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Albert D. J. Cashier and the Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry (1844-1915)

Mary Catherine Lannon

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ALBERT D. J. CASHIER AND THE NINETY-FIFTH
ILLINOIS INFANTRY (1844-1915)

Mary Catherine Lannon

142 Pages

August, 1969

An historical account of a woman who fought in the Civil War and subsequently lived in Central Illinois. It is primarily based on official records, letters, interviews, and newspaper articles.

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ALBERT D. J. CASHIER AND THE NINETY-FIFTH
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This thesis studies the life of Albert D. J. Cashier, a woman who, disguised as a man, fought with the Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry during the Civil War. It is primarily based on official records, letters, interviews, and newspaper articles. Cashier was basically an ordinary soldier, one of little note or controversy; thus her life during the war is reflected in the experiences of the regiment. The Ninety-fifth Illinois was active in four notable campaigns: the siege of Vicksburg, the Red River expedition, the Guntown disaster, and the capture of Mobile.

After Cashier was mustered out with the regiment, she remained in Belvidere, Illinois, for a short time. In 1869 she moved to Saunemin, Illinois, where she stayed for over 40 years. While there, Cashier worked as a herder, a janitor, and a general handyman, assuming the role of a man the entire time. In 1910 her disguise was discovered by five people who agreed not to disclose her secret.

Shortly thereafter, Albert Cashier was admitted to the Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Home in Quincy. Though the superintendent of the Home was told Cashier was a woman, the records list her as a male. Eventually a Bureau of Pensions investigation and a sanity hearing brought Cashier's female status to public attention. Earlier the Pension Bureau, unaware of her sex, had granted her a pension. After an investigation to confirm her war service, the Bureau acknowledged that Cashier was the only woman known to have received a pension for Civil War service.

In 1914 Cashier was found to be senile and was committed to the Watertown State Hospital. After her death a year later, a search for heirs uncovered a wealth of claims and explanations, but none was accepted by the court.

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ALBERT D. J. CASHIER AND THE NINETY-FIFTH
ILLINOIS INFANTRY (1844-1915)

MARY CATHERINE LANNON

A Thesis Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
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ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

1969

THESIS APPROVED:

7-30-69 _____
Date Chairman, Advisory Committee

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M. C. L.

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PLATE 1
FRONTISPIECE

Woman Soldier in 95th Ill.



ALBERT D. J. CASHIER
OF
COMPANY G, 95TH ILLINOIS REGIMENT

Photographed November, 1864



ALBERT D. J. CASHIER
OF
COMPANY G, 95TH ILLINOIS REGIMENT

Photographed July, 1913

Photograph is in writer's possession.

INTRODUCTION

"Albert D. J. Cashier and the Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry (1844-1915)" primarily concerns the study of a woman who, disguised as a man, fought in the Civil War with the Ninety-fifth Illinois without having her secret discovered. It is indeed challenging to study the life of an economically underprivileged person who lived a semi-public life as a person of the opposite sex. The specific aspects dealt with in this study are the movements and involvements of the Ninety-fifth Illinois in the war; the conditions under which Cashier and his regiment lived, particularly those circumstances which allowed Cashier to pose successfully as a man; Cashier's life in Central Illinois after the war; Cashier's probable origin; and, finally, the problems involved in settling the estate of a person who had lived under an alias most of her life.

Since Private Albert Cashier was with the Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry from its inception until its members were mustered out, the experiences of the regiment and Cashier were shared in common. The movements and involvements of the Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry Volunteers included participation in the siege and capture of Vicksburg, the Red River expedition, and the battle of Guntown. These activities, as well as the minor

involvements, are chronicled in two books. The first is a regimental history which was written by Wales W. Wood and was published in 1865.¹

Wales W. Wood was a college graduate, Phi Beta Kappa, from New York who had come to Illinois to study, then practice, law. Having settled in Belvidere, Illinois, he was admitted to the bar in 1860.² He enlisted in the Ninety-fifth Illinois in 1863 and was elected its adjutant, serving in that position throughout the regiment's service. Wood's regimental history contains no documentation, but is based largely on the author's own memory, his use of diaries kept by members of the regiment, and his consultation with other members of the regiment. Since the account was begun while the men were still in service and the men's memories were still fresh, it contains a notable level of accuracy when compared with official records.

The other book which specifically deals with the Ninety-fifth Illinois is a compilation of letters of

¹Wales W. Wood, A History of the Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry Volunteers (Chicago: Tribune Company's Book and Job Printing Office, 1865).

²Newton Bateman, Paul Selby, and Richard V. Carpenter, Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Boone County (2 vols.; Chicago: Munsell Publishing Company, 1909), II, 938.

Sergeant Onley Andrus, Company D. These letters, 47 from Andrus and 14 to him, contain valuable insights into the day-to-day life of the men, as well as a chronology of troop movements during the war.³ In addition, the editor of the Andrus letters, Fred Albert Shannon, supplies a very useful map which indicates the specific towns and cities visited by the Ninety-fifth.⁴

A third source of information is the files of the United States Pension Bureau. Cashier, the only woman known to have received a Civil War pension, was investigated thoroughly; the government wanted to make sure that the woman applying for a pension was indeed the person who served with the Ninety-fifth Illinois. As a result, the pension file is replete with depositions taken from members of the regiment who were asked to identify Cashier (either by seeing him in person or by viewing a photograph). These men were asked to recall certain facts about Cashier and his service; and though many of the

³Fred Albert Shannon, ed., The Civil War Letters of Sergeant Onley Andrus (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1947). Andrus served throughout the war as a Sergeant, but was mustered out as a First Sergeant; see Illinois, Adjutant General, Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Illinois (9 vols.; Springfield: Phillips Brothers State Printers, 1901), V, 417.

⁴Shannon, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

comments were quite vague, some revelations were detailed and helpful.⁵

Also of great value are the local newspaper accounts. The Ninety-fifth contained men mostly from Boone and McHenry Counties; since Belvidere is in Boone County, the Belvidere Standard constantly covered the actions of the Ninety-fifth and frequently printed correspondence written to the paper or to local individuals from members of the regiment.⁶

Diaries or other accounts written by members of other regiments whose activities coincided with those of the Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry have also been consulted in order to help complete the picture of daily life which is necessary in this study.

