

The Rock

At day-lite we come to the Ouachita River. It was swimming from bank to bank, with no bridge nor ferry, so we was between the Devel and the Deep Sea. I toald the boys that thar was one of two things we had to do, fight Burk's Company at a great disadvantage or swim the river. It was evident that our trail would be found that day. If we stayed fur the river to run down, we would have Burk to fight. So I give them a choice and we voted. It came out that we swim. We found a little dugout that would carry two men at a time. In this we got our beding and armes across, when we swam. Most of the horses tuck the water fine but far some reason I could not get mine to take it, he kept coming back. So I found where a branch went into the river, with a steep bank on each side. I got him in thar.

I got behind him and had to whip and push till he jumped in and then he turned to come back. I met him in the water and got him turned around again, then taken him bey the tail and when he would try to turn around I would throw water in his face till he would have to go forward. I finally got him across, froze as any man could be to walk. I got to where the boys had a good fire going. Never have I welcome a fire more. I was the last one to get across and was give out and cold.

Bob Gibeson come down to camp and toald the boys to go git corn and feed thar horses and kill a hog. We stayed here all day to dry out and take in some food.

At dark ~~we~~ started to travel again, went about fifteen milds, then left the road far the woods. We all lay down to sleep without bilding a fire or puting out pickets. Our prisnor, I had him lay down

between me and Joe, with orders not to so much as turn over without permission, and he proved to be a vary still bed-fellow.

The next morning I was up before day-lite and bild a good fire and got breakfast ready bey daylight. We got a early start and was on the road bey the time the sun got out good.

We crossed the Fourche River with no trouble. We come to where Col. James lived. He miss-tuck us fur Confederates and met us rejoising that he had lived to see one more Confederat Scout, toald what all he had dun fur the South and what all he had give the Feds all down the country. He had some good horses in a lot and we had some men that was a-foot. The men come and ask if they could take a couple of his horses. I consented. They got the horses and when James sean this he sed it was hard to beleave his friends would rob him. I then toald him that he had bin bit bey the wrong snake, we were Federals. It would be my duty to take him since he had dun so much fur the South. He asked if I was in earnest about being a Federal.

I ses, "It's no joke."

He then ask if thar was any man a-long that belong to the Masons. I toald him thar was and pointed one of the men out to him. They steped a-side a few minuets. James come back and sed he was as good a federal as I was.

I then ses, "You have got to prove that to me."

He ses that he had the proof at the house. He then toald me that he had protection papers from the Federals. I ask to see them and went with him to the house.

His wife toald him it was a trap and we were out to ketch him, if he got the papers we would hang him. She finally got the papers and they proved all that he

sed and we set him and his horses free. Our walking boys was not too happy about that. The oald man was jest making a protection tolk. This was the only time I ever give my consent fur a man to take a horse during the war.

(Here I will give what become of Col. James. At the close of the war, he fell in with some Confederate soldiers. Them and the Col. got into a dispute and they shot and killed him.)

We went a-head till we struck the road coming from the Glades. Here we sean thar was a company jest a-head of us and we was now in Capt. Conley's range again. It made my hair stick up a little, fur we was not in trim fur much of a fight.

That night I put out a heavy gard, as if we had a full force. I was restless all night but did not want the others to know it. I set up and would walk out to the gard to see if they were a-wake.

As soon as it was light, we were on the march, two of the boys rideing in front. We had not gone far till one of them come dashing back and sed thar was a hole company camped jest a-head. Thar happen to be a clift of rocks on the side of the road that made good protection fur the men, so I formed them in behind the rock. I taken a few boys and went a-head till I was halted. I found out that it was a scout of our own men. This was one more time that I was well pleased.

That night we got to Dardanelle, tired and worried. I had bin on a constant strain fur a week, day and night. I found the command the worst confused set of men I had ever sean. They had enlisted far one year but the secutary would not recognize them fur less than a year during the year and had ordered them to disband without pay. They were trying to get pay fur the time they had served.

I stayd a day or so and had a talk with Uncle Willis. I toald him I was going to where I would be recognized. I went to my prisoner and toald him I would have to turn him over. He ask if thar was anything he could do to keep out of prison. I toald him that he could take the oath of allegiance. He sed that he wanted to take it. I went with him to the marshal. He taken the oath and sed he never knew what brought the war on till Lt. Jones expland it to him.

I puled on my horse and toald the boys what I was going to do. They could go with me if they cared too. Twenty three went. When we got to Little Rock I found a company that liked about that number of being full so I went and had a tolk with the Capt. He was very anxious fur us to go into his company. I toald him I had bin serveing as 1st Lutenant and the boys wanted me to still be in charge if we went into his company. He sed 1st. Lut. was all-redy com-mision, so I toald the Capt. to call his men in line, that I wanted to talk to them. I toald his men that we were a body of 23 men that would come into thar company, understanding that they needed more men. I sed that I was 1st. Lut., but I would run fur 2nd Lut. and if I was beaten I knew how to serve in the ranks. The next day we had the election. I got evry vote in the company. Warner was Capt., Whiten 1st. Lut., and J.N. Jones 2nd. Lut. Whiten was elected to the Legislature. His family lived in town, so he was with the company vary little.

(I will mention the fact here. About 20 yrs. after the war, thar was a bill past in Congress to pay the one-year men. All twenty three of us lost our pay. When we left, it made the Capt. mad and he had our names erased off of the roles.)

Well thar was but three full companys at the time

we went in. One was commanded by Capt. Hand. He had the name of being one of the smartest men in the army. He had bin president of a college and editor of a paper at one time. He was the most dignified man I have ever seen. The first time I seen him, I sed if he is smart, I have never seen a fool and I would like to see some of the papers which he was editor. Anybody could plainly see that when it come to horse sense, he had none. Capt. Hand and my Capt. Warner was great friends, having served in the same company before they were promoted to Capt.

