

***RUFUS
H. PECK***



***REMINISCENCIES
OF A CONFEDERATE
SOLDIER OF CO. C,
2ND VA. CAVALRY***

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Reminiscencies of a Confederate soldier of Co. C, 2nd Va. Cavalry

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In the year 1859 at Fincastle, Va., I enlisted with a company called "The Botetourt Dragoons." This company was composed of 106 men, ready and willing to defend their country when called upon. Our officers were as follows: Andrew L. Pitzer, Capt.; Wm. A. Glasgow, 1st Lieut.; Wm. Price, 2nd Lieut.; and Jas. R. Thompson, Orderly Serg. Our first Serg. was Edward Brugh, second Serg. Wm. Garret and third Serg. Thomas McClure. Our first Corporal was William A. McCue, 2nd Corporal Robert Rieley and 3rd Corporal Geo. Peck.

We were called out by our captain for drills and parades usually on Sat. Our uniforms were navy blue with yellow trimmings. We had general musters once each year. We were invited to Buchanan, Salem and other points.

On our march to Salem we lined up in front of Hollins Institute and called on Prof. Cocke for an address, which he gave in his usual pleasant manner and finished it by inviting us to dine with him on our return. Capt. Hupp's Battery of Salem, and Capt. Dierly's Infantry of Roanoke, met us there. Col. Robert Preston, of Blacksburg, addressed the companies, also Capt.s Hupp, Pitzer and Dierly. All this was enjoyed, but not so much as the time spent with Prof. Cocke on our return three days later. We received genuine Virginia hospitality, such as we longed for many times in the four years which followed.

As the John Brown raid had already occurred we soon found that our service must be for defence and not only for

practice. South Carolina, Mississippi and several other states had already seceded from the Union and when Abraham Lincoln called out 70,000 men to coerce the states, the majority of our men wanted to go to Manassas Junction to protect our capitol, Richmond. We were called first to Lynchburg for drilling and future orders.

FIRST YEAR OF THE WAR.

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We left Fincastle on the morning of May 17, 1861, amid the cheers, good wishes, farewells and tears of mothers, wives and sweethearts. The ladies had prepared neat little pin cushions supplied with pins and needles, also bandage cotton and hospital necessities, some of which were needed before we had gotten five miles from Fincastle. Trooper Frasier spied a “frizzly hog” and called the attention of his comrades, which created so much laughter that his horse on seeing the hog and hearing the noise, became unmanageable and threw Frazier, whose head had to be bandaged, there and then in vinegar and brown paper, (in the language of Jack and Jill.)

We marched off gaily uniformed now in gray, following the flag presented to us by the Botetourt ladies and carried by Wm. McCue. This flag was used during the first two years of the war, and after our victory at the first battle of Manassas Junction we were presented with another flag and our first flag was sent to Richmond. It remained there until after the war and was then sent back to Fincastle, where it remained until 1907. It was then sent back to Richmond to the Confederate Museum to be kept as a relic, and I had the

honor of presenting it on the 7th day of May 1907, to Mrs. Norman Randolph, manager of the Museum. This was the same day on which the Davis and Steuart monuments were unveiled at Richmond.

Now back to our march from Fincastle to Lynchburg. We were cheered on our way by the waving of kerchiefs and throwing of bouquets as we passed on, following the blue ridge road until we came to Buford's Station, where we enjoyed the hospitality of Mr. Paschal Buford.

Our next stop was at Liberty, now called Bedford City. Here the kind people of the town took us into their homes and entertained and accommodated us for the night. We were welcomed in every home and invited to stop with them again if we should pass that way, which I did on one of my trips home from Petersburg. We left Liberty on the morning of May the 18th, and took dinner near Forest Depot at Col. Radford's home. We reached Lynchburg the night of the 18th and as two companies had preceeded us and were enlisted as A and B, we came in as Co. C. We remained here three days, occupying tobacco factories and keeping our horses in Friend's warehouse. We were furnished with tents and moved out near the fair grounds and were mustered into service on the 23 of May, by Gen. Jubal A. Early. By this time Co. D. from Franklin County had arrived and the remaining six companies came in in a few days. The companies were commanded as follows:

- Company A from Bedford County, Capt. Terry.
- Company B from Lynchburg City, Capt. Langhorn.
- Company C from Botetourt County, Capt. Pitzer.
- Company D from Franklin County, Capt. Hale.

