

THE BATTLE OF PLYMOUTH.

FOR THE OBSERVER.

CAMP 56TH REG'T N. C. T.

GREENVILLE, N. C., May 1, 1864.

Messrs E. J. Hale & Sons:—Supposing that you may feel some interest in our Regiment, on account of the former composition of one of the Editors of your paper with it, I have concluded to give you a brief sketch of our operations since leaving Camp at Weldon on the 14th of last month, and incidentally of the part taken by Ransom's Brigade in the late affair at Plymouth. Although other Regiments may be mentioned, I trust that they will not feel slighted at the casual notice which I shall take of them, as I have no wish to pluck a single leaf from their laurels, whether gained on this or other fields of strife; but of the 56th N. C. T. and its members, I have no wish to say more than the simple words "leaving to the more competent with all the care and wading water pens, the task of recording the deeds of others."

Our column, consisting of three Brigades, Kemper's, Va. Hoke's, (21st Ga., and 6th, 21st and 43d N. C. Reg'ts.), and Ransom's (24th, 25th, 56th and 5th N. C. Reg'ts.), left Tarboro' at 10 o'clock A. M. on the 15th, and arrived before Plymouth at 4 P. M. on Sunday the 17th, being joined on the route by the 35th N. C. of Ransom's Brigade, and Col. Deering with a Battalion of Cavalry, and several Batteries of Artillery—all of the latter from Virginia, except a regiment of Capt. Miller's and the Montgomery Blues, Ala. It is but just to remark that the 5th N. C., which belongs to Clinchman's Brigade, was sent to supply the place of the 49th N. C. of our Brigade, on picket duty on Chowan; and that it was worthily doing the heavy loss of this Regiment, exceeding that of any other engaged, and was not in order to give a better understanding of the position of Plymouth, and its natural strength, I will remark that there are three creeks emptying into the Roanoke, the two above forming between them Warren's Neck, and one below the Town. On Warren's Neck was a fort of three guns, one 100 pounder and two 32 pounders. There was also Fort Sanderson, of two guns, to the left as you face towards the river, and about half a mile from it and the fortifications, entirely detached and commanding the Washington road. The fortifications around the Town are in the shape of a parallelogram—the longest side parallel to the river, with Fort Williams, of 5 guns, about the center of this line and projecting forward. On the left, the ground is broken and three ravines are formed inside the fortifications and running somewhat obliquely to them. Its front was the lower one and the river, on a slight eminence, was a fort with a 200 pound gun erected expressly for the ram "Albatross." On the right, the Columbia river is commanded by two forts mounting three guns each; but the line is not continuous, as there is a heavy swamp on the river. The Jamesville road unites with the Washington road 2 miles below town, but afterwards branches to the left, and one running by Fort Sanderson enters the Town from that direction, while the main road runs directly up to the fortifications to the left of Fort Williams. There are other roads branching off to the right, one running first perpendicular, and then at the distance of three-fourths of a mile parallel to the Washington road, and others connecting with Lee's Mill and Columbia roads. The woods had been cleared for a good distance all around the Town, and targets erected in several places. The garrison consisted of about 2500 men, including two companies of "Buffaloes." There were no regular Negro Troops, but all citizens and negroes were compelled to bear arms.