The author also made use of official records and officers' accounts of the war as related in War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies;⁷ Battles and Leaders of the

⁵U.S., Bureau of Pensions, File on Albert D. J. Cashier. Copies of file may be obtained by writing to the Pension Bureau.

⁶Belvidere Standard (Belvidere, Illinois), August 5, 1862-September 26, 1865.

⁷U.S., War Records Office, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (128 vols.; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1881-1901).

Civil War;⁸ and A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion.⁹

These works give further verification of accounts of battles, campaigns, and troop movements.

The problem of chronicling the activities of Albert D. J. Cashier is not so easy; in fact, the simple selection of the pronoun with which to refer to Cashier is somewhat difficult. In this study Cashier is referred to with masculine pronouns during the discussion of the time in which Cashier was believed to be a man. At the time in this study that Cashier's true sexual identity becomes generally known, a switch to feminine pronouns is made.

The major sources of information about Cashier's antebellum life are newspapers, interviews, and court records. Cashier is known to have migrated from Belvidere, Illinois, to Saunemin, Illinois, shortly after the war, and to have lived in Saunemin, a town in Livingston County, until 1911. One useful newspaper is the Pontiac Daily Leader.¹⁰ The Leader contains a limited amount of source material since Albert D. J. Cashier was a nondescript

⁸Clarence C. Buel and Robert U. Johnson, eds., Battles and Leaders of the Civil War (4 vols.; New York: The Century Company, 1884-1888).

⁹Frederick H. Dyer, A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion (3 vols.; New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1959).

¹⁰Pontiac Daily Leader (Pontiac, Illinois), 1910-1915.

person until the public learned of her true sexual identity in 1910. In addition, the Bloomington Daily Pantagraph did, in the 1950's and 1960's, print several articles concerning Cashier's life.

Since Cashier was still living in the early part of this century, there remain people who remember Cashier and are able to relate his activities. The major difficulty with the information gained from interviews is that memories get hazy, inaccuracies get started, and myths grow; therefore, the author has attempted to cross-check all significant information related to Cashier's life.

The court records which are relevant to this study are on file in Adams County Courthouse in Quincy, Illinois. These records concern Albert D. J. Cashier's confinement in the Quincy Soldiers' and Sailors' Home and her subsequent commitment to the Watertown State Hospital in East Moline, as well as the records of the search for Cashier's heir.¹¹ These papers reveal the discrepancy between the private realization of her female status and the legal documentation of her male identity. They also contain information concerning her possible origin, though Cashier was legally ruled to have had no heirs.

¹¹Illinois, Adams County, Court Records.

The presentation of the study will be as follows:
The Formation of the Regiment and Its Movement to Memphis,
From the Vicksburg Campaign to Mustering Out, Cashier's
Life After the War, The Search for Heirs, and Conclusion.

Materials used for this study were found in the
following libraries: Belvidere Public Library, Belvidere,
Illinois; Daily Pantagraph Library, Bloomington, Illinois;
Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois;
McLean County Historical Library, Bloomington, Illinois;
Milner Library, Illinois State University, Normal, Illi-
nois; Pontiac Public Library, Pontiac, Illinois.

CHAPTER I

ORGANIZATION OF THE REGIMENT AND MOVEMENT TO MEMPHIS

On July 2, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln issued a call for 300,000 more men to join the Union Army. The War Between the States which began on April 12, 1861, had not, as some had expected, been completed in a matter of months and additional troops were badly needed. A combination of errors, including the abolition of federal recruiting and the selection of unsuccessful generals to lead the army led to the serious depletion of Union forces.¹

Lincoln's call for forces, augmented by a similar request only one month later, was fulfilled through a quota system. Under this plan, each state and district was told a specific number of men which it must supply, preferably by enrolling volunteers. If, however, there were not enough volunteers, then the remaining number were to be drafted. In 1862 the necessity for the draft was considered to be a disgrace both to the men and to the regions from which they came; such a need was construed as

¹Fred Albert Shannon, ed., The Civil War Letters of Sergeant Onley Andrus (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1947), p. 18.

a reflection on the patriotism of the people in the area. Most counties, in order to try to ensure adequate enlistments, raised money which was paid out as bounty to the men who enlisted. With this method, the state of Illinois was able to fill its quota with volunteers, and, thereby, avoid the use of the draft.²

One of the regiments thus raised was the Ninety-fifth Regiment Illinois Infantry Volunteers, which contained seven companies from McHenry County and three companies from Boone County. McHenry and Boone Counties are in northern Illinois, east of Rockford. Initial enlistments began in July, shortly after President Lincoln's call.³ On August 5, 1862, the Boone County board of supervisors was reported to have voted a 60 dollar bounty for each man. On the same day the Belvidere Standard announced the formation of a Boone County company by C. B. Loop and M. E. Keeler. This company was later designated Company B.⁴

²Ibid.

³Wales W. Wood, A History of the Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry Volunteers (Chicago: Tribune Company's Book and Job Printing Office, 1865), p. 3.

⁴Belvidere Standard (Belvidere, Illinois), August 5, 1862, p. 3.

Of the response in Belvidere, the Boone County city in which Cashier enlisted, historian Gerhard Clausius commented,

Many Belvidere boys had been in the Shiloh battle, for the town's first recruits had been assigned to the Fifteenth Illinois Volunteers, which had suffered many losses in the battle. The people of Belvidere were thus conscious of the need for men if the Union cause was to emerge victorious.⁵

The first complete company for the Ninety-fifth raised in Boone County was, however, not Company B but Company G, the company to which Albert D. J. Cashier belonged. When Cashier (sometimes spelled Cashire) enlisted on August 6, 1862, the only notations made by the enrollment officers, Thomas Humphrey and Elliott Bush, were the usual:

Age:	19	Complexion:	Light
Height:	5' 3"	Marital Status:	Single
Hair:	Amber	Occupation:	Farmer
Eyes:	Blue	Nativity:	New York ⁶

There was no indication that the enlistment of Albert D. J. Cashier was the official beginning of a 53-year disguise: Albert D. J. Cashier was a woman!

