

THE
SOUTH CAROLINA
HISTORICAL MAGAZINE

JANUARY 1958

VOLUME LIX

NUMBER 1



THE SOUTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
CHARLESTON, S. C.

THE
SOUTH CAROLINA
HISTORICAL MAGAZINE

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DIARY OF CAPTAIN JOSEPH JULIUS WESCOAT, 1863-1865¹

Edited by ANNE KING GREGORIE

Joseph Julius Wescoat, son of Joseph Jenkins Wescoat (May 31, 1810-July 4, 1865) and his wife Emmeline Amanda Rivers (August 6, 1817-1891), was born October 10, 1842, on Edisto Island, South Carolina.² After the secession of the southern states, he enlisted November 1, 1861, at Camp Heyward, under Captain William C. Meggett, and he was elected captain from the ranks, May 3, 1862, of Company B, 11th Regiment, South Carolina Volunteers.³ His diary, begun during the defense of Charleston, was continued through campaigns in Florida, Virginia, and North Carolina, and ended while he was a prisoner of war in Fort Delaware.

After the war, Captain Wescoat formed a partnership with his uncle, Samuel Marshall, and carried on the Marshall, Wescoat Hardware Company in Charleston. He married Sarah Anderson of Walterboro, and their two sons, Julius and Marshall, grew to manhood and married. When Captain Wescoat's health began to fail, he gave up his home in Charleston, and built in Summer-ville, whence he commuted daily to his business by railroad. He died on his birthday, October 10, 1908, and was buried in Sumter, South Carolina.⁴

The original diary, owned by Mrs. George Carroll Brown (Esther Wescoat), of Walterboro, having been temporarily misplaced, was not available for collating with a typed copy made some years ago, which was copied for publication below. The editor has made no changes except to supply some names which were illegible to the typist, and to slightly modernize the punctuation.

DIARY OF CAPT. J. J. WESCOAT

11th S. Car. Volunteers

Commenced at Fort Johnson, James Island, S. C.

Sept. 8th. 1863. Ordered to Charleston. Arrived at 8 o'clock P.M. Slept on the cars.

Sept. 9th. Marched to James Island. Encamped about 2 miles from Fort Johnson in an old field.

[*Sept.*] *10th.* Still at the same place. Nothing of importance transpired to mar the monotony of Camp save the occasional bursting of

¹ A contemporary diary by Arthur Brailsford Wescoat was published in this *Magazine*, LV (1954), 71.

² Information from family records in possession of Mrs. G. Carroll Brown.

³ Information from F. M. Hutson, South Carolina Archives Department.

⁴ Information from family records in possession of Mrs. Brown, and of Miss Nellie Jervey of Charleston.

Shell over the Yankee Batteries on Morris Island, from our works at Fort Johnson, and Sullivan's Island.⁵ Noel Winningham (a new member of my Co.) died this morning at 7 o'clock—poor fellow, struck down in the very prime of youth—truly “in the midst of life we are in death”. . . . We drop a tear of sorrow to the memory of one who was held in the highest esteem by his numerous friends.

[Sept.] 11th. Ordered to Fort Johnson—left at 9 o'clock and after a short but tiresome march stopped in an old field (famous place for us) about 1¾ mile from the Fort. Scarcely had the tents been pitched before we had a heavy shower, which, by the way is much needed. Our Batteries have been busy shelling the enemy's works on the Island at intervals of about 5 minutes. The enemy were perfectly quiet until about 2 o'clock p.m., when they fired at Fort Johnson, which they kept up for a short time. I go on picket tonight.

[Sept.] 12th. Just returned from picket. Our Batteries kept up a regular fire upon the Yankee Batteries on Morris Island. About 12 o'clock a false alarm was raised in consequence of the repeated firing of small arms. Except for an occasional shot from our own Batteries it would have been difficult to believe for the last two days that a large beseiging force is in sight of the spires of Charleston; abandoned by the busy keel of commerce, the waves under the pale Autumn sky, have slept more quietly than they ever slept in the good old times before the separation.

