

**Henry Fitzgerald Charles  
Civil War Record  
1862-1865**

[This internet edition transcribed from an edition compiled and Printed by Edwin Fitzgerald Charles and John Elwood Charles at the Middleburg Post, 1969. Some spelling and punctuation errors have been corrected since they appear to originate as typos in the 1969 printing. Words which I have inserted for clarity appear in brackets—John Neitz, 2000]

**FORWARD (1969)**

The Civil War called thousands of men to arms. They came from the South fighting to retain a possession and from the North to fight for human freedom. It was a unique struggle in that many times friends and relatives found themselves in pitched battle against one another.

This narrative is the story of one of these brave men who served three enlistments, during which he took part in seventeen battles and skirmishes. As a soldier he was poorly trained, he had only meager education, but he had keen observation and by daily entries in his diary he has made it possible for the reader to feel some of the humor, horror and sufferings of those who volunteered and were called to put down the rebellion.

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Civil War Record  
1862-1865**

FIRST ENLISTMENT: --13<sup>th</sup> day of September 1862. Discharged September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1862. Company D, 18th Volunteer Militia. Discharged at Harrisburg, Pa.

SECOND ENLISTMENT: --Enlisted 22<sup>nd</sup> day of October 1862. Discharged 31<sup>st</sup> day of July 1863. Company A, 172nd Draftee Militia. Discharged at Harrisburg, Pa.

THIRD ENLISTMENT: --Enlisted 23<sup>rd</sup> day of February 1864. Discharged at Lynchburg, Va. 8<sup>th</sup> day of July 1865 by order of the War Department. Company C, 21<sup>st</sup> Regt. Pennsylvania Cavalry. Transferred to 182 Regt, while in line duty.

## PORT TREVORTON, PENNSYLVANIA

February 20, 1920

### “THIS IS WHAT I REMEMBER OF MY VOLUNTEER MILITIA SERVICE”

We started out to form a Company. We got together some 20 men. I have forgotten the exact number. Then we spliced with a number of young fellows from Selinsgrove. That formed Company D of the 18<sup>th</sup> Regiment then stationed at Harrisburg. Elected A.C. Simpson as Captain, Jerry Bogar as Quartermaster, McClay Coldren as 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant and different others to less important posts. We got to Harrisburg and they marched us up to Camp Curtin. Stood around awhile and then we were told to get into rank. Started to Pennsylvania Depot where we got our first meal, which consisted of a piece of dry bread and cold ham and a tin of good coffee. Then we marched to the Capitol Yard, later into the Capitol Building. We went to the second floor to rest till morning. We did not sleep much as the boys were singing and dancing just as if they were at some great frolic. But it was the boys' time and they preferred dancing to sleep before they returned home. Wonder what it would have been like had they stayed longer.

We surely were a mooly crowd, dressed in style, all in their nearly best. I has a braided cloth coat, satin vest, big black silk neck tie, graded calf boots and the rest were dressed equally as good and some much better. Our clothes were considerably soiled when we came home. We were in such bad array that most of us spent our first Sunday indoors or until we could replenish our wardrobe. We boys were lucky if we had more than one suit and a pair of overalls and a checkered shirt.

Our army equipment consisted of a Harpers Ferry musket with bayonet, haversack made of cloth, and a canteen. We had to carry our ammunition in our haversack. However, the ladies of Selinsgrove presented every man in Co. D with an oilcloth haversack. I brought mine home with me and had it until my father wore it out with his knitting tools used to make fish nets.

Nearly every boy, I'll call them all boys, although there were some men, carried a wreath that his sister, or sweetheart or mother gave him. On our way to Harrisburg going around the turn at Liverpool Station I was riding on the platform, leaning way out and talking to a boy in car 3. There was some cordwood piled along the track and a man pulled me in just in time to miss the woodpile, but it caught my wreath and it too saved my life.

Left Harrisburg by train next morning up Cumberland Valley. When we got to near Green Castle the railroad was blocked with trains. Then they had some trouble with a regiment that did not want to serve. Their colonel disembarked them and had them fall in formation to cross the state line. They said that they had only enlisted for state duty. Then he gave the command—every damn coward step in front, then I will go with the rest. There was not a man had the courage to step out, so he gave the command to return

to the cars. He was a Dutch colonel and with this example there was no trouble with the other regiments.

The farmers were very liberal with their provisions. Some came with cloth baskets of bread, pies, cakes, apple butter, and anything they could provide. They did not come to sell but to give the food to us. But there were three regiments of us and they could not give enough food. The army had made no provisions for us. From here on we went to Hagerstown, Maryland. They took us close to the front and formed a line of battle. We stayed here for a while, then they had us fall back to a small hill or heights where we stayed till evening. Soon we got orders to fall back to Green Castle. It was eleven miles before we got there. We were so tired we thought we were going to the end of the earth, as it was our first march in column with baggage we had brought from home. We had drawn some eats before we left there.

There was another amusing happening while we lay at the heights. There was a farmhouse there and we lounged around for several hours. There was a cellar under the house and there was a sloping cellar door like we have around Snyder County. Some of the boys were lounging on the cellar door. Eventually there was so many on that it broke down. About the time it broke there was a shell came pretty close and exploded. The boys fell in the cellar and they found the farmer had stored his farming implements for safekeeping. Among the implements some prominent men of the locality were hiding so as not to have to go in the army.

Before we left here we got some grub and taters issued to us. We had no teams to haul, so they detached some men to go out among the farmers to haul our stuff. They all refused at first and said they did not have time to go. But the boys had been instructed to bring teams with driver or no driver. So when the boys began to harness they concluded they would help and go along so they could bring their teams back, and so they did. They each got a slip from the quartermaster. I suppose they got they pay they wanted for their teams.

We came to camp in Green Castle in the wee hours of the morning, went in camp in a nice woods about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from town. Had the best of water but the government eats did not suit us. Would have been glad many times after if we just had half as much or half as good. You see, we thought we aught to have pie at least once a day and I only had one pie while I was out there, and the way I got that was this way:

Mr. George Morten was Captain of Company D and while they laid there he would go into town to the bakery and get the baker to bake pies for his company and he would pay for them from his own pocket. So several of us who were strolling around met him with his detail and his pies. He stopped and handed each of us a pie. He knew us, as some of us had been some of his employees. He was the superintendent of the Trevorton Coal and Railroad Company.

We lay there until we were ordered back to Harrisburg and discharged. I at least thought I had learned all about soldiery and had enough.

Our officers were all intelligent businessmen but lacked military training. I doubt there was another regiment in the service that had as intelligent officers all through as the volunteer militia.

