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THE END OF ODEN'S WAR:
A CONFEDERATE CAPTAIN'S DIARY

edited by

Michael Barton

John Piney Oden was one of the Civil War's persevering men. He represents those who kept trying to be warriors at the front, but whose wounds made them wait in the rear, wanting very much to act while they could only watch. His diary from April 6 to June 29, 1863, shows his frustration in clear detail. He faced the enemy, ennui, and he knew there was no glory in that.

Oden was born on May 4, 1823, and was a native of the area around Selma, Alabama. He enlisted at Montevallo in Company K, 10th Regiment, Alabama Infantry, on June 4, 1861, at the rank of First Sergeant. However, he soon became ill, and was sent to Warrenton Springs on August 21 to convalesce. But he did not recover quickly, was discharged for "disability" on September 12 that year, and left with the \$85.66 due him for clothing and pay.

Later he was fit enough to rejoin his regiment, this time as a Lieutenant, but was wounded in the leg at Sharpsburg on September 17, 1862. He went home again to recuperate, then tried to catch up with his men in early April, 1863; now he was a Captain, and that is where the diary begins.

It is evident from the first few entries that Oden must have been a fairly important man — after arriving in Montgomery on April 7 he arranged some "cotton matters," and he soon had an interview with the Governor, who gave him a letter that would make it possible to get castings from a foundry for his mill. With those affairs settled Oden traveled by train from Montgomery to Atlanta, Knoxville, and finally Richmond, arriving on April 11. There a doctor told him it would be a long time, "if ever," before he had full use of his lame leg. Still, he took charge of a squad of soldiers and went on after his regiment. He found it near Hamilton's Crossing and settled down to wait for a chance at more duty.

Here his diary concentrates on the details of camp life: soldiers fixing fish hooks, going on picket, hearing sermons, watching Yankees, staying out of the rain, policing the grounds, and waiting for battle. His life now was a very "monotonous thing," he wrote, and he felt like a "common loafer." Battle finally came at Chancellorsville from May 1 to 5. Oden obtained a doctor's permission to follow his regiment, and so he was able to report from the sidelines. Though Lee's army was victorious, Oden wrote afterwards about those comrades who had been personally defeated: "the work of amputation is now fully begun . . . enough too, to excite all the sympathy within the human breast." Walking over the field a few days later, he observed that "great waste follows great battles," but now "nature" was "once more permitted to roll on."

Oden then made application to be a Quartermaster assigned to Talladega County "to collect the taxes in kind." He waited impatiently for his paperwork to be processed, spending most of his time visiting friends in camp, admiring the full dress of Spring, and worrying about the possibility of defeat at Vicksburg. Otherwise, he was still impressed with the "sluggishness of ordinary camp duties." His application had not been approved by June 4, so he submitted his resignation from the army. By June 9 he was back in Richmond. The time he spent in the capital was also "rather dull," taken up by trying to get the red tape of his discharge untangled. Finally he got out. Then he bought \$2050 worth of tobacco and started for home.

When he landed in Selma he closed his diary with the briefest, concrete commentary on the effects of the war: "Saw a great many men on the streets but few acquaintances."

Oden's diary is reproduced here exactly from a typescript copy; the original text was in a small, green, leather book, 5¾ by 3½ inches, with 85 daily, one-page entries. On the flyleaf was inscribed, "To Lieut. Oden, from Bettie A. H. of Maryland." It is now the only personal document made public from his unit — there is no regimental history or anyone else's diary, letters, or memoir published. I am indebted to Professor and Mrs. John S. Wade, Jr., of Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, for making it available, and also to the National Archives for giving me more information on Oden.

Diary of Lt. John Piney Oden: April 6, 1863 — June 29, 1863
 Small green leather book $5\frac{3}{4}$ X $3\frac{1}{2}$.
 Inscribed on the flyleaf:

To Lieut. Oden

from

Bettie A. H. of Maryland

1863

April 6, Monday. Beautiful morning and long to be remembered. Set out once more to my Regt. which I have been separated with since the ever memorable Battle of Sharpsburg on the 17th of Sept. last. Am in tolerable good general health but not clear of lameness. Arrived at Selma in due time, got my cotton matter satisfactorily arranged, bade adieu to Father and other friends. Got aboard of the Steamer St. Nichols bound for Montgomery about sunset.

April 7. Arrived at Montgomery early this morning. Saw my lady friend safely situated at the Exchange Hotel. Had an interview with his excellency the Governor, obtained a letter recommending or advising any foundry to do any casting that may be necessary for my mill, got the clothing Col. Darby had here for our Co. Strolled around the balance of the day, met W. T. Stubblefield and others of my acquaintance. There are a great many going back to front.

