

Galesburg, Dec 29th 1914

Mrs. H. Fry
Selma Ala

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My Dear Mrs Fry, In

looking back, I am afraid I can not give you much information of the Selma Arsenal during the years 1861-62 the time I was connected with it. My impression now is that it was laid in the year 1862 when I arrived there with Col. J. Prezerant of Memphis's Team who was at the time in command of the Arsenal that had been organized at Memphis, Tenn late in 1861 when that city became in danger of capture by the Enemy the Arsenal was removed to Columbus Miss and then to Enterprise Miss then to Selma Ala. At that time the Selma Arsenal was a Naval Station under the command of "J. Leathby Jones" Lt Commander U. S. Navy - an old U. S. Naval officer. Shortly after our

arrival the two were merged and
Col. Fitzgerald was retained
and Bunnardin was put in
charge of all the works & property.
I myself was rarely in Selma
being detailed as a messenger
to take charge of war material
to the army at the front and
in a short time I was given the
appointment of a young officer
in the U.S. Navy through the
influence of a friend - formerly
of the U.S. Navy whom I had met
previously who boarded at the same
house I did and who kindly took
a fancy to me of course as I
had a leave of thirty days after
my new appointment I did not
take so much interest in Arsenal
matters but took advantage of my leave
to visit my elder bro who was a Major
with Genl. Hardee at Corinth Miss

and as you may observe upon (3)
my return to Lehigh, I was too
much interested in our new honors
- the "middyshipman's" uniform
and the attentions which some
attracted certain beautiful young
ladies - to in any manner look
up matters in the "old Arsenal"

Now this is indeed meagre information
in reply to your nice letter and seems
to be more of personal matter than is
pertinent to the subject matter of
your enquiry. However as I have
introduced myself into the question
- and what a most interesting subject
this being self is, when an old fellow
is writing of the past - to him -

I wish to show just how I got
into the Arsenal business at all
for I did not at the start intend
to be in such a bonny situation.

Early in 1861 my elder brother - 21 -
organized a company at Memphis

named the "Young Guard" this a co
composed of young nice men boys -
16 to 20 - of nice people Capt

John P. Cannon 1st Lt. Milo Brown
2d Lt. Otis Smith, and 1st Sgt
Hampden Cary. All these officers
were before the formation. Special
friends & friends of the Captain,
and none over 21 years of age.

Also the 1st co's officers & privates
belonged to the same social set.

This young gentlemen drilled
three times a day their commander
having been educated at a
Military College, then had to teach
them, so when the time to leave
arrived, the "Young Guard" was the
best drilled, and equipped. On
from Memphis on a beautiful
June-1861-day this company - clothed
in their handsome grey uniforms, with
blue breeches, formed in company front

at the East gate of Fort Sumner (5)
When they were presented with a handkerchief
with flag by a beautiful young man.
The following day the Co. left for
Jackson Tenn, at every station on the
journey the Co. was welcomed by the
young, and middle aged ladies, who
had provided refreshments, and the
good looking members had added to
these refreshments, some kisses from
some of the pretty girls. This inter-
course was so especially honored, of course
was so modest to say. We arrived
at Jackson in the P.M. of the same
day, and before night time, had an
Entire Company camp erected
- all in strict military manner.
There were at that time several hundred
additional men at Jackson who had
assembled with the object of
forming a regiment, The 'Young Guard'
however was the only company
having uniforms, or gages - & belts -
or who had been drilled, hence an

~~the~~ Captain arrived by no less than
seven o'clock, or at six a.m. the young
guard was out drilling showing the
"kay poed" "how to do it" During this
drill when an Capt was coming by
giving his commands as the company
marched and winter marched.
Some men in the rear ranks stepped
on the miter's heels, he at once turning
his head called out - "stop treading on
my heels", "silence in ranks" came
in steam command, from our Martinette
Crews. In a few moments this carrier
bowed repeated the offence and the
militia was not silent. "Company halt
and the command Sgt Cary detail
two men and take that man - pointing
to me" to the Grand house. At eleven
a.m. this mate young soldier called
from the Grand house - he had not been
to breakfast - "Special of the guard".
Upon arrival of that young officer, he
said, "You go and get John Cameron".

and saying "I am here right quick" (7)
The Captain to mean instead of coming
to me, told the Corporal to bring me to
him and addressed me - "Brother
Cameron, I intend to have the best
disciplined company in the Regiment
within year or any member of it & a
shall prefer this and especially you
Now go to your tent" This from my
dear loving old brother who had
always been tender and kind to me -
Well it seemed that for one cause
or another - I passed much time in
the guard house some weeks after
wards I was sent for by the Capt
- no one being present - he put his hand
affectionately on my shoulder and said
with his dear old manner "Will we cannot
get along this way, you bank too much
upon being the Capt's brother, Now I
have made arrangement to detail you
to the Arsenal at Memphis for a time

I am assured of promotion to Major
shortly, then Bonn will be captain
you can come back to the 9, under
different conditions "Dear old fellow"
when I came back to the company
until, as I have said, I came as
his guest - an officer of the 11th Regt.
When I seated, in his tent - he being
then a Major, I put my heels up at
his table, and he joined me at a
plate of some fine Havanna cigar
I had brought. The young Guard
made a fine record, was in the 3d
Carpenter Regiment, Artillery,
Rifles, Marine Detach, Division and
Hards, Corp Major business was
promoted to Lt Col and Commanded
the 3d Company Regiment of Artillery
you see that you gave me an opportunity
to get this powerful talk. I can't
In the paper I requested you to obtain
some more of my like at Selma Ala. The

Right they be of some interest it is as best time I could
do cents. Well they be in the same way, South you should
the

GALVESTON
WORLD'S GREATEST COTTON PORT



W. L. Cameron,
2415 Avenue K.,

(3)

GALVESTON, TEXAS
DEC 29
5-30P
1916



Mr. J. T. Fry,
Seena,
Atlanta,

Galveston, Dec. 29, 1916

Mrs. J. T. Fry,
Selma, Ala.

