

Over the Border

Scarcely had the Taylor County companies arrived home from Clarinda, Iowa, where the organization of the First Regiment of the Western Division of the Iowa Volunteer Militia was completed on July third and fourth, 1861, when a messenger on horseback dashed up Main Street of Bedford late in the afternoon on Friday, July fifth, and brought the startling news that Maryville, Missouri, was threatened with an attack by the Secessionists. The Union men of Nodaway County, Missouri, wanted help from their friends across the border in Iowa.

The news spread quickly throughout the town and soon Main Street was thronged with excited people. Men stood in groups discussing what should be done. Did the local home-guard companies dare cross the State line? It was argued that the Union men of a neighboring county needed help, and orders or no orders the Bedford companies would go to their rescue.

Hasty preparations were made for the trip. Horses and wagons were borrowed or commandeered as conveyances for the infantry while the troopers prepared to ride their own or borrowed mounts. Blankets and food were piled into wagons, while one vehicle was loaded with powder and lead

— enough ammunition someone said for the entire Union army. In a short time about fifty armed men, some in wagons and others on horseback, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel L. T. McCoun were headed southwest in a long irregular column. By nightfall they reached the State line, about eight miles south of Bedford, and encamped in a spacious farm yard. The kegs of powder were piled in the kitchen of the house to protect them from the threatening rain.

Early the next morning scouts were dispatched into Missouri to ascertain the real situation, as many of the men hesitated to cross the State line. About nine o'clock the messengers returned post-haste urging the troops to hurry forward. In the meantime other members of the two companies who were late in starting from Bedford arrived, and the men voted to push on regardless of consequences. Yelling and shouting the Iowa volunteers rushed over the line into Missouri and headed for Maryville, distant some twenty miles. Farmers along the way who sympathized with the Union cause greeted the expeditionary force with enthusiastic demonstrations, and offered the hot and dusty cavalcade whatever refreshments they had on hand.

Around one o'clock the force arrived near Maryville, and at the suggestion of Lieutenant Colonel McCoun the honor of leading the first Iowans into the town was given to G. W. Friedley who had become captain of the Frontier Guards when McCoun

was elected to a regimental post. On their entrance into Maryville the Taylor County boys were greeted with cheers by the Union men while the Secessionists kept out of sight. The Bedford soldiers joined forces with the local company of Nodaway County Home Guards under Colonel Wm. J. W. Bickett to repel the expected attack of the Secessionists alleged to be gathering a few miles to the southward.

Meanwhile a messenger who had been dispatched from Maryville to Page County for help arrived at Clarinda at midnight on July 5th. Between midnight and dawn Colonel John Morledge mustered two hundred and fifty of his Page County boys for the march to Maryville, thirty-three miles away. Detachments from the Clarinda Home Guards, the Harlan Blues, the Nodaway Home Guards, the Border Guards No. 1, the Union Guards, and the Nodaway Rangers joined the expedition. As in the case of the Taylor County contingent, wagons were used to transport the infantry while the rangers rode their mounts.

With the arrival of these reënforcements the formerly outnumbered Union men in Maryville breathed easier, yet the fear of an attack on the town continued to keep the excitement at fever heat. Rumors came that a large force of Confederates was assembling at Brownsville, a small town some fifteen miles distant. On Sunday night when the attack on Maryville was anticipated extra guards were thrown out and the troops slept on their arms. The raid, however, failed to materialize, and news

came next that the Secessionists had not only retreated but for the most part had disbanded.

Several citizens of Maryville who were outspoken in their denunciation of the Union and the invasion of the State of Missouri by Iowans were arrested. Those who recanted and took an oath of allegiance to the government were released, while others who stubbornly refused to change their attitude were placed in confinement under guard. While the infantry patrolled the town and kept a watchful guard at the temporary fortifications, the cavalymen scoured the country in the vicinity of Maryville and brought in many prisoners from the rural districts. As soon as these supporters of the South took the oath of allegiance they were permitted to return home.

One group of eight prisoners was captured by a squad of men under Captain John Van Sant of Page County after another detachment had failed to bring the Secessionists to terms. Captain Van Sant's squad surrounded these men in a cornfield and demanded their surrender. They replied that they would die first. Undaunted by the threat the Page County boys rushed into the field and overpowered the enemy without any casualties on either side.

During their sojourn in the town a squad of Bedford men discovered the hiding place of a Confederate flag which had been run up by the Secessionists at the outbreak of the trouble in Maryville. Led by

Lieutenant Colonel McCoun and Captain Friedley the Bedford boys surrounded the home where the flag was supposed to be concealed and rushed inside to search for the banner. It was found in the cellar under a pile of hay, and was carried back to headquarters in triumph. This captured flag was brought back to Bedford and later turned over to Governor Kirkwood to be kept among the trophies of war.

Feeling that danger of an assault on Maryville was past and knowing that business affairs and abandoned tasks demanded their attention, the Taylor County troops decided to return home. Accordingly the captains of the various Iowa companies marched their men in front of the courthouse where patriotic speeches were made before a large assemblage. A few citizens had urged a summary execution of the most outspoken of the prisoners but the spirit of mob violence was opposed by the speakers. Some of the prisoners who had been released made as patriotic speeches as any of the day, acknowledging their error and pledging their assistance to crush out secession. Hundreds of voices joined in cheers for the Union, and many of the prisoners, sticking their heads out of the courthouse windows, joined with the crowd in singing the "Star Spangled Banner". With the cheers of Maryville citizens ringing in their ears the Taylor County boys set out for home.

