

Letter from J C Bolten to Colonel H McMahan

Findlay Ohio Aug. 14th 1888

Col H. McMahan

Toledo O.

Your esteemed favor came to hand some time ago requesting me to state you what I know about the 26th Tennessee (rebel) Regiments Colors captured by our troops at the Battle of Stone [sic] River.

Pressing business engagements and more or less absence from home prevented me from sending you a prompt reply, consequently your letter remained unanswered but I will now relate to you briefly my recollections although the lapse of over a quarter of a century may have left its mark upon my memory as regards distance etc but the statement I here send you regarding the capture of the flag is a true one in every respect.

On the second day of January 1863 after we had crossed the river and were driving [sic] the rebels [illegible] the hill through the works under a heavy fire, [missing] a moment before our regiment (21st O.V.I.) captured the rebel battery, whilst advanceing [sic] we were passing over large numbers of dead and wounded of both federal and confederate, and about a hundred yards as near as I can recollect to right of the rebel battery captured by our regiment and only a short distance in the woods before we entered the open field (corn field) is as near as I can describe the location where while we were advancing under a brisk fire I saw laying on the ground before me a dead rebel with a flag by his side. I picked up the flag and saw it belonged to the 26th Tennessee Reg and intended to bring it with me, but at once comprehended, that it was impossible to use my [illegible] and carry the flag with me so I hurriedly threw down by the side of the dead rebel where I had found it, and proceeded along with the Reg until we came to a halt out in the open field when I returned to get the flag but when I got there it had been taken away by some one else. There is no question but the color bearer fell from a shot fired by some one of our own regiment but who fired that shot will undoubtedly never be known.

I will here add that I honestly believe that no one person in particular is entitled to the credit of capturing that flag, but one thing is certain that the credit for the capture of it belongs to the 21st Regiment Ohio Vol Infy [sic].

Trusting the above narrative regarding my observations and knowledge of its capture of this flag may be of some advantage to you in your history I remain

Yours Truly

J C Bolten

Writing on envelope

Col. H. McMahan

East Toledo Ohio

[writing on left side of envelope: Capture of flag by [rest is illegible]