I have been somewhat minute in the description of the situation, in order that the following account of the positions taken by different Brigades may be understood, and because I have seen some accounts published not doing justice to Ransom's Brigade—the contrary what is said is so vague and general that to one would suppose that we took any active part in the capture of the Town. Arriving at the distance of 5 miles from town, Kemper's Brigade turned off a road to the left leading to Warren's Neck, to make a joint, while Hoke and Ransom would do the work, and suffered very slightly, losing three killed and several wounded by imprudently advancing skirmishers too close to the fort on Monday. They were not actively engaged afterwards except on Wednesday, when part of them were moved around to the front of town to intercept parties trying to escape and suffered somewhat from the guns of Fort Williams by going too close. Warren's Neck surrendered after the town had been taken, and the high column of the Richmond Examiner of the 25th of the "gallant heroes of Gettysburg," though described by other exploits, was not particularly gratified in returning to the conspicuous loss of this Brigade in the recent engagement, as I do not think it will equal one fifth of ours. Capt. Blunt's battery, being in this position at Warren's Neck, succeeded in injuring a gunboat so badly that she sunk on reaching town. After leaving Kemper's Brigade on Sunday afternoon, Hoke and Ransom, not following the direct road, as the bridge across the creek had been destroyed, turned to the right, and crossing the troops on a mill dam, made a circuit round into the Washington road a mile below its junction with the Jamesville road. Sending on a company of cavalry, two yankees were killed and nine captured of the picket at this spot, two only escaping. Soon we saw the "long roll" of the enemy, and our line is quickly formed to receive a shelling—Hoke some distance in advance and on both sides of the road. Ransom on the right of it along the perpendicular road mentioned above. Skirmishers are soon sent forward by both sides—the enemy also opening briskly from his artillery, which is not repelled by our guns. Night soon comes on and all is quiet except an occasional interchange of shots between the skirmishers. During the night and next morning Hoke's Brigade is moved entirely to the left of the Washington road, and all his skirmishers in our front relieved by 25th N. C. and companies from the other Regiments. About 2 A. M. next morning the 56th is called up and 250 men under Col. Faison detailed to go to the front and throw up works near the Washington road, from which our artillery can play on Fort Sanderson. This is so far finished next morning that one company at a time is left to complete the work, and three guns are placed in position. Soon the yankees see what is being done and open briskly on them. The fire is returned but slowly at first. Co. H. of the 56th Regiment still continuing the work for other guns, one of our pieces begins to bark by shell. After a while our pieces begin to bark and nearly silenced Fort Sanderson, though receiving a hot fire from Fort Williams. It is now getting late in the afternoon, and we learn that Gen. Hoke, with his Brigade, will assault Fort Sanderson, while our Brigade, with a large force of artillery, will make a demonstration on the enemy's left centre, (that part of the works on the long side of parallelogram to the left of the enemy at Fort Williams.) About 5 P. M. the Brigade moved through some woods to an open space still concealed from the enemy, and threw forward skirmishers from the different Regiments to relieve the 25th, which assembles to the left and connects with Gen. Hoke's right, distant about 3/4 of a mile from our left. The first four companies of the 4th Companies E,

L. E. and A. (Capts. Roberts, Harriell, Lookhart, and Hughes,) are sent forward from our Regiment. The whole Brigade now moves by the right flank and forms line of battle along the edge of some woods, in the following order: 24th on the right, next 56th and 25th. We are now in full view and distant about 1 1/2 miles from the enemy, who soon begin to hurl their shells over them. Our skirmishers, with a yell, now rush forward; those of the enemy diving way after a light resistance. Our Artillery, consisting of Regiments Bradley's, Miller's and other batteries, under the command of Capt. Faison, to the front and ready to fire. It is now that we learn that the demonstration is to march behind those batteries and receive the fire of the enemy from over 20 pieces, besides two Gun Boats, throwing every variety of shell, from the 200 pounder to the 12 pound Napoleon. Steadily our line advances, being down a very hill, the iron balls falling thickly both in our front and rear. Our skirmishers had run those of the enemy over the breastworks, and were now lying down to avoid the heavy shower of grape with which they were greeted. Our demonstration kept up from 6 to nearly 10 P. M. when our guns have used nearly all their ammunition, the caissons having been several times sent to the rear for new supplies and our line of battle had advanced three-fourths of a mile. Some estimate may be formed of this fire, when it is stated that some of the guns had fired nearly two hundred rounds. Lieut. Wilson and 14 men of the 56th Regiment had been wounded, several seriously but none more. At 12 o'clock our Brigade is moved back leaving a small force of skirmishers. We now learn that Hoke had succeeded in surrounding Fort Sanderson but that it had not surrendered, and that Col. Mercer and some 20 others had been killed—the fort was strongly protected by abatis and made a stubborn resistance, but yielded between 2 and 3 A. M. the next (Tuesday) morning. During the preceding afternoon and night numerous had been the inquiries as to what had become of our ram, the "Albatross," as she was to have joined in the attack. "Blown up," some would say, "like the Merrimack."