April 8. Left Montgomery on the $5\frac{1}{2}$ A. M. train. Beautiful morning but a little too cool, had some frost, fear the wheat and fruit will be injured at home. "Tis a very pleasant time indeed to travel. Was very much crowded. Arrived at Atlanta in due time. Nothing of any note occurred on the way. Left on the 7 P. M. train for Dalton after partaking sumptuously of a two dollar supper. When dark came on stowed away the children and made other arrangements for napping.

April 9. Daylight found us considerably on our way towards Knoxville. This morning frost here is nearly as heavy as any we have had this winter. In passing Hanover met my old friend Mr. Tate who treated me so kindly last fall. Saw a great many soldiers about Knoxville. Met a great many paroled prisoners captured at Murfresboro. The news is confirmed

of our successful defense at Charleston. Arrived in due time at Bristol, there left Mrs. Cherry.

April 10. Travelled all night, again another beautiful morning, bright frost, everything looks very winter-like. The wheat in particular is very late. Arrived at Liberty in due time, but owing to a breakdown or run-off of a train ahead, lay over here until the next regular train which is twenty-four hours. There were several injured, one Mississippi (?) soldier killed a paroled prisoner from Tennessee. Met Dr. Letcher, strolled around, found private quarters and are very comfortably *fixed*.

April 11. This is a beautiful morning, quite cool to an Alabamian. Strolled around town and passed off the time as best we could. Took the 2 P. M. train, arrived at Richmond 3 A. M. Sunday — meanwhile lying over yesterday visited Dr. Letcher's hospital. Spent a while with him very pleasantly. While there wrote a letter home. All the trains between there and Knoxville going both ways are crowded and a great many prisoners are going both ways.

April 12. Sunday. Very beautiful morning indeed. Went to my old friend Mrs. Taylor's, engaged board and after breakfast commenced a stroll to Exchange Hotel, Post Office, Capitol Square, etc. After dinner called on Dr. Clark who examined my wound and gave it as his opinion that it would be a good while before I could have good use of my limb if ever, went to the passport office to get our papers to pass to our Regt., reported to L. H. (?) next morning and took care of a squad.

April 13. Took charge of a squad at the train and set out for Hamilton's Crossing at 10 o'clock A. M., arrived there about 11 A. M., reported my squad to the Provost Marshal, got leave and direction to our Regt. Met Geo. Taylor with a wagon and got our luggage carried out and took a seat myself. The Regt. is stationed about 7 or 8 miles from the depot, passed through the battlefields, etc.

April 14. Found the boys generally very well and in fine spirits and only moderately fixed up, as they have only been at this place a short time. The Regt. is crowded very much and

very much tangled and confused and consequently confused, hence from these circumstances, presume our stay at this place will not be long. At any rate, hope we will be better fitted up by moving again soon. Went out to the field to witness a brig. drill as a spectator. Have not reported for active duty yet.

April 15, This is one of the dreaded days in camp, raining heavy all day, all closely confined to their several or respective bunk or shelters. While some are only tolerably good, others are most intolerable, however, let the wide world wag as will, the soldier will be gay and happy still. As I have taken a very sore throat and bad cold for the life of me cannot be very happy. We finally succeeded in getting J. T. Mims' substitute mustered in and John of course relieved.

April 16. Cleared off this morning very much to our gratification as our Regt. has to go on picket this evening so most sincerely hope the winter is now broke. All hands are very lively this morning fixing up fish hooks, etc., preparatory for going on picket. Wrote to William Perryman about the death of his brother Henry. Sauntered around camp, rather lonely this evening, however, met with my old friend Capt. Truss and whiled away the balance of the evening.

April 17. The weather has not entirely cleared off. Visited our picket post, found the river bank slick as an oyster slide being used all winter along here the Yankees are all along on the opposite side seemingly diligent. Our heights enable one to view their forces for some distance. There is a good large force in sight. Our boys are scattered all over the battlefield like so many cattle or sheep gathering wild onions, others are to be found up to their necks seining for fish just below a dam *across* the river above the city.

April 18. This is a beautiful sunshiny day, the most spring-like of any since my arrival and even any as yet this season. Had our payrolls approved by the Col. Com. There is more leisure today the boys say than they have had in sometime and hence permission is granted to several to wash but not having utensils enough to wash in, but few can wash at a time. The camps are being policed and a general fixing up is going on.

Puts one in mind of days gone by at home sweeping yards, etc., Saturday evenings.

April 19. Sabbath morning clear and beautiful. All hands are astir fixing for Regt. inspection. The Col. seemed very much pleased. Our guns were bright as new money. After this, assembled and heard a most excellent sermon from Rev. Mr. Renfro. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation. Col. W. H. Forney came in this evening looking only tolerable well. The day passed off unusually quiet, a little cooler towards night. New moon seen this eve.

