

John Robinson History

Confederate Military History

A LIBRARY OF CONFEDERATE STATES HISTORY, IN TWELVE VOLUMES,
WRITTEN BY DISTINGUISHED MEN OF THE SOUTH, AND EDITED BY GEN.
CLEMENT A. EVANS OF GEORGIA....

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John M. Robinson, of Jackson, a gallant soldier of the army of Tennessee, was born in Gibson county in the year 1841. His parents were both descended from Revolutionary patriots, and he showed himself as prompt as they, when occasion arrived, to fight in defense of his country. It was his good fortune, as a soldier desiring to face the foe on many fields, to become a member of the famous fighting Sixth regiment, Tennessee volunteers, enlisting in Company K early in 1861. His first battle was Shiloh, where the Sixth was greatly distinguished. He remembers that as they advanced to dislodge Prentiss' Union brigade, they passed directly by the spot where Gen. Albert Sidney Johnson lay dying, near the Cantrell house. It was a few minutes later when Prentiss rode out into an old field and surrendered the remnant of his command. He was slightly wounded in this battle. At Murfreesboro, the next great engagement in which he took part, he escaped injury, but at Missionary Ridge his left eye was destroyed by a fragment of shell. Notwithstanding this serious and painful hurt, he remained with his regiment, and was on duty again in ten days. His next wound was received in the famous battle of Atlanta, July 22, 1864, but he returned to duty in two weeks. While on picket before Nashville, in December, 1864, he was captured, and being sent as a prisoner to Camp Douglas, Chicago, was held there until June, 1865, being one of the last released from that [rest is missing]

[image: photo of Madison County soldiers at Confederate Reunion July 18, 1898]

REMINISCENCES

The Confederate Army record of J. M. Robinson, Company K, Sixth Tennessee Infantry Regiment, of Nanny's Brigade, Cheatham's Division, Polk's Command of the army of Tennessee. In the early part of '62, the army was commanded by Albert Sidney Johnston, who was killed at Shiloh on April 6, 1862. General Bragg became commander until 1864; General Joseph Johnston commanded the army until July 17, 1864; at this time General Hood took command. We had acted on the defensive until then on account of the superior number of the enemy. General Hood began to storm the Federal works whenever the enemy gave an opportunity, and our army was slaughtered without mercy. An account of the Sixth Regiment will include the movements of the Army of Tennessee.

The Sixth Tennessee Regiment was enlisted at Jackson, Tennessee May 15, 1861. It was composed of ten companies, eight from Madison County. We went into camp at the old fair grounds, west of town, and remained there until Sunday, May 26, when we left Jackson over the Mobile and Ohio railroad for Union City. We went into camp there and remained until the first of August. We made our first march by way of Troy and Reelfoot Lake to Tiptonville, on the Mississippi River. Here we boarded boats, and went up the river to New Madrid, Missouri. After remaining there for some time, we got on board boats and went down the river below Fort Pillow, but returned to New Madrid. We unloaded and went out to the Phillips farm, four miles up the river. We went into camp there and remained about two weeks. We left there on boats and ended at Hickman, Kentucky, in the night.

Yankee gun boats came down the river and opened fire. That was our first introduction to Yankee shells, but by no means our last. We stayed there that day and left by rail for Columbus, Kentucky, that night, by way of Union City. In Columbus we went into camp and commenced to fortify the bluff above the town. Our Brigade was sent to Jordan Station by rail and stayed there a few days. Then we moved east on the State Line road to Fulton. We remained there a few days and returned to Columbus and went to work fortifying. About the time we finished the work the Yankees came down and the Battle of Belmont [sic] was fought. We then went into winter-quarters and stayed there.

On the first of March, 1862, we marched to Union City and stayed there for a short time; went by rail to Homboldt [sic] and remained there for a few days; went by rail to Corinth, Mississippi. We remained there only a short time, our Brigade being sent up the road to Bethel Springs. We left there on the evening of April 4, for Shiloh, we stayed at Purdy that night, leaving the fifth of April. About ten o'clock that night we arrived at the place assigned us in the line of battle.

