

# James R. Maxwell Autobiography

[image-James R. Maxwell-The Civilian]

[image-Eugenia H. Maxwell-Wife of James R. Maxwell]

Autobiography of JAMES ROBERT MAXWELL of Tuskaloosa [sic], Alabama

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This copy of my AUTOBIOGRAPHY is presented to

My Cousin Professor Frederick R. Maxwell Jr of the University of Alabama that he may have it to remember me by when I shall have passed away

James R. Maxwell

March 1927

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## CHAPTER X

### GENERAL ROSENCRANS ATTACKS BRAGG

On the day after Christmas, General Rosencrans, who had superseded General Buell in command at Nashville of the Federal Army, started out from near that city, with his 65,000 men, to attack Bragg, whose army consisted of some 30,000, infantry and artillery, with some 5,000 cavalry. Wheeler's cavalry delayed the Federals so much in marching the twenty-six miles between Nashville and the battlefield, some two miles north of Murfreesboro and just north of Stone River, a fordable stream with limestone bottom, that they did not get in touch with Bragg's line of battle till the afternoon of the 30th.

#### Army Takes Position for Battle

On the 29th General Wheeler, with his cavalry, had gotten in the rear of the Federals, capturing and destroying several hundred wagons loaded with baggage and supplies. On the morning of the 29th our regiment left its winter quarters with three days' rations of beef and bread in our haversacks, and marched to and across Stone River, to a line that had been selected as our line of battle. Our regimental position was about one quarter of a mile north of the little stream; in Alabama we would call it a creek. Our right was in a piece of woods timbered with large black walnut trees, and a cedar thicket. The center of the regiment was along the northern edge of the same woods, with a cornfield with dry stalks still standing, probably 600 yards across to the foot of a wooded ridge. The left of the regiment extended into another strip of woods, with a cornfield in its rear.

We simply stacked arms in the line of battle marked out, and bivouacked for the day.

In the afternoon Waters' Battery of six-pound, brass, smooth-bore guns took position in our line, or just in front of our right wing.

In marching from camp I was riding in the rear of our regiment, when a quail flew from the right of the road across just in front of my face. I struck it down with my right hand,

one of the men picking it up and handing it to me. I broke its neck and stuffed it into my haversack.

It was cold and we all had roasting fires along the line, broiling meat and toasting bread on the coals. Jim Bobbitt came from camp. He and the colonel's servant made us a big fire, put down two logs and filled in between with dry corn stalks, on which a blanket was spread for our bed.

I got out my quail, picked and dressed it, stuffed it with biscuit crumbs and little pieces of fat bacon, took my silk cord hat band, and hung the stuffed quail before hot coals, with a slice of fat bacon between its legs at the top. With a little stick I kept that quail turning before those hot coals till it was done to a "sizzling brown," then I divided it with Col. Mitchell. It added very much to our supper of broiled beef and toasted crackers. We both said it was as good as any "quail on toast" we had ever eaten.

#### Rides to Ammunition Wagons Under Artillery Fire

That night my cadet friend, Reuben Martin Searcy, was the lieutenant in command of Co. F out "on picket" on the ridge in our front across the cornfield. When relieved the next morning they came in with a Yankee lieutenant and ten or twelve men whom they had captured when they came forward onto the ridge they held during the night. Of course, the prisoners were sent to the rear at once.

The enemy aligned itself along the top of the ridge during the morning and placed a battery of rifled fieldpieces in their line, which opened on us just after noon. Our own skirmishers were along the edge of the cornfield, some fifty yards in our front, all skirmishers and the line of battle lying flat on the ground behind whatever would stop a bullet.

Waters' battery, in our line, replied to their fire, and the air was soon filled with flying and bursting shells.

I was stationed behind a big tree some fifty feet towards the skirmishers to transmit any orders given to them. In the mêlée I noticed Col. Mitchell making rapid gestures and ran to him. He gave me a rifle on which the tube for the cap had been broken and ordered me to take it to the ordnance wagon of the regiment to exchange it for a new rifle. I ran to one side where horse holders were holding headquarter horses, mounted one and galloped off back to Stone River, across, and to the ordnance train where our surgeons had also established themselves, something over one quarter of a mile behind the line of battle.

I got the new rifle and galloped back. As I neared our line the shells were shrieking past, and bursting all about. A regimental friend, Jim Brennan, was hugging a big tree very close. I called to him as I galloped past, "Lie down!" He answered, "You little

rascal, you'd better get off that horse"; but on I went, gave the waiting soldier his gun, jumped off, and ran to my big tree station.

Reuben Martin Searcy Mortally Wounded

The artillery duel kept up all afternoon. When it ceased, near dark, Col. Mitchell sent for me, and said, "Maxwell, Searcy has been badly wounded by shell and sent in to town. Get your horse, go find him and see that he has every possible attention." So I rushed off.

I found Searcy lying in a crowded building, on the bare floor, under the influence of a heavy dose of morphine. Not a rag of his torn and bloody clothes had been removed. No artery had been cut, but the venous blood had clotted and been spread pretty well all over him as he lay there unconscious.

The surgeons told me there was no hope for him, and their time must be spent where life could be saved. I found Jim Bobbitt there by his side, waiting for me to come.

