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# CONTENTS

Editorial .....132

Five Confederates,  
*by Charles T. Jones, Jr.* .....133

**EDITORIAL**

The thesis used as this number of the Quarterly is here presented as submitted by the author. There are certain errors in the comments of the author known as such by the four members of the family still living at Montgomery but these errors are not of such a character as to destroy the value of the material and they are not edited out of his presentation.

Peter A. Brannon  
Editor

**FIVE CONFEDERATES: THE SONS OF BOLLING HALL  
IN THE CIVIL WAR**

by

**CHARLES T. JONES, JR., B. A., B. D.**

**THESIS**

**Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of  
The University of Texas in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements**

**For the Degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS**

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**FEBRUARY, 1961**

## PREFACE

I was first introduced to the five Confederates and their war letters by Dr. Barnes F. Lathrop early in the spring of 1957. Dr. Lathrop also suggested that a thorough study of these letters could serve as the basis for a Master's thesis. From the time I accepted his suggestion, he has given me wise counsel and constructive criticism to the end that the story of the five Confederates might be told. I am grateful for his assistance.

I am thankful for my wife, Barbara, and for my daughter, Becky, whose patience and understanding never wavered when the head of the household went off to fight the War with the Five Confederates.

Charles T. Jones, Jr.

San Marcos, Texas

January, 1961

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. 1861 .....	138
The Bolling Hall Family	
The Enlistment of the Hall Boys	
The First Battle of Bull Run	
Camp Life with the Sixth Alabama	
The Autauga Guards	
Columbus, Kentucky	
The Battle of Belmont	
II. 1862 .....	152
Bolling, Jr.'s Company	
Hilliard's Legion	
Departure from Columbus	
The Battle of Shiloh	
East Tennessee	
Cumberland Gap	
The Invasion of Kentucky	
The Twenty-Fourth Alabama	
The Battle of Murfreesboro	
III. 1863 .....	169
"A Place of Small Importance"	
Life at the Gap	
Knoxville	
James on the Duck River Line	
The Enlistment of Tom	
The Retreat from Chattanooga	
Chickamauga and Snodgrass Hill	
Tom's Death	
The Siege of Chattanooga	
The Fifty-Ninth Alabama Infantry Regiment	
The Battle of Missionary Ridge	

## TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

CHAPTER	PAGE
IV. 1864 .....	190
James at Dalton, Georgia	
The Return of Bolling to East Tennessee	
The Fifty-Ninth and the Defense of Richmond	
The Siege of Petersburg	
Sherman's Advance	
The Fall of Atlanta	
V. 1865 .....	216
The End of Bolling's Army Career	
Crenshaw's Despair	
The Battle of Five Forks	
"The Last Fight of the War"	
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	219

“Five of us were in the war.”

—In a letter from John Hall,  
Chafin's Farm, Virginia, to  
Hines Hall, June 5, 1864.

## CHAPTER I

This thesis tells the story of five brothers—Bolling Hall III, Crenshaw Hall, James A. Hall, John E. Hall, and Thomas B. Hall—five of the nine sons of the second Bolling Hall who served in the Confederate States Army. The Hall boys were sons and grandsons of prominent Alabama planters.<sup>1</sup> The story of their experiences based upon the letters they wrote home to their father and other members of the family describes the price one southern family had to pay for the war.<sup>2</sup>

Their grandfather, the first Bolling Hall, was born December 25, 1767, in Dinwiddie County, Virginia. In 1792 Hall moved to Hancock County, Georgia, where he achieved substance as a planter. He was also involved in politics representing the Milledgeville district in Congress, March 4, 1811-March 3, 1817. He left Georgia in 1818 and settled in Autauga County, Alabama. He was not especially prominent in Alabama political affairs, but did correspond with various Southern leaders, including John C. Calhoun.

The father of the Hall boys, Bolling Hall II, born in 1813, had carried on his father's occupation and his interest in politics. He was a member of the Alabama house in 1849, 1851, and 1853. Although he never held any important office, he was close to the "Montgomery Regency," and politics fill his correspondence. He was supported by the co-operationists in 1860 but was beaten by his opponent who favored immediate secession. He was loyal to the state, however, and devoted himself to the Confederate cause.

