

Mike Pillsbury

" A SOLDIER OF SHERIDAN "

as told by

PVT. FRANCIS CHARLES FORBES  
Company D 8th Vermont Regiment

to

HIS SON  
John Albert Forbes

To Ruth Lucia Latham Pillsbury

from her mother.

September 17, 1957.

A SOLDIER OF SHERIDAN  
FRANCIS CHARLES FORBES

First Recollections of the Civil War

In '61 I was working for Grove Talcott who lived where Roscoe Mace does now. One day I saw a hay-rack pass the house. It had the Stars and Stripes flying from a pole, and men in it were shouting and singing, "Come on boys! Come on!" That was a short time after the battle of Bull Run and the North was realizing that the war was a big thing and was calling for men.

I was at that time 13 years of age. My parents were living on the Roe place about three-quarters of a mile south of the village. My brothers Robert, Rollin and Benjamin were with them.

Soon a great flag pole was erected on the village "green" on the three-cornered plot in front of the Bingham house near the spot where the present pole stands. It stood 150 feet high, spliced of course. The trees for the pole were cut in the Bradley woods west of Oak Hill, and there was a "bee" when it was cut and snaked to the village. The great pole stood during the War, but was taken down soon afterwards, for people were afraid it would fall on someone or do some damage.

In the fall of '61 the first regiment of Vermont cavalry was raised, and it encamped on the old fair grounds north of the village of Burlington. Well, I was out there looking around with the Marshall boys, George Bliss and others from Williston. I went out as often as I could, and lived around the camp on and off for two or three weeks, helping care for the horses of the soldiers, and trying to make myself useful. I wanted to go

with them. I knew when the regiment was leaving for the South and I was there that day to help lead the horses along when they "carred" them. But Father heard they were leaving, and thinking that perhaps I might run off twith them, he came to the camp and said to me, "Come on home, boy; you'll have a chance to go later." I did not believe him.

In '62 I worked on George Landon's farm, which was just south of the Reed farm on the Lee Road, about a mile south of the village. Landon was an assessor of taxes. Those were the days when everything you had was taxed: organs, pianos, gold watches, carriages, etc. Landon was away from home most of the time, so the farm work was left to two Irishmen - John Larkin and Mike Burke - and myself. All the haying had to be done by hand for the meadows were all cradle-knolls. I remember one incident that happened that summer there. It was a rainy day and old John had been drinking pretty hard. At milking time when he went to carry a full pail of milk into the kitchen, he stubbed his toe on the threshold and fell sprawling and the milk was splashed all over the clean floor. I never saw such a mess. Mrs. Landon was mad, and poor John was trying to apologize, but was too drunk to help clean up much of the mess. It is strange how I can remember little things like that but forget what happened a few days ago. When my time was up I took two yearlings and a cook stove that had a reservoir for pay. My pay was eight dollars a month that summer. The summer before I got five per month. But I knew that Mother had no cook stove with a reservoir, so I gave that to her and Father kept the yearlings for me. I don't know what he did with them. I never saw them again.

In '63 I worked for Harry Miller who lived in the village in what is now the Bingham place on the corner. He had two old red cows and one of them had the most crumpled horn I ever saw. I used to milk them out doors across the road from the house in the lot now known as the Miller Lot. Harry Miller was well to do and he had a couple of Indian ponies, or so we called them, and I remember how I learned to ride them standing up on their bare backs, one at a time of course, and would race up and down through the village street.

I wasn't going to school much. When I did, I went to the little brown school house that stood where John Forville's store does now. Later I went for a few weeks in the lower room of the brick academy. I don't recall that I learned anything much there. My brother Robert went "up stairs."

I went to church every Sunday with Father and Mother. We were Congregationalists and attended the old brick church. When I had no shoes of my own I used to wear an old pair of Mother's to church.

In the fall of '63 I went to work for Dave Murray who lived on the Charles Walston farm, later owned by the Charlands. Dave set me to work drawing stones when there was snow on the ground, and I did not like that. One night at Murray's there was a husking bee. The barn floor was cleaned up and a great heap of corn piled up in the middle of it. The corn was "snapped off" and ready to be husked. It was young Rollin Murray who got up the bee and no ladies were present. Dave himself stayed in the house, so did not know what was going on in his barn. When they had all come the young fellows thought it would be fine to have something to drink. So they asked me to go down to Eber Baldwin's

and bring back some whiskey but I wouldn't go. So Phaley Cavanaugh muffled the hoofs of the old white horse and galloped off to Baldwin's in "Sucker Hollow." They were careful not to let the old man hear him go. He soon came back and then most of them got drunk. About ten o'clock Mrs. Murray called us into the house for refreshments. Her son Rollin didn't appear and his mother wondered why, but did not know that he was too full to stir. The doughnuts and coffee and pumpkin pies were too much for the full stomachs and the whole crowd was sick.

When the winter term opened I began going to school again at the little red school house at Oak Hill. Isham Talcott was the teacher. He must have been about seventeen years of age then. But I did not go to school more than three weeks for war meetings were being held often in the town hall at the village and excitement was high and I was wanting to enlist. So I left school one day in December and went to war.

#### HOW I ENLISTED

President Lincoln had called for three hundred thousand men, and "We're Coming, Father Abraham, Three Hundred Thousand Strong," was being sung everywhere in the North. Col. Stephen Thomas, later Brigadier General Thomas, had returned from the seat of war in Louisiana and was in Vermont raising a regiment for General Butler's command. It was to be the "8th Vermont Infantry." Col. Thomas held three war meetings at different times in Williston. I think that the Colonel was the only speaker at these meetings. Men came to hear him from all parts of the town and from St. George and other towns.

I went everytime, I think. One night there was a big crowd out. The Colonel spoke of the War in the South, of the need for men and how it was the duty of every young man to volunteer. And that night eighteen Williston men and boys enlisted. We put our names down on the paper for the list. I think that we signed on the same old desk that still stands on the platform in the town hall. Here are the names of those who enlisted that night, December 28, 1863:

1. Lawrence Kelley	7. Ben Charles	13. John Rolo
2. Charles Christmas	8. Bertram Brown	14. Lonzo Lee
3. Prentice Bullock	9. Mitch Osborne	15. George Baldwin
4. John Larkin	10. Ransom Fay	16. Will Simonds
5. Mike Burke	11. Fred Bliss	17. Robert Forbes
6. Henry Barber	12. Charles Sprague	18. Francis Forbes

The next night we who had enlisted all came down to Deacon Miller's, and we were sworn into the service. The Deacon's house stood where the cellar is that is near what is now known as the Barber barns. There we were mustered into the Vermont military service. My father said that if I did not want to go now he would go in my place, but I wanted to go and so would not hear to his going. My mother gave me a New Testament, and I carried it through all my service - the only thing that I started out with and brought back home after the war was over.

All of us that had enlisted went to Brattleboro in a day or two. We were marched to the barracks. It was night when we arrived there. I had an upper bunk, and in the night my silver open faced watch fell to the floor and was ruined.

