

Francis M. Carlisle Autobiography  
Co. D, 4nd IND. inf.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Francis M. Carlisle.

I was born in Pike County, Indiana, on the 11th day of August, 1844. My mother was a widow and when I was five years old she married David Kinder, and moved to Warrick County, Indiana. On July 2nd, 1851, my mother died at the age of fifty years; I then lived with my sister Armilda Kinder, in Pike County, Indiana, until I was eleven years old. I then came to Warrick County, Indiana, and lived with Zachdrich Skelton, a short time and lived with Allen Folk one summer in the year of 1856; in the fall of that same year I set into work and lived with my brother, Pleasant P. Carlisle, who had married Nancy A. Polk, in 1857, and worked for him six years. When I was sixteen years old I ran away from home and went to Evansville, Indiana. After sojourning there for a few days, I hired to work for a man by the name of Cromwell, who was clearing up 100 acres of land in the Ohio River bottoms, at \$13.00 per month; I had worked only a day or two when my brother P.P. Carlisle came after me and wanted me to come home, which I thought best and did so. I then worked for my brother until the Spring of 1861, when I quit him and worked for Squire Johnson for a few months, when my brother's wife died, and it was so that he needed me very much to help him in his business, I then went back and stayed with him until in August 1861 and on the 11th day of August, 1861, I enlisted in the U.S. Service for three years. On the 9th day of September, 1861, we all assembled at Folsomville, Indiana, early on Monday morning to form a Company, and selected Armour Reed as our Captian [sic] and Squire Johnson as our 1st Lieutenant; and at ten o'clock a.m. we marched off by wagon conveyance to leave our home and friends and loved ones behind – perhaps with a great many for the last time. We bade our friends good by, a many “God-Bless-You” was said to all. We hoisted our flag and made out toward Boonville, the County seat, and Oh! such a wave of handkerchiefs and Oh! such a wave of handkerchiefs [sic] and small flags held out to us as far as could be seen. Such times were never witnessed at Folsomville before nor since; some of our fathers and mothers were there taking their last farewell with their dear boys and while others took leave of their absence dear sisters and others their best girls and sweet-hearts and brothers and friends – for all were our brothers and friends, then over and over we sang “The Blue-eyed Girl that we left behind” until we reached Boonville, where the good people of that place had a fine dinner awaiting our arrival, which we did justice to.

After dinner we bade farewell to our friendly host and boarded our wagon-train and started for Camp Vanderburgh, near Evansville, Ind., we landed there about sun-down and were received with great royalty, and military honors by members of the 42nd Regiment, Indiana Volenteers [sic], who had proceeded us to camp; here we took our first soldier's lesson and soon became better acquainted with the tactics of war. We soon formed into a Regiment and my Company became Company L of the 42nd

Regiment of Indiana Volunteer [sic] Infantry. Here we drilled, squad drill and Company drill and Regimental drill, which is called battelion [sic] drill and stood guard, patrolled [sic] the woodland for miles around to pick up the boys who would break guard and get out of camp to have their fun. Here we stayed awhile and on the 9th of October, 1861, the regiment was mustered into U.S. Service, which made us soldiers indeed and in truth. We here drew our new uniforms, which were of a pretty bright sky blue color consisting of pants, dresscoat [sic] and overcoat, with brass buttons and blue caps and blanket. And here we broke camp for the first time and marched to and through the city of Evansville, to a place on the Ohio River below the City, where we drew our Army tents called the A tent – room for six members to the tent. We gave this camp the name after our Colonel, “Camp Jones” and here we drilled and equipped ourselves with knapsacks, canteens and haversacks and were there given guns with five cartridges and five percussion caps to start in with to put down the Rebellion.

We all felt the necessity of taking the best of care of the ammunition that was given us, as we were daily expecting to get orders to go to the front, which was just across the Ohio River where there were many rebels organizing into regiments.

On about the 1st of November, 1861, at night there came a dispatch to our Colonel to take four companies of the 42d and go to Henderson, Ky., and put down the Rebellion at that place, at midnight we boarded the steamer called the “Mattie Cook” and went down the Ohio River to Henderson; we landed and marched off of the boat with hard-chills and the “buck-Ague” trembling in every joint, expecting to be attacted [sic] any moment. We marched through the town unmolested, and camped in a tobacco factory until daylight; we put out our pickets that morning before day, and as there were several rebels in town, not expecting us so soon, several of them were taken in and detained in the City. While we camped here we had considerable trouble with rebel guerillas and many arrests were made.

