

Chapter 20 Banks' Retreat

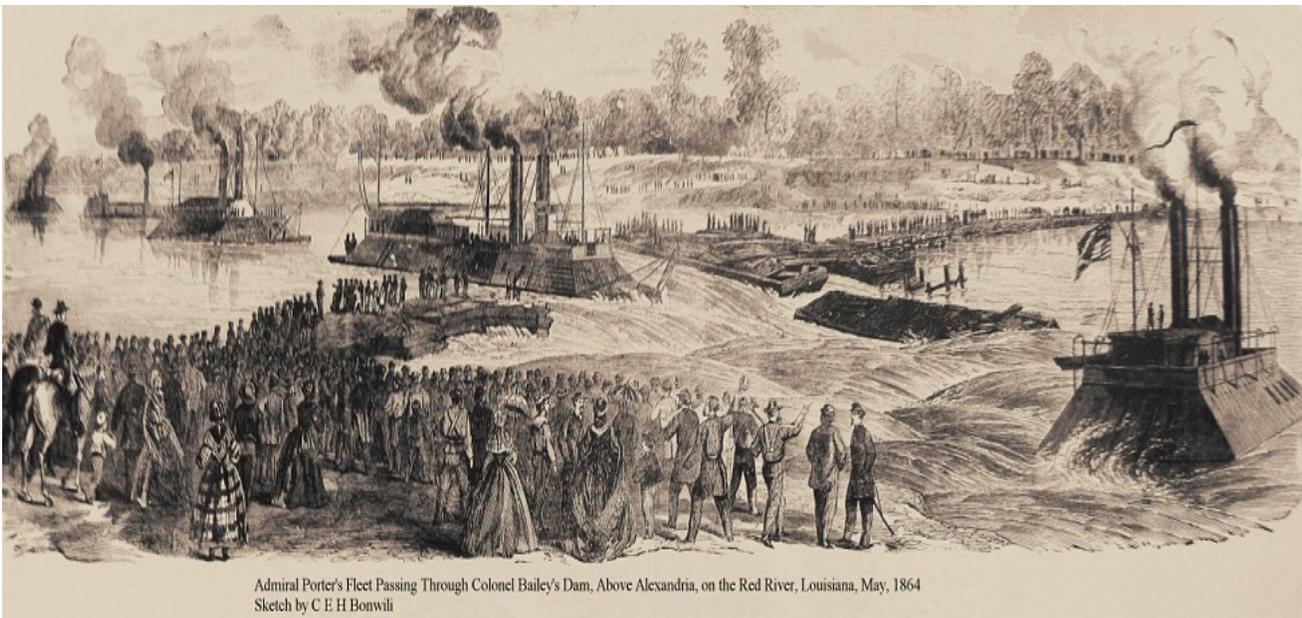
Retreat from Alexandria to the Mississippi River: 120th Ohio Volunteer Infantry
The remnant of the 120th who got away at Snaggy Point joined up with the Banks expedition at Alexandria, Louisiana.

Go to 120th_maps on this CD and see north_alexandria_to_simsport_jpg.jpg to follow for this page on the retreat from Alexandria, LA.

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.617

Those who were fortunate enough to escape [from Snaggy Point] formed themselves into a battalion of three companies, under Lieutenant-Colonel Slocum, coming together for that purpose about one mile from the scene of disaster. Recognizing at once the folly of attempting to rescue their comrades from captivity, the battalion resolved to husband the remaining ammunition and use it to defend themselves against the guerilla bands infesting the country between them and Alexandria. A fatiguing march of twenty-three hours brought them to Alexandria, where they reported to General Banks, were kindly cared for by that General and his staff, and furnished with rations, clothing, camp equipage, and comfortable quarters. This remnant of the One Hundred and Twentieth was assigned to duty on the 12th of May in the division commanded by General Lawler.

On the 13th of May General Banks began his memorable retreat.



Admiral Porter's Fleet Passing Through Colonel Bailey's Dam, Above Alexandria, on the Red River, Louisiana, May, 1864
Sketch by C E H Bonwili



Drawing above is from *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. pp378-379

Portrait of Brig Gen Bailey, USA, is public domain at Wikipedia

Bailey's Dam made it possible to get Porter's fleet past Alexandria and down the Red River and Gen. Banks then began his retreat from Alexandria.

