

“Scouts”

The next scout was in the days of Reconstruction of the State. The members of the Legislature lived in different counties and had to be garded in. This was our business.

We was sent after the one in Montgomery County bey the name of Priddy. He lived between the two Mazarn creeks, west of the Ouachita River. Our horses was in splended fix, so everything went well with us till after we had crossed the Ouachita. We crossed at Fair's oald mill. Here we stopped to noon. I post a gard out on the west hill. Through a opening I sean a bunch of men a-coming and spoak to the Capt. and sed we had better see hoo it was. He toald me to take ten men and meet them at once, so I did. I had served with every one of them in the one year troops and knew all of them well.

They had jest had a fight with the Burk Company that day and had got one of thar men killed. John Cane. I knew him well. So this was another time I was a-greeable surprised. The men went back to camp with me and I introduce them to the Capt., telling him that he could relye on every one of them. I had sean them all tryed and knew what I was talking about. All of the boys went into the company and went back to the Rock with us.

They give us the news in brief, but to proceed. We went from thar to Widow Ferleys. The Capt. camped thar, sending me on after the oald man Priddy. He lived some 5 or 6 milds from thar. I tuck 10 men with me. Bey this time it was vary dark when we got thar. I plast a gard out as pickets, some two hundred yds. from his horse, then went in to see what I could learn about Priddy. I had already learned that he was lying out in the woods and Mrs.

Priddy was vary causious, but after I had satisfide her with hoo I was and my business, she come around and sed he was not fur off and if I would go with her she would take me to him.

She was not willing fur anyone to go with us, so we went alone into one of the roughest thickets in Arkansas. It seamed to me if a possum had struck a trot going through it, he would have lost his hide. So you may be shore our clothes showed they had bin somewhere. The green briars flourished. After falling down and getting up something like a hundred times a peace, she toald me to stop and she would go a-hed and see the oald man. She was gone so long I run out of patients. It seamed to me she had went off and got lost somewhere. I set down and got up and tried to see and, plague the thing, I could not see or hear but in quick succession I heard two guns go off at the house, which was at least a half a mild off. Thar was trouble at the house but I was thar and had to wait on oald lady Priddy.

After a-while she come back and toald me Priddy sed fur me to come to where he was, so I started with her. She was leading the way and as we past a big tree, he ordered me to halt. I was not slow in doing it fur dark as it was I could see the mussel of a double barrel shot gun not more than 5 foot of my head.

I toald him to hold up. He spoke, and sed a man mite pull the wool over his wife's eyes, but they could not fool him. I ask if he was not satisfide. He sed that so fur as he could see it looked like J. N. Jones but my voice was not natural. I ses, "My guess is we are boath scared."

He laughed and sed, "I am satisfied now."

About this time two more guns went off and he ask how many men I had. I toald him 10.

He sed, "John, I can not go without a better gard than that."

I toald him of the company at the widow's house. He sed Burk had killed John Cane and he was afraid he would run on us before we got to the company. While we was talking, two more guns went off. I toald him I had to get back and see about my men, he could come or stay, so he started following me.

The scramble commenst to get back, falling down and getting up to fall again.

We finally got to the house. I toald him to get ready as quick as he could and I would go out and see what was the matter a-hed. I rode out to the picket. The man on post sed two men rode up and when he halted them they fired and run back down the road. They come again and he shot at them.

Priddy was not long getting ready. We made good time getting back to the widow's. We spred down our blankets and was soon a-sleep. The next morning we started fur Little Rock, went through Hot Springs. I was in the advance and thar was six of us, George Petajohn, John and Bob Gibens, also George Biges and my-self. As we were near the Salene, we come face to face with a company of Rebels. I ordered the boys to front face and fire.

Petajohn ses, "Let's charge."

I then ses, "Charge it is."

We drew our pistols and raised the war hoop and commenst shooting. They taken to the woods and scattered in evry direction. In about a half a mild, thar was a creek to cross. One fellow was riding a mule. We pushed him so close he left the mule and went into the creek a-foot. Now, Reader, jest think of a company of men out hunting a fight and let six men stampede the hole company. We got about twenty hats of the Oats Straw variety, the mule and

several guns that they had dropped in the fight. If they ever fired again at us, I don't know it. The company was soon up with us. We had no further trouble.

We did not get to stay in camp long till we was ordered out on another scout. This time we had a regiment of men commanded bey Major Bennet. We were ordered to the Caddo Gap or at least that is where we went. We taken the Benton Road. After we past through Benton some 10 milds, the advance gard was fired on from the brush. Several shots was exchanged and we had one man killed. The Major oredered me to take charge of the advance gard and to keep a sharp lookout, having each side of the road flanked. I rode a-hed to take charge of the men in front, leaving a detail to bary Martin, the man that had been killed.