I wrote a hurried note to Col. Mitchell and sent Jim Bobbitt, on horseback, with it. In an hour Jim was back with orders to me to "stay with Searcy and do all that can be done for him." It was now about midnight, and there I sat by my friend's side, with the wounded and dying lying around, a few of whom were Yankees. There was nothing I could do but moisten lips with water, or given those able to drink a little now and then. Candles or dim lanterns gave the only light. Along in the small hours the wounded began to awake from the effects of opiates and talk to their nearest sufferers. One Confederate finally said, "Well, I declare, if here ain't a Yankee too. Where did you come from?" "Your cavalry got me."

"Well, what did you come down here for anyway? We were not pestering you."

"Well, boys, you know if I had not volunteered the girls would have called me a coward, and I could not stand that, but all the same I don't blame you for contending your rights."

Says the Confed., "Well, I reckon that's so, it's the same way with us, but we've got the right to secede if we want to, and we want to."

Moves Searcy to Private House

As soon as it was clear daylight I stared out to find, if possible, more comfort for my friend if he should regain consciousness. The first house that seemed to me to have considerable room I applied to, as everything in town was moving as soon as they could see.

At a two-story brick house, on stating my errand, the lady said, "Bring your friend here. My daughter and I are going to give up the whole house to the wounded, except one

bedroom and the kitchen. Come just as soon as you please.” She was a widow, a Mrs. Thompson; her daughter was also a widow, but her name escapes me.

#### Searcy Attended by His Father’s Personal Friends

Applying to the surgeons of our regiment, who had established their hospital quarters in town at once, in a few hours I was able to get a litter and one litter-bearer, and with Jim Bobbitt at one end of the litter, moved the shattered body of my friend to an upstairs room with a fireplace at Mrs. Thompson’s house. We laid him on a mattress that we covered temporarily with a lot of old worn rags to absorb the blood. But still as the battle now was raging, our regiment in the midst of it and our wounded pouring in that needed instant attention, our surgeons had their hands full and could not come. But that afternoon I found two surgeons who were both personal friends of the father our suffering friend who came at once, as their own commands had not yet been engaged, and did all that could be done, that is, cleaned up the sufferer, getting rid of the blood-soaked clothing, and washing and disinfecting his wounds as far as possible. These surgeons were Dr. Eustis of Mobile and Dr. Wm. Leland of Tuskalooza [sic], both on temporary assignment to a Kentucky regiment. Both were personal friends of our patient’s father, Dr. Reuben Searcy of Tuskalooza [sic], Ala.

Their own commands were not being hotly engaged, on this, the 31st day of December, 1862, whilst Bragg’s left wing was driving the enemy’s right wing to and across the pike leading north towards Nashville. At daybreak his line of battle extended, east and west, at right angles with that pike with his left touching Stone River. At night his army had been driven from every position, except where his left wing was, at the river, or close to the river. It was an open field fight, for the Confederates had not even dug a ditch, as Bragg intended to attack, while the enemy had expected to have to attack themselves, and now at dark of the 31st, the Federal Army, after having been driven all way, was on the eastern side of the pike parallel to it, touching it nowhere, but occupying the line of the railroad which formed pretty good breastworks for his beaten troops.

The rattle of musketry and roar of artillery had been continuous all day, Dec. 31st, of course plainly heard by all in Murfreesboro, being only two miles away.

It was curious to find that, during the succeeding night, when there was constant passing of heavy feet up and down the bare boards of the stairway, the footsteps sounded to our brains like the rattle of the musketry of the previous day. It took an effort of the brain to distinguish the difference, for we knew that no heavy fighting was then going on.

#### James T. Searcy Sent to Attend His Brother

On Jan. 1st, Gen. Bragg, having concentrated his reserve battalion of artillery opposite the enemy’s left wing “digging itself in” near Stone River, and placing artillery to defend itself, after heavily cannonading their position, threw forward Gen. Breckinridge’s corps to the attack, but failed to drive them, with quite heavy loss, and fell back to his lines.

Both sides had entrenched themselves during the night. On that night Mr. James T. Searcy came to his brother, after their shelling the enemy during the day in front of Breckenridge's corps. Some news of Reuben Searcy's terrible wound had reached Lumsden's Battery during the day, and at night Capt. Lumsden allowed his brother James to come.

During the day the two surgeons I have spoken of had done for the sufferer all possible, gotten him cleaned and disinfected, which was all that could be done.

There was no hope whatever. One large piece of shell had torn away the whole inside of his right thigh, from knee to buttock, laying bare the femoral artery, no flesh being left on the leg above the knee, except possibly a six-inch-wide strip on the outside of his right thigh.

Another smaller piece had sliced off his left breast a strip some four inches wide and six inches long, exposing the ribs. No bandaging was attempted. He was never allowed to get from under the influence of powerful opiates; when he would mutter and move his lips we could only moisten them with cool water. When the sterilized cloths spread over the terrible wounds needed changing, which was about every two hours, we did so, burning up the used ones in the fireplace. On the fourth of January he died. We laid him in the graveyard near the Presbyterian Church, where, after the war was over, his brother, Dr. James T. Searcy, saw to the erection of his monument properly inscribed. It has never been convenient for me to see it. But the burial, and all that preceded it, will never be forgotten.