April 20. Another rainy day, not quite so hard and more intervals than the last, consequently, the boys are out occasionally playing cat, etc. J. T. McMillian left us this morning for home. Learn the Yankees are unusually still today. As soon as the weather settles will look for a movement of some kind. However much they may move and change about, have no idea they will ever attempt a crossing here. Everything seems to be more dull and monotonous every day in camps.

April 21. Quite cool today and very unlike spring. All vegetation is certainly very late. Consulted Col. Forney about getting a horse. He advised me not to buy yet. He is of the opinion we will not move from this place for sometime. Col. Caldwell came in today, have not seen him yet. No news from Norfolk or Suffolk. We are anxiously awaiting news, from former news we are very expectant from that quarter.

April 22. Our Regt. is out on picket; last night was very cold for the business, however, as that is a getting way from camps and a chance to amuse themselves fishing, all hands go very cheerfully. Visited the picket line, had a very plain view of the Yankees, their pickets, reserves, etc., but did not see many other of their forces from this position. This was the extreme posts up the river or the left of our infantry line. Procured some fish bait and tried my hand but did not succeed.

April 23. This is another desperate rainy day. Pretty hard and cold hence very disagreeable. No time to read nor write but must answer Kate's received 21st inst. Finished the payroll and drew the money, *paid* off the Co. One Co. from each

Regt. of our Brig. was called out. Some say to strengthen the pickets somewhere above where the Yankees are threatening a crossing. Would prefer to think the reverse; viz., that we are about to make a small raid on them.

April 24. Still raining this morning, very cold at that, almost sleet, bad time soldiering along now; however, we crowded up in and under our little and otherwise scanty shelters and while away the dreary moments as best we can. Yesterday's news from the North justifies the idea of no more fighting until fall, if then. Witnessed the unpleasant sight of two men of Co. H (?) marched in front of our Regt. with bbl-shirts and one-half of their heads shaved.

April 25. Clear and very windy today, as the wind is from the north 'tis a little cool and very unlike April weather. Feel better today than I have since my return to the camp. Hope now to get along without any more setting back but have already fallen off very much. Col. Forney made his first attempt to drill the Regt. The Regt. is very well drilled. Strolled around camp to while away time. 'Tis getting to be very monotonous thing with me indeed, feel to be a common *loafer*.

April 26. Sunday. Inspection arms, policing camp, etc., after which Rev. Mr. Renfro preached one of his usual interesting sermons from Psalms 97 - 1. The Lord reign. Made a proposition to furnish the Regt. with a weekly newspaper, religious, but not sectarian. Subscribed for 6 copies for our Co. Paper published at Atlanta, Ga. Am pestered this evening with very severe griping in my bowels. Got some pills and salts to take in the morning. Our Regt. went on picket this evening.

April 27. This is the most spring-like day we have had. A few more such will give everything quite a different appearance and with us agreeable. Feel better today. The Regt. returned from picket, nothing new from the Yankees but little talking across now, however one of their sentinels said to one of ours, if he had a chance he would shoot ole Abraham, therefore, they are getting tired of the war. Hope that shooting spirit will increase if there is any close in such a sentiment.

April 28. Another dark, dismal and drizzly day, very much to

the discomfiture of the soldier, however, as it is not raining very much our old field is filled with boys playing ball with an occasional yell that would do justice to at least such a number of Indians; but for something of this kind the camp would be the more irksome. No news of much interest in the papers now. Am getting very anxious to hear from home.

April 29. Was called to attention of our fighting impliments last night at 1 o'clock to be ready at a moment's warning. The enemy is said to be making a demonstration at Banks Ford. All things remained quiet until 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ A . M. when cannonading was heard down the river, also small arms could be heard down the river. Also small arms could be heard a piece off from camp; heard in the evening that a large force had succeeded in crossing. Learn they are moving up the river rapidly.

April 30. Great excitement prevailed throughout the camps this morning. Rose at 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ o'clock, struck tents, paced up and loaded wagons, rained slowly until near 12 M — when the sun shone out beautiful and warm. Many reports are now afloat. From reliable information learn heavy skirmishing is going on 6 or 8 miles above here on the river, perhaps in Gen. Posey's Brig. Our Regt. has all gone on picket this evening, extending down near to Fred. Heard heavy cannonading below Fredericksburg.

