

“Union Army”

When we got in, we organised a company of twelve more troops. The boys wanted me to run fur Capt. I toald them Lut. was all I wanted, so I was elected 1st Lut. Sam Weaver was Capt. John Mitchell was 2nd Lut. Thar was a Brigade ordered to go to Princeton. I was detailed to go with them. I was put in the advance with twenty five men. Everything went well till we got to Rockport. Having herd thar was a company of Confederate thar, we were ordered to make a saber charge on the town.

I had a fine horse but had bin toald he would run away the first time a horse come loping up be-hind him. I liked him and thought I could manage him. I now had a test. When the Sabors commenst trotting behind him, he taken bits in his teeth and lit out down the road fur town. Away we went. I was a hundred and fifty yards a-hed. He never stopped till he had went through town. I then got him turned back up another street and met the boys as they were coming in. I think I could safely say I was the worst scared man that ever went to Rockport. As good luck would have it, thar was no rucus thar, so we camped here fur the night.

Thar was a house pointed out to me to camp my men around and tie our horses picets around the yard fence. I sean that the lady was scared. I toald her that I would protect her and see that she was not harmed in any way. She sed she did not have food fur all the men but asked me to have supper with her. I thanked her and toald her I always stayed with the boys.

I was sorry far this lady as she did not know what

to do. She was afraid to stay, and if she went off she was afraid the soldiers would steal everything she had.

“You can do as you please about that, but I toald you that I would protect you and I ment all I sed. If you stay or go I will see that nothing you have is molest. I’ll gard you as I would a sister.”

How can you gard this place? The men can climb the fence any where they want too.

I toald her I had a couple of men that I would let sleep at her door. No one would go in or out and they would not go in themselves.

She ses, “If you have men you know you can trust, I will stay.”

So I put two of the best boys thar to sleep. Her name was Mrs. Baley. She was a widow. The next morning I ask her if she had lost anything. If she had she had not found it out and she thanked me very kindly.

Early the next morning we were off fur Princeton. We stopped jest long enuff the next night to get supper and let our horses rest. Jest before daybreak we run on to thar pickets. They fired on us, then fell back to the top of the hills and give us another volley. They kept this up fur five milds, firing on us from the top of each hill.

Thar was one man riding a white horse and every time he shot the ball would whistle prity close to us. So I toald one of the men to hold his fire fur the white horse man, so he did. When I sean him coming to the road, I toald my man to get ready. He got down and put his gun across his horse’s back. As the man threw the gun to his place, my man fired at him. At the crack of the gun, he come vary-near falling off of his horse. When we got to the place where his gun was lying, it had bin struck on the

breech and was still loaded. I taken the gun, thinking I would shoot it back at them, but this was the last stand they made till they got to thar command.

As we come in sight, they were across a creek from me. Thar was a oald field running down the creek on the side that I was on. Here I stopped and wrote a note to the Commander, stating I had come in sight of thar incampment but I didn't think it prudent to go any futher without more men. The Col. sent up a company and a Capt. to take charge.

The Capt. sed we were ordered to dismount and skirmish with them till the Army could be brought up. He give me a choice in sides of the road. I was not long in taken choices fur I thought I could see where the main fight would be and I didn't want to kill anybody or get killed. I taken the side where I thought was the least danger. We deployed out our skirmish line then had to advance across the oald field till we was fired on. While I was talking to the boys, one of them commence throwing up so I got another man to take his place.

I then toald the boys what I thought was best far us to do. I wanted all of them to follow me and I was not going to stop till I got to the timber. I knew we would be fired on before we got thar but we was not going to stand out in a open place to be shot at. I wanted them to regulate thar gate to mine. The nearer I got to them the faster I would run. I would get as near as I could to center and fur them to keep well scattered out.

We started and, jest as we struck the edge of the timber, they fired on us. I sean a beach tree a-head of me so I made far it. The balls kept braking the tree every time I stuck my head out. I could see no one far some time and wondered where everybody

went.

