

THE CAREER OF CYRUS BUSSEY

Cyrus Bussey of Bloomfield was elected on the Democratic ticket as a member of the Iowa State Senate in 1859, and served in the Eighth General Assembly. When Fort Sumter was fired upon in April, 1861,¹ and it was apparent that war was inevitable, the excitement in Bloomfield was intense, and a public meeting was called "to Confer with our Senators and Representatives upon the legislation proper to be had at the approaching Special Session of the legislature". Bussey, the Senator from that district, and Harvey Dunlavy and Marvin Hotchkiss, the two Representatives, were invited to present their views at the meeting.

Senator Bussey responded in a speech in which he briefly reviewed the existing conditions of the country, and set forth in a high "spirit of patriotism" the duty of every citizen. At the close of the meeting some of Mr. Bussey's Democratic friends declared that he had "made a great mistake" — that "the war was brought upon the Country by the Republican party and that that party should be left to fight it out". Mr. Bussey replied that if he must be disloyal to the Union in order to be a Democrat, he would cease to be one.

Governor Samuel J. Kirkwood called a special session of the legislature to convene on May 15th, for the purpose of passing legislation relative to war activities. The members

¹ The material concerning the military career of Cyrus Bussey was taken largely from his own story of his life during the Civil War. These manuscript records, which fill fourteen notebooks of medium size, are not daily journals, but appear to have been written some time after the war. The notebooks were loaned to The State Historical Society of Iowa by Mr. Cyrus B. Hillis of Des Moines.

of the legislature were equally divided — one-half being Republicans and the other half Democrats. Many of the Democrats were not in sympathy with war legislation, and some of them were avowedly southern sympathisers.

Mr. Bussey writing upon this situation at a much later date said: "The reader of the present day, can with difficulty understand or believe that any considerable number of men living in the Northern States and enjoying the protection of the Government, could withhold their sympathy from our soldiers in the field, and wish success to the Confederates. Yet, such was the fact. The tie which had for half a century existed between the Northern and Southern democrats proved stronger than their love for the Union. They were willing to 'let the Southern States go in peace', rather than use force to coerce them to remain. They evinced their feelings, whenever a Union defeat was reported, by expressions of joy, and were correspondingly depressed when the victory was on the side of the Union Army. In every State of the Union North, this influence had to be resisted. While but one party existed in the South, and that party declaring its purpose to dissolve the Union. There were two parties in the North, one of them the democratic, seeking to get control of the National and State governments, and 'giving aid and comfort' to the enemy by declaring the War 'a failure' and by denouncing the Union soldiers as 'Lincoln hirelings'. Many democrats went South and took up arms in behalf of the Confederate cause. These were exceptional, but sufficient to demonstrate the disloyalty of a portion of that party, however, there were a great many loyal democrats who enlisted in the Army, most of whom severed their allegiance with that party. Many democrats who remained at home were loyal and sympathized with the Union Cause, but were powerless to commit their party to that policy. I had been all my life

a democrat and had abundant evidence of the feeling prevalent among the members of that party in the West."²

Although a member of the Democratic party, Senator Bussey was definitely in sympathy with the North. In the special session of the legislature he was placed on the Military Committee, which reported a bill which finally passed, appropriating \$800,000 for war purposes.

Upon the adjournment of the legislature, Senator Bussey returned to his home in Bloomfield, with no thought of active service in the Army. On the 11th of June, 1861, however, Governor Kirkwood appointed him as one of the aids de camp on his staff with the rank of lieutenant colonel of cavalry. Colonel Bussey was assigned to a district consisting of Lee, Van Buren, and Davis counties and was authorized to organize a company of men in each of these counties for the purpose of defending the border against invasion by the Confederate forces from Missouri. He was advised by the Governor that arms would be furnished his men as soon as they could be obtained from the government.

Companies were organized in accordance with the Governor's instructions. Hugh J. Sample was elected captain of a company organized at Keokuk in Lee County; Emanuel Mayne of Keosauqua led the company organized in Van Buren County; and Henry H. Trimble of Bloomfield headed a company in Davis County. Military equipment could not be obtained for these men, but they were instructed to hold themselves in readiness for service as soon as arms could be obtained.

Colonel Bussey communicated with the leaders of the Union forces in northern Missouri and plans were made for coöperation between Iowa and Missouri troops in case of necessity. On the 27th of July, 1861, Governor Kirkwood wrote to Colonel Bussey saying: "You are author-

² *Notebooks of Cyrus Bussey*, No. 1, pp. 57-59.

ized, for the protection of our Citizens and of loyal Citizens of Missouri to call into the service of the State three companies of the Regiment of mounted men provided for by the laws of the Extra Session of the current year. You will arm them with such arms as you have and furnish them with ammunition. . . . You will use these companies or any of them, at your discretion to secure the above objects — not crossing the Missouri line unless absolutely necessary, but doing so without hesitation should such necessity exist.”³

