

## Colehour Diary

Outline of our Daddy's Wanderings during the early sixties or Three Years with Old Glory amid hardship, joys and privations.

I commenced this squally life on January 28, 1842 in Willistown Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania, fifteen miles west of Philadelphia or six miles East of West chester [sic], Penn. Lived here until 1854 when the family moved to Carroll County, Illinois. Here I attended school in winter and tilled the soil in summer until the year 1860 when I returned to Philadelphia where I was to work in brother Isaac's store for \$10.00 per month and board with hours from 5 A.M. until 11P.M.

In April 1862 I returned to Illinois and on the 8th of July Brother David and myself enlisted in Company "I", 92nd Ill. Vol. Inf., for three years or during the war. We were not mustered into the U.S. Service until September 4, 1862, at Rockford, Illinois, our rendezvous.

Here we tarried, drilling and maneuvering until October 10 when we were ordered to Covington, Kentucky and which place we arrived at on Sunday, October 12. Slept on the ground without tents and heard the roar of the Artillery to the South of us. On Monday the 13th we drew tents and wagons, also mules and rations.

On October 18 received orders to march and our first march commenced at 4:00 P.M. not on the cars but on foot, with knapsack, gun, blankets, haversack, canteen and 40 rounds of cartridges. The start was splendid, we were young and by midnight we reached the Fair Grounds of Kenton County and were dead tired and played out, artillery still booming in the distance. Of course, it rained so we're a very sorry crowd.

Falmouth was the next town reached, then Cynthiana October 24 and camped in a snow storm 5 to 6 inches deep.

Talk about "My Old Kentucky Home", well I guess, we wanted to be home with mother. The old pig pen would have been a warm place that night. Next day we trudged on to Paris and then to Lexington - Suffering for water, for it was a dry time in Kentucky.

From Lexington we went to Winchester then Sterling and here remained about a month then back to Lexington again. November 19 reached Nicholasville and on the 26th went to Danville in a snow storm.

Here Brother Dave was taken sick and I came down with Typhoid Fever - joined my regiment again on the 25 of January and on the 26 commenced our march to Louisville, Ky. - It snowed and rained daily on this march - We slept in mud and snow, and I scarcely convalescent. Whiskey was issued on this march the first and only time. On the 31st marched thru Louisville and took steamer for Nashville, Tennessee.

On this trip we suffered worse than marching as it was cold and stormy and we had to sleep and stay between decks, (all open) heads under the boilers and feet under the mules and horses. Freezing at one end and roasting at the other. No pleasure on a winter trip on the Ohio River. Reached Fort Donaldson [sic] on Feb. 3 and saw our first battle field where the 83rd Ill. Regt. had cleaned out Gen. Forrest's command and killed and captured 600 men.

We had seen our first dead and thought of the "Bull Dog" Gen. Grant who the year before captured Fort Donelson. Five cannon shot went thru one tombstone and one door panels had 17 bullets in it. Never saw one regiment do so much execution. Forrest had 6000 men against, one regiment.

On the 7th of February 1863 we reached Nashville, Tenn. and camped 3 miles out on the Franklin Pike. In a few days the sound of cannon summoned us to Franklin, without tents or baggage. Here Col. Coburns [sic] brigade of Wisconsin troops were caught in a trap and captured. We being too late to render him any aid. Then commenced a chase after their captors to Columbia, Tenn.

We were three days going out, skirmishing all the way.

This was our only march with gallant Phil Sheridan [sic] under Gen. Gordon Granger, a West Point Dahm [sic] Phool [sic]. I was on picket for three nights - rain all the time - no tents - no rations but nigger beans. Crackers were sold for \$1.00 apiece. None to be had.

The third night without sleep I lay down for a snooze by a fire and went to sleep - when I woke up my high boots fell from my feet - burned to a crisp. The march back with no enemy in front was made in one day, I think. I made it bare foot on a turnpike road in February and for four weeks knew nothing as I had a relapse of Typhoid and was put in a field hospital. My regiment left me and Bro. Dave died in Nashville twelve miles away, and I too sick to know it. Brother Hiram took Brother Dave 's body home and he (Hiram) died in two weeks. At home they supposed that I, too, was no more as Hiram had reported my condition as hopeless.

No doubt so much suffering and worrying killed him. Well after time I do not know how long I found myself in Hospital Number 13 at Nashville, Tenn. I was convalescent of Typhoid when I came down with a severe attack of Erysipelis [sic] in the head and eyes. I was blind end crazy with pain for some days but finally got around again.

