

A Private's Recollections Of Morgan and His Men.

I am prompted by a notice of the death of Col. R. M. Martin (Col. Bob Martin, as he was familiarly called) to present a few reminiscences that may bring to memory some of the cherished recollections of the "boys in gray" whose ranks are becoming decimated by time.

It was my good fortune to belong to the regiment of which this daring spirit was made Colonel by the promotion of the no less gallant officer, Col. Adam R. Johnson, to the Brigadier generalship of the Second brigade of Morgan's division of cavalry. Under the leadership of these gallant officers as partisans, Johnson's regiment became famous throughout Kentucky. On reporting to Gen. Morgan for duty near Murfreesboro, they at once ranked with the best of troops, and from then on they participated in all the daring undertakings of that dashing cavalier.

After remaining in camp for a month, we started on the raid into Kentucky known as the "Christmas raid," made memorable by the hardships endured—the rigors of winter, the swollen streams to be forded or swam, incessant pursuit of the enemy, and the night marching and frequent engagements, all of which told upon the physical man; but it went to make veterans of boys wholly unaccustomed to the hardships of army life. The fruits of this raid were immense. The capture of towns with their army stores, the destruction of railroads and Government property, the capture and paroling of hundreds of prisoners of war, the equipment of our men with the best of arms, the addition of recruits to our ranks and the diversion of the Federal army, thereby relieving Gen. Bragg as he quietly fell back upon Fullanoma. It was while crossing one of these rivers (Rolling Fork) that Gen. Duke received a wound from the explosion of a shell, a fragment of which tipped its way through his side. As we supposed him killed, gloom hung over the command like a pall; no officer possessed the confidence and esteem of his men to a greater degree.

As we passed out of Kentucky into Tennessee we took position at the forks of the pike near Liberty. It was here, I think, that Col. Johnson received his commission as Brigadier General. It was while here that the battles of Milton, Woodbury and Snow's Hill were fought. It was while here that Col. Martin so delighted in his characteristic scouts, one of which I call to mind and would be glad to relate. Gen. Rosecrans had issued an order that all Confederates caught within the Federal lines wearing the Federal uniform were to be treated as spies. The order was intended for Morgan's men, more especially, as they frequently wore the captured overcoats. In fact, if I remember correctly, Gen. Morgan wore one of the overcoats himself, and it was not unusual to see a private dressed completely in a Federal uniform, boots and spurs included. Col. Martin ordered a detail of one hundred and twenty-five men to have them represent Federal cavalrymen as nearly as possible. Of this detail, the writer was one. After preparing two days' rations, we started on our march, a perfect counterpart of a Yankee scouting party. That night we bivouacked in a dense grove of cedar, within hearing of the Federal army, the noise of which reminded me of some great monster as it lashed itself into repose. As we rested on our arms, ready to move at a moment's notice, I thoughtlessly removed a spur from my foot, which was unpleasantly tight, thinking that I would get it before leaving; but unfortunately I failed to think of it. It had been borrowed of my Captain, who prized it highly, as it was one of a pair presented to him by some friend. We had gone about three miles before I missed the spur. Riding up to my Captain, I told him of the loss. He seemed to be much worried, and asked me to return back and get it. In the face of Rosecrans' order and my probable capture, I naturally hesitated; but recalling the fact that I was mounted on one of Gen. Harding's Belle Meade race horses, I felt that I could out-run the entire Yankee army if it became necessary. Without delay I galloped back just as the sun was creeping above the tree tops. I was never more impressed with the beauties of a morning. On turning an angle in front of a small church, and almost in sight of the coveted spur, I ran face to face with two Yankee cavalrymen. Instantly my Sharp's carbine went to my shoulder, with the command to halt, which they did without a moment's hesitation. I asked them to what command they belonged. They said the Twenty-first cavalry. I ordered them to take a road bearing to my right, and watched them as they disappeared in the cedars. I lost no time in recovering the spur and making all haste in getting away from so unwholesome a locality.

