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## “We have surely done a big work”: The Diary of a Hoosier Soldier on Sherman’s “March to the Sea”

*Edited by Jeffrey L. Patrick and Robert Willey\**

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Major General William Tecumseh Sherman’s march through Georgia from Atlanta to Savannah in the fall of 1864 is a legendary event in the annals of Civil War history. Severing his communication and supply lines to the North, Sherman intended his army to live off the land as an independent force as it aimed for the Atlantic coast. He would thus take the war to the civilian population and destroy the Confederacy’s ability to resist. Sherman’s relentless drive deep into enemy territory with more than 60,000 men from November 15 to December 21, followed by an equally successful thrust through first South Carolina and then North Carolina, contributed greatly to the end of the South’s bid for independence. As recent Sherman biographer John F. Marszalek writes,

Sherman’s march to the sea . . . played a significant role in the Union victory and signaled the future direction of modern warfare. When the Confederacy could not prevent a Union army from moving unimpeded through its heartland, destroying its railroads, taking its food and personal goods, freeing its slaves, terrorizing its people, and shaming its military establishment, its days were numbered.<sup>1</sup>

“Cump” Sherman was already a household name by the time he began his trek to Savannah. In May, 1864, he began perhaps his greatest endeavor, when he moved south and east from Chattanooga to capture the vital railroad and supply center of Atlanta. He outmaneuvered his opponent, Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston, drove to the outskirts of the city, and laid siege to the metropolis, by then under the command of General John Bell Hood, Johnston’s replacement. On September 1, 1864, after several costly battles, Hood evacuated Atlanta and withdrew his battered Army of Tennessee. The victorious Yankees occupied the prized “Gate City” the following day.<sup>2</sup>

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\*Jeffrey L. Patrick holds an M.A. degree in history from Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana. He resides in Springfield, Missouri. Robert Willey owns the diary, photograph, and service memorabilia of William Bluffton Miller.

<sup>1</sup> John F. Marszalek, *Sherman: A Soldier’s Passion for Order* (New York, 1993), 315.

<sup>2</sup> For general information on the Atlanta Campaign and Sherman’s “March to the Sea,” as well as on specific military engagements and details, see Mark Mayo Boatner III, *The Civil War Dictionary* (rev. ed., New York, 1987); Patricia L. Faust,

Hood was not completely finished with Sherman, however. By early October the still lethal Confederate army had moved north of Atlanta, intending to destroy Sherman's rail line, invade Tennessee and Kentucky, and draw the Union forces away from Georgia. Sherman was forced to send many of his men in pursuit of Hood, all the way to Gaylesville, Alabama, but there the Federals gave up the chase in late October. Sherman detached two of his army corps to reinforce Federal forces in Tennessee and deal with any threat by Hood, then returned to Atlanta to begin the Savannah campaign, popularly known as the "March to the Sea."<sup>3</sup> Among Sherman's hard-marching veterans were more than two dozen regiments of Hoosier volunteers, including representatives in the cavalry, infantry, and artillery branches. Although many Indiana units participated in Sherman's campaign, relatively few accounts of the march written by Indiana enlisted men have been published.<sup>4</sup>

William Bluffton Miller, a Hoosier from Wells County, kept a record of his experiences on the March to the Sea. Miller served as a sergeant in the Seventy-Fifth Indiana Infantry, a veteran regiment organized in 1862.<sup>5</sup> By late 1864 Miller and his unit had seen service during the Tullahoma (Middle Tennessee) campaign of 1863, the Battle of Chickamauga, and the Atlanta Campaign. Although the regiment had also distinguished itself in the assault on Missionary Ridge outside Chattanooga in November, 1863, Miller—who had been badly wounded in the right and left thighs at Chickamauga—missed this action and did not rejoin his comrades until December of that year. For the purpose of Sherman's great march, the Seventy-Fifth Indiana remained a part of the Fourteenth Army Corps under the com-

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ed., *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War* (New York, 1986); Burke Davis, *Sherman's March* (New York, 1980); Joseph T. Glatthaar, *The March to the Sea and Beyond: Sherman's Troops in the Savannah and Carolina Campaigns* (New York, 1985).

<sup>3</sup> For contemporary narratives of the march by participants, see David P. Conyngham, *Sherman's March through the South, with Sketches and Incidents of the Campaign* (New York, 1865); William T. Sherman, *General Sherman's Official Account of His Great March through Georgia and the Carolinas . . .* (New York, 1865); N. A. De Wolfe Howe, *Passages from the Letters and Campaign Diaries of Henry Hitchcock . . .* (New Haven, Conn., 1927); George Whitfield Pepper, *Personal Recollections of Sherman's Campaigns, in Georgia and the Carolinas* (Zanesville, Ohio, 1866). Another useful source from the immediate postwar period is Jacob D. Cox, *The March to the Sea: Franklin and Nashville* (New York, 1882).

<sup>4</sup> For published accounts of the March to the Sea by Hoosier enlisted men, see the brief accounts in Oscar O. Winther, ed., *With Sherman to the Sea: The Civil War Letters, Diaries and Reminiscences of Theodore F. Upson* (Bloomington, Ind., 1958), 130-45; Donald F. Carmony, ed., "Jacob W. Bartmess Civil War Letters," *Indiana Magazine of History*, LII (June, 1956), 157-86; and Steven D. Zink, ed., "if I was there I could tel you A good bit more": The Civil War Letters of Private Jackson Davis," *ibid.*, LXXVIII (March, 1982), 38-58.

<sup>5</sup> Miller was mustered out of the company in June, 1865, as a first sergeant although he had been commissioned a second lieutenant the month before. William H. H. Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana* (8 vols., Indianapolis, 1866-1869), III, 7.

mand of Brevet Major General Jefferson C. Davis, a fellow Hoosier. Their corps made up half of the Federal "left wing," also known as the "Army of Georgia," which was led by Major General Henry W. Slocum. Two additional Union army corps composed the "right wing."<sup>6</sup>

On November 15, 1864, in preparation for the march to Savannah, the Indiana units camped east of Atlanta and that night witnessed a great fire deliberately set by the Federals to destroy businesses and industrial sites. The following morning they started on the epic journey.<sup>7</sup>

As the regiment left Atlanta, one member of the Seventy-Fifth noted: "It was a charming November morning. The [Fourteenth] Corps . . . with swinging, regular step, arms glistening in the sunlight, and colors unfurled to the balmy breezes, was as fine a picture as eyes ever saw." Although all four army corps were marching by separate but parallel routes, their first rendezvous point was in the vicinity of Milledgeville, the capital of Georgia, and Sherman himself accompanied the "left wing" as far as that city.<sup>8</sup>

On their way south, the Seventy-Fifth Indiana began the work of making Georgia "howl." The Hoosiers helped destroy part of the Georgia Railroad, an activity the regiment performed several times during the campaign, as one eyewitness noted, "On account of its frequent recurrence, it was a work of destruction in which we became proficient, and for which we became famed."<sup>9</sup> Foraging parties, soon nicknamed "Sherman's bummers," set out to hunt for rations at local farms and plantations.

