

Voices from Shiloh

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Named after a small log meetinghouse near Pittsburg Landing, the Battle of Shiloh has been described and dissected by military historians who have traced every commanding officer's order, every regiment's advance or retreat. Here we listen to the voices of individuals who fought there. —*The Editor*

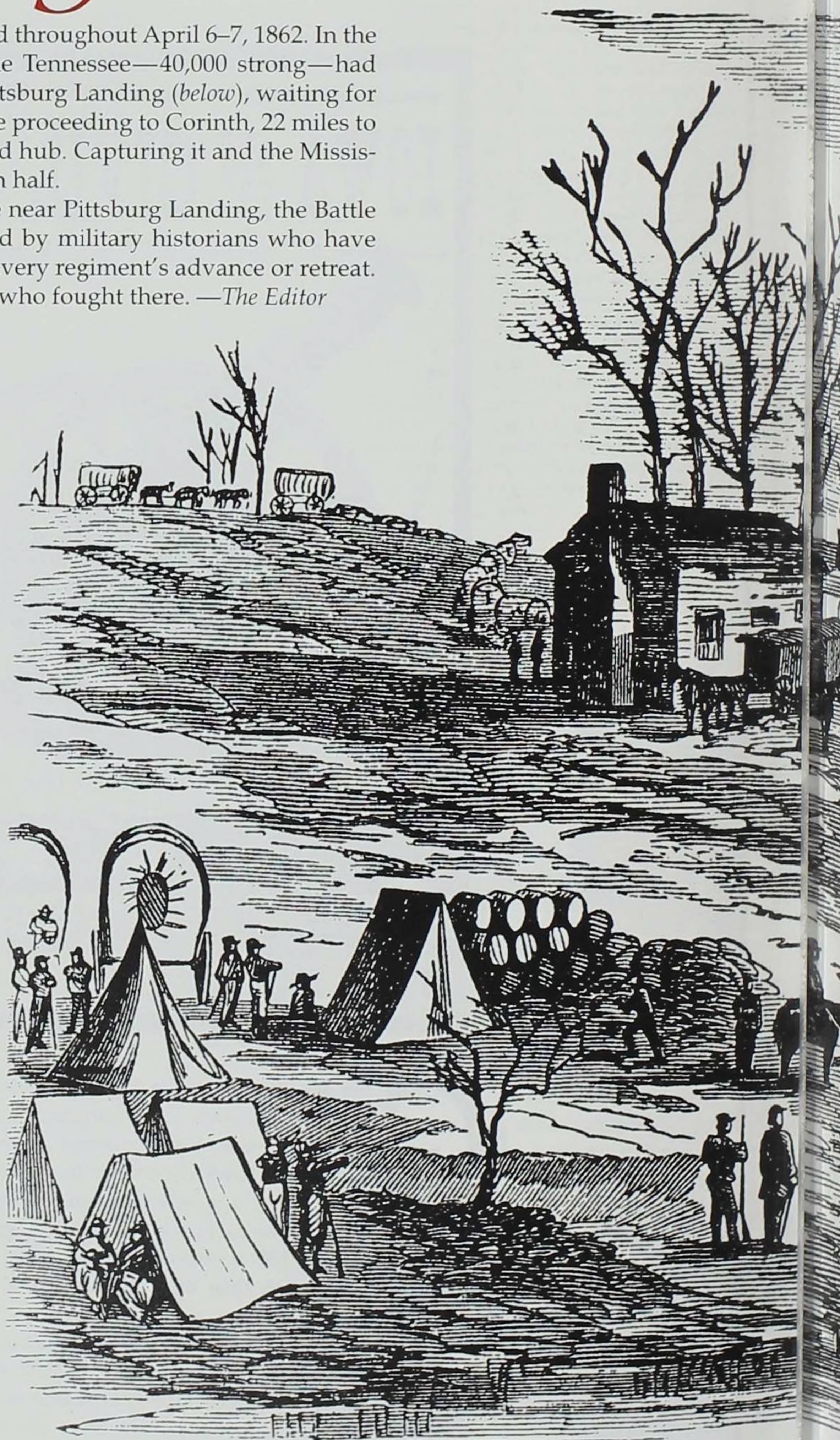
*Pittsburg Landing Tennessee
March 28 1862*

"This is as beautiful a spring morning as I ever saw. the sun shines out in his splendor. the grass is growing trees budding out peach trees in full bloom & the little birds singing their sweet songs cannot help but be pleasing to the soldier as it is here at the present time. it does look beautiful to see the peach trees in full bloom. the warm weather wilts me down a little as it always does in the spring but to go out and have a good game of ball and take a sweat seems to drive the old diseases out of our system and we are growing as tough and hearty as when at Camp Union. I believe that in a few days our Regt will hardly have a man unfit for duty. every day the sick list becomes smaller."

