

THE STORY OF MY LIFE
1837—1924

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PETOSKEY, MICHIGAN
SEPTEMBER 10, 1911



From National Archives

At the request of my children I write this to pass down to my grandchildren, a partial history of the events of my life. I do this from memory at my age of 74 years.

I was born in Württemberg, Germany, April 15, 1837, in the small village of Wilhelmsdorf. My father's name was John Michael Henke and my mother was Frederika Gumpfer. Of my father's people I know very little. They were manufacturers of woolen goods in Korndal, near Stuttgart and his brothers were prominent men of the social and political life of those times. My mother's father was also a manufacturer of woolen goods. All looms were run by man power in those days. There was no steam power. The shoemaker and tailor came to the family's house to make up the clothing and shoes. Matches were not yet invented and the smoker lit his pipe by using steel flint and punk. Ninety percent of the people were poor and we were in that class. White bread was a rare thing in our house, and meat was on the table only about once a week, and then only in small quantity. Mother cooked soups of all kinds for us children. We had plenty to eat and there was no discontent or faultfinding in our family.

Father was a wagonmaker and it was a hard task for him to support a family of six children. With all the comforts of life in our possession today, one cannot realize the condition of the people in Europe at that time. The dwellings, barns, and stables were all connected and under one roof. But with all this we seemed to be happy and contented, although we could see others living much better. Our home life was very much like that of the best people of our class. We were always kept clean and our clothing was good. Mother would sand her floors as we had no carpets. I do not remember of ever seeing a carpet on any of the floors in our village.

In the early spring of 1848 Grandfather Gumpfer and our family decided to immigrate to America in order to better the condition of their children. Well do I remember how delighted I was over this news. There was no limit to my boyish anticipations. Little did I dream of the hardships in store for us. There were other families going with us so we were not alone. We started for America from our town in covered wagons. There were eight or ten of these for the six families that made up our company. We were headed for Manheim, several hundred miles away to the first railroad we had ever seen. Then we went by river to Bremen where we were to get a boat for New York. This was a long trip and I cannot remember how many days we were in getting to Bremen. Father was taken sick with brain fever at Bremen, and we could not remain with him, neither could we take him along. The parting of the family in that sick chamber was a heart breaking scene, and to this day I think of it only as one of the saddest events of my life. A mother with six small children bidding farewell to the husband and father, leaving him to the care of strangers, and she to go to a foreign country among people who could not even understand her language. This was a trial for a mother almost unbearable. Grandfather Gumpfer is entitled to very much credit for his assistance, for mother could not have gone through this without his aid.

We now got on a three master sailing vessel for New York. We were forty long days crossing the Atlantic and here were some awful experiences for a boy. It was a very rough passage and several nights the hatches were fastened down, and we were like so many cattle shut in total darkness down below. It seemed to us as though every plunge of the boat would be the last. All the delightful anticipations I had before starting were now shaken from me by the angry Atlantic, for it was a fearful trip. However, for us children it proved to be the greatest good that could have been done for us.

We landed in New York about May 1, 1848 as near as I can remember. Ann Arbor, Michigan, was our stopping place. How well do I remember mother and her children sitting on our trunks in the station, weeping over our forlorn condition, and father back in Bremen whether dead or alive we did not know. This was our condition on arrival in the land of the free and the home of the brave. I was eleven years of age and I could realize that our future was to be anything but cheerful. Father arrived in the fall so we were all united again in this country.

At the age of twelve years I left home to work among the Germans. They were hard taskmasters and abused a boy shamefully, and many a night I went to sleep weeping with homesickness. That first year in America was the hardest of my boyhood life. I do not remember of our family ever meeting all together at one time again after coming to this country. At thirteen years of age I could not speak English. I then went to work for an American on Lodi Plains and here I was treated much better. I learned to speak English quite rapidly and was treated so much better than I had been that I got over my homesickness.

Mother died in 1854 and father in 1858. Both are buried in the town of Freedom, Washtenaw County, Michigan, in a German Lutheran cemetery, and a small stone marks their graves. My father and mother never derived any benefit from coming here. Theirs was a hard lot from start to finish: and I felt when death ended all it was better for them, they now were at rest. Not a home of their own, no future ahead of better conditions, there was nothing inviting for them to remain. We children could not help them.

At the age of fourteen I went to Grass Lake to carry a horseback mail. This was the best job I had seen and I worked here for three years. I then worked in a brickyard for three years for better wages. In the winter I drove team hauling wood to the Michigan Central Railroad. The railroads burned wood in the engines in those days. The brickyard work was very hard, but the wages were better than on the farm. Farm wages were ten and twelve dollars a month, and at the brickyard I was getting fifteen dollars the first year, seventeen the second, and nineteen the third and board. But I had a fairly mature mind at that age and began to meditate on opportunities for improvement. In looking over the men and the work there was no future to it. The men were all poor and mostly of a drinking class. For these reasons I concluded to make a change. I had saved my money and was careful not to mix in with the bad element.

