

Daniel E. Bruce: Civil War Teamster*

A teamster of the Civil War, who served from 1862 to 1865 and kept a diary through that long, trying period, deserves to have his story told. He did not command an army nor a regiment. He did not even rise to be a corporal. He did not, however, perform the duties of an ordinary private, but served as a driver in charge of teams (usually mules) and wagons, being one of a class of indispensable army men without whose services successful warfare is impossible. That such a man, who had been given little chance at any kind of schooling, should have persisted in keeping a record of his daily experiences is a tribute to his character, native intelligence and worth.¹ Daniel E. Bruce was born in Seneca County, Ohio, on June 6, 1836. He was the son of Abraham and Sarah Hoch Bruce. His grandfather, Stephen Bruce, Sr., came to Indiana with his wife and several married sons and daughters in 1837. He bought land at an auction sale from the Public Lands Office, and received his patent on August 2, 1837. The land purchased is about midway between Logansport and Plymouth at the western edge of Fulton County.

Daniel, the grandson of Stephen Bruce, was but little more than one year old when his people migrated to Indiana. He grew up in a very new and undeveloped pioneer community. On October 11, 1857, he was married to Sarah E. Heiser. When he joined the army in 1862, he left behind his wife and one child. He did not see them again for almost four years. Following the War, he lived during the remainder of his career in Harrison Township, Pulaski County, a short distance from his boyhood home. In all six children were born into the family, each one living to maturity. The ex-soldier led the life of a successful grain and stock-raising farmer. Twenty-nine when he closed his army service, he lived fifty-five years longer, dying on July 19, 1920, at the age of eighty-four.

It was on Monday, August 11, 1862, that this Daniel E. Bruce, a young man of twenty-six said goodbye to his wife

* This sketch is the joint work of Foster Bruce, an attorney of Crown Point, Indiana, and grandson of Daniel E. Bruce, and the *Editor*. The original diary, which has been in the hands of the *Editor* for several months, is the basis for most of the story. Facts pertaining to the family have been furnished by Foster Bruce from records in his possession. He has also kindly placed certain information relative to the history of the Eighty-seventh Indiana Regiment at the disposal of the *Editor*.

¹ The diary was written from day to day, but every entry is in ink. Three small ledgers and the larger part of a fourth, all bound in black leather, were filled while Bruce was in the service.

and little daughter, went to Pleasant Grove and enlisted. Next day he could have been found at South Bend drilling with other recruits and sleeping in the Odd Fellows Hall. The first night he had slept on the train under a board shed. Company E, in which Bruce was enlisted, formed a part of the Eighty-seventh Indiana Regiment which remained at South Bend until August 27, when it was transferred to Indianapolis.² On Saturday, August 31, Abraham Bruce, father of the new recruit, came to Camp Morton and remained through till Monday. The diary entries of Saturday and Sunday are of interest:

Satur 30 Father came in camp this morning on a visit Sineing the prole [pay-roll] list & differ ones to get our Pay Ridgement marching to Town for the Flag. Camp Rose Ladies in South Bend maid the Flag. Had to move in the Barix 89 Ridgement left.

S 31 Father slep in camp with me. I & Father talk about Our farms. he told me he would milk & I told him to Oversee my farm. I got my Bonty money \$25. & 1.50 for inlistment. 13 for the month. Then i went to Town Bot a Revolver & 2 pare socks & cusion for Needles & Thred. Spent \$14.75 I gave father \$10. Dollars to Pay my dets.

Sunday night, Bruce's Regiment spent in the cars at the south edge of Indianapolis. At five A.M., Monday, the transport trains got started, and reached Jeffersonville at two P.M. The companies marched to the Ohio, where they were carried across by steamboats. They then marched over "awful dusty" roads to Camp Oakland south of Louisville, about four miles from the City. Here they drilled with guns for the first time and marched farther southward on September 3. By Friday, the sixth, the inexperienced soldier, after a night of service with a scouting party, wrote: "Marching 4 miles to camp My feet is awful Sore. I can't scarcely walk."