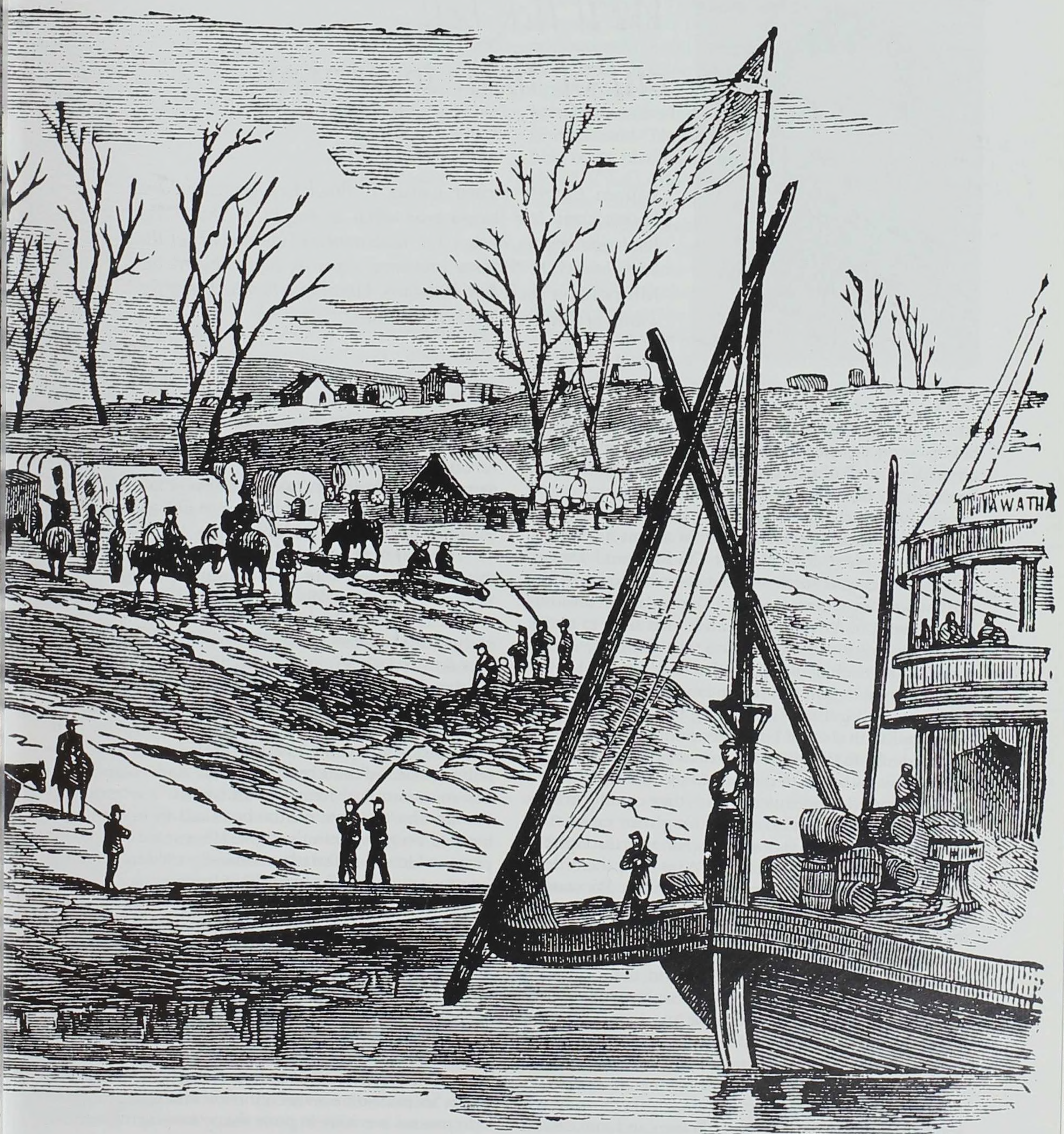
*Corporal Abner Dunham
12th Iowa Infantry*

"This spot lately an insignificant landing, in a sparsely settled district, had suddenly become an important military point thronged with a fleet of steamers, busily discharging their cargoes and crowded by the daily arriving troops. Mule teams dragging guns and wagons up the steep bluff under the inspiration of whip and loud ejaculations, added no little to the bustle and din."

*Author unknown, Special Collections
State Historical Society of Iowa*



Iowa and the Civil War



HARPER'S PICTORIAL HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR (1866)

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HARRIS'S PICTORIAL HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR (1868)

SHSI (IOWA CITY)



We'll lick hell out of them to-morrow

Warren County farmer Cyrus F. Boyd had served in the Union army less than a year when he fought at Shiloh. As the battle begins, he is a 1st lieutenant in Company B of the 34th Iowa. On Sunday morning, April 6, he is aboard the Minnehaha docked at Pittsburg Landing when he hears the sound of cannon. This is his account.

At 9 o'clock the wounded began to come in and there begins to be a great stir on the shore. Officers and cavalry riding in all directions. The roar of the cannon can be distinctly heard some miles to the South.

At 10 o'clock we are ordered ashore with all our equipments including 40 rounds of ammunition. . . . We were in great confusion as Col Reid and Dewey galloped back and forth without seeming to know exactly what they were doing. Col Dewey did a considerable amount of hard *swearing* and I had time to notice him wheel his horse around and take some *consolation* through the neck of a pint bottle. This seemed to give him a stronger flow of swear language than before. When we had got into something like a line we were presented with several boxes of ammunition and each man ordered to fill up to the extent of 100 rounds. By this time we were loaded down to the "guards."

The wounded men were by this time coming in freely and were being carried right through our ranks. And we could see hundreds of soldiers running through the woods. Col Reid got us started. Who gave the order I know not. Who our guide was I knew not. We started on the double quick in the direction of the heavy firing which was mostly of musketry. The field officers were mounted on horses and we tried to keep up with them and to do it we had to *run* and then the front (for the Regt was marching by the right flank) would halt and the rear would telescope into them. Thus we kept on for at least three miles meeting hundreds—yes thousands of men on the retreat who had thrown away their arms and were rushing toward the Landing. . . .

There was also Infantry officers with swords drawn and trying to head off the flying troops and make them

halt. There was Cavalrymen galloping after men and threatening to shoot them if they did not *stop*. But I saw no one stop—But on we went facing all these discouraging circumstances to take our turn at failure to stop the Rebel tide which was coming in like a wave of the sea unresisted and irresistible.

Here we were a new Regt which had never until this morning heard an enemies gun fire thrown into this *hell* of battle—without warning. The hot sun and the dreadful load we had carried through three miles of dust and battle smoke had so exhausted us that there was no strength left in the men. On the bluff we have put the first cartridges into our guns and added to the scenes through which we had just passed was enough to unnerve the best troops in the world. But we were *green* and went in and not a man was seen to halt or to falter. Lieut Fisk had been in a dark state room all the trip on account of his eyes—but when we formed at the landing he came off the boat and in full uniform insisted on going into the fight. He wanted to take his place as Lieut. Several of us earnestly tried to persuade him to stay out but he would not listen to us and go he did. He was almost blind and followed us to the field.

The roar of the artillery and the crash of the musketry was close at hand. We came to the edge of a large field and as we crossed a little Ravine the bullets and a few shells passed over us making some of us dodge. Here we deployed by the right flank to come into line of battle but did not get that accomplished until we were out in the open field and in fair view of the enemy. A heavy shower of bullets riddled the ranks and threw us into some *more* confusion and being jammed into masses we were in poor shape to return the fire—

some were wounded and a few killed before we could come to a front. Here I noticed the first man shot. He belonged in Co "K" Capt Hedricks Co. He was close to us and sprang high in the air and gave one groan and fell *dead*. Our Company had to pass over him and each man as he came up seemed to hesitate and some made a motion to pick him up—but the officers sternly ordered them "forward." The men all gave a cheer and rushed on in line of battle with bayonets fixed.

