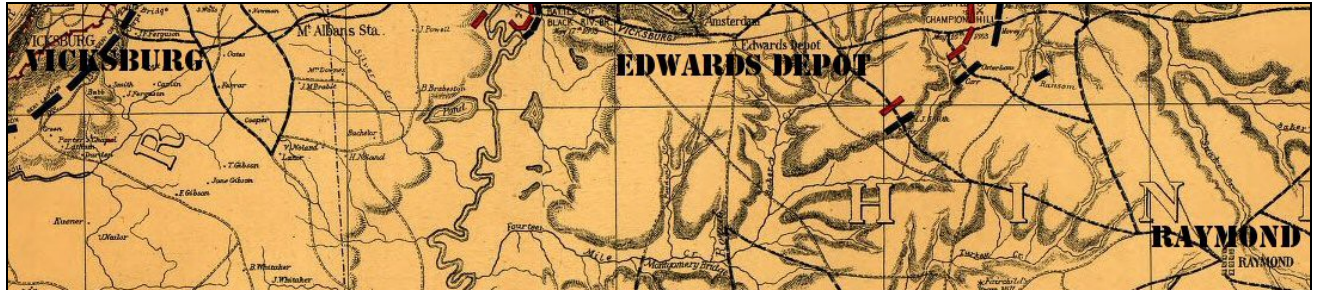


Action Against Vicksburg

Portion of map from National Archives: [Map of the country between Millikens Bend, La. and Jackson.](#)



Private **Henry Lucas**, Co G, from his pension papers

Captain William G. Myers wrote that Henry and others were burned by explosion of shells or powder dropped by the enemy **while marching from Raymond to the rear of Vicksburg**, died from those wounds two weeks later on 1 June 1863 near Vicksburg, MS. Another report said that the burn was received by the premature explosion of powder near Champion Hills, MS on 18 May 1863.

Siege of Vicksburg, Miss. 18 May to 4 July 1863

The 120th Ohio took part 19 - 23 May and then were ordered to Black River Bridge, MS.

"Skirmishers in the Woods on the Advance to Vicksburg" [Sketch from the book Battles and Commanders of the Civil War : a graphic and pictorial history prepared directly from the government records in the Departments of War and Statistics, by Frank Leslie and Marcus J. Wright, 1902 and 1906, page 521]



Diary of Henry S. Sherman, nephew of Gen. W. T. Sherman, Sergeant Major, 120th Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry, 9th Division, 13th Army Corps [Henry was in company A when he wrote the following. He had been promoted to Sergt. Major from Private on 26 Sep 1862. Contributed by descendant David Carter.]

18 May 1863 [Monday] [Note: Raymond is about 12 miles from Edwards. Edwards is about 18 miles from Vicksburg going west.]

"Left Raymond about 7 O'clock A. M. with orders to march night and day until we joined our Division in the front [at Vicksburg]. We took our prisoners (250) with us to deliver them at **Edwards Station**. We marched all day (leaving our prisoners at Edwards about 3 P. M.) and about 11 P. M. we were compelled from fatigue to rest two or three hours, having marched about twenty-five miles during the day."

19 May 1863 [Tuesday]

"Started [marching] again about 4 A. M. and about 11 A. M. arrived at the Division almost worn out. ... After about a half hours rest we started towards the front and were deployed on the crest of a ridge about two miles from the enemy's line of entrenchment. In about a half hour, about 9 A. M. the whole Division advanced in line of battle about a mile in an oblique direction and meeting with no opposition. We were halted on the crest of another ridge where we received the first fire of the enemy. The 116th Ills. came very near breaking when a shell flew near them. When the shells came near and fast we advanced a short distance under cover of a ravine. Here we lay for above an hour when we received orders for the whole division to make a charge on the batteries in front. We all moved up on the ridge in front and started with a yell on the double quick. Over gullies and ridges, up hills and down valleys, through canebrakes and undergrowth, and over open ground we gallantly charged, Gen. Lee leading in person. All at once we received a galling fire of shell, grape, canister and solid shot, Sergt. Major MacKey being slightly wounded."

[Note: Sergeant Major John Mackey, 120th, "was struck on the shoulder by a fragment of a shell which caused him to retire from the field, being unable to use his sword."

Wooster Republican, 1 Dec 1870, page 1]

"Here the 118th for a second time broke and refused to go any further. Our men, although they had marched 35 miles since the morning before and had had nothing to eat since the dinner yesterday, still kept far in advance of the others and after we halted, when we found we could not take the place, had the satisfaction of being highly complimented by Gen. Lee for our bravery shown in this charge. While lying in this ravine I was sent with a message to Genl Osterhaus that a large body of Cavalry was going out to the right of the enemy's position probably to flank us, and which was afterwards found out to be wrong. While I was thus engaged, Gen. Lee was wounded in the head, a piece of shell striking him near the cheek bone and coming out near his ear. He left the field immediately. His wound was serious though not dangerous. Col. Spiegel was also struck on the knee with a small piece of the same shell but only bruising him slightly. After dark we moved back a short distance under cover of a ravine where we remained all night."

