



Photo by William Redish Pywell, Chickasaw Bayou Feb 1864, [Library of Congress](#)

[Ohio in the War: her statement, generals, and soldiers, Volume 2, by Whitelaw Reid, The Robert Clarke Co, 1895 **Section on 120th Ohio Volunteer Infantry** pp. 614]

Upon the organization of the army for the expedition against Vicksburg the regiment was assigned to Colonel Sheldon's brigade, of General Morgan's division. This, called the right wing of the Army of Tennessee, commanded by Major-General W. T. Sherman, embarked at Memphis on the 20th of December, and **moved down the Mississippi to the mouth of the Yazoo River**; thence up the Yazoo to Johnson's Landing, and there debarked preparatory to an attack on the line of fortifications defending Vicksburg.

The attack was opened by the National forces late on the afternoon of the 26th of December, and on the following day the One Hundred and Twentieth was for the first time under fire, having been ordered to the support of the First Michigan Battery near the left of the attacking column. In the afternoon of the same day Sheldon's brigade, consisting of the Sixty-Ninth Indiana, One Hundred and Eighteenth Illinois, and the One Hundred and Twentieth Ohio, charged upon the enemy's forces on the extreme right, and succeeded in driving them into their fortifications. A charge by the Ninth Division (General Morgan's) was now contemplated, but night coming on our troops were withdrawn to a place of safety. This charge, though unsuccessful, was made on [page 615] the following day. The One Hundred and Twentieth had been ordered to cover a working party engaged

in laying a pontoon across Chickasaw Bayou, and hence took no part in this assault, but was exposed to the enemy's fire during the entire day. A terrible rain-storm, peculiar to that climate, raged during the whole of the ensuing night, which owing to the inexperience of the officers and men of the regiment, proved very disastrous, prostrating a large number with fevers and other virulent diseases common to the South. The fruitlessness of the attack on Vicksburg from the Yazoo being recognized, the National forces were withdrawn and taken on transports to Milliken's Bend, on the Mississippi River, where Major-General McClelland assumed command. The unavoidable use of the miserable water of the Yazoo River, the exposure in the recent storm, close confinement on crowded steamboats, and poorly-prepared food, here made its mark to such extent that more than one-half the number reported "present" were unfit for active service.

**Chickasaw Bayou, Mississippi
Sunday 28- Monday 29 December 1862**

This was an unsuccessful attempt to "reduce" Vicksburg.
It was important to take out Vicksburg to open up the Mississippi river for the Union forces and thus split the Confederacy.

The 120th was at Chickasaw Bayou December 26-28, 1862. Chickasaw Bluff December 29. **1st Brigade, 3rd Division, Sherman's Yazoo Expedition, to January 1863.**



Portion of map No. 1. [First vicksburg campaign or Chicksaw \[sic\] Bayou](#), Dec. 27th 1862-Jan. 3rd. at the Library of Congress.



General William T. Sherman

**Right Wing, XIII Corps: Major General William T. Sherman
Gen. George W. Morgan: Morgan commanded the 3rd Division of
the [XIII Corps](#)**

1st Brigade: Col. Lionell A. Sheldon

118th IL: Col. John G. Fonda

69th Indiana: Col. Thomas Warren Bennett

120th Ohio: Col. Daniel French

**The Battle of Chickasaw Bayou. Driving the Rebels from the
Position.**

**Sunday 18 Jan 1863, New York Herald, Vol XXVIII, Issue: 17 Page
2-3**

[Selected passages]

"Let the reader imagine before him an inverted V, with Haines' Bluffs at the apex, Johnston's plantation at the left hand corner, and Vicksburg at the right, and with the sides of the letter about twelve or fifteen miles long.

Along the left hand runs the Yazoo river, and on the right is the range of hills from Haines' Bluffs to Vicksburg. The intervening space is the low bottom land of the Yazoo. It is now dry, but in high water is submerged ten or fifteen feet. A little rain at the present time would render the roads impassable."

