

Big Black River Bridge in Camp

[Pension papers, William Carmichael, Private Company K]

Carmichael's comrade, Charles Weant of Company H wrote: "Near Vicksburg Miss as near as I can mind between the 15th and 20th of May 1863 while employed as teamster I was driving the team right ahead of Wm Carmickel and when I drove across the bridge his line mule swung on him and upset his wagon and turned his wheel mules over in the ditch and when I ran back to him he was lying with his leg under the saddle mule and the mule turned over struck him in the breast with the saddle and when we pulled him out he could not stand and we laid him down until he came to...then helped him in the wagon." In another paper in the file it stated that there was an injury to his breast, back and right leg, and broken ribs on his left side.

Company A Muster Roll: **On the 24th [May] we marched to the place where we have remained to the present date.**

Company B Muster Roll: station of company, June 30, 1863, near Big Black River, MS

Company E Muster Roll: Was in the Siege of Vicksburg from the 19th to the 24th of May since which time we have been at Black River Bridge.

Company F: Left the battlefield May 24th 1863, and arrived at Camp Kegwin near Big Black River.

Wooster Republican 28 May 1863: Casualties in the 120th Ohio: **Alfred Wilson**, [Co I] wounded in right arm and leg.

"DIED - At his father's residence in Chester township, Wayne County, Ohio, **June 15th 1863**, **PETER SPERSIUM [LONGANECKER]**, aged 20 years, 2 months and 28 days.

This amiable young man, impelled by a laudable zeal in the cause of our bleeding country, added his name to Company D, Capt. Emrich, 120th O. V. I. After the first battle of Vicksburg he took the measles, which resulted in a chronic disease that disqualified him for duty, and he was honorably discharged from service and returned home in March, where he professed peace with God and all men, and died in hope of Heaven. W. M. G."

[Published 2 July 1863, Wooster Republican, page 2, available at GenealogyBank]

This next letter was signed M R and was sent to Plain Township. That fits with the letter being from Mahlon Rouch of Co A.

"Camp Clear Creek, Miss. **June 23, 1863:**

Dear Father: This afternoon I embrace the opportunity of again informing you that my health is still as good as usual, which I could not wish any better. We have moved **back about two miles from Black River** and are now encamped in a beautiful grove upon the side of a hill. The air we breathe is as pure as that of my own native hills, and the gentle zephyrs sporting around our weather beaten tents, and the feathery tribe warbling among the branches and thick foliage of the surrounding woods chanting their sweet hymns of praise to their great Creator, make us almost forgetful that we are in hostile lands. Apples and peaches are fast ripening though disappearing just as fast. There are blackberries of the finest quality in numbers without end that we have access to, and in connection with these the Government furnishes us with good rations. Likewise heaven grants us weather most beautiful though very warm. We have had warmer weather here than ever I experienced in mid-summer in the North, but our duty at present is light, so that we do not mind it as much as if called out to hard labor.

We have not as yet been disturbed much by the enemy here. They have made a number of feints or raids on our cavalry pickets, which amounted to nothing more than causing the troops to be aroused at night to exchange a few hours of sweet repose for as many of tiresome waiting and search for an enemy that was nowhere to be found. But all this belongs to, and forms a portion of a soldiers life. We have fortified on this side the Big Black and have little fears of attack here. This is the first time that we have been on the defensive and if the 'rebs' come here we will try them in their own way - the way they taught us by their own example - that is, by giving them an opportunity of battering against a line of heavy fortifications, instead of lines formed by the 'bodies of brave men.' We have troops enough here now to hold in check a considerable force because our position is a strong one by nature, and has been made much stronger by artificial works.

But while things seem quiet around us here, it is not so at Vicksburg. **The thunderings of the death-breathing cannon can still be heard peal after peal in that direction, and upon approaching nearer that point the incessant firing of our sharp shooters can be heard all along the lines. Our forces are drawing still closer to the rebel works, and continue bombarding them with good effect.** We are still sanguine of success although we can form but little idea when the days of rebel Vicksburg shall be numbered and the news of the fall of that city shall reach our ears. All seems to be favorable to us at present. We have gained a number of brilliant victories in our march from Milliken's Bend, and are but now awaiting the crowning work of this expedition - the surrender of Vicksburg. The troops are all in the best of spirits.

