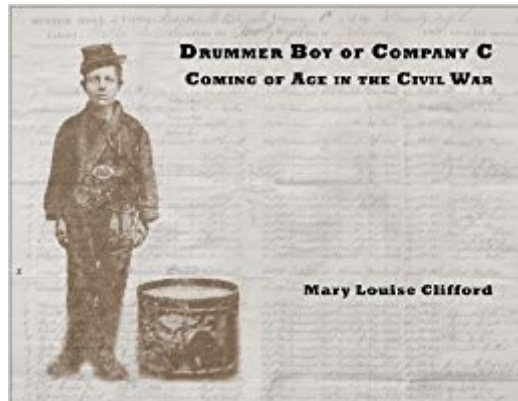




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# Drummer Boy Of Company C: Coming Of Age During The Civil War



## Synopsis

In 1861, when he was 14 years old, Almon left home after the start of the Civil War. Too young and too small to enlist, he followed Indiana infantry regiments for almost a year before he found a company that would enlist him as a drummer boy. His 75th Indiana Infantry Volunteer regiment was sent south through Kentucky to foil threatening Confederate armies. They marched and skirmished into Tennessee and wintered in Murfreesboro. In the spring they participated in the Tullahoma Campaign, fought their way through Hoover's Gap, then marched on to Chickamauga. A major battle was fought there on September 19-20, 1863. Al was busily helping wounded soldiers off the battleground when his field hospital was captured. Al spent 14 months as a prisoner of war in four different Confederate prisons: Richmond, Danville, Andersonville, and Florence. Paroled finally, he rejoined his regiment in 1865. In June they marched down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C., part of the victorious Grand Army of the Republic. This true story is based on primary sources including a memoir written by Almon. Intended for readers age 14 and up, *Drummer Boy of Company C: Coming of Age in the Civil War* will be published on the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Chickamauga, September 20, 2013.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 6-9  
In a book that is very much a labor of love, the author relates the experience of her grandfather, Almon Beneway, as a drummer boy and prisoner of war in the American Civil War. Beneway enlisted at age 14, beginning as a man-of-all-work, "brushing the lieutenant's uniform and blackening his shoes," before becoming a regimental drummer. Sent home

from the front once, he reenlisted against his mother's will. The use of primary-source documents is exemplary, with lengthy quotes from both published first-person recounting as well as her grandfather's unpublished memoir, newspaper accounts, documents from the National Archives Compiled Military Service Records, and a breathtaking, beautifully placed array of photographs and period drawings—œ portraits, maps, and illustrations. Gray-shaded sidebars give additional information on topics as varied as minie balls, battle organization/chaos, sources, and specific information sources for statements in the text. The text is readable and involving. Given all these strengths, it is a shame that the author felt the need to fictionalize. Information is often relayed in the form of conversations that "might have" or "probably" happened, and frequently these conversations are treated subsequently as fact. These kinds of insertions will make it difficult for readers in the middle school range—œ to whom this title might well appeal—œ to discern the difference between fact and fiction. Librarians and teachers, then, should at the very least be aware of this aspect of the text when considering purchase. A lovely, if flawed, work that does not replace such standards as Jim Murphy's *The Boys' War* (Clarion, 1990).—œ Ann Welton, Grant Elementary School, Tacoma, WA—œ (c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

It is said that every war is a boy's war. Clifford's grandfather, Almon Beneway, joined up in 1861 as a 14-year-old boy of small stature and left a veteran, four years hence. Using his pseudonym, Albert Walton, he served as a drummer boy, a thoughtful brother in arms to his regiment, a prisoner of war, and later a chronicler for his family of the most divisive episode in our nation's history. Accessibly written by Beneway's granddaughter and meticulously researched by his great-granddaughter, this visually appealing, sepia-toned volume invites readers into the saga. Shaded box insets offer definitions, excerpts from journals, and more bits of pertinent information. A wide range of primary sources, including Mathew Brady's photographs, maps, drawings, and original war documents, add further authenticity. Even Clifford's endnotes embrace young scholars: "Don't be intimidated by endnotes. They supply important information without cluttering up the text."—œ An excellent reference resource. Grades 7-12. --Gail Bush

I personally enjoyed this book since the drummer boy is my Great-Grandfather and wanted to know more about him and his experiences. I felt it was very well written and must say that there was nothing Civil about the Civil War. I love history and found this to be very informative.

This was fascinating. A different perspective on the civil war from a 14 yr old boys viewpoint. I was shocked on the treatment of imprisoned men. The illustrations were heart breaking. This is a must read for us history buffs! Well done Ms. Clifford and Thank You!

Mary Louise Clifford's most recent book, *Drummer Boy of Company C*, is a history of Almon Beneway's experiences as a drummer boy in the Civil War. Beneway was Clifford's grandfather and enlisted at age 14. Clifford's carefully written book is based on extensive archival research and a 24-page, handwritten account of the young man's military career spanning the years from 1862 to 1865. Captured at the battle of Chickamauga, and sent to the infamous Andersonville Prison, Beneway was paroled and able to rejoin his regiment. Throughout the book, Clifford explains technical terms, greatly enhancing the book's value to the general reader. Attractive enough to be on a coffee table, the book is filled with Civil War era photographs and contains a number of maps, and a timeline. It is sure to delight readers.

Soundly researched and excellently written story of the author's grandfather. Her accomplished historical narrative relates a teenager's life-changing experience to the larger events of his times, with fascinating details and historical information. The sepia tones of the illustrations and script make this Civil War account even more memorable.

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