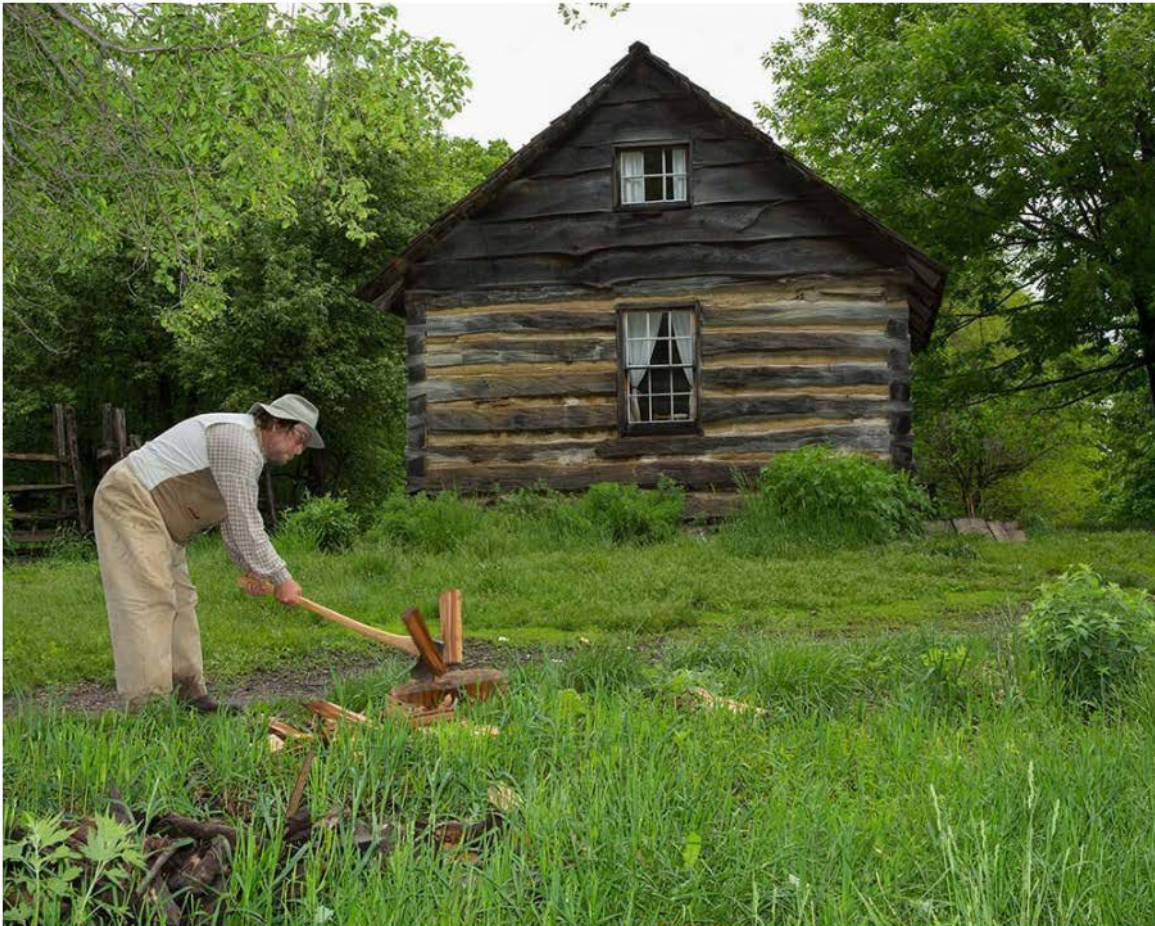


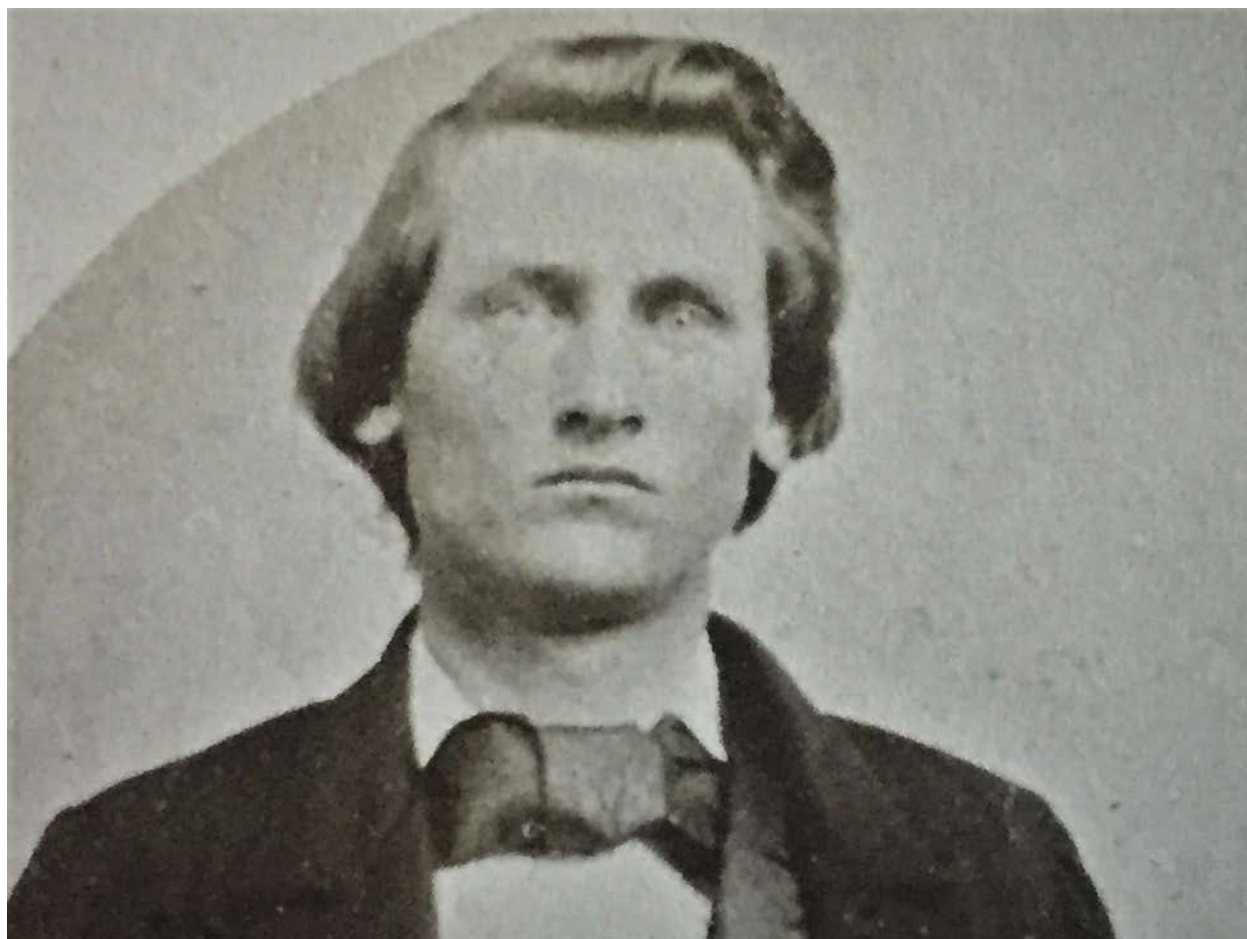
My name is Fielding Rice; I was born in 1842 in Sumner County, TN. When I was 7 years old, the family moved to Benton County, Iowa. My father, James Rice, had been a tailor in Tennessee. In Iowa he became such a prominent farmer and citizen he was known as “Squire” Rice.

PHOTO 1



The photo shows a typical 1850s farm home in Iowa, thus it's an idea of the view of the family home I remember so well. Yes, chopping wood for the fireplace and the cooking stove was one of my chores.

