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EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF R. A. SPAINHOUR .

Edited by Finley P. Curtis .  
Butler, Tenne

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

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IN THE spring of 1919, Mr. Spainhour, in answer to a special request, loaned me the original copy of a diary which he wrote during the war of 1861-1865, to be used in collaboration with the reminiscences of my father's war life which I was then writing, and which were subsequently published in THE CONFEDERATE VETERAN. With his permission, I made a complete typewritten copy of that diary. Not long ago, I chanced upon my copy among my old papers, records, etc., and later read it thru. I became deeply interested in it. It was so satisfyingly complete, so vivid of camp and battlefield experience, so replete with interesting narratives that I felt I would be neglecting my duty as the son of a Confederate veteran if I did not try to publish it to the reading public. This I now do, with his hearty permission, believing it will add appreciably to the already voluminous history of that great Inter-State Conflict and, perhaps, stir the memories of many other old soldiers who fought in the incomparable armies of the South. It is reproduced herewith almost complete, with the exception of an occasional strictly personal reference here and there. A copy of this manuscript has been submitted to Mr. Spainhour and he has expressed his approval.

In a recent letter from Mr. Spainhour, he tells me that he is 85 years old. He is very deaf, but is able to manage the school book department in his son's store, in North Wilkesboro, N. C., where he has passed a long, useful life. His family and my father's family were friends and neighbors for over half a century. He and his two brothers (John and James) and my father and his two brothers (Judson and Larkin),

were soldiers together in Company B, First North Carolina Regiment of Infantry, (State Troops.) He lost his two brothers in the war and my father lost one of his. Company B was organized by James B. Gordon, who was then a prominent merchant in Wilksboro, in May, 1861.

The first entry in the diary was written while the regiment was in the training camp at Warrenton, N. C. — F. P. C.

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1861 ON THE 19th day of June, brother James received his appointment as chaplain of the regiment, which is the first of the <sup>State</sup> ~~State~~ Troops to be organized. June 19  
The ladies and gentlemen of Warrenton paid us marked attention. Several ministers came and preached for us. . . . On the 4th of July, we marched into Warrenton and fired a salute, and then received an excellent dinner from the citizens, after which we listened to many stirring speeches by Col. M. S. Stokes and other officers. During our stay at Warrenton, J. B. Gordon was promoted to major of the First North Carolina Regiment of Cavalry and H. A. Brown to captain of our company. . . . Rev. J. B. Soloman and Finch of the Baptist Church preached to us often. I think a great deal of the people of Warrenton.

July 27 We left Warrenton and landed in Petersburg late at night. The trip has been quite pleasant. Next morning we moved on to Richmond and pitched our tents in the fair-grounds. . . . I spent a few days sight-seeing. The Capitol square is a beautiful place. In a few days, we moved from the fair-grounds to Rockets, out on the east side of the city.

Aug. 14 We have orders to move to Aquia Creek, on the Potomac. Next day we moved to Brooks Station, four miles above Aquia Creek. \* \* \* I learned how persons of honor are buried in the army. When the military procession reaches the grave, a salute is fired, and the ceremony is attended with music, all of which is very solemn. We are now under command of Stokes as colonel and Holmes as Brigadier-General. Our company is now being drilled in the manual of heavy artillery.

(NOTE: Here is a period in the record, from Oct. 11, 1861 to Jan. 31, 1862, devoted to an account of the sickness, suffering and death of James Spainhour, about whom he says: "He bore it all with Christian meekness, and I have a strong hope that he is now with The Father in the Region of Glory. . . . How can I give up one who was so dear and good to me, who was ever ready with good counsel and amid trials ever ready to cheer the drooping heart? I acknowledge him as my literary guide and religious director. but why mourn for him"? he asks. "He is now beyond the reach of sorrow and disappointment." There is also an account of his burial, of the writer's subsequent sickness, of his rest at home on furlough, of the blessedness of friendship, etc. ---FPC.)

1862  
Jan.-April I started back to the regiment; landed at camp three days later and found the health of the company much better. February has brought nothing new. We have been working some on our cabins for winterquarters and gathering wood. March brought considerable excitement, on account of the evacuation of Ivinport. Troops from that point are in our camps tonight. The latter part of March, we were ordered to Goldsboro, N. C., which was joyful news to us. We landed there on the 28th, after a very cold and unpleasant ride, but in a few days moved down near Wilmington. My brother John and I. L. Memphill joined the company during April. . .

May 26 Today we were ordered back to Virginia. Stopped at Petersburg and camped, but had not been there long when we were ordered back to North Carolina. We just about to get on the train, when that order was countermanded.

June 1 Before day the long roll told a doleful tale: we were summoned to an engagement. We moved to Richmond and then marched out on the Williamsburg road, where the battle of Seven Pines had just been fought. The day was exceedingly hot and many of the boys came near fainting. We met many wounded, and I was particularly struck with the spectacle of a pile of arms and legs lying beside the road.

