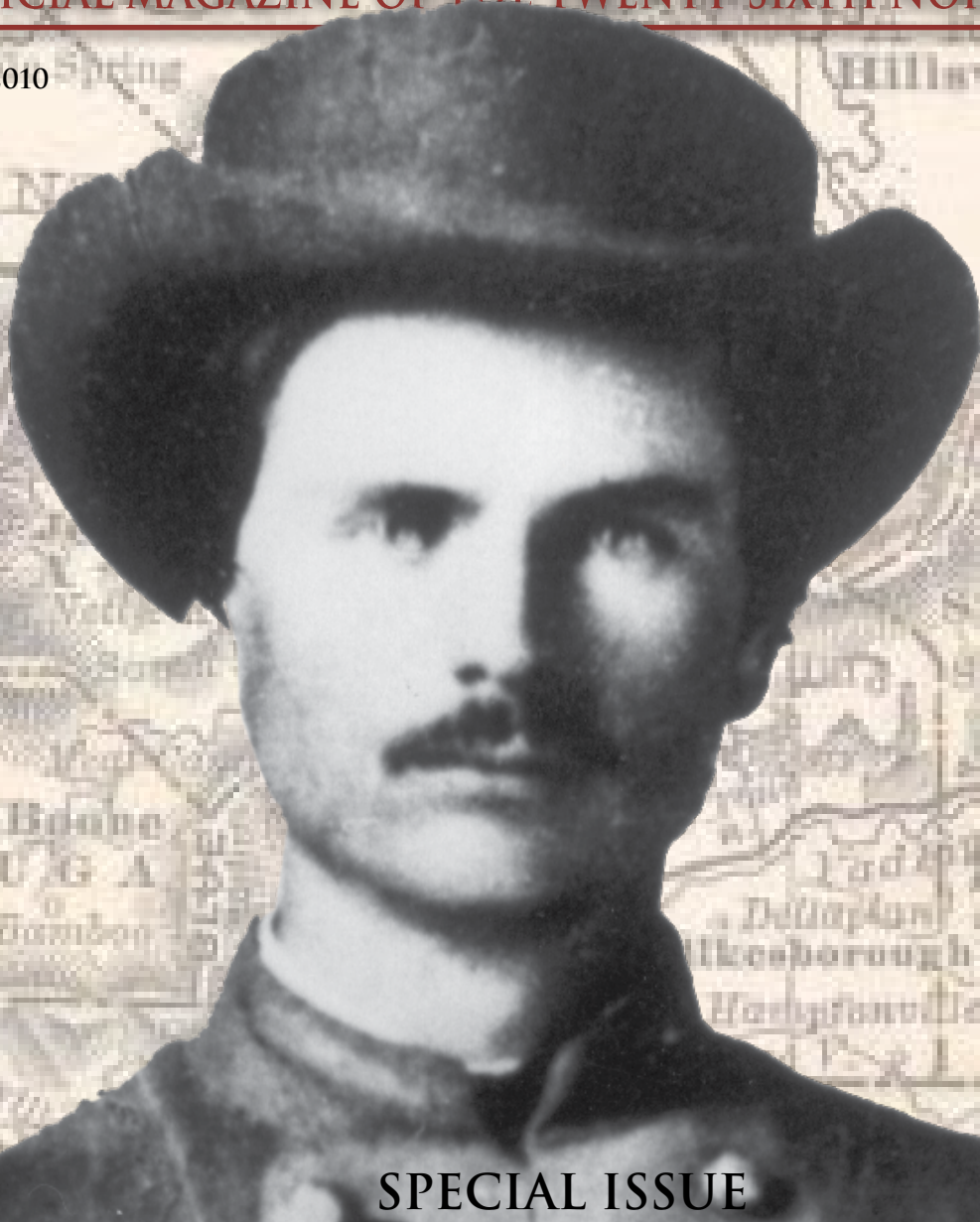


COMPANY FRONT

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH NORTH CAROLINA

ISSUE 1, 2010



SPECIAL ISSUE

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

DURING
THE CIVIL WAR

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Front Cover

Map of Western North Carolina and 1st Lt. Charles M. Suddreth

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INTRODUCTION

The war in the mountains of North Carolina has always been a fascinating story that unless you have lived in the region, you more than likely have not heard much of. But, it is a story that needs to be remembered. This Company Front issue provides a short introduction article of how the Civil War existed in western North Carolina, four historical articles that tell the story of Stoneman's Raid and Fort Hamby, plus detailed biographical notes, order of battle and a word about the marauders who terrorized the citizens of the northwest section of the state. While the three historical articles dealing with Fort Hamby will have some similar passages, there are enough differences to warrant their inclusion. Each writer was there and offers their unique perspective to the event. Lastly, instead of providing footnotes to each person mentioned in the four historical articles, Greg and I came to the conclusion that it would probably be better to simply place the biographical notes in alphabetical order at the end of the articles.

I would like to thank the following friends who offered tremendous advice, information and assistance in putting this issue together.

- Dwight Joplin, a fellow teacher, who re-typed the four historical articles
- Al Leonard, who assisted me in re-writing an old article I had earlier used for a master's history class. His additions and thoughts added immensely to the original work.
- Greg Mast, who helped put the Biographical Notes and Appendices in order. I could not have done this without his assistance (and red pen!)
- Kevin Ellis, who took the time to find the Michigan Regimental Rosters and in fact found the Wade of Ft. Hamby fame.
- Bob Williams, who took the time to examine the rosters of the 9th Louisiana Infantry for the Capt. Jones from the Stoneman's Raid Article.
- John Jett and Raymond Robinson, who assisted with the proofreading of the four historical articles.
- Jason Goodnite – for his outstanding graphical work (as always!) on this issue of Company Front.

I hope you enjoy this issue of Company Front.

For the 26th,
Skip Smith



Unknown Wilkes County Soldier
Courtesy Edith Carter

FIRE ON THE

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA AT THE



Lenoir, NC Circa 1870.
In the background is St. James Episcopal
Church and Hibriten Mountain

THE MOUNTAIN

TIME OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

By Locke W. (Skip) Smith, Jr.
and Alan C. Leonard

The American Civil War involved places that will forever remind students of history of the carnage that took place over four bloody years. Shiloh, Sharpsburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Spotsylvania Court House, Cold Harbor and Franklin – all give the reader a window to the horrors of war. While not so familiar or bloody, there are places in the mountains of western North Carolina that also evoke thoughts of terror. This is because of the atrocities that were committed there by both sides of the conflict. Marshall, Shelton Laurel, Warm Springs, Winding Stairs, the Globe Valley and Ft. Hamby are among the places very familiar to the inhabitants of the mountains of North Carolina. Stories like the captured “boy” soldiers from Camp Vance who were used as human shields when their captors make even the hardest of men wince. Or the stories where women, children and older citizens (whose husbands, fathers and sons were away fighting) would nervously lay down their heads wondering if they would be attacked in their homes in the middle of the night were far too familiar to the inhabitants of the region. While terror was visited upon many citizens throughout of the South, no place could equal western North Carolina in ferocity. (Bumgarner, 2000)

The twenty-two western North Carolina counties in 1861 had slightly over 130,000 free residents, about 13% of North Carolina’s total free population. (Inscoe & McKinney, 2000) The people that inhabited the region were essentially a mirror image of the other parts of the Tar Heel state and the South, as many of the affluent citizens who resided in the towns and fertile valleys could easily fit into society anywhere across the region. As in other sections of the state, these families often dominated the social, political and economic affairs of their communities. However, the majority of the inhabitants were simple farmers who often struggled to survive the harsh winters and rugged landscape of the North Carolina mountains. Inscoe and McKinney found that about “forty percent of the region’s inhabitants worked farm land that they did not own.” (Inscoe and McKinney, 2000) Economically, the area as a whole was poor. With weak road networks and no railroad, it was very difficult for the common folk of the mountains to move about and become engaged in the affairs of the region. Isolation was the result. Also, news from the outside world was almost non-existent or slow in coming to the remote coves and valleys of the western counties. In 1861 there were only four banks in the region (Asheville, Morganton, Murphy, and Macon) so a strong barter system developed for trade. (Trotter, 1988) Like most North Carolinians of the period, these mountaineers shared common European ancestry rooted in the British Isles and Germany, which helped form the personal characteristics commonly associated with the mountaineers: independent, self-reliant, industrious, religious and vengeful. (Inscoe & McKinney, 2000)

Slavery existed in the 22 western counties but not to the degree found elsewhere in North Carolina and



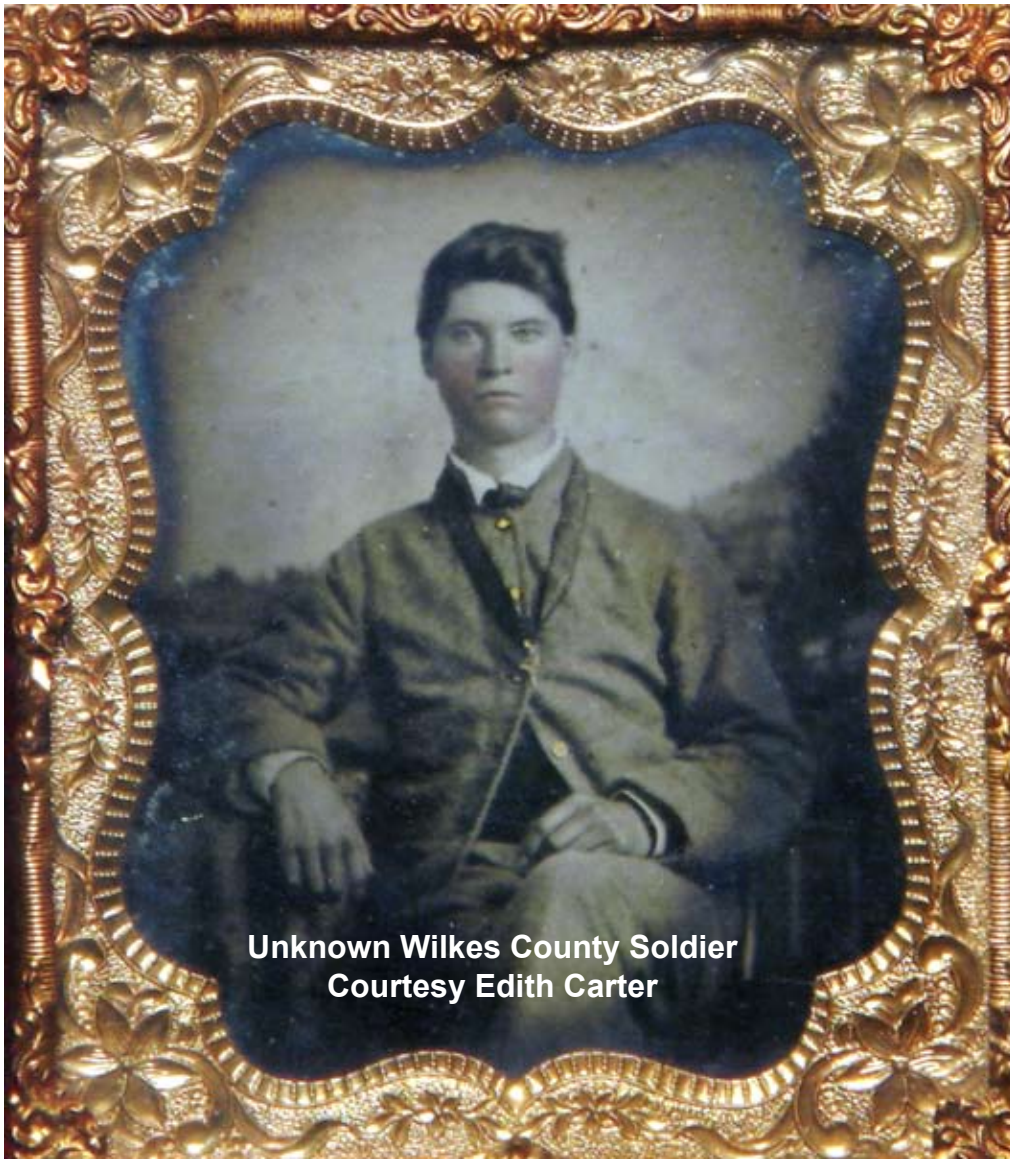
Period Map of Western North Carolina

the South. There were about 17,000 slaves in the region, or about 5% of North Carolina’s total slave population. Only in Burke County was the slave population more than 25% of the total population. The average number of slaves in these 22 counties was about 770 with the lowest population, 144, found in Watauga County. (Inscoc & McKinney, 2000)

Also in this region were the remnants of the once powerful Cherokee Nation. These Native Americans had been robbed of their ancestral lands and in 1838 most of them were relocated to Indian Territory in what is now Oklahoma. However, over 1,000 members of the Cherokee tribe remained in what was then Jackson County, with another 100 of them residing in two adjacent counties. During the Civil War the vast majority of the Cherokee sided with the State of North Carolina and relished the opportunity to strike back against the Federal government that had dealt so unfairly with them. The presence of the Cherokee added to a mix that made the culture in the western counties unique. (Inscoc & McKinney, 2000)

Politically, the mountain region was similar of the other parts of the state and of the South. The Whig Party had largely died out by the start of the Civil War and the Democratic Party had regained dominance. In the election of 1860 the national Democratic Party split between northern and southern contingents, allowing Abraham Lincoln, the candidate of the new “Republican Party,” to be elected President. (Trotter, 1988)

At the beginning of the Civil War the people of western North Carolina could be classified as enthusiastic to reluctant secessionists. Too often the citizens of the region have been erroneously categorized as largely pro-Union. This mistake is made because “the victors write the history” and the citizens of the western North Carolina counties were easily but wrongly lumped in with the inhabitants of east Tennessee, who in 1861, pub-



**Unknown Wilkes County Soldier
Courtesy Edith Carter**

licly declared their allegiance to the Union. While these two groups of people shared some common heritage and the experience of living in the mountains, they were not that similar in their political viewpoints. To be certain, there were pockets of Union sentiment in the mountains of western North Carolina, but that could be said for many other places in the state and the South, and hostility to the Confederate cause was slow in developing in the mountains. Historian Terrell Garren states that as of late 1861, and early 1862, only about 5% of the citizens of western North Carolina could be considered “Unionists.” (Garren, 2006) Inscoe and McKinney, in their study noted that several counties in the upper and central piedmont “Quaker Belt” were actually more Unionist and anti-war than were the mountain counties and that strong Unionist sentiment could also be found in northeastern coastal

region. In fact, six Union regiments were formed in eastern North Carolina during the war composed of local men. In western North Carolina “one could find someone with Unionist sentiment but, no where could they be considered the majority.” (Inscoe & McKinney, 2000) Garren advances a final observation regarding Unionism in western North Carolina when he points out that since the end of the American Civil War, Wilkes County has been labeled as a “pro-Union” and it has been said that there were many men from the county that supported and fought for the North. This is not accurate. Wilkes County provided almost 1,600 men who fought for the Southern cause, and 472 of them died during their service. The number lost represents more than three times the 145 Wilkes men who joined the Federal army late in the war and suffered relatively few privations and casualties. Though there was a sizable “loyal” element present in Wilkes County, the numbers strongly indicate that it is not accurate to classify it as “Unionist.” (Garren, 2006)

In summary, the citizens of western North Carolina were a relatively isolated group and had a tradition of settling differences among themselves. They possessed a strong independent streak that didn’t necessarily translate to hostility toward the existing government, Federal or Confederate. While numbers do not necessarily tell the entire story, they are hard to ignore when thousands of men from western counties served with enthusiasm and pride in North Carolina infantry and cavalry regiments. About 1,836 western North Carolinians served in Federal units, mostly in the last two years of the war, while more than 26,000 citizens of region went to war for the Southern cause as members of various regiments of North Carolina Troops. Out of these 26,000 men who served in the Confederate forces, 5,840 did not return home to their beloved mountains. (Garren, 2006) A Brief Description of the War in Western North Carolina - 1862

While there were some minor problems in the region during the early months of the war, the situation and mindset of the citizens left at home began to deteriorate in April of 1862, a year into the conflict. The Confederate government enacted, for the first time in American history, a Conscription Act that required all able bodied men between the ages of 18 and 35 (upped to 45 in September 1862) to enlist in the Confederate Army. This irritated many mountaineers and their families who wanted to avoid any involvement and they did not take kindly to being forced into the conflict. This change also compelled local authorities (Home Guard units, sheriffs and magistrates) to attempt to round up those who did not voluntarily enlist, and this policy often times led to the use of aggressive and abusive strategies. (Bumgarner, 2000) State authorities assigned some regular infantry regiments to the defense of western North Carolina. The 62nd and 64th N. C. Troops (NCT) were from the western region of the State, with the 64th NCT being primarily made up of men from Madison County, but this regiment also included some east Tennesseans. These regiments had on their rolls many men who did not volunteer for duty, thus there was a lack of discipline among these troops and a lack of respect for their commanders which sometimes led to out-of-control individuals roaming the mountains, causing trouble for any suspected Union man and his family. Lastly, there were small cavalry battalions that formed local defense units in the mountains. In summary, the troops who were detailed to protect loyal citizens and the families of soldiers, and to defend the mountain passes and round up deserters and conscript dodgers had a difficult job that amounted to guerilla warfare in remote and tortuous terrain. Often they carried with them feelings of resentment and vengeful motives born of previous experiences, and it was all too easy and tempting for them to return at will to their nearby homes and families. Many exhibited an overall lack of the military discipline necessary to the successful completion of their assigned duties. (Mast, 1995)

By the summer of 1862, the 62nd and 64th NCT had been formed and were given the additional difficult duty in east Tennessee of securing various bridges and railroads from Federal forces and pro-Union partisans. Eventually large proportions of both units were captured when Cumberland Gap fell to the Union. Those that escaped returned to the mountains of North Carolina and eventually to their “police duties,” devoting a good bit of their effort to rounding up deserters and men who were trying to avoid conscription. Their methods often left much to be desired, as they sometimes intimidated and tortured suspected Unionists and their families to gather information as to the whereabouts of their kinsmen. But still, the war for the most part stayed far from western North Carolina. Sarah Lenoir of Morganton, North Carolina wrote to her cousin Annie Lenoir in neighboring Caldwell County, on July 10, 1862, stating that “Morganton must be the safest place in the Confederacy...but then again, you are even more remote that we are.” Sadly, that was about to change. (Inscoe & McKinney, 2000) Across the mountains in east Tennessee trouble was brewing. The citizens of that region publicly and loudly voiced the opinion that Tennessee should remain loyal to the Union. The other two-thirds of the state however, favored casting their lot with the new Confederacy. When the state succeeded it literally split in half. While there were east Tennesseans who joined Confederate units, one could travel anywhere in the area and find Unionists. Ultimately, almost 31,000 men from that state put on the blue, a number unheard of in the “Old North State” where Union sympathizers tended to be much less brazen and outspoken. (www.tennesseencyclopedia.net)

As the year 1862 came to a close, citizens of western North Carolina were beginning to experience hardships beyond what they were accustomed to. With many of the men off fighting at the far-flung seats of war, the women, children and old folks began to experience a new difficulty – bushwhackers from both sides congregated in the mountains of western North Carolina and abused defenseless civilians. Adding to the misery were numbers of Confederate deserters, from North Carolina and other states as well, who began hiding out in the mountains of North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. This lawless element was something entirely new to the region. (Trotter, 1988)