We did a great deal of scouting while camped at Henderson. In a few days after going into camp (which was called “Camp Denby” after our Lieutenant Colonel) the rest of the regiment came down and joined us. Lieut. J.P. Sanders, while here at this place, took eight men (myself being one of them) to manage a cannon, and with two companies under command of our Major, Jas. G. Shankling, boarded the steamer “Storme” and went down the River to Uniontown and captured seven large coal barges from a rebel citizen and towed them up to Calhoun, Ky., on Green River to make a bridge across that stream so that our cavalry and artillery could be crossed at a moments [sic] warning.

About the 15th of December, 1861, our regiment had orders to march to Calhoun, Ky., to take our place under General T.L. Crittendon [sic], where we found the following regiments organizing: Col. Wolford with the [illegible] Ky., Cavalry and the 25th, 26th, 11th, and 17th Kentucky Infantry all under command of Genl. Crittendon [sic].

It taken us four days to make this march, as we marched through a very swampy country until we reached Curedesville [sic], a small village on Green River. It had been

drizzling rain until we got to the river; then it commenced to snow. We had to cross on a small Ferry Boat. We commenced crossing in the morning and when about half of the regiment had crossed, and just at night, the steamboat "Mattie Cook" came up the river to our relief and soon got us all over. One of our company members, Martin Withers, by accident was knocked off the boat into the river, but by being a good swimmer and by help of some of the boys he succeeded in getting out all right. Some of our boys who had crossed early in the day managed to get a lot of Old Monarch Whiskey, and were having a royal time got into camp.

The Colonel ordered our Sergeant Major to take a squad of men, patrol the town and to take charge of all the whiskey he found, and that soon out a stop to the boys' fun. The snow fell to about eight inches and our tents were in the wagons and they were the last to get across the river and it was near midnight when they reached camp. There was only one Church in the town and Company K and I got that and the rest of the boys built fires and stood around them the remainder of the night. It was so cold that those in the church almost froze, they passed off the time by speech making and keeping up a general racket all night, any by morning the snow had ceased and had commenced to melt and before night the mud was shoe-mouth deep. Nine o'clock a.m. next morning found us on the road, the snow melting the country being broken and hilly, made hard marching. We had to carry forty rounds of ammunition to the man, and our guns and accoutrements, and three days rations and canteens filled with water – all told from 65 to 75 lbs. to the man.

We got to Calhoun, Ky., late in December, and taken our places under Genl. Crittendon [sic]; we were in camp about a week when the measles [sic] broke out in camp, and all who had not had them, taken the disease and died like hogs with the cholera.

Here we went into winter quarters and built small fire-places to our tents, and slept on the ground with a little straw under us for bedding. Here Company D. buried the first of its members, namely, W.J. [illegible], and after we had laid him to rest in the wooded hills near Calhoun. Ky., we were called on by our Chaplin [sic] to draw near around his grave to listen with bowed heads and hearts, to the petition sent up by the Chaplin [sic] and Prayer. We filled the grave and gave the usual military salute, by firing three musket-shots over his grave. We then returned to camp with sad and sorrowful hearts.

We remained at Camp Calhoun for quite a while, as fully One-half of our regiment was sick, and in Hospital; about the first of Feb., all of the regiment that was hale marched up the river to South Carrolton, and camped about two weeks there, and while there Company K built a fire against a large tree, and one night while all were asleep the tree fell into the Company and crippled two of its members so badly that they were discharged and sent home. They were David Adington and Wm. Barton.

The regiment returned to Calhoun, Ky., and on the 16th of Feb., we received orders to march to Owensboro, Ky., we started at dark, the snow about twelve inches deep, we reached Owensboro, the next day about three o'clock p.m. There a fleet of steamboats

awaited us in readiness to transport us down the Ohio. We landed at Evansville the next morning, staying there all day. While there I met my brother P.P. Carlisle, who with other friends had come to the City, and I got permission to go up into the City to see a few of my sick comrades that were there at hospitals.

We again boarded our botas and bade good-by to home and State and turned back down the river, probably for the last time in life, for all we knew. We landed at the mouth of the Tennessee River at Paducah, Ky. There we cast anchor for some time, while the several large steamboats came down the Cumberland River, loaded with rebel prisoners that Grant had taken at Fort Donaldson [sic], Tenn.