As no arms had yet been furnished by the State, Colonel Bussey visited General John C. Frémont at St. Louis, Missouri, in an effort to obtain supplies. He declared that southern sympathizers were numerous in northern Missouri and southern Iowa, and that Confederate troops would doubtless make a raid in Iowa to obtain horses and provisions to take south into the Confederate service. He requested guns for his soldiers but was advised that none were available. He also asked for 100,000 rounds of ammunition, and General Frémont yielded to the request and gave the order, although he questioned the advisability of issuing ammunition without guns. Only 50,000 rounds were, in fact obtained. These were shipped to Keokuk immediately. As a result of the interview between Colonel Bussey and General Frémont, the Fifth Iowa Infantry under Colonel William H. Worthington and the Sixth Iowa Infantry under Colonel John Adair McDowell were ordered to move from Burlington to Keokuk to strengthen the Union forces on the Missouri border. When these troops arrived at Keokuk, General John Pope, in need of troops to repel an attack being made by General Sterling Price at Boonville, Missouri, ordered

³ *Notebooks of Cyrus Bussey*, No. 1, pp. 7-10. For an account of this incident see Bussey's *The Battle of Athens, Missouri*, in the *Annals of Iowa* (Third Series), Vol. V, pp. 81-92.

these troops on to St. Louis to secure equipment, and the Iowa border was again left without adequate protection.

With conditions becoming more and more hazardous in Missouri, Colonel Bussey believed that there was imminent danger of an invasion of Iowa unless troops could be equipped at once to defend the State. In this emergency he was compelled to rely upon the settlers along the border to hold themselves in readiness to defend their own homes, and he found loyal citizens of both Iowa and Missouri ready to cooperate.

Governor Kirkwood had been called to Washington and had authorized Colonel Bussey to use his own discretion in handling the local situation. Colonel Bussey had in turn dispatched a man to Missouri to ascertain conditions there, and the messenger had returned with the news that the Confederates, fifteen hundred strong, were organized and would probably advance against the city of Keokuk.

Upon the receipt of this news, Colonel Bussey started at once for Keokuk, and upon his arrival there, telegraphed to General Frémont for arms, and notified the railroad officials that an attack might be expected. He then went to see Samuel F. Miller relative to providing adequate defense for the city, and while the two men were conferring John Given, a railroad official, appeared with a bill of lading for a thousand guns which had been consigned by the War Department at Washington to Colonel Grenville M. Dodge at Council Bluffs. The guns were to be transferred to the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad for transportation to their destination.

The 50,000 rounds of ammunition which he had obtained from General Frémont was of the right caliber for the guns, and without hesitation Colonel Bussey seized the guns and ordered the train to be ready to move at a moment's notice to distribute the guns. He gave out 200 guns in Keo-

kuk and sent another 200 to Athens, Missouri. The remaining guns were distributed at Farmington, Keosauqua, and Bloomfield, and then Colonel Bussey hastened back to what he thought would be the point of attack at Keokuk. Before he arrived at Keokuk, however, he was met by a messenger who had been dispatched to tell him that an attack was being made at Athens, Missouri.

When Colonel Bussey arrived in the vicinity of the war area he found troops already assembled. A body of Home Guards under the leadership of Colonel David Moore had erected barricades in the streets of Athens and resisted the enemy until troops could arrive. The attack on Athens was made on the morning of August 5, 1861. Troops from Keokuk, Farmington, and Croton, equipped with the arms which had been consigned to Colonel Dodge, arrived in time to prevent the Confederate forces from taking Athens, and by noon the Confederates were defeated and had started southward.

The foresight and initiative which Colonel Bussey had exercised in seizing and distributing the arms consigned to Colonel Dodge prevented a Union defeat at Athens, and doubtless prevented the Confederate forces from invading Iowa soil. Colonel Bussey, however, received several letters criticising him for having seized military arms in transit, but when the authorities learned what had been accomplished he was highly commended. General Frémont said: "Not one man in a million, not an Officer in United States service would have assumed such responsibility." As a result of this service Bussey was given a commission as colonel and was authorized to enlist a regiment of cavalry for Union service to rendezvous at Keokuk.

A call was issued for men to enlist and to bring their horses with them. Within ten days twelve hundred men had volunteered — many more than could be accepted for

service at that time. Colonel Bussey was then only twenty-seven years of age, and was without scientific military training, his experience having been that of a merchant.

Before Colonel Bussey's men had enlisted he received a long letter from General John Pope — commanding officer in northern Missouri — instructing him to move into Missouri and take an active part in the defense program. This, of course, he was unable to do at that time.

On August 26, 1861, the men were mustered into service as the Third Iowa Cavalry, and stationed at Camp Rankin in Keokuk. On September 4th it was learned that more than four hundred Confederate troops were stationed in the northern counties of Missouri, and orders were received from General Pope to take the field against them. Equipment was not yet available, but Colonel Bussey had a conference with General Pope and obtained sufficient equipment for defense.