- Company E from Amherst County, Capt. Whitehead.
- Company F from Bedford County, Capt. Wilson.
- Company G from Bedford County, Capt. Winston Radford.
- Company H from Appomattox County, Capt. Joel Flood.
- Company I from Campbell County, Capt. Jack Alexander.
- Company K from Albemarle County, Capt. Davis.

We remained at Lynchburg one month guarding the two magazines and drilling on foot and on horse-back. On June 10th, Capt. Terry with Co's A and B went on to Manassas Junction, while we of Co. C with Co. D were ordered out June 17th.

Our first stop was at Rockfish Station where we camped for the night, and our second night was spent at New Glasgow. We reached Charlottesville by noon the next day and spent the night near Orange C. H. The next day found us at Culpepper C. H. by noon and night overtook at Warrenton Springs. We reached Manassas Junction by night fall of the next day. We moved on to Fairfax C. H. the following day and found Gen. Bornem commanding the first South Carolina Brigade, stationed there. Here we pitched our tents on Sat. eve and on Sunday a. m. a part of our Co. was sent out on a scout and two of our men, Calvin Garret and Joseph Robinson, were captured by the New York Zouaves. We remained at Fairfax C. H. until the 17th of July, and I was sent with fourteen other men, commanded by Serg. Garret, three miles below Fairfax C. H. on the Falls Church road to stand picket, and at 9 o'clock a. m. we found

that McDowell was moving on Manassas Junction by three roads, viz.: Falls Church road, Little River turnpike, and Flint Hill road. Serg. Garret returned to notify the General of McDowell's movement, but the Gen. had already learned from other pickets, of his advance, so he ordered the army to retreat immediately. As Serg. Garret did not return to us, Corporal McCue sent me back 3 miles to Fairfax C. H., and when I arrived our Adj. told me of the retreat and from there I could see Col. Kershaw's regiment already engaged with the enemy, so I had to return to notify the other pickets to join the command, which we could only do by a flank movement and came very near being cut off entirely by the enemy. When I returned I found that two of our pickets on the Flint Hill road, John Mays and William Maller, had been captured. We continued our retreat to Centerville and remained there until night. Gen. Beauregard's plan was to throw sky rockets to let us know when to retreat further towards Manassas Junction, and when we called in the last pickets, we were fired upon by the enemy and two of our horses were killed from under their riders, Edward Hayth and William Walton.

During the night we marched across Bull Run at Mitchel's Ford and laid down for the remainder of the night in front of the guns at Manassas Junction. We were awakened next morning by the firing of one of the enemy's guns called "Long Tom." As this was the first big gun I had seen fired, I remember well the appearance of that shell to me. It looked more like a gate-post flying through the air than any thing else I could compare it to. After hissing through the air about a mile it exploded and I told the boys I knew it had

blown Manassas Junction to “kingdom come” and she would need no more protection. It wasn’t many days after this though, until we became more accustomed to the big guns, so we didn’t jump at such hasty conclusions and the firing wasn’t so exciting or terrifying. I hadn’t seen much of the infantry until that day and when they began double quicking and crossing Bull’s Run at Mitchel’s Ford in order to meet the enemy, I imagined we had men enough to whip the North right there.

At 9 o’clock on the 18th, the two armies met and for two hours a raging battle followed and when the Southerners made a charge all along the line, they drove the enemy back with considerable slaughter, into the timber back of the lowlands, where the battle was fought, and they remained there until Sunday, with “Long Tom” occasionally saluting us. Our line of battle extended from Blackburn’s Ford up nearly to Stone Bridge, a distance of 10 miles.