Two personal accounts connect the 120th OVI to the retreat from Alexandria.



The first is Corporal Columbus Arehart, Co B 120th OVI
A Centennial Biographical History of Richland Co OH, by
A. J. Baughman, 1901, pp 512 - 514

"Mr. Arehart took part in the fighting at Graham's plantation [near Alexandria, LA], May 5 to May 7, 1864; at [Avoyelle's Prairie] Prairie Bayou, May 14 to 16; at [Bayou de Glaize May 18]De Glaize, May 16, 1864;

[Note: Graham's Plantation could be Tyrone Plantation. 6576 Bayou Rapides Rd. Alexandria, LA, near the Alexandria airport. Built in 1843 by George Mason Graham.]



Portrait: public domain Wikipedia

Confederate General, Richard Taylor, CSA

Destruction and Reconstruction: Personal Experiences of the Late War, by Richard Taylor, 1883, D. Appleton. Page 190: "After many days of energetic labor, the enemy on the 13th of May succeeded in passing his fleet over the falls at Alexandria, evacuated the place, and retreated down the river, the **army, on the south bank, keeping pace with the fleet.**"

Page 191: "To harass the retreat, the horse and artillery, on the river above Alexandria, were directed to press the enemy's rear, and the remaining horse and Polignac's infantry to intercept his route at Avoyelles Prairie. During the 14th, 15th, and 16th he was constantly attacked in front, rear, and right flank; and on the 17th Wharton charged his rear near Mansura, capturing many prisoners, while Colonel Yater, with two regiments of horse, cut in on the wagon train at Yellow Bayou,

killed and drove off the guard, and destroyed much property. Meanwhile Liddell, on the north bank of the Red, followed the fleet and kept up a constant fire on the transports. But for the unfortunate withdrawal of his battery, before alluded to, he could have destroyed many of these vessels. On the 18th we attacked the enemy at Yellow Bayou, near Simmsport, and a severe engagement ensued, lasting until night. We held the field, on which the enemy left his dead, but our loss was heavy, four hundred and fifty-two in killed and wounded; among the former, Colonel Stone, commanding Polignac's old brigade. Polignac, in charge of division, was conspicuous in this action. The following day, May 19, 1864, the enemy crossed the Atchafalaya and was beyond our reach.

[Note: On 8 May 1865, Taylor surrendered his forces near Mobile, AL.]

Many of the following records were found in: [The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies: Prepared by the Late Lieut. Col. Robert N. Scott, Third U. S. Artillery. Published Under the Directions of the Hon. Redfield Proctor, Secretary of War, by Maj. George B. Davis, U. S. A., Mr. Leslie J. Perry, Mr. Joseph W. Kirkley, Board of Publication. Series I - Volume XXXIV - in Four Parts. Part III - Correspondence, Etc...page numbers are indicated.](#)

Confederate record. CSA Page 163.

May 14, skirmish at Wilson's Plantation.

May 15, Skirmish at Avoyelles or Marksville Prairie.

May 16, engagement at Mansura.

May 17, action near Moreauville and skirmish at Yellow Bayou. May 18, engagement at Yellow Bayou.

Summary by Maj. Gen. Banks.

Chap XLVI page 193 [The Red River Campaign]

Headquarters Department of the Gulf, on board U. C. Steamer Avenger, Mississippi River, May 21, 1864.

[A dam had to be constructed above Alexandria to get the union boats down the Red River.]

“On the release of the gun-boats the army took up its line of march for Simsport. **It encountered the enemy in full force on its march, on a prairie near Mansura, where it occupied a position covering three roads, leading to Cheneyville on the right, to Simsport on the left, [and to Moreauville,] over one of which the army must pass. A sharp engagement ensued, lasting about four hours, and chiefly confined to the artillery. Our troops getting possession of the wood in which the enemy was posted drove him back to the road to Moreauville. We pursued him upon the second road to Simsport, where it arrived on the morning of the 17th. The Atchafalaya was bridged by the use of the transport vessels, and the passage of the river was completed. On the evening of the 20th [18th?], General Mower's division of the Sixteenth Corps, supported by a brigade of cavalry of the Nineteenth Corps, had a sharp engagement on Yellow Bayou with the enemy, in which we captured 180 prisoners. Our loss in killed and wounded was 140. The enemy's force was estimated at 8,000.** Throughout the entire campaign, except in killed and wounded (in which at Sabine Cross-Roads, Pleasant Hill, Mansura, Yellow Bayou, and other battles our losses have been severe), no prisoners, guns, wagons, or other material of the army have been captured by the enemy, except that abandoned to him in the unexpected engagement at Sabine Cross-Roads on the morning of the 8th of April. With the exception of the losses sustained there the material of the army is complete. General Canby arrived at Simsport on the 18th, and remained until the passage of the river was completed. The **troops will rendezvous at Morganza**, on the Mississippi, a point they reach today and to-morrow.
N. P. Banks, Major-General