Early in September, Colonel Bussey again appealed to General Frémont for supplies, and on September 19th orders were issued for him to purchase the necessary supplies. Colonel Bussey at once went to Chicago and made extensive purchases. His experience as a merchant enabled him to select the best supplies available, and as a result his men were eventually equipped in an excellent manner. By November 1st the equipment had arrived, and the Third Iowa Cavalry was ordered to report at Benton Barracks, near St. Louis. Upon their arrival there, they came in contact with other troops from Iowa, and from various other States, but none were better equipped or trained than they.

Samuel R. Curtis had been in command at Benton Barracks, but soon after the arrival of Colonel Bussey and the Third Iowa troops, Curtis was succeeded by William T. Sherman. Soon after assuming command General Sher-

man ordered all troops to appear for review by General Henry W. Halleck and himself. Colonel Bussey's regiment "was in splendid condition embracing over one thousand men, mounted on fine horses, elegantly equipped, with banners and guidons flying and sabres flashing, as they went through the manual of arms". When the regiment had passed the reviewing stand, both General Halleck and General Sherman complimented Colonel Bussey upon "the magnificent drill and the efficiency displayed by the command". On two or three occasions during the month of January, 1862, Colonel Bussey was ordered to march his whole regiment through the streets of St. Louis. The object of this, no doubt, was "to make a display of force, for the benefit of the disloyal element then in large numbers in the city".⁴

While Colonel Bussey was at Benton Barracks, he was visited by his wife and daughter Cora, who remained for some time in comfortable quarters provided for them there. On the 5th of February, 1862, these guests left, and on the following day Colonel Bussey left St. Louis, having received instruction to go to Rolla, Missouri, and report to General Samuel R. Curtis.

Upon his arrival at Rolla, he found that many of the troops were ill, and that scarcely enough remained to perform post duty. Moreover, he learned that troops were needed to defend the town of Salem. He telegraphed to General Curtis, and received instruction to advance by forced march to Lebanon, where Curtis was stationed. The commander at Rolla, however, telegraphed to General Halleck to have this order countermanded and to hold Colonel Bussey's troops there. Other troops were sent to Rolla. Two companies of the Third Iowa Cavalry were dispatched under Major William C. Drake to protect Salem, and the

⁴ *Notebooks of Cyrus Bussey*, No. 2, p. 4.

remainder of the regiment under Colonel Bussey was sent to join General Curtis.

On the morning of February 13th, Colonel Bussey with his men and an ambulance loaded with ammunition started on this forced march to Lebanon. Weather and road conditions were so bad, however, that the ambulance was abandoned, and the soldiers dismounted from their horses and walked a part of the time in order to facilitate travel. Colonel Bussey, himself, dismounted and requested every officer and man to do likewise, thus affording great relief to the horses.

Upon arriving at Lebanon they found the town deserted, General Curtis's army having moved on to Springfield. No supplies were to be found except flour and fresh beef. The troops were without tents or equipment of any kind. Colonel Bussey writing of conditions later said:

The weather had turned very cold, freezing the roads and ponds in a few hours so hard that a six mule team could pass over them without making the slightest impression. A heavy snow storm set in and continued all day and night. We camped in the woods, near the town, where fires were made, and the flour which we had procured was made into dough by mixing it with water in the corners of our rubber coats, rolling dough around sticks and baking it before the fire. From a pile of logs set on fire several large rattle snakes were run out and killed. The snakes were broiled and eaten by the men with a relish, and pronounced excellent!⁵

The march on to Springfield was over extremely rough roads. When the troops arrived there, they went into camps which had been deserted by the enemies. Food and supplies were also available.

From Springfield the march was continued to Wilson's Creek, Cassville, and then to Sugar Creek, Arkansas, where the troops joined the army of General Curtis. On this march the troops learned that General Benjamin McCulloch

⁵ *Notebooks of Cyrus Bussey*, No. 2, pp. 22-26.

had told the people that the Union soldiers would murder every woman and child found in the country, and that many of the inhabitants had followed the Confederate army. Those who were unable to go were surprised to find that "they were not only unmolested, but that guards were placed at their houses to protect them".

In describing this overland journey Colonel Bussey said: "This march of more than 220 miles from Rolla to Sugar Creek, through mud, rain, sleet, snow, and severe cold, without tents or camp equipage of any kind, has ever been considered by my regiment as equal in severity to any service it ever performed. It was endured by the men like veterans, and without a murmur."⁶

After a brief rest at Sugar Creek, Colonel Bussey moved on to Fayetteville, Arkansas, where his troops captured the town without resistance — the Confederate troops fleeing as he entered the town. In Fayetteville there was widespread evidence of destruction of property. General McCulloch had instilled a great fear into the minds of the citizens by destroying property on every hand, and representing that the Union forces would wreak vengeance upon all who remained in the village. Citizens everywhere were surprised to learn that Colonel Bussey and his troops were not revengeful and cruel as had been represented to them by the Confederate forces.

From the 22nd of February, 1862, until the 4th of March troops were kept on the move, reconnoitering toward the Boston Mountains, where the Confederates were concentrating in large numbers. On the night of March 5th the enemy, 40,000 strong, was reported as advancing, and the Union forces were ordered to fall back to Sugar Creek. In making this retreat, troops under General Franz Sigel were attacked, and Colonel Bussey was called upon to aid in the

⁶ *Notebooks of Cyrus Bussey*, No. 2, pp. 33-36.

defense. A running fight ensued, but the enemy abandoned the pursuit when they arrived within a few miles of Sugar Creek.