At the beginning of 1861, Bolling Hall III, or Bolling Hall, Jr.,<sup>3</sup> the oldest of the Hall Boys, was studying law at the Uni-

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<sup>1</sup>For the history of the Bolling Hall family before the Civil War, see Ora Lee Cupp, "The Bolling Halls, A Planter Family of Georgia and Alabama, 1792-1860" (unpublished M.A. thesis, The University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1949).

<sup>2</sup>The **Bolling Hall Papers, 1785-1898**, comprising several thousand manuscripts, are in the Alabama State Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama. Microfilm copies of the correspondence, January 11, 1807-April 22, 1865, are in the University of Texas Library, where they are classified as Ramsdell Microfilms, Rolls 319B-322.

<sup>3</sup>The third Bolling Hall signed his letters Bolling Hall, Jr. His father was addressed as Major Bolling Hall.

versity of Virginia. Deeply interested in the events of his day, and enthusiastic for the Southern cause, he saw the storm approaching. To his father he observed: "I fear nothing will avert a civil war. The students just from Washington say that the general opinion is that war is inevitable."<sup>4</sup>

Following the bombardment and capture of Fort Sumter, Bolling sought his father's advice about his future course of action. His letter left no doubt that he had already made up his mind to respond to the call to arms.<sup>5</sup> As a member of the University Cadets, he participated on the night of April 18 in the seizure by the Virginia authorities of Harper's Ferry and its valuable arms machinery.<sup>6</sup> Soon afterward Bolling was back in Alabama, where he volunteered at Montgomery on May 15, 1861, and was mustered into service on June 2, 1861, as a private in (Old) Company L, Sixth Regiment, Alabama Infantry.<sup>7</sup> Colonel John Seibels, who had served in the Mexican War, commanded the regiment.<sup>8</sup>

Late in May the Sixth Alabama was ordered to Corinth, Mississippi. In his first letter from Corinth, Bolling described Colonel Seibels as

. . . very unpopular. He curses everyone. He told them all a day or two since that he didn't come here to get popular. He asked Lieutenant Kirkpatrick whether he was popular with them. Kirkpatrick replied, "Yes, they curse me a great deal." "Then," says Seibels, "you are a good officer for if you are popular with them I know you are not worth a damn."<sup>9</sup>

Bolling also had much to say about their trip to Corinth, which was made in box cars. Bolling had managed to ride part way with some of the officers and share their mess. At

<sup>4</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., University of Virginia, to Father, January 1, 1861.

<sup>5</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., University of Virginia, to Father, April 14, 1861.

<sup>6</sup>Major Bolling Hall, n.p., to the Hon. Secretary of War, n.d. This seems to be the first draft of a letter. See also Douglas Southall Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants* (3 vols., New York: Scribner's, 1942), I, 9.

<sup>7</sup>Compiled Military Service Record of Bolling Hall, Jr., R.G. 109, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

<sup>8</sup>Joseph Wheeler, "Alabama," *Confederate Military History*, edited by Clement Evans (12 vols., Atlanta, Georgia, 1899), VII, 72.

<sup>9</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., Corinth, Miss., to Father, May 30, 1861.

Chattanooga he was impressed with the fact that "one fellow was charged ten cents for washing his face." They arrived in Corinth on Sunday, May 30. As white tents spread out in every direction, the town took on a "truly war-like appearance." Bolling's time was consumed mostly in drilling, an activity which he was satisfied he knew more of than did any other in his company.<sup>10</sup>

Crenshaw, next oldest of the sons of Bolling Hall, had, like Bolling, Jr., volunteered as a private on May 15, 1861. He became a member of Captain G. B. DuVal's (Old) Company D,<sup>11</sup> Sixth Regiment, Alabama Infantry. At Corinth, Crenshaw was stationed only a quarter of a mile from Bolling. Crenshaw's military service record described him as being five feet and ten inches tall, with light hair, grey eyes, and light complexion.<sup>12</sup> As a classmate of Bolling's at the University of Alabama, he had been much inferior to Bolling in behavior, careless in his habits, constantly in debt, disposed to blame professors for his failures, and sick a great deal of the time.<sup>13</sup> To his mother Bolling had reported: "I give him lectures on honesty, at which he growls very harshly . . . He will think before long that I am worse than you or father ever was on him . . . You would be perfectly how well he takes them (the lectures)."<sup>14</sup> In spite of serious difficulties and Bolling's lectures, Crenshaw graduated from the University of Alabama in 1859. By 1860 he had returned to the University seeking practical experience in writing essays and reviews of current publications.<sup>15</sup>