Jest before I got up with the men, I heard a gun fire, so I tuck off in a hurry to learn what was going on. I saw that Cantrel had bin killed. Oald man Wafford had shot him. Wafford was the meanest looking man I have ever sean. I ask him what he had killed Cantrel fur. He sed it was a grudge, Cantrel had reported him fur being a Union man and had him put in prison and now he was even with him.

I ses, "Like hell you are."

I then asked the boys what had taken place. They toald me Wafford rode up to Cantrel calling him bey his name in a frindly manor. He then ses, "This man I know and I am going to take care of him right now." The boys taken no futher notice till they heard the man call to Wafford not to shoot him. Wafford ses, "I am jest going to snap a cap at you." Before the other boys could prevent him, the gun fired and the man fell dead.

We left Rockport road and turned in the direction

of Hot Springs. We camped near a house which happen to be oald man Wafford's brother's. I had no idea hoo lived thar or we would have by-passed it.

I was getting supper when one of the boys called to me and pointed to oald man Wafford, yelling, "He seys he is going to kill his brother and then he will be satisfied."

I jumped and run with all possible speed I had in me. He was fifty yards a-head and was jest turning around the corner of the smoke house. I dashed into the house jest in time, fur he had his pistol cocked and presented on his brother.

He called his brother bey name, and seys, "I have got you now and will kill you."

I come up from behind and jumped and caught him bey the neck. He dropped the pistol but it didn't go off.

His brother then spoak, and says, "Dave, you wouldn't kill me."

Wafford ses, "If it had not a-bin fur the blasted Lieutenant you would not have ask that fool question."

I then marched him to camp, put two men to gard him, ordering them not to take thar eyes off him.

Here was two oald men, brothers, and from sixty to seventy five years oald, that was at a danger point, and all over political differences. So you see, we had men that was destitute of simpathy or humanity on each side of the question.

That night the Major sent fur me. He asked if I knew where Capt. Stinnett lived. He then toald me to take twelve or fifteen men with me and go and get him and meet him at the Gap. After we had crossed the Ouachita River, I once more taken the north side of the Trap Mountain, dodging all the houses. This

give me one more chance to see my Mother and child, so we taken supper with her, finding her doing vary well. I toald her that we could not stay all night, so we left. It was about fifteen milds and somewhere near midnight when we got thar. I hollowed till I got the oald lady a-wake. I then toald her hoo I was and my business. She sed the Capt. was in Little Rock and she did not know me.

I then ask her if she would know me bey a light. She sed she would. I then toald her to strike a light and I would get down. She lit a candle and set it on a table. I went in and picked it up and asked if she was satisfied. She shook her head. I turn to her daughter that was grone, calling her bey her name. She shook her head. So did the daughter-in-law. I then turned to her, telling her where I had sean her last. She still give me the shake of the head.

I toald them I had little Jessie Osband with me and they would surely know him. I called fur Jessie to come in. He come in as friendly as a shep puppy, shook hands all around. I then asked the oald lady if she was satisfied. She sed it looked like Jessie but he had a twin brother and one was with the Rebel Army and she did not know them a-part. I knew bey then something was wrong or they was giving me the dumb head.

I then asked if Jim Buchanan was home. They sed he was. He lived about a half mild down the road. I toald her if the girls would go with me to Jim's, he would know me. She sed the girls could go if they were a mind to. So they went. Jest before we got thar I stopped the men and me and the girls went a-head. We got to the gate and I called Jim. He and his wife was a-wake talking and they boath sed it had not bin two minutes before I hollowed that he sed he would give a hundred dollars to see me, and

when he heard me, he says, "I will be damnd if that ain't John." Mrs. Buchanan ses, "Hush," and spoak and ses, "You are right."

When he sean the girls he ses, "Hell, you got women with you." He was in his underclouse. I then ask the girls if they was not willing to tell where thar Father was. Thar answer was, "Jim will tell you."

Jim not only toald but went after him, while I taken a nap of sleep.

I think it is necessary to give a brief history of Jim Buchanan. He was strickly Union but when the conscrip law was enforced he went into the Army. He was elected Lut. and had favored the Union men so much that he had lost favor with the officers and they had charges brought against his loyalty to thar cause and he had got a pass far a few days and was at home. Me and Jim had bin members of the same company in the Confederat Army and had bin raised in the same country, had always bin good friends. He went to the Rock with me and stayed till the war closed.

