

<http://stores.ebay.com/Ancestry-Found>

E577

.5

7th

577

<http://stores.ebay.com/Ancestry-Found>

n

E

577

.5

7th

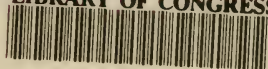
<http://stores.ebay.com/Ancestry-Found>



McDaniel, J.J. Co. "M"

Diary of battles, marches and
incidents of the Seventh S.C.
Regiment

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00010290867





Class E 577

Book .5

7ch

DIARY
OF
BATTLES, MARCHES AND INCIDENTS
OF THE
SEVENTH S. C. REGIMENT.

BY J. J. McDANIEL, OF CO. "M."

The 7th South Carolina Regiment was organized at Camp Butler, S. C., on the 15th of April, 1861, to serve for twelve months. T. G. Bacon elected Colonel; R. Fair, Lieutenant Colonel, and E. Seibles, Major. This Regiment was noted for the fine material which composed it. It was among the first to go to Virginia, and was formed into a Brigade with the 2d, 3d and 8th S. C. Regiments, and placed under Gen. Bonham; and ever occupied the advanced position of our army around Centreville. In the famous retreat from Fairfax to Bull Run, previous to the battles of the 18th and 21st of July, 1861, this Brigade covered the rear. During the fight, the 7th and 3d were guarding the centre, not engaged, though under an artillery fire. The 2d and 8th were engaged. Gen. Kershaw was appointed over the Brigade at the resignation of Gen. Bonham. The Brigade remained in front at Centreville until the army evacuated the place, the 8th March, 1862, and arrived on the Peninsula the 9th April. I enlisted for the war with a reëlisted Company (M), on 24th March, and arrived on the Peninsula shortly after the Regiment.

In the following sketch, my object is to give a truthful narrative of facts which came under my observation, for with Æneas I can say, *Magna pars quorum fui.*

On 28th April, 1862, took the train on York River & Richmond R. R., and two hours brought us to where the Mataponi and Pamunky form the York river. Here, transferred to transports, we soon are be-

ing tossed by boisterous winds and waters of this famous river, which is very straight until it empties into the Chesapeake. Four hours, and we are approaching Yorktown, celebrated in history for deeds of valor done, which crowned our first Revolution with victory, and taught a powerful and proud nation that "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." As we near the landing we view with scorn the gunboats of the enemy riding the waves, though at a very respectable distance from our huge guns, which bristle along the breastworks. Occasional shots are interchanged, and some shells fall in dangerous proximity to the transports discharging their precious living freight, which seem to produce nothing more than some amusing remark from some witty soldier. We ascend the heights to the town. Alas! the desolating track of war meets the eye on all sides in smouldering ruins, lonely chimneys and deep entrenchments. Ah! McClellan, you could never have reduced this place by approaching in front, had not your gunboats, aided by the James and York rivers, given you such facilities for *flanking it*. Hence Gen. Johnston properly ordered a retreat in the direction of Richmond, where he could draw you out from the shelter of your boasted power, and fight your mercenary hirelings in open field, where Southern patriots, armed with the triple armor of justice, could defeat your motley crew of foreigners and oath-breaking Yankees.

Our regiment being sent to guard Dam No. 1, here we are kept in almost a constant state of excitement. The Warwick river, a small stream running into the James, had been enlarged by damming it up every few miles, to prevent the enemy crossing. This was done by Gen. Magruder, who had command of the Peninsula, before the arrival of the army of the Potomac, under Johnston. The enemy attempted to cross once, and were driven back with slaughter by the 3d Georgia regiment. The pickets at night would fire at the least noise in the water, and one rainy night our regiment was double-quickened to the river, by the continued volleys of musketry, when it was thought afterwards, instead of Yankees, some sentinel had fired at noises made by frogs.

It having been determined to fall back, we found it necessary to make a feint to cover the retreat, and while the wagon trains and main army were being hurried off, the 7th and 3d S. C. regiments were sent down to Land's End, junction of Warwick and James rivers. We went down 30th April; on the opposite side of the river the Yankees were thrown into activity at our approach. We were strung out, and built large camp fires through the woods, making the appearance of a large force. About dark, with our fires lighting up the whole face of the heavens, we were silently withdrawn, and ordered back to camps. We had scarcely left our illuminated camps when the enemy began to shell them furiously, which occasioned many a merry laugh. But now, though escaping the enemy's missiles, we are severely tested; we are

22-32940

near eight miles from camp—very dark and raining—the road is about impassable to wagons, in places *belly* deep. Coming down we could see and leave the main track, but not so now; it is with difficulty we feel our way through the almost impenetrable darkness and deep mud. Many a soldier measured his length. I saw one fall two or three times in succession, producing the hearty yells of all around. Many stepped into *mud-holes*, sinking up the length of their legs. We arrived in squads at camp from midnight till day, begrimed with mud and drenched with rain; when we had an opportunity of again meditating over the vicissitudes of a soldier's life; but we are in for the war, we have counted the cost, whether with one third of our enemies, we are determined to be freemen or slaves; we have chosen the former or death.

May 3d.—All the army and trains having left but our division, at dark on 3d May, the division moved off and our Regiment was rear guard. We marched all night, and at sunrise, Sunday, 4th, we reached Williamsburg. Here we lay till evening, waiting on the heavy trains to precede us through the deep mud. About 1 o'clock, just as the last wagon had left, we resumed the march, but just as we entered the town, the report of the enemy's artillery was heard firing on our rear guard. They had discovered our retreat, and were pushing on after us, with the assurance no doubt from the false prophet and reporter, McClellan, that our whole army would be captured. The order immediately ran down our ranks, "about face," with a shout it was obeyed, and that rear guard, with determined faces, were seen rapidly meeting the enemy. We had just left some strong redoubts thrown up in the edge of the town. It was now a struggle who should reach there first, we or the enemy. Fort Magruder is now in 200 yards of their advance; at this juncture a N. C. Battery passed by us in full gallop and enters the fort, unlimbers, and pours into the enemy's battery a heavy fire. For several minutes an artillery duel rages, many shells bursting over the North Carolinians, though the shells that passed over them fell among our and other regiments following us. We thought we were going to this fort, but when within 150 yards of it, the command was given "by company into line," and we were turned directly to the right to take possession of another redoubt 2 or 300 yards off. We had to pass through an open field directly in front of the enemy's battery, and had they used grape or canister (which I suppose they had not), we would have been badly cut up. When about the middle of the field we were halted and commanders ordered to dress their companies. While thus halted, and I being the guide upon which the company was dressed, a rifle conical shell passed in a few inches of my head, just passing the entire front rank; had it struck me, probably the entire front line would have been swept away. But an over-ruling Providence shielded us. I learned the same ball cut off one man's coat tail, tore another's gun in two, and shattered another's