PHOTO 2

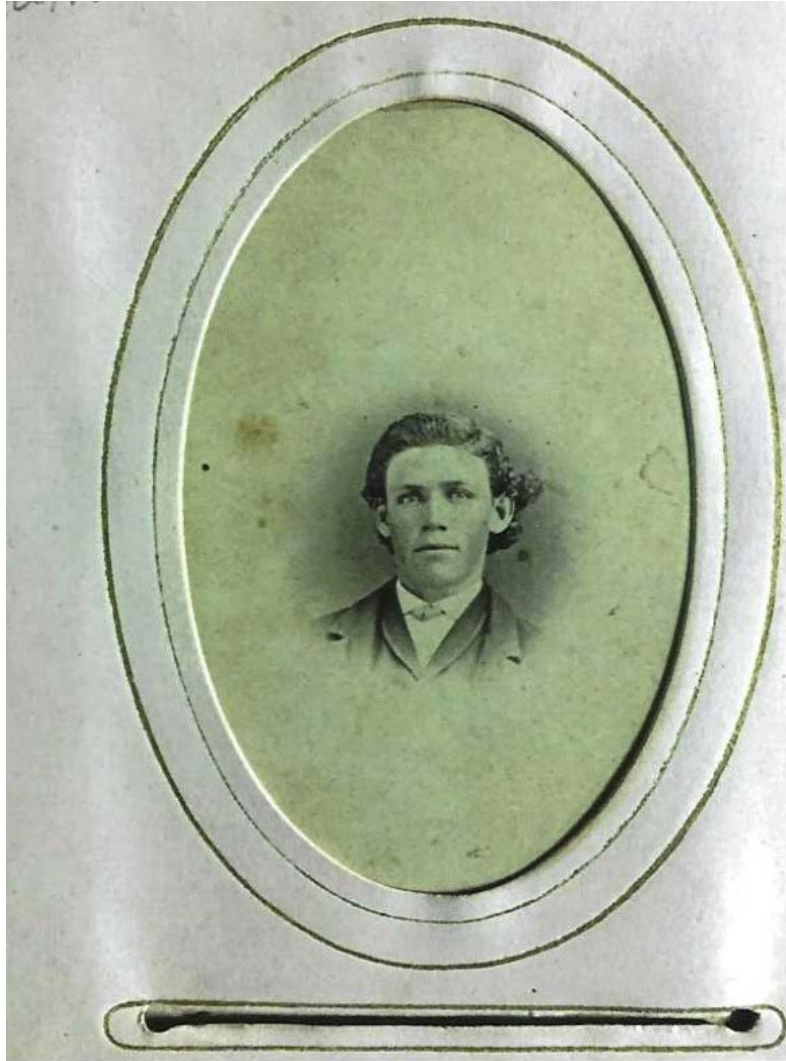


This is my older half-brother, Nathan Rice, born early in 1839. He had graduated with a teaching certificate from the University, in Iowa City, in May 1861. Nathan enlisted in August 1861 as a Sergeant, was promoted to 2LT and spent a few weeks in Iowa City as an Army recruiter. In September, he mustered with the 9th Iowa Infantry, soon becoming a 1LT. The 9th Iowa eventually found itself at the Battle of Pea Ridge, in northwestern Arkansas.

Nathan was killed, instantly, by a minnie ball on March 7, 1862, and had a battlefield burial with other officers at a nearby little orchard.

Nathan's death really motivated me to enlist but my parents refused to allow me to do so.

PHOTO 3



Here I am, in 1863, at age 21. I was farming with my father and the family.

Finally, in January 1864, my parents allowed me to enlist. On the 19th of January I arrived at Camp McClellan, along the Mississippi River at Davenport, Iowa, was provided a uniform, some equipment and training, and mustered into Co. A., 28th Iowa Volunteer Infantry, as a Private.

This photo shows a bronze plaque, in 2024, at the location of the Camp.