All of us tried to get into the cavalry but could not do so. Col. Thomas was there in camp and was recruiting for his regiment - The 8th Vermont - that was stationed at New Orleans. The Colonel

made us the proposition that if we would enter under him we could have a leave of absence of two weeks or so at home before we were to sail. Robert and I and four or five others from Williston signed up to go with Col. Thomas, and then we went home for our leave of absence. Robert hurt his foot chopping while at home and so did not go with me when the time expired. When the leave was up we again went to Brattleboro, from there by train to New London, Conn., and by boat from there to New York City. We arrived in the night and marched a long distance across the city in the snowy slush, and boarded the old "Cahabah," and pulled out into the river and anchored there. We set sail the following day for New Orleans. There were eleven hundred of us on board - mostly Vermonters. Besides the enlisted men there were sixty deserters and bounty-jumpers, who were under guard on the hurricane deck.

#### A STORMY VOYAGE

Everything went well til we struck Cape Hatteras where one of those terrible winter storms came upon us. It lasted three days and three nights. We all had to be shut up below decks during the storm which was especially severe. The bulk heads had been removed to make way for the tiers of bunks that extended one above another the entire length of the ship. The bunks were arranged four or five high with just room to crawl under to get to one's bed. The only light came from the port-holes, and these could not be opened on account of the great waves except on the side of the ship away from the wind, so the air in the place was very bad. The grub came down a long spout and at the word "grub" we had to get what we could as it came down. Coffee came in

pipes and faucets. That was the first time I ever had coffee to drink. Every man was his own nurse and his own doctor. To make things pleasanter all the bounty-jumpers and deserters had to come below during the storm, and they robbed and plundered the sick soldiers. In the darkness we could hear cries of "I'm robbed" ring through the ship. The deserters got mixed up with the others and so it was hard later to sort them out. Most of the men were sea sick, and as they lay in their bunks they would vomit over into the narrow alley-ways, 'til the filth was ankle-deep on the floor. To make matters worse, a sailing craft with one hundred head of cattle on board was in tow of the "Gahabsh" and of course that delayed us and made it all the more tedious. Our supply of water ran low and we were allowed but a few swallows of warm water from the tanks that were carefully guarded. I was not sea-sick - one of the few who were not.

After the storm ceased we were allowed to come on deck. On the deck was Col Thomas' horse apparently dead. Looked like a drowned rat as he lay in his stock. He finally survived and went to Louisiana, and even returned with us to the Shenandoah campaign, and was shot in the beginning of the battle of Cedar Creek, shot with buck shot in the head by the Johnnies when the Colonel, who was officer of the day that day, was riding out beyond the picket line to see what the un-looked for disturbance meant. As his horse fell, the Colonel shouted, "You got Old Pete but you haven't got Old Thomas," and escaped. Pete, the horse, recovered and returned to his master's head-quarters himself, where he was found after the battle by some men of the 8th. So he escaped



death the second time. After the War was over Pete went back to Vermont with the Colonel, who kept his faithful beast 'til Pete died of old age. Pete was a handsome dark bay Morgan and weighed about ten hundred.

To return now to the account of the voyage: The storm stopped a day, I think, before we got to Key West. When we came on deck, as narrated above, one of our men, crazed by the storm and terrible experiences, climbed onto the wheel-house and sprang into the sea, where he must have been eaten by the sharks that followed the ship. I saw him jump with my own eyes. There were some other men who had to be watched, so deranged had they become during those three days of sufferings.

#### AT KEY WEST

We stopped at Key West to water up, and here we felt for the first time the hot southern sun. The Darkies rolled the tierces of water. We left the cattle here. We remained at Key West only an hour or two.

#### ON TO NEW ORLEANS

About one day later, I think, we entered the mouth of the Mississippi, and sailed up the river to Algiers which is opposite to New Orleans. We landed at Algiers. There we joined the regiments and companies we were assigned to and went into camp. We remained at Algiers two or three weeks, and we put in that time drilling and learning the manual of arms. A corporal or sergeant would take a man out and drill him on the manual and teach him to march saying, "Hay-foot, straw-foot" to keep him in step. Some of the men like old Mike Burke and John Larkin never could

learn to do it, much to the disgust of the drill master. I never had any trouble learning the manual, etc. One night the long roll beat and we formed a line of battle, for it was said that Gen. Kirby Smith, the Rebel Commander in Louisiana, was going to make an attack on us, but it was a false alarm. I went over to see the city of New Orleans just once. There I remember seeing in a great ware-house a lot of Darkies cracking oysters, shelling them.

While at Algiers we were under the command of General Banks, who had failed in the Shenandoah, and had then superceded General Butler in command in Louisiana.

#### EXPEDITION TO THE RED RIVER

We expected to fight Kirby Smith, and after we arrived there his army disbanded into guerrilla bands and then our regiment was detached into companies to hunt guerrillas. This was up near the mouth of the Red River. The companies of the 8th Regiment were detached and located in various places along the river doing picket duty, guarding the railroad, fighting mosquitoes, rattlesnakes and alligators, mules and niggers. Company D was guarding the railroad and the mosquitoes were so thick and large that one man became so crazed with them that he took off all his clothes and hollered and yelled and went running down the railroad track. At the same time we heard an awful noise in the swamp, a slashing, which turned out to be a drove of mules--as crazy as the man from the mosquitoes. While we were in camp there, a man from Williston, Johnny McGargin, and a native of Louisiana, who had joined the Company, got to scrapping and chewed one another up like bull dogs. They were parted and taken down to the Bayou to be washed up, and

he jumped in and swam away from them. Saw no more of him for nine days. There was some cavalry stationed eight or nine miles below us who said that one of our infantrymen was on the shore a few miles below. A detail was formed from the Regiment and they went after him, brought him back and buried him.

We then had orders to return to Algiers. On the fifth of July we sailed on the St. Mary for Fortress Monroe, and made the trip in a mail steamer in six days with pleasant weather. About half way across we struck the "Alabama", and the Captains passed a few words, we having been ordered to get out our guns from the hold as soon as lights were sighted. We stood at attention while the Captain of our boat and the Captain of the "Alabama" talked. There was nothing more said, but the ship began to start. We expected to be sunk, or all taken prisoners. The Captain of the "St. Mary" told us afterwards that the strange ship was the "Alabama", the famous Confederate cruiser. If so, it is very strange that we were not captured. We stopped at Fortress Monroe, and expected to land, but received orders to proceed to Washington.

#### AT WASHINGTON

We marched right out up past the White House. Someone had stolen my shoes and I had to go barefoot. It was early in the morning, but Abraham Lincoln was there and reviewed us. We marched on the Fort Stevens, northwest of the Capital, where there is now a tablet. Abraham Lincoln seemed to be standing on something - he was so tall. He was viewing the enemy, and just before an officer - a surgeon - had been killed beside him. He was cautioned, but did not heed it. The enemy was in plain view on a high ridge about a mile to the north. It probably was the rear guard of

Gen. Early's Command. The battle was fought the day before and the main part of the army was gone. Dead soldiers were seen as we passed on. This was my first sight of a battlefield. The next horried thing was two deserters which had been left hanging - one on each side of the road - in a piece of woods that we passed through. They were a warning to us. We had now got across the battlefield. (We arrived in Washington on the 13th of July, and camped that night four miles west of the city. We saw the hanged deserters mentioned above on the morning of the 14th.) On the 14th we broke camp and marched two miles beyond Orford cross roads. On the 16th we waded across the Potamac and camped at Leesburg.

