

**BATTLES IN CULPEPER
COUNTY,
VIRGINIA, 1861-1865: AND
OTHER ARTICLES**

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Battles in Culpeper County, Virginia, 1861-1865: And Other Articles by Daniel A. Grimsley

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DANIEL A. GRIMSLEY

**BATTLES IN CULPEPER
COUNTY,
VIRGINIA, 1861-1865: AND
OTHER ARTICLES**

BATTLES IN
CULPEPER COUNTY, VIRGINIA,

1861--1865.

... AND OTHER ARTICLES BY ...

MAJOR DANIEL A. GRIMSLEY,

OF THE

Sixth Virginia Cavalry.

COMPILED AND PUBLISHED

—BY—

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CULPEPER AS A BATTLE GROUND.

IN THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES.

[By Judge D. A. Grimsley.]

[Daniel Amon Grimsley, son of Rev. Barnett Grimsley and Ruth U. Grimsley, was born April 3rd, 1840, in Culpeper, now Rappahannock county, near Washington. When about twenty years old Judge Grimsley enlisted as a private in the Rappahannock cavalry, which was first commanded by Captain John Shackelford Green, and was appointed orderly sergeant soon after the company went into active service. Was elected first lieutenant upon the re-organization of the company in the spring of 1862, and within a few days thereafter became captain upon the promotion of Capt. Green, and afterwards major and lieutenant colonel of the sixth Virginia cavalry, to which the Rappahannock company belonged. He served through the entire war from April, 1861, to the surrender at Appomattox. Major Grimsley, although he had several horses shot under him, was never wounded, sick, or on furlough for more than a day or two at a time, and was in command of his regiment a greater portion of the time during the latter years of the war. Major Grimsley has an accurate memory, which, together with his thorough knowledge of military affairs, virtually renders him an oracle, and he is always sought out by those in search of information along these lines.]

After the war, Judge Grimsley studied law under a private tutor, Mr. H. G. Moffett, in Rappahannock, and upon obtaining his license, began the practice of his profession at Culpeper in 1867. He was elected to the State Senate in 1869, of which body he remained a member until 1879. In 1880 he was appointed by Gov. Holliday judge of the sixth judicial circuit to fill a vacancy caused by the death of Judge Henry Shackelford. The readjuster party obtaining control of the State in 1872, he was defeated in the election for that office. In 1885 he was elected to the House of Delegates to represent Culpeper county, and in 1886 he was elected judge of the sixth judicial circuit, which position he still occupies.

In 1868, Judge Grimsley married Bettie N., daughter of William L. Browning, and has six living children, who are: Margaret, married George Drewey, Virginia, Thomas Edwin, married Mary Edelin, Mary B., married John Strode Barbour, Fauny G., and Elizabeth Barnett. Their younger child, Ethel, died a few years since of typhoid fever.—R. T. G.]

Brandy Station was the great battle ground between the cavalry of the armies of Northern Virginia, and of the Potomac, during the war between the States. It was the scene of quite a half dozen pitched battles, in which thousands of horsemen met in the rude shock of conflict.

Brandy Station was directly on the line of advance and retreat of the armies, between Washington and Richmond. A station on the Southern railway (then the Orange and Alexandria), which either army, occupying Culpeper, used for the purpose of supply. It was a point from which the road south diverged eastward to Fredericksburg, to the Wilderness and the lower Rapidan, and westward to Madison and Orange; going north, they diverged westward towards Warrenton and upper Fauquier, and eastward towards Kellyville and the lower Potomac. So it was an objective point in the movements of either army, in either direction. The country around about the Station was admirably adapted to cavalry movements. It was a broad, open, undulating plain, without forest or other serious obstruction to the movements of large bodies of troops, but sufficiently rolling to furnish select positions for the use of artillery.

In the early part of the war the country was well fenced, occasionally by a hedge and ditch, which offered serious obstruction to the movements of cavalry, and was not unfrequently, both in charge and retreat, the occasion of serious mishap to the bold cavalier, being especially disastrous in retreat. However, the fences soon disappeared, and the hedge rows were leveled to the earth, and it became an ideal locality for cavalry.

