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Wiley Sword, 77: Civil War scholar, author was historian of common man

By C.G. Freightman, Atlanta Journal Constitution, November 23, 2015

Wiley Sword had a long and successful career as a manufacturer's representative. But he became nationally known for his hobby as a Civil War historian with one of the country's most extensive private collections of war memorabilia.

Sword's collection of artifacts and more than 1,000 original letters and documents was acquired in January by the Pamplin Historical Park, a 424-acre Civil War historic site in Petersburg, Va.

Many of his books about the nation's bloodiest conflict are considered must-reads by Civil War buffs.

"Not only was he one of the pre-eminent collectors, but he was an accomplished historian. And this was his avocation, not his profession," said Wilson Greene, executive director of Pamplin Historical Park. "I don't know anyone who combined Civil War scholarship with collecting like Wiley. He was a wonderful man. The Civil War community is much poorer now that Wiley is not with us." Sword of Suwanee died Nov. 9 of complications from a staph infection. He was 77. His memorial service was Nov. 12 at Johns Creek Baptist Church.

Born on Dec. 7, 1937, in Mexico, Mo., Sword grew up in Detroit. An only child, his grandmother used to keep him occupied by telling him stories about his family and U.S. history.

By age 12, he had become particularly fascinated with Civil War history and got his parents' permission to purchase an antique

gun. It was the first of what would become a huge collection of Civil War-era weapons he would buy, research and write about over the next six decades.



Wiley Sword

After graduating from the University of Michigan in 1959, Sword joined his father in the family business, working as a manufacturer's representative to the automobile industry until his retirement.

In his spare time he studied Civil War history, collected artifacts, led battlefield tours and shared his insight and discoveries in speeches and publications.

Sword sold his weapon collection in 2000 and retired the following year. He then relocated to Atlanta and began collecting Civil War soldier letters.

His letter collection impressed Civil War experts not only for its size, but for its significance as a research tool.

"Some collectors go for letters or documents from famous people.

Wiley didn't collect that way," Greene said. "Wiley sought out soldier letters that told stories. The stories made them special. Most were from common soldiers and low-ranking officers. In some cases, the letters shed new light on our understanding of important events that occurred on the battlefield."

Once all the items have been catalogued and made keyword searchable, the park will make the collection accessible to researchers and the public. Some of the soldier letters already are on display in an interactive, touch-screen exhibit at Pamplin's National Museum of the Civil War Soldier.

"One of the reasons we exist is to tell the story of the common soldier of the Civil War," Greene said. "The collection greatly enhances our ability to tell the story."

A prolific author, Sword was a frequent contributor to Civil War magazines, including a regular column for Blue & Gray magazine.

His first book, "Shiloh: Bloody April," was published in 1974. Other publications include "Mountains Touched With Fire: Chattanooga Besieged, 1863," "President Washington's Indian War" and "Embrace an Angry Wind," which won the 1992 Fletcher Pratt Prize for the best nonfiction book on the Civil War.

"He was a genuinely nice guy who happened to be a historian. He was always eager to share his findings with others," said Dave Roth, founder, editor and publisher of Blue & Gray. "His scholarship was superb, and his writing style was very readable. He wrote the kind of books you didn't want to put down."

Sword participated in the making of Civil War documentaries, including an acting role in the 1993 series "Civil



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War Journal" and as a consultant for the 1999 series "Civil War Combat." He also will be remembered as a devoted family man and a staunch University of Michigan football fan who enjoyed golfing, traveling and lecturing.

"Family came first. He was truly a humble and good person," said his wife Marianne Sword. "He provided for his family and contributed to American history. He felt the preservation of history was very important to this country."

In addition to his wife, Sword is survived by his sons Andy Sword of Norcross and Greg Sword of Cumming and three grandchildren.

Last Lowered Confederate Flag Seen On 150th Anniversary Of Surrender

By Scott C. Boyd, December 2015
Civil War News

RICHMOND, Va. – The last Confederate flag was not lowered at Appomattox when Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia on April 9, 1865. Several Confederate armies were still in the field, the last standing being that led by Brig. Gen. Stand Watie, who surrendered his small army of Confederate Cherokee, Creek, Seminole and Osage Indians on June 23 at what is known today as Doaksville, Okla.