arm as it passed through the 8th S. C. Regiment on our right. We soon arrived at the redoubt on the right, and there had a full view of the fight progressing on the left. Soon we saw a long line of cavalry emerging from the town, approaching within a few hundred yards of the enemy's and our battery. Suddenly with drawn swords and a wild yell, such as Southerners alone can give in a charge, Col. Butler (then Major) with his horsemen are upon the battery, capturing the guns and gunners, and sending dismay among the enemy. This bold charge ended the fight for the day, with the exception of some skirmishing.

That night about 10 o'clock we again were on the march—that is Magruder's Army Corps—to guard the trains, while Longstreet's Division, who were encamped beyond Williamsburg, were ordered back to meet the enemy. Monday, 5th, witnessed the terrible struggle of the battle of Williamsburg. We could hear the deep roar of the guns as we toiled through the mud and rain, and next morning we received the glad news that our forces had repulsed the enemy and held the entire field; notwithstanding, the *brave* McClellan, ten miles off, sends back, not his first nor only *lying* despatch, that we were routed. It was in this battle that "fighting Joe Hooker" got the false title by McClellan's report of "Hooker's grand bayonet charge," all of which was branded with the lie by Gen. Early. If they made a charge it was not on our troops. For the bravery of our troops, they had "Williamsburg" inscribed on the banners of those regiments engaged. Our regiment and division halted next day till Longstreet's Division, retiring from their victorious field, had passed us. We then slowly retreated in line of battle, but the enemy were satisfied, and did not again molest us, and we took our line of defence on the Chickahominy River.

May 12th the 7th Regiment was reorganized in accordance with the Conscrip^t Act of Congress, of April 16th. Two of the companies, "M" and "A," were reënlisted and consequently were organized, the others reelected officers, seldom retaining their old officers. May 13th field officers were elected. D. Wyatt Aiken, Colonel; Elbert Bland, Lieutenant Colonel; ——— White, Major. Along our new established line, we had but little to do, occasionally exchanging shells with the enemy, now advanced to the east bank of the Chickahominy. This river made renowned several centuries ago by Capt. Smith's daring adventures and narrow escape on its waters, again has its name been linked in the events of our second great struggle for independence. It is quite a small stream, though its steep banks render it impassable without bridging. It runs in a semi-circle around Richmond. On the west and south side we lay distant some 5 to 8 miles from Richmond. Where the river makes a bend south, there our lines left this stream, running directly across to the James. The enemy, where the location would admit, were building bridges under cover of their guns. Below where our lines left the river, they crossed over large bodies of troops about the last of May, McClellan thinking, no doubt, he would verify

his despatch sent from Williamsburg, "he would press us to the wall." On 31st of May, about 12 o'clock, we heard the roar of artillery, and soon volleys of musketry succeeded, 4 to 5 miles to the right of our Brigade; soon we were under marching orders, proceeding rapidly in the direction of the firing. We were halted at 3 o'clock within about 2¹/₂ miles of the left of the raging battle, to prevent the enemy crossing the bridge and flanking us on the left. Here Kershaw's Brigade lay within full hearing of the terrible conflict, until about sundown, when news arrived that our left wing was hard pressed. We were ordered forward at a double-quick, arriving on the edge of the battle field at dusk, when the fighting ceased for that day. We were moved up directly in front of the enemy, and ordered to sleep on our arms. I lay down on my blanket, committing my soul and body to God, thinking of the loved ones far away and of the fierce scenes the coming holy Sabbath's sun would usher forth. Amid these solemn thoughts, sleep overpowers the weary soldier. The next thing I know we are aroused up about midnight, and are soon back opposite the bridge we had left. I learned this was done to still prevent a flank movement of the enemy. Sunday morning, June 1st, at about 8 o'clock, the battle again began and was very heavy for some two hours. But for coming back to guard the bridge the 7th would have been engaged. The firing became farther and farther off, by which we knew the enemy were giving way. The battle of the 31st and 1st, called by the Confederates "Seven Pines," but by the Yankees "Fair Oaks," again evinced the superior valor of the Southerners over Yankees. We drove them some two miles with great slaughter, and then returned back to our original lines, leaving the enemy ditching in the swamps through which we had driven him. The 7th Regiment remained at Smith's farm, opposite the bridge, for a week. The enemy were building two bridges about 400 yards apart. We could have prevented them from working at them, but were not ordered to do so. They were in full range of our batteries. But the sequel proves our leaders acted wisely, as these bridges were of great use to our troops in crossing over to attack the builders. During our stay here it rained almost incessantly.

On June 12th, we were relieved and retired to Camp Reserve, 4 miles of Richmond. Here we remained till the seven days fight before Richmond began. On the 25th June, the 4th Louisiana and 3d Georgia Regiments attacked Sickles' Brigade, which had been thrown forward to extend the parallel sieges, by which the famous ditcher, McClellan, was going to take Richmond. Those two regiments drove Sickles' four regiments back into the entrenchments. On 26th, we were ordered on picket to support a Louisiana Regiment. About 2 o'clock, P. M., while lying in front of the enemy's picket, near the railroad, we heard the heavy booming cannon on the enemy's extreme right, showing that the great struggle had commenced. Lee, with the two Hills, Longstreet and Jackson were leading their invincible troops