We had one boy and two men in our squad that took French leave when they heard the cannons roar at Sharpsburg. We did not know what had become of them till we got home. They were there all right. They said one of them was in such a hurry to get away from the cannon and get home that he did not stop to attend to the duties of nature and so when he returned home he had to have a new seat put in his pants. These two men both got in the army again. One was drafted and failed to report. The Provost Marshal got after and caught him. They brought him to the hotel here at Port [Trevorton]. They got to drinking and the guard helped to get him loaded. At least he thought he did as he staggered around and they carried him upstairs to bed. The guard returned downstairs and took part in a dance going on at the hotel. After a while he went upstairs to find the bird had flown down over the porch roof and disappeared. But it finally got so bad for him that he enlisted in the 184<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Regiment and the report is he did a lot of good and was wounded. The other fellow enlisted in the 208<sup>th</sup> Regiment and the report is he was no good and played sick and in one engagement he got a fainting fit and it took two good men to carry him off the field. After he came home he used to brag how he fooled them. The news got around and he could not get any work, not even as a laborer.

### **HERE STARTS MY EXPERIENCE IN COMPANY A, 172<sup>nd</sup> REGIMENT**

Because I was not old enough, I failed to be drafted. The draft was intended from 21 to 45. My father was drafted and he wanted to go but I said I would take his place. He did not want me to; neither did my mother. But I said I would go anyway. At last they consented and I went.

Several days after the draft we had to report to Middleburg. They marched us around in a field. Then those that were a little smarter than the rest of us began organization and appointed the officers. But we had so many men that failed to report and so there were too many officers and some of them had to come down. Then some of us went and got dinner. The supposed officers arranged all the subs affairs and then we left for home, to take the train next day for Harrisburg.

When we got there we were given a tent, we had quite a time until we had same set up. Then we got some rations, but all we got to cook that day was coffee, there were lots of grumbles. Several days afterwards we got our uniforms and blankets. Each had brought a blanket from home. Companies had been assigned by this time. M.L. Heintzelman was elected captain of our company, which took in men mostly from Chapman Township (at that time Union Township was part of Chapman Township).

There were a few from Dauphin County. I will confine myself and experiences to Snyder County men and mostly to those from Chapman Township.

Next we were mustered in United Service, which included obeying the Laws of the U.S. and Presidential Proclamation. When the mustering officer got to that part of the service one man pulled down his hand and said "Nay ich will far domld net" (Damn it, I will not). He was opposed to the Emancipation Proclamation. The mustering officer didn't pay any attention and I don't suppose he knew what he said in Dutch. This man said the same thing when he was issued his uniform and he swore he would not wear it; neither did he. He left that night and was caught afterwards by the Provost Guard. He was taken before an examining board at Harrisburg and was exempt. He only had one eye. It was a hard thing for a sick man or an invalid to get help from the examining board. We had 5 men in our company that ought to have been sent home. One was discharged for disability after we got to Virginia. The rest served their time. Each company was to have so many men and if they sent any home we would have to consolidate with some other company and then the officers would have to serve in the ranks. There were many men who never reported and many deserted or took French leave. Some were caught and imprisoned and others were even in jail when we got back home. These fellows had some kind of organization to help each other and it was called The Knights of the Golden Circle. They had a badge of a cobra head and some even carried snake heads. They seemed to have few members, as most were ashamed to wear the badge. There were thousands deserted in the first draft. We all went to Harrisburg in our citizen clothes. If a man wanted to leave, all he had to do was to put on his uniform over his civilian clothes. When he would get outside he would go behind a stretch of fence that was handy, strip off his blues, throw them away, and be on his way in his citizen outfit. Some times you could pick up 20 to 60 blue suits along back of a fence. Hundreds went home that did not throw away their outfits, as they did not intend to stay home. I went home 3 times myself without leave to see my folks and my sweetness. But they soon started that they put the States under martial law, then nobody could travel without a Provost Marshal's pass. Before we got our blues I went to the city. We always had to have a pass or have an officer pass us out. I went to the Provost Marshal's office, who was there, but Charles Kleckner, then a clerk for the Marshal, wrote me a pass for three days. I told him I was a canal boatman and I expected to be in Harrisburg 10 or 12 days and I said "give me a pass for a longer time." So he gave me a pass until further orders. I knew this man personally for years. He was a produce huckster and used to stop overnight where I was employed. I bedded his team down many a night and many was the half dollar he gave me.

We stayed around the Harrisburg area about six weeks and left Harrisburg on December 3. We left there and went by the way of Baltimore where they gave us an extra meal. It was the worst meal I ever sat down to, corn meal and it not salted and some slop for coffee. That night most of the boys slept out in the mud and snowstorm in a field near Washington D.C. There was a stable near where we were and I asked the owner if four of us could sleep in it but he refused us flatly. He said he had several horses in and every time some soldiers were around something was missing in the morning. I made all kinds

of promises in good faith at that and kept on till at last he gave us permission. I thanked him and told him there were only church members in our bunch. I found out next morning that one of the fellows took his rubbers and stole the blanket off the horse. I suppose we really were the last soldiers to sleep in that stable. That morning they marched us to Alexandria and put us on a transport for somewhere; we did not know where. They packed us in like cattle on both decks. We had an awful time as we were caught in a storm and we went to some harbor where we laid for three days and the boat was rocking all the time. Three quarters of the men were seasick and spewed until it was about ½ inch thick all over the decks. We had no place to lay down and it was a devil of a time to get to the toilet and not half enough room when you got there. We had nothing to cook all this time and made some coffee out of saltwater. We took off and in 8 hours we disembarked at Fortress Monroe and then we marched to Newport News. There we got something to eat but nearly froze that night as the ground was froze so hard we could drive no tent stakes in. We laid here 8 days and then went up the peninsula 12 or 14 miles and then it was that I learned what it was to carry a load. This is what I had: One blanket from home, 2 government blankets, a citizen suit, extra drawers, shirts, socks, musket, 450 rounds of ammunition and two days rations. But the next morning before we left I sold my blanket from home for a dollar, stuffed one of my other blankets in a cooking kettle and that was hauled and so that day was lighter. My, but it was cold that night; a good many never laid down at bedtime. But some of us found a rail fence and we built a big fire. Then I hunted some leaves and spread them on the ground, put one blanket over them, and I've never slept better in my life. Next day we marched about a mile to Yorktown and there we laid several days and then we got orders to pack as we were going into the fort to drill. I believed it, so I gave my citizen clothes away for nothing. I was too tired to carry them any further. We stayed at the fort 5 months. We drilled infantry and we drilled artillery. There were about twenty guns mounted, then there were some light pieces and two light batteries with horses. It was a sort of tiresome place. Sometimes part of our outfit would go up the river on transports or our old cavalry outfit would come up here to visit us. We did no marching and had plenty to eat, fresh bread every day and fresh beef three times a week. Passed lots of time by making bone rings and selling them to the cavalrymen. We had a drill to bore the bones out and there were several good engravers to put the initials on them. Our tents were on boards raised off the ground about a foot. There was no place to build a fire except in the cooks' pit, which was out in the open. There were not many could get warm around it especially when the cooks were trying to cook. I think we had the dirtiest and laziest cooks in the whole Army of the Potomac. Once in a while we could get a pan of charcoal and put them in our tent and fan them with tin pans so our fingers would not get too stiff while we were having a sociable game.

