

Civil War Scouting In Maries County

By Gary Knehans

Interest in Civil War history still remains high some 130 years after the occurrence of the tragic events associated with this period of time. It is not uncommon to come across a Civil War buff or two who reads every piece of information he or she can find about this conflict and still seeks to find more.

For the benefit of such enthusiasts, as well as people interested in Maries County history, the Gazette reprints a dispatch written about a scouting foray to Vienna by Union troops stationed in Rolla in the summer of 1862. The dispatch was printed in the Rolla Express on August 9th, 1862, and reprinted in the Rolla Herald on April 1st, 1897.

We left Rolla, last Wednesday, and accompanied Capt. Ing upon his expedition to Maries county. Our force consisted of about fifty men, mostly new recruits, and a few of Captain Ing's own company. When we started there was some indications of rain, but before evening it was fair and very warm. We could hear various reports about secesh being at different places but could get no definite information. A little after nightfall, we reached the residence of Mr. R. L. Ramsey, who though professing to be a Union man, has a son who recently left for the Southern army, taking with him two of his father's horses, and it has been charged that the old man consented to their departure, and that he has been giving aid to the rebel cause before. We stayed all night with Mr. Ramsey, the boys helping themselves to his grain, corn meal and bacon. We could gain no satisfactory information as to the hiding places of the secessionists, so the next morning we started in the direction of William Simpson's, who, we had reason to believe, was knowing the whereabouts of Crabtree, who had gone through the country a few days before, gathering up rebel recruits.

We reached Simpson's about 9 o'clock and rode up his house surrounding it, and scouting the woods in his vicinity. He was at home, and was one of the most innocent mortals living, when first approached, and avered that even if we hung him, he could make no more developments, other than the fact that the said Crabtree had passed towards Waynesville the Friday previous, but

finally confessed that he went to see that officer. We took dinner at his house, then Capt. Ing invited him to saddle his horse and ride with us to Vienna: which place we reached in the afternoon.

In Vienna we found Dr. V. G. Latham (now Captain Latham) commander of that post, he having organized a company of Militia under the recent call of Gov. Gamble, and was taking charge of the same in a very efficient manner. Too much praise cannot be awarded the efficient officers of this little band of State Militia. They are indeed regenerating and conquering the field. They are doing much to restore public sentiment to its former loyalty, by infusing a confidence into the hearts of Union men, and securing the decisive co-operation of many who have heretofore been wavering. Capt. Latham is aided by Lieuts. E. M. Kimzey and Arthur Royal. The company subsists upon the liberality of Union men, who have to loan to the State, and the grudging contributions of

secession sympathizers. Let a few more militia companies be formed and set to work, and if offered by as true and earnest men as have control in Maries county, our word for it, a good sound Union sentiment will be left in their wake, which will be marked with very little bloodshed.

Friday, Sergeant Pillman and Sergeant Flora scoured the county East of the Gasconade to Paydown, returning in the evening, with one or two prisoners and Sergeant Pillman said that a fellow by the name of Moon had been stopped by a bullet.

Saturday morning we were ordered to return to Rolla, taking with us Messrs. William Simpson, John Hoops, Samuel Westlake and two discharged soldiers from Price's army, as prisoners. On our way we fed our horses once more with Mr. Ramsey, and invited him to join our train to Rolla, which place we reached about five o'clock in the evening and Capt. Ing turned over his eight prisoners to the Provost Marshal. It has not been our

fortune too often to meet in more agreeable company than Capt. Ing and our traveling companions, and we think this expedition will not prove altogether barren of good results for that county.

Shortly after this account was reprinted in the Herald, the editor of the Maries County Gazette advanced some contrapuntal claims:

Robt. Ramsey, father of L. N. and R. S. Ramsey, was a victim of their wrath; he was a sympathizer with the southern cause, but had taken no part in the conflict then raging, but he was dragged off to Rolla with several of his neighbors and thrown into prison. The writer of that article left the story incomplete; he failed to tell of the return of the men, the breaking open of a chest supposed to contain money, and the perpetration of several other atrocities that were entirely uncalled for and undeserved. The other side of the story would probably make about as interesting reading as the article in question.



DABNEY RAINEY, editor of the Maries County Gazette, from 1887 until his death in 1919, and his wife, the former Miss Pauline Schenker of Vienna. Courtesy of Historical Society of Maries County, donated by Harold S. Hutchison.