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by Tony Moureale

COLUMN SOUTH

WITH THE FIFTEENTH PENNSYLVANIA CAVALRY

From Antietam To The Capture Of Jefferson Davis

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Foreword

This is not a history of the Civil War but of two young men who fought in it. Like so many of their companions they kept diaries, and it is from these that I have compiled the story of their life in the cavalry during the three years of their service.

From their diaries it is sometimes difficult to know where they were and why, and for this reason brief descriptions of the battles in which they took part have been added, together with some of the adventures of other members of their cavalry regiment.

To explain the rather casual and free life the two boys led in the early months of their service it might be well to show the condition of the army at the beginning of the Civil War.

In 1861 the United States army consisted of only 16,000 men, with only two generals who had directed the evolution of as large a unit as a brigade. These were General Winfield Scott, the General-in-Chief, and General John E. Wool, both of whom had served in the War of 1812 and the war with Mexico in 1847. It was in the latter war that they won their fame: General Scott at Vera Cruz and General Wool at Buena Vista. But now they were old. General Scott was ill with dropsy and vertigo and quite incapable of directing an army in the field, while General Wool, although still active, could no longer remember what he had said a few minutes before and had to ask his aides if he had put his hat on straight.

There were plenty of excellent men who had graduated from West Point, but they had no knowledge of staff work and little if any knowledge of the problems of operating an army or the planning of war manoeuvres. West Point's curriculum included engineering, fortifications, and mathematics with only a minor part devoted to strategy. Then, too, the government had made no topographical maps except for the West. This was natural as all the fighting had been located in the West during the years just prior to 1861. But the result was that, at the beginning of the war, most of the generals of the North and of the South had no real knowledge of their own country, and didn't know where they were going or how to get there. No wonder there was chaos on both sides.

It has been said the Civil War was the last Gentlemen's War and the first Modern one. This would seem to be true, for at the beginning the soldiers were taught respect for women and for civilian property, no looting being tolerated. There was the parole and exchange system* rigidly respected by both sides. There was the raising of troops by States, selecting their own uniforms, which in its turn caused confusion. These were many and varied at the start of the war. There were highlanders in plaid "trews" (tight fitting breeches). There were blue jackets, gray jackets, Zouaves, pleated blue blouses and many full gray uniforms. Lumber men from Michigan in tasseled caps and zouave-like trousers. There were cavalry with jackets resplendent with yellow braid. There were hats of all kinds, high, wide,

COLUMN SOUTH

tall, squat, some with brass emblems on them. There were wool caps, felt caps, every kind of cap. One regiment from New York wore scarlet fezzes and French breeches. There was an Italian regiment wearing a uniform copied after the Bersaglieri of the time of the Crimean War. A French battalion in Algerian uniform.

Most of these gay and easy-to-shoot-at uniforms were completely worn out after their wearers had been in one campaign and were replaced by the regular uniform of blue flannel shirt and light blue kersey trousers usually with the funny little forage cap. However, many wore the high crown felt hat, if you can judge by the pictures of that time.

At the outbreak of the war there were only six regiments of cavalry, and it wasn't until May, 1861, that a call was made for volunteers from the States. General Scott believed that, because of the improvement in rifled cannons and the broken and wooded country in the south, the cavalry would be unimportant. General Lee, himself a dragoon, felt quite differently and at once organized a great force of cavalry. This was not difficult to do in the south, for the lack of good highways forced the Southerner to ride from boyhood, whether living on the rich plantation lands or in the mountains. Their raids proved to be so successful against railroads, wagon trains, etc. that finally the Union generals began clamoring for more cavalry, and before the end of the war the Union cavalry proved their worth.

The weapons supplied the first Union cavalry regiments consisted of a saber and revolver, the latter a Colt's, loaded with powder and ball, and fired by percussion caps. Soon they were issued a short carbine, and later they received the Spencer, a seven-round carbine. Later still some were given the Henry rifle, firing 16 shots. The saber issued at first was of the long, straight Prussian pattern, but this was soon replaced by a light cavalry saber with curved blade.

In addition to his arms, the cavalryman carried a box of cartridges and another of percussion caps, a haversack with his rations, a tin cup with which to cook his coffee, a canteen of water, his poncho or "gum equipment", extra horse shoes and nails, a lariat and picket pin, currycomb and brush, and some extra clothing in his saddle bags. The saddle used was the "McClellan", so-called because it was adopted through recommendations made by General McClellan. It was a modification of the Mexican saddle, and with improvements has been used by the cavalry up to the present time. In 1861 the States provided the horses for their volunteer cavalry, but by 1862 this plan was abandoned and all the cavalry horses were obtained through the government.

The pay? In Pennsylvania in 1862 the average pay of the officers was \$58.75 per month, out of which they had to supply their uniforms, rations, servants, and forage for their horses. The enlisted men received little more than \$8, but their rations were issued them, as well as all their equipment.

At the start of the war the Confederate cavalry, in spite of their fine organization and great numbers, were poorly equipped as to weapons. Later, after their many successful raids, they were able to use the captured Union Colt's pistols, cavalry carbines, and McClellan saddles. Throughout the entire war the men rode their own horses, and were paid a *per diem* rate for their use, with a muster valuation in cases where they were killed in action, but not for any other casualty in

¹⁸see OPPOSING GENERALS

COLUMN SOUTH

the campaigns. At the beginning it was easy to either capture horses or simply "acquire" them from farmers, but toward the close many were unable to remount themselves and were forced to hold the horses of their companions who fought dismounted. They hoped for both captured horses and weapons.

In 1859, soon after John Brown's attempt to free the slaves at Harper's Ferry, the border States and some others farther south formed military companies and began to uniform, arm, and drill them. Many of these were mounted companies and all had dashing uniforms, as varied as those early ones in the north. Later they adopted the gray uniform, but due to the blockade of the southern ports the gray cloth was soon exhausted and any color, from dark gray, blue, red, to almost white kersey, was acceptable as a uniform. Shoe leather had to be imported too, so even early in the war some were nearly barefoot. Small wonder that as soon as a Union soldier was captured he was made to exchange his coat, pants, and shoes with his captor!

Before August 1862, President Lincoln's calls for troops produced a surplus of volunteers, but when men no longer responded in sufficient numbers, "bounties" were introduced. The Government, the cities, and their wards were forced to give increasing bounties, and in the summer of 1862 Philadelphia gave to every certified recruit \$20 for the nine-month men, \$30 for one-year men, and \$50 to those enlisting for "three years or the war". Bounty-jumping became a lucrative pastime for some of the recruits. They would enlist, receive their bounty, then, when they had a chance, usually while on picket duty, they would desert and repeat the performance.