#### TO THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY

On the 17th we marched four miles and camped on the Blue Ridge. On the 19th we stayed in camp all day, and then on the following day we marched across the Shenandoah. As we were going through Snisker's Gap the captain gave orders to the men that not a man should leave the company. But Tuttle and Daniels left the line of march with some canteens and went to a spring a few rods in the bushes, and when they came to the spring there they were met by a crowd of Mosby's men, taken prisoners, and marched away, searched, robbed of their guns, uniforms, and all belongings. A few days later they were ordered to report at the headquarters of Mosby, and parolled them on that condition. But the two Vermonters did not chose to visit Col. Mosby, and so found their way back to their regiment nine days after they had disappeared.

After we had crossed the river and had had dinner, orders came to countermarch back. In the meantime there had been a

severe storm with much rain, terrible lightning, and wind. One or two men were killed by the storm. When we reached the river on the way back, we found it - the Shenandoah - swollen and rapid. So Mike Burke helped me upon to a piece of artillery, saying, "You'll be drowned here, ma boy." When we reached the other side a captain swore at me for riding on the gun, and was going to have me arrested. Mike said to him, "If ye touch this b'y I'll stick ye" and made a pass at the officer with his bayonet. Then he told me to scoot, and so did Mike, and no more was seen of the important feeling "Westpointer." This was about two or three o'clock in the afternoon. We marched all night, and there was no general halt 'til two o'clock in the morning. When we did halt, Col. Thomas came riding along to see how many men were in the ranks, and when he got to company D, he said to the Lieut. Gould, "Where are your men?". "They've all fallen out, Colonel, and are back in the bushes; this (pointing to me) is the only man I've got." Then the Colonel turned to me and said kindly, "My good fellow, aren't you tired? Won't you ride my horse?" I said, "No, Sir." Then he said to the lieutenant, "You want to promote this boy at the next vacancy in the company." "I will," said the lieutenant. (A chance for the promotion came later, but I could not accept.) After a short halt we marched on 'til eight or nine o'clock the next morning when we halted again for breakfast at Leesburg, I think, or in that vicinity.

#### MARCHING AND COUNTERMARCHING

(I have am following closely the diary of Elias Tuttle, a corporal of Company D, who sent me a copy of his diary twenty years ago. It extends only 'til the first of September, or at least the copy I have extends only to that date. I have been following it quite a lot since we arrived in Washington.)

"July 21: Marched all last night, camped four miles East of Leesburg. At two P.M. moved again a short distance. At nine P.M. camped again. Warm and dry.

"July 22: Marched at 8 A.M., camped ten miles from Chain Bridge at 10 P.M., smoky and warm.

"July 23: Marched at 8:30 A.M. and camped across Chain Bridge at 4 P.M. Warm.

"July 24 and 25: Laid in camp.

"July 26: Broke camp at 11 A.M. and camped three miles past Rockville.

"July 27: Marched at 5 A.M. and camped at 1 P.M. three miles past Pyattstown. Warm weather.

"July 28: Marched at 5 A.M. to Monocacy Junction, and camped at nine A.M., and marched at 8 P.M.

"July 29: Marched all last night and camped at 4 A.M., and marched at 9 A.M. and camped two miles east of Harper's Ferry at 11 P.M.

"July 30: Marched at 6 A.M. three miles west of the Ferry. Stopped one hour and marched at two P.M., camped two miles west of Jefferson at 12 P.M.

"July 31: Marched at 6 A.M., camped three miles north of Frederick at 6 P.M. Very hot indeed.

"August 1: Laid in Camp. Very warm.

"August 2: Marched at 1 P.M. to Monocacy Junction four miles, met 2nd Division. Very warm.

"August 3: Laid in camp. Cooler.

"August 4: Ordered to march at two P.M. Marched at 8 P.M. Waded the river. Cloudy.

"August 5: Got on the cars at two A.M. Got to Harper's

Ferry 5 A.M. Marched on the hill under M.D. Heights. Camped at 8 A.M. Warm.

"August 6: Marched at 6 A.M. in the rain to Halltown and camped at 1 P.M. Pleasant.

"August 7: Laid in camp. Pleasant.

"August 8: Laid in Camp.

"August 9: Laid in Camp.

"August 10: Broke camp in the A.M. and marched to within one mile of Berryville.

"August 11: Marched one mile through town and formed in columns for battle. Cavalry took 40 prisoners. Camped four miles east of Winchester.

"August 12: Marched at 5 A.M. camped at Middletown at 6 P.M. Heavy skirmishing in front.

"August 13: Lived on green corn.

"August 14: Remained in camp.

"August 15: Marched at 11 P.M.

"August 16: Arrived at Winchester at 5 A.M. Camped.

"August 17: Broke camp at 4 A.M. marched to Berryville, Arrived at 12 noon.

"August 18: Marched at 4 A.M. Stopped from 9 A.M. 'til 4 P.M. three miles north of Berryville. Camped three miles south of Charleston.

"August 19 and 20: Remained in camp.

"August 21: Broke camp at 1 P.M. and marched to the north of Charleston and built breastworks.

"August 22: Left at 1 P.M. and camped at Halltown. At 4 A.M. moved forward. Camped in the woods, skirmishing in front.

"August 23: Laid in the woods. Skirmishing all day.

"August 25: Skirmishing all day.

"August 26: Firing 'til near night, and reconnaissance.

"August 27: No enemy found in our front today.

"August 28: Broke camp at 7 A.M. and marched two miles south of Charleston and camped at 6 P.M.

"August 29: Built breastworks at night. Heavy firing in front today.

"August 30: Built breastworks today.

"August 31: Laid in camp today, and were mustered for pay."

To go on with my account of some of the things that I remember happening during the period that is covered above by Comrade Tuttle's diary: Once near Charleston, between twelve and one o'clock at night, the lieutenant came around and whispered to us to get up and move immediately, and be careful not to let our canteens rattle or to make any noise. It was the darkest night you ever saw. Looked as though it was going to rain. We fell back to Maryland Heights. The enemy followed us, and we went into camp on Maryland Heights. There I saw the biggest hog I ever saw in my life. We scared him up as we went into camp. We went for him and killed him and had some port steak for breakfast. Oh, it was tough! Right away our company was detailed to support a battery which was stationed right on top of the Heights. The next morning when we awoke, our pickets were a little way down the valley and the Rebels were a short distance farther away. We laid there all day, supporting that battery, which kept firing all day. We fired also. One of the guns was demolished by a Rebel shot, and two or three of the battery men were killed or wounded. We lay in between the pieces and saw



all there was to see and hear. The next day there was no enemy in sight. They had all left in the night.

One day we were in camp with the enemy so near that we had been ordered not to fire off a gun in camp. But there came a big drove of hogs into camp and the temptation was so strong that some of the men in the 47th Pennsylvania could not resist shooting a few of the porkers. In fact, we all took after the hogs and clubbed and bayoneted them, I helping all I could. Our company got one, killed it and dressed it. In a few minutes a half dozen of us were put under arrest by the Officer of the day for disobeying orders. Our guns were taken from us. But soon we were given them back again and were detailed for picket duty, and that was all the punishing we got. It was the only time I was ever under arrest.