On March 7 and 8, 1862, the battle of Pea Ridge was fought. In addition to five companies of the Third Iowa Cavalry — A, B, C, D, and M — Colonel Bussey in this engagement had a considerable number of Missouri troops under his command. The Union army, however, was considerably outnumbered by the Confederate forces. This was the first battle in which Colonel Bussey and the Third Iowa Cavalry were in direct conflict with the enemy.

In writing of this battle, Colonel Bussey said: "The gallantry displayed by our forces in this unequal conflict was remarkable, notwithstanding the fact that our regiments were overwhelmed by the vastly superior forces of the enemy, composed of the best drilled Veteran troops of Louisiana, and Arkansas. There were large bodies of Texas Rangers and Indians engaged under leaders whose names were supposed to strike terror to our men, who were for the first time under fire."

While a considerable number of Confederate troops were serving under well trained leaders, some of the troops were not well trained. Among these was a body of Indians. When these were placed in the thick of the fight the Confederate forces "speedily disintegrated into an uncontrollable rabble".⁷

The Third Iowa Cavalry lost 51 men at the battle of Pea Ridge. When Colonel Bussey returned from the battle he was informed that many of these men had been wounded, then captured and killed by Indians under the leadership of Albert Pike. The total Federal loss is reported as 1384, while the Confederate loss is estimated at something more than 800.

⁷ *Notebooks of Cyrus Bussey*, No. 3, pp. 24-44, 49, 51, 53; *Stuart's Iowa Colonels and Regiments*, p. 586; *Hosmer's The Appeal to Arms*, p. 108.

Colonel Bussey in writing about this battle said: "General Curtis's victory at Pea Ridge furnishes an example where a force greatly superior in numbers was defeated in a fair fight in the open field, without the aid of defenses of any kind by a force as inferior as 10,500 is inferior to 25,000. Van Doren's army outnumbered the Army of General Curtis in men and artillery in the ratio named." The battle of Pea Ridge was one of the most difficult battles in which the Third Iowa Cavalry fought.⁸

When the Confederate forces left the Boston Mountains to march against General Curtis, just before the battle of Pea Ridge, it is said that "doubtless every man in that Army expected a decisive, and easy Victory". From the beginning of the war they had heard of many Union defeats. They had come to "honestly believe in the superiority of the Southern soldier over his Northern antagonist". The results of the battle proved, however, that the Confederate forces had failed to make a proper estimate of the real strength and bravery of the Union army.

The defeat of the Confederates at Pea Ridge was complete and final. A citizen of Fayetteville who witnessed the retreat of troops through that city said: "About 10 o'clock on Sunday morning, the Army, which a few days before, had passed my house so exultant and confident of an easy and complete Victory, came back; but it was an Army no longer. The Army was a confused mob — not a regiment, not a company in rank, save two regiments of cavalry, which, as a rear guard, passed through near sun down; the rest were a rabble rout, not four or five abreast, but the whole road, fifty feet wide, perfectly filled with men, every one seemingly animated with the same desire to get away. Few, very few, had guns, knapsacks or blankets. Everything calculated to impede their flight had been abandoned;

⁸ *Notebooks of Cyrus Bussey*, No. 4, pp. 50-68; *Stuart's Iowa Colonels and Regiments*, p. 586; *The New International Encyclopaedia*, Vol. XVIII, p. 231.

many were hatless; very few words were spoken, few of them had taken any food for two or three days; they were thoroughly dispirited. And thus, for hours, the human tide swept by, a broken, drifting, discouraged mass, not an officer, that I could see, to give an order; and, had there been, he could not have reduced that formless mass to discipline or order."⁹

Soon after the battle of Pea Ridge Colonel Bussey was granted a leave of absence to make a journey to St. Louis on business connected with the regiment. He made the journey alone, going by way of Rolla, through the enemy's country. In this adventure he was in constant danger of encountering parties of guerrillas. Near the town of Waynesville, Missouri, he suddenly came upon eleven men whom he recognized as guerrillas. He could not turn back with safety. Accordingly, he drove spurs into his horse, and rushed up to the men. Stopping suddenly before them he called to them as rapidly as he could: "How are you, gentlemen; how far to the next house? Can I get forage there for five hundred cavalry?"

Scarcely waiting for a reply he dashed away again at full speed. Continuing on to St. Louis he transacted his business, and in a few days returned without further encounters. Upon his return to his troops near the Arkansas border, he was presented with a magnificent sword as a token of bravery. This sword with his commission was later deposited in the Historical, Memorial and Art Department Building in Des Moines.