About July permission was granted me to join my regiment if able at Wartrace, Tenn. I made the effort and after several collapses reached my command. I seemed to be partly paralyzed in my limbs and would double up without warning. Finally reached the regiment. The boys brought me corn, blackberries and peaches and good cheer - I partook freely - was so that I had to be helped to dress, the boys having to button my clothes.

We were finally given horses. Courage and health returned and with them came a gun and horse and the smell of battle was soon to be ours.

August 16, 1863 we took up our march for the Chattanooga campaign. While at Wartrace we were given horses taken from the Gen. Granger 's command and put in the famous "Wilder Brigade" of Mounted Infantry and were soon to see busy times – always in front our scouting.

From Wartrace we went to University Place on top of the Cumberland Mountains, our first days [sic] march on horseback – Citizen's saddles – half of the men never on a horse before and the roads were paved with frying pans, coffee pots, knives, forks, spoons,

bacon, hardtack and poor riders. It rained torrents [sic] and I never have heard such terrific thunder but it was the jolliest and most ludicrous ride I ever witnessed.

We next struck Tracy City, a coal mining town then Jasper and then Poe's Tavern in the valley of the Tennessee. Here we had skirmishes and did picket duty on the river and were finally sent via Bridgeport to Chattanooga. Fought our way to the top of Lockout Mountain and were the first regiment in Chattanooga. This was before Hooker had his battle on the Mountain. From Chattanooga we went to Rossville then to Chicamagua [sic] and did heavy skirmishing for two weeks before the battle.

September 18 we drew rations at Pond Springs and heard heavy artillery firing nearby. On the morning of the 19th, we were in saddles early and ordered to left of line. We would gallop for an hour then rest for an hour and ride again for life, wait for orders then at it again.

The dust was terrible. Tom Gren's horse fell and half of the company ran over him but he jumped up, regained his horse and rode on, not hurt, a particle. It was a miracle. Here I met Dan Fowler, an old school mazer in 19th Ill. Infantry. Where are you going, he said. To get a furlough I replied. It was prophetic.

We rode by burning fences the entire forenoon, no dinner and about one o'clock we stopped at widow Glen's house where we were ordered to dismount and form line in cornfield, take down fences and prepare for battle.

I was scared for my legs were tricky and would let me down without any warning whatever and I thought, if we had to run, where would I be. While waiting here the field telegraph was put up and Gen. Rosecrans came to us and established his headquarters at the widow the Glen's and sent us flying farther to the left to reinforce Reynolds [sic] Division which was hard pressed. We arrived at junction of the two roads, tied our horses to trees and sailed in, taking the place of a Brigade which had been routed and don't you think for a minute that the bullets, shot, shell bark, chips and dirt did not fly. I had fired three or four shots when I thought someone struck my shoulder with a club, my arm felt numb at this minute and just then Gen. Reynolds rode up and said, "For God's sake, men fall back, you are being surrounded." He had to strike one or two men to make them fall back as we did not know we were nipped. Was I afraid? No, not as long as I could shoot. It seemed as tho [sic] a bullet grazed my cheek every second that I was in that fight and I guess I am right in thinking so as I could feel them burn. Only Sargent Price, Corporals Bigger and Colehour were hurt of our – Jim Bigger being killed. I went back and lay down by a tree, felt homesick and with no friend near but dead and dying all around, when help came in the person of Sergt. [sic] Price, blood all over but he could walk and I knew he was not badly wounded but received a glancing shot in the forehead and was bleeding like a stuck pig.

But we were chums. Finally the regiment came along brought our horses, and we were able to ride to Crawfish Springs where we found eight hundred (800) of our boys wounded, the first de-y's work.

Dr. Clinton Helm, our surgeon, came at midnight to dress our wounds and we told him to do what he could for the others first who were injured more severely [sic]. We lay down under the trees (notents [sic]) and it was cold.

Some guy took our blanket off and left us to shiver but we were up at the peep of day and did what we could to help. Big kettles of soup were put on for the wounded and about eleven o'clock the cavalry formed behind us and we who could were ordered back to Chattanooga.

I still had my horse but had nothing to eat since the breakfast the day before (Saturday) and I and the Doctor Darkey with Doctor's watch and best case of instruments we went to Chattanooga, arriving at sundown of Sunday, September 20, having gone twenty miles – tired, wounded and weary I lay down by the river close by pontoon bridge. Doc got me some crackers and I lay there from Sunday night until Wednesday morning while a steady stream of wounded were crossing all this time. (Just those who were able to walk.) On Wednesday we were stowed sixteen in a wagon and started for Stevenson, eighty miles away, over the mountains, rocks, gullies, hills and valleys. We sixteen in one wagon with a six mule team on ahead were pounded to a jelly. No grub and we smelled worse than a garbage wagon.