I now started in learning the carpenter trade and got along well, soon making up my loss in wages while learning. In the third year I received \$1.50 a day

and board, this being the best price going at that time. I became associated with a better class of people, moved in the best society in Grass Lake. I had raised myself, as it were, out of the lower element to a better outlook for the future. Life began to look better to me, everything looked more cheerful, and I felt as though I was as good as any of the young men with whom I associated. From the German boy immigrant, I had become an American. The hard struggle was over. I had seen much hard life and appreciated the better condition more than anyone else that had never seen the hard side of life. Nearly all my associates were young men of well-to-do families and had never been through any such trials as I had: and later in life I passed them all in the great struggle of a man to lay by something for old age. They had not gleaned from the cold world what I had. All those young men who were my companions passed away comparatively poor. I was the only one from among them that really made a success of life in the broad way of looking at it today. In my early boyhood years I had learned a lesson never to be forgotten.

In 1861 the whole country became excited over the firing of Fort Sumter by the South. President Lincoln called for 75000 volunteers to put down the rebellion, but this proved to be only a starter. The Battle of Bull Run was fought and lost, and this led to increased excitement both North and South. Lincoln called for 300,000 more men. Business was neglected, men stopped work, everybody was talking war. A company was formed in Grass Lake. I put my name down with forty others. The officer forming the company was from Detroit. He failed to show up, and having no leader we broke up and proved to be a fizzle. Four of us went to Detroit to enlist, but the quota for the state was full. So great was the rush to fight for the country that no more men were wanted on that call from Michigan. We then went to Illinois. The other three boys concluded they would go back home, but I had packed my tools, quit work and was bound to enlist, and was the only one of the four that went through the war. The other three never enlisted. I enlisted at Cairo, Illinois, September 2, 1861 in Company C., 10th Illinois Infantry. Not a man in the regiment had I ever seen. I changed my citizen's clothes to a soldier's uniform and from a salary of \$36.00 a month I was cut down to \$11.00 and I soon realized this great change. An entire change of life: all were strangers and the atmosphere was chilly, and I confess I was one of the homesick ones for a time. But I was not alone for all were more or less affected in that way. It was every man for himself. We were simply a fighting machine. No one cared for you in the least and it became a cold, selfish proposition, and many of the poor boys died of homesickness. The change from civil to military life was in itself a fearful trial to the men and I took my dose with the rest. One hears nothing of this in reading of the war, but I am sure every volunteer soldier went through this trial and many of the boys could not survive the severe test.

Cairo was on the border line of Missouri and Kentucky and was then the advance post of the Union army. Volunteer regiments began to gather here for the formation of a great army. Men were drilling everywhere. Just across the Mississippi was Missouri and across the Ohio was Kentucky.

These states were occupied by the rebels. Everything was excitement and talk of war. We put in the winter drilling, marching and guard duty. Cairo was a very sickly place and many died of typhoid fever. I too came near going with the others, but got well and went through the whole war without getting seriously ill after that.

In the spring General Grant with twenty seven boats loaded with men, started for Fort Donaldson. It was a grand sight to see them move up the Ohio River. In a few days we crossed over the Mississippi to Birds Point. General Pope was getting an army of 10,000 men together to move into New Madrid, Missouri which lies about sixty miles below on the river. The river from Cairo to New Orleans was then occupied by the rebels. Island #10 about half way to New Madrid was fortified and considered impregnable to an attack by our gunboats. To open the river was of great importance, and to do this General Pope marched his army across the country to capture New Madrid. Things now began to look like war and as we started out from Birds Point, we began to realize what we had enlisted for. In two days we exchanged shots with General Jeff Thompson. Here we first dodged the whizzing rifle bullet and we drove the enemy rapidly into New Madrid. Our regiment, the 16th Illinois and the Yates sharpshooters were ordered out at midnight to fortify a position close to their forts. In doing this we lost ten men killed, but succeeded in our undertaking. The next day we witnessed the most terrific cannonading we saw during the war. We now realized that we were soldiers and that we had a work before us that required a great deal of nerve. On the following night the enemy evacuated the two forts and New Madrid was ours. In a few days after this two of our gunboats ran past Island #10. Two small river boats were also brought through the swamps, so now we were ready to operate against the foe from the river. Everything now being in readiness, the 10th and 16th Illinois were put onto these boats, the gunboats leading, and in a short time engaging the rebel batteries on the shore. Here now was a new and exciting scene: the cannon balls skipping over the water close to our little boats. This I want to tell you was a dangerous venture for us. One shot hitting those boats would have put us to the bottom, but none hit us and the gunboats cleaned out the land batteries. Without stopping we were landed and started after the retreating enemy, following them up until dark, driving them out of their camp, eating their cooked suppers, sleeping in their tents, and early in the morning they surrendered, 5000 men and their supplies. This was a great victory, especially as it followed close onto General Grant's great victory at Fort Donaldson. This was a hard trip. We were all tired out on that days march and excitement and had the rebs given us battle they would certainly have captured us, for they had 5000 to our 1600 men. We did not receive reinforcement till the following day, for these boats had to go twelve miles and back to bring them and then march ten miles to where we were. General Pope got another star for this victory. This also captured Island #10 and the river was opened 180 miles.