James A. Hall, the third son of Bolling Hall, had, like his older brothers, been a student at the University of Alabama. He was still an undergraduate when war broke out. The details of his entering military service are not clear, but it appears that he enlisted at Montgomery prior to September, 1861. He joined Captain T. L. Faulkner's Company, the Au-

<sup>10</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., Corinth, Miss., to Father, May, 1861.

<sup>11</sup>Compiled Military Service Record of Crenshaw Hall, R. G. 109, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup>Culp, "The Bolling Halls," 121.

<sup>14</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., Tuscaloosa, Ala., to Mother, November 14, 1861.

<sup>15</sup>Culp, "The Bolling Halls," 124.

tauga Guards, and was elected orderly sergeant.<sup>16</sup> On September 22 Faulkner's company arrived in Iuka, Mississippi, to await assignment to a regiment.

John E. Hall, fourth in age of the Hall boys, had attended East Alabama College at Auburn, Alabama. A student of the natural sciences, he had been much interested in a trip which was to have started in December, 1860, to the West Indies with a college group to hunt specimens of plant and animal life.<sup>17</sup> At the outbreak of the war, he joined a college company at Auburn.<sup>18</sup> But, as he wrote, "the company busted up because the Governor would not accept our services."<sup>19</sup> From Auburn he went to Montgomery and "joined the Independent Rifles," which became the Sixth Alabama Regiment. As a private in company D,<sup>20</sup> he camped "at the race track about a mile and half from town . . . for about two weeks." Toward the end of May, John left Montgomery in a freight box car for West Point, Georgia. Thence he traveled to Atlanta, and on to Chattanooga, arriving at daybreak and seeing for the first time "beautiful Mount Lookout." From Chattanooga John went via Huntsville, Alabama, to Corinth, Mississippi, reaching his destination in good spirits. En route he was impressed with "the crowds of people at every station to greet us. And at every town and village we saw the Confederate flag floating in the breeze."<sup>21</sup>

Thus, by the end of May, Bolling, Crenshaw, and John Hall were privates in the Sixth Alabama Infantry near Corinth, Mississippi.<sup>22</sup> On Friday, June 6, the Sixth was ordered to Northern Virginia.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>16</sup>Compiled Military Service Record of James A. Hall, R.G. 109, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

<sup>17</sup>John Hall, Auburn, Ala., to Father, September 14, 1860.

<sup>18</sup>John Hall, Corinth, Miss., to Sister, May 31, 1861.

<sup>19</sup>Frank E. Vandiver, *Rebel Brass* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1956), states that "the army had to turn down over two hundred thousand volunteers in 1861 because there were no arms available with which to equip them."

<sup>20</sup>Compiled Military Service Record of John E. Hall, R. G. 109, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

<sup>21</sup>John Hall, Corinth, Miss., to Father, May 26, 1861

<sup>22</sup>As far as is known, James did not enter the army until late in the summer of 1861.

<sup>23</sup>Crenshaw Hall, Lynchburg, Va., to Father, June 13, 1861.

By June 11 Bolling was two miles from Manassas Junction on the road to Alexandria, having arrived at that place by box cars "so crowded that there was no chance to sleep at all . . ."<sup>24</sup> He had heard rumors that there were 15,000 Confederate troops in the vicinity. The army was busy throwing up breastworks in anticipation of a battle which many believed would take place "in two days or less or it may be a month."<sup>25</sup> General Beauregard had asked one of the men in Bolling's regiment, "How is the regiment named?" The answer came back sharply, "Rifles." Beauregard replied, "I am glad of that for I will give you some shooting to do in a day or two."<sup>26</sup>

On Friday, June 13, Crenshaw wrote his father on stationery with the following call to arms in the upper left-hand corner:

To Arms! To Arms! ye southern braves!