It was on September 7, that Bruce was assigned to duty as a teamster. "I was Detailed to go to Town to bring the teem of mules 3 span i drove the mules for the first time in my Life. Loding 4 bales of hay waing 1600." He was to have little relaxation as a driver of teams of six mules to heavy army wagons until he was mustered out of the service in 1865. The day following his first duty as a teamster, he had other new experiences. These included "drafting grapes and peach-

² From South Bend, the regiment was transported westward to the railway running from Michigan City to New Albany (the Monon of later years) and over this line to Lafayette. The diarist states that the train crossed the Tippecanoe River between Battle Ground and Lafayette, but he meant the Wabash. From Lafayette the train passed over what is now a Big Four line to Indianapolis.

es", that is, appropriating them without leave, which was pleasant enough, and washing his own clothing. "Washing 1 pair of Drawers. This is the first Washing that i done since i was a Boy." Such is his entry, but it is only the earliest of very many like recordings, since doing his own laundry became a very common and necessary duty.

While the brigade that included the Eighty-seventh Indiana remained for a short period in the vicinity of Louisville, the raw soldiers were worried by many irritating and sickening happenings. On September 11, teamster Bruce reached a state of mind in which he declared that "A Soldier Life is the worst life that a man ever seen." On the night of September 12, Bruce was sent back across the Ohio and remained in Indiana for a while. He was kept busy hauling supplies for different regiments. On the nineteenth of the month, as troops were being concentrated to protect Louisville, the regiments about Jeffersonville were thrown across the River and sent to Camp Robinson south of Louisville. The great invasion of Kentucky by General Braxton Bragg was on, and there were fears for the city. Women and children left the city in large numbers. On Wednesday, September 24, the entry in the diary reads: "Soldiers lay on there Arms lass Nite. at 3 O'clock form a line of Battle. . . . A.M. drive the teem in town for a lod of Goods. Stoors [stores] & Grocery &c are all Shut. Drove back empty."

There was no battle at Louisville and no attack on the city. The Confederates moved to the southeast, with Union forces concentrating against them. The battle came on October 8, and is known as the Battle of Perryville, near which town it was fought. The soldiers of the Eighty-seventh Indiana, a new regiment with almost no training, took a minor part in the fight. Bruce writes: "The Battle Commence at 3 O'clock in the morning. kep up till after dark The Rebels Throws the Shells one [once] after our Regiment, But did not hit any of theme Our Boys laying flat on the ground. They did not Shuit at all Our Side best. I went to the Hospetal to see the Wounded. It look horrible to see." General James B. Steedman reported that his Brigade was ordered up to the line of battle, where "it was exposed to quite a severe fire of

shot and shell and some musketry without being able to reply", except by the attached artillery.³

During his period of service, teamster Bruce was usually with the Eighty-seventh Indiana. Though he served other regiments he was never far from his own regiment and company. In Company E, there were several groups each made up of men from a single neighborhood. Throughout his three years, Bruce was closely associated with young men that he had known before enlistment. Among these were a brother-in-law, and six cousins.⁴ The diary supplies much personal information about these relatives, as well as the more general story of the Eighty-seventh and Company E of that regiment.

The forces that operated against General Bragg in Kentucky moved southward as the Confederates retreated. The Eighty-seventh spent some time in the country east of Nashville during the remainder of 1862, but did not participate in the Battle of Murfreesboro. Entries for the days of that bloody fight will show what the diarist, who was not far away, was doing:

Tues 30 [December, 1862] Calvery Man come riding past to [the] camp. Said that the Rebels was coming Mager Sumner to get in line and Marching Double Quick. Then Genera Stedman [Steedman] came riding hollering Halt He Order them back. Sad that he was Commander of this Briggade. Then Stednan Sent the Briggade & Artillery. Heavy Canniadeing. Bernt Several House-es Seen no rebels, rote a letter & Sent with David Runnels, put it in Peru Post oface.

Wed 31 Halling 1 load Crackers from the Depo. Choping Stove wood for Quarter Master.

Thurs 1 [January, 1863] Fiting near Mumfres Burow. yesterday & to Day, General Sills and other Generals reported kild Hard Battle Fiting 5 days Our Side Best took 6000 prisners Feeding, Curing [currying], watering & the mules heels has the Cratchers. I cooking Beef and Homney I have \$2.50 in pocket is all i have

Fri 2. Paid Joseph 25 cents for the Whip. Drove to Galiton for 1400 wait of Beef. Washing mule hels [heels] with Wite [white] Oak Oos [ooze] for cratchers.