The army was now loaded into steamers and proceeded down the river, the navy in advance: all our gunboats having come down, so we had a large fleet. It

certainly was a great sight to see. We stopped above Memphis and the troops were unloaded there. An order came from General Halleck for our army to report at Pittsburgh Landing.

The Battle of Shiloh was fought and a doubtful victory the result, General Grant being superseded by General Halleck. We were now ordered aboard and started up the river to Pittsburgh Landing, a long distance to go. The Mississippi river abandoned and left to its fate was a great mistake. It resulted in the Vicksburg campaign and closed the river again for nearly two years.

We were now in the state of Mississippi and here before Corinth had a lot of hard work and to little fighting in a small way, as General Pope's troops did all there was done after we got there. However, the rebel army escaped and so ended the campaign. We were now placed in General Palmer's division: afterwards governor of Illinois and candidate for President by the Democrat gold money party. We were now ordered to Nashville, Tennessee which was a long and hard march. We relieved the garrison at Nashville, they to relieve Louisville from the General Bragg invasion. Here we did heavy guard duty and were cut off from the North for nearly two months. We were constantly annoyed by the rebs on the outskirts of the city, so while in Nashville we were kept busy by the enterprising enemy. We occupied Fort Negly, and it was at this place that I met Leonard Remington for the first time, and afterwards he became my brother-in-law. He had enlisted in the 4th Michigan Cavalry. I was delighted to meet him as I was then writing some very interesting letters to his sister Vina.

In the spring of 1863 we started for Chattanooga, the Chattanooga Campaign, General Rosecrans commanding. Here we had hard marching and a great deal of skirmishing. We were now in the 14th army corps, Jeff Davis division, and it seemed as though they used us for cavalry, as we were always on the flanks keeping the rebel cavalry at a safe distance. General Bragg, commanding the rebel army, evacuated Chattanooga. This was a surprise to all of us, but the storm was only delayed for a short time. The Battle of Chickamauga was fought and our corps, General Thomas commanding, stood the ground after the balance of the army fell back. We were out on the flank and escaped much of the worst. The roar of the artillery and musketry was awful, infantry and artillery being often close together. The battle of Chickamauga was the bloodiest of the war.

Next came the battle of Missionary Ridge. In this battle our division was assigned to General Sherman. We crossed the Tennessee River on a pontoon bridge 6 miles above Chattanooga. Our division was on the reserve, held close by and not brought into action on the day of the battle. But the next day on Beauregard's retreat we did some hard marching and hot skirmishing, and captured a great many of the enemy at Chickamauga Station. Here I saw a sight never to be forgotten. After we had gone through the station and on reaching the hills overlooking a valley, I beheld a retreating army. As far as I could see the valley seemed to be covered with a panic stricken rabble of men in full retreat. They were badly whipped the day before and it seemed to all of us that we ought to crowd them into a fight and hold them until reinforcements came up, but we

were held there for hours looking at them, only to see them disappear. I think had General Grant or Sherman seen this, the result would have been otherwise.

General Sherman was ordered to relieve Burnside at Knoxville, and our division being attached to his army, joined in this march. It was one of the hardest marches we saw during the war. We were living mostly on parched corn and making from twenty five to thirty miles a day, but we saved our army at Knoxville, General Longstreet retreating into Virginia. When we got back to our camp where our tents were left before the battle of Missionary Ridge, we were a hard looking lot. Many of the men were almost barefoot and snow on the ground, the regiment was about used up by the hard service. We moved camp to Rossville, Georgia, 6 miles south of Chattanooga. The government wanted the old soldiers to reenlist and offered as an extra inducement \$400.00 bounty, \$100.00 on enlistment and \$50.00 every three months. A soldier who had become accustomed and hardened to the service was worth double a raw recruit, besides the U.S. needed men. Apparently the war was no nearer a close than the year previous, and matters did not look good for the closing of the war. Drafting, in some of the states to make their quota was already enforced. The country was no longer supplied with volunteers. To join the army now was a serious thing and men held back from offering themselves to save the country. Officers used all their influence with their men to get them to return to the service in order that their regiments might hold their organization. I hesitated a long time for I had seen all the service I cared to, and being orderly sergeant, a position next to a commissioned officer, I had quite an influence. Twenty men were waiting for me and if I went they would go: and so great pressure was brought to bear upon me from headquarters until I too enrolled. This now made the quota to hold our company organization. Most of the men reenlisted and the regiment held its organization also. I have never regretted the step then taken, for I went through the entire war from start to finish on the fighting line.