Whilst waiting on our sufferer when needed, we had no leisure, night or day; the house was filled by wounded and kept filled. As fast as one would die and be carried to his grave, another was put in his place. Our surgeons, when they could get us, soon had us trained to help around the operating tables, which were continually in use.

Whilst there were other soldiers, detailed as nurses, there was work for all, and we could not keep all as clean as was desirable. Jim Bobbitt, and my horse, kept us in touch with the 34th Alabama Regiment and Lumsden's Battery at night until the night of Bragg's retreat, the night of January 3rd.

Surgeons Told Us We Could Not Leave the Wounded

The troops had been in battle line and fighting for five days and nights, with rain falling every day.

The army wagons were four miles to the rear. Food was brought to the lines at night, and only smoldering fires could be had down in little pits.

As soon as we heard Bragg was starting to retreat I went to see Dr. Leland; to see what I ought to do.

I wanted an older head than mine to decide. My friend was in his grave, but we had a lot of wounded on hand; some officers and men from my own regiment, none from Lumsden's Battery.

Dr. Leland came to the house to see the condition of things. There were two or three other men nurses there.

Dr. Leland said, "You boys are both needed right here. It would be heartless to advise you differently. You must stay right here with these wounded men as long as the Yankees will let you. They have got used to you, and it won't do to leave them to the mercy of whom we know not." We both said, "That settles it, we will stay." At once we got up a package for Jim Bobbitt to take with him on his retreat, with last mementoes of dead officers and men, and letters from wounded soldiers of the 34th Regiment, with instructions to take them to Col. Mitchell. Jim Bobbitt rode away on my horse and faithfully performed the duties assigned him, and then made his way home to Tuskalooa [sic].

The mementoes and letters Col. Mitchell sent to the proper parties, and had published my letter to him, which were the last that several families ever heard of their loved ones.

The next morning, about sunrise, James Searcy and myself were in the yard of our house when a Confederate cavalry man rode up, calling, "Good morning, boys. Are you getting lonesome?"

"No. Can't do that. Too much on hand." "But where are the Yankees?" "Well, I don't know. Our cavalry have been six miles out towards Nashville and never saw a Yankee." "Looks like they are on the run also." A diary kept by James T. Searcy has this conversation noted in it. So my memory is correct.

No Federals Towards Nashville

The Yankees had possession of the Murfreesboro-Lebanon pike. The Confederates had both the Murfreesboro-Nashville and Murfreesboro-Franklin pikes.

It does look as if the Yanks may have started to retreat via Lebanon pike also. It is hardly possible that they were standing fast at that hour of the day facing empty Confederate trenches. Where was their cavalry? There was not a Confederate in Murfreesboro at sunrise except a small body of Confederate cavalry scouts. There were no Yankees at all and Bragg's army was a few miles southeastward towards Tullahoma.

But during the day at Yankee cavalry force came into town, and its officers were conferring with Confederate surgeons in charge.

I have never heard of any admission from Federal official sources that Rosencrans' army was also on retreat. But they would never let that get into history, even if it were true.

But what bothers me, if it was true, is that I have never seen it stated so by any Confederate source, but as I have related, from a Confederate scout sitting on his horse at sunrise next morning, not expecting any trouble with Yankee cavalry.

The Confederates had captured on Dec. 31st over 6,000 prisoners, 30 pieces of artillery, 6,000 small arms, a number of ambulances, horses, mules and much other military equipment, which they carried away with them.

We never saw much of their army. They took pos- [unable to transcribe as pages overlapping each other]

## CHAPTER XVII

### Battles of Nashville and Franklin

On the second day of the march we got out of rations, and had to supplement them at the end of the day's march with whatever we could pick up. I remember that about the third night after going into bivouac, our mess scattered to see what we could find to eat.

I and my messmate, Ed. King, came in, after an hour's hunt in the dark, with a haversack of sweet potatoes, Henry Donoho with a haversack of cornfield beans he had shelled out in a field. Walter Guild had two big pumpkins, one on each end of a stick, across his shoulders. Alex. Dearing's bodyservant, Rube, had one half of a shoat, and Jim Bobbitt, my servant, had two puddle ducks (the ducks that resemble the wild mallard). Jim usually had several hundred dollars in a wide, waterproof belt next to his skin, and could always pay for what he got, no matter what the price. With the company commissary wagon was a big twenty-gallon copper kettle, and soon it was full of sliced pumpkin, being stewed down, with ovens of sweet potatoes being baked, ducks and pork being boiled a while in big ovens ready for baking. We slept whilst the darkies cooked till all was done about two a.m., when we were called to eat. We certainly were hungry, and that meal before day was the first for twelve hours, and it was a good one. There were baked ducks and pork and plenty of gravy, beans and pumpkin and pone cornbread to our fill. One fellow said he got his potatoes out of a field around which the owner was walking with a lantern. He would grabble for the biggest potatoes until the lantern got in hearing distance, then quietly move to the other side of the field, but it did not take him long to get a peek, which was all he wanted.