A bird's eye view, however, across the blue waters of the Bay, from some elevated point betray at once the utter hollowness of the semblance of peace. Yonder at Cummings Point, Battery Gregg is rapidly approaching the divisions of a hostile fort, and not far off on the parapet of Wagner floats the Yankee flag, as proudly as if it were never stained by a thousand disgraces. Some what further to the South the formidable batteries No. 1 and No. 2 may be seen looking as formidable as ever and if you watch closely you may detect a relieved working party either drawn up on the sand or disappearing behind the hills. Still further beyond, there gleam the white tents of the enemy, and over the woods towards the masts of the fleet, the Ironsides lies where it has lain for the last two days, close under Gregg, while five monitors are anchored considerably nearer to the North end of Morris Island than they would have cared to be a week ago. Col. Yates commanding Art[illery] on James Island threw a shell from Battery Simkins yesterday into Gregg which exploded a caison or Magazine, which caused great confusion among them.

⁵ For a detailed map of the harbor and its defenses, see John Johnson, *The Defense of Charleston Harbor . . . 1863-1865* (Charleston, 1890), plate X, after appendix.

[Sept.] 13th. Today is Sunday. Nothing unusual. Returned from picketting opposite Wagner. Went on inspection at 10 o'clock—preaching in the afternoon and evening. Many joined the church.

[Sept.] 14th. Same old thing—on picket last night. The Yankees are very quiet. Our Batteries are still firing at intervals which seem to interrupt their working very much. They fail to show themselves in the day, our firing being so accurate that it would be inconsistent with their sense of safety to risk their heads among our shells. The Ironsides still at her anchorage with a schooner by her side apparently transferring supplies to her. Two Monitors have left and gone to Stono, probably to protect themselves from the Equinoctial gale. Was field officer of the day to-day. Had to inspect all the Camps of the Command. Slept in trenches last night.

[Sept.] 15th. Relieved from duty and went to the City in a row boat—arrived at 9 o'clock. Charleston has not the appearance of a besieged city. There seems to be a great deal of confidence exhibited as to the fate of the city. Ladies abound. The Promenade has almost the same appearance it had years ago. It is now truly a place of resort from which can be seen the Batteries of the Harbor and on Morris Island.

After attending to my business I went down to the walk and after perambulating took a seat on a bench and allowed my thoughts to wander back to the many happy hours that I spent, perhaps, on that very seat. What a comparison to those happy *happy* hours. There in the midst of pleasant acquaintances and dear friends, with the cup of happiness overflowing within my grasp. Now, alone. Friends all gone—scattered to the "four winds of heaven." Some cut down by the cruel fate of war in the very bloom of manhood. Oh, when will this cruel, cruel war end? When shall we again return to our pleasant homes? Then, and only then, shall we realize the loss of the many friends that have met their fate in our struggle for independence.

Quite a sad accident occurred at Battery Cheves this morning—a magazine exploded killing five men of the 12th and 29th G[eorgi]a Vol[unteers]. Poor fellows—their mangled and torn limbs could be found in every direction around the Fort. Half an arm and pieces of flesh and skull were picked up but none recognized as belonging to any particular person.

The continued firing of Fort Moultrie and our Batteries elicits but little response from the enemy. All indications, however, point to another attack and a brisk bombardment in a few days. The Ironsides appears to have finished receiving supplies. The schooner that has been lying alongside proceeded to one of the Monitors and again commenced dis-

charging. A few shots were fired by the enemy yesterday afternoon towards Fort Johnson, while throughout the day an occasional shot was fired by Batteries No. 1 and 2 at Fort Moultrie. About 4 o'clock one of the Monitors moved up and steamed around Cummings Point as if on a reconnaissance. Moultrie fired a few shots at her, checking further progress and causing her to turn back.

