

# The Reminiscences of

# SERGEANT NEWTON CANNON

*De y/ASS'  
BATTALION  
LATER 1/1-1862*



*From Holograph Material  
provided by his Grandson*

SAMUEL M. FLEMING, JR.

(late Lieutenant Commander, U. S. N.)

•  
*Introduction by*

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the most valuable by-products of the commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of our War between the States, or Civil War, has been the bringing to light of narratives of personal experiences in the war written by surviving veterans of the Confederate and Union armies. Such narratives, though sometimes somewhat at variance with the formal, official reports made by commanding officers, provide an impressive and often vivid picture of the ups and downs of actual army life as experienced by the man in the ranks. He may not have had at all times a very clear idea of the strategy involved in the movements he was making, but he knew exactly how he was personally affected by these movements, and his warm-blooded and uninhibited account of the campaigns and battles in which he was engaged provides some of the most important and valuable raw material for the historical researcher and writer.

A particularly engaging narrative of this kind is that of Sergeant Newton Cannon of Williamson County, Tennessee. He came of distinguished ancestry. His great-grandfather, Minos Cannon, was a soldier in the Revolutionary War. His grandfather, Newton Cannon, had been a militia colonel in the Creek War, later serving as a member of Congress and as Governor of Tennessee. His father had served in the Seminole War in Florida, where he was wounded; and, as Mr. Cannon took pride in recalling, his own son, Newton Cannon, Jr., served in the Spanish-American War, and his younger son took part in World War I.

A month before his sixteenth birthday in 1862, Sergeant Cannon enlisted in Company I of the 11th Tennessee Cavalry of the Confederate Army, which was organized in Williamson

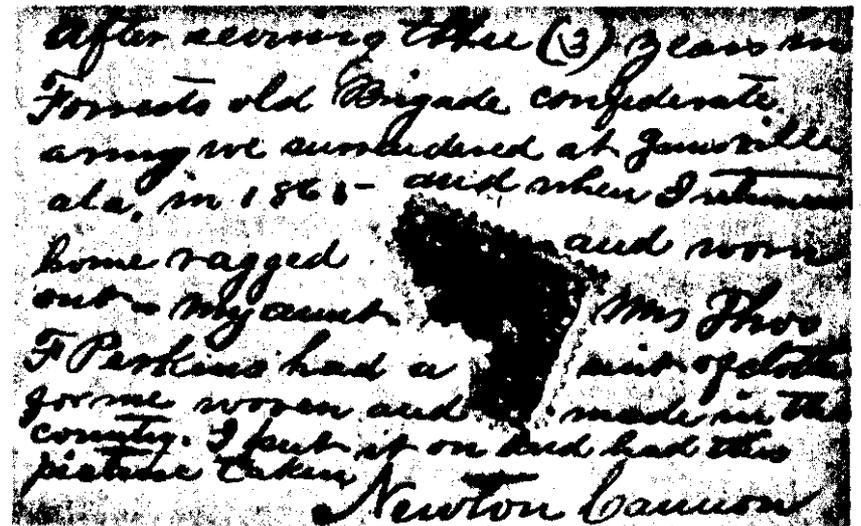
County by his double first cousin, Captain Thomas F. Perkins, Jr. He served throughout the war with this company, seeing active service under General Nathan Bedford Forrest and General Joe Wheeler, and he was the company's First Sergeant when, with the remnant of Forrest's command, he surrendered and was paroled at Gainesville, Alabama, in 1865.

Returning home after the surrender, Mr. Cannon engaged in farming on family-owned lands in Tennessee and Mississippi, and later served as a deputy to his cousin and former commander, Captain Perkins, who had been elected Clerk and Master of Williamson County. Several years later he married, and for the remainder of his active life was engaged successfully in farming or mercantile activities in Franklin and in Nashville. On account of failing health he retired from active business in 1911. He died on January 4, 1924, and is buried at Mount Hope Cemetery in Franklin.

In 1922, John Trotwood Moore, then head of the State Library and Archives of Tennessee, conceived the excellent idea of inviting Civil War veterans to fill out questionnaires regarding their service and experiences in the war. No limit was prescribed for these reminiscences, and Mr. Cannon extended his remarks to the extent of seventy-seven pages of hand-written manuscript. It is this manuscript which provides the text for this brochure. It has been modernized as to punctuation and spelling, and some minor changes have been made in chronological arrangement; otherwise it is just as Mr. Cannon wrote it. For the reader's convenience, it is divided into chapters, with a brief introduction to each chapter written by Colonel Campbell H. Brown, who edited the manuscript.

As a straightforward, unpretentious and unadorned story of a brave and patriotic young Tennessean's wartime experiences, Sergeant Cannon's narrative is a noteworthy and valuable addition to our literature of the war.

STANLEY F. HORN



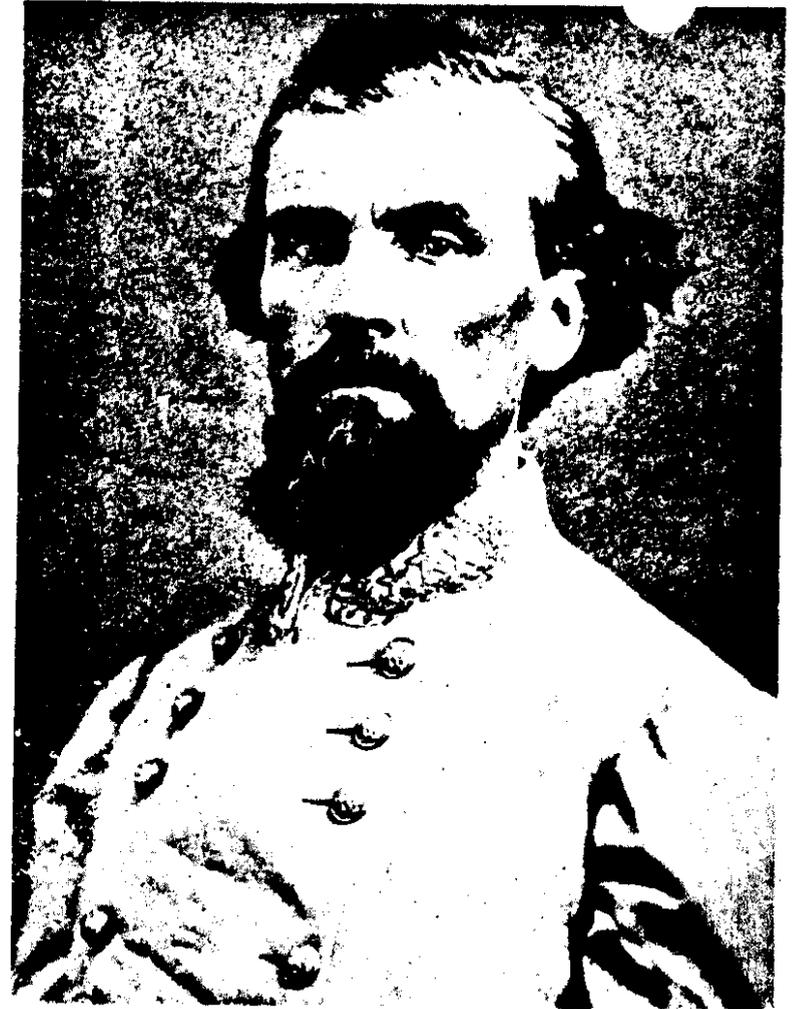
After serving three (3) years in  
Forrest's old Brigade Confederate  
Army we surrendered at Gainesville  
Ala. in 1865 - and when I returned  
home ragged and worn  
out - my Aunt Mrs. Thos  
F Perkins had a suit of clothes  
for me woven and made in the  
country. I put it on and had this  
picture taken  
Newton Cannon



—Lindsay, "Military Annals"

### Newton Cannon

A "reunion" picture, probably taken in the Eighties.



—Library of Congress

### Nathan Bedford Forrest

Even if they had only served a day or so under his command, men thereafter never failed to announce proudly that they had served in Forrest's Command.



—Tennessee Library and Archives

—Tennessee Library and Archives

Joseph Eggleston  
Johnston

Major General Joseph  
Wheeler

—Harper's Weekly

ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND  
Nashville And Its Fortifications



—Harper's We

THE BATTLE OF MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE  
Center of the Army on 2nd January, 1863

—Lindale, "Military Annals"



Col. Daniel Wilson  
Holman

He began the war as major of the 1st Confederate Infantry, sometimes called Turney's 1st Tennessee, shortly before the firing on Fort Sumter. Returning to Lincoln County about the middle of 1862, he raised and commanded a battalion of Partisan Rangers from adjoining counties. In February, 1863, the battalion, over its unanimous opposition, was merged with Douglass' Battalion to become the 11th Tennessee Cavalry. Holman, after recovering from wounds received at the storming of Fort Donelson, assumed command. He continued in command until the surrender, even after the 11th was merged with the 10th Tennessee in February, 1865.



### Captain Thomas Fearn Perkins, Jr.

Commanding Co. "I,"  
11th Tennessee Cavalry

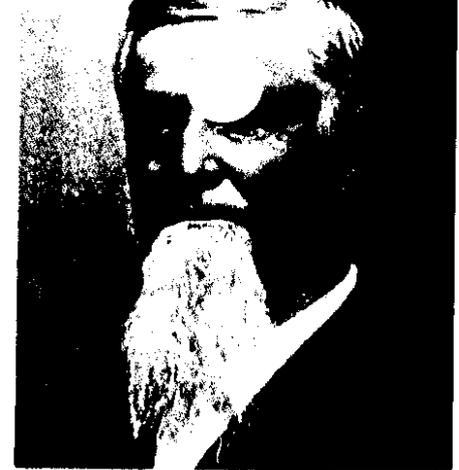
A "reunion" picture, taken probably  
20 years after the surrender.

—Lindsley, "Military Annals"

### Brigadier General George Gibbs Dibrell

Born in Sparta, Tenn., April 12, 1822. In 1862, he raised and commanded the 8th Tennessee Cavalry. Later, he took over command of Forrest's Brigade and commanded it to the surrender, which took place at Washington, Georgia, where the brigade was escorting the President of the Confederacy, the Confederate Treasury and Archives on their unsuccessful flight from Richmond.

—Wyeth, "Forrest"



### Captain Jacob T. Martin

Probably a "reunion" picture. Originally a company commander in Holman's Battalion of Partisan Rangers, he was appointed acting major of the 11th Tennessee Cavalry at its organization.

—Lindsley, "Military Annals"

### Brigadier General William Hicks ("Red") Jackson

Born in Paris, Tenn., Oct. 1, 1835—graduate of the U. S. Military Academy, 1856. Although never advanced beyond the grade of brigadier general, he exercised division and independent command during the last two years of the war. After the war, he operated Belle Meade, near Nashville, a precursor of the imposing thoroughbred horse breeding establishments now found in Central Kentucky.

—Wyeth, "Forrest"



### Brigadier General Tyree Harris Bell

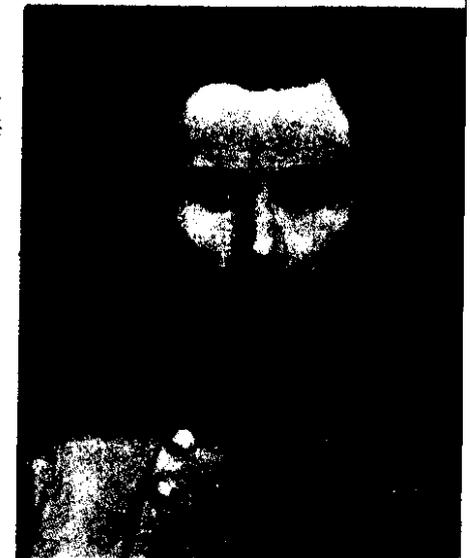
A Kentuckian, born Sept. 5, 1815. He commanded a brigade for Forrest from early in 1864 until the surrender, although he was not actually promoted to general's rank until Feb. 28, 1865.