⁵Gerhard P. Clausius, "The Little Soldier of the 95th; Albert D. J. Cashier," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, LI (Winter, 1958), 380.

⁶Illinois, Records of the Adjutant General. Records are on file at Illinois State Archives, Springfield, Illinois.

The members of Company G met early in August to elect officers. The Standard related,

There was a full attendance, and a finer body of men we have never seen together. In fact if Messrs. HUMPHREY & BUSH [sic] had had their pick of the county, their success could not have been better.

The men referred to by name were Thomas W. Humphrey, who was elected Captain, and Elliott N. Bush, who was elected First Lieutenant; they were the men most responsible for the formation of the company. The other elected officer was Wales W. Wood, Second Lieutenant, the man who was eventually to compile the regimental history.⁷

Captain Humphrey, a native of Knoxville, Ohio, had spent most of his life in Franklin, Illinois. Though Franklin is in DeKalb County and Thomas Humphrey had served in the DeKalb County Recorder's Office and had run for DeKalb County Sheriff, he became an organizer and leader of this regiment representing Boone and McHenry Counties.⁸

The enlistments in the Ninety-fifth were so unexpectedly numerous that the Boone County board of supervisors halted the bounty payment. This action caused such

⁷Belvidere Standard, August 12, 1862, p. 3.

⁸T. M. Eddy, The Patriotism of Illinois (2 vols.; Chicago: Clarke and Company, Publishers, 1866), II, 383.

a decline in volunteers that the area residents began to fear the need of conscription. As a result, on August 11, 1862, a town meeting was held and the people voiced a desire to continue the bounty. A subscription was taken at the meeting and the supervisors were able to promise the 60 dollar bounty to the first 300 men, a large enough number to preclude the necessity of the draft and a large enough number to include all Boone County members of the Ninety-fifth.⁹

While the other two Boone County companies were being filled, Company G busied itself adopting standards of behavior. The Standard praised the resultant resolutions and printed them in their entirety:

The following excellent resolutions were adopted last Tuesday by Capt. Bush's company. Part of them are those adopted by the Board of Trade Regiment of Chicago.

WHEREAS, The people of Boone Co. having generously responded to the call of the President, we, their representatives in the army, going forth as brothers, and desiring to preserve our integrity and elevate the standard of morality and religion in the camp, do therefore resolve:--

1. That we will stand by each other in sickness and health, and will never see a member suffer for anything it is in our power to procure.

⁹Belvidere Standard, August 12, 1862, p. 3.

2. That we will not take the name of God in vain, and will do our utmost to prevent others falling into the pernicious habit.

3. That we will discountenance gambling in any way, using our best endeavors to prevent any game of chance.

4. That we will not drink any intoxicating liquors, nor allow any in camp.

5. That we will sustain our regular worship on the Sabbath, and at such times as may be instituted, if not interfering with our duties.¹⁰

After most of the companies were filled, the officers of the several groups met in Marengo to organize the regiment. The major task was to elect field officers; those selected were the Honorable Lawrence S. Church of Woodstock, Colonel by unanimous vote; Thomas W. Humphrey of DeKalb, Lieutenant Colonel; and Leander Blanden of Harvard, Major.¹¹

Since Captain Humphrey had become Lieutenant Colonel of the Ninety-fifth and Second Lieutenant Wood had become the Adjutant, Company G held a second election to fill the two vacancies. In this election Elliott N. Bush was elevated to Captain by acclamation; Henry M. Bush became the First Lieutenant; and Joseph M. Collier (sometimes spelled Collyer) became the Second Lieutenant. In

¹⁰Belvidere Standard, August 26, 1862, p. 3.

¹¹Wood, op. cit., p. 14.

addition, Charles W. Ives was named Orderly Sergeant. At the same meeting it was announced that daily drills would be held twice a day for those who could attend.¹²

The men of the Ninety-fifth Illinois arrived for training at Camp Fuller, Rockford, Illinois, on September 3, 1862. On the following day, Lieutenant J. W. Tibbatts of the regular army mustered the regiment into service.¹³

At this point one of the obvious questions which arises about Private Albert Cashier's disguise is, how did he ever pass the medical examination given all recruits, without his secret being discovered? There must have been, one realizes, a lack of complete medical examination involved in the process. In July, 1862, Frederick Law Olmstead reported the results of his study of medical examinations to President Lincoln:

The careless and superficial medical inspection of recruits made at least 25 per cent of the volunteer army raised last year not only utterly useless, but a positive incumbrance and embarrassment.¹⁴

¹²Belvidere Standard, August 26, 1862, p. 3.

¹³Wood, op. cit., p. 15.

¹⁴Bell Irvin Wiley, The Life of Billy Yank, the Common Soldier of the Union (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1952), p. 23.

Another historian notes that many of the doctors employed were "barely trained" and only gave two or three taps on the chest of fully-dressed recruits,¹⁵ causing one newspaper reporter to quip that the army's policy was, "Don't test the eyes, count them."¹⁶ One individual who was sworn in at Camp Butler, Springfield, Illinois, noted, "The medical examination was skipped in my case. The doctor simply bowed to me pleasantly and said: 'I guess you will make a good soldier.'"¹⁷ The History of the Seventy-third Regiment of the Illinois Infantry Volunteers reported that the medical examination "was, to all appearances at least, conducted in a thorough manner, though but very few of the men were pronounced unfit for army service."¹⁸

But what of Cashier's regiment? How was its examination carried out? The United States Bureau of

¹⁵Victor Hicken, Illinois in the Civil War (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966), p. 9.

¹⁶Kankakee Daily Journal (Kankakee, Illinois), December 16, 1965, p. 43.

¹⁷Albert O. Marshall, Army Life; From a Soldier's Journal (Joliet, Illinois: Printed for the author by Chicago Legal News Company, 1883), p. 15.

¹⁸Regimental Reunion Association, A History of the Seventy-third Regiment of Illinois Infantry Volunteers (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1890), p. 23.