I can give no estimate of the number of wounded on this train.

On this trip the boys with good legs caught a calf and the boys with good arms tried to kill it with clubs and have a stew but alas it got away and we spent another hungry night. We found a few chestnuts and arrived at Stevenson, Ala. on the 24th, I think, at dark and as luck has always followed me (or the Lord, I think) my second lieutenant was the first man I saw - he had money, I had none - I called for pie, got it, could get nothing else. Fifty men crawled into a box car, nearly starved, the door went shut and snapped fast. All our yelling did not bring a brakemen for hours. The stench was terrible but at last we heard yells -the train stopped, our door was pried open and what did we see - Comrades with great washboilers [sic] of steaming hot soup and darned good soup, too – and a cup full for every wounded man so we had our fill, and blessed them.

I wish I could think of the name of this station - (Stevenson, Ala.) Well, we went slowly on to Nashville, Tenn. And reached there Friday.

We were put into the College Hospital, had a glorious room given a refreshing bath a real night shirt and sheets too. Dr. pulled blue sleeve cloth out of my wound, dressed it, gave me some quinine and whiskey after which I was given a nice supper and then I slept the sleep of the just. But welcome as my much needed sleep and rest was, I dreamed of the piles of legs and arms I had seen at the surgeons [sic] tables at Chattanooga.

I spent one month in this hospital and was then sent home to Illinois on a furlough. I need not rehearse my sufferings on the home trip.

January 18 was bitter cold and the railroads were blockaded for ten days thus I was detained until the fifteenth of January when I started for the front and to find my regiment. Reported at Louisville for transportation and when the morning came, all of those in the transfer barracks were sent but me and I just rebelled at this treatment and the officer in

command told me to run for the train and get in with the other troops which I did and crowded myself in with a Chicago Battery troop and their officer saw me thru.

But such a trip in box cars with no fire in the middle of January, too, and we reached our destination about midnight,, stiff with cold and hungry, too . We tore linings from the car and made a fire on the floor end when this became too hot we called on some comrade who was under pressure to quench the fire.

Lodged in the Lallicoffer House at Nashville. The next day we took a train for Stevenson, Ala. where we arrived and sle t [sic] on side of mountain all alone, under the frosty dome and awoke early pinched with cold. Went down to the spring to wash and found an officer there ahead of me and when he rose up to dry his face I was dazed for who should it be but my surgeon whom I had left on Chicamagua [sic] Battle field. He had been captured and sent to Libby prison for three months, being taken a prisoner while caring for the wounded.

We journeyed towards Huntsville, partly by train and partly on foot end reached there at midnight of the twentieth of January. Found the boys under marching orders for early morn and was invited to join (by the Captain) so borrowed a horse, saddle and gun. The Colonells [sic] cook said that I was a fool and that I would come back in an ambulance.

Well, we marched towards Florence, Ala., and on January 22 our Company in advance we met the enemy. This was Mussell or Musscle [sic] Shoals on Tennessee River, had quite a brush then drove them and captured eight prisoners.

We were again put in advance end started for Florence, but had hardly gone mile when we met them in strong force and tying our horses to trees and sailed in (our Company only) to a whole brigade of Johnnies. Two comrades and myself were on the left going it alone and we had good shooting at fifteen yards when they charged us, but not until they put a minnie [sic] bullet thru my left or well shoulder and gun in hand I started to find my horse. Hurt but not whipped I loaped [sic] off down the middle of the road when a whole regiment of Rebels shot at me but I was not to be killed by the Rebels.

Supposed my arm shot off and was growing sick and dizzy when a comrade who was timid of the fight brought my horse to me and led me back a half a mile to my dear old surgeon, Dr. Helm, who was like a father to me. I rolled into a fence corner and called for water which was soon given to me, that is three canteens full of mud, but it was good.

The Doctor pulled a handkerchief thru my wound, cleansed it and bound it up and I was "Hors du Combat" for a while. I scolded the Doctor for cutting my coat sleeve off and throwing it away. Blood in my boots, blood all over and I saw the boys shudder as they looked at my ghastly face gad battered arm but I felt solace in the Dear old Doctor's eyes and they gave me confidence and I knew I had a chance of saving the arm.

