

WANTED

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Indians and Rebels

By FLOYD E. RISVOLD

On November 30, 1862, James E. Cady addressed an envelope to his little brother, George, from Fort Abercrombie on the Red River of the North. It was significant that this was a 'patriotic envelope bearing a picture of a farmer boy with scythe in hand and the legend, "We are counting Father Abraham 600,000 more."'

James was only eighteen years old when he answered Lincoln's call for "600,000 more" and the following sketch of the Eighth Minnesota Volunteer Regiment is based on one hundred letters of James E. Cady, all addressed to his "folks back home." Fifty-seven were dispatched from the Indian frontier, and forty-three from the greater war in the South.

The Eighth was organized during the dark days of the Rebellion, almost simultaneously with the Sioux outbreak in Minnesota. Instead of going South to fight rebels, the troops were rushed to the Indian frontier. The ten companies of the Eighth were sent to various places as the situation warranted James's company "C," and companies "G" and "H," were marched overland from Fort Snelling, Minnesota, to Fort Abercrombie on the Red River in Dakota Territory.

The following excerpts are from his letter date-titled " Ft. Abercrombie Sept. 29, 1862."

"We reached the fort last evening being 13 days on our journey (from Fort Snelling). They had some fighting with the Indians yesterday in which two men were killed and one wounded. We traveled about 6 miles over one day's journey out from Sault Center and found a man that was killed by the Indians lying on a side hill all cut and staked with knives his head cut off and was shot twice. We heard of the act before we got there. Some two or three men saw the Indians chase him and shoot at him 3 times. Saw him fall from his horse. Saw the Indians run up to him then drag him by the heels off to the hill his head was found where he was shot mortally skinned. We took it to where the body was.—We stopped



James E. Cady, of Eighth Minnesota Volunteer Regiment. Original is in the Risvold Collection, Minneapolis, Minn.

that night at one of Barthanes stations which had been burned up one man was shot there some three weeks ago some men buried the body about one week after. When we got there the grave had been dug open and a large stick jammed into the coffin and the corpse cut all to pieces. The Cavalry killed the grave up. The next day we reached the Ft not however without seeing some Indians all of which done the best running they

could, one party of 13 were so close that we could see clearly that they were dressed in U.S. uniforms with U.S. rifles. The sight of such Indians made us think that the Ft (Fort) was taken therefore we did not take them as our cavalry could easily have done, they were afraid that they had a large force in the timber which they started for but if they had known that the Ft was all right they could have got them before they got in gun shot of the woods, they hoisted and hollowed, motioned their hands at us, fired two shots at but did not hurt any of us. When we got to the Ft we heard that they had had a fight in the morning with the Indians, a party of men out of the Ft of 30 went across the river and were attacked by 50 Indians and two men killed and one wounded they could not tell whether they killed any Indians or not as every one that they shot at would fall at the flash of the gun, our men had to leave their dead on the field, this morning a company or two went over after them, they found them all cut to pieces, one was scalped and his whiskers taken off and a piece of flesh taken from his hip to his knee and the calf of his leg also. One was not scalped, but his hands and head were cut off, and he was



Hand-colored valentines which James E. Cady sent his young brother.

opened his hart and entralls were taken out. his head hands and heart were put inside of him."

When the Eighth arrived at Fort Abercrombie, it found only a group of buildings without a stockade and the garrison under constant alert against an Indian attack. At times, in order to get water, the men had to fire the fort's cannon to drive the Indians away from the river. One of the first big chores was to build a stockade around the fort, and James detailed this in his letters. He also told of the mails being carried by dog teams in the winter, of supplies being shipped by steamboat fifty miles north to Georgetown, Dakota, and of the great army wagon supply trains coming in from Fort Snelling.

On August 11, 1863, he wrote from the Otter Tail River: "little Crow is dead, he was killed below here some time ago. We took his son prisoner, and he said that his father was killed, and that he had his fathers gun because the ball that killed his father passed through the britch of his gun the Col (Colonel) had the gun. The boy was nearly sick and could not get out of our way. he had a severe wound which was not well yet When he was on his way to Devils Lake from where his father was shot he wounded a wolf and when he went up to the wolf, he flew on to him and tore him up bad."

In May of 1863, when the Eighth was mounted, each man was given a green Canadian pony. Since every soldier had to break his own mount, James has some amusing remarks to make about the "green" riders and their untamed horses.

After more than eighteen months' service all companies of the Eighth were assembled at Fort Ridgley, in



Showing portions of letters which James E. Cady wrote to his family.