On January 1, 1864 the regiment was mustered to veteran for three years or during the war. By this reenlistment we were all given a thirty day furlough. By January 10th we started for Quincy, Illinois where we were to disband every man to his home. We were loaded into freight cars and the weather being very cold we suffered greatly, but we arrived at Quincy on the same train by which we had started from Bridgport, Alabama, jammed in like so many cattle. Now for home and each man for himself. It seemed strange to get into a bed to sleep again after nearly three years in tents on the ground. Living like civilized men again was quite a change. I got into a Wabash fast train and wanted to stop at Pesotum, Illinois to visit a brother and sister there, but the conductor would not stop the train. I told him my story and he said go and see the engineer. I went to the engineer at Tolona and also told him my story, and he said, "Soldier, buy the beer and I will stop the train." I did so and he stopped. My brother and sister met me at 3 o'clock in the morning and that night I had no sleep. I remained one day and then started for Grass Lake, Michigan. Everybody was glad to see me, especially my best girl, Vina M. Remington. We decided to get married as we had

been engaged for some time. In two weeks we were man and wife, having had a quiet wedding and my soldier's uniform was my wedding suit. Time flew fast and I soon had to report again at Quincy. The parting from my wife was a very hard and sad affair, as my going back to the front was a serious proposition for both of us. I knew better than she what that meant, only one chance in forty to return.

Well, to get back to Chattanooga was now our orders, which we did by freight train as we had come. General Grant now commanded all the armies, the political Generals having been superseded by better men. General Sherman commanded the western army. All were to move together so the enemy could not concentrate from one place to another. All their men were needed where they were. General Sherman was getting together an army of 100,000 men at Chattanooga. General Grant was doing the same with a larger army in Virginia, and over to the South our armies were to move together onto the rebs, May 1st and operate under one head. It was a great undertaking to get these armies ready. Sherman's supplies came from Louisville, Kentucky, four hundred miles through enemy's territory. This was an enormous task. For weeks nothing was hauled over this line but army supplies. Finally by May 4th we started on the Atlanta Campaign. In a days advance we struck the rebs at Rocky Face and Buzzards Roost. For 120 days we were on the firing line. Our line would move up close to their fortifications and they would be obliged to fall back. A battle was fought at Resaca taking aim at a johnny behind a tree. On June 27th our division made a charge and were repulsed, losing 1500 men. On Peach Tree Creek I had a bullet put through my haversack, and so the whole campaign was a continual fighting. The roar of cannon and musketry was continuous somewhere on the line from five to fifteen miles in length. This was mostly in the woods and the enemy could rarely be seen, and I often wondered how General Sherman was able to locate them. Twice during this campaign four of us were playing cards on a blanket spread out on the ground: and at one of these times my partner was killed, and at another one of the opponents was killed. Of course, this would stop our playing for the time being, but we became so accustomed to flying bullets whizzing through the air and striking trees, that we could not stop having a little recreation.

The Battle of Atlanta was fought and we were victorious. The Confederates admitted a loss of 10,000 men. This battle was fought by the army of the Tennessee and we were on the extreme right flank in the 14th army corps, army of the Cumberland. Being miles away, we missed this battle. General McPherson was killed.

About this time, September 20th, we were transferred to the 17th corps, army of the Tennessee, General O.O. Howard commanding. We were now in General Joe Mower's division. General Sherman now commenced his grand flank movement to drive the rebs out of Atlanta. The 23rd corps fell back seven miles on the north side of the Chattahoochee River and fortified. The balance of the army left our works and started for Jonesborough, 20 miles south, and in the rear of Hood's rebel army, our division bringing up the rear. General Hood telegraphed President Jeff Davis that the yankee army was whipped and

retreating, but he found out differently soon after. As stated, we brought up the rear, and if there is a place to try men it is rear guard of a retreating army. The rebs suspected something unusual was taking place, and an hours before dark we saw them leaving their works by the thousands, and as far as we could see they were advancing. All this time we were being held, as our wagon train was delayed and we could not leave them. We all expected to be taken prisoners and our wagon train captured, but a ditch had been dug for us to fall back to, and we just opened up a heavy musketry fire on them and they stopped coming.

