

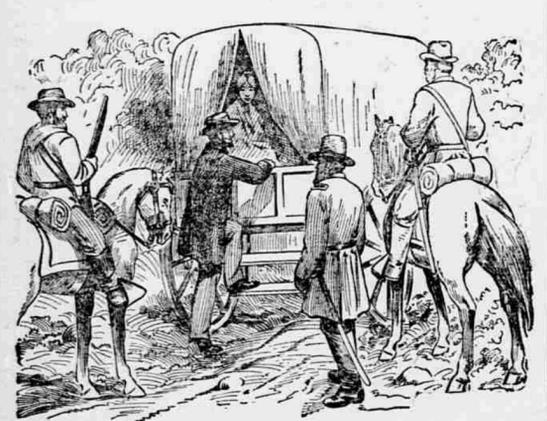
# RECITALS AND REMINISCENCES

Stories Eminently Worth Telling of Experiences and Adventures in the Great National Struggle.

## CAPTOR OF JEFF DAVIS DEAD.

Passing Away of Gen. Benjamin D. Pritchard, 4th Mich. Cav.

There is profound sorrow among the good people of Allegan, Mich., over the passing away of one of their best citizens, and a man who was respected and honored by all classes. Gen. Benj. D. Pritchard died suddenly on the evening of Nov. 26. He was born in Ohio in 1835, of Welsh ancestry, and went to Allegan in 1858. He was a carpenter, and worked at his trade until he could get money enough to go to school; then he became a teacher to support himself while he was in the university, where he studied law and was admitted to the bar. At the outbreak of the war he recruited Co. L, 4th Mich. Cav., and



THE CAPTURE OF JEFF DAVIS.

became its Captain. He held this rank until in the Spring of 1862, when he was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel, and commanded the regiment until the close of the war. He was constantly present in all of the 93 engagements which the regiment has to its credit, except while absent recovering from a severe wound received at Chickamauga. On Sunday, May 7, 1865, he received orders to take his regiment from camp in Macon, Ga., and intercept Jeff Davis's party. This was understood to be crossing the country to the sea to join Kirby Smith beyond the Mississippi. In three days Col. Pritchard and his command rode 100 miles upon this errand, and at 3 o'clock, May 9, they arrived at Abby-

ville, where they met Col. Harnden with the 1st Wis. Cav., and it was decided that the two regiments should leave for Irwinsville, where Davis was by separate roads. On account of the fogged condition of his horses, Col. Pritchard could not get the 150 well-mounted men with which he determined to start, and went on with a fewer number. After a ride of 18 miles through a forest they reached Irwinsville at 1 o'clock on the morning of May 10, and then learned that Davis and his party were encamped about one and a half miles farther on. Col. Pritchard sent Lieut. Purinton with 25 dismounted men to gain the other side of Davis's camp and cut off escape. The movement was successfully made, but there was an unfortunate encounter with a part of the 1st Wis. Cav., which

Col. Pritchard said, "Then I will call you Davis." After a moment's hesitation, and he had thrown off his disguise, straightened himself up and said: "That is my name," and then, putting on an air of bombast, said tauntingly: "I suppose you call it bravery to charge a train of defenseless women and children; but it is theft, it is vandalism."

Pritchard made no answer, but got ready to start back to Macon. Pritchard's men were very hungry, as they had not taken any supplies with them, while Davis's wagons were full of provisions. Pritchard went to Davis, and asked him to give his men some of this, and it would be properly accounted for when they arrived at Macon. Davis refused angrily, saying that the contents of the wagon were private property which Pritchard had no right to molest. The discussion grew warmer, until Pritchard declared that if he did not give up the supplies quietly they would be taken. Davis grew more angry, and said:

"I want you to understand distinctly that Mr. Davis assumed that disguise at my instance. Besides, I had a detail of three officers and 29 men with Washington with his prisoners, which now included Davis. Besides his service Col. Pritchard was warmly thanked by the President and Secretary of War, and promoted to the rank of Brigadier-General.

Upon being discharged Gen. Pritchard returned to Allegan and the practice of the law. He was four times elected to important State offices, and would have been elected Governor of Michigan, but he refused to be a candidate against a personal friend. He was also solicited to run for Congress. In 1879 he organized the First National Bank, of which he became President, and built it up to one of the strongest financial institutions in that part of the country. Besides his banking interests Gen. Pritchard had a large farm near Allegan and other business activities. He was a prominent Odd Fellow, and had been Treasurer of the Grand Lodge for 25 years.

His funeral was largely attended, and under the charge of the Grand Army of the Republic, with the Guard of Honor consisting of 12 members of his old Co. L, 4th Mich. Cav. The Odd Fellows sent a delegation from all over the State, and at the grave the beautiful Grand Army ritual was employed.