We were so close to the Yankee camp that we could hear their mules braying and pawing on the feed troughs. We stayed in this position until about daylight, when everything was in readiness to move and the firing had begun on our right. The ball soon opened in all its fury. We being held on the supporting line, were moved from one part of the field to another, exposed to heavy fire, and we could not fire a gun until about twelve o'clock, when our whole Brigade became engaged with General Prentice's line on the Cantrell farm. His line ran west from the Bloody Pond, our line right of a line resting near a peach orchard, running west, parallel with the line known as the "Hornet's Nest" line. A Yankee battery had a position in or near the road south of the Pond. Our Battery's position was near the southwest side of the field, just west of the peach orchard, supported by the Sixth Tennessee Regiment.

The first show fired from the enemy's guns killed five men in my company. Then the enemy was posted behind an old fence and protected by undergrowth, so that it was impossible for us to dislodge them. After a loss of about two hundred men the Regiment was withdrawn and a part of it returned immediately under the command of Captain John Ingram, I being one who stayed by his side. We moved back on the south side of the old field and kept up a heavy fire until we reached our own site, to form on the left of a line forming to move into the old field to attack General Prentice's line. While we were forming on that line, General Johnston, accompanied by Governor Harris, and two other men, rode through the line to our site, immediately in front of me they stopped and lifted

General Johnston off his horse. They laid him on a shawl of Governor Harris', but he was dead before they got him down.

By that time we were ready and moved forward into the old field and the fight opened again. It lasted until Prentice's line surrendered. We then moved on out beyond the Bloody Pond. The gun boats opened fire, but their shells passed over behind our lines. Our line was then halted and no further move was made on that part of the line in front of Pittsburg.

On the sixth firing continued heavy until dark. On our right in going back to my command I passed over and viewed the old field. We remained on that field Sunday night, unprotected in a downpour of rain all night, and we were compelled to fight on Monday, the seventh, and to face about twenty thousand new troops. Up to noon the fight was furious, neither side seeming to be inclined to advance. The enemy finally fell back on our left, where we were engaged near the old Shiloh church.

About two o'clock we commenced to make arrangements to leave the field. We advanced our skirmish line to cover our retreat. I being one of that line, could see a Yankee once in a while and get a shot at one. About half-after-four o'clock I was wounded in my shoulder. We left the field and stayed at Monterey that night in a drenching rain. We arrived at Corinth on April 8 and went into camp. We suffered a loss of about 225 men.

We remained in Corinth until about the first of June. The enemy had advanced their lines to close to us that fighting was kept up all along the line every day. We left Corinth and went into camp at Tupelo, Mississippi. We stayed there a short time and moved by way of Mobile, Alabama, Montgomery, Alabama, and Atlanta, Georgia, to Chattanooga, Tennessee. We remained there until about the last of August, when we started on what is known as the "Kentucky Campaign." After leaving Chattanooga our first stop was at Blue Springs. We left there and crossed the Cumberland Mountains. Our second stop for two days was at Sparta, in Middle Tennessee. We left there and the next stop was at Glasgow [sic], Kentucky. on Saturday. We remained there on Sunday, and leaving on Sunday night, made a forced march, forded Green River, and moved west to the L. & N. railroad. We moved south on the railroad and closed our lines around a fort at Munfordsville [sic] and captured four thousand Yankees. We turned north, stopped a few days at Bacon Creek, and moved west to Muldrose Hill in a hurried march to prevent Buell from getting possession there. Then we moved on to Bardstown, Kentucky, and stopped there a few days. I was sick and had been for over a week, and being unable for duty, I was sent to the hospital in Danville.

The Regiment went from there to Perryville, where a battle was fought on October 8, 1862. I joined the Regiment on the tenth at Camp Dick Robinson. We remained there for a short time and started on our line of retreat to Cumberland Gap, by way of Crab Orchard and Wildcat Mountains, the most God-forsaken part of the world. We arrived at Cumberland Gap and remained there for three days. We left for Knoxville and arrived there the evening of October 28. A heavy snowfall came that night and we remained a short time. We took train for Chattanooga and stopped there for only a few hours. Then we moved on to Bridgeport, Alabama. The bridge being burned, we had to cross the river on flat boats. We camped there about a week and moved on to Stevenson, at the junction of the M. & O. and the N. & C. railroads. We left there on a train and went to Tullahoma. We stayed there for several days and went from there to Murfreesboro, and

remained in camp there until about December 20. Our Brigade moved out and across Stewart's Creek, on the N. & M. Pike. We remained there until the twenty-sixth. We moved on to Lavern and stayed there that night and the Yankees escorted us back to Stewart's Creek. We remained there, that day being Sunday.