"About one-third the way from Johnson's plantation to Haines' Bluffs a bayou puts off from the Yazoo, and enters the Mississippi just above the town of Vicksburg. This bayou winds across the low land directly towards the bluff, and then follows along the base of the bluffs until it strikes the Mississippi. The banks are quite steep and not far from two hundred feet apart. At present there is but little water in the bayou, though in a wet season it is navigable for boats of considerable size. It is known to the natives as Chickasaw bayou, and on its banks the battle was fought."

[Note: Is the reporter talking about Thompson's Lake in this next paragraph?]

"Slough Lake Parallel with it, and from a quarter to a half mile distant, is a deep slough, differing only from the bayou in having no connection with the river. At one point it widens into a lake of three or four hundred yards in width. As it approaches the base of the bluffs it makes a sharp turn and enters Chickasaw bayou, near the point where the latter makes its angle as it strikes the bluffs. In the latter part of its extent it contains but little water, and its bottom is a quicksand in which it is impossible to make a footing. The water is stagnant in this slough and is the resort of alligators and other luxuries of the Gulf States."

"The bottom land of the Yazoo is covered with a dense growth of cypress trees, much of it quite clear and free of passage, while in others it has a thick undergrowth. Most of the trees are clothed with the far-famed hanging moss of the Southern States, and in some places it is so abundant as to shut out much of the sunlight. With the heavy growth of trees, the thick undergrowth, the pall-like pendant moss, and with the deep, dark and sluggish stream at one's feet, I do not know a spot in the West more gloomy by nature than the banks of the Yazoo."

"The road to be followed by General Steele was upon the levee running along the slough north of Chickasaw bayou."

"Monday Morning At dawn on Monday the rebels opened upon General Morgan with their heavy artillery, though with little effect. Most of the large shells, being thrown from an elevation, buried themselves in the ground, and their explosion merely threw up a huge pile of earth, that scattered itself harmlessly on those standing near. One of them fell in the bayou near Mrs. Lake's house, and threw up an immense column of water as it exploded. The cannonage continued for an hour; and then ceased. It was renewed at intervals during the forenoon. The rebels had a signal station on the crest of the hill overlooking the valley. From this point they could observe all our movements, which they promptly telegraphed with the signal flag. All day long they were giving intelligence of our movements. Not a regiment or a battery was sent in any direction without the fact being promptly telegraphed. Every gun fired was similarly reported. A half dozen persons stood throughout the day by the signal officer, and from their great elevation were perfectly safe from harm. Our sharpshooters repeatedly endeavored to touch them with their long range rifles, but failed to make any impression upon the group."

During the battle: "General Sherman was so exceedingly erratic that the discussion of a

twelvemonth ago with respect to his sanity was revived."

[The Wounded Tuesday 30 Dec]

"General Sherman would not send out a flag of truce, alleging that he did not wish the enemy to know the extent of our injury, or be able to claim that we had to ask the privilege of performing the last sad offices after battle. General Morgan sent one from his front, but as there was a desultory fusillade along the line, the rebels fired upon it and drove the bearers back. During the night there was a cold drenching rain that, no doubt, terminated the sufferings of many a wounded soldier. On the following morning there was another attempt to send out a flag, but as General Sherman had again neglected to order the firing to cease along the whole line the rebels would not receive it. It was once more fired upon and driven back."

"All through that long December day the wounded lay upon the hill uncared for by either contending party. The ground was that for which there had been so fierce a contest, and, while we could not take possession of it, the rebels did not choose to occupy it. Daybreak, sunrise, noon, sunset and night, and still the wounded uncared for. What must have been their sufferings!"

From the Diary of John Summerfield Petty, at that time a Private in Company C:

Sunday, **28 Dec 1862**: "At 3 O'clock I arose the boom of cannons was soon heard.....We are in ranks again ready to march to the scene of conflict. The roar of the cannons is awful.....The forces are attacking two forts Ft. Gaines & the other unknown. We had a sharp skirmish with the enemy in the afternoon. We lost five wounded from our regiment, one from our Co. The bullets & shells fell thick around us."