When the draft* came in 1863 it was possible to purchase a substitute. In 1864 draft brokers in Philadelphia were offering \$1,000 or more to any veteran who would enlist as a substitute. This made it profitable for some to do as the bounty-jumpers did, enlist and desert. Naturally, the regular enlisted men resented the substitutes and this method of "dodging the draft" proved far from healthy for the morale of the army.

Gradually, as the war progressed, the modern command system began to evolve. The draft system of raising troops was started, with a common uniform for all; female nurses were accepted in the army; the armies were separated into various departments, with a Commander-in-Chief over all; the parole and exchange system was abandoned; the cavalry, instead of making massed charges, dismounted to fight, and became "Mounted Infantry". Even before Sherman's "March to the Sea" the armies had begun to live off the country through which they marched and respect for civilian property became a thing of the past. But it wasn't until 1864 that the proper generals and the modern command system emerged from the blunders and chaos of the three earlier years.

The two boys whose diaries have been used were brothers: Matthias Baldwin Colton, 23 years old, nicknamed "Ball", and William Francis Colton, 20 years at the time of their enlistment. They were part of a large family. The father, Sabin Woolworth Colton, was of New England stock and had come to Philadelphia in 1825. He was a deeply religious man and a stern disciplinarian, but still gentle and devoted to his family. He was short, with brown hair and "snappy" brown eyes, all of which, were bequeathed by him, or so it seems, to each member of

COLUMN SOUTH

the family. He was never successful in business, trying first one thing then another. At one time in the grocery business, then farming, then daguerreotypes, and finally in 1863 he became an agent for a Life Insurance Company. It is not surprising that the family finances were usually at low ebb. By rights he should have been a carpenter or perhaps an engineer, for he was extremely handy with tools, inventing and patenting a non-pickable bank lock which is now in the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia and for which he received a medal. According to a grandchild he had a room "fitted with a real carpenter's bench with winches and lathes and the room smelled deliciously of fresh wood and varnish and paint and glue. He made even such things as tables and chairs. We had a chair of his careful make. And very fine and simple and good to have it was. Always, as long as he lived, Grandpa Colton had family prayers in the morning, with Bible-reading. Now, when the children were all youngsters it seemed they had a nickname amongst themselves for Baldwin. It was, for some reason, Jesse. And Aunt Daisy was 'Sis.' In one of the dull geneological tables in the Holy Book, Grandpa read out gravely, 'And Jesse, the son of Sis.' It was too much! There was a burst of laughter. But 'Father' was not amused. He could not understand how anyone could give way in that manner, when the Bible was being read. He closed the book, and left the room, and laughter died away."

The mother, Susannah Beaumont, was a beautiful woman, but delicate. She was quiet, gentle, and a devoted wife and parent. For some reason, whether because of timidity or lack of education, she never wrote one letter to her boys in the army. In almost every letter they wrote home they plead for a letter from her, but their pleas were never answered.

The oldest child was Delia Louise, "Daisy" to some and "Sis" to the boys. She was 27 years old at this time and was a remarkably intelligent girl, quick of wit and tongue. She it was who wrote to her brothers in the army, and she wrote well. To help eke out the family's slender income she wrote articles for the various magazines and journals of those times. She seems to have had most of the care of her younger brothers and she certainly had their devotion.

Ball and Will came next in line; fairly short, with curly brown hair and deep brown eyes; both with a keen sense of humor and both with an eye for the ladies, the only difference being that Ball was shy with them but Will was not!

Julia, aged 18, was the second daughter, small, plump, gentle, full of fun, and eager, too, to help in any way she could. Soon after the boys' enlistment she took a position as governess with a family in Frazier, a small town in Chester County.

After Julia there were the three "little boys". Sabin Jr., 14 years old, already doing his part as office boy at E. W. Clark & Co., an investment company. His salary was \$200 per year, and the family thought it a most generous one! "Sabie", with the usual curly brown hair and snappy brown eyes, seems to have been the one to begin the mischief of the three and the one who dared "stand up" to the stern father. John Milton, "Mill", 12, with the same hair, same eyes, and the beau brummel of the family, was in school, as was the baby of the family, Oren, then only nine.

This, then, is the family who lived at 1839 Filbert St., in Philadelphia; a

COLUMN SOUTH

family who had little of the comforts of life, but who made much of the little they had and who were truly devoted to one another.

In the diaries and letters many friends and relations of the family are mentioned and these, to the best of my ability, are listed below.

AUNTIE . . . Mary Beaumont Dorton, sister of "Mother". She was the favorite Aunt of the young Coltons. She and her husband lived on a farm on Long Island where the "little boys" sometimes went for a visit in the summer. Not so long after the war her husband died and she promptly lost her farm and her money by "unwise investments". It might have been her addled head, for many were the odd things she did when she came to live with her sister, Susannah. A great-niece, Julia's daughter, wrote of her, "she had a habit of sitting down on the empty air. She made careful preparations, hiking up and arranging her voluminous, long skirts; and then someone would cry out, 'O, look! Auntie's sitting down!' and with a concerted rush upon her she would be saved. The chair so carefully aimed at would sometimes be as much as a yard distant." But she remained the favorite Aunt the rest of her life.

UNCLE SIMON . . . Simon Colton, a great-uncle. He was a retail Grocer in Philadelphia. Associated with him was his son-in-law, E. Bradford Clarke. He had four children.

MARY . . . Aged 30, daughter of Simon Colton and wife of E. Bradford Clarke.

ANNIE . . . Aged 17. Daughter of Simon Colton.

RAY . . . Calvin Raymond, aged 25. Son of Simon Colton. He was killed during the war, in 1864, leaving a wife and two children.

SI . . . Simon Henry, aged 21, son of Simon Colton.

AUNT DELIA . . . Delia Thankful Colton Downing, older sister of "Father". She was a widow, living in the country near Paulsboro, New Jersey. She had two children.

ELIZA . . . "Lizzie", aged 20 years.

BORDIE . . . Sabin Boardman, aged 22 years.

FRIENDS

MATTHIAS BALDWIN . . . Founder of the Baldwin Locomotive Works in Philadelphia, for whom Ball was named. His sister married Great-uncle Oren Colton, and there is a tradition in the Colton family that he was once connected with "Father" in the grocery business.

ANNIE CLARK . . . An intimate friend of "Sis", with kindred literary tastes.

CHARLES CLARK . . . Brother of Annie Clark. He served in the army until wounded at Fredericksburg.