After their arrival at Milledgeville on November 23, the Hoosiers' next objective was the city of Millen, one hundred miles away. In the advance, the troops of the Seventy-Fifth Indiana and the rest of their division were detailed to support Brigadier General Judson Kilpatrick's Union cavalry forces. As it moved, the regiment continued to destroy railroads and forage off the land. Despite skirmishes with rebel cavalry, obstructions of logs and felled trees, annoying rain, and scarce forage, the Hoosiers moved beyond Millen in early December and closed in around Savannah.

Because Sherman was reluctant to order a direct assault on the city, the Seventy-Fifth settled in beyond the rebel fortifications to await their commander's next move. Although the veteran regiment enjoyed abundant but monotonous rations of rice around Savannah, the men were soon sent out to forage for better fare and were successful

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<sup>6</sup> For specific information on the movements and activities of the Seventy-Fifth Indiana Regiment, see Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General*, III, 8; David B. Floyd, *History of the Seventy Fifth Regiment of Indiana Volunteers, Its Organization, Campaigns, and Battles (1862-65)* (Philadelphia, 1893).

<sup>7</sup> William T. Sherman, *Memoirs of Gen. William T. Sherman, Written by Himself* . . . (2 vols., New York, 1891), I, 178-79.

<sup>8</sup> Floyd, *History of the Seventy-Fifth Regiment*, 344-56, quotation 344.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, quotation 346.

in securing sweet potatoes and other provisions. While they were off on this expedition, Sherman demanded the surrender of Savannah. The Confederates refused. However, on December 20, the very day that the Seventy-Fifth rejoined the army, the rebels withdrew from the city, and the Federals occupied it the next day. After being reviewed by Sherman, the soldiers rested until January 19, 1865, when the army was ordered to begin the march northward through South Carolina.

Although the March to the Sea had been a relatively easy trek for Miller's regiment, the effective and well-conducted campaign was a source of great pride for the Union veterans. Encountering little enemy opposition, they had scarcely fired a round of ammunition, except at pigs and chickens. They had marched leisurely, traveled more than three hundred miles, lived off the land, and accomplished their mission of devastation across Georgia, thus proving the impotence of the Confederacy in the region. Major General Absalom Baird summarized a few of his division's achievements during the march as he rested in Savannah:

The amount of sweet potatoes, hogs, cattle, and poultry taken in the country and consumed by the troops cannot be estimated, but it must have been very large, the men living well.

The division destroyed quite effectually eighteen miles of railroad and two large bridges . . . . It destroyed, I feel quite sure, 1,000 bales of cotton . . . .

The amount of forage and other minor articles consumed and destroyed cannot be estimated. The command foraged liberally. The number of drafted and saddle animals captured was about 597. . . .

Negroes to the number of about 668 joined or followed our column on the march . . . .<sup>10</sup>

Despite the claims of many southerners and even some northerners, Sherman's army should not shoulder the entire blame for the destruction in Georgia. It is clear that Union deserters, slaves, civilians, and Confederate deserters and cavalry units played a part in the looting and pillaging as well. It must also be pointed out that even though a large amount of personal property was stolen or destroyed by the Federals, few civilians were physically harmed, and their homes were generally left intact. In a sense, Georgians were spared the worst of the devastation, for the residents of South Carolina suffered far greater losses following Sherman's departure from Savannah, in part because his men reserved much of their vengeance for the state in which the secession movement had begun four years earlier.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> U.S., War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (128 vols., Washington, D.C., 1880-1901), ser. I, vol. XLIV, pp. 203-205. This work is hereafter cited as *Official Records*.

<sup>11</sup> Marszalek, *Sherman*, 301-306. Also see Charles Royster, *The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson, and the Americans* (New York, 1991), 342.

William Bluffton Miller maintained a detailed diary throughout his service, not only noting mundane matters such as personal health and weather conditions but also chronicling the experiences of a Union infantryman in some of the most famous campaigns of the Civil War. Miller's diary also includes other valuable details: his encounters with the men of his regiment and with southern civilians, his concern for his family, his experiences in combat, and his day-to-day struggle for survival in an infantry regiment on active service. Among other things, Miller's journal helps document the treatment of southern property, the destruction of railroads and industries, and the other crucial activities of a "typical" Union regiment during the march through Georgia. Miller's entries covering the March to the Sea and the Savannah Campaign follow in their entirety, beginning with the night before his departure from Atlanta.

Tuesday Nov 15th [1864]<sup>12</sup>

Moved out at daylight and arrived at Atlanta about nine O'clock A.M. We stopped in the city until afternoon and then moved out on the Augusta Rail Road and camped on an elevation that overlooks the city. The city is fired in several places and about dark the Torch was set into the Business part. It was a grand sight from our camp to look down on the burning city. The night is dark and an occasional shell bursts and scatters things around promiscuously. Some of our Boys was down and got some clothing from the burning buildings. The entire city was destroyed but a few occupied houses. It reminds me of the destruction of the city of Babylon as spoken of in the Bible which was destroyed because of the wickedness of her people and that is the case with Atlanta. I feel Sorry for some of the people but a Soldier is not supposed to have any conscience and must lay aside all scruples he may have. We drew some clothing and Rations and have orders to move in the morning. With all the excitement and attending to duty I did not get any Sleep.

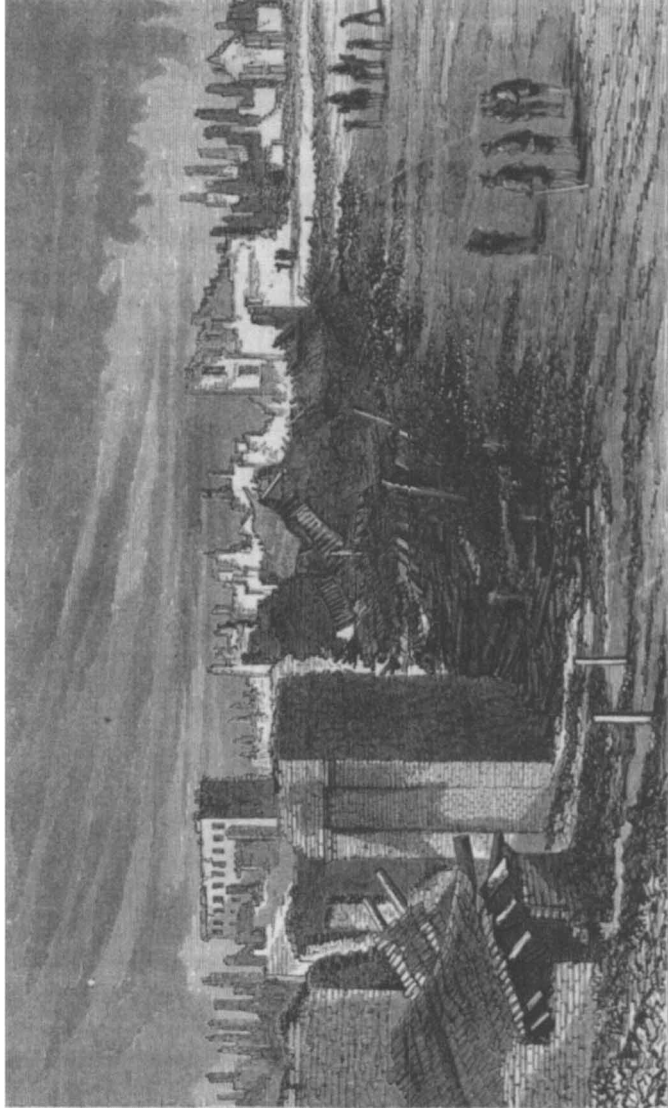
Wednesday Nov 16th

We Struck tents and formed Battalion on Collor Line and Genl Sherma[n]s order was read to us. He says it has become necessary to change our base of operation and that we will be required to march only fifteen miles a day unless circumstances should require more.

