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Nov. 29/06.

Historya

of the 27th Regiment

Ala. Volunteer Infantry

C.S.A.

ARCHIVES & HISTORY ALA. DEPT. MRD

By

J.P.Cannon. M.D., McKenzie, Tenn.

of Co. C 27th Ala.

and Co. K 45th Miss.

27th
Ala.

To the U.D.C.

and

U.S.C.V.

of the state of Alabama

and their descendants

This volume is

Respectfully

Dedicated.

ARCHIVES & HISTORY
ALA. DEPT.
MRD

Introduction.

When I first consented to write the history of the 37th Alabama, it was with a feeling of my incompetency to do justice to a regiment which made so honorable a record during the trying times of 1861--65. As no one else seemed inclined or willing to undertake the work it has fallen upon me and I will endeavor to write a plain, unvarnished narrative of its service.

ARCHIVES & MUSEUM DEPT. MRD

Being engaged in a business which requires all my attention, I will be unable to give the subject the thought and research it deserves, but will quote liberally from a diary kept during the war, which has been published under the title "Inside of Rebeldom". A few items have been gleaned from perry and Smith's Montgomery Directory, and Brewer's Alabama. These and my own memory comprise the only sources of my information, with the exceptionof a very few facts obtained from surviving comrades.

27th Ala. Infantry, C.S.A.

was mustered into the service of the Confederate States at Florence, Ala. on Dec. 24th, 1861, the following Field officers having been previously elected:

A.A.Hughes Colonel James Jackson Lieut. Col.

Dr. Edward McAlexander Major.

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

Col. A.A.Hughes was a member of the Ala. Legislature at the beginning of the war, resigned and returned to Franklin Co., assisted in raising the regiment, was elected Colonel, captured at Ft. Donelson in Feb.,1862, exchanged in Sept.1863, and died the following Oct.

Lieut. Col. James Jackson of Lauderdale Co. enlisted as a private in the 4th Ala. in the spring of 1861, was severely wounded at first Manassas, discharged and after recovery assisted in raising the 27th Ala. He was elected Lieut. Col. and after the death of Col. Hughes, was promoted to Col. of the regiment. In June 1864 he was wounded in the arm ## which necessitated amputation, He recovered and was again in command of the ~~regiment~~ remnant of the brigade when the army surrendered at Greensboro, N.C. April 26th, 1865.

Dr. Edward McAlexander was practising his profession in Lauderdale Co. and in the fall of 1861 took an active part in organizing the regiment. Was elected 1st Lieut. of Co.C. promoted to Major, and afterwards to Lieut. Col., was in command of the consolidated regiment at # the close.

It was my desire to give the names and short sketches of all the company officers, but survivors having failed to respond to my earnest request for information, I find it impracticable to make a complete roster. And to insert sketches of all, even if I had sufficient data, would swell this volume to proportions far beyond the intended scope of the work. Therefore to avoid the appearance of partiality, I deem it best to omit special mention, and name only the first commanders of Companies, and the counties from which they enlisted.

Company A---Capt. J.E.Moore---Franklin Co.

" B--- " R.G.Wright--Franklin Co.

" C--- " E.B.Thompson--Lauderdale Co.

" D--- " H.B.Irwin---Lawrence Co.

" E--- " T.A.Jones---Lauderdale Co.

" F--- " M.P.Roberts---Madison Co.

" G--- " T.E.McCulloch--Franklin Co.

" H--- " ---Humphrey---Morgan Co.

" I--- " Dr. H.L.Ray--- Lauderdale Co.

" K--- " H.A.McGehee--- Lawrence Co.

ARCHIVES & HISTORY ALA. MRD

In the fall of 1861 it was generally believed and so published in the newspapers that the Federals were planning an invasion by way of the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers, This news created a sensation throughout North Alabama. The war was coming to our very doors; our negroes would be freed, stock driven off, and the beautiful valley of the Tennessee devastated. The time had come for every man to "shoulder his gun". President Davis issued an urgent call for volunteers, stating in the call that the men must arm themselves, as he had no arms to give them.

There were no examinations by surgeons as to physical condition, nor were youth or old age a bar to eligibility: every man or boy capable of handling a gun was gladly received and no questions asked. We were entertained with red hot speeches, picturing in glowing terms the glorious destiny of the "young nation which had just been born", and urged to hurry or the boys in Virginia would clean out the Yankees before we had a chance to show our mettle.

The roll of the drum and shrill note of the fife could be heard all over the land, while the work of collecting arms and other necessaries progressed. Double barrelled shot guns were the only weapons available, which the majority of us already possessed, and those who had not were soon accommodated by neighbors who were willing to contribute that much to the cause. Bayonets would have been useless appendages with our shot guns, but it looked more "warlike" to have something of the kind, and it was decided that long "Bowie knives" would be the best substitute and themost easily obtained; accordingly a search was begun for material from which to manufacture them. Almost every farm had a blacksmith shop in those days, and in them were large files and rasps which had been worn out and

laid aside as useless. These and any other pieces of steel which could be made into knives were hunted up, and the ring of the blacksmith's ham- could be heard in every shop, fashioning these once peaceful instruments into weapons which were to exterminate all the Yankees who should have the temerity to come up the Tennessee river.

ARCHIVES & HISTORY ALA. DEPT. MRD

Organization of the Regiment.

By the 24th of December 1861, ten companies of about 100 each had been enrolled and assembled in Florence where we elected Field officers as follows: A. A. Hughes of Franklin, County, Colonel.

James Jackson, of Lauderdale County, Lieutenant Colonel,

Dr. Edward McAlexander, of Lauderdale County, Major.

(*) insert the list of companies

We were mustered into the service of the Confederate States by General S. D. Weakley of Florence, and in the afternoon of the same day, with our 1000 double barrel shot guns and 1000 long Bowie knivesm we proudly marched to the river where a boat was waiting to bear us"to the war".

Like all fresh regiments we had baggage enough to have supplied a brigade twelve months later, in short, were fully equipped for house keeping with the single exception that we had no feather beds, the nearest approach to that article of luxury being the ticks which we carried for thw purpose of filling with straw afterwwe should reach our destination. After a last farewell to the anxious friends who had followed us thus far, we loosened the lines and amidst cheers and the waving of handkerchiefs we steamed out down the "Blue Tennessee!

The trip was uneventful, and on the morning of December 26th we arrived at Fort Henry, a small fort on the east bank of the river in Stewart County Tennessee. It had 10 or 15 guns, chiefly small ones, but looked formidable to us who had never seen anything like it before. We were not allowed to

land but proceeded to the opposite side of river in Calloway County, Kentucky. where it was intended for us to build a fort, which with the assistance of Fort Henry was to present an impassable barrier to all crafts and sink the Lincoln gunboats to the bottom of the river, if they should have the audacity to attempt a passage.

ARCHIVES & HISTORY · ALA. DEPT. · MRD

Prepared for the winter.

It required several days to complete our arrangements, such as laying off camps, stretching tents, building bunks etc, but when it was all done we were comfortably fixedfor the winter and in our ignorance of a soldier's life and its uncertainties, felt like we had"come to stay".

Engineers planned our fort which we named "Heiman" in honor of the Col. of the 10th Tenn., who commanded the forces on both sides of the river but little work was done on it, and we spent the month of January in regular routine duties, many incidents occurring which seemed ludicrous after we became more seasoned soldiers. Our rations consisted of a fair article of beef and cornmeal, which supplemented by luxuries we got from home on the steamboats which made regular trips, enabled us to fare sumptuously, and we began to think a soldier's life not so bad as represented;;but towards the latter part of the month rumors of the advance of the enemy werecirculated in camp, and frequently we were roused from our slumbers by the "long roll" in the dead hours of the night. At first these false alarms caused a great deal of excitement, and we tumbled out of our warm beds and began a search for clothing and accoutrements which in our fancied security we had left scattered in disorder over the tents. It would have beenamusing to an old soldier to have witnessed these scenes, but as all of us were "fresh" there was no one to criticise, and we soon "caught on" and came to the conclusion, that night alarms were only a part of our regulardrill and a nuisance besides.

~~Battle of Fort Henry.~~

Alongin the first days of February we could discern ominous clouds of black smoke rising from the river below, the scource of which was hidden from view by a bend in the river, but evidently it proceeded from gun-boats, and reports came that the enemy was landing thousands of troops on the Fort Henry side and still Fort Heiman was only a fort in name. We had scarcely broken dirt and not a cannon was on our side of the river.

