

THE CIVIL WAR DIARY OF CAPTAIN JAMES LITTON
COOPER, SEPTEMBER 30, 1861 TO JANUARY, 1865

EDITED BY WILLIAM T. ALDERSON

The writer of this document, James Litton Cooper, was born at the home of his grandfather, Joseph Litton, in Nashville on July 19, 1844. He was the second son of Washington Bogart Cooper, a noted portrait painter in Middle Tennessee, and his wife, Ann Litton. In 1846 James Cooper's family moved to a country place located at the intersection of the Charlotte Pike and Clifton Road. Here James Cooper lived the usual life of a son of fairly well-to-do parents until the summer of 1861.

In the summer of 1861 the Civil War was getting under way, and on September 30, 1861, James left his home to join the 20th Tennessee Infantry Regiment, C. S. A. At that time the regiment was facing Union troops in eastern Kentucky. This narrative covers his war experiences from that date until May 18, 1865, when he was paroled at Griffin, Georgia and returned to Nashville.

In 1865 Cooper was employed by Fite, Tisle, Porter & Co., and remained with them until 1880. In 1880 he married Sarah Vaughn, the daughter of Hiram Vaughn and Martha Johnson Vaughn, and about a year later he moved to a farm in the old 18th District of Davidson County. Here he lived until his death on September 7, 1924. He was engaged in farming and the breeding of Jersey cattle and became one of the best known breeders of Jerseys in Middle Tennessee.¹

Nashville, Tenn., August 5th, 1866

Knowing the failings of my memory, and aware of the fact that it will not improve as age comes on, I have this day determined to write down in this book, an account of the principal events that occurred under my own observation during the late war. I am indeed to take this step by a conversation that I heard yesterday.

I purpose to write down as a head, each month after I left home, and under this head to write such occurrences as I can remember, that I think will be interesting to myself or others when a sufficient space of time has elapsed to interest them with that interest, which time always throws around incidents.

I have made this determination, and hope to have perseverance to carry it out, as I now think I will.

I saw about as much service as any one could see in my part of the army. I was not sick a single time while in service, and was only absent

¹I am indebted to Colonel Vaughn W. Cooper for making this diary available, and for supplying the biographical data on James Litton Cooper.

when wounded on two occasions. I made a great many narrow escapes, some of them almost miraculous.

When I entered the army I joined the Temperance Order, and also made a promise never to touch a card while away from home. Both of these pledges, I strictly adhered to. This was not on account of any great virtue in myself, but I suppose I was never *sorely tempted*.

September 30th, 1861

On this memorable day I left the home where I had lived with scarce a wish ungratified for seventeen years, to join my fortunes with the 20th Tennessee Regt., Co. C. This regiment was at that time camped at Cumberland Ford, Kentucky. I left Nashville in company with Capt. Bostick of the Fourth East Tennessee Regt.

Were I asked to explain the reason for going into the army, I do not know that I could do it. I had not much idea of patriotism. I was a mere boy and carried away by boyish enthusiasm. I was ambitious and felt that I should be disgraced if I remained at home while other boys no older than myself were out fighting for the South. That word South was very dear to me, and there was a feeling of pride that I could claim a home in the South. I did not love the North, and after I had been in the army for a while every other feeling was lost in hatred to the Yankees and desire to be free from them. I do not know whether my hatred of Yankees was stronger than my love for the South, but both could work harmoniously together, and I did not attempt to restrain either.

I was tormented by feverish anxiety before I joined my regiment for fear the fighting would all be over before I got into it, but I was mistaken in my calculation; there was plenty, and to spare for some time after I got there.

I felt every inch of a big man when I was stepping about the day preceding my departure, with my grey coat with brass buttons on. I thought I attracted more attention than any other man in the City on that day. I was very anxious for everyone to know that I was only seventeen years old, and that I was going to "join the 20th Tennessee Regiment Col. Battle, sir, at present in East Tennessee among the Bushwhackers but soon expecting to start to Louisville or Cincinnati." Oh! Lordy! how these things do make children of us all. God bless that old 20th Tennessee. May the memory of her noble deeds never die, but when I am old, and this life seems about slipping from my grasp, may that name, Twentieth Tennessee, have power to flash up the flickering light of the eye, and nerve the palsied limbs of this corpus. I know it will do, it. 20th Tennessee, I'm proud of you. Glad that I was one of you. Couldn't you do more fighting, and better fighting in a given length of time than anybody's regiment? And then when running was to be done, couldn't you do it? You bet. And then you were the boys that could march farther in a day, and go farther that night, and bring back more chickens, kill more hogs and sheep than anybody. You could play more cards and take in more money from the greenhorns than six common regiments. Oh, you were snatchers! The like of you will never be seen again.

But I'm sadly off the track, to return to Nashville. At four o'clock Monday evening I left the N. & C. Depot. In spite of my joy at going to the army,

and my natural hardness of heart, about three tears forced themselves from my eyes, as we rapidly rolled away from the home where I could have been so happy if I would, and I began to think about the chance for returning. Notwithstanding the fact that I was not much addicted to prayer, a silent petition arose from my heart that God would bring me safely through all my wanderings and dangers back to that home. But other lips and hearts were praying for me, and to their intercession, not my own, I owe my safe turn. The prayers of the wicked availeth nothing, and if there was a wicked, ungrateful wretch in the family, that wretch was myself. The ways of providence are past our comprehension, for I certainly did not deserve to be brought back safe, sound in health and considerably improved in morals.

October, 1861.

The first day of this month I reached Knoxville, nothing of interest occurring on the trip from Nashville. Here we learned that the Fourth Regiment had started to Cumberland Gap, and were in camp that night about sixteen miles from Knoxville. In company with several officers of the Regiment, I started about two o'clock and reached their camp that night at ten, very much fatigued.

In the morning we resumed the march, and on Saturday the 5th reached the Gap. I saw nothing strange on the route, except the remarkable fondness for chickens and fresh meat, which began to manifest itself among the troops.

On Sunday, the 6th, I left Cumberland Gap for my Regiment, fourteen miles distant. As I marched along by myself, feelings of loneliness and homesickness began to creep over me, and for the first and last time, I felt that if I were at home, I would stay there. I reached the Ford that evening before sunset, and was greeted cordially by James W. Thomas, 4th Sergt., Co. C., and was soon made to feel myself at home. On his account I was kindly received into mess No. 1, the best and laziest set of fellows in the Company. Their names were Ivan Shields, J. T. Callender, J. W. Thomas, T. H. Goss, Ralph Calhoun, and last but not least, "Cabe," the gentlemen [*sic*] who did up the chicken doings and flour fixings, in other words, the cook. I was soon sworn in, and assigned a place in the rear rank. I drew an old rusty flint lock musket, and was told to consider myself a soldier. I thought this doing things in style, especially as I was popped on guard about the third night, and that a rainy one. I was taken to one side by J. T.,² and seriously admonished as to the duties of a sentinel and the direful consequences if I neglected my duty. To this I paid strict attention, and determined not to be caught napping on my post.

A court martial, and probably death, would, I thought, be a sad end to my dreams of military glory. Notwithstanding the rain, I got along finely.

We remained in camp about long enough for me to learn something about the life, and started on the campaign against the enemy at Wild Cat, on Rock Castle River, distant from the Ford about seventy miles. The first day we marched about nine miles, and as I had never carried a knap sack before, I was very tired. We had a little adventure with the bushwackers on the road, in which one cavalry-man was killed. Here I saw the first human blood.

² Jim Thomas, a first cousin.

When about six miles from Wildcat, we came in collision with the pickets, who were driven in after a little excitement. After spending a miserable night, cold as the North Pole, the next morning we advanced on the enemy. The crack of the old squirrel rifles in the woods for a time was all that could be heard, but presently the regular troops came out with their minutes [*sic*], and skirmishing commenced in earnest. I shall never forget the first bullet I heard. It seemed to me to have a peculiarly vindictive, blood-thirsty sound which was anything but pleasant.

Our regiment was not engaged during the day but was marched and countermarched over those mountains in a way that was almost as bad as fighting. Some fighting was done by the 11th Tenn. which sustained the principal loss. When night came we retired with a loss of fifteen killed and twenty-three wounded. This was on the 25th October, on the 26th we started back leisurely to Cumberland Gap. The object of the expedition had failed, but no one was whipped. We had in action only one regiment out of four. There were present the 11th, 19th, 20th, 29th Tenn. and 15th Miss. The latter was some distance in rear Rutledge's battery of artillery and a battalion or two of cavalry. The 17th Tenn. was also with us and sustained the loss instead of the 11th as written above.

November and December 1861

The month of November was occupied in changing our front from Cumb. Ford to Mill Springs. At Cum. Ford I was detailed to accompany the wagon train and did not rejoin the regiment. At C. G. [Cumberland Gap] I went out to kill a hog, being a little short of provisions, but the night was so dark that I repented of my resolution and came back without the pork. About the first of November we started on our march for the Cumberland river. We encountered many hardships on the way; among other things suffered for provisions. Our commissariat was poorly managed, and several nights we were reduced to a couple of potatoes.

I unfortunately blistered my heel on this march and by neglect it became very sore but I struggled on through the mud and at last reached the river. The day we reached Cumberland River I, Wm. Robinson and J. T. [Jim Thomas] happened to be behind, having stopped in Monticello to try and get a pair of shoes. When we were five miles from the river we heard a pretty rapid artillery fire, which quickened our steps considerable. We afterwards learned that it was Rutledge's battery firing on the Yankee camp across the river. This was a small affair but it caused great excitement at that time.

The first night we spent in camp here, there was a considerable fall of snow, the first, I think, that winter. As our mess had a good supply of blankets we were able to keep very comfortable. Others, did not fare so well. About the first of December we made preparations for crossing the river. An advance guard was sent over, and one dark night our regiment crossed. The crossing was done in flats made by the troops under the direction of Engineer officers.

When we were safely over, we were hurried out about two miles to take our stand on picket. We found there, another regiment the 19th Tenn. which had crossed before us. We remained here for several days until a

line of fortifications were made by the troops in rear of us, when we went back into camp.

Our force consisted of the 15th Miss., Col. [?],* 20th Tenn., Col. Battle, 17th Tenn., Col. Newman, 19th Tenn., Col. Cummings, 25th Tenn., Col. Staunton, 28th Tenn., Col. Murray, 29th Tenn., Col. Powell, a battery of artillery commanded by Captain Rutledge and one under Monserat. Part of this force remained on the South bank of the river.

We passed our time here, fortifying and making our winter quarters, which we were destined never to occupy.