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<sup>12</sup> William Bluffton Miller probably kept his journal in small pocket diaries that were easily carried during the war, then later copied them into the approximately 7½ x 9½ volume that remains today. The following portion of his account conforms as nearly as possible to this larger journal. Miller's punctuation and spelling have been retained, with occasional bracketed insertions to clarify meaning. Double spaces designate sentence breaks in places where Miller failed to use end punctuation. Capitalization often required arbitrary decisions, particularly with the letters *s*, *w*, *m*, *y*, and *c*. Underlined words have been transcribed as italicized; superscripted abbreviations have been brought down to the line.

## ATLANTA IN RUINS



Reproduced from George Ward Nichols, *The Story of the Great March from the Diary of a Staff Officer* (New York, 1865), 39.

He cautions us not to leave our commands unless to forage and then in partys large enough to protect our selves from Bushwhackers as they will follow us all the time. We left Atlanta about nine Oclock A M and followed the Augusta Rail Road and passed through Decatur and marched about fifteen miles. A Boy in Co E by name of Shull died to night Suddenly.<sup>13</sup> No one knew he was sick untill he was discovered dead. The country we passed to day is good some hilly but the Plantations in good shape.

Thursday Nov 17th

On the road early. Passed a small town called La Toona on the Rail Road. We put in part of the day tearing up the Rail Road. We marched fifteen miles and camped near Conyers Station. We find plenty of forage and live entirely off the country. Some of the old citizens complain teribly and claim to be Union men and have never been any thing els. Our Boys tell them if they are Union men they can afford to contribute some thing to help us cary on the war and if they are Rebels we will take it any way. In that way we manage to live. But if we was not here they would be all Rebels. They are loyal by compulsion only.

Friday Nov 18th

We pulled out early and marched hard. We tore up some more Rail Road. We passed near Oxford and through Covington both nice towns. Some Bush Whackers attacted our foragers and wounded several and Among them Capt Wilcox of the 105 Ohio.<sup>14</sup> They hung some that they Captured which shows it will not be good for us to fall into their hands. They swear vengence on us for marching through their country but they have only got a taste to what they will get before we get through. We marched the usual fifteen miles and camped near Yellow River. This part of the country has never seen any Yankees only prisoners and the armies have not molested it and the citizens are well fixed and have plenty which makes it nice for us in levying contributions on them. We live like fighting cocks. There is a detail of two men from the company for forageing every morning makeing twenty from the Regiment under a Lieutenant and then they are organized by Divisions and swells the force to about two

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<sup>13</sup> Private John S. Shull of Huntington, Indiana, enlisted in Company E, Seventy-Fifth Indiana on December 6, 1863, and succumbed to chronic diarrhea near Stone Mountain, Georgia. His service record lists his death date as November 17, 1864. John S. Shull file in "Service Records of Volunteer Soldiers who served in Organizations of the State of Indiana," Record Group 94 (National Archives, Washington, D.C.).

<sup>14</sup> Captain Alfred G. Wilcox of Company F, 105th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, a resident of Madison County, Ohio, was mustered into service in August, 1862, and served until discharged in June, 1865. Alfred G. Wilcox file in "Service Records of Volunteer Soldiers who served in Organizations of the State of Ohio," Record Group 94 (National Archives).

hundred one which makes it perfectly safe. The Bush Whackers wont attact us unless in small parties.

Saturday Nov 19th

We was hurried out in the rain at daylight and the road was slipry which made it hard marching. We turned off the Rail Road to the right and went to Sand Town which we passed about dusk. We found plenty of forage such as Yams and Sweet Potatoes And Sorgum Molasses by the barrel. We could not use all that was brought in and it was destroyed. Some Bushwhackers hung on our flanks but kept at a safe distance. We camped after dark and had plenty of wood but water was scarce. It is raining some. We are on the Road direct to the capitol Milledgeville. The Rebels reported in force at Jonesboro and ready for fight. But I dont think they have men enough to make a Breakfast Spell in this country. The country is generally level and Soil Sandy and the plantations under a good State of cultivation

Sunday Nov 20th

We made the usual march of fifteen miles and nothing worthy of note transpired. The country is good and we found it well waterd. The principle products are Yams, Sweet Potatoes Some corn and Pea Nutts. We dont find many men at home. They are either in the Rebel Armies or are called away about the time they learn we are coming.

Monday Nov 21st

It rained all day and the roads are terrible. We only marched about ten miles. We left Eatonton to our left. The soil here is mixed with Red clay and Icenglass and it is Slipery and sticks to the feet. It is hard on the teams and the mules travel very slow and the wagons did [dig?] up the roads makes work for the Pioneers and Darkies who are pressed into the service.<sup>15</sup> We are still going towards Millidgeville. Forage plenty. Some of the citizens say the Johnnies are waiting for us there and that we will get a whipping.<sup>16</sup> Let them trot out their men.

Tuesday Nov 22nd

We started at daylight. It was quite cold but no rain. We Soon struck good roads and marched about fifteen miles and camped on Ex Gov Cobbs plantation.<sup>17</sup> He is now in command of Georgia State

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<sup>15</sup> Pioneers were usually soldiers detached from their units to clear roads, erect bridges, and perform other similar duties. Faust, *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia*, 586.

<sup>16</sup> Throughout his diary Miller refers to Confederate troops as "Johnnies," "Rebs," or "Rebels."

<sup>17</sup> Major General Howell Cobb served as governor of Georgia in the 1850s. During Sherman's March to the Sea he commanded the District of Georgia and Florida and the Georgia reserve corps. Faust, *Historical Illustrated Times Encyclopedia*, 146-47; Boatner, *The Civil War Dictionary*, 160.



Militia. We are eight miles from Millidgeville. We found plenty of Hogs, Corn & Yams and supposed Gov Cobb would not want us to pass by his plantation when he had plenty without asking him to contribute something for the *Union*. We concluded to stay all night and as he was not at home we just helped ourselves to such as we found. It appears he had very urgent business away from home when he heard we were coming to see him. Perhaps he thought we might want him to go along with us. But it is all right and we will excuse him. We were in the lead and camped about three O'clock P.M. Our troops have possession of the city and the Johnnies have skipped out. Our quarters are full of all kinds of forage to night and we are happy. The wind blows hard and it is cold for this part of the country.