against McClellan's strong breastworks. On that night when news arrived that the first line of entrenchments had been carried by our troops, cheer after cheer ran throughout the various regiments of Magruder's Army Corps, still on the south of the Chickahominy, lying in front of the enemy's centre. Our Brigade, in McLaws' Division, were under Magruder. Opposite McClellan's left wing was Huger's Army Corps. On the 27th, our Regiment was ordered forward with a Mississippi Regiment to "feel" of the enemy. In fact the 7th, 8th and 3d regiments of Kershaw's Brigade were manœuvring in front of the enemy most of the day. We were in range of their shells, which were flying most of the day. Late in the day the 7th and 8th Regiments were ordered to drive in the enemy's pickets in front of their advance entrenchments; immediately before this they had cut the timber for 3 or 400 yards; their pickets were stationed in a dense thicket. Lieut. Col. Bland, with Companies A and F as skirmishers, preceded us. He had not proceeded far before encountering the enemy, a brisk skirmish followed. Col. Aiken ordered the regiment forward; the enemy's pickets fast disappeared through the thicket, and took refuge behind their batteries, which opened a most terrific cannonade of shells, grape and canister upon the thicket. We lay down, and these death dealing missiles at first passed high over us, but at every discharge they got our range nearer and nearer. It seems miraculous how any escaped; the tops of the huckleberry bushes were riddled by grape shot as they whizzed over our heads; a shell splintered a tree right at several of our company, sending the splinters in our faces. Soon the Mississippi Regiment to our left attracted their attention, and we retired, with the loss of one killed and seven wounded. This was the first time the 7th Regiment had lost a man in battle. During this day our troops on the enemy's right threw themselves upon him with resistless fury, and drove him from his last strong line of entrenchments around Gaines' Mill. His broken and confused masses retreated in the direction of York River, but finding our forces in his rear, turned and crossed the Chickahominy in the rear of their own centre, and then turned across to seek refuge under their gunboats in James River.

During the 28th, the left wing of our army rested, while the centre was still skirmishing with the centre of the enemy. Early on the morning of the 29th it was ascertained that the centre and left of the enemy were following their shattered right wing in their flight towards the gunboats. We were immediately in pursuit. Soon passing their powerful advanced entrenchments, we saw large fires burning many things they could not carry; our skirmishers were soon engaged with their rear, and from their next stronghold, about half a mile from the first, they threw many shells at us. But soon they were routed out of that, and thus it continued all day. We continued pursuing over a succession of vast lines of entrenchments and through acres of camps,

tents left standing. Hearing a loud explosion, I saw a vast pyramid of smoke rising towards the heavens. This was a vast pile of ammunition they had blown up. Late in the evening they made a bold stand at Savage Station on the railroad. Kemper's artillery, right in rear of our regiment, drew the enemy's artillery fire heavily on us for some time. We were ordered to advance through a dense thicket along the left of the Williamsburg road. They were strongly posted along the farther edge of this thicket, and unfortunately we started with a shout, which enabled them to direct their fire on us, for it is a rule with the Yankees to commence firing at *long range*, and if possible to keep at long range. We did not fire till we got in sight of them and in this thicket we were close on them. Their line was in such a position that the left of our Regiment encountered them before the right. On this account the two right Companies, "M" and "A," became partially separated from the Regiment and advanced on the enemy to the right. We got within thirty steps before we could see them, when we poured in volleys with great effect. Just as we emerged from the thicket, I saw a Yankee, who immediately threw down his gun, and getting on his *all fours*, passed with the rapidity of a quadruped over an open space to a thicket opposite. Just as he entered it, I fired a ball and three buckshot at him. If I did not kill him, he was badly frightened. Another Yankee, seeing us so close, concluded it would be safer to run into our ranks than to retreat, threw down his gun and came dashing into our lines. Lieut. A. P. Bouknight collared him; crying out, "I'm a prisoner, let me go to the rear," he pulled loose and made for the rear faster than a double-quick. The balls were coming too thick for him. The Regiment was ordered back, as it was then growing dark, and laying on our arms in a drenching rain during the night, we arose next morning and found the enemy gone, leaving his numerous dead and wounded.

Eight were wounded in Company M, and about 108 killed and wounded in the Regiment. On the 30th, we were ordered back to cross over to reinforce our troops sent down to the James to intercept the enemy before he reached the gunboats. We traveled all day, and late in the evening came in hearing of the guns of the battle of White Oak Swamp. The fight lasted till 10 o'clock at night. We marched nearly all night and arrived on the battle field at daylight, July 1st. The enemy retreated during the night a few miles to Malvern Hill, a powerful strong position, where he made his last desperate stand to secure his retreat to the gunboats. It is an elevated ridge with extensive slopes, bounded by thickets and swamps in such a manner that we could not make a flank movement on it. On the sides of this hill the enemy's infantry were massed, and numerous batteries crowned the entire summit. We attempted to bring up our batteries on the sides of these slopes to play upon them, but their guns being all in position, would concentrate on our guns and force them to retire. Thus, after trying

most of the day and failing to effect anything with our artillery, our leaders concluded late in the evening to storm the hill. Most of the day shells were passing over and around our Regiment. At 5, P. M., musketry opened fiercely, by some Brigades sent in advance of us. Our Brigade was soon ordered to advance. At this time the balls and shells were falling thick around us, and the nearer we approached the line of battle the thicker they came. We advanced through a dense pine thicket, and almost every tree seemed torn to pieces as the solid shot and shells came crushing along. The enemy not having artillery to contend with, turned loose all their artillery on our infantry, while their infantry poured in continuous volleys from the various lines encircling that hill. Meanwhile our troops were driving back line after line of the enemy towards the crest of the hill, leaving heaps of the slain marking each line. Our Brigade advanced through the thicket on the left of a large field, passing over two other Brigades as we advanced. One of the Brigades was retreating in disorder. Gen. Kershaw ordered ours to lie down, and let them pass out over us. But we jeered them so, that they lay down in front of us, when we rose up and passed over them. Some of their officers were making desperate efforts to rally them. We pressed forward to the edge of the woods, and there found one Brigade lying in a road which had formed a kind of a breastwork by wearing away the earth about 18 inches. With this alone to shield us, we lay down just in rear of that Brigade, ordered not to fire as we had other lines in front. This proved a mistake, as this was our advanced line in this part of the field. We lay here for some time exposed to the most fearful and destructive fire. The enemy's infantry were not over 100 yards, though rather obscured from view by weeds and briars. A perfect tempest of minie balls, grape shot and shells were rained upon us. Every tree round where we lay still testifies to the severity of the fire, from the great number of scars, from the ground to the height of 30 feet. At this crisis Gen. Kershaw was about to order a charge on the vast masses of the enemy, but having received orders when we were sent in to *support* other Brigades in advance, he declined advancing further. But to lay there would be too destructive, therefore we were ordered to fall back to a ravine. It was now growing late, and soon darkness closed in upon the dreadful scene. The musketry gradually ceased, but the night was illuminated by the lurid flashes of artillery, sending the blazing shells flying through the thicket. During the battle the gunboats in James River coöperated, throwing immense shells at us, many of them fully three feet long. I saw some on the field 6 weeks afterwards. But these gunboats did as much damage to their own troops as ours, and were signaled by the enemy to quit firing, they being 3 miles off. I must say this was a badly managed battle so far as our Brigade and the one in front of us was concerned, but not the fault of Gen. Kershaw. Had we risen up and poured in volleys

