

*Alexander Sterrett Paxton Diaries: Volume One*

*June 8, 1861 – September 2, 1861*

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*(Title Page:)*

**June 8/12 1861**

**Alex. S. Paxton's Book June 8<sup>th</sup> 1861**

**Devoted to a brief history of the adventures, movements, etc..., of the "Liberty Hall Volunteers," during the war of Southern Independence and of the resistance to Northern Despotism.**

**"Pro Aris et Focis" The motto of our company on our flag.**

**"Dulce et decorum est, pro patria mori".**

**This book is strictly private**

**I trust to the honor of any who may chance to pick it up.**

**Alex. S. Paxton**

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**Pg. 1 Introduction**

Before proceeding to tell the story of the movements, marches, etc... of the Liberty Hall Volunteers, permit me dear reader to give you a short description of the material, the formation, etc... of our company.

The company was composed of the students of Washington College, Lexington Va. who, when the times began to appear dark and stormy, and the peace and safety of our homes in the old dominion were threatened by the warlike preparations of old Abe Lincoln, deemed it at once a privilege and a duty to organize themselves into a military company and place themselves at the calling of

the Governor of their state. Hence after the taking of Fort Sumpter and the call of the northern despot for 75,000 men to subdue a free and sovereign people – we formed ourselves into a company. We elected Professor Nelson, Chair of Mathematics, our Captain and Professor White of the chair

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of Greek Language and Literature for our 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant. There were within our ranks young men from the different parts of our state. There were those from near the shores of the Chesapeake, from their mountain homes amid the Alleghany and the Blue Ridge, from the extreme west of our state, and there were also a few from the broad savannahs of the sunny south. And it was not composed of any of the dregs of the population as are want to be found in many companies but some of the proudest and best families in the state had sons there. The average age of the company was about 19, all buoyant with youth and hope, Hence the question arose, how could the \_\_\_\_\_ students just from the classic shades of their Alma Mater, be able to meet the veteran soldier in the shock of battle, endure the weary march and the raging heat or the parching thirst. But we tho' boys in years, had the souls of men, yes – “souls to dare and arms to strike, as far as \_\_\_\_\_.” Hence there was a great deal of opposi-

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-tion to our being called out. We offered our services to Gov. Letcher, and were ordered out and then the orders countermanded no less than two or three times. However at last came the orders for our captain to report to Harper's Ferry as soon as possible. And these orders came when most of the company had gone home with the intention of joining other companies, because we had gotten word just a few days before that we would not be ordered out under any circumstances, as a body. I was at home on a visit when the news was brought me that we were certainly ordered to go. So I took a hurried leave of the dear ones there and went forthwith to Lexington. I had often taken leave of home before on going to college, expecting to return soon, but then, as I thought that perhaps I was bidding my last farewell and looking for the last time upon the scenes where my childhood had been nurtured and all the joys of

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my early youth had been centered, I was filled with sadness and sorrowful sensations. For well I know that dangers cluster thick around the soldier's path and thrice fortunate is he who survives a campaign. So with a heavy heart I rode away from my mountain home upon the south banks of the James on the way to join our company of soldier boys. On reaching the college I found that we would not be starting for several days at least, and in the mean time we would drill daily and make all needful preparations, etc. Our company had then been drilling for some time, under Lieut. Morgan a sub Prof at the V.M. Institute, who by the way is a splendid drill master. So we had been initiated into all of the evolutions, etc., of company drill. The ladies of Lexington worked nobly for our boys, making uniforms, etc., for which service we shall ever feel indebted to them and ever remember them with the warmest emo-

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-tions of gratitude and love. Ere the time of our departure arrived our first Captain was compelled to resign on the account of sickness and ill health and we then elected Prof White captain, J.N. Lyle of Montgomery 1<sup>st</sup> Lt., Jos. L. Sherrard of Hampshire 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt., But the time for us to bid adieu to the walls of old W-College where some of us had spent so many pleasant hours, was drawing near at hand. Our class was the Senior and only lacked some three weeks of graduating. But we were given to understand that still we would get our diplomas and so felt satisfied on that score, as we escaped all the labor, \_\_\_\_\_, etc., of standing an examination for graduation. When the time came close for us to leave the delightful shades of that far famed institution, I could not but feel sad. For there I had spent some four of the happiest years of my

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life, there had been formed some of the most delightful associations, and ties of friendship had there been made which would never be broken. The very buildings themselves seemed to afford me a home in the place of my own distant one, and also to silently speak of friendship to the \_\_\_\_\_ youths there assembled. There are pleasures connected with ones college days which can never be effaced from the tablet of memory. The social gatherings, the debating halls, the evening walks, and the "evening calls," all had their own peculiar joys. And all tend to

make the students life bright and happy. Also we had become attached to the delightful town of Lexington, and especially had some of our soldier boys become devotedly attached to some of the fair ones there. So on taking these things into consideration, kind reader, you may well know that some of us felt sad at bidding

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adieu to the precincts of Lexington. All things were ready for our departure, which was to take place on Saturday morning the 8<sup>th</sup> of June. On Friday the evening before our boys were busily engaged in packing up, buying supplies of little needful articles, taking leave of acquaintances in town and c. On that same evening our ex-captain Prof Nelson, gave our company a treat or rather a supper of strawberries and ice cream, which were relished very much. Our company numbered some 68 rank and file. So kind reader, with these few introductory remarks in regard to the formation, material of, the circumstances, etc..., under which our company was formed, I will now begin with the story of its departure, journeys, and c. And if at any point of my story I shall pause to indulge in a reflection you must excuse me and I shall promise to be as brief and correct as possible in my accounts.

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**Chapter I**

**Departure from Lex and Trip to Winchester      June 8<sup>th</sup> 1861**

The morning of the 8<sup>th</sup> of June dawned, upon which our company was to leave Lexington. All in college were up bright and early, making all needful arrangements to leave by 9 a.m. We were to be presented a flag by the ladies of the Falling Spring Church (in my old neighborhood) which presentation was to take place in front of the courthouse. So after breakfast all were ready and we marched over town and were presented with the most beautiful flag, having upon its folds the excellent motto “Pro Aris et Focis” = “For our altars and firesides”, which was one of the most appropriate mottos that could have been chosen, It was presented by Dr. Miller with an appropriate address and was received by our captain who replied in terms well suited to the occasion. It was truly a touching scene. The streets were lined with spectators, many of whom had relations and friends in our

ranks. There were many of my old schoolmates and friends there from my neighborhood, taking leave of whom made me sad and gloomy.

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The ceremony of presentations was ended by a short address and excellent prayer on the part of Dr. White pastor of the Presbyt. church there. As that holy man of God spoke to us of the dangers we would have to encounter, of the hardships we would have to endure, and bade us cheer up and strive hard in the great and noble cause in which we were embarking, also as he told us some of the great truths of salvation and bade us to be at once soldiers of our country and soldiers of the cross. Then not a few tears trickled down our cheeks. And there were but few eyes amongst the spectators which weren't moistened with tears of sympathy and regret. And it was said that there was more sad felling shown on the departure of our company than that of any other. We were all young and apparently unable to endure the toils of war, etc... Just after the presentation ceremony was over, we went around and bade adieu to our friends, tho' 'twas with a sad heart and a tearful eye. Then we marched down by the Institute, below which we took the stages, hacks, etc... which had been prepared to convey us down to Staunton.

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Soon we were all on board and started off amid the cheers of those who were there assembled. And ere long we had passed beyond the precincts of Lexington. Then we had time to reflect upon our expedition. It made me quite sad to part with Mr. Compton's family, with whom I had boarded the whole four years of my college career. Mrs. Compton had always been as kind to me as a mother and ever attended well upon me when (I) was sick, and c. Also I had many other friends and lady acquaintances there which I bade adieu with regret. The cause upon which we were embarking was no mere trifling one. It was no pleasure trip, but one of the sterner realities of life. We were going to meet the invading foe. To strive in mortal combat with our fellow man. Yet we were going in the holy cause of Freedom, we were going to keep back a ruthless foe from the homes and kindred of our boyhood. And in view of all this, who could refuse to go, tho' 'twould be sad for him to leave all the joys and comforts of home. After (we) got some distance from Lexington,

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our boys resumed their \_\_\_\_\_ gayety and high spirits. As we journeyed along we were cheered on our way by citizens from every cottage and village by the wayside. Even the slave paused amid his labors and bade us “go and kill dem Yankees.” As we beheld banners waved and had bouquets showered upon us by fair hands, we thought that we would be recreant to the deities of humanity, of patriotism, and love, did we not go and shed the last drop of blood in defense of those of our loved friends and relations we left behind. We got to Staunton that evening about 9 o’clock and were quartered in a depot. Had plenty of fresh straw and something to eat, so soon piled in, and soon were dreaming of home, of our sweethearts, of Yankees, etc... The next day 9<sup>th</sup> was Sunday and we marched over to the Presbyt – church to preaching. We staid for three or four days in Staunton and fared very well indeed. For our company seemed to be a favorite one and the ladies sent us once occasionally pies, cakes, biscuits, etc..., such as are not generally found in a soldier’s bill of fare. And we owe many thanks to the

**June 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> 1861**

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fair ladies of Staunton for their kindness to our company of soldier boys. On Tuesday the 11<sup>th</sup>, we were mustered into the service of the Confederate States under Brigadier General Harman for the time of 12 months. We left Staunton – after our pleasant sojourn there – on Thursday morning the 12<sup>th</sup>, on the cars bound on our course to Harper’s Ferry. Went whirling down to Gordonsville where we were delayed some 3 or 4 hours and then got on a train about a quarter of a mile long, having on board a regiment of Tennesseans. Passed down the Orange and Alexandria R-Road, which is very level and straight. Got to the junction about dusk and then started on the same train up to Strasburg. Travelled all night and had a miserable night’s rest of it, as we were crowded in freight cars. Didn’t get to Strasburg till 6 o’clock in the next morning. That morning we passed up the Shenandoah (River), and the country along its banks is fine and beautiful. Left Strasburg in wagons for Winchester about 9 am. Got to Winchester about 4 p.m. dismounted on the outskirts of the town and our company marched down main street and were much admired

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**16<sup>th</sup> June 1861**

for we drilled and marched very well indeed. Were immediately shown to our quarters in a large warehouse. After depositing our guns, baggage, etc..., we walked around to see the town. Winchester is situated in the midst of the most beautiful country I ever saw, being well watered, nearly level only rolling a little. Off to the south lay the Blue Ridge sleeping in the distance, whilst the land between Winchester and the range is continually rising thus presenting it in all its varied aspects to a beholder. The town / city is well laid off, the streets being wide, well paved, and shaded. The great majority of the people are real nice people and there is not such a large portion of the dregs of society there, for the size of the place, (and) as is generally found in large towns. It seems to be noted for the beauty of its ladies. I met an old friend there (Lida), and had quite a pleasant time of it during my stay there. On the next Sunday night, I went to the Episcopal church with said lady friend. Have splendid music there. On Monday the 16<sup>th</sup> Gen. Johnston's army came up from H. Ferry, as that place was then evacuated, so we did not go down to same place.