By the time they were ready to advance upon us in line of battle it got dark, our train was out of the way, and we fell back, but they followed us until midnight, firing musketry and artillery. This looked like a bad proposition before dark and we were glad to see night come on, or we certainly would have been gobbled up. After one o'clock we began marching rapidly and reached Jonesborough about eight o'clock A.M. completely exhausted. We were on the extreme right infantry of the army. General Hood had plenty to do the next day as he found Sherman was on his railroad in the rear and that he was not retreating. By ten A.M. we could hear the roar of musketry and artillery miles to our left. The 14th corps we had left but a few days before was doing terrible fighting. Hood evacuated Atlanta, threw his whole army onto our men to save his retreat, but he was defeated at every point, and that night we heard the explosion of his ammunition in Atlanta. Atlanta was ours. It was a great victory, but it cost us 20,000 men and the rebels many more. However, this was the only way to end the war. The army in the east too were doing some of their heaviest fighting. We were under fire from May 4th to September 30th. The Atlanta goes down in history as one of the greatest campaigns of modern times. Over six hundred miles from our base of supplies in the enemy's country. General Grant kept them so well occupied that they could not send reinforcements against Sherman, and our constant hammering weakened them more than us, so ended the Atlanta Campaign.

We now went into camp for a rest which the army needed. No one knew what our next move would be, and with all our speculating on what it might be, we knew we could not go much farther from the base of supplies, as the army must be fed and passing through an enemy's country is a dangerous proposition. It required as many men to guard our supply trains as it did to do the fighting, hence 100,000 men at the front needed as many more to keep them in food, so in order to advance farther south was a problem. General Sherman was up against it, but General Hood, the rebel commander, decided it for us. We had not rested long before Sherman found that Hood had actually gone around us and was destroying our railroad and capturing towns seventy five miles in our rear. We started at once after him and here we did some hard marching. As soon as we caught up to him we drove him off our line and into Alabama on the Tennessee River. But before Hood reached here, Sherman stopped his army and we came back to Kingston and Marietta. Here we were paid off, voted for Abraham Lincoln, and wondered what next would be our orders. It began to be rumored about that Sherman was going to cut loose and go for the Atlantic coast,

leaving General Thomas to look after Hood. However, no one considered such a bold move possible. To cut loose from supplies and subsist on the country with 65,000 men seemed impossible of accomplishment. We waited two days after being paid off when we were told that an officer would take all our money and see to it that it was sent home, and whoever wanted to avail themselves of this opportunity could do so. So we were to break away from all communication and go to the coast. At this time we were at Marietta, Georgia, and were ordered out to destroy 1½ miles of railroad completely. This was our regiment's part of the job. It was new work for us but that day seventy miles of railroad was destroyed. Within a few days, the 14th of November, Sherman sent his last message to Grant, cut the telegraph lines and the great army moved out on different roads.

That day our regiment lead the advance, finding no enemy, made fifteen miles, went into camp early, and were thrown out about a mile on picket duty. Here happened one of the funny things, of which many were mixed in during our service. The officer who was going the round of inspection on the picket line, found one half of the company on the reserve as it should be, but some of the men had partly stripped to relieve themselves of greybacks, and finding things in such a condition, he put Captain Carr under arrest and took him with him. I being the next ranking officer (orderly sergeant) was put in command of the company and from that day till the close of the war I remained in command. My commission as second lieutenant reached me in Savannah, Georgia. Now in order that the reader may better understand this march to the sea and up the coast, I will state that four men from each company were detailed as foragers. This called for forty men from each regiment, and probably comprised 2500 men. These were under officers and put in proper shape for a fighting force. All were well mounted and they were the very cream of Sherman's army, having all volunteered for this dangerous work. They were constantly in the advance and did a great deal of fighting. Many were captured and some were killed. These were Sherman's bummers. They covered a front of from ten to fifty miles and were practically the cavalry of the army. The enemy could never make out where Sherman was heading for, as we covered such a long front. If the bummers were attacked, they could sound their bugles, rally to a given point, confusing the rebs and generally driving them back before the infantry came up. These bummers were a hard lot for the southerners to run up against. The army moved along on different roads and lived off the country. We were passing through the very granary of the south and behind us nothing remained for man or beast. These southern people had never tasted war nor had they ever seen a yankee soldier except as a prisoner. They made a mistake by leaving their homes on our approach, for when they returned to them, they found nothing but the chimney remaining. To illustrate: I was detailed with my company at the crossing of the Ogeegee River on a pontoon bridge, as all bridges were burned in our front, and ordered to burn every wagon that did not have the letters U.S. stamped on it. From seven in the morning till six at night we burned wagons and shortened our train nearly two miles. Our whole corps crossed here. The mules and horses were sent over to be sorted out, so the whole country remained helpless even to