—Wyeth, "Forrest"

### Col. James W. Starnes

One of the early members of the Forrest team, he joined as a company commander on Feb. 28, 1862 in time to fight at the Battle of Sacramento. He was killed at Bobo's Crossroads, in Middle Tennessee, June 30, 1863, while commanding Forrest's Old Brigade. Although he was never promoted to general's rank, one notices here that he was photographed wearing a general officer's tunic, with its buttons arranged in pairs, a standard practice in the Confederate service for officers assigned to brigade command.

—Wyeth, "Forrest"





# I

## HOW IT BEGAN

MAY - JULY, 1862

*It was the second year of the War when Newton Cannon became a part of it. Fort Donelson had passed; Shiloh had come and gone. The South had come to realize that it had a serious war on its hands.*

*The Federals had occupied Nashville, and were probing toward Chattanooga. The Army of Tennessee, licking the wounds of Shiloh, had fallen back from Corinth to Tupelo, in Mississippi, where it had gotten a new Commander, Braxton Bragg. He was preparing for future aggressive action.*

*In Middle Tennessee, a young officer named Perkins, who had fought at Fort Donelson, was making arrangements of his own to pursue the war. In these he involved our narrator. His story begins.*

When Fort Donelson surrendered, Forrest was a colonel and led his regiment out and refused to surrender. My captain, Thomas F. Perkins, who had been going to the military school at Nashville had been made a lieutenant of artillery; at the surrender he had been confined in an old hotel under guard. His negro servant, dressed in home-made brown jeans, was allowed to pass in and out to carry provisions. He exchanged clothes with the negro, walked by the guard and down to the boat where General U. S. Grant had his headquarters. He asked General Grant for a pass to go home; said he wanted to go home so the General gave him a pass. He came by home and went on from there to join Forrest.

Forrest ordered him to go back near his home and raise a company of Partisan Rangers, and to annoy the enemy as much as possible. I joined his company at once, and helped to get up the company. Our first meeting place was at Franklin, Tennessee, where we took the oath as Partisan Rangers. We elected officers, as follows:— Thomas F. Perkins, Captain; John Bostick, First Lieutenant; Dick Clouston, Second Lieutenant; Mack Kirby, Third Lieutenant and Willis Sawyers, Orderly Sergeant; Rube Inman, Second Sergeant; William Cannon Perkins, Third Sergeant. I was elected Second Corporal. I lacked about one month of being 16 years old: Captain Perkins was 19, and his brother, "Sangs"<sup>1</sup> Perkins was near 17. We were armed with such shotguns and pistols as we could get at home; well enough, but we hoped to get some better.

After electing officers, we marched down to the Square and formed a line fronting the Courthouse, where the ladies gave each one a little black Testament suited to carry in his pocket. I think my son Newton has mine now (1922), which I carried during my three years of service. They also gave us a large Confederate Flag. We selected a man—Rube White—to carry it for us. He was about 60 years old, with a long, white beard, while a large majority of the company was under 18 years of age. We loaded our shotguns with a one-ounce ball and three buckshot, but when the one-ounce ball would not go down, we just put in plenty of buckshot.

We marched down the Nashville Pike about six miles and came in view of a large foraging train of the enemy. We raised a *rebel yell* and charged into them, routing them completely. We captured the lieutenant in command, eleven men, nine wagons and about thirty horses and mules; we carried them through Franklin that evening and on to Columbia. The Yan-

kees returned in force and made the old men and boys near the scene of our engagement care for the dead and wounded.

We then operated out of Franklin, largely on the Hillsboro and Charlotte Pikes and vicinity. Our business was to keep the enemy from taking what the people had, to support their army on. It did not take us very long to capture carbines and Enfield rifles enough to arm our company.

We connected ourselves with Major Hawkins for a while; he was trying to raise a battalion and had several companies from other counties, but I think he was soon captured. In prison, he wrote a piece of poetry that ought to be preserved; it began, "Your letter, lady, came too late—".

After operating close around Nashville for some time and getting the enemy afraid to prowl around the county in small bodies, and they having captured twelve of our company and confined them in the Penitentiary at Nashville to be shot as bushwhackers, we charged up to the Penitentiary but could not release them;—had a wild night's fight to get away.

Then, Col. Forrest captured Murfreesboro with its garrison of something like one thousand men. We went there, joined him and were sworn into the Confederate Service for three years or the war.

Forrest sent a flag of truce to Nashville, stating that for every man of our company they killed he would kill ten of their men he had in the Courthouse at Murfreesboro, but that he would exchange man for man those that belonged to his command, so they agreed and our boys were soon back with the company.

## II

SCOUTING AND SKIRMISHING WITH  
JOE WHEELER

AUGUST, 1862 — FEBRUARY, 1863

*The Army of Tennessee went to Kentucky, where it fought bravely and successfully at Munfordsville and Perryville, but derived no profit from either. Returning, it established its headquarters at Murfreesboro, from which it issued during the last days of December, to fight the battle of that name along the banks of Stone's River: thereafter, Bragg moved his headquarters to Tullahoma, and the Army of Tennessee took up its positions in the Shelbyville-Bellbuckle-Watrace-Tullahoma bastion.*

*Captain Perkins' company of Partisan Rangers had no part in the Kentucky Campaign. During this, and previously, they ranged the pikes leading south or west out of Nashville, overrunning Federal picket posts, burning wagons, taking prisoners and carrying off horses and mules. In October, they burned the bridge serving the Del Rio Pike, out of Franklin, over the Harpeth River. Shortly thereafter, they became members of the battalion of Major D. C. Douglass: as part of this unit they served in Wheeler's Cavalry Brigade, during which time they participated in Wheeler's ride around Rosecrans' army just prior to the opening of the Battle for Murfreesboro.*

Forrest soon returned to West Tennessee<sup>2</sup> and left us attached to General Joe Wheeler's command, in front of Bragg's Army; we were in Major D. C. Douglass' Battalion. We operated on that front for some time as pickets, scouts and so forth, and had some pretty hard cavalry fights around Old Jefferson, Lavergne, Antioch and other places near there.

At the Battle of Murfreesboro, we fought on the right of the Army a part of the time: we forced our way across Stone's River to the rear of Rosecrans' army and destroyed his supply trains as far back as Lavergne. Where we crossed Stone's River, Captain Harvey, with a Kentucky company and five or six detached companies of Tennesseans, of which ours was one, was ordered to proceed rapidly to Lavergne, place his command across the road, face towards Nashville and hold his position until General Wheeler, with the balance of the Brigade, reached that point. They destroyed nearly everything between those two points; it was said to be about seven hundred wagons, loaded, with teams and prisoners. Captain Harvey and six of his men were killed in taking possession. We lost very few others, and held our position until Wheeler came. We then moved back to the left wing, after going completely around Rosecrans' army. We came on the field after our Army had fallen back and just as the enemy skirmishers were advancing, and covered Bragg's retreat, and picketed between the armies for some time. It was said that General Rosecrans was ready to fall back near Nashville when he found that General Bragg had already retreated. We were badly disappointed.

A little while later, Major D. C. Douglass and about eighty of our men were captured near Middleton, but none of our company were captured.

While on the Charlotte Pike,<sup>3</sup> General Wheeler told me to get two well-mounted men familiar with the country—to go to Harpeth Shoals and see the number of the enemy boats there—their position, etc., and the best route to reach them with the command; not to stop for any purpose and to report back to him five or six miles from the river, where he would stop to feed and move on. We had to keep riding all night. He was pleased with my report.

Harpeth Shoals is on Cumberland River. Our company being familiar with the country took a very active part; we supplied ourselves with everything we could carry. General Wheeler captured and burned five boats.

Several days after that, we met General Forrest and fought the second Battle of Fort Donelson and then moved back to our former position.

## III

## RIDING WITH BEDFORD

FEBRUARY - MAY, 1863

*This was a season of raids and probings. The Confederate cavalry screen extended from McMinnville, on the right, where John Hunt Morgan held command, to Spring Hill, where the cavalry corps of Major General Earl Van Dorn met frequent thrusts into the fruitful Middle Tennessee country; these were either forage—and horse-stealing expeditions or attempts to reach the Tennessee River.*

*At Van Dorn's death at Spring Hill on May 7, Forrest succeeded to the command of the corps, then consisting of the divisions of Armstrong, Jackson and Martin. One of Armstrong's brigades was Forrest's "Old Brigade."*

When N. B. Forrest was made a brigadier general and took his position near Spring Hill, he took our battalion—Douglass'—and Holman's, to make one more regiment for him. He added his brother, William Forrest's company and his friend, Joe Edmondson's company and made Edmondson colonel of the regiment. It created so much discord in the regiment that Colonel Edmondson resigned, and his company and William Forrest's company were sent back to West Tennessee. Major D. W. Holman was made colonel as soon as he recovered from the wounds he had gotten at Fort Donelson.

Forrest's Brigade was composed of five regiments, all from Middle Tennessee, as follows:

Starnes' Fourth  
Dibrell's Eighth

Biffle's Ninth  
 Cox's Tenth  
 Holman's Eleventh

Freeman's Battery, with Captain Boone's company from Lincoln County, his Escort.

We were stationed near Spring Hill. General Van Dorn came from Mississippi with his division to reinforce us, as the enemy was increasing his force in our front and advancing.

We captured twenty-two hundred of his men after a hard fight at Thompson's Station, fighting dismounted. I had my spur and boot-heel shot off. The wide-bossed spur saved my ankle. I was carried off the field, but soon returned to the line as I got use of my leg and stayed until they surrendered.

We had a considerable cavalry battle with them between College Grove and Triune, too, but drove them back towards Nashville in a hurry. We had considerable skirmishing around Franklin.

Once, while our Brigade was marching along the Lewisburg Pike near Franklin, totally unprepared, the Fourth (Regular) U. S. Cavalry dashed out of a cross-road and captured Captain Freeman, Lieutenant Ed Douglass and two of our guns. We fell back both ways, loaded up and charged them, recaptured the guns and most of the men. It was said they shot Captain Freeman after he surrendered, because he would not move up fast enough to keep us from recapturing him.

After Captain Freeman was killed, Lieutenant Huggins became captain of our battery until the close of the war: he was a gallant officer. Nat Baxter and Ed Douglass were lieutenants in it.

After we had gotten back to Spring Hill, General Forrest asked Captain Perkins to send to his headquarters a well-mounted man who knew the country between Spring Hill and

Nashville, for special duty. In the absence of our orderly sergeant, Willis Sawyers, I was acting in his place and detailed the next man on the list and told him to get ready to report. Captain Perkins said he would not suit and told me he thought I ought to go, so I went, and Major Strange, his adjutant, showed me into the General's room. The General said he wanted me to pass to the left of Franklin, where there was a large piece of the enemy, and to go up around Brentwood, see the position and the number of the force there, take notes of all roads and creeks of any size that I crossed, and where I saw any bodies of the enemy, and report back one hour before sunset the next day. He asked me if I thought I could do it. I told him I could if anybody could; he seemed to think I was rather young and small. He walked out to where my mare was hitched, saw me mount a splendid animal and told me to try it.

I made the trip as directed, and reported a little earlier than expected. Major Strange went with me to the General's room, where they placed a wide paper on the table, and placed Spring Hill, Franklin and Brentwood on a dotted line, and the General took his seat opposite me and Major Strange looked on from behind. He told me to mark out my trip going and coming, to stop at the crossing of road or creek and explain, which took some time. Our company was to act as pilots, advance guard and so forth.

Forrest told me to report to my company, and said to Major Strange that he had sent several of the best men he had and that damned little boy had made him the only sensible report.

We captured a regiment at Brentwood.