May 1. Beautiful day, a little foggy, everything is in motion and very exciting, 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ o'clock fog disappears. The enemy send up their balloon, their drums are plainly heard opposite our camps across the river. Expect the battle to open every moment; on our left our troops are concentrating there. First gun fired at 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ A. M. Our Brig. is now in the east of camps $\frac{1}{2}$ mile waiting for our Regt. to be withdrawn from the picket line. At last they come in and proceeded towards the firing which was about 4 or 5 miles distant. Started in that direction ahead of our Regt., obtained permission of Dr. Taylor to follow our Regt. at will. The Regt. passed while we were at Dr. Taylor's hospital. Set out after our Brig. Overtook them about 2 miles off. Took position in some ditches a short while. Threw out skirmishes and soon followed by the whole Brig., followed on $\frac{1}{2}$ mile after sunset when in $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of river turned back for Dr. Taylor's hospital which T. B., J. H. and a man

who had accidentally shot his finger and myself reached about 9 o'clock.

May 2. Had a pretty good night's rest. Our Brig. was ordered back to Banks Ford and passed us at 2 o'clock this morning. Set out after daylight for our Regt. Went through by old camp. Called at a miserable hut but however asked for breakfast which we luckily obtained. About 10 minutes after 8 A. M. firing commenced about 1 mile west of where we were last night when we turned back. Went on in pursuit of our Regt. but just before we found it learned the Brig. would rendezvous where they did yesterday. Turned our course for Dr. Taylor's quarters which was out on the plank road in sight of the place of rendezvous, arrived there 11½ o'clock A. M. Lay around there until 4 P. M. when the Brig. was ordered to take their former position. T. H. B. went back while I remained. The firing has been very regular up to this time when it commenced. Many reports are coming in, all very favorable. About this time a few heavy guns are heard below Fred. Can't say from whom (perhaps our signal). Small arms are plainly heard up on the river at six o'clock this evening.

May 3. Sunday. The Yankees' chosen day for battle. More or less fighting about Chancellorsville. General Earley's Div. was all turned back last night to attend to these crossings before Fred. which so far, 7 o'clock this morning turns out to be a feint, at least but little firing heard in that direction. The firing in front of Chans. was resumed at an early hour this morning very rapid and continuous, very clear and pretty strong wind from the south. Still the firing is distinctly heard. All are anxiously awaiting but sanguine of the results. 'Tis said Gen. Lee has them now right where he wants them and the news is altogether confirming. A A. M. Gen. Early begins to test whether 'tis a feint or not at Fred. Gen. Wilcox takes position in the ditches at Dr. Taylor's and to the right, went down about this time, found our Regt. in the upper ditch. Gen. Barksdale's Brig. in the lower one and the Yankees between the canal and river thick and crossing rapidly at Fred. & below. Are now becoming satisfied 'tis not a feint by no means. Very desperate fighting is now going on to our right. About 10 minutes to 11 o'clock A. M. our Brig. (in particular our Regt.) was ordered to move by the right flank while T. H. B. and my-

self moved by the *other*. About this time Barksdale's line was charged and broke in and our Brig. was ordered to fall back. Very good order was observed. Stopped at the fork of the road or just below on the plank. We got reinforcements. Our Brig. turned back to the brick Ch., formed line of battle and soon met the Yankees and a most desperate fight issued from 5 P. M. until near night. Drove the Yankees back to this toll gate with great slaughter.

May 4. Daylight presents a sad and very distressing spectacle around our Brig. Hospital. The work of amputation is now fully begun. Three tables are constantly filled with the groaning subjects, enough too, to excite all the sympathy within the human breast. Had one amputation in my company. Wm. Pope had his left thigh taken off near his knee. Wm. Staples is mortally wounded. T. F. Russell is badly wounded in hip and thigh. Several others slightly wounded. Wm. Allen and A. M. Lyon are killed A Crowson, T. Martin, W. O. Wesson & H. H. Stoveall when the Regt. turned back or at least when it halted yesterday. I went on with Dr. Taylor's ambulances to where he established his hospital. Got Rev. Mr. Renfro's horse, went back while the fight was raging as near as I dared to go at least to where the balls were cutting up the dust, remained there until night when the firing ceased. Went up to the Church where I met our Regt., learned all the particulars I could. T. J. Hunt and myself went back to the hospital. Got off to bed in an old crib 11 P. M. There was some cannonading and pretty heavy too occasionally toward Fred., some but not much about Chans. At 5½ P. M. it was very brisk out there for a little while. Reports from all directions are very favorable, presume the victory at both or rather all places is complete. Made a dispatch to Selma Reporter and sent by Capt. Ragan. 'Tis an eventful and ever memorable day with me being another birthday of mine spent in the War which too rolls around my 40th year. Later this eve heavy cannonading is on the river below Dickerson red house.