Monday, **29 Dec 1862**: "The enemy's cannon are now booming & we expect some hard fighting today. We are before the enemy fortifications & will have a hard fight before we drive him in. My trust is in God. Our loss yesterday was quite heavy. Among the slain was one Col, Capt., & Lieut. fatally wounded. We know nothing of the numbers of each. We had hard fighting not a great deal gained. The batteries play on us with a good deal of precision. I as out on sharp shooting. The balls whistled around me but God protected me from harm. It rained all night. We had to move our bed on account of shells."

Tuesday, **30 Dec 1862**: "This will be the 4th days fight. There has been a great deal of heavy firing on both sides. I was out on picket duty on the banks of the bayou. We lost none today. There seemed to be a general cessation of hostilities too, a little skirmishing by the picket was all that was heard. No cannonading on either side. The silence is ominous of some great developments in the future. We were relieved at dark. Went to our old place in the woods. With Spanish moss under us & wet blankets over us we laid down to rest."

Wednesday, **31 Dec 1862**: "The enemy has dealt very ungenerous with us as regards our wounded & dead. The 16th Ohio and 54th Ind. lost a great number in killed & wounded in their unsuccessful bayonet charges & we went with a flag of truce to bury our dead which was fired on. I hear our dead have been stripped & left unburied & the wounded uncared for. Such ungenerous actions will not go unpunished."

Thursday, **1 Jan 1863**: "Many of our poor wounded fellows were left on the field where the fatal charge was made & perished for want of that attention which we were unable to give. We are now on picket guarding the newly planted batteries. We dug a good fortification which we hope will protect us from the shells which commenced flying about noon. We made our beds down expecting to sleep here all night, but at 9 P. M. the Maj. ordered us to pack knapsacks in 'double quick' & retire to our former quarters. Before we had reached them we had orders to fall back into the entrenchments. Then I knew we were covering a retreat or intended flanking the enemy. **The utmost quiet was kept and our guns at a secure when marching.** Our regiment reached its old quarters on board the J. K. Bell at 12 P. M. [midnight] where we soon made our beds and laid down to rest. Ben [Morgan] and I 'gave out' on the march to the boat. We had both been sick and could not stand marching." [Note: Ben had measles and would die of the disease.]

Diary of Henry S. Sherman, nephew of Gen. W. T. Sherman, Sergeant Major, 120th Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry, 9th Division, 13th Army Corps [Henry started out in Company I] courtesy of David Sherman Carter, descendant of Henry Sherman.

"**Dec 28th.** Passed an almost sleepless night on the ground, it being so cold and damp that it was impossible to sleep. Arose about three A.M. and remained by the fire for a short time in hopes of

getting warm and then going back to bed. About 4 A.M. the fires were ordered to be put out. At 5 the ball opened. Heavy discharges of Artillery were heard on all sides and soon after the infantry opened in front of us. We were drawn up in close column of companies until 9 A.M. when we were ordered to advance. When we had approached almost within rifle range of the enemy & had literally smelt powder we were **ordered to the left by Gen. Morgan, comdg. our Division** to guard against a flank attack by the enemy who were menacing us in that direction. We immediately took up a **position on the left along the bayou** which runs in front of the Division.

Our men were formed in the woods covered by the trees on the bank of the bayou.