June 14 We have been doing picket and other duty since we came here.

June 15 This morning we were ordered on picket duty, and at 12 o'clock were ordered to advance. We moved forward about two miles and met the Yankees.

After skirmishing sometime with the enemy and being nearly surrounded by them, we fell back, having lost the rest of our command. We got lost in the swamp and did not get out until 9 o'clock that night. We lost some men taken prisoners today.

June 25 For several days we have been doing picket duty and other camp duty.

June 26 before daylight this morning we were moving in the direction of the Mechanicsville Pike, where we layed in line of battle till late that evening, when we were ordered forward and crossed the Chicahominy under fire of the enemy's artillery. We moved forward under a heavy fire for near a mile, where we engaged them for sometime at a desperate rate. We lost our colonel, major, and several other officers and about half the regiment. The scene was one I cannot describe, the missiles of death snatching men from all around me. Why should I be preserved? My good old friend J. C. Webb was killed suddenly. Poor fellow! He little thought of death so soon! This morning's sun rose on many a blooming young life, who are now lying on this bloody battlefield cold and lifeless bodies.

June 27 This morning the Yankees are gone from our front. We followed, and after marching over a large scope of country occupied by the enemy for twelve miles, encountered them again. The fight was long and desperate; the musketry fire was the heaviest I have ever heard. It lasted till after dark. We held the field. Many were killed on both sides. Few fields are so bloody as that of Cold Harbor. We followed the Yankees till Tuesday, the 1st of July, when we again overtook them at Malvern Hill, where another desperate engagement took place. I, being in the commissary department, was ordered to remain out and take charge of some stores. We lost some good men from our company: Harley, Hendren, Johnson and several others killed, besides many wounded. Brother John was not hurt. We then moved back near Richmond, where we remained encamped for sometime. We had a great deal of sickness. Brother John was taken sick with brain fever and lived but a few days. He bore his sickness and suffering well. He suffered a great deal, and was not in his senses for a day or two before he died. He was burried below the city, near the York River Railroad, near the three mile post. He is the last of the two brothers who have been in the army with me. His death ocured on

the 9th day of August.

(NOTE: Here follows a poem of 36 lines written about the sad deaths of his two brothers, James and John, expressing a very beautiful Christian faith. The poem is signed "Rufus". I reproduce the last verse only:

"Lo! James and John know war no more;  
in Heaven there is no war, we know,  
but Joy and Bliss and Perfect Love,  
With the Prince of Peace in Heaven above."

—WPC.)

August to Sept. 16      Soon, after the death of my brother John, we moved by train to Orange

Court House, where we waited several days for our wagon-trains. We then moved on by way of Culpepper Court house, Warrenton, etc. We passed over the battlefield two days after the second battle at that place. I have never witnessed such a sight in my life; the dead Yankees were thicker than I ever saw before. From this point we moved to Leesburg, where we crossed the Potomac River. If one unaccustomed to seeing an army march had seen us crossing that river by moonlight, he would have been filled with laughter, tho we were not inclined to laugh, except when some of us should get our center of gravity beyond our base and fall into the water. About 11 o'clock at night, we landed on the Maryland shore without resistance. The first thing that attracted my attention was some boats which had been captured on the Washington and Ohio Canal.

We moved to Frederick Town, where we camped several days; then on to Boonesboro, and to Hagerstown, and encamped there a few days. On the 14 of September, our troops (D. H. Hill's division) -- the remainder of the army having gone to Harper's Ferry, which they captured -- moved back to the Gap in the South Mountains to occupy it and thus keep the Yankees from moving suddenly upon us. On the same day (Sunday) the Yankees under McClellan attacked our troops and a desperate fight ensued, which lasted till night, when we fell back to Sharpsburg, near the river. I remained up near Hagerstown until near midday Monday in charge of four stores, when I was compelled to make my way as best I could to the army at Sharpsburg. I found my regiment there in line of battle and the Yankees moving down on the other side of a small stream.

Heavy cannonading commenced, which lasted till dark.

Sept. 16 Cannonading was kept up all day. We cooked for our command on rocks and barbecued beef. The firing tonight is frequent and heavy.

Sept. 17 The engagement commenced quite early, and by 10 o'clock many, very many had fallen to rise no more. The fight continued till late and night found the enemy occupying the same ground they had occupied that morning, the several times both armies had driven each other back and forth over the same ground. The battle was perhaps the bloodiest that has yet occurred on this continent. We lost many good men from our company and both the officers who were present. First Lieut. T. S. Bouschelle was badly wounded in the jaw and Third Lieut. J. M. Peden in the thigh. The number of good men that fell there cannot here be enumerated.