Upon his return from St. Louis, Colonel Bussey found his army ready to start on a new campaign "which was to be fraught with peril and privation". The line of march was over a rough mountainous country, at a season of the year when the roads were almost impassable for heavy

⁹ *Notebooks of Cyrus Bussey*, No. 5, pp. 1-11.

wagons and artillery. Despite these conditions the army started on a march of two hundred and fifty miles southward into the valley of the White River in Arkansas.

On the 15th of April the army was in camp on Bear Creek west of Forsyth, Missouri. Heavy rains had fallen causing the streams to become impassable, while wagon trains and the artillery were reported as "floundering through mud a foot deep". Writing of conditions a few days later than this Colonel Bussey said: "It rained night and day for a week, during which time my cavalry were scouting beyond Gainesville, looking for the enemy. Our troops were on very short rations, and the Country was so poor that subsistence could not be procured. On the 25th of April we arrived at Vera Cruz, Missouri, having traveled for a week over the roughest roads to be found in the Ozark Mountains. To obtain forage we had to take everything found within twenty-five miles of our line of march."¹⁰

When the troops moved from Vera Cruz to Westplains, Missouri, four hundred rebel troops "left in haste" as the Union forces entered the town. From Westplains the troops moved on southward to Salem, Arkansas, arriving there on the 30th of April. The mills along the line of march were seized and run night and day by details from the various regiments to furnish rations of flour to the soldiers. This, together with fresh beef obtained along the way, constituted the chief supply of food.

At Salem, Colonel Bussey was ordered to prepare ten days rations, and proceed with the cavalry in advance of the army toward the White River. At daylight on the morning of the 4th of May his regiment led the army into Batesville — the enemy having crossed the river and moved in the direction of Little Rock. While in Batesville, Colonel

¹⁰ *Notebooks of Cyrus Bussey*, No. 5, pp. 29-32.

Bussey spent some time serving as president of a general court martial in the trial of a number of prisoners.

During the month of May the Third Iowa Cavalry made numerous expeditions, watching the movements of the enemy, but not coming in direct conflict with them until May 30th. On that date there was a severe skirmish with the rebels near Sylamore, about fifty miles northwest of Batesville. Scouting continued throughout the month of June without any serious conflicts with the enemy.¹¹

On the 1st of July advances were made with the Third Iowa Cavalry well in advance of the other troops. The heat and dust of summer had begun to make travel difficult. Writing of conditions early in July Colonel Bussey said:

We had had no water during the march, except such as could be found by the roadside in ponds on which was a green scum, thick enough to float a hat. The dust and heat was oppressive. The next morning was the glorious fourth of July. Memorable as the birthday of the Nation which was now sought to be destroyed. We decided to celebrate the anniversary in the old fashioned spread eagle style, but, before doing so, I was ordered to go, with my regiment on a scout to procure supplies. A force of the enemy was encountered, but they retreated, leaving their tents and other property, which we brought into camp. At a fine plantation house one of my foraging parties found a new-made grave in the yard It had a headboard and foot board — but no name on either. The boys dug open the grave and resurrected the corpus, which consisted of 2000 pounds of bacon and a bag of salt.¹²

During the following days scouting and reconnoitering continued, with Colonel Bussey's men frequently leading the way. Rigid rules of discipline were enforced by Colonel Bussey at all times and his men were always well trained and dependable. Captain H. D. B. Cutler in writing of Colonel Bussey and his command later said:

¹¹ *Roster and Record of Iowa Soldiers in the War of the Rebellion*, Vol. IV, p. 426; *Notebooks of Cyrus Bussey*, No. 5, pp. 33-45.

¹² *Notebooks of Cyrus Bussey*, No. 6, pp. 1-6.

Much of this enviable reputation is due to the earnest efforts of Colonel Bussey, who embraced every opportunity of inculcating in the men a State and personal pride in the honor of the Regiment, and rigidly punishing any infraction of orders. Straggling and plundering on the March has ever been strictly forbidden, and the order enforced by him was not from regard for the rebels but to preserve the morals of the men, that they may return home as good citizens as when they left. And much is due to the sterling integrity of the men themselves, who are the flower of Southern Iowa, and feel that they have a reputation at home that must remain untarnished. The result is the regiment is unexcelled for decorum and order, and I hazard nothing in asserting that it is unequaled for sobriety by any regiment from the west.¹³

In July, 1862, Colonel Bussey's troops arrived at Helena, Arkansas, on the banks of the Mississippi River. Upon the arrival of troops there, a substantial fort was erected and named Fort Curtis. During the remainder of the year troops were engaged in numerous marches, in reconnoitering and scouting in the region around Helena.

On the 2nd of September General Frederick Steele sent a letter to the Secretary of War commending very highly the work of Colonel Bussey, and recommending him for promotion to the rank of Brigadier General. A few days later General William T. Sherman who was in command of troops at Memphis, Tennessee, made a similar recommendation. General Sherman in writing to Colonel Bussey concerning this matter said: "I assure you your promotion will be hailed by me personally, and officially as a good one." General Curtis likewise recommended this promotion and spoke in highest terms of the "gallantry" which the Colonel had displayed, especially at the Battle of Pea Ridge.