Such losses to the farmers were usually paid for by army commissaries, who came along in a day or two, estimated the values, and paid up.

Drank Too Much Whiskey

Arriving at Macon, we went into bivouac near a railroad water tank, near a skirt of open piny [sic] woods, for a day or two. Some of us went down to the city and knocked around, and some of us got too much whiskey aboard. There was too much treating of the soldier boys from the front, and they were about to go back to face the enemy again.

For the first time in my life I got drunk, went behind "Frank's" (the barkeeper) counter, and filled up my overshirt, above the waist-band of my pants, with packages of smoking tobacco, telling "Frank" that "my men" were out of it and that was the best present he could send them, and "Frank" told the boys we had best get along back to camp before the "provost guard" got hold of us, so we started for camp. Out on the sidewalk I bumped against some "major" with a single golden star on each side of his collar. I got hold of him and called out to the other boys that here was a bomb-proof major that had never heard a bullet whistle, etc., etc. The other fellows, who were not quite so far gone as I was, simply because they could stand more drinking than I could, told the "major," "Don't you mind what that fellow says, he's a good soldier, he has just got a little too much tea aboard, or he would not talk that way."

So the major laughed, and told the boys he was not such a bombproof as they might think, but better go along to "camp" and not get into trouble.

We got to camp all right, and found the men had some women there, and big fires and a fiddle going, and a dance on hand on the pine straw.

I sat down before a fire and called on the boys to come up and draw their tobacco rations, which I issued out from my shirt bosom as long as it lasted.

Did Not Like That Sort of Kiss

About that time the men got one of the women to come and kiss me. That was enough for me. I left that crowd and found my bunkmate asleep with our blankets, and I just insisted that he should go to the tank with our canteens and get water and scour my face with a wet corner of a blanket. I was never satisfied until he did. Told him I felt as if a snake had crawled on my face.

After I got my face scoured, I felt better and went to sleep.

That was my first and last drunk; but I remember all I said and did perfectly, but my reason was not then controlling my actions. I'm not so susceptible to the effects of alcohol as a great many, and I like the taste of a good toddy, eggnog or mint-julep with ice in it, but the instant I feel any of the effects I always cut it off short.

Brigade Batteries and Reserve Batteries

I would have my readers not forget that the several batteries of Reserve Artillery Army of Tennessee were never attached permanently to any brigade of infantry. Each infantry brigade had attached to it a battery of light artillery that was under the command

of its brigade general. As a rule, where the brigade went that battery went also. But the several batteries of the reserve artillery were constantly under the orders of the army chief of artillery, who placed any or each battery of the reserve battalion wherever he found it would be of most service, sometimes helping to hold a line with one brigade, and sometimes another. On the evacuation of Atlanta, the brigade batteries went with their brigades around the left wing of Sherman's army at Jonesboro, joining the main body of Hood's army south and west of that point on the railroad, between that point and the Chattahoochee River. Our reserve battalion took the long way round. It was not known what plans the enemy should now develop. So that, at Macon, we were some distance to the southeast of Hood's army, awaiting orders, for several weeks.

As soon as it was seen that Sherman did not intent to try to go farther towards the sound, the reserve artillery was moved towards Gadsden, Ala.

When General Hood made up his mind that he would go with his army up into middle Tennessee, leaving Sherman to push his way through central George, unopposed except by Wheeler and his cavalry, after capturing and destroying the railroad north of the Chattahoochee at Big Shanty, and Acworth and Resaca, capturing garrisons at Tilton, Dalton, and Mill Creek Gap, nearly up to Chattanooga, he crossed, with a portion of his army, on November 20, at Gunter's Landing on the Tennessee River. Our reserve artillery continued westwards on the south side, through the flat piny [sic] woods of Calhoun Country, along roads where almost daily rains had put the white mushy soil into a loblolly mud a foot deep on the main part of the roads, and axle deep in the wheel tracks, the men wading in mud all day from ankle to knee-deep. At Gadsden I had been appointed sergeant in command the 4th Detachment in charge of the fourth gun and its cannoneers, drivers and caissons, being promoted from corporal and gunner of the third piece, or gun. This gave me a horse to ride at the head of the fourth detachment.

Riding along the road, with my horse's feet searching for shallowest portions of the loblolly mud, suddenly the right fore and hind legs of the animal went into a deep rut and down we went, burying me completely in that dark gray slush, over head and all. When I quickly emerged I was greeted with shouts of laughter and cries of "Come out of that stuff, we see your ears sticking up." I just had to wipe the mud out of my eyes, get back upon my horse, and go ahead with my work. A shower, every now and then, kept me wet till we went into bivouac for the night, near a creek, in which I washed my clothes and body clean, and hung up my outer clothing before a big fire for the night, putting on an extra shirt and drawers and rolling in my blanket for the night's rest. Next morning I was all right again, Jim Bobbitt having seen to it during the night that the outer garments were dry as well as clean.

Tuscumbia and Florence

Farther on down the river the reserve artillery went, passing in sight of Decatur, where Tarrant's battery was put into position, supported by some dismounted cavalry exchanging a few shots with a Yankee fort on the outskirts of town. That is where our

friend, Mark Brooks, whose home was at Taylorville, Tuscaloosa [sic] County, lost his arm near the shoulder, a Yankee three-inch rifle shell taking it off. Our batteries passed on out of sight.