I had the gun we had picked up in the road and I finally seen a man loading his gun. I thought I would try and get him before he got me. I hunkered down bey the side of the tree. I thought I would try fur him with my oald cut-off musket. He finally showed his head. I pulled down on him.

The gun flew out of my hands, coming back over my head with the muzzel sticking in the ground, the breech from me. Some of the boys asked if my gun had busted. I sed I didn't know, but the hole side of my face was skinned.

The command come up and charged into the Rebs. They did not make any fight, only on the creek. Thar tran was captured, was about 200 took prisoner. I got up and went bey the tree where the man was that I had shot at. He was not thar and I was proud of it. I did not want to kill him.

The Capt. that had taken the other side of the road had got several men killed. I was lucky, I got nary one hurt. Me and the Capt. taken no part in the fight, only on the skirmish line, so we stade in camp till the command returned.

The Rebs had left thar breakfast on the fire cooking. It was nice far us. We enjoyed thar roast beef and potatoes before we turned far the Rock. I was put in charge of the Rear Gard all the way back.

When we got back to Rockport, we were ordered to camp on the same places we had as we went down. When we rode up to widow Baley, thar was a couple of fine horses hitched to the gate.

She come out and sed, "If I had known you was a-coming back, my horses would not have bin here far you to lead off in the morning."

I ask her if she wanted them led off.

She ses, "No, I do not."

I then sed, "They will not unless it is your will."
She then ses, "I know they are as good as gone."
I am not in the habit of disputing a lady's word.
"I promised you protection when I was here before.
It is with you to say whether I give it to you or not
this time."

She then simmered down, and sed, "You give it
and I am under many thanks to you far it." She ask
me to put the same men at her door to sleep.

I toald her I would.

The next morning when we got ready to go, I ask
her if she had lost anything. She sed that she had
not missed a thing and went on to say thar never had
bin a Scout of her own people camped in town but
what she had lost something, and, "If you ever
camp here again, I want you to camp your men as
you have this time."

When we got back, thar was three Companys
made up. All most all of them was one-year men.
Uncle Willis Jones had his commission as Major.
All of the boys was proud far him and liked to have
him as thar commmander. We stade at Rockport till
after Christmas, then I was sent to Dardanell to
recruit. I stade here a month before the rest come. I
dun very little good recruiting while I was here.

One day I saw a man eyeing me very close. I
walked off from him and in a little while I noticed
him again. He come up and spoke, seying he had
sean me somewhere and asked my name and where
I lived. When toald, he then asked if I ever had bin
in that country before. I toald him I had bin through
thar in the Confederat Army. He then asked me if I
didn't once pass some corn from a man up on Fort
Smith road. I toald him that I had. He then sed that
he was the man. I sed I hated to take that corn all
most as much as he hated to let me have it.

He sed, "I am aprised of that."

In a few days he was back in town, come up and shuck hands with me and sed he had a message from his wife to me.

I ask, "What in the world?"

"She wants you to set the day and bring one or two friends, she will make the best chicken pie she can."

It is needless to say, I went and a better family I never got acquainted with. All fur doing the right thing.

As I am writing this fur the benefit of my grandchildren, I tell this to show the importance of doing right in little things. All far making that soldier put down that chicken and behaving himself, I got to spend many pleasant days with that nice family.

Brother Against Brother

Capt. Conley lived out on Petit Jean Mountain. He had a company and we had got a report that he was home, so Capt. Weaver and me had orders to bring him in. We started jest at dark and rode all night, got thar jest a little before day. We divided the company. I taken charge to go around Conley's house and come up on the opposite side. Me and my men got our position jest before daylight. We waited till daylight then charged on the house.

Mrs. Conley met us at the gate and sed we was a cowardly set of soldiers from the North. "You layed around and watched till my husband left, then charged up when you knew thar was no danger."

