1948

David Vincent Dickenson, a soldier of the Confederacy.

Stuart Sydnor Walden

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DAVID VINCENT DICKENSON

A SOLDIER OF THE CONFEDERACY

BY

STUART SYDNEY WALDEN

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
IN CANDIDACY
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN HISTORY

AUGUST, 1948
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII.</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII.</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX.</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X.</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI.</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII.</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII.</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bibliography ................................. 78
CHAPTER I

In March 1778, there enlisted in the Continental Army a young man, Griffith Dickenson, who was later the grandfather of David Vincent Dickenson.

This young man had been born in Hanover County, Virginia, on August 8, 1757. However, only a comparatively few years of his life were spent at the place of his birth. There was an unfortunate second marriage of Griffith's father which led to his departure, at the age of twelve, from the paternal home. Refuge was found in the home of a kind-hearted mechanic where Griffith worked as a helper, or assistant, until he was eighteen years old. Now young Dickenson determined that he should make his own way. More than a year was spent seeking suitable employment, and finding it difficult to procure, Griffith enlisted in the Continental Army.¹

After joining the army, young Dickenson was ordered to the Southern department and served successively under Generals Howe, Lincoln, Gates, and Greene in Georgia, the Carolinas, and Virginia.²

¹ Taylor, J. E., Virginia Baptist Ministers, ser. 2, p. 216.
² Ibid., p. 217.
According to Reverend J. W. McCown, in the old age of Griffith Dickenson his conversation was enriched with reminiscences and anecdotes of his trying and arduous years in the service. "And as he recounted the hair-breadth escapes of himself and his fellow-soldiers, or the brilliant military movement of his commanders, the ardor of a Christian Warrior and a patriot shone in his flashing eyes."

The term of service of Dickenson expired a few days before the battle of Guilford (March 15, 1781). He left the army and returned to his native county, but had not been there long when he heard of the critical situation of the British Army, which was now in Virginia. Procuring a commissary's commission, Griffith rejoined the army and was present at the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown. This surrender having virtually put an end to the war, Dickenson was again discharged from the army in the winter of 1781.

After leaving the army, Griffith Dickenson visited a brother who was living in Franklin County, Virginia. He liked this section of the state and decided that he would remain there. However, Griffith's farming business made it necessary for him frequently to visit in Pittsylvania, an adjoining county. It was in this county that he met Miss Susanna Shelton.

Miss Shelton was a daughter of Crispin Shelton. About the year 1760, Crispin Shelton had been granted a large tract of land (some 3000 acres).

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3. Ibid.
4. Ibid. p. 218.
5. Ibid.
in Pittsylvania County and had moved to this section of the state from an Eastern county.6

In 1785, Griffith married Miss Shelton and settled on the Shelton estate near Gretna. There were six children born to this couple, they being Crispin, Vincent, William, John, Griffith, and Willy.7

Before his death, Susanna Dickenson's father, Crispin Shelton, wrote his will. This will is a lengthy document drawn up in the year 1801. All of Crispin Shelton's children were remembered. A portion of the will pertaining to Susanna Shelton Dickenson's legacy is as follows:

I lend to my daughter, Susanna Dickenson, during her life my negro boy, Stephen, my negro girls, Rachel and Delpha; and their future increase; and after her decease, I give them my said negroes Will, Stephen, Rachel, and Delpha to be equally divided amongst all my said daughter, Susanna's children and to their respective heirs forever. I give and bequeath to my said daughter, Susanna Dickenson, my large bay mare, one cow and calf, and three ewes, and her heirs forever.8

The Dickensons were members of the Whitethorn Baptist Church until 1800. In that year a portion of the members of Whitethorn withdrew and organized the Greenfield Church not far from Chalk Level, Virginia. Among these were the Griffith Dickensons, and Mr. Dickenson was appointed clerk of this new Baptist Church.

In February 1802, the Greenfield Church appointed a day to consider Mr. Dickenson's call to, and qualification for, the ministry. The conclusion

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6. Dickenson family Bible and papers now in Mr. Crispin Dickenson's possession at Danville, Va. Hereinafter cited as Dickenson family records.

7. Ibid.

8. Pittsylvania County Records - Deeds and Wills, IX, 524.
was that "God had called and qualified him thereunto," and the presbytery was summoned to ordain him. On Friday, the 10th of June 1802, Griffith Dickenson was ordained. 9

Elder Dickenson, shortly after his ordination, received the unanimous call to serve as pastor at Greenfield. He accepted and remained the pastor until his death, a period of forty-one years. Also, Griffith Dickenson was pastor of other churches in the neighborhood; those at Riceville and Republican Grove, among others, shared his ministerial services. For several years he presided over the Roanoke (Baptist Church) Association as its moderator. He continued to preach until his death on October 16, 1843. 10

In 1832, Griffith Dickenson applied for land and bounty for his part in the Revolutionary War. The next year this statement was issued:

To Griffith Dickenson
From Executive Department, 9 February 1833

Allowed Land and Bounty for service as a corporal for three years.

John Floyd, Gov. 11

The United States Treasury Report, Revolutionary Land Scrip, shows the following:

1. Person who performed service Griffith Dickenson
2. Kind of service Corporal
3. Number of warrant 7,304
4. Amount of acres 200
5. Name of person to whom scrip was issued Griffith Dickenson, Jr.
6. Name of agent to whom scrip was delivered Hon. Wm. Davenport 12

In still another report from the Secretary of War in relation to the Revolutionary War pension establishment, the following was found:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Griffith Dickenson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Corporal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual allowance</td>
<td>$ 88.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sums received</td>
<td>$ 264.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of service</td>
<td>Virginia militia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When placed on pension</td>
<td>May 20, 1833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commencement of pension</td>
<td>March 4, 1831</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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CHAPTER II

As previously mentioned, one of Griffith and Susanna Dickenson's sons was Crispin. This boy was born November 19, 1787. When about twenty years old, Crispin Dickenson married Miss Elizabeth Compton, she being the only child of Joel and Nancy Compton. Seven children were born to Crispin and Elizabeth. They were John, Noten, William, Joel, Griffith, Nancy, and Susan Dickenson.14 Crispin's wife died at a rather early age. It would appear that giving birth to such a large number of children in a comparatively short time had been too much of an ordeal. After a few years had passed, Crispin Dickenson married for the second time. On this occasion he took as his wife Miss Christiana Berger. Crispin and Christiana had four children, who were David Vincent, Crispin, Lucy, and Willy.15

Though making his decision a little late in life, Crispin Dickenson decided to enter the field of ministerial labor, and on March 24, 1827 he was ordained. For the rather short period that he served as a Baptist minister, Crispin took charge of Locust Union Church, on Pigg River, and

14. Dickenson family records.

15. Ibid.
Ararat Church at Sandy River, these two churches being in the western part of Pittsylvania County.

Elder Crispin Dickenson died at a rather early age, not quite forty-five, on October 28, 1832. The children by his second wife were at this time mere babies. Crispin's will stated in part:

After my debts are paid and monies collected, I desire my executors shall make an equal division of the whole estate between my wife and children, they having reference to what I have heretofore given away. I desire that my executors should manage my estate for the best advantage at their discretion.

It might be added that Crispin's wife Christinna contested the provisions of this will, and as a result obtained from the estate her dower right.

Christinna Dickenson and her four young children moved to the home of her father, Samuel Berger, when her husband died. When her father-in-law, Elder Griffith Dickenson, died eleven years later at the age of eighty-six, it was found that he had remembered the children of his late son Crispin in his will as follows:

I give and bequeath to the children of my son Crispin Dickenson that may be now living, and the heirs of such of said children, as may now be dead or that may die previously to my own death (in all cases the said heirs to represent the deceased ancestor) one equal fifth part of my estate real, personal, and mixed.

17. Ibid.
19. Ibid., p. 229.
20. Ibid., p. 471.
CHAPTER III

As has been stated, one of the two sons of Crispin and Christinna Dickenson was David Vincent Dickenson. He was the oldest of the four children, and was born on June 16, 1829.21 David Vincent was only three years old when his father died. He was raised on the Berger estate, which was in the same general vicinity as the estates of the Dickensons and Sheltons.

David Vincent and his brother and sisters received their elementary education under the guidance of a local tutor. When the children were old enough for secondary education, they were sent to Valley Union Seminary, a school which had just been established and which was later called Hollins Institute and is now Hollins College.

About 1815, a Mr. Johnson of Richmond bought one hundred acres of land north of Roanoke. A brick hotel was built, and a mountain health resort which took the name "Botetourt Springs" came into being. This place was a popular retreat until the death of Mr. Johnson in 1840. At that time, in order that the Johnson estate might be settled, "Botetourt Springs" was put on the market for sale. 22

21. D. V. Dickenson's family Bible, now in Mr. J. S. Walden's possession at Richmond, Va. Henceforth cited as Dickenson's family Bible.

22. Smith, Charles Lewis Cocke, founder of Hollins College, p. 35.
A Reverend Mr. Bradley, who was from New York state, happened to be in Roanoke at the time. He was very much interested in education, and saw in the "Botetourt Springs" property an excellent location for the establishment of a school. Through Reverend Bradley's efforts, the "Valley Union Education Society" was formed, and this organization purchased "Botetourt Springs" in the spring of 1842.  

Only slight alterations to the buildings were necessary to make the place a first-rate school, and in the fall of 1842 the "Valley Union Seminary" was opened for enrollment with Mr. Bradley as its head.

Mr. Bradley found it difficult to get along with his young student body. In addition, there was dissension in his faculty. As a result, after three years as head of the new school, Mr. Bradley retired. At this time, a young professor (25 years old) from Richmond College, Charles L. Cocks, was called to head the Seminary. Mr. Cocks was the successful head of the school for over forty years. During this time "Valley Union Seminary" became Hollins Institute and later Hollins College and was changed from a coeducational academy type school to a full-fledged college for girls.

It must have been about 1844 that David Vincent Dickenson entered "Union Valley Seminary." Apparently he was enrolled there for three years. While at the school, "Vince," as he was called, met and fell in love with Sarah Jane Evans, at that time herself a student at Valley Union.

On November 28, 1848, David V. Dickenson and Sarah J. Evans were married. This young couple settled on a portion of the Shelton, Dickenson,

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23. Ibid., p. 37.
25. Dickenson's family Bible.
Berger ancestral land in Pittsylvania County, not far from Chalk Level. Soon the new Dickenson couple became prominent in their neighborhood and the county. D. V. Dickenson now became a successful farmer.

Prior to the outbreak of the War between the States, four children were born to David Vincent and Sarah Evans Dickenson. The first child was William Vincent Dickenson, born November 21, 1849. Next, Mary Elizabeth Dickenson was born December 23, 1851. The third child was born January 6, 1856, and was called Christinna Wade Dickenson. On July 3, 1858, another daughter, Ida Virginia Dickenson, was born. After the Civil War a fifth child and fourth daughter, Berkley, was born, but this child died when less than one year old.26
CHAPTER IV

Differences of opinion regarding the basic issues of abolition of slavery and of constitutional interpretation of States' rights, which in 1861 led to open conflict, were being expressed in a mild manner years before the birth of D. W. Dickinson. During his younger life these differences had become most important issues.

It would appear that for a few years prior to the year 1861, Dickinson had entertained notions that an open break would take place. However, before 1856 the situation in his section of Virginia apparently was quiet. He wrote in his diary on Christmas Eve, 1861:

Tomorrow morning is Christmas morning. I expect it will be a gloomy time to me. Little did I think five years ago that I would be in so short a time separated from my wife and children this Christmas morning by the tyrannical power of war. Yet I believe it is a just one on our side, and I submit to it as cheerfully as I can, hoping that the time is not far distant that I may return home to my family with the happy news that the God of Nations has declared peace — the object that we so much desire.27

The state of Virginia had been caught in the middle of the secession movement. Every effort possible was being made by Virginians to bring about

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27. D. V. Dickinson's Diary, Dec. 24, 1861. This diary was kept by Dickinson from Dec. 12, 1861 through Aug. 15, 1862, and is now in J. S. Walden's possession at Richmond, Va. Hereinafter cited as Dickinson's Diary.
a reconciliation between the seceding states of the lower South and the Union.