Monday morning the twenty-ninth, we crossed Stone River and took our position in the line of battle. The fight took place on December 31, and on January 1, 1863. We remained on the field until the fourth of January, when we moved back to Shelbyville, went into camp, and remained there until the last of June. Then we fell back to Tullahoma and crossed the Cumberland Mountains, with a lively fight being kept up all the way. As we fell back, we crossed the Tennessee River on pontoon bridges at Shell Mound. We went from there to Chattanooga and remained there until some time [sic] in August.

The Yankees took position on the opposite side of the river. We fell back about thirty miles down into Georgia and allowed them to cross over and move out on the Chickamauga battleground. As soon as General Longstreet's [sic] Division arrived, we marched back and attacked them. On September 19th and 20th we drove them back into Chattanooga, about fifteen miles, with a loss of about seventeen thousand men. Our own loss was heavy. We remained in front of Chattanooga for some time, leaving there for Knoxville. We went as far as Sweetwater and stopped and returned to Chattanooga. General Longstreet's men going, we remained in front of Chattanooga until the battle of Missionary Ridge was fought on November 23, 24, and 25, 1863. We covered the retreat from the field on the night of the 25th and until darkness closed the fight on the 26th. I lost one eye in the last engagement on that night.

After wading the Chickamauga River the next morning about two o'clock, we arrived at Ringgold [sic] about five o'clock on the morning of the 27th. We were on duty sixty-five hours with about one half hour of sleep. We arrived at Dalton on November 28, went into camp, and remained there in winterquarters [sic] until the first of February, when we were ordered to Mississippi. We left Dalton by rail to Atlanta and West Point, Montgomery, and down this river on a boat to Selma, Alabama, then by rail to [illegible], Alabama. We stayed there about two weeks and returned to Dalton on March 2. We went to our old encampment and woke up the next morning to find a six inch snow on the ground. A two days' snowballing followed. We remained there until April 28, when we march out three miles north on the W. & A. railroad and took our position on Rocky Face and came in contact with Sherman's advance. That was the opening of the Atlanta Campaign. This campaign lasted until the last days of September. During that time we were under fire continually, never at any time being for as long as twenty-four hours out of range of minnie balls, cannon balls, and shell.

It is impossible for tongue to tell or pen to describe. If a true picture could be held up before the men who stayed by their colors in that campaign, they themselves would almost doubt its truth. But it is impressed on the minds of the men who stayed and saw every movement. It will remain there until their dying day.

We were at Lovejoy Station when the Atlanta campaign ended, and we marched back to Palmetto and remained twelve days. While at Palmetto were left yet to be slaughtered. We left about October 14, 1864, and moved back over the same line of the W. & A. railroad to Dalton, where we had started from in April 1864. We turned then south, crossed over Sand Mountain, and stopped in front of Decatur, Alabama. The

Yankees were well fortified and we moved on down to Tuscumbia. We remained there a few days and crossed the Tennessee River to Florence, Alabama. We left there in a heavy snowfall, moving in the direction of Nashville, by way of Mount Pleasant, Columbia, Spring Hill, and Franklin. We arrived at Nashville after a terrible battle at Franklin, with a heavy loss on each side.

We remained in front of Nashville until December 14, and then the Yankees moved out and attacked our lines. The fight lasted until late in the evening of the 16th of December, 1864. That virtually closed the war.

I was captured when the line gave way, and was taken to Camp Douglas, Chicago, Illinois. I remained there nearly three months after the surrender on account of refusing to take that iron-clad oath. I was released June 20, 1865, upon taking the oath of allegiance to the United States. I returned home after four years, one month and nine days – from May 15, 1861 to June 24, 1865. I was in active service on the front all of that time, and have seen as much service as any boy did.

Confederate Army Memories of J. M. Robinson
Co. K. Sixth Tenn. Infantry.