

**A Civil War Collection from the VMI Archives
J. O. Humphreys Diary, Part 1
1st Independent Battery Ohio Artillery
Shenandoah Valley, April-July 1864**

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The following introductory text appears before the diary entries begin—

“All the Way from Dixie. This genl. order Book under dates as below given was fresh from Dixie besides a product that cost some blood to get hold on. See record of last 3 three mo campaign of 1st Indpt. Ohio Battery Lt. Art. starting out from Charleston West Va- Please note Names of counties no. of miles marched daily and names of counties passed through all correct-

“Oh my dear Major you had to give it up- U. S. Vet”(This remark probably refers to to the point at which the book was taken from the officer who originally carried it off. Humphreys, a Private, may have been the one to “steal” the book from his superior officer; or another soldier may have passed the book along to Humphreys.)

“This book picked up where left by the detachment of U. S. Signal Corps where they had bivouac for the night- near banks of North River, Lexington, VA. Head Quarters Signal Corps, June 11th, 1864.”

“I hold it true whatever befall
I feel it, when I sorrow most
Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never, to have loved at all

J. O. Humphreys-This record will forever stand-Woman thy vows are traced in sand-J.O.H.-Now Parsons don't do it. - Stop.-“

All entries are for the year 1864

“1st Independent Ohio Battery on the War Path”

April 29th 1864. Left Charleston-Charleston, Kanawha County-Fayetteville, Fayette County Raleigh C. H., Raleigh Co.-Princeton, Mercer Co.-Tazewell County-Poplar Hill, Giles Co.-Dublin Station, Pulaski Co.-Blacksburg, Montgomery Co.-Union, Monroe Co.-Bungers Mill, Greenbrier Co.-Callahan's, Allegheny Co.-Millboro, Bath Co.-Middlebrook & Staunton, Augusta Co.-Brownsboro, [Brownsburg] & Lexington, Rockbridge Co.-Buchanan, Botetourt Co.-Liberty, Bedford Co.-ynchburg, Campbell Co.-alem, Roanoke Co.-New Castle, Craig Co.-Sweet Spring, Monroe Co.-White Sulphur, Greenbrier Co.

April 29--Left Charleston, marched to Camp Piatt. Distance ten miles.
30th--Marched to Cannelton- seventeen miles

May 1st--Marched to Gauley Bridge-
ten miles

2nd--Marched to Fayetteville- thirteen miles

3d--Marched to Blake's Farm- fifteen miles

4th--Marched to Piney Creek- fifteen miles

5th--Marched to Camp Creek, over Flat-Top Mountain- twenty five miles

May 6th--Marched to Princeton. Captured “Fort Breckenridge” and changed its name to “Crook.” Also destroyed McCausland's camp & some stores. Warrick Price of our Battery shot accidentally this morning, and mortally wounded. Buried on the road. Distance marched 15 miles

7th--Marched to wolf Creek, over East River Mountain, and through Rocky Gap- eighteen miles

8th--Marched to Fox River, captured telegraph office- twenty six miles

9th--Marched over Cloyd Mountain. Fought the Battle of Cloyd Farm, where Jenkins, McCausland & company were entrenched, driving them to beyond Dublin, making a distance of twelve miles marched.

10th--Fought the Rebels at Newbern Bridge, driving them off, and burning the Bridge. An artillery fight, few infantry being engaged. Crossed New River at a ford above Pepper's Ferry, camping for the night after a fifteen miles march east of the river.

May 11th--Marched to Blacksburg, Montgomery Co.- eleven miles. Rained during this day heavily. Rations of U. S. stamp run out today. Corn dodgers in prospect.

12th--Marched to top of Salt Pond Mountain through Newport meeting Mudwall Jackson and his fifteen hundred men with two pieces of artillery. He attempted to head us off, but found us too strongly headed already for him, when he retreated leaving us his camp equipage and some dodger stuff. The distance marched, nineteen miles.

13th--Marched over Peter's Mountain, capturing two pieces of artillery and a wagon train, left by Mudwall Jackson in his frightened retreat. Distance, twelve miles.

14th--Marched to Indian Creek. Skirmished. Distance six miles.

15th--Marched to Union, four miles, passing White Salt Sulphur, a delightful place to spend warm weather in. Shot a bushwhacker because Gen. Crook wanted no such prisoners.

May 16th--Marched through Rocky Point to Greenbrier River which owing to the heavy rains was very high. A very bad road. Distance twelve miles.

17th--Marched one mile, crossing Greenbrier on a small rickety flatboat and swimming the horses. Drew one hard tack to each man and a small quantity of coffee and sugar.

18th--Marched to Palestine. Distance six miles.

19th--Marched to Meadow Bluffs, ten miles. No rations here.