when nearest the enemy we would have decimated their ranks, but we lost many noble fellows without firing a gun. Company M lost but one, wonderful to tell, the lamented J. R. Bouknight, 1st Lieutenant. The 7th Regiment lost — killed and wounded. Taking advantage of the night, the enemy reached the coveted gunboats, again leaving his dead and wounded. Thus McClellan, who came with a great flourish and boastful threats with a mighty host to take Richmond, has built a Napoleonic reputation among the Yankees, because he *saved* the greater part of his army, his own despatches showing that he beat his army to them 3 days.

Our Brigade camped near the battle field for a week. During this time we heard of several thousand Enfield rifles being left by the enemy a few miles below us on the bank of the James. The Colonel left it to the choice of the companies of the 7th to go down and exchange their muskets for rifles. Company M alone went. But Col. Nance of the 3d took down his entire Regiment. The enemy seems to have thrown away these guns in their eagerness to get aboard their shipping, which shows what a state of demoralization existed among them.

July 9th, we marched back to Camp Reserve, near Richmond. Here we remained, with nothing occurring to interrupt ordinary camp duty until 5th August, when we moved a few miles to Mrs. Christian's farm, where we enjoyed the luxury of bathing during those hot days in the cooling waters of the Chickahominy. No vandal soldier was now there, as a short time back, on the opposite shore, to dispute our right to this healthful exercise. I have seen its waters literally swarming with men as far as I could see. While here, the report came that the enemy were again advancing. We started to meet him, and arrived nearly at Malvern Hill when the advance of the enemy was contradicted. We bivouacked on the ground for the night, and next day returned to camp.

August 10th, we moved camp to Chafin's Bluff, 10 miles off. At this time the 7th Regiment was recruited with 235 conscripts, proportioned among the companies. On the 17th, moved 6 miles farther, and from this place McLaws' Division made a reconnoissance in force to confirm the suspicions of our leaders, that McClellan was stealing off to reinforce Pope. We found them gone. But the sagacity of our leaders had penetrated this "change of base," and already all our army except Holmes', D. H. Hill's and McLaws' Divisions had gone to reinforce Jackson, who was opposing Pope. Holmes' Division was left to guard Richmond. Hill's and McLaws' Divisions left to join the army of the Potomac, which was then between the Rapidan and Rappahannock Rivers. Nothing worthy of note occurred, but hard marching, till we arrived at Warrenton Springs on the 31st, when we heard the glorious news of the great victory of the second battle of Manassas, fought on the 29th and 30th of August. The magnificent

hotel at the Springs was burnt by the enemy as they were forced back in a severe skirmish, in which they contested the crossing of the Rapahannock by Longstreet's Corps. When the victory was officially announced to us, new life and animation filled our weary columns, which had been pressed on by forced marches from Richmond for several days to reinforce Gen. Lee before the decisive battle. Although ours and D. H. Hill's Divisions failed to reach, yet an overruling Providence crowned the Confederates with victory, verifying His word: "Boasting goeth before a fall," for Pope in a lying boast, proclaimed to his army that "the rebels always showed him their backs." On this occasion the rebels had a fine view of his army's backs, but did not enjoy the pleasure of seeing even his *back*.

On the 2d of September, we passed over the portion of the battle-field fought on the 29th ult. Hundreds of the enemy's dead lay unburied, presenting an awful spectacle, mostly much swollen and become as black as negroes. The stench was dreadful from the dead horses and men. A deep railroad cut, for which both parties were contending, showed the fierceness of the conflict from the great number of dead Yankees in it and around it. Jackson's Corps were masters of the cut at night. Our Division hastened through these offensive scenes, crossing Bull Run at Sudley's Ford. On 3d, we went to Leesburg, passing near by the battle field of Ox Hill, fought on the 1st, by Gregg's Brigade. We remained at Leesburg two days. On the 6th, we left for Maryland, marching about 10 miles to a ford; we waded the Potomac River. Some soldiers stripped naked, but the great mass stripped only their pants and drawers, while others "*rolled up their breeches*." These latter got them wet, as the water came up *higher* than they could roll them. The river here was about 400 yards wide, having two small islands. In Maryland we met some friends and some foes. Sometimes an old man with all his daughters would come out to the road, smile upon us, and wave handkerchiefs. Others would close their doors, and we could see them making wry faces from the windows up stairs. As we passed a house of this kind, one of our boys halloed out, "You been wanting us in the Union long time, you got us now." On the 8th, we crossed the Monocacy River and camped near Frederick City. We remained there till the 10th, blowing up the iron bridge of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad over the river. As we passed through Frederick City, great demonstrations were made by friends and foes—some ladies were bringing pails of water to quench the thirst of the soldiers—some milk—some bread—some waved handkerchiefs and Confederate flags, while others waved Union flags from windows and held their noses as we passed—some crying, while our bands were playing and the troops cheering. In passing through this exciting scene, a Georgia Major, inspired in part by the occasion, and in part by liquor, was riding along our lines speaking. He was calling the attention of the citizens to "the grand invincible army of the

South ;" in passing our Brigade, he said, "I'm a Georgian, but I give to South Carolina the honor of beginning this struggle for liberty." We gave him a cheer and he passed on. After passing the city we took the Hagerstown road and traveled that to Middleton. There McLaws' and part of Anderson's Division took the left for the purpose of gaining the rear of Harper's Ferry, while the rest of our army continued up the Hagerstown road. At the towns we passed in this section, the Union sentiment seemed greatly to predominate. Women, with Yankee effrontery from their windows, would make remarks of ridicule, but were always badly cut by a soldier's wit. One asked why our soldiers were so dirty and ragged. She was answered, "Our mammas always taught us to put on our worst clothes when we go to kill hogs." Another wanted to know why so many of us were barefooted. She was answered: "We wore out our shoes running after the Yankees." But I must say in justice to Maryland, we have some warm friends, even in these Union Counties through which we passed. An old man was seen to pull off his shoes and give them to one of our barefooted soldiers, and ride off in his socks.