The enemy lay in ambush at the farther side of the field. We at first could not see them only the puffs of white smoke came from the thickets and brush and every log and tree. We reached some scattering trees and [as] if by common consent we made for those and it was fun to see two or three fellows running for the same tree. In the smoke and confusion I saw the flag advancing on our right and running across an open space I made for a small sapling not more than six or eight inches through. When I got there two other fellows were there too and Jeff Hocket was one of them. Jeff gave me a tremendous *butt* and sent me out of shelter and displaced me so that the tree was of no use to me. We all three laughed and the other fellow and I started for another tree and kept shooting toward the enemy. . . . It was every man for himself. We knew nothing about orders or officers. Indeed the Companies now became all mixed up and without organization.

Col Reid was wounded and fell from his horse with a bullet wound in the neck—Lieut Col Dewey I notice sitting behind a tree holding the halter to his horse which seemed to be badly wounded. Major Belknap was wounded and also Adjut Pomutz. Sergt Major Peniman had been killed. The wounded and the dead lay thickly on the ground.

Lieut Rogers of Co "E" had the flag and bore it manfully ahead of all. He made one stand behind the upturned roots of an old tree. A heavy fire seemed to be concentrated on the flag and men fell thick all around that spot. The enemy opened on us with artillery at close range using grape, canister and shell and all manner of deadly missiles. Above the roar of the guns could be heard the cheers of our men as they gained new ground. At last we could see the enemy and they were advancing around our left flank and the woods seemed alive with *gray coats* and their victorious cheer and unearthly *yells* and the concentrated fire which they had upon us caused somebody to give the order for *retreat*. The word was passed along—and we went off that bloody ground in great confusion and had to fall back over the same open ground by which we came.

As we started down the Ravine a wounded rebel caught me by the leg as I was passing and looking up

at me said My friend for God's sake give me a *drink* of water. He had been shot about the head and was covered with blood to his feet. I at once thought of that command "If thine enemy thirst give him drink" and I halted and tried to get my canteen from under my accouterments—but I could not and pulled away from him and said "I have not time to help you." (I had business other places just about that time as the Regt was ahead of me.) And on we went making as good time as we ever made over that old field.

The bullets seemed to fill the air and to be clipping every little weed and bush and blade of grass around us. Many men lost their hats and their guns—The tall gov't hats with the glorious old "eagle" lay thick on the ground and the knapsacks and haversacks and last winters overcoats were too numerous to mention.

In the meantime (and just about as *mean a time* as I have ever met) the enemies Cavalry came dashing around on our right flank (as we retreated) and followed us almost to the ravine where we made a temporary stand and with a few shots the Cav fell back. Here Jeff Hocket ran to me and said that my brother Scott had given out and was lying upon the ground some distance back. I ran to him and tried to get him upon his feet. But he said I should go on as he never could go any farther and that I had better save myself and let him go. I told him the enemy were almost upon him and that he would be taken prisoner or killed. No words of mine seemed to have any effect. I now took him by the *nap of the neck* and jerked him upon his feet and told him to *come* or I should help him with my *boot*. At this he stood up and I managed to work him along down the ravine and left him to rally on the hill. The men kept on to the rear and were fast filling up the great stream of *fugitives* from the battle field.

Cavalrymen were riding in all directions with drawn sabers and revolvers threatening to shoot and "Cut mens heads off" if they did not stop and rally. Officers were coaxing praying and exhorting men for "God's sake" to stop and all make a stand together. But in most cases their orders and appeals were not heard by these demoralized men who kept going like a flock of sheep. All the terrors of hell would not have stoped them until they got to the River. Hundreds lay in the woods on the ground completely overcome with the heat smoke and dust and fatigue. The heat seemed intense. The air was filled with dense smoke and fumes from burning powder took all the moisture from the mouth and a *burning dryness* extended to the throat.

Riderless horses came thundering through the woods with empty saddles and artillery horses with caissons attached ran through the squads of men and

striking trees caused the percussion shells to explode blowing horses caisons and everything around to atoms. Cannon balls were flying in all directions cutting off great limbs of trees and many men were killed and injured in this way as the heavy limbs fell on them. Every indication seemed to point to a great and *terrible defeat*. There seemed to be only a few who thought we were not *whipped*.

At this time about 2 o'clock in the afternoon the remains of several Regiments concentrated with our squad under command of Capt Kittle Co "A" with some Ohio Wis and Indiana troops we went forward again toward the line of battle which seemed to have advanced some distance. Our Reg flag was carried by Sergt Rogers. We kept advancing and falling back as the enemy pressed forward or gave way under heavy fire from troops on our left. Our men dragged some heavy guns back of us and the whole line of Infantry fell back and massed around the Artillery.

About this time some prisoners brought in say that Albert Sidney Johnston commanding the Rebel army was killed this afternoon and that Beauregard is now in command and has sworn to "water his horse in the Tennessee River or *in hell* before night."

About 5 o'clock the enemy came on in solid masses for the final *charge*. At this time there was a calm. The artillery and the musketry almost ceased and the calmness was oppressive. But it was the calm before the terrible *storm* which was preparing. We were massed upon the surrounding bluffs about the landing. General Grant and Genl Buell rode along the line and urged every man to stand *firm* as we should have thousands of reinforcements in a short time and pointed to the opposite side of the river where we could see a long line of blue coats far as the eye could reach—and that was *Buells Army*. This sight was all that saved Grants Army. No promises or words could have inspired men on this desperate occasion. Every man who stood in that crumbling wall felt the great responsibility. To give way then would be *destruction* to the whole Army.

There is some talk now that the enemy having lost their leader is retreating and that the battle is over for to-day which is the reason for the silence. But this delusion is soon dissipated as the smoke clears away we can see the enemy coming on in long dark lines and seem to spring out of the ground in countless thousands. This is to be the grand and final charge by which they hope to sweep us from the face of the earth or capture the entire army. This *death like stillness* is worse than murder. Our Artillery opens with about 40 pieces (all we have left) then nothing more can be seen.