Entries for a few other days of January, 1863, furnish a picture of the ordinary routine that fell to the lot of Bruce:

Wed 7 Drove out [to] forage 6 teems with hay 2 corn & oats. Drove to Comberlin River about 8 miles. 2 leters from wife.

³ *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies in the War of the Rebellion*, Series I, Vol. XVI, 1075.

⁴ The Brother-in-law was Alfred Hizer [Heiser]. Three cousins were the Troutman brothers, John G., James, and Captain Peter. Hiram and Henry Rairicks were also cousins, as was Philip Obermayer.

Thurs 8 Drove my team on the Other Side of Galiton about 1 mile for Beef 800. I paid doctor 10 cents for a pint of milk for Doctor Gold [Gould] he is sick.

Fri 9 Dug [drug] two logs to the fire. Cooking as usual & attending to the time.

Sat 10 Raining. Haling 2 loads Rations, Capturing a mule, Halter & Colar an trimb his tale.

S. 11 I took a good wash. Reading in the Testament, Rote a letter to send to Wife. I thought of home.

Mon 12 Catch a stray Mule that came in camp. Green helping curin [currying] & feeding as usual. Sowing my coat Buttons fast & pockens fast &c.

Tues 13 Got up at 10 O'clock at Night to march at 3 O'clock. Marching for Nashville Stop about 3 afternoon Crossing the Ral R. 13 miles.

Wed 14 General Stednan [Steedman] Ordered the 2 Minisota and 87 Ridgement back to Galiton. Drove threw Galiton About 12 O'clock. About 1 mile North of town. Raining all day. My cloths [clothes] all wet no place to dry.

It was on March 20, 1863, that Bruce made the final entry in the first of the four small black-covered books in which he kept his diary. On this Friday, he wrote:

I must now say fare well for this past life. And if I must lay my body in this Rebel land Then i want to have this book printed for my children That they ever can see what their Father seen and spent in the Army for them. . . .

Daniel Bruce

To his wife and Children⁵

Sarah E.	} Bruce
Naomi E.	
Aaren A.	

A.D. 1863

The Eighty-seventh Regiment participated in the campaigning in Tennessee in the summer of 1863, and later in the Chattanooga campaign. Those in charge of teams and wagons had interesting experiences in the mountains. A week before the Battle of Chickamauga, Bruce was with the force that included his regiment east of the Tennessee River in north-eastern Alabama. The diary reveals that his duties kept him in the general region of the campaigning but out of the main fighting areas. On Monday, September 14, he was near Lafayette, Georgia, to the south of the scene of the great Battle

⁵ When Bruce left home he had but one child, a little daughter by the name of Naomi. Here he also names a son, Aaron A. Bruce, who was born on January 26, 1863 a few months after the father enlisted. Daniel E. Bruce first saw this son when the little boy was about two and a half years old. Strange to say this is the first mention of this child in the diary. Naomi E. Bruce, the little girl left behind with her mother when the father enlisted, married Albert Light, after she grew to womanhood. Mr. Light died sometime ago, but Mrs. Naomi (Bruce) Light still lives and is in good health.

of Chickamauga of the nineteenth and twentieth. Then he was sent northeast again—back to Tullahoma, Tennessee. His journal for four days, the last two being those of the Battle of Chickamauga, reads:

Thursday 17 Had to hich by 4 and remain till sunup. fed. left camp about 8. retreated back and drove round 10 miles. rebels came close to our rear. Shuting [shooting] in the reer about 1/2 mile. Drove after dark.

Friday 18 Camp in a field. Hich by 4 Oclock till day. left the geers on all day. left the camp at Dark. Drove all nite Stop in a field.

Satur 19 Cald [called] for Over coats. forageing and feeding. Hard fiting. Lieutenant Bennett of Co. E kild.

S 20. Left camp about 10 O'clock. Drove 12 miles to Talihona*, past Boys wounded Arms, legs, and Head. Camp in nice grove. Rebes drove our men back.