THE KNIGHTS . . . Lillie, Mary, and Will's "dear Julia". Two boys, Wash and Sam, ran a thriving sutler* business in and near Nashville during the war.

THE KIRKS . . . A family of three boys and two girls, living on a farm in Upper Darby.

ANNA LEA . . . A friend of "Sis". She later became a painter of note, married, and went to England.

COLUMN SOUTH

LIZZIE CHILD . . . Just a friend.

MR. LELAND . . . "Mr. L", "the General," Charles Godfrey Leland, author of a humorous (at that time) book of verse in broken English, *Hans Breitmann Ballads*. He was a help to "Sis" in her literary attempts, and extremely fond of the "Family".

HENRY LELAND . . . elder brother of Charles Leland.

RUDY . . . Rudolph Watson. A young man attentive to Julia.

In the afterword I have tried to tell what became of this family and the companions who shared the boys' adventures in the cavalry regiment to which they were attached.

For the Wilson descendants of the family there is a bit of history which ties in with that of the brothers, Ball and Will. My son's great-grandfather, Captain Thomas Bonar Wilson, was in the 92d Ohio Infantry regiment when it joined the Army of the Cumberland at the Battle of Stone's River. His regiment fought at Chickamauga, Chattanooga, Atlanta, the March to the Sea, and was with General Sherman at the surrender of General Johnston. Somewhere, during the war, Grandfather Wilson lost a lung, but he didn't let that bother him, for he lived to be over 90!

You may feel, as the typesetter of the Northland Press did, after setting up the first galley: "My God, hasn't this been edited?" In my defense: I have changed neither punctuation, spelling nor phrasing of the diaries and articles used throughout; and in defense of the men, remember that much was written by the light of a campfire, after a hard day's ride or battle.

This compilation has been gathered together primarily for the now many descendants of the "Family", and it is hoped they will enjoy reading about their relations of an earlier generation, and that, for a moment at least, the young people of the 1860's may become alive and real to them, as they have to me.

Suzanne Colton Wilson

Long Meadow Ranch
Prescott, Arizona
April, 1960

CHAPTER IV

Stone River Campaign

1862

New Orleans, Memphis, and Corinth were now in possession of the Union Troops, leaving only Vicksburg to hinder the free passage along the entire length of the Mississippi.

The government in Washington had long been urging Buell to march his army into East Tennessee in order to liberate the loyal population of that region "from the peculiarly cruel and galling tyranny" they had been enduring from the Secessionists; and to make Kentucky secure to the Union. Because of the mountains to be crossed and the lack of sufficient wagons for supplies Buell had hesitated too long, allowing General Bragg, whose headquarters were then in Chattanooga, to make a foray into Kentucky. This resulted in the battle of Perryville on October 8, 1862, between the armies of Buell and Bragg. Bragg was forced to retreat to Harrodsburg, but Buell was severely criticized for permitting Bragg to escape annihilation and was removed from the command of the Army of the Cumberland, which was then turned over to General William S. Rosecrans.

General Rosecrans was favored for the command because of his successful battles with the Confederate generals Earl Van Dorn and Stanley Price in northern Mississippi. He was a friendly man, well liked by his officers and men. To the troops he was "Old Rosy" because of his large beacon-like nose. He was well-versed in the theoretical knowledge of war and worked hard at his job. In battle he was apt to become overly excited, but he was completely fearless.

Bragg was now south of the Cumberland River, in a position to threaten Nashville, which was garrisoned by a small force, and it was apparent a battle would have to be fought somewhere in middle Tennessee.

General Sheridan, who was in command of one of McCook's divisions, writes the following from his "Personal Memoirs."

"The Army of the Cumberland marched to Nashville where Rosecrans made his headquarters. The railroad from Louisville was soon reopened and he occupied himself busily for a month in refitting his army and accumulating supplies. Bragg's superiority in cavalry was so great and the raids of Morgan and of Wheeler† were so constant that Rosecrans . . . was compelled to accumulate at Nashville supplies sufficient to render him independent of occasional interruptions.

"General Rosecrans, in the reorganization of the army, had assigned Major-General A. McD. McCook* to command the right wing, Major-General George H. Thomas the centre, and Major-General T. J. Crittenden the left wing. McCook's wing was made up of three divisions, commanded in order of rank by Brigadier-General Jeff. C. Davis; Brigadier-General R. W. Johnson, and Brigadier-General P. H. Sheridan. . . .

†See OPPOSING GENERALS

STONE RIVER CAMPAIGN

"Early on the morning of December 26th, 1862, in a heavy rain, the army marched, the movement being directed on Murfreesboro, where the enemy had made some preparation to go into winter-quarters, and to hold which town it was hoped he would accept battle. General Thomas moved by the Franklin and Wilson pikes, General Crittenden by the Murfreesboro pike, through Lavergne, and General McCook by the Nolensville pike, Davis's division in advance. . . ."

On the 27th, 28th and 29th there were a few skirmishes, but it wasn't until December 30th that the two armies faced each other at Stone River near Murfreesboro.

"From the events of the day and evening of the 30th, it was apparent that the two armies were in close proximity, and orders received during the night revealed the fact that Rosecrans intended to attack by throwing his left on the enemy's right, with the expectation of driving it in toward Murfreesboro, so that the right of Crittenden's corps could attack Bragg's center in reverse, while Thomas supported Crittenden by a simultaneous front assault; and from the movements of the enemy at daylight next morning, it was plainly indicated that Bragg had planned to swing his left on our right by an exactly similar manoeuvre, get possession of the railroad and the Nashville pike, and if possible cut us off from our base at Nashville. The conceptions in the minds of the two generals were almost identical; but Bragg took the initiative, beginning his movement about an hour earlier than the time set by Rosecrans, which gained him an immense advantage in execution in the earlier stages of the action."*

The Confederates attacked before dawn, and the drive against the two divisions of Davis and Johnson struck with such force that they soon broke and retreated, completely demoralized. Men in reserve, a mile behind the line, hardly knew the battle had commenced when the fugitives from McCook's two divisions came rushing helter-skelter through the camp creating a veritable panic. Sheridan's division, however, held, repulsing three attacks, thus giving Rosecrans time to reform his battle line, bringing Crittenden up to help reinforce Sheridan and Thomas. By afternoon Sheridan had run out of ammunition and had to withdraw through the cedars. Slowly the Union troops were forced back to a position parallel to the Nashville pike. Here they made their final stand. General Thomas held like a rock, and Col. Wm. B. Hazen's brigade, consisting of the 110th Ill., 9th Ind., 6th Ky., and the 41st Ohio repulsed attack after attack, and today the oldest Civil War Monument marks the spot where he made his valiant stand.