## Bragg and Others.

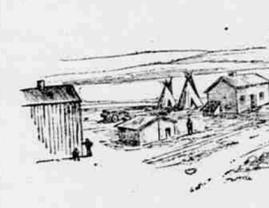
Editor National Tribune: I served in Co. C, 3d U. S. Art., commanded by Capt. and Braver Lieut. Col. Braxton Bragg, afterwards General. Battery M, 2d Art. and we were stationed together at Fort Washita, Chickasaw Nation, La., from June, 1864, till December, 1865. We were then ordered by Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War, to proceed to Fortress Monroe, Va., for a school of artillery practice, and turn in our batteries at Little Rock, Ark., which we did, then went by steamer to New Orleans, and thence by way of Havana to Fortress Monroe, arriving Jan. 15, 1867. There were four companies. About October, H. J. Hunt's and Jas. Totten's companies were sent to Kansas on account of the Border Ruffian War, and the other two companies, we got John F. Reynolds for Captain, who was killed at Gettysburg July 1, 1863.

When the war broke out our company was at the Presidio, San Francisco. Never having heard Bragg's Battery mentioned during the war, I wrote to Maj. Hunt to find out what he knew about it. He wrote me a long letter from Washington, where he was Governor of the Soldiers' Home in June, 1885, telling me our battery was equipped as horse artillery, and operated with the cavalry in the Army of the Potomac, doing good service. He also gave a history of all the officers in his and our company—only one, a Lieut. Long, of Co. M, proving a traitor. Maj. Hunt, Captain and brevet Major, was a nephew of Gen. Cass, of Michigan, who was the Democratic nominee for President in 1848 against Gen. Taylor. Maj. Hunt was a gentleman in every sense of the word, and was liked by all. What a difference between him and Bragg, who was so strict a disciplinarian that the officers were as much afraid of him as the private soldiers. I tell a story, which may have partly accounted for his disagreeable disposition.—John M. Geisler, Co. F, 4th Minn., Albert Lea, Minn.

## THE MASSACRE AT PLATTE BRIDGE.

Gen. Thomas Moonlight Had No Connection Whatever With the Affair.

Editor National Tribune: Comrade Hughes' article in your issue of Aug. 1, 1897, in the National Tribune of Aug. 1.



THE PLATTE BRIDGE AT THE TIME OF THE FIGHT.

At the time Lieut. Collins was killed at Platte Bridge Col. Moonlight was not in command there; indeed, he had been mustered out of the service, and was more than 400 miles away; there was not a full regiment nor a quarter of a regiment there; no emigrant train was attacked; Moonlight did not send Lieut. Collins with 25 men to assist a train; no emigrants were murdered in plain sight of Moonlight or anybody else, and all of the men under Lieut. Collins were not killed.

Now, as to the facts: The bridge alluded to was a wagon bridge across the North Platte River, some distance above Fort Laramie. There was a sort of block house or stockade at the south end of the bridge, and in July, 1865, Maj. Anderson, of the 11th Kan., was in command there with less than 100 men, and quite a number of these were sick. Sergt. Custard, of Co. H, 11th Kan., with four mule teams, with drivers, and about 50 men, had gone to Fort Bridger for ammunition. On July 25 Maj. Anderson's command was attacked by a band of Indians, and the stockade was besieged. The enemy had destroyed the telegraph both above and below the bridge, and communications were cut off. On the 26th Sergt. Custard, with his four wagons and small escort, appeared at what is known as Red Buttes, some six miles west of the bridge and on the north side of the river. The Indians attacked the train with many hundred warriors. Lieut. Collins happened to be with Maj.

Anderson at the time, and he gallantly volunteered to lead a rescuing party, and Maj. Anderson permitted half of his available force—about 30 men—to go with Collins. This body had gone but a little distance after crossing the bridge when they were attacked by an overwhelming force of Redskins, and the brave Lieutenant and a large number of his men were killed and their bodies mutilated. Part of Collins's men got back safely. Of the men under Sergt. Custard only three, and they were of his advance guard of five men, escaped. All the others were killed in the fight at Red Buttes, which lasted about four hours.

My memory as to this affair is quite vivid, for I was not engaged in it personally—my company being then at Horseshoe Station, some distance east of the bridge—yet I was at the scene of conflict only a few days after, and as 12 of my company, including some of my closest friends and most esteemed comrades, lost their lives in the uneven battle at Red Buttes, I cannot forget the details of the affair.

Altho everybody must regret the occurrence, yet this is the first time I have heard of anyone criticizing either officers or men for their action, and certainly think that Comrade Hughes' story is a recollection of some wild rumor started by some one who evidently knew but little of what happened.

This is the second time within the last few months that I have felt called upon to defend the good name of my

old Colonel, Thomas Moonlight, from untruthful and uncalled-for attacks, and hope that the occasion may not again occur. If Moonlight were alive he would make it rather hot in that part of Columbus, O., where I. F. Ward, of Co. B, 11th Ohio, resides.—J. F. Hagedorn, Co. H, 11th Kan., Apache, Okla.