Our march on the 11th brought us within 6 miles of Harper's Ferry to Pleasant Valley, which lays between two parallel ridges, or properly mountains from their height, one of which we crossed to-day, when lovely scenery began to burst upon our vision. As we descended into the valley we saw a company of the enemy's videttes on the top of the opposite mountain. A few shells were thrown at them and they disappeared. We encamped for the night near the village of Brownsville, reclining in the lap of the mountains. Here the people generally sympathized with our cause, giving us liberally of whatever they could spare, for in our rapid marches and scanty means of transportation, our commissaries could not furnish us sufficient subsistence. We lived principally on roasting ears and fruit, of which the slopes of Maryland produced abundance. On the morning of the 12th we again advanced, detaching Company M and Company A of the 7th, and one from the 3d Regiment, and two from Barksdale's Brigade as skirmishers, we ascended to the top of Elk Ridge, Kershaw's Brigade winding itself up the mountain in rear of the skirmishers, while Barksdale's advanced along the left side of the mountain. As the advanced skirmishers gained the top, they were fired upon by the enemy's pickets, who immediately fled. We advanced along the mountain as near the crest as possible. Soon we came upon another picket post, driving them in. Soon the dim path we were following disappeared amid the rocks and precipices. Slowly and cautiously our skirmishers, stretched across the mountain, advanced among the rocks. So difficult and intricate was the passage along the mountain that Company A got lost and did not reach us till we camped at night. After a while we came upon a third picket post, which we drove in with a volley. We had not gone far from here before we came upon the enemy in large numbers,

strongly posted behind a high ledge of rocks, accessible only by a narrow defile, and that was very rugged, and along it they had formed an abattis of felled trees. We arrived before this late in the evening. They kept up a random firing at our skirmishers till night. Our company was posted on the right wing. Here we lay on our arms, hungry and thirsty, for we had not found a drop of water all day, while the Brigade encamped a short distance in our rear. At Harper's Ferry, which lay at the foot of the mountain, we could now see their numerous tents spread over Bolivar Heights, and hear the continuous long roll of many drums.

At daylight on the 13th skirmishing again commenced. About 7 o'clock the skirmishers were ordered back, when we found the 7th drawn up in line of battle, about to attack the enemy. Col. Aiken ordered our company to the rear to rest, as we had been skirmishing 24 hours without food, water or sleep. The 3d Regiment supported the 7th, and the 2d supported the 3d, while the 8th advanced on the right of the ledge, the height of which prevented this Regiment from flanking the enemy at this point. The 7th opened the fight by advancing over these obstacles against the enemy, concealed and protected by natural and artificial coverings. The Regiment pressed right on over rocks and trees and brush in the face of a destructive fire. In less than an hour they had stormed the stronghold and routed the enemy, who fled about half a mile to another position stronger than this. Here they had a regular fort of logs, extending across the top of the mountain. Our troops advanced against this place in the same order they attacked the other, the 7th in front with the 8th on the right. The 7th had stormed the first place, without the supports being ordered forward, and now it boldly advanced. The enemy had cut down the timber in front of their fort for some distance. Over this our troops rushed, pouring volleys into the enemy, who were sending a murderous fire into their ranks. Soon the 3d Regiment was ordered to relieve the 7th, which lay down to let the 3d pass over, and advanced, making a splendid charge. At the same time the Mississippi Brigade was coming up on the enemy's left, protected by a high cliff. Notwithstanding their strong position, they could not stand the idea of close quarters, and precipitately fled down the mountain to Harper's Ferry. As near as we could learn there were about 3,000 of them. This was about 11 o'clock, A. M. The 7th Regiment lost 113 men killed and wounded, the 3d and 8th not so many, the 2d lost none. Our killed (which exceeded the enemy's from their well guarded positions) were buried in the lofty cemetery of Maryland Heights, where they sealed their devotion to Southern freedom, by pouring out their life's blood upon our country's altars. May these fallen heroes have also offered up christian lives, and have been translated from this, the loveliest of earthly scenes open to view, to fairer scenes on high.

The scenery, viewed from these heights, is the grandest and love-

liest I ever beheld. The mountain seems to have been cleft asunder by the Potomac, the towering cliffs hanging threateningly over each bank. On the Virginia side called the Loudoun Heights. The Shenandoah River empties its waters into the Potomac at the base of the mountain, just before it rushes through the vast chasm. Harper's Ferry lies between these rivers at their junction. From the heights over the town, far to the north-west, the Alleghany Mountains, rising like clouds in the distance, are seen. The Shenandoah, winding along its broad fertile valley, and the Potomac is seen for 20 miles cutting in two a succession of parallel mountains, all the intervening valleys visible in one panoramic view from Maryland Heights.