Battle of Fort Henry. * insert note

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

About midnight February 5th, we had another night alarm, this time not by the beating of the "long roll", but by soft tones from the officers, who opened the flaps of tents and commanded, "boys, get up quick, leave everything except guns and cartridge boxes. Fall in without a bit of noise." We had profited by previous training and had everything at hand, so it required but a short time to form line and march to the river, little dreaming that we were leaving our comfortable quarters never to see them again: but such proved to be the case.

Boarding the boat which was waiting for us, with lights all covered and with renewed caution to keep perfect silence, we steered direct to Fort Henry. The gunboats could not be seen on account of the darkness of the night, but having observed the smoke all the day before we felt sure they were not far off and judging from the silence imposed upon us, it could not be doubted that the land forces were close by. Once ashore we were marched out in the bottom some distance in rear of the fort, where we bivouacked, dozing away the long hours of the night, propped up against trees, roosting on logs, and making all sorts of shifts to keep out of the mud. Daylight came at last but from our position back in the timber we could see nothing that was going on, either at the fort or in the river where the gunboats were supposed to be. We carried no rations

* On page 4 insert at * mark that at this time the Twenty-seventh Alabama was brigaded with the 10th Tennessee, the 48th Tennessee, Captain Culbertson's battery of four pieces, and a Tennessee battalion of cavalry. The Brigade was commanded by Col. Heiman of the 10th Tennessee Regiment.

Serial 7, page 137, Report of General Tighlman

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

and consequently had no breakfast and no prospect for dinner. The morning hours passed slowly, couriers constantly passing in and out, but wecould get no information from them, more than that the country below us was just "swarming" with Yankees. So we felt that the time was at hand when we would have an opportunity of testing our double barrelled guns and bowie-knives. An inspection showed that we had left our knives on the other side of the river: not half a dozen could be found in the regiment, some were left sticking in trees where we had practised throwing them, others on stumps where the last beef had been carved, but the larger part probably scattered about camps and in tents.

We had literally obeyed orders, anyhow, for the officers had orderad us to leave everything except guns and cartridge boxes.Now we would have to depend on "Buck and Ball". Our ammunition consisted of paper cartridges carring three buckshot and a round ball weighing about an ounce similar to those used with the old- fashioned musket.

We waited expectantly for something to"turn up"but no demonstration was made by land or water until a little after noon, when we were startled by the discharge of heavy guns, and big shells came crunching and crashing throughthe timber above our heads. It was a thrilling sensation to be under fire for the first time, every moment expecting the land forces to swoop down on us in overwhelming numbers, for we had been led by couriers and cavalrymen to believe that there were ten to one, at least. We were vividly reminded of what the valiant orators , who were doing the wind work for the Confederacy, and urging the boys to go to the front at once and not miss the " glorious opportunity of expelling the ruthless invaders from our sacred Southern soil", told us, i.e., that one Southerner could whip five Yankees. Ten to one was more than we had bargained for and when we were ordered to pile overcoats, load and cap our guns, it was with sup-

pressed excitement that we awaited the approach of the enemy.

Our little fort replied as vigorously as it was capable; the booming of its guns mingled with those of the gunboats, the crashing of shells through the timber and falling of limbs around us seemed terrific to our unaccustomed ears, though the real danger was small, as very few of the shells burst near our lines, and being on lower ground than the fort, those which missed it went clean over our heads. The cannonading continued incessantly about an hour and a half when it ceased as suddenly as it began.

Retreat to Fort Donelson.

We were immediately ordered to "Right face, forward march" up the river, which appeared a little strange, as the enemy was supposed to be in the opposite direction, and for a short while we could not comprehend what had happened; but it soon dawned upon us that the fort had surrendered and we were retreating,— running from the Yankees. We who had so recently left home with visions of glory to be achieved on the field of battle - of hundreds of Yankees to be slain with our "Buck and Ball", and our long bladed knives steeped in Yankee gore, actually running before we had fired a gun or even caught a glimpse of a blue-coat.

When it became known that we were retreating the impulse to go faster seemed to strike all of us at the same time, while the dashing past of small squads of frightened cavalrymen and an occasional shot in the rear served to accelerate our speed until it taxed to the utmostthe capacity of short-legged fellows to keep up with the procession. We followed a dim road leading up the river and had not covered more than a mile, when we were confronted by a perfect torrent of a creek, which swollen by recent rains was rushing down from the hills toward the river like a mill race and full fifty feet wide.

Some of us (the writer among the number) had just broken out with the measles that morning, and here was a predicament— a stream of cold water

ahead, Yankees behind — either was bad enough, but time was too precious for dallying, and of the two evils it required but a moment to choose the lesser. The stream was so deep and current so strong that small men could not stem it alone, so locking together, tall and short, by fours, we plunged in and all made a successful landing on the opposite shore. Following the course of the river several miles we turned across the country towards Fort Donelson, the enemy's cavalry charging upon our rear occasionally during the afternoon, but in small force and they were easily repulsed. Night ended the pursuit, but not our troubles, for it set in cloudy and so dark we could not see our file leaders. All night long we groped our way over hills and hollows, wading numberless creeks and branches, and finally reached Fort Donelson at daylight, exhausted and almost starved. Truly we were in a sad plight: 36 hours without food and a 15 mile run through mud and water without a minute's rest was pretty rough on a lot of raw soldiers, who had never seen any active service. We had got a good deal of experience crowded into a short space of time, but not much glory. Six weeks after we landed, our fort demolished, the Tennessee which we went out to defend opened to the head of navigation, and we, driven away with everything lost: not even an overcoat or blanket to protect us from the wintry winds, the snows and rains which prevailed at that season of the year.

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES MRD

Having no hospital accommodations at Fort Donelson, and very few tents, even the well men were much exposed to the inclement weather, and as the sick would be only an incumbrance during the inpending battle, they were hurried off as fast as the boats could carry them. Being one of those who were sent off to the hospital, I am unable to give the details of the part the 27th Alabama played in the series of engagements which followed, though I was informed by members of the regiment, who participated, that while under fire the greater part of the time the fighting on their part

of the line was not as fierce as on their right, and consequently the loss was comparatively light.

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

Battle of Fort Donelson. *

On the 12th of February skirmishing began between Forrest's cavalry and the advance of the enemy, which was renewed early on the morning of the 13th, our cavalry driven in, and the battle was on in earnest. For three days it raged, attack after attack was made on our lines, our forces being uniformly sucessful in repelling the assaults of superior numbers. On the morning of the 15th our forces assumed the offensive and a determined onslaught was made on the enemy's right wing, supposedly for the purpose of opening the way for a retreat. This was entirely successful, but from some cause or other, instead of withdrawing the army they were marched back to the breastworks and during the night it was decided to surrender. Our boys were very much surprised, when they awoke on that memorable Sunday, to see the white flag, and our generals have been severely criticised, but it does not come within the scope of this work to discussthat point, however it is certain that quite a number did escape, among the number Captain R. G. Wright of Co. B and Sergeant J. H. Chandler of Co. C (afterwards 1st Lieutenant). Lieutenant Chandler says there is no doubt that the bulk of the army could have been marched out on Saturday afternoon, when the right of General * Grant's army had been driven back, and even as late as Sunday morning whole regiments could have been saved. He procured a suit of citizen's clothes in the town of Dover, which he put on over his uniform, but this was not necessary as he never saw a Yankee and had no difficulty in making good his escape.

No official report, so far as I know, of the number of the 27th Alabama actually surrendered has ever been made, but I think ~~500~~ 600 or 700 would be a reason able estimate. The Field officers were sent to Fort Warren, Company offic-

8

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

* Still in Heiman's brigade.
See Report of General Pillow, Serial 7, page 279

ers to Johnson's Island, and the privates to Camp Douglas, where they remained until exchanged in September 1862. I have recently written to some of the comrades to give me some of the details of their prison life, but in not a single instance have I obtained the desired information, so the history, so far as this is concerned, must necessarily be a blank. No doubt it was similar to that of other prisoners of war, many of them died from sickness and exposure and have slept these forty odd years in Northern soil, many familiar faces were absent when we were reunited in the following December.