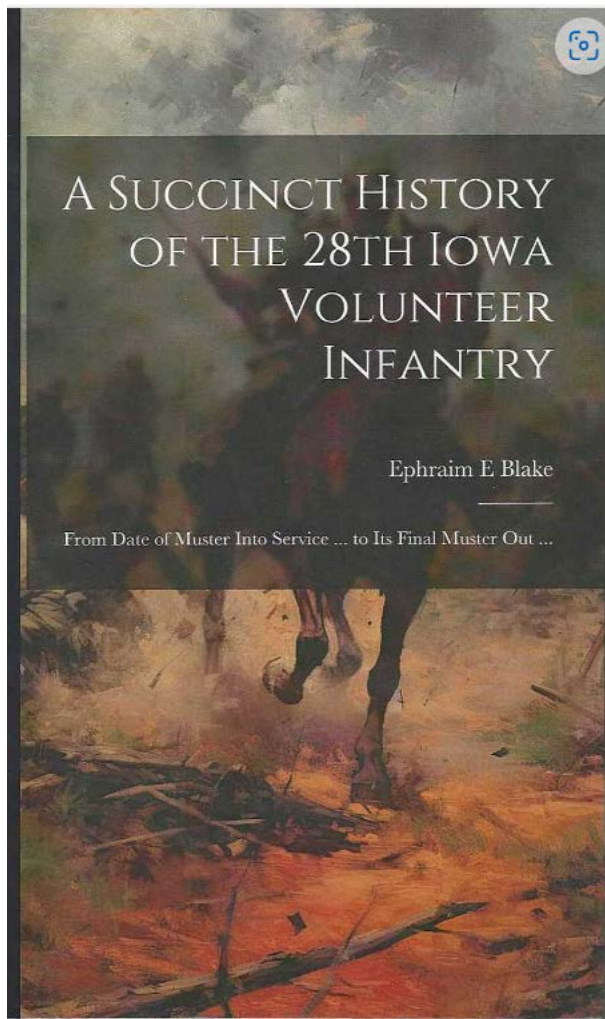
PHOTO 4



In mid-January 1864, when I was training at Camp McClellan, the 28th Iowa was encamped in New Orleans, Louisiana, along the shore of Lake Pontchartrain, at a place called Madisonville. They were engaged in fixing up quarters, building fortifications, picket duty and receiving back into the regiment many of their sick and wounded as well as new recruits. By 15 February, I was one of those “Iowa boy” recruits arriving at Madisonville.

At the end of February, the 28th Iowa began moving across the river to Algiers, a large, busy river docks, shipping and strategic transportation point along the Mississippi River. While in Algiers I received further training and equipment. By March 1st the entire regiment was in Algiers.