#### Wednesday Nov 23rd

All the principal Buildings were burned on the plantation to let the Ex Gov know we had been here and that it might be impressed on his mind so he would not forget it. Our quarters are covered with Yams and they are frozen hard. The Darkies Say it was an unusually cold night. This has been a pretty place and when we arrived here last night was in a good shape but this morning we leave it stripped of its beauty and we start to Millidgeville. We camped in the edge of the city. It is a nice place. The Rebel Legislature was in Session but they adjourned as they had some other important business on hand when they heard Sherman was coming. I was in the senate chamber and our Boys held a Mock Legislature personating the Johnnies and it was very amusing to hear them. They kept it up nearly all the afternoon. They carried it on in regular Southern fire eating style and was all armed with large knives captured from the Arsnell which is situated in the same enclosure. The Arsnell contained some small arms and about four thousand pikes and cutlasses for cutting up Yankees and now we are here for the sacrifice and the Butchers are not at home. The State papers were about all removed to Macon by the Rebels. The Arsnell was blown up to night and the state Prison was burned by the Rebels and all the prisoners liberated if they would join the Army. The men as usual are not at home and a great many citizens left the city. I noticed some fine buildings but the State House looks old and rusty. I was through the State prison building and it is badly damaged. I got one of the cutlasses and will endeavour to carry it home as a curiosity. This was a cold frosty day. The 20th Army Corps has the advance and they moved on to night and we are to follow in the morning. It is reported that our men had a fight at Macon to day but nothing reliable.

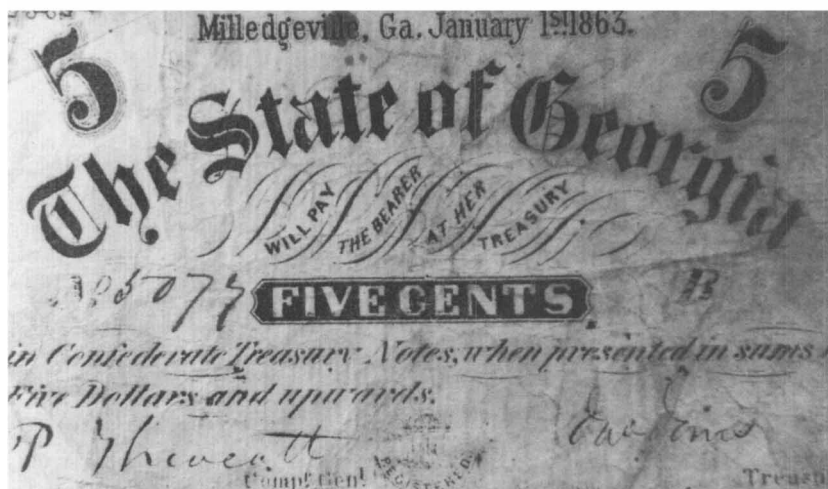
#### Thursday Nov 24th

Unexpectedly we got no orders to move this morning. The weather is nice but still cool. Nice weather for marching. I visited the city again but there was nothing new to see. Killpatricks Cavalry moved

## THE "BUMMER"



Reproduced from George Ward Nichols, *The Story of the Great March, from the Diary of a Staff Officer* (New York, 1865), 39.



CARVED RINGS, UNIFORM BUTTONS, CARTRIDGE BOX SLING PLATE, AND CONFEDERATE MONEY BROUGHT HOME BY WILLIAM BLUFFTON MILLER

through the city. Our division will operate on the left in conjunction with Killpatrick. We have a nice camping ground and good water and plenty of Rails.

Friday Nov 25th

We started from Millidgeville early this morning and marched about Eighteen miles and got into camp after night. We got into some swampy country and had bad roads. They differ from the swamp in Indiana in this that they are quick Sand and are miery and some times they are miles wide. The citizens say the farther we get south the more swamps. Our camp is about three miles from buffalo Creek.

Saturday Nov 26th

We took the advance this morning of the Division and we had the first skirmishing to day since we left Atlanta. This evening before we camped we had to drive the Rebel Cavalry away. We had one man killed and one wounded and found one dead Johnie and captured one. It did not last long. We drove them through a small town called Sandersonville. The Rebels said to be in force two miles ahead but they will be gone when we get there. We crossed severel Swamps and camped about three Oclock P.M

Sunday Nov 27th

We started at daylight in advance and did not find any of the Johnies where they was reported. We marched twenty miles and camped about dusk. We passed a plantation where a Cotton Gin was burning and a large amount of cotton was distroyed. We also found a Store House of wines and some of our Boys got gloriously drunk. They was run out here from Savannah when the Rebels thought the Yankees was comeing up the river. The proprietor was not at home haveing important buisiness to attend to when he heard Sherman would visit him. But it made no material difference as we helped ourselves as usual and made ourselves perfectly at home. The country is generally level and the soil Sandy and well waterd.

Monday Nov 28th

We have the advance again to day and started at day light and marched six miles to Blackrock Creek where we found the Bridge burned which detained us untill nearly night before we got it Bridged so as to cross. We then moved on a Short distance to Louisville which we found on fire. The report is a woman spit in a Yankees face and called him names and he set the house on fire and it burned sever- al others and the Regiment was orderd to put out the fire and protect the town against any further damage. This is a county Seat of Jefferson county. My company quarterd in the court House. The town had about one thousand inhabitants but the men are all gone and no body here but women and children except very old men. The coun-

try about here is level and some good farms. Rebels reported at Augusta in force. We find it hard marching in the Sand as it gives under our feet like Snow. Our men are scatterd over town as provost guards to protect the property. This is our last day in advance as we only have it three days in Succession.

Tuesday Nov 29th

The 20th Corps takes the advance and moved through town but we did not move. We done provost duty. Genl Davis Sent to Capt Karns for a Guard and I reported to him with two men and I was orderd to arrest a Boy from the 20th Corps who had tried the Smoke house at His Head quarters.<sup>18</sup> The Genl orderd me to take him to our quarters and tie him up and then go and get his Lieutenant at a Blacksmith Shop and bring him to him. I done as orderd and Davis gave the Lieut a terrible curseing and then orderd me to release them which I did. Genl Davis is a good reliable Officer but very passionate and I concluded when I heard him talking to that Lieut that it might do for him to curse some men that way and I might have kept still if it had been my case but he has no right to abuse a man simply because he out ranks him and I think I should have cautioned him not to repeat it. I think every man should show due respect for his officers but when the General or any officer descends from his rank to curse and abuse the man below him he is not entitled to any respect. Genl Davis took the life of Nelson at Louisville for the same offense.<sup>19</sup> We was relieved from duty by Co H. at dark. Our foragers had some Skirmishing with the Rebs and they also attacted Trains of the 20th A.C near Blackrock Creek Bridge but was repulsed. Severel of our men was wounded. They undertook to capture the Train but found more Yankees than they expected. We also have a report that Genl Killpatrick was beaten near Millan but no particulars.<sup>20</sup>

Wednesday Nov 30th

No orders to move to day yet. There was some Skirmishing with Bushwhackers and our forageing parties. I was down to town but could find nothing amuseing or instructive and re[t]urned to camp.

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<sup>18</sup> Captain Sanford R. Karns of Bluffton, Indiana, was commissioned and mustered into service with Company K of the Seventy-Fifth Indiana in August, 1862, and served until mustered out in June, 1865. Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General*, III, 6. Karns died in Bluffton in May, 1881. Bluffton Banner, May 19, 1881.