Early that day Col. Martin halted us near the pike—Franklin or Alexandria, I forget which. The rumbling of wagons, the tramp of horses, denoted a foraging expedition. Leaving us to await his command, he quietly rode in the direction of the passing train of wagons, looking the ideal Yankee Colonel. The wagons began to come to us. In a little while the ruse was found out, and the alarm given. The order to charge was given, and such a stampede I never witnessed.

Wagons were overturned, mules killed, and we not able to make off with our captures on account of the obstruction and dense growth of cedars. Eight wagons, thirty-two mules and sixteen prisoners, Col. Martin had captured, you might say entirely alone. We lost no time in getting them out of the way of recapture. Placing a guard over them, they were started back in a different direction to the one we came.

Going in the direction of what is known as Union Hill, Col. Martin learned of a regiment of Federal cavalry. He thought to capture or disperse them. By rapid marching we were soon near the crest of the hill, and just here we were ordered to charge, not cavalry, but an entire regiment of infantry, who sent a withering volley into our little party. Here I lost the horse referred to—shot in two places. That brave soldier and comrade, John T. Shirley, came back under fire, and carried me out behind him. As we were far into the Federal lines, and the Yankees becoming thoroughly aroused, we lost no time in getting back to camp, there to await orders pending other movements.

In a short while we were ordered to move in the direction of Cumberland river to a more favorable camping ground (Salt Lick Bend), leaving many of the rank and file behind in killed and wounded. I think it was at McMinnville about this time that Col. Martin received the wound through the lung from which he recently died. Maj. Owen assumed command of the regiment, putting the men in the best possible condition. Leaving the convalescents in camp, we began crossing the river into Kentucky. Brushing away a small force of cavalry that opposed us, we reached Green river on the morning of the 4th of July, and had a most spirited engagement with some Michigan troops, who fought from a splendidly constructed fortress. We lost here in killed and wounded fifty or sixty of the brave boys. Among the killed was Col. Chenault. Passing on to Lebanon, Ky., we were soon hotly engaged with and stubbornly resisted by Col. Hanson, a brother of Gen. Roger Hanson of Confederate fame. It was here that Lieut. Tom Morgan was killed, the younger brother of Gen. Morgan, a mere boy, but noted for his daring bravery and his devotion to the cause.

After the capture and paroling of Col. Hanson and his men, we at once began

the march. Reaching Brandenburg, we captured two steamboats—one a United States packet, a magnificent sidewheeler, the Alice Deem. Holding in abeyance a gunboat by the well-directed fire of our artillery until the last man had been ferried over, as we ascended the hill on the Indiana shore, the heavens were lighted by the blaze of this magnificent steamer as it was rapidly reduced to ashes. Never doubting our leaders, Gens. Morgan, Duke and Johnson, we pressed forward to Corydon, to be met by several thousand militia and home guards, who had thrown up breastworks in front of their little city. They, however, were no match for the dauntless Morgan, for soon we were in possession of the town. I shall never forget the abundance of eatables that the good dames had prepared for their patriotic lords, who evidently anticipated a siege of several days' duration.

On, on we swept like the wind, overrunning by sheer audacity all resistance. At Salem bridges, railroads and Government stores were destroyed, amounting to thousands of dollars. Citizens fled in consternation, regarding us as a band of ruffians who would spare them nothing. From every hillside the crack of the rifle was heard as they fired into our jaded ranks. But on, on we swept like some mighty cyclone—from Salem to Vernon, on to Harrison, even into the suburbs of Cincinnati, where the pickets were driven into the city. Traversing three great States, our men were utterly exhausted. Reaching the Ohio, the Federals began to swarm around us like bees, suggestive of a diseased brain with its horrible hallucination of blue devils dancing in their joyous glee amid sulphurous flames. The heroic Gen. Johnson plunged into the Ohio with a few followers, in utter disregard of grape and cannister as it belched forth from the port holes of a gunboat in livid flames. After a lapse of nearly two score years the horrible scene is as vivid as yesterday; horses and men struggling amid-stream, many to sink to rise no more, and we powerless to aid them.

As the capture and imprisonment of Gen. Morgan with most of his command and the indignities heaped upon them are matters of history I will not enter into its details. W. W. Church Hill, Ky.