Sept. 18 to Dec. 12 A calm generally follows a storm, so today we have a calm. An armistice was agreed upon in order to bury the dead. The day was spent removing and burying the dead, but soon after night we commenced to retreat and were all night moving back across the river. We crossed at Shepherdstown. I did not cross till next morning.

On the 20th, while the Yankees were following up our forces, we turned on them and destroyed a great many while they were crossing the river. We then moved to Martinsburg, where we remained a few days; from there we removed to Bunkerhill, where we rested for about two weeks. Then we went to Charlestown and tore up the railroad near there. Then on to Berryville, crossing the Shenandoah at Berry's Ford and the Blue Ridge at Paris, to Upperville, where the Yankees followed, and then back to Front Royal, where we remained several days in line of battle. But they did not come on, so we moved up to Staunton and camped there about a week.

We then took up our duds and moved on up the Valley as far as New Market, where we struck the Gordonsville Pike and landed safely at Gordonsville after some very hard marching. The men suffered much for want of clothing, many being without shoes. We got only one or two day's rest till we reached Port Royal, below Fredericksburg. About the 11th of December we reached Fredericksburg.

December Our regiment marched nearly all night, and on the morning of the 13th went into line of battle, and were exposed to shell-fire all day. Many of our men were wounded. Lieut. Vanoy had one eye shot out. This was a bright day for the South; we won a great victory, tho our joy was mingled with sadness. We mourned the loss of many officers and men. General Cobb, of Georgia, fell while gallantly leading his men to victory. Fredericksburg was almost demolished by fire and shell. Soon after the battle we went into camp near the city. We served on picket duty till the close of the year.

1863  
January Another year has passed and no peace yet. The monster War seems to be still active in his preparations to destroy more lives, before he allows Peace to take his place. He seems to be strengthening every nerve and doing all he can to promote his cause, but I hope he will be disappointed and that Sweet Peace will reign in his stead. On New Year's morning our regiment was relieved of picket duty and moved camp a half mile. The army commenced fortifying Fredericksburg, which was well done. During this time a good number of our force was sent to North Carolina. About the 24th we were transferred to Talliaferro's brigade, of Jackson's division. We then moved down the river several miles.

February This has been a month of perfect quietitude, with the exception of many sham snowball battles, which were hard-fought and interesting. We have had some Revival interest. Our chaplain is Rev. W. R. Gaultney, who is a very fine little man. I am tenting with him this winter. We are camped near what is called "Skinner's Neck". . . The month closed quite cold and wet.

March This has been another month of rain, snow and mud. On the 3rd day of last month, Lee whipped the Yankees at Fredericksburg, on the Upper Rappahannock. The health of the troops is good, and religious interest is high.

April A heavy snow fell on the 5th. Religious interest still increases. On the 18th, Brother William R. Spainhour came to join our regiment. Father came out with him, but went back soon. On the 23rd our regiment went to Port Royal, but the Yankees were gone when we arrived. Our troops moved up to Fredericksburg on the 29th

as the Yankees were crossing. The troops remained in line of battle all next day.

May Today our troops moved up the river in the direction of Chancellorsville.

Jackson's army moved to the left of the United States Ford and by a flank movement struck the enemy in the rear, driving them many miles by dark and capturing many prisoners. On the next day a general engagement occurred, which was quite bloody. Many men in our company were killed on the field; viz: F. J. Eller, John and Samuel Pennell, William Pilkington and several others, besides Clark, Whittington and others who were mortally wounded. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ John Estes and George Johnston each lost an arm, and brother William R. Spainhour was wounded severely in wrist and arm, which has incapacitated him for life. During this engagement Gen. Jackson was fired upon by his own men and died of his wound later. The Yankees were drawn back across the river.

(NOTE: Here appears a poem of thirty-six lines describing the battle of Chancellorsville, which had just been fought, signed "Rufus". I reproduce herewith the first, fourth and sixth verses:

"Spring is now again on hand,  
With sorrow in our lovely land;  
It brought a scene of human strife  
And Death to many a blooming life!"

\* \* \*

"The noted Hero of our land  
Fell there among our noble band.  
He led his men to Victory's door,  
But fell before he could do more."

\* \* \*

"There Hookey with his legions bold  
Was routed from his strongest hold,  
By Lee and his brave veterans true,  
Who told by deeds what they could do!"

—FPC)

After the battle, things became quiet, and after remaining near the United States Ford for nearly a week, we moved to Hamilton's Crossing, where we spend the remainder of the month.



June Early in the month we moved off in the direction of the Valley of Virginia. After several days' hard marching Ewell's Corps landed near Winchester and in front of Milroy's forces there. He was surrounded and nearly all his army captured. Milroy escaped with a few men. We got nearly everything he had. Captain John Miller of our company was killed. We immediately moved forward, entering the State of Maryland at Shepherdstown and camped one night on the Sharpsburg battlefield. We passed thru Hagerstown and entered Pennsylvania, moving thru New Castle, Mercersburg, McConnellsburg, Chambersburg, and near the town of Charlestown.