The avenging sword unsheath,

And 'round your heads, or o'er your graves

Entwine the laurel wreath.<sup>27</sup>

Crenshaw was, however, quick to temper this patriotic sentiment with a rather severe appraisal of Colonel Seibels' discipline. He wrote, "Col. Seibels is absolutely severe." Crenshaw was impressed

. . . that we have started from every place on Friday. We started from Montgomery on Friday, Corinth Friday, from Lynchburg, Friday. The men now think that every engagement will take place on Friday.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., two miles from Manassas Junction, Va., to Father, June 16, 1861.

<sup>25</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., Manassas Junction, Va., to Father, June 11, 1861.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Crenshaw Hall, Lynchburg, Va., to Father, June 13, 1861.

<sup>28</sup>Crenshaw Hall, Fairfax Station, Va., to Father, June 22, 1861.

By June 20 General Beauregard had nineteen infantry regiments, which he organized into six brigades. The Sixth Alabama was in the Second Brigade, commanded by Brigadier General R. S. "Dick" Ewell, of the First Corps of the Army of the Potomac.<sup>29</sup> Crenshaw reported that the brigade was "made up of Alabama, Carolina, and Louisiana regiments."<sup>30</sup>

Of his new commander, he observed:

Our soldiers though ignorant of General Ewell's history are disposed to think favorably of him. He is a splendid horseman and I believe has made his reputation fighting Indians as a trooper colonel in the Cavalry.<sup>31</sup>

By June 22 the Hall boys had shifted to Fairfax Station, a position about eight miles from Manassas Junction and seventeen from Alexandria.<sup>32</sup> The brigade was moving to the right of the main concentration of the Confederate Army. During this time the letters of the Hall boys reflect the mounting tension. Crenshaw reported that "on picket duty Bolling challenged a dog and I a rabbit."<sup>33</sup> Bolling wrote home requesting a bowie knife, sidearms, and a nightcap.<sup>34</sup> The nightcap he had was so large that it would "fit a barrel almost."<sup>35</sup> John complained of false alarms which caused the men to rush out to do battle only to be recalled without having fired a shot.<sup>36</sup> Every rumor was passed on until they became the main source of conversation among the soldiers. Practically every letter written by the Hall boys during the latter part of June mentioned a report or rumor of what the enemy was doing or about to do.<sup>37</sup> For example, the Yankees had "insulted the people and were nothing more than thieves and robbers."<sup>38</sup> An outbreak of measles in camp made it necessary to move the sick thirty-five or forty miles to Culpepper Court-house. Crenshaw estimated that the regiment had lost ten

<sup>29</sup>Official Records, Ser. I, Vol. II, 943-944.

<sup>30</sup>Crenshall Hall, Fairfax Station, Va., to Father, July 13, 1861.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Crenshall Hall, Fairfax Station, Va., to Father, June 26, 1861.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., to Father, Manassas Junction, Va., June 16, 1861.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>John Hall, Fairfax Station, Va., to Father, July 1, 1861.

<sup>37</sup>Crenshaw Hall, Fairfax Station, Va., to Father, July 13, 1861.

<sup>38</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., Union Ford, Va., to James, July 1, 1861.

or twelve dead (mostly from measles.<sup>39</sup> By the end of June, Crenshaw himself was sick with what he described as "a fever."

The events leading to the first major battle of the war were rather unspectacular. There had been minor skirmishes with Union forces during the early part of July. In fact, Bolling was involved in one such skirmish. No one was killed, nor even injured, and Colonel Seibels told Bolling's company, "Well, boys, it was glorious but imprudent."<sup>40</sup> The men in the ranks thought that the Confederates were going to attack Alexandria.<sup>41</sup> Actually an attack on Alexandria had been in the mind of Beauregard, but when the plan was presented it was tactfully dismissed by President Davis.<sup>42</sup>