Pensions wanted to know the same thing; thus in 1915 several members of the Ninety-fifth who were asked for depositions commented on the question. Robert D. Hannah, Corporal, Company G, stated, "When I was examined for enlistment, I was not stripped. . . ." ¹⁹ Robert Horan, Corporal, Company G, affirmed Hannah's statement and added that all the recruits showed were their hands and feet. ²⁰ With such a cursory examination, it was apparently easy for Albert D. J. Cashier to be mustered in as a member of the Ninety-fifth Regiment Illinois Infantry Volunteers.

Since the soldiers of the Ninety-fifth Illinois expected to be at Camp Fuller for several weeks,

. . . the commissioned officers and enlisted men, heretofore unaccustomed to the conditions of military life, had a good opportunity of becoming acquainted with some of its mysteries and requirements, of studying into the theoretical part of war, and of informing themselves generally in reference to the duties appertaining to their respective offices. Squad drills, company and battalion drills, dress parades, and commissioned and non-commissioned officers' schools at night, were at once instituted, and the whole camp,

¹⁹U.S., Bureau of Pensions, File on Albert D. J. Cashier, Deposition of Robert D. Hannah. (Hereinafter referred to as Bureau of Pensions File.)

²⁰Ibid., Deposition of Robert Horan.

from morning till evening, now became busy with the hum and tramp of military preparation.²¹

Though Wales Wood makes the first days in camp sound quite romantic, Company D's Sergeant Onley Andrus, McHenry, Illinois, saw things differently; for he wrote his wife on September 7, complaining of the hard work and of a three-day rainfall which kept his socks from drying. The work, the weather, and the diet of pork and hard bread apparently caused Andrus, as well as several of his fellow soldiers, to become ill. As a result, Andrus asked his wife not to come to visit; he was afraid that if too many visitors came, Colonel Church would decide to make the troops drill in order to show them off.²²

Colonel Lawrence S. Church, though a capable, likeable man, was in quite poor health and had to relegate many of his usual duties of command and discipline to Lieutenant Colonel Thomas W. Humphrey. To add to Church's burdens, the Seventy-fourth Illinois Infantry, which, along with the Ninety-second, Ninety-sixth, and Ninety-fifth, had been stationed at Camp Fuller, was called to the field, thus leaving Church, the senior officer, in command. As Wales Wood explained, "The sick bed seemed a

²¹Wood, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

²²Shannon, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

much more appropriate place for him than the camp, yet his ardent patriotism, and an overruling desire to be with his men all the time, determined him to remain with them, though already prostrated with sickness."²³

Sergeant Andrus reacted to Church's replacement of the Seventy-fourth's Colonel Jason Marsh as Post Commander with optimism. In a letter to his wife, dated September 26, 1862, Andrus complained of difficulty in obtaining rations, but expressed hopes of faring better with Church in command.²⁴

In the same letter Andrus mentioned that the men had received their "canteens, Haversacks, and drawers" and stated that the regiment expected to get its marching orders soon.²⁵

It is interesting to compare the account of life at Camp Fuller given by Andrus with that of Wood, particularly the aspect of diet. Onley Andrus, for instance, complains about the food, especially the difficulty of getting rations. Wales Wood, on the other hand, comments on the proximity of the camp to home and notes that the many

²³Wood, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

²⁴Shannon, op. cit., p. 24.

²⁵Ibid.

visitors brought, "large and benevolent supplies of eatables and luxuries palatable to the taste, and conducive to the comfort and contentment of the 'boys in blue.'" Wood, in fact, expressed some concern that such treatment would retard the progress made in preparing the men of the Ninety-fifth for actual duty in the field. He did, however, acknowledge that, in spite of the abundance of visitors and food, the regiment "progressed in a favorable and highly satisfactory manner."²⁶

Before the Ninety-fifth finally left Camp Fuller, there had been two false reports concerning its departure. The first was reported in the Belvidere Standard on September 9, but was labeled almost immediately as false.²⁷ Another rumor related in the Woodstock Sentinel, was attributed to Henry D. Bates, Quartermaster of the Ninety-fifth.²⁸

Legitimate orders finally arrived for the regiment on September 29, 1862. Governor Richard Yates told the regiment to leave Rockford for Louisville, Kentucky, and report to Major General H. G. Wright, Department of the

²⁶Wood, op. cit., p. 21.

²⁷Belvidere Standard, September 9, 1862, p. 3.

²⁸Shannon, op. cit., p. 24.

Ohio. The men of the Ninety-fifth, practicing the military precaution they would need in enemy country, set about destroying all combustible equipment and generally disassembled the camp. Having done so, the Ninety-fifth marched through Rockford and entrained, only to have a telegram from Governor Yates arrive to reverse the earlier order. As a result, the dejected and weary men had to return to Camp Fuller and rebuild camp.²⁹

One month after this frustrating experience, the Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry Regiment received definite orders from Illinois Adjutant General Fuller to leave for Columbus, Kentucky, where it was assigned to serve under Major General Ulysses S. Grant, Department and Army of the Tennessee.³⁰

On November 4, 1862, the regiment, a full 983 soldiers, left Rockford on the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad, then changed to the Illinois Central in Chicago for the trip to Cairo. On the sixth, the regiment arrived in Cairo and boarded the steamboat Dakotah. That night the Dakotah delivered the Ninety-fifth to Columbus, Kentucky, where the men reported to Brigadier General

²⁹Wood, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

³⁰Ibid., p. 25.

MAP 1

LOCATIONS OF THE NINETY-FIFTH ILLINOIS INFANTRY
THROUGHOUT THE WAR

Source: Fred Albert Shannon, ed., The Civil War Letters of Sergeant Onley Andrus (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1947), p. 12.

Jefferson C. Davis.³¹ The Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry Volunteers was attached to First Brigade, Sixth Division, Left Wing, Thirteenth Army Corps.³²

It was while the regiment was in Columbus that Colonel Church's health became so bad that he had to return home.³³ Though the men had hoped that Colonel Church would recover and be able to return, he was never able to rejoin the regiment. At Colonel Church's departure, Lieutenant Colonel Humphrey took command, though Humphrey did not receive an official promotion for two months.³⁴

Almost immediately after having arrived in Columbus, the Ninety-fifth was ordered to move to Jackson, Tennessee, and was placed under the command of Major General Stephen A. Hurlbut, a Belvidere native. The train trip to Jackson was extremely uncomfortable for the men, since they rode in freight cars. To add to their discomfort, Colonel Humphrey decided that the troops should

³¹Ibid., pp. 26-27. See also Shannon, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

³²Frederick H. Dyer, A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion (3 vols.; New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1959), III, 1086-1087.