We would guard one day and one night, that is, two hours on and four hours off. The next day you rest and the next day you are detailed to fatigue duty, which is cleaning up the camp or carrying water for cooking purposes. We had to carry our water about 400 yards. I was detailed to carry water and had to carry it in large camp kettles. We would put a stick through the handles of two kettles and then two men, one on each end of the stick, would pick it up and carry it. I had just put on clean pants one morning and one of

those greasy kettles slipped on the stick and got my pants soiled bad. I let the kettles drop and the water spilled all over. I refused to carry any more water unless the cooks would clean up the greasy kettles, so I carried no water. The other man could not carry it alone so there was no water and no dinner when the company came in from drill. I really got the devil at first, but I would not let up so easily and said I was going to appeal to Colonel West, the post commander. Even my buddies were mad because they had no water or coffee. So I got me a copy of army regulations and found a clause that called for a change of cooks every week. I demanded that it be put into force. They did not want to do it and there was only one man in the company that sided with me. They brought the Major down to talk to me and I had talked so much I was ashamed to stop now since the Major was here. Anyway, it turned out all right as the Major was a neighbor of mine and he was also a friend as I courted my [future] wife in his house and she was living with his wife and family right now. Well, the cooks were changed and I was detailed for one of them; did not like it but had to take charge of the cook tent, cleaned it up, scoured the kettles, soaked the salted meat before I cooked it. In fact, I fried some of it for a change, made coffee for the men who went on guard at 6 in the morning, done our best to make good stew. Everyone seen the change for the better. When my week was up I ask to be relieved; the captain said no, but I said that cook clause in the army rules and regulations calls for it and I want to see it enforced and it was. Two other riflemen were put on and they liked it better than drilling and they stayed on quite a while and gave good satisfaction.

Next, I got the fever and was put in a two-room shack with 17 other cases. The place had one door and one window in each room and they were always closed except when someone was passing through the door, which was very seldom. We had one old soldier for a nurse so you can imagine what kind of nursing we got. Nobody in after 9 o'clock in the evening. One morning they carried out two dead ones and I was a little afraid I would go the same way. That is the time I wished I was home with my mother. The rats and fleas were there by the millions and only four of us got out and then after convalescing a few weeks. Then I was ordered to help in the butcher shop, which I did until July 4, 1863, when our regiment was ordered with speed to join the army at Gettysburg. Left Yorktown on a steamer for Washington. Got there in the morning and got on the Ohio and Baltimore to Frederick City, Maryland, then marched cross country to Gettysburg, but it was too late for the fight. Then we marched with the army up to Hagerstown, then back to Edwards Ferry, over the Potomac River, out Loudon Valley to Washington Junction, and there we entrained for Washington.

As our time was up we were sure happy boys and glad the marches were over, as we had not known what real marching was as we were not used to it. We came home by Bull Run, Washington, Baltimore, and Harrisburg, where we lay several days waiting for our discharge and pay. We were sent home in cattle cars and were very anxious. There was one fellow on top a car at Halifax, when he found the train did not stop there, stumbled or jumped off on the siding. I seen him go and yelled goodbye and figured he was a goner. Then there was so many wanted off there that the train slowed down and

backed up into town and we all looked for the fellow and found him in the bar-room. It was a surprise, but a happy one.

Funny, but we never got in a real fight in the whole nine months of service and only lost one man by death. I saved over one hundred dollars my nine months and some saved more. We lived very cheaply. There was one boy in the company who wrote home once a week and his mother wrote telling him not to write so often as it cost too much for postage stamps. But the poor boy had a sweetheart at home and he wrote to her twice a week, unbeknownst to his mother. We used to have boxes sent from home, which contained such eats as pies, cookies, chickens, and the spirits of rye or corn, and some even got sauerkraut. We got our daily mail while we lay in camp but on our marches we were lucky if we got it weekly. We had some characters in our regiment and among them Richard Mertz beat them all.

### **THIRD ENLISTMENT**

This is my last enlistment. I enrolled the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of February 1863 at Harrisburg. I enlisted for three years or the duration of the war. I was sent to Carlisle to draw some of my gear before I joined my outfit, which was the 21<sup>st</sup> Regiment Pennsylvania Cavalry, Company C. That night they had a fire in the Adjutant's office and some of our descript lists were burnt. We laid there about 5 weeks till they had things straightened out. Then we were moved to a different regiment. I went to a camp a camp at Chambersburg to a camp of instruction. Right away a man came around with a subscription list gathering money to buy the captain a sword. I told him where he could go with words suitable to the occasion. The captain was getting \$100 a month and was getting only sixteen and they wanted me to help him buy a sword. I said pretty loud that he would be better off if he were a private, then he would at least have a musket. The next day the sergeant came around and said "you made a damn fool of yourself yesterday as the captain is a good friend of mine and you were slated for a sergeant, but now its all done and Captain Smith won't even let you have corporal stripes, even if you was a veteran of two enlistments." I told him I was sorry but could not help being right. He said I was the only one in the company that did not give, but I said that did not make me a worse soldier. He was not such a good soldier as he wanted to be for when we got in our first fighting, he chased a private from behind a stump so he could hide there. Then, whenever we were being shelled hard he would get behind some man. The next morning, we were ordered to take the Rebels' works and soon as we got over our breastworks, he dropped into a rifle pit and that was the last we saw of Wonder Smith. No doubt he was shell shocked, and good reason to be. Nevertheless, he got home and got a commission as Lieutenant Colonel in some enlisted men's regiment. (The last I ever heard of him he was in penitentiary for forging pension papers.) Not long afterwards, I was offered the position of corporal several times, but refused it for fear I would do some ovid act and be reduced to the ranks again, which was considered quite a disgrace. But I was often detailed to fill the position when they were short of non-commissioned officers.

Now I had been sent out with a squad of men to St. Thomas, better known as Camelstown, to gather up stragglers; those were men roving around town without permission. I did not want to catch any men, as I wanted to stay in town myself, and I told the fellows to stay in the dark so the officers could not see them. But, just as we got to the hotel, a trio of men came out all tuned up and they told us where we could go and they took off running and it kept us busy to catch them with our horses. We took them back and put them in the guardhouse; these were the first ones we caught but not the last ones. After we had them in the guardhouse they wanted us to let them slide free and offered us a good sum of money, but as we did not accept, they remained for 6 weeks. We got some extra provisions for doing our duty, which we were not entitled to.

Several days after that, we had a racket in our tent. My brother had a fall-out with some fellow who put vinegar in his canteen. This was on an evening when Sergeant Gorie went out to a farm where his wife boarded, so I had charge of the tent. There were 22 slept there, but they were not all in at the time. This fellow said some common cuss words to my brother and said, "Wait till I get a saber;" there were 22 in a rack. About that time my brother had the canteen with the string rapped around his hand and I said "tap him for fair." He did and we thought his skull was cracked. If ever I had a sleepless night that was it. The blood ran freely and they took him to the doctors towards morning. When there was no further danger of death I felt considerable better. But, had he died, what would have become of me for giving the order as I had charge of the tent. No one ever told one me, but if things would have gone different I would have told myself.