Fort Sumter still remains. No point connected with the defense of Charleston is of more interest to the public, not only of our own State but of the entire Confederacy, than Fort Sumter. Associated as it has been in the past with pleasant recollections and in the present with heroic deeds, it has become as it were an heirloom of our whole people, and from the hour when it fell into our hands as the first victorious offering of South Carolina to the Confederacy, to the present moment, it has been defended and protected as "the apple of our eye." At last it has been laid in ruins—its fair proportions, its noble walls, its thundering lines of guns, all demolished by the ruthless demons of war. Yet there the stately old pile still stands, proud and defiant as in her palmiest days—crushed, not conquered, wrecked but not reduced. Every foot of her massive walls written with the tributes of the foe to [the] patriotism, skill, and courage of those who have been her defenders.

[Sept.] 17th. Weather very stormy. Appearances indicate an equinoctial storm which in all probability will drive a Yankee boat or two ashore—the wind is very high. Several tents have been blown down or otherwise rendered useless. My tent fell over, consequently my bed, clothes, and bed clothing got completely saturated. Going on picket to-night. Am afraid will have a disagreeable time of it. The enemy have been very quiet to-day. No shots are fired from their batteries. Ours are still harassing them by their continued firings. It is the belief by those in authority that an attack from some point or other will be made in a few days. Our men do not show the spirit of energy that ought to be displayed upon this occasion. We have good general officers on the Island, and with troops posted at the threatened and convenient places, ought to keep the invaders from the Island. Not being well posted, am not able now to note the different encampments of the troops on the Island. At some convenient time will do so.

[Sept.] 21st. Nothing has occurred worth while writing for the last two or three days. In fact, have been sick, therefore could not take notes. Our Batteries have been firing with unusual rapidity to-day.

[Sept.] 23rd. A few shells were fired by the enemy yesterday, several near Fort Johnson. Our Batteries are still firing at their works on Morris Island. Four of our Companies relieved the Charleston Bat-

talion at Fort Sumter on the 19th. Weather has been very stormy but has cleared off, although not settled. The Yankees made their appearance in large force at Batteries Gregg and Wagner and appear to be working with considerable energy. A few shots were fired at Bat[terie]s Simkins and Haskell.

[Sept.] 24th. Gloomy weather indicates an approaching storm. Yankees quiet. A salute was fired by our Batteries in honor to the glorious victory achieved by Bragg in the West. Sumter fired thirteen guns. The Yankees fired a salute in honor of the arrival of Farragut. Went over to Charleston to-day. Everything is wretchedly dull—nothing to eat without paying starvation prices.

[Sept.] 25th. Quiet to-day—few shells sent at Fort Johnson—no damage. The firing from our Batteries to-day has been very effective. Several caissons were seen to explode in Batteries Gregg and Wagner—a horse was also killed on the beach in front of Gregg.

[Sept.] 26th. All quiet. Yankees hard at work.

[Sept.] 27th. A Monitor came up to Cummings Point to-day but did not shell. Our Batteries are still harassing the enemy at work.

[Sept.] 28th. Went to visit Sumter. Our men are hard at work preparing the Fort for another fight. The enemy commenced the firing upon the Fort again to-day. 100 shots were fired of which 48 fell in and struck the Fort, the others struck the water. The Fort was not damaged.

[Sept.] 29th. Went to Charleston. Took steamboat for Fort Johnson at 9 p.m. The Yankees resumed their fire upon Sumter and Johnson. Yesterday one negro was killed and two wounded.

Oct. 1st. [1863.] Still shelling Sumter, Johnson, and Shell P[oin]t Bat[tery]. I have just returned from the latter place. The shells are fired with great accuracy. One soldier and a negro wounded.

[Oct.] 2nd. Our Batteries shelling as usual, the Yankees replying regularly. The firing from Gadberry Hill is more rapid than that of any former day. The fire was directed on Forts Sumter, Johnson, and Battery Simkins, but principally on Sumter. From the rapidity with which the enemy fires and very heavy reports made, it is believed that the Battery on Gadberry Hill has received and mounted several new two hundred pound Parrott Guns, all the shells thrown being from guns of that size. The enemy's fire was again wild, many of the shells falling in the river.