When we reached the Hillsboro Pike,<sup>4</sup> the enemy tried hard to recapture them with a force from Nashville, and pressed our rear guard pretty hard, as we moved necessarily

slow, but we brought them around safely. Captain Perkins said Forrest paid me the highest compliment he was capable of.

While camped near Spring Hill, I would occasionally get a pass to go home<sup>5</sup> and get my clothes washed. On one of these trips, of five or six miles, I went upstairs and to bed, while the negroes were washing my clothes and cooking something to take back to camp: where we lived was no-man's land, in between the pickets.

A negro boy called to me that the Yankees were down in the lot and coming towards the house: in a few minutes my stepmother called and said I was captured, as they were in the yard all around the house. My father came and asked me to surrender, as I could not get away. I ran down, mounted my horse, which the negro had turned in the yard without unfastening my saddle girth, and made the race of my life with bullets flying in every direction, and got away. They said they had killed me, came back to the house and marched my father to Franklin and put him in jail and kept him there three days. Quite a number of the boys were captured while scouting and picketing around Franklin.

When General Streight<sup>6</sup> left Johnsonville with twenty-five hundred picked men, well mounted, to destroy our supply of ammunition at Rome, Georgia, General Forrest did not know it until Streight was two days on the road. So we started from Spring Hill to overtake him. We had to ride night and day, just stopping to feed our horses morning and evening. We caught up with him at Day's Gap, in Sand Mountain, Alabama, where he fought us pretty hard, and then retreated across the Black Warrior River<sup>7</sup> and destroyed the bridge; the river was unfordable at that place. General Forrest asked an old man and his wife if they knew where he could cross the river, and they did not, but this young daughter of theirs said she could show

him a place; so he rode in a corner of the fence and helped her up behind him and rode on to the crossing, which was pretty deep, but we crossed and this enabled us to reach them almost in sight of Rome.

General Forrest sent General Streight a flag of truce, ordering him to surrender and save his command, saying he had men enough present to destroy them. He kept us moving around to carry out this idea and to keep General Streight from finding out how few men he had. So, he surrendered about twenty-five hundred picked men to about five hundred, or all that was left of our worn-out command. When they stacked arms and moved back and we marched between them, it was said that the Yankees wanted to charge and take their guns back and that General Streight cried. Our boys were worn out and hard to keep awake. Some Georgia militia, coming in, enabled us to keep them quiet, we having captured four or five men of theirs to one of ours. We moved back to Spring Hill, picking up our stragglers along the route.

Ella Sansen<sup>8</sup> was the name of the girl who rode behind General Forrest and piloted us across the Black Warrior River. For this act, the State of Alabama gave her a section of six hundred and forty acres of land.

## IV

## STILL WITH BEDFORD

MAY - JULY, 1863

*Came Summer, and the armies started to move. The Federals moved first, and to greater effect, for Rosecrans flanked Bragg out of his positions around Tullahoma by a smart move around the Confederate right flank, so lately quitted by Morgan's cavalymen, to go raiding into capture in Ohio.*

*So, the Army of Tennessee pulled back toward Chattanooga, through Winchester, Cowan and Sewanee. It was up to cavalry to keep the movement safe. To some of them, as will often happen, it developed into the problem of saving themselves, but Perkins and his people made the best of the situation.*

When General Bragg fell back to Tullahoma and on to Chattanooga, we assisted in protecting his rear and flanks. Our Brigadier General<sup>s</sup> Starnes was killed near Tullahoma. He had left our company doing chain picket duty near Middleton, between the two pikes leading to Shelbyville.

The day before he was killed, he sent a courier—Thomas Tulloss—to Captain Perkins, to draw in his pickets and close up the command as quick as possible. When we attempted to do this, we found ourselves in the rear of two divisions of the enemy, and consequently cut off from our command. We were ordered in that event to make our way to Chattanooga as best we could and join the command there. So, we went back to the Murfreesboro and Triune Road, and captured and destroyed quite a quantity of government supplies and sutlers' stores along

the way. We then went by Franklin and ran into the pickets, killing two. One ran his bayonet through the forage sack behind my saddle and through the clothing of Charley Braden, the boy next to me. Captain Perkins then sent our captured supplies, under about one third of the company, with pack mules, west to a point near South Harpeth River, to await our arrival. With the remaining twenty-five or thirty men, we cut through to the Overton Hills, near Brentwood, moved along the top of them through Judge Lea's lots into the Overton Woods along the Nashville and Franklin Pike, where the enemy had several thousand men, white and black, cutting and hauling wood, under guards. We dashed down among them. Captain Perkins told Frank White and me to take position on the pike near John Thompson's gate, and not to allow anyone to pass in or out of Nashville, while he, with the other men, collected together such prisoners and mules and horses as we could carry off. It created a terrible stampede. Perkins and the other men carried off such as he wished, rapidly out the Hillsboro Pike to our place of rendezvous, and didn't have time to notify White and me, so I told White we would dash in among the others, shooting as we went. We took with us three prisoners and five mules, but did not catch up with the others until near night, when we stopped to feed and rest, and look over the results of our day's labor, which was about sixty prisoners, black and white, and about as many mules and horses with harness, saddles, etc. About one half of the prisoners escaped that night, we being too tired to guard them. We then moved rapidly, crossing Duck River at Gordon's Ferry and so on to Pulaski.

When we sent the prisoners on to Huntsville, Alabama, and sold our surplus stock and equipment, and divided the proceeds among the men, to live on, we met Captain James

Rivers, of our regiment, with a part of his company which had also been cut off from the Army.

Colonel William Stokes<sup>10</sup> had been following us with quite a large body of men. We found that they were most too close to us as we went out the Elkton Pike, so we charged into their head of column and rushed them back into Pulaski, and then moved over near Prospect, to Tunnel Hill, as a good place to feed men and horses and rest a few hours. They followed us there, but we drove them back; they gave us no more trouble as we moved on and crossed the Tennessee River near Bainbridge, Alabama.

We had lost about eleven men, killed, wounded or captured in the last two skirmishes. We crossed Sand Mountain and joined the command in front of Bragg's Army at Chattanooga, with our headquarters for a while at Post Oak Springs, from which we scouted and did picket duty.

## V

## CHICKAMAUGA, AND BEFORE AND AFTER

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER, 1863

*While the main bodies of the armies marched and maneuvered around Chattanooga, cavalry had only one mission—keep in contact, keep after him, get him off balance if you can. Then came the bitter fighting, where men died in squads. After that came more skirmishing, with not so much killing, but some, which killed men as dead as Chickamauga.*

*There were rare opportunities for diversion; these they embraced with zest, sometimes with too much zest. There were opportunities for replenishment of gear and supplies, furnished by the enemy. These they also embraced.*

While we were scouting around Post Oak Springs, quite a number of men from that part of the State had been starved out and paroled at Vicksburg, Mississippi, and their people near Athens, Tennessee, gave them a big barbecue. They invited a few of our officers, my captain—Thomas F. Perkins among this number. They got up a big shooting scrape and one man was killed; it was said Perkins did it. As he was out of camp without permission, the captain expected some trouble with General Forrest, so, when he received orders to report to headquarters at once, he asked me what to do, as he did not intend to stand punishment. I told him we would arm ourselves with four pistols each and, as we were finely mounted, we would go and see what the general wanted and I would stick to him. He did not doubt this; but, after Forrest had questioned him about the matter, he justified him and ordered him to go to his

company and stay; if he left without permission any more, he would be compelled to deal with him.

Soon after this, Perkins was sent with six well-mounted men onto Waldron's Ridge, toward Grassy Cove until he met with the enemy. He was then to send a courier back and fight their front and delay their progress as much as possible. When we met them, we soon had two horses wounded, and the captain instructed me with one of the other men to stay between them and the enemy and take them up behind us if their horses fell and to save them from capture. Very soon they killed my mare, a magnificent animal, and she fell on my left leg and Captain Perkins dashed up over me and helped me up behind him by reaching down and catching me by the arm about the time I had pulled my leg out from under my mare, and carried me off amid a shower of bullets. My left leg was deadened so I could not use it, so I was put on one of the wounded horses. His rider walked and led while I held on. We met General Forrest pretty soon, with a small detachment; he told us to move on as far as possible, as the command was crossing the Tennessee River at Kingston. We soon heard heavy firing just at dark as he attacked their head of column. My wounded animal was almost exhausted, and in crossing Clinch River, which was wide and deep, I held on to the horse's mane so as to let him pull me across the river. The cold water seemed to revive the horse and me very much, so that we managed to reach Kingston in time to cross the Tennessee River with the last of our command. I there secured two Yankee horses and a wagon saddle and two grass sacks. That was my equipment.

We moved rather fast down to Tunnel Hill, near Chattanooga, and had a hard day's fight, pushing the enemy left flank back considerably. We then marched all night around to Crawfish Springs, where Ross' Texas Cavalry Brigade was being

driven back. We formed on their right, and after fighting several hours on foot, succeeded in turning them back and checking their advance in that quarter. We then moved back to Reed's Bridge, where the enemy was crossing, drove them back, and we charged across and dismounted and went to work again, pushing them across a little old field. There is where I saw the first of our infantry.

General Bushrod Johnson's Division came up at the double-quick; we were ordered to lie down, and they passed over us. We then formed on their right and fought there a while. When General Adams' Division came up and took our places, we moved rapidly and formed just to the right of Jay's Mill, and fought very hard until Longstreet's Virginians—they had bright-looking uniforms—began to arrive and form about one hundred yards to our rear. General Pat Cleburne's Division came up at double-quick and formed between us, just at night. We were exhausted and were ordered to lie down, when Cleburne's men passed over us with some terrific fighting for an hour or two, but a very short distance to our front. We assisted the wounded as much as possible, by bringing up water from the branch in our rear. I cut open a Yankee officer's knapsack and got two good blankets, the first I had had since my horse was killed.

The next morning, after moving to the right, we were ordered to charge a battery which had an enfilade fire on our line. We made two charges on horseback without success, but after dismounting we charged and succeeded in taking it, killing many of their men; when they tried to bring up their horses to carry the guns off, we killed nearly all of them. Tip Hill and I were the first to get to the guns, and were somewhat protected while shooting over the guns, but Tip was nearly barefooted. While trying to pull the boots off a fine-looking young officer

who had been killed beside the gun, I put my foot on his leg so as to hold it still; just then a bullet split on the tire of the wheel and filled my eyes with dust and sand. I thought it had blinded me entirely, but I soon recovered and continued in line.

Our next hard fighting was around McDonald's Gap, when the enemy was falling back toward Chattanooga. It was then that General Forrest asked General Polk for a division of infantry; if he had them, he said, he would take the bridge at Chattanooga; but General Polk replied that his men had been fighting two days and had to have some food and rest. Forrest said, "My God! I wonder what General Polk thinks my men are made of; they've been fighting five days." But he ordered us forward and we took two guns of a battery that had been giving us a great deal of trouble. I tried to spike one with my knife, but didn't have time. We drove them into the edge of Chattanooga. I got a drink of water at a rock spring very close to them. They were crossing the river as fast as possible and moving over Lookout Mountain, which we tried to stop by taking possession of the road that led over the mountain, but were not strong enough to do it.

