

# Charles Wainwright



*My name is Charles Wainwright, and I was 34 when I joined the Union army in 1861. When I went off to war, I left my two sisters, elderly father, and successful farm behind in New York. It was sad, but I loved my country, and would do anything I can to keep it together. Luckily for me, my family wrote to me often, and they were proud of me because I was a Chief of Artillery in the army. This meant I commanded cannons on the battlefield. I was there during the last battle against a part of the Confederate army at Appomattox Court House, on April 9, 1865. My soldiers and I were fighting hard, when we saw a white flag of truce go across the field. We were told the Confederate army might surrender. I looked around and saw brave soldiers from the Union that had been killed. I wondered how I was going to get used to the idea that we might no longer have an enemy to fight anymore. Later, we heard that part of the Confederate army surrendered; we were overjoyed! We celebrated that night by lighting the fuses of captured Confederate cannons; they lit up the night like firecrackers. A couple of days later, I rode my horse to go and see the Confederate soldiers give up their guns. Afterwards, we gave the Confederates food to eat because they were hungry and tired. As we left Appomattox to march home, we ran into a lot of former slaves begging us for horses and mules. They told us that they didn't have any animals to farm for themselves. We gave them what we could, but I wondered what would happen to all of those people who were no longer enslaved? It rained a lot on the journey home, and I thought to myself what our country would look like now, after so much fighting? Would there really be peace over the land?*

## Questions:

1. What did Charles Wainwright leave behind when he left to go to war?
2. Why did he join the Union army?
3. How was Wainwright involved in the battle of Appomattox Court House?
4. What are some things that Wainwright worries about that might be the **same** as a Confederate soldier or an enslaved person?
5. What are some things that Wainwright worries about that might be **different** from an enslaved person, or a Confederate soldier?