[Oct.] 3rd. Weather cloudy and indicates a gale. The opposing Batteries still firing.

[Oct.] 4th. Had quite a severe gale last night. But two Monitors and the Ironsides are still to be seen this morning. Weather still gloomy.

[Oct.] 5th. The sun rose this morning beautifully—feel sick to-day and can't enjoy it. The same routine of Camp life.

[Oct.] 6th. No news—sick to-day—fine weather.

[Oct.] 7th. Everything is very quiet. One can scarcely realize that the Yankees are not two miles from us in large force. All eyes are now turned to Bragg near Chattanooga. His great victory is not as complete as was first represented. Nothing of importance has occurred on the "Island" for several days. The enemy's fire has been unusually slow with only an occasional shot from Bat[tery] 2 below Gadberry Hill. The silence of the Bat[tery] on Gadberry Hill is attributed to the bursting of one of the "big guns". Fort Moultrie and Batteries Cheves and Simkins, still shell the Yankee working parties at Bat[terie]s Gregg and Wagner. The fire is quite brisk and effective. The Yankees, however, resume their work as soon as the shells explode. From present appearances, the indications are that the enemy intends, when ready, to direct his heaviest fire on Fort Johnson. It is supposed by many that they are awaiting the arrival of more guns. The fleet remains quiet.

[Oct.] 8th. Everything still remains in state [of] quiet.

[Oct.] 9th. Left Camp at 7 o'clock to go on a review. The force on the Island was reviewed by Gen. Ripley—Gen. [Johnson] Hagood commanded the 1st Brigade—Gen. Tolliafero the troops—about four thousand were out. The Yanks at Morris Island are still hard at work.

[Oct.] 14th. Same old routine. Everybody is "resting upon his oar" and waiting anxiously to see what our Yankee brethren intend doing. It is supposed by many that they have sent a large part of their force to reinforce Rosecrans. The disappearance of a good number of their transports certainly indicate a movement of the kind. The works at Fort Johnson are progressing rapidly and have already attained huge dimensions and in a few days will defy the abolition army. Old Fort Sumter can now speak for herself. Doubtless she will surprise the Yanks very much when she opens those 10 inch Columbiads and Rifle Guns. There is life in the old land yet. Went to Charleston on Monday. The old city looks wretched.

[Oct.] 18th. Left Fort Johnson for Secessionville. Everything is in a bustle incident to a move.

[Oct.] 19th. Our tents arrived to-day, rained last night—got a good ducking. In consequence of last night's exposure W. L. Shaw was taken with congestion of the lungs and died in a very few hours.

[Oct.] 20th. We are at last fixed in our new Camp. Have not started picket duty yet—will have a task of it next week though. Yankees are quiet.

[Oct.] 24. Rain, rain, rain, from morn until night, making our tents more like a fish pond than a habitation for a "Confed Soldier"—we are in for the war though.

[Oct.] 25th. Rain, wind, and cold. Pleasant for poorly clad men.

[Oct.] 26th. Cold but not raining. Went on a drill on the review ground by Gen. Hagood. Going to Charleston to-morrow. This evening is again disagreeable. The weather is fearful—cold, rainy, and dismal. If you would like to appreciate a touch of camp life, just wrap yourself up in a wet sheet and patiently shiver with your feet in a mud puddle from daylight until dark. When meal time comes, put your "incissors" into a handful of parched corn, then wash the pulverized grain down with lukewarm "Sassafras tea", sweetened with yellow sugar and stirred with the index finger. You will be surprised at the "cervilian" aspect which everything will immediately assume.

The Yanks open from Gregg and Wagner to-day. The fire was concentrated chiefly at Sumter, though Forts Johnson and Moultrie, and Batteries Simkins and Cheves came in for their portion.