During January 1861, Virginia had laid the foundation for a "Peace Conference" at Washington, and at her invitation the delegates of twenty-one States assembled there on February 4. It was the very day on which the delegates of the six seceded cotton States were meeting at Montgomery to form the Confederacy, and this fact was of sufficiently ominous import. The time for further discussion had indeed passed, and after three weeks it was clear that the Conference would fail completely. There was much devotion to the Union in Virginia and the other border States, but Virginia had already made it clear that if secession were not allowed to be peaceably carried out, and if the North attempted to coerce the South, then she would herself have to secede.²⁻

The chief ties of affection in the state of Virginia were naturally with the South. Yet, in Virginia, until the fall of Fort Sumter and President Lincoln's call for troops, there was a "battlefield of conflicting emotions."²⁹ Just as in other border states, there were two general fields of thought regarding the subject of secession. There were those who considered it a Constitutional right, and there were others who denied the right to secede but nevertheless they denied just as vehemently the right of the Federal Government to restrain by force a seceded state.

When on April 17, 1861, an authorized Virginia convention passed the Ordinance of Secession, which was to be submitted to the people of the state, it was because of an openly declared policy of the North "to coerce the seceded states and form a Union based on force, and not on account of slavery."³₀

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²₈. Adams, America's Tragedy, p. 175.
²⁹. Ibid., p. 185.
³₀. Ibid., p. 188.
At a poll held at Chalk Level in Pittsylvania County on Thursday, May 23, 1861, David Vincent Dickenson was one of two hundred and thirty-five persons of this county precinct who voted to ratify "the Ordinance of Secession adopted by the Virginia State Convention on 17 April 1861."31

Immediate preparations were made for the increase of the Virginia State military forces. On June 6, 1861, the Virginia State military and naval forces were transferred to the Confederate States of America.32

CHAPTER V

Several companies of Virginia militia were formed in Pittsylvania County. These companies formed the 101st and 168th Regiments of the State militia, and were later part of the 57th Regiment of Virginia Volunteers. One of the companies of the original 168th Virginia Militia Regiment was called the "Galveston Tigers." This original company was organized at Gumspring Meeting House, in Pittsylvania County, June 20, 1861. It later became Company D, 57th Regiment, Stewart's Brigade. A complete roll of the company is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Place, Enlisted</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dyer, David</td>
<td>Captain</td>
<td>Gumspring M. H.</td>
<td>Major, Lt.Col., Col.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dickerson, David V.</td>
<td>1st Lieut.</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>Capt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owen, Drewry</td>
<td>2nd Lieut.</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>died during war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyer, Leroy G.</td>
<td>3rd Lieut.</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


34. A photostatic copy of the original roll, Co. D, 57 Regt., Va. Vol., may be found in the Archives Section, Va. State Library, Richmond, Va. Apparently this roll was made up some time near the close or after the close of the War and was intended to include all of those who had been members of Co. D. Obviously there are omissions of information.

35. Ibid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Place Enlisted</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Haden, John T.</td>
<td>2nd Sergt.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1st Sergt., wounded in foot at Gettysburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas, Geo. N.</td>
<td>3rd Sergt.</td>
<td>McTimiskin, C.H.</td>
<td>disabled from wounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McTimiskin, James T.</td>
<td>4th Sergt.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robertson, E. S.</td>
<td>Corporal</td>
<td>Gumspring M. H.</td>
<td>Lieut.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payne, Coleman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>died during war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jones, Thomas C.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keesee, A. N.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shalton, A. J.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adams, Geo. W.</td>
<td>private</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adams, Wm. H.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Denville, Va.</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbott, J. C.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gumspring M. H.</td>
<td>served 3 years, wounded at Gettysburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adams, J. R.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>died at Columbus, Ohio, and buried in Camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chase Confed. cemetery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker, M. J.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barber, Geo. J.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barber, Enos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butler, James</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Burks, Charles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burks, Thomas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Brooks, Nathaniel</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pittsylvania C.B.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Barber, Henry</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gumspring M. H.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Bennett, P. J.</td>
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<td>Franklin County</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowles, M. Y.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Henry County</td>
<td>served 3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compton, John W.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gumspring M. H.</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compton, John W.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>killed near Chester Sta., Va.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carroll, M. J.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cox, J. A.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*(1864) served 1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooper, H.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalton, Henry T.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalton, D. T.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalton, W. V.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dove, J. M.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeJarnett, Henry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalton, Jubal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalton, Caleb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalton, John A.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dodd, W. T.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis, Nathan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doss, Charles L.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doss, Elisha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doss, Henry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>died during war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>died during war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>died and buried at Pt. Lookout, Md.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Place Enlisted</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forbes, T. T.</td>
<td>private</td>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td>died in hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraelin, J. D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gumpspring M. H.</td>
<td>served Appomattox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin, Jos. C.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>served 3 mos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farrges, Wm. T. J.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>served 4 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraelin, Riley</td>
<td></td>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td>served Appomattox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster, G.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pittsylvania C.H. severely wounded in face Gettysburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gosney, J. M.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>died during war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gray, Wm. W.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>wounded Drewry's Bluff served 4 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good, Richard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George, Noten</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George, Ashford</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goods, H. F.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hines, J. D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gumpspring M. H.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hodges, Jos. T.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haden, Thomas D.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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Franklin County (1864) 1 yr.

Pittsylvania C.H.

Hanover County

Gumspring M. H. (1862) 3 yrs.

Newport News

Gumspring M. H. (1865) 3 mos. in service

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D. V. Dickenson was elected First Lieutenant of the company, and early in July the following was received by him from the Virginia State Executive Department:
The Commonwealth of Virginia
To David V. Dickenson Greeting

KNOW YOU, that from special trust and confidence reposed in your fidelity, courage, and good conduct, our GOVERNOR, in pursuance of the authority vested in him by the Constitution on Laws of this Commonwealth, doth commission you a First Lieutenant of Light Infantry in the 168th Regiment of the 11th Brigade and First Division of the VIRGINIA MILITIA, to rank as such from the 22nd day of June 1861.

STATE SEAL

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto signed my name as Governor, and caused the Seal of the Commonwealth to be affixed, this 29th day of June 1861.

John Letcher 36

36. From original commission in J. S. Walden's possession at Richmond, Va.
CHAPTER VI

It was not until September that the newly formed company of "Galveston Tigers" was called to active duty. In the meantime this band of men prepared for what they felt would be a short stay in the army. On September 23, 1861, the following order was issued from the Office of the Secretary of War:

Special orders
No. 285

Richmond, Virginia
Sept. 23, 1861


Geo. Deas
Asst. Adj. Gen. 37

Initially the newly formed 57th Regiment was ordered to Lewisburg, Virginia. In early November 1861, this Regiment was under the Western Virginia Command of Brig. Gen. Floyd.

By this time, many Union prisoners had been taken in the East and sent to Richmond. So, with conditions being quiet in the western section of the state, the 57th Regiment moved to Richmond and was assigned prison guard duty.

The colonel now assigned to head the regiment was Lewis A. Armistead. This man had been born in New Bern, North Carolina, February 18, 1817. He attended West Point for two years (1834-36) and later (1839) received his commission from civilian life, serving in the U. S. infantry. By the time of the outbreak of the Civil War, he had attained the rank of major. In 1861, L. A. Armistead was given the rank of major in the Confederate States of America Army to date from March 16, 1861. A little later in the year (November) he became colonel of the 57th Va. Regiment.

In a letter to his wife written on December 8, 1861, from Howard's Grove near Richmond, D. V. Dickenson spoke of Colonel Armistead. At this time the Company D captain, David Dyer, was away on furlough, and Lieutenant

38. Ibid., p. 311.
41. Hotchkiss, Confederate Military History, III, 576. This work is in 12 volumes by various authors. Vol. III deals with the state of Virginia.
Dickenson had charge of the company. He wrote in part:

I dressed up in my new suit this morning and inspected my company at 9 o'clock. The Colonel passed around and reviewed us. After inspection I went to his tent to get permission to go to the city. He said to me, "You and your company looked better this morning than I ever saw you, not saying you don't always look well." I told him I reckoned it was because I had on my best suit of clothes. He asked me where I got them. I told him my wife made them. He seemed to be surprised and wanted to know if there were any more women of the same sort where I got mine. I told him that there might, but I thought they were few and far between. He said it was the prettiest and best suit he had seen in the service and said that if he had a wife who would make him such a suit, he would feel rich. He wanted to know if you would make him a suit. The Colonel is a widower and seems very anxious to marry again. If you think you can make him a suit you must let me know.42

Up until the close of the year 1861, few men in the Confederate Army had been brought to realize the seriousness of war. In his letters to his wife and in his diary, which Dickenson started on December 12, 1861 and continued for some eight months, there is a lightness of expression at this time which gradually disappears as time goes on.

In the same letter of December 8, 1861, Dickenson wrote, "We are well fixed up in our quarters. We have a good stove and newspapers pasted around the walls making it quite warm."43 The three company lieutenants, D. V. Dickenson, Drewry Owen, and L. G. Dyer, shared the same shack. Here they kept their provisions and had their meals prepared. An excerpt from

42. D. V. Dickenson's letter to his wife, Dec. 8, 1861. Several such letters are in S. D. Walden's possession at Richmond, Va. Hereinafter cited as Dickenson to Wife.

43. Ibid.
Dickenson's diary, entry of February 5, 1862, stated: "Pomp (Dyer) and Drew (Owen) are fast asleep. We have a settlement today for our last month's board, including cook hire, which was $8.07 per head, much less than it has formerly been."44

Again from the December 8th letter, Dickenson wrote: "I received a letter from Mr. Vaden yesterday. He said that he would start Jim (a slave) down next Saturday."45 It was the custom at the beginning of the War for slave owners to carry with them as an attendant one of the house slaves. In addition, sometimes slave owners would hire out their slaves as cooks for sections of army companies. On December 14, 1861, Jim, the slave of D. V. Dickenson, arrived in camp with Captain David Dyer, who returned on that day from furlough.46 Jim was hired out by Dickenson to James Hodnett's mess for $10.00 per month.47 In March 1862, when Dickenson's company was sent to the Suffolk area, Jim was left with Mr. E. H. Stokes in Richmond to be sold.48 Two weeks later word was received by Dickenson that Jim had been sold for $1,000.00.49

In the Civil War, just as in the war of recent years, prices in the cities were considerably higher than in the rural areas. On two occasions

44. Dickenson's Diary, Feb. 5, 1862.
45. Dickenson to wife, Dec. 8, 1861.
47. Ibid., Dec. 16, 1861.
48. Ibid., March 28, 1862.
49. Ibid., April 13, 1862.
Sarah Dickenson sent chickens, turkeys, and other produce to Richmond to be sold by her husband, Lieutenant Dickenson. 50

At the Christmas season in 1861 there was much celebration in Richmond. On Christmas Eve the streets were crowded with persons apparently in a great hurry walking to and fro. 51 There were a great many boys on the streets with their firecrackers and skyrockets. "I don't expect that the boys in the city will sleep any tonight," 52 wrote Dickenson.

Colonel Armistead gave the men of his command four days rest at Christmas, from December 24 until December 28. On Christmas Day, Dickenson wrote:

I went to the city this morning. The main street was full of boys with their squibs and drums. Our camp has been moderately quiet today. There have been several sent to the guard house for intoxication. We had an eggnog this morning and expect to have a company nog tomorrow morning. This has been quite a lonesome day to me. At home with my wife and children is certainly the most desirable place on earth for me, and nothing but the love of liberty and the love of family has induced me to be here. 53

As has been stated, the 57th Regiment was assigned to prison guard duty while in Richmond. Apparently this duty was not too rigorous, as Dickenson seems to have had ample opportunity in Richmond to attend church, plays, and visit with friends. Frequently visitors from his home county

50. Ibid., Dec. 30, 1861; Feb. 3, 1862.
51. Ibid., Dec. 24, 1861.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid., Dec. 25, 1861.
called on him in Richmond, and on one occasion his young son, Willie, stayed for a few days with the Lieutenant. 54

In connection with this prison guard duty, D. V. Dickenson wrote on January 8, 1862:

I stayed at Rocketts 55 last night as Officer of the Guard. The 14th Alabama Regiment helped us to guard the Yankees last night. I visited several of the prisoners' floors. I conversed with several of the prisoners. They are very intelligent men. A great many of them employ their time making rings out of beef bones. I bought three from one of them for 50 cents. 56

More than likely it was at this time that D. V. Dickenson got the idea for making rings, pins, bracelets, and other trinkets from bones, buttons, and wood. Later when Dickenson himself was a prisoner at Johnson's Island, he sent home many such things that he had made.