We moved up near the mouth of the Hiwassee River and camped. Our next important move was to cross the Hiwassee at Charleston, under fire, and march rapidly to Philadelphia, to look after General Wolford's U. S. Troops, who had crossed the Tennessee River and were very anxious to meet Forrest's Old Brigade and show them what Kentucky could do for Tennessee. Near Philadelphia, when we came in sight, they seemed to be waiting for us. When we charged through General Wolford's line, about fifty of us went too far, and were soon being fired on from three sides. We charged through the remaining gap and met Colonel Hart, with the Sixth Georgia Regiment, in about as bad a fix as we were. Captain Perkins

reported to him on the field, and he ordered us to form in column in front of his already formed column, selected four of us and placed us about forty yards in advance: he asked for a non-commissioned officer. I told him I was a sergeant. He told me that just over the rise the enemy had closed the gap in their line, that we had made, and was fighting our command with backs to us and that our only hope was to strike a lope and go through them again. We were very close to them when they discovered us, with a double line formed, which looked beautiful in the morning sun. They opened a gap for us very rapidly, and we rode through to our command. The enemy reformed and made it pretty hot for the rear of Colonel Hart's column, so General Forrest formed three columns of fours, one regiment in each. I was in the front four of one column. At the sound of the bugle, all charged and went through General Wolford's crack Kentuckians in three places, stampeding them and capturing seven hundred men and horses and a large lot of supplies of clothing, ammunition, weapons and so on. I was the only one of our front four to return to camp. Tip Hill was killed, one was wounded and one captured as their reinforcements tried to retake their captured men. We then returned to camp near the mouth of the Hiwassee River. I never heard of General Wolford and his Kentuckians any more.

The next day, I got out of their supplies a new carbine, a fine new overcoat and two fine heavy overshirts, which suited me exactly, as I had been pretty short of everything after getting my mare killed on the field.

## VI

## BACK TO MIDDLE TENNESSEE — ALONE

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER, 1863

*Following the fruitless victory of Chickamauga, there was dissension in high places. Bragg visited reproaches on his subordinate commanders; they, in turn, were prompt to recommend his relief from command. During all this recrimination Longstreet, though utterly disgusted, was turning over in his mind what to do next.*

*But he must know more of the country, before making recommendations to General Lee and the War Department; so he sent scouts into Middle Tennessee. Three were from the 11th Cavalry; one of these was our narrator.*

General Forrest was sent with four or five hundred men, including Morton's Battery, to West Tennessee and North Mississippi, to get together all the odd commands and take charge of them, and protect that section of the Confederacy as best he could.

General Longstreet started back to Virginia with his command, and to try to capture U. S. General Ambrose Burnside, at Knoxville, and our Division was sent with him under General Frank Armstrong, with our Brigade commanded by General<sup>11</sup> George G. Dibrell, of the Eighth Regiment, and General Thomas Harrison, commanding the Texas Brigade.

As our Captain Thomas F. Perkins<sup>12</sup> and First Sergeant Willis Sawyers had been captured and were confined in prison until the close of the war, our company was commanded by First Lieutenant John Bostick, with Second Lieutenant Sol

Rozell and Third Lieutenant Mack (his name was really Malachi) Kirby, and I was First Sergeant against my wishes but on account of the wishes of the company. About this time, General Longstreet asked three of us,—Lieutenant Sol Rozell, myself and Tom Rodgers,—to go into Middle Tennessee and see what the enemy was doing,—their numbers, movements, commanding officers and so on,—and report to him before he reached Knoxville. He gave each of us a pass to go in and out of the enemy's lines, or wherever else we might need to go. We crossed the Tennessee River below Decatur, Alabama, and stayed together until we reached the road leading from Pulaski to Lawrenceburg. Here, we were to separate and allotted to each a certain territory. But they captured Rodgers and put him in jail at Pulaski with Sam Davis.<sup>13</sup> He was to be shot, but they finally agreed to send him on to prison. Lieutenant Rozell was captured a few days afterwards, so I had the territory of all three to go over alone, which I proceeded to do as best I could. The danger being very great, I had to move rather fast and had but little time for rest. After riding one horse for as long as I could with any safety, I traded him for a fine, fresh one by paying a considerable difference in greenback money. I went as near as I thought necessary to such towns as Pulaski, Columbia, Lewisburg, Shelbyville, Murfreesboro, Franklin, Nashville, Centerville, Lawrenceburg and a few others. So as to procure such information as our Army needed, I took notes of it all in my sergeant's book, which I had failed to leave with the company. With a heavy force of the enemy at Nashville, and smaller numbers at the different country towns, and a great many scouting parties riding all over the county looking for rebels, I had to be on watch all the time.

I arranged with Miss Ann Briggs and Miss Etta Cunningham, who had a permit to get family supplies out of Nashville,

for them to bring me a hat and a pair of boots, which they did by securing them under their dresses. I wanted to see my father before leaving, which was a difficult matter, as there was a regiment of the enemy camped on the creek in our front lot. By waiting until after ten o'clock at night, I rode around them and up to one of the negro houses, called him out and told him to take my horse to the barn and take everything off of him and feed him and rub him until he finished eating, and then put back everything on the horse just as he found it.

This negro's name was Grundy. His son, Dee Cannon, bossed one of my farms for more than twenty years, and is living in one of my houses now (1922), and his son, Dee Cannon, Jr., is man of all work at my house in Franklin and attends to the Harpeth National Bank, of which my son, Newt Cannon, Jr., is cashier.

I then went into the yard and waked Uncle Edmond Cannon and Aunt Susan, his wife, who was the cook, and told them to cook me something to eat and bring it into the house, that I was going into the house to see my father and for Uncle Edmond to keep a close watch on the enemy camp, and if anything unusual occurred, to notify me by three knocks on the door. It frightened Father and my stepmother very much, but in due time Aunt Susan appeared with a bountiful meal for me, which I ate with great relish, and told them all good-bye, mounted my horse and left.

Uncle Edmond and Aunt Susan had almost raised me and my brother, Samuel Perkins Cannon, who was an infant when our mother died, while I was two years old, and nobody could have been more loyal. Uncle Edmond waited on my grandfather when he was Governor and in Congress. He was fairly educated and felt his importance on the farm considerably; he attended to the mill and blacksmith shop.

It was then about two o'clock, and I had to ride about two or three miles to get around their camp and off of the public road before daylight. By that time, I had become so exhausted for lack of rest and sleep, and was on a little path in the bushy woods, so I tied my horse securely, unsaddled him, rolled myself in my blanket with my head in the seat of the saddle and went to sleep. When I waked, the sun was shining in my face. I saw a man in blue sitting on a log near me. I rose and cocked my pistol before he could make himself known. He was a friend, who had seen me there, and was watching to notify me if he saw any of the enemy near; Taylor Marlin was his name.

I rode across to the Cunningham place, got my hat and boots, met a young friend whom I had reluctantly agreed to let go with me, and we followed the company of Yankees who had stayed at the Cunningham place the night before, on towards Duck River, as I learned that was their destination and the safest place for me was as near their rear as possible. They were not travelling fast, and were scouring the country for rebels. Just at dark, I saw two of their horses hitched at a little cabin within twenty yards of the road, so I told my companion to hold my horse and I would get those two horses and carry them off, but just then he said, "Look out! Here they come." He darted through the woods at right angles to the road, but I saw nothing to run from and didn't move. Then I saw one soldier riding my way, and as soon as he was very close to me, I dashed in front of him and ordered him to surrender, which he did. I told him to give me his horse, and I would turn him loose. He said he would die on his horse, so I told him to ride on and not look back, which he did. So I rode around their camp, and crossed Duck River above them by swimming my horse by a canoe. I never saw my companion again.

I made pretty good time then, to Lawrenceburg, where twenty-five hundred of the enemy were camped. I expected, when halted by the pickets, I would ride around the town, but, as I was not halted, soon found myself on the Public Square about eight o'clock,—a bright moonshine night and quite a number of soldiers riding about the town, so I rode on without disturbance and took the Florence Road. In the edge of town I met about twenty-five; I pulled to the side of the road and let them pass.

I stopped at the Halls' old stage stand about six or eight miles from Lawrenceburg. I was very tired and cold and hungry. Mr. Hall was a little slow about letting me in, which made me a little suspicious, but he was giving Ellick Gregg time to get out the back door; he was one of Bragg's scouts who had arrived a few moments ahead of me, and was trying to get warm. So, we warmed up, ate a hearty supper and slept together in a little back room. Mr. Hall was expecting us to be captured. He gave us a very early breakfast, which we ate with a relish, and left on the Florence Road.

We had gone about two miles when we ran into a marching column of the enemy. We stood their fire for a little while, emptied one pistol and made a run, turned off the road and crossed a pond frozen over and too deep for them to follow. We gained a little time while they went around the pond, but they pressed us pretty close, and we ran into another squad of their men. We then met another company of their men, and that left but one way open, and that was towards the Tennessee River, which was very close. They were shooting at us when we reached it, so we crossed a little boggy bayou and went up under a high bank covered with bushes, where they had to get almost over us to shoot at us. We found an old canoe in a drift, with one side knocked off, so Gregg got in

in the front end to try to steer it, while I got both horses in swimming water and jumped in the water holding to my horse's mane. In this condition we had gotten nearly half way across when they saw us and did a great deal of shooting until we reached the other side safely.

We then went across Sand and Lookout Mountain, and reached Bragg's Army at Dalton, Georgia, without any further trouble.

## VII

## BEATING BACK TO LONGSTREET

DECEMBER, 1863

*Longstreet's Corps, having been unsuccessful in its attempt to capture Knoxville and overwhelm Burnside, was withdrawing eastward in good order, to winter at Russellville, beyond Morristown. Knoxville was still in Federal hands.*

*It proved to be as hard to get to Longstreet as it had been to get into and out of Middle Tennessee. The route lay through Dalton, Georgia, where the Army of Tennessee was recuperating from Bragg's mishandling, and getting acquainted with its new commander, Joseph Eggleston Johnston,—"Uncle Joe," the only commander of all its six who was to receive a nickname from its soldiers.*

I went to General Wheeler's headquarters, where Lieutenant Dick Clouston, of our company, had been given a position on the staff. I showed my report to General Wheeler; he complimented it very highly and reserved a copy of it and told me to go to General Hardee's headquarters and show it to him, which I did. The general spoke very flatteringly of my report, gave me an order for supplies from his commissary and asked me to stay that night or, if I liked best to come back the next day, as he wanted to have my report copied for himself and to send it by telegraph to General Longstreet, near Knoxville; as there was a large force of the enemy between them it would be impossible for me to get through to him. I stayed that night with General Tom Benton Smith and Captain William Ewin, his adjutant.

When I went back to see General Hardee, he offered me a position at his headquarters with the rank and pay of first lieutenant and insisted that I accept it; said he needed me, and it was much nicer for me, but I declined and told him that I would go back to my company as they needed me, and I thought I could get back to Longstreet's army some way.

I spent my second night in Dalton in the First Tennessee Infantry; slept with Thomas Carroll of the Williamson County Company. The next morning, Lieutenant Wooldridge said that Colonel Fields<sup>19</sup> wanted to see me before I left,—and he went to the tent with me and introduced us. Then the Colonel said quite a number of his best men had taken artillery horses and run away to join Forrest in West Tennessee the night before, and he wanted to know what I knew about it. I told him that was the first I had heard of it, and of course knew nothing. He said he thought probably I had brought some letters from home that caused it. I told him that he was a colonel and I a sergeant, but wanted him to understand that I was as good a soldier as he was and he must not cast any reflections on me: Lieutenant Wooldridge interfered and we left.

After a toddy together all around, they gave us a fine breakfast of fried wild turkey and silver skin onions,—I furnished the onions. They had been hunting the day before and had two wild turkeys and a deer.

I had found Captain Andrew Gordon, Cam Terrill and Jack Crowson, of our regiment, who were anxious to get back. We went over near the foot of the mountains near the North Carolina line, rested and fed our horses several days, ate a big Christmas dinner and struck out in the snow—about twelve inches deep and very cold. We could scarcely get over the mountain roads. Many places we had to walk and lead the horses.

In crossing the Blue Ridge Mountains, we stayed all night at Cherokee, an Indian village. We stayed with the government agent. We also met Governor Vance, of North Carolina somewhere near here, with quite a squad of militia, hunting deserters and bushwhackers. Those mountaineers in that region captured a number of wagons of Vance's supply train and threw them off the mountain road into a terrible gorge said to be two or three hundred feet deep, destroying mules, wagons and drivers: I looked at the mess below.