I toald her I was a lover of brave women. If she was left a widow, I was going to call on her. She sed she would see me in hell before she would have a man that had on a suit of blue clothes. I toald her she had dun and ruin herself with me. I wanted morals and sympathy with bravery.

She sed, "You are trying to let on like you are so damd nice. I've sean your kind before. You're not worth a damd."

Capt. Weaver come up with his men. Learning that Capt. Conley had left at four that morning, we started back. Thar had bin traps laid to ketch Federals. Once in a while I would slip out and bring in a bunch.

Capt. Weaver and his men planned a sham battle, not letting me or my men know anything about it.

We heard the firing a-head and rushed up to find Capt. Weaver in line of battle with a-part of his men a-hed shooting like they were hard press. Weaver toald me to take a part of the men and go a-head. Soon as the boys sean me coming, they turned and

here they come toward me. I could hardly stop them. I began to question them. They sed it was Capt. Conley's hole company.

I got them to face a-bout and rode back to where they had sean Conley. They sed they had left the road and had gone cross over the hill. So I tuck off fur the hill and I never sean a track. I turned to the boys and sed, "If they crossed this hill, they flew, cause they have failed to make any tracks."

The boys ses, "You passed over them."

"You can't make me believe that. I would not have passed over the trail of 75 or 100 men and not have sean it."

Then the boys sed it was a shame fur us to charge back to the road without finding a track, but I saw no use in going on. When we got back, it was plain to see the others was excited. Capt. Weaver and his men had quite a laugh out of us.

The last day of January me and 2nd Lt. John Mitchell was ordered to go on a scout. The object was to recruit. I was to go to Clark County then to Pike County. We had about 50 men, 25 a piece. It was 125 milds inside of the Confederat lines, with three companys of home gards to pass. Capt. Conley, Joe Head, and Burk's company.

We kept together till we crossed the Ouachita. We crossed about half way between Mount Ida and the Ceder Glades. When we separated, it was twelve o'clock noon. Each of us had about 40 milds to go.

Most of my men lived on the Ouachita and as we would pass near their homes they would drop out. We had a day and place set fur us all to get together again. Me and Joe lived the futherst south of any of them. Thar had bin a harican and bey going through it we could save half the distance. We were with-in

three miles of home.

We got to Mother's place fine. She was so glad to see us that we was all right but sed that we had better put our horses behind the barn as Conley, Joe Head and Burk were all three in that part of the country and she was afraid far us.

The next day we got a lady friend to go around and notify our friends that we were home, and to find out what was goin on. She come back with the news that the day we crossed the Ouachita at twelve o'clock, Burk's company camped thar that night and the next morning taken our trail, but as the men kept dropping out and Joe and I cut through the woods they had lost it.

We heard somebody coming, looked out and it was our brother Alford. He was a member of Burk's company. Carrol Simpson was riding with him. Alford picked up our tracks jest before he got to Mother's gate and he found where we hitched our horses and walked through the house. He knew at once that it was Joe and me.

He toald Mother he knew we were thar and he and Simpson wanted to see us and have a friendly talk. He sed he was going to brother Willis's and would be back that night, fur her to get us word.

I was sorry far my mother. Here she had two sons that was with the Northern Army and one that was with Burk's Company. All of us was out to get each other if we carried out our orders.

I toald Mother to tell Alford thar was nothing but peace that would suite me better than to meet them like brother to brother. She sed she would have supper fur us but she did not want any trouble between her sons.

When we sean them coming, we mounted our horses and rode down to meet them at the gate. We

all shuck hands, was so good to see them. We all went in and set down to the table. Mother was overjoyed to see us once more at the table, laughing friendly and joking with each other. Alford ask me if they were in any danger of being captured bey the Fed's. I toald him not in the least. I then asked if his Co. was out to get us. He ses not from him, but thar was others he could not vouch fur. I then toald him the danger was all around all of us, but I wanted to spend the night with him if he and Simpson would go with us into the woods.