Shortly after this an incident occurred which shows something of the esteem in which Colonel Bussey was held by the commanding officers. Troops under the command

¹³ *Notebooks of Cyrus Bussey*, No. 6, pp. 19, 20.

of Brigadier General Alvin P. Hovey were being placed on a steamer for transportation. Colonel Bussey had been up all night in preparation for the trip. In the morning Colonel Kinney of the Fifty-sixth Ohio Infantry came on board and commanded Colonel Bussey to place his troops on board "without any more delay". Colonel Bussey responded that he was commanding the boat and needed no orders regarding the matter. A controversy ensued which was reported to General Hovey. Presently one of General Hovey's staff officers appeared in the cabin of the boat and inquired for Colonel Kinney. The Colonel stepped forward to receive a message, but was chagrined when he read the contents: "General Hovey sends his compliments to Colonel Kinney and requests him to report to Colonel Bussey for orders."

Union troops were still stationed at Helena when the Emancipation Proclamation was issued on January 1, 1863. Colonel Bussey reported that on the day following the issuance of the Proclamation an old slaveholder came into the city bringing a large number of slaves with him. He told the Colonel that he wanted "to turn them over to the United States Government", and desired Colonel Bussey to give him a receipt for them. The Colonel told the old man that the negroes were already free, and that he was violating the spirit of the proclamation in restraining them of their liberty and in compelling them to march from the plantation into town. Colonel Bussey then talked to the negroes and advised them to continue to work for their former master for such wages as he might be able to pay them. They accepted this advice and all returned to the plantation.

Shortly after the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation colored recruits coming into the army attracted wide attention, and led to much controversy. Plans were made

to organize colored regiments. Commenting upon this situation Colonel Bussey said: "In view of these measures the leaders of the democratic party, North, raised a tremendous protest, calling upon the soldiers in the army to thrown down their arms and come home, if they were to be 'disgraced to serve along side of negroes'".

Colonel Bussey did not approve of the attitude which was frequently manifested against the introduction of negro troops. Moreover, he thought that something ought to be done to counteract the influence of northern copperheads who were writing to the men in the various regiments urging them to desert the service. Accordingly, after conferring with other officers he was active in forming a resolution condemning all opposition to the policy of the government in this matter. This resolution was presented to the troops and unanimously adopted by them.

Colonel Bussey remained in service at Helena for more than ten months, and at various times commanded nearly all of the troops in that division of the army. The commanding officers under which he served included Samuel R. Curtis, Frederick Steele, B. M. Prentiss, W. A. Gorman, A. P. Hovey, E. B. Washburn, William P. Benton, and Leonard F. Ross. General Prentiss wrote a letter recommending him for promotion. This letter was endorsed by Adjutant General G. H. Thomas who said: "I regard Colonel Bussey as one of the very best Colonels I have seen in the service, and capable of making a first rate Brigadier General. I earnestly recommend his promotion."

In May, 1863, General Grant had concentrated his army near Vicksburg, Mississippi, and ordered General Prentiss to send forward from Helena all of the cavalry troops that he could spare. Colonel Bussey was comfortably situated at Helena, and his wife and daughter were visiting him. He invited General Prentiss and his staff to dine with him.

After dinner he called the General's attention to the pleasant surroundings and the pleasure of having his family with him. Then he said: "General, I want to surrender all this for more active service. Please send me to General Grant with my Regiment." General Prentiss consented and Colonel Bussey joined General Grant's army about the first of June.

Upon his arrival at headquarters he was ordered to report to Major General William T. Sherman by whom he was assigned to command the cavalry troops in General Grant's army. From the time Colonel Bussey arrived at Grant's headquarters, until the surrender of Vicksburg he was "in the saddle" with his troops "almost day and night". The task assigned to him was that of scouting along the Big Black River, south and east of Vicksburg, guarding bridges, fords, and ferries along the way.

During these eventful days Colonel Bussey kept in close touch with both Grant and Sherman. On July 3rd, Colonel Bussey was at Clark's, fifteen miles from Vicksburg. He had started to visit Sherman's headquarters, when he was met by an officer with the following message from General Sherman:

General Grant telegraphs me that commissioners have come to him from Pemberton to arrange terms of surrender. Glorious, but too good to be told, yet it is so. We must move East at once. Send a strong force of cavalry at once to the ford below Jones', and reconnoiter beyond. Examine the crossing as to its fitness for infantry, and artillery, and report at once. Get all the effective cavalry well in hand for a movement. With Vicksburg, and good success inland, the valley of the Mississippi, the great object of the War, is ours.

Yours,

W. T. Sherman

Major General Commanding.

This news was gladly received by Colonel Bussey, who

returned to camp and read the message to his troops, by whom it was received "with manifestations of great rejoicing". On the following day, July 4, 1863, General J. C. Pemberton surrendered Vicksburg. This, with the simultaneous defeat of General Robert E. Lee at Gettysburg, was the turning point of the war.