Christmas came while we were in this camp, "Beech Grove," and was celebrated by all hands and the cook getting drunk.

The usual scenes followed as a matter of course. Fighting and cursing was about all that was done from dawn till night.

January 1862

Sunday 19th Jan. 1862

This month came and found us in our old camp. Events now occurring every day showed us that we would not remain quiet much longer. Skirmishing between the outpost was of frequent occurrence, and one, in which our mess mate, Ivan Shields, had a narrow escape, was followed by an advance of our entire command to Fishing Creek, distant about ten miles. The birds had flown however and we had our march for nothing.

On the 17th of this month, the federal general Thomas, who had been at Columbia with his brigade, marched to unite with Gen. Shoef who had been in our front, at Somerset. After concentrating they would cross the river below and above and have us at their mercy. After a council of officers had been called, Gen. Geo. B. Crittenden who had arrived and taken command, determined to anticipate their design and to attack them in camp. The troops were ordered to cook rations and hold themselves in readiness, and at midnight the march commenced. Gen. Thomas had this night reached a point about ten miles from our camp, and the intention was to attack at Daylight, Sunday Jan. 19th, 1862.

We had had much rain, and the roads were in a terrible condition. The order of march was as follows: first the 15 Miss.; 2d the 19th Tenn.; 3d the 20 Tenn. The artillery and other regiments followed. Two regiments were left to guard the camp. We marched steadily forward for several hours when the frequent halts and the number of Staff Officers dashing about told our proximity to the enemy. Some of us still thought and said that there would be no fight, that the Yankee would leave, but just as day was

Mill Springs or Fishing Creek

breaking a wounded man was brought to the rear; we now knew that we had to fight and prepared for it, by piling up our blankets; knapsacks and whatever could impede our movements. As soon as it was light the sharp rattle of musketry in our front told that the 15th Miss. were driving in the skirmishers, and we were double quickened into line, and moved to their

*Cooper apparently could not remember the name of the Colonel of the 15th Mississippi, and left a blank space where he could insert the name at a later date.

assistance, when we reached our position on their right, the fight had commenced in earnest, and we were under fire directly. By this time the rain was descending in torrents and our flint lock muskets were in a bad condition; not one in three would fire. We were a little excited at first, and one man in company H was shot by one of my own company. The excitement was soon over and with a shout that would have warned an Egyptian mummy, we rushed up to the right of the 15th Miss., and with only a fence between us and the enemy did the best we could with our old flint locks. Mine went off once in the action and although I wiped the "pan" and primed a dozen times it would do no more. I had just taken aim and pulled trigger, and was waiting for the hammer to descend, when I felt a "new sensation" across the small of my back; It was like the cut of a knife, and I knew I had been shot. My first thought was that the bullet had gone through me and of course I was considerably demoralized. I call J. T. [Jim Thomas], we had been side by side all the time, and was very much relieved when he told me it had not entered.

By this time the two regiments, 20th Tenn. and 15th Miss. had lost half their number, and Gen. Zollicoffer being killed, no troops were sent to assist us. Human flesh and blood could not endure such a fire, both of small arms and artillery as was poured upon us, and with much confusion the retreat began. Every one for himself was the motto, and to get back to camp as soon as possible the idea. I started from the field with a considerable party but was soon headed by the Yankees and compelled to hide. Most of my party were captured at that time. I remained hid until night and tried to then make my way to the river and cross. I marched up to the 38th Ohio about midnight and was "taken in." I was carried back to our old camps that night in time to see the last of the command cross the river, and then taken to Somerset. I was under charge of Cap. Choute, since killed at Jonesboro, Co. B. 35th O. R. and was very kindly treated. After I arrived at Somerset I was taken to Gen. Shoef who paroled me, with permission to go through the town, and sent me to wait on the wounded. I sent a letter home from here by Dr. Cliff who accompanied Gen. Zollicoffer's body to Nashville. I saw Gen. Zollicoffer after he was killed.

I remained in the hospital attending to the wounded men, during the month, and witnessed many dreadful scenes of suffering and death. I saw one man die from lockjaw. His anguish was terrible to behold.

Our regiment's loss was (114) one hundred and fourteen killed, wounded and missing out of three hundred.

February, March and April 1862.

During three months I remained in the hospital at Somerset. Many of my comrades and acquaintances died from their wounds and sickness combined, but I fortunately kept my usual good health.

I was at one time detailed to accompany Sergt. Grey to a private house but found my position there unpleasant, and had to return to the hospital.

I escaped being shot, by an accident; one of the Yankees mistook me for one of the "reb," who had been paying attention to his lady love, and vowed vengeance. No one was hurt however. Some of the "rebs" visited around considerably, but as I did not have much fancy for the ladies I remained at home.

About the latter part of March, I think we were notified to prepare for a trip to Camp Chase. We left Somerset in company with about one hundred Yankees who were returning to their commands, on the 4th of April. The entire body was under charge of Dr. Boyle, a very gentlemanly officer, and who seemed to prefer the society of the Rebs to the Yankees. He treated us throughout the trip with uniform kindness and courtesy. We traveled on foot and in the wagons which were with us, about seventy miles to Nicholasville, where we took passage on the cars for Cincinnati. We reached Cincinnati during the night and were taken to the fourth St. Hospital, a most comfortable place, where we remained until next morning at eleven o'clock. Our paroles were then taken from us and we were sent under guard to Columbus. Some of our party were very indignant at this but it was no use to resist the "powers that be."

We reached Columbus at twelve that night and were immediately sent in omnibuses to Camp Chase, distant about four miles. We were sent into the prison to our respective messes, and told to make ourselves at home. Myself and four others had much difficulty in arousing our mess mates. They were lazy, sleepy fellows, who had no sympathy with misfortune. After we had awakened them they tried to entertain us some time before they would get up, with most marvelous accounts of the number and size of the lice and vermin of all kinds abounding in the prisons. This was sickening to us, as we were just being initiated, but to them it seemed to afford infinite amusement.

The next morning I was fortunate enough to get into Mess No. 36 with some former acquaintances, who had left Somerset before I had. I was received with a hearty welcome and soon felt better satisfied than I had before supposed possible. I soon received letters from home and was supplied with clothing, money &c.

We had some very cold weather after I came here, but as we were well supplied with wood and stoves we did not suffer. Provisions and clothing were plentiful and but for the consciousness that we were prisoners, we might have been very contented. The sentinels posted around the walls were generally polite, but some times a dirty blackguard, inspired by the thought of killing a rebel, would fire through the prison. No one was hurt in our prison, but in the other prisons, there were three casualties occurred. One man lost his life and others, limbs.

Considering all things we were very well treated, and could have no just cause for complaint.

May, June and July 1862.

The interior of our mess would have presented a strange sight to a stranger. Its dimensions were 15 feet by 13 and in these narrow limits eighteen men had to live, for the weather was too disagreeable to remain out doors long. We did most of our own washing and all of our cooking. Our time was employed in different ways, reading, writing, card playing, making trinkets, mending old clothes and a variety of other occupations, made up our amusements. One or two revivals of religion occurred, and a good many were converted. Several of my own mess professed religion, and I had come to the determination to become an "inquirer" myself when the

revival ceased through want of a leader. One of our mess, Pink Martin a young man of most remarkable moral courage now commenced "family prayers" in the mess and kept them up till our departure.

Some of Morgan's men were brought here about this time, also the officers from Island ten, who caused quite a sensation in our prison. Anything to relieve monotony was welcomed.

There were some fine musicians in prison and many hours that would have hung heavily upon our hands, passed rapidly away when listening to the songs of Dixie. Dr. Becker a noted violinist from Nashville was here for a short time.

In May, Col. Battle, our grey headed leader was brought a prison[er] from the battle of Shiloh, with several members of the regiment. All had been severely wounded; one, so badly, in the head that his recovery seemed almost miraculous. He was shot through the head, just below the eye.

August 1862.

As well as I can remember on the 10th of this month we were ordered to leave Camp Chase for exchange, at Vicksburg. Rumors had been prevalent in the prison for some time, but nothing definite was learned until the evening of the 9th when a big sergeant came into the prison and mounting a barrel, in a stentorian voice gave orders to prepare three days rations, and be ready to leave at midnight. Never were orders obeyed with more alacrity, and long before the appointed time every one was ready and waiting. Of our mess, No. 36, the following members went out, Pink Hughs, Pink Martin and brother, Abbey Hill, Jas. L. Cooper, Wm. Vady, Tennesseans; Dolph Pearson, Charley Taylor.

Two of our mess Dr. Nunnally and Mr. Tribble being citizens we had to leave behind. One, Dr. Benfort was left by an error in the rolls.

Every thing looked peculiarly green and fresh to me, as we left that place of confinement for so long a time. The birds seemed to sing a gayer note, and every object looked altogether more attractive from force of contrast. We had to walk about two miles to the railroad, but all looked sorry when we reached the place. There was much to look at and admire in that walk to men who had not been outside of a wall in ten months, some longer.

We passed around Cincinnati that evening about sun set, and next day reached Cairo, where we were to take boat passage for Vicksburg. Here we were joined by thousands of other prisoners from different places, until five transports were thoroughly packed. The one we were on, I have forgotten the name, had twelve hundred on her. At night when all laid down, there was not a foot of spare room.

All being ready we started down the Mississippi high in hopes of soon seeing Dixie. Alas, how many of those gallant men whose hearts beat fast with the thoughts of seeing home and friends once more, but found graves in that Dixie. Of the five Tennesseans from our mess, two found their last resting places in the South.

We were conveyed by the gun boat Essex, which caused us much delay by sticking on sand bars. We received a hearty welcome from the citizens of Memphis, where the guards had to keep the ladies off the boat. With no inci-

dents, except seeing a corpse in the river occasionally we steamed slowly towards Vicksburg, which place we reached about eight days after our departure from Camp Chase. Here we bid adieu to Uncle Sam, and once more took up our abode with the boys in Grey.

We left Vicksburg the morning after our arrival there and proceeded to Jackson, where I heard the regiment was encamped. I had scarcely left the cars when I met several members of my old company, and soon learned all the changes that had taken place in my absence. I spent one night with the regiment and then joined the "prisoners," who were encamped near the city. The day following the regiment started to Holly Springs, and in a few hours the returned prisoners of the division, Breckenridge's, left for the same place. We found them sixteen miles north of Holly Springs, and here I drew a gun, this time an Enfield Rifle, and was again a Confederate Soldier.