But within the last few days we have been receiving news from our own dear homes which falls like a ponderous weight upon the hearts of many. We hear from several sources, reliable too, that Southern sympathizers in the North are not content to thwart the plans of the Government by using their remonstrances against them, but even now, when the Administration deems it necessary to call upon them in connection with others to defend the principles of our Government by the use of arms, they refuse to respond to the call even to resistance by force. Can such shocking news as this be correct, or are we laboring under false impressions? Have affairs arrived at this point within our own Congressional District, or, more than that, within the borders of my own county?

Can men become so dead to their true interest as to attempt to carry out such hellish designs as this? Will men lay aside all dignity and honor in order to execute the promptings of their own baser passions? Have they no religious or patriotic feelings to turn them from the ruinous course they are pursuing or about to pursue? Or do they really design to betray the trust confided in them by the 'Fathers of the Revolution?' Do they desire to spurn the petitions of that Government to which they owe all they have in their possession? Or are they not indebted to the Government for this? Did it not extend its protecting hand alike over all? Did it not shed its benign influences over them the same as those who have already gone forth to do battle for the same? Aye, they have but too long been dandled upon the knee of civil liberty and nurtured by its hand to appreciate its true value, and I fear they will not appreciate it until it is placed beyond their reach. Their words and actions at present show that they are on a fair way of robbing themselves of these inestimable blessings. The President of these United States calls upon all to come whose lot it may be to assist in rescuing our grand 'Ship of State' from being swallowed up in the great whirlpool of destruction, or consumed by the glaring flames of a traitors hell. Our soldiers in the field earnestly beseech them to come to their assistance. All Union loving people at home say, if it be their lot, go without a murmur and discharge their duty faithfully. If after this call of their Chief Executive, and such earnest requests by both soldiers and citizens any one dare refuse, what more can we say? Will we sit quietly down and say to such, do as you see proper, or will measures of a different nature entirely be taken? I know the latter will be the case. - By resisting the draft men will only bring war to their own doors, and behold their own thresholds stained with human gore, where otherwise they can easily avoid it. Such, if any such there be, will learn by sad experience that the rulers of our land are in earnest in all their undertakings. There yet is power in the principles of right and wheresoever that power lays hold on evil its influence will be keenly felt. Let all whom this may concern keep it in strict remembrance that soldiers have but little sympathy for those who have no sympathy for their Government. The sentiment here is let those who will not fight *with* us be sent to the front where they will have an opportunity to fight *against* us *openly* and not in a clandestine manner as they have been doing heretofore. I hope this manner of warfare may soon be ended and that each will flock to his kind, that the proper character of all may be fully known.

But what if men should resist the draft? - Will it better their condition any? I assure them it will not. They may strive against the powers over them and cause some little difficulty, but in the end must and *will* come. - Methinks sometimes it would be a blessing to the State of Ohio and to the Government if the 'rebs' would make but one raid through there to teach the people what it is to have war in the land. O, it seems to me I could see the feathers of Democracy drooping and snake Republicanism disappearing from the stage of action. The lodges of *Union Leagues* would soon be forsaken and all from every party or order would form one *grand Union League* and rush to the rescue of their threatened homes. But this is not the case. Our homes are not yet visibly threatened. But who can doubt but that if people continue to carry on such hellish works as we

understand they are, it will be so ere long. Look now at Pennsylvania your sister State, and see how she is threatened, and have they (the rebels) not equally as good an opportunity of making an inroad upon Ohio? Certainly they have. But I hope the people will all do their duty without any such calamities or even without any more controversy, for it is necessary that all should be united and sincere. If ever there was a time that men should be true men in the strictest sense of that word it is so now. Every man must know 'whom he will serve.' He must either be for or against the Union. God grant to instill wisdom into the minds of men that each may know his duty and discharge it faithfully.