By July 17 it became certain that General Irvin McDowell's Federal forces were on the offensive. His move was toward Manassas Junction. Against the superior forces marching to attack him, Beauregard was not confident that he could hold his own, and fell back to the south side of Bull Run Creek.<sup>43</sup>

Crenshaw reported that in the retreat the Sixth Alabama was . . . in the rear of all for the first two miles. I thought my legs would fail me in a very trying hour, but as I preceded (sic), I still maintained my strength. We burned the bridges on the road (Rail Road) as we retreated. At length after (sic) four or five miles distance from here we reached a stream called Bull Run. Our retreat was accomplished between one and three. We did not cross the stream. In an hour Major Gordon came up with his battalion. He was much excited and said, "He had seen the enemy."<sup>44</sup>

The reason Crenshaw's legs had nearly failed him was that he was still sick with fever.

<sup>39</sup>Crenshaw Hall, Fairfax Station, Va., to Father, July 13, 1861.

<sup>40</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., Fairfax Station, Va., to Father, July 4, 1861.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup>Alfred Roman, *The Military Operations of General Beauregard* (2 vols., New York: Harper, 1884), I, 7.

<sup>43</sup>Roman, *Beauregard*, I, 92.

<sup>44</sup>Crenshaw Hall, Manassas Junction, Va., to Father, July 19, 1861.

Following the retreat, the main concentration of the Confederate Army was a few miles in front of Manassas Junction. Ewell's Brigade was on the extreme right at Union Mills Ford.<sup>46</sup>

The battle at Manassas Junction was over by July 22, and the Confederates had accomplished the first important victory of the war. The Hall boys, however, had very little to write home about, inasmuch as Crenshaw had been sick and did not participate, and Bolling and John had been with Ewell's command on the far right which was not seriously engaged. "Of the results of battle," Bolling stated candidly, "you have more correct knowledge than I."<sup>46</sup> He believed that the Confederates had taken over "fifty pieces of artillery . . . killed over ten thousand and taken no one knows how many prisoners and thousands upon thousands of arms and ammunition."<sup>47</sup> Some Negroes who had been into the Northern lines after the battle reported that the "wounded would raise up and beg them to carry them away out of the rain . . ."<sup>48</sup> John sent a copy of Beauregard's and Johnston's congratulatory proclamation to his father with a letter stating that he himself had never seen the battlefield.<sup>49</sup>

On July 28 Bolling was promoted to corporal, Company L, Sixth Alabama Regiment.<sup>50</sup> Crenshaw was sent to Charlottesville "to remain until perfectly well."<sup>51</sup> Bolling and John stayed at Union Mills Ford near Manassas Junction.<sup>52</sup>

During the lull in activity, the men had some time to reflect on the war and the future. There seemed to be impatience with the inactivity of the army. Bolling complained

<sup>46</sup>Official Records, Ser. I, Vol. II, Pt. III, 440.

<sup>47</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., n.p., to (unidentified), n.d.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid. The Confederates sent to Richmond 550 wounded and 871 other prisoners. Official Records, Ser. I, Vol. II, 521. The Federals' loss was 25 guns, 481 killed, 1,011 wounded, 1,176 missing. Official Records, Ser. I, Vol. II, 327-328.

<sup>49</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., n.p., to (unidentified), n.d.

<sup>50</sup>John Hall, Manassas, Va., to Father, August 1, 1861.

<sup>51</sup>Compiled Military Service Record of Bolling Hall, Jr., R.G. 109, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

<sup>52</sup>John Hall, Manassas, Va., to Father, August 1, 1861. Crenshaw was dismissed from the hospital August 13, 1861. Compiled Military Service Record of Crenshaw Hall.

<sup>53</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., Union Ford near Manassas Junction, Va., to Father, August 2, 1861.

that "we are now at the same old place that we started from."<sup>53</sup>

After rejoining his brothers, Crenshaw thought that . . . the war will continue till the North has lost control of money and men—their hatred is too great—this added to the immense interest they have in preserving the union will give them a sneering patriotism which will require of us many hard fought battles.<sup>54</sup>

Bolling doubted that peace would come soon.<sup>55</sup>

In August Bolling groaned, "Drilling everyday—very hot and dull times";<sup>56</sup> and later, ". . . our employment is the same as ever—a very dull routine it is." However, all was not dull. There was work, such as rebuilding the railroad bridges that had been burned in the retreat caused by General McDowell's opening offensive.<sup>57</sup> John bragged that his tent was "finely fixed up for we have managed to get enough hay to cover the ground and make a good bed of it."<sup>58</sup> The boys were so eager that their father visit them, but he was unable to come.