54. Ibid., Jan. 9, 1862.

55. Rocketts was the name of the section which is now called Fulton Bottom. The prison was in this section.

56. Dickinson's Diary, Jan. 8, 1862.
CHAPTER VII

By the end of the year 1861, the Union forces were being massed in the seaboard area of Virginia. On December 7, 1861, General J. B. Magruder had written to the army headquarters in Richmond from his post at Williamsburg requesting that the 57th Virginia Regiment be sent to his command "to help repel an impending attack on Yorktown." Magruder stated that he believed the citizens of Richmond could guard the prisoners. The 57th remained in Richmond.

In February 1862, with the Union blockades of Southern ports, there was an expected invasion through Eastern North Carolina. On February 14, 1862, the following order was issued from army headquarters:

Special Order #37

The 57th Virginia, under Col. Armistead will proceed without delay to Suffolk, Virginia and report to Gen. Huger of the Dept. of Norfolk.

Jno. Withers
A.A.G.

I understand since I came in that there were orders for us to leave here soon for North Carolina. I don't know whether it is true or not. I was detailed today by Col. Armistead as recruiting officer. I expect to go up (to Pittsylvania) Monday. Gabe Murphy was also detailed for the same purpose. We have 30 days. 59

The orders directing the regiment to Gates County, North Carolina, just across the Virginia-North Carolina border below Suffolk, were carried out. As Dickenson's company prepared to leave Richmond for the Suffolk area, Dickenson himself prepared to leave for home for thirty days of recruiting duty.

In the summer of 1861, the South had been "agog with enthusiasm." Thousands of men had swarmed to the recruiting stations, begging to be taken, and in most cases they had been refused for lack of arms. The South had "gone to war with an improvidence and unpreparedness truly American." 60 In the winter of 1861-62, the unseasoned troops, living for the most part in tents rather than huts, and very poorly provisioned, were scourged by disease. There were hundreds of homesick boys from the sunny South who became ill and died of measles, mumps, typhoid, and other sicknesses which were dangerous in the cold Virginia winter. In addition, the months of drill, drill, and more drill, unrelieved by military action, had "chilled the military ardor of the Southern people, which had been so high after Manassas." 61 Furloughed

59. Dickenson's Diary, Feb. 14, 1862.
60. Eckenrode and Conrad, James Longstreet, Lee's War Horse, p.23.
61. Ibid., p. 27.
men, and men who were sent home on sick leave, had tales to tell of their hardships which made the "stay-at-homes" all the more complacent with the comforts of home. "Volunteers came infrequently now, in fact hardly at all."\(^{62}\)

Recruiting officers were appointed by the various commands in the late winter of 1862 to be sent to their particular localities in quest of new recruits. D. W. Dickinson received such an appointment. He had written in his diary on February 3, 1862, after returning from a twenty days' furlough to his home in Pittsylvania:

> The militia in Pittsylvania are very much frightened in regard to the draft, but they say that they will never go until the draft comes, and then I think it will require a force to bring some of them. I am sorry to say it, but there are some very disloyal people in the County of Pittsylvania.\(^{63}\)

One of the problems that had caused the Confederate States' Secretary of War, Judah P. Benjamin, considerable anxiety by the close of the year 1861 was the short term enlistments in the army. A large portion of the Confederate soldiers were at this time enlisting for a year, "and their terms of enlistment would probably expire at a time when they would be vitally needed."\(^{64}\)

> It was very doubtful if a large number of Confederate volunteers could be prevailed upon to enlist for the duration of the war. However, Benjamin advocated that the twelve-month (non-commissioned) volunteers be granted a liberal bounty and moderate furlough upon the condition that

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\(^{62}\) Ibid.

\(^{63}\) Dickinson's Diary, Feb. 3, 1862.

\(^{64}\) Meade, Judah P. Benjamin, Confederate Statesman, p. 211.
they re-enlist for the war. At the same time the regimental commanders were prevailed upon to strongly advocate to their men enlistment for the war. On January 3, 1862, Dickenson wrote in his diary, "The Colonel this morning wanted us to enlist for the duration of the war. I don't think that he met with much encouragement." Again on February 4, Dickenson wrote, "There are a good many in the regiment who are enlisting for the war—more than I expected." Still again on February 8, he wrote, "The Colonel still continues to urge us to join for the war. Only three of our company have joined as yet."

On February 13, 1862, Dickenson enlisted for the duration of the war and noted in this connection, "I hope that I may never regret it." Now during the last days of February and the first days of March he was seeking new enlistments in his native county. The following appeared on the Company D muster roll of February 1862, in the remarks column opposite Lieutenant David V. Dickenson's name: "Absent on recruiting service from the 15th day of Feb. 1862 for 30 days per Regt. Order No. 29 dated Feb. 1 1862." The recruiting work was tedious and did not bear the anticipated fruit. "Many acknowledge the importance of volunteering and dread mighty

65. Ibid.
66. Dickenson's Diary, Jan. 3, 1862.
67. Ibid., Feb. 4, 1862.
68. Ibid., Feb. 8, 1862.
69. Ibid., Feb. 13, 1862.
the draft but they still indulge a hope that there will be no draft, and if there is, that they will escape. 71

In Virginia, the anticipated draft came first in the form of the Governor's Proclamation calling the State Militia to active duty. Lieutenant Dickenson was still at home trying to round up volunteers, and he writes:

"Everything is in commotion through the county. The militia men are going to and fro moving and fixing up their affairs to leave. The Governor issued a proclamation on the 10th instant calling out the entire militia of the State. The proclamation reached this county on the night of the 10th instant. The major of the 168th Regiment issued orders on yesterday for the militia to leave for Norfolk on next Tuesday. The 101st Regiment will start on next Wednesday. I got 22 recruits before the call for the militia. I have got some 10 or 12 since. A great many of the militia are still holding on saying that this is only a sham to scare them into the Volunteer Companies. Others look very serious with faces as long as a mule's head. They are running from this one to that one for advice, scared nearly to death. I hope that they may get over it after a while, and things will be made easy with them. I shall leave home in two days (March 16) in order to rejoin my company, Providence permitting. 72"

The call of the Virginia State Militia was followed in a month by the passage of the first conscription law of the Confederate States. This law, "An act to provide for the public defense," was passed by the new Congress. The act withdrew from the control of the states and placed under the complete control of the President of the Confederacy all male citizens over eighteen years and under thirty-five. 73 This was "a curious,

71. Dickenson's Diary, Feb. 28, 1862.
72. Ibid., Mar. 14, 1862.
almost ironic, negation of the whole doctrine of State's rights" — one of the main points on which the Confederacy was founded.

On March 22, 1862, Lieutenant Dickenson reported with his recruits to a place which he called "Fort Dillard in Gates County, N.C." In all of the available records there is no mention made of a "Fort Dillard." It is true that this encampment was used for only a comparatively short time. Perhaps Dr. H. J. Eckenrode has offered a logical explanation when he said that frequently a camp, which did not become well established, simply was given a local name by the occupying forces, a name which was never officially recorded.

Dickenson's diary entry of March 23, 1862, was as follows:

Gates County, N.C., Fort Dillard

I reached this place yesterday at 1 1/2 o'clock P.M. after a very fatiguing walk from Franklin Depot, on the Seaboard R.R., a distance of 12 miles. The country is very level and poor, interposed with large swamps of cypress and reeds. We didn't have to wade but one place, a distance of 60 or 70 yards. I fear it has given me a cold. Thirty-four of my recruits walked with me. Three others waited and came down on an old flat boat that left there about 12 1/2 o'clock P.M. They got to camp about dark. I found all well in camp except Caleb Dalton. He received an injury a few days ago by a shanty falling on him. The shanties are made like an old fashioned top, struck and covered with leaves and dirt, or rather sand, as there is nothing else here but sand. I went down to the river yesterday to see the fort. It is built very strong and made bomb proof. It only has two guns in it. There are a great many ditches for the infantry to get in. The works, I believe, are nearly complete. They have, just below the fort, a very large chain stretched across the river and timbers lodged against it, making an immense blockade. It is thought by most of the people around here that the Yankees will not

74. Ibid.
75. Dickenson's Diary, Mar. 23, 1862.
76. From an interview with Dr. Eckenrode, State Historian, on June 30, 1948.
come up this far, but that is very uncertain. Yet if they
do come, we will give them the best fight we have got.

The government is transporting a great many troops to
Goldsborough and Weldon, N.C. There are a great many
troops moving in every direction.

We are stationed on a level about 15 feet above the
level of the River Chowan which is formed by the junct-
ion of the Blackwater and Nottoway Rivers which unite
about 400 yards above our fort.

I expect to go to Norfolk tomorrow to get more recruits
out of the militia that went down from Pittsylvania
County. I saw them as they passed through Suffolk. They
looked very badly.

From the Quartermaster's Department, Lieutenant Dickenson received
$1,850.00 to be paid the new recruits as bounty. Each man was given
$50.00. 77 In addition, Dickenson "received of Lt. Col. Geo. Dean, A.A.G.,
headquarters, Richmond, cheque on Farmer's Bank of Virginia in full for
recruiting expenses, the said cheque being for $75.00." 78

As of March 24, 1862, Major General Benjamin Huger had 13,000 Con-
federate troops in his Department of Norfolk command. This force pro-
tected the city and the captured Gosport Navy Yard across the Elizabeth
River. Huger also guarded the south side of the lower James River
against any attempt to land in Norfolk. There was no Federal army that
immediately confronted General Huger, but he was exposed to attack up the
inland waterways from Albemarle Sound, North Carolina, which the Federals
controlled. Just across Hampton Roads at Fort Monroe there was a garrison
of some 10,000 Union troops under General John E. Wood. This force was

77. Dickinson's File, from the original receipts, Feb. 15, 1862,
$750; Mar. 15, 1862, $1100.
78. Ibid., original receipt, Mar. 20, 1862.
in a position to descend on Huger when there was a sufficient Federal fleet to combat the Confederate navy at Norfolk. 79

As had been mentioned by Lieutenant Dickenson, he expected to go to Norfolk for additional recruits. This trip was made, and from Norfolk on March 28, 1862, Dickenson wrote in his diary:

I was out to see the militia yesterday. They are very much dissatisfied and would be glad to volunteer if they had the opportunity. My business here is to get recruits, but I am not allowed to recruit yet. There will be an opportunity given the militia in a short time to volunteer or go as militiamen. I expect to remain here three or four days.

Yesterday I visited the Merrimac or Virginia. She is quite a formidable looking craft. I went aboard her. The machinery is immense. We had to have a guide and a lamp to go through her. It reminded me of a large cave. They had her in dry dock, repairing and making additions to her former strength. She will be ready to branch out in a short time.

The initial trip to Norfolk by Dickenson to get recruits was a failure. "We made a failure in our effort to recruit in Norfolk on account of not being allowed by General Mahone 80 to recruit amongst the militia," 81 he wrote after returning to "Fort Dillard." A few days later, on April 8, Dickenson was sent again to Norfolk in order to attempt to recruit. In connection with this trip he wrote on Thursday, April 10, 1862:

I got back from Norfolk today about 11 A.M. I went after recruits but failed to get any in consequence of the same orders that existed when I was there before. Captains Ramsey and Wade and Lt. Fountain went with me. We went down last Tuesday. I saw the militia that was there. They

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79. Freeman, R. E. Lee, II, 10.
80. Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, I, 201. It is stated that William Mahone was a Brig. Gen. under Huger's command.
81. Dickenson's Diary, April 2, 1862.
are very much dissatisfied and are very anxious to volunteer.

