

**HISTORY OF  
CORPORAL  
FESS WHITAKER**

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History of Corporal Fess Whitaker by Fess Whitaker

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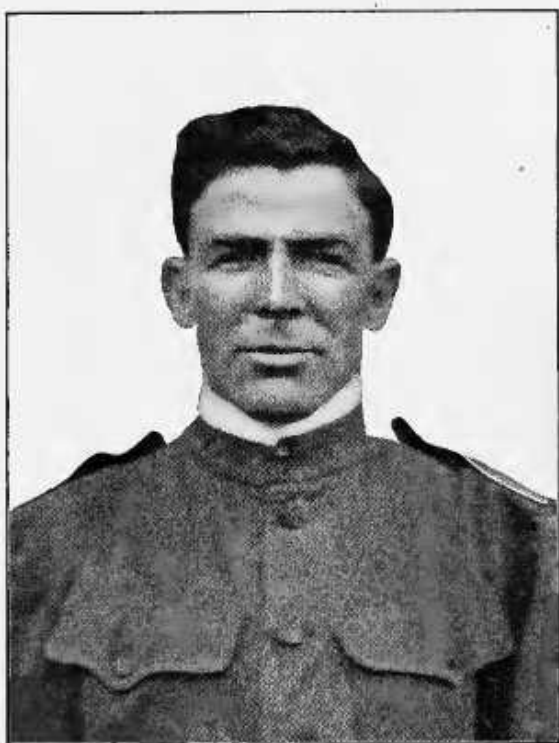
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**CORPORAL FESS WHITAKER**  
February 12, 1898, to August 22, 1904



## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

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**A**MONG the people of Letcher County no other man has so remarkable history as Fess Whitaker; none other is so well worthy of being carefully studied by all who find pleasure in the past history and particularly by Letcher's own people. In the winning of friends he stands first; in the upbuilding of the county his influence has been strongly exerted; as a soldier on the battlefield he stands firm. While the moonshiners and ku-klux were provoking the country in my early boyhood as though led by an inscrutable hand were finding their way over the mountains and preparing to establish themselves as the outguard of civilization that they might become the possessors of all the sons of Letcher County, the good mountain mothers, almost unaided, not only stood like a wall of fire to forbid such conduct of the men, but made good their footing, which soon afterward made their loving Christian homes a pleasure.

The strong characteristics of the men and women who, with unexampled courage, endurance and patriotic devotion achieved so much with so little means and in the face of obstacles so great, could but impress themselves upon the people of Letcher County. From

the first mothers they have escaped that sign of Athenian decadence, the restless desire to be ever hearing and telling some new thing to show what good people Letcher County has.

This book claims to be but an epitome of the History of Fess Whitaker; but it will be found to contain a general account, to which interest he has taken by an uneducated man, special and particular incidents, etc. The adult or educated mind will read far more between the lines than is found in the book. The author trusts that he has imparted to the short stories something of that spirit which should be impressed upon the people whose minds and character are still in the formative state—an admiration of their own country and a pride in its past, the surest guarantees that in the future her fair fame will be enhanced, her honor maintained and her progress in all right lines be steadily and nobly promoted.

## HISTORY OF CORPORAL FESS WHITAKER

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**F**ESS WHITAKER was born June 17, 1880, in Knott County, Kentucky. Knott County is located in the mountains of Kentucky between the Big Sandy River and the north fork of the Kentucky River. There are no railroads in Knott County, but there is lots of fine coal (what is known as the Amburgey seam), and lots of fine timber. Hindman is the county seat. Knott County has fine churches and schools and good roads, and, no doubt, the best farming county in the mountains.

When I was only six years old my father swapped farms with Tood Stamper and put the Whitakers together in Letcher County and the Stampers together in Knott County. My mother was old Kelly Hogg's daughter, and in time of slavery my Grandfather Hogg swapped a foolish negro to Mr. Mullins, of Knott County, for a good farm worth \$10,000 today, known as the Black Sam Francis farm now. Mr. Mullins thought lots of his little negro and called him his Shade, meaning that he could rest and the negro could work. But when the greatest man that ever has been elected President of the United States of America, Abraham Lincoln, said slavery was not right and