We fell to sleep that night hearing some one remark, "if you call this a demonstration, what in the name of heaven is a fight?" The next morning on awaking we were greeted with the joyful news that the "Albatross" had indeed arrived, sunk one of the enemy's gunboats, and we could now hear her guns below the Town. Also that the Fort taken that morning was the key to the position, but we found out before the day was over that that key would not work—and that it was reserved for Ransom's Brigade to burst the door of the defenses. The surrender of the town had been demanded and refused. The 24th and 56th Regiments are now moved around to the Lee's Mill road to prevent any escape in that direction. After a while we see a column approaching, but find it to be Col. Deering and his cavalry going to the Columbia road, and that we are ordered back. In a short time the order is given for Ransom's Brigade to assault the town from the right, we then march back around to the Columbia road and make preparations to lay a pontoon bridge over the creek on that side. The enemy, about 100 strong, made some resistance, but our artillery opened, and part of the 24th is crossed over. The bridge is then built and skirmishers thrown forward from both sides. Our line of battle is then formed a little over 1/2 of a mile from the enemy's Fort, in the following order: 56th on extreme right next to the river; then 25th, 5th, 24th, and 21st. It is now 12 at night, and the men, first throwing up abatis breastwork, lie down to sleep. The enemy kept up a shelling all night, but without much effect. Our gunboat also, on our right, exchanged shot with the 200 pounder. Just as the moon goes down we are ordered, the line formed, and the command "forward" given. At first we were marched at quick time but with a wild shout, colored back from Hoke's Brigade on the other side of town, we took a double quick. Fortunately for the 56th, we have no force directly in our front, but there are other obstacles nearly as formidable. First there is a large drove of cattle who are driven to a deep ditch, and with wild shouts of fear break through our lines. Into this ditch, more than 6 feet deep, we go, and climbing up the other side, again form our line. The next thing is a heavy swamp into which go many of the men up to their waists. Getting out of the swamp, our line is again quickly formed, and through a heavy shower of "minnies" we go up a hill and form on the right of the 24th, sheltered by some houses and palings. The 25th comes up on our right. We lost several killed and wounded before getting to this place. This was my first acquaintance with the "whistling minnie," and though some may profess to love the noise, I must say that my impressions are not of the most pleasant character, as they rather seem to me singing a monotonous requiem for the soul about to pass into eternity. Marching a short distance, our line is again formed near the jail; our right on Water Street and the left on the Street above, in which a piece of artillery, and the 24th to the left of that. The 25th is also advancing up Water Street. The yankees are firing at us from every house, from holes in the ground in every direction, from holes in the walls of the settlement of "grounded" pipes." Fort Williams gives us a fire from left and rear, and the Water battery on one Street, and a 12 pound Napoleon at the end of the other fire in front steadily we advance; Lieut. Holton, Palmer, and Thornton, falling wounded, as well as many of the men. We are now near the end of the Street, in advance of the Regiments on either flank, as the houses afford us better protection, and the yankees afford us a fine view of the Water battery which a piece of artillery, supported by the 25th Reg't, opens on it, and soon compels a surrender. Men from each Reg't (Col. Deering in front) march into it about the same time. The capture of this Fort is claimed by both Reg'ts and I shall not attempt to balance the claims. On the left, at the end of the street, a piece of artillery, caisson and 12 horses were standing, which we were anxious to capture without injury. The caisson was sent back some distance with a yankee and two others on the horses, and a fire from Fort Williams killed the yankee and four of the horses. To prevent the capture of the six horses with the piece, the yankees were to blow up the lumber within 20 paces of us, killing and wounding all the horses, and some of our men. During this time the yankees had been pouring a hot fire into us from the left, and behind some rail fences, throwing up as rear protection to their works and separated from us by a ravine. The 24th were at this time engaged with them in front. As soon as it could be determined what was the cause of the explosion in front, we advanced by the dead horses, having to cut the railers for this purpose, as the street was so narrow that they were tied on each side. Here we got a beautiful view of the Water battery and some other pieces of the outside works. The road from Fort Sanderson enters the town at this point. Giving the yankees behind the town at this point. Giving the white flag is soon raised and a heavy fire, two hundred prisoners. The 24th we got nearly two took a good many at the foot of the hill. Our flag is now waved to Hoke's Brigade, who had been waiting our progress more than six hundred yards distant, as the works were too strong