With some large rifle siege guns, the enemy began to throw shells at us, some passing over the heights, falling near our wagon trains in the valley. But this was soon stopped, as Jackson appeared in front of Harper's Ferry about 2 o'clock, P. M., when they directed their artillery against him. He had preceded us up the Hagerstown road which we left at Middleton in order to get in the rear of the Ferry, while he pushed on, crossing the Potomac above at Williamsport, appeared in front. From the heights, we could see the artillery of Jackson engaged with the enemy on Bolivar Heights. This fight continued at intervals till night. On Sunday, 14th, about 11 o'clock, Jackson began firing from Loudoun Heights, and by 2, P. M., we had got our guns on Maryland Heights, and opened, and thus Harper's Ferry was encircled by artillery, which rained an incessant shower of shells down upon the devoted town. Large masses of their infantry were seen continually shifting their positions. Thus the scene went on till night. While the siege of the town was thus progressing in our front, we were admonished by the continuous deep roar of guns in our rear, that bloody scenes were there also disturbing the peace of this holy Sabbath day. McClellan with 200,000 troops fresh from Washington City, was pressing upon our rear, attempting to relieve Harper's Ferry. With 25 or 30,000, as near as we could learn, he pursued McLaws' Division with two Brigades of Anderson's, operating in rear of the Ferry. Gens. Howell Cobb's and Semmes' Brigades were sent to guard the pass through which we came over the mountain, 6 miles back. Anderson's two Brigades guarded the gap below us through which the river and railroad passes, while Barksdale's and Kershaw's Brigades held Maryland Heights. Thus it will be seen that our entire force was six Brigades, while in front of us was the Potomac River with no point of crossing but Harper's Ferry, and that defended by 12,000 of the enemy; on each side of us almost impassable mountains lay, while in our rear was pressing an army of three times ours in numbers. The remainder of McClellan's army advanced up the Hagerstown road, where D. H. Hill and Longstreet made a stand, as this road crosses the mountain at Boonsboro. Here a bloody battle was fought some 12 miles from us, at the same time that the enemy were pressing their

overwhelming numbers against Cobb's and Semmes' Brigades, 6 miles in our rear. Their numbers allowed them to flank our troops, and especially Cobb's troops were driven back in great disorder. The enemy succeeded in possessing the pass the night of the 14th.

Early on Monday, 15th, all our batteries opened with redoubled fury on Harper's Ferry. At daylight Barksdale's and Kershaw's Brigades were ordered down to the valley, as we expected the enemy, now having the pass, to attack us in rear. As we marched back, stretching our line of battle across the valley, sternness was depicted on every countenance, for we all appreciated our critical position, and determined to stain that beautiful valley with the blood of heroes before surrendering to the hated enemy. About 9 o'clock, Gen. Kershaw, riding in front, cried out "attention battalion," every man springing to his feet, expecting to advance; but instead of that, he said "the enemy have raised a white flag over Harper's Ferry, and Jackson is now marching in to take possession of the town." Such a spontaneous burst of cheers and yells broke forth, echoing through the mountain glens, which no doubt produced a salutary effect on the enemy, for we remained there all day unmolested, while our trains passed over the bridge at the ferry safely into Virginia. Thus it will be seen what an important part the 7th S. C. Regiment took in the capture of Harper's Ferry. Yet I have seen newspaper reports that Jackson captured it with the *loss of but three men*, when the 7th alone lost 113, which I believe was near double the loss of any other, but the 3d had more killed dead. Had not the heights in the rear been taken, the place would have been impregnable.

During the night of the 15th we crossed over the enemy's pontoon bridge at Harper's Ferry, sleeping but a short time during the night; we marched some two miles beyond town, stopping here for the commissary wagons, on the morning of the 16th, for we had got nothing to eat since a few morsels hastily eaten the morning before. Here we lay listening at the battle's roar of Crampton's Gap, beyond the Potomac, where the numerous vandal hosts were pressing upon Longstreet. During the day vast quantities of army stores, captured at Harper's Ferry, guns, wagons, &c., passed by us, while the neighboring farmers carried home by droves the negroes the Yankees had stolen, and were busy employed in reclaiming stolen property of all descriptions, recaptured from the enemy. Late in the evening our commissary wagons arrived, which produced joy throughout the Regiment. But alas! how often is a soldier's expectation thwarted. Before we had time to "draw rations" the order ran down the lines "fall in 7th Regiment," and with hungry stomachs we were soon on the march. Taking the right, speculation ran high as to where we were going. But the heavy guns over the Potomac admonished us that we were going back into Maryland. At 10, P. M., we lay down to be aroused again at 1 o'clock. At daylight on Wednesday, 17th, we were again fording the river at

Shepardstown. We were now pushed on towards Sharpsburg, some 3 miles distant. We could now distinctly see the bursting shells and clouds of smoke which told of the fearful struggle into which we were rapidly hastening. Arriving within a mile of the battle ground, we were halted, and stacked arms. About 9 o'clock we were ordered forward. Soon the shells were flying fast and thick about us. The nearer we approached the line of battle the faster we went, and the last half mile at double-quick. Our knapsacks were now thrown off as we run, making our route look more like a retreat than an advance. We met Hood's Brigade, that had withstood the shock of battle since daylight, retiring. As we were being placed in line of battle, Hood rode up to us and said, "If I had received these troops this morning this thing would have been over." We were now on the left wing of our army, where the enemy had been, and were still, making desperate efforts to force us back and turn our centre. Had he done this, from the nature of our position, our army would have been in a critical situation. Kershaw's Brigade occupied the right of the division—the 2d and 3d Regiments in front—the 8th and 7th in the rear and a little to the right. Our line of battle extended along a ravine and the edge of some woods, which were some 300 yards wide, and extending in length some distance. The 7th and 8th Regiments were a little to the right of these woods, and had just got into position when an officer came galloping back, saying, "The enemy are advancing." The arrival of McLaws' Division was timely, and saved the left wing of our army from being driven back upon the centre. Although that wing was being forced back by overwhelming numbers, the slain of the enemy attested the stubbornness of the resistance. But the enemy now advancing in heavy columns of fresh troops, expected to sweep Jackson's wearied and reduced veterans before them. They did not know that our division had arrived. Gen. Kershaw had just placed the 2d and 3d Regiments in position in our front. The enemy came within 75 yards of these before they could see them, and were received with such a volley that thinned their ranks and stopped their advance; these volleys were now rolling along our entire line. Soon the long dark lines of the enemy were seen staggering back, broken and confused. At this moment the 7th and 8th were ordered to advance. The routed enemy were flying through the woods, while we were pouring volleys into their retreating lines. Soon we had driven them entirely through the woods, over a fence, into a field, to the top of a hill. By this time they were so thoroughly disorganized that every one seemed to be running his best, and fast disappeared in a large corn field in front. By the time we reached the top of the hill they had gotten out of the way of their batteries placed some 2 or 300 yards down the slope. No sooner did we gain the top of the hill, than they opened a most murderous fire of grape and shells from batteries on our right, front and left. Of all the cannonading I ever experienced, this was the most

destructive. It seemed almost whole lines would melt away at once—still the cry was “onward men, onward.” A portion of us had nearly reached the batteries in front—killed and driven off most of the gunners. But at this juncture we discovered that we could not hold these batteries. We had no supports, while the enemy had new lines in their rear, while we were enfiladed by their batteries on the right and left. We now fell back to our first line, the 7th Regiment having lost 169 killed and wounded, being half the men carried into action. Company “M” lost 17 of 29 carried into action. The other Regiments of the Brigade also suffered severely.