I forgot to say just as were were [sic] driven back our Brigade came up and drove the Rebs army in a handsome manner. I was given the belt and revolver of a Captain who was killed but they have since become lost.

We had completed our mission and turned for home, eighty miles away. When the Doctor put me in ambulance a big Johnnie who had been shot in the rear and a comrade of our

Regiment who was dangerously wounded, he said: this man will probably die before morning but you won't mind. This was Andy Rafferty of Company "B" who had four bullets in him and was paralyzed but got well almost as soon as I did. My arm got no care and no bandage but only cold water in plenty all the way back for three days.

Did you everyhave [sic] your bones scraped with a file? Well, those were my feelings for several night.

As I lay by a fire the first night after being wounded, Colonel Adkins came along and said: Corporal, I am going to send you home soon as you are able and if you don't stay all day I will have you Court-Martialed. I was put in a private hospital in Huntsville and when well enough was sent home to stay until well.

I omitted to say that the Cook who had made the prophecy that "I would be shot again" was the first to see me on my return to camp. He said: "You damn phool [sic], I told you to stay at home for I knew you would get it and the next time it will be a center shot."

Huntsville was a beautiful dreamy place and a rich resort for old planters who had retired. Here was the largest spring that I had ever seen.

I remained here for about a month when my furlough came from the Colonel with orders to remain at home until well, so with my arm in a sling I worked my way North and found the girls just as handsome as ever and they rejoiced to see me.

Although "Hors du Combat" I could visit and eat and May the sixth found me again in the saddle at Ringold, Georgia. This third leave taking was the darkest one of all for you all know the old saying about "Three times and out" I had already had my two and fully expected the third as you will see later "It might have been".

On May 6, 1864 Sherman's Atlanta Campaign started. We left Ringold that day for Resaca via Snake Creek Gap and skirmished all the way and captured the Reb's mail and read all the Johnnies' letters saying that the war would soon end as they had Uncle Billy Sherman put where they wanted him.

The rain poured down all that night in the gap and we just floated around in our beds. The next day we left Resaca on our left and a good many of our boys were hurt. The second day we went straight at them and drove them into their works and had our heroic Gen. Kilpatrick shot in the thigh.

We held them until Gen. John A. Logan put his troops in our place and then we started for Lays Ferry which was about six miles to flank them. Here Resaca saw the Grandest Martial display of about fifty regiments going into battle with colors flying, well dress lines and plenty of noise from both artillery and musketry. We were to the Ferry and fought our way across in boats. (The Ostanale River). We were now in General Judson Kilpatrick's Division. Here at Lays Ferry we lost several men but gained our point by getting our infantry across and commenced a flank movement that drove Johnson's Command out of Resaca but at fearful cost. A woman (a rebel) had a leg shot off while standing at the crossing watching the fight. On [sic]

On May 18 we went to Calhoun, then to Adairsville and then to Kingston where we did scouting duty along the Etowa River.

On June 13 we were sent back to Resaca to patrol the railroad which the Rebels were molesting. While in or near Kingston I had ingrowing toe nails that prevented my wearing shoes and the Doctor slit the toe nails and pulled part of them off with forceps! While in this fix, in play with a big German I accidentally jumped on his spurs and stuck it neatly through one of my feet and between my nailless [sic] toes and wounded foot it was sorry work riding and fighting in crowded columns.

We lay in Resaca for two weeks but had no rest though for Kilpatrick was our leader and while here I went over the battle field again and [illegible]. We could [illegible] live in this [illegible] of that and shell.

The hazle [sic] brush was literally mowed down close to the ground and here I saw one two inch tree which had eight bullet holes in it and near an old tree about a half mile west of Esaca I collected a quantity of relics such as pieces of shells and bullets.

Don't go to war barefoot – if on horse back every frying pan in the regiment will scrape your shins raw. I had to go to a hospital of which I had had enough.

On July 25 Kilpatrick returned to us, having recovered from his wound and we started for Altoona Pass which was famous from "Hold the Fort".

From Altoon [sic] Pass we took the right of Sherman's army to Atlanta fighting all of the way and then stopped at Sandtown on the banks of the Chatahooche [sic] River. Here we did lively work and came to lay pontoon bridge across the river but first had to drive the enemy out. We were flanking Atlanta or Johnson's force. We went out to Fairburn Station on the Montgomery and West Point Railroad where we burned up the depot, tore up the tracks and raised hell in general, then went back to camp again.