1863 – The Year the War Comes to the Mountains

By the close of 1862, a new type of warfare was being prepared for the western North Carolina mountains. East Tennesseans were joining Union regiments positioned around the northeastern part of that state, and there were



Major John Woodfin



Brig. Gen R. B. Vance

individuals infiltrating the western North Carolina counties hoping to encourage and recruit pro-Union men of the region. One such man was John Kirk, son of east Tennessee Unionist Alexander Kirk, who encouraged about 50 men from the Shelton Laurel Valley of Madison County, North Carolina to raid Marshall, the county seat. On the night of January 8, 1863, they dutifully ransacked the town of Marshall, breaking into numerous stores. One of the items that they were particularly in search of was salt, which was a most valuable commodity in those days before refrigeration. They felt that they had been denied their share of the salt issue in the past and intended to even the score, but they took matters further when they entered the home of the absent Col. Lawrence Allen, commander of the 64th NCT. His wife and three sick children were home that evening. The raiders terrorized the family as they tore through the house and even took the blankets off the beds of the sick children. The children died by the time Col. Allen returned home. Confederate Department Commander, Major General Henry Heth, on hearing of the raid stated that he did not want anymore problems (or prisoners) from the area. Arriving first was Lt. Col. James Keith of the 64th NCT with several companies of the Regiment. They immediately set off for the Shelton Laurel Valley and proceeded to round-up any man they thought or heard of as being responsible for the depredations in Marshall. They captured a total of 15 men and boys under the pretense of taking them to Knoxville to stand trial. After two of the captives managed to escape, Lt. Col. Keith marched the remaining men down the road and executed them. Kinsmen recovered the bodies and hastily buried them in graves that can be seen today at Shelton Laurel. Word soon reached authorities in Raleigh and Richmond, and North Carolina Governor Zeb Vance, a mountaineer himself, was outraged that something like this could happen and demanded an investigation. He also stated that Lt. Col. Keith should be court-martialed and declared that he would follow Keith to the “gates of hell” to make sure that happened. This event served as a catalyst for other things to come in to the mountains. (Bumgarner, 2000)

At the beginning of the war, most North Carolinians realized that protecting the State from an invasion would be a challenge. On the remote and mountainous Tennessee boarder there were simply too many infiltration routes to be patrolled and guarded. In response, state officials authorized the formation of local Home Guard units. More often than not, these Home Guard units did not perform well and revenge often became the motive for hunting down deserters and those trying to avoid the Conscription Act. (Inscoc & McKinney, 2000)

By August of 1863, the major city of eastern Tennessee, Knoxville, had fallen to the Union. This event

allowed the Federal army to control the region and those citizens of Unionist sentiments became more bold in their allegiance and actions. One such Unionist was George W. Kirk, another son of Alexander Kirk. George Kirk's name would soon strike fear and anger in the hearts of western North Carolinians. During the early stages of the War, Kirk had been a member of Union cavalry regiments made up of mostly east Tennesseans, but he had grander ambitions. In the late summer of 1863, George Kirk joined the newly formed 2nd North Carolina Mounted Infantry (2nd NCMI), a Federal regiment made up predominately of Union men from western North Carolina whose mission was to help drive a wedge between Unionist and Confederate citizens. From the start George Kirk had problems with the 2nd NCMI's commanding officer and often deliberately disobeyed orders as he secretly planned to raise another unit. In October, Kirk led about 600 men across the mountains and up the French Broad River to enter the Madison County village of Warm Springs (now Hot Springs). Enroute Kirk's men plundered and stole from any known Confederate sympathizer. While visiting Warm Springs, Kirk's men were involved in a small skirmish with the 14th NC Battalion Cavalry, commanded by Major John Woodfin of Asheville. On his arrival Woodfin halted his command and moved forward to scout the enemy's position. Some of Kirk's men, laying in ambush, unleashed a volley that killed Woodfin instantly. Word soon reached the Department Commander of Western North Carolina, Brig. Gen. Robert B. Vance (brother to Gov. Zeb Vance), who quickly raised a force to move on Warm Springs. When they arrived they counter-attacked and drove the 2nd NCMI back down the river into Tennessee. On recovering Major Woodfin's body they discovered that it had been stripped clean of valuables. During their return to Tennessee, the 2nd NCMI committed more atrocities, reportedly killing and scalping known Confederate soldiers who were so unfortunate as to be found at home on furlough. They also killed two men over 70 years of age for the "offense" of being Confederate sympathizers. To close out a bloody year, the 64th NCT again raided the Shelton Laurel Valley and was able to round up pro-Union men who were forming up to join the 2nd NCMI. With the Home Guard scouring the mountains looking for deserters and eligible conscripts, the war in the mountains was ready to enter a more ugly and divisive phase. (Bumgarner, 2000)

1864 – The Grim Reality of War Comes to Western North Carolina

In February of 1864, two things happened that further escalated the conflict and complicated matters in the mountains of North Carolina. First, the Confederate Congress broadened the Conscription Act of 1862, requiring more men to go into the service. The new conscription ages became 17 to 50, with boys from 17 to 18 forming what was known as the Junior Reserves, while men 45 to 50 were assigned to the Senior Reserves. This change led to additional problems for the citizens of the mountain counties as local authorities set about gathering these men up for service. The other watershed event involved George Kirk, who was authorized to raise another Regiment of troops for Federal service, the 3rd North Carolina Mounted Infantry (3rd NCMI). Through clandestine activities late in 1863, and working with his brother John and other recruiters who crossed into North Carolina, he was able, with the incentive of enlistment bounties, to quickly raise a force of nearly 600 men. Recruiting duty was not without its hazards as a number of Kirk's recruiters were hunted down and killed while doing their work in western North Carolina. Also, the complexity of the divided loyalties and conflicted motives in the regions is illustrated by the fact that the 2nd and 3rd NCMI were to be plagued by high rates of desertion, some of it by men who had previously deserted from Confederate units and had no firm allegiance to either side. Kirk had been authorized to find mounts by any means necessary for his new Regiment, which caused further problems for the citizens of western North Carolina and cost the lives of several horse thieves. During the spring of 1864, Kirk and his troops made several incursions into North Carolina. The towns of Warm Springs and Burnsville (the county seat of Yancey County) were raided and the citizens subjected to depredations. Confederate troops assigned to defend the mountain passes were fighting a losing battle as Kirk's men moved quickly and stealthily and were virtually unopposed when they struck a helpless town or home. In Burnsville they severely beat the Confederate Conscription Officer and torched the Burnsville Academy. Colonel John Palmer, the new Department Commander of Western North Carolina (and Colonel of the 58th NCT), counter-attacked and defeated Kirk's force, which withdrew to neighboring Madison County. During this raid Kirk's forces again terrorized civilians with known allegiance to the Confederacy. (Bumgarner, 2000)

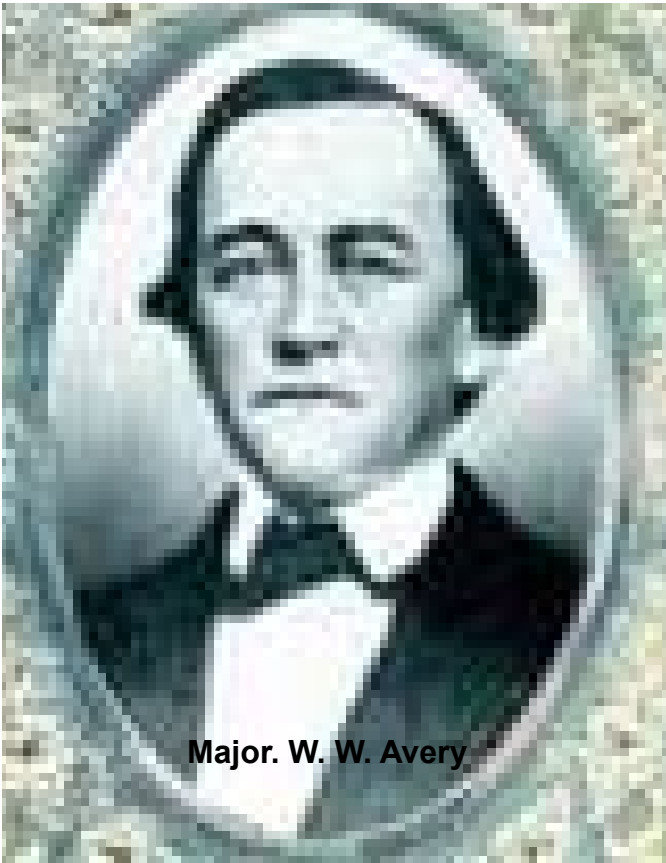
On June 12th, 1864, Kirk received orders to take elements of the 2nd and 3rd NCMI on a raid deep into the western and piedmont section of North Carolina. His goal was to destroy the vital railroad bridge across the Yadkin River that connected Salisbury and Greensboro but, first he had to deal with Camp Vance, a Confederate conscription and training facility located near Morganton, the county seat of Burke County. On June 28th Kirk surprised and captured Camp Vance, which at the time was occupied by 17 and 18 year boys who were learning to be soldiers. They were part of the newly formed Junior Reserves from the western part of the State and had not yet been issued weapons. On securing the camp and his young prisoners, Kirk learned that word of his deeds had spread. He was forced to abandon his plans to destroy the Yadkin River Bridge and set about a hasty retreat toward Tennessee. Before he was able to get out of Burke County a small contingent of Caldwell County men took up the chase and were able to engage the rear guard of Kirk's



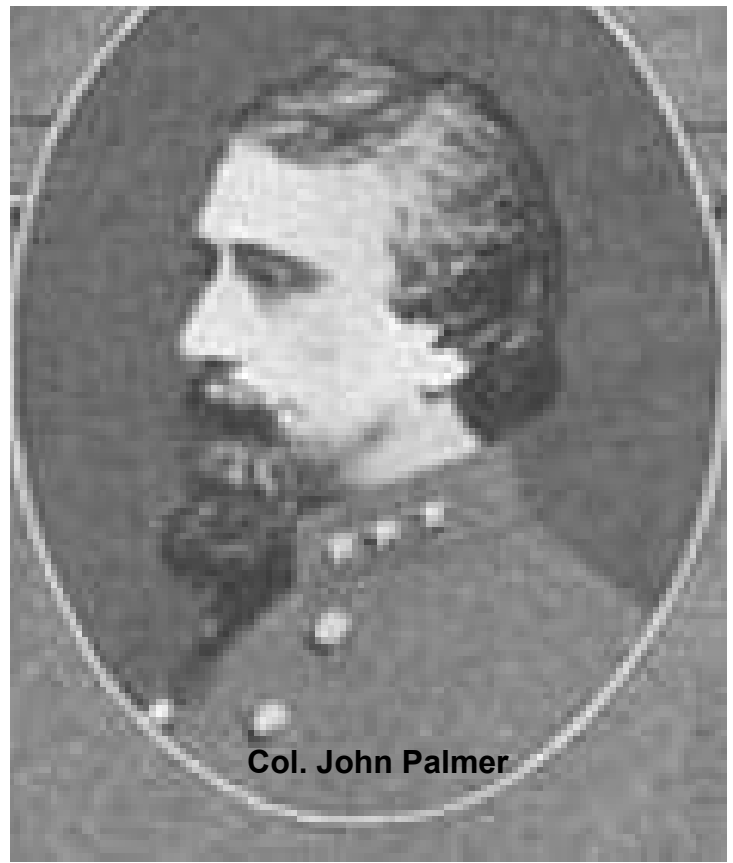
John Kirk (Left) Alexander Kirk (Center) George Kirk (Right)

forces as they moved into the mountains near Piedmont Springs. Also joining the pursuit was a group of Burke County men led by Major W. W. Avery, who was killed in the attack at Winding Stairs, a steep mountain path into the Blue Ridge. During this encounter George Kirk's true character emerged when he positioned 15 or so of the young prisoners as human shields in front of his troops, daring the Confederates to fire. When they did return fire, Kirk was heard to exclaim, "Look, those damn fools are shooting at their own men." Unfortunately for the Confederates, they were unable to corner the invaders, who pushed further into the mountains. Along the way they continued their practice of plunder and destruction and otherwise made war on the civilian population. In Mitchell County they burned the home of Col. John Palmer, the District Commander who had defeated Kirk and his men in Yancey County. (Bumgarner, 2000)

During the years 1862 to 1864, another terror to mountain citizens began making a name for himself. In March of 1862, "Keith" Blalock and his wife Melinda Pritchard Blalock (disguised as "Sam" Blalock), with less than clear motivation, traveled to eastern North Carolina and enlisted in the 26th NCT, which was at Kinston. After one month of service the husband contrived a medical discharge and "Sam" revealed herself as female. The two returned home to the shadows of Grandfather Mountain and once Keith Blalock "recovered," a recruit-



Major. W. W. Avery

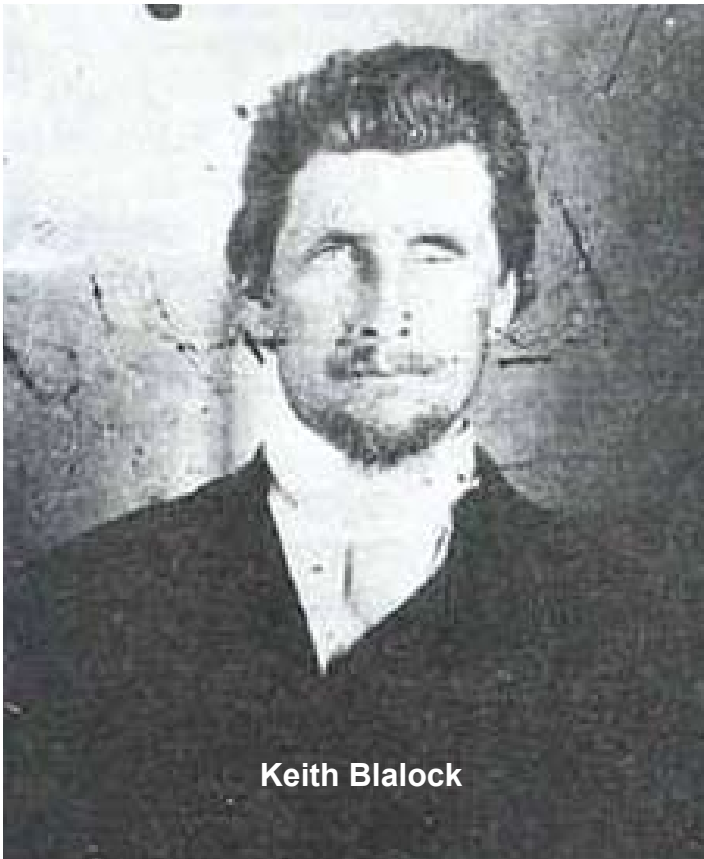


Col. John Palmer

ing detail moved to “re-enlist” him pursuant to the Conscription law. A fight erupted and Blalock was slightly wounded but, managed to escape further into the mountains, where he found others of Unionist sentiment, then he went into Tennessee. He served for a time as a recruiter for a Michigan Cavalry Regiment stationed near Knoxville, Tennessee, and as fate would have it, he met newly appointed Lt. Col. George Kirk and struck up a friendship. Kirk persuaded Blalock to return to the mountains near his home to recruit others to visit vengeance on Confederate sympathizers. By the spring of 1864, Blalock had formed a small group of “outliers” (among them his wife Malinda) and they began a reign of terror directed at citizens of the Globe Valley in northern Caldwell County. One of the first homes attacked was that of Carroll Moore, father of James Moore, the young soldier in Company F of the 26th NCT who recruited Keith Blalock in March of 1862. Carroll Moore had publicly stated that Keith Blalock was a deserter and a traitor. Blalock and his gang received a major setback in this attack as the members of the Moore family were able to defend themselves, thanks in part to the fact that James Moore was home on furlough recovering from wounds received at Gettysburg the previous July. During the attack Keith’s wife, Malinda, was wounded in the shoulder. This would not be the only time Blalock would attempt to capture or kill Carroll Moore in what became a Moore-Blalock feud and a grim cycle of retaliation. A second attack in October of 1864, also ended up in defeat for Blalock who lost an eye in the fight. These setbacks at the Moore farm did not deter Keith Blalock, a man set on revenge. He furiously attacked many of his former neighbors, many of them defenseless women and children who were unable to defend themselves. During the closing months of 1864, Keith Blalock continued to lead raids into other parts of Burke, Caldwell and Watauga Counties that amounted to nothing more than outlaws taking advantage of the situation. In one such attack in Watauga County the North Carolina Home Guard killed his step-father, Austin Coffey, but this only hardened Blalock’s determination for revenge at the cost of the Confederate populace. (Trotter, 1988)

1865 – Union Control Tightens and the Atrocities Escalate

As the winter of 1864-65 passed and spring begin to come to the western mountains, troops on both sides began preparing for what everyone knew would be a most desperate fight. Lee’s famed Army of Northern Virginia



Keith Blalock



Melinda Blalock

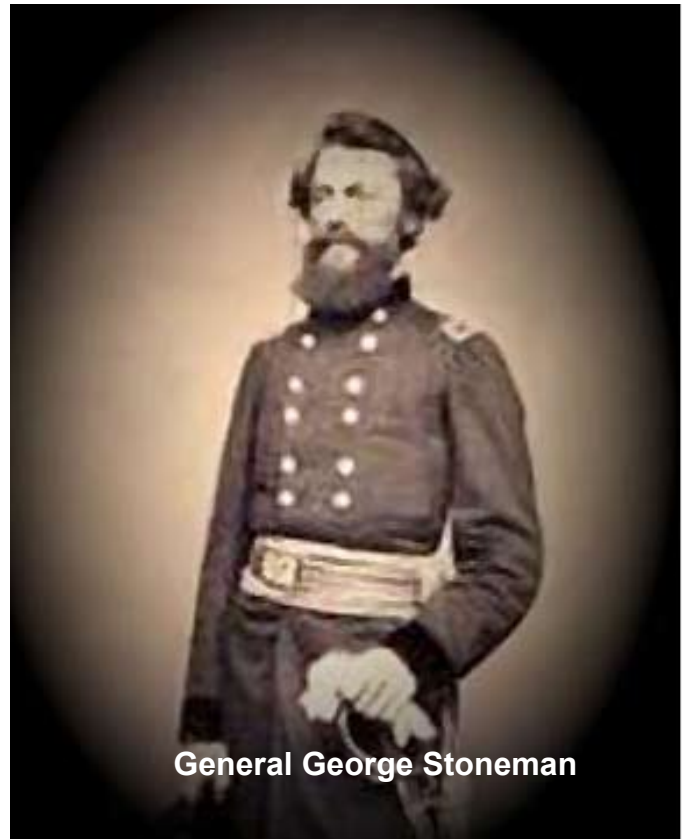
was entrenched in siege war with the Federal Army of the Potomac around the Confederate Capital of Richmond, while the other major Confederate force, the Army of Tennessee, was licking its wounds after a terrible fall and winter that saw General Sherman lead the western Federal armies to numerous victories through Georgia. Wilmington, on North Carolina's coast, the only port that remained open for the Confederacy, was facing the "handwriting on the wall" as a deadly land and sea assault was launched by blockading Federal forces that would eventually lead to the fall of Ft. Fisher in January and Ft. Anderson in February. The prospects for the young Confederacy were growing dim. (Foote, 1974)