The very earth trembles with the fearful explo-

sions. The enemy charged to the very mouth of our cannon and hundreds of them fell—filled with whiskey and gun powder. The battle raged for the possession of this hill which we held. If we would have lost this *all would have been lost*. Every man seemed nerved beyond human strength to do his utmost and he *did*. Acres of dead and wounded told the fearful tale of sacrifice.

At this time two gunboats moved up the River and opened on the flank of the enemy. Such terrific noises were never before heard in these dismal woods. The rapidity of the discharges and the roar of the guns seemed to mow the very forest to the ground. This so demoralized the Rebels that they fell back about dark. At this time a grand stampede took place at the Landing.

Thousands of men who had fled from the field tried to get aboard the steamboats which lay at the bank. The Boats were ordered to leave and fall over to the other bank of the River. The crazy fugitives from behind crowded those in front and hundreds were pushed into the River and scores drowned. The cannon balls from the enemies batteries now passed over our heads and clear across the River, so close were they to us. Darkness and the gunboats determined our persistent foe to fall back and thus at dark we found ourselves crowded like a flock of sheep on the bluffs around the Landing just able to keep the Wolf at bay while the favoring night that settled down on friend and foe put an end to the fearful slaughter for the day a parallel to which this Continent had never before witnessed.

... *Second Day's Battle April 7th*. No pen can tell, no hand can paint no words can utter the horrors of last night. Such a doleful pressure of misery and woe and suffering as rested on this





FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR, PAGE 111

field of *death*. Unable to succor or help the poor wounded men that fell in yesterday's battle the living cared only for themselves. Scarcely able to endure the great fatigue of the day each one cared only for himself.

The enemy held undisputed possession of the greater portion of the field where lay the badly wounded. About 10 o'clock at night the thick smoke in the air gathered in thunder clouds lit up by flashes of lightning and rolling thunder—and soon the rain began to come down in torrents drenching both man and beast. There was no shelter any place. Piles of provisions and ammunition lay uncovered. The darkness was impenetrable except when the lightning flashed.

The groans of the *wounded* and *dying* could be heard in the din of the tempest. The struggles of the wounded horses as they floundered upon the ground and came running through the darkness made the situation one of almost as much danger as during the day

in the battle. Signal lights were flashing on the river all night as the boats kept constantly running back and forth bringing Buell's Army across which yesterday marched thirty miles to be here at the fight which was impending. As the poor tired fellows came up from the landing they gave a *shout* and a *cheer* and yelled "Never mind boys. We'll *lick hell* out of them to-morrow." Such a welcome shout made us feel new again. But [we] thought of the fearful morrow and would it be possible to redeem the terrible losses of to-day.

It took all night to get that army of 30,000 men across the Tennessee. Before dawn this mighty Army of reinforcements was in line of battle. Before the darkness had lifted from the deep forest we heard the roll of musketry and the shouts of Buell's men far to the front—at first the scattering shots of the pickets then the increasing crash of the small arms followed by the roar of the cannon and the cheers of the contending

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hosts as they grappled in the death struggle for the old field of yesterday. About 10 o'clock our scattered Regiment got together about 400 men and we marched out toward the front and took our place in the reserve in line of battle near where we fought on yesterday. Here we lay more as a Reserve than anything else

Buell's Army to-day is doing the *fighting*. The cannonading at this time was *terrific* and on until in the afternoon. Batteries were *taken* and *retaken*. Sometimes one side held the ground then the other would rally and recapture it. . . . This desperate fighting lasted about 4 hours. Acres and acres of timber such as small saplings and large underbrush were mowed down and trees one foot in diameter were cut down as if a mowing machine had gone through the field and limbs fell like autumn leaves in the leaden and iron storm. Men and horses were piled in death over hundreds of acres on the fatal field.

At last! At last! About 3 o'clock there was precipitate haste to the front and the fire seemed to slacken and the volleys of musketry were getting more distant toward the South. Soon the glad news came that the enemy was *retreating*. . . . Men mortally wounded jumped upon their feet and shouted for Victory. Every coward who had slunk under the river bank was out of his hole. There had not been so many men *wanting* to go to the front since the battle began. The woods were full of Cavalry hunting the *front*. They had heard that the enemy was "retreating" and they wanted to give him some of their ammunition.

Two or three of us took a little ramble out on the field and we perhaps went one mile or more from the Regt. We took a look at the ghastly sights. By this time we had become accustomed to seeing *dead* men and the *shock* had passed. We soon came to where the dead lay thick. The first dead rebel I came to lay on his back with his hands raised above his head and had died in great agony. I took a *button* from his coat. Here was the camp of the 52d Ills. Federal and Confederate lay alternately scattered over the ground some of them wounded and so near dead from exposure that they were mostly insane.

Farther on the dead and wounded became more numerous. Some had died in a quiet and peaceful manner and had passed away with no visible sign of pain or suffering. Others wore the most fearful signs of agony as they had struggled with death. Some fell with their muskets tightly gripped in both hands so that they could scarcely be separated. I saw five *dead* Confederates all killed by one six pound solid shot—no doubt from one of our cannon. They had been behind a log and all in a row. The ball had raked them as

they crouched behind the log (no doubt firing at our men). One of them had his *head* taken off. One had been struck at the right shoulder and his chest lay open. One had been cut in two at the bowels and nothing held the carcass together but the spine. One had been hit at the thighs and the legs were torn from the body. The fifth and last one was piled up into a mass of skull, arms, some toes and the remains of a butternut suit. Just a few feet from where they lay the cannon ball had struck a large tree and lodged. I took it out and carried it some distance but finally threw it down as it became too heavy a relic to carry.

I saw one Union man leaning against a tree with a violin tightly grasped in his left hand. He had been dead some time and had no doubt been instantly killed. Another close by was leaning against a tree with his hat pulled down over his eyes and his hands crossed in front of him. I thought him asleep but when I took his hat off I found him cold and *dead*. This was in the camp of Genl Prentiss who was on the extreme front and where our men were first surprised yesterday morning. I saw where the 3d Iowa and some other regiments fought yesterday. There has been the most terrible destruction. I counted 26 dead battery horses on a few square rods of ground and the men were lying almost in heaps. Blue and gray sleep together. Oh my God! . . .