On Thursday the sixteenth of August Gen. Sherman sent five thousand of our command out fora run around Atlanta and we took plenty of amunition [sic], no blankets or tents, but plenty of grub and started out at six in the evening and by nine o'clock that evening we were in it, hot and fire and bullets flew thick and fast. We won and on the run chased them until morning when we struck the railroad then destruction commenced and we turned the track over and after the rails had been hected [sic] we twisted them. During this affair a part of the men were fighting to keep the rebels back while we were carrying on our work of destruction.

We next reached Jonesboro, our objective point, where all public buildings were burned, railroads demolished and barrels of whiskey were turned into the gutters and thousands of dollars worth of Reb rations were destroyed. Trains were tooting to the North of us and trains to the South of us, all bringing in Rebel troops.

We fought like demons nearly all night, destroying all that we could and just at the peep of day we pulled cut for Lovejoy Station where many were captured as they were worn out and had gone to sleep but the noise of battle did not awaken them.

When near Lovejoy station we were surrounded by heavy columns of Rebel Infantry and while fighting for our lives, three flags of truce came with a demand that we surrender. Kilpatrick told them he would ask his wife and in no time had massed his gallant five thousand men and rode the Johnnies down like sheep. We captured two pieces of cannon, a great many prisoners and arms. The road was paved with arms which the Rebs had thrown away and hands were up on every side which were signs of surrender.

We reached our old camp at Sandtown on Monday, August 25, played out completely as we had not unsaddled our horses nor had a night's rest. Half of our men had lost their hats while riding.

Lost a third of our horses. Reined every day so we were constantly wet and fighting every hour. We went completely around Atlanta. Sherman said, "Well done, Boys" and the next day you will take the same route and the infantry will follow, and then Atlanta will be ours and in less than ten days she was.

Our suffering cannot be described. I have slept and seen the boys sleep when cannon were thundering around us. One boy, Shilling, by name, we threw water in his face from canteens and he would wake up long enough to swear just half an oath and be asleep again instantly. So near dead were our men for rest that death had no terrors for them.

On the trip we made a typographical map that Sherman wanted in his flank movement. Gen. Hood was in command now in Atlanta, Johnson superceded [sic] and we had three days of hard fighting again before we reached Jonesboro the second time and brave boys fell at Jonesboro but Atlanta was ours. I had a detail of men in Atlanta for a month and we slept in a smoke house and a good place too on Peach Tree Street.

Then we were ordered to Marietta. This was while our boys were chasing Gen. Hood back to Franklin for Pap Thomas to bag. No period of our service was so trying as this raid around Atlanta and our repetition [sic] of it. It was a two weeks fight of it for our cavalry and we were constantly on the move.

"When Sherman marched down to the Sea."

At Marietta on the thirteenth of November 1864 we burned our bunks as we were expecting marching orders but we were ordered back to camp.

On the fourteenth of November we started for the sea but we knew not our destination at this time. West of Atlanta we took up our march through Jonesboro again and at Lovejoy Station we again had a bad short brush with the enemy. We then made straight for Macon - to deceive the Rebels - and after a hard fight captured their works but could not hold them, in fact, we did not want to for Sherman wanted the Rebels to think we were after that town.

We left Macon and that night had a fierce fight, then swung to the East and Milledgville, the Capitol of Georgia. Here the Legislature was in session, but hurriedly they left and we organized a new legislature, elected members and again voted Georgia into the Union, once again.

We then started for Milan to rescue our prisoners (Nov. 25) and the enemy routed us out early and in spite of its being Sunday, we fought all day until nine at night and at close

quarters most of the time too. We were ordered not to stop but to hurry and rescue our boys at Milan. We had heard during the day that they had been removed to Salisbury, N. Carolina. Did not have a man hurt this whole day. The next day, Kilpatrick (our regiment) gave Wheeler and Hampton a handsome thrashing, killing and wounding about four hundred men. We next went to Louisville, Ga. where we rested until all of Sherman's infantry had passed. We had demonstrated smoothly against Augusta, Ga., and now we turned for Savannah and a week from our last fight, on the same ground and on Sunday too, we jumped on Wheeler and Hampton at Waynesborough and gave them the best thrashing that they had ever had. We lost several of our boys this day and I had several shots at General Wheeler. We had no supper that night before and were on picket duty all night then were shelled by the enemy and had no breakfast but had to run nearly two miles so when we got into the fight we could not shoot very straight.