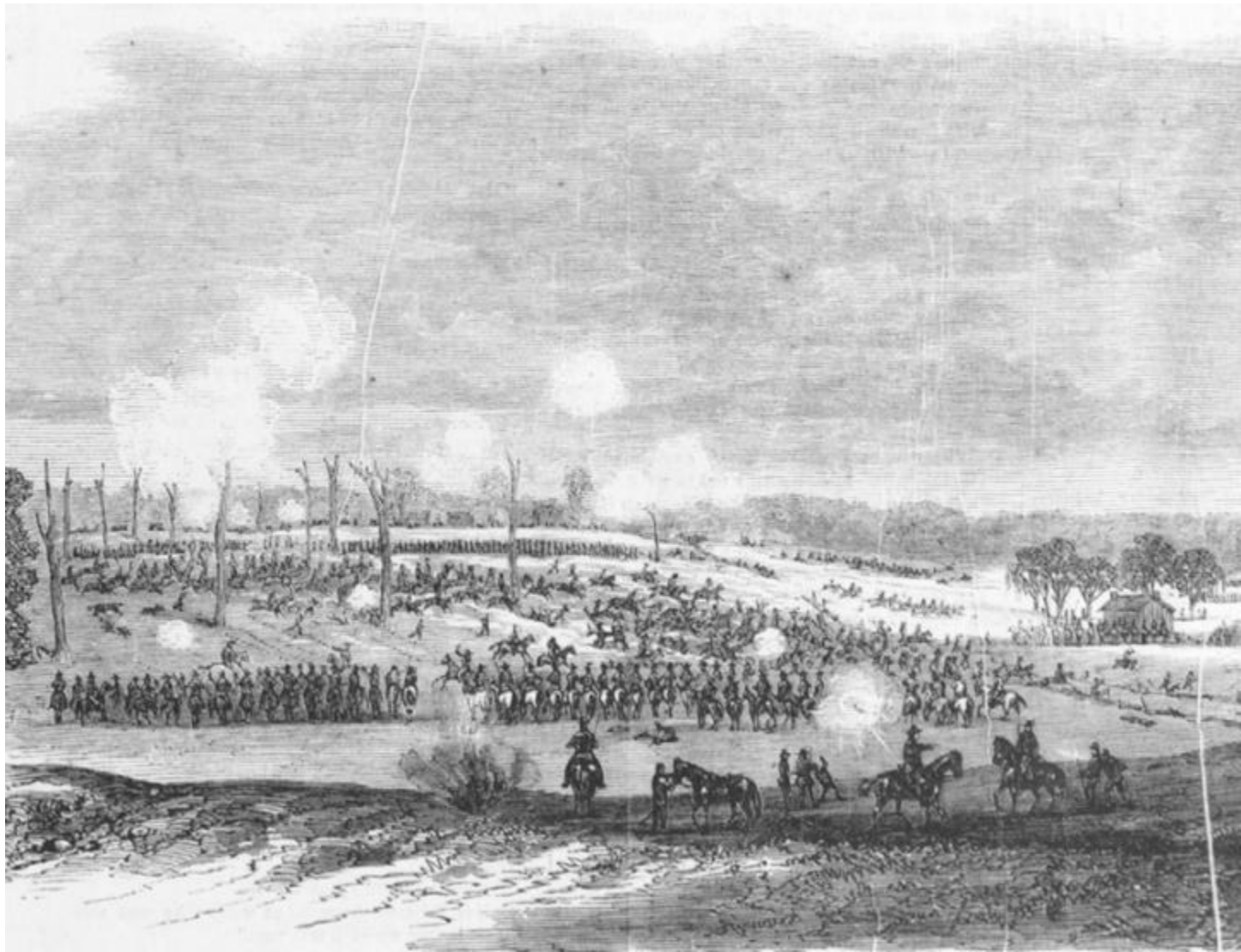
PHOTO 5



I want to mention, at this point, the primary sources used by my Great-grandnephew, Bob Cox. The first was my great-nephew, Bob's uncle, the late Jim Pauley, a grandson of my sister, Lucinda Rice Pauley. The second source was this book, "A Succinct History of the 28th Iowa Volunteer Infantry, 1862-1865", written in 1896 by Pvt. E. E. Blake, of Co. G., 28th Iowa. I was in Co. A., 28th Iowa. The third source is the "Historical Sketch, 28th Regiment Iowa Volunteer Infantry", compiled from first-hand reports by many officers of the 28th Iowa. A fourth primary source was Gary Gimbel, a noted 21st century historian from Martinsburg, WV.

It was now the 1st of March, 1864. As told by Pvt. Blake, "We were ordered back to New Orleans to prepare for that ever memorable campaign up the Red River, we arrived in Algiers and went into camp." Our assignment was to join the infamous Red River Campaign, under Major General Nathaniel Banks. I'm using the word "infamous" because, ultimately, the campaign was a Union failure, the outcome of which did not have a major impact on the war. In fact, it may have extended the length of the war by several months.

PHOTO 6



This photo is a Library of Congress engraving of the Battle of Mansfield.

On the 8th of April we found ourselves at Sabine Crossroads, Louisiana, fighting at the Battle of Mansfield, our only notable engagement in the Red River campaign. It was "3000 against 28,000 at close range, a death struggle, our ammo gave out, Gen. Franklin said "Boys you have done all you can, save yourselves", we started to the rear until rebels commanded us to surrender.

It wasn't a safe place to be, standing before cocked carbines pointed straight at you. However, our luck was with us: the rebels went for our cracker barrels, they were hungry, filling their haversacks, we made a run for liberty and won.

Sadness soon overtook us: "no man can picture such a scene, a field covered with dead and wounded, a disgraceful defeat, two miles back we met our 19th Corps, night was coming, the rebels stopped pursuit."

On the 9th of April, the 28th Iowa was assigned as train guards and sent to the rear. The 28th "had met defeat the day before, we were ready and anxious to assist in retrieving the disaster but were denied the privilege by the officer who had shown his unfitness to command an army".

April through June, 1864, the 28th, at various points in Louisiana, assisted in construction of fortifications overlooking the Red River, endured toilsome marches and great hardships marching with the army to Alexandria, Louisiana.

Under Gen. Canby, we assumed an aggressive attitude moving in pursuit toward the enemy though they declined to engage and managed retreat so successfully the pursuit was finally abandoned. By July 2nd, the regiment returned to Algiers, where we went into camp and enjoyed a brief season of rest.

PHOTO 7



SS Arago, 28 Jun 1864, public domain, NARA image.

On July 21, we embarked on the steamer "Arago," and were conveyed to Alexandria, Virginia. The voyage was a great hardship due to extremely hot weather, the crowded condition of the ship with 2000 men on board; we were glad to find ourselves once more upon land on the 1st of August 1864.

Our route was through the Gulf of Mexico and the Florida Keys, around Florida, up the eastern seaboard to Chesapeake Bay at Newport News, to the Potomac River, and upriver to Alexandria, Virginia.

One of our officers said “the waves began to lift up the bow and sink it again, up and down went the old Arago; if anyone can correctly describe the sensations of a seasick soul. Our regiment, being quartered on the upper deck, fared better”.