The last flag lowered by a Confederate military force, however, was the flag of the commerce raider CSS Shenandoah, which came down on Nov. 6, 1865, when Capt. James I. Wadell surrendered his ship to British authorities in Liverpool, England. That same flag was put on public display for only the second time on Nov. 6 at the Museum of the

Confederacy, which is part of Richmond's American Civil War Museum.

The 136 by 88 inches flag was displayed flat on a huge table in the museum's lobby from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Conservator Cathy Wright said visitors wanting to see the flag queued up outside 30 minutes before the museum opened. Some even traveled to Richmond just to see the flag.

Wright said the flag display closed two hours before the museum did because of the time required to carefully fold the flag while placing non-acidic tissue paper between the folded sections, in preparation for storing it again with the other approximately 550 Confederate flags in the museum's collection. She said that the flag was not put in a wall display case because of its size. The last time the flag was shown was in the museum's Confederate Navy exhibit from 2005-2008. It was in a wall display case then, but only after being partially folded.



Museum conservator Cathy Wright, left, and visitor Mark K. Greenough look at the huge flag of the CSS Shenandoah that the Museum of the Confederacy displayed on Nov. 6, the 150th anniversary of the flag being lowered for the last time in Liverpool, England, when Capt. James I. Wadell, CSN, surrendered his ship to British authorities. (Scott C. Boyd)

The flag was donated to the predecessor of the museum in 1873, according to museum public relations manager Sam Craghead. The CSS Shenandoah was built in Liverpool as a passenger and cargo ship and launched Aug. 17, 1863, under the name Sea King. On its maiden voyage and several trips like it, the Sea King transported British troops to New Zealand for the Maori War there.

Following a change of owners, Confederate agents purchased the Sea King in secret on Oct. 18, 1864. The secrecy was necessary because Great Britain was officially neutral in the American Civil War and not supposed to provide weapons to the belligerents.

A day later the new Confederate owners changed the ship's name to Shenandoah and raised the fledgling nation's flag, the so-called "Stainless Banner" or Second National pattern flag.

The ship had already rendezvoused at the Madeira Islands with a steamer carrying Confederate naval officers plus the guns, ammunition and stores to convert the merchant ship into a warship.

The CSS Shenandoah wreaked havoc in the Northern Pacific, destroying most of the Union's whaling fleet there, capturing a total of 38 ships during its voyage from England.

Lacking the 20th century marvel of wireless radio, the CSS Shenandoah was in the dark about the fate of the Confederacy and kept fighting long after the last Confederate soldiers surrendered. Only on Aug. 3 did Captain Wadell receive a reliable report from a British merchant ship that the war was over. Rather than face trial and execution as a pirate if he surrendered his ship



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in an American port, which all Confederate privateers and commerce raiders risked, Waddell disarmed and returned the ship to England and turned her over to local British authorities.

The ship was handed over to Union officials in England who attempted to send it to the United States. A bad storm in the Atlantic caused it to return to England, where it was sold to the Sultan of Zanzibar. Eventually the ship sank in the Sultan's service while going to Bombay (Mumbai), India, for repairs in 1872.

The defense of Chincoteague

November 21, 2015, FB Union Heritage

In 1861 the citizens of Chincoteague voted 138-2 to remain loyal to the Union, despite Virginia's vote for secession on May 23--the island was the only part of Virginia to do so. On the evening of September 28, eight small boats were spotted rowing toward Chincoteague Inlet from the mainland. An alarm bell was rung in front of W.H. Watson and Company warehouse, and 94 armed men from Chincoteague responded, taking up positions along their warehouses and docks. It soon became clear that the boats were not attacking Chincoteague, but marking the channel with lanterns, so two sloops and a large schooner could enter the inlet.

By dawn, the three ships had anchored near Cackle Creek and a British flag that had been flying from the schooner, Venus, had been replaced by the Confederate banner. On the afternoon of the 25th, an oyster sloop commanded by Edward Whaley, Jr., and crewed by William Lynch, John Jester, Henry Savage, and Robert Snead set off to Hampton

Roads to again warn the Navy. Whaley and crew were escorted in guard boats to the flagship, USS Minnesota, and presented to Captain Goldsborough; they then ate with their host in Minnesota's great cabin. Four sailors from Minnesota, armed with rifles and cutlasses, accompanied the men back to Chincoteague with the pledge of immediate aid.