July On the 1st, 2nd and 3rd of the month our troops engaged the enemy at Gettysburg. The Yankees were fortified on a mountain in the rear of the town, and after many attempts to drive them out, our troops were compelled to desist, though not until the hardest fighting I have ever heard tell of had taken place. The third day of the battle was one continuous roar of cannon and musket. I suppose that more than two hundred pieces of artillery were engaged in the duel at the same time and the slaughter was terrible on both sides. We remained on the field on the fourth day, and that night commenced a retreat, but the mud was so deep that we made very little progress. At length we landed at Williamsport, but found the river too swollen to cross. There we remained in line of battle for several days, until pontoons could be constructed. We then crossed the river, moved on up the Valley and crossed the Blue Ridge without molestation.

August We moved near Orange Courthouse, where we spent several weeks in camp, resting, recruiting, etc. Brother William came back to the regiment, but was not fit for service.

September We remained in camp at Orange Courthouse until Sept. 14. Brother William received his discharge from the service and started home. About that time we moved camp and after several days' hard marching to different points, went into camp again about 12 miles below Orange Court House. There is evidence of deep religious interest in the regiment.

October This month has been noted for its hard marches. On the 8th we left

camp and marched by way of Madison Court House to Culpepper, but failing to cut off the Yankees there, we marched forward again to Warrenton, where we encountered them. We moved around to their rear and aimed to cut them off there. But some misunderstanding on the part of an officer caused a mistake. We then retired to the Rappahannock and stationed ourselves near Brandy Station.

November We stayed but a short time at Brandy Station, when the Yankees made some demonstration at or near the Rappahannock Bridge. Hayes's and Hoke's brigades were sent over the river to meet them, but the enemy came upon them in such overpowering force that the two brigades were nearly destroyed. Some were killed, some were drowned and many were captured. The army then moved south of the Rapidan River, where we remained quietly till near the close of the month, when we were moved to Germania Ford to meet the Yankees crossing there. On the 27th we engaged them in battle. Lee's cavalry attacked them and drove them back across the river.

December The month commenced cold, and our men were in a bad way to endure it, being unprotected in line of battle; but after a few days the Yankees retired to the north side of the river and we to our former camps, where we had nothing to disturb our quietitude during the remainder of the month.

A bloody year had just closed; scenes, the bloodiest our country had ever witnessed, had transpired during the year. It has furnished the historian with a large store of material for future history.

1864 Nothing of great interest has transpired during this month. We had plenty  
January of snow and cold weather, which made our picket duty very hard.

February Early in the month our brigade, now under Brig.-Gen. Geo. H. Stuart, went on picket duty, but just as we were about to relieve the troops then on picket, the Yankees crossed the river and attacked us. Considerable skirmishing was required before we could drive them back.

We have complete<sup>d</sup> a churchhouse for worship, also a school for the instruction of those who cannot read and write, and we are having some interesting meetings.

March In the first part of this month a cavalry force of Yankees crossed the river and moved in the direction of Richmond. They were near the city when they were attacked by our troops and driven back with some loss. Their object was to take the city, but it failed.

On the 22nd a deep snow fell and we had a sham snowball battle, the 1st and 3rd North Carolina Regiments against the 10th, 23rd and 37th Virginia Regiments. It was as stubbornly contested as any fight. Such sham battles were in progress in nearly all the Confederate winter camps. . . . (NOTE: Here follows an interesting personal account of a furlough home, during which the author visited his family, relatives and friends, and rested from the hardships of camp and battlefield. He returned to the regiment about April 15th. — FPG)

May 4 Our troops moved from our former picket lines to Locust Grove.

May 5 About 12 o'clock our troops (Ewell's corps) engaged the Yankees near the turnpike above the old Wilderness Tavern. We repulsed them with heavy loss in prisoners and took two pieces of artillery. We also lost considerably. Raw, Jennings and Hackett and several others in the <sup>company</sup> were wounded.

May 6 There was heavy fighting all along the line today. Our troops fought behind breastworks and repulsed the enemy with heavy losses. Our losses were not very great, the the slaughter among the Yankees was terrible. We lost General Longstreet wounded and Brig.-Genl's. Jones and Jenkins both killed. Our victory was complete.

May 7 We remained in line of battle nearly all day, but there was little fighting. Tonight the enemy are moving off to our right, extending their lines in the direction of Fredericksburg.

Sunday We moved about twenty miles off in the direction of Fredericksburg, with

May 8 our right wing resting near Spottsylvania Court house and our front facing Chancellorsville. During the night we fortified our position. This has been a very hot and dusty day, and the whole wilderness was on fire, so the fire, dust, smoke and the intense heat of the sun, all added to a very hard day's marching, served to

to make our condition almost unendurable. Many gave completely out, but most of them came up during the night.

