

# **The Woodruff Gun**

## **Annotations to the Margreiter Article**

### **Woodruffs during the Battle of Clark's Mill, Mo.**

*Official Records of the War of the Rebellion*, Series I, Volume 13, Part 1, pp. 354-356.

Operations in Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas the Indian Territory, and the Department of the Northwest, April 10-November 20, 1862.  
Reports.

Action at Clark's Mill, Douglas County, Mo., Report of Capt. Hiram E. Barstow, Company C, Tenth Illinois Cavalry:

On pages 355-356, Barstow reports that he deployed his two Woodruffs but was replied by Confederate six-pounder guns. Vastly outnumbered by a Confederate force about ten times their size, and with but 23 canister rounds remaining between his two guns, Barstow surrendered:

...[Messengers] returned and reported another large force coming in from the northeast. I at once planted my 2-pounder artillery to receive them on both roads, and in ten minutes they opened fire upon us from the hill with two 6-pounders one-half mile northeast of camp. We immediately replied with our artillery and kept up the firing at intervals for five hours, during which time our pickets were driven in and our camp surrounded on all sides.

The enemy sent in a white flag and demanded me to surrender, and gave me ten minutes to decide in. I consulted with my officers, and we decided that we would not be able to hold our position one hour longer, as we had but 23 rounds of canister for our artillery and my men were mostly armed with Colt revolvers.....

It is unclear what happened to the captured Woodruffs after this action. If there were only 23 canister rounds left for the two guns, their usefulness to the Confederates would have been very limited without a means of acquiring additional ammunition of a non-standard caliber.

John Berry reports that, according to *Guide to Missouri Confederate Units 1861-1865* by James E. McGhee, the two Confederate regiments that fought at Clark's Mill were the 3rd Missouri Cavalry Regiment and the 4th Missouri Cavalry Regiment under Burnbridge and Greene. Under listings for the 3rd Regiment (Greene's) on pages 64-66, the book gives the items captured at Clark's Mill, and two cannons are in the list, so presumably the 3rd took possession of the guns at this time. Early in December 1862, they were incorporated in a newly organized brigade in Pocahontas, Arkansas. The 4th Missouri was incorporated into a brigade that included the 3rd and 8th Missouri

Cavalry and the Newton Artillery. They fought at the Battle of Hartville, Mo., on January 11, 1863. No Woodruff-specific cannon balls are known to have been found at Hartville, or at least none are present in the town museum which covers the battle. On April 26 they fought the battle of Cape Girardeau, in southeast Missouri. They ended up with Price on his 1864 raid, fighting at Pilot Knob, Boonville, Glasgow, and all the way to Mine Creek, where they were broken up by a Federal cavalry charge with 13 killed, 27 wounded and 34 prisoners.

In these expeditions my men have been very successful, losing none and having only a few wounded and have killed quite a number of the enemy and frightened them awfully. I have just learned that the citizens on Dry Wood are leaving with their families, after asking for a force which I could not give them; and Squire Redfield has also asked for a force in his vicinity, as the inhabitants are very much frightened.

I am, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

B. S. HENNING,

*Major Third Wisconsin Cavalry, Commanding Post.*

Brig. Gen. JAMES G. BLUNT, *Commanding, &c.*

### NOVEMBER 7, 1862.—Action at Clark's Mill, Douglas County, Mo.

#### REPORTS.

No. 1.—Maj. Gen. Samuel R. Curtis, U. S. Army.

No. 2.—Brig. Gen. John M. Schofield, U. S. Army.

No. 3.—Col. Dudley Wickersham, Tenth Illinois Cavalry.

No. 4.—Capt. Hiram E. Barstow, Tenth Illinois Cavalry.

#### No. 1.

*Report of Maj. Gen. Samuel R. Curtis, U. S. Army.*

NOVEMBER 10, 1862.

General Schofield telegraphs that the enemy, 1,000 strong, under General Green, on the 7th, attacked two companies stationed in a block-house at Clark's Mill, near Vera Cruz. After six hours' fighting our troops (100) surrendered and were paroled. Our loss was 2 killed and 2 wounded. Enemy, 8 killed. A large force has been sent in pursuit of the enemy.

SAML. R. CURTIS,  
*Major-General.*

Col. J. O. KELTON,  
*Assistant Adjutant-General, Washington, D. C.*

#### No. 2.

*Report of Brig. Gen. John M. Schofield, U. S. Army.*

SPRINGFIELD, MO., November 9, 1862.

The enemy, 1,000 strong, under General Greene on the 7th instant attacked our forces at Clark's Mill, consisting of about 50 of the Tenth Illinois Cavalry and 50 of the Missouri State Militia, under Captain Barstow, and after a fight of six hours our forces surrendered. The enemy destroyed the block-houses. Our men were paroled. Our loss was 2 killed and 2 wounded. The enemy's loss was 8 killed. A large force has been sent in pursuit of the enemy.

J. M. SCHOFIELD,  
*Brigadier-General.*

Maj. Gen. SAMUEL R. CURTIS.