At Tuscumbia, we encamped for a few days, awaiting the building of a pontoon bridge just about where the railroad and wagon bridge is now.

The men foraged for chickens, eggs, butter, milk, potatoes, honey, or anything else of the kind. Prices were high, but Confederate money would still pass at very good value, considering. We were in a grove, not far from Big Spring, for which the town is noted, a creek flowing directly out from a limestone ledge at the foot of a hill, which furnished the stream for a grist mill close by.

Florence to Near Columbia

In cutting down trees for firewood, one tree accidentally fell across about the only fat little mule we had, so that it had to be killed. The men butchered it same as a beef, and it was better meat than any beef we were getting. The fat we tried out and put the grease into bottles and canteens. For some days it furnished shortening for biscuits, and some of it was being eaten out of haversacks for a day or two on the march. A fellow would pull out a chunk and bite off a mouthful, hold up his head and bray his funeral hymn.

When it came our turn to cross the bridge the whole battery, men, guns, caissons and battery wagons were marched to the south end of the bridge awaiting our turn. We went onto the bridge at 11 p.m. and stood in a drizzling rain, moving a few feet at a time, getting off the northern end and up the hill in axle-deep mud after sun-up in the morning, men at each wheel, and animals doing their best; mud-covered from head to foot and wet to the skin.

A big fire in a deserted storehouse, using part of the floor for wood, felt mighty good, and roasted mule rib and musty corn pone toasted on the coal was mighty good to the stomach under the circumstances. When our whole battery was on the northern bank we went out to the edge of Florence and into bivouac for twenty-four hours.

Kahnwiler Episode

Early one morning after leaving Florence, and before reaching Pulaski, as soon as reveille roll call was finished, the "stable bugle call" sounded. As sergeant, it was my duty to at once issue feed to the drivers of my fourth detachment for their horses at the forage wagon, before anything else, for they can only feed whilst at rest. Men can take their rations along in their haversacks, and eat as they march. Before I had quite finished issuing the feed for the animals, a big private named Kahnwiler, a book-binder [sic] by trade, was quarreling about having to wait for his rations. The commissary had just come from the cook wagon with the day's rations of boiled beef and corn pones for the men.

They were piled out on an old tarpaulin and I had to divide them up into as many piles as there were men in my detachment, sixteen men, drivers and cannoneers. I was kneeling down cutting up the beef when Kahnwiler said something that I was not willing to let pass.

I at once laid down my knife and rose up, saying, "Kahnwiler, I've stood your jaw as long as I am going to," and at once socked my fist against his nose, somewhat staggering him. He at once began clawing at my face with his nails, clawing down a woolen scarf I had wrapped around my head, turban fashion, I getting in a few more blows at his face until my turban got down before my eyes. I threw it off my head with my hands, he grabbing my shoulders, at the same time pulling me to him, so that as I got the turban out of my eyes his wide mouth, wide open, was about to grab my nose with his big white teeth. My fingers flew up to his eyes and began to gouge, when he dropped back slightly, and I got in a blow that knocked him down, just at Lieutenant A. C. Hargrove rushed in between us and stopped the fight. I then got back on my knees and went on with my job of cutting up the meat, Lieut. Hargrove ordering Kahnwiler to move off. I was not at all disfigured, but Kahnwiler looked, for several days, as if he wore a pair of goggles. A few days after that, one morning before we started on the march, Capt. Lumsden, near whose fire I was standing, said, "Maxwell, what was the trouble between you and Kahnwiler the other morning?" I replied, "Not much; he has been grumbling for some time back every time I detailed him for any service, as if I was being unfair, which was not true. Details come round pretty often when several men at a time are called on, out of a squad of six cannoneers, and he was grumbling because I gave feed to drivers before issuing rations to the men, and I got tired of his jaw and concluded to stop it."

Says Lumsden, "Don't you know that you have no right to strike one of these men with your fist? If one is insubordinate you have a right to shoot him, but not to strike him." "Well, Captain, I think it is better to put goggles on his eyes than to shoot him, for we have now got a pretty good soldier, who has quit giving trouble. If I'd shot him we would not now have the soldier."

Lumsden laughed and that was the end of it.

I never had any more words with Kahnwiler, never spoke of the matter again, Treated him just as I had always, and never had any more grumbling.

Reaching Contact with Enemy at Columbia

This was about November 1st, 1864, we having been about ten days coming from Gadsden. General Forrest, with his cavalry, was threatening Pulaski and Lawrenceburg, while General Thomas had concentrated his Federal force during October to meet Hood's army. As Hood's army advanced Thomas withdrew to Columbia, on or about November 23, Forrest's cavalry obstructing his movements as much as possible. There they entrenched themselves rapidly. About November 27

Hood's army took position in their front and entrenched, but our reserve artillery was not placed in position.

On the 28th Forrest's cavalry crossed Duck River above Columbia, and next day, the 29th of November, Stewart's and Cheatham's corps followed Forrest, leaving Stephen D. Lee's corps in our trenches, facing Columbia.