May 9 We strengthened our breastworks today; there was very little fighting.

May 10 Our lines were assaulted at many different points, but the attackers failed to accomplish much, save getting their men killed. They did drive Dole's Georgia brigade back, but our brigade was sent to their relief and we soon repulsed them and reestablished the line. In this relief sally Lieut. Larkin Junius Curtis was instantly killed, while leading the company. He was the only officer left in the company. He was a kind and indulgent officer, always at his post of duty, dilligent and brave in battle. He was a pious Christian. Dying on the field of battle in the bloom of manhood, he lived to witness few of the sorrows of life.

(NOTE: Here Mr. Spainhour is speaking of my father's brother. --FPC.)

May 11 Both lines have remained quiet today. I have been visiting some of the troops. They boys seem to be quite lively, in spite of everything.

Fate Hemphill is aslively and full of mischief as ever. There was little fighting.

May 12 Day had scarcely dawned upon us, when the Yankess threw a heavy force against the second brigade, which, after desperate fighting, was compelled to give way. The Yankæes rushed upon our rear and at the same time put a terrible pressure on our front. Nearly all our men were captured. My brother-in-law was killed instantly, struck by a ball in the head. He could have been honorably freed from battle by the doctors, but he would not. Colonel H. A. Brown was again wounded badly, this time in three places. Sergeant D. M. Carlton attempted to make his escape from the enemy, but was mortally wounded and died on the 14th. He was a brave, noble-hearted, intelligent man and officer. Few nobler men have fallen than the three who fell in my company on that day. General Daniels died of a wound received in the conflict. The fighting was most terrific, but our troops finally drove the Yankæes back with heavy losses.

Sunday  
May 15 The remnants of the First and Second North Carolina Regiments were consolidated and placed in command of Brig.-Gen. Ramseur. Three days

later the enemy attempted to charge our lines, but he was repulsed by our skirmish lines in front and artillery fire from the rear. On the next day Gen. Ewell took his corps on a reconnaissance to the left and ran upon the Yankees. A sharp fight ensued, in which we lost considerably and captured three pieces of artillery. The troops and trains are moving off down toward Fredericksburg.

May 23 We left Spottsylvania Court house on Saturday and on Sunday landed  
to May 31 at Manover Junction, where we camped. . . . Here we remained till about the first of June, with very little fighting.

June 1 We moved down to a point about nine miles from Richmond, with our left resting near the Central Railroad and our right near Gaines' Mills. On the 3rd the enemy assualted our works at various points, but we repulsed <sup>them</sup> all along the line with severe losses.

June 6 My brother <sup>(William)</sup> has been sent back to my company, as the regiment has been joined to the 2nd North Carolina. The Yankees have disappeared from our front and are moving away to the right. We are now near the Mechanicsville Pike.

June 7 Today General Thurston came down and took command of our two broken regiments, and ordered that the company sergent of his regiment and myself should draw lots as to who should act as Commissary Sergent for the two consolidated regiments. The lot fell to me.

June 12 Our corps is not now in the works. We were ordered off very early this morning from our camp and marched in a north easterly direction by the Three Chop Road. I formed the acquaintance of the DuVall family today.

June 17-22 Today we landed at Charlottesville, having passed thru a country remarkable for its senic beauty and pretty women. It was well watered and ideal for grazing and farming. At Charlottesville I met again with Dr. Broadhurst, who treated me with such royal kindness in 1861, having taken splendid care of me in his own house at Fredericksburg while I was very sick. I also visited the university of Virginia, which is a magnificance building, tho there was no school in progress. Thence we marched to North Gander Station, where we boarded

the train and went to Lynchburg the same night. On the next day, June 10, we set out in pursuit of Hunter on the pike leading to Salem. We passed thru New London and Liberty, and camped near the Blue Ridge on the night of the 21, early next morning crossing the mountain still in pursuit of Hunter's troops. His route was literally strewn with dead horses and broken wagons. Our cavalry blocked his way near Salem, but he succeeded in cutting a way thru our horsemen, and escaped across the Alleghany Mountains. In his headlong flight he lost six pieces of artillery.

June 22 Today we rested, cooked rations, washed clothes, etc. This is the garden spot of the world so far as I have seen!

June 23 I heard with regret of the death of my old friend Capt. Jacob Hayes. He belonged to the 59th Tennessee Cavalry, and was killed at Piedmont (?), Virginia. He was a brilliant student, a fine orator, and a gentleman in every sense of the word. . . . We moved today in the direction of Buttott (?), Springs.

June 25 We passed thru Lexington today, where we visited the grave of General Jackson. The flag sent from England was floating over his grave. The Country in this section is particularly wonderful. I visited the ruins of the Military Institute at this place, which was destroyed by the Yankees.