I found the chief amusement now in the army was gambling; playing "keno" was the most fashionable game, and in every direction you might see a crowd of dirty soldiers, gathered around a "keno box."

September 1862

About the first of this month our division, Breckenridge's was ordered from its camps at near Grand Junction, to Tennessee. With much enthusiasm did we obey the order. We had a dull trip to Mobile, the railroad was in such a terrible condition, but no murmuring was heard; all were overjoyed at the idea of going to Tennessee. When we left Mobile it was late in the evening and by the time we reached Tensas Station it was quite dark. Here we had quite an adventure with a train loaded with sutler stores &c. It so happened when we at last started several boxes of tobacco and other articles were found on the train. No questions were asked. In our car we found a box sent by some fond "Ma" to her soldier boy. It contained lots of nice things which were duly confiscated.

We proceeded onward for several days, passing through Montgomery and Atlanta, and finally eight days from the commencement of our trip, reached Knoxville, Tennessee. From this point we expected to march into Kentucky, but were disappointed. Gen. Breckenridge, with the Ky. brigade started and we were ordered to Murfreesboro. We started with high hopes of soon seeing home, and of getting good clothes and something to eat. We crossed the Tennessee river in flats at Bridgeport, with great trouble with our baggage. slept two nights on the cars and arrived at Murfreesboro before day one cold morning, that I shall never forget. Wagons were scarce and we had to transport baggage to camps on our backs, which was no light work, for the distance was more than a mile.

Every thing looked homelike in this country. We had been so long in the swamps of Mississippi that anything else would have been a relief, but this was peculiarly pleasant.

October 1862.

We had been in camp only a few days when Ma, and Kittie Robinson* came after me. I succeeded in getting a leave for four days, and started

with them. I used this furlough about five weeks, instead of four days.

We left Murfreesboro about three o'clock one very chilly evening, in Kittie's barouche, for her home. We got as far as Trinne that night, and stayed at Mrs. Bosticks; next day we continued our journey and arrived safely at Kittie's before dark. Here for a time I almost forgot there was a war, in my intense delight of rest and fine living. In a short while I was aroused to the knowledge of my condition by finding that I had the itch; this disagreeable disease was contracted somewhere on the trip from Camp Chase. After two weeks doctoring I succeeded in curing the itch, and from that till my departure to the regiment, enjoyed myself hugely in riding about, hunting, fishing and such amusement, with Wm. R.^o, Bob Hulme, and several others.

We were roused from sleep several times, by the announcement of the approach of Yankees, and sometimes forced to ride all day about through the woods and bottoms hiding from them. There was no confederate force between us and Nashville, and the Yankees being rather straightened in the provender line, came out for something to eat.

I spent several days over my leave here, in getting well of the itch and other filth. It seemed terrible then to have the itch and to be lousy, but I became accustomed to it before the war ended, and considered them quite improving to a gentleman. It gave him employment.

November 1862.

Before the middle of this month I had bidden farewell to my relatives, a long one it was destined to be, and returned to my regiment. I was well received by the mess as I brought quite a supply of provender. Our mess at that time, numbered four men, John Savage, Jas. Stevens, M. F. Smith and myself. They were fine fellows to live with; all having an eye to business which means they were ready to pick up any little thing they saw lying about for the mess; and not being very particular as to the owner, they kept us supplied.

When I returned to the regiment they were encamped at Stewart's Creek eight miles from Murfreesboro, on the Nashville road. We were put here as an advance guard; Brag's [*sic*] army had by this time reached Murfreesboro, on their retreat from Kentucky. As might have been expected we were kept pretty busy, watching the Yankee raiding parties. On one occasion they came out from Nashville, driving our cavalry back, and burned Lavergne, about four files from our camp. Our regiment was hurried down but arrived too late to be of any service. We succeeded [*sic*] in extinguishing some of the burning houses, but the greater part of the village was completely destroyed.

We had some intervals of rest, and had a pretty lively time generally. We had one pretty deep snow, this month, and had quite a snow ball battle with our neighbors, the 45th Tenn. We also had a huge rabbit hunt, in which we were very successful; capturing scores.

About the latter part of this month we were relieved from picket duty by other troops and ordered back to camp at Murfreesboro.

* William Robinson.

December 1862.

During the first of this month we remained in camp, west of Murfreesboro with nothing to disturb the monotony of camp life, but occasional drills and reviews. Christmas came and passed with the usual scenes of drunkenness and fighting, &c. About this time we were put into a brigade composed of the 60th North Carolina, the 1st, 4th, and 3rd Florida, and commanded by Gen. Preston, of Kentucky. The first time we were brought together was to witness a military execution, a day or two after Christmas. A deserter from the 60th N. C. was shot by men detailed from the different regiments in the brigade. It was a fearful scene, to a novice [novice?] and made an indelible impression upon my memory. I also saw a man hung on the same day.

All this day the rain poured down in torrents, and as night approached the dark gloomy clouds seemed to hover over our camp as portents of the dark scenes through which we were soon to pass. It was such an evening as would make one at home draw closer to the fire and give himself up to the enjoyment of home, thankful if no duty called him abroad. But alas for the poor soldier. About four o'clock a courier came galloping up with orders to cook rations, and prepare for action. We had been in some measure prepared for this, for all that day we had heard the heavy discharges of artillery in the direction of our outposts, and knew the enemy were approaching; the intelligence was none the less disagreeable on that account however. We went to work, and as one of our "inimitables" had just stolen a rooster, we so had every thing in readiness.

About dark, Hardee's Corps being pressed back from their position near Eagleville, came in and went into camp near us. We expected a summons to move that night but were agreeably disappointed [*sic*]. Next morning we tore down our tents, loaded the wagons, and started out to take our position. We marched through Murfreesboro to music, with colors flying, and every one full of enthusiasm and "fight." Our brigade was the right of the division, Breckenridge's, and as this was the right division, we formed the extreme right of the army.

Tuesday night found us in position of the South Bank of Stone's river. We constituted the reserve division, and had been attached, to Hardee's Corps. The enemy had formed in front of our line on the left, and north of the river and considerable skirmishing ensued. Wednesday morning 31st, the left of our army attacked the enemy before light. We had quite the advantage at first and drove them back in confusion. Our division was two miles from the fighting so for some time we had the pleasant post of listeners. There was a very high wind that morning, and all we could hear of the small arms was a rushing noise, I can compare it to nothing else. The incessant din of artillery, however, which continued from daylight till dark, could have been heard almost anywhere in that country.

About twelve o'clock the enemy succeeded in checking the hitherto irresistible progress of our troops, and the reserve was ordered into action. We marched quickly to the ford in the river, and with shouts of enthusiasm crossed and formed into line. Excited as I was, I look[ed] around and thought "what an awfully sublime scene."

Wounded men were coming in a stream, dead were lying all around, and on every living face was seen the impress of an excitement which has no

equal here on earth. All around us the smoke of battle had settled down, rent aside every moment by the thunder of artillery. To the left the battle still raged furiously, and ever and anon there would rise about every sound, the swelling shout of men rushing to the bloody charge. But the finest sight of all was our division ranged in order of battle, waiting the command forward. We were formed across a high hill in perfectly open ground, so that every regiment could be seen. Our regiment formed the extreme right, resting on the river.

About the time we started forward the firing had almost ceased, and a most unearthly silence prevailed. We moved forward slowly at first, Preston's brigade leading. When we had advanced two hundred yards, the sharp shooters commenced popping away, killing and wounding numbers of our men. Our walk then quickened into a run, and the whole line dashed forward with a shout. We were a little confused at a Brick house on the road, but soon got around it and swept forward in gallant style. The firing had by this time changed into a regular roar both of artillery and small arms, and as we rose on a little hill was so heavy that the line was ordered to lie down. We lay here close to the ground in an old cotton patch for a few moments when hearing a loud cursing from our men directly, I looked around to learn the cause. I saw the cowardly North Carolina regiment who were to support us running for dear life, every mother's son of them. This did not discourage our brave boys, but with a regular old Tennessee yell, we rose to our feet and started for the Yanks. Those in our front did not wait very long, but "tuck the back track," leaving us about thirty prisoners, and numbers of wounded. A large proportion of our men had been wounded by this time for they were falling every step. We did not have more than one hundred and fifty left and we had done all men could do and had to fall back, carrying our prisoners however. It was here that I captured my first prisoners. We retired leisurely about a quarter of a mile where we found the rest of the brigade. Here was a scene of great confusion, and had not the enemy been too neatly whipped himself, he could have annihilated our army. As it was he was content to be let alone. Bragg and Rosecrans were pretty much in the same condition on the night of the 31st. Dec.

We lost some good men from Co. C. that day. One little incident is worth narrating. At the battle before this at Fishing Creek, I was in the rear rank and my file leader, Tom Brown was shot exactly in the center of his throat, making a bad wound from which, however, he recovered; at this battle Murfreesboro, I was in the front rank and my rear rank man, Geo. Jones was shot in precisely the same place as Brown, from which he died instantly, the ball having cut some large artery.

By this time both parties seemed willing to quit fighting for the day, and silence settled down over that bloody field.

After dark we were moved to the right, passing over many dead bodies, and in the darkness stepping on them before we knew it. When we had marched nearly a mile we formed into line, stacked arms, and were told to go to sleep.

We lay down, but for a time, sleep was impossible to men who had passed through such dreadful scenes that day, and expected a renewal of them tomorrow. Thoughts of home would creep in, and many a fervent prayer was

breathed that night by lips, more accustomed to oaths than supplication. Many had gone to eternity that day, all unprepared.

January 1863.

The morning of the first day in the new year dawned upon us and found us in position about the center of the army. The preceding night had been cold, and numbers of the wounded had perished, from the combined effects of their wounds and the cold. I had been detailed "on the Infirmary corps," and was busily occupied all the morning bringing in the wounded, both Confederate and Federal. I walked over part of the battle field of yesterday, and saw some terrible sights. In one place two brothers were lying, both killed by the same shell.

Contrary to our expectation there was no fighting this day, but some very lively skirmishing; during which we were very much exposed to the shells which flew in every direction. We occupied our position in front of the lines until night when we were ordered back into the rear.

We then built up fires and lay down for another nights rest, thankful for having been kept from death that day at least.