May 5. Some little firing last night among the big guns. Some Regt. of our Brig. took a good many prisoners last night near our old camps. What were not taken were not to be found anywhere on this side the river or anywhere in this neighborhood. Went up to the brick church where our Regt. has been

in position since the engagement. Found them employed in guarding prisoners, gathering up and burying the dead. Had quite a pile of Yankees, Found the body of A. M. Lyon today. Received orders to fall in. Went down to the toll gate, remained there until 2 or 3 P. M. Ordered in the direction of Chans., about this time a very heavy rain set in, rained until night. Struck camp about 8 o'clock. Our boys found their Yankee rubber cloths of great use; having lost all their knapsacks when they fell back from the ditches. They were very eager to supply themselves at the first opportunity which the most of them did amply. But little cannonading through the night.

May 6. Still very cloudy and even raining slowly and very cold. Cannonading has commenced to the right of this road (plank) seemingly not more than 2 miles off. Our Brig. is ordered in that direction. Others are also making their way there too, however unpleasant the weather all hands seem to step full and cheerful, the news is cheering from that quarter. Gen. Jackson is said to have them surrounded by entrenchments. Remained with our ordinance wagon which stopped one mile this side of Chancellorsville. The firing ceased gradually. Our Brig. was soon ordered back to our camps which place we reached about 5 P. M. Still raining more or less. Quite a stir fixing up with Yankee tents, rubber cloths, etc., as best they can, our baggage wagons not having returned from the rear. However much rain falls and inclement the wind blows all seem to be jubilant over their great victory, especially after seeing the battlefield about Chancellorsville, their gigantic fortifications, the immense army stores captured, etc., etc. —

May 7. Everything is very quiet this morning. The booming of big guns has once more ceased and nature once more permitted to roll on as it were uninterrupted. Raining occasionally, however unpleasant each and every one is eager to tell what occurred to his *certain knowledge*. Bagge wagons returned late this evening with cooking utensils, a few [?] etc. Fixed up better for the inclement weather. Took a stroll to view the opposite side of the river, saw but few Yanks.

May 8. Still very quiet. Learn there is going to be an exchange of wounded prisoners at Banks Ford today. Took a stroll over the battlefield on this side of the plank road with

R. T. J. Find a great deal of sign (sound) timber literally shot to pieces with small arms. There are a great many guns and accoutrements picked up and stacked all along the line. Great waste follows great battles. Learn this evening something was lacking about the exchanging the prisoners, hence no exchange.

May 9. Very beautiful day. Spring is once more presented in all its loveliness. Bright sun up today and a few others will soon clothe this heretofore cold and desolate region in its green mantle, so much desired by both man and beast. Took a stroll down to our ditches or *starting* point of today a week ago. Viewed the Yankees across the river who appeared to be very busy passing to-and-fro with their wagons and
Heard Gen. Lee's order or proclamation. Send this evening 9 Regt. to observe tomorrow in W_____

May 10. Sunday. Another fine day. Had inspection arms, afterwards preaching by Rev. Mr. Renfro from I Cor. 15 - 51. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, etc. Wrote a letter today to my Hostess Mrs. Macgill, Hagerstown, Md. Went over near Dr. Taylor's where the Yankee wounded were. Met a surgeon who promised to mail my letter. Had a good long confab with several of the surgeons. All seem to agree there was great slaughter among the Yanks. This has been the warmest day this spring. Almost summer. All vegetation is putting forth rapidly.

May 11. Got a horse and went out to see the battlefield around Chancellorsville. Have never seen such defenses, varied, etc. It seems to one not skilled in the art of war to say the least, to be a solid mass of barricaded confusion, especially after our boys began to press them out of their dens. Nearly all the woods have since been burned over where there was any fighting, either by the shell or set on purpose to assist in covering their retreat, which was in great confusion from the signs, guns, knapsacks, accoutrements, etc., strown to the river 75,000 guns.

May 12. Very beautiful spring-like day. Very much appreciated after so much bad weather. Started my application and recommendation for a transfer as Q. M. to Talladega Co. to collect the taxes in kind. Was favored by every com. officer

in the Regt., which am ever grateful for whether I get the transfer or not. The transferring the wounded Yankees to their own side of the river has been going on for a day or two, are pretty well done this evening. Wrote D. B. a letter today. Had no mail today for our Co. but little news anyway. All things quiet.

May 13. Was threatened with rain last night but the sun rose beautiful this morning and bids fare for another fine day. Set out early to see Capt. Cook, found him very bad. Leaned the board of Phasians at Gen. Anderson's headquarters was to meet today, who I will have to go before before my papers will go to War Department and hence I soon set out in search of that place; learned before reaching there the board would not meet, turned about and made my way back to camp. Had a hasty shower this evening.