In March of 1865 Federal General William T. Sherman authorized a raid out of east Tennessee commanded by Major General George Stoneman. The objectives were to destroy the salt works in southwest Virginia and the camp that held Federal prisoners of war in Salisbury, North Carolina. In the pursuing these objectives Stoneman was to take the war to civilian populace by disrupting their way of life and their will to resist, both physically and mentally. In late March, Stoneman entered western North Carolina and rode into Watauga County where his men burned the courthouse records in Boone. They then moved toward the mountain passes and the force divided with the objectives of attacking Wilkesboro and the northern section of Caldwell County. Another contingent moved into Caldwell's Patterson Township, destroying a cotton mill owned by James Harper and reeking havoc on the people of the Yadkin River Valley. On April 3, 1865, Kirk's men occupied the Watauga County village of Blowing Rock, serving as rear guards to hold the pass in the event that Stoneman needed an avenue of escape. But there was no need for concern as the bulk of the men from Caldwell, Watauga, and Wilkes counties were away fighting for their lives in south-central Virginia or opposing Sherman's drive on Raleigh. The only opposition to the Federal troops were Home Guard units and some local defense troops, mainly from Major A. C. Avery's Battalion N. C. Local Defense Troops. (Van Noppen, 1966)

Keith Blalock and his small but vicious raiding party met Lt. Col. Kirk in Blowing Rock and were given orders to renew the attack on the Globe Valley, but Capt. Nelson Miller, commander of Company C of Avery's Battalion, received word that Blalock was moving into the Globe near the headwaters of John's River. Capt. Miller and his men were waiting and handed Blalock's raiding party a sound defeat. Major Avery, convinced that Blalock and his men had returned to Blowing Rock, sped off to Salisbury to gather more troops. Unfortunately he was captured by Stoneman's troops who appeared in Salisbury at the same time. (Van Noppen, 1966)



Major A.C. Avery

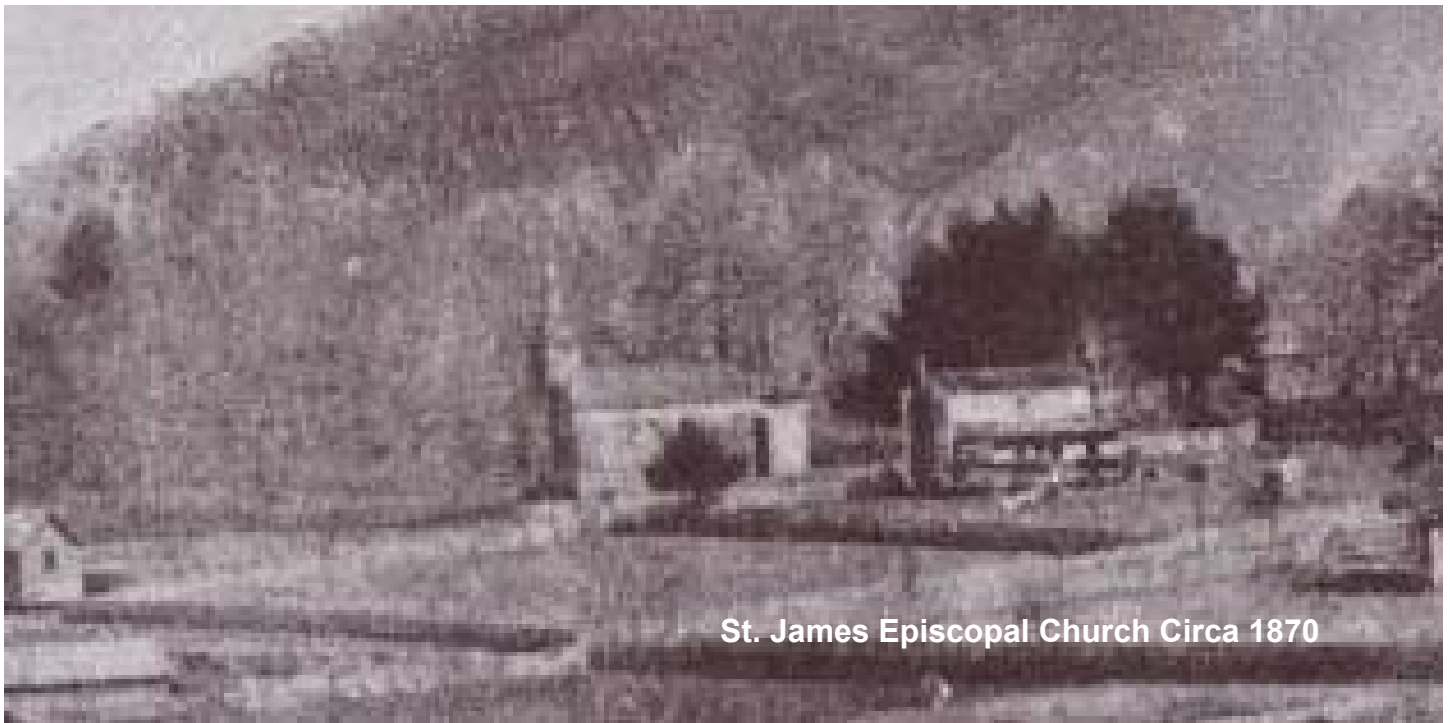


General George Stoneman

During their stay in Blowing Rock it was said of the 2nd and 3rd NCMI that “there was a disposition on the part of the boys to commit depredations of some kind on the rebels living in area...” With Keith Blalock leading raids in the same vicinity the people of Watauga County suffered greatly. Driven by a thirst for revenge and looking for a chance to settle personal scores, the men under Kirk and Blalock delivered terror to the home and hearth of nearly every Confederate sympathizer. (Van Noppen, 1966)

After sacking Salisbury and destroying the Federal Prisoner of War Camp, Stoneman turned his force westward. He moved into Caldwell County by way of Alexander County and hit the small town of Lenoir with a vengeance on April 16th, seven days after Gen. Lee’s surrender at Appomattox. Stoneman had gathered close to 900 prisoners, who he housed on the grounds of St. James Episcopal Church in downtown Lenoir. Many were men too old to have rendered military service, and sadly, many died during the long forced march from Salisbury to Lenoir, unfed by their captors. Among the prisoners was Maj. Avery who kept his identity hidden as he and others knew that he was a man marked by the “Home Yankees.” He received help from an old friend, Sidney Deal, who was able to obtain a razor and a change of clothes from some citizens in Lenoir. Keith Blalock made his way down the mountain to Lenoir after Stoneman’s arrival and secreted himself among the prisoners. He was looking for Major Avery and boldly claimed that he would kill him on sight. Little did he realize that the newly shaven man standing beside him in civilian clothes was none other than Maj. Avery himself. Stoneman decided to return to eastern Tennessee with part of his force and all of the prisoners. His route took him directly up the mountain to Blowing Rock. During the march up the mountain and on arriving in Boone many of the prisoners died from brutal beatings they received at the hands of Blalock and his men. Fortunately for Major Avery, Blalock never discovered that he was among the prisoners, thanks to the efforts of Sidney Deal. (Trotter, 1988)

The other half of Stoneman’s force continued their sweep toward Tennessee through Asheville. Leaving Lenoir, Gen. Gillem’s Brigade of east Tennessee Unionists troops marched southwest to Burke County. When they arrived at the Catawba River, separating Caldwell County from Burke County, about 70 local men formed on the Burke County side of the river and attempted to stop the advance of the Federal troopers. After a brief fight the Union force flanked the small opposing contingent and attacked Morganton with a vengeance, sacked much of the town, then moved west towards Pleasant Gardens in McDowell County for more robbery and

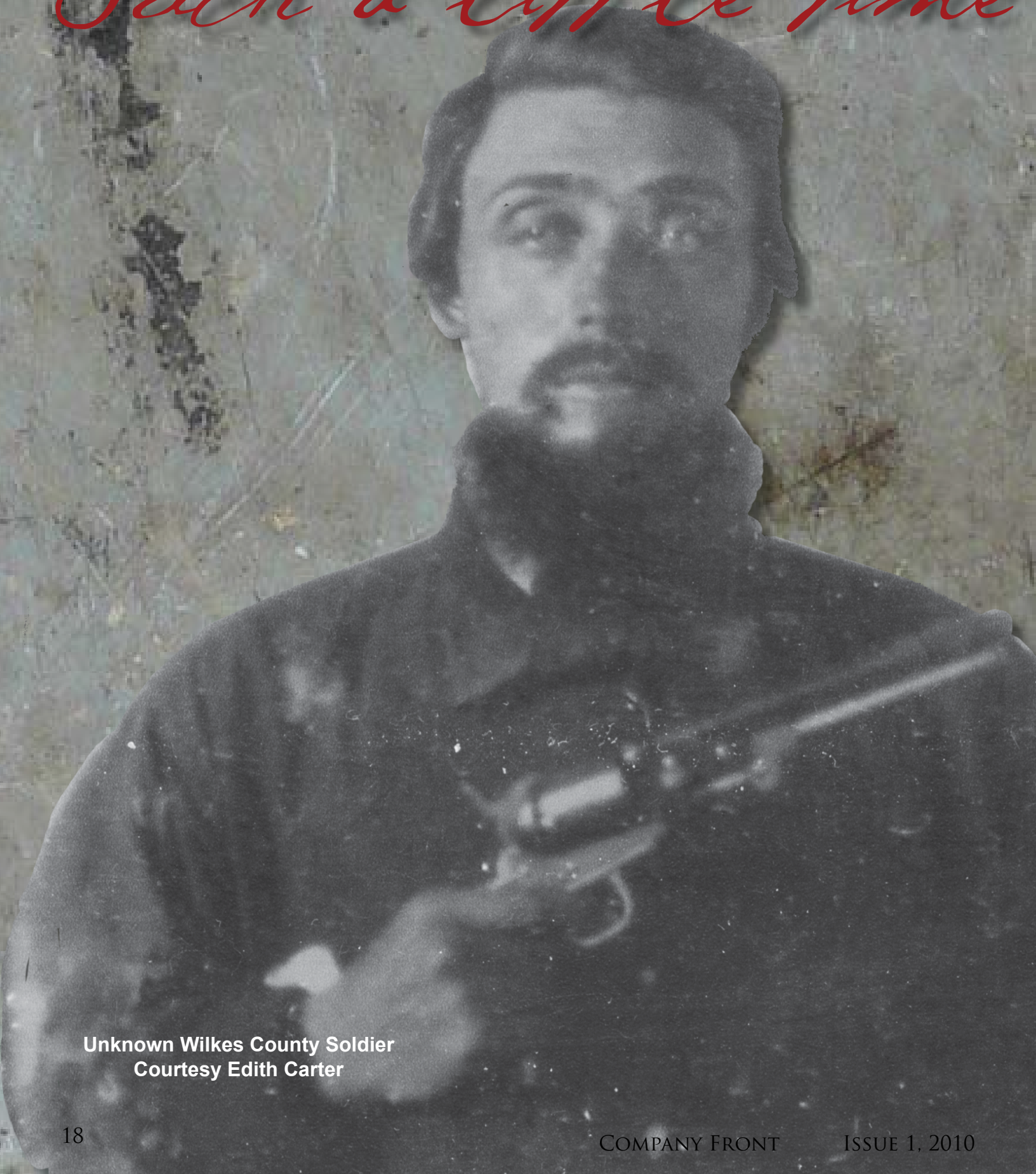


St. James Episcopal Church Circa 1870

plunder. They were finally stopped by Brig. General James G. Martin and troops of the Western North Carolina District as they attempted to move toward Asheville through Swannanoa Gap. The Federal column turned south and lingered in Rutherfordton for several days of plunder and intimidation that caused the Captain of a detachment of Pennsylvania cavalry to record that he had more sympathy for the citizens of Rutherfordton than he did for his Tennessee allies. The invaders then traversed Polk and Henderson counties as they passed through Howard Gap and the mountains south of Asheville. While moving through Henderson County word was received that Generals Johnston and Sherman were meeting under a flag of truce at the Bennett Farm in Durham County. On receiving this information Confederate troops told Gen. Gillem that they would not defend the town of Asheville and would honor the flag of truce and allow his force to pass unmolested. After the Federals marched through the town the citizens were horrified to see them return that night. They did not know that surrender negotiations had been broken off and Gen. Gillem had consequently allowed his men to return to the largest town in western North Carolina and a former center of Confederate sympathy. According to Confederate Brig. Gen. James G. Martin, most Asheville homes and businesses were ransacked not just once but, usually two or three times by various groups. (Van Noppen, 1966)

Even after Confederate Gen. Johnston formally surrendered all Confederate forces east of the Mississippi, the war would continue for a few more weeks in the southwestern part of North Carolina. Kirk's men were involved in more plundering before they took the surrender of the last group of Confederates in the town of Waynesville in the southwestern mountains and finished the war in Asheville in mid-May. For the citizens of the northwestern counties the horror of the war was still not over as deserters from Stoneman's raid joined with local bushwhackers to terrorize the citizens of Wilkes, Caldwell and Alexander Counties. Using a large log house belonging to the Hamby family in western Wilkes County, dubbed "Fort Hamby," these cutthroats conducted raids at night into surrounding towns. During the day they were known to take target practice at the expense of local citizens, mortally wounding an elderly lady while she was sitting beside her husband on their wagon. To show off their shooting skills they even took turns shooting at children climbing a fence. Finally in late April, the men of the area began returning home from the surrender sites and after one botched attempt they were able to set the house on fire and evict the raiders. The criminals met quick justice, and, mercifully, "official hostilities" ceased in western North Carolina. But, the bloody and vengeful Civil War experience is well documented in the history of the region and was long remembered and recounted by residents of the mountains, even to this day. (Trotter, 1988)

"Such a Little Time"



Unknown Wilkes County Soldier
Courtesy Edith Carter

To prepare to Die"

HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS OF THE CAPTURE OF FORT HAMBY

The Capture of Fort Hamby

By Confederate Chaplain, W. R. Gwaltney

Written for the Mountain Scout, Taylorsville, N. C., 1903

In March of 1865, General Stoneman left East Tennessee, moving from Taylorsville, Tennessee, through Watauga County to Deep Gap in the Blue Ridge Mountains. On the twenty-sixth of March he entered Boone, North Carolina, and then the following day the column was divided, one division under General Stoneman going toward Wilkesboro, while the other under General Gilliam crossed the Blue Ridge at Blowing Rock and moved on to Patterson in Caldwell County. Thence, this division re-joined Stoneman's division at Wilkesboro and together they moved on to Mt. Airy in Surry County. (see Appendix A)

During General Stoneman's march through this section of the state, his men committed many depredations and after leaving Wilkesboro, a number of the most lawless deserted and joined other worthless characters in this section led by two desperadoes, Wade and Simmons (see Appendix C.) They soon completely terrorized the people of Wilkes and portions of the adjoining counties by their raids. They would ride into a man's yard, dismount, and several of them would enter the house and pointing loaded pistols at those inside would say: "If you open your mouth we will drop you in your tracks." While this was going on, others of the gang would be going through every drawer and trunk to be found, taking with them everything that suited them, together with every good horse on the place.

It must be remembered that at this time every man fit for military service was in the army and the country was, therefore, almost completely at the mercy of these desperadoes. After Lee's surrender and the Confederate soldiers return home had begun, this state of affairs continued, but now the marauders divided themselves into two bands, one being led by Simmons with headquarters in the Brushy Mountains, the other by Wade with headquarters on the Yadkin River in Wilkes County. Several times the two bands operated together; but as the writer had to do with Wade's band, this article will be devoted to his fiendish work.

Wade claimed the rank of major in Stoneman's army and said he was from Michigan. The house where he had his headquarters was on the road between Wilkesboro and Lenoir, nearly a mile from Holman's Ford where the valley road crossed the Yadkin River. It was situated upon a hill and commanded a fine view of the Yadkin Valley and of the valley road for a distance of a mile above and below the ford. To its front on the south was the Yadkin River, and on the west Lewis' Fork, a stream smaller than the Yadkin into which it emptied. On the north and east lay a wide belt of thick woods. From this position the Yadkin Valley and the surrounding country for at least a half mile in every direction could be swept and controlled by Wade's guns, and it would therefore, have been difficult to choose a stronger location, either offensively or defensively, than this. There is a tradition that Daniel Boone himself fortified himself against the Indians at this very place. The house had been built of logs and was two stories high. In the upper story, the robbers had cut port-holes for their guns which were army guns of the very best type. This house had formerly belonged to some disreputable woman by

the name of Hamby, and after Wade took it over and fortified it, it was known as Ft. Hamby.

It is not known just how many men belonged to Wade's band. A list of 18 names was found when the fort was taken, but more than that number was known to have co-operated with them. They showed a spirit of revenge and a desire for plunder in all of their raids. Indeed, they seemed to think they must treat with the utmost cruelty all those who were not in sympathy with them. All the people of Wilkes, therefore, lived in constant dread of them, and consequently were frightened at the mere barking of a dog or the rattle of the leaves. Life was worse than death. Not only were the people of Wilkes frightened and subdued by them, but those of the adjoining sections of Alexander and Caldwell Counties where they had several raids, as well.

On the seventh of May, 1865, the robbers made a raid into Caldwell County. The following Sunday night, Major Harvey Bingham, with a few men, made a well planned move upon the fort. It seems that Wade and his men were not aware of the approach of Bingham and his men until they had entered the house. Wade and his men announced their helpless condition and begged for their lives. No guns being in sight, Bingham gave Wade and his men time to dress; but at the moment when the captors were off their guard, they rushed to their guns which had been concealed about their beds and opened fire on them. The result was that Clark, a son of General Clark of Caldwell County, was killed, together with another man named Henly of the same county. The others, however, escaped, leaving the bodies of Clark and Henly behind.

The following Saturday night, the robbers crossed over into Alexander County, with the intention of killing or capturing W. C. Green, son of Rev. J. B. Green, who had been a lieutenant in the Confederate Army. Mr. Green, however, had been apprised of their intentions and was on the lookout for them. The robbers surrounded the house and Wade, wearing a Confederate gray suit, which he always wore when he wanted to enter a house without forcing his way into it, approached the house and, claiming to be an officer in the Confederate Army on his way home, asked for a night's lodging. The moon was shining brightly and Mr. Green, recognizing Wade, replied: "I know who you are, and if you come into this house, it will be over my dead body." Mr. Green had his position at the front door with a pistol in one hand and a dirk in the other. His son was at one of the front windows and his daughter, armed with a knife having a long blade, at another. They had also armed five of the servants and placed them in the rear of the house; but when three of the robbers were about to enter a window in this part of the house, Lt. Green rushed back, knocked out a pane of glass, and fired at them. Having wounded one of the robbers, he had convinced the robbers, who fled leaving two or three hats and two of their horses behind. The next day, Col. Washington Sharpe gathered together about twenty soldiers and pursued them; but James Linney, a brother of Hon. R. Z. Linney, and Jones Brown were killed, and the others, some of them springing from their horses and running on foot, escaped. They managed to get together at Moravian Falls and returned home greatly dejected. The burning question now was: "What is going to be done?" Some thought there was little or no hope of anything's being done, while others who had already tried and failed were really afraid to try again.