³³Belvidere Standard, November 25, 1862, p. 3.

³⁴Shannon, op. cit., p. 19.

stay aboard the train until morning so that there would be no chance that they could cause or get into any trouble.³⁵

During the two weeks the Ninety-fifth Illinois was in Jackson, the regiment spent its time drilling, trying to prepare itself for the real hardships of battle.³⁶ In addition, the men were assigned to guard land in the area which belonged to people who claimed to support the Union.³⁷

On November 21, 1862, the Ninety-fifth Illinois moved to Grand Junction, Tennessee, and was put under the command of Brigadier General John McArthur, a division commander of the Army and Department of the Tennessee. The Ninety-fifth found itself grouped with experienced veterans serving with the Eleventh, Twelfth, and Seventeenth Illinois; the Fourteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Wisconsin; the Eleventh, Thirteenth, Fifteenth, and Sixteenth Iowa; and the First Kansas regiments. The experienced troops' numbers had been diminished by casualties to such an extent that when the Ninety-fifth

³⁵Wood, op. cit., pp. 28-29.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 32-33.

³⁷Shannon, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

marched in with its 900 or more men, some of the veterans asked "what brigade was passing."³⁸

Since the Ninety-fifth Illinois was the new regiment in camp, it came under close scrutiny by the other soldiers. The first time the Ninety-fifth was on drill with the whole division, it won the general's praise. The regimental historian recalled:

Thus at the outset the regiment won golden opinions from old officers and soldiers. The drilling and constant preparation for such scenes while in camp at Rockford and Jackson, now produced the good results of such training, and the organization, in its efficient and well disciplined condition, was considered a valuable acquisition to the brigade and division.³⁹

In spite of their pleasure with the compliments of the older soldiers, the men of the Ninety-fifth were dissatisfied; for they were getting eager to get into battle. In fact, for a short time the Ninety-fifth was referred to derisively as the "women's outfit," an ironic label in light of the presence of Private Albert Cashier.⁴⁰ Thus, when on November 26th the troops were ordered by Grant

³⁸Wood, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

³⁹Ibid., p. 36.

⁴⁰Kankakee Daily Journal, April 16, 1965, p. 47; Betty Phillips, "WCIA Report," WCIA Television, telecast on December 26, 1968.

to strike camp and move south from Grand Junction to confront the enemy near the Tallahatchie River, the regiment fulfilled its task quickly, destroying everything that had to be left behind in order to keep the Rebels from gaining anything of use or value.⁴¹

The first day the troops marched about 25 miles, a long distance for a regiment that had not done much marching. Initially many of the men of the Ninety-fifth had filled their knapsacks with extra articles, such as mementoes and good luck charms; however, as the march got longer and the packs heavier, most of the men discarded such luxuries. In fact, several tired soldiers suggested that even some of the regulation articles were too numerous and unnecessary. They kept their packs, however, and most of the members of the Ninety-fifth, though tired and foot-sore, were able to stay with the other regiments.⁴²

The next day the regiment moved through Holly Springs, Mississippi, and set up camp a few miles from the Tallahatchie, only a few miles from the enemy. Forecasts for the upcoming confrontation were optimistic, for the Official Records include Brigadier General Frederick

⁴¹Shannon, op. cit., pp. 35-37.

⁴²Wood, op. cit., pp. 40-42.

Steele's report of November 27, 1862:

. . . the entire force under Pemberton's command will scarcely amount to 50,000 . . . they are disheartened and demoralized and will make but a feeble resistance. I have no doubt but that Grant will meet with complete success.⁴³

On November 28, most of the regiments stayed in camp while the First Kansas and the Eleventh Illinois scouted ahead to pinpoint the enemy's position. The scouting expedition discovered that Lieutenant General John C. Pemberton had led his Confederate troops on a hasty retreat, burning a crucial bridge in his wake.⁴⁴

As a result of the fire, the troops had to rebuild the bridge so that wagons and artillery could be taken across. Some of the men of the Ninety-fifth Illinois, including Cashier's Company G, were trapped on the north side of the river and had to help rebuild the bridge. It was ready for use by the second day and the remainder of the division crossed the Tallahatchie to the recently abandoned fortifications.⁴⁵

⁴³U.S., War Records Office, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (128 vols.; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1881-1901), Ser. I, Vol. XVII, Part 1, 529.

⁴⁴Wood, op. cit., pp. 42-43.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 43. See also U.S., War Records Office, op. cit., Ser. I, Vol. XVII, Part 1, 472, 534.

For the first time, regimental chroniclers noted that the Union force to which the Ninety-fifth was attached had captured many prisoners and found deserters, who revealed Pemberton's plans and actions.⁴⁶ The captives revealed that, though the fortifications were well secured for an attack from the north, the direction Grant was coming from, General Pemberton had discovered that General Sherman was closing in from the west. As a result, Pemberton hurriedly moved out of the trap.⁴⁷

The infantry, then led by the Ninety-fifth, moved on south after Pemberton until they reached Abbeville, Mississippi, where they stopped.⁴⁸ The Ninety-fifth set up camp two miles southeast of the town. During their two-week stay, many soldiers went "foraging" and brought back food. Though ostensibly the men were not to steal food or animals, it was not uncommon for the soldiers to take anything they found.⁴⁹ One apparently common ruse was for the men to capture, kill, and skin a hog, then claim the carcass was that of a possum. As Sergeant

⁴⁶Belvidere Standard, December 16, 1862, p. 3.

⁴⁷Wood, op. cit., pp. 44-45.

⁴⁸U.S., War Records Office, op. cit., Ser. I, Vol. XVII, Part 1, 471-472.

⁴⁹Belvidere Standard, December 16, 1862, p. 3.