"[illegible] HEAD FOR THE SEA"

We encountered swamps most of the way and Rebels planted shells in the roads to get us, felled trees in our way and burned bridges to keep us back but we landed on the tenth day of December with our ambulances full of the wounded comrade as we could not leave them for the enemy.

We starved around Savannah until the 23rd of December and had only had rice to eat and this we had to thresh. On the above date the city was captured and rations soon came after that.

We still went farther south into Florida a short distance. Forage for man and beast very plentiful and very little fighting going on.

From Marietta to Savannah and back and forth we had travelled over five hundred miles, had numerous fights, always being successful, capturing eleven hundred and fifty mules and horses, lived on the country, burned five thousand, eight hundred and forty bales of cotton, burned twenty nine Cotton Gin Houses and eleven flouring mills.

This the record of one brigade of four Regiments in the (loyal) state of Georgia. What will the harvest be in the Carolinas, you shall soon see.

General Sherman presented the city of Savannah to President A. Lincoln on Christmas Day in 1864 which happened to fall on Sunday.

We were reviewed on the twelfth day of January in 1865 by the Secretary of War (Stanton) in the city of Savannah. Then came a rest and orders of congratulations from our valley Commander, General William T. Sherman.

"THE CAROLINAS"

On my twenty-third birthday, January 28, 1865, the trumpets blew boots and saddles and we were off for Sisters Ferry about twenty eight miles up the Savannah River. On February 3 our brigade crossed, the advance of all troops and we expected the sacred soil of South Carolina would sink with us. Here instead, we found torpedoes in the roads and some were slain but we tarried not and soon reached Robertsville and camped at Lawtonville. An early start and a twenty mile march brought us to Allendale.

Now we began to see lone chimneys, smoking ruins and blood red skies at night. The Mud Hills of the North were abroad with the sword of Justice. Not now could one Southern Chevalier whip six Yankees for the Lord of Hosts was our guide.

When within two miles of Barnwell, we found the enemy, fortified on the East Side of the Salkhatchie River and the bridge burned.

Our regiment dismounted and plunged into the swamp, some swam and some waded the river and took the fort without a halt.

Kilpatrick ordered fires built for it was cold and we were wet and the balance of the command went on to Barnwell and by morning fire had finished the ruin. While the town was burning Kilpatrick gave a dance by invitation. It was a bitter satire for the Loyal Confederate Ladies whose homes were burning but who instigated the rebellion?

The next day we were off for Blackville, driving Wheeler's troops and destroying the railroads. We next camped at Williston Station then towards Augusta and camped at Windsor. Our company was sent to burn the cotton mills near Augusta but failed as too many Johnnies were guarding them. Next camped at Pole Cat Pond and daylight of the eleventh of February found us in the saddle on our way to Aiken and we in advance were to see a strenuous time of it. Our Regiment drove the enemy into Aiken and were caught in a trap set by Wheeler and Hampton and Cheatham's Division of Infantry. We rode right in and were left by Kilpatrick to get ourselves out of it and he supposed that we were all captured, but General Adkins, our Brigadier said "no". He disobeyed orders and with the balance of Brigade charged the rebels on one side and we on the other and we came out with colors up, after losing thirty of the boys.

Colonel Van Buskirk, (none more handsome nor brave) was pulled from his horse and with empty revolver was pounding the rebels on the right and left when some of the boys came to the rescue and rescued him.

My Captain, Becker, could not get his sword from the scabbard and being a powerful man used scabbard and sword to smash heads right and left. None were dismayed and we came out victorious and had a running fight back to camp at Pole Cat Pond again. Here we found gallant Kilpatrick with the balance of our Division and ready for battle but old General Wheeler was shy of rail breastworks after his awful drubbing at Buck Head Creek in Georgia.

We camped here the second night and were not molested at all, and the next day did scouting. This demonstration was to deceive the enemy and protect the left wing of Sherman's army which swung off the East and at noon we followed and camped at Davis Mills on South Edisto River.

The morning found us at it by daylight with the Rebels in front and on parallel road to left. Camped twenty miles from Columbia and the next night we camped at Lexington where we were attacked in the night but we burned the town and next day crossed the Saluda on pontoons. Started at eight o'clock in the morning for Alsten and attempted to save the bridge which was a large covered one across Broad River but the enemy had [sic] it burned so we crossed on pontoons.

On February 19 we marched at sundown and by four o'clock in the morning had only marched four miles as the roads were filled with our infantry and we on trains. After waiting all night in a drenching rain we crossed the Borad River and it was too cold to strike a match but some other Yank did it and we warmed up by a good dry rail fence fire. Coffee and hardtack warmed us and we were off for Monticello (which was in flames) and camped at White Oak Station on the Railroad.