After returning from the army, I took a small school in Alexander County and boarded at the home of Ellis Hayes, Esq. The company that was driven from the fort the Sunday before was made up of men from this community.

Col. Sharpe called together a number of old soldiers and after a consultation, it was decided that another effort should be made to dislodge the robbers. I left my school in charge of one of the pupils and joined in the company. We started on Tuesday afternoon following the Sunday on which our Alexander County had been repulsed. The company numbered about twenty. Having crossed the Brushy Mountains at Cove Gap, we were nearing Holman's ford, when we met a man who told us that Wade and his men were waiting for us and that he had said he could whip a thousand of us. We stopped and held a consultation and decided to send one of our men into Iredell County to ask Col. Robert V. Cowan who had commanded the Thirty-third Regiment of North Carolina Troops in the late war, to get together all the men that he could and to come to Holman's Ford with all possible speed. It was also decided to send another of our men to the headquarters of some Federal Troops encamped near Lexington, N.C., to inform them of the condition of things in Wilkes and to ask them to relieve the situation as quickly as possible. Leaving Moravian Falls about midnight, we moved cautiously up the road together toward Holman's Ford. The night was dark and all felt that the march was fraught with danger. As we neared the ford, a voice rang out sharp and clear: "Halt! Who comes there?" Col. Sharpe replied: "Men from

Alexander. Who are you?" The reply came: "Oxford's men from Caldwell. Advance!" This was good news to us and when we reached them we found them all sleeping in the woods near the road with the exception of two or three who were walking the sentinel's beat. We were soon sleeping beside those men in their bed of leaves.

At break of day, the next morning the two companies, which now numbered about forty, arose from their beds of leaves and started on their way. We left the road leading to the ford and turned up the river to the left and crossed it at a small ford on the farm of a Mr. Tolbert. We then ascended the hill and on to the valley road where we dismounted, fed our horses and ate our breakfast from our haversacks in the yard of Mr. Tolbert's home. Inside, a woman lay dying. As she and her husband were approaching the ford the day before, in a wagon, she was shot by one of the robbers from the fort more that quarter of a mile away. While here, Mr. Tolbert said to us, "You can easily judge what my fears of these robbers are and what my feelings toward them are; but I dare not say a word. My advice to you is that you go back home for you will not be able to take them with the small force which you have. They are on the lookout for you and have no doubt sent out for recruits. Should they capture you, they will surely put you to death. No doubt they are right now lying in those thickets and no sooner that you cross the top of yonder hill, you will be fired upon." We held a council of war and while a few of our bravest men were in favor of going back and waiting until we could rally a stronger force, it was decided by a large majority that we would go on.

After passing the top of the hill and coming to a narrow path leading through a long stretch of old field pines, the Col. said to me, "You take these five men with you and follow this path until you come to the hill which is on the west of the fort. Feel your way carefully through the thicket and when you come to the hill search it to see if any one is on it. I will take the rest of the men and station them on the north and east of the fort. As soon as the men are stationed a gun will be fired so that you may know we are in position." I took the five men and we went single file, expecting every moment to be shot down. We didn't draw a free breath till we had reached the hill and found no one on it. We had been in many places of danger during the war, but never had our courage been tried as it was in our march through that thicket. We had been on the hill only a few minutes when one of the robbers was seen leaving the fort and going into the field below where several fine horses were grazing. While he was bridling one of them, the writer ran down the hill toward the creek (Lewis' Fork) to a pine tree where he tried to get a shot at the robber, but there were so many trees in the way. He led the horse away before I could get a shot at hem. Soon thereafter, I heard the gun of one of my men snap. I looked and saw that he was pointing toward the creek below me. I knew that he was trying to shoot one of Wade's men who was between me and the creek although I could not see the man. After snapping his gun several times, he took one of the other men's gun, raised it to his face and fired. It seemed to me that I had never heard a gun roar so loud. He had shot at one of the robbers sitting on the bank of the creek, presumably watching for us. He missed, and the robber jumped into the creek and ran toward the Yadkin. The warning that he got saved his life for he did not return to the fort.

A few moments after the shot had been fired at the robber, they were all in position. Then such a yell was raised in the fort as we had never heard before. It was more like the howling of devils, cursing us with the most fearful oaths. They dared us to come on. Our men kept up the firing on the house all day and they returned the fire at us, shooting with such accuracy that we had to keep at great distance and behind trees and logs.

Night came on and it was very dark and cloudy. Another council of war was held, and again some of our number was in favor of returning home and trying to rally a stronger force. Others said that if we did not dislodge them now they would never return for another effort. A majority declared we could whip all the recruits they might be able to bring in under cover of darkness, and we must stay until the fort was taken. It was finally decided to stay, and in the darkness we began to construct a new line of breastworks near the fort and kept on shooting at the house for quite some time. The enemy fired no more after it became too dark for them to see us. We had in our company a man from Iredell by the name of Wallace Sharpe, called "Wall" Sharpe. His station was near the spring and between him and the fort stood an old kitchen built of small pine logs and covered with boards. As soon as Wall could see the sign of approaching day, he pulled off his shoes and very quietly made his way to the kitchen. Pushing some dry trash into a crack, he struck a match, set fire to the trash, and ran back to his station. Soon the whole kitchen was ablaze and you may be sure no fire was more eagerly watched. Very

soon the sparks began to fall upon the roof of the old fort and it was not long until little blazes began to spring up here and there on it. Our men raised a shout of joy.

It was not long before the robbers raised a yell and when commanded to come out and surrender, they inquired what would become of them if they did. Wall Sharpe replied with an oath: "We will kill the last one of you!" Finally, they did come out, Wade in front. He raised his hand and touched his hat as though he would surrender, then darted like an arrow down the steep hill toward the river. Several shots were fired at him, but it was too dark to see clearly, and not a shot hit him. He ran across the river and was gone. He told someone afterward that some of our men came within 5 or 6 feet of him. As soon as the others came out they were seized by the soldiers and for a few moments, it seemed that they would be torn to pieces. They were in the hands of men whose mother, wives, and sisters, they had abused and insulted, and the whole company was for a while an infuriated mob. For the first time some of us were impressed by the fact that nothing is to be feared more than a body of men so enraged as to lose their heads.

Stakes were soon driven in the ground and the robbers told that they must die. They begged to be imprisoned for life, but were told that they must pay with their lives for the murder of Clark, Henly, Brown, and Linney. Passing with them through the yard to the place of execution, Col. Sharpe told them that they might have a little time to prepare for death. They began to pray, but their prayers were: "Men spare us!" Wall Sharpe said with an oath, "Don't pray to us. Pray to God, for He alone can save you!" Some of the men still burning with rage began to ridicule and mock them. But Wall Sharpe said, "Men, we have given them time to repent and you shall not bother them." He then commanded the men to be quiet and asked me to pray for them. I replied that I feared to approach the throne of Grace just then lest I might come into His Presence without sincere desires. Rev. Isaac Oxford, Capt. of the Caldwell Company, said, "Hold my gun and I will pray for them." I did so, and he thanked God that the men had been captured and that none of our company were killed, while justice had been done.

We then moved onto the place of execution and bound them to the stakes. Before the order to fire was given, however, I said to Col. Sharpe: "I feel a desire to pray for them now." Being given permission to do so, I tried to pray for their forgiveness and salvation with all the earnestness of my soul. In a moment the order to fire was given and they were in eternity. It may be interesting to know that a good friend of Linney's who was in the company asked to be detailed to shoot the man who shot Linney. His name was Fony Roseman. (see Appendix B)

As soon as the robbers had been captured several of the men proceeded to extinguish the fire on the roof of the fort. We now returned to see what was inside. Here we found property of nearly every description – fine dresses, hats, and barrels of unshelled corn – the latter we threw out the window from upstairs. All other contents having been removed, the house was again set afire and burned to the ground. In a pasture nearby we found some 20 fine horses which were later returned to their owners.

Wade was seen by some one in the vicinity not long after. He said he just lay all day under the bank of the river and some time during the night went to see just what had been done. A few days later he left and was never seen again.

On our way back to Alexander, we met Col. Cowan of Iredell County with about 15 men coming to our assistance. We also met some citizens of Wilkes coming with wagon-loads of provisions for us. The morning after our return and before I had started to my school, I saw 12 men coming down the road from the direction of Fort Hamby on Horseback. My first thought was that they were some of the recruits who were expected at Fort Hamby and that they were after taking vengeance on us. As they approached the gate, I went to my room which was on the first floor. I locked myself in, and examined several guns and pistols that I kept loaded. I was determined to sell my own life as dearly as possible. They dismounted, came to the door, asked Mr. Hays if they could get breakfast and their horses could be fed. While they were waiting for the food to be prepared, they sat on the porch to talk with Mr. Hays. I joined them there, and they asked if I knew of a band of robbers near Holman's Ford in Wilkes County. They wanted to know whether or not it was true that these robbers have been executed. I answered that it definitely was, and the lieutenant in command replied, "I am glad of it, for we were on our way to capture them." They had come in response to the message we had sent to Lexington. The lieutenant had 31 men in his command, the remainder of whom had gone to other places for breakfast. They

went into the mountains and captured the notorious Simmons, took him to Lexington and put him in the guard-house. While plundering in the mountains, he had supplied himself with considerable gold and silver, some of which he used to bribe the sentinel and he got away.

The Capture of Fort Hamby

By S. Finley Harper

As taken from Clarke's Regiments, Vol. V.

In March, 1865, General Stoneman, with a large body of cavalry, (see Appendix A) left East Tennessee on a raid into North Carolina. Passing through Watauga County, they entered Boone, the county seat, on March 26. The command then divided, General Stoneman going toward Wilkesboro, while the other, General Gilliam, crossed the Blue Ridge at Blowing Rock and to Patterson, where they began their vandalism by burning the cotton and wool mill with all its contents and a large amount of other property in the store and warehouses. This burning was without provocation, and as the Union citizens of East Tennessee were getting their supplies of cotton yarn and cloth at this mill, its destruction by the Union army was a great surprise. This force, leaving Patterson, went to Wilkesboro, arresting along the way a number of old and infirm non-combatants. A number of worthless characters deserted Stoneman's command along this march, and formed with native bushwhackers bands under the leadership of two desperate men, Wade and Simmons (see Appendix C.)

Wade's party located in a log house on a high hill, half-mile north of Holman's Ford of the Yadkin River in Wilkes County. Being heavily armed with army rifles and pistols, they made daily raids into the surrounding country, robbing, plundering, and terrorizing the citizens, taking everything they could find to eat, as well as horses, etc. Their practice was to ride up to a house, dismount, and enter, pointing loaded guns at any person occupying the house, threatening to shoot if they opened their mouths, while others were searching closets, trunks, drawers, etc., taking what suited them. The people for miles and miles in the country surrounding lived in constant dread of them, as they seemed filled with a spirit of hatred and revenge, treating all persons not in sympathy with them with the greatest cruelty.

The house they used for headquarters was finely located for offensive as well as defensive operations. On a high hill, facing the Yadkin River on the south and front, and Lewis' Fork on the west, their guns could sweep the country for a half-mile each way up and down the river. The house was two stories, with portholes cut in the upper story. It was formerly occupied by a family named Hamby, and after being fortified was known as Fort Hamby.

The robbers, numbering probably twenty-five or thirty, made several raids into Caldwell and Alexander Counties, robbing, plundering, and insulting in the grossest manner the women and children, the able-bodied men being in the Confederate Armies. Maj. Harvey Bingham, with a small home-guard force, followed the raiders out of Caldwell County on May 6, executed a well-planned move on the fort at night, and completely surprising the defenders entered the house. The men begged for their lives, and no arms being in sight Major Bingham gave them time to dress. The prisoners, taking advantage of this opportunity, rushed for their guns, and fired on the attacking party, killing two – Robert Clarke, son of General Clarke, and Henry Henley, both of Caldwell County. They were brave Confederate soldiers, and splendid men. The others, seeing themselves overpowered, made their escape, leaving the dead bodies on the ground.

The next week Wade made a raid into Alexander County, with the avowed intention of killing Lieutenant Green, son of Rev. J. B. Green, who had returned home, after the surrender of the Confederate Army. Being informed of their intention, Mr. Green prepared to give them a warm reception. They came and surrounded the house. Wade, wearing a suit of gray, claimed to be an officer in the Confederate Army returning home, and wished a night's lodging. Green could, however, see them, and said, "I know you, and you can't come in here unless it is over my dead body." Three of the gang were about to force entrance through a rear window, when Lieutenant Green rushed to the place and fired on them, slightly wounding one of them. They then withdrew, leaving two horses, and returned in haste to the fort.

Col. Washington Sharpe, of Iredell County, gathered up about twenty men, soldiers just returned from the Confederate Army at Appomattox, pursued, crossing the Yadkin River, rushed up to within a few yards of the fort, when Wade's men opened fire and killed two – Mr. Jas. Linney, Brother of Hon. R. Z. Linney, and Mr. Jones Brown. Seeing their hazardous situation, the others made a hasty retreat, leaving the two dead bodies. This second disastrous repulse greatly depressed our people, but they determined the place must be taken at all hazards. Colonel Sharpe collected a squad of about twenty returned soldiers, and sent a message to Caldwell County for help. A number went from Lenoir. Among them is remembered, A. S. Kent, T. L. Norwood, Jas. W. Norwood, George H. Dula, Robert B. Dula, and S. F. Harper. They collected others along the way, and met Rev. Isaac Oxford with a party from the Little River country. They all proceeded to near Holman's Ford, and waited for the Alexander Company. This was about May 18. The day before this, as a man and his wife were in a wagon approaching the ford, the robbers opened fire from the fort and killed the woman.

We were told by citizens living nearby that Wade was expecting us, and that we had better return; that we could not take the fort, as they probably had sent for recruits, etc. Colonel Sharp was put in command, and Captain Oxford and T.L. Norwood in command of the Caldwell Company. After consultation, it was decided to attack not by storm; but surround and cut them off from water and compel surrender by siege. Skirmishers were sent forward to prevent ambush. By a detour, the command came in on the rear, and established picket posts on three sides of the fort. Our men kept up firing on the house all day, and they returned the fire with such accuracy that our men had to protect themselves behind trees and logs. When they found they were surrounded, they raised a terrible yell, and with fearful oaths cursed our men and dared them to come on.

Near night, our lines were moved up nearer. As day-light approached, Mr. Sharpe, from Iredell, who was stationed near the spring, very quietly crept up to the old kitchen, built of small pine logs, which was old and dry, keeping the kitchen between himself and the fort; put a match to it, and dashed back to his post. Soon the kitchen was ablaze, and the burning brands fell on the roof of the fort. It was now our time to yell, which was done. A demand for surrender was made. They asked what would be done with them, and were told that they would be killed. They came out, with Wade in front. He raised his hands as though he intended surrendering, made a dash down the hill to the river, fortunately for him passing between two of our picket posts, made his escape to the river, and hid under the bank. A number of shots were fired at him, but it was still too dark to see him well. Diligent search was made, but he could not be found.

Four of Wade's men surrendered, and much stolen booty of various kinds was found in the house, and a number of stolen horses in the lot nearby. There were only five men in the fort at this time-Wade, and four others. It was quickly decided that the four should pay the penalty with their lives, after giving them a little time to prepare for death. Upon request of the colonel, Rev. Isaac Oxford said he would pray for them, and handing his gun to comrade he thanked God that none of us were killed and that justice had overtaken them at last. Then after Rev. W. R. Gwaltney prayed for them they were tied to stakes, and shot to death in regular military fashion. (see Appendix B)

The capture and execution of this band had a very whole-some effect in effectually discouraging any other parties that were inclined to go into robbing, plundering, and murdering business, and our country has had no more of it. The capture and destruction of Fort Hamby and its defenders gave a great relief to the whole surrounding country.

Patterson, N. C., April 1913.

A Battle After the War

Capture of Fort Hamby, 14 May, 1865

By R. Z. Linney, Private Co. A, Seventh Regiment, N. C. T.

As taken from Clarke's Regiments, Vol V.

All wars are demoralizing. The Confederate and the Federal armies in the war of the United States were probably as well disciplined, and the red-eyed daughters of war, plunder and rapine, as well restrained as in any war in the world's history. Even under these conditions we were not entirely exempt from that demoralization which defies the most rigid army discipline.

In March, 1865, General Stoneman left East Tennessee, moving by the turnpike leading from Taylorsville, Tenn., through Watauga County to Deep Gap on the Blue Ridge. On 26 March he entered Boone, N. C., and on the 27th the column was divided, one division under General Stoneman marching toward Wilkesboro, while the other, under General Gilliam, crossed the Blue Ridge at Blowing Rock and went to Patterson, in Caldwell County, and then joined Stoneman at Wilkesboro. Leaving Wilkesboro on the 31st, General Stoneman moved over into Surry County, going towards Mt. Airy. During the march through this section of the State, Stoneman's men committed many depredations, and after leaving Wilkesboro a number of the lawless element of his command deserted. Shortly after this a number of men, some deserters from Stoneman's command and other worthless characters, led by two desperate men, Wade and Simmons, completely terrorized a large portion of Wilkes County by their frequent raids. (see Appendices A & C)

In order to fully understand the situation, the condition of the country at that time must be taken into consideration. Almost every man fit for military service was in the army, and the country was almost completely at the mercy of the robbers. It was thought after Lee had surrendered and the soldiers returned home that these depredations would be discontinued, but they were not.

These marauders were divided into two bands. One, led by Simmons, had its headquarters in the Brushy Mountains, and the other, led by Wade, had its headquarters near the Yadkin River in Wilkes County. The bands at times operated together, but it is principally with Wade's band that this article is to deal. The house which Wade had chosen and fortified was situated near the road which leads from Wilkesboro to Lenoir, in Caldwell County, and about a mile from Holman's Ford, where the valley road crosses the Yadkin River. The house was situated on a high hill, commanding a fine view of the Yadkin Valley, and of the valley road for a distance of a mile above and a mile below the ford. The house fronted the river on the south while the rear was protected by the "Flat Woods" belt, in which there were sympathizers if not aiders and abettors of the band. From this position the Yadkin valley and the surrounding country for at least half a mile in every direction could be swept and controlled by Wade's guns. There is a legend that this point was chosen by Daniel Boone as a splendid military post to protect himself against the Indians. At any rate it would have been almost impossible to have chosen a stronger location, both offensive and defensive, than this. The house was built of oak logs, and was two stories high. In the upper story Wade had cut port holes for his guns, which were army guns of the most improved type, and could command the approaches to the house from all directions, making it indeed hazardous to attempt to reach it. This house belonged to some dissolute women by the name of Hamby, and after Wade had fortified it, the name by which it was known was "Fort Hamby." The exact number of men engaged in these depredations is unknown, though it has been stated on good authority to have at no time exceeded thirty.