[Oct.] 27th. Went over to Charleston—returned in the afternoon. The Yanks fired several shots at the City—no damage done—people taking it very coolly.

[Oct.] 29th. "Go to it Boots, nobody is your dad". A heavy and incessant fire from the works off Morris Island is still going on.

[Oct.] 30th. Bombardment not as heavy this morning. In other respects everything is quiet.

[Oct.] 31st. On picket to-day opposite South Stono. Several boats came up the River and shelled the pickets furiously—did no damage—fragments fell all around me but none struck.

Nov. 1st. [1863.] Still on picket—will not be relieved till to-morrow. Looks much like rain.

Sun. Nov. 1st. Relieved this morning, fell back upon the reserve—spent the day loafing—in the afternoon went out in the creek and gathered oysters—had splendid supper.

[Nov.] 2nd. Still with the Reserves, expect to go back to Camp to-day.

[Nov.] 24th. It has been a long time since I have had an opportunity of writing up my book. Having been detailed on the 31st. ult. on an examining board, I was necessarily absent from Camp a greater part of the time. The Bombardment of Sumter is still going on and at times very vigorously. The old fort presents a still more dilapidated appearance, but strong enough to resist the shells. The City also shelled a greater part of last week with but little damage—only one casualty. Our position is being strengthened every day. Secessionville presents the appearance of a Sebastepol. The Yankees will find secession hotter there than [they] will care for. Our West line is also impregnable. The Eastern line, which extends to Battery Glenn, will prove as strong as earth generally proves—lastly but not least is our front, which is ready to meet the expected visitors at any moment. Am on a Court Martial at Clark house.

[Nov.] 25th. Quiet, ding dong life. Got the blues to-day.

[Nov.] 26th. Same old thing. Sumter getting it in style to-day. Our Batteries are annoying the Yanks a great deal. They shell Secessionville frequently. All has resulted in the killing of but one horse.

[Nov.] 27th. Cold, rainy, and of course, disagreeable—with no tent to shelter us—"oh my Country."

[Nov.] 28th. Batteries on Morris Island have been busy with Sumter all night. This morning is quite raw and disagreeable—no drill to-day.

[Nov.] 29th. Went to Charleston for the mail to-day in a pouring rain, and oh, what a surprise I met with—what a happy day I spent. The day soon fled and I had to return to Camp before dark.

[Nov.] 30th. Arrived from Charleston last night wet and splashed up with mud from head to foot. Clear but cold as the devil—splendid day for young ducks. Yankees not troubling us but giving the old Fort thunder. Went on inspection this morning. Got orders to move to Secessionville. Got permit to go to Charleston for thirty six hours. Walked to the General and got my papers approved and walked down to Battery Glover—took a boat for the city.

Dec. 3rd. [1863.] Had a delightful time in Charleston—can hardly resign myself to Camp life. Appointed on the Board of Ex[aminers] again today. Will go to town again tomorrow night.

[Dec.] 4th. Went to the City last night—spent a *Happy* evening. Was to return to Camp before morning but failed—had to return home and wait until morning.

[Dec.] 5th. Very quiet—no firing at all.

[Dec.] 6th. Nothing worthy of notice.

[Dec.] 7th. Same old thing.

[Dec.] 10th. Today is Thanksgiving day—went over to Charleston.

[Dec.] 11th. Spent last night in Charleston. Sumter caught fire to-day. Some ammunition was destroyed, which resulted in the killing and wounding of a good many men. The Yankees opened a terrific fire from Morris Island upon the Fort, to which our Batteries on James Island and Sullivan Island replied with vigor.

[Dec.] 12th. On court martial to-day—raining like thunder. Left for picket. Miserable weather for outpost duties.

[Dec.] 14th. Still on picket. Went to look at the pannel today. Weather clear but cold.

[Dec.] 15th. Have not been relieved yet. All quiet on the lines. Heavy firing in the direction today.

Nothing occurred worthy of notice since writing last.

Feb. 18th. [1864.] Attended Dr. Black's wedding.