A good deal of sickness prevailed in the army. Bolling calculated that there had been "an average of a burial every day in the regiment for the last two weeks or more."<sup>59</sup> Not only physical disease plagued the army, but also homesickness. John dreamed about how fine it would be to "eat those beautiful apples and peaches" on his father's plantation.<sup>60</sup> Bolling reminisced about "fishing and hunting" back home.<sup>61</sup> He also wanted to know how many brick his father had made and how many shade trees had died.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>53</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., Sangster's Crossroads, Va., to Father, August 18, 1861.

<sup>54</sup>Crenshaw Hall, Sangster's Crossroads, Va., to Father, August 14, 1861.

<sup>55</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., Sangster's Crossroads, Va., to Father, September 1, 1861.

<sup>56</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., Union Mills Ford, Va., to Laura, August 11, 1861.

<sup>57</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., Sangster's Crossroads, Va., to Father, August 18, 1861.

<sup>58</sup>John Hall, n.p., to his Sister, August 10, 1861.

<sup>59</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., Sangster's Crossroads, Va., to (unidentified), September 13, 1861.

<sup>60</sup>John Hall, Union Mills Ford, Va., to Laura, August 1, 1861.

<sup>61</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., Union Mills Ford, Va., to Father, August 2, 1861.

<sup>62</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., Union Mills Ford, Va., to Laura, August 11, 1861.

The dullness of the day was on one occasion relieved by the passage of Yankee prisoners through camp. "The Yankees were," Crenshaw had to admit, "quite good looking for Yankee volunteers and were very respectably armed and equipped."<sup>63</sup>

However, toward the end of the year he expressed to his sister his great destestation for the enemy. "The men I am trying to kill are not like the men you see everyday—they look just like us but their hearts are mean."<sup>64</sup>

With the advent of autumn, the Bolling Hall boys started requesting luxuries for the winter. They wanted gloves, boots, blankets, woolen socks, books (Hardee's *Tactics* and Rollins' *Ancient History* were mentioned), letter paper, envelopes, five or six good lead pencils, and a "negro to do the cooking."<sup>65</sup>

Bolling reminded the family back home that the need for these things was great because their homes during the winter would be tents.<sup>66</sup>

In addition to the everyday employment, Bolling and John were called out on scouting parties. On one such maneuver they moved within three miles of Alexandria "and could see very distinctly the breastworks" of the enemy.<sup>67</sup> Bolling could not understand how two large armies "could stand watching the movements of each other without some important engagements." He reported that "our pickets and the enemies' are in constant collision." Because of this, he felt that "a great battle would be fought "before winter sets in."<sup>68</sup>

In October the enemy provided some spice for camp life by putting an observation balloon over Confederate territory. The men tried to bring it to earth by taking pot shots at it as it hovered high above them. Bolling write, "I see him where

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<sup>63</sup>Crenshaw Hall, Sangster's Crossroads, Va., to Laura, September 12, 1861.

<sup>64</sup>Crenshaw Hall, Bull Run, Va., to Carrie, November 14, 1861.

<sup>65</sup>John Hall, n.p., to Father, November 3, 1861.

<sup>66</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., Sangster's Crossroads, Va., to Father, September 1, 1861.

<sup>67</sup>John Hall, Sangster's Crossroads, Va., to Father, September 3, 1861.

<sup>68</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., n.p., to Father, September 16, 1861.