raise a crop the following year. This was the hardest blow the Confederacy and the state of Georgia had ever seen. No railroads, no bridges, no horses, mules or wagons. The war had reached a state of annihilation. We were all tired of it and any way to bring it to an end was the feeling in our army. We met very little opposition until near Savannah. There the infantry took the place in the line of battle of the bummers to take the city. Our division was taken out of line and made a fifty mile trip down the coast to gather forage. We returned with a mile of wagons loaded with everything eatable for man and beast. We had destroyed fifty miles of the Gulf railroad and this was a hard trip. On our return Savannah had surrendered and the Cracker Line was open. Our fleet and navy that were already to come up the sound as soon as Fort McAllister was taken, were unloading supplies. On December 24th Sherman telegraphed this message to Lincoln: "I present you as a Christmas present the city of Savannah and 25,000 bales of cotton." Cotton, at that time, was worth a dollar a pound.

When this news reached the North there was great rejoicing over this wonderful victory and our safe arrival; for the rebel papers had reported that Sherman's army was being annihilated. We were for forty days a lost army without any communication with the North, and at that stage of the war it was a great victory, and the day began to break so that the North could begin to see peace in sight. General Grant ordered as a salute for our army a hundred guns fired into the rebel army in front of Petersburg. The Senate and House passed a vote of thanks to Sherman and his army. Lincoln and Grant wired congratulating orders to read to the army. A reviving wave of jollification passed over the whole of the North accompanied by many public meetings celebrating Sherman's safe arrival and great victory. It was the hardest blow with which the South had met during the war. The Confederacy was cut in twain, their railroads destroyed, bridges burned, and they could no longer move troops from east to south to reinforce one another. General Thomas had destroyed Hood's army and General Grant had Lee almost whipped. Very evidently the Confederacy was on its last legs.

On December 30th, 1864 I was mustered out as orderly sergeant and mustered in as a commissioned officer. All company property such as guns and accoutrement belonging to the U.S. were turned over to me and I became responsible for them, and from that day till the close of the war I drew a captain's pay of \$150.00 a month. To step out of the rank and take command is very embarrassing and a trial for a new man, especially when bad men can get whiskey; but as soon as we took to the field this all disappeared. We stopped at Savannah ten days, just long enough to clothe the army, then the 15th and 17th corps were loaded on steamers and landed at Beauford, South Carolina. The 14th and 20th corps marched overland. We now found the enemy in force, as everything in the shape of men, including what was left of Hood's army also was now in our front. It rained continually and this in the low country, water and rebels everywhere, made it very disagreeable. The Confederates were forced back continually, but we lost many men in doing it. The 14th and 20th corps now joined us and we moved right along, driving the rebs before us. On the 3rd day of February, 1865,

the anniversary of my wedding, we had a hard fight, our regiment losing 60 men, I having lost 15 from my own company. Many many times during that day standing in water to my knees and above, men dropping all around me, did I think of my wife at home. Five of my men were killed almost touching me. As one fell and I helped him out of the water another fell near by. This was the hottest day of the trip and I thought my chances of ever getting home again were doubtful. In crossing the north and south Edisto rivers, our division crossed below their batteries and made night charges on the rear of the enemy. Now I want to say right here that this was not only dangerous, but we were in water nearly freezing, in the middle of winter. If there is anything trying on a man and a soldier it is a midnight charge or a midnight attack, for artillery and musketry overcome the cold during the attack, but when quiet is restored, oh my how one shivers. After crossing these swamps and rivers we reached a better country. We now seemed to be threatening Charleston. The rebels were looking for us too, but General Sherman made a wheel of his army with the right end as a pivot and we were brought up fronting Columbia, the capital of South Carolina. Here was a scene for an artist, 65,000 men on the opposite side of the river. As far as I could see there were four lines deep of men.

One hundred and fifty cannon all looking over into the city, the rebel cavalry moving out and not a shot being fired at either side. This was a strange affair in war and one we had never seen before. A city, the very hotbed of secession, where this wicked rebellion was hatched, at our mercy. It certainly was a great experience. What these people must have thought now, these people who on the start of the war said one southerner could whip five yankees. However, things had changed. Then there was not a yankee soldier within a thousand miles, now there they stand across the river on the sacred soil of South Carolina, and that once haughty Confederacy on its last legs. We crossed the river and camped about a mile out in a cotton field. I beheld Columbia from here as she burned, and at midnight I read a rebel newspaper by the light of the blaze. The editor stated that we were just where they wanted us, for General Johnston was ready to annihilate Sherman's robbers when the proper time came, but somehow the proper time never came and it did not turn out as this writer was telling his people. We moved north and all the rebels looked for Sherman to go to Salisbury, North Carolina, but another left wheel and we came up at Cheraw. Here the rebels had moved machinery, printing presses and a lot of stuff out of Columbia for safety, many cannon for artillery not finished. For many miles along the track, these things had been unloaded. A detail with sledge hammers made short work of this machinery and artillery. We now crossed the Pedee river and entered North Carolina. The enemy at our front became bolder. Our bummers could no longer drive them, so the infantry were engaged constantly somewhere along the line to stop this disputing of our advance. At Aversborough a hot engagement took place and as we drove them back they were getting reinforcements. Sherman's army could not stop here for want of forage, so it was a case of fight or starve. The 14th corps was attacked with heavy lines of infantry while on the march. Johnston's plan was to destroy one corps after another, as we were scattered