We built a big pine-not fire and talked all night. We were hid deep into a hollow. I tried to show them the war was all most to a end but they could not see it as I did.

Alford's clouses had give out. He was always a man that went well dressed. I was sad to see him in this shape. Joe swoped hats with him and I give him a pair of good boots fur his worn out shoes. I also give him a gun and a blanket. I had brought a good lot of powder and lead with me. Simpson, seeing this, proposed to bey some of it.

I then sed, "If you had-of ask me fur a divide of my money, you would have got it, but you are not able to bey one load of my powder."

Simpson come and tuck my hand and ses, "John, I ought to have known you better than to have asked you fur it." He then ses, "John, do you fully realize the danger you are in? Thar is a Federal scout down in this country and every road will be watched. Your chance is prity slim to get out of here and you are too good a man to throw your life away."

I then toald him not to worry, I would get out. Simpson was the ex-sheriff of Montgomery County. We all shuck hands and parted, not knowing but that the next time we met it would be in battle. I

could not keep from shedding tears as they rode off, and I think they were doing the same thing.

Joe and me were in bad need of sleep, so we spread our blankets down for a nap. It was getting late and was time for our lady friend to make another report to us. Joe said that he would go and get it. I made some excuse to him that I would not be there when he got back.

Molly, Darling

As soon as Joe left, I started for the widow Ded-willey's. When I got there, they were eating supper, so I set down and helped devour a fine lot of milk and bread. The old lady told me some one had killed the last meat hog she had on her place, her mill was burned down and she could see nothing ahead but starvation. I had a little money and when I got ready to leave, I told Molly I wanted to make her a present of ten dollars. She said that she could not accept it. I ask why. It would give the people something to talk about. I said to hell with the people and went to the old lady and offered it to her, but she refused to take it, saying she could not use it. I set down to think a minute.

Here was the only woman that I knew that I was willing to take as a partner for life and she was likely to suffer for something to eat, and I could not assist her. I thought I would go and make her a proposition, that we get married the next night. I remembered Molly had said that she would not marry me till the war was closed and we could be together. I had told her that too, but under the circumstances, I was willing to take it all back.

So I got up and told her I wanted to talk with her a few minutes, and we walked off a few feet behind the house.

She said, "You almost scare me, John. I never seen so much determination pictured on one countenance in my life."

I said I guess it done me full justice. I commenced to tell her the conclusion I had come to.

She said, "But we agreed we would not as much as talk about marriage till the war is over."

"That's all true, but now I am willing to take it all

back. It does seam to me it is the best thing we can do. If you think a-nuff of me as a pardner fur life, I want you to be honest with your-self. If you don't, then this is your time to say no."

She sed, "If the war was over, I would not hesitate a minute, but it would be hard fur me to loose two husbands."

I ses, "Let us hope fur the best. If I am killed, you loose me anyway."

She then ask a few questions, and sed, "I will leave everything to you."

So it was settled that we get married the next night.

At that time a marrage license was not required, and my oauld friend John Wright was jestices of the peace. So as I went back to camp, I went by and called him up about 2:00 o'clock in the morning. He ses, "John, you know it would cost me my life if it got out on me. All I ask is to keep it a secret."

I got back to camp about day-lite, lay down and tuck a nap. Several of the boys had come in. I had a cousen among the bunch, so I toald him I was going to have a little fun and wanted him to go with me. He a-greed to that. So I turned everything over to Joe.

Me and the cousen struck out. We had eight milds to go. He ask where we was going. I toald him jest to have fun. I had him lost before we got thar. We rode as close as we could, then I toald him that we would leave our horses in that thicket and go a-foot. I ask him if his pistol was in good fix. I could see the light in the house, so we went up and nocked. The door was open.

Molly was seting at the back of the room and a chair was seting by her. I went strate to her and set down. Wright asked if we were ready? Soon as I

could unbelt two forty-four six-shooters and Wright could say a vary short ceremony, we was pronance man and wife. My cousen never had the least idea that he was going to a weddin till I taken my seat. He promest to keep everything mum. Wright did not stay five minutes after I got thar, afraid he would be caught.