#### Battle of Franklin

Our cannons and all but one commissioned officer of Lumsden's Battery were here detailed to follow Reynolds' brigade, leaving guns, caissons, and drivers in charge of one commissioned officer south of Duck River. We were with our bare hands alone, and were to follow this brigade of infantry in the attempt to capture Spring Hill, some thirteen miles northeast of Columbia, and cut off whatever Federals were left there. The enemy soon learned of our flank movement and, with heavy flanking troops at some distance from their turnpike, began to rush away their trains and artillery. At about two miles from Spring Hill, Cheatham's corps came in contact with their flanking guards, but did not manage to rush the place by nightfall, and so the chance was lost. During the night we lay parallel with pike, at about 600 yards distance, whilst Schofield's army passed by.

The object of our cannons and officers following Reynolds' brigade "bare-handed" was to take immediate possession of a captured battery, which it was expected our infantry and cavalry would take, with experienced artillery men to at once put into use.

As soon as we could see next morning, we took the pike for Franklin, passing burning wagons, with mules shot down in their harness all along the pike.

Still following Reynolds' brigade of infantry to the top of the range of hills overlooking the plain, at the far side of which lay Franklin, when the charge began in the line of battle, as we passed over the ridge in sight of the enemy's lines of trenches, General Reynolds ordered Capt. Lumsden to "Take those men behind the ridge and wait further orders."

The brigade passed on in the charge about the middle of the afternoon, and as soon as they overran the first line of trenches or infantry pickets of the enemy, capturing most of them, the bullets ceased to reach the top of the ridge. So we got on top of the ridge and sat down and witnessed that terribly fatal charge where, for an hour or more, Confederates were on one side of a bank of dirt and Federals on the other way into the night. If we had had our guns we could not have used them. As it was we were only spectators, and could see little but the pall of smoke.

During the night our guns came up. Next morning we took the pike in pursuit of the enemy, passing directly through the town. The first houses, on the inside of the Federal earthworks, were a gin-house for cotton on the right hand, with the owner's home on the left. Outside of the trenches an "abatti" [sic] had been built of thorny locust trees, well nigh impassable apparently, but those charging Confederates had, many of them, gone

through, and some over the top of the trenches, only finding themselves so few, amongst their enemies, that they had to throw down their rifles and surrender. I saw General Cleburn's [sic] horse with its neck doubled up on the outside of trench, where its rider had been shot from his back. The horse of General Adams lay with his front feet on the Federal side and hind feet on the Confederate side, where both horse and man had perished.

It was said that a Confederate, son of the owner of the first house on the left, was killed there in the yard where he was raised, having passed unscathed through many battles.

The blame for the Confederates' failure to throw their troops across the pike at Spring Hill has never been satisfactorily explained to any critic of strategy. By many it is believed that whiskey was the cause of it, as Cheatham, who had command of the advance infantry, was addicted to its use periodically. If so, whiskey was the cause of the slaughter at Franklin, and the loss of the battle of Nashville as well, for Hood's troops had been decimated at Franklin, and the remaining troops had lost confidence in their commander.

Morning After Battle of Franklin

But to go on with my personal history. As our battery passed through the gap, where the pike passed through the entrenchments, and some 100 yards from it we passed Jim Bobbitt, my body servant, sitting on a knapsack by the side of a dying Yankee soldier, where many were laid out awaiting removal to hospital or grave. We soldiers, of course, each belonged at all times with our commands; our body servants went where and when they pleased when not engaged in cooking at commissary wagons.

I asked Jim, "What are you doing here?" He replied, "Mass Jim, this man has done with a might good pair of shoes, and I'd just as well have them as anybody else." I told him not to disturb him, he was almost gone. He replied, "I won't, sir, as long as he has got any sense." That night in bivouac Jim came with some food for me. He told me the soldier had died soon after we passed, that he got the shoes but they would not fit him and he had sold them to a barefooted Confederate. Of course, soldiers in rags and barefooted did not bury good shoes or any other clothing in the ground to rot. All such useful articles were utilized where most needed. It was only common sense.

This battle of Franklin was on November 30, 1864, eighteen miles from Nashville, where we took position in his front some two miles from the city, our battery entrenching in the yard of a fine residence that the enemy had burned the day before, it being within 400 yards of his own entrenchments. Of course, we had to entrench in the night and got ditch enough to cover from rifle bullets so that the trenches could be worked on in daytime, but the least exposure drew rifle fire from the enemy. The cellars of the house were the most comfortable places, and the inside of the destroyed furnace the most desirable sleeping place in the frosty nights.

In Front of Nashville

We were relieved from this point after about three days, and moved to an isolated low hill about a half mile behind the extreme left flank of Hood's infantry, where details under engineers had laid off a redoubt for four guns, with instructions to build quickly an enclosed redoubt or fort that could be held even when surrounded.

Nothing of the sort had been done as yet. The four embrasures had been started, and some fifty feet long, from each end of the redoubt, had been ditched for infantry, without any head logs. Just a ditch with the dirt thrown up on the outside bank, and that not deep enough to protect an infantryman except when bent halfway to the ground.

A hundred infantry had been detailed as our support in case of attack. But we all went to work to get the redoubt in better shape.