covering nearly 30 miles of front. The 14th corps were on the extreme left of the army. General Sherman was certainly taken by surprise. This was the battle of Bentonville, North Carolina, the last battle of the war. Our advance, the 15th corps, held them until the 20th came up. We were 30 miles to the right of our line when the battle commenced. We could hear cannonading. Just before going into camp that night we crossed a swamp with water waist deep, haversacks and cartridges having been taken off and hung over our shoulders to keep them from getting wet. We were all dried and asleep when at 11 o'clock P.M. we were ordered to fall in line to reinforce our men 30 miles away. Now here came in a hard duty of a soldier. In a short time we were wading through this swamp again in water nearly freezing, but our army needed help and we must go to their relief. We marched all day and all night without a halt only to eat twice. We joined the fighting line at dark, but the Battle of Bentonville was over and we were victorious with less than half of our men engaged. Next morning the brigade moved to the right about four miles and we were hotly engaged with the rebel army. Here we got into a trap and the only way out was to run or be captured. Our regiment was on the skirmish line, my company on the extreme left, hence we were the first to be rolled back. In the attack seventeen of my men and nearly all the next two companies were taken prisoners. I made a run for life through rebel cavalry and got away. This was a hot engagement for a short time.

General Sherman says in his memoirs: "I ordered the whole line to advance in order to save Mower's brigade from being captured." The next morning there were 20,000 men to help us, but too late the rebels had gone, leaving their picket line behind them. We were now headed for Goldsborough. Here we met General Schofield's army coming up from Newburn. The Cracker Line was open once again and we were in communication with the North. We had been two and a half months inside the Confederacy and it was the hardest army life any of us had seen. I remember well the remarks of Schofield's men, the 23rd corps that fought and whipped Hood at Nashville, they were astonished to see us ragged and shoeless and tanned up like Indians. This 23rd corps was with us all through the Atlanta Campaign and were a part of Sherman's army. They came around by rail and water and opened up the line from Newburn in order to relieve us when we reached there. We were the worst looking union army in the field when these men met us, and I tell you we were cheering to meet them for we had been in some tight places since November 14th. But we were bringing the war to a close very rapidly. We now camped ten days at Goldsborough for a rest and to clothe the army. We had marched a thousand miles and made a battlefield over the entire distance. This was a record no army had made during the war. About April 1st we started with 15,000 more men for Raleigh, North Carolina. Johnston retreated in our front and gave up the capital of North Carolina without a fight. Before reaching the city an order was read to us of General Lee's surrender to General Grant. I can yet at this writing hear the cheering of the men. This meant that the war was over. A few days after this an order was read to us of the assassination of President Lincoln. We were in camp beyond the city of Raleigh and in front of the rebel army. Negotiations for the surrender of the

entire rebel forces were in progress. This order of Lincoln's death cast a gloom over the entire army. I have never before or since had such a sad feeling creep over me as when this order was read. What does this indicate? After whipping them in the field, Lincoln and Seward assassinated, it was simply awful. Had General Sherman advanced his army for battle at that time on the rebel army, the closing history of the war would have been terrible, for our men would not have taken prisoners, but would have slaughtered Johnston's army. This news had turned us into savages for the time being. We did not then know by whom nor how the murder had been perpetrated. Johnston's army surrendered and we were a happy lot of men.

Now for a march to Washington of several hundred miles for a grand review of the Army of the Potomac and Sherman's Army. We went through Richmond and over the eastern battlefields, and reached Alexandria in due time. This was a hard march for the men, the weather having grown warm, and many of them fell out exhausted. For some reason it was a race to see who could get the best roads. Men who had never fallen out, lay by the roadside. It was all wrong to march men in this manner for no reason whatever. Early in the morning of May 24th we left Alexandria, crossed the long bridge over the Potomac River and arrived at the capitol grounds at 7:30 A.M. for the grand review of Sherman's army, the Army of the Potomac, 100,000 strong having passed in review the day before. This was the largest and grandest review that had ever taken place on this continent, 180,000 men in the two days.