The Merrimac was lying out in the harbor at Norfolk. She was ready to move whenever circumstances require it.82

The Merrimac had been one of the largest of the United States Navy vessels prior to the capture of the Gosport Navy Yard by Confederate forces and the abandonment of Norfolk by the Federals in the spring of 1861. At that time this wooden, forty gun steam frigate had been sunk at her berth by the withdrawing Union forces. The hull of the ship, after being raised, was cut down so that the forward and after portions were awash. Nothing was left except the lower part of her hull and the engines, which had never operated properly. Amidships there were ten guns housed in a low deck house with sloping sides covered with four inches of iron plates. "Her hull was invulnerable, as it proved, but she had two great weaknesses; her poor old engines which could get up no more than five knots speed, and her great depth of twenty-three feet."83 The Merrimac was 275 feet long and had a beam of 38½ feet. Her original weight had been 3200 tons, and she had cost the U. S. Government about $700,000.84

After an initial successful engagement with Union ships on March 8, 1862, the Merrimac met her equal the next day in her battle with the Monitor. Finally when orders came to abandon the Norfolk area, it was determined to take the Merrimac up the James River and use her for blockading

82. Ibid., April 10, 1862.
it. With the vessel armed the draught was too great to take her up
the river. Therefore, she was lightened of her guns. Still it was im-
possible to get her over the sand bars. Her commander, Commodore Tatnall,
as a result, ordered the ship blown up rather than have her fall into the
hands of the enemy. 85

On April 14, 1862, Colonel Armistead was notified of his promotion.
On that day Lieutenant Dickenson wrote, "Col. Armistead received his com-
mission as Brig. Gen. today and has gone to Suffolk to report." 86 Shortly
after this, company elections were to be held. On April 19, a portion of
Dickenson's diary entry was as follows:

There is a good deal of jesting in camp among the boys in
regard to the reorganization. I expect that the field
will be full of candidates for lieutenantcy. W. G. Bowles,
W. B. Murphy, G. H. Thomas, and James T. McKinice are can-
didates besides the present incumbents. It is not known
yet when the election will take place.

The election of company officers, commissioned and non-commissioned,
was one of the extremely weak links in the Confederate States Army organiza-
tion.

Early in the war even corporals were elected, with, as
can be readily surmised, ill results. Until December
1861, Eggleston declared that he never knew an instance
in which a captain dared offend his men by breaking a
non-commissioned officer or by supporting one without
submitting the matter to a vote of the company. Even in
the first instance which occurred after that date the
captain had to bolster himself with written authority
from headquarters, wherupon followed three weeks of
muddled diplomacy and discipline to quell the mutiny
which resulted. 87

86. Dickenson's Diary, April 14, 1862.
87. Lomn, Desertion During the Civil War, p. 16, quoting
The right to elect company officers was incorporated in the "Furlough and Bounty Act." This act was designed to strengthen, but actually did much to disorganize the army. It was passed by legislative action on December 11, 1861, as a means of assuring the re-enlistment of the twelve-months' volunteers.

A bounty of fifty dollars and a furlough of sixty days were promised all enlisted men and non-commissioned officers who agreed to serve for the duration of the war to a maximum of three years. Soldiers desiring of changing company, or even their arm of the service, were allowed to do so. When the reorganization of the Army was effected through re-enlistment on these terms, the men could elect their own company and field officers, regardless of previous law. Thereafter, all commissioned vacancies were to be filled by promotion.

"A worse law could hardly have been imposed on the South by the enemy." Any officer who discharged his duties with vigor and aroused the antagonism of his indolent men could be sure that he would be overlooked at election time.

By relaxing discipline, designing men who sought to assure their continuation in command, might curry favor. The ambitious would conduct electioneering campaigns. Any one from Lieutenant to Colonel who discharged his sworn duty might be humiliated by defeat at the hands of soldiers he disciplined—and might be succeeded by some popular incompetent. All that had been done in ten months to develop a competent corps of officers might be set at naught.

It was not until the Conscription Act was passed in April 1862, and General Lee was named by President Davis to command the Army on

88. Freeman, R. E. Lee, II, 25.
89. Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, I, 130.
91. Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, I, 133-134.
June 1, 1862, that order began to exist in the disorganized Army. One Northern correspondent wrote after the Seven Days Battle in which the then Commanding General was Joseph E. Johnston:

The shell which wounded General Johnston (May 31, 1862), although it confused the Rebels, was the saddest shot fired during the war. It changed the entire Rebel tactics. It took away incompetence, indecision, and dissatisfaction and gave skilful generalship, excellent plans, and good discipline. (After Lee took command), the discipline became better; the Rebels went into battle with shouts, and without being urged, and, when in, fought like tigers. A more marked change for the better never was made in any body of men than that wrought in his army by the sensible actions of General Lee.2

The anticipated reorganization of Lieutenant Dickenson's company and the 57th Regiment didn't take place until May 7, 1862. On that day Dickenson wrote in his diary:

We received orders today about noon to reorganise the companies and Regiment. Thereupon, the Regiment was formed about 1 o'clock P.M. and proceeded to reorganise. Capt. James and our company were the first to organize. Lt. Col. Keen and Maj. Haynes conducted the elections. One conducted one company and the other conducted the other company.

Capt. Dyer was reelected Captain without opposition. I was elected 1st Lieut. without opposition. W. G. Bowles, the former Sergt. was elected 2nd Lieut., Senior, and E. S. Robertson (formerly corporal) was elected 2nd Lieut., Junior, cutting Lieuts. Dyer and Owen out. There were several companies where their former Lieuts. were cut out.

After the reorganization of the companies, the officers proceeded to reorganize the Regiment. Lieut. Col. Keen was elected Colonel, Capt. W. T. James from Franklin County was elected Lieut. Col. and Capt. A. J. Smith was elected Major. Capt. Allen of Botetourt and Capt. Magruder of Albemarle opposed Capt. James for Lt. Col.
He beat them both on the first run. Maj. Haynes opposed Capt. A. J. Smith. I expect from all appearances there will be a thorough reorganization of the staff. Col. Keen was elected without opposition. A great many of the defeated officers look very bad this evening.

Lieutenants Drewry Owen and Leroy Dyer left the Regiment the day after the elections with the rest of the defeated officers. They reported to General Armistead and "rather expect to go home as relieved from duty," 93

During the interval between April 19, the day Dickenson wrote of the possibility of an election, and May 7, the day the elections were held, the 57th Regiment had been on a nine days' march to Sandy Cross, North Carolina, and back. On April 21, the recruits, which Dickenson and other officers of the Regiment had been seeking in Norfolk, reported to "Fort Dillard." "There were about 290 for the Regiment. Most of the recruits being from Franklin County." 94 The next day the Regiment began its trek to the South in search of Yankees who were reported to be in the vicinity of Gatesville and Sandy Cross.

On the night of April 30, just after the Regiment had completed its march back to "Fort Dillard," Dickenson wrote:

This morning we had company inspection and muster for pay at Gatesville, N. C. at 8 o'clock A.M. We then marched to this place. A great many of the boys broke down and were left behind. A good many of them have not come in yet. We saw a good many ladies on the road. They came out to the road and presented many of the soldiers with booklets. ... We had a march down to Sandy Cross and back for very little purpose. I feel very tired from the trip but am not sorry we went .... I do not expect to stay here long as we have commenced moving. We have marched in the last 9 days about 80 miles. 95

93. Dickenson's Diary, May 9, 1862.
94. Ibid., April 21, 1862.
95. Ibid., April 30, 1862.
Lieutenant Dickenson was correct in his prophecy to the effect that the 57th would not remain long at "Fort Dillard." Already General Huger had received word from General Johnston's headquarters in Richmond to prepare to evacuate the Norfolk area. During the first week of May these preparations were made. "On May tenth the Union forces occupied the city."97

On May 11, Lieutenant Dickenson wrote from Fort Dillard:

Early this morning we received orders that the enemy was coming up the river. They had passed Gatesville this morning, a distance of 25 miles below here. We were soon under arms, and our wagons were brought up ready to load. We have been waiting the approach of the enemy all day. We have heard nothing more from them since this morning. I expect it's all a farce again.98

And the next day Dickenson wrote:

We received orders to march this morning very early. We started about 8 o'clock this morning and got to Franklin Depot about noon, a distance of 12 miles. We there got orders to march to Petersburg, Va. via Jerusalem. We then started for the latter place and are now camped about 2 miles from there for the night. Our men marched remarkably well this morning. Since leaving Franklin they have fagged very much. A great many of their feet are blistered very badly. Our rear guard burned the railroad bridge across Blackwater River. I was about 1/2 mile off. The black smoke loomed up at a tremendous height. The citizens seemed to be very much mortified at our leaving ....

Our old Fort Dillard was surrendered today, but we brought off our guns. Our Regiment is the last force to leave this country. We bring up the rear.99

The 57th Regiment followed the old Jerusalem plank road into Petersburg. Not far from Petersburg the weary Dickenson wrote: "While

98. Dickenson's Diary, May 11, 1862.
99. Ibid., May 12, 1862.
we were halted today to rest, a cart load of ice came by. Some of the boys got some, and we had a first rate ice today. It was quite a feast for a poor soldier down here in this land of trouble and sand.\textsuperscript{100}

Petersburg was reached on the evening of May 15th and the Regiment remained there until May 29th.\textsuperscript{101} During this time word was received of the acceptance of Major A. J. Smith's resignation. \textsuperscript{102} "Consequently there will be a change in field officers. Capt. Dyer will probably be Major," Dickenson wrote. As a matter of fact, the promotion of Captain Dyer was already underway. He was promoted to the staff position of Major to rank from May 23, 1862.\textsuperscript{103} At the same time D. V. Dickenson was to replace David Dyer as Captain of Company D, this rank to date from the same day.\textsuperscript{105}

While the 57th Regiment was in Petersburg there was a good deal of fighting which was taking place around Richmond. General McClellan was cautiously moving his Army of the Potomac toward that city. On May 15th Federal gunboats had been repulsed at Drewry's Bluff. General Johnston wrote:

\begin{quote}
The greatest danger to the Confederate capital at this moment did not arise from the Federal army, but from the gunboats in James River. Trusting to the Virginia, the Confederates had prepared no formidable defenses of the James, and when the destruction of the great ironclad left the river open, hurried preparations had to be made
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., May 13, 1862.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., May 16-31, 1862.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., May 25, 1862.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{104} David Dyer's File, Old records section, Adjutant General's office, National Archives Building, Washington, D. C.
\textsuperscript{105} Dickenson's File.
at Drewry's Bluff to resist the advance of the Federal fleet. Here the crews of the Virginia and of some of the other Confederate ships from Norfolk were placed, and a battery of five heavy guns was mounted in such a position as to give a close and plunging fire upon the advancing gunboats. Some vessels were also sunk in the channel to obstruct the navigation. On May 15, Commodore John Rodgers, with the Galena, the Monitor, and three other Federal gunboats, came up the river and attempted to pass the battery. A severe fight of four hours' duration ensued, at the end of which the Federal fleet retired discomfited. The Confederate battery was so elevated that the gunboats could not reply effectively to its fire, while a body of sharpshooters on the bank annoyed the Federal gunners greatly.\footnote{106}

Now on May 29 the 57th Regiment left Petersburg and headed toward Richmond. On Saturday, May 31, 1862, D. V. Dickenson wrote from Drewry's Bluff, Virginia:

\begin{quote}
We left our camp near Petersburg Thursday morning at 4 1/2 o'clock and made a very rapid march to the Richmond and Petersburg depot to get there by 6 o'clock A.M. We were first ordered to Richmond, but before we could get off we received orders to stop at this place which is about half way between Richmond and Petersburg. We are now on the turnpike road leading from Richmond to Petersburg about 1 mile from the river. Night before last we laid out on the railroad about 3/4 mile from here and came here late yesterday evening. We had but one tent and a fly. Our company had no tents, having orders to leave all our tents standing at our former camp at Petersburg. We had the most terrific thunderstorm last night that I have ever heard. Soon after we got here a very heavy cloud came over, and I never saw such a rain in all my life. As soon as that passed another heavy cloud came up and one after another they kept coming up. I never heard such thundering nor saw such raining before. It lasted until nearly midnight. Most of our men got wet last night, having no tents.

Nothing of note transpired on our trip. Our baggage wagons were sent to Richmond and did not get with us until last night. Our men didn't have much to eat until then. There are said to be four gunboats in sight at
\end{quote}

\footnote{106. Allan, op. cit., pp. 28-29, quoting Johnston's Narrative, p. 139.}
the bluff. We would not be surprised at an attack at
most any time.

6 o'clock P.M. — I was down to see the fort this evening.
It is the strongest concern I have seen. The forts are
90 feet above the level of the river. There are some 10
or 12 large guns, some of the largest that I ever saw.
There are several guns that they haven't finished mounting.
There are a large number of negro and white hands at work.
They are at work on a casemated battery, covered with iron
4 inches thick and sloping so that the balls will fly off.
I have no idea that the enemy gunboats can take them. I
saw a great sign of the fight they had on the 15th instant.
The trees are torn down and the ground plowed up in a
great many places. I stayed there looking on for more
than an hour.