About December 6 it began to snow and sleety, which interfered with our work, but by the 10th we had our gun redoubt in pretty fair shape for the four guns, facing towards a ridge that ran somewhat parallel; some 600 yards away, and from which the enemy would doubtless fire on us, if they should attack us in flank. Between us and the Hillsboro Pike, which was some 300 yards in our rear, ran a little creek called Richland Creek, a shallow run some ten feet wide at low water.

All the timber had been cut down between us and the ridge which, whilst it gave a view of the ridge, had left trunks of trees that permitted the enemy to use them as protection for their skirmishers, if our skirmishers fell back out of them.

Whilst the snow and sleet, two inches deep, covered everything, Jim Bobbitt brought me a change of underclothing. I had to brush off the snow and sleet from a log, strip, and bathe in the icy water, with thin ice on the still places, but it did not take long.

We were issued plenty of beef, but bread, even corn bread, was scarce. Where horses were fed the men would pick the shattered grains out of the frozen mud and parch them. From the extreme left wing of Hood's infantry trenches to the Cumberland River was perhaps one half mile. In our front the river was farther than that as, running east and west just north of Nashville, at about four miles west of Nashville, its course changed to northwest.

The gap between the western end of Hood's infantry trenches, possibly one quarter of a mile west of Hillsboro Pike and Cumberland River, was covered by Chalmer's cavalry brigade, supported by Ector's skeleton brigade of infantry.

On Dec. 15, patches of snow and sleet still visible, the rattle of musket fire and occasional cannon firing along the line of this cavalry front, under cover of a heavy fog, advised us that the enemy was making a move in that direction, whilst the same coming from Hood's line of battle to the right showed something was going on along the whole line.

## Battle of Nashville

During the early morning the enemy's infantry, which later we learned was Gen. A. J. Smith's corps, lately arrived from Missouri, pressed back Chalmer's cavalry and infantry support steadily under cover of a dense fog, those directly in front of our battery finally passing us. They left no skirmishers even between us and the advancing enemy. Capt. Lumsden protested against their leaving us thus uncovered. He said, "Colonel, you must hold this ground. Orders are that it must be held to the last limit." The colonel's reply was, "Captain, we can't do it. Their skirmishers outnumber us two or three to one." As soon as the fog lifted, about 10 a.m., the enemy opened on us with their three-inch rifle batteries of their different brigades, amounting to twenty-four guns, at four different points, immediately in front from 600 to 800 yards, and to our right from 900 to 1,000 yards away, their whole fire concentrated on our four twelve-pound smooth bore, brass Napoleon guns. We fired only at those in our immediate front. Before long the rifle bullets also began to sing through our embrasures, and some of the shell skimming over our head from several directions, exploded above us.

I was sergeant in charge of the fourth gun. My gunner was Ed King (a grandson of Dr. Drish who lived in what is now the Jemison School). Ed King shortly was struck in the side by a chunk of wood knocked from the edge of our embrasure, breaking several ribs. Lieut. Cole Hargrove shouted to me, "Maxwell, get to that trail, back to your old place as a gunner." I jumped to the trail handspike and kept our front. Soon my number three, Horton, was shot down at his place with a bullet in his groin, and was rushed off to the rear in search of a surgeon, I having taken off his thumbstall and put another man in his place. Directly another battery opened on us from opposite our extreme left, completely enfilading the line of our guns, behind our works. Either they would have to leave or we would have to. I turned my gun, being on the extreme left of our battery, on that battery. Captain Lumsden had the two guns on our extreme right, Nos. 1 and 2, run back from their embrasures far enough to turn them also to the left and fire on the enfilading battery some 600 yards to our left. Within ten minutes the enfilading battery ceased firing and moved away, when our three guns turned back to their original places and objects of fire. In whirling my gun back to place with the trail handspike, I broke off the rear pointing ring, on the end of the gun's trail, in which the handspike fitted. I jumped to the tongue of the limber close behind, got a trace from the harness, quickly made a loop to hold the handspike and again put the gun in action. It was all done quicker than I can write it. But presently the enemy's dismounted cavalry and 11th Missouri infantry charged us in mass. We gave them a few charges of canister then as they crossed the last 100 yards in our front, when they were upon us, entering our redoubt right at my gun where the 50 infantrymen of our support were supposed to be, but were not. Lieut. Cole Hargrove ordered us to run towards our right, which we quickly did, after firing the last charge of canister in the faces of the charging enemy.

At the second gun, after passing the third, the sergeant of same, Jim Jones (from Autauga County), had his gun aimed at the enemy already at my gun I had just left.

Calling out, "Look out, Jim," I dropped down on hands and knees, and that second piece belched a double charge of canister right over my head at them. I sprang to the side of that second piece, helped to load and fire it twice, and it was again loaded with canister, with Lumsden standing close by with another charge in his hand, crying, "Fire!" But the No. 4, with the friction primers, had run. I called out to Captain Lumsden: "Captain, he's gone with the friction primers." Then Lumsden ordered, "Take care of yourselves, boys." As he did so, a Yankee soldier, coming in through the second embrasure, where we had the gun aimed towards the left, jumped down right by my side with his rifle and bayonet, and I left him with all the speed my legs could put on, with all the others who did not throw themselves flat on the ground in surrender.