All the events related before took place, as recorded in Tuttle's diary, in and about the region surrounding Harper's Ferry. We manouvered and manouvered and manouvered, just as had been done during the last three years, and all to no purpose. Gen. Hunter and Gen. Franz Sigel had failed to do much to straighten out the situation, and the 6th Corps, to which we were assigned, was under their command. But Lincoln and Grant knew that something must be done in the Shenandoah, and so on the 6th of August Philip Sheridan took up his headquarters at Harper's Ferry in an old hotel. Sheridan was only 33 or 34 years of age and weighed only 115 pounds, and was but five feet five inches in height, but he was a giant in ability and soldiership and strategy. And soon there was a change in the Valley of the Shenandoah. We all knew that we had a new commander. We all felt that there would be something done, and there was.

WITH PHIL SHERIDAN COMMANDING

Here I quote from Gen. Sheridan's "Memoirs", Chapter XXIII, page 475: "In a few days after my arrival preparations were completed, and I was ready to make the first move for the possession of the Shenandoah Valley. For the next five weeks the operations on my part consisted almost wholly of offensive and defensive maneuvering for certain advantages, the enemy confining himself meanwhile to measures intended to counteract my designs. --- Upon the advent of Torbert Early immediately grew suspicious, and fell back twelve miles south of Martinsburg, to Bunker Hill, where his flank would be less exposed, but from which position he could continue to maintain the break in the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, and push reconnoitring parties through Smithfield to Charlestown. These reconnoitring parties exhibited considerable boldness at times, but since they had no purpose in view save to discover whether or not we were moving, I did not contest any ground with them except about our outposts. Indeed, I desired that Early might remain at some point well to the north 'til I was fully prepared to throw my army on his right and rear, and force a battle, and hence I abstained from disturbing him by premature activity, for I thought that if I could beat him at Winchester, or north of it, there would be far greater chances of weighty results. I therefore determined to bring my troops, if it were possible to do so, into such a position near that town as to oblige Early to fight. The sequel proved that he was accurately informed of all my movements. To anticipate them, therefore, he began his retreat up the valley the day that I moved out of Halltown, and consequently was able to place himself

south of Winchester before I could get there."

On one of these mancoverings the following occurred which I had a part in. A head-quarters drummer boy came into our company (he was at one time previously of Co. D) and said that he knew where there was some honey, and wanted me and another fellow to go with him and get it. Said that he would furnish horses and pails, so we went. It was in the night. Well, we went out about two miles beyond the picket line, and struck the place. It was a farm. The old farmer had procured a safe-guard from our army, being suspicious that some of our men might be tempted to molest something of his property. We built a smudge and proceeded to take the honey from the hives. The old man, he set up an awful howl, and tried to have the "safe-guard" shoot us, but the drummer boy said to him, "Shoot, and you are a dead man!" We were all armed with revolvers that the drummer had furnished us, and I guess that he had two or three revolvers. The safe-guard threatened us, but he did not shoot, and we got the honey. There was a tree of pound-sweets in the yard, and the drummer said, "Let's get all of them that we can." Then the old man jumped right into the air when he saw us getting the apples, and he was going to have the safe-guard arrested and courtmartialled for not doing his duty. But I guess he never did.

We put the apples into our frocks or blouses. Then we mounted and carried the honey in pails, each man carrying a pail in front of him on the saddle. We hadn't gone a great way before we were halted, and supposed we had run into a band of "gerillas." But our leader said, "Stop right here, boys, and I'll go ahead and see who they are and what they want." But they proved one of our pickets. An ammunition train had gone into camp since we

had gone through. We proved ourselves all right, but had to give them some honey and apples to let us pass. Then we knew that we would have to go through another picket on the other side of the same outfit, so he got a pass from the sergeant or corporal, to let us go through. Finally we got through all right, and struck our own pickets, and we had to give them some too, a little, and we were pretty well besmeared with honey - the horses, too. We had honey enough to last for some time. I went to my company with my apples and honey, and when I got there, Robert wanted to know where the honey was. I told him, and he began to eat honey and hard-tack, and in a minute he got a live bee in his mouth, and it stung his tongue so badly that he could not eat in comfort for some days - not even speak for quite a while.

BATTLE OF WINCHESTER OR OPEQUAN  
September 19, 1864

We were lying in camp somewhere near Harper's Ferry when on Sunday at noon there came the order to be ready to march on a moment's notice. But we never got the order to move 'til two o'clock the next morning, so we had to lie or sit around as best we could without blankets which were rolled up, but which we could not use. We had supper. History says that we made coffee, and left camp at three o'clock.

We started out, and in the thick darkness, over rough ground through the lots. The boys were wondering where we were going. Some said, "We are going home," and some said, "We're going to a long home, some of us, before night." Well, we went on with the usual halts and starts, and about sun-rise we heard the guns booming in front of us. We knew that something was coming then.

Well, we went on, going through a piece of woods about ten or eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and there we began to see the first sights of war: Ambulances backed down on the right side of the road and a big hospital tent on the same side, and they were carrying the wounded in. And on the other side of the road was a thick woods, and that was full of cavalry, for acres, as thick as they could be. They had fallen back from the front. Their wounded were being brought back all the time. The Rebels were shelling the woods as we went through. Limbs of trees were coming down around us. I don't remember that I was scared at all, but wanted to get into it as soon as I could.

We then had orders to "right flank, single file, march, and form a line of battle." We got formed. We did not have orders to fire. We could see the enemy. We were at the edge of the timber, and the enemy was in the edge of another wood opposite across a large field of uncut hay. They were probably a half mile away. The first bullets that I saw from the enemy struck a tree close by me, and some of them stuck. A man by the name of Day, of my company, was shot through the sleeve, and wounded slightly. He was later killed at Cedar Creek. A sergeant, who had recently been made a lieutenant, was wounded right away, too. Then our company was ordered to deploy as skirmishers, so we went right out to the front. There we fired and loaded and fired 'til between three and four o'clock in the afternoon. We could see the enemy plainly. Two men of our company, Casey and Bullock, close by me were wounded slightly. Casey was shot in the mouth, but soon was ready for service again. I fired 35 rounds of cartridges. We were supposed to have 40 rounds, but we had

used them up on previous skirmishings. After we had shot the 35 rounds, a fellow came along with a whole haversack full of cartridges, and he was throwing them down just as if he were salting cattle, a handful or two in a place. Then there was a lieutenant, I did not know him, came along. I had picked up some gun to cap it, and I saw that the tube was gone. The tube is the primer on the firing cap. I handed the damaged gun to the lieutenant. He said, "Throw it away. There's one right over there under that dead man." Well, I got the gun from under the body and went on loading and firing. I fired 35 rounds with that gun.

Then we had orders to "left oblique." When we had executed the order, I and a fellow by the name of Barstow were going side by side, and he was struck by a ball right in the calf of the leg. He jumped and hollered, and I always thought that the same ball struck me just above the ankle, but it did not break the skin. He went back. Then we formed a line again. Then came the order "to Charge." It must have been nearly four o'clock. We charged across the open field to where the enemy's main line had been, and there there were lots of dead Rebels. They had gathered up some of them, and they lay in rows. That was my first sight of anything like that. Right there was a Rebel Officer mortally wounded. He could not be moved, so his men had set him up against a tree. And he had a little dog that was watching over him, and the officer was swearing and cursing the Yankees. He had a nice gold watch-chain that took my eye, and I suppose that he had a nice watch. Then we went on and up a grade to a wall, and behind that there were some Rebel skirmishers. We drove them out.

