

CHAPTER XVI.

March To Lynchburg-----Back To Richmond-----Triumphal,
Entry Of The Rebel Capitol-----Preparing For Home
-----Mustered Out-----Transfers To The 62d Ohio-----Off
For Home-----Home.

At noon on the 12th, our division started for Lynchburg, marched sixteen miles and halted for the night within seven miles of the place. Rebel officers and soldiers were all along the road, making for home. There were nearly as many of them as of us. Companies, squads and large and small parties of them were everywhere in the roads, fields, woods and houses. Negroes in great numbers were shouting around us all along the road. It was a strange sight. At night the rebels camped with us, ate with us, slept with us, and told camp stories with us. With scarce an exception they were glad the war was over, and they on their way to their homes. There was not half the rancorous feeling among them that we found among the citizens who had not been in the army. At 5 the next morning, we were on the road. Had not gone more than two miles before we came to a creek, where we found the bridges burned. The troops crossed some distance below on a canal bridge. The railroad bridge across the James River Canal was also burned. Bridges had to be built for the trains, which delayed us till after noon, and we did not reach Lynchburg until about 4 P.M. The rebels had laid out extensive fortifications about Lynchburg, with the intention of making a stand there, and thousands of negroes had recently been at work upon them. Great quantities of artillery had been thrown into the canal, a lot lay here and there spiked, with the carriages either cut down or burned, the canal, roads, streets, yards and houses were full of sabres, muskets, carbines and all kinds of war material. No such sight was ever before witnessed as we beheld as we marched through the city. Thousands of negroes thronged the way, clapping their hands, shouting and singing, and praying, and thanking God that they were *free!* They were frantic with delight, did all sorts of peculiar, novel and extremely ludicrous things. Their joy seemed unspeakable, which they tried to express by actions the most peculiar and singular, and which, among themselves, seemed to be full of meaning and expression. Such looks of gladness; such shouts of joy, such blessings; such prayers! Those poor people will never be happier in Heaven than they were on the evening of the 13th of April, A. D. 1865. We halted in the streets, and then the rush they made for us nearly took us off our feet. It seemed impossible for their joy to exhaust itself. Being short of rations, we were hungry. On learning this, they rushed off, soon returning on the run with everything they could find that was eatable, corn bread and bacon largely predominating. In all this scarcely a citizen was to be seen, none, in fact, save of the poorer classes. As we again took up the line of march through the city, we were followed by thousands of negroes with songs, prayers, and thanksgivings. The men were by this time all well fed, and were carrying abundance for another meal. We have no doubt that many an aristocratic larder and cellar was scarce of provision that night. Our regiment finally went into camp about a mile beyond the city, and near our battle ground of June 18, 1864.

General Turner, of our division, assumed command of the post, and at once issued very strict orders forbidding men entering houses or committing depredations of any kind upon citizens, or public and private property. On the next day, many of our officers and men visited the battle ground of 1864 and made search for the graves of our fallen heroes, especially for that of our lamented Captain Keyes. We were unsuccessful. Inquiry finally led us to the records of the undertakers of the city, from which we readily found his and other graves. We found Captain Keyes' grave on the Seminary Hill, west of the Seminary, and in front of the rebel breastworks thrown up against Hunter. It was to this Seminary, which was used as a hospital, the Captain was taken by the rebels, and here he lay till he died, on the 19th of July. A large number of Union dead are buried in this cemetery, which is now known as "The Poplar Grove National Cemetery." Captain Keyes is buried in "grave 333, section E. division E." The burial place of others of the 116th at Lynchburg will be found in the list, given elsewhere, of names of men of our regiment buried in Southern cemeteries. General Harris made a speech to the negroes in the afternoon, giving them good advice in the exercise of their freedom. Rations were issued to the poor, and to the paroled prisoners on their way home. The rebel soldiers were surprised at our kindness to them, and at the leniency of the Government.