[Feb.] 19th. Returned from Barnwell and spent the night in Charleston.

[Feb.] 20th. Returned to Camp today and found the Regt. under marching orders from Lake City.

[Feb.] 21st. Left Camp for the C[harleston] S[avannah] Rd. about 12 P.M. Spent the day there and took the train about 8 P.M. Went over to Charleston for a few minutes; called on some young ladies, who, although comparative strangers to me, gave me a kiss which they were pleased to term a soldier's privilege.

[Feb.] 22nd. Arrived at Savannah at 4½ p. m. Passed through the city with colors flying and band playing. Streets crowded with ladies. Took the Albany and Gulf R.R. at 9 p.m.

[Feb.] 23rd. Arrived at Valdosta, Ga., at 3 p.m. where we got off and took the road across the country for Madison, Fla. We found the ladies of Valdosta very kind—had invitations to dance, etc. Took the line of march at 6 o'clock. Stopped at Clarksville at 10 p.m.

[Feb.] 24th. Got breakfast and took the road again. Arrived at Madison, Fla., at six p.m.; crossing the Withlacoochie River on our route. The people of Madison, as well as those on the road, were exceedingly kind and very patriotic. The country being thickly settled, we saw a

great many; on arriving at Madison, the ladies immediately came out and invited us all to supper. One lady alone fed at least fifty.

[Feb.] 25th. Marched down to the depot to take the train for Lake City. The ladies crowded down to see our departure. We waited there all day. I therefore took the opportunity of making many acquaintances.

[Feb.] 26th. Have not left Madison yet. The train upon which we were to have gone was kept waiting the arrival of General Beauregard who is expected to arrive.

[Feb.] 27th. Am still at Madison. The regiment left yesterday evening. Not having room, I, with some others, remained. Went out visiting last night and spent a pleasant evening. We received numerous invitations to spend the evening and to take meals, and we generally availed ourselves of them. We slept out last night. Not being accustomed to sleeping on feather beds, we didn't sleep as sweetly as one would suppose.

[Feb.] 28th. Took the train about two o'clock after bidding a sad farewell to the kind ladies of Madison, and arrived at Lake City about 5 o'clock p.m., which place we left at 10 and arrived at the camp next day at 7 a.m. On our way we passed several villages etc. and Baldwin about 8 miles—also the battlefield of the 20th inst., and several Yankee camp grounds. The battle field presented an awful appearance. The Yankees evidently destroyed an enormous quantity of stores, ammunition, etc. We are drawn up in line of battle as I write, and from the appearance of everything, they must expect an attack. We have quite a strong force and as the Yanks are away from their gunboats, we have no apprehension.

[Feb.] 29th. No attack yet. Weather good but fare bad. My breakfast lies before me spread on a palmetto leaf—consisting of a piece of dry corn bread and bacon—quite different from the fare we received from the kind people of Madison. We are perfectly content to eat what we can get. Our only desire is to drive the Yankees from the soil of Florida. The troops of this army are to be mustered today.

Mar. 1st. [1864.] All quiet along the lines today. About 10 o'clock orders arrived for our Regiment to report to Col. Zachary at 7 o'clock tomorrow. The men here ordered to prepare one day's rations.

[Mar.] 2nd. Marched towards Jacksonville today and drove the enemy's picket in. Met the enemy at Cedar Creek—fought and drove them from the field. The fight was pretty severe. Our loss was about 18 or 20—none from my company. Our force engaged consisted of the

27th Ga., 5th Ga. Cav[alry], 2nd Fla. Bat., and our Reg[iment], also a section of Cheatham Art[illery] under command of Col. Zachary. Our Reg[iment] entered the field with "The Ladies of Madison" as their battle cry. Have not heard from South Carolina since we left. I'm wondering what is going on there.

[Mar.] 3rd. Gen. Beauregard passed the lines today. It is supposed that he intends taking the field in person as he has with him his tents, etc. Good news from Dalton—the enemy has been repelled. It is reported that the Yanks are leaving Jacksonville—don't believe it though.