The President and Cabinet, all the foreign ministers of Europe, Generals Grant, Sherman and Meade were seated on a large platform in front of the White House. The streets, housetops, and trees were covered with people for two and a half miles. Never before had this country seen such a large gathering of people. The Army had never received such a welcome before. We were marching in review for the whole civilized world. It was a proud day for us bronzed veterans of many battles. We had marched from Chattanooga to Atlanta; to Savannah, to Columbia, South Carolina, to Raleigh, North Carolina, making a battlefield of seven hundred miles; thence to Washington five hundred miles or a total of twelve hundred miles in all. All to participate in this grand review and we were one year in doing it. At 8:00 A.M. the signal gun was fired for us to advance. Our corps had the advance, as I remember now. We marched by company fronts, each company closed up to ten feet, each regiment one hundred feet, on Pennsylvania Avenue. And such a sight as I looked back from the Treasury building, looking over a mile beholding the marching columns with guns glistening in the sunlight; it was a sight never to be forgotten, and the shining gun barrels all keeping time with the rhythm of the music. Thus ended the grand review which was the final and closing scene of the mightiest war of modern times. The North had two million men in the field at one time. This review only represented a small part of the great army, but it represented the men who had fought the greatest battles of the war. For weeks and months it was the talk of the people who saw this final close of the rebellion.

The army was now loaded into box cars for a long trip to Parkersburg, Virginia. There we transferred to steamboats on the Ohio River and landed at Louisville, Kentucky. This too was a hard trip of about seven days. Here we went into camp outside the city. We now received orders to furlough every fourth man for twenty days, giving married men the preference. It was reported that Sherman's whole army was to go to Mexico to drive out Napoleon who was here about to conquer that country. Napoleon had sent Maximilian, an Austrian Prince to locate an empire in Mexico. He had taken advantage of our trouble to do this. But our war being over, the government at once ordered the French general to move out or do worse and he got out of Mexico as quick as he could, leaving Maximilian to his fate to be executed by the Mexicans. So ended the Mexican invasion and we did not go. But during the time the men were furloughed, and I also went home to see my wife once more before going to Mexico, there was much dissatisfaction among the army. In a few days after being home I received a telegram to report at once to my regiment in Chicago, there to muster out my company. This was good news and I reached Chicago in time, and July 4th, 1865 we were all mustered out and changed from military to civil life. Now here came a time when our head men and all Europe prophesied a lot of trouble ahead in putting two million men back to civil life. All nations had had trouble here, but it was all done quietly and without a hitch. From here the men went to their homes and each took up his citizenship as though nothing unusual had happened. Europe commented on this as a wonderful achievement in history.

I will now close this by giving a list of battles in which I participated, the many skirmishes being too numerous to mention.

Mar.	1862	New Madrid and Island #10, Missouri. - General Pope's Army
June	1862	Siege of Corinth at Farmington, Miss. - General Pope's Army
Sept.	1862	Franklin on Duck River, Tennessee - General Pope's Army
Sept.	1863	Chickamauga, Tennessee - General Rosecrans' Army
Nov.	1863	Missionary Ridge, Tennessee - General Thomas, 14th Corps
May	1864	Rocky Face & Buzzards Roost, GA. - Sherman & Thomas Army
May	1864	Resaca, Dallas, Midnight Charge, GA. - Sherman & Thomas Army
June	1864	Peach Tree Creek & Kenesaw Mountain, GA. - Sherman & Thomas
July	1864	Battle of Atlanta, Georgia - Sherman & Thomas Army
Dec.	1864	Siege of Savannah, Georgia - Sherman & Thomas Army
Jan.	1865	Salt Kehatchie, South Carolina - O.O. Howard, Army of Tenn.
Feb.	1865	Crossing of North and South Edisto Rivers - O.O. Howard
Mar.	1865	Battle of Bentonville, North Carolina - O.O. Howard

During the seven and one half months I commanded the company we did more marching and fighting than had been done by any one officer commanding the company during the war.

In closing this history of my life and looking back over the past from my age of 74 years, I find my boyhood days a struggle for existence, with no play days as

the boy of today enjoys, no one to guide or advise me, only the hard master of experience. No home only as I made that home, from the time I was twelve years of age till I was twenty eight. My army life was of the most strenuous and exciting. No one knows what three years on the fighting line of a large army, during our war means, except those who were in the field. Only the best men could survive the terrible strain. The war records showing the death rate by sickness tell the story. My life after the war is one of activity, always a busy, hard struggle to get started and place my family above want. My home life has been of the very best, my business fairly successful, so that now I am in comfortable circumstances, practically relieved from business, and seeing my wife and children above want, all enjoying life.

I am proud of my wife and children. They are an ornament in the social and business life. I have done my part towards fulfilling the destiny of man and I believe the world is better for my coming.

C.F. Hankey

Petoskey, Michigan Sept. 10, 1911



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