Rosecrans, throughout the day, rode furiously up and down the lines, placing guns at the right of Thomas and forming new lines of infantry from McCook's regiments, who had retreated during the early part of the day. Garesché, his chief-of-staff, was beheaded by a cannon ball as he was riding beside Rosecrans, his blood besplattering the general. Sheridan wrote, "Garesché's appalling death stunned us all, and a momentary expression of horror spread over Rosecrans's face; but at such a time the importance of self-control was vital, and he pursued his course with an appearance of indifference, which, however, those immediately about him saw was assumed, for undoubtedly he felt most deeply the death of his friend and trusted staff-officer."

The next day, January 1st, 1863, passed with only some scattered skirmish-line action. On January 2d, Bragg attacked on the Union left, but the artillery caught

COLUMN SOUTH

his advancing lines in the flank, and the attack was crushed almost before it got started.

That night Bragg withdrew to Tullahoma and Rosecrans entered Murfreesboro, both sides claiming a victory.

"The victory quieted the fears of the West and Northwest, destroyed the hopes of the secession element in Kentucky, renewed the drooping spirits of the East Tennesseans, and demoralized the disunionists in Middle Tennessee."

Total loss of the Union army in the campaign: Killed, 1,730; wounded, 7,802; captured or missing, 3,717 equals 13,249.

Total loss of Confederate army in the campaign: Killed, 1,294; wounded, 7,945; captured or missing, 1,027 equals 10,266.

Effective force of the Union army, 43,400.

Effective force of the Confederate army, 37,712.

Back now to Ball's diary and his last few days with the Regiment.

Sunday, 21. We started this morning for Nashville with three or four regiments of infantry, three hundred wagons, 400 pack mules and 1,500 cattle. Pickets are sent out every night.

Tuesday, 23. Bivouacked in a strong position among the hills, which are very steep. The place swarms with rabbits and butternuts. We are now about 14 miles from Nashville. Passed some very steep hills.

Wednesday, 24. Called up at 3 A.M. with the information that the rebs were in our rear. The wagons were sent on ahead, and before daylight we moved out ahead of the infantry. Yesterday we halted at the Tyrene Springs. This has been a great watering place. There is a large hotel here, deserted. It was burned last night. Continued our march till 7½ miles from N., when a despatch came from Rosecrans to halt, as a body of Rebels were just the other side of the Cumberland River. Halted two or three hours and started on. We passed some beautiful places. Arrived at the city at 3 P.M., crossing the Cumberland on the pontoon bridge. A fine bridge was destroyed here by the Rebs. I was not much prepossessed by the place. The old barricades of sand bags across the streets are still here. Rode around the town awhile, seeing several members of the old troop.

Sunday, 25. Christmas. Cloudy; it is said that we are brigaded, and many of the men say they will not move, when ordered. Wynkoop's cavalry are here. We are under orders to march tomorrow. We put up our tents today. A foraging party went out this morning numbering two hundred, they came back in tonight having had a skirmish; one of the enemy was killed and we lost one man.

Friday, 26. The majority of the men in every company have stacked their arms, and refuse to move. In front of most every tent is a pile of arms, sabres, pistols and carbines. The officers can say nothing. A committee was appointed, waited on Col. Spencer, and asked if they were to be brigaded, and demanding that we be officered. He sent them off without satisfaction, and they still refuse to go, with some exceptions. Four of our mess are going in other regiments if we cannot go any other way. Some of the Captains have addressed the men advising them to go, and they have gained over a few more men. Gen. Rosecrans sent word that he hopes they will not mutiny. Before noon over two hundred of us are off,

STONE RIVER CAMPAIGN

the rest remaining. The whole army is moving southward towards Murfreesboro where the Rebels are entrenched in force. We travelled with the army until dark, and turned off into a field for the night. It rained hard all night. No tents. We spread our gum balmas over us and kept tolerably dry.

Will's comment on the "mutiny" was, "When I entered the army I had made up my mind to obey my officers and when the men first declared they would not obey, I decided not to be one of them. Ball was also of my opinion, also Frank, Al Cummings, Harry Johnson, and Wesley Bowen." So Will, Ball, and most of their personal friends went with the army.

Ball's diary continues:

Saturday, 27. At daylight off again and about 9 A.M. turned off up the hills and soon came up with the enemy, and a brisk little brush. We dismounted and fought afoot, firing several shots. We had two horses shot, and Stewart Logan had the stock of his carbine shot away in his hand.

Major Rosengarten and a big reb had a hand to hand fight, and both being strong men they were having a hard tussel, when Wash Airey stepped up and captured the Reb. The fellow had bitten Rosengarten's finger. The balls whistled about us sharp and thick. A rebel battery of artillery also opened on us from a high point of ground in front, and the rushing noise of the shell was fearful. Soon the infantry came up and opened on them at short range, firing for about ½ an hour when the Rebs moved slowly off. While this was going on we had taken another position and with a small party I was sent in advance as a picket, when someone in concealment commenced firing on us. We soon discovered a grey coat hiding in a field a short distance off, deliberately loading and firing on us. I could have shot him, but we had strict orders not to fire, and the man finding he was discovered, cleared out. We had the advance. It rained hard all the afternoon, and we all got very wet while we were scouting around the hills all the afternoon, and saw but few Rebs. Bivouacked in a field, Cummings and Bowen each captured a goose and we had roast goose for supper and breakfast.

Sunday, 28. Foggy morning. Did not start till 9 A.M. Had frost last night. No Rebels about. After going a couple of miles, halted in front of a fine mansion, while a scouting party was sent out. We were not long in finding out they had a cellar. We passed down and got canned peaches and fine apples and sweet potatoes. Beautiful day, warm and pleasant.

Monday, 29. Was on picket last night till 11 P.M., a short distance ahead of me were two men on horseback, watching our motions. Relieved at 11 P.M. and on our way to camp we, with much difficulty, despatched two small pigs. Up before light and off another way towards Murfreesboro. We had a hard march with the right wing of the army, we being in the advance. We advanced through a very thick woods of cedars on the Bole Jack road. On this road we observed natural oil, by the sight and smell. Saw some fine scenery. At last we emerged to an open space, where we came up with the Rebel cavalry, and skirmished awhile with them, driving them back, and followed on, striking them again on the Wilkinson Pike, charging after them at full speed, they halted and formed in a cleared field, and as we suddenly came upon them, they delivered a volley at short range and

COLUMN SOUTH

then cleared out at full speed. Rosengarten and Ward led us up through the woods to the right, over ground which only a moment before had been occupied by a regiment of Rebel infantry. They had left so suddenly as to leave on the ground by the fires, rations half cooked. Advancing a short distance we could see the grey jackets sneaking and watching us from behind a worm fence; we immediately charged them, and coming up to a fence, we suddenly halted, the Rebels being on the other side, only a few feet distant, we came up with them so suddenly, that many of the enemy mounted the fence and surrendered, throwing down their guns. The Rebs seeing we could not get through the fence immediately opened a heavy fire on us, and we firing at them over the heads of the prisoners on the fence. As we were not over fifty men and the Rebs a thousand strong and infantry at that, the fight was unequal and lasted but a few minutes, when our men were being killed off rapidly, we retreated, having lost heavily.