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

Off for Home.

We will now follow the remnant of the regiment which escaped by reason of being in hospital, off on detail, and other causes. Having no command to go to, it was "every fellow for himself" and we made our way as best we could to our homes in North Alabama, where we found the people in a turmoil of excitement. The disaster had a depressing effect on all, every vestige of defense upon which they relied had been swept away, all our armies retreated south of the Tennessee river, and they felt that they were at the mercy of the enemy. Newspapers contained exaggerated accounts of depredations committed in Tennessee, which increased the panic among the citizens, who were making hurried preparations to run off their negroes and bury their gold and other valuables.

We were in no great hurry to get back to the army and remained at our homes some two weeks, whem we learned that Captain Roberts and Wright of the 27thwas collecting the remnant of the regiment, and reporting promptly we found about fifty of the boys in camps at Tuscumbia, Alabama. This number was recruited during the month of March to about one hundred and fifty, all who were left of the one thousand who had started out three months before.We organized into two companies. and having about a

full complement of officers, they took command according to their respective ranks in the regiment.

In the meantime Gen. Johnston had concentrated all available forces in the vicinity of Corinth, and Gen. Grant was landing large numbers of troops at Pittsburg Landing, which indicated that a battle of greater magnitude than any that had been fought in this Department was imminent. Consequently we were not surprised when the roar of artillery was borne to us over the placid bosom of the Tennessee on that Sunday morning of April 6. Gen. Johnston was one of our ideal commanders, and we had full confidence in his ability, with the vast army which he had collected, to retrieve the waning fortunes of the Confederacy.

Presuming that our little squad, so far from the scene of action, would be overlooked, and eager to "hear drums and see a battle", we immediately telegraphed him that we had 150 men at Tuscumbia subject to his orders; but no orders came then and we spent the whole of that bloody Sunday listening with intense anxiety to the storm raging around Shiloh Church.

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

Getting there too late.

Early on Monday morning we received a reply to our telegram instructing us to came at once, and having neither baggage nor accoutrements, it required but a short time to roll up our blankets and hasten to the depot The battle had been resumed, and the rumble of guns, like distant thunder. was more constant, if possible, than on the preceding day. The most encouraging telegrams were constantly being received-- our boys had driven a portion of the enemy into the river, captured many thousand prisoners, and were finishing the work begun on Sunday. This was the substance of the news which was passing over the wires, and while waiting impatiently for a train the telegraph office was the centre of attraction to get the latest.

It was the middle of the afternoon before our train arrived, which we boarded, hoping to reach the scene of the conflict in time for the third day's battle, provided there was anything left for us to fight. We heard no more from the front during the short trip, and when we reached Corinth we were stunned by the changed state of affairs: the battle had closed, the victory of Sunday had been turned into defeat on Monday, and our army was in retreat.

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

The town was full of stragglers, hundreds of wounded were being brought in and when we saw the suffering and heard the groans of the unfortunates we felt some satisfaction that we had not arrived in time to participate in the battle, and thankful that we were alive and sound in body, which would not have been the case with some of us, at least, but for the delays under which we hadbeen chafing the last two days. Depressed in spirits and mourning the loss of their commander, the army continued its retreat, and within a few days settled down in camps around the town.

Our two little companies were in a pitiable condition; without arms, with out a commahd which we could call our own, we felt lonesome in the midst of an army of 50,000. Like orphans we were buffeted about from place to place, receiving orders one day which were countermanded the next, until finally we landed in the 51st Tennessee, with which we had the promise of a permanent location until our own regiment should be exchanged; but we had hardly been with it long enough to learn the names of the officers, when we were ordered to report to Gen. Ruggles for artillery service.

We immediately called a meeting of the two companies, and it was unanimously voted that we did not want any artillery service "in ours". We had volunteered as infantry and proposed to stick to that arm of the service, but how to avoid it was the question which agitated our minds.

We sent up a petition, requesting a coutermand of the order, but knew it could not go through the regular channel and return by the time we were

to report to Gen. Ruggles., which was 8o'clock the next morning: so some suggested that all report sick, thus staving it off one day longer, which would give us a little more time to consider the matter.

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

A successful ruse.

When the drum beat sick call I50 of us fell into line and marched up to the Surgeon's tent. What he thought of such a procession he did not divulge but began examining at the head of the column. One had a backache, another rheumatism, another a bad stomachache, and so on through the list of diseases as far as our limited vocabulary of names could be remembered.

He had examined a dozen or so before he seemed to realize the magnitude of his undertaking: looking down the line he heaved a long drawn out sigh and exclaimed: "You Alabamians are the sickliest lot of soldiers it has ever been my misfortune to meet up.with. What are you fellows up to, anyhow,?

Someone gave him a hint of our troubles, which aroused his sympathy, and he told us to go back to camp: that he would excuse the whole " lay-out". His report was sent up, stating that all the Alabama### contingent of the 5Ist was sick and not physically able for artillery service, and that was the last we heard of "joining the artillery!

Shortly afterwards the 3rd Miss. battalion, underMajor Hardcastle, joined the army at Corinth, and, with some other loose companies of Missippians which had not been assigned to any command, all of us were thrown together and organized the 33rd Miss., afterwards the 45th Miss. We had at last found a home, as it were, and entered upon our duties with more spirit than at any time since we were recruited at Tuscumbia. Arms and accoutrements were issued to us, but the guns were old, clumsy, breech-loading affairs which had been thrown aside and probably rusting in the corner of some arsenal for years.; however we had no use for them, as we remained around Corinth, inactive, enlivened only occasionally by a skirmish between the pickets. (* insert the note)

Owing to bad ~~artillery~~ sanitary conditions, miserable water, and probably other causes, our men began to get sick by the score, and by the latter part

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

12

* The Thirty-third Mississippi was with the 16th Alabama, 32d Mississippi, 44th Tennessee Regiments and Baxter's battery, brigaded under General S.A.M. Wood, in Hardee's Corps, June 30th, 1862
See Serial 10, page 786.

of May our regiment had I25 on the sick list, principally from typhoid fever. These were sent to hospitals at Columbus and other Mississippi towns, where many of them died, and others lingered through the summer months, recovering in time to join Gen. Bragg at Chattanooga the latter part of August.

The Kentucky Campaign.

During the Spring we evacuated Corinth and marched leisurely down to Tupelo, Miss., where we remained until July when camps were again broken and the main body of the army moved by rail to Chattanooga, preparatory to the invasion of Kentucky.

ALA. DEPT. OF ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

Nothing of especial interest occurred during the few weeks we were around Chattanooga, but it was generally understood even by the privates that Kentucky was to be our destination. Accordingly on August 28th I862, we began crossing the Tennessee river, entering upon what proved to be a long and tiresome march.

We carried no tents, bivouacking anywhere we were allowed to stop long enough to get a few hours sleep, considering ourselves lucky if it happened to be in the timber where we could have the shelter of a tree. Nor were we burdened with baggage, as the Confederacy could not furnish us clothing and blankets, and having been cut off from home so long, what clothing we had was about worn out. In short we started out "in light marching order", and held our own in that respect throughout the campaign,

The march through Tennessee was without hindrance except that we halted one day and two nights in Sequatchie Valley to give time for the artillery and wagon train, which was a long one, to cross the mountains. While here the two Alabama companies got into trouble. Quite a number of boys from other regiments stole mules from the teamsters and rode out into the mountains foraging, and as it turned out to be, their forage consisted chiefly of apple brandy which was very plentiful in that section.

Afterdark Co. K was detailed to picket the road on the mountain side, which was the only route for them to get back to camps. We had orders to arrest

every man coming in, and before midnight they began coming, in squads of two, three, and four, and continued at intervals the remainder of the night, everyone having a jug or Canteen full of apple brandy. By daylight we had thirty or forty prisoners and as many gallons of "Mountain dew". Prisoners, captors, officers and privates all were in different stages of intoxication, a few drunk, butbthe majority of us had imbibed only enough to make us feel a little "boozy".

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

Alabamians in trouble.

When we reached camps the rear of the army was just leaving and our division had been gone two hours. We followed, overtaking the command about noon, when the last one of us was very promptly placed under arrest and ordered to march in rear of the regiment. We found Co. I(the other Alabama Co.) in the same fix for stealing "roasting ears" the day before. Corn, in the valley, was very fine and just in the right stage to be palatable, so the boys could not resist the temptation. After three days the privates were released, and the commisioned officers continued under arrest until October 8th, when they were released to participate in the battle of Perryville.