Then off to our right we saw brigade or division of Union cavalry, commanded by Custer, making a charge. It was one of the grandest sights I ever saw in my life. It was just at sun-down. The sun light on their drawn sabers as they dashed along was wonderful to see. They charged the main body of the Rebel army, and captured a great many prisoners.

From there we went on and went into camp at dusk near the village of Winchester. There there was a Rebel battery that had been shot to pieces, and four or five horses killed or wounded. The groaning of the wounded beasts annoyed us, and we knocked them on the heads with an axe to put them out of their misery.

That night and the next day the enemy fell back to Fishers Hill their stronghold in the Shenandoah Valley. This wasn't more than three or four miles from Strassburg. We moved to Cedar Creek and vicinity.

BATTLE OF FISHERS HILL  
September 22, 1864.

We were brought down through Strassburg and I don't think that we had much fighting. After we got through Strassburg, pretty near to Fishers Hill, we saw where there had been a New York regiment on a charge. I saw a little fellow coming back, wounded, crying, and he said that all his company had been killed. So we expected to have to go right where he had come from, but we didn't. Well, we waited, standing in line of battle a long time. The Union cavalry was working round on the right flank, and Gen. Crook had gotten around then all ready to drop his shells on the Rebels, and the Johnnies got demoralized and got out. They skedaddled and left their artillery that stood

behind their earthworks. I presume that the foundations of the pieces (stone foundations) are still there. We went on, and followed the enemy all night as he fled up the Valley towards the south. The whole army followed them.

We went three regiments abreast, one in the road, one on each side of the road. The men marched four abreast. The road sides were as bare as the road, and had been used all through the war by both armies. Our regiment was on the left in the lead, and we had orders to halt when we got down to the river where there was a bridge. One column of four's could cross at a time. There had been a trap made for us to fall into, for the enemy knew that we would have to halt and pass the bridge in that manner. There was a Rebel battery stationed on a hill above the bridge. (The stream was called Tom Brook.) Just as Colonel Thomas gave orders to halt, he said, "You had better sit on your blankets, the ground is damp." Then the Rebels, who were probably a rear guard that we were pressing closely, began to fire on us. Their fire in the night looked like the light of lightning bugs. They fired one volley into us, and then they broke and ran after we fired a volley into them. They had used their rifles. Their battery fired, also.

A lot of our men were hurt, especially the men who were farther back waiting in the road. We were too close and low down. It was the 12th Connecticut, I think, that got it the worst. Then there was a shell that struck near where Liout. Gould and I were. It burst and threw dirt and mud all over us, and a piece of it hit Gould in the wrist. Then I had to tie up his arm, and I tore pieces off his coat to do it. I coarded up his arm.



Then there was a regiment that was ordered over the bridge, and they charged and drove the enemy, and that ended the battle of Fishers Hill. Yet that incident at the bridge was the most critical time that I ever saw in the war. It was night and the horses were running about riderless. I was knocked down someway, and my jacket torn off me, but I got up and went on. I think that the battle by the bridge lasted about a half an hour.

Then we went on and camped at Harrisonburg, I think.

Twenty years after the war, I visited the important battle-fields of the Shenandoah, and the excursion stopped pretty close to Fishers Hill. A man who had been in the 1st Rhode Island Cavalry and his small son and I went on to the hill. We saw a lot of Darkies working a stone-crusher, after the ravages of the war. It being a very hot day, we went under a large pine tree, looked up and saw a big bulge in the tree; and he said that he bet there was a ball in there that had hit the tree during the war and it had made a bulge in the tree where it had struck and stuck. So I climbed the tree, and examined it with my knife and soon struck iron. He sent his boy to the train and he got a hatchet, and we got out what proved to be six or eight pound shot (solid shot) that had been fired in from the direction of Cedar Creek. It was too hot and the shot was too heavy to carry easily, but the boy was anxious to keep it, so we let him have it, and I suppose that he has it now.

At the same time we had a gathering at Harrisonburg, and the Daughters of the Confederacy got up a great dinner for us. There were many ex-confederate officers that spoke there, and the women were after funds to raise funds for a monument to the

Southern men. One of the events of the day was a shooting match between the "Blue" and the "Grey." We used the same type of old guns. I won a ribbon for good marksmanship. When we were there I was talking with a little Confederate who pointed out to me a man who had lived in that locality during the war, who made his brags that he had shot 70 Union men - stragglers - during the years of the war. He must have been as good a marksman as I was. This was a scene much different than those of the real days when we marched and fought in the same Valley and over the same farms and fields.

During these excursions we had our camp at Winchester, using the old kind of tents that had been put up for us, and from there we would go forth every day to visit the scenes. We dedicated a monument at Winchester and another at Cedar Creek - that is, the 8th Vermont Regimental Associations. Two men of the 8th - Carpenter and Hill - put up these monuments. The one at Cedar Creek stands just across the pike on the slope from our camp. It was there that the hottest fighting took place. These two regimental monuments were the only monuments on these fields at that time. At Winchester there is a beautiful Union Cemetery. The dead are buried according to regiments and states, and it is well kept up. The Confederate Cemetery is beside it, but at that time there were no stone monuments, merely wooden markers. It was to buy monuments that the Daughters of the Confederacy were wanting money. We gave them quite a lot.

That day, while we were at Harrisonburg at the dinner, Gen. Fitzhew Lee, a famous Confederate cavalry leader, who had commanded a division or brigade in the battle of Cedar Creek

and other battles of the Shenandoah, was one of the speakers. I had the pleasure of meeting him and shaking hands with him. He was a nephew of Gen. Robert E. Lee, and was later a general in the Spanish American War, in the Philippines.

In the Shenandoah we saw evidences of Yankee ingenuity. Some Northern soldiers had settled there after the war and owned farms. A few now had good barns which had been built to replace those destroyed in the war. As yet the fences had not all been restored, and cattle were wandering about at will, but we could see that the Valley was fast recovering from the storm of battles that had devastated it from '61 to '65.

An Englishman had bought the Belrose mansion and estate of 1100 acres, which included all the battlefield of Cedar Creek; this mansion was Gen. Sheridan's headquarters for a month or more before the battle of Cedar Creek. During the years after the war his men had ploughed up many balls and relics of the battle and he had saved them. He told us to make ourselves comfortable on his nice lawn, and he had his men bring out the baskets of relics and he told us to help ourselves to them. I got a piece of shell and some bullets. I also got a piece of cedar wood from the site of the monument on the field of Cedar Creek.