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**19<sup>th</sup> June 1861**

The Gen's army encamped around Winchester and the 4<sup>th</sup> Va. Regiment – Col Preston of Montgomery to which we were assigned, was encamped in the fairgrounds. Jackson's brigade to which our regiment belonged was soon ordered down towards Williamsport on the Potomac to observe the enemy's movements there. So we had to leave our comfortable quarters in W-, and leave the shady streets, the busy throng, to join our regiment and be subject to all its strict rules and regulations. 'Twas on the evening of the 19<sup>th</sup> June and a very warm one too when we were enrolled amongst the other companies of the gallant 4<sup>th</sup>. The next chapter will be devoted to our march to, and sojourn at Camp Stephens in Berkeley. Winchester is in Frederick Co., Martinsburg in Berkeley. Are some beautiful farms on the road from Strasburg to Winchester. The regiment to which we were attached contained two other companies from Rockbridge, "Rifles" and "Greys", of which

most of our company had friends and some of us relations. So we were glad to get into it, as the Col. Is a nice man and above all kind to his men.

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## **Chapter II**

### **Departure from Winchester. Camp Stephens**

**19<sup>th</sup> June 1861**

As before mentioned on the evening of the 19<sup>th</sup> we joined our regiment (4<sup>th</sup>) just as it was on the point of leaving on its march down towards the Potomac. That was the first march for our boys and tho' the evening was quite warm, they stood it very well indeed. Thirst is what mostly troubles a soldier on the march and he can navigate pretty well if can only get enough of good water. Marched remarkably fast that evening and that night went as far as Darksville, 14 miles from Winchester. As soon as got there, went into a large clover field, stacked arms, and without supper, threw ourselves down upon the ground upon our blankets. However we slept as sound in the open air with no roof covering, except the broad canopy of the Heavens, as we had done under the old homestead roof upon comfortable couches. The morning drum roused us early from our slumbers on the next day; and we immediately prepared our breakfast, at which

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we done our appetites justice. Soon after breakfast we were ordered to fill our canteens with water and prepare for another march. The drum beat, we fell in and on we went. Reached Martinsburg about 11 o'clock and marched through and halted on the other side just on the skirts of the town. Remained there until late in the evening when countermarched thro' the town and encamped in a beautiful grove about a mile from M- in a northerly direction. Staid there until the evening of the 21<sup>st</sup> and then resumed our march down towards Wm's Port. Martinsburg is quite a common looking place and some of the hardest looking people there I ever saw in one place of its size. Most of the houses are old, built in an old style. We were not welcomed there so warmly as in Winchester, as a strong Union odor tainted the public breeze there. The town gave 300 Union majority on the secession



vote. Whilst we were there Col Jackson of our brigade had a large amount of property belonging to Balt & Ohio R. Road Company burnt – such as cars, eng-

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**June 21<sup>st</sup> 1861**

-ines, bridges, etc..., all amounting to about 500, 000 dollars worth. This was done lest some day it might fall into the hands of the Federal forces and besides that company had offered the Government its services to transport troops to invade our soil and c. Left Martinsburg on the evening of the 21<sup>st</sup>, and reached Camp Stephens about sundown, where we encamped in a most beautiful grove. Camp Stephens is about 8 miles from the Potomac and just in the mouth of a narrow isthmus or \_\_\_\_\_ of the river. The place was well suited for an encampment as is a large spring of splendid water there and a large branch of clear water running thro' a meadow nearby. On the night we arrived there one half of our company had to go on guard, quite a pleasant business after marching. The Guard goes on at 7 o'clock one evening and comes off at the same time on next. Each man in guard has eight hours to stand, only two in succession as he is on post 2, and off 4(hours), when some others of the guard are standing.

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**June 22<sup>nd</sup> 1861                      Camp Stephens**

We found that we were going to remain at Camp Stephens for some time and so set about fixing up a little. Our company were supplied with tent knapsacks, which is a coarse cloth about 3 ft wide by 6ft long which each one carries around his budget (?) So four or six \_\_\_\_\_ together could put up a little tent as protection against rain or hot sun and as none of the regiment as yet had gotten tents, we soon run up our little shelters. Got our messes all arranged, and everything else required in camp life, the sweets of which we were destined to enjoy. Then came the cooking and washing business, at which we were all green. In our mess had \_\_\_\_ and took it by turns of two to cook on each day. The way we boys flew around the fire, made coffee, fried meat, etc..., was a wonder to all experienced cooks. Some of our mess advanced strong arguments in favor of not washing dishes, for they would

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“just get dirty again.” Our daily routine of duties were as follows. Reveille beat at 5 in the morning, at which we were all compelled to attend. At 5 ½ we out to battalion drill which lasted for 1 ½ hours. At seven, drum beat again when all the sick who were able had to go and report to the doctor and get their respective doses. Then we next breakfeasted and from that time to 10 we amused ourselves as chose to do; reading, writing letters, washing, tailoring, etc... At 10 we had to go to company drill for an hour. Then prepared dinner, which roll call was at 12. Then we were free until five in the evening, and the intervening time was generally employed in sleeping, laying around, talking, etc.... At 5 o'clock had battalion drill again which lasts until 6, when had dress parade. Immediately after dress parade had guard mounting and at 7 had old guard taken off and new one posted. Then came supper and had roll call at 9 ½, when all had to be present, then went to bed and dreamt of our sweethearts and c. At 10 had taps and all of the lights had to

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be put out and all noise hushed in camp. Thus passed off the day. The day after we came was Sunday, and then had no drills, no duty, only dress parade in the evening, Have preaching at headquarters at 11 o'clock a.m. and 4 p.m. We had no gorgeous sanctuary in which to worship, no cushioned seats or gilded desks, or deep sounding organ. Our sanctuary was in the open woods with the blue canopy of the Heavens above us, our seats the hard cold earth. Yet the song of the soldier can be as full of praise to the God of battles, as that of any other, even tho' it ascends from midst the forest grove. Tho' far away from home and the loved ones there, he can unite and mingle his prayers with theirs, and both can wing their way together up to the throne of Grace and Salvation.

Whilst there many of our company were laid up sick and unfit for duty. They had never been used to such hardships before, most of them having been raised in the lap of luxury and in the midst of idleness. Our cavalry pickets were still stationed all along the Virginia side

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of the Potomac and they could plainly see the enemy's encampments over on the Maryland side. Often the pickets would fire at one another over the river, and ours often took some of their men prisoners. Some of our adventurous boys were accustomed to go over and penetrate their camps in disguise, hence find out their number and disposition of forces. Gen Patterson had command of their forces at that point, estimated at 15,000 men. Col. Stuart's regiment of cavalry were feared and shunned by the Yankees as one would shun a viper. For he always put them to flight and cut them up and took many of them prisoners on all occasions. Whilst at this camp we got our mails regular and most of our company got boxes from home filled with all that is good and nice and agreeable to the soldier's appetite. One only knows what it is to have a good home, when he is far away, deprived of all its joys and comforts. Do we prize them highly. Both on account of the rarity of contents themselves and for the sake of those that sent them. We stayed at Camp Stephens until the morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July. As the Northern

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Congress was destined to meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, many of our boys were indulging themselves on the hope that it would recognize the independence of the Southern Confederacy, come down like a thousand brick upon Abe's Administration and that we would have peace. But they were reposing in delusion, for "there was no peace." "Liberty or Death," was the only alternative for the gallant south, and that was found out when Abe's proclamation, \_\_\_\_\_ forth destruction to the cause of the South came out, clothed in all the panoply of deceit, despotism, and boasting (?). During our stay of 11 days at Camp Stephens, nothing else of any interest transpired and things went on quite smoothly for the most part. But were not suffered to remain at rest and \_\_\_\_\_ longer than until the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July., when the enemy made a move across the river. You must remember that Jackson's Brigade of about 3300 men were the only troops there and Johnston with the rest of his army were encamped about Winchester. The night of the 1<sup>st</sup> it was very cold as (it) rained evening before.

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## July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1861      Battle of Hainsville. Return to Darksville.

On the morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> July, our scouts brought in the intelligence that the enemy had crossed the river and were coming upon us to the number of about 9000. We were immediately ordered to pack up and one of our regiments was ordered to advance with one piece of Capt. Pendleton's Artillery to meet their advanced guard. Soon our regiment and another followed on, whilst the remaining one remained behind as a body of reserve (at the time we did not know the exact amount of their force.) Harper's, the advance regiment engaged their advanced guard about 2 ½ miles below our encampment, and when we heard the cannon fire we thought we were in for a battle and hurried on. When we came within a half a mile of the scene of the action, we were halted and told to load at will, which we did in short order. The rattle of musketry became louder and apparently nearer. Just then Gen Jackson received intelligence

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that a large column of the enemy was moving up on our right to flank us and also got intimation of their numbers. So to prevent our small force of about 3300 from being surrounded, and cut to pieces by nearly four times our number, we were ordered to fall back, which we did in good order and at common time. We had no sooner passed by Camp Stephens than their flanking column of about 5000 marched in our camp from our right. So had we been 10 minutes later, we had been flanked and would have had to contend against fearful odds. So owing to the skill of our Gen., we escaped the trap laid for us by the wily Yankee Gen. They plainly showed that they relied on their numbers and aimed to flank us and then get the advantage, and not come out boldly and attack us in an open field in a fair fight. However, we then went up the road towards Martinsburg and drew up in a regular line of battle and waited for the enemy to come upon us, but they had received

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reinforcements and so marched off to our right and left again, doubtless reserving a body to attack us in front when they had achieved their flanking object. But Gen. Jackson understood their intention and not wishing to sacrifice so many lives, ordered us to fall back so we resumed our march towards Martinsburg. In the

engagement at Hainsville, we had only about 400 of the advance regiment engaged, whilst they lost at the lowest 150 killed and many wounded. This seems unreasonable, but yet 'tis a fact. The God of battles was certainly on our side, and tho' we had to fall back on the account of inferiority of numbers, still we got the best of the fight. Supposing as a matter of course that their whole force was coming on, our Gen. determined to fall back and unite with Gen. Johnston's entire force (Jackson was general of a brigade and Johnston of a division composed of several brigades, hence outranked Jackson). During the engage-

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-ment at Hainsville, Gen Jackson exhibited the greatest bravery and coolness. He sat calmly on his horse and wrote a dispatch to Gen Johnston, whilst the balls were flying thick around him knocking up the dust, cutting down leaves from the trees, etc... He is certainly a brave man, and worthy to be a namesake of "Old Hickory." We retired thro' Martinsburg and encamped for the night about two miles this side near one of the largest and coolest springs I ever saw in my life. I had to go on guard that night after all the excitement and fatiguing marching of that day; and I never was so near giving out in my life, as when with slow measured tread I walked my post during the long hours of the night. A very large comet was seen towards the northwest that night, having a tail stretching away across the Heavens toward the South. Many were the omens which the soldiers interpreted there from. We had a good many Yankee prisoners in the guardhouse that night, (for by the way we took about 53 prisoners in the en-

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**July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1861**

-gagement. I asked one of them what he came down here for; and was it to kill and drive all of us away from our homes? The poor fellow replied that "they told him he was fighting for liberty," poor soul he didn't know what he was fighting for. He was only helping to rivet still tighter around his feet the manacles of a base and cowardly military despotism. On the morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, as soon as we had eaten breakfast, we resumed our march to cooperate with General Johnston., and halted at Darksville in same place where we had encamped on the night after leaving Winchester. There we were joined by Gen. Johnston's remaining forces, in all

amounting to about 12, 000. There our regiment was encamped in an open field without any shelter whatever; and we were very uncomfortable under the scorching rays of a July sun which poured down upon us. However had plenty of good water near which added greatly to our comfort. Heard the enemy had been strongly reinforced and would probably advance upon us the next day. So we expected to spend the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1861 in fighting the Yankees.