<sup>19</sup> Brigadier General Jefferson Columbus Davis fatally wounded unarmed Major General William Nelson after an argument in a hotel in Louisville, Kentucky, in September, 1862. Nelson, Davis's commanding officer, had earlier rebuked his subordinate. Davis was never tried for the offense. Faust, *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia*, 207-208; Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, 226.

<sup>20</sup> Brigadier General Judson Kilpatrick's Third Cavalry Division fought a severe skirmish with Major General Joseph Wheeler's Confederates on November 28, 1864, near Waynesboro, Georgia. Kilpatrick's men were forced to withdraw. This is probably the action referred to by Miller. *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. XLIV, pp. 55, 363-64, 408-409.

Nothing confirming the defeat of our Cavalry near Millan. We still have plenty of forage.

Thursday Dec 1st

We left town about nine O'clock and Joined the Brigade and camped for the night. The Cavalry and foragers done some Skirmishing and we formed a line of Battle and moved out about one mile but the Johnnies Skipped out when they saw the old "flat foots[?]" coming. Several Cavalry was killed and wounded but we did not become engaged. I got hold of a Rebel paper to day and it is very amuseing to read their accounts of us. One item said Shermans men was Hungry and ragged and deserting by hundreds and he might possibly get out with" a corporals Guard (two men) they would capture nearly his entire Army. They will have quite a number to gobble yet before they get us all. Our men are in the best of spirits and have plenty to eat and wear and think it fun. I learned to day that we left Kingston with ten days rations on the wagon and we have not drawn any since. So we are ten days ahead yet.<sup>21</sup> According to their papers we have been defeated several times since we started. But I suppose the Democratic papers in the north will be glad to publish that kind of news and that will make our friends worry about us. But I will Say if the Johnnies capture Sherman and his men they will want help to let us go. I dont believe one man has deserted on this march and I doubt if any does. The Rebel cavalry harrassing us only keeps our men together and they dont do us any harm and if they are not carefull they may get a warming up befor we reach our destination

Friday Dec 2nd

We got marching orders and was on the road early and only marched ten miles. Wheeler and Hamptons Rebel Cavalry are keeping on our flanks.<sup>22</sup> We left Waynesboro to our left and they are reported to have a large force of Cavalry there. They are reported at so many places but when we go to them they are looking for us some place els. The[y] dont wait untill we come. But then it is safer for them.

Saturday Dec 3rd

We took the wrong road and marched twelve miles and was then only five miles from where we camped last night. We Struck

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<sup>21</sup> Miller refers to the town of Kingston, which the Seventy Fifth passed through on October 11, 1864, on their way back to Atlanta following the pursuit of Hood's army into Alabama. William B. Miller diary, October 11, 1864.

<sup>22</sup> Miller was mistaken regarding the role of Major General Wade Hampton. At this time Hampton was commanding the cavalry corps of General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, which was operating around Petersburg, Virginia. *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. XLII, part 3, p. 1191. Major General Joseph Wheeler, on the other hand, commanded the cavalry corps of the Department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida during Sherman's march and ineffectively opposed the Federal advance. *Ibid.*, ser. I, vol. XLIV, pp. 406-12.

the Augusta and Savannah Rail Road about two miles from Millan prison pen.<sup>23</sup> We tore up the track. Burned the Ties and crooked the Iron and camped along the Road. The Rebel Cavalry have been harassing us all day and they have to many for Killpatrick alone and we help him out when he gets into a bad scrape. They are near us to night.

#### Sunday Dec 4th

The Rebs run up a Howitzer and Shelled the 92nd Illinois and stampeded a Cavalry Regiment before day light and we got into line quick. Genl Killpatrick formed and drove them off and followed towards Waynesboro where the[y] surroundid his command and they built a Barracade of Rails and we was orderd to support him. When we arrived they were haveing a lively time. We formed and E & K companies was thrown out as Skirmishers and they did not find out we was Infantry untill they discoverd our flag. We opend up on them they concluded they did not want Killpatrick. They had to retreat across a large swamp about a mile wide and the road was graded high and about wide enough for three or four men to ride abreast they was in such a hurry the[y] crouded each other off. Some of them undertook to ride through the Swamp and they mired down and was shot off their horses and quite a number lay along the road. We pushed on after our Cavalry into town and followed them some distance but they did not halt any more untill they put the river between them and us. We then returned to town. Gatherd up the guns and wounded left the dead to be burried by the citizens and started to catch up with the ballance of the Army. We did not get to camp untill after midnight and march[ed] over twenty miles. We camp at Alexandria. We run Wheeler away from his breakfast and came very near capturing him and his Staff. They was completely surprised at infantry getting there so soon and supposed we was at Millan. Our loss was about forty men altogether. We captured about a hundred prisoners and killed about thirty of them. It was fun for us to see them Skip out. I seen one old Reb lying along the road (quite an old man) that had been a Saber stroke across his back and was not dead yet but mortally wounded and under other circumstances his grey hairs would have appealed to my heart for simpathy but we are not here to Simpathise with men who brought it on themselves. When we skirmished through the town we did not see any body but Rebel Cavalry but when we returned it was alive with women and children who had on their sunday clothes and it reminded me of home. They had hid in the cellars while the fight was going on and come out to see us.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Camp Lawton, a Confederate prison, was built in the summer of 1864 at Millen to handle excess prisoners from Camp Sumter (Andersonville). Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, 118.

<sup>24</sup> A few days after Kilpatrick retreated from Wheeler near Waynesboro, Sherman ordered him to make a strong reconnaissance back toward that town and to

Monday Dec 5th

We was on the march early and marched twenty miles and camped near Jacksonboro. We had no Skirmishing to day as I guess they had all they wanted yesterday and will let us alone. This part of Georgia is very poor. The Soil is very Sandy and the timber mostly pine. I would not take the best plantation here as a gift and live on it. The citizens as a general thing have no education and are to lazy or careless to work and have always depended on the Darkis to support them.

Tuesday Dec 6th

We had the lead to day and marched twenty miles. The Rebel cavalry put in an appearance again to day and kept popping away at us when ever they got a chance but they did not bother us much. I got a rebel paper and it is full of good news for them. It says Wheelers Cavalry cleaned out the 14th Corps and Killpatricks Cavalry Sunday at Waynesboro. If we had not been there I could believe it better. But if that is what they call a victory we will give them one every day. It also says Sherman is trying to get to Savannah and I am thankfull for the information as I did not know before where we are going. I noticed a Small item where the Tellegraph Opperator tellegraphed to Richmond from Millan Saying Sherman was within two miles of that place and he (The opperator) was about to bid it a hasty adiew and said they had not heard from him Since and the Editor supposed Sherman had Millan.

Wednesday Dec 7th

We marched twenty miles to day and camped and got our supper when we received marching orders and started again about ten Oclock and moved five miles. The Cavalry coverd the rear and as they entered a swamp charged them but our boys held their ground. The Rebels thought they would stampeed the Cavalry and play the same game we played on them at Waynesboro but they failed. We stopped about four Oclock A M and got a little rest but we needed it badly as we marched about twenty five miles Since Yesterday morning. It rained some during the night.