Making this their headquarters, Wade's force began to plunder the surrounding country, and from their cruelty it appears that their object was to gratify a spirit of revenge as well as to enrich themselves. They marched as a well-drilled military force, armed with the best rifles. It was only a short time before they brought the citizens for many miles around in every direction under their dominion. They plundered the best citizens, subjecting men and women to the grossest insults. Their cruelty is shown by this act: A woman was working in a field near Holman's Ford, having a child with her. The child climbed on the fence and the men began to shoot at it, and finally killed it. Emboldened by their success in Wilkes County, they made a raid into Caldwell County on 7 May. Major Harvey Bingham, with about half a dozen young men from Caldwell and Watauga Counties, attempted to rout these marauders from their stronghold at Fort Hamby. On Sunday night after their

raid into Caldwell, Major Bingham made a well-planned move on the fort, at a late hour of the night. For some reason, Wade and his men were not aware of the approach of Bingham's men until they had entered the house. Wade and his men announced their defenseless condition, and begged for their lives. Major Bingham had assured Wade, who was a deserter from General Stoneman's command, and who had organized this band of robbers, that his only purpose was to compel them to desist from any further robbery and insult upon the citizens, and it was agreed that no violence was to be done them, and they were to be delivered to the military authorities at Salisbury for trial. This, the robbers pretended to be willing to submit to. No guns were seen, and they were, so Bingham believed, his prisoners. They gave Wade and his men time to dress, after which, at a moment when the captors were off their guard, they rushed to their guns, which were concealed about their beds, and opened fire on them. The result was that Clark, a son of General Clark, of Caldwell County, and Henley, from the same county, was killed. The others escaped, leaving the bodies of Clark and Henley.

Clark and Henley were both young men of rare excellence of character. Major Bingham himself narrowly escaped being a victim of this treachery. The robbers, being encouraged by the failure to dislodge them, began to enlarge the territory which they were to plunder. About a week previous to this Simmons with his band had crossed into Alexander County and had made a raid on Colonel McCurdy, a well-to-do planter. They forced this excellent old gentleman to lead them to the place where his money was concealed, but it was not until they had tied him to the limb of an apple tree and began to flay him alive that he surrendered and led them to his hidden treasure.

About this time Mr. W. C. Green, of Alexander County, who had been a Lieutenant in the Confederate Army, received news from a friend in Wilkes County that Wade had planned to move into Alexander County and make a raid on his father, Rev. J. B. Green, and to kill him (W. C. Green) if found. Mr. Green began to fortify his house, barring all the doors with iron. They also took five Negroes into their confidence and these promised to assist in defending the house against Wade. It was found out that they had in the house fire-arms enough to shoot eighteen times without reloading. Weapons were also provided for the Negroes.

Wade started across the Brushy Mountains on Saturday, 13 May, and reached Mr. Green's that evening about dark. Mr. W. C. Green saw a number of men stop their horses in the road above the house, and he concluded that they were Wade's men. He notified his father, and mustered the Negroes in the dining hall. All the lights were extinguished, though the moon was shining brightly. Mr. J. B. Green stationed himself at the front door, with a revolver in one hand and a dirk in the other. Mr. W. C. Green took his position at a window commanding a view of the front gate and porch. The Negroes were stationed in the rear part of the house. Three men with guns approached the house in front, one of them being Wade who had on a bright Confederate uniform which he always wore on his raids, posing as a Confederate soldier when necessary to gain admission into the houses he wished to plunder. The other members of the company took another route and surrounded the house from the rear, though this was not known at the time. Wade pretended that they were Confederate soldiers; that they had belonged to the cavalry and were now on their way home, having been detained on account of sickness. Mr. J. B. Green told him "he lied, that he knew who he was, what his business was, and that he could not enter his house except over his dead body."

Some of the men had by this time come up from the rear and were trying to force an entrance. When this fact was made known to Mr. W. C. Green by one of the Negroes, he rushed to the rear, knocked out a pane of glass and opened fire on them, wounding one of the men. This unexpected turn of affairs seemed to frighten them and they all began to retire. Mr. J. B. Green and Mr. W. C. Green rushed into the yard and opened fire on them as they retreated, Wade and his men at the same time returning the fire. They retreated so rapidly that two of the men left their horses.

It was found out afterwards that five of Wade's men had passed on down the Cove Gap road to the store of W. C. Linney, where there was some powder and lead, and were watching the store. A number of old Confederate soldiers had visited W. C. Linney that night, and remained in the store with them, and though it was only about one mile to Rev. J. B. Green's, they had no knowledge of what was going on there, not of the action of the five desperadoes who were watching them.

It was Sunday morning before the news was circulated. Mr. W. C. Green went to York Collegiate Institute and informed several men, and by 10 o'clock twenty-two men, almost all of them Confederate soldiers, had

gathered, ready to pursue the robbers. In this party were several officers of the Confederate army and they were dressed in their uniforms. Colonel Wash Sharpe was placed in command of the squad and they started in pursuit. The first news from Wade was when they reached "Law's Gap." Here it was found that Wade had camped in the Brushy Mountains part of the night after the attack on Mr. Green, and about sunrise the next morning had made a raid on Mr. Laws and forced him to give up his money. He informed the party that two of Wade's men were wounded. The pursuers followed the trail and found that five miles from Wilkesboro Wade's men had left the public road and had taken a shorter route by way of Hex's Mill and Holman's Ford to Fort Hamby. The ford was reached in the evening of 14 May, and after crossing the river, and traveling along the public road and followed a private road which led to a creek at the base of the hill on which Hamby house stood. In the plan of attack, part of the company under Colonel G. W. Flowers was to approach from the north while the other part under Captain Ellis, was to approach from the south, and then surround the house. In the enthusiasm of the moment all seemed to forget the danger. Colonel Flowers' men had gotten within seventy-five yards and Captain Ellis' men within twenty yards of the house when its defenders poured a volley of minnie ball through the port holes. James Polk Linney, only 16 years old, and Jones Brown, about 18 years of age, were killed. As the squad that followed Captain Ellis to the south side of the house got within fifty yards of the east end of the house, W. F. Patterson and Burrell Connolly, two Confederate veterans, rushed up the hill to the house, Patterson before, Linney next and Connolly next. When they reached the house I heard the voice of my brother for the last time, say: "Boys, they are going to shoot." Immediately the guns of the robbers were heard and Patterson and Connolly rode away, while Linney sat on his horse at the east end of the house with his body bent as though he were trying to adjust his spur. Soon he went to the ground still holding the reins of his horse. He was mortally wounded by a minnie ball passing through his head, having entered just below the right eye. The robbers gave him no assistance; not even a drink of water, until Monday evening, when he died.

Brown was charging up the hill on the west side when he was wounded. Some of the men were compelled to jump from their horses and throw themselves on the ground in order to escape being shot down. Their horses became frightened and breaking loose from them, ran to where Wade's men had their horses. Two of these horses were the ones captured from Wade at Mr. Green's. These men did not recover their horses at this time.

Under the severe fire the men were compelled to retreat, and when they had retreated to a small stream, Brown, who had been shot, fell from his horse and died in the presence of Rev. W. R. Gwaltney, who was then a boy about the age of Brown. Mr. Gwaltney says: "As we were approaching Holman's Ford the word passed along the line that the house standing on an eminence to our right was the headquarters of the desperate land pirates whom we were pursuing. Brown looking in that direction, turned and said, 'They are going to fight, sure.' Pointing his finger toward a wood above the Hamby house, some women were plainly to be seen retreating into the woods, 'That,' said he, 'means business.' Then, taking his gun from his shoulder and laying it across his saddle, holding it and the reins of his horse with his left hand and laying his right hand on the butt of his revolver, he rode silently on. After crossing the Yadkin River a detour of perhaps half a mile was made when we found ourselves halted on the bank of a roaring, rocky little stream, while our advance was slowly crossing the rough and rapid stream. The sun was stooping low towards the summits of the Blue Ridge in our rear, Brown casting his eye over his shoulder, gazed at the beautiful scene and observed, 'What a beautiful Sunday to be engaged in work like this, guiding his horse into the stream and ere all had landed, our advance had reached the open field and the fray was on. As we emerge from the thicket skirting the stream, Brown fired his gun towards the house. James Linney, brave, noble youth, was shot from his horse near the fatal den. Brown hastily drawing his revolver, with flashing eye and face aflame, plunged forward to the fray, only a few leaps were taken, only twice did his faithful revolver speak when the fearful whack of the enemy's bullet, as distinctly heard as the smiting together of the palms of the hands, indicated some one was struck. Brown suddenly reined his horse, threw up his right hand from which his smoking revolver fell and exclaimed, 'I'm shot, I'm killed.' The hope was expressed that he was not seriously hurt. 'Ah,' he said, pointing to his bleeding leg from which the blood was flowing in a stream, 'I shall be dead in five minutes.' Then lifting his eyes upward as if in prayer, he cried, 'O, such a little time to prepare to die.' These were the last words I heard him speak. Almost simultaneous with this we began to dismount and a confused retreat began. Passing the spot the writer snatched his

revolver and brought it away. Casting my eye toward the river I saw Brown still on his horse as he was being assisted across by two friends. Ten paces perhaps from the landing his horse reared and hurled the dying man to the ground. He arose to his feet, staggered once or twice around a small circle, and fell with his face to the earth. The writer was among the last re-crossing the stream. Hastening to the spot where my dying playmate lay, I dismounted, gave my reins to Lansing Lowrance, who dismounted and remained with me. Running to my friend, I raised him in my arms. Only a few moments passed, his eyes closed forever to scenes of blood, the brave heart grew still, and that noble spirit that no face of earthly foe could daunt, passed bravely, grandly into the great beyond.”

The force was now divided, part having fallen back across the creek, and part having reached the pines east of the building. There was no chance to re-unite, and after waiting until dark, the men withdrew, some reaching Moravian Falls that night. These met the others at “Squire” Hubbard’s next morning. In retreating under the severe fire from the fort, the men were compelled to leave the bodies of Linney and Brown. Wade’s men afterwards buried them near the fort.

These men returned to Alexander County and raised a large company, a strong force having been brought from Iredell County under the command of Wallace Sharpe. On Wednesday the force started towards Fort Hamby. After crossing Cove’s Gap, a courier was sent back to Iredell County to request Captain Cowan to raise a company and come to their assistance; also, another courier was sent to Statesville to an encampment of Federal soldiers to inform them of the condition of things and to ask their assistance. Before reaching Moravian Falls, they received a message from Wade saying, “Come on; I am looking for you; I can whip a thousand of you.” It was dark when Holman’s Ford was reached. Some one in the woods before the company ordered them to halt. The men thought that the order was from some of Wade’s band and were about to fire upon them, when it was found out that this was a company from Caldwell County, under the command of Captain Isaac Oxford, on the same mission. They had encamped near the ford and had thrown out their sentinels. The two companies camped together that night, and next morning marched up the river and crossed at a small ford. They came to the house of Mr. Talbert (Tolbert), who lived on the public road, and there they found a woman dying. She had been shot the day before by the men from the fort, when she and her husband were coming to the ford in a wagon on the opposite side of the river from the fort-nearly a mile distant.

Mr. Talbert begged the men to return, telling them that Wade was expecting them, and had sent for reinforcements. He told them that it was impossible to dislodge him, and to make an attempt and fail would make it worse for the people.

Captain R. M. Sharpe, of Alexander County, assumed command of both companies, numbering several hundred men. W. R. Gwaltney was sent with a small body of men to reach a high hill, overlooking a creek (Lenoir’s Fork), and to remain there while all the others marched around to the north and east of the fort. Gwaltney’s men were to be notified by the firing of a gun, when the main body had reached their position. One or two men were seen to escape from the fort before it could be surrounded. They were fired at, but escaped. The supposition was that they had gone to get reinforcements from the other band. The companies had left their encampment before day and by daybreak the fort was surrounded, the men being placed about twenty steps apart. The soldiers kept up the fire on the fort during the day and night. Wade’s men returned the fire, shooting with great accuracy. The soldiers were compelled to keep behind logs and trees, or out of range of the guns. It seemed impossible to take the fort. “Some of the bravest men were in favor of giving it up, while others said death was preferable to being run over by such devils.”

One old veteran, James Harvey Connolly, was heard to remark, “Well my interest in heaven may not be much, but such as it is I would be willing to give it all for a piece of artillery one hour.” Thursday morning just before daylight, Wallace Sharpe and two others approached a small house near the log fort, under cover of the night, and Sharpe set fire to it. Wade and his crowd begged for terms. Sharpe in vigorous language informed them that the death of our young heroes, Clarke, Henly, Linney and Brown must be avenged. As the flames of this out house began to ascend, all the men surrounding the fort began to rush up. Wade made a rush toward the river, through a body of Caldwell men, who opened fire on him, but as it was yet a little dark, he escaped. Four men were captured, Beck, Church, Lockwood, and one whose name cannot be ascertained. The flames which had caught the fort were extinguished, and in the house was found property of almost every descrip-

tion. Five ladies' dresses and bonnets had been taken for the dissolute women who occupied the house. About twenty horses were found stabled near the fort. Some of the property was restored to the owners. The men who were captured plead for a trial according to the course and practice of the courts. They were informed that they would be disposed of as summarily as they had disposed of Clark, Henley, Brown and Linney. Stakes were put up, and on the way to the place of execution they were given time to pray. They knelt down to pray, but the prayer was, "O, men, spare us." Wallace Sharpe replied: "Men, pray to God; don't pray to us. He alone can save you." Captain Sharpe requested W. R. Gwaltney to pray, but he replied that he never felt as little like praying in his life. Captain Isaac Oxford said, "If you will hold my gun I will pray;" but instead of praying for the men, he thanked God that they were to be brought to justice and that none of the party had been killed. After this Rev. W. R. Gwaltney offered an earnest prayer for them, and then they were shot," as nearly in strict conformity to military usage as these old Confederate soldiers, under the excitement of the occasion, could conform to." (see Appendix B)

After the prisoners were shot, the fort was set on fire. When the flames reached the cellar, the firing of guns was like a hot skirmish. Wade's men had stored away a great many loaded guns, and a large quantity of ammunition.

Wade was seen in the vicinity several days after. He claimed to have been a major in Stoneman's command and a native of Michigan. He said that he had escaped to the Yadkin River from the fort and had hid under the banks until night; that in searching for him the soldiers had frequently come within six feet of him.

On the way back to Alexander County Captain Cowan, from Iredell, was met with a small body of men on their way to Fort Hamby. Also a company of Federal troops, then stationed in Statesville, were met on their way to the fort. They were told what had been done. The Captain ordered three cheers, which the men gave with a good will. The bodies of Linney and Brown were brought back home for final burial. Though all the desperadoes were not brought to justice, this completely broke up their depredations.

The most startling thing about the whole tragedy is this: Major Bingham attacked the robbers and lost two young heroes eleven days before the fort was taken and four of the robbers shot. It seems almost incredible that such a band of robbers should be permitted to plunder a county where 700 men able to wear an helmet, and of sufficient courage to assail any foe, had their homes. The writer inquired of Colonel Flowers a few days since how he was armed. "I had a small pistol," said he. So had I. We had no guns of any value to use upon such a fort, such a strong lag wall. The rifles of the robbers were the very best then used in the Federal army. The writer has one of them taken from the fort from the robbers we shot. It shoots with accuracy 1000 yards and to lock to-day appears to be as strong as when first made. The gun weighs ten pounds. The destruction of the band of robbers was at great sacrifice indeed. It put an end to plunder and insult of our people, but the loss of the lives of four of the gallant youths that had survived the war was a dear price to pay for it.

Romulus Z. Linney
Taylorsville, N. C. (14 May, 1901)



SHOOT AND BE DAMNED

SOME INCIDENTS OF GEN. STONEMAN'S RAID AND OTHER EVENTS OF THAT PERIOD

By R. L. Downs

Published in the Lenoir Topic in a series of five articles from December 17, 1890, to January 14, 1891.]

In the spring of 1865 the home defense of Caldwell County consisted of three Companies of Infantry and one of Cavalry. The infantry had been classified into one company of the first class guards and two of second class. The first class company was under the command of Capt. W. A. White, while the two companies of second class were under Captains R. R. McCall and Fin Shearer respectively. Now the difference between the first and second class home guards was that the first class company was composed of the ablest bodied men to be found, who were exempt from the Confederate Conscription Act, and they were held ready to be ordered to any part of the state, while the second class consisted of such men as were not considered physically able to stand the hardships of the long continued service and were therefore not required to serve outside of the county. The company of cavalry which was commanded by Capt. N. A. Miller had no fixed amount of service to perform but was held ready to go wherever required, and to do anything for which cavalry might be better suited than infantry. But each Company of infantry was required to serve ten days in turn, so that one company was always on duty.

While these men were doing the best they could to hold in check the robbers and Tories of the Blue Ridge country, Gen. Stoneman of the Federal army with his great column of cavalry was rapidly approaching this State from East Tennessee. He came through Watauga County on the Blowing Rock. There he established a fort or at least what was called a fort and named it Fort Rollins in honor of Maj. Rollins of N. C. who belonged to the Tory gang. Gen. Stoneman then proceeded to garrison this fortress with Tories, robbers, and deserters of both armies under command of the notorious George W. Kirk. (see Appendix A)

Then leaving this miserable band of marauding libertines to rob and plunder the helpless people of the surrounding country, he moved on down the turnpike as far as Patterson, then burning the manufacturing establishment situated at that place, he went down the Yadkin into Wilkes and on to the east. On the day following the burning of the factory at Patterson, Capt. White was on his way to Lenoir to take charge of his company which was to go on duty that day. While on the road he learned that the Yankees under Gen. Stoneman were in the county and had burned Patterson Factory. At the same time Captain Shearer, who was going off of duty, was on the road to his home in Little River for they both lived in this township. They met and after counseling together for a while, Shearer turned about, united his forces with those of White, and together they pushed on to Lenoir, but without knowing which way Gen. Stoneman was moving.

As they were entering Lenoir and being on the road near where Dr. J. C. Newland now lives, a horse-man came riding at a great rate from towards Mrs. John Powell's and reported that a detachment of Yankees had come in by Gen. Clarke's and on towards Lower Creek Church and was approaching Lenoir from that direction, while the army was coming in on the Patterson Road and would be soon pouring down North Main Street. Of course, it was an easy matter for our men to see that unless they made their escape at once they would all be captured, so turning to the left they ran up a steep bank opposite Rev. Mr. Healan's and took position on an elevated portion of the hill at that point. From this position the court house square could be clearly seen, and it was Capt. White's intention to fire two volleys into the Federals as they came into the courthouse yard and then escape by running across Lower Creek into Hibriten. Almost all the men were gone from Lenoir, everything was perfectly quiet. A few Confederate cavalrymen, claiming to have been cut off from their command were encamped just across Lower Creek on the Hickory Road. Occasionally some of them would run into town to find out if anything new had been learned about the Yankees.

