

Confederate soldier's letters chronicle 'cruel campaign' 6/6-98

When the Civil War broke out David Jackson Logan was an ex-schoolteacher (at Brattonsville) and living in Yorkville, where he and Samuel Banks Meacham kept a store. Logan was also married and the father of two small children, but it did not keep him from enlisting in the 17th Infantry.

David Jackson Logan's adventures are the basis of a splendid new book, "A Rising Star of Promise: The Civil War Odyssey of David Jackson Logan, 17th South Carolina Volunteers, 1861-1864," by Sam Thomas of the Cultural and Heritage Commission of York County, and Jason Silverman, professor at Winthrop University.

The book neatly combines, in chronological order, Logan's let-

ters to his wife Sallie, accounts of his unit's activities published in the Yorkville Enquirer and Logan's diary. A gifted writer, Logan obviously intended to leave an honest account of his adventure. And adventure it was, as his unit fought in battles and skirmishes on the Carolina coast, in Mississippi and finally with the Army of Northern Virginia. They moved about so much that they became known as the "Tramp Brigade."

The Confederate troops were almost entirely dependent on their families at home to send them clothing, writing paper, soap and money to buy food. The Confederate army furnished the men with ammunition (the men generally owned their weapons), hospitals and sometimes transportation, but little else.

On Dec. 29, 1862, Logan wrote the editor of the Yorkville Enquirer from Kinston, N.C., about the fighting around the town. At Kinston Bridge, "we were driven to the wall. Some of our dinner table and

chimney corner patriots can imagine our feeling if they choose, on Saturday night, the 13th of December. We had been on a forced march the whole day, many without a single blanket, and not allowed to kindle a fire, for it might serve to bring an angry bomb shrieking over your head; the bitter cold, the exhausted frame, and the contemplation of the fact that we numbered scarcely 500 men . . ."

A letter written by Logan to his wife in the summer of 1864 from Virginia after the battle of Petersburg reveals the life of men in the trenches:

"My health is very good this morning, with the exception of that 'itch.' Lying on the ground has aggravated it and made it much worst & I fear if it dont get better I will not stand it here. I tear my flesh up smartly."

Logan wrote this on his 19th day in the trenches, which were wet and slippery from excessive rain.

In the same letter he tells Sallie

that his clothes are rotting off him and begs her to send him a "pair of Drawers" and a pair of boots. The "men are getting full of lice."

With all his heart, Logan hoped that "this cruel campaign will soon close and give us peace without more bloodshed."

David Logan's last letter home was June 8, 1864. His money was running low. The letter ended with his usual "Kiss our babies for me."

David Jackson Logan lost his life on June 18, 1864, while ordering his men to keep their heads down. Logan's friend, Lt. Samuel Lowry, wrote in his diary: "We lost our much lamented company commander, Lieut. David J. Logan. . . . He was an officer and a gentleman, a man of brilliant intellect, who by his kind heart and gentle ways, had attached himself to every one of us."

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