I will also give a short sketch of Mason Stinnett. He was above the avarge in general information. He belong to the Masonic Order and had always bin popular till the war come up. You see how cautious his family garded him. He went to the Rock and come back and commenst laying out again. Thar was a squad of Confederats souldiers disguiseing themselves as Union souldiers and fooled his wife and she went with them to him. They arrested him and marched him afoot to Shreveport, Louisiana and from thar to Tyler, Texas. He was a weak man physically. He kept a diary after he got to the stockade. He give the number of deaths each day and toald how they were exposed to the weather

without a particle of shelter from rain or sun. He wrote till the day before his death, stating that he never expected to be able to write any more. He left his diary with one of the prisoners to send it to his wife. The man kept his word and brought it to Mrs. Stinnett. She gave me the diary to read and it took a harder man than me to read it without shedding tears.

“Pursuit of Burk”

As soon as our horses had eat a bit, we started fur the Gap. We had learned that Burk's Company was at the Gap. Not knowing if our scouts had got thar or not, I was not willing to take a lot of men thar to be slaughtered. I only had ten men that was armed. We had picked up several recruits that did not have any kind of weapon. So when we got close I hid the men in the bresh and toald them I would go alone and see what I could learn. Brother Joe would not hear to this so he went with me. We crossed the river below the mill and went at good half-racehorse speed to the mill. I asked two oald men and some boys if they had heard of any scouts of either side. They sed not. I sean two men coming down the road so I toald Joe to meet them and see what he could learn from them. He come back and sayd they knew of no scouts. I ask the boys if they knew where Burk was camped. They sayd they did not know. They all gave us the lye because Burk's Company was in half a mild and as soon as we left thar was a runner sent to them, telling Burk that me and Joe had bin at the mill inquiring fur them. They got up and went about six milds and hid in the mountains. Burk was not with his company at that time. They sent fur him when they were safe from Federal bullets and no doubt feeling good.

Burk toald me after the war that he shamed his men fur letting the sight of two men run them in, hiding out like a wolf from hounds. Burk was a brave man. He taken the mountain and led the men back.

Bey this time the Federals had got thar and put out thar gards. Burk run onto them and thar was several shots passed. Bey this time it was dark. Joe

and me was a little scurry, we had two forty-fore six-shooters a peace. We had jest got back to the boys when we heard the guns. I was satisfied our scouts had got thar so we all started fur the gap. When we got to where we thought the firing was, I halted the boys and toald them I would go alone and let the pickets know hoo was coming. I was afraid if we all went up we stood a good chance to be fired on bey our own men. This worked out fine. They drew in thar picket and I went back after my men.

Burk had got on the point of the Mountain and sean me, thinking the pickets was below and I would be coming back purty soon. He had two men with him and they would step down near the road and take me prisnor. When I come back I had the boys with me so that idea was knocked in the head. Burk was lying under a little sireaty holla tree, not more than twenty feet from the road. What a capture I could have had.

We got here all safe, the command had bin bushwacked the day before and had been delayed. That night I woke up and sean a loose horse and someone trying to ketch it. I finally sean them get a hoalt of it, so I turned over fur another nap saying to one of the boys, "That man put me in the mind of Burk."

He ses, "You have Burk on the brain."

The next morning we woke up to find thar was a half a dozen horses and that many haulters missing, seven or eight hats, so Burk was in our camp all-right. He slipped in between our pickets, taking the boy's hats, and got away with the best nag in our company.

The next day we only went about five or six milds and camped on Collins Creek. We was fired on from the mountain that night.

The Major sent for me. He asked me if I was acquainted with the road. I told him I had traveled it one time and there was a gap to go through and a bluff on the right of the road that would give the enemy a big advantage. He said he wanted me to take a few men and cross the mountain and come up on the other side. I told him that I was not willing to go with less men than it would take to whip the great Burk's Company. (I said to myself, I aimed to whip them out once and for all) for if I crossed the mountain and ran onto Burk's Company and got in a fight, he could not reinforce me and I would be forced to retreat unless I was able to stand my ground with him.

How many men did I want, said the Major. I wanted anywhere from fifty to seventy five, not nary one short. He said I should have them. •

The next morning I crossed the Mountain. We traveled along the top, getting up close to the gap. When one of the boys stopped and pointed to a man looking over the top of the mountain, he saw us about the same time and broke for his horse. Just as he mounted, I fired on him. His horse fell but he went on. I told the boys it was Burk himself. We pursued him to his men but they never stopped to shoot at us. We fired a few shots at them at long range. Some of our boys ran onto some bush-whackers and got two or three men pretty badly wounded, so we did not go far till we camped.