Our Home Guards on the heights anxiously awaited developments. But it was a false alarm for no Yankees came. The alarm seems to have been caused by a few straggling Yankees who came over from Patterson as near Lenoir as Gen. Clark's and were supposed to have gone back to the Yadkin Valley by way of the Indian Grave Gap. At night the Home Guards went down to J. C. Norwood's and got supper, they then returned to the position they had occupied during the day. On the next day they marched into Lenoir. The citizens and people of the town so earnestly solicited them to remain there as a guard for the town that they finally agreed to stay, and did stay during Capt. White's ten days of service. After they had decided to remain at Lenoir a line of pickets was posted around the town and everything put in regular order of war. The men were boarded by the people of the town, each family taking a proportionate number.

Now at this time the Tories had become so outrageous in their depredations upon the people of the counties bordering the Blue Ridge in this section of the state that Maj. A. C. Avery, now one of the judges of the Supreme Court of North Carolina, but at that time Adjutant General of the Staff of Gen. D. H. Hill was sent home by the Confederate authorities with orders to raise troop and if possible break up and destroy the Tory organization.

As soon as Maj. Avery arrived at home he began making preparations to perform the difficult task assigned him. It was necessary for him to go to Lenoir. So without knowing the situation in Caldwell, he started one evening for that place. He was alone.

It was late at night when he arrived and as he galloped up West Main Street suddenly two sentinels sprang from the sides of street crying, "Halt! Halt! Who goes there?" He could not tell whether they were friends or foes but the continuous click of their muskets brought him to a standstill. He soon found he was in the hands of friends. It was then necessary for the sentinels to call the Corporal of the guard to pass him through the lines which was done. This was no doubt a great surprise to Avery, but we supposed by no means a disagreeable one.

It was soon decided that it was impossible to dislodge the Tories from Fort Rollins at Blowing Rock without artillery. So Maj. Avery went at once to Salisbury to bring up guns for a battery. While he was there Gen. Stoneman's army stormed the town, took the Confederate prison situated at that place and set the Federal captives at liberty and Maj. Avery, as well as many other Confederates, fell into the hands of Stoneman as prisoners of war.

From Salisbury, Stoneman moved toward the west. He came through Iredell and Alexander counties and struck into Caldwell on Saturday, April 16th. The main body of the army came on the direct road leading from Taylorsville to Lenoir. But small detachments made their way into almost every section of the counties though which they passed. If the writer is correctly informed a detachment was sent from Taylorsville by way of Hickory to destroy the Confederate Commissary situated there.

Now as Gen. Stoneman approached rumors of his coming began to be circulated through the county. So on the morning of the 15th Capt. Miller at the head of his company started from Lenoir toward Alexander to find out if possible the truth of the rumors. He went as far east as Cedar Valley Church and then waited for the Yankees to come but, while waiting a small detachment of his men moved on into Alexander County. They were hardly more than a mile across the county line, and being on the Taylorsville and Lenoir road when they came

upon two Yankees having in custody our county man W. L. Payne, whom they had taken at Long's only a few minutes before. They captured the two Yankees, set Payne at liberty and with the two prisoners turned about and started for their command at a rapid rate. Mr. Payne then hid himself in the mountains but kept in sight of the road that he might see the army pass. He was a little too bold, however, and was captured again in a few hours.

Now it seems that as soon as Stoneman found that two of his men were captured he detached two parties of men to pursue the captors. One party followed on the main road, while the other took another road which breaks off at this path, and leads round by W. D. Oxford's and Union Church and comes out into the main thoroughfare about five miles from the starting point. It is supposed that this party intended to outride Miller's men and cut them off, but they failed to do so. These pursuing parties made no halt at any place but as the main army approached the men were continually scattering themselves all over the country "foraging." They captured all the horses they could get, took almost everything that could be found in the shape of provisions, and rummaged people's houses carrying off whatever their whimsical fancy might dictate whether it was valuable or otherwise.

Many people asked for a guard. This request was generally granted, and whenever a guard had been stationed at a house the pillagers had to pass on. The grandfather of the writer—Aaron Downs—lived near the road; several men happened to be at his house; seeing the Yankees approach, they took to their heels and escaped into the woods. But he was an old man himself and did not try to get away. As soon as the Yankees reached the house, one of them asked in a very arrogant manner, who those men were, that had just left the place. The old man refused to tell. Whereupon the Yankee cursed him and swore he would shoot him if he didn't tell. "Shoot and be d---," said the old man. "You'll not cheat me out of many years if you do." But the fellow didn't shoot and he didn't tell.

As the army passed on several very interesting incidents occurred in this part of the county but for the present we will relate only one. Maj. H. Bingham, then of Watauga County, but now of Statesville, N. C. happened to be at home on furlough or by some other legitimate means, and was at this time in Little River Township at a refuge for the Tories of his own county. On the morning of the 15th he was at the house of old man Jacob White. And hearing that the Yankees were in the country, he and Mr. White and Capt. Fin Shearer started to go over to Lenoir road or rather in sight of the road to see if the Yankees really were passing.

They were going along a by-path or private road which leads from a point known as the "Pole Ridge" on the Hickory road, out into the Lenoir road opposite William McLeod's. As they walked leisurely along not suspecting any danger, they came to a hollow where there is a short crook in the road. Just at this point without a moment's warning a party of Federal Cavalymen came dashing round the road and was almost on them before they knew it. Shearer was before and without any forethought, he instantly raised his gun to his shoulder, cried "Halt!" and fired upon the foremost horseman almost the same instant. The ball struck the man's arm. He reeled in his saddle but did not fall.

This so surprised the Yankees that they fell back out of sight, but the next instant the commands were heard "Form! Form! Charge!" And back they came again like a thunderstorm but, while the Yankees were doing this our fellows made a break to get out of the way. Bingham ran up the hollow and White and Shearer ran down it. It seems that the Yankees did not see Bingham, but as they came in sight they caught a glimpse of Shearer and White and pursued them, firing as they went. One fellow dismounted and ran on foot.

Maj. Bingham afterward said he could have stolen his horse easily. However he didn't undertake to do so but got away as fast as possible. He threw away his gun as he ran and the gun is supposed to be there yet somewhere for it is not known that any one ever found it. White and Shearer soon came to a little brook; its banks were thickly covered with ivy. They went down this. Here the Yankees divided - part going on one side and the remainder on the other. White being an old man and afflicted with rheumatism, he soon found that it would be impossible to escape by running so he dropped down in between the banks of the brook and lay flat in the water. His pursuers passed by without noticing him.

As soon as they were out of sight he returned to the left, ran across a ridge and escaped into another thicket of ivy. But they finally captured Shearer and when they caught him they were so enraged that they resolved to kill him at once. Now Shearer was a Freemason and as his enraged captors stood around him with their guns and pistols cocked ready to riddle him with bullets, he gave the Masonic sign of distress. This saved



William Deal III

him for there were Ma-
sons among them who
interfered in his behalf.
He was taken with the
other prisoners on to
Camp Chase in Ohio. He
eventually got back home
again safe and sound but
soon after left this state
and went to Kansas.

Maj. Bingham was
not captured, but lay out
all night in the spurs of
the Bald Knob Mountain,
in sight of the Yankee's
camp fires, for a large
detachment was encamp-
ed on the road between
Wm. McLeod's and
Rev. I. Oxford's. On the
following morning this
camp ground was liter-
ally covered with things
curious, valuable and
otherwise. Corn, oats,
meat, hats, shoes, brass
cartridges, run down
broken firearms, old
clothes, some books, an
old violin and all manner
of trinkets and curiosi-
ties. These things were
picked up and carried
off by the people of the
neighborhood. Mr. White
was as fond of jokes as
any man of his age I have
ever known, but he never
could bear with good

grace, to be joked about his adventures with the Yankees. It was always a serious affair with him.

We will now return to Capt. Miller and his men. When the party having in custody the two Yankee pris-
oners arrived at Deal's Mills , Capt. Miller was there with his company having moved down to that point from
Cedar Valley. The prisoners were placed under a guard, which was ordered to take them to Lenoir, in the least
possible time, but they never reached that place, at least not in the same relation in which they started, for while
on the road both guard and prisoners fell into the hands of Stoneman's men.

Miller did not apprehend any danger from Gen. Stoneman for a few hours yet, and his men were prepar-
ing to take dinner with William Deal, Esq., the owner of the mills and progenitor of all the Little River Deals.
But before they were seated for dinner, the Yankees came in sight. They ran to their horses, mounted quickly
and formed a line of battle but, by this time some of the Federals as if some traitor had informed them of the
situation, had come round north of Deal's house and were almost ready to attack our men in the rear, thereby

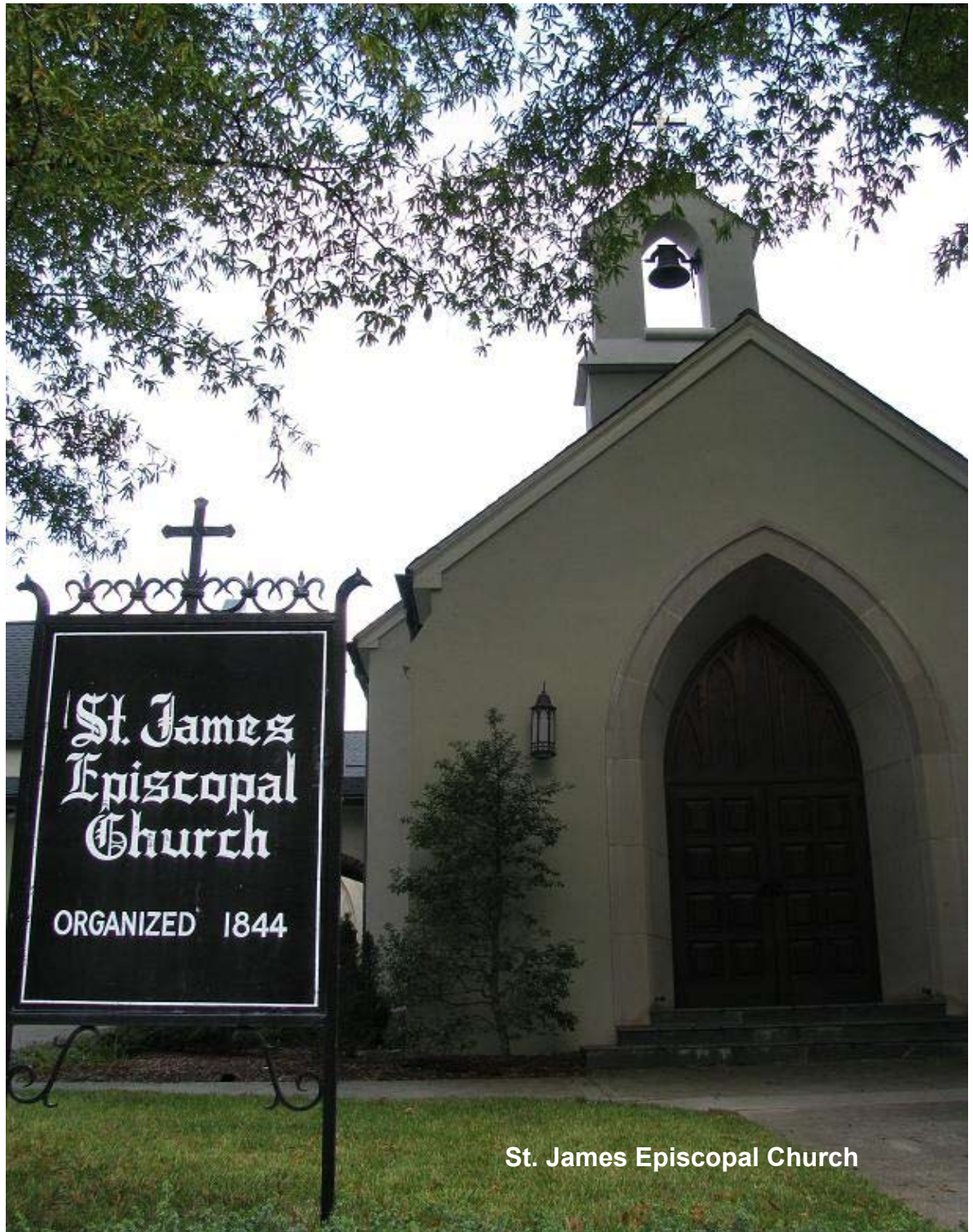
cutting off all means of retreat. However they saw the movement in time to avoid it by retreating further up the road where they again formed a line and waited the enemy. As soon as the Yankees were within gunshot, both sides began firing. Several Yankees were wounded, but it is not known that any were killed.

Miller again retreated. Some of his men were separated from the main body and ran into the thickets of Hibriten where they were safe from the enemy. The others moved rapidly toward Lenoir, going on the road leading south of Hibriten. At one point they halted and formed a line, intending to wait for the Federals and give them battle but this idea was abandoned.

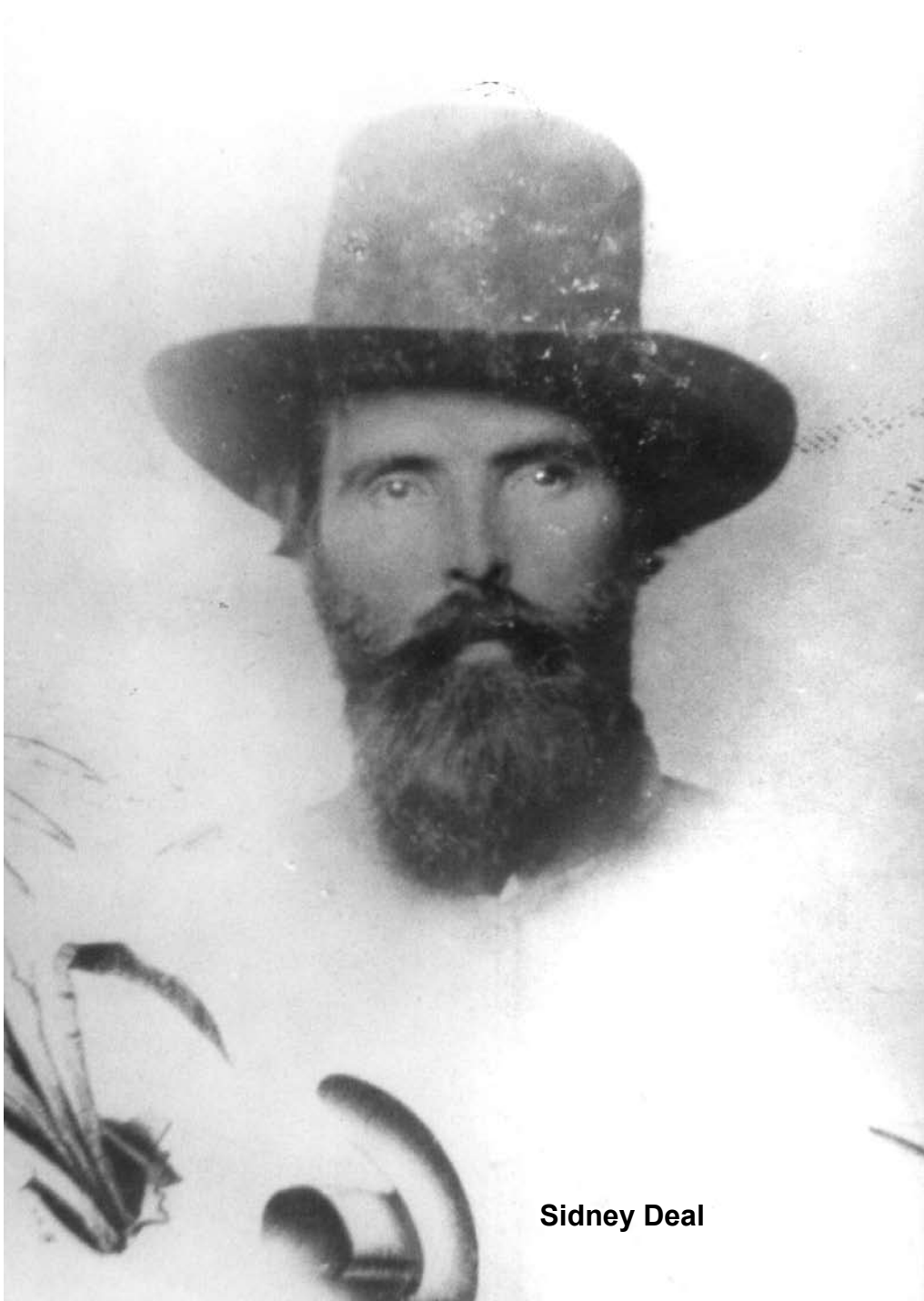
Now, Gen. Stone-

man's main army was marching on the road north of Hibriten, and the advanced guard arrived at Lenoir about the middle of the afternoon, taking the town almost completely by surprise.

While this was happening Capt. Miller was making all possible haste to reach Lenoir and give the alarm, not aware that the town was already in possession of the Yankees. As he and his men were crossing Lower Creek toward the house of J. C. Norwood they were fired upon by a number of Yankees who were about Mr. Norwood's place. They wheeled about and went down the Creek. The Yankees kept up their firing at long range, but did not hit any of them. They escaped into the mountains and were never captured. The Yankees pursuing them heard the firing and moved forward very slowly and cautiously expecting serious trouble at every stop, so say Ambrose White, Esq., who was at the time a prisoner in their custody but, of course they found no trouble.



St. James Episcopal Church



Sidney Deal

When the great throng of prisoners arrived at Lenoir late Saturday evening General Stoneman ordered them to be placed in and around the Episcopal church, and had them secured by a guard placed at a proper distance from the church, and in this condition they remained till Monday morning, for the army did not march again till that time. It seems that Gen. Stoneman was waiting for information of some kind, and therefore remained over Sunday at Lenoir. Maj. Avery as we mentioned before, was captured at Salisbury and brought on to Lenoir with the other prisoners. He found himself at this time not only weary and foot-sore from his long march, but also in a situation of great personal danger.

Tories had joined Gen. Stoneman from time to time in his raid through Western North Carolina, until at this time he was accompanied by quite a large number of them. Now these Tories had a terrible hatred for all the Avery's, we suppose, because they were a patriotic people true as steel to the Confederacy and always took an active part in putting down all Tory move-

ments. These things coupled with the fact that Maj. Avery had been sent home from the army for the express purpose of making war upon them and thus heightened their hatred towards him into a perfect frenzy and many of these miserable libertines were swearing that if Avery should be captured they would kill him on first sight, now knowing that at the same time he was among the prisoners, for in the excitement at Salisbury and subsequent rapid marching he had not been recognized by any of the Tories, though he had often heard their frightful oaths concerning him and knew that he was in danger of being assassinated.

Sidney Deal, Esq., happened to be at home on furlough at the time, and had gone to Lenoir to aid in collecting men to fight the Tories at Blowing Rock and while here the Yankees came in and he was captured and placed with the other prisoners. On Sunday morning Avery took Deal into the vestry room of the church and there told him his dangerous situation. They counseled together for a while and decided that the best thing that could be done for Avery's safety would be to disguise him as fully as possible. His beard was several inches long. It was decided that if this could be shaved off and his military dress changed to the suit of a civilian, his



1st Lt. Charles M. Suddreth



Col. John K. Miller

appearance would be so changed that none of the Tories would be likely to ever recognize him. At this point two other prisoners, W. L. Payne and Charles Suddreth were called into the room to aid in making the disguise, but the whole matter was kept secret from the rest. To procure a razor with which to shave him and to get a different suit of clothes seemed at first to be utterly impossible.