June 27 We landed at Staunton today and camped there till Tuesday, when we began moving off down the Valley in the direction of the Potomac. We moved down the road leading by Cross Keys. There were many interesting scenes for us as we marched down the beautiful Valley. The fields were loaded with luxuriant crops of wheat, which were owned by a people marked for their liberality. We passed thru many nice little towns, the principal ones of which were Mt. Jackson, Strausburg and Winchester.

July On the fourth of July, we landed at Harpers Ferry, drove the Yankees out and took their fortifications. Early then left them and moved his principal forces across the Potomac at Shepherdstown. He made as if to descend upon the rear of the enemy at Harpers Ferry, then moved swiftly in the direction of Frederick-

town, in Maryland, where on Saturday, July 9, our troops under General Gordon had a sharp encounter with a portion of Lew Wallace's corps and whipped them soundly. They retreated in bad order on the Baltimore Road, and we marched rapidly all day toward Washington. That night we camped within about twenty miles of the Capital City. Next day we passed thru Rockville and reached the outer breastworks about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Immediately we commenced skirmishing with the enemy on the outskirts of the city.

July The troops remained in line of battle near the breastworks surrounding the city and skirmished with the enemy nearly all day. About dark the fighting and firing was exceedingly heavy, and soon after dark General Early began withdrawing the army, without having made an attempt to take the city. We marched nearly all night on the retreat, moving backward over the Rollville Ferry Road, and crossed the Potomac within about seven miles of Leesburg. On the 15th we rested at the Big Spring near Leesburg and on the next day crossed the mountain at Snicker's Gap. Just before we crossed the mountain the Yankee cavalry ran into our train and carried off a few wagons. On the 17th we crossed the Shenandoah at Snicker's Ferry and made our camp below a short distance. About 3 o'clock on the afternoon of the 18th our forces encountered the Yankees crossing the river at Snicker's Ferry and a hot fight occurred between our division and the Yankee troops. We lost two colonels from our brigade -- Col. Stallings of the Second and Col. Wood of the Fourth North Carolina Regiments. On the 19th I received orders to act as brigade commissary sergeant. On the 20th we moved to Newton. Ramseur's division was badly cut up today, having suffered a surprise attack of the Yankees. Then we moved from Newton down to Fisher Hill, near Strausburg, where we remained till the 24th. We broke camp, met the Yankees at Kernstown, routed them and drove them helter-skelter beyond Bunker's Hill, causing them to burn about 75 of their wagons to accelerate their flight. We then moved to Martinsburg and encamped.

August On August 1st we crossed over to Williamsport and secured the stores there. We returned to Bunker's Hill and made camp, where we remained a few days.

Retracing our steps, we marched back to Williamsport and six miles beyond on the Boonesboro Road, stayed there one night, and recrossed the river next day and returned to Bunker Hill. The Yankees retreated before us constantly, burning wheat, barns, houses and other property. Our troops moved out toward Wythfield, where they engaged the enemy in skirmish fighting nearly all day, driving him toward Harper's Ferry. Retiring to Martinsburg, we went into camp.

September Since the 30th ultimo nothing has happened of interest. We moved to Berryville to reenforce Anderson, but there was no fighting. . . . A few days ago I received a letter from my little sister Mary saying she had become a Christian and united with the Baptist Church. I hope she is now prepared to realize Eternity when called for. What a blessing it is to be prepared to meet God in early youth! O that I had spent my early days in His service! Mary is only about 13 years old, but she is a bright, intelligent girl and has womanly ways even now.

This morning we were ordered to Winchester, and soon after our arrival there our division engaged the Yankees hotly. Early in the day brave Generals Rhodes and Goodwin were killed. The battle raged furiously. We fought our battle with a fair measure of success until late in the afternoon, when the Yankee cavalry charged our flanks, broke our lines, and created a complete stampede. The utmost confusion prevailed among our troops, and every man seemed to be using his legs to the best personal advantage! Those of us who had fortunately escaped, fell back to Fisher's Hill near Strausburg, where we had formerly thrown up breastworks. Here we prepared to make a last stand.

The Yankees followed us. On the evening of the 22, they began making demonstrations in our front. Again our flanks protected by our cavalry were charged and turned. Soon the enemy in overpowering force was upon our rear, and another utter stampede similar to the one created on the 19th ensued. But with complete victory in their hands, the enemy passed to plunder our camps. We managed to escape again, with considerable loss, of course, but if the enemy had pushed home their chance they could doubtless have utterly ruined us. Altho we had been seriously damaged



in two successive encounters, the Old Army of the Valley rallied and prepared to face new battlegrounds.