We made a rapid march through Tennessee, crossing the Cumberland river (by wading) about sixty miles above Nashville, and reached Glasgow, Ky. about September 10th, where Gen. Bragg issued a proclamation, calling on Kentuckians to rally to his standard. He had been assured by citizens of the State that they would join the Confederacy if an opportunity was presented, and this was one of the objects of the invasion. Leaving Glasgow we struck the Louisville and Nashville R. R. at Cave City in advance of Gen. Bull who followed from Nashville.

Capture of Prisoners at Munfordsville.

At Munfordsville we thought we had"struck a snag"when we were drawn up, where we could look into the muzzles of frowning guns and see the glis-

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tening arms of the infantry in the ditches, expecting every moment for the order to assault. We knew it would be a bloody affair, although we largely outnumbered the enemy, but the afternoon passed without orders and we slept on arms, dreading the light of day.

We were agreeably surprised when morning revealed white flags fluttering in the breeze, and the prisoners, 4000 or 5000, were marched out for our inspection. Besides prisoners we got a lot of arms, ammunition and other stores which we needed; the most important part of the capture, to us privates, being the hard tack and bacon which we were in fine condition to take care of. We tarried but a short time. Gathering up the spoils we pushed on, filing to the right towards Bardstown., Gen. Buell passing our rear in the direction of Louisville.

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

At Bardstown we rested several days, the first rest we had had for about four weeks. We had been marching fifteen to twenty-five miles a day, on half rations of flour bread and bacon. The bread we had to cook at night after reaching camp, which was seldom earlier than midnight, when we were in the rear, and starting at 3A. M. , when we happened to be in front. The bacon we ate raw, as it was too precious to waste any part of it in cooking, and almost any time during the campaign we could have eaten a day's rations at one ~~#####~~meal.

Battle of Perryville.

Our next point of interest afterleaving Bardstown was Perryville, where we arrived on Oct. 7th, and on the next day, while Gen. Bragg was at Frankfort "inaugurating" a Confederate Governor, The booming of the guns cut short the ceremony and the Battle of Perryville was on. This was a hard fought battle, and might be called a small one as compared with some others that were fought afterwards, but it seemed to us at the time to be a most tremendous affair, and surely was a dangerous place as evidenced by the casualties of our two companies, which having been reduced from one cause and another to about seventy men, suffered a loss of eight killed and twenty-five wounded.

On our part of the line the battle began about noon. We were subjected to a most merciless shelling for about two hours, when we were ordered forward, and advancing within 200 or 300 yards of the enemy, halted and spread ourselves on the ground, and another two hours we had an open field fight. Rather we were exposed in the open field while the enemy were posted on a hill among scattering timber which afforded them some protection with nothing to obstruct their view,; it was a grand but horrible spectacle, when the dense smoke was lifted by a passing breeze, to witness the surging columns of gray and blue, which could be plainly seen a distance of one mile to the right. The firing was incessant, and nothing but a continuous roar could be heard. If any commands were given, they could not be distinguished above the din, so when it became necessary to move forward again, Col. Charlton rode down the line and gave the command to each captain separately, "to fix bayonets, forward, double quick march". Up to this time our loss had been comparatively light, but when we raised the "rebel yell" and moved forward, it was then our boys were mowed down by the bullets of the Indianians on the hill.

ALA. DEPT. OF ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

Gen. Wood, who commanded our brigade, was wounded early in the action by a piece of shell, and almost every mounted officer in the brigade was either killed or disabled in the charge through the field. Our line had been very perceptibly thinned by the time we reached the foot of the hill, and the ascent was slow and laborious in the face of a terrible fire fro m an enemy two or three times our number, with all the advantage of position on their side, but we pressed on until within thirty yards of the top, when it seemed folly to attempt to go farther. A few began to waver, then more, and in a short time what was left of us descended the hill in about one fourth the time it required to cover the same distance on the advance. We retreated into the field but stopped behind the first ridge, which afforded any protection from the murderous fire which poured into us, We had hardly recovered "our breath" when a most thrilling and welcome sight greeted us-- a long line of gray, Gen. Polk's division coming to

reinforce us.

We began to rally the stragglers, and when Gen. Polk's line reached us, we had thirteen of the two Ala. companies together under Lieut. Bell Andrews, and falling in with them moved forward again.

The Indianians stubbornly held their position, pouring deadly volleys into us, until it seemed that we would have to resort to the bayonet, but to our great relief, before the clash actually took place, they broke and fled precipately from the field, leaving the dead and some of the wounded in our hands. Night had set in, and a full October moon beaming down on the pale faces of the dead made it a ghastly spectacle to us, who had never witnessed anything like it before.

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

(*insert note)

Gathering ammunition.

We had used all our ammunition, and the ordnance train having left early in the morning, Gen. Buckner ordered the Colonels to disband their regiments twenty minutes to supply ourselves from the cartridge boxes of the dead. They too had been using ammunition extensively and it was necessary for us to search many boxes before we got our own filled. We also exchanged many of our old guns for new Enfield rifles with which the enemy was armed. When we re-formed our lines we hoped to go into camps, where we could rest and sleep the remainder of the night, but the army was already in motion and we had a tiresome night march till 1A.M when we bivouaced in a creek bottom where the timber had been cleared off and not a stick of wood left to make fires.

We had stripped to our shirts for the fight and sent off blankets, coats and all baggage in the wagons that morning, not expecting to be caught out on a frosty night in such light apparel, but the wagons were gone, we knew not where, and so exhausted with the day's battle, and night's march, we were compelled to have some sleep, and huddling together on thewet ground we shivered and slept short naps until daylight.

* There statements on pages 15-17 are fully sustained by the report of General W.J. Hardee in Serial 22, pages 1119-22 15-17 both of the gallantry and heavy losses of the Brigade of General Wood. in the battle of Perryville.

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

We were not interrupted in our March to Camp "Dick Robinson" where we arrived on the tenth and remained the following day, While here, we were in the best of spirits and did not know that we were making preparations to retreat out of the state: for Kirby Smith had whipped the Yankees at Richmond, and we had whipped them at Perryville, and we thought Gen. Bragg was only making a strategic move to take advantage of some other wing of the enemy's troops, "do them up", and drive the last one of them across the Ohio river, giving old Kentucky a chance to join the Confederacy.

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

A disappointment-- Short rations and hard marching.

On Oct. IIth, we received orders to cook three days' rations and be ready to march at 3 A.M., which we presumed would be towards Cincinnati, but during the night the wagons and artillery began moving in the opposite direction, and promptly at three o'clock the bugles sounded reveille and the head of the column followed in the wake of the wagons.

We soon"caughton" and realized that it was a retreat instead of an advance and that our Kentucky expedition was a failure. We had been in service about ten months and imagined we had seen some rough times. but this retreat proved to be the worst of our experience. By daylight we were strung out on the road towards Crab Orchard, and by noon had eaten the last of our three days' rations, and yet were not full enough to impede locomotion in the least degree.We were not gluttonous, either, as our three days' rationa consisted of five biscuits and a small piece of bacon, which was only an average breakfast for fellows w ho had been on half rations for the past month. We learned afterwards that hundreds of barrels of pickled pork had been destroyed after the soldiers had taken all they could carry., but it was where we did not have access to it and and we knew nothing of it until too late to get our part.The day's march was made in "quick" time, with but few short stops for rest, and

owing to the drought which had prevailed in this part of Kentucky during the fall, the dust was stifling and the scarcity of water added to our discomfort; and the fact of our failure to enlist recruits, which was one of the objects of this expedition, and being forced to abandon the beautiful bluegrass country preyed on our minds and made us feel despondent. The day's march was a hard one and we went into camps after midnight, so fatigued that it required but a short time for all of us to be sound asleep, forgetting our hunger and other troubles for a few short hours, when the bugles and drums roused us before daylight and we were off again. The pangs of hunger were not so acute on the second day ~~### ##~~ as on the first, but before night we felt an "aching void" in our stomachs and a decided weakness in the lower extremities. On the second night we killed a few beeves, which after being divided we cut into strips, suspending them on ramrods before our camp fires to let them cook while we slept. Our jerked beef proved right savory, though without salt, and sustained us on the following day's march, though we were sorely disappointed when night came again and no rations except a few ears of corn, which we picked up during the day and parched in the ashes. In the meantime the enemy was pressing us and the booming of the guns in the rear stimulated us to keep moving, consequently there was little straggling and no time for foraging.