May 14. Some little rain last night and is very cloudy this morning and even raining a little occasionally. Our Regt. is out on picket, hope it will not rain much as it is very disagreeable. Strolled down on the river near our line, never saw any Yanks. They seem to have all moved down opposite Fred. Everything is remarkably quiet now on their side. Capt. Truss and Blewster returned with Co. this evening (19th). They report some of our boys back already that were taken prisoners.

May 15. Very free day but quite cool, almost frost. Lt. Johnson and myself went down to see Capt. Cook. Found him very low, remained until after noon. He appeared a little better, but nothing permanent. Got a good dinner, corn bread, vegetables, etc. Received a letter from Kate, larned there had been great excitement about the Yankee raid that attempted to pass through our state (with every person in the whole country but wax into them.

May 16. Clear and cool and windy, more like fall than spring. Received our *things* from Richmond, coffee, sugar, cups, plates, knives and forks, etc., etc. Bill \$27.00. Borrowed Mr. Renfro's horse and made my way to General Anderson's headquarters. Leanred my papers have gone on up to War Department. Made but little tarry. Saw a good many fine horses, well kept in-

deed, etc. After my return learned of Dr. Taylor about my papers. Hope they have gone the right direction and will soon be heard from.

May 17. Another fine day and Sabbath. Expect preaching today by Rev. Mr. Renfro but a visit to where Capt. Cook is with my friend Capt. Truss will deprive me of the benefit of it. Found the Capt. better and even have some hope, however Dr. Taylor says there is none for him. Got a good dinner, corn bread, vegetables, asparagus, etc., relished it very much. Find several signal stations around here and learn Gen. Hood's Div. is above on the river and Gen. Longstreet is below. Expect a forward move.

May 18. This our picket day has rolled around, seemingly too soon, however 'tis so and the Regt. must go this evening at 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ o'clock. Brig. drill in the morning and picket duty in the evening is putting in duty pretty tight. Everything in this vicinity is very quiet. Went out to our post, saw few blue bellies at the lower post below Banks Ford, none above. Saw they were anxious to change papers but made no change while I stayed, returned to camp by sunset.

May 18. Very cool again this morning. Wind from the north about 10 o'clock A. M. Heard several cannon a little west of north a great way off. Can't say whether they are signal guns or not. Had milk and butter for dinner in camp today. Gen. Huey & Capt. Cook's Lady arrived today. News from home is all cheerful, crops very good especially wheat. Our boys got a Phil. paper of yesterday while on picket. Great efforts are being made to smooth their late reverses.

May 20. All things around being very quiet this morning adds to the serenity, beauty and grandeur of the season. All the vegetation is putting forth rapidly. Forest leaves are nearly grown. Learn today, too late to go before the board, my papers have been returned, so that ordeal will now have to wait until Saturday before they can be started aright. Am getting impatient. See from today's papers detailed accounts of the battles in Miss. and expect more hard fighting there soon.

May 21. Have a report in this morning that our forces are

crossing the river between here and Culpepper near the latter place. 'Tis beautiful weather indeed for an army to move. Received the intelligence of the death of Capt. Cook. He died at 8 o'clock A. M. His body was sent to Hamilton's Crossing this evening. Received a letter from Kate this evening, was pleased to hear all were well and Felix had got home but sorry to hear the plough stock were so skinned up and even crippled.

May 22. News of yesterday unimportant, however fear Gen. Pemberton has not been so successful as might have been. Went out to witness Brig. drill, could plainly hear Yankee arms. Expect grand reviews are going on and great efforts are being made to keep up appearances. The balance of the day passed off rapidly, lying around sleeping in the shade. Saw an elderly lady very busy going around through the Regt. of our Brig. principally in the 11 Ala. Regt.

May 23. Clear, very still and warm. Summer seems to have rushed in all at once. Walked over to Gen. Anderson's headquarters, met the board, my *case* was to be laid before General Anderson as to whether he wanted to approve the application on account of *light duty* or not. Was very kindly treated by the board. Found it very warm stretching across the old fields. News of today very discouraging, fear our forces there, Vicksburg, will have to do some desperate fighting to sustain or even extricate themselves.

May 24. Another Sabbath has rolled around. Clear and exceedingly warm. Attended preaching in the 9th Regt. Quite a good turnout. Went with J. L. D. to Mr. Tonsile's for dinner, by a very tight *squeeze* got a nice one. No news from the West of importance. From private sources hear of the casualties of the 30th Regt. occasionally. Nothing as yet has shown very much fighting by that Regt.; however, expect ere this they have been into it as well as all that army.