Andrus, always concerned about his diet, commented, many provisions were left in Grand Junction and the troops were getting only half rations; thus the contraband meat and other food were "very good eating for a hungry man."⁵⁰

After helping to repair the Mississippi Central Railroad bridge nearby and handling other miscellaneous chores, the Ninety-fifth's division marched south through Oxford, Mississippi, and arrived at Yockena (sometimes spelled Yocona) on December 18. Upon their arrival in Yockena, news came that the Confederate Major General Earl Van Dorn had raided and captured most of the Union garrison at Holly Springs, Grant's supply depot. Apparently, in spite of advance knowledge of Van Dorn's location and intentions, the garrison, left by Grant with only "two truncated regiments," was inadequately prepared for the subsequent attack. As a result, the Confederate forces were able to destroy most of the supplies needed to sustain Grant's move south.⁵¹

⁵⁰Shannon, op. cit., p. 42.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 37-38. See also U.S., War Records Office, op. cit., Ser. I, Vol. XVII, Part 1, 477; and Clarence C. Buel and Robert U. Johnson, eds., Battles and Leaders of the Civil War (4 vols.; New York: The Century Company, 1884-1888), III, 475.

Immediately, the Ninety-fifth reversed directions, marching directly back to Holly Springs, a distance of 30 miles. The troops were greeted with the sight of ashes and charred remains. "Cars, whole trains, nothing but the wheels to show that they ever stood there, clothing commissary [sic] stores, forage for teams, everything that you could imagine and more. . . ."52

Most of the forces remained at Holly Springs temporarily, but the Ninety-fifth Illinois, along with the First Kansas, Sixteenth Wisconsin, and a battery under the command of Colonel George W. Deitzler, set out in pursuit of Van Dorn's forces. Heading northwest, the brigade spent the night in Salem, Mississippi, learned that Van Dorn's troops, a cavalry unit, were too far ahead to be overtaken by infantry, and turned back to Holly Springs.⁵³

Serving in the same brigade as the First Kansas Infantry proved to be a helpful experience for many members of the Ninety-fifth, for the Kansas soldiers were admitted experts at finding food along the way wherever they went. It was said, ". . . when there was anything

⁵²Shannon, op. cit., p. 43.

⁵³Wood, op. cit., pp. 48-49.

good to eat which could be seized . . . the First Kansas was in no fear of starvation." Though, as noted previously, the Ninety-fifth had had some experience in "foraging," the regimental historial, Wales Wood, cited this particular expedition as one in which many of the regiment made "rapid progress in learning the skillful modus operandi of bringing eatables into camp. . . ."54

From Holly Springs, Sergeant Andrus wrote to his wife about camp life and he mentioned his sharing a tent. This simple statement, made in passing, brings up one perplexing problem concerning Albert D. J. Cashier's successful disguise: how could he live with, even share a tent with, other members of the regiment without his true sex being discovered? In answer, first of all, one must turn to the statements of Cashier's companions. Of the men who made depositions concerning Cashier, none of the three who mentioned the fact of "bunk mates" could recall the names of any of Cashier's bunk mates.⁵⁵ One man thought Cashier "had one at time [sic],"⁵⁶ leaving one to wonder if the man meant to say "had one at times" or "had

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 49-50.

⁵⁵Bureau of Pensions File, Depositions of Robert Horan, Joy H. Saxton, Eli Brainerd.

⁵⁶Ibid., Deposition of Eli Brainerd.

one at one time." Another recalled, "I remember now that he didn't seem to want a bunk mate."⁵⁷

Most of the men of the Ninety-fifth commented that Cashier was unusually quiet and difficult to get to know. He did not participate in the games and sports that often took place.⁵⁸ These descriptions make Albert Cashier seem reclusive. Such behavior was not unique, for Bell Irvin Wiley includes a category for the recluse in a section on types of soldiers in Billy Yank. He quotes one soldier's explanation:

These men were irreproachable as soldiers . . . but they seemed shut up within an impenetrable shell, and would be on their blankets silent while all others joined in the social round; or perhaps would get up and go out of the tent as if its lively social atmosphere was uncongenial. . . . Should you address them they would answer pleasantly but in monosyllables. . . . They could not be drawn out. They would cook by themselves, eat by themselves, camp by themselves . . . in fact keep by themselves at all times as much as possible.⁵⁹

⁵⁷Ibid., Deposition of Joy H. Saxton.

⁵⁸Ibid., Depositions of Robert Hannah, Eli Brainerd, Joy H. Saxton. See also Lowell A. Dearing, "The Challenge of Rebellion," Outdoor Illinois (July, 1967), 26. Dearing's article, however, does contain inaccuracies, the most glaring of which is the designation of Cashier's company as the 65th rather than the 95th.

⁵⁹Wiley, op. cit., p. 332.

The implication of the above comments is that the soldiers who wished to be left alone were left alone, a situation which would have helped Cashier to keep his sex a secret.

Shortly after Christmas, Grant's army left Holly Springs for Memphis, Tennessee. The Ninety-fifth, along with the rest of Colonel Deitzler's brigade, stayed in Collierville for 11 days in order to help repair and guard the railroad.⁶⁰ Keeping in mind the error made at the Holly Springs garrison, Deitzler required the troops to be up and ready for battle at 3 a.m.⁶¹

On January 13, 1863, the brigade marched to Memphis and set up camp three miles from the city. The hopes of the Ninety-fifth for more action were high, for "it was soon evident . . . that there was a grand expedition on foot for the Army of the Tennessee, that the campaign was to be continued, and that it would be prosecuted with renewed vigor down the Mississippi Valley, against Vicksburg. . . ." ⁶² At this point, the Ninety-fifth was shifted from the Sixteenth Army Corps under the command of Major General Charles S. Hamilton to the Seventeenth

⁶⁰Wood, op. cit., p. 51.

⁶¹Shannon, op. cit., p. 38.

⁶²Wood, op. cit., p. 52.

Army Corps under Major General James B. McPherson.⁶³

After this shift in command, the Ninety-fifth Illinois left Memphis for Vicksburg, Mississippi. At the time the men could not have realized that their duties would take place in and around Vicksburg for most of the rest of the war.

⁶³Shannon, op. cit., p. 38. See also Dyer, op. cit., III, 1087.