We came later to a nice house on a beautiful little stream, and I asked the man to let us stay all night. He said he would be glad to do it, but just a little way up the creek was camped the captain and a full company of the worst men in those mountains, who would be glad to know we were there, as they would be glad to kill all the rebels they could find, so he advised us to go as far as we could before stopping. We got forage and rode on, and after night took a trail off the main road and stayed with Squire Green on the side of Smoky Mountain. We slept with our clothes and pistols on. The squire didn't like it at all, but the next morning I gave him and his two boys a heavy drink of apple brandy, which got them in a good humor, and then we pushed on.

## VIII

## "THE VALLEY FORGE OF THE REBELLION"

JANUARY - MARCH, 1864

*"The winter of 1863-64 is said to be the most severe of the four years of the war, and we had the most to endure in the coldest section with the poorest equipment and the hardest fighting."*

Nothing of importance until we reached Longstreet's Army at Knoxville and I made a full report. The general said he had received Hardee's despatch, but wanted to talk to me more fully, which he did, and I reported to my company.

First Lieutenant John Bostick, in command, and Mack Kirby, Third Lieutenant, were the only two commissioned officers with it. I was First Sergeant. The number of men was small,—not more than one half or two thirds of the original company. Quite a number were in prison, as well as Captain Thomas F. Perkins and Lieutenant Sol Rozell. Dick Clouston had been put on General Wheeler's staff. Henry Smith had been given a position at the Headquarters of General Preston Smith and Marcus Crump was with General Marcus J. Wright. Some were sick or wounded in hospitals, some killed and some dismounted by getting their horses killed. They were a hardy set of boys, good fighters, but very poorly supplied with clothing or anything else, and the weather bitter cold.

General Longstreet, after surrounding General Burnside in Knoxville and being unable to capture them found large forces of the enemy between him and General Bragg's Ten-

nessee Army, as well as hurrying to relieve Burnside's army from several directions, had to make a hasty retreat up the Tennessee Valley<sup>14</sup> with his army in bad condition and with no prospect of relief from any quarter. Our division had a hard time covering his retreat and protecting his rear and flanks,—crossing streams without bridges in snow and ice and holding in check a very strong enemy who felt their strength very much. When we drove them back toward Knoxville we would have to fall back at night for protection and forage and so forth. The winter of 1863-64 is said to be the most severe of the four years of the war, and we had the most to endure in the coldest section with the poorest equipment and the hardest fighting. We called it the Valley Forge of the Rebellion.

Besides the fighting around Knoxville, we fought at Strawberry Plains, Mossy Creek, Maryville, Shook's Gap, Bull's Gap, Dandridge and a lot of other places. At Maryville, after fighting most of the day, the enemy began to press us very hard, and it looked as if our part of the command would be captured. When the horses were brought up for us to withdraw, Lieutenant Mack Kirby mounted the first horse he came to, which was James Trigg's: it was shot from under him. He then mounted his own. I turned the company right about and checked the enemy temporarily, which gave us time to mount and ride off. It was all I could do to keep James Trigg from shooting Mack Kirby off his horse.

At Shook's Gap our Colonel, D. W. Holman, was in command of our Brigade in the absence of General George G. Dibrell. Late in the evening, when we were trying to fall back, our regiment forming some distance in rear of the main line, to hold it until another passed through; but, before our regiment could form, the enemy, in a column of fours charged, broke through the center of our Brigade and came back to us

before we were prepared, so I called on Company "I" to dismount and turn their horses loose. Lieutenant Rush of Company "L" did the same thing, and we lined up on foot, but we had to let our men pass through before we could fire much, which put them very close to us, but we checked them and they fell back a short distance and reformed. The officer at the head of their column rode out in front, waved his sword over his head and called out, "Forward, my Fourth Ohio! Forward!" and they dashed at us just as if they intended to run over us. We shot the men and horses up pretty badly and they fell back. The officer and his horse were killed about twenty yards from me. I got the officer's outfit,—saddle, bridle, holsters, etc. A very fine equipment, quilted saddle, brass mounted, with holsters and pistols and all the rest. I used it for a while and exchanged it later with Captain Coffee of our Regiment for his, because this one was too heavy for me, especially when wet in snow or rain and I was a little weak, and small.

The coldest, and in many respects the worst night I ever spent was at Shook's Gap. Colonel Holman sent me with twenty men on brigade picket in front of the enemy. I thought three posts would do, as we were in full view of the enemy. A bitter north wind was blowing, with a lot of fine sleet, which stuck to anything it hit and created a thick crust. By one o'clock, the half-clad boys were suffering so that I decided to take the place of all three, the reserve lying on the frozen ground covered with blankets and rubber sheets. I cautioned them to keep one man awake, so as to relieve me in two hours, as I was pretty well clothed. They all went to sleep and left me there alone about three hours; after listening to the enemy relieve his pickets, I left my post, went back to the reserves, and had to get one of the boys to knock my feet out of the stirrups with the butt of his gun before I could dismount.

At Dandridge, our company was on the skirmish line, with the enemy's line pretty close to us. Little Frank White and I had crawled up to a lone pine tree in an open field, where we could do good work shooting. General Longstreet rode up to where we were. I rose and saluted him, told him to go back, that the enemy had just run a battery up to their skirmish line. Just as I pointed to it, a shell burst between us—almost covered us up with dust and trash. Nobody was hurt. The general rode off.

I was taken sick across the French Broad River a little above New Port.<sup>15</sup> The surgeon came and said I would die if I laid out so unprotected on the frozen, snowy ground, so I got Colonel Holman to allow Albert Short, one of our company, to go with me to try to find a house and stay and wait on me. The boys helped me on my horse and we left, Short leading and I holding to the horn of the saddle. We had to ford the French Broad River, which was very deep; while waiting for a man to show us the ford, I told Short to lead my horse to the edge of the water and let him drink. While doing this, he let the reins fall out of his hand and the horse stepped into swimming water and swam across with me sitting on him. As he scrambled up the bank, the ice formed on him and me. He saw a good-looking house near; he said it was Mr. John Stokely's.<sup>16</sup> When told who I was, they gladly took us in. Mr. Stokely said he had voted for my grandfather for Governor, he was a Whig. The Stokely family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Stokely, their two lovely daughters, Miss Sue and Miss Lou and their son, John, about my age—seventeen and a half years old. Only their great kindness saved my life.

The surgeon called with an ambulance, but, after examining me, said I was too low to move, that the Command was moving over to Pigeon River and that the enemy would be in New Port in a day or two. I begged Short to stay with me until

the next day, then, with the assistance of Mr. Stokely and amid the tears of all, they got me on my horse and we struck out. We got eight or ten miles the first day and twelve or fifteen the second; caught the command nearly dead. Several of the boys contributed blankets to help cover me, and they sat up by the fire that evening and night. It snowed about twelve or fourteen inches on me without any tent. The command moved the next day; the colonel gave me a pass to march at will, which was necessary, as I had to stop and rest occasionally during the day.

We camped near Bull's Gap, on the Nolichucky River, several days, and then started on the long march back to the Army at Dalton, Georgia. We went by Greeneville, Paint Rock, on the French Broad, Asheville, and on south through North Carolina. I became too weak to travel with the command, and got a permit to go on the cars, which I took, I think, at Branchville, South Carolina. I got one of the boys to care for my horse and equipment, and bring them on with the command.

While waiting for a car, I went to a house close by and asked for just a little something to eat more delicate than the camp feed. The woman slammed the door in my face and said she didn't take in strangers, which made me very mad. I went back to the depot, where there were twelve or fifteen sick and wounded waiting for the same train and they joined in abusing South Carolina very bitterly,—all anxious to get out of the state. Soon an old gentleman asked me to go a short distance with him and he would satisfy me. I at first declined, but finally did go, and got the first decent meal I had had in some time. We left on our open-top flat car and reached the command below Dalton without incident and much improved.

## IX

WITH JOE WHEELER AGAIN, FOR  
UNCLE JOE JOHNSTON

APRIL - AUGUST, 1864

*The Forrest Brigade was glad to be back with the Army of Tennessee again. There was fighting, of course, — 100 days of it, over 100 miles of bloody ground — but they had a commander in whom they trusted, and to whom they could look up, so they fought mightily, all the way from Rocky Face Ridge to Jonesboro, and a little beyond.*

After some heavy skirmishing on the right near Tunnel Hill Station, we began to fall back and cover the retreat of General Joe Johnston's Army to Resaca, where we stopped and had some hard fighting to do. The enemy having placed a battery so as to get an enfilade fire on a part of our line, we were ordered to charge it on horseback, which we did, taking two of the guns and silencing the others. Captain W. R. Garrett, the adjutant of our Regiment, leading about sixty of us, reached the guns, but had to fall back under heavy fire from other guns. Young Cam Terrill's mare was shot from under him, and I stopped in the open under heavy fire and took him up behind me, amid the cheers of the other boys. The enemy took our field hospital, and we were sent to retake it, which we did in good style,—but in that charge Jack Nicholson was killed; his horse ran through the enemy line with him before he fell. He was the son of Judge A. O. P. Nicholson, of Columbia, a schoolmate of mine and a noble boy.

After a few days, General Johnston's Army renewed the retreat through Adairsville and Calhoun to Cassville, which gave me some hard work to do, covering their rear and flanks. Mack Perkins, a cousin of mine, was killed near Adairsville. Near Cassville, parts of three companies under Captain Tom Pierce were the extreme rear guard. They did some brilliant fighting in an open field in full view of our infantry in the works on the hill above the town. Our instructions were to fall back fighting; the enemy, being very much annoyed, brought up a heavy front and seemed determined to run over us. We halted and came to a right about, lined up and waited their assault, which we could see coming. We broke their lines three times, marched off in column of fours and in good order, back to and through the works and were greeted with cheers from our men in the ditches. Just as we were coming into line preparatory for dismounting and getting into the ditches, a shell burst between my horse's head and Ike Hillman's. I caught him as he was falling from his horse, and one of the boys led the horse back to an ambulance. We put him in it, and turned the horse loose, as he was badly wounded. I found afterward that Ike had a large piece cut out of his thigh and another plug cut from the bottom of his foot, which made him unfit for further service. He was sent to prison after partial recovery. My horse's saddle was hit in five places without injury to either of us.

The line at New Hope Church, where General Leonidas Polk was killed, was held by us longer than any other place on the retreat from Dalton back to Atlanta. Our lines were close together, and heavy skirmishing and hard fighting were the order of the day. We were in the breastworks with headlogs. We were used to lengthen the infantry lines, our company being next to General Pat Cleburne's right. It was here that

Federal General McPherson's corps made a terrible assault with several lines in mass formation. They had to cross a small field in front of Cleburne's division and were not fired on until they had nearly reached our works, when they were driven back with terrible loss. It was here that I saw more dead and wounded than on any field of the same size during the war. I was hit in the back as I was coming off the skirmish line to get in the ditch; I was knocked off the headlog, but not seriously hurt.

I first heard of General Polk being killed from three Federal prisoners we captured on the skirmish line. It was said that General McPherson reported to General Sherman after the assault and asked for orders; he was ordered to renew the assault at daylight in the morning, and replied that he would be glad to do it but must have some fresh troops, as his command was totally unfit for the purpose.

We made a raid on Sherman's supply train. My mare was wounded, so I sent her to the rear, but never saw her again. I took a lead mule out of one of the wagons we were destroying, and rode him until I could get a twenty-day furlough to remount myself.

I went to Holly Springs, Mississippi, and got a horse from my aunt, Mrs. Judge Dawson, but on returning to Atlanta I found a very fine mare my father had sent me from Tennessee, so I gave the other horse back to Mrs. Dawson's son, Hardin Perkins, a first cousin of mine who was on General Hardee's staff.