May 25. Quite a stir in camp today paying off the Regt. generally which always produces more or less a gratifying, stirring time, at least more so than that which is brought about on the eve of battle (fall in). This evening's news is very cheering from the West, however, 'tis not altogether reliable,

but hope, fond hope is want to catch at everything that is the least favorable. Received a letter from Nettie of 28th ult. by L. E. S. He has been sick on the way, hence the delay. Very cool this morning.

May 26. Very cool and cloudy. Fire is very pleasant, in fact, too cool to do without. T. H. B. and myself strolled down to Mr. Robey's, got a nice dinner. Met Col. Sanders and Caldwell who *wanted* dinner too but failed. Learned Gen. Wilcox went to Rich. today. Expect he will be promoted. Had some stir among the officers in our Regt. on the Caldwell matter [?]. Received a letter from A. J. C. today. All well and Kate was there (18) on a visit.

May 27. Yet cloudy this morning but some appearance of clearing off, turning warmer. Lt. C. is gone to Rich. today, no news of interest yesterday, especially from Vicksburg. Am again quite anxious to hear from that quarter. Was ordered to draw 3 days' rations and cook them immediately but before getting under headway the order was countermanded. Learn there was a cavalry fight up the river this morning. News from Vicksburg good again this evening.

May 28. Everything remains very quiet, presume there was nothing but a cavalry skirmish yesterday which never amounts to much. Received a letter from Billy yesterday of the 18th inst. Was proud to learn they were all well at home. Wrote to Lizzie today. Went down to the river and took a bath. No one offered to molest or make us afraid, however, saw 2 Yanks on the other bank with horses who soon as we pitched in moved their horses fearing we might swim over and get them. No news this evening. The Regt. went out on picket.

May 29. Received orders last night to cook 1 day's rations and be ready to move at a moment's warning. We are ready this morning but (no) orders to move as yet. (8 A. M.) There is evidently something afloat. Their balloons are occasionally to be seen and artillery moving up to the heights near Banks Ford. Whether they intend crossing again or a pretence to cover their retreat is the question. Prefer to think the latter is more plausible, however, a few days will tell.

May 30. Daylight finds our Regt. snug enough in the ditches near Banks Ford. The Yanks are busily engaged in throwing up earthworks, but as they are not ready yet, hence our Regt. came back to breakfast. There was but little or no news the balance of the day, but many grapevine reports and piney woods suggestions as to what is culminating in the future. No news from Vicksburg today. Am getting anxious to hear from that quarter.

May 31. Was again called to get ready to march at a moment's warning and rest on arms till daylight (At 12 o'clock) Learn the 11th Regt. went down to see what was the occasion. The Yanks were very busy near Banks Ford felling timber, etc., so as to use the canal as breastworks. Had preaching today at 10 A. M. by Rev. Mr. Bell of Alabama and was to have a sermon in the afternoon by Mr. Renfro but the wind has blown down the arbor. Late in the evening went to view the Yanks. They are busily galloping round.

June 1. All things are very quiet this morning. Strengthened our picket last night by sending 10 men and 1 sergeant from each co. Mr. A. Barber and J. B. B. came in today. Left home a week ago today. They bring good news, wheat crop very good. Harvesting had already begun before they left. Received a letter from Kate stating she . . . new biscuit for breakfast on Sunday morning before they left (24). The health of the country was very good. No new cases of small-pox up to that time.

June 2. Have had another quiet night. At last everything seems to have returned to its former sluggishness of ordinary camp duties. Brig. drill, etc. Arranged the papers for J. B. Bell substituting J. J. H. Mr. Barber is listed on the same for *Lawler*. Our Regt. went out on picket this evening. See a good many blue bellies herd their horses on the other side of the river. No news from Vicksburg very reliable. Still hope eager, lays hold of every little item however small.

June 3. Took a stroll with Mr. Barber and Boatright along our picket line. Could see about Banks Ford a good many Yankees what they had been doing for several nights that had caused the trouble in our camps for the last few nights, the

timber has all been felled between the canal and river so as to prevent our getting across, also to use the canal as a ditch. While down there a lady on horseback came down to the ford accompanied by two officers. Our boys exchanged papers, etc., while on post.

June 4. All quiet and still this morning. Drilling in Bat. etc. . from orders and inquiries look for a move soon, and as I have not heard from my application offered my resignation this morning favorably endorsed by Col. Forney. About 12 o'clock M. . received an order to fall in quick and go to Banks Ford. Was off immediately. Marched out on the high hills in plain view of the enemy and then filed off into the woods. Remained an hour or two and returned to camp without any loss this time.

June 5. Some appearance of rain this morning. All things remain very quiet. Other artillery has come in and taken position between this and Banks Ford. We are again becoming anxious to hear from Vicksburg. Heard nothing yesterday. Cannonading opened pretty brisk below Fred. about $\frac{1}{4}$ to 6 P. M. and ceased in an hour. About 9 P. M. received orders to cook two days' rations, pack up and be ready to move at a moment's warning. Was trying to sleep and was of course disturbed. Many reports are to the future movements.