At 3 P.M. on the 15th, our regiment, with its division, started back toward Richmond. Camped that night about seven miles out. Next morning we started at 6. After going six or seven miles, a train on the South

Side Railroad took most of the 3d brigade on board. Ours marched on some distance beyond Appomattox Station and camped. The news of the assassination of President Lincoln reached us that night. It was not credited, and hence created very little excitement. We reached Farmville on the 18th, where we received newspapers which confirmed the sad news of the assassination of the President. The revulsion of feeling and the terrible depression it cause among the soldiers has never been, and can never be, described. President Lincoln was regarded by the army in the light of an exceedingly kind and indulgent father, and the mourning his death created is indescribable. A little way beyond Burkesville Junction, on the 20th, that part of the regiment which had been on the Danville Railroad since the 6th joined us, bringing with it a large number of prisoners, horses and mules.

It is now in place to mention the services of the right wing, which had been sent down the Danville Railroad from Burkesville Junction, under Captain Mann, on the 6th. The Captain was ordered to go hastily down the road and take a position, with a view to capturing any supply or other trains which it was supposed Jeff Davis, who had passed down just before we reached the Junction, would send up to Lee. The Captain proceeded down the road, capturing many prisoners as he advanced. Reaching Meherrin Station, he found a lot of corn, to which a squad of rebel cavalry was helping itself. His skirmishers soon drove them off. The whole neighborhood was alarmed by the firing, and the presence of Union troops caused great excitement. Breaking the road was the work of but a few moments. He then stationed his men in a good position, well under cover and out of sight of any approaching trains. Very soon they heard the rumbling of a train, and then the whistle of an engine, evidently at the first station below. They waited anxiously for its approach. But all at once there was heard sharp whistling to put on brakes. The noise of the moving train ceased for a moment, "off brakes" was whistled in a manner that indicated an excited engineer was in the cab, and then as the rumbling noise of the train began to grow fainter and fainter, they saw that their game had escaped them, information of their whereabouts having doubtless been conveyed to those in charge of the train by the cavalry driven from Meherrin. In the evening, the Captain observed rebel cavalry hovering about and watching his movements. Anticipating a night attack, he prepared himself by fortifying his position. Chaplain Logan accompanied this wing of the regiment, and observing the threatening appearance of things, went to the Captain and said to him: "Captain, we will no doubt be attacked during the night, and as John _____ never does us much good in a fight, I will esteem it a favor if you will give he his gun." This was just like Chaplain Logan, who was a "fighting parson," in the true and patriotic sense of the term. But the Captain and his men were not attacked that night, and saw no more rebels until they came streaming through on their way home from Appomattox. The command was actively engaged in scouting and preventing foraging parties, of our own and the rebels, from pillaging, and in gathering up prisoners, horses, mules and other rebel property. The citizens about Meherrin soon recovered from their alarm, and treated our men with great kindness, furnishing them cheerfully with plenty of provisions. They expressed regrets when the Captain and his men were ordered to rejoin their regiment, for they were thus left without protection from the gangs of marauders with which the country was at that stage of proceedings overrun.

We lay at Burkesville during the 20th and 21st. On the 22d we started direct for Richmond, keeping on the railroad most of the time. Passed through Jennings, Jettersville and Section House, and camped within a couple miles of Amelia Court House. The 23d, we marched twenty miles, and on the 24th thirteen miles, camping within two miles of Richmond. The next day at 8 A.M., we passed through Manchester, and crossed the James River on pontoons, just one month from our leaving Camp Holly. On striking Main Street, the 3d division of our corps, which had been in possession of Richmond since its evacuation, the night of the 2d of April, was drawn up to receive us, cheering, presenting arms, and bands playing. It was a befitting welcome to troops returning from a campaign so fruitful of results. We were cheered everywhere as the "heroes of Appomattox." We passed directly through Richmond, and went into camp about two miles out on the Lynchburg pike. Here we lay, with some changes of camp, until the 14th of June, when the regiment was mustered out.

