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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

Battle of Kelleysville—Reports of Stuart and Fitz. Lee.....	1	Gen. Lee's Strength and Losses at Peters- burg, by Colonel William Allan.....	34
Stuart's Report of Chancellorsville.....	9	Confederate Loss at Seven Pines—Letter from Gen. J. E. Johnston.....	42
General S. D. Lee's Report of the Siege of Vicksburg.....	14	A Slander Refuted.....	43
Defence of Battery Gregg and Evacuation of Petersburg, by Gen. C. M. Wilcox... ..	18	Editorial Paragraphs.....	45

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SOUTHERN HISTORICAL SOCIETY PAPERS.

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Battle of Kelleysville, March 17th, 1863—Reports of Generals J. E. B. Stuart and Fitz. Lee.

[The following reports were published in 1863, but are so rare as to be accessible to but few. We are confident, therefore, that many of our readers will be glad to have us print them from the original MSS, in our possession.]

HD. QRS. CAVALRY DIVISION,
ARMY NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
March 25, 1863.

GEN'L R. H. CHILTON, *A. A. G.*:

GENERAL: I have the honor to enclose herewith the very graphic report of Brig.-Gen. Fitzbugh Lee of the battle of Kelleysville, (March 17th), between his brigade and a division of the enemy's cavalry. There is little to be said in addition. The dispositions made for meeting this anticipated raid were sufficient to have prevented or very much retarded the crossing of the Rappahannock at Kelleysville. The report shows wherein these dispositions failed of their object.

The brigade, however, under its noble chief, so redeemed the day by an exhibition of the most extraordinary heroism that we are half disposed to lose sight of the picket failure in the outset.

Being charged by the Commanding-General specially with "preparations to meet Stoneman," I was present on this occasion because of the responsibility which would necessarily attach to me for what was done; but having approved of Brig.-

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Gen. Fitzhugh Lee's plans, I determined not to interfere with his command of the brigade as long as it was commanded so entirely to my satisfaction, and I took special pride in witnessing its gallant conduct under its accomplished leader.

The defeat was decided, and the enemy, broken and demoralized, retired, under cover of darkness, to his place of refuge—the main army having abandoned in defeat an expedition undertaken with boasting and vain-glorious demonstration.

I have the honor to enclose a copy of congratulatory orders from division and brigade headquarters, and an order announcing to the division the death of the lamented and noble Pelham.

I was especially indebted to him for his usual gallant services, and to Capt. Harry Gilmer, Twelfth Virginia cavalry, who accompanied me as volunteer staff. Major Lewis F. Terrell, the court martial to which he belonged having taken recess, buckled on his sword with commendable zeal, and came to the field, where he acquitted himself with credit both as an artillery and staff officer.

I cordially concur with Brigadier-General commanding in the high praise he bestows on Col. T. L. Rosser, Fifth Virginia cavalry, who, though severely wounded at 2 P. M., remained in command, at the head of his regiment, till the day was won, and night put an end to further operations; on Col. Jas. H. Drake, First Virginia cavalry, who led his regiment in a brilliant charge upon the enemy's flank, routing and pursuing him to his stronghold; on the lamented Puller and his comrades fallen; on Lieut. Hill Carter, Third Virginia cavalry, and Adjt. Peter Fontaine, Fourth Virginia cavalry, whose individual prowess attracted my personal attention, and remark, the latter receiving a severe wound; and on the very efficient staff of General Lee, enumerated in his report, and the many others to whom the 17th of March will ever be the proudest of days.

Brig.-Gen. Fitzhugh Lee exhibited in the operations, antecedent to and consequent upon the enemy's crossing, the

sagacity of a successful general, and, under the blessing of Divine Providence, we are indebted to his prompt and vigorous action, and the determined bravery of his men for this signal victory, which, when the odds are considered, was one of the most brilliant achievements of the war, Gen. Lee's command in action being less than 800.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,

J. E. B. STUART,
Maj.-Gen. Commanding.

HD. QRS. LEE'S CAVALRY BRIGADE,
March 23d, 1863.

GEN'L R. H. CHILTON,
A. A. & I. Gen'l A. N. Va.

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following report of an encounter on the 17th instant between my brigade and a division of the enemy's cavalry, certainly not less than 3,000 mounted men with a battery of artillery. My first intimation of their approach was a telegram received at 11 A. M. on 16th from headquarters, A. N. V. At 6 P. M., scouts reported them at Morisville, a little place 6 miles from Kelley's Ford. At 1 A. M., another report informed me that enemy had encamped at that place, coming from three different directions.