It was occupied for a time by Gen. Stuart in the spring of 1862, on the retreat of the Confederate Army from Manassas, and some little skirmishing then took place, between the videttes and pickets along the banks of the Rappahannock. No serious engagement, however, occurred until the 30th of August, 1862, when Lee advanced on Pope, then occupying Culpeper, just previous to the second battle of Manassas.

After the defeat of McClellan, before Richmond, it will be remembered, General Lee quietly transferred his army to Orange county, and massed it behind Clarke's Mountain, from which point he designed to hurl his veteran battalions on the flank and rear of Pope, in Culpeper. Lieut.-Colonel Henderson, of the English Army, who is at present [Jan. 1800.] a staff officer of Lord Roberts in the South African war, in his life of Jackson, gives the following beautiful description of the landscape, as seen from Clarke's Mountain, where Jackson had established a signal station.

"The view from the summit embraced an extended landscape. The ravages of war had not yet effaced its tranquil beauty, nor had the names of its bright rivers and thriving villages become household words. It was still unknown to history; a peaceful and pastoral district, remote from beaten tracks of trade, and inhabited by a quiet and industrious people. To day, few regions can boast of sterner or more heroic memories. To the right, rolling away in light and shadow, for a score of miles, is the great forest of Spotsylvania, within whose gloomy depths lie the fields of Chancellorsville, where the breastworks of the Wilderness can still be traced, and on the eastern verge of which stand the grass grown batteries of Fredericksburg. Northward, and beyond the woods which hide the Rapidan, the eye ranges over the wide and fertile plains of Culpeper, with the green crest of Slaughter's Mountain overlooking Cedar Run, and the dim levels of Brandy Station, the scene of the great cavalry battle, just visible beyond. Far away to the northeast, the faint outline of a range of hills marks the source of Bull Run and the Manassas plateau, and to the west, the long ramparts of the Blue Ridge, softened by the distance, stand high above the Virginia plains."

This movement was designed to be begun on the 18th day of August, but by reason of the delay of the cavalry, in reaching Orange from the Peninsula, it was not begun until about 3 o'clock on the morning of the 20th. General Pope, having in the meantime, learned of Lee's meditated attack, began his

retreat on the morning of the 19th, and had reached the south bank of the Rappahannock before Gen. Lee left Orange. The Confederate Army crossed the Rapidan at Raecoon and Morton's Fords, and moved towards the towns of Culpeper and Brandy Station, preceded by Robertson's brigade of cavalry, consisting of the second, sixth, seventh, eleventh and twelfth Virginia Regiments, White's battalion, and Fitz Lee's brigade, consisting at that time of the 1st. Maryland, 3rd, 4th and 5th regiments. Gen. Fitz Lee took the road by Madden's towards Kellysville, and Gen. Robertson the road by Stevensburg to Brandy Station, Gen. Stuart moving in person with Robertson's brigade. Gen. Bayard, of the Federal Army, was directed with his brigade, then at Brandy Station, and consisting of the 1st. Pa., 1st. N. Y., 1st. R. I., 1st. Mass., and 2nd. N. Y., to protect the flank and rear of the retreating army in the direction of Stevensburg. At that time, if the writer remembers rightly, for some distance out of Brandy Station, on the Stevensburg road, there were woods on both sides of the road, and on the east side they extended beyond the point where the Culpeper road now turns off from the Stevensburg road, and in those woods, the Federal cavalry, their rearguard having been driven back from Stevensburg, made their first determined stand against the advance of the Confederate cavalry. By dismounting a portion of his force, armed with carbines, and judiciously posted in these woods, Gen. Bayard was enabled to hold in check the advance of the Confederates for some time. After the contest here had been waged for quite a while, Gen. Robertson moved some portion of his command, around by the Wise house in the direction of the Barbour hill, and thus turning the flank and reaching for the rear of the Federal commander, forced him from his position in the woods in front of Brandy. Failing back from this position, he made a stand on Fleetwood Heights in solid columns of squadron, with mounted skirmishers in front and flank. The Confederates moved up rapidly, and attacked the Federals in this new position with great dash and spirit. Gen. Stuart, in his report of this engagement at this point, says: "Robertson's regiments were hurled in rapid succession, in columns of four, upon the main body of the enemy's cavalry, and before the clash of the sabres they took fright and fled, taking refuge close to the river, under protection of their batteries on the other side." He always paid a high compliment to this command, which, he says: "had been brought to the stability of veterans by the discipline, organization and drill of the brigade commander." Gen. Bayard, in his report, says: "that the sudden charge and yells of the enemy seemed to strike terror to his men, and they soon began running;" that they were rallied, however, and retreated quietly to the Rappahannock. Fitz Lee, on this same occasion, had a spirited engagement with the Federal cavalry on the road from Madden's to Kelley's Ford.