Southern Minnesota, preparatory to joining General Sully in his great Indian Expedition of 1864. They marched overland from Fort Ridgley to a point on the Missouri River that was to become Fort Rice. His letter written after arriving is date-lined "Sunday, July 10, 1864. At Ft. Rice. Camp No. 23. We got here Friday the 8th. Gen Sulley came up on the boats and got here the 7th, layed out the plans of a fort on the other

side of the river. Named it Ft. Rice — the Wisconsin tropps are going to build and Garrison it".

Starting July 19th General Sully marched up the Cannon Ball River for several days, and then across the plains to the Heart River in search of Indians. He left his supply train on the Heart, and headed north to the knife River, where he found them encamped at Tah-kah-o-kuty, or Killdeer Mountain. In his letter of Sep-

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tember 10, James E. Cady wrote: "On the 28th July we ran on to a camp of from three to five thousand warriors with their families. they only knew of our coming but two hours before we were on to them, we took their camp with every thing piled into the brush near by, we came onto them about noon, that night we camped in their camp. we killed 113 and probibly many more ran off to die. the next day (29th) we under took to follow them but they were on the border of the roughest ridges that I ever saw or heard of." In this same letter he also tells of the battle of the 7th, 8th, and 9th of August.

On returning to Fort Rice General Sully learned that an emigrant train of eighty to one hundred wagons was besieged by Indians about two hundred miles west of the Missouri. This train was headed for Idaho and was led by Captain James L. Fisk, an assistant quartermaster assigned by the government to conduct the emigrants to the west.

Men from the Thirteenth Wisconsin, the Eighth Minnesota, the Seventh Iowa Cavalry, the Second Minnesota Cavalry, Brackett's Battalion and the Sixth Iowa Cavalry, set out to rescue this wagon train. James was one of the men selected from the Eighth, while the balance of those not selected returned to Fort Snelling and the war in the South.

After rescuing the emigrants, the troops returned to the Missouri, then floated down river on flatboats to Sioux City, Iowa. Here they received orders to rejoin their regiment in the South.

From Sioux City they marched overland to Dubuque, Iowa. In his letter of November 3, 1864, from Dubuque, James wrote:

"we were treated well all a long the road, but at one place and that was a place called Ft Dodge, they were very strong 'Mc C men and some of them very near 'secesh a drugists expressed his opinions which the boys did not like very well. they made him get the stars and stripes and tried to have him put them up that night but he said he would put them up the next morning, so they let him off—the next morning most every (one) on the expedition waited on for him to come to his store to rais the flag but the (wagon) train was like to go and leave us, so they found where he lived, and paid him a visit told him if he did not put up the flag they would help him to do it. he came out and put it up tremblingly, most all of the Citizens in town were out

to see him do it, most of which were glad to see it they said, for he was a secesh."

On November 26 he wrote that he had rejoined his regiment at Murfreesboro, Tennessee and that they had gone into winter quarters. On December 3 and 4 he described the battle of Overall's Creek and the relief of the block house:

"We were ordered about 2 o'clock to go out about 5 or 6 miles to drive the rebels from a block house on the R.R. the block house had about 35 men in it with no artillery. the block house was built with two tiers of timber with six foot of gravel between, and was covered with timber then R.R. iron, and had roof boards out side of them." This was the first time the Eighth was under rebel fire and they drove them off without loss.

On December 8 he wrote in great detail about the battle of Murfreesboro: "We were then ordered by the right flank and swung around to the end of the R's (rebels) unfinished breast works. then we went into them by charges they were in the woods throwing grape and canister shell and solid shot at us while we were in an open coten field, we falling down every time they fired, we got up most to the woods then we layed down flat in the open coten field and gave them a continual roar of musketry for fifteen minutes two co's on our right got up to run. (some of them did) they would not mind their officers. it is said that one co's capt gave them orders to crawl back to the brush beyond the coten field and that started the other whose captain lay clost down and ordered them to stand, but they payed no attention to him till our capt got up with his sword and motioned them back, and they came with a rush. we had 5 men wounded while lying on the coten field, and one killed (Marshal Veeder) he was shot through the head, throwing his brains all over, Ally Allen and two spots on my dress coat sleeve. he was lying a little to the right and a head of me. —the bullets were flying thick and fast cutting off coton all around us. —then they gave a general Indian yell, and we could see the rebels runing in the woods— When we were ordered to charge into the woods, we all broke for the trees, and fought them behind the trees, the co's got all mixed in to gather. I came on to something that at first sight I did not think what it was, but I saw a gun beside it. it was a rebel dead on his hands and knees with his head on the ground, their clothes
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Indians and Rebels

(Continued from page 348)

look so much like leaves that they are hard to be seen. —I saw about a dozen dead rebels, and one wounded on the field, but when we were going into the Ft. (Fortress Rosecrans) I saw a good many wounded rebels and our men wounded and dead as we passed the Ambulances." The foregoing is only a small part of his description of the action around Fortress Rosecrans and the battle of Murfreesboro.

