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FROM MISSOURI.

Detailed account of the Battle of Arcadia Valley and the defeat of Brig. Gen'l Thomas Ewing, Jr. – Arrival of Gen'l Mower at Cape Girardeau – Gen'ls McNeil and Sanborn leave Rolla for Jefferson City. – The Rebels moving in that direction.

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From Our Own Correspondent.

St. Louis, Mo., Thursday, Oct. 6th, 1864.

The safe arrival at Rolla of Brig. Gen. Ewing, with his command, is simply told, but when the circumstances of the campaign are detailed, and the mind dwells upon them for a space, a feeling of admiration for the skill and bravery of that Commander must find a place in every breast and cause a glow of patriotism to thrill the heart that truly feels for the brave men who are sacrificing so much to restore peace to the nation.

My communication of the 2nd inst., gave you a general idea of the battle of Arcadia Valley, which events have proven to be the struggle for the possession of the Iron Mountain Railroad, and hence the temporary possession of St. Louis by the Rebels. A few more details of that affair are necessary to complete the account, and these I am enabled to give from the highest and most reliable sources.

ADVANCE OF PRICE

Gen. Ewing left the brigade of Major General A.J. Smith's command at Mineral Point, on the Iron Mountain railroad, and with one hundred and thirty men reached Pilot Knob on Sunday morning, the 25th of September. He found the rebels in superior forces, and the outposts of the Knob all driven in. He gathered these together and found that he had about one thousand men, viz: a battery of ten-pound Rodman guns, ten companies of infantry and three of cavalry. The greater part of this command were raw came from Price, by the hands of a refugee, for Ewing had persistently resisted every attempt of the rebels to gain on him by a flag of truce, a favorite dodge of theirs. The proposition was that if Ewing would surrender his command, he would be permitted to march out of the fort, officers carrying their side arms, and private property of all held sacred from pillage. It is needless to say that this was disregarded, and the

troops, but the best was made of the material, as events will show. Gen. Ewing removed all the stores from Pilot Knob first, and sent them to St. Louis, and then commenced to fall back slowly, but still presenting a bold front to the enemy. The latter soon discovered the actual state of affairs, and growing more bold as Ewing fell back, soon compelled him to take one horn of a dilemma – he must either leave the valley open to the rebel advance, and allow it to reach the Iron Mountain Railroad, or make a stand and take the chances of capture or destruction. Fort Davidson favored what the General already decided upon, a stand and a fight, as good as he could make it under the circumstances. Some account of the fight in the fort was given you, and it is only necessary to add that the mountains around it are nearly five hundred feet high, and their base not more than one thousand yards from the fort, to understand fully the advantage Ewing had, as long as the enemy did not climb to the top with artillery. The valley lies like a great letter S, between Cedar, rock, Sheppard and Iron Mountains and Pilot Knob, and the curve runs due North and South. The fort is in the upper curve of the S, and the rebels came into the valley through Fredericktown, and entered the lower curve. The rest is known already; there were literally mowed down before the sustained fire from the fort, and after several attempts during Tuesday, fell back and commenced clambering up the sides of the mountains. Fagin [sic] took possession of Iron Mountain and Marmaduke Sheppard Mountain. Gen. Price was at Pilot Knob, and directed the movements. As soon as the mountain sides were gained, Ewing saw that there was no more safety in the fort, and he resolved to evacuate rather than be captured, destroyed, or to surrender. The rebels may have suspected this, for no sooner was he ready to depart than a tremendous fire burst out in the furnaces of Pilot Knob. All the coal accumulated there for iron smelting for months was in a blaze at once, and the entire valley and mountain sides were lit up bright as day. Ewing went on with his preparations, but more stealthily. In the meantime

A PROPOSITION FOR SURRENDER

preparations for evacuation and retreat went on. At midnight these were completed and the garrison was withdrawn through a covered way, and the artillery removed by muffling the wheels and moving stealthily until the shadows of the mountain concealed all from view. The evacuation was a complete success and the command moved rapidly out northward on the Caledonia road as Gen. Ewing hoped to reach Mineral

Point [undecypherable text]. AJ. Smith's brigade, but instead of this, he encountered in the streets of Caledonia the advance of Shelby and drove it back. This circumstance was proof positive that the upper part of the road was in the hands of the rebels. He had little time to determine on his course for Shelby was now coming in force from Potosi, so Ewing decided to strike for Rolla by way of Webster and Osage.

Price's proposition was accompanied by a threat that if it was not agreed to, he would take the fort by assault and kill every man found in it. Shelby was ordered from Potosi for the purpose of making the assault, and it became his apparent duty now to follow Ewing and either capture or demolish his command.

EWING'S RETREAT TO ROLLA

Wednesday night was very dark and stormy, succeeding a day of constant skirmishing with the enemy who seemed to spring from the ground on every side. The retreat was conducted under the most embarrassing circumstances, for a host of refugees, white and black, old men, women and children flocked to the Union banner and sought protection under its bright and friendly folds. At every attack and fire of the enemy they stampeded and imparted alarm to the raw soldiery, now no longer protected by earthworks, but exposed in the open field to an experienced and overwhelmingly superior foe. Nothing could have saved the entire force from utter demolition but the unflinching energy, coolness and courage of Gen. Ewing and the battery of Rodman guns.