June 6. All astir this morning but did not move until $\frac{1}{2}$ after 7 A. M., then the Regt. went down near Fred. Took position with T. H.'s wagon and ordinance and medical wagons. Went out on the plank road, thence toward Fred. halted within $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Went in search of the Regt. Afternoon. Found it was in a wood between _____ and Dr. Taylor's. Strolled down toward Fred. before finding it to the heights where I had a beautiful view. Yankees appear very busy. Hear an occasional report from their guns, even see them.

June 7. Cleared off quite cool after the shower yesterday evening. Everything quiet up to 7 o'clock A. M., when the Yanks fired a gun or two below Fred. answered by one still below. Strolled down to the heights on the left of the plank road to where our Regt. was on picket. (Dr. Taylor's, thence came to Fred.) The whole Regt. fills this space. Found our

Co. at the Factory. Co. E. from there to town. Went down through towards the Fitzgerald place, etc.

June 8. All things appear as they were. Across the river they keep up appearances and a might drumming over there. Went down to the Gen. Anderson's quarters after my last set of papers, got them approved there and withdrawn thence. While there went down on the heights, had a splendid view. Could plainly see what Yankees that have come over. They seem to be entrenched, still the knowing ones do not think they are going to make a fight on this side of the river. 'Tis said Gen. Longstreet is crossing above and below Culpepper Ch. today.

June 9. Clear and quite cool this morning, everything is as quiet as ever. Still a considerable drumming could be heard last night and this morning over among them seemingly disturbed Yanks. The best judges here think they are keeping up appearances here while their main force is gone to meet Gen. Longstreet or are preparing to get further. Firing is heard a long way off up the river early this morning. Obtained a pass to Rich. of Dr. Taylor, got L. H. to carry me down to Guinen (?) station was *directed*. Got a passport and set out on 2 P. M. train. Arrived Rich. at 5 P.M.

June 10. Fine morning. News was cheering from Vicksburg. Learn Gen. Stuart met the Yanks yesterday near Culpepper C. H. and drove them back across the river. My friend Dr. Clark and myself went in search of my old application for a transfer, also concerning my resignation. No papers have yet arrived. Have to send my resignation back and let it take the regular course to Gen. Hill thence to Gen. Lee. Strolled around the city a little looking at the [?] of the city. Learn Jim Stuart had a desperate Cavalry fight yesterday. Over 300 prisoners came in.

June 11. Cloudy and warm this morning. News from Vicksburg by an officer of ours who escaped from the Yanks is cheering. The Yanks say as Johnston is in their rear, sudden death awaits them in front and annihilation in rear. Sent my resignation to Col. Forney by Mr. Killough Co. B. 10th Ala. Wrote to Kate, Josh. Morriss and Tom Coleman which kept

me pretty busy 'til dinner after which strolled around the balance of the day. From the casualties of General Stewart's forces, engaged the other day, fear he made another Drainsville affair of it.

June 12. The city is as quiet or more so this morning than usual. Went with my friend Capt. Farmer to Ala. baggage Depot to get my blanket left at Sharpsburg, thence to a hat establishment or manufactory, bought one at \$15. Capt. Farmer saw D. B. in passing Wilsonville who informed him all were well and getting on well. The news of the wheat crop is very cheering. The news came in this evening of an advance of the Yanks on the peninsula, some rush of troops down there last night.

June 13. A rumor from Vicksburg in morning papers is that Gen. Walker has reached there with reinforcements, while we have Yankees' account of its capture, both need confirmation. Went down to the War Department in search of my old papers. After much inquiry at last found they had been received on the 6th inst. and filed in the proper place but learned the appointments had been already made but not confirmed, however they are virtually made. 'Tis too large a business for me anyway. The State is laid off into 8 districts.

June 14. Sabbath. Rather cool for the season, the weather is certainly as changeable here as in Ala. if not more so. Visited Capitol square from the busy throng going to Sabbath school then to _____ and from the silks that some damsels display, one would conclude naturally there was no war going on, however, a great number of these selfsame ones are thus paraded in deep mourning but as this is more or less in almost every family, it seems to follow as a matter of course. Visited the Oakwood Cemetery, there viewed in Regt. array the many thousands graves.

June 15. Bright sun this morning with not a cloud above, expect quite a warm day. The streets are as usual thronged with women and children. Met Lt. Calhoun. He left two weeks ago. Have news from home to that date. All were well. Were in full blast cutting wheat crop. Very good but had been injured by a rain storm in our neighborhood. Corn crop is