WE had a 1<sup>st</sup> lieutenant in charge of the company at this time as the captain was away. And the man that was hit with the canteen was a great friend of the lieutenant as they came from the same town. The next morning he ordered my brother tied up by his thumbs so his feet barely touched the ground, but they never did it, as I appealed to a higher authority and demanded court martial if they had to proceed, and that may have sent them both to detention at hard labor, without pay. I knew the lieutenant did not want to see his friend there and neither did I want to see my brother go. So they were left off by cleaning the picket line; that was dunging out the stable. Since I gave the order, I helped, and so did most of the other boys for they all loved him for he was a good boy. After the other got good he said it served him right and they were always the best of friends afterwards. But it left an animosity between me and the lieutenant as long as he was with the company.

Several days after that we had a racket in the tent and one of my friends cut my hand and finger fairly off with a dull hatchet. I tell you, I certainly suffered until that was healed. There were five of us in Company C that were wounded fighting among themselves. There were 12 companies, about nineteen hundred men, and our company always held the record for the most wounded even before we got to the front. But, if we had no Johnnies to fight, we would fight among ourselves. It took a long time for my hand to heal and, when it was healed, it was stiff for a long time. I could not handle a saber, thus, of course, I could not drill. So, they detailed me to help the cooks. I went to the cook tent and there were two Irishmen cooking. I told them I was sent to help them

and they said the tent had to be cleaned up some. In other words, they were the boss and I was to do the work, but I said they should go to their tent, as I worked better without a boss. They were glad to steal a little nap and I was glad not to have them around. Soon after that, the regiment got orders to report to Washington D.C. It took us several days to ride down there overland, and we were in camp only a day when we got orders to turn in our horses. That's when we became foot cavalry. We left there about four days afterwards by steamer, went down the Potomac, Chesapeake Bay, and then up the Rappahannock River to near Fredrick [Fredericksburg?]. When we disembarked, we still had our camp kettles as we had to do our own cooking on the steamboat. I asked the lieutenant what we should do with them and he said they were supposed to be carried along. They had a canal boat for a wharf and the two cooks and I were the last off and we had the three kettles on a pole but somehow they slipped off and were drowned in the river. That ended my experience as a cook. Of course, since I had been cooking I had no gun, and the boys were bickering and complaining because I marched empty handed, but I just when I needed one I would pick it up off the battlefield; that I would not need it till then anyway. At Cold Harbor I did pick up a dandy musket on the battlefield and used it to the best of my ability. Later on, I bought a pistol and a Bowie knife and then I was the best armed man in the company. The Bowie knife I lost, and the pistol I sent home with a wounded comrade. After we were mounted again we were issued government revolvers.

We were assigned to guard a wagon train loaded with provisions and ammunition. We guarded for three days in a row and for a day and a half we had nothing to eat, so one morning before we started out we saw a drove of cattle in a distant field; we found out afterwards that were our own and they belonged to the train we were guarding. Six of us decided we were hungry and we would each get a steer. I got one but did not have time to kill it; the rest each got one but they left theirs go when they found a cart at an old lime kiln. They hitched one of the horses in it and threw all their blankets, guns, slings, and knapsacks on it and started off. I followed very slow with the steer. Soon, they were way ahead of me and the roads and fields were rough and I was so tired I could have tumbled by the road. For a long while I had lost track of the regiment and so in the evening when I caught up with them they killed the steer but I was so tired I fell asleep before they had the beef cooked. But they divided some out for me and so they next morning I had beef and coffee for breakfast. That night we drew our regular rations and they disappeared in a hurry. That night we camped, or rather slept, between North and South river; we laid in a grass field and we had stored our blankets and tents away and there was a heavy dew and when we came to in the morning we were all soaking wet.

That evening we arrived at Cold Harbor; then it all began. There had been fighting there two days before and the dead and wounded still lay on the field. We charged the rebel works next morning. We were successful in the middle, but the right and left ends were repulsed and we could not get back, so we lay among the dead of the day before. Our batteries protected us as good as they could and we fell back that night and so did the rebs. Some of the dead were bloated so bad that the buttons tore off their coats. All of us that had blankets took them to cover the dead next day and shoveled a

little dirt over them and that is all the burial they got. It was horrible for a human to behold and what we tell, human ears cannot understand.

We ran out of rations again and I offered a dollar for four hardtacks; the man gave me the tacks but would not take my dollar. It was so surprising how generous the people were; they would give of anything they had.

Next morning, I went out to where some men had drawn rations and picked up the crumbs of crackers that fell when the men cleaned out their haversacks. I got about a pint of crumbs, dirt and all, but the boys were very glad for them. I also found three pocketbooks; the contents of one was nothing, one had three postage stamps, two pennies, and a silver three cent piece. The other had three photo pictures and I wished I could return them to their owners or to the right families. J.G. Shaffer was lost here but turned up all right the next day. We were kept very busy fighting here second and third day of June at Bethesda Church; there was a graveyard here and we were lucky we did not end up in it. A little on from here we fought around a grain mill but in a little while the mill disappeared to its foundations. The next place was White Oak Bottom and we built a large breastworks here; that is, we cut down trees, piled them on top of each other from three to five feet high for miles in each direction. Then we piled earth against it. We layed here about eight days. While laying here I went out to forage; you might call it stealing. I got to a plantation and everything had been carried off except the grindstone. Since there was nothing usable but the grindstone I took it along and it came in handy for the fellows to use when they built breastworks. When we left there it was too heavy and we left it. The next place we stopped was Charles City Crossroads. We marched all night to get there and then I and some others were delegated for picket duty and were taken out in the woods from camp and kept for two days without any eats. During that time, the men marched to Harrison's Landing and crossed the James River on a pontoon bridge. Then one of the boys I was with got a small pig somewhere. We killed it, gutted it, and quartered it in four pieces as well as we could with bristles and all. We did not have time to cook it so we stuck out bayonets thru it and marched toward the river in double quick time, that is, a dog trot. My load got too heavy and soon I dropped it by the wayside. Some of the others who were stronger than I carried it until they had to abandon it on account of the blowflies following them. We all failed to have fresh pork for dinner or anything else. When we got near the river, about a mile away, we could see the army on the other side of the river, some cooking and some bathing. We soon expected to get something to eat and be able to wash in the river, but how easy it is for one to be fooled and we surely were. Before we got to the river they had taken the pontoon bridges up and the army had all left but the rearguard and we had no eats. They finally took us across with a small steamboat and we started off on a fast march and a little before evening we caught up with our command. The boys then gave us something to eat, but it was too late to revive me much that night. We had no water but use of a stagnant pool that they had driven cattle through before. We went by way of Prince Carriet House. About eight o'clock I played out and told my messmates that I was done for and had to lay down. J. Hoover and my brother said they would stay by me. I told them to go on as I did not know what would become of me and it was not worth the risk for them to stay. Finally,