#### ON TO STAUNTON

We lay in camp at Harrisonburg two or three days, and then marched on south up the Valley as far as Staunton, which place was southern limit of our campaign in the Valley of the Shenandoah. There was a big flour mill in Staunton. We got the old miller to work and while we camped there we had pancakes three times a day. Col. Mosby, before this, had burned our supply train way back at Berrysville, and so we were glad to use the

flour from this mill. It was here that we saw little boys standing at the gates of the houses in the village waving the Stars and Stripes. They must have been staunch Rebels there, but this they did to protect their property, and probably when the Southern troops went through the town they would have been seen out waving the Stars and Bars. It was in this village that a boy by the name of Thomas Woodrow Wilson was living at that time, and I suppose that Little Woodrow was one of those who waved the Union flag so energetically when we were about. He was some eight years of age at that time.

#### WAR'S DEVASTATION IN THE VALLEY

Now Gen. Sheridan determined to return north as far as Strassburg, at least, and destroying, according to the commands of Gen. Grant, every bit of food, grain, and produce of any sort that would give comfort and aid to the enemy. The Shenandoah Valley was one of the best and chief sources of supplies of food for the armies of the Confederacy. I quote from Sheridan's "Memoirs," Chap. III, Vol. 2, page 55:

"-----I determined to withdraw down the valley at least as far as Strasburg, which movement was begun on Oct. 6th.

"The cavalry as it retired was stretched across the country from the Blue Ridge to the Eastern slopes of the Alleghanies, with orders to drive off all stock and destroy all supplies as it moved northward. The infantry proceeded the cavalry, passing down the Valley pike, and as we marched along the many columns of smoke from burning stacks and mills filled with grain, indicated that the adjacent country was fast losing the features which hitherto had made it a great magazine of stores for the Confederate armies."

On the 9th the cavalry had a sharp encounter with the Rebel cavalry under Resser who had come to the aid of Early. We, the infantry, had no part in it, but remained stationary that day.

The 8th Vermont was the rear guard of the army as it passed down the valley, or I should say that the regiment was one of the brigades that did the rear guard duty. We were stretched way across the valley. "On the 10th my army, resuming its retrograde movement, crossed to the north side of Cedar Creek." (Sheridan's Memoirs." There we built breastworks. We laid there 'til the 19th, the date of the famous Battle of Cedar Creek, one of the most remarkable battles of the whole war, if not of all wars.

#### BATTLE OF CEDAR CREEK

We did camp and picket duty during those days, and there was some reconnoitering every day. There was a signal corps station on the Blue Ridge that was signalling right over our heads to Gen. Early's headquarters. In the daytime we could see the flags waving, and at night we could see their lights, torch lights, giving the messages. I think that we captured them on the mountain before the day of the battle.

Then came the battle of Cedar Creek. Sheridan was in Washington, and the commander of the army was Gen. Wright, commander of the 6th corps. That is, he was left in command while Sheridan was away. Sheridan had been called to Washington by the War Department.

The night before the battle I was detailed to go on picket. It was a large detail out of our regiment. Col. Thomas was Officer of the Day and he took the responsibility of placing a picket out that was larger than usual. The colonel was

suspicious that the enemy was planning some move or surprise, and so he notified the corps commander who ordered him to report his suspicions to Gen. Wright. Gen. Wright did not think that there was any danger nor need of special watchfulness. But the larger picket went on just the same.

As I have said, I went out on this large detail. About 200 men of the 8th went on picket, and the rest of the regiments sent an equal number, I suppose. When we got out there, they lined us up and an officer wanted to know if our guns were loaded. When this officer found that we did not have our guns loaded, he placed Lieut. Cooper, who went out with us, under arrest and sent him back to camp. The next day Cooper was in the battle and was killed. Our Captain, Captain Getchell, was sent out in his place, and took command of the picket posts for our regiment, that is, of the men from the regiment who were on picket duty that night.

Everything went all right 'til about two o'clock when I went on for the second time. Then I heard firing way off to the right. Well, it sort of alarmed the captain, and he came up and wondered, but said that the cavalry was probably having a little brush. But we found out later that that firing was intended to draw our attention that way. Between three and four o'clock we heard firing on our left. Then the captain said, "That must be up where the 8th corps is. The Rebs must be attacking them pretty smart." That's what it was.

The Rebels marched their army along under the mountain and took off the pickets of the 8th corps, capturing them. They made them think that they (the Rebs) were the 5th New York Regiment, a cavalry regiment that had been sent out on reconnoitering

duty and was supposed to be returning to camp at that time. After they had got the pickets they overpowered the 8th corps in their camp, and that was the firing we heard on our left. Col. Thomas went out to see what was going on and was told to surrender. He said that it was too early in the morning, and wheeled and got away. (His horse "Pete" was wounded, according to the reports later in the day, and not at this time as I had supposed when I began this story.) He went back and ordered his brigade right up to the front. Then they had it hand over fist.

When it got daylight we could look from where I was posted and see the Rebels in our own camp. We were probably two miles away from our camp, nearer to the Belrose mansion than to our camp. I called the attention of the captain to the fact that I thought the Rebels were in the camp and he agreed that that was doubtless true. They had driven out everybody, the 8th and the 19th corps, and they (the rebs) were eating our breakfast. They were about starved anyway.

Everything we had on wheels was on the move to the rear, and we could see them going plainly. The Captain said, "Those are the Johnnies all right."

There was an old officer, who I think was going to be the next officer of the day, or else had been before Thomas. He was so drunk that he reeled in his saddle, and he was feeling very important. He wanted to be officer of the day still. He said, "If any of you leave this post, I'll mow you right down." The captain pulled his revolver and said to him, "If you don't get out of here I'll shoot you right down," and the old drunk

came to his senses and rode away. Then the captain said to us, "Come on, boys,"

The Rebs were close on us, but had not yet discovered us on the picket. We went to the rear as fast as we could, and the captain said, "Every man for himself. Get back as best you can." Just when we had gotten a few rods from our post, and were going through some bushes, we looked around and saw some rebel cavalry on the spot where a few minutes before we had been stationed. They dismounted and took after us. We think that they dismounted in order to save their horses, for horses were scarcer than hen's teeth in the Confederate army, and they (the cavalry) feared the infantry. They fired on us and shouted "Surrender!", but we were a match for them on foot and we ran on as fast as we could go. A fellow named Asa Thompson of my company and I hung together, and we went through one or two creeks. Our clothes were so soaked that we could not run very fast after that. My brother, Robert, was not with us, being on the sick list, and he had a chance to ride away from the camp before the Rebs got in -- rode away in a wagon.

It was between eight and nine, and perhaps no later than half-past seven when we left the post.

The main body of the army fell back before the Rebs and formed a line of battle at Newtown and Halltown. When we were running we saw a few mule teams that had tipped over down a bank, and saw a lot of hard-tack spilled out on the ground. We were hungry and so filled our pockets with them. We had left all our packs and blankets on the post before we left.

Then Thompson and I came to an old family burying ground. There probably had been buildings near there once, but they



were now gone, perhaps burned up on the campaign. We could see a Rebel skirmish-line coming right behind us on the oblique, fast; and Thompson said, "I'm going to get two or three of them fellows!" Well, he and I fired a few shots, but I said, "They'll get us, and I'm going," and I ran on. He stayed and in a little way I looked back and saw that they had killed him there. Well, I went on on my own hook until I struck a piece of timber, and on the edge of that timber there were some Pennsylvania German cavalry stationed there to stop all stragglers. They could not speak English, but I asked where the infantry was, and they pointed up toward the pike, and I went that way. Then the cavalry had orders to dismount and deploy which they did. But I paid no attention to them, and kept agoing while they were fighting with those Rebel skirmishers. I was mighty glad that the Germans were there. I kept going 'til I crossed the pike and I saw flags, the colors of my regiment. There were very few soldiers around there.