CHAPTER II

FROM THE VICKSBURG CAMPAIGN TO MUSTERING OUT

On January 19, 1863, the Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry boarded the steamer Maria Denning for the trip to Vicksburg. Along with the Ninety-fifth were the Eleventh Iowa, Eighteenth Wisconsin, and one company of the Second Illinois Artillery, as well as artillery, army wagons, mules and horses--enough men, equipment, and animals to fill every bit of space aboard.¹ Because of the overcrowding, some of the troops had to travel below with the animals and equipment. Sleeping on board was not possible; so the Maria Denning and the 14 other steamers in the fleet stopped at night and the men slept on shore.²

One week later the fleet of steamers arrived at Milliken's Bend, Louisiana, a point several miles above a canal which was under construction. It was strategically desirable to provide a passage for boats to proceed to

¹Wales W. Wood, A History of the Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry Volunteers (Chicago: Tribune Company's Book and Job Printing Office, 1865), pp. 53-54.

²Fred Albert Shannon, ed., The Civil War Letters of Sergeant Onley Andrus (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1947), pp. 38-39.

a point below Vicksburg, thus permitting an attack from the rear. When the Ninety-fifth arrived at Young's Point, Louisiana, the location of the canal, the infantrymen were put to work on canal construction, day and night shifts. Soon, however, the Ninety-fifth Illinois, as part of Colonel Deitzler's brigade, was sent to Lake Providence, Louisiana, to begin another canal. Just before the brigade left Young's Point, Colonel Deitzler issued a statement praising the "soldierly bearing and conduct" of most of the men, asserting further:

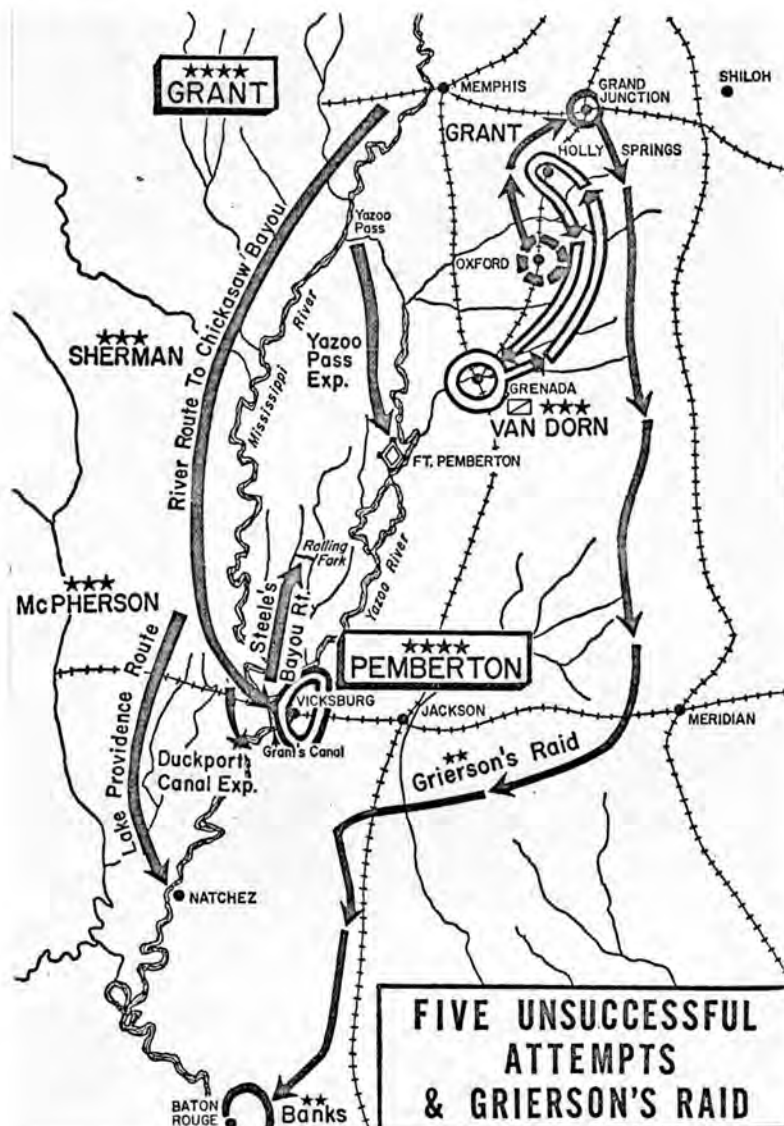
. . . the Ninety-fifth stands at the head of the list in the brigade, if not in the division, in point of good order and discipline, and "a patient continuance in well-doing," which is certain to bring its reward in any position of life, will ensure the regiment a bright record, to which they can point with pride.³

Interestingly, at approximately the time Deitzler issued the above statement, Sergeant Andrus wrote a letter noting the desertions of about 20 members of his regiment, and an equal number from the First Kansas. According to Andrus, the men left about the time the brigade was ordered to move from Memphis toward Vicksburg. Of the desertions Andrus derided, "Such Soldiery will never end the

³Wood, op. cit., pp. 55-57.

MAP 2

THE VICKSBURG CAMPAIGN, PRELIMINARY OPERATIONS



Source: Mark Mayo Boatner III, The Civil War Dictionary (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1959), p. 872.

war.⁴

The canal being dug at Lake Providence was intended to join the lake with the higher water level of the Mississippi, effecting a flooding of the lake and its outlets which would allow the larger boats to pass through. Around the middle of February the link was completed and the Mississippi waters rushed in, flooding plantations and the village of Lake Providence, even threatening the troops camped nearby. The experiment did not meet its intended goal, however, for the new boundaries were not wide or deep enough for large steamers. The major benefit of the inundation of land was that the land which supplied Confederate forces in the area with supplies was flooded. The canal at Young's Point also failed to accomplish its intent.⁵

The service at Lake Providence from February to April of 1863 proved to be costly to the Union forces. The hard work and new climate proved fatal to large numbers of the troops.⁶ In one letter alone, Andrus noted

⁴Shannon, op. cit., p. 46.