I must close for this time. Write soon and tell me all the news. Our present news from the East and Eastern army is very discouraging. I hope we may hear better from there ere long.
Your dutiful son, M. R.

[Published in Wooster Republican, 16 July 1863, page 2, available at GenealogyBank]

DIED - On the 26th of June, 1863 in Big Black River Hospital, Mississippi, **Wm. H. CAREY.**

His remains were brought home and interred in the Churchyard at Applecreek, July 29th. His age was 22 years, 5 months and 14 days. He volunteered as a member of Captain Emerick's company [**Co D**], 120th Regiment, O. V. I., August 21st, 1863. He was fourteen days on the battle-field. He was in the battle's of Chickasaw Bayou, Champion Hills, Thompson's Hill, and nearly five days in the engagement in the rear of Vicksburg. He united with the Applecreek Presbyterian Church in 1860. He gave satisfactory evidences of piety, and his conduct ever since has been consistent, and his walk and conversation such as becometh the Gospel. Having heard and obeyed the voice of Christ calling him to join the sacramental host of God; he also heard and obeyed the same voice calling him to take up arms in defense of his country. - Having engaged in the spiritual warfare, to which the captain of Salvation calls all his followers; commanding them to 'fight the good fight of faith,' and to 'war the good warfare,' he felt it also to be his duty to enlist in his country's service. He believed that his Saviour, who had led him to unite with the church and people of God, also led him to take his place among the defenders of his country. His conduct, as a soldier, both when in the camp and in the field, was praiseworthy. He manifested not only piety and patriotism, but heroism. He experienced, during his last illness, the consolations of the Gospel, and the comforts of the Holy Ghost. Oh, how consolatory to know that 'the righteous hath hope in his death.'.....A. V.

[Published Wooster Republican, 24 Dec 1863, page 2, available at GenealogyBank]

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.]

4 July 1863

"This day dawned gloriously for the arms of the army of the Tennessee. Early in the morning the joyful news arrived in camp that **Vicksburg had capitulated** and that our troops would take possession at 10 A. M. Our boys were wild with joy and soon a pole was in process of erection with the Regimental colors on the top. Speeches were made by Col. S., Major S., Lieut. Totten, A. A. Genl. Peck and myself. We had a glorious time celebrating the 4th."

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

Greenfield, Wilson S., Co A, died 7 June 1863 at Milliken's Bend, Louisiana

Toms, Abraham, Co A, died 28 June 1863 at Van Buren Hospital, Milliken's Bend, Louisiana

Freedley, Benjamin, Co A, died in July 1863 at his home in Ohio.

Soliday, Jacob R, Co A, died 2 July 1863 at Young's Point, Louisiana

Bechtel, Reuben, Co B, died 11 June 1863 at Big Black River, Mississippi.

Force, James, Co B, died 9 or 15 Jun 1863 at Milliken's Bend, Louisiana.

Scott, John C., Co C, died 28 June 1863 at Jefferson Barracks, MO

Longanecker, Peter S., died 15 Jun 1863, Chester Twp, Wayne, OH

Piper, William, Co D, died 18/28 June 1863 at Columbus, OH

Cary, William, Co D, died 26 June 1863 at Big Black River, MS

Eberhart, Samuel, Co E, died on 28 June 1863 at St. Louis, MO

Gardner, George W., Co E, died on 28 June 1863 at Jefferson Barracks, MO

Lucas, Henry, Co G, died 1 June 1863 near Vicksburg, MS
Myers, Hiram, Co I, died 10 June 1863 at Milliken's Bend, LA
Pool, Charles, Private Co I, died 10 June 1863 at Convalescent Camp at Milliken's Bend, LA or Young's Point, LA
Kelso, Washington, Co I, died 13 June 1863, buried Memphis National Cemetery
Maxwell, James J., Co I, died 18 June 1863, Jefferson Barracks, MO
Webster, Lyman, Co K, died 6 June 1863 [or other date] at Milliken's Bend, LA
Cross, Joseph, Private Co K, died 14 June 1863 on a hospital boat "D A January

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