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## **Chapter IV**

**July 4<sup>th</sup> 1861**

### **Encampment at Darksville. Return to Winchester**

The morning of the 4<sup>th</sup> at length dawned and a bright and beautiful day it was. The bright sun arose in all his majesty and beauty and smiled upon the beautiful valley in which the hostile armies were so near to each other. That same sun well might have veiled his face at the scenes which on that day were exhibited in our country. For on that day for years back, he had been wont to rise and smile upon a land rejoicing in peace and prosperity, a mighty nation before whose name the great men and nations of the earth stood in awe. But then, how changed the state of things. We were divided, our armies were arrayed against each other and the dark and bloody tide of war was surging along our northern border. Yet it was a war most unjustly thrust upon the South and so we were willing to celebrate that day, the 4<sup>th</sup> July 1861 by a battle against the ruthless invaders; and achieve anew, by a victory, the liberty of the gallant South. That liberty it was befitting to regain upon its own birthday

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**July 4<sup>th</sup> 1861**

On the night of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, we had cooked provisions for the two days ahead, being certain that the enemy would advance upon us on the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup> roused us on that morning about 3 o'clock and we had breakfasted by daylight and were ready to go at a moment's warning. But no tidings came for us to go and we waited in suspense, under arms until about 12 am, when we were ordered to draw and

cook again for two days ahead, for in one day eat all up we had had cooked for two days , on the proceeding night. Thus passed away the 4<sup>th</sup>, and the 5<sup>th</sup> dawned, but as yet no enemy came. We heard that they had gotten a force of about 30,000 at Martinsburg. In the mean time we had gotten some fresh troops so that then we could muster about 14,000 men. Yet tho' they were more than two to our one, our boys were eager for a fight, and burned to strike a death blow on the foe. We expected them to come on the 5<sup>th</sup>, but still they came not. Gen, Johnston sent a challenge to their Gen. (Patterson) for a battle that he would meet him half way; but Patterson declined, expecting Johnston to

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**July 6<sup>th</sup> 1861**

Advance and attack his superior force in Martinsburg, where he had entrenched himself and besides had the women and children as a protection against a bombardment. But Johnston deemed it best not to sacrifice so many precious lives in such an unfair assault upon a cowardly enemy. We still cooked ahead, and on the 6<sup>th</sup> about 11 a.m. news came in that the enemy were moving upon us from M-. The artillery was immediately sent ahead to give them the first warm reception. The line of battle we had chosen was about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile below our encampment towards M- . Our brigade was soon posted, its position being on the right of the centre. Our company was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division and whenever a man was shot down or wounded out of the 1<sup>st</sup>, one from the our division had to step up and fill his place. After we had taken our position, Gen. Johnston rode along the line (about 2 miles long) and was cheered by the soldiers with great enthusiasm. We then laid down on the ground and waited in suspense for the Yankees

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to come. Such suspense is very disagreeable indeed, and during the time one is thus waiting, it is a relief to hear the cannon boom forth, or to hear of the retreat of the enemy. We waited there until 4 p.m., when hearing that the enemy had gone back, we marched back to our camp ground, cooked a supper, and retired to our hard couches upon the cold ground to dream of driving back the enemy without any fighting. The fact was, that the enemy had sent out a column to try and surround our picket guard and cut to pieces, but they failed in the attempt most

woefully! They however had again been strongly reinforced. So Johnston, our gallant Gen. having offered battle to the enemy no less than three times either by challenge or action, and having been refused by the enemy (who doubtless was waiting for an overwhelming force) he determined to fall back upon Winchester and there by entrenching himself to make a final stand. It was entirely against the wish of many soldiers to go back, especially the Kentuckians and some who were from the counties of Berkeley and Frederick. They wanted first to

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**July 7<sup>th</sup> 1861**

welcome the invaders at the point of the bayonet and greet him to a bloody grave. On the next day (Sunday) we were ordered to pack up and march back towards Winchester. At this time we had a good many of our boys on the sick list. They could not stand up to the hardships like most of the others in the regiment. Sunday was a very warm day, and the march of about 13 miles was quite hard on the troops. They just drained every spring, well, and branch they came across. We encamped on the night of the 7<sup>th</sup> in a grove about 4 miles below Winchester and on the morning of the 8<sup>th</sup>, we moved up to Camp Johnston, about a half a mile higher up the road which was in a beautiful grove near the railroad leading from W – to H – ‘s Ferry. Staid there on the 9<sup>th</sup>, and that night about 9 o’clock we were ordered to cook a day’s rations and pack up all our utensils, etc... We had first laid down to sleep, being tired and wet as it had rained that evening; so you may suppose that it was with a heavy heart and many hard thoughts on the authors of the war, etc..., that we kindled up our fires and went to cooking.

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Finished by 1 o’clock and threw ourselves down to get a little refreshment in slumber. Were roused early on morning of the 10<sup>th</sup>, and ordered to prepare to march, tho’ we didn’t know where we were going. For troops never have any knowledge when they first start on a march whither they are destined to go. The drum beat, we moved on and on coming to the main road we wheeled to the left and marched towards the beautiful town of Winchester. And soon we could see that delightful place reposing in beauty upon the distant hills, its church spires and lofty roofs reflecting the morning sun beams. From a distance it looks as it were



situated in a grove, so thick and lofty are the rows of shade trees along the wide streets. About a mile from the town, the militia were busily engaged in throwing up breastworks. They looked quite pleased when they saw us coming, for the militia have no exalted opinion of fighting, when troops are not near to encourage and cheer them up. It was about 11 a.m. when we got to the precincts of W-.

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## Chapter V

### Encampment at Winchester

July 10<sup>th</sup> 1861

As soon as we reached Winchester, the report came that the enemy were rapidly advancing upon us. So we drew up in line of battle and proceeded to cook our dinners. The position of our brigade was on the south side of the railroad thence to H. Ferry. Our regiment was on the extreme right of the brigade and next to Capt. Pendleton's battery. Soon the truth came that a column of the enemy had advanced only a few miles from Martinsburg and halted at one of our old encampments. So we began to look out for shelter for the night, as we had no regular tents yet. Was a very hard thunderstorm in the evening and the spirits of many of our boys were considerably dampened. We constructed temporary shelters for the night out of our tent and oil clothes, pressed some hay out of a barn and cold and wet, retired to bed, not knowing but that we might be surprised during the night by

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the Yankee enemy. There was great excitement in the town when they heard that the enemy was approaching, but their fears subsided when they heard the true statement. Met some of our old Rockbridge friends when we came to W-, and were glad to see them, for it makes one feel encouraged to meet with the friends from "long ago," when he is far away from the bright and sunny scenes of home. The natural defenses of Winchester (towards Martinsburg) are very good and we (i.e) our forces had thrown up breastworks and upon them at the common intervals had mounted some 24, 32, and 44 pounders, which commanded an extensive range of country and would sweep down the advancing columns of the foe. On the left of the railroad was a range of high hills well suited for batteries. So our position was well chosen and commanding in all its aspects. But to return to our regiment...The

enemy made themselves scarce that night and our slumbers were not disturbed by any cry of “to arms!” “the foe...they come, they come!”

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On the 11<sup>th</sup>, the sun rose in beauty and shed his genial rays on the wet earth around. We were engaged in drying our blankets, cleaning up our wet guns, etc... We also got hold of our extra baggage, which had been sent to Winchester, from Darksville, all that we had except what we wore on our backs and about our persons. They were very strict about going out of camp to go over town, and had to either get a permit or else slip the sentinel on pretense of getting water. You may well imagine how pleasant it was to get away from the narrow limits and dull monotony of the camp, and go over on the crowded streets, observe the fair ones as they glided by, etc.... Our boys, most of them, managed to get over more than any company and made good use of their time too. I had the pleasure of going over several times and calling on a lady friend, which made the hours pass by very pleasantly indeed. For the soldier's path would be a hard and gloomy one, was it not here and there lighted up by a smile from “partial beauty,” and by rays of hope which told him of a future

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all radiant with joy and love. Thoughts and sweet memories of the fair ones and the dear friends they have left at home, are their constant companions on the march and by the bivouac, cheering them on amid the sunshine and the storm, and \_\_\_\_\_ (nerving?) their arms and strengthening their hearts amid the din and thunder of battle. And as he climbs the slippery steep of fame, at each successive step from woman's brow, and his brow is encircled by a halo of joy and love.

About this time we had all read and mused over Old Lincoln's (proclamation) message, full of bombast, revenge and “all manner of evil things.” When I read that he demanded 400,000 men and \$400,000,000 to subdue the south I could only smile at the folly of such an enterprise. For the idea of conquering and subduing a free people, a mighty nation is absurd. And it was no little rebellion, no petty conspiracy he was undertaking to quell. It was the outburst of the sentiment of a

mighty nation, the upheaving of the great deeps of the public mind, and he might as well

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have attempted to calm old ocean's billows or quench the fires of Vesuvius, as to allay the storm of secession which was sweeping over the sunny south. And I felt that the south would never submit to the rule of a Northern despot, so long as she had an arm to strike or a soul to dare. For hers was the cause of Freedom, of life, and the preservation of all that is dear to the human heart. And being confident that the God of battles was on her side she could fight cheerfully and cheerfully die in such a righteous cause.