The next morning we were delayed with the wounded. I had again been detailed to go in the advance. Just as I had got my orders, Capt. Smith came up and asked me if I was detailed to go ahead. When I answered that I was, he said he was detailed to bring up the rear and he would like to change places with me if it was all right with the Major. So

he went a-hed and I had to wait till my gard was mounted. About a half a mild a-hed thar was a creek to cross. The road went into the creek then turned down the creek fur forty or fifty yards and it was pointing right to a bluff.

We did not leave the creek till it got in thirty or forty yards of the bluff. On top thar was a log and the Rebs had cut bushes and stuck them in the ground in front and behind of the log. They lay concealed and when the men all got into the creek with thar horses drinking, they fired on them with shotguns. I had jest mounted my horse to take charge of the rear gard when I heard the guns a-head. The Major ordered me to support the advance at once, so we struck a lope fur the front. We soon met Capt. Smith. I spoak to him and he raised his head and commence falling off his horse. i cought him bey the shoulders and we went to the ground together. He was dead before I could get him straitened out. This was bey far the deadest valley I ever knew. Thar was not a man but what had bit hit. Some was mear scraches, so that was one time I made a good trade. I went a-hed and found the log where they were concealed. We left our horses and scouted round through the woods but found no one. The Major come out and sed he

Headquarters Detachment Seventh Army Corps

Col. A.H. Ryan, Little Rock, Ark., April 11, 1864

Comdg. Fourth Arkansas Cavalry, Lewisburg, Ark.;

Sir: The general commanding directs that you order Second Lieut. John N. Jones, of your regiment, to proceed in command of a scout of 75 men, to be detailed by you and properly officered, to Hot Springs County, on a special duty, in which he is instructed by the proper person. He wishes the detail to start at the earliest practicable moment. He orders that no houses be burnt by them and no property destroyed, but he wishes them to secure all guerrillas and bush whackers who may fall in their way.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant.

E.D. Mason,
Assistant Adjutant-General.

was satisfied that Shelby's hole brigade of Masouria troops was between us and the Rock. We would have to fight every step of the way. He ordered me to take the advance from thar on.

I ses, "Major, you have nine Captains in this command. Why not put one of them in advance? They are suppose to be smart a-nuff, am I right?"

He ses, "Jones, you know the country and the kind of men that we have to deal with. Damn it, you are the only qualified man I've got to do it. Lieutenant Jones, you go in advance and that's an order."

It was late before the Regiment got ready to move. While we was waiting, the Rebs slipt up on the rear gard and fired on them, wounding two or three men.

Reader, I am not much of a hand to believe in fate, but providence or good luck favored me that day. Thar I was shifted from place to place and never sean a Reb all day long.

The next day thar was forty men detailed to go with me. I had all the suspicious places flanked and everything went off all rite. That night I toald the Major I thought he was wrong about thar being any force a-hed of us, cause I had examined every cross road and trail and had sean no sight of a body of men.

Thar was a high rocky ridge running parroled with the road. I sent twenty men to come up on the other side of it. They jumped a lot of bushwackers that thought they were surrounded. The wackers jumped and run fur thar life and the boys fired a few shots at them to hurry them a-long.

When we got to the Rock, I went to the Major and toald him I wanted absence of leave fur a few days. I went and stayed with my wife fur ten days. This was

the only time I had ever got to be with her except for a day at a time, so I sure enjoyed this time but it soon had to come to a close.

Defense of the Rock

About this time General Sterling Price made his last raid into Missouri. In order to get by with his Infantry, he sent his Cavalry in the direction of the Rock, crossing the Arkansas River unmolested between the Federal garrisons at Little Rock and Fort Smith. They made the Federals believe that they was a-going to attack the place. They swarmed around the Rock and fired on all the pickets for three or four days.

I was sent out on the Benton Road. The outpost was station where the road forked, one turning to the left going to Pine Bluff. Thar was a oald field here that had bin turned out. It had grown up in pine bushes a little higher than a man's head. I had strick orders to keep a sharp lookout and in case of being attacked to report at once, but to hold my position at all hazard till I was reinforst.

The first night jest before day the picket was fired on bey eight or ten guns. I sent a Sargent with about half the men to reinforce the picket. I fell back to where thar had bin a house burnt down. The stone fence was something like a half achor and was still standing. As soon as I got the boys inside of this wall, I went to the front. The Rebs would come up through the bushes and fire at us then change places, so I drew the men in out of the gun-shot of the oald field then sent in a report of what I had dun. We had got no man hurt and only two horses shot so I was well pleased. The men was what counted to me.