Heavy firing both of musketry and artillery is constantly heard and the ambulances are hurrying to the front. Only eight are reported wounded and none killed at this hour, (11 A.M.) About 11 and a half A. M. we were formed into line and marched back to the front and were there thrown into line in the rear of Foster's Battery behind the levee. [Webmaster's note: 1st Independent Battery Wisconsin Light Artillery was led by Jacob T. Foster. See his account below these Sherman diary excerpts.] We were very much exposed to the fire of a rebel battery. The shells came hurtling over our heads in a lively manner. Oh! what terrible sights witnessed during the half hour that we were in that position. Men torn limbs from limbs in every manner by the terrible missiles of destruction hurled from the rebel battery. My first impressions on coming under fire were indescribable. I did not dare to let fear arise in my heart but it was a hard matter [to] lie still and not reply. Just as we left the levee a round shot came hurtling through the air and from the hissing sound I knew it would strike near. I fell flat on my face and the shot passed directly over me and buried itself within three short feet of me. I shuddered involuntarily and thanked God for my narrow escape. We crossed the bayou immediately with orders to attack and take a battery if possible. We deployed into line and advance cautiously throwing out skirmishers in front and flanks. We had advanced to within a short distance of the battery when our skirmishers were attacked. Through a mistake our regiment opened upon the rebels and thereby endangering the lives of the skirmishers in front. They rapidly closed to the left and fell back on the regiment. The musket balls flew thick and fast around us and our men were thrown into confusion for a minute. I was terribly excited and might have, perhaps, skulked behind the trees had not this seemingly [sic] calamity occurred. But that aroused me and I threw all fear aside in endeavoring to rally our men on the left. After this is all a blank with the exception of one or two circumstances. We were under heavy fire for an hour but seemingly only for 10 minutes. I will remember the feelings that animated my breast on seeing the first man fall in front of me. He was shot through the lower part of the neck and when I first saw the blood spurting through the hole in his clothes a dizziness suddenly came over me almost unmaning me. In about an hour the firing ceased and we lay on our arms until about 7 P.M. when we were relieved by Gen. Blair's brigade and ordered across the bayou. We took up our position some distance to the right of Foster's battery for the night."

"**Dec. 29.** Before day light the rebel batteries opened upon us with astonishing vigor, shelling our position in the woods and all around it for quite a distance making it very uncomfortable for some time. Our batteries responded in a similar spirit but with apparently little success as the firing from our guns seemed to make very little impression upon them. The roar of the Artillery and the discharge of musketry made the place a perfect pandemonium until late in the afternoon. The discharges were incessant and the shells flew thick and fast. Our regiment was, early in the forenoon, thrown forward along the bayou and a heavy force of skirmishers were deployed along our front. They kept up an incessant fire which tended to keep the rebels down although they continued to throw shell among us almost continually. While lying in that position a shell fell in the midst of Company C. wounding 4 or 5 slightly, but none seriously. After dark we fell back a few yards to a ravine where we remained under cover for a space of two hours. After which we fell back to a position to the right of the one we occupied the night before. About dark it commenced raining and continued to rain very hard during the night making it very uncomfortable for the men who lay in the water all night. We lay down (the Adjutant and I) at the foot of a tree and were awakened in the course of an hour or two by finding the water in our bed and ourselves pretty well soaked. We got up and took a new position at the foot of another tree where we lay shivering the remainder of the night but getting little sleep."

"**Dec. 30.** We lay in our position all day. All was very quiet with the exception of a little picket firing in the extreme front."

"**Dec. 31.** The same as yesterday only a little more quiet if anything. In our same position and awaiting them to open upon us, but were very agreeably disappointed. About 5 P.M. we moved to the right a little to protect a battery. Our regiment was thrown into the rifle pit in the rear of Lamphere's Battery where they were safe comparatively speaking."

"**January 1, 1863.**This morning early our men were set to work digging rifle pits near the edge of the bayou. When the rebels perceived this they commenced shelling them so our men desisted for the time. One shell struck within a few feet from Col. Spiegel which fortunately for him did not explode. After dark our men commenced digging again. **About 9 P.M. when the Adjutant and I were just falling asleep Co. Speigel came to us and astounded us by saying that we were ordered to evacuate our position and fall back to the boats. About 11 o'clock we quietly withdrew and commenced our retreat. We arrived at the boats about 1 A.M. after a most fatiguing march over ploughed ground of some four miles.**"

[Note: **Col Sheldon was in charge of the 1st Brigade at Chickasaw Bayou which included the 120th.**]

The War of the Rebellion: Formal reports, both Union and Confederate, of the first seizures of United States property in the Southern States (53 v. in 11) by United States War Department, Robert Nicholson Scott, Historical Times, 1886. pp 644-645

At [Google Books](#)

Report of Col. Lionel A. Sheldon, Fifty-second Ohio Infantry, Commanding First Brigade, of operations **December 27-30, 1862.**

Headquarters First Brigade, Third Division December 31, 1862

Sir: I beg leave to make the following report as to the operations of my brigade since leaving the boats:

About 2 p. m. of the 27th instant two of my regiments, to wit, the Sixty-ninth Indiana and One hundred twentieth Ohio (the One hundred and eighteenth Illinois having been detached to guard the boats), moved from the point of debarkation in rear of Lindsey's brigade to the corn field on Mrs. Lake's plantation. At about 10 o'clock the next day I moved the Sixty-ninth to the white house and the One hundred and twentieth to the bayou about 1 mile below. About noon I was ordered to bring up the One hundred and twentieth and take position in rear of Lindsey. I immediately moved forward and came up with Lindsey a little in advance of and to the right of the point where a section of Foster's battery was engaged with a battery of the enemy. There I remained some twenty minutes under a storm of shells, but received no injury.

Pursuant to orders I then moved the One hundred and twentieth across the bayou to the left of De Courcy's position to support the Forty-ninth Indiana; the Sixty-ninth I moved to a position on De Courcy's left, on the right of the bayou. The enemy at this point very soon opened on us with infantry, and I advanced two companies of the Sixty-ninth about 150 yards and returned the fire.

In the skirmishing which then ensued the Sixty-ninth lost 1 killed and 2 wounded. In the mean time I was ordered to cross the bayou to take command of the Forty-ninth Indiana and One hundred and twentieth Ohio and make a vigorous demonstration on the left to attract attention while De Courcy would make a charge in front. I threw forward a line of skirmishers, presenting a concave front to the enemy's works, over which he had his colors hoisted, and opened on him a brisk fire. Then I moved forward the Forty-ninth on the right of my position near to the line of skirmishers with its left well advanced and opened a splendid line of fire at pretty close distance. I did not intend to move forward the One hundred and twentieth until I had well established the Forty-ninth, but being separated from my staff before crossing the bayou I was compelled to give personal attention to everything, and Colonel French, of the One hundred and twentieth, having been previously ordered by someone on General Morgan's staff to advance on the left of the Forty-ninth, which fact I did not know, moved up unexpectedly to me and opened fire, which disconcerted me in my plans. In advancing amid obstacles in line of battle the One hundred and twentieth became crowded together in the center, and receiving a sharp fire from the enemy for the first time (it being a new regiment) some confusion occurred; but through the aid of the faithful and well-directed efforts of Colonel French and Lieutenant-Colonel Spiegel order was soon restored and the regiment put into position. The contest was very sharp for about thirty minutes, both regiments putting a well-directed fire into the enemy's entrenchments. His flag-staff was shot off and the advanced work cleared of its occupants. I continued to advance until reaching the edge of

the bayou, when the enemy opened on us with shell and grape, to which we could not reply with any effect. De Courcy did not charge, as I was informed he would, and I did not deem it advisable to do so unsupported. After a contest of some forty-five minutes I retired, having sustained a loss of 1 captain and 8 privates killed and 53 non-commissioned officers and privates wounded.

At sunset I was relieved by General Blair, when I took position with my brigade on the right of Lindsey and remained for the night. As the Forty-ninth has been under my command only at this time I take occasion to say here that Colonel Keigwin and his officers and men behaved with great skill and gallantry.

On the morning of the 29th instant I advance the Sixty-ninth to the front at the point where Captain Patterson was to construct a pontoon bridge, where it remained until noon, when I moved my brigade in position to support Lindsey. The skirmishers of the Sixty-ninth were sharply engaged all the forenoon and met with a loss of 1 killed and 5 wounded. During the forenoon my brigade was subjected to a continuous storm of shells, but escaped damage altogether. At 2 p. m. the One hundred and twentieth was moved to the right of De Courcy and advanced to the bayou, where it skirmished all the afternoon and sustained a loss of 7 wounded. At 9 p.m. it was moved back, leaving a heavy line of skirmishers on the bayou. My brigade was shelled all night, wounding 2 of the One hundred and twentieth at one explosion. I was compelled to change position twice in the night and once during the day.

On the 30th I occupied the front on the right of De Courcy. Little occurred during the day except slight skirmishing. The night was quiet.