In falling back I met Col. Aiken coming out of the battle. Together with several others, we took refuge behind a pile of cut wood in the woods, to determine where to rally the Regiment, as a hurricane of balls were now passing through the forest. Having decided upon a ravine in the edge of the woods, each of us started out to inform those we met where the new line would be formed. We had proceeded but a short distance, before the Colonel was shot through the body, falling on the field, but I did not know it (as we had separated) until late in the evening. He has since recovered. Our Major was killed on the hill, where many of our noble officers and men reposed in the cold embrace of death. But the enemy's loss far exceeded ours. I almost agree with a newspaper correspondent, who said, “In a piece of woods through which McLaws' Division fought, you could walk on the enemy's dead for 3 acres.” The piles of their slain exceeded anything I ever saw, while but few of our men were killed, till we rose the hill in front of the batteries. Our batteries were of little service to us on the left. Had the ground admitted of their advance as we made our grand charge, the right of the enemy would have been swept from the field. As it was they made no more advances on our left, but kept up a furious shelling the rest of the day. It was now about 12 o'clock, and failing to break through our left, the enemy now turned to our centre. Here the contest was short, as they were soon repulsed. Next they assailed our right about 2 o'clock, where the contest raged till darkness put an end to the awful strife. During the evening I occupied a position to see the fight on the right. The enemy were repulsed here as at the centre and left, with great slaughter.

The morning of the 18th broke with profound silence upon the two exhausted armies in front of each other, and the sun scattered his bright rays over the vast heaps of the slain. Hardly a gun broke the solemn silence of the day. During this morning, for the first time since the morning of the 15th, we drew rations. Thus it will be seen that for 3 days without food and scarcely any sleep, we had patiently endured the terrible ordeal through which the love of country and liberty had called us. Gen. Lee's army, reduced by hard marches and sickness to about 40,000, fought the battle of Sharpsburg against the fearful odds of 160,000, repulsed the advance

of the enemy at all points, held the battle field 24 hours, and retired the night after, safely over the river into Virginia, carrying everything away with him, but a part of his disabled wounded. Taking all the circumstances in consideration, truly the Providence of the Almighty was nowhere more strongly manifested in our behalf than in this battle.

The Regiment encamped in the neighborhood of Winchester. On the 20th, the enemy threw a few Regiments across the river. A part of Jackson's Corps captured and killed most of those, after which the experiment of crossing the Potomac in the face of our army was abandoned by the enemy. Here the Regiment remained without anything of interest occurring till the 31st of October. While here, Lieut. Col. Bland, who was wounded at the battle of Savage Station, returned and took command. J. S. Hard, being senior captain, was promoted to Major by the death of Major White.

On 31st October, the Regiment left for Culpeper, where it arrived after 4 days of hard marching. There it remained till the 18th of November, when it left for Fredericksburg, arriving there on the 20th. Our division was the first of the army that reached here. Nothing of much interest occurred till the stirring events of the bombardment of the city, which occurred December 11th, and was held during the day by Barksdale's Brigade. At night they evacuated the place. The enemy were busy crossing the river and occupying the place, preparing for the great battle of the 13th. The place was badly mutilated by the bombardment, the houses generally perforated by shot and shell, yet the heroic Mississippians held the place, under this terrible fire, all day. At night they fell back to the base of the hills which border the plain of the city. They were relieved by Cobb's Brigade, which, taking position behind a stone fence, bravely withstood the fierce assaults of the enemy, whose great object seemed the possession of the hill just in rear of Cobb, for this commanded most of the other heights immediately in front of the city. In this battle, which resulted so gloriously to us and disastrously to the enemy, the 7th Regiment bore an important part. (I was not in this battle, being off sick, and give facts not as seen, but as I learn them from others engaged.) Kershaw's Brigade occupied Lee's Hill just in rear of a redoubt, on which was placed a heavy rifle gun commanding a railroad cut leading out of town. Gens. Lee, and Longstreet, and Stewart stood by this gun all day directing its firing, which cut lanes through the terror-stricken enemy. Late in the evening, with Lee and Longstreet on each side, it burst, hurting no one. Early on the morning of the 13th the Brigade was carried to the foot of this hill, where they remained throwing up breastworks, till 1 o'clock, when it was ordered to the hill, at whose base T. R. R. Cobb's Brigade was. This was over a half mile from Lee's Hill, to the left and nearer the town. They passed under a heavy fire of the enemy's artillery while proceeding to this position. Stopping

in rear of a large brick house, which crowns the summit of the hill, they lost several men, being exposed to the shells and the enfilading fire of the infantry up a ravine on the right. They were soon ordered to the front of the house, when the advancing masses of the enemy were in full view in the plain below. The 3d Regiment was on the hill to the left of the 7th, the 2d and 8th had gone down to the foot of the hill in rear of Cobb's men, the 15th and 3d Battalion (James') which were transferred to our Brigade, were on the right, but not engaged, though the 15th was considerably exposed. The 7th was somewhat protected by a natural depression in the ground, behind which they lay and fired. This depression protected the men from the front, but it sloped off into a ravine on the right, up which the enemy's sharpshooters greatly annoyed the Regiment. Thus posted, the 7th shot over Cobb's men, raining their balls upon the ranks of the enemy, who were hurling column after column against the position, to be shattered and driven back in confusion under a bluff near the edge of the city. Thus the battle raged, till darkness put an end to the dreadful carnage. That night, Kershaw's Brigade, with the exception of the 3d, which had suffered dreadfully, relieved Cobb's, which had held the stone wall at the foot of the hill since the night of the 11th.