20 May 1863 [Wednesday]

"Moved towards [?forwards] into a ravine about one quarter of a mile nearer the enemy's works about 1 o'clock P. M. Here we advanced one company towards the brow of the hill as sharpshooters. About dark some good news came along the lines and we gave three good old 'Buckeye' cheers which was answered by an angry volley of rifles from the pits in front and by their heavy shells which did us no harm. After dark we went back to our old camping ground leaving our skirmishers as pickets. During the latter part of the day our skirmishers were very close under the forts and many were the taunts passed on both sides. Our boys cheering for 'Black Bridge', 'Thompsons Hill', &c. and the Rebels for Jeff. Davis, &c."

22 May 1863 [Friday]

"About 8 o'clock we took up our old position in the ravine. At ten o'clock a charge of the whole army was ordered and at the sound of the bugle started. In our charging column, the 7th Kentucky led the van [?advance], 118th Ill. next and 120th behind. It was a terrible charge. A perfect hurricane of bullets and grape met our advance on the ridge of the hill and the 118th was unable to stem the torrent and so fell back. The 7th went over in part only, and they were unable to do anything after they were over. We lay in the ravine all day and evening."

23 May 1863 [Saturday]

"This morning we moved back to the old ravine and being relieved from duty lay quiet all day. In the eve. rec'd orders to prepare to move back to Black river early tomorrow morning. Witnessed about 9 o'clock P. M. the throwing shells from the mortars. It was a most magnificent sight as they came sailing in a perfect arc of a circle over the town leaving their small train of light behind."

[Portion of Map, Vicksburg Missp. and the Rebel Batteries 1863, at National Archives online, by Robert Knox Sneden] Notice on the map where it says 13th Corps and Osterhause on the southeastern side of Vicksburg.



Letter from **Marcus Spiegel** at Headquarters 120th OVI in the field at Black River Bridge, Mississippi, 27 May 1863, written to Col. James Kegwin, Commanding 1st Brigade 9th Div. 13th Army Corps

I have the honor to submit here with the following report of the part taken by the 120th Reg't O.V.I., in the **engagements on the 19th, 20th, 21st, 22d and 23d inst. [May 1863].** **On Monday morning, 18th of May, I received orders from Maj. Gen. Grant, Commanding Dep't, to move forward with my command from Raymond with all possible dispatch, and join my Division in the field near Vicksburg.** I accordingly started from Raymond at daylight on the morning of the 18th, having in charge about 200 prisoners of war, which I was ordered to turn over at Edwards' Station. On my arrival at **Edwards' Station** I turned over the prisoners and pushed on rapidly until about 11 P.M., when I rested my command until 3 A.M. roused my men and pushed forward, joined the Division just on the eve of engaging the enemy on the fortifications in the **rear of Vicksburg** at about 9 A.M., 19th inst. On my arrival I reported to Brig. Gen. Lee, then commanding the 1st Brigade, and was by him **assigned to take up position in line on the left of the 118th Illinois and right of 7th Ky.** About 10 o'clock I received orders to advance, when after moving forward about a half mile crossing a series of very difficult ravines or gullies, we received the fire of the enemy. Seeing our exposed condition on the crest of a ridge, Gen. Lee ordered me to deploy my regiment in a ravine a short distance in front, the regiments on my right and left receiving the same orders. In this position we remained until ordered to charge on the enemy's works. Early in the afternoon when this order was received, although my men were nearly worn out by the forced march of a day and night before from Raymond, they nevertheless

formed quickly and seemingly their extreme weariness was forgotten, and when the command charge was given they moved off as though all of them were well rested, charging over hills and ravines for over one mile, all this time exposed to the fire of the enemy's well placed batteries, under scorching rays of the hot sun, all striving to excel each other, truly showed the bravery and gallantry of the boys.---- On arriving on the hill opposite those of the fortifications we were ordered to halt and rest. Just then Gen. Lee was severely wounded, and by evening we were by you ordered to fall back to the ravine from which we started on the charge. About 10 o'clock A.M. on the 20th I received orders to move forward and occupy a ravine running in front of the enemy's works. I threw out two companies as skirmishers to cover my front, keeping up a brisk fire continually, drawing the attention of the enemy while our folks were planting a battery on the hill to my right and rear, after we retired as per your orders to the old position leaving one company as pickets. At the break of day the 21st [May], again moved forward to the position held the 20th, taking three companies to cover the left flank and one the front. Skirmishing was unceasing during the whole day, changing the companies when out of ammunition and their guns too hot to handle, at night was ordered to withdraw to position occupied night before. The 22d at day break assumed position as day before. At 9 o'clock A.M. I was ordered to form my regiment in double column closed in mass, and support the 7th Ky., and 118th Ill., in a charge; at the same time being informed that a simultaneous charge by the whole army along the whole line would be made.