Major Rosengarten was killed instantly, being shot through the head, and Major Ward fell with a shot in the breast. I saw him fall, besides we had a number of men and horses killed. Kimber, the orderly sergeant of our company, was shot through the head and killed. Warry Caldwell of our company had a horse killed under him.

In the afternoon Corp. Morton was sent under a flag of truce into the enemy's lines to recover the dead bodies of our men. There were two regiments of infantry we were fighting, a South Carolina and Georgia reg. We camped tonight but were not allowed to have fires on account of the close proximity of the enemy.

Another description of this day is given by a good friend of the two boys, Charles S. Kirk.

"I was a corporal in Company E at that time, and had been selected to carry the Company guidon.† For doing this I was not required to carry a carbine. We had forded Overalls Creek and were grouped around a large house. Major Ward was with us. There was a level stretch of country for a half mile to the front and then the woods. Animated by a boyish spirit I waved my guidon, and immediately saw a puff of smoke from the woods, then the sound, and lastly, with a vicious thug, a bullet went into a tree at my back.

"Take care, Corporal!" said the Major. 'That was a close shot.' At this time a party of Confederate cavalry was seen in our front, making good time for Murfreesboro, and instantly the boys took up the cry, 'There they go! Charge them! Go for them!' Major Ward, who was close to me, yelled, 'No, don't go! My orders are to go only this far.' Still the yells continued. Some of the men advancing, the Major said, 'D—n you! If you will go, I'll go too—Charge!' and then all started, without semblance of formation, most of them down the road and others through a gate across a corn field, where the stalks had been cut and put in shocks.

"I was yelling as loud as anyone and waving my guidon like I had seen in pictures, but had never done the like of it before or since, when, somehow, I don't exactly know how, the stick of the guidon got caught in a corn shock, and my next recollection was lying on the ground trying to remember what had happened. My horse stood by me, and I soon concluded to get on him and continue the charge. I got in the road, but the detachment had passed in the woods out of

†Flag used as guide

STONE RIVER CAMPAIGN

sight. I saw a few men down a lane to my right, on which there was a frame house, and I went down it to join what I supposed to be some members of our own party.



As my horse kept up his run, it did not take long to cover the ground between us; but what anxious moments they were, for the four men in the road carried muskets, while all of ours carried carbines. Then, as I got nearer, I saw they had a butter-nut colored uniform, instead of the blue we wore. I was too close to them to stop my horse, and doubt if I could have done so anyhow, but in a flash came to me the drill with lances I had seen when I visited my brother Will in his regiment, 'Rush's Lancers.' Down came my guidon to a 'charge lance.' My first adversary

sat stolidly on his horse, fingering the trigger of his musket; his comrades were in the rear of him, but all my thoughts were on him and I think his were on the peculiar weapon I carried, and his ignorance of its effectiveness magnified its powers, for when I got within a dozen paces of him he dropped his musket to the ground and raised his right hand in token of surrender. The others followed his example at once, and for a few moments I had four prisoners on my hands. Soon some of our men came up, only one of whom I now recall, Joe Rue.

"Captain Norman Smith now appeared with his Company, coming in from the right, and some firing took place in front. The Captain ordered us to advance as skirmishers, across a cotton field, and in the forward movement I divided my attention between the enemy we expected in front and a new Confederate uniform, which a colored man told me had been dropped off the saddle by the rebel officer who had just gone on ahead. I did not find the uniform, but found the enemy behind the fence just in front of us. They reached it first; two of them occupied the panel just in front of me, while in the next panel I saw a bareheaded man crawl through, who came running to us. He had no hat or accouterments, and his head was smeared with blood from a wound, and as he came nearer I saw it was Sam Jamison, of Company L, who in the mix up over to the left, had been batted over the head by a rebel, was captured and escaped, all within a few minutes.

"The skirmishers in front were making it hot for us now, and all on our end of the line moved for the woods, from which came yells and heavy firing. I passed Major Ward coming back, supported by a man on each side, a deathly pallor on his face, but telling us in feeble tones to 'go on.' I went to within twenty-five yards of the fence, from behind which came shots at irregular intervals. I saw my friend Wash. Airey, dismounted and with saber drawn, calling to the boys to 'come on!' and I remember thinking what a dangerous position that was, for he was not over ten yards from the rebel line of battle and looked every inch the gallant officer he was. I saw several of our men lying on the ground and horses rearing; one seemed to me to spin around on his hind feet. Just near me were Lieutenant De Coursey and Serg. Will Kimber. 'This is pretty hot here; let's get out,' said De Coursey. 'Just one shot more,' returned Kimber, and gave it, but got one in return

COLUMN SOUTH

square in the forehead. We were all getting out now, and a little depression in the ground gave us cover and the chance to retreat in good order, and all firing from the front ceased, and was succeeded by some horrible, agonizing cries from some of our wounded back on the field.

"We fell back to near Wilkinson's crossroads and slept in the woods all night. It was a quiet bivouac, and many silent thoughts went out to those of our comrades who lay stiff and stark on the field of action, toward Murfreesboro."

December the thirtieth was spent by the Regiment in scouting to find out the position of the enemy. Ball's diary continues on the day of the big battle.

Wednesday, 31. The sky was lit up by camp fires, at 2 A.M. we came into our lines, and halted and laid down to sleep on the road by the fires. At daylight we drew rations of crackers and pork. Here we came across Bowen and some others who were with the wagons which were all captured by the Rebel cavalry and burned.* Just after drawing rations there is a great stir, the infantry coming by on the double quick, regiment after regiment. We mount and are off, and heavy musketry is soon heard. We take up our position with some other Cavalry regiments; Col. Stokes' Tennessee regiment being on our left. (The other cavalry regiment was the 2nd Kentucky Vols.) Here we stood several hours in line of battle. While marching to take up our position a battery opened on us from a hill, and a shell came rushing through our ranks, taking off an arm of a man in Co. B, by the name of Edge. The shell after doing its dirty work burst in a field to our right scaring our horses much. We were now passing over ground where there had been skirmishing in the morning, and several bodies of Rebels were lying about, with guns and knapsacks, etc.