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engage Wheeler's cavalry wherever they were encountered. On December 4 Kilpatrick gained his revenge when his troopers met a rebel skirmish line near town and drove them back upon their main line, which consisted of dismounted cavalry posted behind barricades. After a failed first charge, the Yankees carried them with a second assault and drove Wheeler's men into Waynesboro. In town Kilpatrick discovered a second line of barricades, which he also carried by direct assault, and routed the rebels. Baird's Third Division, including the Seventy-Fifth Indiana, supported Kilpatrick. *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. XLIV, pp. 55, 204, 364-65.



Thursday Dec 8th

Our Brigade had to take the rear and did not leave camp untill about Nine Oclock A.M. We had marched about Six miles when we halted for dinner and the Rebels made a dash at us and we formed a line of Battle and moved out to meet them but they only came to our Picket line. There was a number of Shots fired and some men hurt. Some of our Boys was out in front of the picket line gathering pine knots for fire when the Rebels [came] and we thought they were our own Cavalry. Among them was Capt Peter Studabaker of the 101st Indiana and when the charge was sounded he discovered they were Johnies and he retreated on a "double quick" inside our lines.<sup>25</sup> He had severel pine knots in his arms but he left them for the "Johnies." I dont Say the Captain was scared but he done some pretty [keen?] running to get away. We lay in line untill midnight but they did not molest us any further and we then crossed Big Ebonezer River and the 75th coverd the rear and had orders to burn the Bridge which we did at day light. This stream runs through a swamp about three miles wide and the road is graded hight. It [Up?] to this time the Darkies have been following the army from sections through which we passed and have accumulated to thousands of all Sizes and Sex and our orders is not let them cross the River. The Rebels shelled us some as we was leaveing but only wounded one man. Some say the shell came from a Gun Boat. There has been some heavy cannon-adeing to day along our lines.

Friday Dec 9th

When we destroyed the Bridge across Big Ebonezer this morning the road as far as we could see north was lined with negroes who have followed us. It was really pittty full to see them and they are afraid of the Rebels and begged hard to get over. Some of them Swam the river but the women and children could not get over. I noticed women with two or three little children trudgeing along through the mud. Old white headed men who could hardly walk all trying to get away. They are very ignorant but they know on[e] thing and that is they want to be free. Thinking they could go with us they have gathered up their little effects and left their old homes. They are taught to believe that we were regular cut throats by their masters but when we come they are ready to go with us. They know we are their friends and the mistery is how they know it. Some of them say they thought the Yankees had horns like an ox. I dont see how they can live in the

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<sup>25</sup> Peter Studabaker, a farmer from Bluffton, Indiana, began the war as captain of Company B, 101st Indiana Volunteer Infantry, in August, 1862, but was promoted to major of the regiment in June, 1863. He survived the war and was mustered out with his regiment in June, 1865. Peter Studabaker file in "Service Records of Volunteer Soldiers who served in Organizations of the State of Indiana," Record Group 94 (National Archives).

country we have passed over for every thing was destroyed. Some Negro Huts are left but Smoke marked the advance of our Army and many of Shermans Monuments (as we call the chimneys) are standing in memory of the "March to the Sea." There was heavy cannonadeing to day and one place at the entrance to a Swamp the Johnnies planted a Battery so as to rake the road and dismounted one of our Guns but it got to hot for them and they pulled out. They killed a Lieutenant of one of our Batteries but I did not learn his name. We had to go some out of our way on account of our Wagon train and only moved about ten miles. Things look now like we should get through with a very Small loss and shows the Johnnies did not make good their boasting of Captureing Sherman and his Army.

Saturday Dec 10th

We did not leave camp untill about ten Oclock Am as we are still in the rear. The first Division drove the Rebels out of a small Fort and captured one gun. We struck the Charles ton an[d] Savannah Rail Road about Eleven miles from the latter and near where it crosses the Savannah River. We tore up the Track and there is a long Trustle work through the Swamp leading to the Bridge and a detail was sent to fire it and the Bridge but the Rebs had a Gun Boat laying in the river and they Shelled us so we abandoned it. They made it "redd hot" for us. We camped for the night here and it rained very hard nearly all night. The Soil is yellow sand and the product of the country is principally Rice.

Sunday Dec 11th

The cannonadeing is heavy this morning in the direction of Savannah. It cleared away and we made another attempt to distroy the Trustleing and Bridge but the Swamp and Rebels prevented us. We moved about two miles across a Swamp and obstructed the road by cutting timber in. The Johnnies made their appearance but did not attact us. It is reported that our fleet is lying at Fort Jackson below the city and will opporate in conjunction with us.<sup>26</sup> Wheeler made a dash on our pickets but he did not remain long.

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<sup>26</sup> Miller was correct in that Union naval forces were near Sherman's army, although some distance from Fort Jackson. On December 13 Rear Admiral John A. Dahlgren of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron sent word to Sherman that he had two ironclad ships at Wassaw Sound and a force of gunboats at Ossabaw Sound and the Savannah River, east and southeast of the city. Dahlgren believed that the best way to open communications with the army was from Ossabaw Sound into the Great Ogeechee River. Unfortunately for the Federals, the river was guarded several miles upstream by Confederate-held Fort McAllister, although Dahlgren thought the fort could be successfully assaulted by Sherman. *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. XLIV, p. 708. U.S., Naval War Records Office, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion* (30 vols., Washington, D.C., 1894-1922), ser. I, vol. XVI, pp. 140-41.

## Monday Dec 12th

We did not move to day. There was some Cannonadeing. The 20th Army Corps captured a Boat comeing down the river loaded with provission from Augusta. Our rations are getting Short and we dont get any hard Tack.<sup>27</sup> Nothing but Coffee, Beef & Rice and we have been liveing so well that it goes hard with us. Wheeler did not put in appearence to day as he cannot cross the Swamp untill he cuts out the timber and we have a Battery Stationed to rake it and it would be very hazzarous. The weather is warm and I find one nice thing for us. That is no amount of rain can produce any mud. The sand when wet packs down solid and the water runs away.

## Tuesday Dec 13th

We moved about Eight Oclock to the crossing of the Macon and Savannah Rail Road and took a position in rear of our wagon train as we front all around. We have Rebels in Savannah and Rebel behind us and dont know where they may attact us first. Their was some heavy fighting on our right and it is reported that our men captured a Gun Boat in the river and that the Rebels are evacuating the city via the Gulf Rail Road and I think our lines must extend nearly all around the city on the north and south. We drew one quarter rations of hard Bread. But we have plenty of rice and we have to hull it in a tin cup with our Bayonett. It makes Rough feed as the Boys say but it does very well.

## Wednesday Dec 14th

We remained in camp all day and the cannonadeing was kept up as usual but seams to be down the river from us and I suppose it is our fleet Shelling the city. We got the news of the capture of Fort McAllister on the Ogeechee river and that we could now write our friends as that openend communication. I did not learn what our loss was but our men charged the fort from the land side carying it by storm captureing the entire Garrison<sup>28</sup> this makes the thirty second day Since we left Kingston and Seventy one since we started north from Atlanta since which we have been moveing continuously and we have surely done a big work. We have cut the Confederacy in twain and destroyed the crops in the richest part of their country so

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<sup>27</sup> Miller refers to the army bread ration, known officially as "hardtack" or "hard bread." The large, hard crackers were a staple of the army diet, with nine or ten issued daily. Detailed information on hardtack can be found in John D. Billings, *Hardtack and Coffee, or, The Unwritten Story of Army Life* . . . (Boston, 1887), 113-19.