On August 1st, the Army of the Shenandoah, including the 28th Iowa as part of the XIX Corps, had a reorganization under Major General Philip Sheridan. We successfully over the next few months, with bloody battles and minor skirmishes against Confederate General Jubal Early and his “johnnies”, at Charlestown, Harpers Ferry, Berryville, Winchester, Fishers Hill and Cedar Creek, rendered the Shenandoah Valley unable to produce the foodstuffs needed by the Confederates.

By now it was mid-October. The campaign left us in sad condition, clothing old and worn, many almost naked, no shirts, others no socks, drawers gone, coats and pants in shreds, hard to keep warm, becoming cold and chilly.

The morning of the 19th of October arrived; we were encamped at Cedar Creek. It was 5AM; some of us were stirring, looking for something to eat and maybe a cup of coffee.

Suddenly, the enemy, in overwhelming numbers, attacked the 7th Corps, which was on the left of the 28th. The 7th, failing to be under arms, was soon driven from their works.

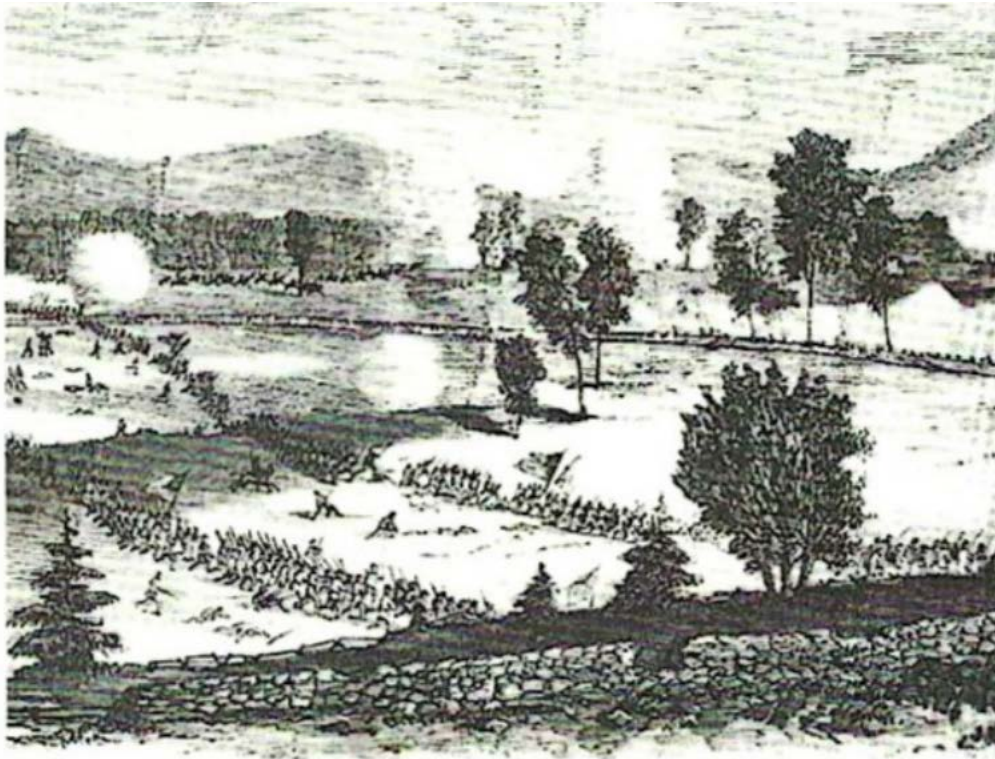
The 28th Iowa hurriedly moved, with whatever arms we could take up, leaving our breakfasts, supplies and camp, to hold the crest of a hill about one-fourth of a mile to the east of the Winchester Pike. The remaining regiments of the brigade failed to come to the line and retired in confusion, which left our right exposed.

A brigade from the First Division was soon outflanked and gave way. The 28th, engaged on both flanks and front, was the last to fall back; there was no hope left of holding our ground.

We fell back slowly. Our Commanding Officer gave the order "Double quick!," and for one-third of a mile we passed through one of the most destructive fires ever witnessed.

Arriving at Sheridan's headquarters we rallied and for a short time held the enemy in check. The 28th as well as the whole army had been repulsed. The enemy had our camps and all we had, except our arms; they had possession of the battlefield. In fact, our officers learned, the Rebs made their fatal mistake by going back into our camps, taking our haversacks and much of our food.