[Page 519](#) on May 9 1864 **Brig. Gen. Lawler** was assigned to take over the Thirteenth Army Corps for John McClernand while McClernand was ill.

[Page 558](#)



Brigadier General
Michael Kelly Lawler

Portrait public domain Wikipedia

Headquarters Department of the Gulf

Alexandria, La., May 12, 1864

Brig. Gen. M. K. Lawler, commanding Thirteenth Army Corps: The commanding general directs that the troops and transportation of your command on the other side of the river be at once withdrawn to this side.

Geo. B. Drake, Assistant Adjutant-General [Page 558](#)

Message sent to U. S. Forces, near Fort De Russy by D Dwight, Brigadier-General and Chief of Staff from Alexandria, 12 May 1864 to Brig. Gen. Fitz Henry Warren, Commanding US Forces, near Fort De Russy

“The naval fleet have passed the rapids safely. The army moves toward Marksville to-morrow; we shall probably attack the enemy about 5 o'clock to-morrow afternoon. There are about 2,000 cavalry [CSA] on north bank of river under Liddell and Harrison, main body on south bank under Taylor.

[General Richard Taylor, CSA, was the son of Zachary Taylor and the son-in-law of Jefferson Davis.]

The commanding general directs that you move with vigor upon the rear of the enemy upon either bank of the river. Your judgment and information may advise keeping near the gun-boats, if you move on any force superior to your own.”

[Union Page 322](#). Second Brigade May 14 (return trip) **marched along Red River** via Marksville, and Simmesport, arriving at the mouth of the Red River on the 21st, having

engaged the enemy on the 14th (at Wilson's Landing) on Red River, on the 16th at Mansura and on the 18th at Yellow Bayou.

Page 585...a bridge had been burned by the rebels on the Cheneyville road.

Page 586 Headquarters Department of the Gulf, Near Marksville, May 14, 1864
[to] Brig. Gen. A. J. Smith, Comdg, Detach. Sixteenth and Seventeenth Army Corps:
General: The major-general commanding directs that you move your whole command at 3 A. M. to-morrow, and take position on the right of the 19th Army Corps. General Emory, commanding the Nineteenth Army Corps, has been ordered to move his whole command at 3 A. M. to the position beyond Marksville occupied by our advance this evening. You will move at daylight to turn the left flank of the enemy, and take possession of all the roads leading to Cheneyville. The major-general commanding desires you to make this movement with the utmost vigor, and to be ready to move promptly at the hours indicated. The wagon train will be in park in rear of the town, guarded by a brigade of cavalry. In moving across the prairies, and when practicable for the purpose of shortening the column, you will move your command in columns of regiments.
By command of Major-General Banks:
Geo. B. Drake, Assistant Adjutant-General.

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Headquarters Department of the Gulf, **Near Marksville**, May 15, 1864
[to] Rear-Admiral D. D. Porter, Commanding Mississippi Squadron:
Admiral: We shall camp to-night between Marksville and Mansura, headquarters at Marksville. Simsport is 20 miles distant. We shall make our headquarters there to-morrow night. I should be glad, if the river admits, if you would send down one or two boats to that point. The enemy has returned in our front, showing some artillery and dismounted cavalry, but has made no decided resistance.
N. P. Banks, Major-General, commanding

Boats were going to be needed to get the troops across the river at Simsport.

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U. S. S. Choctaw, Off Fort De Russy, La., May 15, 1864, 3 p.m.
[to] Maj. Gen. N. P. Banks, Commanding Department of the Gulf:
Sir: In obedience to instructions from Admiral Porter, I have the honor to inform you that he, being very unwell, has gone down to the mouth of this river and left me in command at this place. He has ordered me to stop all boats that have provisions and forage on board until I hear from you. **The empty transports are to proceed immediately to Simsport.** I shall be pleased to learn your wishes at as early a moment as possible.
Frank M. Ramsay, Lieutenant-Commander, Commanding.