About 10 o'clock the order to advance was given and the column, 7th Kentucky in advance, moved on. **When we arrived at the crest of the hill above the ravine a terrible and withering fire from the enemy met us, from which the advance suffered greatly.** Finding that crossing the hill under such a fire would be destructive, while even after crossing the hill an impassable ravine and abattis had to be confronted, and our forces would be at the mercy of the enemy, the column was halted and the charge along abandoned. **I here received orders to advance three companies of my command through a ravine to the left and occupy a position close by one of the enemy's forts, which I did, and the boys by vigorous shooting kept the enemy from using his cannon. I remained all night in the ravine. The 23d [May] I was ordered to fall back to our first position, being relieved by Gen. Hovey's forces, leaving two companies as skirmishers, who were relieved by Gen. Hovey on the eve of the same day. The same evening I received orders to prepare for a march by daylight to Black River Bridge.**

I cannot close this report, Colonel, without expressing my gratification and just pride at the gallantry and the good behavior shown by the officers and men during the five days of peril, hardships and privations.

They have my heartfelt thanks and richly deserve the thanks of their country for the cheerful and prompt manner with which they performed every duty assigned them, while all have done so well it is useless to particularize any one.

Respectfully, Your obedient servant, M. M. Spiegel, Col. 120th O.V.I.
[Published Wooster Republican, Thursday 1 July 1863, pg1]

Erwin, Thomas R., Co D "Of his action in one of the assaults on Vicksburg he wrote home to his mother, 'I fired so rapidly my gun got so hot I had to lay it down and take another.' "

Waters, John W., Co D, wounded 22 May 1863 in the siege of Vicksburg, Mississippi

Company A Muster Roll: marched and bivouaced until the 19th of May when the 120 joined the column in the charge of the day in rear of Vicksburg. **Henry Dunham** Private wounded in foot.

Skirmished in Co's until the 22nd when we again charged upon the enemies works without loss.

Company D Muster Roll: arrived at Vicksburg on the 19th went into action and remained 5 days a sergeant of the company was seriously wounded on the 22....

Company G Muster Roll:

May and June, 1863 shows station of company, Big Black River Bridge Miss.

Record of events: Company G was engaged with the Regiment in the Battle of Thompsons Hill, May 1, 1863 with a loss of one wounded, Private Samuel Hoover. Marched and bivouacked until the 19 day of May when the Regiment joined the column in the **charge upon the Confederate forts in the rear of Vicksburg in which this company lost one wounded Sgt W. Q.**

Lawrence. Skirmished by companies until the 22nd when another charge was made on the 24th. We marched to this place where we have remained to the present date.

23 May, Saturday] ordered to Black River Bridge.

120th OVI, Died in May 1863, Died of disease unless otherwise noted:

Andrews, David, Co B, died 3 May 1863 near Vicksburg, Mississippi

Huston, George G., Co B, died 28 May 1863 at Milliken's Bend, LA

Christine, Samuel, Co C, died 2 May 1863 at Milliken's Bend, LA

Harker, Jacob, Co C, died 8 May 1863 at Smith's plantation, LA

Gould, William, Co D, died 15 May 1863 at Young's Point, LA

Johnson, Silas Co D, died 19 May 1863 at Young's Point, LA

Urban, Hiram, Co D, died 25 May 1863 at Milliken's Bend, LA

Shoup, William, Co E, **Killed 1 May 1863, at Thompson's Hill, LA**

Wagnor, Isaac, Co E, **wounded in battle of Thompson's Hill, MS on 1 May 1863 and died 2 May 1863**

Brant, John, Co E, died 14 May 1863 at Milliken's Bend, LA

Brindle, John, Co F, **Killed 1 May 1863 at Thompson's Hill, MS**

Wertman, George, W., Co F, died 9 May 1863 Van Buren General Hospital at Milliken's Bend, LA

Mansfield, Abraham, Co G, died 2 May 1863 at Lawson General Hospital, St. Louis, MO

Beard, William, Co G, died 20 May 1863 at St. Louis, MO

Bricker, Leslie G., Co H, Discharged 20 April 1863 at Milliken's Bend, LA. He died 21 May 1863.

Kling, Michael, Pvt. Co I, died 27 May 1863 at Van Buren Hospital, Milliken's Bend LA

Edwards, James P. Pvt, Co I, discharged for disability 12 Apr 1863, died at home Richland Co OH 8 May 1863

Research by Susie Holderfield, 2001-2018

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