On the 30th of May, Lieutenant Colonel Teters received his commission as Brevet Lieutenant Colonel, and Lieutenant Wm. Biddenharn as Brevet Captain.. These officers were recommended for promotion to these brevet ranks just after the battle of Cedar Creek, October 19th, 1864, for gallant and meritorious conduct in the battles of the Shenandoah campaign. Lieutenant Colonel Teters was then a Captain, and Captain Biddenharn a Second Lieutenant. The promotions came tardily, many months after they were earned, but

they were none the less deserving. At the time Captain Biddenharn was recommended for promotion, he was an aide on the staff of Lieutenant Colonel Wildes, then commanding the 1st brigade, 1st division, Army of West Virginia.

On the 1st day of June, orders were received to prepare rolls for muster out. The order excepted companies F and K, and some recruits of other companies, whose term of service did not expire prior to October 1st. This was regarded by all as particularly unjust and unfortunate, and was the occasion for a great deal of bad feeling throughout the regiment. The fact is that these two companies, although not mustered in at the same time with the others, were in every action, and on every march and service in which the rest of the regiment was engaged, and the recruits were in every battle, save Moorefield and Winchester, in 1863. These men were transferred to the 62d Ohio regiment, and afterwards, when the 62d and 67th were consolidated, they formed a part of the latter organization, under command of Colonel and Brevet Major General A. C. Voris, of Akron, Ohio. The non-commissioned officers, thus transferred, were mustered out June 20th, and the privates August 8, 1865. This has rendered it impossible to get the rolls of these two companies into proper shape. I have done the very best I could with them, but I am not at all satisfied with their condition. I am greatly indebted to Sergeant Silas King, of company F, for the assistance he has given me in preparing the rolls of that company, and to Major Hull and Captain John F. Welch, of company K, for their aid in preparing those of company K.

Whilst waiting for muster out at Richmond, Quartermaster Sergeant W. T. Patterson wrote for Whitelaw Reid's "Ohio in the War," the sketch of the regiment which appears in that work. Mr. Patterson contemplated writing the history of the regiment upon his return home, and with that view kept a very full and accurate daily memoranda of events from the beginning to the end of its service. After his muster out he graduated from the Ohio University at Athens, and began the study of the law, which he soon abandoned, and entered upon a theological studies. He had just finished his studies when he was stricken down with fever, and died July 2d, 1869. His friends have very kindly placed in my hands his manuscript and memoranda. He had begun to write the history of the regiment, and had covered the time up to our arrival at Winchester in March, 1863. He and his companion and friend in the Quartermaster's department, Quartermaster Sergeant Ezra L. Walker, kept very full diaries of passing events. Sergeant Walker was a matter-of-fact man in everything. Sergeant Patterson was very different. While he noted all the facts passing before his eye, he found pleasant society also in noting everything of the country through which he passed. The blue edges and gleaming caps of the mountains of Virginia, its beautiful Valleys, clear streams, virgin forests, winding mountain roads, with their display of magnificent scenery, furnished him never-ending subjects for pleasant comment and enthusiastic description. His memoranda and writings are replete with pictures of the country. Even when returning from the Lynchburg raid in 1864, when we were all more than half starved, and all the enthusiasm and inspiration was worn out of everybody else, he found heart to describe the enchanting scenery along that dreadful march. In one place, we see him in ecstasies over the beauties of Sinking Creek, Potts and Sweet Spring Mountains. At another, we have interesting descriptions of Sweet Sulphur Springs and vicinity, then of the Big and Little Sewel Mountains, Meadow Bluffs and New River, and even the night march we made through that rocky gorge before reaching White Sulphur Springs had romance and grandeur in it to him. Nothing could dampen his enthusiasm, nothing could drench his ardor. Patterson with nature was like a youth with the maiden he loves. He lived closer to nature than any man I ever knew. Desert places, dreary regions, desperate mountain passes ribbed with barren ridges, had charms to him and gave play to the imagery of his poetic mind, when they were casting nothing but gloomy shadows and discouragement over the sore and weary footsteps of all others. Every object, when he looked upon it, seemed to revolve about and exhibit its bright side. As Theodore Winthrop says of John Brent, so it might be said of Will Patterson: "She (nature) was always his love, whatever she could do; however dressed, whether in clouds or sunshine, unchanging fair; in whatever mood, weeping or smiling, at her sweetest; grand, beautiful for her grandeur; tender, beautiful for her tenderness; simple, lovely for her simplicity; careless, prettier than if she were trim and artful; rough, patient and impressive, a barbaric queen."