More from Ramsay at 7:30pm: **"All the transports have gone to Simsport. Eight gun-boats have gone with them to protect them."**

**See 120th_maps on this CD for maps of the battle at Mansura.
mansura_maps_joinedjpg.jpg**

The War of the Rebellion: v.1-53 [serial no. 1-111] Formal reports, both Union and Confederate, of the first seizures of United States property in the southern states, and of all military operations in the field, with the correspondence, orders and returns relating specially thereto. 1880-1898. United States War Department
Chapter XLVI Operations in Louisiana and the Trans-Mississippi States and Territories. January 1-June 30, 1864
pp234-235 maps

Page 211Report of General Banks...some dates are not correct.

The army on its march from Alexandria did not encounter the enemy in force until near the town of Mansura. He was driven through the town in the evening of the 14th [15th] of May, and at daybreak next morning our advance encountered his cavalry on the prairie east of the town. He fell back with steady and sharp skirmishing across the prairie to a belt of woods, which he occupied. The enemy's position covered three roads diverging from Mansura to the Atchafalaya. He manifested a determination here to obstinately resist our passage. The engagement, which lasted several hours, was confined chiefly to the artillery until our troops got [page 212] session on the edge of the woods, first upon our left by General Emory, and subsequently on our right by General Smith, when he was driven from the field, after a sharp and decisive fight, with considerable loss.

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Headquarters Department of the Gulf, Near Marksville, La., May 15, 1864

[to] **Brig. Gen. M. K. Lawler, Commanding Thirteenth Army Corps:**

The major-general commanding directs you to move your whole command at 3 A. M. to-morrow to a position directly in the rear of the town of Marksville, and hold yourself in readiness to move to support Generals Smith and Emory. The wagon train will be in park in your rear, guarded by a brigade of cavalry."

Geo. B. Drake, Assistant Adjutant-General

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Headquarters Department of the Gulf, Near Marksville, May 15, 1864.

[to] Brigadier-General Emory, commanding Nineteenth Army Corps:

General: You will move forward at 3 A. M. to-morrow with your entire command to take position at the farthest point in the front, where our troops have to-day reconnoitered. At Daybreak you will move forward and attack the enemy with the greatest vigor. General Smith moves from your right flank to turn the enemy's left at the same time. General Arnold has been ordered to take position in rear of your right flank. **The Thirteenth Army Corps will be in reserve near Marksville.** It is of the greatest importance that this movement be made with promptitude and vigor. The wagon train will be in park in the rear of the town, guarded by a brigade of cavalry, and when practicable, for the purpose of shortening the column you will move your command in columns of regiments.

By order of Major-General Banks: Geo. B. Drake, Assistant Adjutant-General.

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Headquarters Department of the Gulf, Mansura, La., May 15, 1864

Brig. Gen. M. K. **Lawler**, Commanding Thirteenth Army Corps:

The commanding general directs that you still take charge of the trains, hurrying them on. The enemy have retreated, apparently, on two roads, one toward Moreauville, the other toward Enterprise.

Geo. B. Drake, Assistant Adjutant-General.

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Message from Drake to Brig Gen A. J. Smith, 16th and 17th Corps

"A servant captured upon the City Belle has escaped from the enemy this a. m., and reports them falling back upon the Bayou de Glaize. They expect our force is going by the river from Fort De Russy. You will push on to Moreauville, in your regular position in the column, with all possible speed. You must come across to the Moreauville road."

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Headquarters Department of the Gulf, Near Marksville, May 16, 1864.

[to] Brigadier-general **Lawler**, Commanding thirteenth Army corps:

You are charged with the protection of the train during the march to-day. You will keep sufficient troops on flanks and rear, in conjunction with cavalry from General Arnold's command, sufficient for its proper protection. General Arnold and yourself are charged with the **protection of the train** during to-day's march.

By command of Major-General Banks: Geo. B. Drake, Assistant Adjutant-General

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suddenly there are orders May 16th from Drake at Marksville to have the 16th and 17th move to the right and attack the left of the enemy and drive him.

