

Skirmish at Leesburg, Virginia

Washington, Monday, May 2; From the Army; A Fight with Mosby's Guerillas

The Star says: "The cavalry expedition sent out from Vienna last Thursday, under command of Col. Lowell, returned to that place yesterday, after visiting Leesburg, Rectortown, and Upperville. Near Upperville, a portion of Mosby's guerilla band was encountered, when a sharp fight ensued, which resulted in the loss to the Rebels of two killed and four wounded, and twenty-three taken prisoners.

Col. Lowell lost three men killed and four wounded. Col. Lowell returned safely to Vienna with the twenty-three prisoners captured from Mosby, and also three blockade-runners, twenty-five horses, and a large quantity of wool, tobacco, and other contraband picked up on the route.

New York Times, May 3, 1864.

[Thursday, 29 April 1864]¹

Captain Henry O. Claggett was a member of the Virginia State Legislature at Richmond. He had much influence there and following is a letter from a constituent:

April 30, 1864

My Dear Henry,

I have but a few minutes to write you a note and cannot give the news in any detail. On the 28th at 3 in the afternoon the Town was surrounded by Colonel Lowell's cavalry units from Vienna. There were about 18 Confederate soldiers in town, some of them drinking at Pickett's. Among the latter was Jonathan DeButts who was so drunk he hardly knew what he was about. He commenced a regular duel with a Yankee upon the street. He is said to be a good shot when sober, upon this occasion he did no damage, but received a ball in his shoulder which glanced down to the elbow where it was extracted.²

Some attempted to escape by way of Swann's, one of them a genteel young man from Baltimore by the name of Flack, in charge of the detail sent by Mosby to haul corn from Grundell's. He was on a slow horse and could not get out of the way, and was shot through the head killing him instantly. He was buried yesterday at the cemetery. The ladies covered his grave with flowers.³

The Yankee's next went to Mr. Grundell's, burned the barn, the stone one, containing about 200 bushels of corn and farming implements, etc., and also a quantity of hay. They carried off 11 persons, a mule, and 3 of Grundell's horses. They went to Silk House Spring, and I learned when they reached there they had 23 prisoners and many horses. They also captured 3 wagons loaded with corn and 1 six-horse wagon belonging to Mr. Calvert loaded with bacon. I have no time to comment.

Mrs. Donnelly called on me to see if I could do anything for her husband and son who they say were arrested by Mosby's command and taken to Richmond upon a charge of harboring horses. The old woman seems so much affected by their detention, particularly as her son has been in service since the war commenced, I told her I would write to you and send the inclosed certificate which she procured, and tends to inculcate him so far as the --- horse is concerned. Please look up the old man and son and see upon what charges they are detained.

Mrs. Rollins is very anxious about her son Charles who was carried off by the Conscript Officer. She has heard that he is in irons and wants you to look him up and try to procure his release.

Thomas Washington Edwards
Of Fruitlands, Leesburg, Va.

To: Captain H. O. Claggett⁴

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¹ *Their Horses Climbed Trees*, Larry Rogers and Keith Rogers, Schiffer Publishing, Atglen PA, page 264.

² Mosby Ranger John Payton DeButts, wounded at Leesburg, was taken to the Cavalry Brigade Hospital at Vienna for treatment, then sent as a POW to Ft. Delaware where he remained until the end of the war.

³ Mosby Ranger Thomas J. A. Flack's family removed his body to the family plot in Greenmount Cemetery, Baltimore, MD following the end of the war.

⁴ Letter from the files of the late John E. Devine, Leesburg.