On the evening of the 2d of April, after the charge of our regiment on Fort Gregg, he got lost in the darkness in returning to the train, but he could not help putting down his impressions of the grandeur of that night search for the "look out" near which the train had been parked. On the 12th of April, as the regiment was approaching Lynchburg, he writes: "The red clay hills and oak forest about us remained one

of dear old Ohio.” And so he saw and noted everything, and everything pleased him. His powers of description, too, were boundless, and did I not feel constrained to eliminate everything from this little book not closely connected with the personal history of the regiment, I would take great pleasure in making use of much more than I have of his beautiful descriptions of the country through which we passed. I know many would feel a keen interest in the panorama, which his pen has drawn, of our long and tiresome marches. It would afford them, as it has me, great pleasure to look back over the routes they traveled, and as they saw them pictured anew, to note the beautiful things they missed seeing as they passed along, too footsore or too weary to observe them. But he loved the 116th, as every line of his copious memoranda verifies. He grew prouder and prouder of its career as he wrote down its daily record, and it will ever remain a source of deep regret to us all that his young life was not spared to finish the pleasant task of writing out and publishing the record he had so religiously kept, and in which he felt such deep concern and pride.

On the 10th of June, General Gibbon issued the following farewell order to his corps:

HEADQUARTERS 24TH A. C. REVIEW GROUND
RICHMOND, VA., June 10th, 1865.

Soldiers of the 24th Corps:

This, probably, is the last occasion upon which you, as a corps, will be assembled. Many of you are about to re-enter civil life, to resume those domestic duties which by your service in the great cause of your country have been so long neglected. Before we separate, I desire to thank you, in the name of a grateful country, for the service you have rendered her. By your discipline, long marches, and hard fighting, you have established for yourselves a name second to none in the army. Your badge has become an emblem of energy, valor and patriotism, and is a source of just pride to all who wear it. Those of you who are entering civil life should still wear it on all occasions as an evidence to your brothers who remain in the service, of your pride in a badge made sacred by the blood of so many brave men, and of your disposition should your country ever again call you to arms, to again assemble under that proud emblem and revive the glory of the 24th corps. To our comrades who are leaving the service, we pledge a kind farewell, and a wish that their career in civil life may be as successful and prosperous as their military life has been honorable to themselves and valuable to their country.

JOHN GIBBON, Major General Volunteers, Commanding Corps

The regiment was mustered out just before noon. June 14th, and forming it in a hollow square, Lieutenant Colonel Teters delivered the following farewell address:

HEADQUARTERS 116TH O.V.I.
RICHMOND, VA., June 14, 1865

Officers and Soldiers:

In bidding you farewell today, I desire to tender you my thanks for the kindness, co-operation and support I have received from you since assuming command of the old regiment. Since putting on the soldier's garb you have endured untold hardships without a murmur. You have toiled through one of the most trying raids of the war. You have engaged in some of the most desperate battles of the war. You have never disgraced your colors. You have honored your State and have won the esteem and praise of every commander of every army in which you have served. Now that you are returning to your homes crowned with honors, now that the smoke of battle has been dispelled by the rays of the glorious Sun of Peace, and you are about to enter again upon the duties of civil life as citizens of our restored Republic, that your brave brothers in arms, and the people to whom you return, may always be proud of you and will feel it a solemn duty to honor you and your posterity, be as peaceful and honorable

in civil life as you have been brave and glorious in battle. Let us not forget to cherish the _____ in battle _____
 _____ Here at the _____
 _____ dead comrades, and be
 _____ of a comrade and of
 _____.