## X

GOOD-BYE TO UNCLE JOE: GOOD-BYE  
TO ATLANTA

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER, 1864

*The Army had lost its beloved commander, but there was no help for that; people were always getting shifted about in a war. So Hood took over; minus a leg, and with a useless arm, he had to strap himself in his saddle.*

*After Hood had lost Atlanta, he tried to draw Sherman away from the ruined city, having the archaic idea that wars are won by defeating armies and not by destroying people and their cities, and hoping that he might, by some magic, catch Sherman off guard and defeat him in detail, as Johnston had hoped to do.*

*But Sherman had different ideas; he was going to "make Georgia howl." He sent the dependable and skillful George Henry Thomas to Nashville, to stop Hood if he should try to break north, or to occupy Tennessee, and started his army for Savannah, having cut his own communications and intending to live off the country; so Hood commenced to formulate plans to invade Tennessee.*

In our one hundred miles in a hundred days' fighting, we lost very little and were never whipped from our position. Everything moved with great precision, and the whole Army, from the highest officer to the lowest private thought we had the greatest general the world had ever produced—General Joseph E. Johnston.

Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy, came to Atlanta. He told General Johnston that it had been decided

at Richmond that he must hold Atlanta at all hazards. The General told the President that he would decide that matter for himself, or resign, which he did. President Davis offered the position to General Hardee, who declined, saying that if General Johnston could not hold Atlanta, he would not try.

The President then sent for General John B. Hood, and offered him the position, with the request that he hold Atlanta. Hood accepted, with the remark that the first duty of a soldier was to obey his Commanding Officer, and that he would hold Atlanta if the Army was strong enough to do it.

General Hardee told me this himself.

We then fought the great Battle of Atlanta, with frightful loss, and retreated back to Jonesboro. Our command cleared the city of all stragglers and drove them back to the Army while we covered the retreat. A part of our command participated in the Battle of Jonesboro.

From here General Hood marched around Sherman's army and destroyed all communications,—railroad bridges, telegraph lines and so on as far as Dalton, Georgia. He took our Regiment, the 11th Tennessee Cavalry, with him and left the balance of our brigade—the old Forrest Brigade, under General George G. Dibrell, in front of Sherman.

## XI

### BACK UNDER FORREST. TO TENNESSEE—AND BACK—WITH HOOD

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER, 1864

*October and part of November passed before Hood could get his army assembled and in motion for Tennessee. Properly prosecuted, this could have been one of the brilliant campaigns of the war; as it was, there was the Battle of Franklin, after which the outcome was inevitable.*

*In the advance from the Alabama line, Forrest's Cavalry Corps played one of its most distinguished roles; but the coverage of the retreating and disconsolate Army of Tennessee from Columbia to the Tennessee River is one of the feats that caused the late Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig to characterize Forrest as "one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of English-speaking commanders of mounted troops."*

At Dalton, we captured a stockade with a regiment of Negro troops with white officers, a Colonel Johnson in command. We marched them all night to prevent their recapture, through Snake Creek Gap to some place where our Army had stopped, and turned them over to the Provost guard. I allowed Colonel Johnson to ride my horse while I walked, and led him a part of the way. He seemed to appreciate my kindness and said he believed I had saved his life, and presented me with a fine pair of saddlebags.

We were used as advance guards, pilots, scouts and couriers across Sand Mountain and on to Twin River, where we reported to General N. B. Forrest, the first time we had seen him since

soon after the Battle of Chickamauga. We were attached to General Tyree H. Bell's Brigade.

About a week ahead of Hood's Army, Captain Jake Martin (Jacob T., acting Major), of our Regiment was sent into Middle Tennessee to keep telegraph lines and railroads cut, in command of seventy-five picked men selected from three companies, twenty-five each, from Companies "I," "D" and "G." I was in that squad. We crossed the Tennessee River below the Shoals,—I think at Brown's Ferry—and moved rapidly. The first place we struck the railroad and telegraph lines was near Spring Hill, in Campbell Brown's field, where we threw a train heavily loaded with soldiers going south off the track. We also cut the wires at two posts, and I carried off a large piece of wire by wrapping a part around the horn of my saddle so as to keep them from mending it too quick. Captain Martin tried to stay in reach of the Nashville & Decatur Railroad. He sent twenty-five men to the Chattanooga Railroad and twenty-five men to the Northwestern Railroad;<sup>17</sup> to this latter squad I belonged. We did more execution than both the other squads. After striking first near where the railroad crosses the Harpeth River, we separated into four squads of six men each, to strike the railroad at certain designated points, and as near as possible about the same time. After repeating this, we had caused them considerable trouble, as they were moving a great many troops from Johnsonville to Nashville. They sent quite a lot of men to drive us out. We fought them a few times, with pretty heavy skirmishing, to make them slower about attacking us and finding out how few men we had. We then separated, every man to take care of himself and get back to the Army as best he could. The sound of the artillery was our principal way of finding out where Hood's Army was.

The Battle of Franklin was nearly over when we came in reach of it. We were detailed next day to get up supplies and equipment for the hospitals, which we did for a week or ten days, and then joined our Command near Nashville.

The Battle of Franklin can hardly be appreciated by anyone without looking over the field. The idea of charging over an open field sloping gradually up to a fine line of works filled with soldiers proved to be a perfect slaughter pen for as fine a body of men as composed any army in any war. There were left on the field about four thousand of our men and two thousand of the enemy in four hours' fighting. Six of our generals were laid on Colonel John McGavock's porch the next day.

During the fighting around Nashville and the beginning of Hood's retreat, our command operated on the left, along the Granny White<sup>18</sup> and Hillsboro Pikes and vicinity. I had twelve men on picket two miles west of Franklin, until Hood's Army had passed, when we were ordered to report to the Regiment in the suburbs of Franklin and cover the retreat along the Columbia Pike and watch both flanks. Hood had lost a large lot of his best men at Nashville, and consequently had to move rapidly to get across the Tennessee River. We had some heavy skirmishing to do to make the enemy progress as slow as possible. Of course, they outnumbered us so greatly that it kept us pretty busy, tired and hungry.

We had a hard fight at the bridge at Pulaski, and at Anthony's Hill, nine miles back. It was here that we made a heavy effort to check them, and it was said that General Hood told General Forrest that if he could hold this point until five o'clock that evening, he thought he could get his Army across the Tennessee River. Forrest was almost exhausted and ready to fall back, but called on his men to hold it at all hazards, which we did, but it required our full capacity, and the weather

was very bad. I was sent with twenty men to take two hundred and twenty prisoners around the command and turn them over to the Provost Guard. It required nearly an all-night movement. All became very tired towards the last, and some refused to go further, but there was no time to rest. I tried to move them faster by threatening to shoot them, but this soon lost its effect, so I helped them along by making our men walk and lead and put one or two prisoners each on their horses. We finally succeeded and returned to the Command in time to finish the Anthony's Hill fight and fall on back towards the Tennessee River and Hood's Army was saved.

Our company was placed in some old rifle pits on the hill at the Tennessee end of the old pontoon bridge over which the Army had passed, and our command was then crossing very closely, it seemed to me. I told the boys that it looked as if they intended to sacrifice us to save the others, but we were soon ordered to march out single file, holding our horses by the bit. The enemy had placed some guns in position, and were trying to cut the bridge. They spattered a little water on us, but failed to hit the bridge before we reached the other shore. For a second time we had left the bluegrass hills of Tennessee and never expected to see them again; this was the sentiment of many of the Army.

## XII

### RIDING WITH BEDFORD. SURRENDER

JANUARY - MAY, 1865

*The Army of Tennessee went to Tupelo, where, under Gen. Dick Taylor, they were regrouped, refitted and finally taken to their last conflict and surrender in North Carolina.*

*Forrest took his people to Corinth. Here, every man who could reach his home within the time allotted, got twenty days' leave. Returning, as most of them did, they found their commander in command of the District of Mississippi and East Louisiana, and of all the cavalry between the Chattahoochee and Mississippi Rivers. Not only were there raids by Federal cavalry in overwhelming force, but there was the messy job of rounding up or discouraging the cloud of guerillas, stragglers or deserters who infested the country, stealing horses, supplies and money, and committing an occasional murder.*

*The most significant Federal threat was furnished by the magnificent cavalry corps of James Harrison Wilson. For some reason, our narrator has him confused with Andrew Jackson Smith, but Smith was in command of the XVI Corps, which, at about that time, had moved from Nashville to assist in the capture of Mobile.*

Our Brigade, commanded by General George G. Dibrell and now composed of four regiments, had gone on in front of Sherman after we left Jonesboro, Georgia, and our regiment was now left with Forrest and saw no more of Hood's Army. We guarded the Tennessee River, West Tennessee around in front of Memphis, North Mississippi, with headquarters generally around Meridian and North Alabama. Light rations, hard

fighting and hard riding was the rule, with no government in reach of us to look to. Of course, we lost quite a number of Tennesseans by desertion, capture and sometimes by the enemy.

About this time, Federal General A. J. Smith crossed Sand Mountain with a heavy force of cavalry, going in the direction of Montgomery and Selma. Forrest gathered his forces together and started on a forced march to meet him. General William H. Jackson, with our division, met General Croxton's division near Tuscaloosa and whipped them, they retreating in the general direction of Gainesville, Alabama, while General Forrest, with the remainder of his command, was looking after the remainder of A. J. Smith's Federal command. We whipped Croxton again near Cotton Plant, and he fell back across the river and burned the bridge, leaving quite a number of his men on our side, whom we captured.

General William H. Jackson came up to give orders what to do with prisoners; he told me he wanted the best-mounted man in the company, as long as he had plenty of intelligence, for special duty. I was riding a fine animal and leading another one which I had just captured. I told him I expected I was better mounted than any of the other boys. Then he said he wanted me. He handed me a despatch, to be delivered to General Forrest as quick as possible. I asked him where I would find General Forrest. He said he did not know, but somewhere in the direction of Selma, probably twelve or fifteen miles from us, and not to spare my horse.

I was riding a fine mare. I kept her in a lope about twelve miles or more and met General Forrest with Major Strange, his Adjutant, at the head of a small column of men. I handed him the despatch, dismounted and put my elbow in the seat of my saddle and leaned against my horse. My horse and me were very tired, in fact, almost worn out. The general questioned me

considerably about General Jackson's movements,—the route I had come and the route General Jackson would probably come, and the like. He then said, "You have killed your horse; he will be dead directly." He told Major Strange to write me an order to press me another, and a pass to be away from the command, as I was obliged to have some rest myself. They then moved on to meet General Jackson. This was just after the Battle of Selma, when Forrest had been whipped by General A. J. Smith, with a large command, and had cut his way through them with what men he had with him.

This was the last battle of the war east of the Mississippi. General Forrest collected his command together and prepared to surrender, as General R. E. Lee had already surrendered, so we understood. In the meantime, I had gone to a Mr. Ridgeway's, and stayed a day and a night and rested and eaten a plenty and swapped horses with him and rejoined my command.

While waiting and making arrangements for our surrender and parole, there was a great deal of restlessness among the men. Quite a number wanted to leave, but Forrest insisted that we stay together, so that he could get us paroled on better terms. About ninety of us were making arrangements to cross the Mississippi River and go to Texas and then to Mexico. General Tyree H. Bell, who commanded our Brigade, insisted on my staying to get my parole and go home to my father and help as much as possible to save what was left of our property, which I decided to do.

So I was paroled, and struck out for home from Gainesville, Alabama, with one gold dollar. Confederate money had no value.

As I was leaving, John Carney, First Lieutenant of Company "D" of our Regiment (Captain Jack Lytle's Company)

stopped me and proposed to swap either coats or pants, as his coat matched my pants and my coat matched his pants, so I swapped pants with him, but refused to part with my cavalry jacket, which I had worn a long time, and had two bullet holes in it. He seemed much pleased when we changed pants, and said we would both make a more presentable appearance when we reached home.