## No. 3.

*Report of Col. Dudley Wickersham, Tenth Illinois Cavalry.*HEADQUARTERS, *Marshfield, Mo., Nov. 8, 1862.*

COLONEL: I have the honor to state that the forces at Clark's Mill surrendered, after a constant fire from 11 a. m. to 5 p. m. Our troops consisted of about 50 of the Tenth Illinois Cavalry and 50 of the State Militia. The enemy (1,000 strong) under the command of General Green. After the surrender the enemy remained at the post long enough to burn the block-house and other outhouses. Prisoners paroled. The enemy left on a double-quick, up what is known as Bryant, in a southerly direction. Our loss was 2 killed and 2 wounded. Enemy's loss was 8 killed. Our troops were under the command of Capt. H. E. Barstow, Company C, Tenth Illinois Cavalry. The troops sent out last night under Major [M. L.] Stephenson returned this evening. Captain [E. J.] Searle and party, who were out from the mills at the time of the attack, have not arrived. I presume they are in pursuit of the enemy. Will give you a full report upon the arrival of Captain Barstow.

Very respectfully,

D. WICKERSHAM,  
*Colonel, Commanding Post.*Colonel ORME, *Commanding, Springfield, Mo.*

## No. 4.

*Report of Capt. Hiram E. Barstow, Tenth Illinois Cavalry.*MARSHFIELD, MO., *November 10, 1862.*

COLONEL: I have the honor to report that at 2 o'clock on the morning of the 7th instant I received information that from 300 to 400 of the enemy were at Gainesville the day before, robbing Union families, and about 8 a. m. received word that 7 bushwhackers had taken and killed 1 of our men about 4 miles east of here; and, thinking that there was a gang of bushwhackers passing through the country and were trying to pass our camp in two divisions north and east of us, dispatched Lieutenant [J. A.] McClure, with 20 men, in the direction of Gainesville. At the same time I started with 18 men to reconnoiter to the southward. I came onto the enemy's advance guard about 5 miles north of Rockbridge, on the Vera Cruz road; charged on them, and drove them back about 40 rods, killing 9 of their men and several horses. My loss was 2 men killed, 2 wounded, and 8 horses badly shot. I immediately fell back with my men and returned to camp; sent a messenger for Lieutenant McClure and scouts; dispatched a messenger to Lawrence Mills and Marshfield. My Marshfield messenger was driven in, and reported a large body of the enemy in the corn field on said road, and that they had fired on him. I immediately dispatched another messenger through the brush in a southerly direction; at the same time a scout of 5 men in an easterly direction. They returned and reported another large force coming in from the northeast. I at once planted my 2-pounder artillery to receive them on both roads, and in ten minutes they opened fire upon us from the hill with two 6-pounders one-half mile northeast of camp. We immediately replied with our artillery and kept up the firing at intervals for five hours,

during which time our pickets were driven in and our camp surrounded on all sides.

The enemy sent in a white flag and demanded me to surrender, and gave me ten minutes to decide in. I consulted with my officers, and we decided that we would not be able to hold our position one hour longer, as we had but 23 rounds of canister for our artillery and my men were mostly armed with Colt's revolvers. I had not to exceed 110 men; the enemy 1,750 cavalry and infantry, armed with revolvers, rifles, and carbines, and four 6-pounders, and, as I afterward learned, between 300 and 400 rounds of cartridges for their artillery. In the demand for a surrender the enemy agreed to parole all of us on the ground and allow us to keep our private property; but after my surrender they refused to allow my men to keep their horses or anything but their clothing, which was generally retained by the soldiers. My loss was 7 killed and 2 wounded. The enemy's loss was 34 killed and a number wounded. The colonel commanding gave his name as J. Q. Burbidge. Colonel Greene was second in command at the time of my surrender. All avenues of escape were cut off, and knowing they had 10 men to my 1, I considered it suicidal to attempt a retreat with my command. At the time I sent the messenger to Lawrence Mills and Marshfield I had no intimation that there were over 400 of the enemy, and had no intimation that they had any artillery until they fired on us. I then sent out feelers to learn, if possible, their strength, and in the course of an hour ascertained that they were not less than 1,000 strong, and had their men so posted as to cut off our retreat. If I had known at the outset that they had artillery of that size I should have abandoned the post when I returned from driving in their advance. We have been repeatedly notified that there were large forces moving on us within the last forty days, and by sending out our scouts have found them to be false alarms, and thinking there was but a small force, concluded to go out with my men.

Hoping you will approve the course I pursued, I remain, very respectfully, yours,

H. E. BARSTOW,

*Capt. Company C, 10th Ill. Cav., Comdg. Post at Clark's Mill.*

**NOVEMBER 8-13, 1862.—Expedition into the southern part of Missouri and the northern part of Arkansas.**

*Report of Capt. Milton Burch, Fourteenth Missouri Cavalry (Militia).*

OZARK, Mo., November 13, 1862.

SIR: I have the honor of reporting to you the result of a scout made by me into the southern part of Missouri and the northern part of Arkansas:

On the evening of the 8th instant, by order of Capt. S. A. Flagg, I took command of 80 men of the Second Battalion of the Missouri State Militia and proceeded to Lawrence Mills, a distance of 35 miles. We arrived at that place about 10 o'clock on the morning of the 9th. I sent scouts out in every direction, with instructions to find out the strength and position of any bodies of the rebels that might be found.

On the evening of the 10th the scouts all returned, reporting no strong bodies of the enemy nearer than Yellville. They reported a considerable number of provost guards in the neighborhood of Dubuque,

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