## Fought Fire in the Wilderness.

Editor National Tribune: While I do not claim to have been the youngest soldier, I think there were few younger or smaller who saw any more hard service. I first enlisted in Schooley's Battery of heavy artillery as bugler, but when they looked me over said I was not heavy enough for the job, and sent me back home. I tried it again in August, 1862, and enlisted in Co. E, 143d Pa., as drummer. They gave me a musket, and I was mustered in as a private, 15 years and 10 months of age, weighing 101 pounds, and short of regulation height. We joined the Army of the Potomac in February, 1862, being moved to Belle Plain, where I was detailed as fife orderly for Gen. Doubleday's headquarters. Third Division, First Corps, serving as such till about October, 1862. May 4, 1864, found me on picket when the army moved on for Richmond. On May 19 we charged the enemy's works at Laurel Hill, and were repulsed. The woods caught fire, and our wounded were in danger of being burned. Comrade P. De Lacey asked Maj. Coningham for a detail to fight the fire, who replied that he would not detail men to go to certain death, but that De Lacey could have all the

volunteers he could find. No one, however, wanted the job, and finally my tent mate, John Otto, and I offered to go along with De Lacey. The three of us fought the fire between the lines in front of the enemy's breastworks. They gave us a warm reception, but finally ceased firing, probably because they saw we were trying to save our wounded. I was wounded twice, but not severely enough to put me out of service. As our dear old flag, which had been carried thru Chancellorsville, Gettysburg and all the battles from the Wilderness to first Hatcher's Run was nothing but a few rags and staff, the ladies of Wilkes-Barre presented us with a new one, and I was detailed to carry it. This was about the biggest undertaking I ever had on my hands, as I only weighed about 125 pounds then, and a flag is a hard thing to carry anyway, specially thru woods. I was mustered out with the regiment after nearly three years' good hard service, and never having lost a day's duty except when I had a frog felon on my right hand. If any of the comrades who were at Laurel Hill at the time I can furnish you any information, go and fight that fire see this, I wish they would write me, giving their version of the affair. Capt. M. L. Blair, John Otto, Samuel Biggers, J. A. Dolph, F. E. Connor, Wesley Knapp, Amos Washer, D. Beemer and J. Nickaboeker, of Co. E, 143d Pa., are alive, and will furnish their addresses.—Rogers W. Cox, 302 Wyoming Ave., Scranton, Pa., Box 30.

## The 7th U. S.

Editor National Tribune: Please give in The National Tribune a short history of the 7th U. S.—Sampson Chadwick, Richland, Wash.

The 7th U. S. was originally organized under the Act of July 16, 1798, for the war with France, and discharged June 15, 1800. It was re-organized in 1808 and took part in the war of 1812, after which it was consolidated with the 2d and 4th U. S. to form the 1st U. S. A new 7th U. S. was formed in 1815 by the consolidation of the 8th, 10th, 36th and 38th U. S. At the beginning of the war, Henry Wilson was Colonel, having been so commissioned June 11, 1851. He served until Feb. 25, 1861, when he was succeeded by J. J. Abercrombie, who was in nominal command of the regiment until June 12, 1865. He was at once made a Brigadier-General of Volunteers during the war with J. R. Smith, Isaac Lynde, G. O. Haller, H. D. Wallen. The regiment served in Agnew's Division, Fifth Corps, Army of the Potomac, and lost two officers and 50 men killed, and 59 died from disease.—Editor National Tribune.

Old Regulars. Zack Clark, Co. K, 25th U. S., and Co. H, 18th U. S., Stockbridge, Mich., want to know what has become of the Old Regulars, and if they have no organization. He thinks the country must be full of them, and would specially like to hear from Sergt's Parker and Deam, Privates Colter, Carr and a host of others, and asks them to drop him a line.

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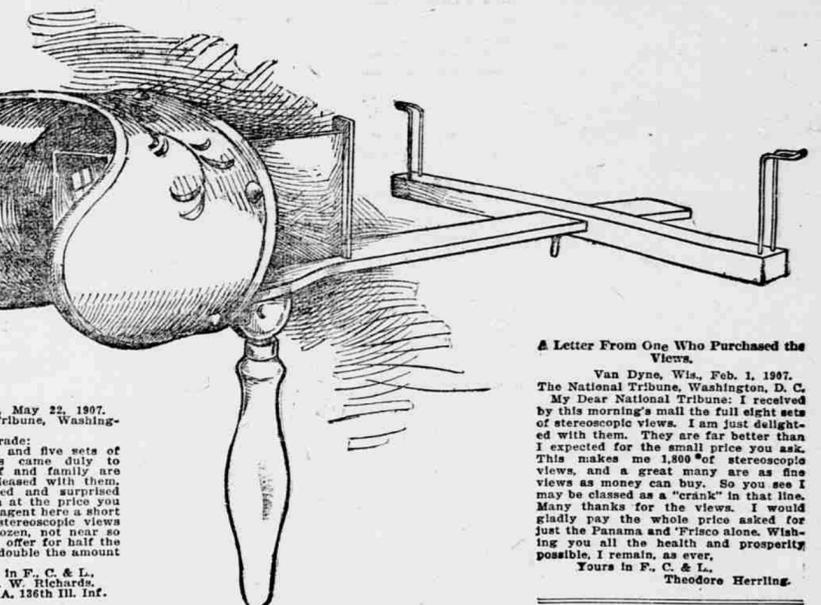
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