About 4 o'clock this afternoon there was a very heavy firing
heard down below Richmond that lasted until dark. It seemed
to be some distance off. I heard tonight that it was down
on the Chickahominy River, that the enemy had come over with
about 30,000 men and that their bridges had washed away and
that General Johnston had attacked them and expected to
capture the whole lot of them. I hope it may be so. The
clouds look very much like rain again tonight.107

The 57th Regiment was ordered to Drewry's Bluff to support the
small garrison which was already there. Additional attacks by more Federal
gunboats were definitely expected. Such attacks had to be repulsed by the
only important barrier on the James River, the guns at Drewry's Bluff.

It was on Tuesday, June 3, from near Drewry's Bluff that Lieutenant
Dickenson wrote:

Since last Saturday we have been moving to and fro so much
that I haven't had time to make any notes. Sunday morning
we received a dispatch that there were two gunboats coming
up the river about 2 miles below here. We were ordered
there immediately. It was exceedingly warm and the men
suffered very much for water. We went part of the way in
double quick. Upon getting down near the river, we learned
that the boats had gone back. Our company remained there

all night as picket. We had a very warm night, and the mosquitos were very bad. There came up a thundershower in the night and sprinkled us a little. Yesterday morning we were relieved and came back to camp without having eaten anything until we came back. We now got breakfast and took a nap. We were aroused again by orderly call. Then we marched again down near the river and were halted in the edge of the woods, stacked arms, and remained there until late in the evening when we returned to camp. Our camp has been moved from where it formerly was. We are now in an open field and on a high ridge with a very good spring of water.

We are expecting an attack every day as it was telegraphed to Col. Ken by Gen. Lee yesterday that there were a large number of transports coming up the river and that he (Gen. Lee) would send ten thousand men and a General to command them here. In less than 12 hours the troops were pouring in here yesterday. This place is to be held at all hazards.

There has been a very heavy battle near Richmond last Friday and Saturday. I understand that we gained a very signal victory on Friday and that we lost nothing on Saturday. The particulars of the fighting are not known yet, though we have a great many killed and wounded. We took a number of pieces of artillery from the enemy and a quantity of whiskey and lemons. Yesterday they were burying the dead. I understand that President Davis and General Lee are both now on the battlefield in their tents.

In a telegram to Secretary of War Stanton, General McClellan reported the Federal loss in the Battle of Seven Pines at 7,000. In his official report, however, his loss was numbered at 5,737. According to the official report, the Confederate loss was 6,134. General Johnston stated his captures to have been 2,350 prisoners, 10 pieces of artillery, 6700 muskets and rifles in excellent condition, a garrison

108. This was the Battle of Seven Pines in which the Confederate Commanding General, J. E. Johnston, was wounded (May 31) and General Lee was given command.

109. Dickinson's Diary, June 3, 1862.

110. Allan, op. cit., p. 56.

111. Ibid.
flag and four regimental colors, medical commissary, quartermaster, and
ordnance stores, tents and sutlers' stores. 112

The tension gradually lessened at Drewry's Bluff after June 3. The
troops stationed there returned for a time to the old army routine of drill,
guard duty, and fatigue duty. The Seven Days' Battles around Richmond were
not to commence until June 25. In the meantime there occurred minor skirmish-
ing. On June 7 Dickenson wrote, "We heard firing commence in the direction
of our forces below Richmond. It is not very rapid. I suppose they are
shelling one or the other parties." 113 Two days later he noted, "We heard
firing all day in the direction of our lines below Richmond. I expect they
are only shelling each other." 114

On June 14, 1862, Lieutenant Dickenson learned of his promotion to

This is a lovely Sabbath morning. The sun rises and the
lovely east breezes seep over the face of the land and
reminds me of by-gone days when I used to be at home with
my dear wife to walk out into the garden to look at our
vegetables and to the pastures to look at and salt the stock.
Oh, that I were there this morning to enjoy the same delights.
I do hope and pray that it will not be long before the bright
sunshine of peace will shed its rays over this unhappy and
distressed country. There is so much wickedness pervading
the land that I fear we will never have peace until the people
repent and turn from their wicked ways. Yesterday there was
quite a change in our company and regiment. Capt. Dyer re-
ceived his commission yesterday as Maj. of the Regiment. I
was promoted to Capt. and Bowles to 1st Lieut. and E. S.
Robertson to Sr. 2nd Lieut., whereupon we proceeded to hold
the election for the Jr. 2nd Lieut. Leroy S. Dyer was elected. 115

112. Ibid., quoting Johnston's Narrative, p. 140.
113. Dickenson's Diary, June 7, 1862.
114. Ibid., June 9, 1862.
115. You will remember that L. S. Dyer was the original Co.D.,
2nd Jr. Lt. He had been defeated in the previous company election of May 7
by Corp. E. S. Robertson.
He received 36 votes, J. T. McKinice 14 votes, and G. H. Thomas 2 votes. There was a board of officers ordered by Gen. Walker to convene here yesterday for the purpose of examining the candidates for promotion. Capt. Dyer was not examined. The examination was very slight — only a matter of form. The board was composed of three W. C. Colns who are stationed in the vicinity. They passed a considerable compliment on the officers examined. They thought that we were a better set of officers than common and expressed a wish to swap for some of us.\textsuperscript{116}

The next day was the new Captain's birthday, and he recorded the following:

\textit{This is my 33rd birthday and a lovely day. It is clear, cool, and beautiful ... I heard last night of the brilliant achievements accomplished by Gen. Stuart's ride around the enemy's army and landing yesterday morning with 170 prisoners and a number of mules and horses. It was a hazardous trip but proved successful. We had a good Battalion drill this afternoon.}

\textit{Maj. Dyer moved his tent this evening and I went into his old one. Maj. Dyer is suffering very much with the piles at present.}\textsuperscript{117}

General Lee was attempting to arrange his forces so that he could trap and annihilate the army of General McClellan with its headquarters at the White House on the Pamunkey River. Lee had to know as much as possible about the enemy. For the purpose of obtaining this information he summoned General J. E. B. Stuart.

On June eleventh he dispatched J. E. B. Stuart, with twelve hundred cavalry and a section of artillery, to see what was behind McClellan's front. Stuart rode north as far as Ashland. Officers and men thought they were bound for the Rapidan or the Valley, when suddenly they turned east, passed behind McClellan's right and far to his rear, created a vast commotion near the base at the White House, obstructed the railroad at Tunistall's Station, and secured information about the enemy's line of supplies.

\textsuperscript{116} Dickenson's Diary, June 15, 1862.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., June 16, 1862.
That done, the venturesome Stuart decided that the long way around was the best way home. Instead of turning back by the road he had come, he rode on south clear across the Peninsula, turned back west toward Richmond, and the third day rode into the capital by the James River Road, having been clear around McClellan's Army with the loss of but one man killed and a few wounded.\textsuperscript{118}

Naturally Stuart's bold feat sparked the imagination of the South. It seems to have set the style for future cavalry raids, that being the "raid around the army." "Stuart himself was rarely able to resist the slightest temptation to repeat the romantic performance."\textsuperscript{119}

By June 24 the expectancy of a major encounter increased in the camp at Drewry's Bluff. Captain Dickenson wrote, "We expect a fight around Richmond soon. I have orders to keep every man in camp and for every man to have his complement of cartridges and musket in good order."\textsuperscript{120} The next day a portion of his diary entry was as follows:

There has been very heavy firing all day in the direction of the two armies below Richmond. I have no doubt but that a general engagement has commenced and will doubtless continue for several days. I heard today that Gen. Jackson was in the rear of the right wing of the enemy with fifty thousand troops...\textsuperscript{121}

General Jackson and his army had been summoned by General Lee to leave the Valley and join the other Confederate commands near Richmond. "So rapid were his (Jackson's) movements, and so well concealed their object, that he was within a day's march of the enemy before his coming was suspected."\textsuperscript{122} On June 25 Jackson reached Ashland. It was not until June 24

\textsuperscript{118} Henry, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 152-153.
\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 153.
\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Dickenson's Diary}, June 24, 1862.
\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Ibid.}, June 25, 1862.
\textsuperscript{122} Allan, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 70.
that McClellan suspected his approach. A dispatch of McClellan’s to the
Secretary of War on that day was as follows: “A very peculiar case of
desertion has just occurred from the enemy. The party states that he left
Jackson, Whiting, and Ewell (fifteen brigades) at Gordonsville on the 21st,
that they were moving to Fredericksburg, and that it was intended to attack
my rear on the 28th.”123 Actually Jackson had under his command approxi-
mately 12,000 men including the divisions of Whiting and Ewell.124

On Thursday, June 26, 1862, Captain Dickinson made his final diary
entry before going into battle. It read as follows:

Today has been very pretty and cool. Heavy firing all
day in the direction of the opposing armies. This evening
late it was very heavy and rapid until 8½ o’clock P. M. A
general engagement is expected tomorrow. We are under
orders to be ready to march at a moment’s warning. A dis-
patch bearer has just come in, I expect with orders to
march. The N. C. battalion over on our right has just
beat the long roll. Our drum has just commenced beating.

It was not until the evening of July 11 and the morning of July 12
that Captain Dickinson had a chance to record additional data in his diary.
He then wrote:

This is the first opportunity that I have had since the
26th ultimo to make a note, and consequently my notes
will be imperfect and disconnected. We left our camp
at the Bluff on Friday morning (June 21) about light.
We were called up at 10 o’clock the night before but
were ordered to wait for further orders. Consequently
we did not sleep much that night. A good many of my men
complained and were left behind.

We marched up the road towards Richmond, leaving everything
but one blanket apiece and our haversacks and canteens
filled. We crossed the James on the Pontoon Bridge about
4 miles above the Bluff. We went up to Rocketts and turned
and took the Williamsburg Road. It was very warm and we

123. Ibid.
124. Ibid., p. 77, quoting in Southern Historical Papers, vol. 1,
p. 415.
suffered immensely for water and with heat. We went up that day to within a mile of the battlegrounds of the Seven Pines, stacked arms, and made arrangements for the night under the bushes and shrubbery which was very thick.

Our balloon and the enemy's were up all day. We passed very near ours. It was a very pretty sight.

We were called up and thrown into line of march several times during the night. Consequently we didn't sleep much.

Early the next morning (June 28) Gen. Walker's Brigade started for some point above us on the Chickahominy. We were then thrown into Gen. Armistead's Brigade and moved down to his headquarters that morning. We stayed there until late in the afternoon when the Regiment was sent out on picket duty for the night and ordered to hold the line and not to advance until ordered. This was the first time that we had ever been on picket duty when we expected the enemy. Nothing of interest transpired during the night. There were several guns fired but no advance of the enemy.

The next morning (June 29) about 8 o'clock we were ordered to advance. The brush was very thick and our advance was very slow and irregular, some going a long way ahead of others. A portion of my company and I were a reserve for Capt. Wade's company. His company took fright and ran back once. We stopped and rallied them and started again. We soon reached the picket line of the enemy and found it evacuated. We proceeded to within sight of the breastworks and halted for a short time. Then we proceeded to march up to the works. We found them evacuated and a great deal of plunder in and around there. Their tents were all standing. It was the stinkiest place that I ever saw. Dead men and dead horses were buried with their feet out of the ground and others not buried at all. There was a great deal of filth of every kind. We didn't remain there but a short time. Then we went back to our breastworks, nearly famished for something to eat and for water. We stacked arms and only remained a few moments when we had to take up the line of march in pursuit of the enemy. We struck the Williamsburg turnpike and went down that same distance and laid on our arms that night.

The next day (June 30) we mustered for pay in the woods, lying on our arms. That afternoon we went further down the road and came up near the enemy. They had an artillery fight. The shells flew over us pretty fast. None of us was hurt. We laid that night near the battlefield on our arms.
The next morning (July 1) we left and took a blind path through the woods and came up on the battlefield where Gen. Longstreet had fought the afternoon before. We then moved very cautiously and slowly, passing through the battlefield. We were then in line along an old fence and were ordered to lie down. We laid there until late in the afternoon, when we were ordered to charge the battery.

The shells flew thick around us from 12 noon until we moved in the afternoon, but fortunately none of us was hurt.

I dreaded the charge mightily, but after we started and we commenced hollering, my fear left me and I was never daunted afterwards.