Hoover said he would go; but my brother would not and he stayed with me. We went into a woods not far away and were surprised to find hundreds of others who had played out and had the same idea I had. Well, I had a good night's rest and it revived me so early in the morning we started to follow the regiment. We got to a little brook and stopped to cook some coffee and then some of our men came to get some water for the same purpose. I asked them where the regiment was. It laid several hundred yards from where we were, so they had stopped about a half-mile from where I played out and we rejoined them there. Several hours after that it was fall in ranks and forward march. Soon the bullets began to whistle death songs all around us and we lost a good many; saw and heard some of my comrades for the last time, poor mortals. Soon we got on a little hill and got orders to charge down and take a deep cut of railroad. We started and took the cut but while going down, some of us had to go thru where some buildings were burned down. There was still plenty of fire and hot ashes and I got some fire in my shoes. My one foot was burned considerable but I did not dare to stop to take the fire out as they were feeding us plenty of grape and canister all around. We took the cut; it was about twenty feet deep, and the boys went down pell-mell and quite a number got hurt by the fellow's bayonet behind him. I stopped on top of the bank till they were straightened out and then I started out; just as I left the place, a shell struck and exploded everything to tinder. Had I stayed a minute longer, a few grease spots would have [been] all that remained of me. My guarding Angel must have been protecting me all thru or I wouldn't be here now. Next, we charged to the creek and we lost a few more men, but the high banks protected us till dark and then we got all mixed with another regiment on the brow of the hill. We really lost almost all the officers and men in our company. Brother Frankie and J. Hoover and several others were all that was left. When daylight came we began to charge uphill but were stopped and started to dig in with our tin plates. If the boys ever tried to dig a hole for a little protection, they did there. We were relieved by other troops later in the morning and we were sent to the rear to get something to eat and rest up. We laid back three to six miles for a day or two and then were reorganized and the sent back to the same place, only in the meantime they had built breastworks out of timber and clay. Then we got orders to build bum proofs. They are a hole dug in the ground from three to four feet deep and then covered with logs and railroad iron. We were in luck to have the railroad we took from the Rebs close by. WE wanted a good one so we put about three feet of earth on top. They were intended for protection during artillery duels. Some of our men undermined a Reb works on a hill but they did not tell us when it would go off and we were eating breakfast in our hole about sunrise when the explosion went off and, I tell you, it fairly lifted you right off the ground. We had a good victory and had a big fuss about it, but I could not call killing a victory. After a few days, we were sent to the rear again for rest. I tell you now that was when we began to build mud forts in our rear and front. We worked with a pick and shovel ten hours out of every twenty-four, five hours in daytime and five hours at night. But the shells were so bad in the day that we worked mostly at night. Then we heard of the battle of Jerusalem Plank Road where they trampled and captured a good many of our men. We were run in to stem the tide and we followed the Rebs up through a dry swamp full of long grass and briars and other underbrush; finally our company got lost and we were away from each other and could not find our way out anymore. So all we could do was to lay down and

keep quiet. The General thought we were all captured. We lay in the mud and grass all the rest of the night, but the Johnnies did not know it or they would have had all of us. Their artillery kept pounding with sixty-fives all night but their aim was too high. The next morning our army advanced and found us in there and, I tell you, I was a happy boy when they found transportation to the rear for us. In a few days we were in the thick of the fighting again at Yellow House and Weldon Railroad. From here we journeyed for miles and they had to wagon train our provisions and ammunition into us. We laid here for quite awhile—at least long enough to make us restless. So they decided to give us infantry drill, but as we had enlisted for cavalry, we refused to drill, at least nine of us did. It worked very well for four days and then we got a new Lieutenant and then it ended. The next morning the drill sergeant told the nine of us to turn in our rifles and cartridge box and belt and he gave each of us an axe. He took us into a small woods and told us to cut down a sapling and we thought we were going to build a cook shanty. But I smelled mice and I cut down the smallest one I could find and the Lord only knows it was more than heavy enough for the purpose intended. There was one sapling heavier than all the rest and I said, “You had better make two out of it,” but the smallest fellow of all of us wanted to show how strong he was and said, “No, I’ll carry it.” He wanted to show his strength and he had all the opportunity he wanted when he got to camp. Then, since I had such a small sapling, the sergeant told me to get my gun again and I was to take charge and march these fellows back and forth in the company streets carrying their logs. In about an hour the sergeant came along and asked if we were ready to fall in and drill that afternoon. You bet your boots we were and in good faith, too. And then he dismissed us and we went and got our dinner and our mail. I got a letter from my father and in reading it, I mistook the heading for Burnside’s Headquarters, which was not far away. I went to the Lieutenant’s quarters and asked if I could go over to Burnside’s Headquarters to see my father. He asked if I was not one of those who refused to drill and I said he was right, but that I had a change of mind. He said, “Then get out and drill.” I said not a bit of it, that it was over a year since I had seen my father and I may never see him again and I offered to show him the letters. But without looking he said I could go, but I should be sure to be back and drill tomorrow. I left in a hurry and I looked all over Burnside’s Headquarters, but I could not find the 208<sup>th</sup> Regiment. Then I re-read my letter and found out that I had made a mistake and it read Berminda Hundreth. Anyways, I was sorry I did not get to see my father, but it kept me from drilling that day. We did not drill the next day, either, as things got hot again and we had the Poplar Grove fight, and here is where poor James Hoover got his arm shot off with a case shot.

A little after this, we had our second skirmish at the Yellow House, where they attacked us but got more than they bargained for as they retreated and did not return again. We did picket duty when we lay here and a few of us restless fellows made up a raiding party and went outside the lines to see whether we could find some fruit. There were about ten of us and we were in a woods back of the picket line, and in about a half a mile we came to a cornfield. Then we came to a lane that led to a house. There were some peach trees along the lane, but the peaches were not ripe enough to eat yet. So we started for the house; before we got there a shot was fired at us but, luckily, no one was hit. This shot was from a rebel stationed nearby and we got scared and rode away. There

was a great commotion over in the other woods at their reserve post and we could have easily got some plunder, as there were teams roaming everywhere, but everybody was scared stiff and ran away pretty fast and one poor fellow jumped over a bank and wringed his foot so bad that he couldn't make it anymore. I and a man carried him back in the woods a piece and then went for help to bring him back to camp. We came pretty near being court martialed for leaving our reserve post. Had it been captured, we would have been classed as deserters and, if caught, we would have been disgraced for life or perhaps shot. We were on the picket line just before the Poplar Grove fight and that evening you ought to have seen the gambling. If you was a looking for a fight, you had one if you tried to stop the card playing. They rather fight than gamble, but we left them alone as they had to do something to while away the hours. Here I helped a man from Maine to cut down a big bottom poplar to get a raccoon, but when we had worked a long time and the tree got down and [we] went for our coon, we found it was a possum.

Now I resume that the Poplar Grove fight was the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 1864, and we were in the advance when we got there and there was an open field and a considerable way up to the rebel works, which was about 500 yards away...