ARMY DEPT. ARCHIVES & MUSEUM MRD

Devouring a "Mudlark".

Late in the afternoon of the fifth day we had the good fortune to run up on a fine fat "mudlark"--- commonly called a hog--- which we killed and skinned. Dividing the meat we broiled it over the coals and devoured the whole of it before retiring for the night. After we got into the mountains we could not get even an ear of corn, as the land was too poor to raise anything more than a few "nubbins", and these the people had hid where a

hungry rebel could not find them. The citizens here sympathized with the enemy and bushwhackers annoyed us from the mountain sides. At Wild Cat Pass quite a squad of them, screened behind crags and in crevices above us, opened on us with squirrel rifles, creating some confusion in our ranks, but fortunately no casualties resulted from it except a few slight wounds. Our march continued rapid, considering our weakened condition from loss of sleep and long fasting, being roused at three A.M. when in front and going into camps at midnight or after when in the rear.

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

We drew no rations until we arrived at Cumberland Gap October 10th, where we got one fourth pound flour. This made two biscuits which we ate without salt or meat, just enough to wake up our stomachs and make us feel hungry again. For eight days we had not tasted bread nor had a spoonful of salt. Salt, salt was the cry everywhere and a barrel of it could have retailed for a fortune-- in Confederate money.--

If plenty of provisions could have been provided it would not have been prudent to have issued full rations, as we were in such a famished condition we would not have controlled our appetites, and the consequence might have seriously affected the efficiency of the army. We also got some tobacco here , which broke the famine, from which we had suffered the past four or five weeks. We paid $2.50 each for six inch plugs of very poor quality, but it filled a "long-felt want" and was almost as much enjoyed as the two biscuits we had just eaten. Before leaving Chattanooga a few of the boys were wise enough to lay in a supply, but a large majority of us believing we were going into Kentucky where that article of luxury was supposed to be abundant, deemed it useless to encumber ourselves with anything not absolutely necessary, and failed to lay in a supply.: but alas, when the small amount we carried in our pockets was gone we found it impossible to replenish. The merchants would not take our Confederate money, and to conciliate the Kentuckians, Gen. Bragg enforced the strictest discipline, giving us no opportunity of "foraging"

so for weeks there was no smoking around the camp fires and no chewing of the luscious weed on the march.

From Cumberland Gap we got about one fourth rations, and as the enemy had relaxed their pursuit we travelled more leisurely, arriving in Knoxville on the 25th in a dilapidated condition physically and otherwise. Since leaving Chattanooga. 55days before, we had marched, including our meanderings, at least 600miles, most of the time on short rations, had slept every night sheltered only by the "broad canopy of heaven", had waded every stream from Chattanooga to near Louisville and from there back to Knoxville. Our clothing, well worn at the start, was now in rags and tatters, shoes worn out and many entirely barefooted, so when we awoke on the morning of the 26th and found four inches of snow on the ground and a cold wind blowing from the North, we felt that our lot had been cast in hard lines.

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

A Rest at Knoxville.

We rested a few days at Knoxville and rations being a little more plentiful than we had been accustomed to for some time, we rapidly regained the flesh and strength that we had lost the preceding two weeks. In the meantime Gen. Rosecrans had superseded Gen. Buell and was collecting a large army at Nashville, and it became necessary for us to have one to oppose him; so we were loaded on freight trains and transferred as fast as possible to Chattanooga. From Chattanooga we had many delays on account of insufficiency of rolling stock of the RailRoad, but by marching and riding by turns we finally landed in front of the enemy, our division locating near Shelbyville on the bank of Duck River. While here some of us enjoyed a visit from friends from home, who supplied us with much needed clothing and shoes, and a limited number of tents having been issued to us we were pretty well equipped for winter weather. Shortly after we got our camps adjusted we learned for the first time that the Camp Douglas prisoners had been exchanged, and immediately sent up a petition that we be transferred to our regiment.

In due time our request came back approved, accompanied by orders to report as soon as practicable at Port Hudson, La.

Ordered to Port Hudson.

We had been with the 45th Miss. about eight months and formed attachments, that were broken with regret, it was like parting from old friends when we came to tell them goodbye: but on the other hand our own regiment being composed of neighbors, old acquaitances, and in many instances relatives, the ties which bound us to them were the stronger and we were anxious to sever our connection with the army of Tennessee.

It was too late when we recived the order to get everything in readiness to start that day, so we cooked what rations we had and left our camps at 2A.M. the next morning, and after a tramp of 13 miles in "the wee sma' hours" arrived at Wartrace about daylight.Here we boarded the cars and had quite a pleasant trip by way of Chattanooga, Atlanta, Montgomery, and at Vicksburg we halted 36 hours waiting for a boat to carry us to our destination. We rather enjoyed the delay, for in addition to a bountiful supply of rations we found the banks of the tiver covered with barrels of sugar, acres in extent,

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

Hungry for Sugar.

We were hungry for sugar, having had none since we left Fort Henry in such haste ten months before. Gouging holes in the barrels and hogheads we filled every receptacle we could command, but having left everything in Tenn except knapsacks and haversacks we had few conveniences for carrying it. However all made some shift, some wrapping it in dirty handkerchiefs, others in haversacks, and one fellow who happened to have an extra under garment tied strings around the lower extremities, filled both legs with sugar, and when the boat came, slung it astride his shoulder and marched on,to the amusement of the passengers and s pectators. All of us were loaded with sugar and fairly revelled in sweetness all the way

down the river, little thinking that a few weeks hence the very sight or smell of it would cause a heaving and a retching, as will appear further on.

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

Reunion of 27th Alabama.

Our trip down the broad Mississippi was a very pleasant one, and about the middle of December we landed at Port Hudson La., a small town 25 miles above Baton Rouge. Here we found what was left of the 27th Alabama, and it was both a sad and a pleasant meeting. There were absent many familiar faces of comrades, who had succumbed to disease and given up their lives in prison, and were perhaps buried in unmarked graves far away from home and loved ones who knew nothing of their fate. Having been exchanged three months before, the "balmy Southern breezes" had restored some to health, while others lingered and died from the effects of confinement and disease. The regiment was reorganized before our arrival, vacancies in field offices being filled by promotion. Col. Hughes having died Lieut. Col. James Jackson was promoted to Colonel, Maj. Edward McAlexander to Lieut. Colonel, and Capt. R.G.Wright to Major. Line offices were filled in the same way, which left some of the lieutenancies to be supplied by election. *

Although the climate was usually mild, winter had set in, and frequent rains and cold winds from the North, to which we were exposed, rendered our situation very uncomfortable, as we were not supplied with a sufficient number of tents to shelter us, so we began as soon as practicable to build houses for winter quarters. The only timber available was the large stately bay trees which we cut and split, and with the logs erected very respectable houses, which we covered with boards "chinking" the cracks with long hanging moss, which grew in abundance on the trees. We also built bunks and made beds of the same moss, and having swept off the streets, our camps presented an appearance quite cheerful, in striking contrast to what we had been accustomed.

23

* It was placed in General Beall's brigade by General Orders, No. 5, Serial 21, page 934. On March 31st it appears in General A. Buford's brigade as appears from Serial 21, page 1033, the regiment under the command of Col. James Jackson.

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

Then began regular routine duties, such as drilling. picket and guard duty, working on ditches etc. Considerable work had been done on the fortifications, but they were far from complete, and a good portion of time was spent shovelling dirt, making a ditch seven feet deep and eight feet wide at the top, thrwwing the dirt inside for protection.

The regiment having been in prison almowt from beginning of enlistment, were naturally very deficient in the drill, consequently a very large part of the time was spent in this very necessary exercise. In the performance of all the duties devolving upon us we were kept very busily employed and had very little time for observing what was going on outside of our immediate vicinity.