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And Col. W. H. Dickey's brigade Corps d'Afrique was called in to 2 miles from Marksville, to the right a little of the Mansura road.

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Gen Drake gave orders 17 May for the order of marching at 7 o'clock on the road to Simsport. 1st 19th Army Corps. 2nd all trains in order indicated previously. **3d 13th Army Corp.** 4th detachments of the 16th and 17th. Fifth the cavalry. **Each command will halt at Yellow Bayou until camp can be indicated by a staff officer.**

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Headquarters Department of the Gulf, Simsport, May 17, 1864.

[to] Brig. Gen. W. H. Emory, Commanding Nineteenth Army Corps:

the major-general commanding desires you to direct Colonel Robinson to destroy the enemy's works on Yellow Bayou to-morrow.

C. S. Sargent. Acting Assistant Adjutant-General.

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Simsport, May 17, 1864.

[to] Brig. Gen. A. J. Smith, Comdg. Detachment Sixteenth and Seventeenth Corps:

The major-general commanding directs that at Daylight to-morrow, as soon as the wagons have crossed, you cross Yellow Bayou with your whole command and occupy the line, with your left resting on Red River and your right on Bayou De Glaize, throwing one regiment across Bayou De Glaize. **If the present position of the Thirteenth Army Corps interferes with taking up this line, General Lawler will move his command nearer Simsport.** Colonel Robinson has been directed to destroy the enemy's works on Yellow Bayou, and the commanding general directs you to protect his working party while executing this order.

C. C. Sargent, Acting Assistant Adjutant-General

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"Headquarters Department of the Gulf, Simsport, May 18, 1864.

[to] Brig. Gen R. Arnold, Chief of Cavalry: You will move with your command to-morrow morning at as early an hour as practicable, supported by General Lawler's corps, with whom you will communicate to-night in order to have a through understanding, across the bayou by the dike, beyond the right flank of the enemy, endeavoring to gain the cut-off in his rear. You will furnish General Lawler with a guide." Geo. B. Drake, Assistant Adjutant-General

Page 666 "The major-general commanding directs me to inform you that the movement contemplated in his instructions of last night to the flank and rear of the enemy will not be made except in the event of an attack from him in front."

"You are directed by the major-general commanding to return, immediately upon the receipt of this order, to your camps near Simsport."

Headquarters Department of the Gulf, Simsport, May 19, 1864.

[to] Brig. Gen. Richard Arnold, Chief of Cavalry:

General: I am directed to inform you, in answer to your note just received, that the commanding general desires all **the wagon trains to cross before any of the troops cross.**

C.S. Sargent, Acting Assistant Adjutant-General.

Page 211 Report of General Banks...some dates are not correct. [Note: the water was high in the river.]

The 16th [probably the 18th] of May we reached Simsport, on the Atchafalaya. **Being entirely destitute of any ordinary bridge material for the passage of this river (about 600 yards wide) a bridge was constructed of the steamers, under direction of Lieutenant-Colonel Bailey. This work was not of the same magnitude, but was as important to the army as the dam at Alexandria was to the navy.** It had the merit of being an entirely novel construction, no bridge of such magnitude having been constructed of similar materials. **The bridge was completed at 1 o'clock on the 19th of May. The wagon train passed in the afternoon, and the troops the next morning,** a better spirit and condition, as able and eager to meet the enemy as at any period of the campaign. The command of General A. J. Smith, which covered the rear of the army during the construction of the bridge and the passage of the army, had **a severe engagement with the enemy under Polignac on the afternoon of the 19th [18th], at Yellow Bayou, which lasted several hours.** Our loss was about **150 in killed and wounded;** that of the enemy much greater, besides many prisoners who were taken by our troops."