The same regiment went up the road to command the front. We circulated and another regiment marched to the left of us and formed a line, but the rebs kept breaking around until the tension got too great and we then started forward. General Gruffelen tried to stop them but to no avail. There was no more danger in going in and taking the works than standing there to be shot down. Anyway, we went up and took three guards and all the line to the left of us. But there was a place to the right we tried to take by going in with men and horses, but they shot most of our horses and we failed to take it. Another regiment that was to help us came just as soon as they could and we rallied and drove the rebs out. We then foraged and I found knapsacks and I retrieved a new blouse, a pair of pants, and a cashmere shirt. Picked up a buckskin portfolio containing papers, envelopes, and stamps. I really got a good outfit and I would have returned it, but the owner was unknown. We were relieved and sent back about six o'clock. But before we got our supper, the rebs came with reinforcements and made our whole company a target for their rifle bullets. They drove us back into the woods. I never saw such musketry fire before, but they fired high and did little harm. Leaves and branches fell down on us all the time we were in the woods. I thought next morning that a hailstorm could not have played more havoc than the rebs' bullets did.

They marched us out in an open field onto a hill in a very exposed position. It was after night and we could not tell much about it till next morning. Then we seen what it was like. Birt Moore was an aide-de-camp and came riding up to Colonel Knowles and said he needed him badly and required his regiment to protect his batteries and to secure about four acres on a plain on top of the hill. Here, I felt like I never felt before. All I could think of was that I did not want to be killed. They placed us about fifty feet apart along the top of the hill. We had our muskets fully primed and pointed to the edge of the hill where the Rebs would have to come over. We were laying on the ground quietly with our hearts in our throats waiting for the Rebs to charge. At last, we heard a rumbling

noise and we could tell they were coming nearer and nearer. They never suspected that we were waiting for them. We left them come over the hill about thirty feet—then what a surprise for them. They never fired a volley; only a few stray shots was all. I thought it would shake the earths when all our guns exploded into Rebs coming over the hill. I never saw so many dead soldiers and officers as they lost there.

After it was all over and we had stacked up a big pile of bodies, we were sent back for some rest, which we needed badly. Next day, some of us went back over the field, and seeing the mess, we wondered what had become of our blasted civilization that it permitted man to kill and maim, like was done here on the battlefield. Then I happened onto where their field hospital had been located. Oh, what a sight. The dead and wounded had all been removed, but the arms and legs that had been amputated still lay there on a pile. Some with boots and shoes still on, parts of pants and underwear, and arms with white hands sticking out of tattered shirt sleeves. You got sick looking at all the blood and dirt and could almost feel the pain that was suffered there. It was the most disgusting scene I ever saw and I hoped it would be the last. But then, little did I know what would be in store for me and that I would see it repeated more than I want to remember. We turned away from it disgusted awondering how a human could endure it.

We stayed in this place two days longer; then there was an order came from the War Department to report to City Point to get rest. It was good news to us – Goodbye infantry and infantry drill, which I was glad to escape. When we got there, the first thing I tried to find was Hoover, my mess man who had just lost his arm. I went thru all the hospitals and could not find him. He had just been put on a transport to go north but at last I found him. He looked so good that you thought there was nothing wrong with him. He was joking all the time. He was sent to a hospital in Philadelphia and we heard from him now and then by correspondence. He brought my pistol along home. A little before the war closed he was discharged. He had been one of the bravest and hardest [hardest?] boys I knew. He answered the last roll call in 1869.

Another instant about him was when he lost his arm and his things were too heavy on a forced march he threw his blanket away. The night got terrible cold and we almost froze. He begged me to get him a blanket so I gave him mine. It was Penna. Issue stained on it and when he got to the hospital they sent my blanket home with the other things he had about him.

Another soldier boy and I started over the battlefield and into the woods where men had thrown their things away or discarded it when they were wounded. Lots of dead were laying around with a few shovels of dirt thrown on them by the burial detail. We came unto a field where we sat down together on a log to chat awhile and to rest. All at once I heard a gun crack and at the same time my mouth was filled with another man's brains. There was a sharpshooter in the distant woods somewhere and we were a too tempting bait for him. I studied for years why he took him instead of me. I reckon he waited till he had us both in line and was going to kill two birds with one stone, but my friend's head was too hard—it reflected the bullet. If I swallowed any of it, it certainly

came up along with everything else I had in my stomach. My whole body rebelled, and I pulled out of that place fast like a through train. I was also hit in the face by a piece of human flesh at Petersburg one night. With what part of the body I can't tell, as at the time I did not wait to investigate, as there was more important business on the program.

I went over to see my father at Bunder; it was only about three miles from where we lay at City Point. I stayed overnight with him and we talked nearly all night. As he had enlisted only several months before, he told me all about home. The next morning I joined my company again.

Before we left City Point, several of us went to the town and got a ham and egg dinner. We paid 75 cents apiece and thought it was an awful price. It was for us—only getting 10 dollars per month. But what would the money be worth at the front line; reckoned maybe we could never spend it.

Then we went back to Mead Station, began mounted picket duty—mostly scouting. Then we made a raid to Stony Creek Station, one of the Rebs' supply depots—burned it, destroyed trains and railroad. We laid in as reserves for a while and watched the rest do the work.

Then we were rearguard coming home. Then that's when the fun began. There was only one place to cross a swamp, so when most of the army was across, a piece of artillery got stuck in the mud, which then blocked the road. We tried to keep the Rebs back that were following us, but it was impossible. They got behind us and on both sides. We used all the fire we had but they encircled us and we could not go forward. They opened fire on us and we tried to go thru the swamp and we were so mixed up and so close that the sabers had to be used frequently. I was lucky that I was a little further away and off came my gear so I could move faster. I had not drilled on saber exercise as on account of my stiff hand. I seen one man who was shot fall off his horse into the mud puddle. We could not help and reported him killed. He was carried on the rolls as killed for three months. Then he came back—exchanged. The ball had struck him above the ear and went round in front to the opposite ear and left him, but the skin was ripped open as though you had cut it with a knife.

Well, at last we got started, but the Johnnies followed us real good. So we put the first cavalry in ambush along the road. They left us stay on our horses. We let the Johnnies get opposite us and then opened fire on them. We had the 16 shooter, you load them one day and shoot all day next. We gave them one volley and were not bothered anymore that day with them.

By riding so fast most of the boys had lost their hats in the raid and when we got to Point City again the settlers [sutlers?] had hats with nice brims, which they wanted five dollars for. Most of the fellows fell in love with them and I did too, but I loved the five dollars more. While we were being engaged I lost my hat and as the troops passed by us I saw lots of hats being tumbled around by the wind. I dismounted to get one, but

changed my mind mighty quick when I seen how close the Rebs was. Had I not done so, they would have had me before I had the hat.

There was also several negroes with the column when we left the station. They certainly were some group of pickininnies and were from three days to one hundred years old. All those that were big enough to carry something did so. They had axes, shovels, cradles, anything imaginable. Some were only half dressed; others fairly well dressed. They crowded the road so we on the horses went into the fields. We speeded up the horses so we would not have to carry their stuff. They got hold of several of our packhorses—wish they would have gotten them all, as they were always a nuisance. They were used mostly for carrying gear and for the officers. They could have done without necessities as well as we. The negroes were all retaken and taken back to Stony Creek. I certainly pitied them but was glad to be relieved of them. But such are the fortunes of war.