About the middle of July, Colonel Bussey advanced with his troops to the vicinity of Jackson, where he continued his service in scouting and guarding against the advance of Confederate troops. To prevent advances he not infrequently destroyed several miles of railroad. In this process the railroad ties were piled together, the rails placed on top, and the ties burned. The heat thus produced caused the rails to bend so that they could not be replaced.

On the 25th of July Colonel Bussey crossed the Big Black River at Messinger's Ferry and went into camp near General Sherman's headquarters. He had been in the saddle from sixteen to twenty hours nearly every day for two months, living much of the time on stale rations carried for days in his saddle bags. Much of the time, too, he had been deprived of water that was "fit to drink".

Almost exhausted from exposure and lack of food he asked for a leave of absence for a few days, that he might go home and recuperate. General Sherman returned the application, saying that he could not spare the Colonel at that time. Colonel Bussey then asked for permission to visit General Grant at Vicksburg. This was granted. The Colonel explained his condition to General Grant, who ordered him "to proceed to Keokuk, Iowa, and inspect the Hospitals at that place". The order also stated that "Colonel Bussey has permission to remain ten days in Iowa, after which he will return to his command". The result was that the Colonel was given not only a leave of absence but had his transportation paid. When he arrived at Keo-

kuk he found about eight hundred soldiers who had recovered sufficiently to be sent back to their regiments.

While Colonel Bussey was at home a campaign for the election of Governor and other State officers was occupying the attention of the people. William M. Stone was the Republican candidate for Governor. Although Colonel Bussey had always been a Democrat he now felt that to elect a Republican ticket in the North was as important as to win victories in the South. Accordingly he addressed a Republican rally, together with Samuel R. Curtis and James W. Grimes, and the *Keokuk Gate City*, reporting the event, said that "Colonel Bussey made the speech of the day".

When Colonel Bussey returned to Vicksburg, General Grant had received a telegram from the Secretary of War, requesting that Bussey be directed to return to Iowa to aid in the campaign. Senator Grimes, General Curtis, and Judge Samuel F. Miller had telegraphed to the Secretary of War requesting that this transfer be made.

Late in October, 1863, Colonel Bussey returned to Helena where he was assigned to the command of the First Division, Army of Arkansas. During the remainder of the year he was engaged in scouting and reconnoitering near Benton, Princeton, and Little Rock.

When President Lincoln issued the call for the reënlistment of regiments in the field, for a term of three years or until the end of the war, Colonel Bussey determined to be the first officer in his division of the army to respond. His men at that time were in a new camp and subjected to severe weather conditions. They were "standing in mud, snow and slush three inches deep" when the call was read to them. Colonel Bussey made a short speech commending the men for their bravery and loyalty and commanded that all who would reënlist then and there should advance three paces. At the command "forward march" more than half

of the regiment advanced and their reënlistment was taken care of on the spot. On January 1, 1864, this reënlistment was reported to General Steele, and Colonel Bussey and his troops were given veterans' furloughs.

A few days later Colonel Bussey left for home. While he was at Cairo, Illinois, he noted that the morning paper of January 11th carried a notice of his promotion from colonel to brigadier general, the promotion having been dated January 5th, 1864.¹⁴ He proceeded to St. Louis where he received his commission and was assigned to duty under General Steele at Little Rock.

About the middle of May he was placed in command of the First Division, 7th Army Corps, comprising troops from Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Arkansas, and Missouri. About this time the term of enlistment of some of the troops under General Bussey expired. In some instances the troops had been badly managed and there was much discouragement among them. General Bussey inspired confidence, however, and secured reënlistment for the period of the war.

After his promotion General Bussey served in the Department of Arkansas with headquarters at Little Rock until February, 1865. On the 5th of that month General Joseph J. Reynolds received orders to send "the most efficient" officer in his command to relieve General John M. Thayer at Fort Smith. When asked if he would like to go, General Bussey replied that "being a soldier" he would go wherever ordered. He remarked, however, that there were other men in the Department of higher rank and that since Fort Smith was a most important station the other officers might feel that they should be sent. General Reynolds replied that discipline had become bad at Fort Smith and that he

¹⁴ *Notebooks of Cyrus Bussey*, No. 9, pp. 10-29; *Heitman's Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*, Vol. I, p. 268.

desired General Bussey to go in order to restore respect and order. Accordingly, General Bussey was sent to Fort Smith.

A week before General Bussey's arrival there a heinous crime had been committed by Union troops. The General's first task was to find the guilty parties and punish them severely. This he accomplished with such dispatch as to command the respect and admiration of all officers.¹⁵

When General Bussey assumed command at Fort Smith he found men in camp who had been dishonorably discharged. He at once issued an order that "all officers who have been dishonorably dismissed from the service of the United States, and are now within the limits of this command are hereby ordered to leave the Department of Arkansas within ten days."

The attitude of the General was approved by the people of Arkansas, and the Governor of the State said: "I have great confidence in General Bussey. His judgment, energy, and firmness, I feel confident, will be equal to the task imposed — though it be great."

The rigid rules which were enforced soon involved General Bussey in difficulties. Appeals were made to General Grant, but Grant having seen Bussey in action at Vicksburg sustained his orders. As a result of the more stringent rules rigidly enforced there was a rapid and marked improvement in the discipline and order of the troops.