During the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 14<sup>th</sup>, nothing of any importance transpired in camp. Had our regular routine of drills, etc... to perform. In the mean time, the militia were engaged in throwing up breastworks, thus rendering our position still stronger. At this time many of our company were sick, and unable to perform any duty. Most of them were in W- and were taken into private houses – were well treated. And the soldiers should ever remember the kindness and care shown to them by the good citizens of Winchester.

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**July 14<sup>th</sup> and July 15<sup>th</sup> 1861**

On the morning of the 14<sup>th</sup> (Sunday) I had to go on guard, together with 3 or 4 more of our company. It was a beautiful moonlit night, and soon after we went on post, we could distinctly hear the church bells ringing over in town, calling the citizens up to the seminary to worship the God of battles. The solemn \_\_\_\_\_ of those bells called up to my memory scenes and associations of the irrevocable past. They reminded me of old Lexington and Sabbath nights of my college days. I also thought of my old home, of its quiet joys and of how the loved ones there were then engaged. How great the contrast between my situation on that night and one year ago. Then I was surrounded by the joys and comforts of home, now I was in the midst of a campaign and walking my lonely post with measured tread.

On the next day (15<sup>th</sup>) tidings came that the enemy was rapidly advancing upon us and were actually at Bunker Hill, a small village about 11 miles distant, and we were looking out for an attack soon. When our boys

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who were on guard , got off and were relieved, it was just about dark. And when we got back to our tents, all was in an uproar and confusion. The companies were all drawn out and the regiments were forming and double – quicking off to our right. We, (the guard boys) soon ascertained that they were anticipating an attack on the right that night. So we were ordered to get our supper as soon as possible and then join our company. Got our supper and with much difficulty found our company, in the yard of the house at which were Gen Jackson’s Headquarters. They had just helped to tear down a small brick house on the south side of the dwelling house, because it was in the range of a large gun there mounted. Then we laid down for a few minutes, and soon were ordered back to our camp, and to bed, with orders to have our arms by our side and be ready to march at a moment’s warning. But the enemy as usual did not

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**July 16<sup>th</sup> 1861**

make his appearance and we awoke on the next morning none the worse for our excitement on the proceeding morning.

The 16<sup>th</sup> was a sad day for our company. For on that one of our comrades – Wm. Brooks of Augusta died of the brain fever. His death threw a pall of gloom over the whole company, as it plainly reiterated in our ears the truth of the saying that, “in the midst of life we are in death.” We buried him in the suburbs of Winchester, and there he sleeps his long sleep in his soldier grave. And tho’ far away from the home of his infancy, with no loving mother or gentle sister to strew his grave with fresh flowers, that gallant boy will long be remembered by his comrades and by all who knew him with the warmest feelings of friendship.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> heard that the enemy were going to attack W- in three columns, in front, on right, and on the left. Our brigade was to meet the attack on the right. Said to be a column of 10,000. About 11 a.m. we were called out and marched out and pulled down a large

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**July 17<sup>th</sup> 1861**

amount of fencing along the road, by which they would have to come. We saw many persons coming with their valuable property up to W-, retiring before the approach of the enemy. The object in pulling down the fences was to make a battlefield open and the movements thereupon unobstructed and easy. Many of the troops instead of pulling down fences, were busily engaged in gathering blackberries and running rabbits. A poor rabbit stands but a poor chance when a whole regiment gets after him. Our Col. Remarked that the Yankees would stand a poor chance if our troops charged upon them with the same vehemence and determination as they did on the gentleman with the cotton appendage to his nether parts. Gen. Patterson still didn't advance upon us.

Now Patterson's column was to prevent Gen. Johnston from uniting with Beauregard, by attacking him when he should start for the junction. So by preventing this union they could the more easily overwhelm Beaure-

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**July 18<sup>th</sup> 1861**

-guard at Manassas. But as they were threatening to make an attack there daily with an overwhelming force, Johnston was ordered to make a forced march over the Blue Ridge and unite with Beauregard. So Johnston intended to give him the slip and nip Patterson's hopes of entrapping him in the bud.

Accordingly, about 10 a.m. on the 18<sup>th</sup>, we were ordered to cook a day's rations, pack up, and be ready to move soon. But then we had no idea which way we were going. Some thought to Romney, others to Strasburg, and then to the N-west, others declared they "didn't know." However, were soon ready for marching, having sent our sick to W-. The drum beat and we started. We filed through the

town and took the road leading to Ashby Gap in the Blue Ridge. Then the troops began to suspect the destination of the Army, for all they want is the direction. The good citizens of Winchester were greatly troubled and disturbed on seeing us file thro' their streets, and not knowing the truth of the case, thought

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that we were retreating and thus leaving them to the mercy of the foe. But when we left W-, Patterson was out of our reach, having gone to Charlestown, I know not for what. The fair ladies bade us adieu with tearful eyes and the sick looked upon us as we departed, with despair written upon their countenances. We did not much like the idea of leaving them either, tho' we knew not how the case stood. For it looked hard, for us after receiving so much kindness at their hands, thus to go away and leave them almost in a defenseless state. But we left some 4000 or 5000 of the militia to defend the breastworks, who would doubtless give the Yankees a warm reception should they attempt to advance. But it was not Patterson's aim to march into Winchester after we had left it. For on hearing of our departure he withdrew his main body and crossed the Potomac near H -Ferry. Thus the delightful, valley in which reposes W-, was rid of a hostile and pillaging army.

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**Chapt VI**

**July 18<sup>th</sup> 1861**

**March from Winchester to Manassas**

Well we had left the delightful precincts of Winchester and were on the way toward Manassas. The road was macadamized and we went along quite briskly. After had gotten about two miles from W-, we had a dispatch read to us, telling us that, Beauregard was fighting with the Yankees, that Patterson was attempting to go to join McDowell and overpower him with part of his force and that we were entreated to hasten on and save the country from all the disaster of a defeat. On we went, tho' the evening was very warm and sultry. We halted at the little village of Millwood, where the kind citizens had set out many tubs of ice water, which was quite a treat. After halting for about two hours and being somewhat refreshed, the word was given "Forward, Forward!"

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On we went. We had to cross the Shenandoah River before we reached the Blue Ridge which loomed up darkly before us. We could now plainly see the pass, through which we had to go. As we toiled on our wearisome march, and looked away on that mountain pass, it was quite discouraging to think we had to climb those lofty ridges and steep hills. As we neared the Shenandoah, the country is beautiful and fertile, whilst some splendid looking mansions crowned the eminences along our road. From every house along the way ladies came tripping down to the roadside to greet us with their smiles and words of encouragement. The shadows of twilight now began to fall around and by the descent of our road we were aware that we were nearing the banks of that beautiful river.

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**July 18<sup>th</sup> 1861**

Soon we reached its northern bank and by the faint light of the moon – which was veiled by the clouds, we could look across its broad and smooth surface. Halted for a few minutes, then were ordered to prepare for wading, as was no other way of crossing. This preparation consisted simply of divesting ourselves of our shoes and pants, hanging our cartridge boxes around our necks and carrying all our divested garments upon our shoulders. All were ready and into the stream we plunged, our gallant Captain at our head. Had we met any of the modest portion of the rising generation on our passage, doubtless it would have put them to the blush and they would have seen something interesting away up or down the stream. Doubtless we looked like a long string of ghosts to an observer a short distance off. The operation was quite pleasant after our long march and as (the) stream was not very deep all got over safe and sound. Rigged ourselves out again and on we went. The road now

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began to be rough and uneven. Soon reached the base of the mountains and commenced our ascent along the narrow pass. The ascent was not very steep, but still it seemed so to us who were quite fatigued. Long before we got to the summit, could hear the words of complaint and sighs of despondency from ours as well as

the other boys. Yet they toiled on in hope of stopping on the other side. The summit was reached and could see far off upon another mountain a signal fire, doubtless understood by Johnston and Beauregard. Marched on down the mountain and halted at a small village (Paris) situated at the base. There being completely exhausted, we threw ourselves down on the ground without blankets and soon fell off into sleep. Remained there from the time we got there 11 ½ that night until 3 o'clock in the morning, when were roused from our slumbers and with stiffened limbs moved on. We marched six miles thence to Piedmont station on the railroad leading

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**July 19<sup>th</sup> 1861**

from Strasburg to the Junction where we were to take the cars, much to our gratification. Got to the station a little while after sunrise and there heard the welcome news that on the day before (18<sup>th</sup>) Beauregard had defeated the Yankees and run them back. This cheered us up very much indeed. The kind hearted citizens of the neighborhood around the station, hearing of our approach, hastily collected some eatables and brought them in and tho' not sufficient for our ravenous appetites still were relished very much by those who were fortunate enough to get any. The surrounding hills were mostly covered with ladies and children, etc... , who had come to see the army. Staid there until about 9 ½ a.m. and then took a train (i.e. our regiment) and whirled off, towards the seat of war amid the cheers of the bystanders and the plaudits of the ladies who bade us "go and help Beauregard and his brave men to whip those Yankees." We got to the junction about 3 ½ o'clock p.m. and heard the victory confirmed and also that they were expecting another attack on the next day. The citizens all along the road we came down were very much excited and greeted us with shouts of exaltation –

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**July 20<sup>th</sup> 1861**

The distance we marched on the evening we left Winchester was about 20 miles and from Paris to Piedmont station was six miles. At every station as we came down the road were some provisions ready for us, showing how the inhabitants



valued our aid in driving back the ruthless invader from the hallowed soil of the Old Dominion. When we got to the junction we met a good many old friends. Got something (to) eat there and (tho' had to cook it ourselves) and then about sundown we were ordered to go down to Bull's Run 4 miles distant where the battle of the 18<sup>th</sup> had taken place and where our line of trenches were. The precincts of the Junction are well fortified on every side. Soon got to our place of destination and lay down, expecting – from the firing of the pickets in our front to be attacked certainly by daylight in the morning. Did not at first unroll our blankets and soon woke up and it was raining most beautifully upon us. But did not rain long and morning dawned, but still no enemy came. Cooked breakfast and had no sooner finished eating then a trooper came galloping in and called for the Head Quarters.

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**July 20<sup>th</sup> 1861**

We always know that “something is out,” when we see those trooper's aids, etc..., come riding in at full speed. The enemy were threatening to make an attack off to our right, so our brigade was marched off about a mile in that direction, and our regiment was posted in the road leading thro' a corn field. After waiting there for about two hours the word came that the enemy had retired and we were ordered to retire also. But we did not go to where we came from that morning, but halted on the edge of a pine grove distant about a quarter of a mile from where we had been drawn up. There was a hospital - designated as they always were with a yellow flag on top – in sight of the enemy on the day of the fight and shame on them to say, they made it an object of their cannonade, which is in violation of the laws of civilized warfare. That evening we were ordered to cook for a day in advance, expecting we would have a fight on the next day, (Sunday). We retired to our hard beds soon that night, expecting that we would be roused early on the next morning.