N. P. Banks, Major-General Volunteers

[Sunbury American., (Sunbury, PA) June 18, 1864, Image 3]

Also present at Mansura, LA, were the Sunbury Guards of Sunbury, PA. A soldier who signed his letter H. D. W. and sent it to Wilvert, wrote after the fact from his camp at Morganza Bend, La., on 29 May 1864 about the Banks' retreat from Alexandria. Here is his letter in part:

" On Sunday, May 15, we left the river road and took a short route through the woods, saving considerable distance. The windings of the red river are so numerous that it resembles the tape worm railroad wherewith the politicians frightened the dear people during the administration of Ritner and Stevens. – We stopped several hours in the woods to leave cavalry pass, when we moved forward and by four o'clock emerged into a large open plain where we formed in line of battle, expecting a regular engagement. The enemy, however, retired and we advanced 'till dark, when the forces halted for the night, with orders to rest on their arms. 'Twas here that Banks road through our regiment amidst the cheers of the boys and gave us the pleasant news that Grant had defeated Lee. **Early next morning we marched through Marksville into a prairie nine miles long and six wide where every preparation was made for a fight. The whole of our force was formed in line, in support of artillery in front, who commenced operations on the enemy driving him gradually from the prairie into the woods. As the enemy retreated before the heavy fires of our artillery, the infantry advanced in line until they reached Mousoula, [does he mean Mansura?] where they formed in column, taking the whole field in and attempt to flank the enemy, but their running qualities were so good that we were foiled. The manoeuvring [sic] of the troops was handsomely done, and the movements was one of the finest things of the war. The fight of artillery was a steady one of five miles. The enemy merely stood that they might cover the retreat of their infantry and train under cover of their artillery. Our loss was slight. Of the rebels we could not ascertain correctly, but learned from citizens who had secreted**

themselves during the fight, that they had many killed and wounded, who threw them into wagons, promiscuously, and drove them off so that we could not learn their casualties. The next day we moved to Simmsport on the Achafalaya river, where a bridge was made by putting the transports side by side, which enabled the troops and train to pass safely over..."

[Mineral Point Weekly Tribune., (Mineral Point, Wisconsin) June 22, 1864, Image 2]
This was an official report from the 8th Regiment to the governor of Wisconsin, James T. Lewis. Written by Lt. Colonel John Wayles Jefferson of the 8th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry at Red River Landing, La. on 22 May 1864. [The regiment with the famous eagle named "Old Abe."]They had marched to Fort DeRussy, arriving on the 15th , at 11 pm and received orders again to march at one a.m.

"My men were much fatigued, having had but little sleep and very short rations; they, however, marched out with alacrity. Gen. Smith's army now was rear guard to Gen. Banks' army.

We marched by daylight six miles to Marksville, where Gen. Banks artillery was engaging the enemy in our front. Gen. Smith's army deploying to the right, my regiment was the extreme left one. Our brigade was now advanced in column by battalion. We advanced three miles, in this manner, to Mansura, where the enemy made a stand. We had an open prairie, three miles wide, to advance over. The enemy opened on us, as we advanced, with heavy and light pieces of artillery, giving us canister and spherical case. Our brigade was now advanced en echelon. This order was continued a half-mile farther, when the brigade was formed in line, my regiment upon the left. Musketry was now freely showered upon us. Our brigade charged forward upon his guns, but he succeeded in limbering up and getting them off by way of a by-road that we were not aware of. He left his dead and wounded on the field. My skirmishers captured some prisoners. My regiment in this action had 8 severely wounded and 25 slightly wounded.

This action was one of the worst and most continuous artillery fires my command were ever under – Vicksburg and Corinth not excepted. We advanced for five miles over an open plain, and after we had succeeded in gaining the woods, charged the enemy's lines and guns and drove him off ignominiously; had it not been for the bye road in his rear, as before mentioned, which was unknown to us, we should have captured his guns."

[The National Tribune. [Washington D.C.], April 14, 1904, Page 3, Image 3]
From article called Up the Red River, by Robert Welch, Co. D, 165th, NY
On May 13, the army and the fleet left Alexandria, the 165th N. Y. being the last to leave. The army marched along the river to protect the fleet. The transports were loaded with cotton and stores, the sick and the wounded. Soon after we had evacuated Alexandria it was in flames. Strict orders had been given not to burn the town. The fire must have been started by camp followers or stragglers. Our progress was slow. Cavalry marched in advance, in the rear, and on the right flank. The fleet was attacked frequently by the enemy on the other side of the river.

At Marksville, May 15, Gen. Mower, of the Sixteenth Corps, repulsed an attack. On the following day we encountered the enemy again, in line of battle in heavy timber, three miles below Marksville. We formed our battle line on an open plain. I never saw a more magnificent sight during the war than our army presented that day when in battle array on Mansura Plain. All the artillery was in proper position, supported by infantry, lying down behind the batteries. The 165th N. Y. supported the 21st Ind. It was largely an artillery engagement. The Sixteenth Corps turned the Confederate right, forcing them to abandon their position. Some of the prisoners wanted to know the kind of guns our cavalry had, saying that they loaded them at night and fired them all day --- referring, no doubt, to one of

our cavalry regiments that was armed with the Spencer rifle.