By the aid of some very fortunate circumstances Mr. Deal was enabled to obtain every thing necessary. Now it so happened that the guard of the prisoners was commanded by Colonel Miller of Carter County, Tennessee. Carter County joins Watauga County, North Carolina and before the war Colonel Miller had been Sheriff of Carter County, while Mr. Deal was Sheriff of Watauga County. They were personally acquainted with each other at that time. Deal recognized Miller and renewed their former acquaintance. And it seems that Miller liked Deal and would have been glad to help him escape but could not think of a plan that appear safe, so Deal did not attempt to get away but, the friendship of Miller enabled Deal to get the things necessary for Avery. P. A. Healan, Esq., then a boy of six or seven, was running about the grounds like the ordinary small boy—we suppose—just to see the sights. Deal went to Col. Miller and told him he had a sister (Mrs. Healan) living in town, and ask if he would permit that boy (P. A. Healan) to carry a note to Mrs. Healan, however, but to Mrs. J. C. Norwood, Avery's first cousin, and requested her to send Maj. Avery an old hat and half worn suit of clothes. The boy was well instructed and soon returned bringing safely through the lines the required suit, also a razor, brush, and soap for shaving.

Our friends then proceeded to make the disguise. Avery's bright Confederate uniform was laid aside for the costume of an ordinary civilian. His whiskers were also shaved off except mustache and imperial and it is said that he has worn only a mustache and imperial from that day till this, because they were part of the disguise which carried him safely through the dangers of that fearful march to Camp Chase. After this was done an old slouched hat was pulled down close to his eyes and the disguise was so complete—says Deal—that his most intimate friends would not have known him. He resembled Capt. Jones of the 9th La. Regt., know as the “La. Tigers” so much that the resemblance suggested the name and he was introduced to some of the other prisoners as Capt. Jones of New Orleans, and he was known by that name until completely out of danger from the Tories. And it is not now supposed that any one expect Deal, Payne, and Sudderth knew until afterwards that it really was Avery.

On Monday morning the army with the prisoners marched to Blowing Rock, Avery and Deal marching side by side. On arriving there they encamped for the night. Soon after they had halted, that well-known Tory and robber Keith Blalock came to Deal and told him that some of the Tories were devising a plan to murder him, and offered to remain with him and sleep by his side and guard him from these mortal foes. Of course, Deal accepted this kind offer which was given in good faith and in like manner performed as the sequel proved.

For the satisfaction of the reader it shall be necessary to explain the reasons why Blalock should take this interest in Deal's welfare. Deal—as was mentioned before—had been sheriff of Watauga County before the war, and on several occasions had arrested Blalock, for he was a rowdy then as well as later and on such him as far as possible Blalock remembered these things and though he was indeed a very bad man yet in offering to do what he could to protect Deal in the time of peril he showed that he was not altogether devoid of that generous principle called gratitude, which is in fact one of the noblest characteristics of the human soul.

Deal was a faithful, headstrong, outspoken Confederate and this was probably the reason why he had incurred the mortal hate of certain Tories. Deal, Avery, and Blalock all slept under the same blanket. Blalock was almost continually cursing Maj. Avery and swearing in most horrible manner that he would kill him if he should ever be able to find him, and at the same time Avery was lying by his side though he had not the slightest suspicion of it.

When we reflect for a moment upon Avery's trying and perilous situation,—disguised and unknown, sleeping under the same blanket with an assassin, whose vengeance could be averted by nothing less that a miracle, should he be recognized, suffering the indignity and humiliation of being subject to such ungenerous and ignoble captors, not knowing at what moment his identity might be brought to light and his life be put in greatest jeopardy. In a way, when we reflect upon these things and remember that no less a personage than our own great Avery suffered them, a scene is brought before the mind of such romantic and thrilling interest that is puts to shame the wildest fiction.

The incidents of this hazardous peril in the life of our great jurist should be written in full detail and preserved. Not however by an ordinary scribbler like myself, but the narrative should be handed down to posterity embellished by the touch of North Carolinas brightest genius. On the following morning Gen. Stoneman placed the prisoners in the hands of the Tories under command of George W. Kirk, the great Beelzebub of the Tory gang, giving him orders to take them on toward Camp Chase, Ohio. Stoneman then turned with his army and went down John's River into Burke County and on toward the west.

As the great column of over a thousand prisoners moved forward under their Tory guard, at a point just beyond Silver Lake some of the prisoners made a break and dashed past the guard, intending to escape into a great thicket of ivy by the roadside. The guard fired upon them and Capt. Price of Virginia was too badly wounded that he soon had to be left at some house by the way side, and it is not known by the writer what became of him. None of the prisoners however escaped out of sight expect Capt. John T. Shotwell of Livingston, Tex., who was treacherously murdered by a Tory a few minutes afterward.

We are not fully informed concerning the manner in which Capt. Shotwell was killed and it does not now seem possible to find out for certain the exact truth about the matter, but it appears that a man who was well acquainted with the ground ran along a bypath which led in front of Shotwell and on arriving at a point where he supposed Shotwell would come, he hide himself and there lay in wait. As Shotwell, on hands and knees crept though the dense thicket, he cautiously raised his head to peer over a log in front of him, when the

ambushed coward fired and shot him dead. He was left lying where he was killed. Someone afterward threw a few leaves and brush over his dead body, but that was all. Several months afterwards the father of Capt. Shottwell came from Texas to Blowing Rock in order to find out the particulars of this tragic affair and to learn if possible whether or not the unfortunate man really was his son. The body was found and was identified by a gold finger ring which was an heirloom in the Shottwell family. The remains of this unfortunate and lamented Confederate were then carried to his home in Tex., and buried.

Just beyond Boone while the column was halted a man, who is today well-known, well-to-do and well-respected in the county where he lives, having a grudge at Deal, approached him with a large knife drawn, swearing as he came he would kill him—cut his heart out and let him see it with his own eyes before he died. But Blalock had placed the muzzle of a Spencer rifle to his breast and told him with the most profane emphases how quick he would put day light through him if he didn't stop.

That night they encamped near the mouth of Cove Creek and the next night at Duggers Forge, Carter County, Tennessee. Night after night crowds of Tories were among the prisoners robbing them—searching their pockets and taking from them whatever valuables they might have about their persons. At Knoxville, Tennessee, some of the prisoners in camp, at the instigation of Col. Stone, of Mississippi, prepared with stones and clubs to resist these robbers. This seemed to be a very rash thing to do yet it had a good effect for the robbers seeing that they were determined to resist decided to let them alone and they never bother them again. At Louisville, Kentucky, the prisoners were placed in the hands of regular Federal troops who took them from that place to Camp. These genuine Yankees treated them with a great deal more kindness and humanity than the Tories had done. After being imprisoned for a few months they were discharged at different times and sent to their respective homes.

We have traced Gen. Stoneman in his raid through this section relating some of the incidents which occurred at that time and have also followed our prisoners to their destination and home again. However we are aware that this sketch is very imperfect and may contain many errors for the writer had barely seen the light when Gen. Stoneman passed through this county, and of course is not so well qualified to write as a person living and acting at that time but, if we have made mistakes we are ready and anxious to be corrected, indeed, it is to be hoped that some one better qualified for the task will give us more information concerning those troublous times. We are rich in interesting war time traditions and it is our duty to preserve in our annals those that bear upon the history of this section of the state.

In conclusion, we desire to express the most profound sympathy and love for the defeated heroes of the "Lost Cause." Where is the man in all the South with a single spark of chivalry or of patriotism in his soul, who does not honor them with his sympathy and love and admiration? How differently are they situated from their Northern antagonists, who are today the praised, the petted, the pensioned darlings of this great republic, crowned as it were with garlands of victory and honored it seems by the whole outside world. But our Southern country men, actuated by principles as pure, as noble, as patriotic, fought as bravely and as faithfully as did their conquering foreman, yet they are even today stigmatized by a certain element as rebels and traitors.

When we think of those things and remember how many of them are today bearing in their bodies the infirmities the battle scars, the unmistakable signs of suffering, from those four years of blood and carnage, we can begin to realize how much is due them at our hands. We cannot love them too well. We cannot honor them too highly. We cannot do too much for them in any way; for their sufferings, their privations, their deals of valor for country's sake are to us a heritage of honor more precious than the untold material wealth of our mountains and valleys.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

By Locke W. (Skip) Smith, Jr.

Edited by Greg Mast

Major Alphonso Calhoun Avery – (1835 – 1917) Avery was a member of a prominent family in Burke County and western North Carolina. He commanded a unit called Avery's Battalion N. C. Local Defense Troops. That unit organized in February 1865 and served until it disbanded in April/May 1865.

Beck – He was captured at Fort Hamby and executed. A search of the rosters of the 10th and 11th Michigan Regiments Cavalry found no one by the name of Beck who deserted. John Crouch, in his 1902, *Historical Sketches of Wilkes County*, identifies Beck as one Bill Beck. According to the 1860 Federal Census of Wilkes County, there is a William Beck residing in the Wilkes County with his parents, Joel and Mary Beck, and is listed as being 15 years old at the time of the census. There is a William S. Beck, who enlisted in Company B, 2nd Regiment N. C. Cavalry (19th Regiment N. C. Troops) at the start of the war. He later transferred to Company I, 52nd Regiment N. C. Troops in December 1864 but, deserted that company the same month. The Beck family is not listed in the 1870 Federal Census of Wilkes County.

Major Harvey Bingham – Bingham served as an officer in Company E (the "Watauga Minute Men"), 37th Regiment N. C. Troops, and sustained a head wound at Second Manassas. He resigned on October 21, 1862, by reason of "disease of the lungs." Following the establishment of the Home Guard in 1863, Bingham was appointed major of the Watauga County Home Guard battalion, formally known as the 11th Battalion N. C. Home Guard.

Keith Blalock – He resided in Caldwell County when he enlisted (with his wife Malinda Pritchard Blalock, disguised as "Sam") in Company F (the "Hibriten Guards"), 26th Regiment N. C. Troops, on March 20, 1862. Blalock was discharged on April 20, 1862, because of "hernia" and "poison of sumac." When he returned home he and his wife joined other Federal sympathizers to form a "Unionist" band that terrorized the people of Burke, Caldwell, Watauga and Wilkes counties.

Jones M. Brown – Brown enlisted in late 1863 in Company D (the "Watauga Rangers"), 1st Regiment N. C. Cavalry (9th Regiment N. C. State Troops.)

Church – He was captured at Fort Hamby and executed. A search of the rosters of the 10th and 11th Michigan Regiments Cavalry found no one by the name of Church that deserted. Examining the 1860 Federal Census for Wilkes County revealed a very large group of citizens with the surname of Church. Five men with the surname of Church enlisted in the 3rd N. C. Mounted Infantry (U. S.), with three of them deserting that unit in April 1865. Alfred Church deserted at Carter County, Tennessee, while both John. L. Church and Jordan Church deserted at Boone, North Carolina.

General Cornelius Clarke – (Born 1808) Clarke, whose title reflected service in the antebellum North Carolina militia, lived in Caldwell County. Three of his sons – Robert Burns Clarke, D. P. Clarke, and Hosea A. Clarke – served in Company A (the “Caldwell Rough and Ready Boys”), 22nd Regiment N. C. Troops.

Robert Burns Clarke - Son of General Cornelius Clarke and brother of D. P. Clarke and Hosea A. Clarke. He enlisted March 19, 1862 in Company A (the “Caldwell Rough and Ready Boys”), 22nd Regiment N. C. Troops. He was wounded and captured at Gettysburg on July 1-5, 1863, and hospitalized at Davids Island, New York Harbor, until he was paroled and transferred to City Point, Virginia, on August 28, 1863. He returned to duty and although was listed as missing in action at Spotsylvania Court House, returned to duty and was paroled at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865.

Burrell Wells Connolly – He was from Alexander County and served in Company A, 7th Regiment N. C. State Troops, until paroled at Greensboro in May 1865. He was a brother of James Harvey Connolly.

James Harvey Connolly – Connolly served in Company A, 7th Regiment N. C. State Troops, until wounded and captured at Gettysburg. He was paroled and transferred for exchange in late 1863, and was discharged in April 1864. He was a brother of Burrell Wells Connolly.

Robert V. Cowan – Cowan, of Iredell County, rose from captain to colonel of the 33rd Regiment N. C. Troops. He was wounded at Chancellorsville and surrendered at Appomattox Court House. There is a story told by Major Weston of the same regiment, that when Colonel Cowan received word of the negotiations and mounted his horse and rode off claiming that “I will not surrender.”

Sidney Deal – (Born 1826) Sidney Deal was a son of William Deal III, and was a blacksmith. Prior to the Civil War he was elected sheriff of Watauga County and served as a private and blacksmith in Company D (the “Watauga Rangers”), 1st Regiment N. C. Cavalry (9th Regiment N. C. State Troops) through 1864. Sidney Deal was captured at Lenoir on April 15, 1865, and imprisoned at Camp Chase, Ohio, until released June 13, 1865.

William Deal III – Father of six sons that fought for North Carolina during the Civil War. He was a captain in the 19th Battalion N. C. Home Guard (Caldwell County.)

Aaron Downs – Resident of Caldwell County who was 71 years old at the time of the 1860 Federal Census. He was the grandfather of the writer (Robert Lee Downs) of the article, About the Time of the Surrender: Some Incidents of Gen. Stoneman’s Raid and other Events of that Period.

Robert Lee Downs – Resided in Caldwell County and was born in 1862. His father, William served in Company I, 26th N. C. Troops. He is the author of About the Time of the Surrender: Some Incidents of Gen. Stoneman’s Raid and other Events of that Period

George H. Dula – Resided in Caldwell County and was 13 years old in the 1860 Federal Census of Caldwell County. His father was S. P. Dula who served in Company A (the “Caldwell Rough and Ready Boys”), 22nd Regiment N. C. Troops, and Company I (the “Caldwell Guards”), 26th Regiment N. C. Troops.

Robert B. Dula – Resided in Caldwell County and was 11 years old in the 1860 Federal Census of Caldwell County. His father was S. P. Dula who served in Company A (the “Caldwell Rough and Ready Boys”), 22nd Regiment N. C. Troops, and Company I (the “Caldwell Guards”), 26th Regiment N. C. Troops.

Captain Evan Ellis – He was from Wilkes County and served in the 2nd Regiment N. C. Detailed Men during the last six months of the war. That unit served as guards at the Salisbury Prison.

Colonel George W. Flowers – (Born April 25, 1842) Flowers, of Alexander County, served as a teacher at York Collegiate Institute prior to serving as a captain and lieutenant colonel in the 38th Regiment N. C. Troops. He sustained wounds at Mechanicsville, the Wilderness, and surrendered at Appomattox Court House.

Brigadier General Alvan Cullem Gillem – (Born July 29, 1830) A Tennessean, Gillem graduated from West Point in 1851 as a second lieutenant in the artillery and served on the Texas frontier until the Civil War. After duty as a quartermaster, he was elected colonel of the 10th Regiment Tennessee Infantry (U. S.) and then appointed Brigadier General of Volunteers on June 1, 1863. He commanded a cavalry division under Major General George Stoneman in the Department of East Tennessee during the last months of the war.

Reverend J. B. Green – Resident of Alexander County and father of William C. Green.

William C. Green – Greene, of Alexander County, saw early war service as an officer in Company K, 7th Regiment N. C. State Troops. He resigned in August 1862, and, according to F. P. Curtis, Jr., was a “bounty hunter for conscripts” and a member of Company B, McRae’s Battalion N. C. Cavalry.

William Robert Gwaltney - (Born September 9, 1835) Gwaltney entered Wake Forest College in 1859 and was licensed to preach on April 21, 1860. A resident of Alexander County, he was ordained at Taylorsville on March 1, 1863. Gwaltney was appointed chaplain of the 1st Regiment N. C. State Troops on February 12, 1863, and served until he resigned because of ill health on December 30, 1864. Gwaltney returned to Wake Forest College to complete his studies in 1867. During a career of thirty-nine years he helped found many Baptist churches in western North Carolina.

Sallie Hamby – Harvey Augustus Eller, in a letter dated September 21, 1931, identifies the owner of the Hamby home as Sallie Hamby, a woman of “questionable character.” A probable match is found in the 1860 Wilkes County Federal Census. Sixty-two year old Sallie Hamby is listed as living with John Hamby (sixty years old) in a home that that included the following: Caroline (twenty-nine year old spinstress), Eda (twenty-seven year old spinstress), Amelia (eighteen year old farm laborer), James (eighteen years old farm laborer)and, Eliza (sixteen year old farm laborer).

Samuel Finley Harper – (Born July 10, 1843) Harper was a brother of Major George Washington Finley Harper of the 58th Regiment N. C. Troops. He enlisted in Company A, (the “Caldwell Rough and Ready Boys”), 22nd Regiment N. C. Troops. He was wounded at Seven Pines and was present and accounted for until he surrendered at Appomattox Court House. He was often detailed as a clerk at the headquarters of generals William Dorsey Pender and A. P. Hill.

Ellis Hayes, Esq. – A resident of Alexander County.

Mary Deal Healan – Wife of James L. Healan. She was the daughter of William Deal III and the sister of Sidney Deal. She was the mother of three Caldwell County soldiers: Matthew D. Healan and John R. Healan, both of whom served in Company A (the “Caldwell Rough and Ready Boys”), 22nd Regiment N. C. Troops; and William Healan who served in Company C (the “Burke and Caldwell Reserves”), 3rd Regiment N. C. Junior Reserves. She was also the sister of six Confederate soldiers from Caldwell County.

Pinkny A. Healan – The son of James L. and Mary Deal Healan was listed as seven years old in the 1860 Federal Census of Caldwell County. He was a nephew of Sidney Deal and a grandson of William Deal III.

Reverend Mr. Healan – According to the 1860 Federal Census of Caldwell County, J. L. Healan was listed at 45 years old and resided in the Lenoir Township.

Henry Henley - He served briefly in Company H, 38th Regiment N. C. Troops, in late 1864. Henley later joined the Home Guard of Watauga (11th Battalion N. C. Home Guard) and Caldwell (19th Battalion N. C. Home Guard) counties and fought against Keith Blalock.

Daniel Harvey Hill – (Born July 12, 1821) A graduate of the U. S. Military Academy and a veteran of the Mexican War, Hill became a professional educator and served as superintendent of the N. C. Military Institute at Charlotte. Elected colonel of the 1st Regiment N. C. Volunteers, Hill was promoted to brigadier general in 1862. He led a division under Robert E. Lee through the fall of 1862, but was passed over for promotion when the Army of Northern Virginia reorganized in the spring of 1863. Hill was sent home to North Carolina to recruit and later was promoted to lieutenant general and assumed command of a corps in the Army of Tennessee. After the Army's re-organization following the Battle of Chickamauga, Hill was left without a command and relegated to the backwaters of the Confederacy. His last fight was at the Battle of Bentonville in March of 1865 when he commanded a division under General Joseph Johnston.

Squire Hubbard – William Henry Hubbard was born on April 6, 1824, and resided in Wilkes County. He died December 27, 1897.

