

Official Records-- SERIES I--VOLUME XVI/1 [Serial # 22]

SEPTEMBER 27-28, 1862.--Skirmishes at Augusta (27th) and Brookville (28th), Ky.
No. 3.--Report of Joseph Doniphan, of skirmish at Augusta.

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AUGUSTA, KY., [September 28, 1862].

SIR: On Saturday, about 12 o'clock m., Colonel Bradford received intelligence of the approach of between 400 and 500 rebels, under command of Basil Duke. The colonel immediately prepared to defend the town, his three consisting of about 100 Home Guards and militia, and the gunboat *Belfast*, Captain Sedam commanding.

About 1 o'clock the gunboat *Allen Collyer* moored alongside the *Belfast*, and Colonel Bradford dispatched a messenger to the *Collyer*, requesting her to remain, as we would certainly be attacked by 2 o'clock.

A few moments later the *Florence Miller*, carrying a gun, came along and anchored in front of our town.

Colonel Bradford then posted his men in the houses along Front street and up Pine street to Second. The enemy in the mean time had reached the hill back of the town and were rapidly surrounding us. Hardly had our forces gotten their positions when the rebels with two small pieces of artillery appeared on the hill. The *Belfast* threw a shell, and so well was it aimed that it struck within 30 feet of the enemy's gun, killing 2 or 3 of the rebels, and causing them to change the position of their gun. The enemy then opened fire, throwing shell with little or no accuracy, and the *Belfast* fired two more shots with good effect.

Up to this time the forces in the houses were not engaged; but, to the surprise and sorrow of our people, the *Belfast* weighed anchor and abandoned us to our fate. The *Florence Miller*, without firing a gun, did <page 1015> the same thing. The *Allen Collyer*, although importuned to stay with us, steamed off before the fight and never returned.

Then came a shout from the rebels and they were upon us. From every window our true and trusty boys were firing, and for one-half hour the leaden hail was doing its work of death. Rebel after rebel was made to bite the dust, while our boys thus sheltered were fighting for their homes and firesides.

But what a scene now followed! The houses in which our forces were in were set on fire; the cannon of the enemy was planted in our streets, and, disregarding women or children, they were firing shell into the houses. Yet true to their work, the little band of Union men fought on until it was useless to try to hold out longer.

Colonel Bradford ordered a surrender. So soon as this was done then commenced the pillage and plunder, every rebel acting for himself. Stores were broken open and rifled of what was wanted by the rebels. This, however, was soon over. The rebel bugle was sounded, and the enemy retired from our town in good order, though in haste.

The fighting was desperate, and although our loss is small, yet gallant and brave men have gone from us forever. Our killed and wounded amount to 12 or 15, while that of the enemy number between 75 and 100; among them some 8 or 10 officers. We had no means of ascertaining the names of all the rebels killed and wounded, but among the number wounded mortally is a son of George D. Prentice, of Louisville. Capt. W. Rogers, of Harrison County, was killed, and a Lieutenant Wilson. The rebels left some of their dead and wounded in our hands, all of whom have been properly cared for. They took our horses, buggies, wagons, and all means of transportation to carry off their dead and wounded.

Among the killed on the Union side was Dr. W. Taylor, N. B. Worthington, John B. Story, George Byers, Oliver Stairs, John Gephart, John Perkins, and W. Gregg.

The prisoners were all taken from town as rapidly as they could march. Some have been paroled and returned home.

The conduct of the gunboats seems to us as cowardly in the extreme. Just above our town is a large sand bar, and so soon as the rebels could cross the bottom they ran out on this bar 100 or 150 strong, drew up in line of battle, and fired volley after volley at the Belfast and Florence Miller, and not one shot was fired in return. With one fire of grape the whole horde of rebels could have been mowed down ; but the gallant commanders fled! Ay, and when they got to Higginsport actually hauled their cannon ashore and moved off up the river with their boats.

Much of our town is destroyed; the loss will reach \$100,000. The principal sufferers are Thomas Myers, J. B. Ryan, W. D. Diltz, W. P. Taylor, Mrs. Hooke, T. F. Marshall, V. Meldin, J. T. McKibben, and Mrs. Barr.

The Confederate forces are a battalion of Morgan's. Colonel Bradford, Colonel Harris, and F. L. Cleaveland, esq., are still in the hands of the enemy.

On yesterday Colonel Wilson and Colonel Wadsworth, commanding the forces from Maysville, Ripley, &c., passed on to Brookville in the effort to overtake the rebels, but were there only in time to fall upon their rear guard, they having retreated in great haste in the direction of Falmouth.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

JOSEPH DONIPHAN

(Webmaster's note: Mr. Doniphan was the Mayor of Augusta.)