

{From the Marietta Republican, June 5, 1862.}

FROM NORTH ALABAMA.

(Correspondence Cincinnati Commercial)

The Movements far Down in Dixie—Sacking the Town of Athens – A Severe Skirmish.

Camp in Limestone County Fair Ground.
Athens, Ala., May 1, 1862

Since I wrote you that letter from Huntsville, the Eighth Brigade has had an extensive circulation in North Alabama. At one time we were as far down the M. & C. R. R. as Tuscumbia Landing, a point on the Tennessee River below Florence. Thither we went to receive and transport to the main army a large quantity of supplies which came to that point under convoy of the gunboat, *A. O. Tyler*. This being done, we returned to Huntsville, the movement of our rear being slightly accelerated by the appearance of a heavy force of secesh cavalry who came to cut off our trains. A small supply of provisions were burned at Tuscumbia to prevent their capture.

Having returned to Huntsville, and burned the Tennessee River bridge, the right wing of the division commenced operations towards Chattanooga, the particulars of which are already printed. Meanwhile, Col. Gazlay, of the Thirty-seventh Indiana, resumed the “honors” of Provost Marshal, and “Jargo” the labors of ditto, neither of which were sinecures in that community, where the Molock of treason is enshrined and adored.

From Huntsville we marched to this place distant 30 miles in sunset direction. Hither we came to reinforce Col. Stanley, of the Eighteenth Ohio, who had been attacked and fallen back, losing his camp equipage in the run. Before we got here, the rebel cavalry had fled, and made their escape with a skirmish or two, and a few telling shots from the Fourth Ohio Cavalry.

One of the most disgraceful outrages ever perpetrated during this war was the indiscriminate and general sacking of the city, by certain forces in Col. Turchin’s brigade. When Colonel Stanley’s regiment returned through the town, some of the citizens cheered, and several, one or two of whom were armed. Without waiting to ascertain who were the guilty ones, a general onslaught was made upon the community, and the town was sacked. When it is remembered that Athens was the last town in Alabama that hauled down the “old flag,” and only then under a threat of devastation by her neighboring towns, the injustice of this sacking will be more apparent.

Stores were opened, and their contents carried away by the soldiers and negroes. Several safes were broken open, and robbed of thousands of dollars, was stolen. The trunks and wardrobes of the ladies were robbed, their splendid silk dresses being torn to pieces before them, and their fragments thrown to the negroes, leaving them with no clothes save that were upon them at the time. One widow, having four little children, for whom she gained a comfortable subsistence with her needle, was robbed of nearly all she

possessed, and now starvation stares them in the face. She had no relatives in the army fighting against us, and her voice had always been for the Union and the old flag.

Yesterday I conversed with an old man who belongs to a family, not one of whom is connected with the rebellion. In addition to the loss of his store, and much household property, twenty thousand dollars worth of notes of hand, useless to all but himself, were destroyed. When I compare such treatment with the previous history, and present kindness and hospitality of the citizens of Athens, I feel ashamed. I will not say what officers are responsible for these doings, or what regiments participated in them, but I will now make a clean record for the 37th Indiana. When the sacking began, the 37th was at once marched out of the town by our new and popular Major, Wm. D. Ward, who was commanding at the time, and there they remained until the disgraceful proceedings were ended. Thus far this regiment has received praise of the communities through which they have passed, for their gentlemanly deportment. May they continue this, even though some high officer in the regiment should set them a bad example.

A bad calamity befell our regiment on last Friday, the 10th inst., resulting in the loss of five men killed and two wounded, and the capture of two Captains, two Lieutenants and forty-one men. Companies E and G were guarding two bridges, about eight miles north of this place, and distant from each other about three miles. Capt. Lord, who was in command of the positions, with his Second Lieutenant, Shafer, were at advance post; when the attack was made, both were captured. The rebel cavalry dashed suddenly upon them, but the men "stopped not to number the foe," but made a most vigorous and bold resistance, not flinching or ceasing to pour a ceaseless volley upon the enemy until ridden down and overpowered by the overwhelming odds opposed to them. Col. Gazlay, who was absent at Elkton when the fight occurred, returned by a forced march that night, and visited the scene of the fight, where he gathered reliable information that eleven of the enemy were killed on the spot and eight more died soon afterwards in the neighboring houses, within a distance of five miles. Of the eleven killed, four were supposed to be officers, as their bodies were carried away while seven privates were buried on the spot. Either four or five officers were wounded, the informant was not positive which. They were taken away in two carriages procured in the neighborhood. Two wagons loaded with wounded, numbering over twenty men, were hauled away. Col. Gazlay was informed by citizens who saw them after they were made prisoners, that Capt. Connet was slightly wounded in the left cheek by birdshot, and that, he also received a buckshot in the thigh. Lieut. Hank Hughes was shot through the left hand and received a buckshot in the thigh. Officers Lord and Shafer were unhurt.

Five as brave and true soldiers as the army possessed fell in this struggle. Their names are Robert F. Heaton, Alfred C. Scull, Robt. Conner, John F. Morgan and James Jordan, all belonging to Company C, 37th Indiana. Heaton and Scull were shot in the right side, the balls entering the lungs, Conner was shot in the left side near the lower rib, on a line between the armpit and hip. Morgan was shot through the bowels, and Jordan, to all appearances, directly through the heart which, however, could not have been the case, as he lived more than an hour, as I have recently learned. In his pocket covering his heart was the miniature of his wife and little girl. The ball that killed the father passed through this, leaving a sad symbol of its real effects upon the widow and orphan. The pierced and crushed miniature is in my possession, the only memento left by the pilfering rebels upon the persons of the slain.