On the next day Lieutenant Colonel J. M. Tuttle

with a detachment of troops from the Second Iowa Infantry reached the scene of trouble from Saint Joseph, Missouri. This detachment consisted of Company B with eighty-eight men under the command of Captain Robert M. Littler of Davenport, Company H with seventy-six men under the command of Captain Henry R. Cowles of Washington County, and a squad of twenty men from Company K who were temporarily attached to Company B. The remainder of Company K had left Saint Joseph with the detachment, but had been ordered back from White Cloud where Colonel Tuttle received word that the Maryville home guards with the assistance of volunteers from Iowa had the situation in hand. The boys of the Second Iowa had been caught in a terrific rain storm shortly after leaving Saint Joseph and had been thoroughly soaked.

These men were in full uniform and made a splendid appearance when they paraded for an hour on Wednesday through the streets of Maryville. Company B brought with them a twelve pound brass howitzer and an assortment of shrapnel, canister, and grape-shot. At the request of the Union men in Maryville, Captain Littler unlimbered the artillery and the squad in charge of the piece discharged it six times in a minute.

Seeing that the prompt response by Iowa volunteers and regulars to the call for help from the Union men of Nodaway County had disorganized the Secessionists, and that the danger of an immedi-

ate attack was over, Colonel Morledge also decided that it was time to return home. Accordingly the Page County boys departed leaving the regulars from Saint Joseph in command of the situation.

The Taylor County troops on their return trip passed the home of a man living in the country about a mile and a half from Xenia, Missouri. The boys from Iowa stopped and demanded a "hurrah for the Union" from the owner of the farm, which was answered by a little girl with a "hurrah for Jeff Davis". Whereupon several of the Bedford boys scrambled over the fence and asked the farmer what flag he marched under. He rather concluded that he was a Jeff Davis man. With the announcement that they were out to attend to such men, the Iowa boys again demanded a "hurrah for the Union". The four sons of the farmer responded but the father remained silent. Asked why he did not cheer he replied that he had no hat to toss up. Thereupon one of the Iowa boys clapped his hat on the old man's head and commanded him to hurrah which he did in concert with his sons.

At Xenia the returning troops met another outfit of Iowa boys en route for the seat of war, and farther north a large body of Taylor County men, including most of the home-guard volunteers from Platteville, Gravity, and other localities outside the county seat, was encountered. Most of these troops turned back when they learned that the excitement was over, but some of them continued to Maryville,

stopping at the home of the Jeff Davis man who would not "hurrah for the Union" and escorting him to Maryville to take the oath of allegiance.

The returning column of Taylor County home-guard troops was met half a mile out of town by hundreds of Bedford people, and escorted home. The soldiers marched into town with the Stars and Stripes flying at the head of the column, below which fluttered the captured Confederate banner. Great was the rejoicing over the bloodless victory in which the Frontier Guards and the Light Horse Troop had engaged.

The troops from Page County likewise encountered a joyous welcome upon their return home. The Clarinda *Herald* felt that "the appearance of Union forces in Maryville upon this occasion has had a most salutary effect upon the good cause in Nodaway, and perhaps the adjoining counties of Missouri. Union men are strengthened in their devotion to their country, weak-kneed, doubtful dough-faces have fallen upon the right side, and publicly avowed disunionists are put to a test that will effectually silence them in the future."

In a later issue of the *Herald* announcement was made that the United States troops had left Maryville taking with them sixteen of the prisoners, some of whom were to be sent on to Saint Louis to be tried for treason; and that rumors were afloat to the effect that the Secessionists of Nodaway County were swearing vengeance upon Page and Taylor counties

for the assistance rendered to the Union men during the late difficulty.

How the Union men of Nodaway County felt about the help given them by the volunteers from Iowa was expressed in the following resolutions which were adopted in Maryville and sent both to Bedford and Clarinda for publication.

Resolved, That to the brave boys of Southern Iowa we return our most grateful thanks for their promptness in rallying around the standard of our country, and hastening to the assistance of their brethren in arms against treason in Nodaway County.

Resolved, That by their timely aid the back-bone of secession in Nodaway was broken and all the horrors of civil war thereby averted.

Resolved, That the presence of Iowa soldiers is a sure antidote for secession.

Resolved, That if the ladies of Southern Iowa are as pretty and modest as their soldiers are brave and generous, the charms of one and the arms of the others are alike irresistible.

Resolved, That our best wishes ever attend the soldiers of Iowa, knowing that they will ever be found wherever our country needs their services.

Resolved, That the Editors of the *Maryville Reporter*, *Taylor County Tribune*, and *Page County Herald* be requested to publish the proceedings of this meeting.

B. F. TORRANCE,
Ch'm of Com'tee.

M. G. ROSEBERRY, Ch'm of Meeting,
S. M. Penfield, Sec'y.

The first raid over the border by Page and Taylor County troops was ended and the boys of the home guard were again at work on the farm, at the shop, and in store and office. Soon, however, a second call for help was to send them scurrying southward again to aid their comrades in Missouri.

BRUCE E. MAHAN