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**Chapt VII**

**July 21<sup>st</sup> 1861**

**“Battle of Stone Bridge! Or Manassas”**

Reader I will now narrate to you some of the events of this memorable day. I can only give you an account of the part played by our brigade (Jackson's), in this Waterloo of America – decidedly the greatest battle ever fought on this side of the Atlantic. On that Sabbath morning – the morning of the eventful day of the battle – the sun arose in all his majesty and beauty, making the face of nature smile and radiate with joy. The morning birds sang their sweetest songs in the grove which surrounded us, and all nature seemed to send up praise and adoration to Nature's God. Alas! that the beauty of such a scene was so soon to be marred by the horrors of battle. But such are the stern decrees of war, and some of the greatest battles that have ever been fought, were fought on the Sabbath day. Soon after sunrise a courier came announcing that the enemy were attempting to flank us on our left with a heavy column and for us

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i.e. (our brigade) to go to its support. Away we marched to meet the foe, leaving a guard for our baggage and some to cook. We had not gotten far from our encampment during the night when the loud report of a cannon off to our right, broke in upon the holy stillness of that Sabbath morning. Soon afterwards, other guns opened on our lines just in front of our encampment, throwing balls, shells, etc... over into the midst of our baggage, cooking utensils, etc... You must remember that Bull's Run was the limit to our lines and all along our side of it we had entrenchments thrown up for miles and the ditches well manned. Whilst our brigade was posted just in rear of these entrenchments on the night before and it (our brigade) was destined to support the point of heaviest attack that day, hence would have plenty of marching, countermarching, etc... to do.

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The cannonade now grew louder, telling us that our guns were returning the compliments. Yet we continued our march along the banks of a small stream – a branch of Bull Run – leading towards the left of our lines. There is something exciting in hearing the distant booming of cannon; it rouses one's dormant energies and makes him feel martial in every sense of the word. So we felt, on that morning as we filed along our course. We knew the work of the day had commenced in all its dread reality.

As yet there had been no firing upon our left, but our general had ascertained that the firing of the enemy upon our right, was only to draw thither our troops, whilst his largest column of attack was to march upon our left and thus endeavor to flank us. It was a tolerably well planned thing by him, but our gallant Gen.s were too keen that time

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for Yankee ingenuity to entrap them. After marching about two miles and a half, we halted, drew up in battle array and loaded our guns. Then sat down to await the approach of the enemy should he dare to approach at that point. Having remained there about three quarters of an hour, we were marched back a short distance then countermarched and filed a little towards the left of where we were first drawn up and were posted along the edge of a grove. There we had to remain until further orders, hence sat down to rest. Which we needed after the fatigue of all that marching, countermarching, double quicking, etc.... Then we had time to reflect upon our situation. Tho' we were about to engage in mortal combat with our enemy and that upon the Sabbath, we were acting only on the defensive. The violation of that holy day rests upon the heads of that heaven forsaken band, and the precious blood that crimsoned the fields of the Old Dominion on that day, all cries for vengeance upon the leaders of their myrmidon host. It was now about 11 o'clock a.m. and the firing had commenced upon the left with a fierceness which

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plainly told that there the awful work had begun. Every minute the cannonade grew louder and the musketry was sharper. A shout arose along the line of battle. Was it a shout of triumph of our brave troops over the enemy? Or was it a shout of defiance from the foe? None could answer these questions so full of anxiety and suspense. We could not see any of the fighting, but could discern the smoke of the conflict curling up from behind the large extent of woods in the distance. An aid comes riding over the hill at full speed. We are ordered to the scene of action. We had to ascend a hill in order to get to the field of strife. As went up the hill, we met a portion of the famed Washington Artillery from New Orleans coming away having been out of ammunition. The face of the hill up which we now marched was covered with pine trees mostly small and these only extended nearly to the

summit of the hill. As we passed up the hill, balls, shells, and c., flew over our heads, some of them singing in a manner that was not altogether pleasant to hear. We reached the upper edge of the pines on the right of our road, filed to the right along

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the border of the grove and our regiment was then posted behind our batteries in order to support them and charge on the enemy as soon as possible. These batteries were stationed on the summit of the hill and about twenty paces in front of us, but about four feet more elevated in position than we were. The batteries of the enemy at this part of the line of battle were just in front of us on an adjoining hill, tho' our infantry behind the batteries could not see them. We were immediately ordered to lay flat on the ground, as a protection against the fire of the enemy's artillery, which was chiefly directed against our guns. We were on the left of the line of battle and the enemy's object were to flank us at this point. Now the thunder of the battle grew louder and the strife waxed warmer. The enemy outnumbered us far, but we were determined to conquer or die! At this time, the line of battle where they were fighting extended off towards our right about a mile and a half. But the din of the battle rose so high near us that couldn't hear the firing elsewhere, and much less could we see them. Our regiment had the most dan-

### **Pg. 57**

-gerous position on the field. We were exposed to the enemy's fire and had to remain inactive so long. The shells would burst over and around us scattering their fragments far and wide. And as we lay there prostrated on the ground the cannonballs from the enemy's guns would whiz just a few feet above our bodies, strike in front of our line and bounce over us, whilst the minie balls went singing by our ears and between our bodies producing anything but pleasant sensations. The grove in our rear was completely riddled and the ground was subsoiled indeed. Our batteries in the mean time played well upon the enemy and we could see the gunners clap their hands and cheer when they shot through the enemy's columns. Capt. Pendleton's battery from Lexington did excellent work on that hill, and his men acted nobly. The enemy's infantry were between the two hills on which were stationed the respective hostile batteries and upon these columns our cannon were

mostly directed. We remained in that awful position for about two hours. The inactivity itself was

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a burden, and besides knew not at what moment we would be swept away. Whilst we were there Gen Jackson rode up and down the line as cool and calm as if on an evening parade, tho' the missiles of destruction flew around him as thick as hail. Now and then he would exclaim "All's well," and once remarked, "This night we will drive them across the Potomac." Col. Preston of our regiment also conducted himself nobly on that occasion. Whilst there, we lost three of our boys in our company, two were doubtless killed by a shell bursting between them and the other by a ball. Also had two others wounded, one mortally. The enemy moved some of his guns up on our left in order to obtain an enfilading fire upon our lines, but some of our guns replied to his, with deadly effect. The crisis of the action had now arrived, for the enemy owing to their superior numbers had been able to hold out thus far, and were now attempting to flank our batteries on the left. At this moment we were ordered to charge, and believe me it was a relief for our boys to get up from that dreadful

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Position, and with a loud shout of defiance, dash forward in the deadly charge. One dashing on in the charge feels more like a demon than a human being, for the reason no longer controls him and a mad enthusiasm carries him on and a burning thirst for the life blood of the foe, such as never felt before then seizes upon him. Onward we dashed. We are nearing the enemy lines. They see the deadly gleaming of our bayonets, and the flash of mad determination in our eyes. A chill of horror passes over them, they turn and run like "brave boys." Then bursts a loud shout of triumph along our lines. At this moment the roll of our drum is heard, whilst was the signal for us to halt. Why it then beat I know not, doubtless an error on the part of the drummers. For we had them in full retreat and had routed them then had not the signal to halt beat. Many of our regiment then halted, but others carried away by the flush of success, still pursued. The enemy we had to deal with there on our left were the New York Zouaves of the notorious Ellsworth's regiment and a

regiment of the Brooklyn Zouaves, with a large number of regulars, “all” being the flower of their “grand army.” However, the en-

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-emy on seeing us halt, rallied near their cannon. Then we opened up a galling fire of musketry upon them to which they replied with tolerable good effect. Our batteries at the commencement of the charge were ordered to retire a short distance in our rear or else they had now swept the enemy’s ranks from the summit of the hill. Some of their guns still played upon parts of our lines, but most of their horses were dead or wounded, and many of their gunners had fled in dismay. The firing now was fierce on both sides, and as the enemy were getting some reinforcements, we knew that the last grand effort on our side was to be made. That was to be made with the bayonet, and we were again ordered to “Charge!!” Once more did a shout of mad defiance and wild enthusiasm burst along the lines, and our bayonets moved quickly in a bristling line up towards the foe. Many of them broke and ran at first, but some of the Fire Zouaves fought well and stood their ground until we had gotten close on them. But the “best and bravest” of the grand army of Yankee manufacture, plainly showed that they

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could not face such an array of cold steel and soon turned their backs upon us and without any further ceremony, left us at full speed. That was the turning point of the day. We drove them from their guns and our regiment – (the 4<sup>th</sup> Va.) captured the far famed “Sherman’s Battery.” Our Col. was among the first at the pieces and a gallant citizen of Lexington seized our flag from the bearer who was shot, and with his own hands planted it upon the captured battery. Sprigg’s battery was also taken from them by our brigade. Then when they saw the “flower” of their army in flight, the enemy one and all fled, both their bodies of reserve and those who were attempting to rally. Our troops pursued them about two miles, and could only keep in sight of them, for fear seemed to give them wings, judging from the way they “got up and travelled.” Those moments may be numbered amongst the proudest of our lives, when we beheld our regiment’s flag floating in triumph over the bloody field. (We turned some of their own cannon on them with deadly effect too.) Our cavalry joined in after

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them and pursued them about 7 miles on the road towards Alexandria. The rout was of a most disastrous nature and 'tis said it has not had its equal since the bloody tragedy of Waterloo. Our victory was a glorious one! We had routed their "grand army," taken a great many prisoners and captured a large amount of excellent artillery. So we returned from the pursuit of the enemy, very much fatigued, yet buoyant with the proud reflection that the day was won and the victory ours!