The next day, the enemy's left effected a crossing on Stone's river opposite our extreme right and Gen. Bragg determined to attack them in position. He ordered Gen. Breckenridge with his division to make the attack. We were hurried back across the river and thrown into line, our regiment being the right regiment of the army with the exception of some cavalry. No sooner had we reached our place, than the roar of four pieces of artillery gave the signal, forward. The sharp shooters had been cracking away pretty briskly in our front, and we had only gone a short distance when their line was discovered, reaching away to the right of us, and outflanking us. This was more than we expected, but the line moved steadily on looking only to their front. As we entered an open stubble field, several hundred yards wide, the enemy being in the woods on the other side, the whole line both artillery and small arms, opened upon us with a deafening roar, and the groans of men on all sides told how true was their aim. Our men replied and the battle had commenced in earnest. After firing at long range for a while our whole line dashed forward with a gallantry which was irresistible, and swept the Yankees from their position, taking numbers of prisoners. They rushed pell mell to the river, and here sheltered by the bank, and aided by fresh troops, and massed artillery from the other side, made a successful stand. Our troops were scattered in the ardor of pursuit and not expecting such resistance were thrown into some confusion and fell back in disorder. The lines were reformed in the place where the fight commenced and then we had time to count our number.

In this bloody fight of not more than an hour's duration Breckenridge's division had lost more than a thousand men.

We spent the greater part of that night, it was dark when the fighting ceased, in marching about and in standing picket. To add to our discomforts a cold rain was falling, which put an end to all hope of sleep. The next morning to put up breastworks, and awaited an attack. Towards night it was whispered about that we would evacuate Murfreesboro: and about two hours before day, the retreat commenced. We struggled through

the mud till we reached Murfreesboro, and started out on the Wartace road. When day dawned we were several miles from the Yankees, but they were very willing to let us alone.

Friday, Jan. 2, 1863.

They were about as badly whipped as we were. We stopped to rest about dinner time and here, I washed my face and hands for the first time in five days; as may be well imagined I felt somewhat refreshed.

The loss from our regiment in this battle was one hundred and fifty out of about three hundred; the names of killed from our company were G. S. Jones and George Watson. Six or seven were wounded, some of them pretty badly.

We marched to Alisionia [Allisona], and rested for a day or two and then went to Tullahoma.

Our brigade commander acted very gallantly in this battle, winning good opinions from every one. When one of the Florida regiments seemed wavering in the first days fight, he seized their battle flag and dashing to the front, so animated them by his example that they rallied and drove the Yankees from their position.

We were no sooner in camp, than the wickedness and depravity of the soldiers, began to show itself in a thousand ways. Card playing, gambling, cock fighting and drunkenness were every day amusements.

The three "invincible" of my mess lead [led] the van, and sometimes I thought I would have to quit the mess, but after a while it became more endurable.

We were encamped in a low, muddy place, very distant from wood, and the weather was bitter cold, so we did not enjoy ourselves much. On the whole it was about as disagreeable a month as I passed the whole time I was in the army. I look back now, and wonder how I ever endured it.

February, March and April 1863.

During these three months we remained near Tullahoma. We were kept busy when the weather would admit fortifying, drilling and reviewing. We formed a complete semicircle of breastworks and redoubts around the place, which we were destined never to use. There was some terrible weather, but as we had moved to a better camp and had built chimneys to our tents we did not suffer from it as much as we had before. Rations were pretty scant, but by stealing and foraging around a little we managed to keep enough on hand to sustain life.

One of my mess, had been captured at Murfreesboro, and had been replaced by Geo. Davis, his equal in meanness but not so good a mess-mate. He was no more honest than Smith, but he was too lazy to steal; and consequently, we felt Smith's loss. He was decidedly the best rogue in the mess. Geo. Davis in addition to his many faults, got very sick while the other two members of the mess were out at Hurricane Creek, on a bender. I had to nurse him, and as the surgeons of the regiment had just received a barrel of whiskey, and were of course, drunk all the time, the poor fellow came very near dying.

There were some splendid reviews near this place, and at one of them we were presented with the celebrated flag, by Mrs. Breckenridge, wife of our Gen.

We were still in Preston's brigade, Breckenridge's division, and Hardee's corps. Gen. Hardee drilled us twice at this place, and complimented the regiment very highly upon their proficiency.

May and June 1863.

In May, we took up the line of march down the railroad in the direction of Wartrace. We felt very much elated at leaving the miserable country around Tullahoma, and going to a place we had heard so much of. After moving around a good deal we encamped about four miles from Wartrace, on the east side. While here we enjoyed ourselves finely. We had nothing to do, and provisions of every kind were plentiful. What more could a soldier want? A fine stream ran near our camp, and from it we caught fine fish, which were quite a rarity. We were camped next to the North Carolinians who had treated us so badly at Murfreesboro and the boys made it a point of honor to steal everything from them they could lay their hands upon. Our mess as usual came in for a share of the plunder.

While here Gen. Breckenridge and Preston, both left us, the former going to Mississippi; the latter to Mexico, on some mission. The departure of Gen. Breckenridge caused quite a scene in our regiment as the men were devotedly attached to him. When he came to bid us farewell, he could not trust his voice to speak more than half dozen words; but wheeling his horse galloped off, and was soon out of sight.

We were now transferred to Bate's brigade, H. B. Stewart's division, Hardee's Corps. The brigade was composed of the 20th Tenn., Col. T. Smith, 30th and 15th Tenn., Col. Tyler, 37th Geo., Col. Joe Smith, 4th Geo., Sharpshooters. Maj. Caswell, and the Eufaula light artillery.

The corps was composed of Johnston's and Stuart's divisions.

A number of troops had about this time, been sent to Mississippi, to Joe Johnston's army, so our force was reduced very much. As soon as the enemy heard that part of our force had been sent off they made preparations for the long delayed advance.

Hoovers Gap, Wednesday June 24th, 1863.

On Tuesday June 23rd we had an inspection by Maj. Clare, Gen. Bragg's staff. During the inspection the roar of cannon was heard in our front, and we began to think we would have some fighting to do soon. The next day, Wednesday the 24th, about two o'clock a courier came galloping up pale with fright and excitement, and announced the enemy in two miles of our camp. The drum beat the long roll immediately and in a very short time our regiment and the Georgia sharpshooters were on the march to the threatened point. The other regiments were to follow as soon as ready. The Yanks had run over our cavalry, and came very near surprising us. When we had marched a mile and a half a stray cavalryman announced them in sight. The regiment was instantly thrown into column by companies, skirmishers thrown out, and double-quickened forward. In a minute or two we saw their cavalry videttes coming at a gallop. Our skirmishers fired on them, and

they did not wait for a second volley but turned and fled. The regiment was marched onwards a short distance and thrown into position to support a section of artillery which had come up. We were placed immediately in front of it and sheltered by a little hill. The Yankee line was now in view and they soon replied to our battery. Our position was very exposed to their shell, and three of our men were killed at the same time. To add to our discomfort it had commenced to rain and we were almost overflowed.

After remaining here for half an hour, the Yankees attempted to flank us on our left, and we were moved to meet them. They had got possession of a hill, covered with large trees, from which Gen. Bate determined to drive them, if possible. He therefore ordered our regiment to make the attempt. We formed in the edge of the woods and advanced up the hill.

The undergrowth was very thick and we were unable to see the Yankees until we came within thirty yards of them. Their first line was driven back in great disorder, but the woods were full of them. Here I think I killed my first yankee, and maybe my last one. We ran against a line of Yanks that was too strong for us and falling back, in no confusion, but with considerable swiftness, was then the order. We retired a quarter of a mile, and reformed but no advance was made. We marched about through the mud that night until every bone in my body had a thousand aches, but still, no rest. The next day we were on picket, the enemy not advancing any on our part of the line. Friday evening the whole line advanced, and considerable skirmishing and artillery firing ensued. The night was spent expecting an attack, which did not come. A drove of loose colts created considerable excitement with the pickets, but no one was hurt. Saturday morning the whole army started back to Tullahoma, which point we reached that evening very much fatigued. Sunday the everlasting Yanks had us out again; this day Gen. Starnes was brought in, by us, mortally wounded.

In the bloody little fight at Hoover's Gap we had sixty two men killed and wounded out of one hundred and fifty in action. From our company James T. Callender was killed.

Numbers of our men, were scattered around through the country, not expecting this fight, some of them were captured and others did not get in for weeks.

July and August 1863.

About the first day of July we commenced our retreat from Middle Tennessee. We evacuated Tullahoma in the night, burning what stores we could not remove. The next morning we crossed Elk river and waited until the enemy came up. Our brigade was left here as a rear guard until the army got some distance in advance. There was some pretty sharp cannonading, and some of the cavalry were killed. When we left this river we hurried rapidly on, and overtook the command on the mountain. We descended the mountain near Jasper, Marion County, and crossed the Tennessee river below Look Out Point, here we went into camp to recruit our strength after the long, fatiguing march.

After remaining here about a week we were loaded on the cars, and taken through Chattanooga to Tyners Station on the Chattanooga and Knoxville Railroad, fifteen miles from Chattanooga.

At Tyners Station we went into camp for the summer. While at this place, the army was drilled and disciplined, until it was again in fighting order and ready for the enemy.

We were troubled here by several things. The rations were scanty and bad, the wood was hard to get, flies and lice equal to those of Egypt abounded, and the weather was exceedingly hot.

Near the last of August, the enemy commenced shelling Chattanooga, and his movements showed a determination to attempt the passage of the river. Our command was put in motion and marched down the river, to some ferry. Here our cute doctors detected a man in the act of playing sick, and exposed him. This was quite a remarkable case.

About the last of the month we were ordered to Knoxville and got as far as Loudon. Here we were ordered back to the main army.

September 1863.

The first of this month we were ordered back to Chattanooga. At Loudon we met Buckner's command retreating from Knoxville which had been occupied by the enemy. At Loudon by accident, what was called "sick flour," was issued to the troops, and such a "calling on York" was never seen before.

We went as far as Charleston by rail and here left the cars, and started on foot. While at Charleston an election for third Lieut. took place in which I was defeated. I was then promoted to first Sergeant. After some hard nights marching, we crossed the Chattanooga railroad at Ooltawa [Ooltawah] and proceeded to the first station above Ringold on the Western and Atlantic road here we learned that the army had evacuated Chattanooga.

Next morning we went to Lafayette, about twenty miles from Chattanooga, and now occurred one of the most exciting campaigns of the war. Gen. Rosecrans, who commanded the Yankees was very careless, and several times only escaped destruction by the neglect of our generals. On one occasion at some cave in the mountain, our brigade and division were in advance, and had some pretty sharp skirmishing. They escaped this time on account of Gen. Hindman's incompetency. On the 16th of this month we commenced our preparations for the long looked for battle, which was to decide this campaign. On the 17th we left Lafayette where we had been encamped for several days, and marched towards Chattanooga. We marched slowly and on the 18th late in the evening came up with the Yankee's advance near Chicamauga River. When the firing commenced our regiment was in rear of the ordnance train, and had to double-quick about half a mile in dust shoe deep to regain our position in line. We were exposed

Saturday, September 19, 1863

to artillery that evening, and two men in the brigade were killed. Night put an end to the fight and we lay down to dream of tomorrow, and the terrible struggle we knew it would bring.