Kershaw remained here till the morning of the 16th, when it was ascertained that the enemy had recrossed the river, leaving the plains literally covered with his dead—a just retribution upon the plundering thieves, who largely exercised their propensities while they occupied the city. Thus the grand Federal army of the Potomac, with Burnside, the fourth valiant leader, in its fourth “on to Richmond” met its fourth disastrous defeat. May God, who gave us the victory and who is the judge in our cause, continue to crown our efforts with success.

The loss of the 7th Regiment was 65 killed and wounded. From the best information we could obtain, the enemy fought 48 regiments in front of the stone wall and the hill in rear of it, while we had in actual engagement at those points 3 brigades, viz: Cobb's, Kershaw's and a North Carolina Brigade, or a portion of it—about 12 regiments. A part of the time our batteries on the hill were firing, but the principal work was done by the infantry.

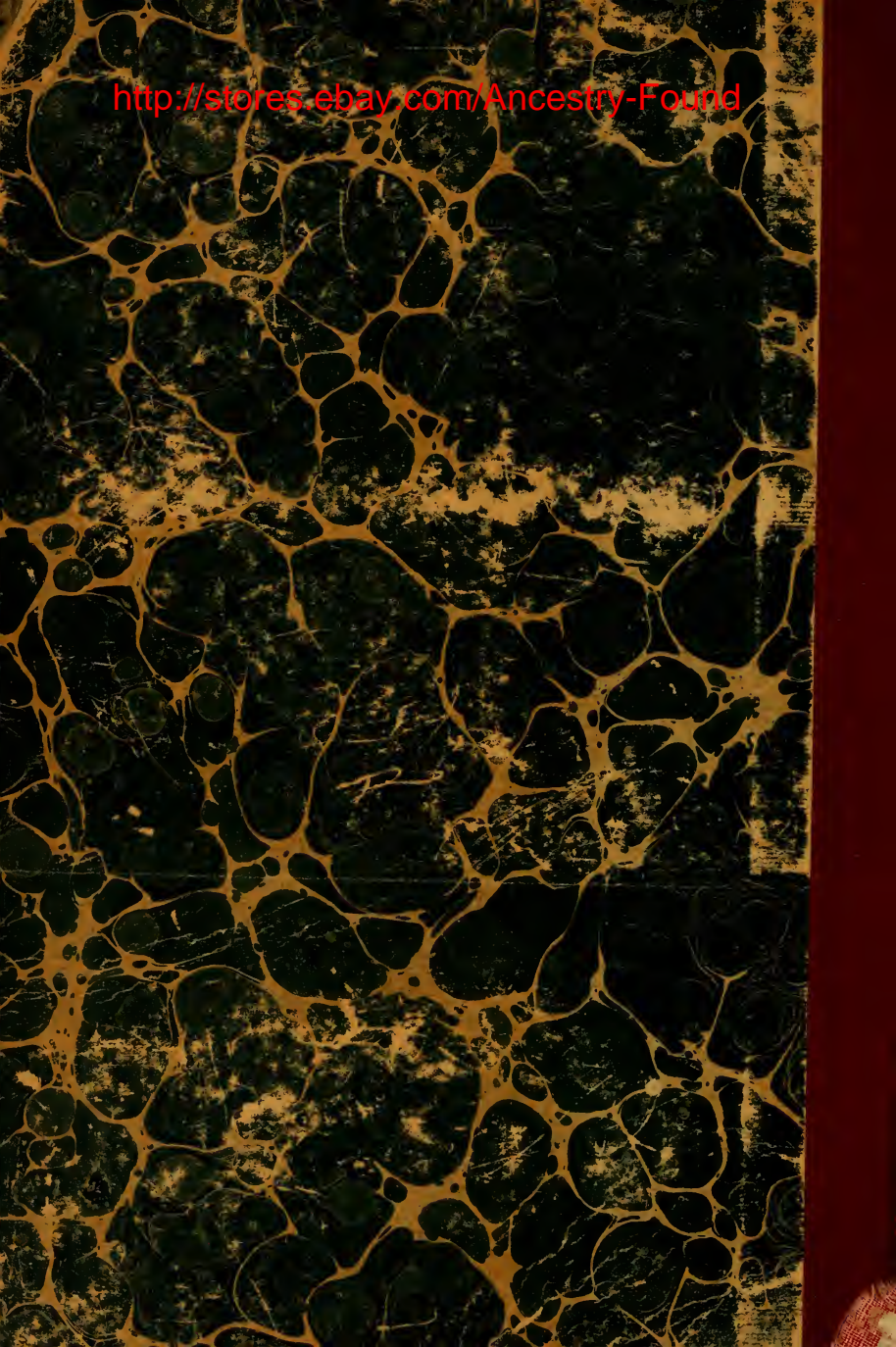
The citizens of Fredericksburg said that late in the evening, Meagher's Irish Brigade passed through the city going into the fight. They were greatly applauded and cheered as they went by the masses of skulking Yankees along the streets, saying, “Here goes the rebel batteries, in 10 minutes the Irish Brigade will have them hills.” Meagher made them a fiery war speech, at which they lustily huzzaed, telling them that all who had tried had failed, but he knew they could take them. The Irish, half drunk with liquor, flattered by the cowardly Yankees, and elated by the harangue of their leader, no doubt thought as they entered the plain, that they would see the “rebels” running. It must be said in credit of their valor, or liquor possibly,

that a few of them came nearer than any others to our batteries, some lay within 50 yards of our lines at the foot of the hill. The citizens say that about an hour after they passed through with such boastful threats, about 30 of them came running back, and the pontoon bridges were cut to stop them at the river. Out of the whole brigade only about 200 escaped unhurt. Their liquor had led them into the "slaughter pen." May theirs be the fate of all the beastly, drunken, thievish foreigners who pollute our Southern soil in company with their employers, the Yankees.

1870
The first of the year was a very
cold one, and the weather was
very disagreeable. The snow
was very deep, and the wind
was very strong. The people
were very much distressed,
and the government was very
kind to them. The people
were very much distressed,
and the government was very
kind to them.

<http://stores.ebay.com/Ancestry-Found>

<http://stores.ebay.com/Ancestry-Found>



E577

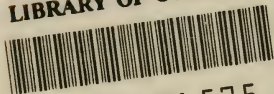
<http://stores.ebay.com/Ancestry-Found>

.5

7th

<http://stores.ebay.com/Ancestry-Found>

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00023476575