

Levi Wagner (Private, Co. A, 1st Ohio Inf.), Recollections of an
Enlistee, 1861-1864

In this fight of Stone river our Co. lost sixteen men, killed, wounded and missing. The whole Union army lost 1533 killed, 7245 wounded and 2800 missing. Gen. Sill was killed. The army was reorganized and the 1st O.V.I. was placed in the 2nd division, 20th corps. On June 24th, 1863, the army began its advance on Tullahoma, which is east of Murfreesboro, on the railroad that runs from Chattanooga to Nashville, and was then only a small town, I should judge of about 500 inhabitants. We marched by way of Midelton, Hovers Gap, Beech Grove, Liberty Gap and Grays Gap. Our first days march was begun about noon in the rain and mud, as usual. Our route lay along a somewhat crooked valley, and through this valley ran a common sized stream, still more crooked than the valley itself. It seemed to delight in winding back and forth from one extreme side to the other, and as there were no bridges, we had the pleasure of wading this stream about a dozen times that half day. Twelve mile out the enemy was encountered and routed, but the 1st Ohio was only subject to an artillery fire, and suffered no loss. This occurred at Liberty Gap. In the evening we camped on the brow of a bluff overhanging the valley, which here narrowed down to what might be termed a gap or pass. We lay here until about 9 P.M. when we received orders to start large fires along our line, and then pull into line for a move, which we common soldiers supposed would be forward. Our fires were started with much difficulty, owing to the continual rain. We then fell into line and started, but instead of going forward we marched back over the route we had come, for perhaps five mile, and then halted in a large meadow. The rains had in the meantime swollen the streams to such an extent that the water was several feet deeper than when we had passed along four or five hours earlier, and was running swiftly, as all such streams where the water rushes down from the elevated lands above on both sides of the valley. But as we were already wet we didn't mind so much plunging into the stream. Several of Co. A lost their footing and fell down. One in falling lost his gun and failed to recover it. We finally branched off into this meadow, and as it was dark and late, we had no means of starting a fire, and would not have been allowed to if we had, so we just wrapped our wet blankets about us and lay down on the wet ground and slept once more the sleep of weary innocence.

In the morning after breakfast we again took up the march, and we now found that this move had been a false one to deceive the enemy. We now cut across fields for some distance to the north, where we again turned to the right and once more headed for Tullahoma. This march was very disagreeable to both men and horses, on account of the constant rain, which made the ground so soft that it was almost impossible for teams to pull through.

On June 29th we reached Manchester, from which place all extra baggage was sent back to Murfreesboro. During this time the main Rebel army was at Tullahoma, but there were strong detachments out on every road to harass us and delay our advance. On the 1st of July we passed on to Tullahoma, Bragg having vacated the place, going toward Chattanooga. We got into town about 1 A.M.