Capt. Jones – We were unable to identify Capt Jones in the 9th Louisiana Infantry rosters.

Abrham Suddreth Kent – Kent, a resident of Caldwell County, had served as an officer in the 95th Regiment NC Militia (1861 organization) and possibly in Avery's Battalion N. C. Local Defense Troops.

George W. Kirk – A resident of Greene County, Tennessee, Kirk served as a major of the 2nd Regiment N. C. Mounted Infantry (U. S.) until received authorization to raise another mounted infantry unit. He was appointed colonel of the 3rd Regiment N. C. Mounted Infantry (U. S.) in 1864. Kirk participated in the battles at Hot Springs (Madison County), raid on Camp Vance (Burke County), and several other small engagements.

James Polk Linney – Born in 1849, Linney was 16 years old when he was killed at Fort Hamby. He was a brother of Romulus Zachariah Linney, Joseph Wellington Linney, William C. Linney III (who was captured at Camp Vance in 1864 by Kirk's Raiders), and Virgil A. Linney.

Hon. Romulus Zachariah Linney – (December 26, 1841 – April 15, 1910) Linney, of Alexander County, served in Company A, 7th Regiment N. C. State Troops, until late 1863, when he was discharged because of a severe hip wound sustained at the Battle of Chancellorsville. Following the war, Linney became a lawyer and eventually a member of the U. S. House of Representatives.

W. C. Linney – William Coplin Linney, the father of James Polk Linney, Romulus Zachariah Linney and William Coplin Linney, III, all of who served in the Civil War.

Lockwood – He was captured at Fort Hamby and executed. A search of the rosters of the 10th and 11th Michigan Regiments Cavalry found four men with the surname of Lockwood. One of them, Theof. Lockwood, Company F, 10th Michigan Cavalry, deserted at Wilkesboro on April 30, 1865. This was the same company that Michael Wade, the leader of the "gang" that used Ft. Hamby as its base, served in.

Lansing J. Lowrance – A resident of Wilkes County, Lowrance enlisted May 1864 in Company D, 1st Battalion N. C. Junior Reserves.

Captain R. R. McCall – He resided in Caldwell County and served as a captain in the 95th Regiment N. C. Militia (1861 Organization.)

Colonel Isaac S. McCurdy – A prominent planter of Alexander County whose son and namesake (a First Sergeant in Company K, 7th N. C. State Troops), was killed at the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House on May 12, 1864. The title “colonel” apparently refers to a pre-war militia rank.

William McLeod – Resident of Caldwell County where he as listed as being 52 years old in 1860 Federal Census.

Colonel John K. Miller - Former sheriff of Carter County, Tennessee. He was colonel of the 13th Tennessee Cavalry (U. S.) during the war.

Captain Nelson A. Miller – He was a resident of Caldwell County and was lieutenant colonel in the 95th Regiment N. C. Militia (1861 organization.) He later served as captain of Company B, Avery’s Battalion, N. C. Local Defense Troops.

Dr. Joseph Columbus Newland - Born November 19, 1816, and moved to Lenoir in 1873. At the time Robert Lee Downs wrote his newspaper accounts of Stoneman’s Raid, Newland had moved to Lenoir and occupied the property the Downs mentions in his article, About the Time of the Surrender: Some Incidents of Gen. Stoneman’s Raid and other Events of that Period.

J. C. Norwood – The 1860 Federal Census of Caldwell County lists Norwood as 46 years old and a resident the Lovelady District in the Lenoir Township.

Jas. W. Norwood – The 1860 Federal Census of Caldwell County lists him as twelve years old and the son of J. C. Norwood

Mrs. Laura Lenoir (J. C.) Norwood – Wife of J. C. Norwood and a member of the famed Lenoir family of Caldwell County.

Thomas L. Norwood – Norwood, a resident of Ashe County, served in Company A (the “Ashe Beauregard Riflemen”), 37th Regiment N. C. Troops, as a private and second lieutenant. He was wounded at Ox Hill and wounded and captured at Gettysburg. Norwood managed to escape and rejoined his regiment in late 1863. He surrendered at Appomattox Court House.

Isaac Oxford – (June 23, 1810 – January 10, 1899) Oxford, of the Little River Township of Caldwell County, was a Baptist minister and a member of the 19th Battalion N. C. Home Guard (Caldwell County.) Two of his sons were Confederate soldiers: Sion H. Oxford of Company A (the “Caldwell Rough and Ready Boys”), 22nd Regiment N. C. Troops, and James Oxford Company I (the “Caldwell Guards”), 26th Regiment N. C. Troops.

William Dobson Oxford – Oxford served from August 1863 to June 1864 in Company E, McRae’s Battalion N. C. Cavalry.

William Franklin Patterson – He served in Mallett’s Battalion N. C. Troops and transferred to Company A, 7th Regiment N. C. State Troops, in April 1864. He was present and accounted for through October 1864.

Walter L. Payne – Resided in Caldwell County and was a captain in the 95th Regiment N. C. Militia. He also served in the 19th Battalion N. C. Home Guard (Caldwell County) and Miller’s Company B, Avery’s Battalion N. C. Local Defense Troops.

Mrs. John Powell – The 1860 Federal Census for Caldwell County lists a John B. Powell living in the Patterson District with his wife Rebecca.

Capt. Price – We are unable at this time to identify Capt. Price of Virginia.

Major William W. Rollins – A resident of Madison County, North Carolina, he enlisted in Knoxville, Tennessee, on March 14, 1865, and was appointed major of the 3rd Regiment N.C. Mounted Infantry (U. S.)

Elphonso A. “Fony” Roseman – Roseman, of Alexander County, served in Company A, 7th Regiment N. C. State Troops, until discharged on May 26, 1863.

Fielding Wallace Sharpe – Enlisted in Iredell County on June 7, 1861, in Company B, 2nd Regiment N. C. Cavalry.

Colonel George Washington Sharpe – Sharpe, of Alexander County, served briefly as a major in the 38th Regiment N.C. Troops but was defeated for re-election when that regiment re-organized for the war on April 18, 1862. He was appointed Lt. Col. of the 54th Battalion N. C. Home Guard (Alexander County) and was serving in that capacity at the time of Stoneman’s Raid and Fort Hamby.

R. M Sharpe – Sharpe was from Alexander County and served as a sergeant and officer in Company G (the “Rocky Face Rangers”), 38th Regiment N. C. Troops. He was “distinguished for gallantry” at the Battle of Second Manassas and was wounded at Spotsylvania Court House. Sharpe surrendered at Appomattox Court House.

Captain Fin Shearer – Commander of Company C, 19th Battalion N. C. Home Guard (Caldwell County)

Capt. John Shotwell – According to the National Park Service’s Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System, there was only one soldier with the last name of Shotwell from Texas. He was 1st Lieutenant John I. Shotwell and served in Company B, 1st Texas Infantry.

Simmons – Six men with the surname of “Simmons” were found in the rosters of the 10th and 11th Regiments Michigan Cavalry; however, according to the records, none of them deserted. Another thirteen Simmons served in the other units of Stoneman’s command but, we were unable to ascertain if any of them deserted. Furthermore, the surname of Simmons was fairly common in Wilkes County. Absent further information, it is impossible to determine the exact identity of the Fort Hamby and Brushy Mountain “Simmons.”

Colonel John Marshall Stone – (April 30, 1830 – March 26, 1890) A resident of Mississippi, Stone served as captain and colonel in the 2nd Mississippi. In January 1865, Colonel Stone went to Mississippi to recruit. He was returning to Virginia when he was captured by Stoneman’s troops at Salisbury and imprisoned. Upon his release in July 1865, he returned to Mississippi where he entered state politics, twice serving as a State Senator and Governor.

Major General George Stoneman – (August 22, 1822 – September 5, 1894) Stoneman, a New Yorker, graduated from West Point in 1846 and served in the U. S. Army until the start of the Civil War. He was a brigade and division commander in the Army of the Potomac and, in early 1863, General Joseph Hooker placed him in command of the cavalry in the newly re-organized Army of the Potomac. Following his disappointing role at the

Battle of Chancellorsville, Stoneman was relieved of command. He subsequently petitioned for field service and received command of the cavalry corps of the Army of the Ohio. Stoneman participated in the battle for Atlanta where he was captured. After his exchange, he was placed in command of the District of East Tennessee. Following the war, Stoneman retired in 1871 and moved to California. He became governor of California in 1883.

Charles McDowell Suddreth – Suddreth, of Caldwell County, served most of the war as an officer in Company F (the “Hibriten Guards”), 26th Regiment N. C. Troops, and was wounded at Gettysburg. Because of his wounds, he resigned from service on January 14, 1865, and returned home to Caldwell County prior to his capture in Lenoir on April 15, 1865. Suddreth was confined at Camp Chase, Ohio, until released on June 14, 1865.

Mr. Tolbert – The Tolberts (listed as Tolvard in the 1860 Federal Census of Wilkes County) were residents of Wilkes and Surry counties. Levi Tolbert is listed as head of the household in the 1850, 1860 and 1870 censuses, with an elderly lady living with him and his family.

Wade – A search of the rosters of the 10th and 11th Michigan Regiments Cavalry found that there were three men with the surname of Wade. One of them, Michael Wade, Company F, 10th Michigan Cavalry, deserted at Wilkesboro on April 30, 1865. One of the four men executed, Theof. Lockwood, also deserted from the same company as Wade and on the same date.

Ambrose White – White, of Caldwell County, served in Company I (the “Caldwell Guards”), 26th Regiment N. C. Troops, until captured at Falling Waters, Maryland, July 14, 1863. He was subsequently exchanged and returned to duty prior to July 1864, but was reported absent wounded for most of the remainder of the war.

Jacob White – Resident of Caldwell County and was listed at 54 years old in the 1860 Federal Census. He had two sons who served in the war: John White and Calvin White, both members of Company I (the “Caldwell Guards”), 26th Regiment N. C. Troops.

Captain Wilson A. White – White, of Caldwell County, served as captain of Company I (the “Caldwell Guards”), 26th Regiment N. C. Troops, until he was defeated for re-election at the re-organization of the regiment in April 1862.

APPENDICIES

Appendix A

Stoneman's Raid Order of Battle

Federal Army

Major General George Stoneman, commanding

Brig. Gen. Alvan Gillem, Commander of the Cavalry Division

1st Brigade – Commanded by Colonel William Palmer (15th Regt. Pennsylvania Cavalry)

10th Regiment Michigan Cavalry

12th Regiment Ohio Cavalry

15th Regiment Pennsylvania Cavalry

2nd Brigade – Commanded by Brevet Brig. Gen. Simeon Brown

11th Regiment Kentucky Cavalry

11th Regiment Michigan Cavalry

12th Regiment Kentucky Cavalry

3rd Brigade – Commanded by Colonel John Miller (13th Regt Tennessee Cavalry, U. S.)

8th Regiment Tennessee Cavalry (U. S.)

9th Regiment Tennessee Cavalry (U. S.)

13th Regiment Tennessee Cavalry (U. S.)

Battery E, 1st Battalion Tennessee Light Artillery (U. S.)

Kirk's Brigade – Commanded by Colonel George W. Kirk (3rd Regt. N. C. M. I.)

2nd Regiment N.C. Mounted Infantry (U.S.)

3rd Regiment N.C. Mounted Infantry (U.S.)

Confederate and North Carolina Troops

Stoneman's Raid and Fort Hamby

Order of Battle

Avery's Battalion N. C. Local Defense Troops

Major Alphonso C. Avery, commanding

Company A –

Company B – Captain Nelson A. Miller

Company C –

N. C. Home Guard Battalions (County of Origin / Commander)

11th Battalion N. C. Home Guard (Watauga County / Major Harvey Bingham)

19th Battalion N. C. Home Guard (Caldwell County / Major J. R. Ballew) **1**

- Company (1st Class) – Captain W. A. White
- Company (2nd Class) – Captain R. R. McCall
- Company (3rd Class) – Captain Fin Shearer

43rd Battalion N. C. Home Guard (Iredell County / Col. S. A. Sharpe) **2**

54th Battalion N. C. Home Guard (Alexander County / Lt. Col. G. W Sharpe) **3**

58th Battalion N. C. Home Guard (McDowell County / Lt. Col. J. M. Neal) **4**

60th Battalion N. C. Home Guard (Burke County / Col. T. George Walton) **5**

68th Battalion N. C. Home Guard (Wilkes County / Major W. W. Vannoy)

Footnotes

1. The 19th Battalion N. C. Home Guard combined with the 58th and 60th Battalions N. C. Home Guard to form the 8th Regiment N. C. Home Guard, commanded by Col. T. G. Walton, Lt. Col. J. M Neal and Major J. R. Ballew.

2. The 43rd Battalion N. C. Home Guard combined with the 54th Battalion N. C. Home Guard, to form the 5th Regiment N. C. Home Guard, commanded by Col. S. A. Sharpe and Lt. Col. G. W. Sharpe

3. The 54th Battalion N. C. Home Guard, combined with the 43rd Battalion N. C. Home Guard to form the 5th Regiment N. C. Home Guard, commanded by Col. S. A. Sharpe and Lt. Col. G. W. Sharpe

4. The 58th Battalion N. C. Home Guard combined with the 19th and 60th Battalions N. C. Home Guard, to form the 8th Regiment N. C. Home Guard, commanded by Col. T. G. Walton, Lt. Col. J. M Neal and Major J. R. Ballew.

5. The 60th Battalion N. C. Home Guard combined with the 19th and 58th Battalions N. C. Home Guard, to form the 8th Regiment N. C. Home Guard, commanded by Col. T. G. Walton, Lt. Col. J. M Neal and Major J. R. Ballew.

Appendix B

Who Were They? The Execution of Ft. Hamby Gang

According to R. Z. Linney's article there were four men executed. He was able to provide the last names of three of the four men (Beck, Church and Lockwood), with the fourth man not being identified at the time of his 1901 writing. John Crouch in his 1902, Historical Sketches of Wilkes County provides the names of the four as; Bill Beck, Bill Wood, Enoch Wood and Lockwood. The main difference is that Linney identifies one as Church and Crouch claims that two had the same last name – Wood, with no mention of one named Church.

Beck – According to R. Z. Linney and John Crouch, he was captured at Ft. Hamby and executed. A search of the rosters of the 10th and 11th Michigan Regiments Cavalry found no one by the name of Beck who deserted. John Crouch, in his 1902, Historical Sketches of Wilkes County, identifies Beck as one Bill Beck. The Beck family is not listed in the 1870 Federal Census of Wilkes County.

Bill Beck - The 1860 Federal Census of Wilkes County provides two possible matches for Bill Beck.

- a) William Beck listed as residing in the Wilkes County with his parents, Joel and Mary Beck, and is listed as being 15 years old at the time of the census.
- b) William S. Beck, who enlisted in Company B, 2nd Regiment N. C. Cavalry (19th Regiment N. C. Troops) at the start of the war. He later transferred to Company I, 52nd Regiment N. C. Troops in December 1864 but, deserted that company the same month.

Church – According to R. Z. Linney, he was captured at Fort Hamby and executed. A search of the rosters of the 10th and 11th Michigan Regiments Cavalry found no one by the name of Church that deserted. Examining the 1860 Federal Census for Wilkes County revealed many citizens with the surname of Church. Five men with the surname of Church enlisted in the 3rd N. C. Mounted Infantry (U. S.), with three of them deserting from that unit in April 1865. Alfred Church deserted at Carter County, Tennessee, while both John. L. Church and Jordan Church deserted at Boone, North Carolina.

Lockwood – According to R. Z. Linney and John Crouch, he was captured at Fort Hamby and executed. A search of the rosters of the 10th and 11th Michigan Regiments Cavalry found four men with the surname of Lockwood. One of them, Theof. Lockwood, Company F, 10th Michigan Cavalry, deserted at Wilkesboro on April 30, 1865. This was the same company that Michael Wade, the leader of the “gang” that used Ft. Hamby as its base, served in.

Wood – According to John Crouch, two men with the last name of Wood (Enoch and Bill), were executed after being captured at Fort Hamby. A search of the 10th and 11th Michigan Regiments Cavalry did not provide any matches to these two men.

Enoch Wood - According to the 1860 Federal Census of Wilkes County, there was an Enoch Wood (20 years old) living with his parents, Joseph and Susan Wood.

Bill Wood - The 1860 Federal Census of Wilkes provides three possible matches for Bill Wood.

- a) The first William Wood, residing in the Trap Hill section of Wilkes County, was 16 years old and listed as living with his parents, Sampson and Matilda Wood.
- b) The second William Wood, was a 26 year old male living in the Wilkesboro section, with his parents John and Nancy Wood.
- c) The third possibility is a William Wood (who at the time of 1860 census was listed as being 13 years old) who resided in the Trap Hill community with his parents, Thomas and Apalona Wood. According to Matthew Bumgarner’s book, Kirk’s Raiders, there was a William M. Wood (18 years old) from Wilkes County who enlisted in the 3rd N. C. Mounted Infantry on January 25, 1865 but, is listed as sick in the hospital in Knoxville, Tennessee on March 30th, 1865. If the ages of the 1860 Census are correct, then this William M. Wood is probably the one who joined the 3rd N. C. Mounted Infantry.

Appendix C

In 1902 John Crouch published his history of Wilkes County, entitled Historical Sketches of Wilkes County. The following is a small section he included about the “other” gang that terrorized the region at the same time as Wade’s Gang was using Fort Hamby as its base.

Simmons Gang Robbers

There was another gang of robbers under the leadership of another renegade Yankee deserter named Simmons. They made headquarters out on the Brushy Mountains. They were as mean and daring in their deviltry as the Fort Hamby gang, and sometimes the two gangs would raid together. A number of innocent people were wantonly murdered by this gang for no purpose what ever except to satisfy their hellish desire to kill. On one occasion a young man who was rather idiotic was captured by one of the gang who thought they would take him to camp and have all the fun they wanted out of him and then kill him. The young man was put in the road before the robber and made to march at his command. As they were marching through a dark hollow the robber was sighting at the back of the boy’s head and the opportunity to commit murder was so tempting that he pulled the trigger and the innocent man fell dead.

About 20 years before the outbreak of the Civil war one morning there was a boy baby found lying on the courthouse steps. The child’s parent could not be found so a Presbyterian Minister named Pervis, who lived on the lot east of the courthouse known as the Cowles place, adopted the child into his home and raised it. Since the boy was found at the courthouse he was named John Wilkes after the county. He grew up into manhood and was a bright young man. He was wantonly killed by a member of the Simmons gang.

When the Stoneman’s division of the Federal army marched through Wilkes the people hid their horses in the woods and mountains for fear they would be stolen, and it was several days that the people were afraid to venture out. About three days after the raid William Transou ventured up to Wilkesboro to hear the news. Simmons captured him on his way home and intended to kill him. He told him if he wanted to pray he would give him a moment. Transou fell to his knees and he too begging Simmons not to kill him. One of the Simmons’ associates was touched by Transou’s pleading and he too begged Simmons to spare him. Simmons finally consented to spare Transou if he would tell where his horses were at.

The Simmons gang committed some daring robberies mostly in Alexander and Iredell. After the Fort Hamby gang was broke up, the band dissolved and Simmons left the country.