<sup>28</sup> Fort McAllister, located about fifteen miles south of Savannah on the Great Ogeechee River, was the key to the city's defenses and to the opening of a supply and communications route from the Union fleet to Sherman's forces. Once the fort was taken, communications were established with the coast, and the Union fleet landed needed supplies for Sherman's army. Faust, *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia*, 275.

as to cut off their supplies and now we are beseiging one of their principle Seaport cites.

Thursday Dec 15th

I wrote a Letter to Nett to let her know that I am Still among the living and how many hearts will be made glad when our Letters get home to our friends many miles from us and who have looked anxiously for one word from us from day to day during our long march and how they will rejoice when the[y] know the victory gained over Treason and the prospect of a speedy close of the war.<sup>29</sup> I am satisfied that unless the war closes we will make more such Raids through their country and devastate their land entirely. They will begin to see that the Yankees are getting in earnest. Savannah must surrender soon and then we will make that a base of opporation. We got orders to go forageing to morrow morning. There was some Skirmishing to day. We did not get any mail.

Friday Dec 16th

Our entire Brigade started South west from camp for the purpose of forageing. We passed the prisoners captured at Fort McCallister and they are the worst looking Soldiers I ever Seen. They are little Boys and very old men not strong enough to be in the field. They were about played out marching. We took a good laugh at one of our men who was guarding a Boy quite small and they was behind the rest and the little fellow was about played [out] and one of our Boys suggested to the guard as we passed that if he could find a cow to let that *Babe* Suck. It sounded rediculous and caused considerable merriment. I see by these prisoners how the Rebels are pushed for Soldiers and convinces me that the war is nearly over. We marched about Twenty five miles and crossed the Ogechee river about dark and camped two miles from the river. Our rout was through a Swampy country and the land is mostly coverd with water. I started from Camp with four small crackers and a little Coffee and we found nothing but Rice on the march and I had to go to bed hungry to night but misery likes company and I console Myself by thinking that no body els has any more than I have. There was a Mail Boat lying at the Wharf when we crossed the river. We did not see any Johnnies. I am very tired and sore from marching.

Saturday Dec 17th

We started at day light and soon passed a long wagon train loaded with corn and they told us we would find plenty of forage. I

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<sup>29</sup> Nett was Miller's wife, Melissa Jeannette Karns, whom he married on June 14, 1860, in Bluffton. William B. Miller file in "Pension Records of Volunteer Soldiers who served in Organizations of the State of Indiana," Record Group 94 (National Archives).

had one little cracker and some Rice for breakfast. We passed a plantation in the evening where some Soldiers was cooking Sweet Potatoes and we inquired how far we would have to go before we would find forage and an old Darky said three miles and I almost felt as though I could never march it. But I did and we found plenty. This plantation belongs to an old Rebel by the name of Collins. I Shot a hog as the Regiment camped and Skind out a ham and Lieut Starbuck had some Yams and we got a square meal and we done it Justice.<sup>30</sup> I thought I was hollow clear to my toes. We loaded our wagons with corn during the night so as to return in the morning. We load[ed] Ninety one Wagons. We did not see any Johnnies but they are reported to be at Rice ville a Short distance away. Some claim we are in the State of Florida. We marched twenty four miles to day.

#### Sunday Dec 18th

My Regiment with the 105th Ohio was Sent towards Riceville to see what was there in the Shape of Johnnies. We went within about two miles of the Town and as they was gone we returned to the Train and we started back towards camp and marched ten miles and correlled the Train and camped for the night. We passed Station No 3 where we found about one hundred and fifty Barrells of Salt but the station house was burned. This is a terrible country. It seems to be one continued Swamp and the country coverd with water. They dont raise any thing but rice and alligators and there is plenty [of] boath. Our old Darky Andy is very fraid of the latter and I put up a little Job on him. When he went to the Swamp for wood about dark I followed and about the time he Shoulderd the wood I made a Splash in the water and he supposed it was an Allegator and dropped his wood and retreated in quick time to camp. The old fellow had a terrible tale to relate when I came back about seeing an Allegator and how it tried to catch him and how he out run it. I tried to persuade him to go back but he would not go and I had to go and get wood myself and I dont know whether the joke is on him or me.

#### Monday Dec 19th

We started again at day light re-crossed the Ogechee and Stopped for the night near the 17th Corps. They say we will have to take another road than the one we come from here to camp. There was nothing unusual occured to day only we marched about twenty five miles. We heard some cannonadeing along the lines but no fighting of any consequence.

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<sup>30</sup> First Lieutenant James A. Starbuck of Bluffton was commissioned and mustered into Company K of the Seventy-Fifth Indiana in August, 1862, and served in that capacity until he was mustered out in June, 1865. From 1861 to 1862 Starbuck had served as a private in Company G, Twelfth Indiana Infantry, a one-year regiment. He died near Pennville, Indiana, in June, 1914. Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General*, III, 7, IV, 211; Portland, Indiana, *Commercial Review*, June 10, 1914.

## Tuesday Dec 20th

Started at day light and got on the wrong road and went a few miles out of our way. One place we had to pass within range of a Rebel Battery. The road was graded up and there is water on both sides of it. It looked like a lake and the[y] have been shelling this part of the road and knocked several wagons off but our officers concluded rather than go around they would cross here. We were deployed at five paces and started through and the Johnnies opened up on us and the shells would come skipping along on the surface of the water and strike in the road or pass over us. Our wagons were deployed and they peeped away at them but did not hurt a man or damage any of the wagons but all passed over safe and we went on to camp where I found four letters from Nett and one from Mollie with some Towells and a Handkerchief.<sup>31</sup> The letters were dated Nov 8th, 12th, 14th & 25th and being very tired I did not write any. We drew some crackers. We brought in some rice having carried it fifty miles.

## Wednesday Dec 21st

The report came into camp this morning the Rebels have evacuated Savannah. I wrote to Nett but did not mail it as the capture of the city was confirmed and we got orders to move to Town. The Rebels crossed the Savannah River near the city and went towards Charleston S.C. Where will they go now. They have no place to go that they can stay for I think we will follow as soon as we rest a little and get supplies here. We did not move today.

## Thursday Dec 22nd

We had orders to be ready to move at noon but did not leave camp until about one o'clock. We camped in an old brick yard about a mile from the depot but can see the city. Lieut Starbuck and I walked down to the depot. The Rebels left the city without doing any damage and their heavy siege guns remain in the works. We passed several of them and there is one mounted at the depot to guard the rail road. They have all the flood gates closed is the reason the country is covered with water. In raising rice they have to inundate and those gates are approached by canals and used for that purpose. We got only two hundred prisoners but found about thirty thousand bales of cotton in the city. This is a cold day. We are camped near the Macon rail road track.

## Friday Dec 23rd

We spent the day in preparing quarters and as we had plenty of brick and lumber we erected quite a house and we have a nice camp. The mail came in and brought me three letters from Nett,

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<sup>31</sup> Miller's sister Mollie was a frequent correspondent. William B. Miller diary, *passim*.