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

Maj. Gen. Gardner was in command of our garrison consisting of 5000 or 6000 men, our line extending in a semicircle around the town, the flanks resting on the river above and below, while we had many pieces of artillery planted at intervals along the bank. Reinforcements were arriving almost every week during the winter until we were something like 15000 strong. Alabama being represented by the 1st, 27th, 35th, 49th, and 54th regiments and 4th Ala. battalion and possibly others. Frequent reports were brought by the cavalry that Gen. Banks was advancing from Baton Rouge in large force, but these proved to be false alarms and resulted in nothing more than a formation in our respective positions which we held for a few hours and then marched back to camp.

Gray Backs.

When we first rejoined the regiment the camps were infested with gray backs which were very annoying and which we accused the boys of bringing from Camp Douglas, but after we got our houses completed and a few wash days, boiling and reboiling our clothing, blankets etc, we got rid of the pests, proving the fallacy of what was often told for truth that "boiling water would not kill a body louse."

Much Sickness.

Owing to bad water and detestable diet, we were soon stricken with a Dysentery which was very distressing, and while a majority of us continued on duty, there were but few well men in the regiment during our four months stay. The writer was at this time clerk for the surgeon, whose duty it was to attend sick call, make a detailed report of the sick, and carry to the Brigade Surgeon. Long lines of sick were marched up to the Surgeon's tent every morning, and having noted for quite a while that the doctor prescribed Dover's powder in almost evry case, with an occasional dose of Blue Mass, I asked him one morning why he prescribed the same medicine day after day. He replied, "It is the only medicine I have at all adapted to the prevailing disease. There are other remedies that would be much better in a large number of the cases, but I have none and they can not be procured." A small epidemic of Small Pox broke out during the winter, but the cases were isolated as fast as they became known and the disease was soon checked, the 27th losing but one man. With this exception and the Dysentery from which all of us suffered, we had but little sickness during our stay at Port Hudson.

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

Our rations from December to February consisted wholly of corn bread, blue beef, sugar and rice. The meal was the very coarsest and having no "sifter" except old tin pans with holes punched in them, it was impossible to make good bread of it. The beeves were so poor they could scarcely walk, and a whole day's boiling would not raise an "eye" of grease in the pot, driven from Texas, poor when they started they were in a starving condition when they reached us. The sugar was of the wet, brown variety, and we had been surfeited on it until the very sight of it was nauseating, and it was emptied on the hill side by the camp kettleful every morning. The rice was palatable at first but got to be as offensive as the sugar, all taken together were so repugnant that we could barely eat enough to sustain life, but on the 24th of Feb. a steamer arrived

from Red River loaded with hogs, bacon and corn, which caused great rejoicing. The good news was carried from regiment to regiment, and yells from thousands of throats rent the air from one end of the line to the other. We had been praying for months for something to eat and old bacon was the most desirable of anything which we had hopes of getting. This unexpected addition to our rations was a godsend, as our health began to improve immediately and with returning strength we felt more like meeting the advance of Gen. Banks, which we had every reason to believe would take place within a short time. During all the winter we had to do all our washing with plain water, no soap having been issued for many months, and all the beeves killed at Port Hudson would not have made enough tallow to make a pound of soap, but after rations began to come in, "grease" was a little more plentiful, and details were made to cut timber, burn and use the ashes for making lye soap, and then we had the satisfaction of wearing clean clothes once more.

The fleet remained in the river below, usually very quiet, but at intervals throwing a few shalls by way of diversion. No attempt was made to pass our batteries, as was the case at Vicksburg. Frequently gunboats would try to float by the latter place in the darkness, but were usually discovered in time and driven back. However the Indianola, one of the most powerful gunboats of the Federal navy, succeeded in running the guantlet and caused consternation among our steam boats, which plied between the two fortified places, and an expedition was planned for her capture and destruction.

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

Our River Navy.

Accordingly on Feb. 14th, a call was made for volunteers. We were drawn up in line, the object stated, and we were warned to consider well, as it was a perilous undertaking and there must be no flinching when the ordeal came. We were limited to one man from each company, but when the command was given, many more than were needed to fill our quota stepped to the front, and then it was decided to determine by lot who should go.

Ten men were thus selected to represent the 27th Ala., and I regret very much that I can not give their names, Ike Landers of Co. C being the only one I can recall at this time.

The "Dr. Beatty", a large transport, was armored for the ex-pedition, fortified with cotton bales from stem to stern, with port holes for the guns, and on the 16th our "volunteer tars" boarded her, and gallantly steamed up the river, cheered by the thousands of officers and soldiers who had congregated on the bank to witness their departure. Days of suspense followed, we could hear nothing authentic from the expedition, fears and hopes alternated, but after a time reliable news was received that the boys had found the object of their quest at or near Gordon's Landing in Red River, and after a sharp engagement she had surrendered with 98 men and everything on board, with a loss to us of two killed and four wounded.

Contrary to expectation the winter wore away and March came without any general engagement, but the fleet entertained us in a more lively manner by "pitching" over a few large shells every day, and occasionally by a severe bombardment of an hour or more duration, but with slight casualties on our side. Our batteries made no reply, preferring to keep the enemy in ignorance of their location until the struggle should come on in earnest. We continued strengthening our works, and made details from each regiment to construct rafts for the purpose of obstructing the river below our batteries to prevent the passage of boats.

ALA. DEPT. OF ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

When opportunity presented, which was not often the case, we delighted in going down to look at the boats composing the fleet. We had never seen any frigates and "men of war" and it was a great sight to us,. We could crawl up to the banks, taking care not to expose ourselves to view, and on oneoccasion I made a memorandum of names as follows: Flag ship Hartford. Mississippi, Richmond, Monongahela, gunboats Kineo, Essex, Gennessee, Brooklyn, Pensacola, Albatross, Sachem,. Besides these five mortar boats were stationed in a bend of the river below the fleet.

Payne Money.

On 1st day of March we "mustered for pay". We had not been paid for many months, and money was scarce, but we had a resourceful member of the regiment who relieved the stringency by supplying a circulating medium which answered the purpose to some extent. This individual was known throughout the army as R.E.Payne, "The Banker", and he was not as "green" as he looked to be, nor as one would suppose a man to be who had lived forty years in the Sand Mountains of North Alabama. He was a great forager and trader: bought and sold for profit anything a soldier could use, from a pint of Lousiana rum to a bed quilt or a mess of potatoes. HE had followed trafficking ever since he enlisted in the army, but was accumulating wealth too slowly for a man of his business capacity, so he conceived the idea of adding a banking business, and accordingly got a printer to print for him several thousand dollars of "money" in denominations ranging from fifty cents to ten dollars. It read "Redeemable in Confederate money when presented in sums of $20.00 and upwards-- signed R.E.Payne." Whether he bought or sold he invariably made change with his own money, and as anything that "promised to pay" was current, it was seldom refused, so Payne turned the bulk of his money into Confederate and was just "rolling" in wealth. He had the Confederate and we, the "Payne money"

He made good his promise and redeemed all that was presented according to the printed terms, but it was not often that any of us had as much as $20.00 at one time, and when he did have to take up a batch of it, he passed it on to the next fellow and kept it in circulation.

Early in March we received reinforcements, increasing our effective force to 10,000 or 12,000 men. We were in good spirits and eager for the fray, our works in good shape, we felt confident that we could hold them against any land force that might be brought against us, provided our river batteries were able to hold back the fleet and prevent the passage of boats up the river. The enemy was reported advancing in strong

force from Baton Rouge, Pickets were doubled, unusual activity of couriers and staff officers, all in dic ated that we might expect stormy times very soon, but with the exception of a few false alarms, and the shelling from the fleet sometimes in a slow goodnatured way, then a furious bombardment for an hour or more, nothing of interest occurredd until the 14th.

ARCHIVES & HISTORY ALA. DEPT. MRD

Battle of Port Hudson.

It was a lovely day, the air cool and pleasant, birds singing, woods green, and all nature looked bright and cheerful, the fleet was quietly anchored in its accustomed position, and all remained calm until 2 P.M.,

when without warning--boom! boom! boom! the big shells came screeching through the camps. The long roll was beaten, and hastily forming line we double-quicked to our positions behind the breastworks. No enemy in sight we had nothing to do but watch the bursting shells and curling smoke, which in the bright sunlight made a beautiful appearance.