to be assaulted from that side. Passing over another ravine we receive the last prisoners on that side of the town, when some of Hoke's Regiments enter the town by a flank and form in the ravine, others behind the entrenchments on that side—(part of the 56th had been advanced considerably nearer)—the Fort, but the ground being so open and no other Regiments coming up, it was deemed best to form again in the ravine. The town was now entirely ours except Fort Williams, whose surrender was demanded. Sharpshooters were now sent forward from several Regiments of Hoke's and Ransom's Brigades, and aided materially in its reduction, which took place between 11 and 12 o'clock. Our fighting was now over except the pursuit of some yankees and negroes, who had escaped from the front works, and some Buffaloes who had crossed the river, many of whom were captured. We took in all about 2300 prisoners, besides some 500 or 600 negroes, a large quantity of stores, 23 pieces of cannon, and two gunboats destroyed—thus ending the most brilliant affair that has taken place in North Carolina during this war. "TAR HEEL."

RATES OF FREIGHT.

Table with columns for various goods like Beans, Wax, Flour, etc. and their respective rates.

LIST OF CHARGES FOR PASSENGERS.

Table listing charges for passengers on different routes like Fayetteville to Wilmington, etc.

NOTICE.

Text regarding the sale of Cotton Yarn and other goods.

SEPARATION WANTED.

Text regarding a separation wanted by a man.

A Chance to Invest Confederate Money.

Text regarding an investment opportunity in Confederate money.

To the Voters of Chatham County, and my Fellow Citizens of the 1st Precinct.

Text regarding a political address to voters.

RED SPRINGS.

Text regarding a notice in Red Springs.

YANKEE ACCOUNTS OF SHERMAN'S REPULSE.

The N. Y. Herald publishes details of Sherman's repulse by Johnston on the 27th ult.

For this desperate charge the troops now debouching through the thick woods were rapidly forming into line. Gen. Howard and Wood superintended the movement themselves. The troops had to move up a steep hill, which was separated by a gentle valley, partly clear, from the slope occupied by the enemy's barricades of logs, trees and abatis.

"About five in the afternoon the troops, having gained the crest on the first hill, advanced in columns of double lines by brigades, thus forming six lines of attack. Hazen's brigade occupied the front, Willitt's brigade, under Col. Gibson, the second, with Beatty's brigade in rear.

"The division advanced in line as far as the edge of the open space and then charged, delivering a fire at the enemy behind their works. The rebels, with one defiant cheer, hurled a regular shower of bullets right into our faces, while two sections of batteries masked on our flank opened a converging defiling fire of grape and canister along our lines, crushing our broken, decimated lines. The first line was driven in on the second. A ravine broke the centre of our lines, which materially interrupted our assault.

"There was a dead silence all along our other lines. The very artillery ceased firing. Why was this? Why was there not a regular simultaneous attack? Why was one noble division left to struggle against overpowering hosts and adverse circumstances? It was one here, continued firing. No pattering of bullets, but one continued roar of musketry ran along the lines for hours. The officers did all that men could do—rallied, charged—but all in vain; nearly two rebel divisions, in strong entrenchments, were contending against that seven thousand men. Night was now falling, and our men fell back to the valley where they first formed, and soon sent out strong details to bring in our wounded and dead. These were chiefly from the 7th, 124th, 41st, and 1st Ohio. The rebels attacked them, jumped from their breastworks, charged on them, and succeeded in taking about two hundred prisoners, among them Col. Payne, 124th Ohio. As our line fell back the rebel batteries swept the road and the valley. They seemed to have perfect range of these positions. I have not as yet ascertained our loss, but I expect this one division alone must have had one thousand killed and wounded. We succeeded in bringing in our dead. Gen Wood remained up, collecting in his troops and placing them in a position to meet the enemy, should they follow up their partial success.

"The dead and wounded were collected into the little valley. The field was so thickly strewn with them that our horses had to cautiously pick their steps among them."

Balls, Shells and Bombs—How they are Made.

The manufacture of bomb-shells is as follows: The shell is first filled up with old fashioned round lead bullets; melted sulphur is then poured in to fill the interstices and bind the bullets in one solid mass; the shell is then put into a kind of lathe, and a cylindrical hole of the exact size of the calibre of the shell is bored through the bullets and the sulphur; this cavity is filled with powder even with the interior edge of the orifice; a six inch shell of the kind here described holding about half a pound.

