

THE AUGUSTA FIGHT

Graphic Account of the Battle of More Than 53 Years Ago.

The following account of the Augusta battle is clipped from the Cincinnati Daily Commercial of September 30, 1862, and was handed to the Chronicle by Chas. W. Houck, of this city:

Judge Doniphan arrived from Augusta, Ky. yesterday, on the steamer New Era. He estimates the rebel force that attacked Augusta at five hundred, including over one hundred cavalry. They were under command of Basil Duke, a Kentuckian, recently of St. Louis. Col. Josh. T. Bradford commanded our forces, one hundred and twenty five strong. By previous arrangement, Bradford was to retreat to the houses for defense, while the gunboats were to shell the enemy as they approached the town. The gunboats Belfast and Florence Miller, were laying above the town. The Belfast fired three shells, all of which were effective, killing three of the rebels, and wounding several others. Both boats then retreated up the river. One company of the enemy then came down to the bar at the water's edge, and were in fine position for being shelled. There being no response from the boats, the enemy deliberately formed in line and fired a volley of musketry at the retreating gunboats. Meanwhile, Bradford, finding that the gunboats had deserted him, stationed his men in the houses for defense. As the enemy moved through the streets, our men picked them off successfully - the fight lasting some thirty minutes, when the enemy brought a couple of six-pounders to bear on the houses, which they also set on fire. At this juncture Col. Bradford surrendered.

The killed and wounded among the Union forces number between fifteen and twenty, while the rebel killed and wounded

number from seventy five to one hundred. Among our forces known to be killed are Dr. W. Taylor, Jno. Gephart, N. B. Worthington, Jno. B. Story, Geo. Byars, Oliver Stairs, Alpheus McKibben, John Perkins, Mr. Gregg (son of Jno. D. Gregg) and Wm. Bland, of Madison Ky.; Major Little of Harrison Co., and Ellie Day and Mr. Drake, of Bracken Co., badly wounded.

The enemy entered the town about noon on Saturday, and retired at night, leaving twenty-two of their dead, and several of their wounded behind. They pressed all the wagons and carriages they could find, to haul off their wounded. The rebels confess that they lost nine officers in the fight. Among the wounded rebels left behind is Clarence Prentice, son of Geo. D. Prentice, Cap. Whip Rogers of Harrison Co., Lieut. Wilson and Capt. Morgan of Fayette county.

Two squares and a half, the most central and containing the finest dwellings in the place were destroyed by fire. The loss is estimated at \$100,000. They ransacked the stores, carrying off all the clothing, goods, and provisions they could find. Our men fought with great determination and did not surrender until they were compelled by the firing of the houses in which they were lodged. Judge Doniphan, as soon as he learned our forces had surrendered, secreted himself in Colonel Bradford's garden until the rebels had retired, thus eluding capture. Clarence Prentice is mortally wounded. Capt. Duple left for Augusta last evening on the New Era. He deems the conduct of the gunboats as disgraceful, and will institute a thorough inquiry, being determined to punish those who are guilty of cowardice.

Another Account

We are indebted to Col. Laban J. Bradford, of Augusta, Ky., for further particulars concerning the burning and pillaging of Augusta by the rebels under Basil Duke. Dr. Bradford, accompanied by Capt. Reagan and Mr. Sullivan, came down from Augusta in a buggy yesterday.

He states that on Saturday morning, Capt. Reagan, commanding one hundred Augusta Home Guards, which constituted the main defense of the town, left Augusta on a scouting expedition on the Rock Spring road. When some miles from the town they were confronted by a strong rebel force, and upon attempting to retire they were intercepted by about 300 of the enemy who cut their retreat to town. They then made a wide detour proposing to return by Metcalf's Landing, which movement they successfully accomplished, making a march of some twenty-four miles. Meantime Augusta was attacked and captured. Couriers notified the people of Augusta at about 2 o'clock, p.m. that the pickets of the enemy had appeared on Bradford's Hill in the rear of the town. Col. A. J. Bradford said Lieut. Col. Harris immediately mustered a force of about 130 men and boys on the public square, and the former assured them if they would fight, they with the aid of the gunboats could whip the rebels. The men responded cheerfully for the "Union and old Kentucky." The gunboats Belfast, commanded by Capt. Sedam, and Allen Collier, Capt. Wilson were then at the wharf. Col. Bradford had an interview with the commanders, and subsequently arranged to post his men in squads in the houses, believing that the best mode of defense.

