

Jackson County Journal.

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\$1.00 THE YEAR IN ADVANCE

THE VERA CRUZ FIGHT TOLD BY RANSOM COWARD

U. S. Chester, Vera Cruz, Mexico, April 30, 1914.

Dear Bud:—We arrived here on the morning of the 21, at 4:00 o'clock from Tampico and landed all available men at once. I didn't land, owing to the fact that electricians are not numbered among the available.

The Mexicans began a rifle fire at us as soon as we entered the harbor but didn't bother us on account of the darkness and the fact that we were showing no lights. They could hear a ship coming in but could not see us. However, they knew it must be one of our ships and began firing at random and wasting ammunition.

The Florida's battalion was already ashore and was holding the the custom house when we got in. The other ships landed men as soon as we did. The real trouble began at daylight, about 5:30 a. m..

I was called about 5:30 to go on the quarter deck and take down the stern light so that the flag staff could be taken down in order to make a clear gang-way for our after five inch in case we should have to use it. Mexican sharpshooters had already begun firing at our men working on the quarter deck when I got up there. When we began working on the flag staff we made good targets for the sharpshooters stationed in the beams, lumber piles, buildings and tug boats. They began a continual "picking" as they called it that is trying to pick off our men when they showed themselves. They were either very poor marksmen or else could not get the range, as we were anchored at just a nice rifle range from the beach. As soon as the Greasers in the tug boat began to fire we began to worry though for they began to fire through a search-light screen just over our heads. When they started that our captain ordered us to make up a gun crew and give the guns a couple of shots. As most of the regular gun's crews were ashore, we had to use any one we could get hold of. As a result we had gun's crews composed of coal passers, carpenters mates, electricians and seamen. They did good work just the same. At Captain Moffett's orders we put two three inch shells through the tug that had been giving us the most trouble. She hoisted a white flag and got out of the way, so did the rest of the tugs when they saw what they would get if they continued firing at us.

After the tugs were cleared out of the way we turned our attention to the sharp shooters ashore. They equipped about twelve of us men who had had training with the Naval rifle, with rifles and ammunition and ordered us to stop the firing from the beach. It did not take us long to stop a part of the firing and to drive them all to cover but they continued to fire from the windows of buildings and as they were using smokeless powder we could not locate them. Two of our men were wounded from either the building of the Chilean Consulate or the Mexican Naval Academy which had a Red Cross flag flying over it. We couldn't return the fire because we were not

TAKE YOUR CHOICE, BUT GO!



—Evans in Baltimore American.

1847—A GREETING FROM THE PAST—1914.



—Carter in New York Evening Sun.

certain about where it was coming from and it did not look reasonable that it could be coming from under the Chilean or a Red Cross flag.

About this time a battalion of our men marched out from the Custom House to clear out these seemingly few and scattered Mexican sharpshooters which had been giving us so much trouble. They went out in the form of columns, three companies of marines and two of blue jackets. Just as they got opposite the Mexican Naval Academy with the Red Cross flag over it, a rain of fire poured down on us from the windows of the Academy. It looked to us watching from the ship here that the whole battalion would be murdered before anything could be done. We began to get our guns ready to fire. This took us but a few seconds and while we were doing this the two

last companies of the battalion who were not so greatly exposed to the fire as the rest of the battalion, were retreating toward the Custom House and the rest of the battalion who couldn't retreat without unduly exposing itself to the fire of the enemy, dropped out along the water front, a distance of about seventy yards from the Academy in the line of skirmishers forming a semi-circle from the building and laying flat on the ground. The Mexicans had also opened from many nearby buildings. All of this took but a few seconds. We got the word to fire as soon as we were ready. When our after five inch spoke you could see parts of the roof of the Naval Academy and mingled Greasers going up in the air. It is needless to say that this followed up by many more just like it soon stopped all the firing from this section of

of the city. It was about like murdering rats in a trap but it had to be done. Their act of ambushing our men from under the Red Cross flag was not an act of civilized warfare and deserved more than the treatment it got. The dead from guns of this was estimated at more than two hundred.