RIGHT: "NETT," OR "NETTIE," MILLER, WILLIAM B. MILLER'S WIFE  
LEFT: ONE OF WILLIAM B. MILLER'S SISTERS, POSSIBLY MOLLIE

one from Mollie, one from Sue and one from Jake Miller the latest was Dec 4th. Mollies letter contained a Lock of Mothers hair.<sup>32</sup> I did not write any. We got the news that "Old Pap Thomas" had given hood a terrible drubbing at or near Nashville Tenn and captured a great many of his men and Hood was retreating again.<sup>33</sup> This has been a year of Successes for the Union Army and now if Genl Grant will take Richmond we will soon go home. And if he cant do it let him send for us and we will go and help him. Genl Joe Johnston is commanding the Rebel Army here but I dont know where he has gone to. But we will soon hunt him up.<sup>34</sup> I believe we will go north from here to Charleston

<sup>32</sup> Sue was another of Miller's sisters. His mother died October 24, 1864. William B. Miller diary, *passim*. "Jake" Miller has not been positively identified.

<sup>33</sup> Major General George H. Thomas, under siege in Nashville by Hood's Army of Tennessee, attacked the Confederates on December 15–16, 1864, and drove them from the field. Thomas reported capturing over 4,400 Confederates, fifty-three pieces of artillery, and thousands of small arms during the battle. *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. XLV, part 1, p. 40.

<sup>34</sup> The rumor placing General Joseph E. Johnston in command of troops in the region was premature. According to orders from Robert E. Lee dated February 22, 1865, Johnston was placed in command of two departments (Tennessee, Georgia, and South Carolina and Georgia-Florida) and then moved to oppose Sherman's army. *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. XLVII, part 2, p. 1248. In December, 1864, Lieutenant

or some of those cities and if necessary on to Richmond. Perhaps Johnston will go there and the little difficulty be all settled at once. Let Hood come too with the few men he has left.

On January 20, 1865, the Seventy-Fifth Indiana left Savannah to begin the march through the Carolinas, ostensibly to link up with Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant's forces in Virginia. Moving through South Carolina in early February, the Hoosiers advanced with some difficulty through swamps toward the capital at Columbia. Enemy opposition was practically nonexistent, as was the case in Georgia, and they successfully reached the city by the middle of the month. With this leg of the march completed, it was on to Fayetteville, North Carolina.

The Hoosiers had the honor of being the first organized Union troops into Fayetteville on March 11, driving the Confederate rear guard ahead of them. After destroying the arsenal there, and taking a four-day rest, the Federals pushed on to Goldsboro, sixty miles away. The only serious opposition of the entire campaign came on the way to Goldsboro at Bentonville, where Sherman's old nemesis Joseph E. Johnston, who had assumed command of Confederate forces in the region, sought to destroy both corps of Sherman's left wing in detail. His first target was the Fourteenth Corps. The battle began on March 19, and the Seventy-Fifth Indiana entered the fray the following morning. The Hoosiers kept up a brisk skirmishing fire and were harassed by Confederate artillery in return, but by late afternoon Johnston retreated. On the 22nd the march for Goldsboro resumed, and the Hoosiers arrived in the city the next day.

By the time they reached Goldsboro, Sherman's army had traveled more than four hundred miles in fifty days and had crossed five large rivers. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Doan, commanding the Second Brigade, Third Division, Fourteenth Army Corps, which included the Seventy-Fifth Indiana, paid tribute to his men in a report written in late March at Goldsboro:

During the campaign our troops have subsisted themselves on the country through which we have passed with the exception of one-third ration of bread, sugar, and coffee. . . . During the whole campaign, wherein we have marched nearly 500 miles and overcome difficulties perhaps without a parallel, the officers and men of this command, with scarcely an exception, have exhibited the most admirable and untiring patience, energy, and perseverance, and I am happy to tender them my most sincere thanks.<sup>35</sup>

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General William J. Hardee technically commanded the Department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida from Savannah, while General P. G. T. Beauregard served as Hardee's superior in command of the Military Division of the West. *Ibid.*, ser. I, vol. XXXIX, part 1, p. 4, part 2, p. 880; *ibid.*, vol. XLIV, p. 875.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. XLVII, part 1, pp. 561-63.



The army rested in Goldsboro until April 10, then began the final stage of their march, some fifty miles to the city of Raleigh. The Hoosiers of the Seventy-Fifth led the army, and on their way they claimed to have fought the last battle and suffered the last combat casualty of Sherman's masterful campaign. The regiment's skirmishers pushed the enemy before them and in a brisk fight captured the city of Smithfield on April 11. Miller and his comrades were paid a rare compliment there by the commander of the left wing, General Slocum. When Captain Mahlon Floyd reported for duty with the Seventy-Fifth's skirmishers outside Smithfield, General Slocum asked if they were part of the same regiment that had first entered Fayetteville. When he was told that indeed they were, he replied, "I want no better; I will risk those fellows with anything."<sup>36</sup>

The regiment successfully reached Raleigh on the 13th. On the way they were cheered by the news of General Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia. The Hoosiers then went into camp near Raleigh and awaited the surrender negotiations between Sherman and Johnston. On April 26 the Confederate commander at last signed documents requiring his men to lay down their arms. With this rebel army no longer a threat, the men could look forward to returning home.

Miller and his comrades set out from Raleigh on April 30, passed through Richmond, the former Confederate capital, and arrived near Washington on May 19. Five days later, Sherman's men passed up Pennsylvania Avenue in a grand review before President Andrew Johnson, members of his Cabinet and Congress, and the army's generals. Despite the scorching heat the marching was perfect, as the ranks of the Seventy-Fifth Indiana filled the street from one side to the other and swept the avenue. Military bands worked up the crowd to the "highest pitch," and they enthusiastically cheered Sherman's westerners.

The Seventy-Fifth Indiana was officially mustered out of United States service on June 8, 1865. The troops left Washington the same day by train for Parkersburg, West Virginia. There they embarked on a steamer for Lawrenceburg, Indiana, then traveled by train again to Indianapolis, where they arrived on June 14. Back in the state capital, where they had begun their epic journey nearly three years before, the members of the regiment surrendered their muskets and equipment at the state arsenal, then enjoyed a public reception hosted by Governor Oliver P. Morton on the grounds of the capitol. On June 16 the proud 468 survivors of the Seventy-Fifth Indiana were given their discharges and began their journey north to home.<sup>37</sup>

William Bluffton Miller came back to Wells County, Indiana, having survived some of the bloodiest fights of the Civil War, though

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<sup>36</sup> Floyd, *History of the Seventy-Fifth Regiment*, 383-84.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 391-406.

his painful wound from Chickamauga no doubt reminded him of how perilously close to death or dismemberment he had come during his service. Miller found work as a carpenter and druggist in various locations in northern Indiana and died in Charleston, Illinois, in 1918, always proud that he had helped the “sun of the Confederacy” sink into “everlasting night” by serving in the ranks of Sherman’s army in the march to Savannah.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> William B. Miller file in “Pension Records of Volunteer Soldiers who served in Organizations of the State of Indiana,” Record Group 94 (National Archives); Catharine Merrill, *The Soldier of Indiana in the War for the Union* (2 vols., Indianapolis, 1866, 1869), II, 776.