My dear Mrs. Fry:

In looking back, I am afraid I cannot give you much information of the Selma Arsenal during the years 1861-62 the time I was connected with it. My impression now is that it was early in the year 1862, when I arrived there, with Col. J. T. Trezevant of Memphis, Tenn. who was at the time in Command at the Arsenal that had been organized at Memphis, Tenn. late in 1861, when that City became in danger of capture by the enemy the Arsenal was removed to Columbus Miss. and then to Enterprise Miss. then to Selma, Ala.

At that time the Selma Arsenal was a Naval Station under the Command of J. Catesby Jones, Lieut. Commander, C. S. Navy--an old U. S. Naval Officer. Shortly after our arrival the two were merged and Col. Trezevant, was relieved and Commander Jones put in charge of all the works and property, I myself was rarely in Selma being detailed as a messenger to take charge of war material to the armies at the front and in a short time I was given the appointment of a Young officer in the C. S. Navy through the influence of a Lieut. formally of the U. S. Navy, whom I had met previously, and who boarded at the same home I did, and who kindly took a fancy to me, of course, as I had a leave of thirty days after my new appointment I did not take so much interest in Arsenal matters, but took advantage of my leave to visit my older brother who was a Major with Gen. Hardee at Corinth, Miss. and as you may assume upon my return to Selma, I was too much interested in my new honors--the Natty Midshipman's Uniform, and the attentions which same attracted certain young ladies--to in any manner look up matters in the "Old Arsenal"

Now this is indeed meager information in reply to your nice letter and seems to be more of personal matter than is pertinent for the subject matter of your enquiry, however as I have introduced myself into the question--and what a most interesting subject he thinks, self is when an old fellow is writing of the past--to him.

I wish to show just how I got into the Arsenal business at all for I did not at the start intend to be in such a comfortable situation.

Early in 1861 my older brother--21--organized a company at Memphis, named the "Young Guard" the Co. was composed of young men--mere boys--16 to 20--of nice people. Capt. John F. Cameron, 1st. Lieut. Will Browne, 2nd Lieut. Otis Smith, and 1st. Sgt. Hundslen Cary, all these officers were before the formation special friends and chums of the Captain and one over 21 years of age, also the non-Com. officers and privates belonged to the same social set.

These young gentlemen drilled three times a day, their Commander having been educated at a Military College knew how to teach them, so when the time to leave arrived, the "Young Guard" was the best drilled, and equipped Co. from Memphis. On a beautiful June 1861 day, this Company clothed in their handsome grey uniforms with blue trimmings formed in Company front at the East Gate of Court Square where they were presented with a handsome silk flag by a beautiful young Miss.

The following day the Co. left for Jackson, Tenn. at every station on the journey the Co. Was welcomed by the young, and the middle aged ladies, who provided refreshments, and the good looking members had added to these refreshments some kisses from some of the pretty girls. This writer--if he was so specially "Honored," of course, was and is, to modest to say. We arrived at Jackson in the P. M. of the same day and before night time had an entire Company Camp erected--all in strict Military manner.

There were at that time several hundred additional men at Jackson who has assembled with the object of forming a regiment. The "Young Guard" however, was the only Company having uniforms or guns--I believe-- or who had been drilled, hence our Captain could do no less than show off, so at six A. M. The "Young Guard" was out drilling showing the "Hay Seed" how to do it. During this drill when our Capt. was earnestly giving the commands as the Company marched and counter marched, some man in the rear ranks stepped on the writers heels, he at once, turning his head called out--stop treading on my heels "Silence in Ranks" came in stern command, from our Mortinet Commander. In a few moments this careless comrade repeated the offence and the writer was not silent, "Company Halt" came the command, "Sgt. Cary detail two men, and take that man"--pointing to me to the guard house. At eleven A. M. this irate young soldier called from the guard house--he had not been to breakfast "Corporal of the Guard, upon arrival of that young officer, he said, you go and get John Cameron and bring him here right quick."

The Captain, however instead of coming to me, told the Corporal to bring me to him and addressed me--Private Cameron, I intend to have the best disciplined company in the Regiment, neither you or any member of the Co. shall prevent this, and especially you. "Now go to your tent," this from my dear loving old brother who had always been tender and kind to me.

Well it seemed that for one cause or another--I passed much time in the Guard House some months afterwards I was sent for by the Capt. no one being present, he put his hand affectionately on my shoulder and said, with his dear old manner, "You bank to much upon being the Capt's. brother now I have made arrangements to detail you to the Arsenal at Memphis for a time. I am assured of promotion to Major shortly, then Brown will be Captain, you can come back to the Co. under different conditions."

Dear old fellow, I never came back to the Company until, as I have said--he being then a Major, I would put my heels up on his table, and he joined me in a smoke of some fine havana cigars I had brought.

(I came as his guest--an officer of the Navy--when I seated, in his tent--)

The Young Guard made a fine record, was in the 3rd Confederate Regiment, Hindman Brigade, Marmaduke Division and Hardee Corp. Major Cameron was promoted to Lieut. Col. and commander the 3rd Confederate Regiment afterwards, you see that you gave me an opening for all this per-talk. Excuse it. In the paper I requested you to obtain, I gave some of my life at Selma, Ala. The paper may be of some interest, it is all historical and describes methods used in those days in the South.

Yours sincerely,

Wm. L. Cameron.

ADDRESS:

From Wm. L. Cameron To Mrs. A. M. G. Fry.
Orrville, Alabama