I was left in command of our company one day and was writing when one of the men come and toald me Capt. Hand was trying a man as a spy, and he believed that he was going to have him shot. I toald my boy thar was no danger, Hand was too smart fur that. In a few minutes he come back and ses, "I toald you they were going to kill that man and they have killed him." I ask where. He ses, "Jest over the hill," so we rode over thar.

They had taken him where thar was a gully that had washed out and had shot him. When I got thar they were jest stretching him out to put him in the gully to cover him up. I don't think I had ever bin so badly shocked in my life, jest to think a man would acumen the authority to have a man killed. I started fur town to inform the authorities. When I met Capt. Warner riding toward camp, I toald him what Capt. Hand had dun and what I was on my way to do.

He ses Hand was drunk and we had better say nothing about it. This was another shock to me. I remarked I was not the man to cover no man's rascality and he ought to hang fur it, I was going to report him. He commenst to say the man they killed

was a vagabond and was of no loss.

At this, I toald Capt. Warner I had a better opinion of him than that, and I was afraid that he was as mean as Hand. We had some sharp words and from that day on we never was friends. I went a-hed and reported Hand. They come and arrested him and kept him under gard fur a few days, then turned him loose. He come right back and taken charge of the company. He never had a trial. How it was managed, I don't know.

It was not long till he had his men load thar guns and sed he was going down and arrest the Governor and try him fur trespassing. Capt. Warner stopped him and he was pronounced crazy and sent north to a assilum and that was the last of Capt. Hand. The man he had shot was Gilume. The boys sed Hand was not smart but he sed he was vary smart and he was paying off fur a purpus, so let this suffice.

It was not long till our company was ordered to go near Hot Springs and escort some families in that wanted to move to the Rock.

We camped at the Garner place. I went around and posted out the pickets and thought I had them posted so that it would be impossable fur them to surprise us. We had tide our horses to the fence and bild our fires jest behind them.

Thar was a hollow that come down to where we were camped. I had posted a man on each side of it on the hill. I thought we were safe, so we layed down to sleep. They slipped down the hollow and got in about 75 yrds. of us. It was midnight when they fired on us. We got up in a hurry, the men so confused they didn't know what to do. Each one of them wanted to get behind the other fellow. I hollowed fur them to git out of the light. Two or three of the boys had fell out at the start and went to

shooting in good earnest.

One of the Rebs hollowed, "Oh God, they killed George," and started to curst him and sed, "That's what you get fur slipping up and shooting at a man and him a-sleep."

Well, we got two men badly hurt and several slitely, and several horses crippled. The Capt. had stayed in a house, but when he heard the shooting he come in a hurry. The next day he left me in charge of the command. He had to find a hack to take our wounded back.

I was in the house working with the wounded men when a oald man come a-long with a wagon. I had bin ordered not to let anyone pass through, so I toald the boys to stop him. He come in to see me and sed if I would not let him go he was going anyway. He was heding fur Arkadelphia after salt and his folks was sick. I toald him that I was sorry that I had to detain him, but I was under orders and would have to hold him. He went out and toald the boys he was going anyhow and started on.

I ses, "Go and stop him." They went but he would not stop, so they punched him with the mussels of thar guns. I was busy working with the wounded men and never went out, but he learned from some of the boys my name and where I lived.

He went bey and toald Molly that I had come out on the Salene and got into a fight with some Bush-Whackers and was killed. He sed he helped put me into a wagon to take me back to the Rock to bury me. He had bin requested to come and tell her.

I had a horse at Mother's and my wife got it and traveled almost day and night till she got to the Rock. She was not used to horseback riding. She was completely give out after riding 120 milds. I was in camp when I sean her coming and had no

thought that it was her till she got close enough that I knew the horse.

I sprung to my feet, saying, "That lady is riding my horse."

So I struck out to meet her. She fell into my armes as I under-tuck to help her down. She could hardly walk and was in such shock that she could not speak. It's needless fur me to say what I would have dun had I met that oald man that toald her that terrible lye. I know I would have shot him as full of holes as a pepper box bottom, but the oald man is long sence past over the grat-devid and is trying the realaties of another world. I am glad I never met up with him.

We camped four milds below the Rock near the Fletcher farm. The next morning I went down to see Uncle Dickers as he was commonly cauld. He happen to be in one of his ill humors and when I toald him that I wanted to rent a room and get board fur my wife, he sed I could bring her thar a few days but to look out fur a place fur her to move as he did not want to be troubled with anyone. He was the wealthiest man in the country before the war. His wealth consisted in land and slaves and of course his intrest run with the South. He had run his slaves to Texas, all but a cook. He was a widower at the time.

He showed us into a vary well furnished room. He sed she could take her meals with him but again toald me to be looking out fur a place to take her. I had been looking fur a week. I had found no place I was willing to take her to, so I spoke to Uncle Dickers again about it.

He ses, "Put yourself to no futher trouble. If your wife is willing to stay here, she is welcome."

Our regment moved out west of town. I was thinking of renting a house in town and go to house keeping, but couldn't find one that suited me. Uncle

Dickers sed that he had a request to make to me and he would like to know if I would grant it. I ask him what it was. He sed he wanted me to let my wife stay thar till this un-holy war come to a close and it would not cost me one cent. I toald him that would suit me, but I would have to consult Molly.

He ses, "Let's see her now," so we got up and walked into her room and he toald her the request he had made to me. She sed it suited her if it did me, so it was settled. We had a home while the war lasted and never will I forget the kindness of that oald man to my wife. If she had a-bin his own child, I don't know how he could have bin better to her. Well anuff of this fur now. I will go a-head and give the history of my scouts.