On September 30, Navy Lt. Commander Alexander Murray arrived off Chincoteague with 90 men in the recently built, propeller-driven iron hull steamer, USS Louisiana.



Meanwhile, Venus had rapidly been converted into a privateer of ten guns: in addition to cannon, 1,000 New England rifles, shot, and three tons of powder had been put aboard. The 135 ft. schooner, with her broad beam and shoal draft, would have been ideal to prey on shipping entering or leaving Delaware Bay. However, at 9 a.m. on October 5, two boats from Louisiana were launched and attacked Venus with howitzers.

Louisiana herself was then piloted through Chincoteague Inlet and opened fire with her 32-pounder. Next, a Virginian force of 300 cut off the Louisiana's boats, but the Federal crews attacked and boarded Venus. The heavy fire from Louisiana shut down the Virginian defenses, and the Federal boarding party set fire to Venus, which burned to the water line before sinking in Cackle Creek. The two accompanying sloops were captured and taken to Norfolk as prizes of war. On hearing the news, Winfield Scott is said to have ordered Chincoteague oysters and Bermuda onions at Willard's Hotel. In early December, Venus' rifles and cannon were salvaged from the wreck; her gear is likely still buried in her so-far-undiscovered hull.

The Louisiana was later used as the powder boat which was exploded harmlessly during the first attack on Fort Fisher.

Dennis Frye, Chief historian at Harpers Ferry receives Nevins-Freeman Award

By John McVey, Mobile Journal News, November 4, 2015

MARTINSBURG - Dennis Frye's name has been added to the stellar list of Civil War historians who have been previous recipients of the highly regarded Nevins-Freeman Award, such as Bruce Catton, Shelby Foote, Stephen B. Oates, James M. McPherson and Ed Bearss.

"I admit that receiving the award was a surreal experience," Frye said Monday in a telephone interview. "It's so huge to be recognized and acknowledged with the incredibly



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famous people that are now on that list."

Frye is the chief historian at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, author of award-winning books on the Civil War and has frequently appeared on PBS, The History Channel, The Discovery Channel and A&E as a guest commentator for Civil War documentaries.

The Nevins-Freeman Award is presented by the Civil War Round Table of Chicago, the first and oldest Civil War roundtable. It has been the template for Civil War roundtables around the world.

Established in 1974, it is one of the most prestigious Civil War history awards in the nation. It is presented to those who have spent a lifetime advancing Civil War scholarship and preservation. It is named for Allan Nevins and Douglas Southall Freeman, both of whom authored several scholarly works on the Civil War.

"First, I am deeply humbled, and I am incredibly blessed to have been able to contribute to the scholarship and preservation of the Civil War," Frye said. "It is the greatest tribute I've received."

In his opinion, there is no higher acclaim that an individual associated with the scholarship and preservation of the Civil War can receive, Frye said.

"I was familiar with the award when I was a teenager," he said. "I have had the occasion to present lectures to the Civil War Round Table of Chicago four times. My first presentation was in 1983, at 24 years old. At the time, I was the round table's youngest presenter."

At his award presentation, Frye's lecture was John Brown: The Spark that Ignited the Civil War.

He also has been a guide for the round table's annual Civil War tours five times, assisting Bearss, who served as chief historian of the National Park Service from 1981 to 1994.

Originally from the Sharpsburg, Maryland, area, Frye grew up within a few miles of Antietam National Battlefield and Harpers Ferry.

"I attended Shepherd College because I could study the Civil War in my own backyard," he said.



Dennis Frye

He was president of the Hagerstown Civil War Round Table when he was 18 years old. He also was co-founder and first president of the Save Historic Antietam Foundation as well as co-founder and former president of today's Civil War Trust. He is a past recipient of the Civil War Trust's highest honor, the Shelby Foote Award.