March 4, 1865, was the date set for the inauguration of President Lincoln for a second term. The Union armies under Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan had recently won important victories, and it was thought appropriate to celebrate the events. At this celebration General Bussey was the principal speaker of the day. After he had commented upon the recent Union victories, referred to the increasing

¹⁵ *Notebooks of Cyrus Bussey*, No. 12, pp. 8-17; *Stuart's Iowa Colonels and Regiments*, p. 588.

prospects of peace, and pronounced an appropriate and eloquent eulogy on the President, he launched into a practical discourse upon matters of order and discipline. He denounced, in no uncertain terms, the crimes which had been committed, and pronounced a fixed determination to protect the loyal people in their lives and property, and to punish promptly all transgressors. His speech throughout, it was said, "was in perfect keeping with the new state of affairs" inaugurated upon his taking command at Fort Smith.

But there were other difficult problems confronting the Union officers at this time. The country around Fort Smith had been plundered by both the rebels and the Union men. This plundering had continued until destruction and starvation prevailed through this region. General Bussey in writing of conditions at that time said that in addition to the very large number of destitute people within his lines, "numbering fully 10,000 starving people", there were some 5000 or more loyal refugee Indians "absolutely on the verge of starvation". General Bussey made every effort to put an end to the plundering and encouraged the people who could, to go to work to repair their losses. In this manner he rendered not only a valuable military service, but greatly aided the civilian population as well.

On the 14th of April, while General Bussey was still in command at Fort Smith, President Lincoln was shot. At the memorial services held for the President at the fort, General Bussey was the principal speaker. He briefly reviewed the early life of Lincoln and presented him as a "model for coming generations to imitate". He also predicted that "Abraham Lincoln would, in future years, be accorded a place in the hearts of his countrymen and in the esteem of the world second to no man who has lived".

Robert E. Lee had already surrendered at Appomattox

and the war was virtually at an end, but the enmity which still existed seemed irresistible. General Bussey later said: "The war between the Union and Confederate forces had been so bitter that it was feared they could not live together in peace." He had heard threats made by Union soldiers of what they would do to Confederates when they returned home.

In order to promote peace and friendly relationships he decided to celebrate the Fourth of July, and to invite all of the Arkansas troops, both Union and Confederate, to be present at the celebration. On this occasion General Bussey addressed a large crowd of soldiers and citizens. He asked every man present to pledge that he would keep the peace and go to work in the spirit of harmony to build up that which would be for the best interest of the entire country.

General Bussey remained at Fort Smith until September 29, 1865, serving the government in the management of troops and in dealing with the Indians. He was then mustered out of service and returned to his home in Bloomfield.

After the close of the Civil War General Bussey¹⁶ located at St. Louis and engaged in the mercantile business. He soon removed to New Orleans, however, where his energy, sagacity, and popularity won for him a leading place among the business men of that city. For six years he was president of the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce and a leader in the commercial activities of that city. During this time he took an active part in securing appropriations for the erection of the jetties at the mouth of the Mississippi River.

¹⁶ Material on the life of Cyrus Bussey after the close of the Civil War is scarce. The facts given below were taken from *The Dictionary of American Biography*, Vol. III, pp. 354, 355; and *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, 1890-1891, Vol. III, pp. 3-94.

In 1881 he removed his business to New York City. Having become a staunch Republican in politics, he was elected as a delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1868 and again in 1884. In 1889 he was appointed to the office of Assistant Secretary of the Interior where he served for a period of four years. In this office he took a special interest in the adjustment of pension claims and did much to secure aid for needy veterans of the Civil War. As an evidence of his activities in this matter his reports show that in 1891, 179,927 more pension claims were passed upon and allowed than had been granted in any previous year.

General Bussey also worked to secure an amendment to the law regarding widows' disability pensions. The law of 1890 provided that if "an honorably discharged" veteran of the Civil War died leaving a widow, or children under the age of sixteen, such widow or children shall be entitled to a pension. General Bussey urged an amendment to this law to make it apply to the families of soldiers who died while on furlough as well as those who had been honorably discharged. He also suggested that the law be amended so as to apply to "permanently helpless children" of deceased veterans regardless of the age of such children.

In the administration of the pension law, it became apparent to General Bussey that pensions paid to inmates of the government hospital at Washington were frequently held by trustees or guardians, and upon the death of the inmates the funds accumulated were spent in a manner not contemplated in the pension law. He advocated an amendment to this law so as to conserve the funds thus paid to disabled veterans.

In like manner he advocated a change in the law relative to the purchase of Indian supplies in order to secure better materials for the money expended. In each of these instances General Bussey showed a spirit of liberality toward

the wards of the government, at the same time insisting upon business-like methods in the distribution of government funds.

After his retirement from office in the Department of Interior, General Bussey established a law office in Washington, D. C., where he spent the declining years of his life in the general practice of law. He died on March 2, 1915, and was buried in Arlington Cemetery.

JACOB A. SWISHER

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