On the morning of the 19th, Saturday, we were put in motion about sun rise, and both armies made preparation for the day. The day was bright and beautiful, and the world never seemed half so attractive before, now that there was a good chance for leaving it soon. Every thing was quiet until

about eight or nine o'clock when light skirmishing began on our right. It was tolerably light for half an hour when the battle commenced in earnest, and from that time till dark there was a continual roar of small arms and artillery that made the very leaves on the trees quiver. I never heard such a crashing of small arms before, and hope I never will again. Our division, Stuarts was moved to the right by slow degrees, so that by midday we were directly in rear of the heaviest firing. Our Corps (Buckner's) had been engaged some time when our division was ordered into action. We were sent in by brigades, and two brigades, Clayton's and Brown's had preceded us. We saw them both repulsed, and moving to the front, were soon under a very heavy fire. We pressed steadily forward unchecked by the murderous discharges, of their small howitzers, loaded with cannister and grape, and drove the first line from their position. Here occurred the prettiest fighting during the whole war. We rushed up on a little hill, and the enemy were just below us, all crowded together in a deep hollow. Our rifles were in prime condition and our ammunition so good that I really enjoyed the fight. The enemy's reserve was soon brought up and then we had hard work to hold our position. Finally near dark we were driven back some distance, when night put an end to the conflict.

We slept on our arms that night prepared to renew the battle at early dawn. Nothing decisive had been done but the enemy were very much alarmed. We had captured a good many guns from him, and driven him from several strong positions. All night long the Yankees were busy arranging their lines, and the clatter of thousands of axes, fortifying, and the rolling of artillery to positions told us that tomorrow would be a bloody day. Numbers of wounded had been left between the lines, and their cries for help were heart-rending.

Sunday, September 20th, 1863.

Just at day break we sprang to our feet, and prepared for the expected attack. It did not come however, for the Yankees had had enough of us on the preceding day. Everything was so quiet this beautiful Sabbath morning, that for several hours we all thought there would be no fighting. About nine o'clock the terrible slaughter commenced again and from that time until dark our ears were deafened by such a noise and confusion as seldom falls to the lot of man to hear. At sun set, in despite of the most determined opposition we had driven them back at every point and they were in full retreat for Chattanooga. Then every one seemed wild with joy, from Generals down to privates, all joined in the exultant cheers that rang over that blood stained field, telling in tones as loud as "heaven's artillery," that we were victorious. Wild shouts ran from one end of our lines to the other and even the poor wounded fellows lying about through the woods joining in.

Provisions were brought up and as soon as our excitement had subsided we lay down to obtain that much needed rest, expecting ere the night was over, to start in pursuit of the retreating Yankees. We were too tired to heed the dead bodies lying all around us, so close we could almost touch them with our hands.

Contrary to the expectations and desire of every one, we remained on the battlefield all day Monday. We spent the greater part of the day in rambling about over the battlefield. The ground was thickly covered with brush and fallen limbs, which were very dry. The batteries had in many places fired this and some of the wounded men, unable to get out of reach of the flames, perished miserably in the fire. I saw numbers of the dead who were so burned and charred by fire as to resemble old logs, more than human beings.

Our dead were all buried during the day, but the greater part of the Yankees were left where they fell.

I had been in great danger several times during the battle. Men were shot down all around me, but I was not touched. My right hand man received two bullets before he could get away from his first wound.

On the 19th we were exposed to a very heavy fire of artillery, for two or more hours. We were lying down in the grass, and numbers of the men actually went to sleep, while the shells were bursting all around them.

Our brigade was small at this time, numbering a thousand muskets: out of this we lost over six hundred. In my regiment the loss was ninety-eight out of one hundred and sixty-two.

We moved quietly down to Chattanooga, and forming our lines around the place, fortified and went into camp. Our lines extended from Lookout Mountain to Chicamauga River, and had a fine position.

October, 1863

We were almost starved during this month. The rations were very scant at best, and then sometimes the railroad would not come up to time. Then it was dreadful. One occasion I well remember, when for three days, in place of our meat ration of three quarters of a pound of beef, or one sixth of a pound of bacon, we drew one spoonful of sugar daily. We were constrained to add to our allowance by "charging sutless" and eating corn, beef guts, and all other kind of trash that came in our way.

Our picket line was very near the enemy, and after a time an agreement was made to quit firing at each other, and after that it was easy work, standing guard. Quite an exchange of papers, tobacco and coffee was kept up until orders from headquarters put an end to it.

With the exception of an occasional shell we were exposed to very little danger during this month and had rations been more plentiful we could have had a right easy time. My mess had again been changed; they were now W. & J. Barnes, J. Stephens and myself.

We were moved about so often that we did not have much chance for making ourselves comfortable, but by the aid of big fires we managed to keep from freezing. Part of this month the rain descended incessantly and the weather was about as bad as could be. The army continued in excellent health and spirits, notwithstanding the many trials of both, we were subjected to, and waited for the enemy to be starved out of Chattanooga, giving him an occasional shelling by way of reminder. How we were disappointed will soon be shown.

Monday, November 25th, 1863.

Gen. Longstreet's corps was sent to Knoxville about the first of this month. Other troops were also sent off, and added to the short rations, bad weather, and the inactive life we had been living for two months, and it will be seen that we were in poor plight for an active campaign.

On the morning of the 24th, the enemy's long lines were discovered along the outside of their fortifications. We at once knew that their expected movement had been commenced, and at three o'clock the sharp rattle of musketry was heard on our right where our skirmishes were attacked. Our regiment was moved to the extreme right where we were exposed to a pretty sharp artillery fire, and one of our company, James Mitchell, was killed. He was buried that night, under circumstances which called forth a repetition [recitation?] from one of the company, of the poem, the burial of Sir John Moore, Poor fellow, their relative positions were considerably different.

At night we moved back to our former position and spent the night in cooking rations, and carrying our baggage up the steep Ridge behind us. Morning found our army in position on the top of Mission Ridge; all the troops, but skirmishers, having been withdrawn from the valley, below. The enemy maneuvered about all the morning, and it was not until after mid-day that any general advance was made. Every movement in the plains, below, was visible to us, and a sublime scene was presented to our view, when the massive columns began their onward march. In front of the foot of the ridge was a field of half a mile in width, and as they entered this, our artillery, with one simultaneous peal, began the work of death. The Yankees crossed the field and pressed forward up the Ridge. In front of our division they were easily repulsed, but our lines were broken both on the right and left of us and the enemy, forming at right angles to our fortifications, swept everything before him. Our brigade, commanded by Col. Tyler, fought nobly, and when the retreat commenced, marched leisurely, and in good order, to the rear. We were the only command of the whole left wing which was unbroken. Gen. Bragg, in his official report, said, "that the army was saved was owing to Bate's small but gallant brigade." Gen. Bate was soon after made a Division General.

I was marching slowly away from the top of the Ridge, and had just fired my gun at the Yankees, when I felt a sensation, as if someone had struck me with a board. I knew that I had been shot, and after an examination, started from the field. I crossed the Chicamauga River, and made my way to the railroad, hoping to get on the cars. At the station I learned that the cars would not come up, and in company with many other wounded men, I started down towards Dalton. I marched all night and reached Ringold before day. That day I started off again, and next day arrived at Dalton, twenty-five miles from Mission Ridge. I was completely broken down, and my wound was becoming quite painful. I got on the cars here and started, on top, in a cold rain, for Marietta. I went to the hospital here, but was carried next day to Uncle J.* where I was doomed to undergo much suffering.

* Jessie Thomas, U. S. Collector of Internal Revenue in Nashville at the beginning of the war.

I was very kindly treated by Dr. Setts, who was a practicing physician in that place, and wanted for nothing which could be supplied by friends and relatives. Uncle Ike's[†] and J's families were living together, and the house was small and pretty full. G. S.* was also there wounded.

I felt very much fatigued for a short time but soon recovered from that, and imagined I would be well directly, but I was slightly disappointed.

December 1863, January 1864, Feb.

My wounds gave me a great deal of trouble during the month of December and it was not until Christmas that I commenced improving. I had quite a rest from soldier life, but it was too painful to be pleasant. In January, after I was able to go about, I enjoyed myself very much. Uncle J. [Jessie Thomas] & I's families were living then at opposite ends of the village, and I spent my time in visiting from one to another. I was under lasting obligations to Dr. Dupre, for his kind attention. In fact he, I believe, saved my life. I was also very kindly treated by Mr. Morgan and his family.

The first of February, having sufficiently recovered to be sent back to the army, I rejoined my regiment at Dalton. I found them encamped upon a high hill one mile north of the place. My mess were very comfortably settled in a little doghouse of a place, about ten by six feet in extent. The prospect was not very cheering, and as the surgeon told me I was unfit for duty, I got another furlough, and went rejoicing back to Marietta. I intended to go to Pickensville, Alabama, but as there was danger from the Yanks, I determined not to go.

About the last of February, several divisions of the army were started to Mississippi to meet a movement in that direction; an advance in front of Dalton necessitated their recall, however, just as the advance reached Mont. [Montgomery], Ala. The movement on Dalton was only a feint and after a few days skirmishing, the Yankees went back to Chattanooga. Our loss was trifling. I had gone to Hogansville when this movement commenced, and I started back to my command, but only reached Atlanta when I heard the news of the retreat. I very willingly deferred my return to the army until the expiration of my furlough.

March and April, 1864

I procured a furlough for a few days in March and went back to Marietta. After this I made up my mind to stay with the army until I either received another wound or was sick. Our camp life was varied by different amusements. For the religiously inclined, there was a considerable revival of religion in the brigade to attract their attention; others, not so pious, could attend the cock fights, and could also take a hand at poker or seven up. I am afraid those of a pious turn of mind were decidedly in the minority.

The men of our army took up ball playing here, as an amusement. Breaking down the stocks also became quite fashionable, and many laughable incidents occurred. During the winter we had much sport in snowballing, an unusually heavy fall of snow happening.

[†] Isaac Litton, also referred to as Uncle I.

* George S. Litton?