Fleetwood Heights is a beautiful location. Being an elevated ridge, which extends eastward at right angles to the elevation extending south from Wel-ford's, and jutting out into the plains, it commands the country and roads leading north and south from Brandy Station. On this occasion it received its baptism of fire, and thereafter, there was no movement of troops across the borders of Culpeper that artillery did not blaze from its summits, and charging squadrons, on its slopes and around its base, did not contend for supremacy.

The day after this engagement the cavalry, followed by the whole army, moved westward along the south banks of the Rappahannock into the Little Fork and finally swinging around through Thoroughfare Gap, debouched on the plains of Manassas, to win, for a second time, a victory on the same field. The writer has a most pleasant recollection of the kindness on this occasion of

one of the most worthy and respected citizens of the town of Culpeper. He (the writer) was on picket duty the night before, at Rapidan Station, with a squadron of cavalry, and was ordered to join his regiment the next day at Brandy. This put his line of march through the town of Culpeper, and he entered it on the heels of the retreating enemy. When he had arrived on Main street, at a point opposite the store of Dr. Gorrell, he found that that gentleman, in anticipation of the coming of the Confederates, had prepared a huge tub of lemonade to refresh the tired soldiers. Just think of it! Ice cold lemonade, with plenty of lemon in it to make it sour, and plenty of sugar to make it sweet, and ice to make it cold, to a tired, weary, dirty, dusty Confederate soldier, on a hot day in August. I think of it now, and, although it is winter time, I thirst for that lemonade to-day, and would enjoy so much a draught of it from a clean, shining tin cup. We thank him for it still. May he live long and prosper.

KELLEYVILLE.

Perhaps we might have heretofore referred to the first incursions of Federal troops in the county and village of Culpeper on the morning of the 5th of May, 1833. Major D. Porter Stowell, commanding the 1st Mass. Cavalry, crossed the Rappahannock river at Beverly's Ford on the night of the 4th, and after refreshing men and animals on the farm and at the house of Mr. Richard Cunningham, came on to the village the following morning. It seems to have been the irony of fate, that the soil of Culpeper should have been first invaded by the sons of New England. Nearly a hundred years previous, when Massachusetts was threatened with invasion and oppression from the mother country, among the first to take up arms in defense of her cause, as well as the common cause of the colonies, were the gallant "Minute Men" of Culpeper. Now, the first to appear, as armed invaders of her soil, were the sons of those, with whom they had stood shoulder to shoulder a hundred years before, and this in the sacred names of union, liberty and freedom. Well may we say with Madame Roland: "Oh liberty! What crimes have been committed in thy name."

The officer in command of the expedition says he found on the farm of Mr. Cunningham abundant forage for his horses, and that the overseer, a Mr. Wiltshire, was very kind to him, furnishing forage and opening the mansion house for occupancy by his command. He speaks of it as an elegant old mansion, handsomely furnished, and says that he and his soldiers enjoyed their repose on sofas, couches, beds, lounges and on the parlor floors. He was evidently a gentleman, and understood, even in war, the laws of property rights, for he says, notwithstanding it had been the headquarters of the Confederate generals, and the absence of the owner, yet nothing in the house, or about the premises, was taken or injured by his men. Leaving Cunningham's, he followed the ridge road, passing the brick house of Dr. Huntington (Dr. Dan'l. Green's), and came out by the Barbour house to Brandy Station. He gives, in his report, a very interesting account of his trip, of the route pursued, of the beauty and fertility of the country, and the temper of the people with whom he met. He speaks of the country as lovely in its appearance, well cultivated, and filled with supplies of all sorts, for man and beast. That most of the farmers had left their homes in charge of their overseers, but that their farming work was going on as usual.

At this time there were no Confederate troops north of Gordonsville, save two companies of cavalry of the 2nd. Va. Reg., encamped on the Greenwood estate, and engaged in picketing the roads north of Culpeper. The officer reported that he encountered the Confederate pickets some three miles north of Cul-