(Now Reader, think about this; A man going to get married having to slip through the country like a crimnal. Going to marry one of the best women in the country, you can call this love or sympathy, bad judgement or any other name you please. I taken this woman without a dollar, instead of a rich young beautiful widow on the Arkansas River that had a farm of 200 achors.)

I went back to camp and aimed to start back the next day, but it commence snowing vary fast. We had to get up forage fur our horses while the snow was falling cause we could make no tracks in the snow fur somebody to follow us. All hands comenst to prepair. Before night we had four day's rations a-head. The boys had also killed two nice deer, so by night we was in good shape.

The snow was three or four inches deep and still snowing fast. I turnd evry thing over to Joe and at dark struck out to see Molly. I went afoot and cut across into the woods, and past the snow. It fell so fast I would have to turn and walk backwards to get it out of my face so I could see.

They were setting up and had a pot of good coffee. I shur enjoyed it. I toald Molly that I had come to stay with her till the snow melted off. She seam to be pleased to see me. It was risking a good deal. I stayed four days before the snow melted.

One day while I was here, I sean a man coming. I watched out the window till I could tell hoo he was.

It was Uncle Alford Ewing. He had heard I was in and had bin to see Mother to find out where I was. She had sent him to Molly's.

When he nock, I sed, "Come in," and set a chair fur him at the fire.

He ses, "Young man, ain't you resking a good deal, staying here like this?"

I toald him I was keeping a prity close watch, and vary good company. I could see that he was resless. As soon as he drank a cup of coffee, he then sed that he wanted to talk with me and he did not want to stay in the house. I thought I ought to get to safer quarters, so toald him to go out the front way, I would go thru the patch and meet him.

Soon as we met, he ses, "John you and Molly is shore to get married some time purty soon."

I remarked, "Never."

He sed, "You can't fool me. You love her and she loves you. You could do no better. She is vary prity and the smartist woman in the country."

"I admit all of that, but we will never marry. She an't fur me."

It was two months before Uncle Alford knew the difference.

Well, the time come. I had to bid Molly bood-bey, telling her I had to go and she would hear from me evry chance I had. I give her some money and toald her to take good care of herself.

When I got back to camp, Mother had sent word that thar was eight men that had started to go to the Federal Army but the snow had cougth them and they were wanting to get with me. They were hiding out in the woods. I had to ride eight milds or more to get to them. I toald them we would start that night and they were welcome to come along. So I headed back to the boys, making the trip through the woods

on my way back.

I met oald man Jessie Carpenter on the way back to camp. He had a nephew that was a fool Confedert soldier that was going to kill some one or get killed. Carpenter wanted me to take him out of the country. I toald the oald man that I would come and get him that night.

When I got back to camp, the boys had every thing ready to hed for Dardanelle. As soon as my horse could eat, we started. When we got opposite oald man Carpenter's place, me and Weaver went bey to gobble up the nephew. We stood outside the door fur a while and listen at his wild tales before we went in on him. I toald Weaver I wasn't sure jest what we had caught in this trap. They lived in an old fashion log house with a door on each side. I went in one door and Weaver in the other. I threw the door open and toald Weaver to search him.

The oald man Carpenter begin to beg fur his nephew, letting on like he did not know hoo I was. He was begging me to be good to him. The prisnor was the worst scared man I have ever sean. He thought I was going to hang him and I'm not sure he didn't desserve it. He sed all of them yarns was lies, how bad he had bin. By the time we got to camp, he had down-graded him-self to a snake's level.

When we got up to where the boys were, one of them yelled, "Did you get him?"

He put up the best prayer of his life fur me not to let them hang him. I promest he would be treated as a prisnor of war, provided he did not try to get away. If he did he would be so full of lead he would not be able to carry it off.