I that night reinforced my picket of 20 sharpshooters by 40 more. I regret to say that only about 11 or 12 of them got into the rifle pits in time for the attack of the enemy (owing to an unnecessary delay in carrying their horses to the rear), which commenced about 5 A. M. The force *in the pits*, under Captain Jas. Breckenridge of the Second, behaved very gallantly, holding in check a large force of the enemy, mounted and dismounted, for an hour and a half—killing and wounding 30 or 40 of them. I also ordered the remaining sharpshooters of the brigade, under that very efficient officer Major Morgan, First Virginia, to move from their camps by day-break to a

point on the railroad, where road turns to Kelley's, $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from railroad bridge, and $3\frac{1}{2}$ from Kelley's, and the rest of the command was ordered to be in readiness to move at the shortest notice. At that time a force was reported to be at Bealeton, supposed to be their advance guard; and it was uncertain whether they would attempt to cross at Kelley's, railroad bridge, or move on towards Warrenton.

The report that enemy's attack was made at Kelley's never reached me; and the first intimation I received from that point was at 7:30 A. M., to the effect that they had succeeded in crossing, capturing 25 of my sharpshooters who were unable to reach their horses. I moved my command at once down the railroad, taking up a position to await their approach, ordering my baggage-wagons and disabled horses to the rear towards Rapidan station. Some time elapsing and they not advancing, I determined to move upon them, and marched immediately for Kelley's. First met the enemy half a mile this side of ford, and at once charged them. Their position was a very strong one, sheltered by woods and a long, high stone fence running perpendicular to my advance. My men, unable to cross the fence and ditch in their front, wheeled about, delivering their fire almost in the faces of the enemy, and reformed again, facing about under a heavy fire from their artillery and small arms. The Third, in this charge, was in front, and First Lieutenant Hill Carter was very conspicuous in his behavior. From that time it was a succession of gallant charges by the various regiments, and once by the whole brigade in line, whenever the enemy would show his mounted men; they invariably falling back upon his artillery and sheltered dismounted skirmishers. Their total advance was 2 miles from the ford. At that time my artillery arrived, and they were driven back, recrossing the river about 7:30 P. M., with us in close pursuit.

My whole command acted nobly. Sabres were frequently crossed, and fences charged up to, the leading men dismounting and pulling them down, under a heavy fire of canister, grape, and carbine balls.

Had I my command in the order it arrived in this enervating section of country, and not weakened by the absence of four squadrons on picket guarding a line stretching from Grifinsburg, on the Sperryville turnpike, to Richards' ford, and by the large numbers of horses unfit for duty by exposure to the severe winter with a very limited supply of forage, I feel confident that the defeat of the enemy would have been changed into a disorderly rout, and the whole brigade be supplied with horses, saddles, and bridles.

Commanding officers of the detachments from the various regiments engaged mention in their reports as deserving especial attention:

In the Fifth, Private Wm. J. Haynes, Company F. (badly wounded); Private A. R. Harwood, Company E., Private Henry Wooding, Company C., (especially commended, seized the colors when the horse of the color-bearer was shot, and carried them bravely through the fight); Sergeants Morecocke and Ratliff, and Private George James, Company H.

In the Fourth, Captains Newton and Old, Lieutenant Hobson and Adjutant Fontaine (seriously wounded). Sergeant Kimbrough, of Company G, deserves particular notice; wounded early in the day, he refused to leave the field. In the last charge he was the first to spring to the ground to open the fence. Then, dashing on at the head of the column, he was twice sabred over the head, his arm shattered by a bullet, captured and carried over the river, when he escaped and walked back 12 miles to his camp. Lieutenant-Colonel Payne, commanding, also mentions Privates Jos. Gilman, J. R. Gilman, Poindexter, Redd, Sydnor, Terry, and N. Priddy.

In the Third, Captain Collins, Company H; Lieutenants Hill Carter and Jno. Lamb, of Company D; Lieutenant Stamper of Company F; Lieutenant R. T. Hubbard, Company G; and First Lieutenant Hall, of Company C, (was twice wounded before he desisted from the charge, and, when retiring, received a third and still more severe wound, and was unable to leave the field). Adjutant H. B. McClellan is also particu-