PHOTO 8



SHERIDAN'S COUNTERATTACK

Image from "Sheridan in the Shenandoah", E.J. Stackpole. Battle of Cedar Creek, afternoon of 19 Oct 1864.

General Sheridan came to the field about 1030AM, after his soon-to-be-famous "Sheridan's Ride". The 24th and 28th Iowa were the connecting links between the 6th and 19th Corps. It's now about 4PM, the awful scene opens. We notice nothing except our own commands and the enemy in front. We press forward, the enemy flees.

Our brigade was ordered up the slope under heavy fire; we steadily advanced, pouring deadly volley into their lines. With a cheer we charged, pressing them down the hill, dropping the fleeing foe, turning the morning's defeat . . . *but I wasn't able to enjoy that glorious victory.*

Captain McGuire wrote in a letter to my father, “Private Rice was laying on a certain part of the field, wounded, and as we had to move on in pursuit of the enemy I sent an orderly and 2 or 3 men, they soon found him, made a fire next to him and lay there with him till about 9 o’clock next day when they got him taken to the field hospital”.

My left leg and foot had been shattered by minnie balls. After a night of awful pain – I don’t know if I slept or passed out - I was taken by wagon, with other severely wounded men, some 4 miles along the Valley Pike to Middletown. My God, what a horrendous ride that was! The field hospital was inside St. Thomas Chapel, there.

PHOTO 9



An 1864 sketch by James E. Taylor, an artist for Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper. This quite likely represents the inside of St. Thomas Chapel during and after the Battle of Cedar Creek.

My left leg amputation surgery was on Oct. 20th. "The surgeons knew that the best chance for survival was when the amputations were done quickly, so most were performed in temporary field hospitals".

On the 21st, I, along with other injured, the dying and those to be transferred, was taken by wagon, another horrendous ride, some 40 miles to Martinsburg, and given a bed at the former United States Hotel, taken over by the Army and renamed U.S.A. General Hospital. That was a dirty, old hotel also used as a stable by the Army. By the 24th, I was able to complete a letter to my father. In that letter, rather than telling about my terrible ordeal and scaring the daylights out of my family, I asked how the family was doing and how the war was affecting their daily lives. Later that day, the 24th of October, 1864, suffering from severe pain, infection and complications, I passed away.

Quoting internet sources on Injury, Amputation and Death rates in the Union Army: nearly 20% of Union injuries to arms and legs treated by surgeons resulted in amputation. About 27% of those amputees died; I am one of the dead.

PHOTO 10



This photo is of Green Hill Cemetery, Martinsburg, West Virginia, incorporated in 1854, sitting on 15 acres atop a hill that offers a rare view of Martinsburg and North Mountain. This cemetery is my original burial site, although the documents identifying the location of my former grave have been lost.

Many Union Civil War dead were buried here and, yeah, there were Rebel war dead here, too.

PHOTO 11

Winchester National Cemetery



This Veterans Administration photo is of Winchester National Cemetery, Winchester, Virginia, which was established on land appropriated for burials during the Civil War. It was used for burial purposes as early as 1862 but not officially dedicated until April 8, 1866. Winchester is the final resting place for Union soldiers from the battles of Winchester, Cedar Creek and many others.

My disinterment at Green Hill and permanent burial at Winchester probably took place sometime between April 1865 and April 1866.

Taking a quote from the 1910 History of Benton County, Iowa: "When the boys returned some did not return, some are sleeping the last long sleep under the southern skies, they died as Union soldiers and Benton County will never forget their noble deeds nor their heroic deaths."

PHOTO 12



This photo is Bob, visiting Winchester National Cemetery and my grave on July 19, 2024. It could be he is the first of my family to come for a visit. You see, it was 1864, it was war time, my death was during the harvest season, Winchester is some 1000 miles from the family farm, my parents and family didn't have the money and time to travel that far. It's OK they didn't come; I wrote them a letter and told them I loved them. They know I had done my duty and had performed as best I could, as Dad taught me while doing my chores and out in the fields.

I want to thank you, Commander, and all of you Sons and Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Picacho Peak Camp 1 for honoring my fellow Civil War Union veterans, and for your attention, today.

In closing, I share a quote by Private Blake, from his book:

“Our deeds of heroism will live after us and as years come and go down the ages, our services and sacrifices as told in the pages of this little book, will keep our memory fresh in the minds of our descendants, forever. God has prepared the verdict. Our deeds are approved.”