My two regiments in the field are new and inexperienced. Colonel Bennett, of the Sixty-ninth, and Colonel French, of the One hundred and twentieth, have conducted themselves with attentiveness, skill, and courage, and officers and men of both have behaved like veterans. L. A. Sheldon, Colonel, Commanding First Brigade.
Lieut. E. D. Saunders, Acting Assistant Adjutant-General.

Memoirs of Gen. William T. Sherman, Volume 1, by William Tecumseh Sherman and Willis Fletcher Johnson, pub. D. Appleton, 1891.

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Page 289, 290, 291, 292

"The place of our disembarkation was in fact an island, separated from the high bluff known as Walnut Hills, on which the town of Vicksburg stands, by a broad and shallow bayou -- evidently an old channel of the Yazoo. On our right was another wide bayou, known as Old River; and on the left still another, much narrower, but too deep to be forded, known as Chickasaw Bayou. All the island was densely wooded, except Johnson's plantation, immediately on the bank of the Yazoo, and a series of old cotton-fields along Chickasaw Bayou. There was a road from Johnson's plantation directly to Vicksburg, but it crossed numerous bayous and deep swamps by bridges, which had been destroyed; and this road debouched on level ground at the foot of the Vicksburg bluff, opposite strong forts, well prepared and defended by heavy artillery. On this road I directed General A. J. Smith's division, not so much by way of a direct attack as a diversion and threat.

Morgan was to move to his left, to reach Chickasaw Bayou, and to follow it toward the bluff, about four miles above A. J. Smith. Steele was on Morgan's left, across Chickasaw Bayou, and M. L. Smith on Morgan's right. We met light resistance at all points, but skirmished, on the 27th, up to the main bayou, that separated our position from the bluffs of Vicksburg, which were found to be strong by nature and by art, and seemingly well defended. On reconnoitering the front in person, during the 27th and 28th, I became satisfied that General A. J. Smith could not cross the intervening obstacles under the heavy fire of the forts immediately in his front, and that the main bayou was impassable, except at two points--one near the head of Chickasaw Bayou, in front of Morgan, and the other about a mile lower down, in front of M. L. Smith's division.

During the general reconnaissance of the 28th General Moran L. Smith received a severe and dangerous wound in his hip, which completely disabled him and compelled him to go to his steamboat, leaving the command of his division to Brigadier-General D. Stuart; but I drew a part of General A. J. Smith's division, and that general himself, to the point selected for passing the bayou, and committed that special task to his management.

General Steele reported that it was physically impossible to reach the bluffs from his position, so I ordered him to leave but a show of force there, and to return to the west side of Chickasaw

Bayou in support of General Morgan's left. He had to countermarch and use the steamboats in the Yazoo to get on the firm ground on our side of the Chickasaw.

On the morning of December 29th all the troops were ready and in position. The first step was to make a lodgment on the foot-hills and bluffs abreast of our position, while diversions were made by the navy toward Haines's Bluff, and by the first division directly toward Vicksburg. I estimated the enemy's forces, then strung from Vicksburg to Haines Bluff, at fifteen thousand men, commanded by the rebel Generals Martin Luther Smith and Stephen D. Lee. Aiming to reach firm ground beyond this bayou, and to leave as little time for our enemy to reenforce as possible, I determined to make a show of attack along the whole front, but to break across the bayou at the two points named, and gave general orders accordingly. I pointed out to General Morgan the place where he could pass the bayou, and he answered, 'General, in ten minutes after you give the signal I'll be on those hills.' He was to lead his division in person, and was to be supported by Steele's division. The front was very narrow, and immediately opposite, at the base of the hills about three hundred yards from the bayou, was a rebel battery, supported by an infantry force posted on the spurs of the hill behind. To draw attention from this, the real point of attack, I gave instructions to commence the attack at the flanks.

