



PATRIOTIC RECOLLECTIONS



Just a Little Bit of History:

Interview with Henry Adams, Battery B, 1st West Virginia Light Artillery USA^(a)

Hello, Henry, said the REGISTER reporter to Henry Adams. I'm on the hunt for a Narrow Escape, please proceed.

Well, now this is too sudden, returned Henry; give me a chance to think up one. Oh, no; you ought to have one thought up-give about your capture, if you can't think of another. While it was no escape, yet you were in pretty close quarters.

Yes, I can tell you of that. I was a member of Battery B, commanding. On the 3rd of January 1863 the rebs attacked us at Moorfield and we drove them off and supposed they were gone. So on the 5th I started to Winchester with a battery wagon, a forge, and a baggage wagon. We were guarded by 25 cavalry of Capt. Rowan's company, 1st West Virginia, Lieutenant Dawson in command. We left Moorfield about 7 a.m. and started on a two or three days journey, but very suddenly our progress was cut off. We hadn't gone an hour, and while yet in sight of Moorfield, two companies of reb cavalry came swooping down on us. Lieutenant Dawson and his 25 cavalrymen were in our lead and the rebs drove them back, but not withstanding their good fighting, they were all around us. Three or four were killed or wounded. I was standing right by the battery wagon where I emptied my revolver at them, when a reb officer dashed at me, pointing his revolver in my face. He put me in charge of a guard, and kept on. I tell you it was no time when they had us all, 33 prisoners, each in charge of a guard. They set fire to the wagons, and started us toward the mountains-prisoners and guards ahead, the reb companies behind.

Of course, our camp at Moorfield caught n to the racket right of, and Ringgold's cavalry started in pursuit and from 8 o'clock in the morning until 10 at night we could hear the banging and the clatter at the rear. Three times we caught sight of our men, in pursuit of us, and our hopes grew bright, but as often we were disappointed. So at 10 o'clock that night when we got into the mountains, our would-be rescuers gave up the chase.

We kept on and in a few days came into the valley at Strasburg. We were treated kindly by the guards. Capt. McNeal, the reb commander, said when we started on our flight, "Now if a guard mistreats any of you, let me know, and I'll tend to him. I was captured once myself at Lexington, Missouri by Colonel Mulligan and treated generously and so shall my prisoners. But at Strasburg, we were handed over to General Imboden, and then things were different. Every little article we had, even our pocket combs was taken from us. Some of our boys had just been paid off, and they had to give up their money. Max

Stoker, who lived at Hanging Rock, lost \$217.65. My little \$27 went too. Ed Lyman and I were taken before the General together. Ed had bought a \$60 silver watch just before we were captured, and then it was taken, Ed could not contain himself, so he broke out: "General Imboden, I consider you a d---n thief." Imboden retorted; "Shut up, we shoot men for less thing that." "Shoot and be dashed," replied Ed, "it will be only one man less." He was not shot, but he was tied down out in the cold night, that awful January night, and came near freezing to death. It was a "narrow escape" for him, for he could have frozen to death as sure as fate, had not some one, having great pity, taken him an overcoat, about midnight. Other boys who were with us were Jim Henry, Hezekiah Miner, Davy Thomas, James Howard, and Pete D'Army. All of them lost their two months pay or what was in their pockets, left of it.

We were sent off to Libby Prison, where we remained 32 days, and then we were sent to City Point, where we were paroled. Then we went to Paroled Prisoner's Camp at Annapolis, where Ed Lyman and myself, by a little dodge, got a furlough. We went to Baltimore, where we reported to General Wool, and the old white-headed General treated us nicely. After a short visit home, we were exchanged and returned to our regiment.

When I left Capt. McNeal, who had captured us at Strasburg, he gave me a letter to Colonel Mulligan, his captor, which I had to sew up in my coat to protect McNeal and get it through the lines. I presented it to Mulligan in the Shenandoah Valley and he seemed delighted to hear from his old prisoner and the effect of his own kind treatment.

(a) Having been a camp Patriotic Instructor, I know how hard it is to find interesting topics for camp meetings. Over the past year I have compiled 200 stories/bios of Civil War Veterans from Ohio. The first series is from the 1886 Ironton, Ohio REGISTER and is re-printed with the permission of Martha Kounse and Sharon M. Kouns, webowners of lawrencecountyohio.com website. The REGISTER produced 91 articles under the heading of Narrow Escapes, (one a week for 91 weeks) by interviewing Civil War Veterans from their area. This article appeared January 13, 1887.

Submitted by:
Donald E. Darby
National Patriotic Instructor
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War
December 2000