According to the diary, Bruce was near Lafayette, Georgia, on September 14 and at Tullahoma, Tennessee, on the twentieth, about seventy miles away on a straight line. This meant strenuous driving in a mountainous country. On the twenty-sixth, he started again for Stevenson, Alabama, but his duties did not permit the most direct route, since he mentions passing through Jasper, Tennessee, on September 30. On this day he made thirty miles. He started early the next morning. It had rained all night and continued through the day. Five miles were covered, and a stop made at the foot of Sand Mountain. Here Bruce heard that 400 teams were to go over the Mountain ahead of the teams in his division. The next three days were full of real experiences:

Friday 2 [October, 1863] Rebels attack us. Our train [wagon train] Capturd and bernt about 400 wagins and captured a good many of Our Boys. I onhich my teem and [gave] the rest of the Boys, a mule apice about 9 in the morning and for all the riding up the mountain threw the brush & logs I never seen and suting [shooting] on every Side. Rode on to camp. no hat or coat.

S 4 [Sunday. No entry for Saturday] We saleve [salvaged] 14 of our mules. 175 wagons bernt by the rebels and took off and [or] kill 500 mules and 100 wagins and a good many of our Boys. we left camps about 5 in the evening. I slep without a blanket on the ground.

Monday 5 No feed for the mules. Came the River road. Past the Train Had 1500 wounded on going to stevison. We came to Battle crick about Dark. Came on the old Camp grounds. rode 30 miles rebe got my Blanket

* Tullahoma, a place in Tennessee nearly sixty miles northwest of Chattanooga.

Back and forth through the country west and southwest of Chattanooga in Tennessee and Alabama, the services required of Bruce took him during the long campaign. He had some easy days during the middle of October. On Sunday, October 25, the day of the Battle of Missionary Ridge, Bruce wrote: "Talk of Hiching 8 mules to a wagin and Halling Goods to Chattanooga. got a wagin and geers for 13 Mules. fiting [fitting] the geers on the Mules." There was need of abundant supplies in Chattanooga, as the Union troops concentrated there at the time of the engagement on Missionary Ridge numbered close to 80,000. For several weeks after the Confederates left the city, a large Federal force remained at Chattanooga. Day by day through the winter, the teamsters were busy transporting supplies. Bruce drove in and out of the city many times.

On March 1, 1864, Teamster Bruce was transferred to Ringgold, Georgia, about halfway from Chattanooga to Dalton, from which place he carried on until the army started towards Atlanta early in May. For nearly two weeks, he was on duty as a cook, and then went back to driving mules. On April 4, he mentioned that "Governor Morton [sent] the 87th 7 Barls Potatoes, and Several weeks ago Sent 7 Barls and [some] Oneions". He added: "Morton is best Man of all the Governors to the Soldiers."

The divisions of the Union army that were stationed at Chattanooga and other points near by, about 100,000 strong, began the movement toward Atlanta early in May, 1864. Bruce, stationed at Ringgold, Georgia, made this entry on May 5: "Troop coming in all day long. Large Supplies Brot to this Place." This meant that the move on Dalton was about to be launched:

Friday 6 Hald 1 log 40 feet long. Ordered me and the teem in the Supplitrain. Quite warm. Dierear verry Bad. Put on [wagon] Bows and Cover and Traps. Drove to Brigade Supplytrain Drew forage aftere Nite, then feed and Harness. Drove to Brigade Comisary. Loded 6 Barls of Pork. midnite when got in Bed. 13 teems in the train.

Satur 7. Slep on the Barls. Hich By 6 O'clock. Troops passing all morning. Grees wagin. Took the geers of [off] at nite.

S 8 Hich by 6 and drove nearer Village. Mules Harness all day. Rote letter Wife. 2 Minsta [Second Minnesota] paid Teemsters. lost 2 Mules, fed them too large feed of Crackers. time fed til Died 4 ours.

On Monday May 9, Bruce left Ringgold where he had been for more than two months. He was now with a moving army. From day to day, he saw fighting, or heard the guns, or learned of skirmishing near at hand or a short distance ahead. There were numerous entries like the following:

May 10 Pastering Mules. Schirmishing all day yester Day and nite And this morning, and now and then Cannon Shot. Still advancing. Rebs falling back. Drew forage. Raining.