Around these batteries men have died at their posts beside the guns. Some are torn all to pieces leaving nothing but their heads or their boots. Pieces of clothing and strings of flesh hang on the limbs of the trees around them—and the faithful horses have died *in the harness* right by the cannon. Some of them torn to quarters by the bursting shells and their swollen bodies are already filling the air with a deadly odor.

While here some cavalry came dashing back and yelled that the enemy was coming on us again in force. The way we climbed toward the Regiment was not very *slow*. But we lost our course and the sky being clouded we could not tell directions. The woods were full of men running in all directions and we were in the flood of a *great panic*. Some said the River was in one direction and others said it was the *opposite*. We crawled into a *thicket* and waited until we got a little better settled in our minds about the *direction*. Finally we got the course and went on until we [saw] some of our Regiment.

The enemy has retreated and left all his dead and wounded on the field. We have whipped him but at an awful *sacrifice*. The two armies are like two tenacious *bull dogs*. They have grappled and fought until both are exhausted and worn out. One has crawled away to *lie down*

and the other one *cannot follow*. This is our condition. We are quite glad to hold the *ground and let him retreat*.

Ambulances and men are hurrying over the field and gathering up the wounded. The surgeons are *cutting* off the arms and legs. Burying parties and details are out burying the dead this evening who have been dead now since Sunday Morning. The air is already filled with the stench of decaying bodies. . . . The terrible rain of last night has filled the ground with water and washed the gullies out. The trees are just bursting into leaf and the little flowers are covering the ground—but their fragrance is lost in the pall of death which has settled down on this bloody field.

"This is the valley and the shadow of death"

Camp at Battlefield of Shiloh

April 8th. Some of us slept in the tents of the 8th Iowa last night. The Tents of the 8th and 12th Iowa are close together and the men are missing—nearly all of them were taken prisoners on Sunday. Here are the knapsacks and blankets just as left when the fight commenced at daylight on Sunday morning and the men had only time to get their guns and fall in or rather to fall out and go to fighting. They never saw their baggage again.

The rain kept falling all night. There was a great *panic* this morning caused by men firing off their guns to see if the *loads* would go out. There was a rally on the color line and we expected another fight. It is very chilly and thousands of the wounded lay out the *third* night with no care. . . . Have been trying to get our Company together but cannot find all the men. Granville Feagins was killed and left on the field of Sunday. Oscar Ford was mortally wounded and is now dead. Lieut Fisk is missing likewise Crosly and some others. Some fifteen men of Co "G" are wounded and some of them badly. All the wounded are being hurried on hospital boats and will be sent away. . . .

April 9th. Weather damp and rainy. Went down to the Landing this forenoon to hunt up some of our baggage which we left on the boat. Thousands of men were there getting their teams and camp equipments. Wounded and sick men were lying around on the muddy ground and the dead were being tramped over as if they were logs of wood. I helped to carry two poor fellows on a boat who had the measles and were too weak to help themselves. They had lain there two days they said. The hillside at the Landing is so deep in mud as to be almost impassable.

I slipped a few lines into an envelope and gave it to a stranger and asked him to *mail* it somewhere so that it would go to the folks at home and let them know that we are not as bad off as we *might* be. All mails are stoped and no letters will be taken from here unless *smuggled* through. This has been a terrible battle and the news must not go North for a few days until the Reports can be *fixed* up. This afternoon I took a stroll out about three miles. I have not eat anything to-day and have been so sickened that I shall not want anything for sometime.

Where the retreat commenced on Monday afternoon are hundreds and thousands of wounded rebels. They had fallen in heaps and the woods had taken fire and burned all the clothing off them and the naked and blackened corpses are still lying there unburied. On the hillside near a deep hollow our men were hauling them down and throwing them into the deep gulley. *One hundred and eighty* had been thrown in when I was there. Men were in on top of the *dead* straightening out their legs and arms and *tramping* them down so as to make the hole contain as many as possible. Other men on the hillside had ropes with a noose on one end and they would attach this to a mans foot or his head and haul him down to the hollow and roll him in. Where the ground was level it was so full of water that the excavation filled up as fast as dug and the corpse was just rolled in and the earth just thrown over it and left.

War is *hell* broke *loose* and benumbs all the tender feelings of men and makes of them *brutes*. I do not want to see any more such scenes and yet I would not have missed this for any consideration. ❖

"A notebook in my side pocket was like a pocket knife always at command on the march," wrote Cyrus F. Boyd, "and a larger book in camp or in the baggage was written up at the first opportunity." Boyd wrote daily during the three years and four months that he fought for the Union. Many years after the war, he wrote up his notes in full, and this was later published by the State Historical Society of Iowa in four issues of the *Iowa Journal of History* in 1952. This account of Shiloh is an excerpt of the complete diary.

Journal editor Mildred Throne commented, "This is not a camp and battlefield diary of the usual order, with brief entries of only the high lights of the day." Boyd "wrote, in simple and startling language, descriptions of battles and their terrible aftermath. . . . It is an honest, simple account of one man's experiences in a bloody civil conflict."

Spelling and punctuation here reflect the original, but periods have been added to indicate sentences. —The Editor

What a deluge of flame

CAMP NEAR PITTSBURG LD'G, TENN,
April 10, 1862

THE FAYETTE COUNTY PIONEER.

. . . You have heard all about it "by lightning" long before this, and had it all explained to you by those whose trade it is to relate stories of the horrible, and there is no kind of use for me to attempt drawing a picture of the fight, and what was to be seen after the fight. . . . And even if I had, I never would take advantage of it to let my fellow beings know the desperation of this unprecedented fight and the horrors presented on the field of battle even three days after the fight.

Early on the morning of the 6th the different camps were startled from their "hasty plate of soup" by the booming of cannon and heavy volleys of musketry some three miles from the Landing, and a mile and a half from our camp, when every man sprang to his taps, buckled on his accoutrements, seized his gun, rammed home a fresh cartridge, and its usual "condiments" of "ball and buck," and formed in line in the streets without an order being given, so that within 15 minutes from the first alarm, our Regiment was on the double quick for the scene of action.