**Chapt VIII**

**July 21<sup>st</sup> 1861**

**Evening of the day of the Battle**

**Return to Camp**

We gained the victory but it was dearly bought, at least by our regiment, and more or less by our whole brigade. For we left many a poor fellow laying on the field who would rise no more/ Our company had four killed on the field and one died whilst being carried off, besides two who were mor-

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-tally wounded and have since died. I will here give the names of these gallant boys who were thus sacrificed upon the altar of their country, having fallen in defense of her dearest rights. Whilst we were lying behind those batteries, Wm. L. Paxton, B.A. Bradley, and C. W. Bell, all of Rockbridge were killed, tho' Bell died as were taking him off the field. And there Calvin Utz of Fincastle was mortally wounded by a piece of a shell. He was near me when struck and cried out, "take me away boys, I'm shot." He was borne away and died in a few days. In the first charge W. B. Ott of Rockbridge and H. L. Wilson of Augusta were killed and C. D. Strickler mortally wounded and died about a week afterwards. We had about 6 or 7 others slightly wounded, one behind the batteries and the others in the charges. After we returned from the pursuit of the enemy, those who had not gone to take care of the wounded, went over the field in search of their wounded and dead

comrades who had not yet been found. After we found all the dead of our company, I walked over the part of the field,

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on the left of the line of battle, where our brigade fought. The enemy had decidedly the advantage of us as regards position, etc.... I had often read the most vivid pictures of a battlefield, but never until that evening did its horrors flash upon me in all their dreadful reality. Around me the ground was strewn with the dead and the dying in all the ghastly forms of mutilation. But I'll leave it for the pen of another, to describe the horrible scenes of this bloody field on that eve of the battle day. The ground in places where the conflict had been fiercest was torn up in a frightful manner. There, where lately was all the thunder, and din of battle, the clashing of arms, and shouting of captains, all was now quiet and no sound broke upon the ear save the groans of the wounded and dying or the low voices of the living in search of their comrades. The setting sun was shining beautifully over the field, and seemed as if he were hastening to hide his face beneath the horizon from such a scene as that. Around where there batteries had been planted, the strife had been fiercest and the rider and the horse lay side by side, "in one red burial blent." The enemy's loss

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far exceeded ours, and the ground was thick with those Zouaves and regulars. I gave some of their wounded water to quench their burning thirst. And with tears in their eyes they said that we "Southern boys were to kind to them," said they had been deceived as to the object of their enlistment, as it was only to defend the Capital and not to invade the South. That they had been forced over into Va. and had found that we southerners fought far differently from the way which they had been led to suppose. I could not help pitying them as they lay there writhing in the agonies of death. In some places where we had driven them back and fought where they had stood, there, our dead were mingled with theirs. There, some of the sons of Virginia, of the Carolinas, and of the whole south lay cold in the embrace of death by the side of those who had come from the granite hills of Maine, from the banks of the Hudson, and from old Faneuil Hall to take away our liberties and our



rights. As the shades of the evening began to fall I turned my footsteps towards our camp of the night of the 19<sup>th</sup> whither our regiment had been or-

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-dered, and after much difficulty in finding the way – on account of the intense darkness which closed around us, we at length reached our camp and there found many of the regiment who had preceded us. We there found about twenty of our company with our gallant Capt. who bore himself nobly during the whole of that bloody day. We marched out that morning with 44 in our company (so great was the sickness therein) and only about one half returned that night. Of the others, some had been left on the field, others were wounded and the rest had gone to care for the wounded, who had all been sent to the junction. You may well suppose that there were sad hearts and sorrowful countenances there, as our little band gathered close around our bivouac and related the story of the day's work. And as it was whispered round how and where our brave comrades had fallen, the tear of sympathy and sorrow stole down many a cheek, when we thought of the bright homes now destined to be draped in mourning for those gallant boys. With wearied bodies and heavy hearts we threw ourselves upon the cold ground and sought repose in slumbers. Thus ended the memorable day of the 21<sup>st</sup>.

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**Chapt IX**

**July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1861**

**Burial of the Dead. Incidents of the Battle. Complete rout of the Enemy**

On the morning of the 22<sup>nd</sup> we were roused early by the morning drum. At first it was hard to realize the fact that we had fought a battle on the preceding day, for it all seemed like a dream. Yet when there were so many names unanswered at the roll-call, the truth flashed upon me in all its dreadful reality. Having breakfasted we proceeded out to the battlefield, for the purpose of burying our dead, a work full of sorrow and regret. We were compelled to bury them on the field, as the wounded could scarcely be sent home. It commenced raining quite briskly in the morning, for it seemed that the skies were weeping over the scenes of \_\_\_\_\_

and misery which were presented on the bloody field. On reaching the field, we found our dead comrades where we had left them. In a place where they would not be disturbed. We dug their graves (four in number, as the other one who had been killed had been ta-

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-ken off the field) beneath two pines on the edge of the grove, just behind our position when we first lay on the ground. There two of them had been killed by the fire from the enemy's batteries. We wrapped them in their blankets and laid them down in their soldier graves. For some reason, I know not what, we were not permitted to bury them with military honors; doubtless they wanted no firing on the field then as 'twas reported the enemy were coming under a flag of truce to bury theirs. Also, it had been an impossibility to have fired a gun then, for it rained in torrents. As we laid them away, I thought of the past on the burial of Sir John Moore;

“Slowly and sadly we laid them down,  
On the field of their fame fresh and gory,  
The sods with our bayonets upturning,  
We carved not a line, we raised not a stone,  
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot,  
But left them alone in their glory,  
O'er the graves, where our heroes were buried.

It was a sorrowful moment for us when we saw the sods close over the manly forms of those gallant boys! They had fallen nobly in the defense of liberty, of their homes, and of all that is dear to the human heart.

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On the morning before, they stood in our ranks buoyant with youth and hope – rejoicing in the past and looking forward with the fondest wishes for the future, but now they are gone and their spirits have passed the veil of time and entered the dread unknown. And we are laying them in the cold, damp ground far away from home upon the hills of Prince William. Here they will sleep the sleep that knows no waking, with no fond mother to \_\_\_\_\_ their graves with bitter tears or gentle sister to strew them with fresh flowers. Sleep on gallant boys! Tho' not

sculptured marble rise over thee now, thy names will not be forgotten. When other men and other times look back and rejoice over this victory of Stone Bridge, you too will be numbered amongst its heroes. The dark pines above the graves will whisper of thy fame, thy comrades will tell thy story of thy fall and humanity will bless thee for dying for such a righteous cause! One of them was a relation of mine. The companion of my childhood and playmate of my early youth.

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We had always been connected by associations and the strongest ties of friendship, both at our homes upon the banks of the James, and in the walls of college. And to see him thus swept away was a sad, sad sight! But let us turn from such sorrowful scenes as these. We placed head-boards at their graves, with their names inscribed upon them. And taking a farewell look at their silent mounds, we turned our steps toward our camp.

It was now raining hard and we were drenched to the skin. Got back to our camp about 3 ½ o'clock p.m. and found all wet and cold. Had no shelter and only a few temporary ones made of blankets which were not of much service. Had left our tents, baggage, and c. at Winchester. With much difficulty we made a little coffee and procured a few crackers to eat. Then lay down on the cold wet ground to get a little sleep and repose. And though it rained on us all night and only had a wet blanket stretched over me, still I slept as sound as if I had been under the old home-

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**July 23<sup>rd</sup> 1861**

-stead roof, upon a comfortable couch. Woke up on the morning of the 23<sup>rd</sup>, considerably refreshed, and as the sun was shining beautifully upon the drenched earth, we engaged ourselves in drying our clothes, cleaning up our guns, etc...

On that day we gathered up the various accounts, incidents, etc..., of the battle and much to our satisfaction heard of the utter rout of the enemy, etc... They had an army of 60,000 men, of whom about 40,000 were engaged and 20,000 as a body or reserve. Our Gens (Johnston and Beauregard) had about 16,000 in the engagement. So we defeated them though they were two to our one, which shows

how freemen can fight, when the cause of their liberty is at stake. Our men fought well against an overwhelming force. The enemy were confident of success, expecting that we would “fire a few shots” and then retire before the triumphant march of their “grand army.” So confident were they of victory, that some of their congressmen, together with a large number of northern citizens and women came too (shame on them to say!) to

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Witness the defeat of our army. In their pride and vanity they had a ball appointed to be held at Richmond and various personages of distinction invited to attend it. At Centreville, where they encamped the night before the battle, there were tables of refreshments, etc. . . . , set out for the elite of W- City (Washington) en route to Richmond City. But they found out much to their disappointment, that in their way to our Old Dominion Capital there stood a living wall of bristling bayonets and our hill tops crowned with cannon. On Sunday morning they left Centreville in all their “pomp and circumstance of glorious war,” with banners waving and trumpets blowing, whilst their women smiled upon the anticipated work. Sunday evening came and how changed the scene at Centreville. The road was crowded with fugitive soldiers, wagons, carriages, etc. . . . , all hurrying on towards Alexandria. The most complete confusion reigned and onward the tide swept, whilst wave after wave of routed troops came swelling the tide behind. In vain did their officers some of them endeavor to re-

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-store order and rally the forces, but ‘twas no purpose so great was the panic. A corpulent old Senator planted a cannon in the road at a certain point, and threatened to shoot all who went by, but the troops upset the piece and rushed by nearly upsetting the old gent’s equilibrium too. They stopped not until they got to Alexandria, and there many attempted to cross over into W-City. The rout is said to never have had its equal since the rout of Waterloo. Our cavalry kept harassing them on their rear, cutting them to pieces and taking hundreds of them prisoners. In the confusion and disorder that prevailed, many were run over by wagons and crippled. The road was lined with guns, blankets, knapsacks, etc. . . . which they threw aside in their headlong flight. In answer to the question of some of the

citizens along the road, “What was the matter?” they said they were “ruined, cut all to pieces,” that they “could fight men, but they couldn’t face devils.” Tis said that some of the Louisianians charged on a regiment with

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Bowie knives and they immediately dropped their guns and hollered “murder” at the top of their voice. The Yankees can’t stand cold steel. Our cavalry captured a large amount of artillery, baggage wagons, loaded ambulances, etc..., all of which our army needed. Are a good many little incidents of the battle worthy of notice. The flag given to our company on its departure from Lexington by the ladies of Falling Spring Church was one of the handsomest banners in our regiment. So we gave it the regiment for a regimental standard, to be returned when called for. That flag, on the day of the battle, was borne through the thickest and hottest of the fight, and finally waved in triumph over the bloody field. With such a motto as “Pro Aris et Focis,” on its folds, how could it drop or trail in the dust? Two of the “Rockbridge Rifles” carried their Bible’s in their side pockets on their breasts, and in the midst of the fight pieces of a shell struck each just on the Bibles tearing the outside but not harming their bodies in the least. That should teach all to have the Bible for their constant companion and warmest friend. But time and space will not permit me to dwell

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on these incidents, etc... And suffice it to say that this victory of ours and complete rout of the enemy, only gave confidence and hope to the South whilst it was calculated to wound the pride of the North, dishearten her soldiers, and expose the unholy contest she was waging against the gallant South!