The Civil War Round Table of Chicago also contributes financially to the preservation of Civil War battlefields and sites, generously donating to the Save Historic Antietam Foundation and the Civil War Trust, Frye said.

The recipient of the Nevins-Freeman Award is nominated by one of the round table's board members, who are all past presidents of the round table. The board then selects the annual winner of the award.

Richmond's St. Paul's Episcopal Church to remove images of Confederate flags

By LAURA KEBEDE Richmond Times-Dispatch, November 23, 2015
The historic St. Paul's Episcopal Church known as the "Cathedral of the Confederacy" has begun removing all images of the Confederate flag from within its walls. The measure includes six plaques with various versions of the Confederate flag, the church's coat of arms with the flag on kneelers at the high altar, and bookplates in some books in the church's library.

The coat of arms will be retired, and the church will start to dig deeper in its history, the role of race and slavery in that history, and how parishioners can engage in conversations about race in the Richmond region, church leadership announced Sunday, three months after conversations began with the congregation.

The elected church leadership also said it hopes to erect a memorial to honor slaves in Richmond, especially slaves who were members of St. Paul's Episcopal.

"While the Vestry does not believe that St. Paul's should attempt to remove all symbols reflecting St. Paul's past during the Civil War, the Vestry is united in agreement that it is not appropriate to display the Confederate battle flag in the church," a church statement said.



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The needlepoint kneelers have already been removed from the sanctuary. The two plaques on opposite walls of the sanctuary honoring Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee and the Confederacy's president Jefferson Davis will be removed and placed in a not-yet-determined exhibit. Also in the exhibit will be a plaque installed in 1961 memorializing Confederate soldiers. The plaques honoring Davis' wife Varina Howell and daughter Varina Davis will be modified to remove the battle flag without removing the plaque from the church walls. A plaque honoring Frederic Robert Scott, an Ireland-born Confederate major, also will be modified to remove the battle flag.

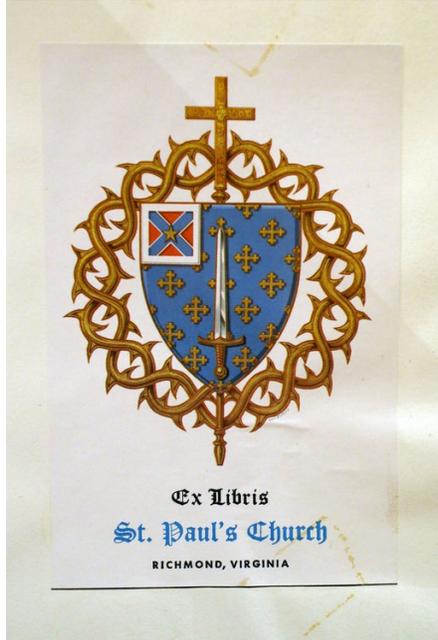
The announcement came five months after the Charleston, S.C., church massacre that left nine people dead sparked a national conversation on the appropriateness of Confederate flags in public places.

Soon after, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church passed a resolution urging their churches nationwide to remove any Confederate battle flags.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church in downtown Richmond across from Capitol Square has not flown the Confederate flag since the 1960s.

But mementos honoring the Confederate era of Richmond's history are prominent in the church's sanctuary. Windows depicting Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis as biblical characters will remain untouched.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church is removing items that have the Confederate flag and putting them in a separate exhibit.



A bookplate with the coat of arms inside St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Richmond, VA Monday, Nov. 23, 2015. The church is removing items that have the Confederate battle flag and putting them in a separate exhibit.

The church was founded in the early 1800s and later became inextricably linked to the Civil War. Lee and his wife attended services there throughout the war, and Davis became a member in 1862.

It was there that Davis received the message that Lee was forced to withdraw from Petersburg and could no longer defend Richmond. Davis quietly left the church service and the evacuation of the city began, signifying the end of the Civil War. A small plaque, which will remain, marks where Davis sat that day.

In August, the church started with a list of 23 items that have any mention or symbolism of the Confederacy and held two discussions among congregants about how to address them.

In response to those conversations, the church "voted overwhelmingly to

embark on a new journey of racial reconciliation," the church's statement said.

A summary of the two conversations in August that involved about 100 congregants at each showed distinctions were made between private memorials to family members and monuments to "the cause."