Nine of our boys who were out foraging were captured and their throats cut by

Wade Hampton's men. They lay beside the road and on their coats were pinned papers marked "No quarters foragers." This was only another sample of South Carolina Valorto butcher prisoners in cold blood and after they had peacefully surrendered too.

On the 20 of February we started at six in the morning and crossed the Borad River then thru Monticello which was burning.

February twenty-second we went, to Blackstock Station and on the twenty-third we went to Gladden's Grove thence to Catoba River where we had to sit on our horses all during a cold rain, waiting to cross the river. While were in waiting here, two Union men almost naked came to us for protection. They had been in a Rebel Prison (HELL HOLE) for nearly two years. Were they glad? Yes, nearly wild.

February 24 found us marching toward Lancaster with more rain. At daylight on the 26 we reached Lancaster so wet and cold that we could scarcely build our fires. Killed all our extra horses and stayed there two days. Sent \$11,000 (Confederate money) to Union prisoners by Dr. Wiley. Exchanged prisoners with General Wheeler and our boys came in almost naked and shoeless but Kilpatrick made the citizens clothe the boys.

March 3 we drove the Rebs to Wadesboro and camped eight miles from there. Here we received news of the capture of Cheraw. The enemy attacked us here very furiously but we held our own. Built barricade all around the division and at ten o'clock in the evening the Johnnies opened fire on Kilpatrick's quarters but our battery soon quieted them.

They (Wheeler and Hampton's forces) were all around us and had twice the men that we had. We sent up rockets which were answered by some of our scouts and the rebels thought they were between two armies so they dug out before morning.

On the fourth of March we started at daybreak towards Great Pedee River with plenty of grub for men and horses. On the fifth we went to the Pedee River and stood in line all night and until ten in the morning then fed and waited until dark before we could cross on the pontoons. Did not have pontoons enough so [sic] were compelled to use forty-two wagon boxes aa part of the way. These boxes had been covered with canvas to make them water proof.

On March 7 we drove the rebls out of the town of Rockinghan and tackled the swamps once more. We helped pull the artillery through the swamps with ropes, we wading in water up to our waists, skirmishing day and night.

I went on picket duty for one of the boys and am afraid that I went to sleep as I was beastly

tired. The roads were something awful.

March ninth our Brigade was ordered to camp at a cross road and when we reached them we saw long lines of fires and after a little reconnoitring [sic] we found plenty of Johnnies who were getting supper.

The Regiment was turned back and I with five men left to watch the Rebels. Very shortly about fifty of them came out as a picket and we halted them and gave them a volley and then commenced a race, we firing as often as we could and finally reached the Regiment in line who gave them plenty of excitement for a while.

We marched all night parallel to them and firing continuously but I slept on my horse now and then. We pushed on towards Fayetteville in North Carolina and while on the march one of Wheeler's staff rode into our lines and began cursing us for not hurrying along at a faster gate. We took him in even tho [sic] he did think he was among his own bunch.

Three Divisions of Rebels were in the road ahead of us and four Divisions behind us, and you can bet we soon left that road.

We pressed in a frightened lady as our guide and took a blind road and built a long bridge and held it in place until every man and wagon crossed, then pushed it over and hurried ahead to find Kilpatrick with the other brigades who were in trouble as we could hear artillery and musketry firing on curleft [sic].

After we joined the other brigades we found Kilpatrick's troops had been driven out of their camp and nearly captured. On March 10 near sundown we were again on road to Fayetteville. All this time a constant firing was going on and we then went into camp and on the eleventh we me marched within a mile of Fayetteville and again camped.

The rebels burned the bridge across Cape Fear River and we put down pontoons again. No grub, but we got our mail and sent some home by tugboat to Savannah. On the fourth of March we drew some rations in the shape of hardtack, then on the fifteenth we crossed and moved toward Raleigh along the Cape Fear River.

On reaching Aversboro we struck the enemy in force. I was on the skirmish line with a shell stuck tight in my gun and the Rebels coming lively and a notion to run but at that time our battery opened and we held them until the infantry came and relieved us. Camped for the night and next day had a hot time all day long and the Johnnies skedaddled toward Raleigh. Here we had fought infantry in their works and received loud praise for our work. W pulled out in the night and crossed Black River, then headed for Smithfield.