After marching half a mile, we formed in line of battle and although our progress was greatly retarded by underbrush and fallen timber, yet we pressed forward until within half a mile of where the action commenced, where we were met by a "stampeded" Regiment, who had been driven from their camp and their battery taken. The woods in front of us, to the

right of us, to the left of us, and all around us was filled with soldiers, running for dear life, some with guns, many without, some leading their wounded comrades and some hobbling off as well as they could, while some who were less fortunate in the shot received, or in the amount of blood to spare, were seated behind trees, logs and everything that offered a support, while horses could be seen by the dozen roaming as if in search of their unlucky riders, and a little further on we began to come to the "ghastly dead" when the thing began to look bilious.

Here let me relate an instance of "pluck." As the "flying" Regiment approached us, a boy, I call him a *boy*, tho' he had the *pluck* of an ox, came up to us *crying*, and said the good looking little fellow, who looked as tho' he had just kissed his sweet heart: "I couldn't help it, they all run and left me and I had to run too. I know 'twas cowardly, but I want to fall in with you and show you what kind of stuff I'm made of." We were not long in making room to "fall in," and he fought manfully with us during the day, while hundreds of his comrades ingloriously fled to the river bank, where no persuasion or threat could arouse them.

That boy, if alive (and I trust he is,) will make his *mark* some day, as he did on the 6th day of April. I wish I knew his mother's address, I would write to her how her darling fought, and enclose a scrap to his

"girl," if I knew her name, and tell her to wait till after the war, and then make sure of a prize.

We soon got sight of our enemy drawn up in line about 60 rods in front of us in the rear of the deserted camp. We opened fire on him, but the distance was too great, and the brush too thick to do any great execution.

We then fell back to a less exposed situation, where we lay flat to receive the charge which we supposed they were about to make, but contented themselves with shelling us for nearly an hour, our battery replying right merrily from a field just to our left, when at last one of our pieces was disabled and the battery withdrew from the field and we deployed behind it, being shielded by a rail fence, and placing the field containing about 40 acres between us and the enemy.

On the other side of the field were a large body of the enemy's cavalry and the Pensacola Brigade, the flower of Beauregard's army. Our Battery of 6 guns threw shell amongst them for half an hour, the enemy replying with their Battery; but doing no damage to us, other than striking Jo. Earll over the left peeper with a piece of fuse, which "only made the young sauce box laugh" at their folly.

But we were beginning to get sleepy, and wishing for a change of *programme*, when we discovered the enemy were preparing to make the charge. On they came, a fine set of fellows, with beautiful banners

and a line that nothing but what was in waiting for them could break. On they came, steady and firm, their polished arms reflecting in the bright sun and making one "snow blind" to look at them. Ah, but 'twas a splendid sight as we peeped thro' the fence, with our guns all pointed plump at about the second button of their handsome "uniform," but still they came, a line of them, reaching across the field, little thinking of what was in store for them as we lay there on our bellies, with our eyes squinted along the barrels of our guns. We could hear the heavy tread of those determined men, when presently they reached the eminence on the brink of a deep ravine about 30 rods from us, and the order was given to "fire!" Great God of Israel! what a deluge of flame burst from Iowa 3d from behind their slender breastwork! And it did not slacken. That fine body of men stood as if mesmerized while the line was falling like wheat before the reaper, scarcely returning the fire, and seeming to hesitate whether to advance or which way to turn, their ranks thinning out continually. What could they do? To advance would be certain death and to retreat would be annihilation, while to deploy to the right or left would save a part, but woe to the hindmost. The latter course was resolved on and away they started on a double quick, off towards our left, but still keeping formed as well as they could, where whole files were dropping under our cruel fire, till at last all were thro' the field but about 300 determined fellows, who must take their chance with our whole fire concentrated on them. . . . The firing didn't cease however, for many of our men in their eagerness mistook the dead and wounded for a Regiment, and fired into them. I acknowledge

having fired twice into what I supposed to be a force of the enemy lying down to receive our fire, and that is the only regret I have for anything I have done during the war. One resolute [Confederate] fellow took a tree, the only one near, and loaded and fired on us after all the others had gone and many a "dead" shot was sent after him before he fell. It seemed almost a pity to shoot so brave a man, even an enemy. . . .

The second day after the fight some of our boys examined that field, and a man could stand in one place and count 82 dead bodies. . . .

We had now been fighting about five hours, along some portion of the line, which extended from the river back for 3 or 4 miles, and frequently the whole line being engaged at the same time, often changing our position by advancing, retiring, strengthening this point and then that, according to circumstances, when about 5, P.M., our right and left wing were turned, and nothing left for us but to retreat back. Here was where we lost the most of our men. We had a gauntlet of three quarters of a mile to run, and we went at it without a *scare*. Some of our men were hit before, but the most of them were shot in getting through our camp which lay directly in our path. The enemy had sharpshooters posted to the right and left of our camp, and every bullet "hissed" before or behind us, not one over our heads; so accurate were the shots.

. . . Our Colonel had his horse shot in two by a cannon ball early in the Morning, disabling him, and at night we only had, I think, two Commissioned officers, they *Lieutenants*. Company F was commanded by Lieut. Crosby, of Company E, and a braver little fellow never walked in boots. Early in the engagement, he drew his re-

volver and informed us that the first man that ran would get a shot from it, when a shout went up from his company, and I am happy to state, he had no use for Mr. Colts "patent."

After running the gauntlet, our Regt. was too much scattered to form again, the officers all being killed or wounded, and some formed with the 2d Iowa, and some with other Regts., while others assisted the wounded to the Landing, and the next morning only 140 of the Regt. could be found, the balance forming in with other Regiments ready for the 2d day's fight.

. . . When our Reg't left camp, Lieutenant Templeton mounted a horse, and notwithstanding he had just arose from a sick couch, he spent the most of the day riding back and forth carrying water and provisions to us. He *couldn't* have occupied his time better and I think it is a great pity that others didn't follow his example. [Through] his untiring exertions many of our boys were relieved from that burning thirst always experienced on the battle field.

. . . Dr. Lake is working with might and main, carving and sawing and as cheerful as of old, when discussing politics in the P. O. He fixed up my "left" to a charm, and when through gave me a rousing drink of "D.S.B. \$10 per gal." Bully for Doc. Dr. Parker is also piling up legs and arms by the cord, and is just the same kind, good hearted man as he ever was.