After Stony Creek we laid on a big plantation. They had a lot of molasses in barrels. We withdrew it and filled our canteens. It was very clear but it did not have a good taste. We took it back to camp and cooked taffy out of it, but one dose was enough for each of us, as I never took a physic that worked so well. There was a lot of shoats at the place and we got to butchering them. I got interested in three and put them on the horse over the saddle and I started back to camp where I would split my pork prize with the boys. We hid some in the bushes and some under a blanket and when we wanted some we would cut some off to cook and then pull the blanket back over it. Next day, the Rebs came and I put a pig and my gear over the saddle but we were pushed too fast and I used my bowie knife to cut my saddle straps—that's the quickest way to unload a horse. I was glad I had my bowie knife as I had loaned it to a friend in Co. B and I thought it was gone for good, but he just brought it back two days before I really needed it to get the pigs and get rid of them. We eluded the Rebs and back to camp where we rested for several weeks and did our share of picket duty.

Then we had the fight at Boydton Plank Road. That only lasted till we had them cleaned out. We got ourselves a few prisoners and recovered all our wounded. From there we went to Hatcher Run. Here, hundreds were killed and most of the wounded died except those who could manage to get back after dark. The dead here were not buried until after the surrender. This happened in October 1864 and I went back about five months later in April 1865. The weathered bodies were in layers at some places and most were fleshless. They were gathered together sometime later and buried. How many there was, the Lord only knows.

Our lines at that place were only about 500 yards apart with two picket lines in between. The pits were so close that I seen one of our men throw a testament from his pit over to a Johnny. And we and the Rebs got along here until the negroes joined our line. From then on they always kept pecking at each other. The Rebs did not like the nigger and neither did the nigger like him. They both seemed to be afraid of each other and from that time on there was not much sociability along that part of the line. But down at

Fort Hell on our side and Damnation on their side they had a trading station. Someone would holler, "Have anything to trade, Yank," that's what they called us. Then someone would reply that he had a rich prize and they would meet at the agreed spot called trading station. Sometimes, it would be only one or two and I seen as high as a dozen from each side there at one time. It was a kind of a truce among ourselves and it was never violated. The Rebs' trading goods generally consisted of tobacco, which our boys were glad to get. The Rebs mostly wanted coffee and sometimes salt, which we had a surplus of. They had other trading stations, but there were orders issued that stopped it. I only traded twice—I did not like their good looks.

One day there was an order sent to advance our picket line and to straighten out a curve that was in it. Their line and ours was about a half a mile apart. There was a ravine between our lines that you could not see in and we were afraid that the Johnnies would work their way in it and surprise us. At some places, we had to get within three hundred yards of their lines, almost up to their pits. We all dreaded to be out in front and I am sure no man would escape, as their picket would hear us. We had to pull our timbers up slowly and then put one on top of the other. They were fastened good, and ground scraped and shoveled over them. This way we built a fence about fifteen hundred feet long and there wasn't a shot fired at us. After we came in, about a hundred others went out with picks and shovels. They dug pits about eight feet square and two feet deep for the pickets to lay in. About two o'clock in the morning, the details had the picket lines advanced almost to the Johnnies' pits without a shot being fired from the other side. It was remarkable we had not all been killed, bit the next morning we knew why. While we were working so hard to build the abutments and pits, they had retreated about a half mile and were reinforced with artillery. It was about dark that evening when they started an artillery duel. They shot the hollow shells with time fuses on them. You could easily see them coming in after dark and they came like rain. You could see the fire sputtering at the fuse like a falling star, and when you saw one coming you could move to the left or right as the case might require.

We were relieved and fell to the rear, where I was put on detail to help dig wells. Every two companies would have a well in partnership. Water had been very scarce and we had to go from ten to twelve feet deep and then we would hit plenty of water. We had trouble to keep the gravel and sand out of the first two feet. Then we would hit loam and sand, then about four feet of yellow clay. The balance would be hardpan and the deeper we got, the harder the pan would be. After we got through that, there would be plenty of water. But we always had to be raking the sand out, but we corrected this by setting a cracker box in the bottom.

There was a regiment laid on a hill; they dug or tunneled a well that was 101 feet deep. They had steps down all the way. I was down once and I concluded I would rather fetch my water somewhere else, even if it was further, and so I did.

When we build Fort Hell, that was all after night; they would have one company one night and another the next night. I suppose it was about 90 to a hundred feet long. It

was open behind and [in] front it was all solid with logs and sandbags, with only parapets for the guns. We filled bags and put them on top of each other crossways. We managed to build it for good protection. It was awful hard work. I was not as well as I should have been, so I deserted and quit. I pulled for camp but could not get my gun, as they had a guard over all the guns. So I left without it. When I got near camp, there was a company who had their guns stacked, so I took one with me. I thought it a pretty trick that when my company came in they had an extra gun and did not know what had become of the owner. They had a roll call and all answered to their names, so they all had to fall in with their guns. This they did so they could catch the culprit that had scampered, but it didn't work, for all fell in with guns. We all shirked whenever we could and they wanted to catch one and make an example of him.

Now we returned to Hatcher Run. We had some dense fighting all afternoon in the woods till about five o'clock, then we got in a field where we were ordered to feed our horses and cook some coffee and then go on picket duty. Others had to bridle the horses and hunt for water. The first thing we knew, the Rebs were on three sides of us and pecking it into us with musketry and artillery. The orders were not to hold the horses, but to fall in line and help the infantry, which the Rebs were driving back. The field was full of stampeding horses and the Rebs' artillery balls were exploding all around us. There was a man aside of me jammed in between the horses so that his feet were under one and his head laid on top of the other. I was with the cavalry and did not feel too comfortable on the ground, so got hold of four horses and made for the woods. It was each man for himself. We were all mixed up when it got dark. It was full of brush and I got out to the road, but had to get off because of the infantry, as they had the privilege of the road. Went back into the woods again, heard troops moving and I sneaked up to see who they were, and how glad I was when I saw they were ours. I got on the road again, but it soon curved right back into the woods. I had only two of the four horses I started with, lost them in the woods among the big stampede. I was played out and fell asleep on my horse and it was daylight when I got awake. Not a soul in sight and I did not know which way to go to camp. Was lost just as much as ever, and while I was musing which way I should go, our bugler came along and he was lost as well as I. We held a consultation, then started toward a field where some hospital tents were. They had just begun to take them down when they were attacked. We had to take to the woods again but got home to camp about two o'clock P.M. Some did not get in until evening and some not at all. My brother was one of them. He was captured and taken to Bell Island, then to Libby Prison at Richmond, Virginia; then to Sarrsbury [Salisbury?], North Carolina; from there to Andersonville, Georgia, where they were nearly starved to death. He came home several days after the war was over. Only two out of every three prisoners returned home. He only lived a little while and it would have been better to be killed outright.

We stayed in camp a little while and did some picket duty. Then we started on Bellfield Raid, which took us five days. Had more or less fighting every day. We started with three rations; that is all the cavalry got no matter how long they stayed out. We had to live on what we could capture, or rather steal. Unfortunately, this part of the country

had been raided before. We were in the front and the infantry behind, tearing up railroads and burning ties and heating and warping the rails.