During the winter Gen. Joe Johnston, had superseded Gen. Bragg in command of the army, and as part of his strategy consisted in feeding his men well, we were living upon the fat of the land, which was poor enough. The contrast to our previous diet was so marked, that we imagined we were doing finely. Gen. Johnston gave universal satisfaction, and a marked change was soon perceptible in the army. He infused a portion of his active spirit into his subordinate officers, and the consequence was that we were better clothed, and better provided for in every way than we had been for a year before.

The approach of warm weather told us that our work for the summer would soon commence, but I do not think anyone had a thought that the task would prove so long and bloody. Near the latter part of April everything was made ready for action, and every day we listened for the sound of cannon at our outposts.

May 1864. Saturday May 14th, 1864.

We were kept in constant excitement during the first week of this month, and about the 8th were marched out in earnest. The enemy had driven in our advance, and were in position at Tunnel Hill when we formed our lines at Rocky Face Ridge. They soon came up in our front and brisk skirmishing commenced. We had excellent works, and were comparatively safe. We remained here several days in full view of each other, and being on an elevated position had a fine view of the fighting between the pickets. One little fight which took place after nightfall was particularly noticed. I escaped death or mutilation for life, while here, only by a hair's breadth. A fragment of shell would certainly have struck me but for a circumstance which I must consider providential. On the night of the 12th our troops evacuated Dalton and marched to Resaca. During the night of the 13th we worked at the fortification, and on the 14th, about 12 o'clock the enemy advanced in force, and began a heavy attack. We repulsed several assaults, and about three o'clock we were sitting behind our rail piles waiting for another charge. At this time I was shot by a sharpshooter who had crawled within a short distance from the works. I was sitting down, closely wedged in by my companions on every side, for the position was very exposed, when all at once I felt a terrible shock and with a sinking consciousness of dying, became insensible. In an instant I recovered my senses, and found myself with my head fallen forward on my breast, and without power to move a muscle.^{*} I could hear the blood from my wound pattering on the ground, and thinking I was dying, almost thought I saw eternity opening before me. I felt so weak, so powerless, that I did not know whether I was dead or not. The noise of the battle seemed miles away, and my thoughts were all pent up in my own breast. My system was paralyzed, but my mind was terribly active. My head was full of a buzzing din, and the sound of that blood falling on the ground seemed louder than a cataract. I finally recovered the use of my tongue and still thinking I was dying, told the boys that it was no use to do anything for me, that I was a dead man. All this time

^{*} A minie ball struck Cooper in the middle of the throat, passing through and emerging on the back right-hand side of the neck, miraculously missing the spinal cord and jugular vein.

I could hear remarks around me, which, although very complimentary, were not at all consoling. When first shot one man exclaimed, "By God, they killed a good one that time," another "My God! Cooper's killed," and several other equal to these. Finally Capt. Lucas directed the man directly behind me, J. Gee, of Co. D to catch hold of the wound and try to stop the blood. To my surprise he succeeded, and in half an hour, or less time, I had sufficiently recovered my strength to start to the rear. I walked half a mile through perfect showers of balls, and reached the ambulance perfectly exhausted. I was taken to the hospital, and after being exposed to some danger from shells, that night we were taken to the railroad, and then to Atlanta. I suffered some from my wounds before I reached Atlanta but was well cared for when I was taken to the hospitals. I was about the most forsaken looking object that came to that place, I know, and when I got off the cars felt pretty sheepish. The entire "crystal of my pants" was gone, and I was covered with blood and dirt, so I had reasons for feeling sheepish, being exposed to the sharp eyes of about four hundred ladies. If their eyes were sharp, their hands and hearts were tender as I soon experienced.

After a short time I was carried to Marietta, where I almost considered my home, by Aunts L. & E.,¹⁰ and here I had a delightful rest for a week; the Yankees moved us however, so we went to Atlanta, I, in a car loaded with girls, and took up our abode in the theatre there, called the Athenaeum. Here we intended to stay but a week or two, but the sequel proved, a much longer term of acting on the stage.

In the action above, one of my company, John Savage was killed. Regimental loss about sixty, from a hundred and fifty.

June and July 1864, Friday July 22nd.

Our stay in the theatre at Atlanta was particularly pleasant to me. We had a merry crowd and had nothing to do but to amuse ourselves, and of course we took advantage of the opportunity. The first week in July having recovered from my wounds, I started back to the army, in a company with G.S.L. [George S. Litton] and J. H.¹¹ I found my regiment busily engaged in fortifying just beyond the Chattahooche[e] river, the army having fallen back to that point. I was warmly received and in a short time felt perfectly at home again. We held our position here a few days, in full view of the enemy, with continual skirmishing in our front, and then retired to the South bank of the river. We now enjoyed two or three days rest which was much needed. On the 16th of July, Gen. Johnston, to the deep sorrow of the whole army, was superseded in command, by Gen. Hood. On the 18th of July I received my promotion to Aid[e]. The letter from Gen. Tyler in regard to it said, for meritorious conduct, was the promotion given. Very flattering indeed; From the 16th to the 22nd we were maneuvering about and skirmishing, and on the 22nd we had a big fight. In this engagement, F. Horton, one of my old company and an intimate friend was killed.

On the 23rd I was ordered upon duty as Aid[e], at Brigade Head Quarters, and mounted on a mule from which the owner had been killed the day

¹⁰ Eliza and Elizabeth Early.

¹¹ Unidentified.

previous. Under these cheering auspices, I commenced my career as a "staff officers." The men of the brigade were particularly kind to me, and I got along famously.

The latter part of this month was occupied in marching and countermarching around Atlanta, and skirmishing had become so common that it excited little or no attention. The last of July found us about three or four miles west of Atlanta, well fortified and the Yankees only a little distance from our front. They were near enough to annoy us with shells, and would occasionally hurt some one. We were well fed and in pretty good spirits, although we had hardly recovered from the loss of "Old Joe."

August 1864, Saturday August 6th.

I had now entered upon my duties as a staff officer in earnest and many were the lonely rides and walks I was compelled to take at night in my rounds. Our "Head Quarters" consisted of the following persons: Col. T. B. Smith acting brigadier, Captain Charley Douglas A.A.A. Gen., Lieut. T. S. Jones A. A. I. Gen. Jas. L. Cooper and Vernon Stevenson Aid[e]s.

On the fifth of this month we, our brigade were placed in position in front of the lines, as a trap for the Yankees. We were at work nearly all night arranging our trap, and I was, on several occasions only saved from being lost by the sagacity of my mule. Saturday the 6th, the Yankees thinking we were only skirmishers at daylight, attacked us. They were considerably worsted, and left in a hurry. About twelve o'clock they came up in force, and hurled their columns against our little brigade. They were met gallantly and after a fierce struggle, almost breast to breast, the enemy fled leaving the ground covered with their dead and wounded. We secured over a hundred stand of arms, thirty prisoners, and two stand of colors, belonging to the 8th Tenn. regt. and 12th Ohio. Our victory was complete, and the brigade was complimented in general orders, by our corps commander, S. D. Lee.

The 7th was consumed in skirmishing, and in returning to the main lines, having only a few men in our former position. One of the men killed a wounded federal this day, by mistake.

August 1864.

After this fight it was a continual skirmish until the last of the month. I went to Eatonton about the 24th to get funds to pay for a horse which I had got from T. Bostick. I was to give fifteen hundred dollars for him. I succeeded and returned after an absence of three days to find the army again, in motion, to front the enemy who were endeavoring to reach the M. & A. R.R.¹²

Wednesday, August 31st, 1864.

The night of my arrival from Eatonton, our Corps, Hardec's, was put in motion for Jonesboro. I was absent from camp after my horse, and did not rejoin the brigade until within a few miles of Jonesboro. This march,

¹² Cooper apparently had reference to the Macon and Western Railroad which ran from Macon to Atlanta.

about twelve miles, was made in the night. When within a few miles of the town, we were halted by the announcement that the enemy were on the road in our front. I was sent out by General Smith "on a scout," but found no enemy. We marched through Jonesboro, and at daybreak took position in front of the Yankees, who, on the preceding evening had got very near the railroad. Gen. Hardee had orders from Gen. Hood to drive them from their position, and after much maneuvering, about two o'clock, we were ordered forward. We had to march a considerable distance through the pine woods before we reached the enemy, and were much exposed to shells. When at last, his skirmishers were driven in and we charged into a wide cornfield in front of his position, such a destructive storm of bullets was

August 1864.

poured on us that we declined to stay there long. We afterwards learned that they were armed with sixteen shooters. After the repulse we retired to our former position and fortified. We had lost a large proportion of officers in this battle, Col. Gracie, Maj. Driver, Maj. Guthrie, Maj. Tankersly, and others among the number. Robert Allison of my old company was killed. My horse was severely wounded and I was set a foot for the time. We remained here two days but having evacuated Atlanta, and our lines being driven back on the right, we retreated to Love Joy's Station. The night we retreated we could very distinctly hear the bursting of shells among the stores that were being burned in Atlanta.

At Love Joy's, we were joined by the army and here we had more skirmishing. The enemy soon withdrew from our front, and went back to Atlanta, and then we enjoyed a season of comparative quiet.

September 1864 & October.

After resting about two weeks, we recommenced our weary labors. On the 18th, we left our camps at Jonesboro and that night reached the West Point R. R. We fortified, and went into camp again. While here President Davis paid us a visit of inspection. We were now deprived of our Corps Commander, Gen. Hardee and placed under Gen. Cheatham.

On the 29th of September, we crossed the Chattahoochee river and marched in the direction of Marietta. We stayed in sight of the Kennesaw mountain, near Ma. [Marietta], for a day or two and then started in the direction of Dalton. On the 18th October we reached Mill Creek Gap, near Dalton. We had marched near Rome, Ga. and crossed the Coosa river at Coosaville. We had quite an exciting march and on one occasion had a little skirmish at a bridge, which was quite romantic on account of certain incidents.

At Mill Creek Gap we had quite an excitement about charging a block house, but the Yanks fortunately surrendered, leaving us lots of good things in their house. After tearing up the railroad at Dalton, we moved in the direction of Gadsden. I was the last man to leave Mill Creek Gap, and as I looked over the scene of desolation, I felt "sorter" lonely. At Dalton we captured a regiment of negro soldiers who were at once put to work.