Sunday morning at about 8 o’clock Long Tom began firing and we all thought the enemy meant to renew the attack, but about 9 o’clock we heard firing at Stone Bridge about six miles above Manassas Junction.

The cavalry was immediately ordered to make a force march to Stone Bridge and when we got there we found that the 8th Georgia Regiment, commanded by Col. Huntington, in trying to hold the ford had lost nearly all their men and their commander. The 2nd Va. Regiment arrived to go to their rescue, but failed on account of the thick pines. About this time Jackson came in and with Gen. Bee and others, turned defeat into victory. Gen. Bee rushed to Jackson and said “General they are beating us back,” and Jackson said

“we will give them the bayonet.” Gen. Bee encouraged by Jackson’s response shouted to his men: “Look! there is Jackson and his men standing like a stone wall.” He was ever afterward called “Stonewall Jackson.”

Gen. Bee was killed in a few minutes after making the remark to his men. The enemy, under McDowell’s command, was driven back with dreadful slaughter to Washington.

As we of the 2nd Va. regiment were unable to get to Stone Bridge to aid in the battle there and were in a dangerous position, being between the fires of both armies, Gen. Beauregard ordered us to the rear. Just at that time Gen. Jos. E. Johnson, coming in from the valley, rode up to Beauregard’s headquarters and took command, he being a senior officer. He immediately sent a courier to Col. Radford to halt the 2nd Va. Cavalry. Col. Radford told the courier to go to the D—— that he was acting under Beauregard’s orders. We were not aware of Johnston being near, but as soon as Johnston saw we didn’t halt he galloped down and shouted: “In the name of Jos. E. Johnston I command you to halt.” Of course, it wasn’t any trouble for Col. Radford or his men to halt, then.

He commanded us to cross Bull Run and go toward Cub Run Bridge to intersect the enemy’s line as it passed on retreat, and to shoot all the horses drawing the artillery and wagons. There being 1,000 of us, we held the road for nearly a mile, coming on their right flank and being so near before they knew it that we succeeded in capturing 24 pieces of artillery and the men commanding same. The road was lined with dead horses for nearly a mile, a sight no one

would want to witness again, but we were only carrying out orders.

Our captain ordered the fences to be pulled down and 3 other men and I dismounted and tore them down on both sides. When we mounted we happened to look to our left and saw a house with a crowd of men standing around a well. I proposed to these three comrades that we could go up and fill our canteens as it was such a hot day. When we arrived, there were 60 or 70 of the finest looking men I ever saw, about middle-aged and finely dressed. More gold-headed canes, gold glasses and gold teeth than I had ever seen before on that number of men. We asked them to fill our canteens, which they did and just as they filled the last canteen, one of the men said to us that our command was retreating and I rode around the house to where I could see our line and it had passed nearly out of sight. Just then two guns that we hadn't captured with the other 24 pieces of artillery, and a regiment of infantry also, opened fire on our regiment, and Capt. Radford of 2nd Va. regiment and Serg. Ervin were killed and several others wounded.

Just as we four men arrived to recross the road, a cannister of grape shot passed down the road striking two of our horses. We rode on about a half mile under a heavy fire, but they were over shooting us, just stripping the leaves from the trees, when one of the horses fell dead from his wound and the other one was still running on three legs. I took the saddle from the dead horse and carried it on my horse that was called the "Flying Artillery" and wouldn't carry two men, and another comrade took the rider of the horse that was killed.

We overtook our regiment just as they were ready to recross Bull Run, and were held in readiness the remainder of the day, but no order for action was given and near night fall marched back to our camp ground of the proceeding night.