On Sept. 24th we left our line of battle at Mount Jackson and retreated thru New Market in the direction of Harrisburg, but turned off our course and went into Brown's Gap, in the Blue Ridge mountain, near Port Republic. Six days later, we recrossed the river above Port Republic and pitched camp near Wier's Cave. That night large crowds of our division went into the Cave sightseeing. We went in to a depth of a half-mile. The Cave contained several fine rooms, beautifully adorned with tags (?) formed by drips from the ceiling. (NOTE: I presume Mr. Spainhour means the stalacites usually to be found suspended from the roofs of caves. --FPC.) "The Washington Hall", "Ball Room", "Ladies' Dressing Room", and "The Drum (?) Room" were particularly fine. We had two good brass bands with us and enjoyed some excellent music. (NOTE: The cave referred to here is <sup>Wier's</sup> "Weyer's Cave, a large stalactitic cavern in Augusta County, Va., opening into a western spur of the Blue Ridge, 11 miles northeast of Staunton. It ranks next in importance to the Mammoth and the Wyandotte Caves and contains several chambers of which the largest is Washington's Hall, 250 feet long and 90 feet high." -- Vol. XXXIII, p. 569, 2nd Ed. New Internat'l Ency. ---FPC.)

. . . The following Monday we moved up the river to Waynesboro and camped near the Richmond-Staunton Railroad.

October We moved down to Mount Sidney and camped there a day or two. About the 7th we landed at New Market, but the Yankees had gone on, having left nothing for the farmers save their land and a few dwellings. Scarcely a barn or mill was left and the amount of wheat and other grain which they had destroyed and carried off was beyond calculation. After remaining there for a few days, we moved on down the valley to Fisher's Mill, where we encamped about the 15th. On the night of the 18th, General Gordon, of Georgia, took three divisions of our troops, crossed the Shenandoah above Strausburg, passed around the end of the Masanut (?) Mountain, and just before daybreak crossed the river again in the rear of the Yankees. At daybreak

he fell suddenly upon their rear and flanks, completely surprising them, and captured many prisoners, arms, etc. and routed them from their Cedar Creek mill camp, well beyond Newton. If General Gordon had not permitted his exultant soldiers to stop and plunder the Yankee camps, as the enemy had done on a similar occasion, he might have pursued the beaten enemy and completely demoralized him. But late in the day, he returned and the fortune of war was reversed. We were caught napping, and in spite of the heroic resistance of our troops, we were driven from the field in great disorder. We retreated in the direction of New Market. During this engagement General Hamseur, a brave little officer, was killed in the thick of the fight. But in my opinion General J. B. Gordon carried away the laurel of the day. We remained in camp at New Market several days resting, etc.

November We are still in the vicinity of New Market. Little of interest has happened during the month. We made another trip to Newton, but had no fighting except with cavalry. The remainder of the month passed quietly. We gathered up some wheat from the country. I formed many acquaintances.

December We remained quietly in camp until the 10th. A deep snow fell, catching us in rather a bad condition, being without quarters. On the morning of the 14th, we moved in the direction of Staunton. The roads were in desperate condition. We reached Staunton on the evening of the next day, got aboard the train and arrived at Richmond next morning at about 8 o'clock, where we remained until evening, then went down to Swift Run, near Petersburg. There we made our camp and built winterquarters. With the exception of an occasional call from camp to picket line, we were inactive during the rest of the month. The month closed with a ray of hope for the future, and I trust the ensuing year will bring good tidings of great joy to the Southland.

1865  
January Tho the new year has just dawned upon us in infancy, yet we are prone to speculate upon its future history, whether its garments are to be stained with blood or whether it is to bring our deliverance. These are problems that cannot be easily solved.

On January 3rd, we received a Christmas dinner from the loyal people of Richmond, Petersburg and the surrounding country, for which we were very grateful.

The remainder of the month passed without much of interest.

February. This month also has passed away without much of interest. Now and then we were called to serve our time on picket duty.

March Early in the month, our brigade was separated from the division and placed on a line to the left of Petersburg. Later we were moved down on the Peninsula, between Appomattox (River) and Swift Run. Again, on about the 31st, we moved to a position at the West end of Halifax Street, near Butterworth bridge.

April 1 Nothing much of interest occurred today, with the exception of a heavy cannonading which commenced today about 10 P. M. and continued thruout the night. It seems that something important is about to occur.

April 2 As day dawned, fighting became general and continued to increase in fury all along the line. Finally our lines were broken in front of Petersburg and soon the lines on the right of the city were broken asunder and taken. About 2 P. M. the Yankees succeeded in reaching the South Side Railroad. This movement struck great fear into the heart of the people. It was not long then before the large tobacco warehouses began to smoke and great tongues of flame licked the sky from different part in the city. The enemy had at last entered the Southern Capitol, and General Lee was now certain the noble old bulwark would have to be evacuated. The following scene was one which I shall never forget, on account of its ineffable sadness. Beautiful and proud ladies weeping, some for their sons, some for their husbands and many, many for the dear homes which they knew must soon fall into the hands of the enemy. Crowds of citizens could be seen hurrying from the place most dear of all to them. To see those lovely ladies weeping as if their hearts would break was too much for even hard-hearted soldiers to endure. It was a calamity which brought tears and sadness to all of us. About dark our government, all of it which could be transported, our stores, arms, ammunition, etc. commenced moving

and proceeded slowly toward the north bank of the Appamattax River.