We reached Gadsden about the 19th or 20th of October, and went into camp for a day or two; we then resumed our march for Florence, Ala., pass-

ing near Decatur. At this place about thirty of our brigade were taken prisoners while on picket. I had just left them and narrowly escaped capture myself. After starving here a day or two, we again started and soon reached the neighborhood of Florence. We crossed the river the last of October and went into camp west of Florence, and here we stayed until everyone was sick at heart with the delay. The troops were also on pretty short ration, and the terribly cold weather rendered this very unfortunate.

November 1864. Wednesday, November 30th.

About the 22nd of this month, we commenced our march from Florence into Tennessee. It was a terribly cold day and the rain as it fell froze in a hard mass on my horse's mane. We marched through Wainnesboro [Waynesboro] and in a day or two began to see evidences of the Yankees, in the dead horses and men along the road, where Forrest's cavalry had been skirmishing with them. On the 26th, we reached Columbia, and went into camp before the enemy's entrenchment. We had quite an interesting time here visiting the pickets and skirmishers. In some places their line was right at some of the fine dwelling houses which adorned this country. One of our staff officers had to move his uncle and aunt from the picket line.

On the 27th, the Yankees retired to the opposite bank of the river, and on the morning of the 29th, Gen. Hood, with the greater part of the army, crossed Duck River above Columbia, and endeavored to gain the rear of the enemy. Here a great blunder was committed by someone. Our Corps, Cheatham's was in advance, but we lay all night in hearing distance of the road and permitted the Yankees to pass along. Next morning, we entered Spring Hill, just as the rear guard was retiring and captured a good many prisoners. We closely pursued them that day, and about two o'clock arrived in sight of Franklin where they were strongly entrenched. An attack was at once ordered, and about four o'clock, after a lively little time with the skirmishers, the charge was made. On some parts of the line, it was successful, we were not. In advancing to the attack we had to pass directly through Mrs. Bostick's yard and then into an open field, where we were terribly exposed. Here Capt. Carter was killed, in sight of his home. I dismounted soon after the fight commenced and gave my horse to a wounded friend.

Of all the battles I have witnessed, this was the most bloody. Our army fought with a desperation I have never seen equalled. The ground about the Yankee works was literally piled with dead. Some of them were shot all to pieces. One man I saw had forty-seven bullet holes through him. The place looked like one vast slaughter pen. After gazing on it, I felt sick at heart for days afterwards. The fighting continued until twelve o'clock at night, when the enemy retreated to Nashville.

I was struck by a spent ball in this action, and for a time imagined myself severely wounded, but was only sore for a day or two.

The morning after the battle, I walked all over the field and the scene that met my gaze baffles description. The yankees had left in a hurry and most of the badly wounded were left on the field. Capt. Carter was not found until just before day. His wounds had rendered him delirious, but when found he was calling my name, and continued to call it at times until he died. He and I were fast friends, and only a few moments before he was

shot down, I had spoken to him and told him not to start the men forward too soon, but his own reckless daring caused his death. His horse, a powerful gray lay dead but a short distance from him. One by one, my true, tried friends were passing away, and I felt that unless I received my quietus soon, I would stand alone.

The result of the battle of Franklin was a bootless victory and a demoralized army. The men were so disheartened by gazing on that scene of slaughter that they had not the nerve for the work before them.

The day after the battle, George Litton and myself with some difficulty, got permission to go to Kittie Robinson's until the next day. We reached there before night and enjoyed ourselves as only men can, who have not slept in a house for months, nor had enough to eat for years. Our time was lengthened out to several days, and then we started back with good clothing and our war bags full of provisions. I also had a big black horse, and was actually mistaken for some general or other, I don't know whom. We started in the direction of Nashville, as we had been informed that our division was there with the army, which was by this time within three miles of the city.

December 1864, Wednesday, December 7th, 1864.

We learned when we approached Nashville that our command was near Murfreesboro, and accordingly started in that direction. I reached the regiment just before dark, and to my great disgust they were once more in sight of the enemy, and engaged in a sharp skirmish with the pickets. My new clothes, horse and last but not least, my war sack, being duly inspected and pronounced all right, I once more entered upon my duties. Next morning the command commenced moving to the right. We were now under the command of Gen. Forrest.

This was on Wednesday, the 7th. We marched across the Wilkinson Pike and then upon a report that the enemy were coming out to attack us, fell back and commenced fortifying. We threw up some temporary barricades and remained in position until about three o'clock, when the enemy advanced, taking our fortification[s] in the flank and rendering them useless. Our brigade was hastily formed across the pike, and before our line was established, the Yankees made their appearance in a long line coming across an open cotton field. We opened fire upon them at once, and considerably staggered, they halted. I was at this time sent back to Gen. Forrest, by Gen. Smith, for a battery, the Washington Artillery, and when I came back, and I did not tarry long, not an enemy was to be seen. They were all lying down in the cotton field and whenever they would try to advance, they were received with such a deadly fire that they were forced to stop. The brigade on our right gave way at this time from some unaccountable reason, and in a few minutes we were almost surrounded. We were compelled to fall back or be captured, and we retired, not without some disorder. Our line was soon re-established and we slowly moved in the direction of the Creek, where the other brigades were now crossing. We remained under a pretty sharp shelling to bring up the rear, and retired across the bridge after everything had crossed. We were highly complimented by Gen. Forrest by our action in this engagement, but he said that the other troops acted shamefully.

Wednesday, December 16th, 1864.*

That night we encamped about three miles from the battlefield, and next morning moved in the direction of Nashville. Before we got to Lavergne, there was a considerable fall of snow, which freezing next day, rendered the roads miserable. Numbers of our men were without shoes, and their bloody tracks could be plainly seen on the ice and snow, I had read of such things occurring during the Revolutionary War, but here were scenes directly under my notice, eclipsing in suffering all that I had ever imagined. Men were actually hobbling along those icy roads, leaving at every step the bloody prints of their bare feet in the snow. As may well be imagined we were several days in reaching Nashville. During the cold weather, our "headquarters," always struck for a house and a fire. One night we stayed with Mr. Shumate, the next with some Doctor not far from a creek about seven miles from Nashville. The next day we took our position in the lines around Nashville. We were placed to the left or West of the Nolensville Pike, just in front of Fort Negley. From the top of the hill, a full view of the Capitol was to be had, and also many of the houses about the City. Very tantalizing indeed it was to be in sight of home and not allowed to be there. Here we rested for two or three days, and I was getting my black horse in fine trim by the aid of abandoned oats and corn, when the vile Yankees again disturbed us.

On the morning of the 16th [*sic*],¹⁸ we were roused by the infernal voice of cannon, and the announcement that the enemy were marching out to attack us. I was mounted on my black horse, my sorrel being away, and he being unused to the noise, could with difficulty be managed.

The Yankees made their first appearance on our extreme right, where a brigade of negroes succeeded in getting entirely around our flank before they were discovered. It was only a weak attack and a few volleys sent them back in a hurry. They now made their appearance on a hill in our front, and considerable skirmishing ensued. By this time the continuous rolling of artillery on the left told that the attack on the right was but a feint. The firing deepened in intensity, until it was almost a steady roll.

Battle of Nashville.

Thursday, December 17th [*sic*],¹⁹ 1864.

Late in the evening, we received information that our position on the left had been forced, and our division (Bates' [*sic*]) commenced moving by the left flank. We moved across the Franklin Pike and soon received ocular demonstration that the battle was going against us. On every side were to be seen the struggling and wounded men, while the artillerists and horses without their guns told that more than one battery had been taken. It was now nearly night and the enemy did not seem inclined to press their advantage, but halted at our works. With sad and heavy hearts forewarning us of the day to come, we took our position and made preparations for the dreaded morrow.

¹⁸ Cooper's chronology is confused here. The Battle of Nashville was fought on Thursday, December 15, and Friday, December 16.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

Our division was just West of the Granny White Pike with Cheatham's division on our left. Our brigade occupied the top of a very steep hill about half a mile or less from the road. We had no entrenching tools and could make but little preparation. Some logs and trees were rolled together, and made a tolerable protection from minnie [*sic*] bullets, but were nothing against artillery. The enemy were just at the foot of the hill and their fires could be seen, and their voices heard plainly all night. Occasionally they would fire at us. At daylight the infernal racket commenced. On all sides the Yankees could be seen moving into position, and our army seemed but a handful in comparison. Their artillery crowded every hill and there were not a few, and seemed ready to blow us out of creation. The sharp fighting commenced on the right, but there they were repulsed. On the left for a while they kept quiet, evidently awaiting the result of the fight on the right. Our division was kept pretty quiet until nearly noon, when they commenced paying us a few attentions in the way of shells and grape, about half a dozen at once. About twelve o'clock, having arranged four batteries to concentrate their fire on about two acres of ground, near the top of the hill, they began to appreciate us, and from that till we left, a mouse could scarcely [have] lived on that hill. At one time the fire of at least twenty guns were concentrated upon our position, and all the fiends in Pandemonium could not have created a more incessant, devilish noise. Shells and canister were everywhere, the air was full of them, and it was almost a miracle that anyone escaped. Five or six passed through a tree behind which I was sitting, at every time approaching nearer my person, until at last I moved out. I don't think it was struck after I left. This fire was continued several hours, the enemy all the time driving back our extreme right, until they had almost gotten behind us. Rain was falling nearly all the evening, and the ground was very soft and miry. Just before sun down the Yankees made a vigorous charge on our position and the breastworks being leveled to the ground, and half of the men killed or disabled of course, they took it.

I was just below the crest of the hill, when I knew by the increased firing and the cheering that the Yankees were charging. I heard someone say, "look up yonder," and on looking I saw the Yankees and our men so mixed that it was scarcely possible to tell one party from the other. I did not look long enough to confuse them, but mounting my horse, made arrangements to go to Corinth. By the time I was on my horse, all the men who were left came rushing down the hill, and now commenced one of the liveliest [*sic*] chases of the war. Our men had to cross a ploughed field where the mud was knee deep, and the vile Yankees were right after them, shooting as fast as the Devil would let them, and he seemed to have very little objection to their shooting as fast as possible. In addition the varmints had turned our own cannon on us and were using it better than we ever could do. It was said that Bate's division ran first, but I think all ran together. It seemed to me a simultaneous running. We hurried out to the Franklin road and in the gathering gloom and darkness started on the retreat from Tennessee. All was confusion and dismay. Scarce a dozen men of a regiment were found together. The army of Tennessee was completely demoralized and routed. I now felt that the Confederacy was indeed gone up, that we were a ruined people. We marched back to Franklin in double-quick time, reaching there before daylight. I happened to meet our wagons, and giving

my horse to a negro, I crawled into one of them, out of the rain which was falling and for a few minutes it seemed seconds, was happily unconscious that I was in existence.