. . . MAJOR JONES.

This account appeared on April 21, 1862, in the *Fayette County Pioneer*, published in West Union, Iowa.

We cross an open meadow, then a gully

"The colonel explains that we are to charge on the enemy's breastworks and take them at the point of the bayonet, . . . not a shot is to be fired until we are inside the works.

" . . . We cross an open meadow, then a gully, tear down and clamber over a rail fence, and commence the ascent of a hill covered with abattis, or fallen trees. The line is well preserved, considering the nature of the obstructions, and thus far not a shot has been fired by the enemy. On we go, when suddenly we reach a point on the hill where a full view is obtained of the rebel rifle pits in front, and as far as we can see to the right and left of us. 'Crash!' and the yellow clay of the pits is covered by a flame of fire which leaps from the rifles of the Mississippians and Tennesseans, by whom they are manned, and who are evidently anticipating an assault. The volley passes over our heads, cutting twigs and limbs off the trees. We give a hearty cheer and rush forward, and then the shots of the enemy begin to tell."

*Private John T. Bell
2nd Iowa Infantry*

"About 4 p.m. the enemy made a rapid movement to our left. . . . In our front all was quiet, the firing being nearly in our rear. Some one passed hurriedly with orders. We were quickly moved over the knoll, and then we could see a great deal. Looking backward from the high ground, and seeing only the 2d and 7th Iowa coming, I remarked to a comrade: 'Some one has blundered. Good-by to the 14th Iowa and those other fellows.'"

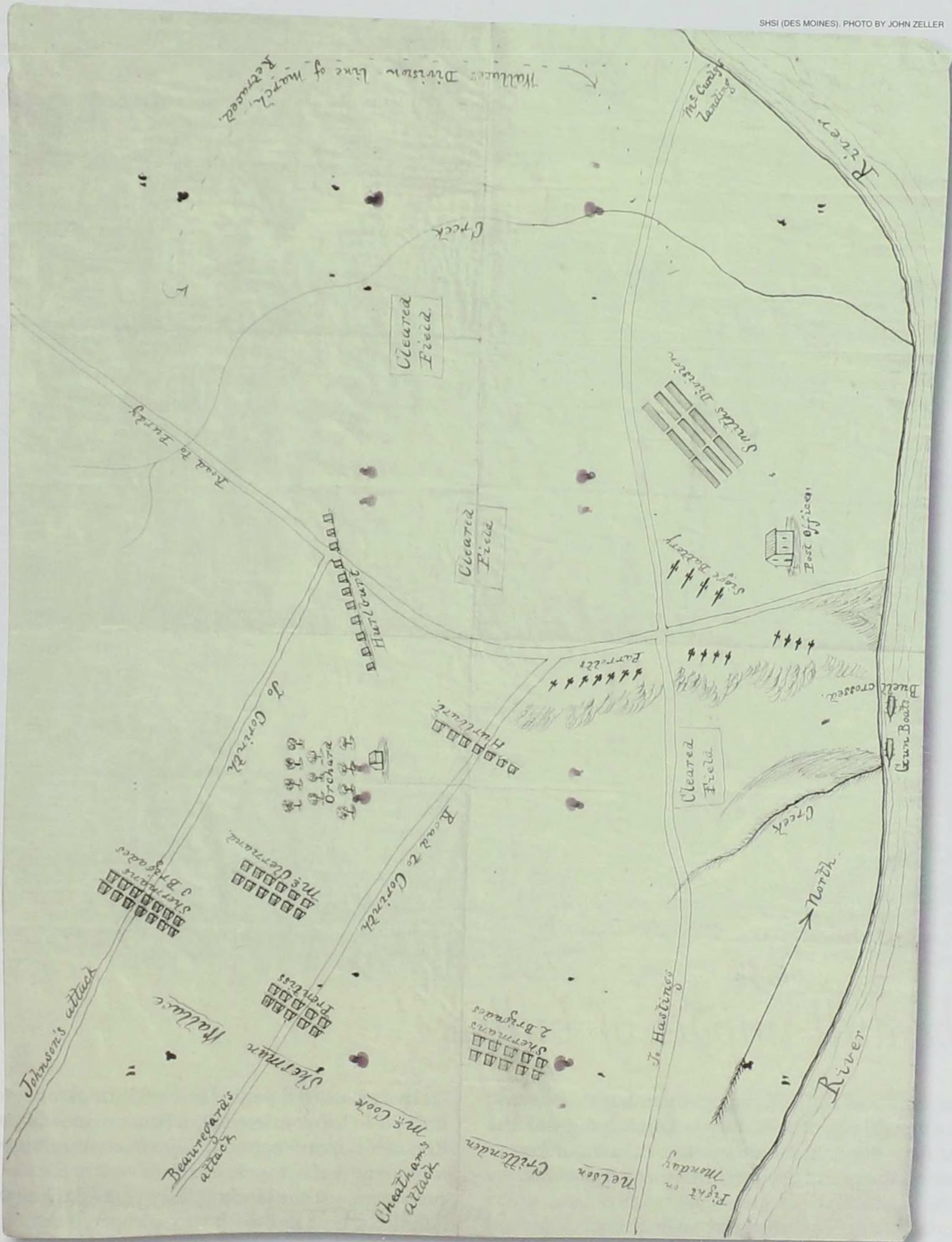
*Private Albert A. Barnes
2nd Iowa Infantry*

"We lay down on the brow of a hill awaiting the approach of the rebels in front. While in this position, Thomas Hains of Company E took off his hat, placed it upon his ramrod, and holding it up, shouted to the boys along the line to see what a close call he had had while out in front, for a minie ball had passed through the creased crown of his hat, making four holes. Before he could get his hat back on his head, a small shell burst over us and mortally wounded him."

*Private Alexander G. Downing
11th Iowa Infantry*

"About a quarter of a mile beyond our camp, we followed the road and woods literally swarming with soldiers of Prentiss's Division, who were retreating from the outposts. As we were passing them, going on 'double quick' to meet the enemy, some of our boys asked them why they were running? They replied: 'Don't go out there—they will give you hell! We are all cut to pieces.' Our reply was, 'Out there we are going, and if the rebels have any hell, we intend to go through and on we went, not stopping.' A short distance further on, we met a Government wagon, in which were some rebel prisoners. . . . As we passed them they commenced cursing our Regiment, calling us 'damned Yankees,' and swearing that they would give us enough of 'Dixie's land' before that day's work was over. I never felt more like shooting a rebel."