[Mar.] 4th. Quite heavy firing in the direction of Jacksonville today—probably a salute in honor of the inauguration of President Lincoln. No news today. Have not heard a word from home yet. The 26th Va. arrived last night. Another Regt. has just passed going to the left.

[Mar.] 5th. Nothing stirring. False alarm about 8 o'clock last night—had the whole line under arms. Slept out last night. Don't know the cause of the alarm.

[Mar.] 6th. Beauregard returned to Charleston yesterday. Maj. Gen. [James Patton] Anderson assumed command of the Army of Fla. Two Co[mpanie]s of our Regiment arrived from Suwanee River to-day. The 26 V[irgini]a Regt. has been transferred to our Brigade in lieu of the 59 V[irgini]a which has been transferred to [illegible] Brigade.

[Mar.] 7th. Quiet to-day. Rations bad and scarce. Killed a calf to-day. 18th S. C. Regt. sent to the front.

[Mar.] 8th. Report is current that our Army has again been successful at [illegible]. Going to Lake City to-day. 26th V[irgini]a Regt. ordered to Baldwin, thence to a point on the St. Johns. Baldwin is about eight miles from this point and at one time was in the possession of the Yankees, who fortified and entrenched it but had to leave it after destroying a large amount of stores, etc.

[Mar.] 9th. Arrived at Lake City about 6 o'clock yesterday afternoon—put up at one of its hotels, if it can be so called. It has the appearance of a large cotton house on one side and a dry goods store on the other—with the smell of a hospital—fare miserable and price terrible. It is kept (or pretended to be) by an old lady who would not oblige you for anything less than \$3.00—old devil. Upon the whole, the city of Lake City is an abominable, nasty little place. Can't be compared to Madison. Met Dr. Black this afternoon.

[Mar.] 10th. Stormy weather this morning.

[Mar.] 11th. Weather still disagreeable. Applied for furlough to-day for 20 days.

[Mar.] 12th. Going to Lake City again.

[Mar.] 13th. Arrived at Lake City last night—intended going to Madison but on account of the heavy rains, the trestle at Columbus has been washed away—so will have to remain here until tomorrow, much to my regret. Am putting up at a private home—could get no rooms at the hotel. Went to Church. All the churches in the city have been turned into hospitals. Had preaching under trees—camp style.

[Mar.] 14th. Returned to Camp Milton—found the Regt had moved over the R[ail] R[oad]. Five Yankee deserters came into our lines to-day. They are constantly arriving. Made the acquaintance of a pretty girl at Sanderson to-day. Beauregard is still with us but not in command. Taliaferro has returned to South Carolina. He takes command of Charleston. Have not heard from home yet, although I have been out here nearly a month. Surely they must have written.

[Mar.] 15th. Quiet.

[Mar.] 16th. Started to build a cabin to-day. Have been taking the weather here-to-fore. I am afraid the energy I display in putting up my house predicts a move.

[Mar.] 17th. As I thought, our Regt. moves to-day to Baldwin. I will be left behind to survey swamps etc.

[Mar.] 18th. Up to my waist in water and mud all day.

[Mar.] 19th. Nothing to do. Went to Lake City—passed the Regt on my way. Got a letter from home—cheering, indeed it was.

[Mar.] 20th. To-day is Sunday and I and Wm Wilson are by ourselves with nothing to do. No church to go to. It is a most magnificent morning. Returned from Lake City yesterday afternoon.

[Mar.] 21st. Nothing to do. Beauregard went off last night. Rainy weather. Three comp[anie]s returned from Baldwin.

[Mar.] 22nd. Rainy weather—cold and disagreeable.