We had to charge through an open field for 1/2 mile. The grape, canister, and minnie balls flew thick and fast. I only lost one man, John C. Shelton. He was struck by a ball from a shell, I think, just below the right nipple. He did not live more than 1/2 hour. I had several men wounded but only one seriously, Thos. J. Townsend, through the thigh. I left the field after dark soon after the firing ceased and made my way back to where we started from and kept up a cry for the 57th Regiment. I found 30 or 40 of the Regiment. Our troops were very much scattered — all that were in the engagement.

Wounded men were crying for help in almost every direction and lights were going on over the field of the enemy and our men were looking up the wounded and dead.

The next morning (July 2) it commenced raining early and it rained all day very hard. I never saw such a time before in my life. The wounded were wet and freezing and ambulances and wagons were traveling in every direction. It was a sight that every man who advocates a war should see.

We remained there until Friday (July 4). We then moved in a southeasterly direction about 8 or 9 miles and remained there in the woods without tents, and but very little to eat, until Wednesday night (July 9). We then went about 1/2 mile and struck the River Road and traveled until 2 o'clock A.M. We were very tired as it was a very warm night. We then stopped and stayed until 10 o'clock the next day (July 10). We then marched some 4 or 5 miles further and struck camp. We stayed there until yesterday morning (July 11) at 6 o'clock. We then commenced the march to this place. It began raining soon after we started and rained nearly all day. Most of us got our tents stretched and slept very soundly last night.
Today has been a very pretty day. The sun shines very warm. I received 2 letters from my wife while I was on the march and 2 from my brother. I wrote several in reply.

Lieut. Dyer got to us on Thursday after the fight. We were very glad to see him as Lieut. Bowles was sick. Lieut. Robertson was not in the fight. He was sick and didn't get to the company until the next day.

We are now on the turnpike leading from Petersburg to Richmond and about 3 miles above our old camp. The enemy is pressed down between the mouth of the Chickahominy and the James.\footnote{125}

In a letter written by Captain Dickinson to his wife there was found a more descriptive account of the part played by Captain Dickinson and his company during the actual battle. This letter was written on the second day after the battle. Dickinson used captured stationery and mailed the letter in what he inscribed, "Yankee Envelope." On the face of this envelope there is printed a little poem called "Union Forever".

\begin{center}
Camp 57th Va. Vols.,
July 3rd, 1862.
(I don't know exactly where we are. We are down below Drewry's Bluff near the river.)
\end{center}

With feelings inexpressible with gratitude to my God for His kind deliverance and protection through the trials of the last 5 days, I am once more permitted to write to you, my dear wife, in health and uninjured by the shafts of death that seemed to pass me so thick that nothing but the hand of God could have kept me from being hit.

The firing ordeal that we had to pass through on the 1st day of July was enough to try the heart of any man. We were marched up within range of the enemy's batteries about 10 o'clock and ordered to lie flat on the ground. We laid in that position until we started to charge the battery about 6 o'clock P.M. All that time the shells were bursting all 'round us and striking very near us.

\footnote{125. Dickinson's Diary, July 11 and 12, 1862.}
The dead and wounded were being carried to the rear which was a horrible sight, I assure. They were mutilated in every conceivable way. We were ordered to the charge about 6 o'clock. We started with little idea that so many would come out unhurt. You can't imagine or conceive of what we had to go through.

We had to go 3/4 of a mile before we got in range of them with our muskets, and the entire way, all were exposed to their shells. We passed over the dead and wounded men and horses. We finally got to the open field where we had to pass for 1/2 mile under the fire of grape shot, canister bomb, and minnie balls. We went in a run as hard as we could go, hollering and cheering. The dead and wounded men were lying thick. We had to cross a branch and up a steep bank and then we were within about 300 yards of the enemy's batteries. We crossed the branch and formed our lines of battle and went up to the top of the hill. We went on double quick for about 100 yards where we were ordered to halt and fire and then laid down and fired again, and remained there until we were ordered off. Most of my men acted bravely. The regiment acted better than I was afraid it would do.

I only lost one man - John C. Shelton was struck just before we started up the hill to make the last charge with a ball or piece of shell. I saw him when he fell. He was struck in the left side just below the heart. He lived about 1/2 hour but never spoke. He died on the field and was buried with the rest of the dead of our Regiment which was 13 in all. Capt. Thos. J. Martin was killed on the field and laid there all night. None of the dead and but comparatively few of the wounded were taken off the field that night. I got out with a portion of my company that night but did not find the Colonels until next morning. Maj. Dyer was knocked down and stunned very badly so that he fainted once or twice.

It commenced raining early yesterday morning - a cold rain. I got thoroughly wet to the skin. I then went over on the battlefields, and, oh, my wife, you can form no idea of a battlefield. You can imagine a man's hand here and his body lying off to one side and men with their heads shot off and eyes and hips and bowels shot out and the wounded wet and freezing and in some instances drowning in the holes of water that gathered around them in the rows of corn.

126. In his diary written later Dickenson said Shelton was struck "below the right nipple."
My dear wife it does not seem to me that any man that was in the battle could go over the field now and view the dead and wounded without feeling grateful and acknowledging the power of God.

Capt. Allen of Botetourt was wounded in the arm and had to have it amputated. Several of my men were wounded but none seriously. Thos. J. Townsend was wounded in the thigh – a very severe flesh wound. All the other wounded are with the company and able to travel. We lay out on our arms for three days and nights in succession with nothing to eat but a little piece of fat bacon and bread. I haven’t felt hungry all the time, being in so much excitement.

The battle lasted until after dark and there was charge after charge made but did not succeed in capturing the battery. The enemy finally left the field with a great many of their dead and wounded and I understand six pieces of artillery. I haven’t been over to where the enemy was stationed. I want to go today if I can. This is Yankee paper the boys found in a portfolio. We found a great many things and any quantity or small arms. If I ever live to see you I can tell you a great many things that I can’t write. The post boy is about to leave and I must close. My love to all. May God bless you and my children.

Your husband,

D.V.D.

The 57th Regiment had been engaged in the Battle of Malvern Hill on July 1, 1862. This was the last and perhaps the most crucial and most bitterly fought battle of the Seven Days Battles. Dr. Douglas S. Freeman said that the Battle of Malvern Hill did more to bring the soldiers engaged to realize the seriousness of war than any other battle up to that time. He supposed it was because of the large numbers killed in a comparatively small area.

Part of the official report of Colonel Van H. Manning, 3rd Ark. Infantry, of June 26–July 2, indicated when the 57th Regiment was detached
from General Walker's command. It reads as follows:

Thursday night, June 26, we received orders from the Secretary of War for the 4th Brigade, Br. Gen. J. G. Walker commanding, to cross the James River and re-enforce Maj. Gen. Huger's division. Our brigade was composed of the 3rd Ark., 30th Va., 57th Va., 27th N.C., 46th N.C., and 2nd Ga., in all about 4,000 men and officers. We crossed the pontoon bridge and reached Gen. Huger about 12 M on Friday, June 27. While with Gen. Huger, the 57th Va. Vols. were relieved of duty with this brigade ...... 128

A portion of the official report of Malvern Hill by Major George M. Waddill, 53rd Va. Vols., indicates an interesting sidelight in regard to the condition of some of the Federal troops. It reads:

As the regiment has not yet come in, a list of its casualties cannot now be made out, but it is believed to be small. When the long continued and terrible fire to which the regiment was exposed is considered, a small list of casualties would seem to be miraculous, and can only be explained by the fact that our men were deployed as skirmishers, and that the enemy were so drunk they could not shoot. This latter view is known to be correct, as prisoners taken were found to be intoxicated ...... 129

In the official report of Lieutenant Colonel Waddy T. James, 57th Va. Vols., there is a detailed account of the role played by the 57th Regiment in the Battle of Malvern Hill. It is as follows:

Our regiment was drawn up in a line of battle along a string of fences about 9 o'clock on the morning of July 1 near the battlefield of this memorial day. We were ordered to lie down to prevent being so much exposed to the shells of the enemy that were flying over our heads in every direction. All the time we remained in this position. Four men were slightly wounded during this part of the engagement. The left company of the regiment was posted beyond a small swamp from the balance of the regiment, and were compelled to move lower down during the evening to get out of range of the shells which at this time began to fall pretty thick and uncomfortably near.

At about 6 P.M. orders passed down the line for our regiment to charge the enemy's batteries, when the whole line were on their feet and started off with a defiant shout and at a run through a pine thicket which had been literally torn to pieces by the artillery of the enemy, and difficult to pass down, down a steep bluff, over a ravine, and up a hill which cleared us of the woods and brought us in full view of the enemy and in direct range of their guns. Here we confidently expected to begin the engagement, but found the enemy still a long way off and posted in a very advantageous position; but on we sped, nothing daunted, and under partial cover of a hill, but really exposed to a galling fire, we were brought to a halt and formed, when our commanding Colonel, E. F. Keen, gave the word to charge. Taking the lead, he was followed in good order and steady ranks to the summit. Here we again halted, and seeing the stars and stripes floating defiantly before, we poured in a well directed fire and had the extreme gratification of seeing the colors totter and fall to the ground, while a wide gap was made around it, as like wheat before the sickle. The hirelings wilted before Confederate fire. But a few well directed rounds had been fired when Capt. J. J. Allen of Co. K had his right arm nearly shot off, and Capt. T. J. Martin of Co. F being instantly killed on the field, proved to the regiment an unfortunate affair, as these companies became confused and the color bearer being stunned by a piece of shell, left the field, which tended to confuse the entire lines, and we were ordered to fall back, which we did in some confusion. An attempt was made to rally the regiment to a second charge, but with partial success, as it was useless for a regiment, or even a brigade, to charge against such formidable odds as greeted us. The colors were again carried to the summit of the hill, but few men were found to rally a third time under such a fire.

Individual instances of heroic conduct might be here mentioned of both officers and men who even followed the colors of other regiments to the charge again and again; but enough of this.

The list of casualties already furnished will speak more plainly than words of the part the 57th Va. Vols. bore in the battle of July 1.

I forgot to mention that Co. C (Capt. D. P. Heckman's Co.) was sent out on picket before we were ordered to the charge and consequently was not in the action.

W. T. James
Lt. Col., comdg.
57th Va. Vols.

W. T. James
Lt. Col., comdg.
57th Va. Vols.

The official report concerning the casualties of the 57th Regiment which was published after the Battle of Malvern Hill shows that one officer and eleven enlisted men had been killed.\textsuperscript{131} There were four officers and seventy-nine enlisted men reported as wounded. No officers, but seventeen enlisted men were recorded as missing.\textsuperscript{132}

"Malvern Hill was Lee's great tactical mistake."\textsuperscript{133} As is known now, the Federal Army, actually unshaken, held an almost impregnable position and was backed up by the fire of gunboats on the James River. Against this Army General Lee had thrown a poorly organized attack, using only a portion of his available force. "With incredible gallantry and persistence, the Confederate brigades and divisions dashed themselves against the Army of the Potomac with its two hundred and fifty guns trained on them."\textsuperscript{134} This seems to have been a mad attempt which was justified only by the assumption that the Northern Army was in broken retreat and that but one more thrust was necessary to drive them back into the river. "Five thousand men, dead and wounded, men whom the Confederacy could not spare, were left on the slopes of the hill above the James at dark of the last of the Seven Days."\textsuperscript{135}

The city of Richmond felt free of the invading force after being so closely besieged, and the joy of the citizens was great. "Only Lee, clear-headed, level-headed Lee, was not satisfied. He judged the Seven Days not

\textsuperscript{131} This total figure is one less than Dickenson mentioned in his letter of July 3.
\textsuperscript{133} Henry, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 162.
\textsuperscript{134} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{135} \textit{Ibid.}
by what had been accomplished, ... but by comparison with what he had planned and missed, the rout and destruction of the greatest army of the North.  

Once again the 57th Regiment settled down to the "old army routine".

On July 15, Captain Dickenson wrote:

I have neglected writing for several days being so pressed with business. I have been trying to work on my pay rolls but have done very little. I have had to make out reports of ordnance and reports of those who did not go into the action of the 1st of July with the causes. Then I have been writing out applications for discharge for the men that are over 35 years of age .....  

We have a very pretty camp and very good water.  