I went in person about a mile to the right rear of Morgan's position, at a place convenient to receive reports from all other parts of the line; and about noon of December 29th gave the orders and signal for the main attack. A heavy artillery-fire opened along our whole line, and was replied to by the rebel batteries and soon the infantry-fire opened heavily especially on A. J. Smith's front, and in front of General George W. Morgan. One brigade (De Courcay's) [Note: Col. John DeCourcay, 16th OVI] of Morgan's troops crossed the bayou safely, but took to cover behind the bank, and could not be moved forward. Frank Blair's brigade, of Steele's division, in support, also crossed the bayou, passed over the space of level ground to the foot of the hills; but, being unsupported by Morgan, and meeting a very severe cross-fire of artillery, was staggered and gradually fell back, leaving about five hundred men behind, wounded and prisoners; among them Colonel Thomas Fletcher, afterward Governor of Missouri. Thayer's brigade, of Steele's division, took a wrong direction, and did not cross the bayou at all; nor did General Morgan cross in person.

This attack failed; and I have always felt that it was due to the failure of General G. W. Morgan to obey his orders, or to fulfill his promise made in person. Had he used with skill and boldness one of his brigades, in addition to that of Blair's, he could have made a lodgment on the bluff, which would have opened the door for our whole force to follow."

The Sherman Letters Correspondence Between General and Senator Sherman from 1837 to 1891, Book by Rachel Sherman Thorndike, 1894: **Jan. 6, 1863** on the Steamer *Forest Queen*

"You will have heard of our attack on Vicksburg and failure to succeed. The place is too strong, and without the co-operation of a large army coming from the interior it is impracticable.

Innumerable batteries prevent the approach of gun boats to the city or to the first bluff up the Yazoo, and the only landing between is on an insular space of low boggy ground, with innumerable bayous or deep sloughs. **I did all that was possible to reach the main land, but was met at every point by batteries and rifle pits that we could not pass**, and in the absence of Gen. Grant's co-operating force I was compelled to re-embark my command.....Whatever you or the absent may think, not a soldier or officer who was present but will admit I pushed the attack as far as prudence would justify, and that I re-embarked my command in the nick of time, for a heavy rain set in which would have swamped us and made it impossible to withdraw artillery and stores.

Up to that time I was acting as the right wing of Gen. Grant's army; but Gen. McClernand has arrived, and we now have a new organization, McClernand commanding the whole, and our present force divided into two commands, or corps d'armee, one of which is commanded by me and one by Morgan of Cumberland Gap."

[Note: They were heading for the Arkansas river and the next big battle would be [Arkansas Post](#).]

[Note: General William T. Sherman's brother was John Sherman, United States Senator from Ohio from March 21, 1861, until his resignation on March 8, 1877.]



[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 275] Hardesty's Richland: (George Stake, Co. H, biography page 486) "In two weeks they again embarked [from Memphis], and were transported down the Mississippi river to the mouth of the Yazoo, and up that river twenty miles, where they debarked, and were immediately ordered in line of battle. **They marched during the day and lay on their arms at night**, and the following day they were ordered to the front. For five successive days at Chickasaw Bluffs they took part in a series of engagements...."

Hardesty's Richland: (Moses Andrews, Co. H, biography page 482) "At the battle of Chickasaw Bluffs the 16th Ohio Volunteer Infantry made the first charge and were repulsed, several of their number being taken prisoners. The 120th then charged, but the rebels' position was a strong one and they were compelled to fall back. The whole army began to retreat and the 120th covered the retreat."

[J.W. Bricker at the May 1937 Reunion of the 120th stated that he believed that "Vicksburg would have been taken if it hadn't been for the fact that a million rations designated for another Union army approaching from a different direction, were captured by the Confederates, thus forcing that army to proceed to a base farther northward..." Found in a news article in Dr. Anna Yoder's Scrapbook at Wooster library.]

Hardesty's Richland = Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia. [*Richland County OH version*] 1885...original available at the Ohio Historical Society. There is also a version of the soldier's biographies extracted from the above Hardesty's that has been published by the Richland County Genealogical Society, 1998 called *Richland County, Ohio Civil War Veterans*. This book states in the bio of **Martin Sharp** of Company B: "he was engaged in the battle of Chickasaw Bluff, Mississippi, or as it was called, Sherman's second attack on Vicksburg, in January 1863. On the seventh day of this battle the Union forces were driven back to their boats on White river. They succeeded in getting on board, but were under so terrific a fire from the artillery and musketry of the enemy that not a smoke-stack was left on any of the boats on the river. Two of the officers, captain and first lieutenant of his company, fled from their commands upon the firing of the first volley."