"The fuse fitted into this orifice is a recent Belgian invention, made of pewter, and resembles the screw cap used for the patent fruit cans. An examination of this pewter cap shows, however, that it is made of two hollow discs of metal screwed together, and filled with meal powder; a number of the holes are drilled in the lower disc, while the other disc is entire and marked with figures in a circle, one, two, three, four. In this state the shell is water and weather proof. When taken for use, the stopper, by means of a small steel instrument, screws out a portion of the outer metal surface and lays bare the charge of composition powder below it.

"If the shell is desired to explode in one second after leaving the gun, the stopper is made on the figure one; if in two seconds, on the figure two, and so on, the idea being that the shells of this description shall first strike the object aimed at, and on execution as a ball, and then explode, sending the bullets forward as from another cannon located at that point where the right of the shell is arrested. Large shells of eight or ten inches are filled with powder only, and bursting do execution by means of their fragments. These large shells are generally fired by means of a gun of metal powder, extending through a brass plug, screwed into the mouth of the shell. In both cases the fuse is fired by the ignition of the charge in the gun—Springfield (Mass) Republican.

I am a Candidate for the

Office of Sheriff of Chatham county at the election in August next.

W. O. ALBRIGHT.

At the request of many friends, both in the Army and at home, I announce myself a candidate to represent Moore county in the House of Commons of our next Legislature in N. C. He is for Southern Independence, and Zeb. B. Vance for Governor.

June 10, 1864. JAMES C. DAVIS.

CALENDAR FOR 1864.

Calendar table for 1864 showing days of the week and dates for each month from January to December.

Fellow Citizens and Soldiers of Bladen, Brunswick and Columbus.

THE time approaches when you will be called upon to choose a Senator to represent your District in the next General Assembly of this State. Your generosity at the past election, for which you have my sincere thanks, assigned me to that honorable post of duty. Behaving from expression of regard which I have had the good fortune to enjoy, that there is a willingness on your part to re-appoint me in that position, my name is before you for re-election. Chosen to that high and responsible post without pledge or promise, I have sought the good fortune to enjoy, that there is a willingness on your part to re-appoint me in that position, my name is before you for re-election. Chosen to that high and responsible post without pledge or promise, I have sought the good fortune to enjoy, that there is a willingness on your part to re-appoint me in that position, my name is before you for re-election.

To the Soldiers from Chatham County, N. C., and Fellow-Citizens of said County.

I AM a candidate for the office of Sheriff of Chatham County at the election in August next. I am a candidate for the office of Sheriff of Chatham County at the election in August next. I am a candidate for the office of Sheriff of Chatham County at the election in August next.

The Friends of Capt. W. J. LONO.

Co. 5th N. C. Reg't will support him for Sheriff of Harford county, at the election on the first Thursday in August next.

We are authorized to

announce Col. PETER P. SMITH a candidate to represent Robeson County in the next Legislature of N. C.

DRY GOODS.

Imported Goods, including various fabrics and clothing items.

We are authorized to announce

ELAM J. HARRINGTON, Co. A, 5th N. C. Cavalry, a candidate to represent the county of Moore in the next Legislature of N. C.

We are authorized to announce

Col. S. J. COBB as a Candidate for the Office of SHERIFF of Robeson County at the election in August next.

THE SOUTH VICTORIOUS!

NEW BOOKS! NEW BOOKS! (OUR OWN PUBLICATIONS.)

- List of books including 'Songs of Love and Liberty', 'Primary Geography', 'York's English Grammar', etc.

The following books are published at various places in the Confederacy:

- List of books including 'Ledy's Andley's Secret', 'Robert and Harold', 'The Bohemian', 'Hudson's Piano Forte Instructor', etc.

MILITARY WORKS.

- List of military works including 'Gillham's Manual', 'Army Regulations', 'Evolution of the Line', etc.

GROCERIES.

- List of grocery items including '250 bags Rio Coffee', '50 barrels Brown Sugar', '400 lbs No 1 Mackerel', etc.

BRANSON & FARRAR, Raleigh, N. C.