20th--Waited patiently for supplies which came after the day had gone and evening came.

21st--Still at the Bluffs.

22nd--Marched with the 3d Infantry Brigade to Bunger's Mill.

23rd through 31st--At Bunger's Mills

June 1st--Marched through the cavalry camp when two guns of our Battery were ordered to report to Gen. Averell commanding Cavalry Division, the first section remaining in camp on the 2nd day of the month.

3d--Left Bunger's Mills, marching through Lewisburg & White Sulphur to Dry Creek, fourteen miles.

4th--Marched to Morris Hill, by Callahan's, twenty three miles.

5th--Marched to Hot Springs where we grazed our horses and halted, thence to Warm Springs where we camped. Another bath, which is enough for one day. Distance marched twenty miles.

June 6th--Crossed Warm Spring Mountain camping at Goshen. Burned a railroad bridge and destroyed the track. Distance marched twenty three miles.

7th--Marched one mile and a half east of Middlebrook across North Mountain, seventeen miles.

8th--Marched to Staunton, twelve miles. Here we found the 1st Infantry Division and Stahel's Cavalry Division of Gen. Hunter's command, this being the first time we ever had an opportunity of seeing anything of our Corps. The force then consisted of the 1st & 2d Infantry Divisions, two Cavalry Divisions, and five or six batteries, numbering in all perhaps twenty thousand.

9th--Laid over

10th--Marched to Brownsboro [Brownsburg]. Heavy skirmishing during the whole day. Our loss was not serious nor the enemy's. Distance twenty three miles.

June 11th--Marched to Lexington where the enemy disputed our passage of North River with artillery and sharp shooting, which was soon stopped, and we entered the town. Geo. W. Tank of our company was killed, no other loss was sustained except three killed and four wounded in the 36th Ohio. Distance 13 miles.

12th--Remaining at Lexington we had an opportunity of looking about the town where the great Rebel General Stonewall Jackson lived and is buried. Here are the Virginia Military Institute and Washington College. Both the Institute and the College were well rummaged by the boys, and the clothing of the cadets and the libraries of the two institutions received much attention. Indeed it is doubtful if ever an army was so devoted to literature as was our Corps. A quantity of ordnance and the Q. M. stores were found at the Institute which were burned with the buildings. Drunken Rebel ex-Governor John Letcher's house was also burned--a very appropriate and fitting way of doing things to such men. Stonewall's grave is unmarked except by a pine flagstaff, which serves to show where a great, brave and good enemy sleeps.

13th--Most of the command remained quiet today. The cavalry moving however. Blazers scouts captured canal boats landing with commissary and ordnance stores, also six pieces of artillery, making twelve in all taken at Lexington. Two of those at the Institute are long, ornamental French pieces, guarding a rather beautiful statue of Washington. Weather beautiful this evening- bands playing national airs.

14th--Marched to Buchanan passing within three miles of the Natural Bridge. The bridge across the James River at B was burned, but an easy ford was found above town. Distance twenty four miles.

15th--Marched across the Blue Ridge between the Peaks of Otter from the summit of which the City of Lynchburg is visible, and it is said that with the aid of a strong glass Richmond can also be seen. Camped at Fancy Farm. Distance seventeen miles.

June 16th--Passed through Liberty destroying depot. Here the rebels had a hospital well filled for the size of it. Following the Railroad our Division destroyed the track completely for twelve miles, burning one of two bridged. The 1st Division marched on the main turnpike. Distance twenty three miles.

17th--Marched in a by-road till we came to the pike, which we struck in advance of the 1st Division. Following this a little distance further at about four miles from Lynchburg the rebels disputed our advance, composed of Averell's cavalry division. Soon our division, (the 2nd Infantry) came up and the 2nd Brigade and our own and the 1st Kentucky Batteries soon were advancing and driving the rebels on toward Lynchburg. Darkness coming on operations closed, although it was well understood that our division and Gen. Crook could take Lynchburg if Major General Hunter would keep out [of] the mix. He didn't and Lynchburg was not taken that night. Our loss was very slight considering the advantageous positions in which the enemy were posted. Col. Turly of the 91st O.V.I. was seriously and Lieut. Robert of the General's staff slightly wounded, both good officers. Lieut. Lawrence acting Adjutant of the 12th O.V.I. was killed and Lieut. Clodfelter of the same Regt. wounded. What our loss is we do not know. Captured one beautiful piece of artillery of English manufacture. That night our division was relieved by the 1st but of course we were not included. However we took what relief there was in sleep and careless dreams.