I sit. It is about the size of my fist."<sup>69</sup>

The army prepared for winter by building log houses. The house in which Bolling, Crenshaw, and John lived was, however, a single room made of cloth "just like negroe clothes." They had no beds and pillows, but slept on straw that felt "right soft to our bones" after they had walked all day.<sup>70</sup> By December the boys had managed to build a log house.<sup>71</sup>

During the late fall, the Sixth Alabama was reassigned and placed in Rodes' Brigade, First Division, Potomac District.<sup>72</sup> According to Bolling, the brigade was on the right of the army and the regiment was on the right of the division.<sup>73</sup>

Considerable displeasure with the officers was expressed by the Hall boys. Bolling described Robert Rodes as a "tyrant who drinks very hard" and Van Dorn as a "hair brained fool who also drinks hard."<sup>74</sup> Colonel Seibels' brother, a major in the regiment, challenged the surgeon of the regiment to a duel. The surgeon shot Major Seibels in the left breast.<sup>75</sup> This event seemed to provide some release from the monotony of camp life.

Thomas B. Hall, who would be the fifth of Bolling Hall's sons to enter the service, was still in school in 1861. Tom had had ambitions to volunteer, but was induced to return to school at Tuscaloosa. This decision pleased Bolling, who wrote to him to "do his best at school in order not to disappoint father."<sup>76</sup>

For Bolling, Crenshaw, and John, the remaining days of 1861 were filled with minor skirmishes and preparation to resist an attack by the enemy. The men were busy "throwing up embankments and cutting down trees."<sup>77</sup> In November, ac-

<sup>69</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., Sangster's Crossroads, Va., to Father, October 4, 1861.

<sup>70</sup>Crenshaw Hall, Bull Run, Va., to Carrie, November 14, 1861.

<sup>71</sup>John Hall, Union Mills, Va., to Father, November 27, 1861.

<sup>72</sup>Roman, *Beauregard*, I, 481.

<sup>73</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., Union Mills, Va., to Father, November 19, 1861.

<sup>74</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., Davis Ford, Va., to Father, December 21, 1861.

<sup>75</sup>John Hall, Union Mills, Va., to (unidentified), November 27, 1861.

<sup>76</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., Sangster's Crossroads, Va., to Tom, October 11, 1861.

<sup>77</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., Union Mills, Va., to Father, November 12, 1861.

according to Bolling, "From this point to Centerville is a complete line of breast works and fortifications."<sup>78</sup> The boys disliked picketing in camp life, and they complained about it to their father. They also complained of the scarcity of food<sup>79</sup> and the inadequacy of clothing. Bolling had to trade pants to get some that fit him.<sup>80</sup> Bolling was discouraged because he had not received a promotion. If it were not forthcoming, he would take a "resting spell when my time is out." According to Bolling, this was the feeling which prevailed in the regiment.<sup>81</sup> To add to their disappointments, the Hall boys had been denied furloughs for the Christmas holidays.<sup>82</sup>

The Sixth Alabama spent Christmas, 1861, in an advanced position of the Confederate army. The enemy was close at hand. But on Christmas Day Colonel Seibels provided whiskey rations and the threat that if "there were any riotous conduct he would have every one arrested." Bolling's description of the celebration was simply, "You may imagine they were all a jolly set here. Everything went well though many were drunk."<sup>83</sup>

Information concerning James Hall from the time of his arrival in Iuka, Mississippi, late in the summer of 1861 to the end of the year is very scarce, deriving mainly from four of his letters. Prior to September 4 James attached himself to Captain T. L. Faulkner's Company, Autauga Guards.<sup>84</sup> Captain Faulkner had obtained from the Secretary of War promises that he would be accepted if they armed and equipped themselves. This they did, though their weapons were shotguns instead of muskets or rifles. According to James, the company had an opportunity to join his brothers' regiment, but Captain Faulkner waited too long to make his decision.<sup>85</sup> The company, at this time, was at Montgomery, Alabama.

<sup>78</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., Union Mills, Va., to Father, November 19, 1861.

<sup>79</sup>John Hall, Union Mills, Va., to Father, November 3, 1861.

<sup>80</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., Sangster's Crossroads, Va., to Father, October 14, 1861.

<sup>81</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., Davis Ford, Va., to Father, December 26, 1861.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup>James Hall, Iuka, Miss., to Father, September 24, 1861.

