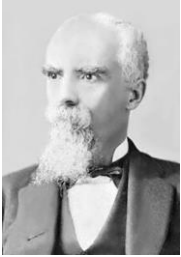


Edward McKendree Bounds

Captain and Chaplain
Missouri Third Infantry



Edward McKendree Bounds, otherwise known as E.M. Bounds, a true Confederate Chaplain who though it was his right and privilege as a commissioned officer and chaplain to serve in the rear echelon chose instead to lead his flock into battle at the front-lines where they needed him the most.

Edward McKendree Bounds was born on August 15, 1835, in Shelbyville, Missouri. He is the son of Thomas Jefferson and Hester A. Bounds. He was the fifth child, in a family of three sons and three daughters.

Bounds studied law in Hannibal, Missouri, after which, at age 19, he became the youngest practicing lawyer in the state of Missouri. Although apprenticed as an attorney, Bounds felt called to Christian ministry in his early twenties. Following a revival meeting led by Evangelist Smith Thomas, he closed his law office and moved to Palmyra, Missouri to enroll in the Centenary Seminary. Two years later, in 1859 at the age of 24, he was ordained by his denomination and was named pastor of the nearby Monticello, Missouri Methodist Church.

In October of 1861 he was called to pastor a small church in the Missouri river town of Brunswick. Having read *Rawles View of the Constitution* while studying to practice law, Bounds was certain that any state had the constitutional right to secede. He knew as well that US government knew this too since this legal truth was taught at all its military academies. He thus saw, the invasion by the Federal authorities as tyranny in violation of the US Constitution.

That same fall Bounds, who had already chosen to not take sides in the conflict, was sitting peaceably in his red brick church building in Brunswick when Union troops rode up and took him into custody after he refused to take the test oath of loyalty, a requirement for pastoring a church under the occupying forces of the federal government in Missouri. He saw this as an act of the usurpation of Jesus Christ as the head of the church.

Because he was a pastor at a congregation in the recently formed Methodist Episcopal Church South, his name was included in a list of 250 names who were to take an oath of allegiance and post a \$500 bond. Edward saw no reason for a U.S. Citizen to take such an oath, he was morally opposed to the Union raising funds in this way, and he didn't have the \$500. Bounds and the others on the list were arrested in 1861 by Union troops, and Bounds was charged as a Confederate sympathizer. He was held with other non-combatants in a Federal prison in St. Louis for a year and a half. He was then transferred to Memphis and released in a prisoner exchange between the Union and the Confederacy.

Bounds headed to Arkansas where he soon learned that his friend General Sterling Price was in Mississippi. He set off through enemy lines and walked 200 miles to Pine bluff Arkansas in his quest to join up with Price. Here he made a deal with a Methodist farmer to sell him a mule for \$200 which he promised to pay should he survive the war.

He eventually ended up in Mississippi where he discovered that Price was on the other side of the river preparing to defend Vicksburg. But after viewing the spirit and valor, he joined the Confederacy on February 7, 1863, at the age of 28.

While in garrison at Vicksburg Bounds received his commission orders from Confederate Secretary of War James Seddon. He was thus sworn in as a captain and chaplain of the Missouri Third Infantry. Because he received his commission and rank from the secretary of War, he was given military courtesy which included duty in the rear echelon away from battle and access to a horse to ride. He did not avail himself of any of them, for his

heart was with his men. He lived with his "little flock," and led them into battle on foot at great peril, exposing himself frequently to withering fire while exhorting them to victory.

This excerpt is from an article on EM Bounds by Stephen Mansfield, published in 2006, which details the last battles Bounds led his flock through.

He found himself in John Bell Hood's Army of Tennessee and a more war-weary band of soldiers have rarely existed. These veterans had seen many a preacher appeal for converts in the quiet of the camp only to flee to the comforts of home when the firing began. Chaplain Bounds was a refreshing change. The soldiers learned that when the fighting broke out, they could find Bounds on the front lines, exposing himself to danger, and drawing fire as he shouted encouragement to "his flock." The men loved him. He was barely over five feet tall and as thin as a rail and when he made his rounds carrying a full backpack, the men laughingly called him "the walking bundle," for the man could scarcely be seen under the huge load. Edward would always smile, eagerly wave, and then turn to the next soul that required mending.

Then came the Battle of Franklin. On November 30, 1864, General Hood launched a frontal assault against the entrenched forces of Union General Schofield near a town south of Nashville called Franklin. It was a hasty, rash move and in a charge as dramatic as anything seen at Gettysburg, 18,000 Confederate soldiers were hurled against Union lines. It was a bloodbath and Hood lost 6,252 men that day, including thirteen general officers. Many prisoners were taken, and among them was Chaplain Edward Bounds. [I might add that Chaplain Bounds was severely wounded having taken a saber blow to his forehead, which took him several weeks to recover.] For days afterwards, Edward's heart-wrenching task was to dig mass graves for the very men whose souls he had tended. All the while, though, he sang hymns, quoted Scripture aloud, and offered encouragement to his fellow captives. Finally, after more than two weeks of this horror, most of the prisoners were released on condition that they not take up arms again. Edward accepted and left for his home in Missouri with unfinished business in Franklin.

Early in 1865, Edward returned to Franklin. With all his heart he had loved the men in those horrible mass graves---he knew their hurts, the names of their wives and children, the shape of their fears----and he simply couldn't leave them there. He conceived a project to properly bury the dead and commemorate their lives. His vision moved a local farmer [I might add, actually two farmers Branch Carter and James McNutt] to donate some land and during the hot summer of 1865 some 1,496 Confederate soldiers were exhumed and buried in the new cemetery on the hills of the Carter Farm. He even raised seven hundred dollars to pay local men to tend the graves.