I do not know whatever became of the rest of the picket, but the captain came back to the colors. I never knew how he or the men who did get back did it. Thompson, who was killed in the cemetery as I have described, was a brave fellow; standing right up to fire and refusing to run at all 'til he had shot two or three to avenge the death of his brother who had been killed at Port Hudson.

Well, then I joined the regiment. The infantry was forming a line of battle at Newton or Halltown. Then was the golden opportunity for the Confederates to make a second charge and drive us out of the field and out of the Valley to

to Washington, but they were eating in our camp and we were told later that their great General Early was already drunk -- and so the great opportunity for the Rebels slipped away from them.

SHERIDAN ARRIVES IN TIME  
"FROM WINCHESTER TWENTY MILES AWAY"

While we were waiting Sheridan came riding on to the scene. He rode up the pike, and we could see him coming waving his hat and could hear him shouting to his soldiers, "Come on, Boys, follow me, and we'll have our old camp ground before night!" He rode up in front of us and halted and talked with our Brigadier General Mellon. Sheridan went on from there all along the line, and we could hear the great cheer that greeted the great commander as he passed swiftly down the line encouraging his "boys" to "come on!". The rebels probably heard the cheering, and if they did, they knew that their day had come. I noticed Sheridan's horse standing about three rods from where I was. He was all dirt and sweat and he was panting with the terrible strain of that rapid ride from Winchester Twenty Miles Away. Sheridan, himself, was covered with the dust of that Virginia red clay.

While the general was riding up and down the line the balls were flying - there being heavy skirmishing out in front. But we did not move for some time, 'til Sheridan had time to formulate his plans. Sheridan had arrived on the field about noon. We hadn't had anything to eat, but rations were found and we had something to eat - hardtack and some meat.

Then came the orders "to fire," we didn't stir, but

fought where we were. Sheridan wanted to get his cavalry on the flanks of the Rebels so as to capture them when they began to run if he could. Finally we made a charge, and we drove them and sent them whirling up the Valley for the last time! We took all their artillery and all ours that they had captured in the morning when they made their great surprise. We chased them as far as Fishers Hill, and the cavalry chased them much farther. They brought in many prisoners, something like 3000 in all.

As we were driving them through Strasburg we came to a bridge of stone - a narrow one. When the Rebel teams passed over it they piled on to the bridge, and many fell off into the stream on both sides, and we saw them heaped up below in the shallow river - mules and wagons and cannons and ambulances. - It was a real stampede all right. From that spot as far as Fishers Hill the ground was completely covered with implements of war - guns, haversacks, canteens, rifles, and everything that the Johnnies had thrown away in their mad flight. I picked up a nice rifle that I carried a few days, and finally smashed it at the order of the captain who knew that it made too much of a load for me with all my own equipment. Among the other things I saw was an ambulance that had run into a tree. The mules had broken the pole and run away. In the ambulance there were some wounded that were groaning as we passed by.

We went to the top of Fishers Hill and camped in the fort that night. That night when we were all laid down and were asleep, someone was trying to get a cannon. They were Rebels who had concealed themselves in the fort during the retreat, I suppose. They were trying to get away with the cannon by the aid of a mule and a white horse. They ran on to Lieut. Gould,

who shouted, "Dam you, you're Rebels!", and there was a great commotion for a time, and we captured them. That ended the great Battle of Cedar Creek.

The next day I think that we went up the Valley aways. Later we came up north again.

Such was the great Battle of Cedar Creek as I saw it and remember it. Gen. Sheridan by his ability, and more by his personality held up his soldiers, turned a defeat into a remarkable victory for the Union cause. Grant, himself, had he been present, could not have done what little Phil Sheridan did.

"In the battle of Cedar Creek the 8th Vermont played an important part. It entered the fight two hours earlier than any other Union regiment, and it received the heaviest charge that day. It led the charge back and was a part of the 'arrow-head' which had the honor to first pierce the enemy's line of battle in the afternoon. Maintaining that advance, it was at midnight farther to the front than any other of Sheridan's infantry."  
(From the description of the battle by Herbert E. Hill.)

The Battle of Cedar Creek ended the fighting experiences of the 8th Vermont, and "no more men fell in its ranks by hostile bullets."

After the battle we went into camp at Newtown for about five weeks. There was nothing but picket duty to do.

#### AT NEWTOWN

While we were lying in camp there, one day the Colonel sent for me, and I went to Thomas' tent. He recognized me as the boy who did not fall out on that forced march in the summer.

He wanted to know if I wanted to act as his orderly, and I said "Yes, Sir." Then he spoke to his adjutant and told him to write off some of the names of the generals in the division, which he did. I, however, could not make out the writing readily and so I could not fill the bill.

So I went back. In a few days the Captain Getchell sent for me and wanted to know if I wanted to act as one of the "markers" for the regiment. A "marker" is one of the two men that a regiment "lines up on" when it forms in line on dress parade or drills. He said that I would not have anything to carry except the Flag. I said, "Yes Sir." He said, "You're one of the markers, then." One of them had been killed or wounded at Cedar Creek.

Well, I got back to the company and told them what I was going to be, but they set up an awful howl and told me that I would be killed surely if I ever got into another fight. Then, I went back and told the captain that I did not care for the position.

#### ON THE WAY TO SUMMITS POINT

Although we had made preparation to go into winter quarters at Newtown, we were not allowed to remain there. Orders came to break camp, and on the 20th of December we left and marched north through Winchester. (In the evening we passed through that village.) At midnight we bivouacked on the frozen ground. When the drum beat "fall in" in the morning, I found a couple inches of snow on my blankets. It was a great sight to see the whole regiment rise up and shake itself of the snow in the bright sunshine. We had coffee and hardtack and then continued

our march towards Summit Point, half way between Winchester and Harpers Ferry.

#### AT SUMMIT POINT

Here our brigade had the job of guarding the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The rest of the army was sent to the Potomac, except the cavalry, to be under General Grant at Petersburg. We built log huts. They were small and had our tents for roofs. We made chimneys out of mud and sticks and had a fireplace inside. There were four or eight men in a hut. Two bunks on a side. Robert and I were in the same hut. Prentice Bullock and Lawrence Kelley were with us, I think. We did picket duty on five miles of that railroad. We guarded supplies for the cavalry and for us.

One day Mosby's men came near the camp and captured our woodtrain (a wagon train of three or four wagons that were sent out to get fire wood) and took eleven men and all the mules, leaving the wagons. We followed them 'til dark. They could not go fast for the snow was pretty deep and they had put two or three men on a mule, I guess. We couldn't catch them. They took their prisoners to Richmond. All but one slipped their guards and came in to our camp the next day.

#### A SEVERE WINTER

The Virginia winters can be cold as we found out in our camp at Summit Point. During January and February, 1865, there was a lot of snow - at least one foot - and with a crust thick and strong enough to bear a man's weight. Old inhabitants of the Valley said that it was the coldest winter in thirty years, and we believed them.