A few days before, one of the boys that I had given a fine U. S. horse that I had captured, said he wished he had one of those large black mules that we captured at the bridge; so I swapped the horse I was riding for a mule, as he said he had to go to work as soon as he got home. When I traded and saddled the mule and mounted and began to spur him, he started in a slow trot. The fellow laughed and said that was as fast as he would go. I told him to examine his new horse's eyes and left him looking at them. I then gave the mule to the other boy, and took back the U. S. horse that I had given him.

While waiting to arrange for paroles, they tried to consolidate companies and regiments so as to make them large enough to be of presentable appearance. They put two other companies with ours, and, as I objected to serving under the other officers, General Bell had me transferred to his escort temporarily; hence, my parole was as a member of the 19th and 20th Regiments, consolidated, but I had done no duty with them. It should have been as First Sergeant, Company "I," Eleventh Tennessee Cavalry, where all my service had been done.

### XIII

#### HOME AGAIN

MAY, 1865

I stopped at a Mr. Wyatt's, in Gainesville and gave him my old rubber coat and leggings for breakfast and feed for my horse.

I had my one gold dollar, and when I had gone some distance up into Sand Mountain, I caught up with four other boys of our Command who hadn't a cent. We stopped a little after dark on the side of the mountain road to rest our horses and sleep a little, without feed for either. I left three of the boys to watch our horses and took one of them with me. By finding a path that led off from the road and walking about a mile or two, we came to a cabin. After much persuading, they let me have fifty small ears of corn for my gold dollar. I then saw an oven on the hearth, with fire on the lid. They said I had promised to go if they would let me have the corn. I sat down and told them I would leave directly; I wanted to see what was in that oven. When she raised the lid, the fumes came my way and smelled fine; so I told her to give half that pone of bread and I would go, so she sawed a butcher knife across it and put half in my haversack and we left. When I got back to the boys, I sat on a log beside the road, divided the corn and bread into five equal parts and gave each one as much as I kept for myself. We soon devoured it, and slept until two or three o'clock in the morning, mounted and went on to Florence, Alabama.

There, I went to see Mrs. Ford, and asked if the Major (her son) had arrived. He had not. I told her he would be home in a few days, as the Armies had all surrendered. She gave us a meal of cold food, as it was between meals. As we sat down to eat, a provost guard appeared at the door to take us to headquarters, and was unwilling to wait for us to eat. So, I told the boys to stay and finish their meal under guard of part of them and bring my part in a bundle with them and I would go and see the commander of the post with the balance of the guard. They were Infantry; as I mounted my horse, they told me I had better walk, but showed me where headquarters was, so I loped up, dismounted, went in and saluted the major and told him the guard had arrested us, and asked him why it was, and showed him my parole, and also told him that we were the last troops east of the Mississippi River to surrender,—that I belonged to Forrest's Command. He said, "Give me your hand; I have met you fellows often enough, and am very glad it is over." He pulled out a long, black bottle, and asked me to take a drink with him. I thanked him for all of us and declined. They soon collected around us, and wanted to know why I was riding one of their horses and had on two pistols of theirs. I told them I had captured them. The major said he expected it was his duty to take them. I told him that I belonged to a people that would not violate their word of honor, and he could notify the provost marshal at Franklin, Tennessee, and that I would deliver them to him on notice, so he let us go on and I thanked him very much and we left.

We passed through Lawrenceburg without trouble from the guards. Just before reaching Mount Pleasant, we met three young ladies, who asked if we were deserters. I told them that the war was over and we were paroled soldiers, and that all the boys that were left were on their way home. I knew a great

many of them who were friends of theirs. These girls in their old buggy looked very pretty to me: the homespun dress could not be beat, when worn by a true Southern girl. Theirs was a charm that has never been equalled since.

We stopped for the night at General Lucius Polk's.<sup>19</sup> They treated us like we were *somebody*, to use a common expression, gave us a splendid supper and an upstairs front room, which some of the boys said was too good for us. We had not slept in a house in such a long time. We ate a very hearty breakfast: our horses had been well fed, all of which made us feel very grateful. We then separated, each one expecting to reach home by night.

I went by Mr. Ben Harlan's, to see my brother, whom I thought was boarding there and going to school to Professor Dodson. I found he was not there, and I wanted to ride on, but could not get away, as dinner was nearly ready, so I took the first chair in the front hall that I could reach, with my back to the wall. In a very short time, a lot of young ladies began to come in, to whom I was introduced, and who kept me busy answering questions about the other boys I knew who were friends of theirs, until Mr. Harlan walked down the hall, with the young ladies seated on each side, and announced that dinner was ready, and when I asked him to let the ladies precede us, said no; that I should have the post of honor, and caught me by the arm and we walked down the hall to the dining room, a very embarrassing thing for me to do, as my little cavalry jacket with two bullet holes in it was too short to conceal the defect in my pants and drawers which had seen too much service, and were even too defective to hide that part of my person that had been constantly nearest to the saddle. So, when we reached the table, some of the girls looked sad, some laughed and some even shed tears.

As soon as dinner was over, Mr. Harlan rode with us to Duck River, to show me where I could cross, since I did not want to go through Columbia, where I might be detained. So I took the nearest way home and reached there just at night; and after a hearty greeting from all, white and black, ate a hearty supper and soon retired. They had not been certain that I was alive—hadn't heard from me in a long time.

The next morning, I found some clothes that I had left in a bureau drawer three years before, but they were entirely too small, so I sent to my father to let me have some clothes, to come down to breakfast in, as two young ladies, Misses Alice and Sue Ewin, nieces of my stepmother, were staying there. He sent me a pair of old pants and a linen duster, and I came down all right.

I then went over to see my uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Fearn Perkins, who were the closest relations I had, and had done so much to raise me. They were the brother of my mother and the sister of my father; their son, Thomas F. Perkins, Jr., was captain of the company in which I belonged, and had been in prison about a year and a half and had not reached home: a younger brother, William Cannon Perkins, with whom I had slept, died a few days after our second fight at Fort Donelson from exposure on our long forced march in cold weather. They gave me a big dinner and a suit of gray jeans clothes which my aunt had had made and put away for me, from black and white wool sheared from the sheep's back, carded by hand and mixed, spun, wove, cut—by guess—and made at home, all of which I was very proud of. I was devoted to her, and she to me. Her children and my brother, Sam Perkins Cannon, my sister, Leah America Cannon and I were double first cousins and were raised on two adjoining farms, both very large. Our houses were about four miles apart, with many

negroes on each. My sister's husband, Major William P. Wilson, who was a major in the Fifth Confederate Regiment of Pat Cleburne's Division, had his right arm shot off at Atlanta when General Hood took command, and was wounded in the right leg at the same time. She had stayed south of the lines all the time, and, after getting him back to Memphis by wagon and train, nursed him back to health.

It was several weeks before all the boys that were left got back home. Although there was general rejoicing, neither the boys nor the houses looked like they did three or four years before, as we were in about the middle of Middle Tennessee, and had been swept over almost continuously by armies of both sides for several years.

XIV  
PICKING UP THE PIECES  
1865-72

*This was the period of Reconstruction, so designated by many authors of histories of the time. It demanded of its participants as much bravery, judgment and self-sacrifice as had the days of battle; sometimes, it was as dangerous.*

It was a sad time in our section to go around and say "howdy" to all the folks we knew and look over the ravages of four years of war, and meet the boys as they came in from the armies—and from hospitals and prisons—all looking a little the worse for wear, some on crutches or with an empty sleeve or an eye gone, and divide our sorrows with the relations and friends of the many left buried on the different battlefields. After frolicking around a while, eating the good things and dancing with the pretty girls and such, it became our duty to get things straightened out, as the whole country was overrun by deserters and camp followers and a lot of desperadoes who preyed on the helpless people.

The about four miles of our large farm had a tremendous population of negroes. Some whole families had moved off, to be close to the Union Army. Some had joined the army, quite a number had died from neglect and disease, as they knew very little about caring for themselves. But many of the most intelligent had stayed quietly at home, and took care of and protected their white people, composed almost entirely of old men, women and children. Of course, the fences, stock and so on were mostly gone.

The country was under martial law, and a provost marshal with a large number of soldiers was in command. In case of any irregularity, no testimony was any good except from negroes and what the Yankees called loyal citizens.

Everything was in a bad fix and getting worse rapidly. Something had to be done; so we banded together about twenty of the best men available; men of brains, experience, nerve and good reputation, and notified all the bad characters, black and white, that there was not room for all of us, so they must go to work and behave, or leave the country at once. Any disobedience to these orders meant very severe punishment or death. No second notice was necessary. All must stay in the house and put out the lights at eight o'clock. Of course, we went well mounted and well armed, to see that our orders were obeyed. Governor Brownlow had offered a reward for each of us, dead or alive, with no results.

A white man, with twenty negroes, all well armed, laid behind a rock fence beside the road and fired on us as we came by, killing one of the boys, William Ezell, and his horse, and wounding several others. We procured a list of them and their officer, and that was the last of them, except two who escaped to the North—an example had to be made of them for the benefit of the country. Of course, there were individuals who gave us some trouble, but that was soon over and everything quiet.

So, after a few whippings and killings, the country became as quiet as one could wish. All felt safe and very much relieved from the strain they had gone through with the negroes as well as with the whites.

The idea of banding together in this was originated in the office of Judge Thomas M. Jones, of Pulaski, by his son, Calvin Jones, and Captain Thomas F. Perkins, of Williamson County,

and both bands started about the same time. After the first excitement it created, it began to spread into different districts, counties and states wherever there was a congested population of the unruly chaps. General Forrest was then put at the head of them all, and everything became quieted; so he disbanded the whole organization forever.<sup>20</sup>

We then filled the farms with negroes, and made contracts with them to work the land on the shares, each contract to be approved by the provost marshal. Stock and supplies had to be furnished them until the crop was made. We had land debts and taxes in abundance.

After getting the two large farms here in shape so that my father could attend to them, I decided to ride through by land and see what had become of the farm in Bolivar County, Mississippi. My father had not heard directly from it in about one and a half or two years, as there was no communication with that section after the fall of Vicksburg. The last he had heard was that the manager was dead, the dwelling burned and the negroes all gone, so we decided that I would go down there and see if I could make something out of it.

I shipped a half cask of bacon and twenty sacks of corn by boat from Nashville. We bought eight condemned horses and mules from the government auction. I took them and five little two-year old mules whose mothers had been taken away during the war. My father gave me fifty dollars—all he could spare. My brother, two years younger, went with me, but returned a few days after getting there. It was a hard trip, hard to get feed for my stock and myself, rivers to cross with few ferries or bridges, and through a country filled with desperadoes. I had to sell one of my horses to get money to get through on.

We didn't know the farm when we got there about an hour after night, the house burned down, the fences washed away by the various overflows, the fields grown up in weeds, cane, vines and briers, but the gin house, barns and cabins looked familiar enough to justify me in stopping. I found a squatter there, who left the next day; he said he thought they called it the Cannon place. I got him to help me fix a place about the barn to hold my stock, and I located in one of the cabins.

I found two of our old negroes in the neighborhood, Uncle Ruben and Aunt Clory, his wife, and told them to move back home. They were quite old, but she could cook and keep house for me, and he could wait on her, make fires, carry water, cut wood and so on. The other negroes were all gone, so, as Uncle Ruben was a kind of preacher and exhorter, I told him to get the cabins filled with negroes, as I wanted to work as much of the farm as possible. I would furnish them with supplies for themselves and families, and stock to work with, and divide the proceeds when the crop was sold.

I found three of our mules in a neighbor's lot and took them home: they were a great help to me. As Uncle Ruben knew them, I took possession of them and never heard from the other party, as I bridled them and took them home. Other parties said I would have trouble about it, but I told them that they knew where to find me, and I was prepared to take care of myself.

I soon had all the labor that I could use, and established a credit account at a store at the landing on the river, four miles away. I soon changed the looks of things very much, worked hard and lived hard. I was not twenty years old until the fourteenth of the following June.