Three days later Dickenson made the following entry: "Nothing new in camp, everything going on smoothly except the conscripted men are very much frustrated and chagrined at the order of the Sec. of War received the 16th inst. holding them in the service for 90 days after their term of service expires..... A great many, I fear, will desert." As a matter of fact, desertion did become one of the major concerns of the leaders of the Confederate Army a short time later.

It was on August 15, 1862 that Captain Dickenson made his last diary notes that are available. His regiment was still resting at the camp not far from Richmond. He wrote: "Today has been quite pleasant. Maj. Yeattes was in camp today. Mrs. Davis and Mrs. Thomas were in camp also. They will start home in the morning except Mrs. Thomas. She will stay a week longer."  

136. Ibid.  
137. Dickenson's Diary, July 15, 1862.  
138. Ibid., July 18, 1862.  
139. Ibid., Aug. 15, 1862.
Dickenson had filled completely his book with notes. However, he did not mention the fact that he was going to discontinue his recordings. The Captain, being a very meticulous person, would surely have done this. Thus, there is reason to believe that other notations were made but were either lost or destroyed.
CHAPTER VIII

It was not long after August 15 that the 57th Regiment was on the move again. "Important events were taking place at Washington and in Northern Virginia." 140 The Federal government united the separate armies in Northern Virginia under the single command of General Pope. "The armies from which Jackson had slipped away to join Lee at Richmond had been united and were about to resume the offensive." 141 An advance of Pope through the valley would cut all railroad communications between Richmond and Northern Virginia. In addition, such an advance would place the richest part of the state in hostile hands and deprive the Southern Army of much needed supplies. "Under these circumstances, General Lee on July 13 ordered Jackson with the veteran troops of his own and Ewell's division to Gordonsville to oppose Pope's advance." 142 It was necessary for Lee to keep a rather large force near Richmond in order to repel a possible second attack by McClellan's army which was recuperating at

140. Allan, op. cit., p. 151.
141. Ibid., p. 159.
142. Ibid.
Harrison’s Landing and apparently was being sent support from North

However, by the middle of August it became evident that McClellan’s forces were being moved north from Harrison’s Landing. As a result, General Lee felt that it was time for him to move the major portion of his force in support of Jackson. “Only the brigades of Wise and Daniel were left to defend Richmond.”

The Federal forces were completely outmaneuvered by Lee’s generalship, so that by September 4 General Lee wrote to President Davis: “I am more fully persuaded of the benefit that will result from an expedition into Maryland, and I shall proceed to make the movement at once unless you should signify your disapprobation. The only two subjects that give me any uneasiness are my supplies of ammunition and subsistence.”

The Confederate Army moved into Maryland, and on September 6, 1862, Captain Dickinson wrote to his wife:

Camp near Fredericktown, Maryland,
Sept. 8, 1862.

Dear Wife,

I write you merely to let you hear from me. I am quite well and hope that this may find you enjoying the same blessing, for I assure you it is a blessing.

We are in camp 3 miles from Fredericktown on the Baltimore and Ohio R.R. We got here yesterday morning. I saw our men blow up the Iron Bridge across the Monocacy River a few hundred yards above the camp. The bridge is said to cost six hundred dollars.

I waded the Potomac last Saturday and set my feet upon Maryland soil for the first time. The country through which we have passed is superb.

143. Ibid., p. 199.
I went in town today to try to buy me some drawers and shirts but couldn’t. All my clothes are dirty and no chance to have them washed. I haven’t heard from you since the 5th of August. I am very anxious to hear but fully as anxious that you shall hear from me.

I have no time to write more as orderly Cook is now ready to start. I see a good many Union men here. May God bless you, my dear wife, and grant us an early meeting.

D. V. Dickenson

Prior to the Battle of Sharpsburg September 17, the regiments under the command of General L. A. Armistead, among them the 57th Va. Vols., were ordered to Shepherdstown, and formed a strong provost guard to arrest stragglers and punish summarily all depredators. Strong measures were authorized to keep men in the ranks and to prevent the depredation of private property.

As a result of being assigned to this duty, the 57th Regiment did not take an active part in the fighting at Sharpsburg. The casualty report of the 57th following the Maryland campaign showed one man wounded.

Although the Battle of Sharpsburg had not been decisive, General Lee was forced, due to dwindling supplies and a decreasing army, to re-cross the Potomac and return to Virginia soil. In regard to the diminishing army, desertions must have been frequent in spite of the precautions

145. Dickenson to wife, Sept. 8, 1862. Only available letter from Maryland.

146. Allan, op. cit., p. 325.

The army is resting today on the Opequon, below Martinsburg. Its present efficiency is greatly paralyzed by the loss to its ranks of numerous stragglers. I have taken every means in my power from the beginning to prevent this evil, which has increased instead of diminished. A great many men belonging to the army never entered Maryland at all; many returned after getting there, while others who crossed the river kept aloof. The stream has not lessened since recrossing the Potomac, though the cavalry has been constantly employed in endeavoring to arrest it ......

To give you an idea of the diminishing extent of some brigades, I will mention that on the morning after the battle of the 17th, General Evans, who was holding a front position, reported to me that he had but 120 of his brigade present. General Garnett, next to him, had but 100. General Pendleton reported that the brigades of Generals Lawton and Armistead, left to guard the ford at Shepherdstown, together contained but 600 men. This is a woeful condition and I am pained to state it, but you ought not to be ignorant of the fact in order, if possible, that you may apply the proper remedy.

R. E. Lee
Gen. commanding
Sept. 21, 1862

At the end of October the 57th Regiment was camped near Culpeper. However, Captain Dickenson was reported absent at this time on "sick leave since Sept. 23, 1862 at home in Pittsy. Cty. Va." 149 However, by the end of December, Dickenson was listed as present with his company near Fredericksburg, 150 and was more than likely present at the Battle of Fredericksburg on December 11, 1862. In this battle the 57th Regiment did not take an active part but was held in reserve. 151

After Fredericksburg the 57th moved into camp at Guinney Station. It was here that Captain Dickenson, tired and despondent, tendered his resignation. It read as follows:

Camp near Guinney Station,
Dec. 30, 1862.

To Genl. S. Cooper,
A. & I. Genl.

Sir, I hereby resign my commission as Capt., Co. D, 57th Va. Regt. unconditionally; for the following reason that I have a large family of small children with no

150. Ibid., Nov. and Dec.
protector but their Mother, that I live 75 miles from any of her connections and entirely unprotected from the numerous thieves and marauders that infest the country in which I live and I feel that my duty to my family is paramount to the duty I owe to the Government. To take effect the 1st day of Jan. 1863.

Very Respectfully,

Your Obdt. Servant
D. V. Dickenson

This resignation was forwarded through the chain of command. It was first "Respectfully forwarded - disapproved" by John B. Magruder, the commander of the 57th Regiment; next by General L. A. Armistead, the Brigade commander; then by General G. E. Pickett, the division commander; and then by General James Longstreet, the corps commander. It was on January 3, 1863 that General Lee made his indorsement. He wrote: "Resp. forwarded - I cannot for such reasons recommend acceptance." The request was then returned to the regimental headquarters. All of the indorsements were written and signed by the individual indorsers.

On January 25, still at Quimby Station, Captain Dickenson wrote in a letter to his wife: "I have sent up my resignation again. It was returned by Genl. Pickett stating that I had better apply for a leave of absence, but I started it back asking that it be forwarded." In this second resignation, which was actually forwarded on February 11, 1863, Dickenson requested a transfer to the artillery. "I have become worn out and tired of the infantry service having lost all trust or interest in

152. Dickenson to Wife, Dec. 30, 1862. The resignation was apparently sent to Dickenson's wife after it was returned to him. It was found among the letters to his wife.

153. Ibid.
the drills," he wrote in his resignation. Practically the same indorsements appeared on the second resignation as on the first: "Respectfully forwarded, disapproved." General Armistead's indorsement was as follows: "Disapproved - Capt. Dickenson, I think, is one of the best officers in his Regt. I do not know the cause of his dissatisfaction." 155

By March of 1863, the 57th Regiment was stationed at Fort Powhatan. An abstract from a field return of Pickett's Division stated: "57th Va. Regiment, aggregate of 528 men, on detached duty at Fort Powhatan." 156 At this time the main body of the division was stationed near Petersburg. 157

General Lee, with the coming of spring, was making preliminary preparation for what proved to be his last major offensive - the advance to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. D. V. Dickenson wrote to his wife on May 13, 14, and 15, 1863.

Camp 57th Va. near Drewry's Bluff, Va.,
May 13, 1863.

My dear wife,

We reached this place last Saturday evening (May 9) after a very fatiguing march. We are in camp about 1 mile from our old camp of last July and August on Falling Creek. We are on the railroad and 7 miles from Richmond. We have no tents, but expect to get some flies today ....

I wrote you last week at intervals and mailed it last Saturday. I gave you in that all of the particulars of our trip. I have no news of interest to write except that I am well and hearty.

154. This second application for resignation is in the possession of J. S. Walden, Richmond, Va.
155. Ibid.
157. Ibid.
Thursday, May 14, 1863. We moved our camp yesterday evening and are now occupying our old camp ground where we were camped last July and August. We are all very much mortified at Genl. Jackson's death and fear his place will not be filled soon ......

A number of Yankee prisoners, about 3500, passed down the road towards Petersburg yesterday on their way to City Point being paroled. They were a hard looking set of fellows; I assure you ......

While our victory was a glorious and decisive one at Fredericksburg, it has cost us dearly. We have lost many a good and brave man, but the loss of Genl. Jackson is most powerfully felt by the Confederacy ..... 

I got me a pair of pants yesterday. Consequently you need not make up the cloth you made for me yet a while. I sent my burnt pants home. I want you to send my hat as soon as possible as my old one is getting very sorry ...... 

I have nothing more to write you. Give my love to all the children, and to Mr. Keattes and family, and to Cousin Louisa and family.

As ever, your devoted husband,

D. V. Dickenson

Friday morning, May 15.

We received marching orders last night about 12 M. We may not leave immediately, and if we have to leave, I don't know where we will go, but rather expect to go down to about the White House on the Pamunkey River. I will let you hear from me as soon as we stop. Direct mail to Richmond, Armistead's Brigade, Pickett's Division.

May God bless you, my dear wife.

D.V.D.
General Lee's army was on the march again. He determined to move to the right flank of the enemy, which was lodged "on the north bank of the Rappahannock River" and whose army "was of double the numerical strength of his own." 

Pickett's division was sent to the neighborhood of Hanover Junction in order to escort supplies. On June 2, 1863, this division, "with the exception of Corse's Brigade, took up the line of march for the main army in Culpeper County." The division picked up the march of Longstreet's Corps at Culpeper as on June 15 the corps marched north, taking for their route the east side of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

By June 26, General Longstreet's army had crossed the western portion of Maryland and now had moved most of the divisions of his command as far

159. Wise, *Campaigns and Battles of the Army of Northern Virginia*, p. 252.
160. Ibid.
161. Ibid., p. 253.
162. Ibid.
163. Ibid., p. 254.
as Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. General Pickett’s division was to the rear due to its later start from Culpeper.

By July 1, the Confederate forces were moving toward Gettysburg. At that town a portion of the Union army under General Meade was met. The first day’s fighting did not amount to much, and on the night of July 1, General Lee determined to launch an attack on Meade’s position. The planned attack of July 2 was slow in getting underway. General Longstreet was to play the major role in the attack and he was not ready to attack until after four o’clock. When the attack did come it was made fiercely, and stubbornly resisted. However the attack was too late in starting and achieved little.

It was not until July 3 that a concentrated attack was launched. Lee had decided to drive directly against Cemetery Hill, where the Federals charge, with instructions to watch the effect of his fire on the enemy and when the moment for attack came to advise General Pickett. There was a lull in the Federal artillery fire and General Pickett attacked — that ill-fated attack up Cemetery Hill.

The next day General Pickett wrote:

My brave boys were full of hope and confident of victory as I led them forth, forming them in column of attack,

164. Ibid., p. 255.
166. Ibid.
167. Ibid.
168. Ibid., p. 281.
and though officers and men alike knew what was before them, knew the odds against them, they eagerly offered up their lives on the altar of duty, having absolute faith in their ultimate success. Over on Cemetery Ridge the Federals beheld a scene never before witnessed on this continent — a scene which has never previously been enacted and can never take place again — an army forming in line of battle in full view, under their very eyes, charging across a space nearly a mile in length, moving with the steadiness of a dress parade, the pride and glory soon to be crushed by an overwhelming heartbreak. Even now I can hear them cheering as I gave the order, "Forward!" I can feel their faith and trust in me and their love for our cause. I can feel the thrill of their joyous voices as they called out all along the line, "We'll follow you, Marse George. We'll follow you." Oh, how faithfully they kept their word — following me on — on to their death, and I, believing in the promised support, led them on — on — on. Oh, God!... Dear old Lewis Armistead, God bless him, was mortally wounded at the head of his command after planting the flag of Virginia within the enemy's lines.