The first day we crossed the river and lay there all night. Adam Shelly's horse stumbled and tossed him into the river. When he came up, he had his mouth full of water and he hissed and blubbered at us when we laughed at him.

We had to ford the river and found a larger force opposing us that we had anticipated. We got all tangled up and had to retreat back across the river. Next morning, we got reinforcements and tried again and made it. We found two of our men on the bank with their throats cut. I suppose they got sick or were too tired to retreat and were caught by the Rebs. We moved out, but the leather straps on our packhorses were rotten, and the provisions they were carrying kept spilling on the ground. We found a fine carriage at a farm and loaded it full of stuff from the horses. Of course we lived on small rations but something helped us on a little. We got some dried corn at a nigger hut and we also caught a goose and carried her a night and a day till we could build a fire to cook her. Stopped at a place to feed and we just put the water on for coffee and the water was merely boiling when the Rebs began shelling us. We had to move fast with no coffee and a raw goose. We were real hungry and ate most of it raw and gave the rest away, so none of it was wasted. We burned lots of things on this trip, as we could not bring it along.

One night we lay where two rivers come together at a point. We got there after night and were not allowed to take anything off our horses, so we laid down beside them with a strap in our hands to hold them so we could mount in a hurry and skedaddle if the Rebs came. It rained and snowed all night and when daylight came we began to fall back. With all the rain, the river got much higher than when we crossed it, so they built a pontoon bridge of wood for us to cross over on. When we got over, they chipped the bridge loose and it went down with the high water. Then we heard the Rebs shooting. They were shooting at about eighty of our men in the woods, and this was unbeknown to us when we cut the bridge loose. They could not cross over and the Rebs got every last one of them.

Later, we dismounted and sent the horses back and scattered along the swamp. There was a high railroad embankment there and me and George Stahl were sent to the other side to watch for Johnnies. We stayed for about two hours and the firing had ceased, so we climbed back over the embankment and we found all our men gone and it was full of Rebs marching up towards the woods. We ran about two Virginia miles till we caught up with some of our dismounted men. They were cutting down some trees to put across the road to barricade it. We stayed there a while and helped them and then, real tired boys, we made it back to our horses and it was the last we saw of the Rebs on that trip. We were so tired from our long run but were happy the Rebs didn't have two more prisoners.

That night we stopped at Sussex Court House, the finest we seen in Virginia. There were some men and a lady there that gave us wrong directions but we caught them

at it and gave the men a drumhead court martial and hung them and brought the lady along to our side. We burned the courthouse down. Marched to the river where the pontoon bridge had been laid and a group from the 9<sup>th</sup> Corps came in to relieve us. The roads were regular mortar beds; frequently the horses would stick in it and the only thing you could do was to shoot them and go on. But in the evening it was so cold the horses would break thru the crust and break their legs—then, by midnight, it froze so hard that an artillery piece with six horses could gallop over it.

I was detailed on a burning expedition. We burned a strip five miles by five miles. Just gave the family notice to get out and then set fire to the buildings. They had no time to save anything. Often wondered what ever became of those poor people that cold night. The reason it was done was so the Rebs would have no place to harbor. I was nearly froze that night when we got to camp as our blankets had been wet and were frozen together so hard we could not get them apart. But our quarters kept the wind away from us and we had a little wood that was left. We soon had a fire and laid and rested our tired bodies. This was also called the applejack raid, as most of the planters had applejack or peach brandy or both in their cellars.

The cavalry was in advance so they got to the house first. Sometimes we had a chance to get some and sometimes not, as the provost guard was always close on our heels. They gave orders to destroy all liquor founding the cellars or anywhere else. I suppose over half of the detail was drunk and wonder what would have happened if we would have been attacked. I had several drinks and so did most of the cavalrymen that drank. I had been detailed to scout with Captain Boyd in command and we got into a place toward evening where there was considerable of the stuff. Most of us filled our canteens and there was a keg of brandy there, which I reckon held between five and six gallons. He said we would take this along for the boys back at camp. So they gave it to me and with my poor hand I didn't get it very far till a yell," Halt there and drop that keg." I said I had it under captain's orders and I didn't intend to drop it. Then a Provost Marshal rode up and dismounted and with his little George Washington hatchet he gave a heavy rap and soon the brandy that was in the keg was on the ground. The infantry gave us a lot of mischief as they were always too late for the applejack and every time they saw us they would yell "Applejack" and some would crow like roosters.

After we got back to camp, we got on the same old routine again for some time. After a while, we started down to Dinwiddie Courthouse. We did a little scouting and fighting there. Then we came back to fight the twenty-third battle of Hatcher Run. We had been real busy for several days and had been riding all night; you might say we were dead o our horses. It had rained the day before and got real cold that night. When we got to the infantry it was just the break of day. It was then I seen that we were not the only ones subjected to the miscomforts of the war. There they laid in the mud and their blankets covered with snow. One longhaired old fellow had his knapsack for his pillow and his hair hung down over the side into the mud and froze while he slept, so they had to chop him loose before he could get up.

We scouted all day and that night they put us out as pickets and I was the last man posted and I was so far from the rest that I was not relieved all night. The Rebs were just across the creek and I knew it was death to fall asleep. Before the night was over I was so tired I pinched myself so hard that I had pain. I fell over once, but I knew if I stayed down I was a done for good. That was the hardest night of my life. That was the second night I stood guard without being relieved, but I was not so played out when I was relieved. The first time I laid down on some rails at a fire and slept so sound that my boots were burned so hard that they broke off my feet in pieces and my foot and leg was scorched. I made it into camp in my stocking feet. There was a fellow gave me a pair of number 9 boots. These I had to tie on so I would not lose them when I walked. Several weeks after that I got boots again that I could wear. I was treated kindly by the officers as they excused me from duty for six weeks.

By [that] time the spring campaign was started and I was sent to City point with some condemned horses. Stayed till after the surrender. Then went to Lynchburg, Virginia till I was discharged, which was the eighth day of July. But they kept us several weeks longer and then sent us to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where I stayed several days before going home.

## BATTLES

Bethesda Church, Virginia	June 2-9.....1864
Front of Petersburg, Virginia	June 18-20.....1864
Jerusalem Plank Road	June 22.....1864
Petersburg (explosion of Mane)	July 30.....1864
Weldon Rail Road, Virginia	August 18-21.....1864
Poplar Grove Church, Virginia	September 30.....1864
Boydton Plank Road	October 21.....1864
Hatcher Run	October 28.....1864
Stony Creek, Virginia	December 1.....1864
Raid on Bellefield (Gen. Warren)	December 3-11...1864

I was in many minor skirmishes and raids without names. I was not in the evacuation of Petersburg, Salor Creek, or Five Forts, being that I was on detached service. I have credit for same which was the rule when a man was on duty elsewhere and was supposed to be present.

This was wrote February 1920 from memory except dates from my daily diary and some incidents from a book I kept.

The reader must bear with me where sentences are not complete and words are misspelled.

Private Henry F. Charles  
Son of Israel F. Charles  
Grandson of Thomas FitzCharles and Frederick Miller.