And _____. Comrades, let me beseech you _____ been in the past. I am _____ your discharge, you may rest _____! You will always in the _____.

_____ TETERS _____ding Regiment.

Here is the language and sentiment of the true soldier, and farewell was never bidden to brave men by a brave man.

But little remains to be done to close the record of the 116th. The next morning at daylight, the regiment marched down to the wharf and took the "M. Martin," General Grant's old boat, and steamed down the James. It was interesting now to pass Forts Darling and Brady, the Howlett House batteries, Dutch Gap Canal, Butler's Lookout, Deep Bottom, Camp Holly and the great fortifications of both sides. No thundering of artillery or mortars now, no pickets or picket firing, and no troops holding forts or fortifications. We could see Camp Holly from our vessel, and the forts and lines of earthworks we had watched with such vigilance so long. There were our log huts yet, but no smoke arose from their chimneys, and none of the signs of busy camp life were anywhere visible in the company streets or on the well trodden parade ground. It was a "deserted village," indeed. It was hard to think that only a few weeks before, these opposing lines of works we were passing were held by hostile armies, striving their very best to destroy each other. As we passed the spot, where we crossed the James in the early evening of the 27th of March, to commence the wonderful campaign which ended so gloriously thirteen days afterwards at Appomattox, many an one thought of the brave fellows who crossed with us, but were not now on this happy journey home.

The regiment reached Columbus on the evening of the 19th, where we took supper at Tod Barracks, and at 10 P.M. again took the cars and started for Camp Dennison, which we reached next morning at daylight, and where we were paid off on the 23d, and the next day we started for our homes. As soon as we reached the Athens County line, squads began to leave us at every stopping place. Crowds were everywhere waiting to greet friends, and such welcomes as they met with on every hand was enough to turn the heads of these brave fellows. But still another greeting awaited them in their homes, a greeting that no other should witness. To that sacred and precious greeting they were remitted, and our work is done.

The Spartan mother who sent her son to battle, bade him to return with his shield in honor, or on his shield in death. Here came a mere remnant of a regiment, bearing their shields in honor, but how many of their brave comrades had returned before them on their shields in death!

On the 20th of June, quite a number of promotions were made in the regiment, which were, of course, not to fill vacancies for further service, but to do honor to a number of worthy men, who had long since earned promotion but could not be mustered, because of the reduced condition of the regiment. The promotions were as follows:

First Lieutenant Samuel D. Knight, to Captain.
 First Lieutenant Ransom Griffin, to Captain.
 Second Lieutenant Jacob Wyekoff, to First Lieutenant.
 Second Lieutenant John S. Heald, to First Lieutenant.
 Second Lieutenant Charles A. Cline, to First Lieutenant.
 Sergeant Mann Smith, to Second Lieutenant.

Sergeant Peter D. Wolf, to Second Lieutenant.
Sergeant John L. Beach, to Second Lieutenant.
Sergeant Adam J. Myers, to Second Lieutenant.
Sergeant Samuel Atkinson, to Second Lieutenant.
Sergeant Francis A. Bartley, to Second Lieutenant.
Sergeant Benjamin F. Sammons, to Second Lieutenant.
Sergeant John C. Chick, to Second Lieutenant.
Sergeant Leander Shane, to Second Lieutenant.
Sergeant Benjamin Sheffield. to Second Lieutenant.
Sergeant Andrew W. Henthorn, to Second Lieutenant.

Thus closes the history of the 116th Regiment of Ohio Volunteers. We have only to add the rosters of the field and staff and the various companies, following which is the list of those who died in Southern prisons, or on Southern battle fields.

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May 19, 2002
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