Side by side we laid our five dead comrades in the church yard at Athens. They were buried with the honors of war, the Acting Brigadier and staff, together with a large concourse of soldiers, being in attendance.

At the request of the regiment the Rev. J. H. Lozier, of the S. E. Indiana Conference, performed the burial services, and on the following morning, which was the Sabbath, preached their funeral sermon to a large assembly of soldiers in the Fair Grounds. Privates James Tillison and Buckner C. Whitlow, were severely wounded. The former by a shot through the right shoulder, and the latter by a shot entering the left eye and coming out under the left cheek bone, another through the fleshy part of the thigh, and a third through the leg below the knee, breaking the small bone thereof. The surgeons say they will both recover. In addition of the five killed and two wounded, we have the following list of

Missing

Capt. A. C. Connet, Co. E

Capt. H. E. Lord, Co. G

1st Lieut. Frank Hughes, Co. D

2nd Lieut. D. Shafer, Co. G

1st Sergeant William B. Harvey

3d Sergeant Thomas B. Peery

4th Sergeant G. W. Kungate

1st Corporal J. W. Gulley

2d Corporal W. N. Barnes

3d Corporal M. M. Wilson

4th Corporal J. F. Wolverton

5th Corporal A. O. Seull

Privates F. Bank, C. Ballard, M. Brooks, L. C. Brooks, J. Barton, N. A. Butler, Wm. E. Clark, T. H. Carter, A. S. Cook, Ed Coleman, H. Creede, J. Cox, A. Ebeminger, G. W. Ewbanks, O. M. Garrett, J. Hanger, A. Hughes, A. Knapp, Wm. McKean, B. McKeeley, J. C. Mckee, J. W. Mahary, D. Price, Wm. Richey, Wm. Stopper, J. B. Stegsdill, B. R. Smith, T. S. Tevis, W.H. Thompson, Sam Wells, Thomas J. Wood --- all of Company G and enlisted at or near Adams, Decatur County, Indiana.

Total

Killed	5
Wounded,	2
Missing,	43

Reports have reached us that these prisoners were all paroled and sent to Nashville. We hope it may be true.

A citizen who with his wagon, was “pressed” to hand off the enemy’s wounded, tells a story illustrating the pluck of the 37th Indiana boys. The rebels who, with a force of at least two to one, overcame fifty “Yankees,” of course felt jubilant, and manifested their joy by hurling continual taunts and jeers at our men. This, Capt. Connet endured until they had gone about three miles, when his “mad” got up, and halting, he denounced them as a pack of cowards --- told them that his men were not whipped, and if they would give them back to him, with their guns, they would whip the whole herd or fight till the last

Hoosier died. The proposition was not accepted by the “one to fives,” although they were then ten to one.

Milton Martin, John Slifer, Phil. Slifer, Gid. Hornie, Harvey Woolley, and Stephen Lewis were also on guard with those captured, but not being at the point of attack, hid themselves and got safe to camp. Corporal Hines, of Co. G, had quite a daring adventure among the rebels also. He was at a house near the road along which the rebels passed with the prisoners. On looking out he saw the rebels moving off with Capt. Lord and others in charge. He at once started for the bridge where his company was stationed and was fired upon by the cavalry. Reaching his company he gave the alarm, and hastily donning a suit of “butternut” hastened to the scene of the fight, where he found rebels loading up their wounded and disposing of their dead. He assisted them, but his partiality to “blue coats” among the sufferers excited the suspicious butternut, and a scrutinizing investigation ensued. Elasticizing the truth slightly, he told them that “them Yankees had stole his hoss, and he had follered ‘em to get it, and that he couldn’t get the hoss, and they wanted to take him, and so he come to them for protection.” The “protection” was generously afforded, but when the rebels got under way, Corporal Hines had vanished. Much credit is due to Enoch Ricketa, of the Regimental Band, who almost alone in a land of assassins, remained with his dead, dying, and wounded comrades until late in the night, when they were brought to town by Dr. Mills of the 18th Ohio, our own Surgeon being absent temporarily when the affair occurred.

Some of our supplies have been recently captured and destroyed by the Rebel cavalry in this locality, the effect of which has been the “nullification” of the usually ill-defined distinction between *meum* and *teum*, in the item of provender on these plantations.

The consequence is, that the very planters who have given their money and horses to “get up” these companies of Rebel cavalry are now most anxious that they should let our provision teams alone, as the best means of “saving their bacon.” It has become almost an “Army Regulation,” in some regiments, never ask a soldier where he gets anything. His “presumptive innocence” being his most formidable fortification, he is magnanimously left undisturbed, lest a “running fire” of interrogatives should “dislodge” him, and leave him open to imputation of having “went for,” “pulled,” “captured,” “fetched,” “pinched,” “hired,” “cramped,” “pressed,” “crushed,” “squeezed,” “seized,” “transferred,” “appropriated,” or “jerked” it. In regard to things eatable, this rule is strictly applied. Whenever fresh meat appears upon the table, the eater philosophically “resolves” that if his cook has violated the scriptural injunction, “Thou shalt not steal,” he will not magnify the offense by violating another, but will “eat what is set before him asking no questions,” – a convenient rule in the army when provisions and money and conscience are among the “limited supplies.”

The aforesaid, JARGN NETHLIZ