**Chapt X**

**Encampment on Bull Run and on one of its branches.**

We remained at our camp on Bull Run until the evening of the 27<sup>th</sup>. Had miserable water there and had no tents either, tho’ though constructed temporary shelters of brush, etc... Whilst there were a great many strangers came down to see their friends, relations, etc... who had been in the battle. Many of them returned having glad hearts having found their friends, etc..., all safe and well. Others went back

with a sad and heavy heart, as some of those they loved had been wounded or had fallen on the fatal field. Renewed our regular drills, etc..., soon and things went on smoothly, and the usual monotony of camp life prevailed. We amused

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**July 27<sup>th</sup> 1861**

ourselves in hearing the particulars of the Yankee rout, reading the stories they gave of it, all of which were black with lies of the most abominable character. By degrees the \_\_\_\_\_ gayety of our company revived, tho' now and then a shadow would pass over our spirits when we remembered that not all of us were there. I visited the entrenchments on Bull's Run. It is a small stream and is nearly all the time muddy, owing to the fact that it runs through clay soil which it readily holds in solution. There is a steep bank on the side towards the junction, whilst the side opposite in many places is sloping and often bad. We had breastworks thrown up on our side for a long distance and had the enemy attempted to cross anywhere along there he had been repulsed with loss; as was the case on the 18<sup>th</sup> when he had made an attack lower down the Run.

On the evening of the 27<sup>th</sup>, we moved to another place of encampment further over towards the battlefield near small branch of the Run. We got our tents then and baggage which we had

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left at Winchester, and we fixed up pretty comfortably, having everything needful to a soldier except good water. The water was miserable and too scarce entirely for the whole brigade numbering about 4000 men. On the 28<sup>th</sup> (Sunday), we had preaching at Head Quarters by a fugitive minister from W-City. He preached on the text "Prepare to meet thy God," an excellent sermon too. That was the first sermon we had heard in camp for some time. As for several Sundays past we had been marching, expecting an attack, etc... and on that Sabbath a week ago, we were far differently engaged. It does seem that we have more marching and work to do on Sunday than any other day. Some of the greatest and most decisive battles that have ever been fought, broke in with their thunder upon the stillness of the Holy Sabbath. Among these, Waterloo, New Orleans, and the Stone Bridge stand out among the first. ( The battle at Manassas was generally called the Battle of the

Stone Bridge, a bridge across the Run, where the fight first commenced on the 21<sup>st</sup> by our outposts and the enemy's advance guard.)

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### **July 28<sup>th</sup> 1861 and July 29<sup>th</sup> 1861**

On the evening of the 28<sup>th</sup> we had a very large thunder storm. The water run in some of our tents and we had to maneuver around considerably to keep ourselves dry, etc... However we kept pretty dry and snug in our corner of our tent that night, but on the next day we took the hint and dug our trenches deeper around our tents. On the same day the 29<sup>th</sup>, we had all the faculty of Washington College down with us except our late President. For the three Profs: Harris, Nelson, and Campbell, came down to see how the Professor Capt. (White) was getting along with his company of student soldiers. (Dr. Junkin, the President had resigned and gone north at the commencement of the difficulty. He was a strong northern man in sentiment and feeling, and is said to have told his son (a strong southerner) he would meet him on the banks of the Potomac in battle array. His resignation will be but the dawn of a brighter era for old Washington College, for he was only and impediment to its prosperity. We boys were all glad to see our old teachers, perhaps more so than we used to be when we met them in the college classroom on Monday morning.

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### **August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1861**

The list of our sick daily increased whilst we staid there. Probably no doubt on account of the bad water and our low situation. So on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August we packed up, and bade adieu to our encampment and took up our line of march for a campground about a mile below Centreville where was plenty of good water, etc...

## **Chapt XI**

### **March to Centreville. Encampment**

Well on the morning of Aug 2<sup>nd</sup>, we started off towards our new encampment. Passed by the battlefield and surveyed again the scene of strife, tho' it brought up

(to memory) at once proud and melancholy thoughts. We passed over Stone Bridge where the battle first commenced early on Sunday morning. The ground

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**August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1861**

around where the batteries were first planted was torn by the artillery fire. Passed many graves and heaps of dead Yankees on the road. For along this road their routed host fled on the eve of the battle. The road itself was very wide, yet in many places, the fences on either side were torn down to let the tide of fugitives sweep by. And the road looked just as if immense droves of cattle had been passing along lately. Down towards Centreville, in Fairfax Co., the aspect of the country was more pleasing, than around our previous encampment. For the country down here is very poor and unfruitful. And we often longed for the beautiful country of the Valley around Winchester, with its fine springs, hospitable citizens, pretty ladies, etc...Centreville is a miserable looking little place, and fit only for Yankee Head Quarters. Our troops were quartered in large numbers around the place. Our brigade filed through and past and encamped about a mile below the village, in a very

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**August 6<sup>th</sup> 1861**

comfortable place. Near our new encampment the Yankees encamped previous to their defeat, and it was, the Yankee campground, just about as filthy a looking place as you'd want to see. We pitched our tents and made beds by driving forks into the ground about two and a half feet high, laying poles on these and nailing staves of barrels on top. Tho' hard, they suited well, both for beds, seats, tables, etc...We were encamped near a grove, and cooked under the trees. Fared very well as the boxes began to roll in to the boys from home. Also we began to bake blackberry pies, apple dumplings, etc...and they were no common articles either. Soon pay day came around, and our company was paid off on the 6<sup>th</sup>. 'Twas well we were encamped away from any town, else our boy's money had soon vanished. But as it was, we had no chance of spending it, and consequently there was an overflow of cash in camp.



When we reached Centreville, our company had marched 102 miles, since we entered the service at Winchester, tho' only at intervals of considerable time between the different marches. Still the distance taken as a whole seems considerable in the eyes of a nervous man.

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**Aug 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> 1861**

Now we went into regular camp life, drilling, attending roll-calls innumerable, etc... These drills get to be very obnoxious to the soldier, especially when the warm beams of an August sun are pouring down upon him. 'Tis much more pleasant to lay in one's tent than to double quick over a parade ground. Nothing of interest transpired until the morning of the 9<sup>th</sup>. On that day we were all drawn out on the hills about a mile from our camp to be viewed by Prince Napoleon of France, who was then paying a visit to this side of the ocean. The day was exceedingly warm, and after all our marching, counter-marching, etc..., we only saw the prince ride along the road at a considerable distance off. He passed by some few regiments, but never came near ours. 'Tis said his visit was on a mission about the recognition of our independence.

We now fared very well, as we generally do in a permanent encampment. For we then got better fixed up for cooking, etc..., and besides generally get some "nice fixins," from

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from home then, which we prize exceedingly high. The country about our camp was very barren in its every aspect. The land was so poor that a certain precocious youth observed that the "rabbits had to carry their haversacks along with them," and that the ground was so poor "a dog couldn't get a foot-hold to bark." Wisely said and there was more truth than poetry in the remarks.

But few citizens were to be seen about, so thinly settled was the country; and a lady got to be quite a curiosity. Even the very birds seemed to have become shocked at the atrocities and dark deeds of the Yankee host and fled affrighted to other groves and other forests. Many of our boys were want to go out foraging, but they didn't always succeed well. But this was the very country in which to fight,

for the fields waving with corn and other crops were few and far between. So the savages of war would not leave such a large trace there as elsewhere in a more fruitful and thickly settled part of the state. The woods around there was brushy and thick with undergrowth. The general face of the country was undulating and much more

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**Aug 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> 1861**

rolling than in the vicinity of the Junction.

Thus things went on right smoothly in camp and nothing of any stirring importance broke in upon the monotony of the scene. For after the battle, there seemed to be a complete calm, after all the stormy time of the previous weeks. And we hardly knew how to rest contented, so accustomed had we been to quick marching, surprises, etc... Gen Jackson got to be more strict with the guard, and took almost a whole regiment for brigade guard. Also read out the law to the guards in regard to sentinels sleeping on post, the penalty in the war regulations for the Confederate States being death. Sentinel after sentinel however had been reported asleep on post, until "forbearance ceased to be a virtue." For suppose we had been the advance brigade, then the safety of the whole army might be thrown in jeopardy by the neglect of one sentinel sleeping on post. After the law was read, the boys kept "wide awake."

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**Aug 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> 1861**

On the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup> it was raining most beautifully. But if it fell most beautifully in the eyes of the farmer and upon his parched fields, it didn't seem so to us, encamped as we were upon the tented field. We had good tents and as long as we remained in them, we kept pretty comfortable. But we had to do all our cooking out in the rain, which is not the most pleasant business in the world. It continued to rain for about a week almost incessantly and afterwards for a short time a shower would daily visit us. For the sake of variety, during rainy weather, the soldiers were want to lay up in their tents, sleep, talk, yarn, eat, etc... Thus the time stealthily passed off. For it does seem to me that time goes by faster in camp

than elsewhere. We boys rarely knew what the day of the week was only on Sunday, as on that day we had no drills to

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attend, etc... and besides had preaching at Head Quarters of our regiment by our chaplain, Rev. Mr. Miller of Christiansburg. We generally knew the day of the month as wrote a letter about every other day. And 'tis beyond a doubt, that the soldier writes beyond any other class of people. For in my own case, one of the purest courses of pleasure I enjoyed in the camp was corresponding with my friends and acquaintances at and near my old Rockbridge home. Though many a hill and valley lay between me and my mountain home, yet there was left a link which still bound me to that home, that was the pen and paper. 'Tis very cheery to the weary soldier after a long march to get a letter from the loved ones far away; also for him to sit down and tell them the story of his trials, his feats of daring, and the tale of the victory he helped to win.

So things went on smoothly in camp until the evening of the 23<sup>rd</sup>; when we were disturbed in our repose by one of "war's alarms."

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**Aug 23<sup>rd</sup> 1861**

**Chaptr XII**

**March to and from Fairfax Court House**

Well on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, nothing broke in "to mar the beauty," of the camp scenes, until about 4 ½ o'clock in the evening. Then our attention was called to some troopers riding up at a full speed to Head Quarters and in a few minutes and Aid was seen galloping around to the different regiments. Then came the old drummers with the long roll, alarm the signals, and "turn out the regiment!" This was more than we looked for, as we were not dreaming of the Yankees. Then there was such a bustle and hubbub in camp packing up blankets, knapsacks, etc... as is not often to be seen. Soon we were all equipped, with one blanket on our backs and nothing to eat in our haversacks. The orders were to take one blanket, leave our tents standing, and our other baggage in them. And there were enough of those who were halfway

sick in camp to attend to these and to cook up what flour and meat we had left in our provisions boxes. And it was wonderful

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**Aug 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1861**

to see the number who are want to report on the sick list when there is a prospect of advancing towards the enemy. By 5 o'clock the brigade was in motion, and the head of the column turned down the road towards Fairfax Court House, where many of our troops were stationed. Col. Allen's regiment was in the advance and ours followed next in line of march. As yet we knew not of our destination, only we were under the impression that the enemy were advancing.