The loss of the battalion ashore was not nearly so great as we thought. They only had four killed and seventeen wounded. It was only their coolness and quick wits that made the casualties so small in such a heavy fire.

It was only the work of this ship's guns that saved from complete destruction the whole battalion of men. We have been complimented on our quick work and accuracy of fire by all of the higher Naval officers.

The only thing that has got us guessing now is: how in the thunder did the Prairie, San Francisco and Florida ring in on the honor of saving that bunch of men from destruction? We and the Prairie were the only two ships inside of the harbor where we could fire. The Prairie did good work but her position was behind the Custom House from this trouble so that she could not fire a shot into this district. All of her firing was further up in the city and occurred later in the day. The Frisco hadn't reached this port from Tampico at this time. So you see it has got us puzzled.

We can understand how the newspapers gave the Florida part of the credit, or most of it in fact, with her firing a shot. She brought a bunch of newspaper reporters down from the States.

What I have told you is only the part the Chester played in the battle. I won't attempt to detail the the rest of the fighting, as I presume you know about as much it as I do, from the the newspapers.

I have just gotten my last promotion for this enlistment. I signed my last second class petty officers appointment yesterday. It is now waiting for the Captain's signature. He has probably signed it by this time. I successfully passed the examination for second class electrician. As a second class on here was just promoted to first class; it left a second class vacancy, and as my year as third class was up, and my marks were good, I was recommended to fill it. It pays \$44.00 dollars per month.

We are all praying to be sent back to the States soon. We are getting very tired and disgusted with this country. Just when they gave us something interesting to do down here, they had to spoil it all by starting up some kind of a "peace conference." It makes things quieter down here than they were before. They gave us a taste of excitement and now the only they leave us to fight is the heat. The Lord knows we have enough heat to put up a good fight, too.

M. R. COWARD, Elec. U. S. N.

J. N. Reed of Beta was here yesterday and advanced his subscription to the Journal.

Kelly Keever was here yesterday on business.

Oscar Lovedahl was in town on business yesterday from Cowarts.

Troy Rogers of Willets spent the day yesterday in town.

INJURED BY FALLING TREE

Ance Parker, was seriously injured last Thursday while peeling bark in the Moses Creek section. He had fallen one tree which lodged against another and thinking it safe was peeling the bark when the second tree became uprooted and fell, a large limb striking Mr. Parker. While he is seriously injured it is not thought that it will prove fatal.

ODD FELLOWS CELEBRATION AT SYLVA

Black Rock Lodge no. 247, of Sylva, will hold an annual celebration on the Fifth Sunday in May. Immediately after the Asheville train passes, the Odd Fellows will march in a body to the Fair Grounds where they will be addressed by Prof. O. S. Dean of Cullowhee.

After dinner is served, they will be addressed by Hons. Tom Green of Waynesville, and Zeb F. Curtis of Asheville.

The community knows something of the ability of Prof. Dean and Hon. Mr. Green as speakers. The committee will vouch for the ability of Mr. Curtis. He is a prominent lawyer of Asheville. We request the ladies of the community to bring baskets, this will be highly appreciated by the order.

Signed,

J. J. Gray, R. A. Painter,
T. F. Dillard, C. W. Warren,

NOTICE TO TEACHERS.

There will be a Summer School held at Cullowhee this year beginning June 16th, and continuing for six weeks. All teachers of the county are urged to attend the entire session if they can possibly do so and all teachers who did not attend an Institute or Summer School last year are required to attend this year for at least two weeks.

An opportunity will be given for those who desire to do so to take the regular examination for a teacher's certificate at the Summer School.

The Theory and Practice examination will this year be based on O'Shea's "Everyday Problems in Teaching."

All teachers holding a First Grade certificate who have kept up the entire Reading Course work are entitled to have their certificates renewed without examination.

No Second Grade Certificate or any grade on a Second Grade Certificate can be renewed, but all Second Grade teachers who this year took and passed successfully the entire Reading Course will not be required to take the examination on Theory and Practice.

Respectfully yours,

DAVID H. BROWN,

County Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Napoleon Crisp has gone to Proctor where he will spend the next few months.

J. L. Ballard of Willets was in town yesterday.