On the 17th we reached Simsport, at the junction of the Red and Atchafalaya Rivers. The river then being some 700 yards wide, we could not use the pontoons. The enemy, knowing the river was wide and rapid, attacked us on the 18th. After a spirited conflict the confederates retired, pursued by our cavalry. We captured many, and their dead and wounded were left to our care.

Col. Bailey, ever resourceful, so arranged the transports as to form a bridge across the river. This involved a delay of 24 hours. The planking from the pontoons was used in the construction of a level road across the bows of the transports. The main part of the army passed over leaving the cavalry to protect the batteries and train. Details of brigades ran the batteries and wagons over by hand. The crossing was completed on the evening of the 20th, and the march was resumed. When we reached the Mississippi, on the 21st, there was great joy."

[The National Tribune., September 14, 1893, Page 3, Image 3] *Part of letter to the newspaper from A. Roberts, Co. F, 29th Wisconsin. He was from Marion, Iowa.*

"I personally recollect that the 29th Wis. marched from the south side [of the Red River] and from the line where we were camped late in the afternoon to the north bank of the river, and worked on the dam all night. In the morning, or sometime during the day, we marched back to the south side and were almost immediately returned to the north side, and all the boats had passed the rapids. While there we did both labor on the dam and guard duty.

I believe we were the last regiment to leave the north bank of the river. I stood on the north bank just opposite where the second boat swung around and hung on the rocks after passing the dam, and saw every boat pass the rapids. I shall not attempt to describe it, but will say that in all my life have not witnessed greater excitement nor more enthusiasm. It was witnessed by not less than 50,000 people, citizens and soldiers, our hearts were in our throats, and as each one in turn successfully passed the rapids, cheer after cheer rent the air. Tears ran down our cheeks, and we wanted to hug each other, we felt so glad.

I wish to say a word in favor of Gen. Banks. During the work on the north side I saw him nearly every day, in his shirtsleeves, working and directing work side by side with the men, and never a word was used that was loud or indicated that he was an important person or better than his humblest man.

We left our camp on the north bank of the river some time during the forenoon of May 13, the other regiments having left during the night preceding, and followed the army down the river road. On May 15 the 29th Wis. was detailed as rear-guard to support the cavalry and bring up the train. Being closely pressed by the rebels just a little before night we were in line of battle facing the rear several times, and the cavalry in line not 10 rods away.

The 29th Wis was on duty...and it was very late when we went into camp for the night. On May 16 we were routed out very early in the morning, and advanced on quick time till we arrived at Marksville, when the whole army formed a regiment and brigade front, and advanced in line across the plains. I believe this was the grandest display of military equipment during the war. As far as the eye could see were troops, cavalry, artillery, and wagon-trains, all advancing in line of battle, and shells from the enemy's guns bursting overhead or passing to the rear made the spectacle exciting and grand. From the position where my regiment was in line, near the center, looking to the right or left as far as one could see, the sight was magnificent. Fully 40,000 men and the necessary equipment could be seen in one grand display. The picture I saw that day will remain with me as long as I live.

Another great engineering work was building the bridge across the Atchafalaya River. This stream is about three-fourths of a mile wide, is deep, and looks like the Mississippi flowing by. This bridge was built of steamboats being anchored so as to form a bridge across their bows, there being two pontoon boats on each side of the river to reach the large steamers. Stringers were laid and the whole planked over to form a good bridge from one side of the

river to the other, on which all our artillery and wagon-trains passed over, and also a part of the army.

The building of the bridge and crossing of that large army with its equipment took only three days. Great credit is due to the officers who planned it and the men who did the work. I marched across on this bridge with my regiment, and saw what I have described, which is written from memory. - A. Roberts, Co. F, 29th Wis., Marion, Iowa."

The following came from the Muster Roll records of some of the companies of the 120th.

Captain Henry Eberhart, Co B May and June, 1864 June 30, 1864 shows station of company, at Morganza, La.