In the latter part of the afternoon we advanced and were suddenly opened on by a battery masked in the woods, and the fire was so hot that we were compelled to fall back in some disorder. Just as we emerged from the woods, Gen. Stanley met us and said, "Follow me, my brave Pennsylvanians". We rallied and charged the Rebel cavalry which were now in our front, and they fell back, and then made a stand, and we had a brisk fight, by the time I had fired five rounds my ammunition gave out and I was obliged to borrow. At last we drew sabers and were about to charge when they cleared out. We then retired as it was almost dark, and there was no enemy to fight.

Company L captured a battle flag* of an Alabama regiment which had this inscription, "Death before Subjugation"; another captured a horse with his accoutrements.

We halted back in the woods, and stood mounted in line of battle till 12 midnight, we being allowed by turns to dismount for exercise to keep warm, as we most froze on horseback. At 12 we were relieved by the 7th Penna Cavalry, and bivouacked on the ground where a great struggle had taken place today. The dead are still lying on the ground in large numbers. Tonight is very cold. Owing to some mismanagement of our Gen. Johnston who commanded this part of our line, our army met with a great disaster, having lost many men and guns. They were suddenly attacked before daylight this morning while the men were eating their breakfast, and a desperate struggle took place lasting nearly all day. Johnston's division was badly cut up. We lost two Generals killed, one Gen. Sill, and one a prisoner.

STONE RIVER CAMPAIGN

Before lying down I went in search of water, and after a long tramp among dead bodies came to a turnpike lined with ambulances filled with wounded men proceeding to the rear. Filled my canteen with thick muddy water and returned, lying down to sleep in a few feet from a dead officer. Gen. Johnston was captured.

Owing to our reverse we are all filled with the most dismal feelings but hope to retrieve our losses tomorrow.

A rather humorous incident occurred on the 31st, here recounted by a Col. Charles S. Greene of the Union army.

"In the rebel charge upon McCook's right, the rebel Third Kentucky was advancing upon one of the loyal Kentucky regiments. They came from the same county and were old friends and neighbors. As soon as they came near enough for recognition, they ceased firing, and began abusing and cursing and swearing at each other, calling each other the most outlandish names. All this time the battle was roaring around them without much attention from either side.

"This could not last. By mutual consent they finally ceased swearing and charged into each other with the most unearthly yell ever heard. The muskets were thrown away, and at it they went, pulling and gouging. The rebels were getting the best of it, when the 9th Ohio came up, taking a great many rebel prisoners. As the late belligerents were conducted to the rear, they were on the best of terms with their captors, laughing and chatting and joking; and they all became as jolly as possible."*

Meanwhile on the 30th and 31st, A. B. Coleman of Co. L had quite a different experience.

"It was the day after our fight at the battle of Stone River, where we had dashed headlong against the 10th South Carolina infantry, posted behind a fence, and been driven back, with a score of our small force killed and wounded. Our Company commander, Lieut. John W. Jackson, detailed Corp. Chas. H. Kirk and four men, of whom I was one, to go up to where we had our fight the afternoon before, impress a wagon from some farmer in the neighborhood, and load up our dead on it and take them back to Nashville.

"We started and soon reached our field. The infantry had already arrived, and their skirmishers were busy popping away at the enemy just off to the left and in a different direction from which the heavy attack came early the next morning. Farmers and country wagons were scarce, and while we waited for our wagon to come we could watch the movements of our infantry, which was all new and interesting to us. The rattle of the skirmishers never stopped, and to add to the entertainment we were treated to the sight of an artillery duel between two of our guns and two of the enemy's posted off to our left and front. They fired round shot at us, which ricocheted across the fields but hurt no one. This kept up for quite a while, till one of our generals came up and said to the batteryman, 'Why don't you stop those fellows? Where's Ed?'

"Then a young fellow of about twenty stepped up smiling, and saluting said, 'Here I am, General.'

"'Ed, put a shot into that battery and stop them.'

"Ed carefully sighted one of the guns, a Parrott, and pulled the lanyard. There

COLUMN SOUTH

was an explosion over in the rebel battery, then a cheer from our lines, and the last seen of the enemy they were going like wild for shelter.

"Our wagon came at last late in the afternoon. Our dead were piled in it, and we pulled out as far as Wilkinson's crossroads, where we spent the night. A little after daylight the next morning a terrible infantry firing took place quite near to us in front, accompanied by some cheers and a larger volume of rebel yells. Some artillerymen with led horses stopped long enough to tell us that their battery had just been overrun by the rebels, and then some officers ordered us to 'light out' as fast as we could, as the rebels were coming.

"Our team had been hitched up at the first noise of battle, and pulled out at once down a road for 100 yards, and then took one to the left. Just at the turn we met Alex. Ramsey and Ed Patteson, on guard over a lot of ammunition, and told them to come along, but they declined, and in about three minutes the rebels had them. Our wagon kept jogging along, the mules at a sharp trot. We joined the wagons, all anxious to get away, and the yells and firing of rifles and artillery seemed greater than ever, while the peculiar whiz of the rifle ball was ever in the air. We had left the road by this time, cutting across fields, and all the time at a jog trot. The tailboard of our wagon got loose and the body of Major Rosengarten commenced sliding down from the pile of bodies. There was nothing to do but stop our wagon, crawl in over the bodies and lift the Major's body back to its place, then start off again. This happened so often that the other wagons all passed and we were left to follow alone. A line of the enemy's cavalry came up in our rear, about half a mile away, and occasionally sent a shot after us, and the only reason I could think of why they did not send a few men and capture us, was that they thought our wagon, off by itself, was only a decoy to draw them on. This kept up for an hour, when we reached Lavergne, where some of our troops were and where the other wagons had assembled. The Michigan Engineers had had a sharp fight here only a couple of hours before, defeating Wheeler's cavalry. All about the place was an air of subdued excitement, for while they had won the first round in the battle, it was not yet determined who would be the victor in others that might come.

"After a short halt here our wagon started off alone to Nashville, fifteen miles distant. It was an anxious trip for us, as the enemy's cavalry had all been thrown to the rear of our army and we were continually hearing them all around us. Besides this, the stragglers from the field of battle were almost as bad, as they told such terrific tales of what they had done and how much more terrible the rebels were; of 'how their regiment was all cut to pieces—not twenty-five men of it left alive' until one felt almost as craven and disheartened as the cowards who had run away from their command. The rear of an army is the worst place to judge how the battle is going in front. At one point in the road an infantryman, mounted on a mule, galloped by us, 'Look out, boys! the rebels are just behind!' Five minutes later he came back, without mule, hat, gun, haversack, and told us that the rebels were on that little knoll just in front, in plain sight; that they had captured him there and were waiting for us. But we passed in safety and saw no sign of an enemy. It was a weary, hard, anxious day, and there was no let-up to it until near dusk, when we passed within the line of our pickets and soon after reached our old camp."