After getting things straightened out, I went to Memphis, to get established with a little credit. I stopped at the Gayoso

Hotel, where my aunt, Mrs. E. M. Dawson, and cousin, Miss Ella Grey, were boarding; both were wealthy. My aunt was my mother's sister and the widow of U. S. Senator Dawson, of Georgia. She had had only one son, Hardin Perkins, who had died. She offered to let me have all the money I needed. I thanked her, and told her I was not twenty-one years old and was working for my father. I made arrangements with a Memphis merchant to let me have what I needed.

I had a double first cousin, Dr. Newton Cannon Perkins, who lived near Memphis, and was a man of wealth: I also had an only sister, Mrs. Leah America Wilson, whose husband, Major W. P. Wilson, was a lawyer of large practice, but had lost his right arm in the Battle of Atlanta and been wounded in the right leg at the same time. My sister and I had been together but very little, as our mother had died, leaving an infant, my brother, Samuel Perkins Cannon, and me two years old and my sister five years old.

I spent a few days with her, then went back to the farm in Mississippi and was kept very busy, repairing things and putting in all the cotton that I had stock to cultivate. I always went armed, as there was no white man within two or three miles of me, and I had sixty or sixty-five negroes on the farm, but I never had any trouble with any of them.

When I had my crop laid by, I left the farm in charge of the head man among my hands, and went up to Memphis, to be with my sister a little while, but my aunt, Mrs. Dawson, and my cousin, Ella Grey, were anxious to travel; they insisted that I go with them, they to pay all my expenses, which I did. We went to the Virginia Springs, Washington City and many of the Northern cities. It was a great trip for me from an educational standpoint. I saw and learned a great deal; I had quit

school at fifteen, entered the Confederate Army at sixteen and surrendered at nineteen and was now about twenty.

But I could not stay long, had to hurry back to the cotton field. I found everything getting along as well as could be expected. My father came down early in November, got up on the cotton scaffold and took a view of the cotton field, which looked beautiful to him, but I was behind in picking and ginning, both. He seemed very proud of me. I was too busy, and living too rough for him, so he left on the next boat.

I hired ten negroes as they were mustered out of the U. S. Army; I got their colonel to allow them to keep their guns to kill game with at odd times, as they were picking cotton by the pound. It took me until about the first of February to finish picking, but just before the first of January, I had rented my father's place to some parties at a good price for five years.

I went to New Orleans, sold my cotton for twenty-four and a quarter cents a pound and, with a part of the rent paid in advance, I paid off any old debts of my father's and all of my own, and settled with my negroes, all feeling well paid and happy. I sold my stock, tools and seed to the renters, sent my father a good lot of money home and left the Delta country. I had to go back once or twice each year to collect the rent, for seven years, when I swapped it for a farm in Kentucky that they could live on, as they were unwilling for my half-brothers to live in that unhealthy country, and the home place was entailed property, having been given by my grandfather to my mother and her heirs, who were my brother, sister and myself.

I went to Memphis, lived with my sister and worked in the law office of her husband at fifty dollars per month; I had to do a great deal of writing for him, as he had no right hand, also collected, ran errands and did any and all work around

the office. I read law at odd times, and at night, as he was trying to prepare me for a partnership.

I also attended to considerable business for my aunt, and besides made long trips to Canada, the northern cities, Saratoga, the Virginia Springs,—several of them. At the Allegheny Springs, I spent about two weeks very pleasantly in company with General Hardee, General Early, General Beauregard and others, learning a great deal about the war from first hands.

I also had to look after the Mississippi farm, collect the rent and look after other matters connected with it. While waiting for my rent, I would sometimes camp out in the cane and hunt bear, deer, turkeys, and occasionally, ducks. It was quite thrilling to listen to the wolves or foxes bark, the panthers squall, and to all the other night sounds.

## XV

### THE VICTORIES OF PEACE

1873-1922

*The narrator's experiences here were unique in that, with natural modifications, they were common to many former soldiers of the Confederacy all over the South. It was these men who, working steadily with patience, patriotism, intelligence and fortitude, brought the prostrate states of the Southern Confederacy to the position of leadership which they now occupy as part of the United States.*

By the end of 1873, my father's business in Middle Tennessee had gotten into such an unsatisfactory condition that I decided that it was my duty to go there and give him all the assistance I could.

Soon my cousin, Captain Thomas F. Perkins, was elected county court clerk of Williamson County. He insisted on my going with him as his deputy clerk, which I did for about a year. I then bought a half interest in a dry-goods store, where I stayed for about seven years. In the meantime, we had settled with Father, and divided our land and the rest of the estate from my mother.

Soon after that, my brother married a daughter of S. A. Pointer, who bought my farm for her. Not very long afterwards I married Miss Jennie Brown McEwen, the daughter of John B. McEwen.

I next sold my dry-goods business in Franklin and moved to Nashville, where I went into the wholesale hardware business. J. P. W. Brown, Norman Farrell and I bought out Craig-

head, Breast and Gibson, and did business under the firm name of Brown, Farrell and Cannon, all equal partners. After about seven years, I sold to my partners and moved back to Franklin and settled for life. I bought a dwelling, with store house and farm nearby. I began a grocery and hardware business, and continued in this for about eighteen or nineteen years with much success, and bought another farm close by.

My family by this time consisted of my wife, my four boys and two daughters. One of the boys, who was old enough, was a soldier in the Cuban War; another served in the World War, while another became an Episcopal minister. All but one have married, and have presented me with ten grandchildren.

My family had grown and had been educated, dressed and each started on his or her way of making a life of their own, and my business had grown to such proportions that it taxed me a little too heavily, what with taking a leading part in getting waterworks for Franklin, and getting good public school buildings for both white and black. At the age of sixty-five, I broke down with nervous prostration, went to a hospital and spent several weeks and was cured, as the doctor in charge said I only needed rest and a plenty of nourishing food.

I came home from the hospital, decided to quit work and let my son, Newton, look after the management of my business. I have been improving in health ever since then, and exert myself as little as possible, doing only such as I think is best for me. I am now seventy-six years old, and in good health. I have been a member of McEwen Bivouac and Starnes Camp, of the United Confederate Veterans, from the beginning, but there is but few of us left; they are dropping off fast. I attended all reunions until taken sick, and took a great interest in matters for the benefit of Confederate soldiers.

I tried to distribute such charity as I thought I could afford among the needy around me. I did a large credit business without friction, and was in the habit of allowing a customer a little more than the market price for such things as they wanted to sell for the payment of accounts. I did my own collecting, and extended time, had no lawsuits and was a great believer in arbitration. I had a large family, with many relatives; I was friendly to all. They were very clannish, and were generally successful in life.

The people, rich and poor, black and white, have been very kind to me, and I try to show my appreciation. My grandchildren are the sixth generation of their family in Williamson County; a fine county, with a fine population.

## FOOTNOTES

1. This was a favorite nickname in those days. It was bestowed on a skinny, gangling boy, who was supposed to resemble the bifurcated "sang," or ginseng root.

2. Forrest made his first West Tennessee Raid during this interval. It was not the only one of his activities during the period, but was probably the most spectacular.

3. The old pike from Franklin to Charlotte.

4. It ran south and west from Nashville to Hillsboro, on Leiper's Fork of Harpeth River. A branch ran to Franklin.

5. The Cannon farm lay along the east side of the Nolensville Pike (U. S. 31A) about midway between Triune and College Grove.

6. Abel D. Streight was a colonel when he tried his famous raid from Palmyra (not Johnsonville). He was given his star after exchange and release from prison.

7. It was over Black Creek, which is not far from the Black Warrior River, that the fording problem arose. The old man mentioned by the narrator was probably the widow Sanson's father-in-law.

8. After 59 years, the narrator should not be too heavily censored for this slight deviation in the name of Emma Sanson. After all, Forrest himself had trouble with her name in his writing of his citation "for hir [*sic*] gallant conduct."

9. Colonel James W. Starnes was never promoted, although recommended, and although he exercised brigade command for some months.

10. Colonel William B. Stokes commanded the 5th Tennessee Cavalry, U. S. A.; the Confederates called them "home-made Yankees." Stokes himself had started the war as a Confederate; early in 1862 he underwent a change of heart.

11. Dibrell commanded the brigade, but his commission as brigadier general, to rank from July 24, 1864, was not issued until January 28, 1865. About the same is true in the case of Brigadier General Thomas Harrison.

12. From the time of his capture in Middle Tennessee in December, 1863, until the war's end, Perkins spent much of his time breaking out of prison and being recaptured. He spent the first 15 days of his captivity persuading his captors that he was not another Perkins, a bushwhacker with a price on his head. Enroute from Louisville, Ky., to Camp Chase, Ohio, under guard, he escaped in Seymour, Indiana, and made his way back to Louisville, where he was again captured. This time, chained to a 32-pound ball, he was taken to Camp Chase, where he spent two months before being removed to Fort Delaware. Here, he slipped through a network of guards, but was captured while trying to swim the bay with the aid of canteens for buoys. Shortly thereafter he was moved, in a group of 600 Confederate officer-prisoners, to Fort Wagner, near Charleston, S. C., where they were staked out, for retaliatory purposes, exposed to Confederate fire for 48 days. He again broke away, swimming with a stolen life preserver to an island, where he was picked up five days later, in a famished condition. In July, 1864, he was moved to Fort Pulaski, at the mouth of the Savannah River. Enroute, he managed to cut a hole in the ship's side, but was detected and confined in the casemate of the fort. After four weeks he was

taken, for retaliatory purposes, to Hilton Head, S. C., and placed in close confinement. He cut a hole in the floor of his cell with a pocket-knife and, with Col. Fowlk, of North Carolina, escaped, to be picked up shortly. He stole a Federal uniform and made another try, but was captured and placed in a log cell four feet square, without bedding, where he was fed through the cracks. After about four weeks of this, he was sent to Fort Monroe, Va., for exchange, but was transferred to Fort Delaware. Finally, on June 20, 1865, he was released to go home. (Lindsley, *Military Annals of Tennessee*; Nashville, 1886.)

12a. "A trooper in Coleman's Scouts, C.S.A., he was captured by the Federals with secret papers of great value to the Confederacy. Threatened with death unless he gave the source of his information, he steadfastly refused. He was hanged at Pulaski, Tenn., Nov. 27, 1863." (Historical highway marker near Sam Davis Home in Smyrna, Rutherford County.)

13. The colonel's name appears as Hume R. Feild on contemporary personnel records.

14. In this location it is the valley of the French Broad River, one of the Tennessee's tributaries.

15. Now spelled as one word, — Newport.

16. The head of the Stokely family at this time was named Jehu. His son had the given name of John. Descendants of the Stokely family verify this sojourn.

17. Built by the Federal Army during the war, from Nashville to the Tennessee River at Johnsonville. The L & N R.R. to Memphis now follows its right-of-way.

18. Runs out of Nashville south, between the Franklin Pike (U. S. 31) and Hillsboro Pike (U. S. 431), now only as far as Old Hickory Boulevard. It formerly connected with the Franklin Pike near Hollowtree Gap.

19. This was General Lucius J. Polk, who had been Adjutant General of Tennessee some years before the war, but had no Confederate combat service. The house, "Hamilton Place," is on the west side of U. S. 43, about six miles south of Columbia.

20. The reference here, of course, is to the Ku Klux Klan.

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CAMPBELL HUXLEY  
BROWN

A graduate of VMI, former officer of the United States Marine Corps and retired officer

my, part-time sports and the author of at percent of the texts way markers erected the state by the Historical Commis- is managed to take om his duties as Ex- irector of the State's Centennial Commis- the reminiscences of Sergeant Newton

ILLUSTRATION:

ralry attacking a Wagon near Chattanooga.

uction from an original oil by Stanley F. Horn