*Sergeant Harold M. White
11th Iowa Infantry*



This hand-drawn map of the Battle of Shiloh was found among the papers of Iowan Grenville Dodge at the State Historical Society of Iowa. Dodge was a Union colonel at the time of Shiloh and had been wounded at the Battle of Pea Ridge a month earlier. On this map, the Tennessee River appears on the right edge, flowing north.



The dull impact of bullets

"Then there was the dull impact of bullets on human flesh, the writhing of the wounded and dying—all the hell of the battlefield . . . always to be a companion picture of 'the pomp and circumstance of glorious war.' "

*Author unknown, Special Collections
State Historical Society of Iowa*

"If there occurred panics and exhibitions of cowardice, is it to be wondered at, when we remember that Regiment upon Regiment were fresh from Muster-in; receiving their arms etc. on their way to Shiloh; some even armed at the landing, many of whom had never handled a gun, and with very meager, if any, instructions even as to how to load and fire."

*1st Lieutenant E. G. Franker
6th Iowa Infantry*



FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR, PAGE 117

"During the night [of the 7th] rain fell in torrents and our troops were exposed to the storm without shelter. I made my headquarters under a tree a few hundred yards back from the river bank. My ankle was so much swollen from the fall of my horse the Friday night preceding, and the bruise was so painful, that I could get no rest. The drenching rain would have precluded the possibility of sleep without this additional cause. Some time after midnight, growing restive under the storm and the continuous pain, I moved back

to the log-house under the bank. This had been taken as a hospital, and all night wounded men were being brought in, their wounds dressed, a leg or an arm amputated as the case might require, and everything being done to save life or alleviate suffering. The sight was more unendurable than encountering the enemy's fire, and I returned to my tree in the rain."

*Major-General U. S. Grant
Army of the Tennessee*



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FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR, PAGE 165

Fire swept through the woods

"During the battle of Sunday the woods were fired and when we regained our outer camps, Monday, found at one point a pile of corn, containing several hundred bushels, gathered with the husks on. Many wounded soldiers crawled to this pile of corn, seeking more comfortable conditions, and when the fire swept through the woods and over the corn, they could not get away and were burned to death. At another place Monday afternoon I found a bright young boy (confederate) lying badly wounded on a cot in a tent. Facing him, on another cot alongside his own, sat a dead rebel with wide-staring eyes, and underneath the cot occupied by the boy was the body of a union soldier. By dropping his left hand the boy could touch this body, and by moving his right hand a trifle he could touch the other. He said: 'I was badly wounded yesterday, but managed to get into this abandoned tent and climbed up on this cot. Soon after this man on the other cot crawled in, and just before dark this soldier

lying under my cot. They were both hurt worse than I was, but we talked to each other as much as we could for encouragement. Then along in the night this man on the cot talked very low and weak, and after awhile said he knew he was going to die and bid us good-bye. I didn't hear anything after that from the man lying under my cot, and it was awful still from that till morning. When daylight came I found that they were both dead, and I have laid here all day hoping someone would come and help me.'"

*Private John T. Bell
2nd Iowa Infantry*

It is useless to fight longer

"Finally Gen. Prentiss, as I heard him describe repeatedly, said, 'It is useless to fight longer. I must stop this slaughter,' and he stepped forward on to a stump and waved his handkerchief in token of surrender.

"Just before the firing ceased one of my boys called to me and said that Lieut. Ferguson had been wounded and I went to where he lay and he lifted his shirt and showed me a horrible wound in his abdomen, which I saw at a glance would prove fatal. A few moments after our surrender was completed I called Ferguson's cousin, Private N. G. Price, and we went to where Gen. Polk and his staff were grouped a short distance from us. . . . I got the General's eye, saluted, gave my name and pointing to Ferguson, said, 'General, the officer lying there is my 1st Lieut. He is every inch a gentleman and a soldier and is my best friend; he is mortally wounded; Private Price here is his cousin and I want to ask if you will permit Price to remain to care for him.['] 'Most certainly,' said the General, 'Corporal Price, you remain with your cousin and if any one attempts to interfere with you tell them you are there by the order of Gen. Polk.'"

*Captain John H. Stibbs
12th Iowa Infantry*

"As soon as surrender was made, the Confederates shook hands with us, praised the bravery of the captured and promised the best treatment. General Bragg recognized Colonel Shaw of the 14th Iowa as a comrade in the Mexican war, and said, 'This affair'—the defense of the the Hornet's Nest position—'cost us an hour and a half.' The men were ordered to throw down their arms and accoutrements and the officers to give up their side-arms. One young officer . . . tried in vain to break his sword rather than surrender it."

*Author unknown, Special Collections
State Historical Society of Iowa*

"Every second seemed a minute—every minute an hour; but of such was the army at Shiloh. . . . Shiloh with its little back-woods, log church goes down into history; but what a day and what a name for the slaughter of brother human beings. Sunday—God's day; 'Shiloh'—Hebrew for 'rest—peace.'"

*E. G. Fraker
6th Iowa Infantry*

The true cost in suffering

NEARLY 110,000 soldiers fought at Shiloh. On the first day, the Union retreated. On the second, the Confederacy retreated, thus failing to stop the Union's advance into northern Mississippi.

The horrifying losses at Shiloh shattered any hopes of a short war. Bruce Catton writes, "For the first time in the conflict, men on both sides came to envision something of the true cost in suffering and death that victory would ultimately entail."

According to historian Robert K. Dykstra, "one of every four Union soldiers slaughtered at Shiloh . . . was an Iowan." —*The Editor*

Union

Strength

Day 1	39,830
Day 2 reinforcements	25,255

Total engaged 65,085

Losses

Killed	1,754
Wounded	8,408
Captured or missing	2,885

Total losses 13,047

Confederate

Strength

Day 1	43,968
Day 2 reinforcements	731

Total engaged 44,699

Losses

Killed	1,728
Wounded	8,012
Captured or missing	959

Total losses 10,699

Source of numbers: National Park Service