The boat on which the Rebel General, Simon B. Buckner and staff were, landed by the side of our boat; several of our Officers were well acquainted with some of Buckner's staff Officers; Clay Stinton of Evansville, Ind., was a Captain of Artillery on Buckner's staff. [illegible] here at this place we had strict orders not to let a man off the boat, there being no stage plank thrown out, and the boat being anchored twenty feet from shore, the guard thought it not necessary to watch very close, but we had a man in our company by the name of Perry Buntely, better known as "Bully"; who was always breaking guard and getting out of camp to get whiskey and get drunk and raising [illegible] generally; and "Bully" taking in the situation, made a jump for the shore; the guard heard him strike the water and yelled out man-overboard!, but Bully came up out of the water and swam to shore all right and about-faced, gave the guard the military salute, and made his way to the City, - and that was the last time we ever saw of "Bully" for three months when he made his appearance in the Company all right.

When we left Paducah we started up the Ohio, and at Smithland, at the mouth of the Cumberland River, we took up this stream and proceeded to Clarksville, Tenn., When we entered the Cumberland River, we had twelve boats in our fleet loaded with soldiers, it was Sunday and the weather was fine, each boat had a Silver band on board, and we had a fine time racing, one bota trying to pass the other, and the bands playing; each one trying to excel the others in good music and the boys would cheer them and we had a fine time all that day; but after we reached Clarksville, just below Fort Donaldson [sic], we were more careful, as there had been no yankees [sic] above that place, and the gunboat the "Ironclad" was ordered to proceed us for fear of trouble at Nashville, Tenn. We landed at the Warf [sic] at two p.m., but the men all stayed on board until next morning, except a strong patrol on the water front; next day while we were lying anchored at the foot of Main St., some of the rebels that were still in the City set fire to a steam-boat that was loaded with pork for the rebel army; it has been said that it was Jno. [sic] Morgan himself that set it on fire, hoping that it would float down on our fleet and burn us out, but in this he failed, as it lodged against an anchored coal-barge and this saved our fleet. We kay at the foot of Main St., until the next day when we marched through the City of Nashville and some of the women, strong sescasionist [sic] would call our boys "negro-stealers" and would spit down on our boys from upper rooms along the street; and for that some of their houses were burned.

We camped out about one mile from the main part of the City; while here our brigade was ordered out by our Division Commander, Genl., Nelson, to assemble at a point near a ravine [sic] to witness the execution of a member of the 14th Ohio Regiment, by the name of James Cornell for drunkenness [sic] and wanting to fight his Colonel. The brigade consisted of four regiments, we there formed a hollow square and the condemned man with his hands tied behind him, walked between two Catholic Priests and behind his coffin, the Brass band in front playing a funeral dirge marched in front of each regiment of the brigade with twelve guards following, when they reached the ravine the pall-bearers set the coffin down and he stood at the head of the coffin, then a short prayer was said by one of the Priests, after which the Black-cap was adjusted over his face. The twelve men that had been selected was drawn up in fifteen yards of the condemned man and he motioned to the guards with his left hand to his breast, and the guards had already been instructed as to their part, by an Officer in charge, by motion of his sword, twelve muskets was discharged, Every guard fired and the poor fellow eased down, on his coffin paused for a second; then fell over and was dead in another minute. The brigade marched back to camp with sad heart and with many condemnations of General Nelson, the inhuman Comander [sic] of our division, as this execution was carried out by his order. This cast a melancholy feeling over all the boys who witnessed the execution, but such is war, and on account of the excitement of war which immediately followed, this incident and the sadness resultant to it was soon forgotten.

Here the regiment was paid off for the first time since it enlisted, and this put new life into the boys and we all had a fine time for awhile. This was six and one-half months service for the 42d regiment, and we marched from our camping ground the last week of March, 1862, to Murfreesboro, Tenn. At Murfreesboro, I was left at the hospital with mumps; here I was put on extra duty as nurse in ward a with Jno. [sic] A. Bingham of the 4th Ohio cavalry at 25 cents per day extra pay, I served until the last of June, when I was ordered to my regiment at Fayetteville, Tenn [sic] on the Elk River. We remained there for several weeks and marched from there to Huntsville, Ala., while here we scouted the country for [illegible] near, and was called out and crossed the Tennessee River several times on account of rebel guerrillas who were haranging [sic] the country and giving us a great deal of trouble. We built several stockades and blockhouses along the R.R. for eight or ten miles each way, and had several narrow escapes from being taken prisoners while located there.