18th--This morning the batteries of the 1st Division came straggling up, and we had the assurance that the 1st Ohio and 1st Kentucky Batteries would have an easy time once in their lines, unless an emergency arose requiring the use of reserves. The rebels disputed our advance, and it soon became apparent that the enemy had been reinforced. Soon they opened somewhat heavily with artillery on our right center, but after being closed up remained comparatively silent until about noon when the Johnnies concluded to try their luck at charging. Our Division and with it the batteries belonging to it were in as easy circumstances as folks could be under the continual skirmish firing going on, but as soon as the dreamlike cheer of the rebs was heard the batteries took position and, Gen. Crook always knowing what to do, swung his division around in splendid style and the rebs soon had their bellies full of charging and were

driven entirely into their entrenchments. Here again Lynchburg was ours, had we been rid of our Major General. Things became quieted once more, and so remained until evening, when our forces slowly withdrew and when dark came it found us retreating as rapidly as the length of our column would allow. All night long we marched. Tired soldiers lined the way, sleeping and caring not for the danger that hung about our rear. Our rear guard waked these sleepers, but it is scarcely possible that all were aroused. 17 miles.

June 19--Arrived in camp at about seven o'clock in the morning- a weary sleepy set. Here we again took the rear, and after a long waiting at eleven a.m. or twelve o'clock p.m. we marched on toward Liberty, where we arrived in the evening. The enemy's cavalry came up to our rear guard of cavalry and some fighting took place, we passing through town and taking a good position on the Salem pike. Here we remained in position for the night, but the rebs would not bite. Distance (8) eight miles.

20th--At one and a half o'clock a.m. we were aroused for the march and at 3 o'clock we pulled out, and marched on along the railroad toward Salem. Skirmished all day in rear. Marched seventeen miles.

21st--All last night we marched and how tired and sleepy! We were attacked on the flank, but the rebs did not succeed in their design to capture our two Batteries. However on the north of Salem they succeeded better and in some way banged up eleven pieces. With the 1st Division. Crossed one high mountain today and are supposed to be safe. Thirty miles, and camp and rest came welcome, thrice welcome.

22d--Marched to New Castle- 13 miles. Skirmishing in rear all the way but last five miles.

23d--Marched to Sweet Springs- distance twenty four miles

24th--Marched to White Sulphur, seventeen miles.

25th--Marched to Meadow Bluffs- twenty six miles.

26th--Marched Tyrees- twenty miles.

27th--Marched to Camp Ewing - twenty miles.

28th--Marched to Soup Creek- fourteen miles.

29th--Marched to Camp Piatt- twenty miles.

The handwriting in the diary changes after June 29. Another member of the unit wrote these final entries.

June 30th--In camp at Piatt waiting for our discharge. Capt. in Charleston on a big drunk - he sometimes gets bewildered by the way but very seldom, only when he can get trusted for poor whiskey and he is known in C.

July 1st--Weather warm and dry.

2nd--Hunter's Div. has lost no more guns as far as heard from Parson.

3d--All quiet on the Kanawha.

4th--Laid in camp & slept. Not a gun fired to disturb our sweet repose.

5--Our time expires today but where a man drinks too much poor whiskey the effects don't work of fin a day and the powers that be in the 1st Ohio Independent Battery will not be able to have our papers made out for several days to come, but we'll stem the storm, it won't be long, we'll anchor by and by.

6th--Fried our bacon for dinner in the sun.

7th--The Chief had a case & telegraphed from C that by the way the mustering officer & paymaster would be in Piatt and pay us off.

8th--He says he never send any such telegram or must have been bewildered if he did. I guess it was a little of both. 10 a.m. boots and saddles blown. Started for C, arrived 2 p.m. & sent a committee of 3 to Genl. Crook to learn if they intended to make conscripts of us. Genl. Crook said it was our Capt. fault that we were not discharged on time.

9th--The battery started this morning for Parkersburg over land and we flat foots are waiting for transportation to Parkersburg to get mustered out. If Capt. McMullen had attended to his business we would have been mustered out on time here before the mustering officer left Charleston, but whiskey must not be left to spoil so thinks the Chief.

The boys are gladly Leaving you
McMullen, O McMullen
That came With you from Camp Chase through
McMullen, O McMullen
And Fewer yet would be your crew
Had they the means to get from you-McMullen, O McMullen

O McMullens our leader
When we elected him we were sold
He worked three years for Majorship
And made it he did

This text appears at the end of the diary entries

Notice the Battery. 1st Independent Ohio Bat. Lt. Art. Capt. J. R. McMullen organized at Camp Chase, July 1861 6th. The organization continued under command of Lieut E. P. Kirtland composed of reenlisted men, vets and recruits. The few men who didn't choose to reenlist in the organization left the Battery at Parkersburg West Va and went to Columbus Ohio where they was mustered out and received discharges on or about July 20th/64. The Battery under command of Capt. E. P. Kirtland took cars from Parkersburg East via the B&O RR to continue in service