Our breastworks were no protection as the boats were almost on a line with us., and although many shells burst near by we escaped without a casualty. The bombardment continued incessantly for about three hours, when it ceased and all was quiet again, but the land forces were reported to be near and advancing, so we had to remain in position and were ordered to "sleep on arms." Spreading our blankets on the ground we lay down and one by one we dropped off, until all but the sentries pacing their beats were perhaps dreaming sweet dreams of peace and happiness with loved ones at home, but these were destined to be rudely disturbed, for just at elevem o'clock the thunder of a hundred guns broke the stillness of the night air, and startled us from our slumbers. It was not necessary for our drummer to beat his long roll, every man was at his post in an instant, thinking this was a signal for an attack by land, which we awaited rather anxiously feeling confident that we could repel any assault that might be made. Owing to neglect or other cause the piles of fagots which had been prepared for the purppose of illuminating the river in case of a night attack were not lighted and our artillerists were deprived of the advantage it would have afforded them, nevertheless they replied promptly, and the continuous thunder of several hundred guns, the comet-like fuses of large shells as they darted through the darkness, the mortar shells rising high up in the heavens, descending like "Shooting stars", bur sting and scattering fragments in every direction, presented the grandest and most exciting axhibition of fireworks that we had ever witnessed.

The boats made many attempts to pass, but our gallant artillerists poured such a storm of shot and shell into them that they were compelled to

retire each time, some of them so crippled that they floated off helplessly down the river.

After three hours of incessant firing ~~the gun~~ two gunboats succeeded in running the gauntletand the frigate Mississippi seemed in a fair way to go by.but when opposite our batteries the boys poured such a stream of "hot shot"into her side that she was disabled, set on fire and floated off down stream. Then the rebel yell long and loud was carried down the line from one end to the other.

ARCHIVES ARMY DEPT. MRD

The burning ship illuminated the country for miles around, and for fear of a general conflagration the rest of the fleet withdrew before her. She continued floating down the irver, her bombs bursting, and loaded guns shooting as the fire reached them, until just as day began to dawn a tremendous explosion shook the earth and her remains went to the bottom of the river, (The now famous Admiral George Dewey was Executive officer on this ship.) See Serial 38, page 669

The enemy was completely foiled, their intention being to run enough boats by our batteries to have a fleet above and below, so they could shell us from both sides, while the infantry attacked us in front, but the disabling of so many boats and burning of the frigate caused such consternation among them that they (the infantry) retreated in haste to Baton Rouge. Our loss was very light, though the artillerists suffered more than we, as they bore the brunt of the battle with the fleet while the mortar boats directed their attention to us in the trenches. It seems almost incredible that such a terrific bombardment of three hours' duration, when the elements were filled with flying missiles weighing from 100 to 400 pounds bursting and scattering fragments everywhere, should result in such small loss of life.

After the Battle.

We spent the remainder of the night without sleep, listening to the boom of the guns and shells on the "Mississippi"and watching the flashes produced by the explosions, wondering w

produced by the explosions, wondering what would come next. It began to rain early in the morning, and having no shelter we were soon drenched, but had to make the best of it, until about noon when two-thirds of the regiment were marched back to camps to prepare something to eat for themselves and the unfortunates who were left in the trenches.

The fleet resumed its old position in line of battle and reminded us of its presence by an occasional shot, but showed several vacant places in its formation.

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES MRD

The Mississippi, Monongahela, Richmond and Ganessee were absent but so far as we could discern, the others were in fighting condition and as the land forces had retired from our front we felt confident there would be no general engagement at least for some time to come, consequently we took up our regular routine duties, interrupted only by bombbardments of more or less severity, sometimes opening on us at midnight or other unseasonable hours, much to our discomfort and disturbance of rest.

Since we had a change in our rations a great improvement was discernible in our physical condition, health and strength had returned the morale of the army was far better than it had been all winter ~~and the morale of the army was far better than it had been all winter.~~ We had become so disgusted with rice and sugar that for some time we refused to take it off the commissary's hands, but good old bacon and cornbread seemed to be the very diet we needed, and this was all we got except occasionally when some good "forager" would dodge the guards and buy, beg or steal a mess of vegetables from one of the neighboring planters. On March 26th beef with fat on it was issued to us, the first of the kind we had seen since we left the army of Tenn., and it also proved to be the last during our stay at Port Hudson. Where it came from we never knew but we had about come to the conclusion thatthere was not a cow in Louisiana fat enough to make a tallow candle, We saved the fat borrowed molds from a citizen, and made tallow candles which we used for lighting purposes at night, a luxury we had not enjoyed for quite a long while.

About this time some of the boys who hadbeen home on furlough returned and brought us letters from friends and sweethearts. It was very seldom we got any news from home especially Companies C, E, and I. which were made up in the counties north of the Tennessee river, and as the river was the dividing line between the Confederates and Federals all mails had beem discontinued since early in 1862; but occasionally some one would slip through the lines and , if fortunate enough to escape capture, would come out loaded with letters. In this way all our correspondence was carried on and it was only at intervals, and often long ones, that we could hear from friends or they from us.

ARCHIVES & HISTORY ALA. DEPT. MRD

Leaving Port Hudson.

April brought no change in the situation, the land forces remained quiescent at Baton Rouge, the fleet anchored in the river below, now and then shelling the woods or throwing a few shells into our camps, but we had become so accustomed to them and they did so little harm, that we hard ly noticed them exce pt on occasions when the cannonading was unusually heavy. Rumors spread through the camps that we would soon leave Port Hudson for a field of greater activity, but were not confirmed un til the morning of the 6th, when we were ordered to cook rations, pack up and be ready to move at a moment's notice. The order was received with cheers but at the same time we felt some degree of sadness at the thought of leaving a place where we were so comfortably quartered, for we had our houses in splendid condition, many little conveniences arranged for our comfort, and we had been here so long it seemed almost like home: besides we were at last getting very fair rations and taken all together were having about as good times as a soldier could expect. But inactivity begets restlessness and the constant drill, guard and fatigue duty, had become monotonous, and we were willing to make a change, though we might expect harder and possibly more dangerous service than we had seen the past few

(*) See Serial 21, page 1037

months. Cooking rations required but a short time. and as to "packing". it was a small job, having no tents, and nothing to pack except our scanty knapsacks. By 10 o'clock we were bidding farewell to the comrades who had to remain, and took up the line of march towards Clinton, 25 miles distant. at which town we arrived the next afternoon, left Clinton early on the8th and went into camps at 3P.M. on the banks of Amite river, a very pretty stream where we had much fun bathing and swimming mules. On the 9th and 10th we marched 30 miles to Osyka, Miss., a town on the N.O.J. and G.N.R.R. as it was then known, where we expected to take a train for Jackson.

From some cause we were delayed three days but had no reason to complain on that accouht, as we were not subjected to atrict discipline and had a delightful time with the many pretty girls of the town, attended Sunday School and Church, a privilege we had not enjoyed on so long a time we hardly knew how to conduct ourselves properly. While there a member of the reigiment received his discharge for disability, and we utilized the opportunity of writing litters to homefolks, friends and sweethearts andwhen they were collected the poor fellow was almost overwhelmed with mail.

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

April 13th we boarded a freight train for Jackson, every car packed full and tops thick as blackbirds, the rain pouring down drenched those on top while the occupants on the inside were crowded almost to suffocation. Reached Jackson at dark. marched out two miles through mud and rain and had to bivouac without tents. It was so dark we could see nothing and everything so wet we could not make fires, so we spent a miserable night, wrapped only in our blankets, exposed to the rain which fell in torrents the whole night. The next day continued rainy but on the following day the clouds were dispersed and we dried ourselves in the sunshine having had a thorough soaking of 48 hours.

Ordered to Army of Tennessee.

April 16th we got orders, which were not unexpected, to report to Gen. Bragg and forthwith started on another freight but were sidetracked

ARCHIVES & HISTORY ALA. DEPT. MRD

35

sixty miles from Jackson, where we remained all night, took a fresh start, ran to Meridian and stopped for another night. On 18th left Meridian at 4 A.M. bowled along at the rate of five miles per hour to Selma. Our slow progress was discouraging and we thought, if Gen. Bragg needed reinforcements very much, he would be sorely disappointed, however we were enjoying the trip, for the ladies met us at every station, cheering us, not only with their smiles and showering upon us bouquets of fragrant flowers, but with more solid comforts in the shape of something to eat.