On the thirteenth troops were passing during the night and early morning, "Sherman and Toms" [Thomas] and "Schofield". The supply train passed through Snake Creek Gap on this day and camped at the line of breastworks very recently constructed by the troops leading the advance on Resaca. "No end to the Teems". General Sherman's strategy was to send troops west of Dalton under cover of a ridge. In this way a portion of his army having passed through Snake Creek Gap threatened Resaca, south of Dalton, which caused General Joseph E. Johnston to retreat from Dalton to Resaca on the night of May 12. The fighting at Resaca occurred on the fourteenth and fifteenth. Bruce drove northward to Dalton the second day of the fight for a load of "Hard Bread". On the sixteenth he followed the army from Resaca with "35 Boxes hard Bread". By May 23, the wagon train crossed the Etowah River. The next day Bruce came to a rich plantation which furnished more satisfactory forage. Here he husked fifteen bushels of corn. One of the difficult and ever present problems was to find enough feed for the many mules in the supply train. Corn, wheat, hay and other foods were appropriated, while at times the animals must graze on such land as afforded enough for subsistence. On Saturday, July 2, the teamsters reached Kenesaw Mountain. Bruce camped for the night in a park near the mountain. The diary for July 3, reads:

Left Camp By 6 O'clock. all day on the road. Drove 5 m. Drove over the line of battle [of July 2] and such suting [shooting] of Trees i never Seen in my life and Houses all shot thru of holes. Camp near Marieta in a nise field.

On July 19 Bruce was in a camp on the bluffs of the Chattahoochee River, and went down into the bottoms for forage. On the twenty-first he crossed the River over a pontoon bridge, and went three miles up the valley. Walking to

the top of hill, he could see Atlanta, and several mountains, including Kenesaw Mountain and "Rock" Mountain. It was not till September 8 that Bruce drove into a park within the limits of Atlanta. On the fifteenth he drove his team along the streets of that city for the first time. He loaded five boxes of clothing, and then went to a grove where he chopped down poles for use in building a shade for mules. With others, he was busy at this work for several days. The shed was covered with brush, and when finished sheltered fourteen teams of six or more mules to the team. Bruce remained at Atlanta until October 3.

It is well known that General J. B. Hood, who superseded Johnston prior to the evacuation of Atlanta, tried soon after abandoning the city to transfer the scene of western warfare to Tennessee again. Failing to break Sherman's connections with Chattanooga, Hood moved far to the westward, going to the neighborhood of Florence, Alabama, Sherman followed for about half the distance, then turned about, returned to Atlanta, and prepared to march to the sea.

Daniel Bruce was among the teamsters who served Sherman's force while in pursuit of Hood. From the third to the twenty-eighth of October, Bruce was serving the troops that moved from Atlanta to Gaylesville, Alabama. He hauled a load of wheat into that town on the last mentioned date.⁷ On the fifteenth of November, he was back in Atlanta, and the next day he was on the way to Savannah, the environs of which city he reached on December 22. While on the march to the sea, there was much foraging to be done, as items from the diary will show: "All kind of forage plenty; Nice Clothing and Dresses, Silk and . . . muslin, Thread, &c" (Nov. 17); "foraging Mules and Horses. Detail each Day from each Brigade. past Rich planters" (Nov. 20); "loded 17 Sacks of forage at Sundown. All nite on the Rode Driving 14 miles" (Dec. 21); "went foraging 8 miles [out of Savannah]. Loded Rice in the hull. loded [on] the Savana River" (Dec. 24). It was not always easy to find enough food for the men and animals of a large moving army. On December 18, Bruce records that there was only "rice in the Straw to feed the mules for the past week."

On Friday, January 20, Bruce left Savannah:

⁷ Gaylesville, a town in eastern Alabama, a few miles west of Rome, Georgia.

Ready by Day. Start on Campaign. Drove 8 miles on the same road we came in on Coming to this place. Cold Rain. Rode quite bad. I am quite lame in Sholders and Back. Got wet. Small room on the wagin.

Sherman's army moved across South Carolina and North Carolina taking Columbia and Raleigh along the way. The wagon trains accompanied the troops. Bruce mentions passing through the town of Lexington Courthouse on February 16, the crossing of the Saluda River on the seventeenth, and the Broad River on the nineteenth. He does not mention Columbia. While moving northward he must have passed a short distance west of that city. After crossing the Saluda River, he "got in Camp about 9 at nite". He adds: "Seen cars and foder Burning and Houses. Women crying &c", but he was probably not close enough to see Columbia burn as he records nothing to indicate it. It was on April 14, that Bruce drove his team through Raleigh, North Calolina. His entry of the nineteenth of April, mentions the assassination of Lincoln, but he does not refer to it later:

Wed. 19 Graising Mules. Raining hard lass nite. Abraham Lincoln Presadent, Reported Kild. Talk of Pice [peace]. Sitizens come to the Division. Giving them Horses and Mules, that hant fit for the Survice.