As I ran down the hill towards Richland Creek, at perhaps 40 yards from our guns, I ran over an infantryman's rifle, and noticed one copper cap on its nipple shining bright, with the hammer back at full cock. I grabbed it up and, noticing a Yankee at our guns waving his hat and hurraing, I pulled down on him, but did not stop to see if I hit him. When the rifle fired I opened both hands, let it drop, whirled, and tried to run faster than I had ever run in my life, several Yankees passing me in pursuit of men ahead of me, riding on their horses and firing their pistols at the runners.

I don't think I put more than one foot in the creek at the foot of the hill. Most of the men, only about 20, ran directly towards the Hillsboro pike with the Yankee horsemen in pursuit. A stone wall ran off at right angles to the pike, and as the horsemen were between me and the pike I made for the stone wall with all speed. Crossing it, I then turned towards Hillsboro pike at a walk, as I was about "blown." Along the Hillsboro pike Confederate infantry had been aligning for several hours whilst our battery had been holding A. J. Smith's corps of Federals in check, and as I reached the pike more were being rushed from Hood's right, which had been resisting the attack all the morning. We had held that whole corps in check for four hours.

When I reached the remnants of our cannoneers who had gathered around Captain Lumsden and Lieut. Hargrove near a red brick farm-house, perhaps 200 yards east of the Hillsboro pike, Lumsden was reporting to Gen. Stewart, who said to our captain that we "had done all that men could do"; that our "sacrifice was necessary to gain time to bring troops from our right as soon as it was seen they could be spared."

Soon after, I got hold of an infantrymen's rifle and was hunting for a cartridge box with ammunition to fit, when Capt. Lumsden asked me what I was doing with that gun. I replied I wanted to go in with some infantry now as our guns were gone. Says Lumsden, "You put that gun down and go along with the balance of the company where you belong. My business is to hold my company together to do what it comes to my command to do, and your business is to obey orders." "All right, captain, I've never failed yet."

It will be understood that on the battlefield of Nashville it was only the captain and Lieut. Cole Hargrove, the four sergeants at the guns, the orderly sergeant, J. Mack Shivers, and the corporals as gunners, with the cannoneers that took part. Lieut. John Caldwell,

in command of all the drivers with their horses, had been sent to the rear where our commissary and other company wagons and supplies were not exposed uselessly to danger.

The officers named and about 45 men only were with the guns. My No. 3, named Horton, had been brought away as soon as wounded. He died that night and was buried near the Franklin pike. I cut his name in a plank to mark his grave. Hylan Rosser, the youngest of the three Rosser boys, had his head smashed with a shell. That night, as I was pouring some water out of a canteen on Captain Lumsden's hands, he was picking some clots out of his beard. He said, "Maxwell, those are part of Rosser's brains." There were about 20 of the men captured, some of them never attempted to leave the guns, but lay down and surrendered, and some surrendered to the officers, or cavalry on their horses, when headed off as they ran.

One horseman, having fired all loads from his pistols, headed off Lieut. Cole Hargrove, ordering him to surrender. Hargrove picked up a cut sapling to defend himself when the Yank whacked down on his head with his saber. Hargrove caught most of the force of the blow on his stick, but it was beaten down, so part of the blow reached his head, and the lieutenant said it "hurt like everything," but was dull and did not cut. About that time Confederate bullets began to whistle around the Yank, one grazed the horse's head. It ran off with its rider and Hargrove made his way to safety at the new line along the Hillsboro pike.

The company was now without arms and were simply kept together, at the wagon trains and supply wagons for some, having no part whatever in the battle of the next day, December 16th, after which the army retreated from Tennessee.

Retreat with Army

I had a sort of a horse to ride, but could not ride on account of boils. My boot soles were held to the uppers by strings and wires. My socks were worn out. The roads were an icy, gritty slush, from the sleet that fell almost daily. I could only hobble. So, to keep up, I would watch for a chance and crawl into any wagon possible and stay there all day. One morning I was standing by the captain's fire and Lieut. Cole Hargrove came up saying, "Maxwell, where were you last night? You've been straggling ever since we left Nashville. Last night orders came for a detail of men to help along the pontoon train and I could not find you to send along in charge." I said, "Lieutenant, I've not been straggling as much as you think. I could not ride and could hardly walk so I've been stealing rides in wagons every day and so kept up. My boils are about well, and I reckon I can ride where you can see me now." That was the last of that. But after Hargrove went away, Lumsden said, "Maxwell, I expect I know what's the matter with you. You have lost all hope in our cause, and few of us have any hope left. But it don't do to let up. We've got to do the best we can to the end. You are one of the men we depend on to keep the company together to the end, to get the best terms possible. We just can't break up and go home as a mob." I told him that he was mistaken, that I could, and would, hope as long as any man. That the facts were exactly as I had told

Hargrove. It was steal rides in a wagon and keep up, or I might be captured, and I'd had enough of that. Fortunately I had no more boils, and a horse to ride, so that the gaping boots mattered little in an army whose pants below calves of legs were scorched open and in tatters behind from standing with backs to fires at every stop. Rations, especially bread of any description, were very short.