Record of events: On the 1st day of May 1864 the 120th Regt. O.V.I. received orders to embark for Alexandria La on board the steamer "city Bllele" [City Belle] which orders were promptly obeyed by Col. Marcus M. Speigel commandant 120th OVI when within 30 miles of Alexandria May 3rd the boat was attacked by the enemy who opened upon the boat with a five gun battery, immediately disabling the boat, killing the Col. and many of the men. **Only 164 of the Regt succeeded in making their escape.** All Books, Returns, Rolls etc on board were destroyed by the enemy. **Arrived at Alexandria May 4. Left Alexandria May 13th, arrived at this place May 22nd.**

Captain Benjamin F. Miller, Company D: **May and June, 1864** shows station of company, Morganzia, La. Record of events: The 120 Regt (including Comp D) while at Baton Rouge La was ordered to embark on steamer City Belle May 1, 1864 to proceed to Alexandria La on the 3rd day of May the steamer was attacked and captured. **17 men of Comp D**, with others of the regiment made their escape and arrived at Alexandria on the 4th the army left Alexandria on the 13 of May and arrived at Morganzia, La. on the 22 of May where we have since been encamped.

Company E: Had one man killed and fourteen taken prisoners. **One com. officer and twenty six men escaped**, and arrived at Alexandria May 4th distance 30 miles. May 12th was ordered to the front. May 13th was deployed as skirmishers and covered the Retreat for five miles. Marched day and night (nearly) and arrived at Morganzia's Bend La on the Miss, River - distance 100? miles - May 22nd 1864.

Captain Elias Fraunfelter, Co F: On May 3rd the enemy fired on the boat with Inft and Artillery and captured the boat when we proceeded **on foot to Alexandria La, a distance of thirty miles arriving there on the 4th day of May 1864. Left Alexandria on May 13th and arrived at Morganzia Bend La on the Miss River May 22/64.**

Captain James B. Taylor, Co H: **Twenty seven men of Co H were taken prisoner, four of whom have since returned - one wounded** - marched to Alexandria and back to the place where Gen Banks evacuated ?al.

Captain Christopher Au, Company I: Boat captured and almost two-thirds of the Regt. Every thing belonging to the Regt lost. those escaping arrived at Alexandria on the 5th. **Joined the Brigade May 13th. Left Alexandria and arrived at Morganza La on the Miss. River the 22nd of May where we are at present.**

May 9, 1864, Diary of Simon Bott

Camp Alexandria La

in camp this morning and was ??? of the guns boats come down over the falls today.

May 10, 1864, Diary of Simon Bott

Camp Alexandria La

This morning we was still under marching orders and we may stay all day.

May 11, 1864, Diary of Simon Bott

Camp Alexandria La

this morning we was in camp and this afternoon the first and second company was call out and the rest under marching orders

May 12, 1864, Thursday, Diary of Simon Bott

Camp Alexandria La

this morning we left our old camping ground and marched about five miles west of the town in front of the rebels.

May 13, 1864, Friday, Diary of Simon Bott

Camp ??Furling or purling, La

This morning come off picket and got ready for to march and about 9 (8) oclock we was taken out in front to picket.

May 14, 1864, Saturday, Diary of Simon Bott

Camp ?purling La

This morning we took our line of march and marched along the river about 15 miles then went to camp at 1 oclock at night.

May 15, 1864, Sunday, Diary of Simon Bott

Camp Lea

This morning we started on a march and we marched about five miles then stopped.

May 16, 1864, Monday, Diary of Simon Bott [this would have been at Mansura]

this morning we started at daylight on a march and march about 10 miles thru the prairy and there the ? 18 army corps was a fighting and we laid over.

May 17, 1864, Tuesday, Diary of Simon Bott

This morning we start on a march at daylight and march about 8 miles then we camp a little while.

May 18, 1864, Wednesday, Diary of Simon Bott

Fort Philip, La

This morning we was in camp at the east side of the fort and there some firing all day a long.

May 19, 1864, Thursday, Diary of Simon Bott

Fort Philip La

in camp this morning laying in camp and under orders for to leave.

May 20, 1864, Friday, Diary of Simon Bott

Fort Philip La

in camp this morning and waiting for orders

May 21, 1864, Saturday, Diary of Simon Bott

This morning we march to the Mississippi river and march a long the river till we got to Morganzia

END CHAPTER 20

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