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*

James was elected orderly sergeant on September 4.<sup>86</sup> He had been offered the third lieutenancy but had refused. When his brother Bolling learned of this he wrote, "I was very much surprised at Jim's giving up 3rd Lieutent for orderly seargeant (sic). 3rd Lieutenant entitles one (sic) to carry along a trunk besides other privileges and also it is the easiest office in the company. Orderly seargeant is the hardest and has no more privileges than a private. I never was so astonished."<sup>87</sup> James admitted that his position as orderly sergeant was "responsible and laborious."<sup>88</sup>

On September 21 James' company, numbering 106 rank and file, was sent to Iuka, Mississippi, which James described as a "very pretty place." They were still uncertain what regiment they would be placed in and how long they would remain in Iuka.<sup>89</sup> On September 24 Captain Faulkner received an order from General Leonidas Polk at Columbus, Kentucky, to report to Union City, Tennessee. Having traveled to Union City by rail, the company there made application to General Polk to place them in an Alabama regiment if possible. By October 4 they had been assigned to Lt. Colonel Blythe's Forty-Fourth Mississippi Infantry Regiment.<sup>90</sup> From Union City they were ordered to join General Polk in Columbus, Kentucky, where they arrived on October 3.<sup>91</sup>

Columbus was a key point in the defense of the Mississippi River. When General Polk had superseded General Gideon J. Pillow as commander of what was called Department Number 2, he had begun to concentrate on the defenses of the Mississippi. He seized Columbus on September 4, barely getting there before an ambitious and active Federal commander by the name of U. S. Grant. The immediate task before Polk was to fortify Columbus and make it impregnable.

After James arrived in Columbus, he described the town as "200 yds. wide and a mile long, right on the high bank of

<sup>86</sup>Compiled Military Service Record of James A. Hall.

<sup>87</sup>Bolling Hall, Jr., n.p., to Father, September 16, 1861.

<sup>88</sup>James Hall, Columbus, Ky., to Father, October 5, 1861.

<sup>89</sup>James Hall, Iuka, Miss., to Father, September 22, 1861.

<sup>90</sup>James Hall, Columbus, Ky., to Father, October 4, 1861.

<sup>91</sup>James Hall, Columbus, Ky., to Father, October 3, 1861.

the Mississippi River.”<sup>92</sup> He estimated the forces “in and around this place as from 25-50,000.” During October there was little excitement except that the “Lincolnites” came down the river and threw a few shells into Columbus. James reported to his father that entrenchments were being dug and batteries planted.

James first “heard the rattle of musketry and the whistle of balls” at the battle of Belmont, November 7, 1861.<sup>93</sup> Belmont was a small village just across the river from Columbus. Federal forces under the command of U. S. Grant moved down from Cairo, Illinois, to begin their campaign for the Mississippi River. The enemy took a position at Belmont, and the Confederates crossed over the river to drive them away. Stanley Horn says that the battle of Belmont “was a military engagement in its simplest and most elementary form—two approximately equal bodies of infantry fighting in parallel facing lines.”<sup>94</sup> Both Federal and Confederate troops were, for the most part, inexperienced. After a brisk fight the Federals retired from Belmont and returned to Cairo. Both sides claimed victory. Blythe’s Forty-Fourth Mississippi Infantry apparently had little to do with the main action, but did follow the retreating enemy toward the shore and fire at their boats as they steamed away.<sup>95</sup> The Federal drive for the Mississippi River appeared to have been thwarted.

Throughout the remainder of the year, James remained at Columbus. Like his brothers he made requests for “luxuries” such as “A pillow and anything in the way of eatables . . . boots, also some letter paper and some steel pens.” Except that Yankee gunboats menaced Columbus with small-scale bombardments, there was little excitement for James. The threat of a renewed Yankee attack did demand, however, that the Confederates be ready to spring to their guns “at a moment’s warning.”<sup>96</sup>

<sup>92</sup>James Hall, Columbus, Ky., to Father, October 5, 1861.

<sup>93</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup>Stanley Horn, *The Army of Tennessee* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1941), p. 65.

<sup>95</sup>*Official Records*, Ser. I, Vol. VII, 774-775.

<sup>96</sup>James Hall, Columbus, Ky., to Laura, November 22, 1861.