STONE RIVER CAMPAIGN

January 1863

Now for poor Ball's miserable experience. A bad New Year's Day for him!

Thursday, 1. New Year's Day. Up again at 5 A.M. and standing in line of battle till daybreak, to give notice of any movement of the enemy. We are standing close to their lines. Very cold, freezing hard. Were relieved by the 7th Penna. Cavalry, Wynkoops.

Thirteen rounds of cartridges were given out this A.M. and with the 3rd Ohio Cavalry we set out to guard a train of 300 wagons to Nashville. As we are leaving the front the fight is just commencing again, every house around is a hospital, many graves are being dug, and around each house is lying a row of dead soldiers. It is expected the train will be attacked by the Rebel Cavalry. Bill, Frank Remont, Cummings, Little and myself were posted amongst the wagons as a guard to prevent a panic amongst the teamsters in case of attack, when we were suddenly attacked by Wheeler's and Wharton's Cavalry on the left of the pike. We were then near Lavergne. While the Rebs were firing on us, the stampede of wagons commenced. In the meantime the rest of our little party had left to join the rest of the regiment. Jo Little and I had not heard the order, and remained and were endeavoring to stop the panic when I heard the words, "Do you surrender?" I turned. There were two of the rebel cavalry with revolvers close to my head. I looked up and down the road, having a pretty good horse, thinking I might run for it, but it was no use. The enemy had charged on the train for some distance along the road and were then engaged in setting fire to the wagons and running them off into the woods. The impatient and excited Reb repeated, "Quick, do you surrender?" I said yes, and one of them said "Give us your Navy", and with feeling that can better be imagined than described I was compelled to give up the arms Uncle Sam had intrusted to my care, and we were hurried off into the woods.

Weikel of our company was at the same time shot dead close to me and lay with his head over the edge of the bridge just gasping as I left. Our men had now formed and turned on the enemy and they hurriedly left the road taking some wagons with them. As we were moving off our men opened on us with shell, which exploded briskly around us, the Rebels behind shouting to those in front to hurry up. Other parties joined us, bringing with them altogether about 150 prisoners.

Meanwhile Will, having escaped capture, went with the troop to Nashville and spent the next few days searching for Ball. He finally became convinced that Ball had not been killed, but was either wounded or a prisoner.

Will's diary fades out completely the end of January and does not start again until April. Perhaps a whole volume is missing, or perhaps he wrote his daily doings to his Julia. She, by the way, accepted him as her future husband on Christmas Day. He said, "her letter was a happy Christmas present to me."

The whole Anderson Cavalry returned to Nashville after the battle of Stone's River and there went under complete reorganization.

The refusal of some of the troops to go to the front might be called "The First Sit-Down Strike." Their commander, Captain Palmer, had been captured at Antietam, thus leaving them in temporary command of the former officers and non-coms of the old Anderson Troop. Promise had been made to them that as soon

COLUMN SOUTH

as they reached Nashville the General there would assign them permanent officers and that the original assurances, given when they enlisted, would then be fulfilled. Namely: that they would serve as an independent regiment, acting as body-guard to the General or as orderlies or couriers.

Unfortunately they arrived in Nashville just two days before General Rosecrans moved his army towards Murfreesboro. General Rosecrans, having lately superseded General Buell, had probably no idea of the special conditions under which the regiment had been enlisted. A portion of the men believed they had been deceived and misled by false assurances and when the regiment was ordered forward the crisis came. The order to march was discussed from tent to tent and Company to Company, and the outcome was that when the forward movement began, a large part of the regiment, to the number of 600, stacked arms and refused to go. Meanwhile all the officers, except Lt. George S. Fobes, Quartermaster, and a detail to guard the camp, had moved forward, together with about 300 of the regiment, leaving the "mutineers" completely unofficered. They remained in camp which, for the next day or two, was visited by officers, soldiers and civilians, all eager to see the mutineers.

"General Mitchell, commander of the Post, marched a regiment of infantry and one of cavalry, under command of General Morgan, to their camp and surrounded it. He then sent a message to the men that he was to address them. Immediately, with true soldierly spirit they went to their quarters and equipped themselves as for dress parade, but without arms; marched out by companies and formed regimental front with a precision that made a visible impression on the troops that surrounded them.

"General Morgan then ordered his men to load, after which he read his orders, and asked the Cavalry if they still refused to march. A few stepped forward and explained their reasons; namely, defective organization and of their earlier appeal to the Governor of the State of Pennsylvania and to the Government at Washington."*

This apparently had no effect, for General Morgan gave them five minutes to decide. "It was a remarkable scene. Here were less than 600 men, standing shoulder to shoulder, silent and determined; without arms, but strong in their conviction of right; facing two regiments that might in a few moments more cut them to pieces."*

Their own Lt. Fobes begged for the men, but at first General Morgan refused any compromise; then finally he suggested that they be led to General Rosecrans for his decision. This was hailed with alacrity, all the men eagerly saddling up, and off they went with Colonel Woods of the 10th Illinois leading them, only to be turned back by a superior force under General Wheeler of the Confederate army. "About one hundred camped six miles from Nashville, and made their way to the front the next day, but the majority, disheartened and desperate, without food or forage for their horses, returned to Nashville and were subsequently marched to the city workhouse."*