The next morning I thought I would scout around a little and see how many tracks I could see. I was riding a good horse and had not got more than a quarter of a mild when two men stept into the road

and sed halt, jest like I didn't have sence a-nuff to stop. After seeing them, I jest had time to duck my head and two guns went off. I turned and went back the road in front of thar bullets, and why they did not get thar target I will never know. The scoundrels was not satisfied with two shots. They kept shooting jest like I was not riding fast a-nuff to suite them. The boys had a good laugh at me, saying I would make a good race rider and I had better take my own orders not to go out alone again. I never let any of my boys ride alone if I could help it.

One of the scouts come in and sed he had sean a thousand or fifteen hundred men coming in that direction, so I sent a man with him and toald them to make thar report to General Steel. That evening a little before sun-down the relief gard come out with fifty men, carrying a note from General Steel telling me to take charge of the men fur the night and report prompt if attacked bey any force of consequence.

I posted out the picket, instructing them not to let anyone come nearer than 100 yards before he halted them, and in case they were fired on I would reinforce them at once. The first part of the night I turned everything over to the Sargent and I tried to sleep. But I guess I was scared fur the more I tried to sleep the wider a-wake I got, so I got up and toald yarns with the other boys that could not sleep. About mid-night we thought we would try fur a nap when thar was eight or ten guns went off in quick succession at the outpost.

My eyes flew wide open and I could feel my hair trying to punch my hat off. I had to do some quick thinking so I sent the Sargent with part of the men to the front and I roused the rest of the men and got

ready fur a fight. It seamed that the Rebels would come up every twenty minutes and fire and then fall back. At daybreak they could not be sean and General Steel was sending a ordley every half hour to get the news. I was kept busy sending notes back, expecting anything to bust wide open at any minute.

When day come I lay down and taken a nap of sleep. After being up fur two days and nights, after these scares, thar was no wonder that my hair was getting gray. (I got white-headed very young. So did most of the other boys. We used to kid each other about our white hair.) I was so worn out I wrote a note to the General stating that I had bin on picket two days and nights and wanted to be relieved. He wrote back to me stating that he knew his business, that he had the right man in the right place and I had orders to stay thar until futher notice.

I thought to myself, "You need one of your nine smart Cpts. here, General."

So I was in fur another night wondering where to place the men to the best advantage. Jest after dark I was relieved bey a Capt. from the third Missouri Regiment. Luck was with me once more, fur this Capt. had a battle to fight and got several men killed.

While this was going on around the Rock, General Sterling Price was crossing his men above the Rock fur his last raid into Missouri.

I will pass over several scouts and will speak of but one more as thar is something that happen on this scout that I will mention futher on.

This scout was commanded bey Col. Moore. We went to the Caddo Gap bey the way of Hot Springs. When we got a half mild of the Springs we was fired

on or at least the advance guard was and we were ordered to charge. We went pell-mell down through the valley but the Rebs had made good their escape. After we got through town, we came to a halt and on looking back I saw several houses burning. Hoo set them a-fire I don't know. Both sides has bin accused of burning the town while we were stopped. Lut. Spiva was wounded and no one saw where the shot come from.

Here we taken the Murfreesboro Road, striking the Caddo River some distance below the Gap. We went by Capt. Burk's house. He lived on a creek called Caney. I was in command of the rear guard that day.

We had to pass around a little mountain before we got to Burk's house. Burk's Company fired on the advance and wounded the Bugler. I was something like a half a mile behind. As I was coming around the barn, I saw a man coming with a chunk of fire. I ask what he was going to do. He said Burk had killed our Bugler and they ought to burn up everything on the place. I ordered him to get on his horse and catch up with the command and if I caught him behind any more I would report him.

I saw a horse hitched at the gate. The gate was open so I spurred my horse and rode right up to the door. Mrs. Burk was quarling with a man in the house. He was threatening to burn the place up. I told him to get out of there and catch up with the command, his orders was not to make war on the women and children and he should be ashamed of himself, I was going to report him as soon as possible.

I had known Mrs. Burk when she was a girl but it had bin several years since I had seen her, so I never let on to know her and had no idea that she

would recognize me.

Burk come in to see how the Feds had treated his wife and children. She ses if it had not have bin fur the man that was in charge of rear gard, everything they had would have bin burnt. She turned to me and sed, "You put me in mind of J. N. Jones that I knew when we were young, before the war."

I ses, "You have a good memory, Missus Burk."

We passed a few words then I had to leave. Since I was in a settlement that I knew everybody, I called on most of the people to get the news and as thar was nothing more that I recollect of importance taken place on this scout I will pass on. We got back to the Rock all right, so I will commence to wind up my part of this unholy war.