"During the Prayerful Conversations, one parishioner commented that St. Paul's should become known as a Cathedral of Reconciliation," St. Paul's said. "The Vestry wholeheartedly agrees, and we are excited to begin on the journey towards that goal with all of you."

UMD unveils Frederick Douglass statue

By Hallie Miller, The Diamondback, November 8, 2015

A Facilities Management-led team installed a statue of Frederick Douglass outside of Hornbake Library on Sunday after about five years of planning, construction and anticipation.

With construction on the rest of Frederick Douglass Square concluded in September, the roughly 8-foot-tall statue underwent a three-week voyage last month from Ireland to the United States, said Patrick O'Shea, vice president and chief research officer for the university's Division of Research. No additional construction will occur on the plaza, said Darwin Feuerstein, Facilities Management assistant director for site projects.

An official dedication ceremony will take place at the square Nov. 18 at 2 p.m. to honor the famous orator and writer, who spoke passionately in favor of abolition and wrote several books about his life as a slave in Talbot County.



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The speakers for the event are being finalized this week, said Elise Carbonaro, communications director for the Division of Research.

The dedication ceremony marks the end of an extensive journey that began as early as 2011, said Patrick O'Shea, vice president and chief research officer for the Division of Research. He said the statue's presence on the campus is unique in the university's history.

"There's some other statuary here, but this is going to be quite different," O'Shea said. "There aren't a lot of people statues on this campus. I think people will notice this."

The statue, designed in Ireland and cast in bronze in Wales, is mounted on a 3-foot-tall base and weighs about half a ton, O'Shea said.

O'Shea, who has connections in Ireland, said he helped the university acquire the statue upon learning of the university "North Star" committee's intent to honor Douglass. He said work on the statue design began in Ireland in 2011, about the same time history professor Ira Berlin and the rest of the "North Star" committee were beginning to discuss ways to recognize the distinguished reformer.

"It was not a linear process," O'Shea said. "It kind of came together in a loosely collaborative way."

Frederick Douglass Square cost about \$600,000 to complete and includes benches, lighting, plant beds and many of Douglass' quotes carved into pavers and a steel wall. The statue cost about \$200,000.

"He was one of the first people to deal with human rights on a broader scale," O'Shea said. To highlight Douglass' role in civil and human rights and the abolitionist movement, O'Shea said, the statue's designer, sculptor Andrew Edwards, drew

inspiration from artwork depicting President Obama and Moses.

"There's a lot of complicated imagery going on here," O'Shea said. "It's so dynamic."

The statue presents Douglass midspeech with one arm outstretched and a copy of his autobiography tucked under the other. O'Shea said the majority of other statues depict Douglass later on in life, but this one captures him in his mid-20s, when the escaped slave found refuge in Ireland as his book was published in the United States.



Photo - Tom Houseman, The Diamondback

O'Shea said during Douglass' time in the Irish city of Cork, he lived within walking distance of a young girl named Mary Harris, who eventually immigrated to the United States. In the early 1900s, she "was considered the most dangerous woman in America" because of her ability to organize mine workers and their families to protest against mine owners, O'Shea said. An elementary school honoring Mary Harris "Mother" Jones is located just a few miles away from this university in Adelphi.

"It's a curious parallel," O'Shea said. "It indicates a broader history. This is more than just a statue."

Architecture Dean David Cronrath, who assisted in completing Frederick Douglass Square, said the statue's presence relays the university's mission to its onlookers.

"We're a university that believes in truth and justice as being just as important as knowledge," Cronrath said. "It gives us something to believe in."

He also said the statue's positioning on the plaza is symbolic as well.

"He's not on axis with Hornbake for two reasons, the first being that he wouldn't have wanted to be in absolute authority like a king or a general. That's not who he was," Cronrath said. "The second reason is when you approach the space ... the hand moves away from his face, and it helps the statue control the space." And in addition to its appearance, Cronrath said the statue serves to connect Douglass to his state's flagship university.

The story behind the song "I heard the bells on Christmas Day."