On December 31st he wrote from Columbia, Tennessee: "We have left Murfreesboro. We have been assigned to the 23rd Army Corps 1st Division 3 Brigade. Under Command of Gen Scofield." Here they were ordered to North Carolina via Washington, D.C. They march to Clifton, Tennessee, and were put aboard steamboats going down the Tennessee River into the Ohio, then up the Ohio to Louisville. From this point they were marched around the rapids and put in smaller boats for Cincinnati. From here they went to Washington in unbeated box cars.

The Eighth arrived in Washington the last day of March looking so rough and tough that they were dubbed "Sherman's Woodticks." On February 17 James wrote a letter to his little brother, Hobart, on the back of two large hand-colored valentines. One pictured a comic soldier with a gun titled A RAW RECRUIT; and the other TO A DRAGOON, and which pictured a soldier being bucked off his horse.

On February 23 he wrote from on board the steamship *Aerial* that he was headed for Moorehead City, North Carolina, and Sherman's Army. In later letters he described some of the action around Kingston and the exciting times resulting from Sherman's march to the sea. From this point on the Eighth served as a military police force for the victorious Union Army. James's letters from Raleigh and Charlotte, N.C. describe the country and events as the Eighth remained to occupy the area after Sherman's old army moved north. James's reports include the statement the "two whole Brigades" were put in Raleigh to prevent the Illinois troops from burning the town on learning of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

In James's last letter, date-lined "Charlotte, N.C. July 8th, 1865", he advised, "I am coming home in a few days. —if you want to see soldiers come up to Ft. Snelling."

So after almost three long years James E. Cady and the Eighth Min-

nesota came home—home from a long and varied service extending from Fort Snelling to the mouth of the Yellowstone in Montana, to Tennessee, Washington, Fort Fisher, and North Carolina. From Northern Indians to Southern rebels, the Eighth saw a greater variety of service and traveled more miles than any other regiment in the United States Army.

FOOTNOTES

- Most of the letters and envelopes from the Indian Country are patriotic currier cards and letterheads. Over fifty envelopes are postmarked from Fort Snelling, Fort Abernethy, Fort Ripley, Fort Ridgely, and Fort Randall.
- Barbuck was the proprietor of the Northwestern Stage Company and this was one of his stage stations.
- Little Crow, the Sioux leader in the spring, was shot near Hutchinson, Minnesota on July 3, 1862.
- Official establishment date is July 9, 1864. It may be that General Sully's report was dated July 9th and that he actually laid out the site on July 7th as James reports. This may be the earliest letter ever written from Fort Rice. The envelope is postmarked FORT RANDALL, D.T.
- Battle of Killdeer Mountain.
- McClellan supporters.
- Secessionists or Southern sympathizers.
- The Eighth Minnesota was known as the INDIAN REGIMENT and on occasion gave an Indian yell when going into action.

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- MINNESOTA IN THE CIVIL AND THE INDIAN WAR, 1851-1865, VOL. 1 Pioneer Press, St. Paul, Minnesota 1891.

Memphis Philatelic Exhibition

CONFEDERATE philately will be featured at the tenth annual Memphis Philatelic Exhibition, MEMPHEX, to be held by the Memphis Stamp Collectors Society, Nov. 29-Dec. 1, 1963, at the Hotel Peabody in Memphis, Tennessee.

MEMPHEX is the largest philatelic exhibition in the mid-south; the 1962 attendance was 2,500. The Society is a chapter of the Society of Philatelic Americans, and has 110 members.

The Hernando DeSoto Mid-South Philatelic Society, a new chapter of the American Philatelic Society, is joining in the sponsorship of the show this year. Chairman is Stanley J. Kruger, 406 E. Erwin Dr., Memphis, Tenn. Publicity chairman is Edward F. Williams, 767 Brookhaven Circle, Memphis, Tenn. Requests for exhibition prospectus, bourse table information, or details of cacheted covers should be addressed to MEMPHEX, P.O. Box 17659, Memphis, Tenn. 38117.

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