The surrender of Johnston's army is not mentioned, though two days before it took place, Bruce states that there was "talk of Mooving on Rebel Johnson". The crossing of the Roanoke River is recorded on May 2. On the ninth of May, Bruce claims to have made twenty-five miles. It was on this day that he "past Castle Thunder and Liby Prsn and on Round in the City of Richmond and General Washington Monument".^s On May 24, the diarist wrote: "The Army of Tennesse and of Georgia March to City of Washington. Revied [reviewed] by Presadent Johnson, and Back to Camp".

While in Washington from May 24 to June 12, Bruce was busy a part of his time looking after teams and equipment. On Friday, June 2, he turned over all the extra stock of collars, chains, harness and horses. On the following Tuesday, he heard that he was soon "To Turn over 25 teems". Presumably, this happened within a day or two, but there is no further mention of mules, or any service that a teamster might have been called on to perform. On May 30, he had an opportunity to go to the White House, when he and a friend "Rode on the

^s The Washington monument in Richmond is meant.

Wagin in the City to See threw in the Patin Offace and on to the Presadent House or [and] Capitol. Seen near all in each room & one of the greatest seems i Ever Seen in my life".

It was on Monday, June 12, that the Eighty-seventh left Washington: "Struct Tents. March to the City at 6. Stack guns. Wating for the Cars. Quite warm, left the City about noon. . . ". Traveling on the Baltimore and Ohio, the troop train passed northward to the junction at Relay House, just south of Baltimore. It was dark when Hood's Mill about half way from Baltimore to Frederick, was reached. The next morning the train was at Hancock, Maryland. After passing Cumberland, Maryland, the train was cut into four divisions. Grafton, West Virginia, was reached by midnight, when "grub" was served to the homeward bound veterans. By the morning of the fourteenth, Bruce reports that they were at Bridgeport, a town between Grafton and Clarksburg. That evening they landed at Parkersburg on the Ohio, where they went into camp near the town and drew rations. From Parkersburg to Cincinnati, transportation was by the River. After thirty miles, they changed boats, and were required to do "5 miles fast walking" with the temperature high. They were all night on the boats running at fifteen or more miles per hour. About the time of the boat change, Bruce enjoyed looking at ripe wheat in the fields and some in the shock, while on other farms he saw men hauling clover hay. With a short stop at Cincinnati, the boats went on to Lawrenceburg, Indiana, where the troops were landed at about eight P.M. on Friday, June 16. Having left Parkersburg on Thursday morning, this was a good run.

Taking the train at midnight, the boys in blue found themselves in Indianapolis about six in the morning. From the seventeenth to the twenty-fourth of June, the veterans remained at Camp Oak Glen, with considerable freedom to go about the City. On June 21 they were tendered a "Resepttion Diner". Then the Eighty-seventh and Forty-second Indiana infantry regiments with the Fifth and Sixth Cavalry, were marched to the State House to hear a speech from Governor Morton. Other speeches were made by regiment commanders and by Generals Carrington and Wagner, and some other officers who had come back to Indianapolis from their homes.

When Daniel E. Bruce was mustered out of the service at Indianapolis on June 24, he received pay amounting to \$254.

He bought clothing for which he paid \$29, a bottle of oil for seventy-five cents, a box for \$2.50, a saddle for \$29.50, and paid \$1.65 expressage on articles shipped to his home. He boarded the cars at ten P.M., changed at "Coakmo"* and reached Winamac at six on the morning of June 25. Bruce and five comrades were met by his Uncle Stephen Bruce, at whose home they were given breakfast, and then hauled to Bruce Lake. After nearly three years, the young man who had given strenuous service to his country as an army teamster was at home. At the end of his diary entry for June 25, 1865, which he recorded the next morning, the veteran wrote: "The first time i slep in bed since I left home".

* Kokomo.