Just after dark a heavy rain began and continued all night and about half the next day, so we were thoroughly drenched by this time. Shortly after day break we started toward Centerville and our skirmish line captured several prisoners on the way. We moved very cautiously through the woods in the downpour of rain, thinking the enemy was at Centerville. But instead of the enemy being at Centerville, we found the homes deserted. Tables were set with the most delicious victuals, fine drinks, etc., having been prepared for a general jubilee after the supposed victory. Some of the houses were locked, but the majority were so that we could easily enter and some of the owners soon returned, so we enjoyed a bountiful repast that was intended for the northern soldiers. After the victory at Stone Bridge and the capture of the artillery at Cub Run Bridge, as they were retreating, the enemy rushed on to Washington panic-stricken. Had we realized the condition of the enemy then, as we afterward knew it to be, we could have pursued them and easily captured them, but we didn't know the conditions.

We remained at Centerville until about 4 o'clock, when we began our march to Fairfax C. H., arriving there about night. The next morning we sent out scouting parties and videttes on all the roads and marched on to Falls Church and put out our pickets, some of them nearly in sight of

Washington. We remained here several weeks and enjoyed the fruit of a 300 acre peach orchard. Finally a division of infantry was sent to Mason Heights, which they captured without any great loss, and a few days later Munston's Heights were taken in the same way. From the Heights the city of Washington could be seen, but the distance was too great for any bombardment. We moved camp about this time and when we got to our new camp a terrible rain and wind storm came up. It was a regular equinoxial storm. We hurriedly put up our tents and our Orderly Serg. cautioned us to tie our horses well as it was so stormy. He cautioned Marcus Ammen especially as he had an old horse called "Roachback" that was in the habit of breaking loose and rooting around the tents to hunt for corn. William Harvey, Henry Payne and McCaga Pitzer couldn't sleep, as the wind was blowing so dreadfully, so they got out and built a fire and cursed everything and everybody from Jeff. Davis down to Buckie Brugh, one of our company. Kent Stoner was sleeping with me and I told him I'd give him my room and go out and help the boys celebrate around the fire. I reminded Kent of Basil Underwood's sentence to death at the "Ringing of the Curfew," and how his sweetheart said the "Curfew shall not ring tonight," and that my motto for the present was that "Roachback must get loose tonight." I went and untied Roachback and led him up to Albert Pitzer's tent. The horse soon began rooting for the corn and the orderly went out and soon recognized the horse as Mr. Ammen's. He led the horse down and hallowed: "Marcus! Marcus! Mr. Ammen! Mr. Ammen!" And Marcus yelled back "hello!" Then he said "here is your horse that has gotten

loose. You must not tie him well. Come and I'll show you how." He did, and they both went back to bed.

In a short time I led him up again and he began his search for the corn. Pitzer rushed out and called Marcus again and Marcus said "well d—— that horse."

He tied him again and I went then and talked to that cursing crowd at the fire and when Marcus and Pitzer got quiet, I led Roach-back up for the third time. Pitzer came out yelling to Marcus that he must keep that horse tied. Then Marcus said curse words thick and fast. I thought I'd had enough fun out of the boys for that night so didn't untie the horse any more.

Pitzer was always telling us to fall into line quickly, so the boys nicknamed him "Quickly." Marcus was very quiet for awhile and presently he broke the silence by saying: "D—— old Quickly! If he fools with me any more, I'll thrash him." I was afraid to go back into the tents for fear the boys would suspect me of the mischief, so I slept in Capt. Pitzer's headquarter wagon. It was midnight by the time Roach-back got settled and the boys never knew until I told them, about six months later, that I had caused the fun and trouble that stormy night.

The enemy then began fortifying Arlington Heights and bringing in troops to hold their position, our men began falling back toward Centerville, but keeping our pickets out about twenty miles toward Washington.

About October 1st the northerners began driving in our pickets, and Col. Kershaw, thinking it was a regular advance of the enemy sent me with a dispatch to Gen. Bornem at Fairfax C. H., and he brought four regiments and the