To make the winter life interesting, we heard often of the presence of the Rebel Gorilla Leader, Colonel Mosby, who was supposed to be in that vicinity. We had to watch out for him and his raids, even though Early had long since been defeated at Cedar Creek.

#### A NIGHT RAID

One day in February I was on picket. When I came in that night Mike Burke came to me and said that he had been picked to go on a raid that night to some place and that he did not want to go. He wanted to have me go in his place. I was willing and the orderly sergeant said that it would be all right for me to go.

The detail which consisted of men from all the companies of the regiments of the brigade and I think that there were about thirty-five of us altogether that were ordered to report for duty.

We were marched into a big tent where we were lined up, and one of Sheridan's scouts, who had been out that day two or three miles beyond the pickets had found out that there was to be a gathering of Mosby's officers at a party at a certain house that night. He told us that we were to go to that house and search it. The scout looked us over, marching up and down in front of us - eyeing me and the others closely.

A lieutenant from one of the regiments commanded the detail. We went across the lots on the crust 'til we struck a cross road. It was a pretty dark night. We followed the road 'til we came to a lane that led to the house mentioned before. We had seen

the lights of the house from a great distance. We left three men and a corporal at the entrance of the land.

The house, which was an old hotel, stood back on an elevation. The order was given to surround the house and to secret ourselves behind trees for protection. When all were ready the scout approached the door and rapped repeatedly. The light at once went out and no answer at first was made.

Then came a yell, "You can't come in here; you're damned Yankee robbers!" The scout replied, "I am the man who took dinner here, and I want a night's lodging." Then the scout stepped off the porch and reported to the lieutenant, "No use, they won't let me in."

The lieutenant at once stepped on to the porch and said, "I have here a warrant or order from General Sheridan to search this house for Mosby's officers." "Can't come in here," a voice answered. The lieutenant said then, "We'll give you three minutes. Open the door or we'll fire on the house!"

"Fire away! We won't ever open the door!" was the response.

"Ready, men. Fire into the windows." was the command given. We gave them two or three rounds. Between the rounds the officer demanded that the door be opened. We could hear the women screaming inside when the balls went crashing through the window glass. "Two men step up here, and break down the door," was the next order. I was near so stepped up and began to knock out the panels. The door flew open. To our right we saw two old men, who had double barrelled shot-guns pointed at us. The lieutenant said, "Throw down your guns and strike a match and light your candles." One of the men did so. We went in,



leaving a guard outside. The lieutenant and the scout and half a dozen men - I one of them - entered the hall and went into the first door at the left. We looked under a bed and found a boy and pulled him out. He was so scared that he could not say much. He was about fifteen years of age. I stood guard over him, while the rest went on up stairs and through the house searching. While I stood there a woman came down the stairs, crying and saying that we had shot her baby. Then another came down, and they sailed around there in their great hoop-skirts. The search revealed no one. If there had been anyone in the house they had made their escape or had secreted themselves too well for us to find them.

Then we took one of the old men and the boy to the next house and there we found a Union family. We had quite a time to get into the house for they were naturally afraid that we were Rebels who had come to take the man of the house. But when they found out who we were, they identified the young fellow as a nephew of the older man and that he was not a member of the Rebel Army. Well, we let them both go, and we went back to camp.

#### THE DEATH OF LINCOLN

One morning I went down to the stream to fill canteens. As I was stooping down, I saw a lone cavalryman ride down to the opposite bank to water his horse. He told me "Abraham Lincoln was assassinated last night." I carried the sad news to the camp.

On April 15th, my regiment with other troops was hurried to Washington by rail, and formed part of the body of infantry

that were drawn around the city to prevent the escape of John Wilkes Booth, the murderer.

The next day when it was known that Booth had escaped from the encircling line of soldiers, the regiment returned to Summit Point. We were here but a short time. We went up the Valley for the last time for Johnson had not surrendered and there was still some fear that he and his rebel army might still make an attempt to make a dash down the Valley. The War was really over, but we did not hear of Johnson's surrender 'til we had marched a day or so up the Valley. Of course Appomattox had seen Lee's surrender some time before. The War was really over.

ORDERED TO SAVANNAH  
LEAVING THE SHENANDOAH

On April 21st, we left the Valley for the last time, and went to Washington where we were encamped near Fort Stevens, and later the 8th was stationed near the Arsenal in which the assassins were confined. On May 23rd, we took part in a review of the 19th Corps by President Johnson. I don't remember that I saw the new president at the time. He did not stand out so prominently as Lincoln did.

ORDERED TO SAVANNAH

Later on June 1st, we were ordered to board ship for Savannah. This we did not like for we had seen all we wanted to of the South and the War was over. We went on board ship, however, but at the last minute the 8th Vermont was countermanded to leave the ship. This was done through the influence of Gov. Smith of Vermont who was in Washington at the

### AT GEORGETOWN

We were moved to Georgetown where we went into camp. We camped there and drilled and waited for chances to get transportation for home. We remained here 'til after the Grand Review in Washington, drilling every day so that we could put in a good appearance. We found this disagreeable.

### HOME

After the Grand Review was over we were ready and anxious to see home again. The Regiment made several attempts to get train accommodations, but there were not as many railroads as there are today, and the cars were in poor condition, and the service too poor to accommodate so many soldiers at one time. Finally on the third time we got aboard. Box Cars! No luxuries for the returning soldier in those times. I rode on top of a box car to New Jersey. Those cars had railings around the edge. We ran our own risk in riding in such a dangerous place. I think that one man was killed by crossing from one car to another. It was hot there on the car tops, and there were plenty of cinders. We crossed the Susquehanna River on a great ferry onto which the cars were run. It was a tedious journey. If the war had lasted another year I do not think that there would have been a car left. From New Jersey on we rode in old rickety passenger cars that held together 'til we got to Burlington, Vermont.

In Burlington we marched to the Town Hall where we were given a great dinner and Welcome Home. This was about the last of May in '65.

After dinner I rode out to Milliston with one of the men named Ingrham, the headquarters drummer boy who had taken me on the honey expedition. He was the biggest daredevil in the army. I've seen him dash into a skirmish line to save his sheep that he was in charge of. Well, we hired horses to ride and came home and stayed all night. My people were then living on the Douglas place on the road that runs parallel to the village road, about a mile north of the village. I don't remember seeing much of Robert on the trip from the south nor at home after arriving. I remember seeing Father and Mother who were probably glad to see me. They killed the fatted calf. It seemed strange to sleep in a house again, and to hear the rats running in the partitions.

#### MUSTERED OUT

The next day we went back to Burlington and there we were mustered out and received our pay. Robert was there, and must have been with me the day before, but I can't now remember that he was with me much. I suppose that there was so much excitement that it drove everything else from my mind.

While we were in the army we received \$13.00 per month from Uncle Sam, and \$7.00 state pay. The latter amount went to Mother. She had received that every month while we were away. We were paid something at Burlington, but I do not know how much.

#### AFTER THE WAR

Soon after our return, Father bought the Landon place at Tafts Corners and there we went to farming. The next great event was the Griswold Murder which was worse than the war, or so it seemed to us soldiers.