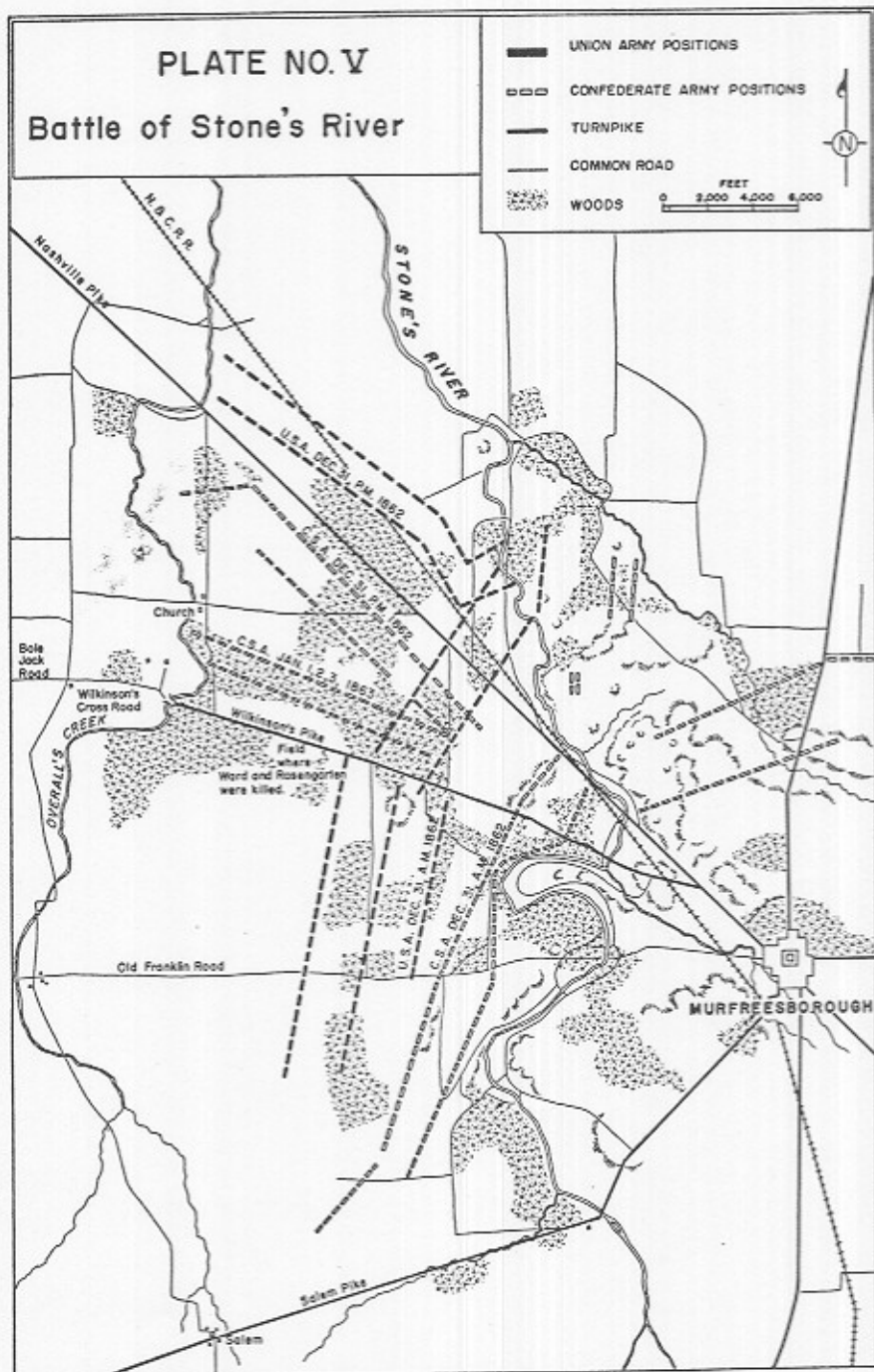
On January 3rd of 1863 many of the men from the Regiment who had been in the fight at Stone River returned and some voluntarily went to the workhouse to join their comrades, hoping to help in forcing the issue.

STONE RIVER CAMPAIGN

The motive for the "mutiny" was, as has been mentioned, a desire for a re-organization of the regiment so that they could be properly officered, but other motives were ascribed to them by the papers throughout the North and the troops in camp. "They wanted to be only the commanding general's body-guard." "They wished to escape active service." "They didn't approve of the Emancipation Proclamation." Etc. As a result not a few little dinners were given by rebel admirers of some of these supposed enemies of emancipation. In their desperation they tried to transfer to the gun-boat service and finally demanded trial by Court Martial. This last was granted and eleven of the men were tried and acquitted. On January 20th, General Rosecrans sent word that they would be speedily re-organized, and he assigned officers both from the old Anderson Troop and the new, so that by February all the men were out of the workhouse and back in camp.

On February 7th Captain Palmer escaped from his imprisonment, "returned and took command, removing the entire Regiment to a new camp, Garesché, near Murfreesboro. Re-organization followed, and the Regiment was mounted and entered upon the career of activity and independent scouting which earned it a name and fame that made it known throughout the Army of the Cumberland for bravery, fearlessness and for its achievements along the front and flanks of the Army of the Cumberland."*

COLUMN SOUTH





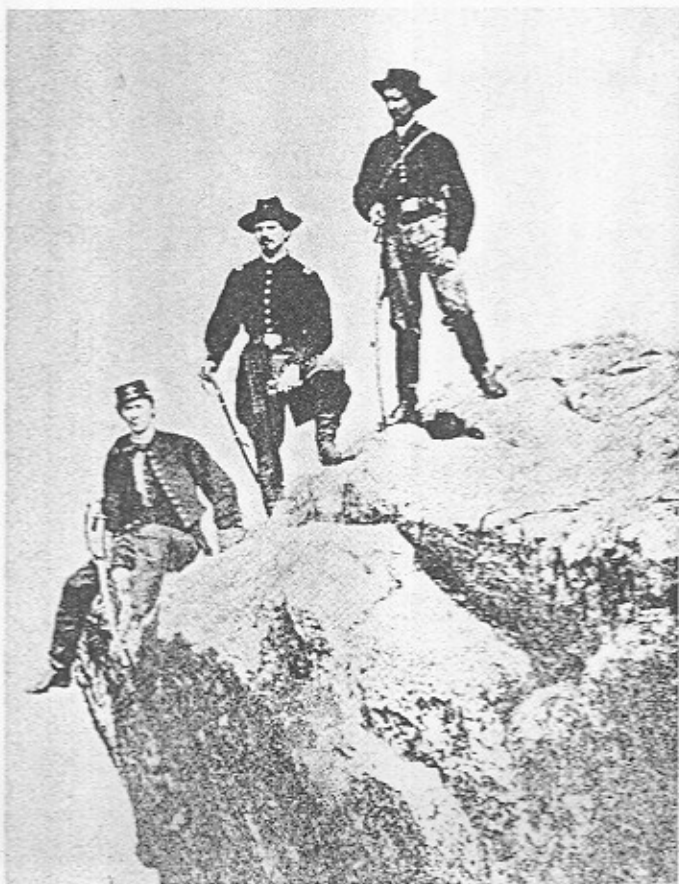
Major Adolph G. Rosengarten, U.S.A.



Major-General Joseph Wheeler, C.S.A.

PLATE 10

At the Summit of Lookout Mountain



Lieutenant-Colonel Charles M. Betts, U.S.A.