As have said, we were encamped in a miserably poor country, but when we drew nearer to Fairfax Court House, the country assumed a new aspect. The residences were more numerous, the fields were greener, the forests of a more stately appearance, and it actually seemed that we were getting into a more civilized and fertile region. Besides as the road was in fine order, the marching was not at all oppressive. We arrived at the Court House about sunset or rather in sight of it about that time

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**Aug 23<sup>rd</sup> 1861**

we passed by and turning a little to the left, we marched about a half of a mile further on and halted. There we doubtless expected to remain during the night and early on the next morning march to meet the foe. We were hungry, thirsty, damp with perspiration, and very much fatigued as we had marched the whole 6½ miles without resting a minute. But See... What means that? A trooper gallops along the line. Are the enemy coming upon us? No, it was orders for us to return to our quarters in our old camp. For the whole affair was on account of this: early on that morning, a party of Col. Stuart's cavalry went out on a scouting expedition. They got down towards the enemy below where Col. Radford's cavalry pickets were stationed, and as they came back towards our lines, Radford's men fired upon them and sent word back that the enemy were advancing, etc... So on the strength of this

little mistake, ours as well as many other brigades were ordered down to meet the Yankees. Jackson's brigade, on account of its gallant conduct in the battle

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at Manassas, had acquired the title of "Stonewall Brigade," and was much prized for its bravery, etc...So this brigade must always be sent for and put in the front whenever the enemy showed any signs of advancing; and also whenever we had to fall back, to take a position, our regiment must bring up the rear. So we had to march six miles to meet the advance guard of the enemy, when in fact the enemy had not moved from his own den, and although there were many other brigades encamped much nearer.

The words "About Face," rang along our lines, and sounded sweeter than ever in our ears. We turned in short order and commenced our march back to our camp near Centreville. The whole country around the Court House seemed covered with encampments and the face of the country seemed to be lightened up with the campfires of a score of encampments. Our backward march was made in quick time. As the moon was shining brightly and we were urged on by the hopes of getting a good supper and a good rest in

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our tents which we had left standing. So eager were we to get back and go to rest, that 'twas with much difficulty our Col. could keep the boys in ranks and prevent them from passing on by the head of the regiment. 'Twas wonderful to see how the boys' spirits rose when we found out that we were sold, that there was no enemy coming, and that we were going to return to our comfortable quarters. So without halting once, we got back to camp about 11 ½ o'clock in the night. The people down there were whole soul secessionists, and cheered us on with many a shout of welcome.

On getting back, much to our regret, we found our tents had all been struck and rolled up. Yet we soon pitched ours again, got a piece of bread to eat, and rolled in

to sleep on our hard couches. Some of our boys had to go on guard, after all that long quick march; and they blessed the Yankees, false alarms, etc...I tell you we slept soundly that night, and “dreamed away until the sun did rise” next morning.

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**Aug 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> 1861**

### **Chaptr XIII**

#### **Still in Camp. Other False Alarms, Etc...**

On the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup> we all got up to roll call reluctantly and felt somewhat sore about the joints of our limbs. Much to our gratification on that morning, three of our mess got each one a box from home filled with eatables in the extra line, together with several bottles of excellent wine. For the reception of a bottle of grape wine dedicated to my own private use, I owe many thanks to Miss Mary ? W----, a fair flower that blooms amid the hills of Rockbridge. These boxes came just in the right time, for our commissary department began to fall short of provisions and we had fared badly had we not got them. So we fared well that day on home “fixins,” etc... We also made the wine fly too, and in performance of an injunction written upon one of the bottles, we “all drank and were merry.”

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And as we each one drank to the health of his “favorite lass,” we forgot for a time the toils, alarms, and hardships of war. But when the deep and heavy roll of the drum broke in upon our feasting, calling us to drill, etc..., then we again realized the stern fact, that we were far from home in the midst of a dark bloody campaign.

We had barely gotten over the effects of our first trip down to the Court House, when we were very unceremoniously invited to go down once more. For on Sunday evening (25<sup>th</sup>) whilst we were reposing in our tents, enjoying the Sabbath evening’s quiet, behold the drum beat an alarm, the brigade is called out, and once more we are marching down the Fairfax road. We marched about two miles and our orders were countermanded. So we turned back to our camp, unrolled our blankets, got supper, etc... just as if nothing had happened. However, ‘twas quite a nice little Sabbath evening walk, as the road was in good order, shady, etc...

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Well, nothing of any interest happened on the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. But on the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup>, we were roused early, had early breakfast, and were ordered to pack up again, and only had to march down towards Fairfax Court House. So the brigade was soon in motion and on our march. We thought that as the third time is always the charm, that we would have work to do then. Besides, we heard that our pickets had moved forward about a mile the night before, which led us to suppose that we were going to advance upon the enemy. Our pickets were then stationed at Falls Church on the Manassas and Alexandria Road, and about 9 miles from Alexandria; also we had cavalry pickets at Vienna about 6 miles from the river. The span of country within which the Yankees were encamped between our line of pickets and the river, was low and very unhealthy. According to the story of some prisoners of theirs they were dying like hogs in their camps and longed to get out to some of their old camp grounds around Vienna and Falls Church. For around these places the country is beautiful, healthy

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and thickly settled with fine cool springs. So our commanders didn't know but what they would advance upon our advance guards and try to cut them off, before reinforcements could arrive. So on this account they (our Gens.) were on the lookout for any piece of news about their moving, etc...

It commenced raining most beautifully just about the time we started and the roads were very muddy too, so you may imagine we had a tall time of it marching off that morning in the rain. Also, we heard the report of cannon early in the morning; which only made us the more certain that we would that day march down, camp out in the rain that night, and on the morrow reenact the bloody defeat to the foe and our glorious victory of Manassas. The rain seemed to come down that harder as we proceeded on, and dark masses of angry looking clouds were boiling up from the south, threatening to pour down their contents upon our devoted heads. Yet the tide of our troops still pressed.

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on down the road. Having marched about 3 miles, the rain ceased, and wet as we were, the marching was not so unpleasant then. We got to Fairfax Court House about 10 o'clock in the morning and halted in the road just above the village. There we remained about two hours in suspense, not knowing whether we would go forward or back. Whilst we were there, the boys got hungry, and forthwith many of them entered very unceremoniously into an adjoining roasting-ear patch, plucked the fine ears and roasted them on a wagoner's fire and the way we relished them was a joy to any hungry man. Having stayed there for two long hours we heard the very interesting news that was nothing the matter, only the pickets had a little fight the preceding night, which resulted in the running of the Yankees and the advance of ours about a mile. So we had come away down there on another "wild goose chase." We came with the expectation of fighting the Yankees and of

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thrashing them too. So there was a good deal of indisposition to return without giving the enemy a few rounds at least. But at the command "about face" all turned and came on up the road towards our old camp. Had not gotten far on our retreat when it commenced raining again and in good earnest too. Another brigade encamped on the road above our camp also had moved and coming back the road was crowded with troops for miles. By the time we got back to our camp, we were pretty considerably \_\_\_\_\_ both as to our spirits and our bodily feelings too. Yet found our tents still standing and got some eatables, etc... and as 'twas late in the evening, we soon rolled in upon our beds and went to sleep.

The country between our line of pickets and the Potomac is level, and beautiful but by no means healthy in the summer season. It gradually slopes towards the river, presenting a beau-

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-tiful landscape view from the certain elevated points further in the state. From the height of the fortifications at Falls Church, our men could see the glistening spires and domes of Washington City as it lay sleeping in the distance. That city, once the



capital of a great and powerful nation, but now the abode of a base and despotic administration, the Sodom of modern times. I could not but wish that we could only plant some guns of about 9 miles range in our fortifications at (the) Falls Church and then riddle the old city out of existence with all its fiends and minions of despotism. The only barrier that lay in our way of taking it was Arlington Heights, which had full command of it, and also of all the country around. But which was almost impregnable owing to its defenses both natural and the entrenchments thrown up by the Yankees. Our Gens. Know the loss we would sustain in taking this and so as yet hadn't tried it (at all).

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### **Aug 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> 1861**

On the 29<sup>th</sup> it was still raining and behold! we were ordered to cook a day's provisions ahead and be ready to take up a line of march at any moment. With much reluctance we boys went to work and after much mental and physical exertion we turned out a nice cake of bread for each of our mess. But thanks to our brave General (Jackson), we did not have to roll out in the rain and march. For although he got orders for his brigade to go down again, he wisely concluded not. For three times he had marched in vain and again the orders to him were from a Gen. of his own rank and not from Head Quarters. So we remained quite in our camp and so did the Yankees. On the 30<sup>th</sup> we were ordered to prepare ourselves for review on the 31<sup>st</sup> by Gen. Jackson and our Col. too. Also to clean out our tents and cooking quarters well, pull down our tents that the ground under might get well sunned, etc...so we went to work brightened our guns, swept out our

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### **Aug 31<sup>st</sup> 1861**

quarters, blacked our shoes, etc...preparatory to the brigade review. Also the colonels of the brigade were ordered to make off their muster rolls for pay on the 31<sup>st</sup> too. The muster roll is always made off about a month before pay-day.

So the 31<sup>st</sup> was destined to be a day of considerable importance in our camp.

The morning of the 31<sup>st</sup> dawned and a beautiful day it was, compared with the gloomy wet ones we had seen for a time past. The sun shone out brightly, a mild breeze was stirring and the atmosphere was of a mellow cast like 'tis on the dreamy autumnal days. Next came the inspection. The troops were all drawn out, in their best trim too, banners were gaily waving, drums beating, steeds prancing, etc... We passed in review before Gen. Jackson and our Col. too. We marched by in all the "pomp and circumstance of glorious war." Thus passed off the morning and we then returned to our quarters, pulled down our tents for sunning, and then went, each one, to his own amusements.

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**Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup> 1861**

Now commenced a regular routine of camp duties. Reveille at 5 o'clock a.m. 6 ½ Sick call. 7 Breakfast roll call. 8 ½ Battalion drill of 1 ½ hours length. 11 o'clock a.m. Company drill one hour. 1 o'clock p.m. Dinner roll call. 2 p.m. Company drill one hour. 5 p.m. Battalion drill. 6 Dress parade. 9 ½ p.m. Tattoo. 10 p.m. Taps, when all hands are politely asked to go to bed and put out the lights. When not on duty, we boys amused ourselves by lying in our tents talking, telling yarns, reading any book that chanced to get into our hands, etc... The privates had to go on guard about once in two weeks, corporals and sergeants not quite so often. But my book has drawn to a close, so I must end it here leaving our Company in the full enjoyment of the delights of camp life. Our number now is only 51, tho' we left Lex- with \_\_\_\_\_ in our ranks, but of that once large number, now 10 are at home sick or wounded and nine sleep beneath the sods of the valley; 2 of whom were stricken down by the hand of disease, and the others, gallant boys, fell on the bloody field of Manassas! Our Capt. \_\_\_\_\_ not long since and we have(CUT)

**End Volume One of A.S. Paxton Diaries.**