Early on Thursday morning Ewing took an unfrequented road to Leesburg [sic] or Harrison, a station on the South Pacific railroad about two-thirds of the way from Pacific to Rolla. He took this unfrequented route because it led to a sharp ridge dividing Dry Creek and Hazza (small streams), which offered the best chance for defense and retreat. He was closely pursued and well surrounded, move howsoever he would; but his artillery kept the rebels at a tolerable distance, and they had no artillery to lessen it, and let their cavalry scatter the heroic little army. At every turn, favorable to the enemy because unfavorable [sic] for the play of Ewing's artillery, he had a terrible struggle, and kept his guns constantly charged with grape or canister, and in two or three

To push out a strong picket up and down the road and move toward Rolla the same night, was the next thing; and this was done, and the position evacuated, before the rebels knew which way the force went. Thirty miles were made that night, and in the morning St. James Station, on the South Pacific

instances fired them upon the advancing enemy with unlimbering the pieces. Leesburg [sic] was reached Thursday forenoon, and just in time to save the train from St. Louis, loaded with military stores for Rolla. These were timely, although not indispensable. Ewing unloaded them rapidly and had his command put aboard, and the train headed for St. Louis, when he discovered the stations above and below Leesburg to be on fire. The rebels now had him completely surrounded and cut off.

THE LAST STRUGGLE FOR LIFE

No time was to be lost. After enduring so much, the commander determined the more fully to see it out, and he immediately set up a temporary breastwork of "ties," cars, and such other material as the dépot [sic] afforded, as a defence [sic] against cavalry and musketry. He disposed his guns so as to command his camp from all sides, and, metaphorically speaking, snapped his fingers under the nose of his pertinacious enemy. Through the night of Friday, the rebels menaced the camp, and fired repeated volleys into it, and on Saturday morning they appeared, several thousand strong, evidently intending to charge, Ewing did not give them time, but opened at once with shell. The rebels lost more horses than men by this operation, and, after making two or three attempts to re-form their lines, fell back, and did not appear until next day: Sunday. In the meantime, Ewing tried every possible means to send a messenger to Rolla to ask assistance, but in vain; he was completely surrounded.

About 3 o'clock P.M. the rebels concentrated and evidently determined to risk an assault. Their lines were drawn up in three bodies, and the devoted band, now almost ready to give up in despair, prepared to receive the shock, but lo! at that moment a large body of Union cavalry was seen coming from the direction of Rolla, and in fifteen minutes it had broken the posts and pickets of the enemy in that direction, and was alongside the little garrison. The joy of the latter can best be imagined, and when the lucky circumstance was explained by Col. Beveridge of the Seventeenth Illinois Cavalry, at the head of 500 men, and he told the garrison that he came, upon hearing of their peril from refugees, the men shouted until the rebels took alarm, thinking that these reinforcements were but the advance of an army.

Road, was reached, where the entire command took the cars for Rolla and reached it in safety, seven hundred strong, after fighting every mile of the way, and undergoing such hardships as such campaigning involves. Gen. Ewing lost no property, save the ammunition for the siege guns at Fort Davidson,

which was blown up; and his entire loss in killed and wounded will not exceed 150. These estimates are made exclusive of the reinforcements from Rolla, of course.

MOWER AT CAPE GIRARDEAU

Gen. Mowers reached Cape Girardeau yesterday. Gens. McNiel and Sanborn, who were at Rolla are ordered to Jefferson City, and are there before this time. The main body of Price's army is moving in that direction, and we look for news from that point next.

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Rebels on the Pacific Railroad – Burning of the Gasconade and Osage Bridges.

From the St. Louis Republican, Oct. 7.
At headquarters, last evening, information was received, of a positive nature, that the rebels, Wednesday afternoon, burned the large bridges of the Pacific Railroad over both the Osage and Gasconade Rivers.

There was a guard of about seventy-five militia posted in the blockhouse at the Osage bridge, but, according to dispatches, they surrendered, without firing a gun, to an inferior force of the enemy. Their conduct is greatly deplored and denounced in military circles, though we confess to be unable to see

upon what ground, as the rebels were advancing in force, and the bridge guard had no assurance what ever that reinforcements would reach them, and, to say the least, no battle was expected to take place at the bridge.

All but one span of the Osage bridge was burnt. The Gasconade bridge was totally destroyed. These were very large and expensive structures, and it will require considerable store to rebuild them. Both are at least 300 feet long.

The bridge over Coal Creek was also burned. Here, in addition, the rebels captured a train of thirty cars, which, with two valuable locomotives, were put to the flames and rendered worthless. From all information, we are inclined to believe the cars were empty.

Every indication leads to the belief that the rebels are aiming for Jefferson City, where they intend to inaugurate "Gov." Reynolds to give a shade of color to the election of Senators and Representatives to the Southern Congress, as well, indeed, as to satisfy the long-cherished desire of Sterling Price to test the love and loyalty of the people of Missouri, for his cause.



Transcribed by:

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