Meantime the enemy planted three one gun batteries of field pieces on the hill, and the Belfast opened upon the rebels, killing three of their officers and disabling several men, besides dismounting one of the enemy's pieces at the first shot. The Union forces were greatly encouraged and cheered in a lively manner. The rebel batteries were now turned upon the gunboats but their shells fell short, although pretty well directed. The Allen Collier, however, had dropped down the river a mile or two

before a shot was fired, and the Florence Miller moved up to take her place. After firing four or five rounds the Belfast, for some reason not yet explained, steamed up, and taking the Florence Miller in tow, moved up to Higginsport - the Florence Miller being next to the Kentucky side and exposed to the enemy. The rebels observing the flight of the gunboats, rushed madly into town, thence down the landing and fired several volleys at the receding vessels. Our troops had now got into cover of the houses on Front Street, and were engaged with the enemy, who fought with desperation. The determined little band fired with murderous effect and kept the rebels at bay until the gunboats had fled, when Col. Bradford seeing that his men would be uselessly slaughtered, surrendered. The enemy's loss was very severe, as stated in our first account. Dr. L. J. Bradford states ours at about 12 killed and 3 wounded. Several of our men were killed after the surrender - Wm. Story was deliberately murdered after he had surrendered, for killing Capt. Morgan, nephew to the redoubtable guerrilla Gen. John Morgan. Dr. B. states that the rebels fought furiously, but that the men of Augusta displayed equal heroism. The women of the place were in the houses loading muskets for the Union men while the fight was going on, displaying splendid pluck. The rebel force was 530 strong, consisting of dismounted cavalry and an artillery company. They took 184 prisoners from Augusta, and Bracken county, to Lexington, where they paroled 84. They refused to parole any of the Home Guards. They spoke with the greatest contempt of the gunboats, saying they "might do to carry fodder for geese, but were not fit to fight Southern soldiers with."

Dr. Bradford also states that as soon as the people of Higginsport, Ripley, Maysville, and Flemingsburg, heard of the attack, they assembled in great numbers with rifles, and started to relieve Augusta, but the rebels had departed too soon for them. A force of about 300 cavalry and 400 infantry were organized by Col. Wilson, Col. Wadsworth and Col. Marshal, who pursued

the enemy, overtaking them at Brooksville, where they killed twelve, wounded others, and took one prisoner losing but one man, the rebels flying in great confusion. The rebels being mounted and their wounded all in good wagons or carriages, which had been taken from Augusta, were enabled to retreat without further loss. Every wheeled vehicle in Augusta was carried off, with some 60 or 70 head of horses. Dr. L. J. Bradford had been posted in another part of the town and when the surrender took place, he eluded the enemy. During the melee, a shell struck the building in which he was posted, and he was wounded slightly in five places by fragments of shell. Capt. Reagan returned to the vicinity of Augusta before the enemy left, but he did not deem it prudent to attack a force five times as great as his own. He returned, however, after the enemy had left, and remained with his forces until 9 o'clock yesterday morning when, at the solicitation of citizens, who feared his small command might invite another attack, he retired across the river to await further developments. He states that the force which attacked Augusta moved up from Falmouth and Cynthiana. When he left Augusta, Clarence Prentice was lying at the residence of Mr. Lewis Wells, in a dying condition.

The facts about the gunboats will be investigated by the proper authorities.