At Selma we took the steamer, Henry J.King, and made a night run to Montgomery, arriving there the next morning, but on landing guards were placed and orders issued for all to remain on board. "What does it mean?" was asked by every one, but we soon learned that it meant orders were ~~to be~~ countermanded and we were to go back to Mississippi! We had our "heads set" to go back to Tennessee to breathe the mountain air and slake our thirst in the clear springs and streams of that region, and it was a great disappointment to be conpelled to turn back, but a large force under Gen. Grant was concentrating in the vicinity of Vicksburg, and I presume the authorities deemed the reinforcement of Gen. Bragg of less importance than the assistance we could render our little army in Mississippi.

The return trip was slow but after two days of hard pulling we landed in Meridian where the brigade was stopped and the 27th Ala. proceeded on # to Big Black river 18 miles east of Vicksburg. See Serial 38, page 805 Arriving at our destination in the night our train was stopped in a dense wood, nobody to show us where to go, a severe storm of rain, thunder and lightning was raging, so dark it was impossible to see anything except by the flashes of lightning, and the Colonel was despairing of ever getting us into anything like decent order, so gave the command "break ranks and look out for yourselves Each fellow struck out on his own hook, hunting for a dry place on which to roost, but none of us were fortunate enough to find it. The rain continued to pour down all night and when daylight came our drummer was beating his drum at a fearful rate in an endeavor to assemble the boys who

were scattered all over the bottom. While this was going on the Colonel was looking for a suitable location in which to camp, and when found it was an ideal place. Large oaks furnished plenty of shade, wood was abundant and convenient, and a fine spring of clear cold water bubbled up in the edge of the camp. Towards the middle of the day the sun shone out, and spreading our wet clothing and blankets on the bushes to dry, all of us plunged into the river to take a bath. At first we were a little shy of alligators, which infested the stream, but if any of the ugly reptiles had been inclined to make a dinner off one or more of us, the noise we made yelling and splashing in the water was enough to scare him off.

ARCHIVES & HISTORY ALL DEPT MRD

At any rate we were not molested. The 27th Ala. were the only troops at the bridge the first week, but on the 28th we were reinforced by the 19th Ark., then on the 30th four more regiments came in, and the following day Gen. Tilghman with his brigade, and we began fortifying all approaches to the bridge. This made quite a formidable force for defense, but it soon became necessary to send part of it to reinforce Gen. Bowen at Grand Gulf, who was engaged with one of Gen Grant's flanking columns.

For several days, while busily employed ourselves with pick and spade, we could hear the storm of battle at Grand Gulf and Port Gibson, but after desperate and stubborn resistance Gen. Bowen was compelled to retreat and the head of his column arrived on May 4th. Two days later all had come in and they were assigned to positions with us for protection of the bridge. Meanwhile fighting and heavy cannonading was of daily occurrance in the vicinity of Vicksburg, and it looked as if we were getting into a close place, a victorious army below, a large force in our front, and still another in the vicinity of Yazoo City, which was liable to come in our rear, however we were much encouraged by reports of success at Vicksburg, but more so by the trainloads of troops which were passing us every day and pouring into the beleaguered city. We hoped to be able to collect an army sufficient to meet Gen. Grant on something like an equal footing, and in that case felt confidence in our ability to defeat

him,but how our hopes were blasted will appear further on.

On May 6th, we were ordered to send everything that could be dispensed with to Vicksburg. Our brigade came in about the same time and we were right glad to see them. We had been astray three weeks, but had a good time eating wild honey, and drinking butter milk."Bee trees"were numerous in the bottom, and many large trees were felled and the quantity of honey we got from some of them was enormous. Our supply of buttermilk came from a good lady, a wealthy widow, who owned a large cotton plantation near the camps. Having learned that we were North Alabamians and being originally from that section of the state, she naturally felt more interest in us than in the other troops, and told us to come evry morning as long as we were in reach of her. She had thirty or forty cows and a great many slaves who attended to the milking and churning, and we got the whole output of buttermilk while the poor little pickaninnies suffered for their usual supply. Buttermilk and honey were rarities in our bill of fare, and together with our regular rations we fared sumptuously during our three week's stay near Big Black Bridge.

ARCHIVES & HISTORY ALL. DEPT. MRD

" An Oyster-stew."

There were a great many mussels in the river, and as they resembled oysters very much, we could see no reason why they would not make a good stew, so while we were bathing we gathered up bushels of fine large ones, and having an extra large kettle soon had it boiling. At intervals we fished out an "oyster" to see whether it was getting tender, but every time with the same result-- it was as tough as leather--. Every hour's boiling seemed to make them tougher, till finally we got discouraged and gave it up, but were not wholly disappointed as we had twelve gallons of soup which was really palatable.

The week from May 6th to 13th was marked by a good deal of activity on the forces on both sides. A large force of the enemy crossed the river above us and moved in the direction of Jackson, while another

was coming from Grand Gulf, and we expected this detachment to attempt a crossing below.

DEPT. OF ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

Having sent all our surplus baggage to Vicksburg our brigade was ordered to cook rations and be ready to march at a minute's warning, but just as we had our biscuit dough made up we had to "fall in" and move out in quick time towards Grand Gulf, marched till midnight and bivouacked in line. The next day were ordered to cook rations again, and in a short time had our sour dough, which we carried in haversacks, as well as the additional rations which we received, cooked and ready for orders again. The brigade remained in bivouac, but the 27th was ordered to the front on picket, taking position where the enemy was expected to cross. They were there in considerable force on the opposite side of the little river but remained quietly on their own side, and we had no disposition to start a "fuss" with them in as much as they made no effort to cross. We remained on picket during the day and night and on the morning of 10th found the enemy had disappeared from our front and learning they had crossed the river below us, we followed in the ir rear. For three days we maneuvored in close proximity to them, but too weak to offer battle, contented ourselves with skirmishing and watching their movements.

While we were following and harassing this column of the enemy, the large force beforementioned were moving eastward threatening Jackson and other interior towns, and orders were dispatched to us by couriers to return to the bridge with all possible haste. Arriving there at midnight of the 12th, we slept two or three hours when the "long roll" called us into line before daylight. We hastened to our temporary breastworks, thinking the enemy was upon us and at last we would have the opportunity of defending the bridge, which we had been guarding for some weeks, but not so, the army was already in motion and about eight or nine o'clock we fell in the rear leaving only a small force at the bridge.

Having marched about four miles the 27th and one other regiment were formed in line of battle near the intersection of two roads to intercept a raiding party of cavalry, while the army continued on the march. The

The raiders took another route and we were not molested, but remained in this position, expecting them all the time, for two days and nights, exposed to heavy rains for which we were not at all prepared, having sent everything to Vicksburg, except the clothing we wore. On the 15th we were relieved from our position at the crossroads, and after a very hard day's march overtook the command in the afternoon. About dark we halted for the night in a clearing where there were great piles of dead timber and brush just ready for the match, as if they had been prepared for our special benefit. In a little time we had bright fires burning which illuminated the surrounding country, and everything looked so cheerful we forgot our fatigue from the day's march, and spent the early part of the night singing, laughing, and yelling: the merriest time we had had in many days. We had been under the impression for several days that we were in close proximity to the enemy, and that a battle was imminent, but when we were allowed to build fires of such huge proportions and observed the lack of the usual precautions when in the presence of the enemy, we concluded this might be only a feint and possibly the Yankees had retired to Vicksburg.

ARCHIVES & HISTORY ALA. MONT. MRD

I have heretofore neglected to mention that when we arrived at Jackson we were assigned to Loring's division, Buford's brigade, the division being composed of Featherstone's Adam's, and Buford's brigades, our brigade having nine regiments as follows: 27th, 35th, 49th, 54th Ala., 12th Louisiana, 9th Ark., 3rd, 7th, and 8th Kentucky.

Battle of Baker's Creek or Champion Hill.

May 16th-1863-- While we were breakfasting on the remnants of our scanty rations a sudden volley of artillery in our immediate front announced to us that the Yankees were much nearer to us than we had imagined the night before. It was a genuine surprise to us if not to our commanders, and subsequent events tended to confirm our opinion that there was a failure somewhere to realize the situation as it was. Unexpected as it was we had no confusion, but activity was apparent all over the camps in