This day has cost us the life of many a brave, noble and able man. Among the number is Lieut-Gen. A. P. Hill, who was killed to the right or west of Petersburg.

April 3 We continued our retreat all day, moving in the direction of Amelia Court House, which place we reached late on Tuesday evening, tired and worn, having traveled without sleep and very little to eat since we left Petersburg.

April 5 Our trains began moving quite early this morning, and they had not proceeded far when the Yankee cavalry charged in among it and burned about one mile of wagons.

April 6 This morning the Yankees made a desperate effort to capture our trains, but they did not succeed. They were driven back by our artillery fire, but late in the evening they pressed very heavily upon our rear and we had to abandon many wagons. We moved to High Bridge, near Farmville, thru which we passed about midnight, where the Yankees again pressed us very heavily and we were forced to destroy a large portion of our train in order to facilitate our movement. Late in the same evening the enemy cavalry made another desperate attempt to completely destroy our supplies, but the final heroic resistance of our troops once again caused their failure. On the retreat we had to pass thru a very difficult swamp and this detained us considerably. On Saturday we proceeded without molestation and marched within about four miles of Appomattax Court House, where we stopped and got some much-needed rest.

#### THE SURRENDER

April 9 Long before daybreak our troops began moving in the direction of the Courthouse, and then severe fighting commenced. Gordon's corps in front attacked the enemy in front and drove him about a mile beyond the Court House, but on account of the lack of support on our flanks, the heavy columns of the enemy swung around upon our flanks and forced our corps back to the Court House. The

enemy during this manouver was continually moving heavy bodies of troops to our flanks, which, with the pressure of his heavy masses of soldiers upon our rear, rendered ~~the~~ the condition of our entire army exceedingly critical. Aware of our hopeless condition and desiring to escape further bloodshed, General Lee, at about 11 O'clock, on the 9th day of April (1865), surrendered the incomparable Army of Northern Virginia to General U. S. Grant, and thereafter all fighting ceased. It was indeed a trying and unutterably sad time for all of us, unaccustomed to shedding tears as we were, but the very idea of giving up the hope of our Country and our Cause filled us with emotion that must find outlet in tears. It . . . It seemed more than we could bear to have sacrificed so much loyal blood and then to have to surrender all and find ourselves in worse condition than when we set out gaily from home! . . .

We spent the remainder of the day near the place of surrender. The gallant General James B. Gordon delivered to his copps as fine an address as I have ever heard, in which he advise<sup>d</sup> his soldiers to put aside all feelings of hatred and ~~enmity~~ enmity and go back to their homes and help build back the beautiful Southland.

Monday and Tuesday, the 10th and 11th, we spent in and about the camps. The Yankees were ever constantly amongst us and permitted us to do as we pleased.

#### THE WAR IS OVER

April 12- On the morning of the 12th, three days after the surrender of General  
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Lee, we marched in front of the Yankees and stacked our arms, and as soon as we were paroled, we started for home, each man or each company of men taking their respective courses. A part of my company and myself went home by way of Camel Court House and Osler (?) bridge, crossing the Staunton (Mountain?) at Toless (?) Ferry. (NOTE: It has been very difficult in many places thruout the diary of Mr. Spainhour to make out the names of men and places. Some words have been badly written, others have been faded by time. I have therefore placed after them the question mark (?) to denote doubt. —KPC) From Toless Ferry, we proceeded thru

portions of Pittsylvania, Henry and Patrick Counties of Virginia and thence into Surry County, North Carolina, passing near the Pilot mountain and crossing the Yadkin River at Rockford. I stopped near there to see Sexton Jones, an old schoolmate of mine, with whom I chatted for a few hours. Then I proceeded to home of Mrs. Jennings's home eight miles further on toward Jonesville, whose two sons had served honorably thruout the war in my company (B, 1st N. C. State Troops). I enjoyed my visit there very much, Mollie (Mrs. Jennings) having been an old schoolmate of mine. On Saturday I went to Wilksboro, and spent Sunday, the 23rd, at Mr. Hezikiah Curtis's. Next day I went to Lenoir and on the 25th I landed at home and found all well.

The remainder of the month of April, and the months of May and June I spent at home, with the exception of a trip to Wilkesboro to a celebration on May 27th, which was just four years from the day we left there to go to war.

(All)

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Transcribed from the original  
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C/O To MR. R. A. SPAINHOUR