Hardesty's Wayne - Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia. [*Wayne County OH version*]: page 508, bio of **Simon M. Bott** of Company E: "Under Sherman he took part in the battle of Chickasaw Bayou. There are but five entrances to the land in the chain of bayous on this bank of the river, and these were in possession of the enemy, and so strongly fortified that when our troops attempted a landing they were swept by such a fire and cross fire that advance was impossible. Falling down the river with the troops on crowded transports, with poor and scanty provisions and miserable water, disease proved as formidable a foe to our soldiers as the confederate army in their well fortified position."

Hardesty's Richland: bio of **Joseph Brown Pritchard** of Company B: "They went on an expedition up the Yazoo river, in order to get in the rear of Vicksburg. Writing to his father and mother January 4, 1863, he said that early on Sunday morning the rebels opened fire on them, and they were kept flanking on double quick for almost two days.....Their regiment made a charge on a battery, but were repulsed with seven men wounded. On Thursday night the order was given to retreat, and this was accomplished so quietly that the rebels knew nothing of their movements

until they were nearly all on board of the transports. The enemy attacked them that night, but were driven back by the gunboats."

[Below are the wounded for which I currently have a record. The War of the Rebellion: Formal reports, both Union and Confederate, of the first seizures of United States property in the Southern States (53 v. in 11) by United States War Department, Robert Nicholson Scott, Historical Times, 1886, page 625 lists the 120th Ohio as having 16 enlisted men wounded.]

WALTER, Cyrus, Co A, Wounded at Chickasaw Bayou, 29 Dec, 1862

MOURER, Levi, Co A, Wounded at Chickasaw Bayou, 29 Dec, 1862

WELLS, Judson, Co A, Wounded at Chickasaw Bayou, 28 Dec, 1862

BUCKLEY, Aaron, Co C, Wounded at Chickasaw Bayou, 29 Dec 1862

BUCKLEY, John E. wounded at Chickasaw Bayou, 29 Dec 1862, Died 28 Jan 1863 at St. Louis, MO

HENNEY, Daniel, Co C, Wounded at Chickasaw Bayou, 28 Dec 1862

JONES, Amasa, Co C, Wounded at Chickasaw Bayou, 29 Dec 1862

TANNEY, John, Co C, Wounded at Chickasaw Bayou, 29 Dec 1862

ARNOLD, William, Co D, Wounded at Chickasaw Bayou, 28 Dec 1862

BROUSE, Jacob, Co G, Wounded at Chickasaw Bayou, 29 Dec 1862 **Died** 12 Jan 1863 on hospital boat "Henry Von Phul."

FOSS, John J. A., Co H, Wounded at Chickasaw Bayou, 28 Dec 1862

BUISCHLEN, Christian, Private, Co I, Wounded at Chickasaw Bluffs by a musket ball

MOSER, Henry S., Co K, Wounded at Chickasaw Bayou, 26, 27 or 28 Dec, 1862

Descendant Michael Moser says about Henry, "He was seriously wounded and had to make his own way back to his home at Rome, OH, a community that is now known as Shiloh, OH, outside Mansfield. It took him months to make his way back home...he was 42 when he entered the war...the wound is described in a letter from one of the doctors who treated him on his journey...he went back [into the army] a year later in the U.S. Veterans Reserve Corp...and again rose to the rank of First Sgt."

Died in 1862 of disease:

Harpster, Henry, 31 Oct 1862, Ashland Co, OH

Eberly, Daniel R., Co, D, 11 Nov 1862, Mansfield, OH

Giffin, David, Co C, 6 Dec 1862, near Hayesville, OH

Johnson, Thomas, Co D, 26 Dec 1862, East Union, OH

Bushong, Andrew C., Co H, 27 Dec 1862, Memphis, TN

Stauffer, Jacob, Co B, 29 Dec 1862 at Memphis, TN

Research by Susie Holderfield, 2001-2018

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[Index to History of the 120th OVI](#)

[Link to Main page for the 120th Ohio Volunteer Infantry](#)