March nineteenth we were in the rear of infantry which indicated trouble or plenty of Rebels and the fourteenth corps was assaulted by Johnson's whole command who were fortified. We lay here all day in barricades on extreme left wing.

At night we went on the skirmish line in front of the twentieth corps and at daybreak we were ordered to take the Rebel works. We got there but the works were empty and we had to bury the Rebel dead.

We were off toward Bentonville but camped at Clinton where we did some foraging and scouting for 2 days. On March twenty fifth special field orders were red promising rest and supplies. We were also complimented for our five hundred mile march thru the Carolinas.

“WITH THE LAURELS OF GEORGIA [ILLEGIBLE] THOSE OF THE CAROLINAS PROUDLY [ILLEGIBLE] THEY AS SHERMAN IS PROUD OF YOU.”

From Clinton to Fasons and then to Mount Olive where we drew clothing which was needed too, you bet, and we were to rest and we did until April the tenth.

When we were in the middle again, Grant told Sherman to press Johnson hard and this could end the war at once. We headed for Smithfield to cut off Johnson from Raleigh and on the twelfth of April we were at it early, we in advance, always were when we had hot work on hand.

(Neglected to state that on the 11th of April we skirmished all day and camped eight miles southwest of Smithfield.)

Received news of Lee's surrender and didn't we yell, and did we cry with joy, oh yes. We crossed Swift Creek after building a bridge and the Rebels were on us like mud and we drove them over and out of their earth works. We were on horseback and you could not see them for dust.

But oh, the price we paid as several of our boys were killed and wounded and Captain Hawk lost a leg and I came very near to seeing my finish as my horse tore away towards the enemy and a bullet thru my saddle showed how near was my call. They ski ped [sic] toward Raleigh and Will Price and I went for forage.

Camped seven miles east of Raleigh after giving Wada Hampton his fill and capturing a train with two ex-governors who came out to surrender the city and be protected.

Heavy fighting all day and on the 13th of April we took the rear, no fighting as we were not needed but the other fellows took our band and marched first into Raleigh but we did most of the fighting just the same and the infantry followed us.

Through Raleigh on towards Morrisville about seven miles and we ran into Joe Wheeler's troops and sent him ahead in a lively manner.

Here we camped and the next day Atkins [sic] Brigade marched toward Chapel Hill (April 14) and encountered Wheeler again and we drove him as usual. Orders to halt and here we halted all say and night, heavy rains and April 15 were ordered to go ahead. Came to New Hope River and found bridge gone. Our boys waded across and fought our last fight.

Next day Sunday the 16th and General Atkins was informed of a truce between Sherman and Johnson. We were sent to Chapel Hill where was located the University of North Carolina.

Here I saw Washington's account book and wanted it very much but we were on honor guarding sacred relics and private houses and nothing was disturbed. We stayed here nearly three weeks. Our General Atkins found his wife here and came back and married her.

On the 24th of April orders were received to resume hostilities as Sherman's terms did not suit Secretary of War Stanton.

April 26, we were ordered to march at daylight and go for Wheeler again but the order was countermanded for Johnson had surrendered.

May 3rd marched to Hillsboro and marched with rebels who were going home. How strange it seemed not to fight our old foe.

From Hillsboro to Greensboro, in camp here was all of Johnson's Artillery, some two hundred pieces of all kinds and patterns.

We next moved to Lexington and Salisbury. On May 12 made our last march on horse back as a regiment to Concord, North Carolina. Here we lay until the last of June and did nothing but grumble to be mustered out. Beautiful camp in the pines but we wanted to go home very bad.

I was sent from here with Lieutenant Sutton and thirty men on a scout to Yorkville and Spartanburg to catch Gov. McGraw of South Carolina. We did not find him but saw the Cowpen's battle ground of Colonial times and had a grand ride of 300 miles to kill time.

Passed ourselves as rebels (they had seen no Yanks) and we had the best in the kitchen. This trip finished my soldiering.

We left for the North on June twenty second and passed through Danville, Va. also Burksville and landed at City Point. On June 26, 1865 we took out boat for Baltimore then took box cars for Chicago by way of Harrisburg and Pittsburg and July the first we landed at Camp Douglas in Chicago and all went swimming in Lake Michigan. July eighth had our pay and discharge. We had enlisted for three years or during the war.

This is an outline of my service.

Signed (James A. Colehour)

1st. Corporal, Co. I – 92nd, Ill.

Mounted Vol. Infantry

[image: photo of Colehour in his Union uniform standing by a chair]