General Armistead's Brigade, prior to the Battle of Gettysburg, had been composed of the 9th, 14th, 38th, 53rd, and 57th Virginia infantry regiments. This brigade had been in the heaviest of the fighting. After the battle Colonel William R. Aylett, 53rd Virginia infantry, commanded the brigade — General Armistead having been mortally wounded. On July 12, 1862, Colonel Aylett wrote his official report of the brigade's part borne by this brigade, commanded by Br. Gen. L.A. Armistead, in the battle of July 2, 1863, near Gettysburg, Pa.

Edqs. Armistead's Brigade,
Pickett's Div.,
July 12, 1862.

I have the honor to submit the following report of the part borne by this brigade, commanded by Br. Gen. L.A. Armistead, in the battle of July 2, 1863, near Gettysburg, Pa.

169. Inman, ed., Soldier of the South, General Pickett's war letters to his wife, p. 61.
170. Ibid., pp. 63–64.
171. Ibid., p. 70.
After a march of about 25 miles on the 2nd, the brigade bivouacked about four miles from Gettysburg, on the Chambersburg Turnpike. From this position it moved at 3 A.M. on the 3rd inst. to the right of the town and took position as a second line or support to the first line of assault, composed of the brigades of Gens. Garnett and Kemper, with orders to follow when they moved forward, and carry the enemy's position.

Shortly after the line was formed, our artillery, posted on the hill in our front, opened a severe fire on the enemy's position, which was responded to with great rapidity. Although the men were for an hour exposed to a very severe fire, the brigade suffered but slight loss and took its position with alacrity and precision when the line was ordered to advance. The brigade moved on across the open field for more than half a mile, receiving, as it came in range, fire of shell, grape, canister, and musketry, which rapidly thinned its ranks; still it pushed on until the first line of the enemy, strongly posted behind a stone wall, was broken and driven from its position, leaving in our hands a number of pieces of artillery, how many is not known. By this time the troops on our right and left were broken and driven back, and the brigade was exposed to a severe musketry fire from the front and both flanks and an enfilading artillery fire from the rocky hill some distance to the right. No supports coming up, the position was untenable, and we were compelled to retire, leaving more than two-thirds of our bravest and best, killed or wounded on the field.

Where all conducted themselves with gallantry and coolness, it would be invidious to specify individuals; but I must be permitted to remark that the whole brigade acted with the utmost steadiness and bravery, and only fell back when its numbers were so small that it could accomplish nothing by remaining.

This report would fail in completeness and in the rendition of justice to signal valor and heroic behavior were it omitted to notice particularly the gallant conduct of our brigade commander, Gen. L. A. Armistead. Conspicuous to all, 50 yards in advance of his brigade, waving his hat upon his sword, he led his men upon the enemy with a steady bearing which inspired all breasts with enthusiasm and courage, and won the admiration of every beholder. Far in advance of all, he led the attack until he scaled the works of the enemy and fell wounded in their hands, but not until he had driven them from their position and seen his colors planted over their fortifications.
In consequence of the great loss of field officers, the command of the brigade devolved upon Lt. Col. White, 14th Va., who retained it until his wound rendered him unable to do duty. He was succeeded by Maj. Cabell, 38th, Va., who retained command until I was sufficiently recovered to assume it.

Private Jack Robinson, Company I, 19th Massachusetts Volunteers, captured the battle flag of the 57th Virginia regiment during the assault on July 3. As a result he was recommended by the War Department to receive the Medal of Honor. 174

As can be readily ascertained, the 19th Massachusetts directly opposed the 57th Virginia. Part of the report of Colonel A. F. Devereux, commander of the 19th Massachusetts regiment, offers an interesting view of the battle action:

Just about 3 o'clock 3 July 1863, the enemy's cannonade slackened and columns of attack appeared emerging from the woods across the open field in our front. They advanced gallantly upon our position which was held firmly excepting on our right at which point there was some confusion. There was a strong attack where our lines had given way. For an instant it seemed to hang in the balance whether we should drive the enemy out of our works which they had entered with extraordinary exertions, our line was carried back to the rifle pits, driving the enemy out.

Just at this moment the enemy, as if actuated by one instinct, threw down their arms in a body, burst into our lines by hundreds, delivering themselves up as prisoners, and the battle was won, very few of the enemy attempting to retreat across the field to their own lines.

We must have killed, wounded, and captured the whole attacking column with comparatively few exceptions.

During the obstinate fight at this place, the two lines being actually hand to hand, my regiment captured four regimental colors from the enemy. Three of these (14th, 19th, and 57th Virginia) have been turned over to the brigade commander.
CHAPTER XI

Slowly Lee's Army began its march back to Virginia. Many of the best of his men were left behind. Captain D. V. Dickenson was among these. He had been captured in the action and sent first to Fort McHenry, Maryland, where he was confined on July 5, 1863. On July 12, he was sent to Fort Delaware and remained there until July 18, when he and his party were forwarded to Johnson's Island. On July 20, 1863, Dickenson joined the post at Johnson's Island, near Sandusky, Ohio.

Two days later he wrote to his wife:

Johnston's Island near Sandusky City, Ohio, July 22, 1863.

My dear Wife,

As I have an opportunity of sending this today by some exchanged officers who will leave this Island this evening, and knowing your anxiety to hear from me, I will avail myself of every opportunity to write you. This is the fourth time that I have written since I was captured.

176. Dickenson's File, records of prisoners of war at Fort McHenry, Md.
177. Ibid., register of prisoners of war at Fort Delaware, Del.
178. Ibid., roll of prisoners of war at Depot Prisoners of War, near Sandusky, Ohio.
We reached this place night before last. It is a beautiful place. The water is good and the fare as good as I could expect. I am now helping to cook. There are seven of us who volunteered to cook for one week. Pomp is one of the seven. We have 90 men to cook for. We have a first rate cook stove and large iron boilers – everything that is necessary. Our bread is furnished to us ready baked.

I am doing fully as well as I could wish to do as a prisoner, if I only had a change of clothing. I expect to have my shirt and drawers washed today and will have to go without any until they are washed and dried, but that is a small matter for a soldier.

Lieut. Robertson, Lieut. Carter, and Capt. Poindexter from the Court House are here also. Walter Dyer, John T. Robertson, Robt. Murphy and several others of my boys were left at Fort Delaware but all well and hearty when I left them last Saturday. I expect that they will be exchanged soon, and I understand it will not be long before we will be exchanged. God speed the time, for to be in prison is not an agreeable thing.

I have written to Thos. A. Berger and Brother Nolen since I have been in the lines but have not heard from them yet.

I will not attempt to give you a description of my trials and hardships undergone since we left Culpeper Court House but hope to see you one day or other and relate them to you verbally.

You must do the best you can with the farm. I hope that you have had plenty of rain and that the crop is fine. By the time you receive this it will be time to make arrangements to seed wheat. You had better seed as much of Johnson’s field as Davy can follow and the best of the land.

I hope that you have heard before this where we are, that we are not wounded or dead. I would like to hear from you, but I would much rather know that you all had heard from us. You must let all of the friends of the above know where they are as soon as you can.

All join me in love to you and their families respectively. God bless you and my little ones.

Your devoted husband,

(Prisoner of War)

D. V. Dickenson

179. Dickenson to Wife, July 22, 1863. The first available letter after capture at Gettysburg.
Captain Dickenson's exchange was not forthcoming as he had expected. There had been a number of difficulties and disagreements between the North and the South in regard to the exchange of prisoners. For the most part, only sick or disabled men were being exchanged during the latter part of 1863. In the spring of 1864, through the efforts of General Grant, the exchange of able-bodied prisoners was virtually done away with.

Grant felt that man power was not a primary need in the North, whereas the South needed every fit man for her forces. Why then, reasoned this Federal commander, should the Union authorities continue to sanction the exchange of prisoners and, by so doing, simply resupply the Confederates with man power?

There are two other available letters that were written by Captain Dickenson from Johnson's Island. In one of them he said in part: "About 190 officers (of the sick and disabled) of this prison left for Point Lookout on the 22 inst. and expected to be exchanged immediately .... I sent by Capt. Oliver of Pittsylvania 5 rings, one for you, one for each of the little girls, and one for sister Willy....." In the other letter he wrote: "We are all in good health and tolerably cheerful. If we only felt assured that we would get back by next fall, we would feel better ....."

It was not until February 24, 1865, that Captain Dickenson left Johnson's Island. On that day he was paroled and forwarded to City Point, Virginia,

180. A ring made by Capt. Dickenson from a button, and inlaid with gold, was sent to his wife. This ring is now in the possession of Mrs. J.S. Walden in Richmond, Va.

181. Dickenson to Wife, April 24, 1864.

182. Ibid., June 10, 1864.

183. Dickenson File, roll of prisoners of war paroled at Johnson's Island and forwarded to City Point, Va., for exchange, dated Feb. 24, 1865.
in exchange for a paroled Union officer. Thus, David Vincent Dickenson returned to his native Pittsylvania County on one of the early days of March 1865 in time to supervise the spring plowing and planting at his farm. He was not allowed to return to active war service because of the terms of the agreement regarding paroled soldiers.
After the war D. V. Dickenson was called by all of his associates, "Colonel" Dickenson. There is no record which shows that Dickenson was ever officially accorded the rank of Colonel in the Confederate States Army. More than likely he was given this rank shortly after the war in a local veterans' association.

Although he was not thirty-six years old when released from prison, the years of service for a lost cause were not endured easily. D. V. Dickenson was old for his years as were the others who had suffered similar experiences. He had been a hearty, robust man prior to the conflict, but now his health was somewhat broken. During the twenty years of his life following the war, he pursued his chosen vocation of farming. After a prolonged illness due to a serious kidney ailment, "Colonel" Dickenson passed away at his home at the early age of fifty-six.

His body was put to rest in Leesmont Cemetery, Danville, Virginia. The inscription on his tombstone is as follows:
Col. D. V. Dickenson
Born
June 16, 1829
Died
October 20, 1885

"There remaineth therefore a rest for
the people of God"
Beloved husband and father farewell!
Not on this perishing stone but in
the bank of Life and in the hearts
of thy afflicted friends is thy
worth recorded.185

185: From the tombstone of D. V. Dickenson at Leemont Cemetery,
Danville, Va.
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Manuscript Sources

A Dickinson Family Bible containing records of Griffith and Crispin Dickenson and their families, and a Record of the Proceedings at the Monthly Meetings of the Greenfield Baptist Church are now in the possession of Mr. Crispin Dickenson, Danville, Virginia.

Deed and Will Books with information pertaining to Crispin Shelton, Griffith and Susanna Dickenson, Crispin and Elizabeth Dickenson, Samuel Berger, Crispin and Christina Dickenson, and David V. and Sarah E. Dickenson, and a Muster Roll Book of 1861-65 with information pertaining to David V. Dickenson may be found in the Pittsylvania County Court House, Chatham, Virginia.

David V. Dickenson's Family Bible, his Diary, in which entries were made from December 12, 1861 through August 15, 1862, his original Certificate of Commission as First Lieutenant in the 168th Virginia Militia Regiment, and his second Application for Resignation from his branch of military service, dated February 11, 1863, are now in the possession of John S. Walden, Jr., Richmond, Virginia.

A photostatic copy of the Roll of Company D, 57th Regiment, Virginia Volunteers may be found in the Archives Section of the Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia.

Eleven letters written by David V. Dickenson to his Wife between December 8, 1861 and June 10, 1864, and his first Application for Resignation from military service dated December 30, 1862, are now in the possession of Stuart D. Walden, Richmond, Virginia.

David V. Dickenson's File containing information taken from pay and muster rolls, regimental returns, rosters of officers, recruiting service rolls, and prisoner of war records may be found in the Old Records Section, Adjutant General's Office, National Archives Building, Washington, D. C. Similar files also may be found with information regarding almost all of the Union and Confederate soldiers including David Ever's File.
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