Huntsville, is noted for having the finest spring of pure water in the South; the spring comes out from under the main part of the City from the side of the Mountain with a stream of water 35 or 40 feet wide, where it runs down the mountainside and wends its way to the Tennessee River about 12 miles distance.

While at Huntsville, one of our men belonging to Capt. Loomis's battery was killed by accident, by pulling his gun out of an ambulance by the muzzel [sic]; the gun was discharged and killed him instantly. We remained here until in Sept., 1862, when the rebel General Brackston [sic] Bragg made his raid into and through Kentucky. We

marched after him by the way of Nashville, Tenn., and after reaching Kentucky the rebels turned upon us and a hard battle ensued, during which my company lost two of its men, Wm. F. Camp and Amos Comoran – both died instantly; Comoran's head being shot off by a canon [sic] ball. The battle Pearyville [sic] Ky began at two o'clock P.M. on October 8th, 1862, and continued until dark when it seemed that the Federals were overpowered but both sides considered it something of a draw. That night both regiments (rebel and Union) with flags of truce and torches met on the battlefield, and collected their wounded.

and all next day were engaged in burying their dead, which numbered up in to the thousands.

We followed after Braggs [sic] through Kentucky to Crab Orchard, near the corner of the State, near Cumberland Gap, where the corner of N. Carolina, and Tenn., join, we then retraced our steps through Kentucky by way of Somerset, Lebanon, down the Roland Fork River, to New Market; then to Glasgow and to Bowling green, Ky.

When we struck the Salt River at New Market the Regiment was paid off to four months pay, \$52.00 to the man. The sutlers all came up with their supplies, and we could buy all necessaries and write letters home for the first time since we left Louisville. We had a two days [sic] rest here; and having plenty of money we felt that we were glad we were still alive.

While at New Market we received a lot of new recruits from home, and that night being the 25th of October, 1862, it came a heavy snow and we had no tents; the snow was at least four inches deep, but it [illegible] on left us. Some of the boys bought new boots at \$5.00 per pair and we soon renewed our march; after the first half day march you could see the "new boot" boys drop out; haul off their boots, their feet blistered and offer their boots at half prices and many of a poor fellow had to wrap his bare feet in blankets until he could get shoes.

When we arrived at Bowling Green, Ky., Genl. Wm. S. Rosencrans [sic] was put in command of our Army and Genl., Don Carlos Buell was relieved of our command – we then marched to Tyres Springs, near Nashville, Tenn. Camped there three weeks, and late in December we marched through Nashville, and camped out on the Granny White Pike. We gave our camp the name of Andrew Jackson, as his home was once in this City. We drilled and scouted there the country around for quite a while, and got ourselves in good trim for another fight; on the 26th of December, 1862 we broke camp and marched down what is know [sic] the Hardinsburgh [sic] Pike, and turned toward Murfreesboro, Tenn., which place we reached on the night of Dec. 30th, 1862.

On the morning of the 31st at daylight we were ordered to fall in line and had to double-quick march to reinforce our right wing in command of General Cook, who had been surprised on that morning at four o'clock by the rebels, and quite a number taken prisoners. This taken place Wed. of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad at a place known as the Cedar Thicket; and before we had our breakfast. It had been raining and

was very foggy until up in the day and as we entered the thicket we ran to a large gang of wild turkeys, and Wm. T. Garrison, of my Company D. caught one of these turkeys while the bullets [sic] from the enemy's guns were flying fast and thick about him; there were several turkeys caught thus while we were forming our line of battle. In the West side of this Cedar Thicket we engaged the enemy on their left, and held them in check until about three o'clock P.M. when they were reinforced and we were compelled to retreat back through the Cedars to the Railroad where we first started in the morning.

