

THE BATTLE OF ATHENS AGAIN.

The following is an extract from a letter written March 2, 1905, by Gen. H. H. Wright of Centerville, Iowa, referring to the Battle of Athens:

. . . An account of that event in the border history of the great war should not leave out the commands of Col. John Adair McDowell and Col. Worthington, of the 6th and 5th Iowa Infantry Volunteers. Col. McDowell arrived at the Croton station just as the engagement was ending on the south side of the river. We heard the shot that sent the cannon ball into the hills on the north side of the river, and saw the little squads of the enemy scampering back over the hills into the big timber out of sight. The scene at the Croton station was calculated to chill the blood in the veins of stout-hearted men in the ranks of the military. Men, women and children, crazed with fear and excitement, running about crying and pleading for help to reach safety from the awful roar of the cannon and small arms. Col. McDowell quickly formed three companies of the 6th and proceeded to cross the river, the men taking their shoes and socks off and rolling up their pants—the water being about knee deep.

The killed and wounded of Col. David Moore's command were gathered into the store, houses and dwellings, where they were cared for by the doctors belonging to the troops and by local physicians. The Iowa commands furnished the picket guards for the outposts during the night and also the camp guards. So it is clear that the 5th and 6th Iowa were in the battle of Athens, causing Gen. Martin Green to retreat and the only pursuit made was by Col. W. H. Worthington, in command of detachments from the 6th and 5th regiments.

Gen. Wright also takes occasion to notice another matter which appeals keenly to the old soldiers' sense of justice. He is himself understood to be writing a book in which he will undoubtedly correct other errors and do justice to the merits of many heroes. For the present he says:

I notice also that the common error is made, of describing the start from Atlanta by Sherman's army as a wild scene of disorder and merriment, when in fact, there never was an army of 65,000 men and 35,000 animals so well organized and disciplined, marching in such perfect order, as did that noble body of men under the eye of that grandest field-marshal produced by the war.

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