On Friday we passed through Franklin and took the road to Columbia. The different commands had by this time somewhat recovered from this demoralization, but the roads were still filled with stragglers. We camped that night at Spring Hill, through which place, but a few days before we had passed, so highly elated with confident hope; now, how changed our feelings!. "Headquarters" secured a house as usual and had a good time, comparatively. We moved off in the morning and after a halt to check the pursuers, we reached a creek about five miles from Columbia. Having crossed the creek, we formed our line and made preparations to meet the enemy. Just before dark they made their appearance, the cavalry skirmishers riding boldly up to the banks of the Creek. A volley was fired at them, which killed a horse and caused them to retreat in haste. We obtained a little rest that night, which was much needed. The rain had not ceased to fall, except at intervals since we left Nashville. Next morning the Yankees commenced with their villainous artillery, and as usual seemed to make our Brigade a target. We were all sitting over our little fires trying to dry, and it seemed strange that no one was hurt. When the fire first opened I saw three shells strike in a spot, in a bank just behind us that I could have covered with my hat. Their precision in firing was truly wonderful. Three men were killed just in front of us, and this was our only loss. About twelve o'clock we marched towards Columbia leaving a guard to cover our retreat till night. It was bitter cold, and we were all wet, and I don't think I ever saw men suffer so much. At the River, Gen. Cheatham and Gen. Forrest had a quarrel about the precedence in going over the bridge, and some tall cursing ensued but no one was hurt. Marching out a mile or two from Columbia, we encamped on a beautiful lawn in front of Mr. Thomas' residence [residence]. Everyone was almost frozen, and the wood and rails suffered. Going into the house I had quite an interesting conversation with Miss Margaret Thomas. I slept in the dining room that night under the table, and as I had only one blanket, I think I was saved from being frozen to death. Some of the men were standing around an old stump that night around which they had made a fire, when to their astonishment a shell exploded, throwing fragments in every direction, fortunately no one was injured. Next morning we left our quarter and taking the Pulaski road, struck a brisk trot for the Tennessee river. Just before reaching Pulaski, Jim Ezell and myself went on ahead, and after a miserable ride of eight or ten miles in the rain, secured comfortable quarters with some relatives of J. E.'s. We took dinner with another one of his relatives, next day, after which we rejoined the command. We had been closely followed by the Yankees all this time and a short distance north of Pulaski one rear guard had quite a sharp engagement which resulted in the defeat of the enemy. After this we were not molested by them.

Christmas day dawned bright and beautiful but upon what a scene did that morning's sun arise. A poor half starved, half clad band of ragamuffins fleeing in disgrace from their last chance for freedom and independence. Poor devils, they little knew what would be the results of that retreat. We moved out from camp before sun rise Christmas, and discipline being very lax at

that time, the soldiers soon commenced firing off Christmas guns. I could almost have imagined that we were in the midst of another battle.

When we reached the river, we found that the bridge was yet unfinished and were compelled to fortify and wait awhile. We had a terrible time procuring provisions and thought the Yankees would catch us at last. The gunboats, they had several little ones in the Tennessee, came up in our rear and threw a few shells over, but did no harm. After waiting here until some of us were almost frightened to death, our brigade was sent across the river to catch one of the little chicken stealers. Owing to the delay of the artillery we did not succeed in our project, but having placed the river between us and our foes, we felt considerably safer. We fooled around for a short time and finally started in the direction of Corinth. Our march was miserable in the extreme, rain fell every day, and the country was almost flooded. We had no forage for our stock and had to steal for them all we could. I kept my horse alive by feeding them [*sic*] on green cane and grass. We had no adventures worthy of note on this march. Every day was the same, and we did not know what would become of us. Rumors were circulated about this time that our next place would be Georgia. But almost everyone thought that the war was about over, in fact that we were a subjugated people. I did not allow my thoughts to dwell upon it. I was fearful that I would become despondent too.

January, 1865.

About the first of January we reached Corinth and went into camp about two miles east of the place. The Army was thoroughly demoralized, and only the semblance of discipline maintained. Our corp[us] (Cheatham) was left at Corinth until the rest of the Army had retired to Tupelo, and had taken away the stores. While encamped near Corinth men and horses were almost starved. I felt very proud of my horse and it troubled me very much to see him falling off day by day. Indeed it was not strange for he had only four ears of corn daily for two weeks. At last we received the welcome order to march, and through rain and mud started on another retreat. The entire country at times seemed flooded with water and the roads impassible to anything but soldiers. The infantry marched the greater part of the way on the railroad track, which was dry, but very trying to feet.

We reached Tupelo and found the whole country filled with soldiers. Here we remained some time and even spoke of putting up winter quarters, but Sherman's movements in North Carolina made it necessary to move the army there. I was now very unpleasantly situated and had become completely disgusted with Our Brigade head quarters, and determined to apply for leave of absence, and if refused, to again enter the ranks. My mess had no tent and the greater part of the time nothing to eat and were altogether in a miserable fix. I felt that I was out of my element, and determined to submit to it no longer. I had very few friends remaining with the Command, and cared very little whether I stayed with it or not. I received my leave the 29th of January, 1865.

All things being prepared, I left camp one day about dinner time and started for Columbus. We had had severe rains and the roads were in a

swim a horse, and the danger was still greater on account of the mud and quicksand. I had some of my regiment as companions for a few miles and then I struck out by myself. I did not know a foot of the road and often went wrong. The first night I rode until long after dark before I could find a stopping place and was almost frozen, the night being the coldest I ever felt in Mississippi. When I got up the next morning to my grief I found that some one had stolen my fine bridle that I had given fifty dollars for only a short time before this. This was a decided sensation. The next day it was the same thing, but I found a better lodging place, near West Point, at the house of some widow lady, whose name I have forgotten, and who refused to receive money for myself and horse's lodging. May the hand of time rest lightly upon her and may she never know what, is the petition of one of the many to whom she extended her kindness. After a most miserably lonesome ride in the direction of Artesia, I found a creek I could not cross and was forced to go directly to Columbus. I passed this night with some overseer near Columbus, and the next morning rode into the town. I found no acquaintance, and after a short stay went to Capt. Neilson's, getting lost on the way, as a matter of course, where I found Uncle L.¹⁰ and part of his family. This day G. S. L. [George S. Litton] also arrived and on the next I borrowed a mule and went to Artesia after my clothes. I rode all night, only resting a few hours in the woods with the owls and other varmints. I enjoyed the rest at Capt. Neilson hugely, regaling myself hugely on apple turnovers, sweet potatoes and other luxuries and helping Miss Sophie to feed the pigs and horses and such other amusements. About the 8th of the month I started to Pickensville, and reached there the same day, with no incident worthy of note. Here I spent a most delightful time for three or four weeks.

The rain poured incessantly the last week of my stay and Pickensville was almost isolated. I was kept here some time by the rain and finally had to leave by water on a steamboat. The Golden Eagle, I think was the name of the Boat, but am not certain.

March, 1865

About the first of this month, I left Pickensville and after a quiet trip landed at Mobile. I intended to take the cars at Demopolis, but the whole country was flooded with water and no trains running. At Demopolis George and I got on the boat and we occupied the same state room. We stayed one night in Mobile, attending a concert, and went to Montgomery. Here I went to the theatre for the first time. From Montgomery we went to Macon, where I accidentally learned that Gen. Tyler was in town, and succeeded in finding him and in getting another leave of absence for four weeks. I then went to Eatonton, Georgia. While in Macon we had got out of money and I sold a five dollar gold piece which had been sent to me by Ma to have my picture taken, for two hundred and fifteen dollars in C. S. C.¹¹ We reached Eatonton safely, after meeting with some difficulty in crossing little river, and received such a hearty greeting that we soon forgot all our troubles and fatigue. We remained here two days and then started for Augusta, to get my horses and bring them back and George L.

¹⁰ Unidentified.

¹¹ Confederate States Currency.

[Littton] to join his command. We were accompanied by Bush and several of the young men of Eatonton on their way to the army. Nath De J.¹⁸ was one of the number. I found my horses, and sold one of them for \$1200 and mounting the other started back to Eatonton about two hundred miles. The first night I rode till about ten o'clock, feeling very lonely and bad, and the next I reached Eatonton. I never had such a lonely, wearisome ride in my life. It would almost kill me now, but I was hardened then. I reached Eatonton and put my horse with Col. Reid, and began to rest. I was completely disgusted and worn out with the army, and I enjoyed the rest from the depths of my heart. I did not have a thing to do but to enjoy myself. No harrowing thoughts of being called up to meet Yankees at any hour of the night. All was so quiet that no one would have thought the war was over. I sometimes wondered if this clean, well washed, well shaved lark, wandering over the country picking flowers, visiting the ladies and going to picnics and fishing parties, was the same dirty-faced, lousy wretch who for months or weeks before would scarcely have dared to meet a lady, for fear some irreverent louse would crawl into view, or that the seat of his pants was gone, shirt tail out, or something of that kind. This pleasant little place, Eatonton, was almost paradise, and I, although an unworthy, inhabitant, enjoyed it to the extent of my capacity for enjoyment. I did not have such pleasure often and thought it more than probable that I would never have another opportunity again, and I made the most of this. All were so kind and attentive that I must have been gloomy indeed had I not had a good time.

April, 1865

In the first of April came the beginning of the end. We had anticipated for some time the dissolutions of our hopes in regard to a future confederacy, but we scarcely expected such a complete falling to pieces as did happen. As the immortal Artemus Ward has it, "when a fellow commences going down hill, it seems as if every thing was greased on purpose." The "fellow" in this instance was the Confederacy, and down hill it was going with a vengeance [*sic*]. The news of Lincoln's assassination, Lee's surrender and Johnston's followed each other [*sic*] in such rapid succession that we had hardly breathing time. Down hill we went and have never found the bottom yet and still some one seems pouring on the grease.

Crowds of men from Lee's and Johnston's armies now filled up the village of Eatonton and one would have thought from the mirth and gayety that prevailed that our armies had been successful. The meeting of relatives for the first time in years contributed much to this gayety and all went as happily as you please. At our house all felt very Blue at the turn our affairs were taking, but with all our sorrow there was a feeling of relief that the war was at last over, that we were at liberty to go home, once more. I am afraid if the truth were known that we were not as sorry as we should have been. The feeling of relief was so great that for a time all else was forgotten in the satisfaction that gave. We now began our preparations in earnest for our return home. When the prospect was in view every moment lost seemed an age.

¹⁸ Unidentified.