While we were in the Cedars we were employed as skirmishers and were facing West, and the sun came out and was shining in our faces, so that we could not see the enemy, but they could see us and had a good range on our line. At this place I got a rebel ball through the cape of my overcoat, and the same bullet [sic] killed my file-closer, James Hamilton of my Company. As we retreated and just as we reached the East side of the Cedars we met Genl., Rosencrans [sic]; he called to Col. Shauklin, to know what regiment we were, and was told that it was the 42d Indiana; he said to the Colonel, to go back into the Cedars in another place just for twenty minutes and then he would relieve us so that we might get our dinners. We about-faced and filed into the woods and laid down and in a few minutes the 38th Indiana came running back over our regiment, and it proved that the whole corps of Hardee's Rebels were making a desperate charge on our entire line. That twenty minutes cost our regiment about 150 of our men, and ten of my Company D were taken prisoners including myself; they were: Captian [sic] Jno. [sic] Eizeman and Lieut., J.C. Schameyherne, Jno. [sic] A. Hevren, Wm. R. [cut off]jillcox, Geo. Gentry, W.H. Garrison, Jacob Kruger, Jno. [sic] Oliver, A.J. Williams, and F.M. Carlisle – were all taken to Libbey [sic] Prison, Virginia. We were run down South to Pollard Station, Alabama, and then back to Atlanta, Ga., and to Chattanooga, Tenn., and camped at Dalton, Ga., where I traded my overcoat to a young rebel for a new blanket, and was given \$10.00 to boot; so that I could buy something to eat, as we went from two to three days at a time without drawing anything to eat.

While camped at Dalton, Ga., we were not guarded very closely, in all there were about 1,000 of us prisoners, one Captain, two Lieutenants and ten Guards, we were lying near a train of freight cars which were loaded with supplies for the rebels camps near by, we crawled under the cars and broke open the back doors and a few of at a time would go in while some would keep watch, and cut holes in boxes of meat and etc., and take liberally therefrom – I secured a haversack of flour from a barrel and carried the same to Libbey [sic] Prison, while there after carrying [sic] it until it was almost black with dirt I rented a skillet on the halves and baked the flour into a tough bread which helped to appease the appetite to some extent.

We were shipped by rail to Richmond, Va., by the way of Washington, Tenn., on the Lynch River, where we found our men had scouted the country in that part of East Tenn., and had burned the railroad bridge and we prisoners had to wade this river which was very swift and cold, and from three to four feet deep. Oh! how cold it was, it was in the middle of January, 1863, we had to walk ten miles to another river called Clinch

River; the bridge here also had been burned by our cavalry, but it was too deep for us to ford, here a crossing was made of logs pinned together. At this place we had to wait for a train to come after us and we had nothing to eat for two days, but the Rebel Captian [sic] was a good-hearted man and he divided the whole Command of us prisoners into squads of five men each and gave the head of each squad \$5.00 and gave orders to go in all directions into the country, to the farm houses and buy something to eat, but if we could not buy, take it and return, as that was the only chance to keep from starving.

Those that were sick remained at the river until those that were sent out returned with some relief, so I had been sick for four or five days I had missed my grub that had been issued at Knoxville, Tenn., and by this time I was getting pretty weak and hungry, I was given permission by the good Captian [sic] who had charge of us to go out alone to see if I could find anything to eat, while on the road I met a man on a horse and he was amazed to see a Yankee soldier alone in that part of the Confederacy, he halted me and quizzed me very closely in regards to the news of the Federal Army, and about the battle of Murfreesboro, and how many prisoners we had lost there, but when he found out that I was a genuine Federal Yankee, he gave me a \$2 bill and told me that he was one of our scouts belonging to Capt., Carters Bridge [illegible], and that I had probably saved him from falling into the hands of our guards, and becoming a prisoner with use as he was being watched very closely by the reber [sic] citizens in that country. He turned off the road and bade me good-by. (I wish I knew his name, but I don't remember it.)

I traveled about two miles up on the side of a mountain, where I came to a little log cabin, I called and fund one of our boys already there, luckily the lady was a Union lady, her husband was lying out in the mountains in hiding from the rebel guerrillas, and she said she did not know when the word would come to her of his capture. She made me a good-old-fashion dinner of corn-bread and pork and a cup of coffee, which was the last coffee she had; well you can guess that I did justice to that dinner, for which I paid her \$1 and a thousand thanks. She filled my haversack full of cornpone; I then returned to the river and reported to the Captain, and made him a present of a peice [sic] of cornpone which he accepted with many thanks. By four o'clock all of our boys had returned, some with plenty of eatables and some with nothing only what they had eaten; that night late we boarded a train for Lynchburg, Va., where we landed next day late in the evening, here I bought \$5 worth of meat and bread and a pie, which myself and Comrade Jno. [sic] [illegible], ate all at one meal. One pie cost \$1, bread and meat in proportion. We next landed at Richmond, Va., where we were placed in a large tobacco warehouse owned by a man by the name of Libby and his Son; thus it is called Libby Prison.