April 20th. [1864.] My poor diary so long neglected. I was taken sick one month ago to-day and have not been able to do anything since. Nothing very strange occurred, though, during my sickness that was worthy of note. Deserters came in every night almost—sometimes four or five at a time, bringing their horses and equipment with them. Gen. Anderson is very strict and has rendered himself very unpopular with the men. Was appointed Inspector General on Brig. Harrison's staff on

the 17th. We received orders to prepare three days cooked rations and hold ourselves in readiness to march. About dark, we took the train for Lake City—arrived there about 8 o'clock next day. At 6 o'clock in the afternoon took the train for Madison. Train ran off the track—only one man hurt. While putting the cars on the track, a tree fell upon one of our lieutenants, mortally wounding him.

We arrived at Madison about 1 a. m. and left at 2 p. m. for Quitman, Ga., a distance of 26 miles across the country. The ladies in Madison were very pressing in their invitations for me to stay with them until I sufficiently recovered from my sickness to attend to my duties, but I preferred remaining with the regt., so I hobbled into an ambulance and went on to Quitman, where we arrived 24 hours after we left Madison. Quitman is a town on the A[lbany] & G[ulf] R[ail] R[oad]—plenty of young ladies and, of course, very lively. They all invited me to stay there until I got strong enough to travel. I refused. They spoke of getting up a Ball for our Regt. on Monday night. Troops are something new to them. Our Regt. is the second one they ever saw, and as for our Band, it struck them with surprise and amazement, from which I am afraid they will never recover.

I got the Surgeon to send me on in advance of the Regt. to Charleston (where the Regt. is destined). I took the A[lbany] & G[ulf] R. R. at 2 a. m. Passed some very pretty towns on the way—principal one is called Valdosta, consisting of about 3 or 4 hundred inhabitants. Arrived at Savannah at 4 o'clock p. m. Spent the night there and took the train at 7 a. m., for Charleston, at which place I arrived at 11:30 p. m. Am now waiting for the arrival of the Regiment.

(To be continued)

THE CALHOUN-PRESTON FEUD, 1836-1842 *

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In November 1833, the General Assembly of South Carolina elected William Campbell Preston to the United States Senate to complete the unexpired term of Stephen D. Miller, resigned. Three years later the General Assembly elected Preston to a regular six-year term. From 1833 until September 1837, Preston and the senior senator from South Carolina, John C. Calhoun, apparently worked in harmony on the major issues of the day, but their ways parted when Calhoun suddenly announced his support of the subtreasury bill espoused by President Martin Van Buren. Prior to that time Van Buren had been generally disliked in South Carolina because of his association with Andrew Jackson. Calhoun's unexpected shift provoked a relentless feud between the two South Carolina senators that continued until Preston resigned his Senate seat in November 1842, thoroughly repudiated by his constituents. The quarrel not only blighted Senator Preston's promising career, but it paralleled and contributed to the extinction of the Whig Party in South Carolina.

A Virginian by birth but a longtime resident of Columbia, South Carolina, William C. Preston was a man of good breeding and varied talents. An able lawyer, possessed of a well-rounded classical learning and skilled in oratory, he was soon widely known throughout South Carolina. Also to his credit politically were his and his brother John's marriages into prominent South Carolina families. It was Preston's work in the nullification controversy that won him a seat in the United States Senate at the age of thirty-eight. There his forensic ability immediately attracted nationwide attention. Contemporaries such as John Quincy Adams, Philip Hone, and James Buchanan praised his elocution and emotional appeal to audiences, while Rufus Wilson wrote: "Not a few claim him as the most finished orator the South has ever produced." On the other hand, Calhoun, Van Buren, and some others thought that Preston's talents were overrated. Nevertheless, Preston was a great favorite of the Senate galleries.¹

* This paper was read at a meeting of the Southern Historical Association in Durham, North Carolina, Nov. 17, 1956.

¹ Charles F. Adams, ed., *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams* . . . (12 vols., Philadelphia, 1874-1877), X, 396; Allan Nevins, ed., *The Diary of Philip Hone, 1828-1851* (2 vols., New York, 1927), II, 524-25; *Diary of Louise Penelope Davis*