By Rachel McDowell, December 1, 2015

In March of 1863, 18-year-old Charles Appleton Longfellow walked out of his family's home on Brattle Street in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and—unbeknownst to his family—boarded a train bound for Washington, DC., over 400 miles away, in order to join President Lincoln's Union army to fight in the Civil War.

Charles (b. June 9, 1844) was the oldest of six children born to Fannie Elizabeth Appleton and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the celebrated literary critic and poet. Charles had five younger siblings: a brother (aged 17) and three sisters (ages 13, 10, 8—another one had died as an infant).

Less than two years earlier, Charles's mother Fannie had died from a tragic accident when her dress caught on a fire. Her husband, awoken from a



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nap, tried to extinguish the flames as best he could, first with a rug and then his own body, but she had already suffered severe burns. She died the next morning (July 10, 1861), and Henry Longfellow's facial burns were severe enough that he was unable even to attend his own wife's funeral. He would grow a beard to hide his burned face and at times feared that he would be sent to an asylum on account of his grief.

When Charley (as he was called) arrived in Washington D.C. he sought to enlist as a private with the 1st Massachusetts Artillery. Captain W. H. McCartney, commander of Battery A, wrote to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow for written permission for Charley to become a soldier. HWL (as his son referred to him) granted the permission.

Longfellow later wrote to his friends Charles Sumner (senator from Massachusetts), John Andrew (governor of Massachusetts), and Edward Dalton (medical inspector of the Sixth Army Corps) to lobby for his son to become an officer. But Charley had already impressed his fellow soldiers and superiors with his skills, and on March 27, 1863, he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the 1st Massachusetts Cavalry, assigned to Company "G."

After participating on the fringe of the Battle of Chancellorsville in Virginia (April 30-May 6, 1863), Charley fell ill with typhoid fever and was sent home to recover. He rejoined his unit on August 15, 1863, having missed the Battle of Gettysburg (July 1-3, 1863). While dining at home on December 1, 1863, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow received a telegram that his son had been severely wounded four days earlier. On November 27, 1863, while involved in a skirmish during the Mine Run Campaign, Charley was shot

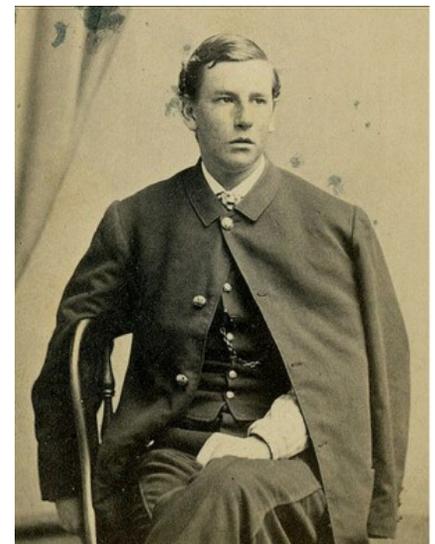
through the left shoulder, with the bullet exiting under his right shoulder blade. It had traveled across his back and skimmed his spine. Charley avoided being paralyzed by less than an inch.

He was carried into New Hope Church (Orange County, Virginia) and then transported to the Rapidan River. Charley's father and younger brother, Ernest, immediately set out for Washington, D.C., arriving on December 3. Charley arrived by train on December 5. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was alarmed when informed by the army surgeon that his son's wound "was very serious" and that "paralysis might ensue." Three surgeons gave a more favorable report that evening, suggesting a recovery that would require him to be "long in healing," at least six months.

On Christmas day, 1863, Longfellow—a 57-year-old widowed father of six children, the oldest of which had been nearly paralyzed as his country fought a war against itself—wrote a poem seeking to capture the dynamic and dissonance in his own heart and the world he observes around him. He hears the Christmas bells and the singing of "peace on earth" (Luke 2:14) but observes the world of injustice and violence that seemed to mock the truth of this statement. You can read the whole thing below:

I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
and wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Till ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime,
A chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
Then from each black, accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South,
And with the sound
The carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearth-stones of a continent,
And made forlorn
The households born
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
And in despair I bowed my head;
"There is no peace on earth," I said;
"For hate is strong,
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"
Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The Wrong shall fail,
The Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men."



Charles Longfellow