⁵Wood, op. cit., pp. 59-60. See also Clarence C. Buel and Robert U. Johnson, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War (4 vols.; The Century Company, 1884-1888), III, 476.

⁶Wood, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

that five medical discharges were to be made and that one other regiment, the Twenty-third Wisconsin, had suffered five deaths in a 24-hour period.⁷

During the period that the Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry was stationed at Lake Providence, the Belvidere Standard carried several articles about the regiment. On February 17, 1863, there was an announcement that Captain Charles B. Loop was so ill that he had had to return home; Captain Loop was replaced by First Lieutenant M. E. Keeler.⁸

As happened earlier in their service, the men of the regiment became dissatisfied with the lack of fighting. One letter writer despaired of the Ninety-fifth's "ever fighting."⁹ Sergeant Andrus complained, ". . . as yet the bold Bloodless 95th have seen nothing like a fight."¹⁰ In one ironic entry from Lake Providence, Captain Elliott N. Bush wrote to the paper, listed the names of the men who were ill, then generalized, "The

⁷Shannon, op. cit., pp. 46, 48.

⁸Belvidere Standard (Belvidere, Illinois), February 17, 1863, p. 3.

⁹Ibid. See also Belvidere Standard, March 3, 1863, p. 2.

¹⁰Shannon, op. cit., p. 55.

health of the company is good."¹¹

While the Ninety-fifth Illinois was stationed at Lake Providence, the Union practice of organizing Negro regiments was begun. Wales Wood noted, "Large numbers of colored flocked in from the surrounding country. . . ." It took little time for several regiments to be formed and, in some cases, men from the Ninety-fifth Illinois became officers in the new regiments. According to Wood, "These colored regiments thus formed were prepared in a few weeks to do important service in the operations which were then going on against Vicksburg."¹²

In light of the hard work and illness faced by Deitzler's brigade at Lake Providence, the order for the Ninety-fifth Illinois to join Grant at Milliken's Bend was a welcome one. The Ninety-fifth, arriving after Grant's departure, moved on through Milliken's Bend to Smith's Plantation, Louisiana, where it was attached to Brigadier General T. E. G. Ransom's brigade; the greater part of Deitzler's brigade had remained at Lake Providence.¹³

¹¹Belvidere Standard, March 31, 1863, p. 2.

¹²Wood, op. cit., pp. 62, 69-70.

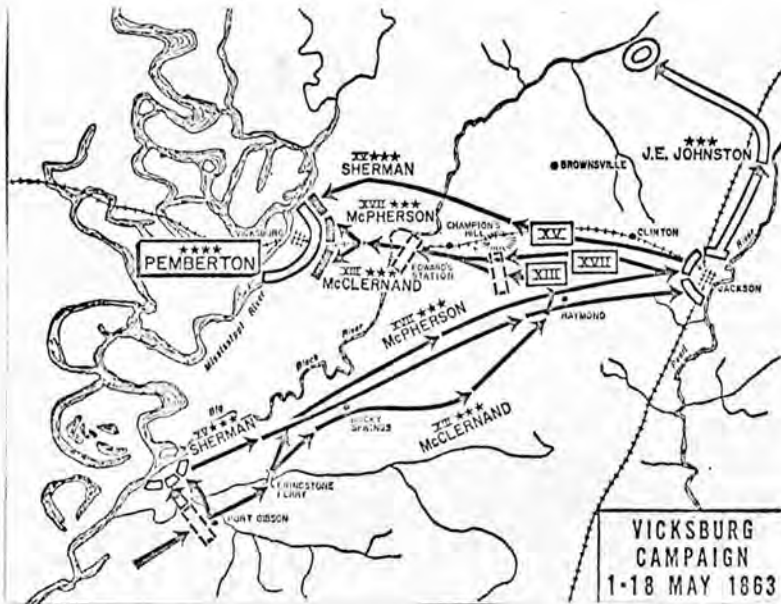
¹³Ibid., pp. 71-72.

Most of the forces which were to accompany Grant's assault on Vicksburg had amassed in March and were already across the Mississippi. Grant had realized that General Joseph E. Johnston was trying to get to Vicksburg to reinforce Lieutenant General John C. Pemberton; consequently, Grant moved quickly to prevent the merger. The rest of the Seventeenth Division had captured Grand Gulf on May 2, 10 days before Ransom's brigade got there, then had moved on to intervene between the Confederate forces. Ransom's brigade, moving quickly to join Grant, almost missed the whole battle; for by the time it reached Champion's Hill, the site of Grant's confrontation with Pemberton, the Confederacy's Pemberton was beating a hasty retreat to the fortifications at Vicksburg.¹⁴

Grant revealed after the battle at Champion's Hill, which is midway between Vicksburg and Jackson, that his troop deployment had actually cut off Pemberton's retreat route, but Grant had not realized it. Later in the day, he ordered McPherson's men to the support of Major General Alvin P. Hovey; thus inadvertently opening the avenue of retreat. In spite of the tactical error which allowed the Confederate escape, Grant's original intent to prevent

¹⁴Shannon, op. cit., p. 40.

MAP 3
 THE VICKSBURG CAMPAIGN,
 MAY 1-MAY 18, 1863



Source: Mark Mayo Boatner III, The Civil War Dictionary (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1959), p. 874.

the union of Pemberton's and Johnston's forces was realized.¹⁵

During the next few days the Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry Volunteers saw plenty of fighting, for they participated in the futile assaults of May 19 and May 22. During the attack of the nineteenth the Ninety-fifth Illinois managed to advance to within 100 yards of the Confederate fortifications, held their position until nightfall, then fell back when ordered to do so. In that one day of fighting, the Ninety-fifth had 7 men killed and 54 wounded.¹⁶ One of the wounded was Colonel Thomas Humphrey, who, though wounded on the instep of his foot, refused to leave the field.¹⁷

Three days later the Seventeenth Division again tried to storm the Vicksburg fortifications. General Grant reported:

I attempted to carry the place by storm on the 22nd, but was unsuccessful. Our troops were not repulsed from any point, but simply failed to enter the works of the enemy. At several

¹⁵Buel, op. cit., III, 511.

¹⁶U.S., War Records Office, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (128 vols.; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1881-1901), Ser. I, Vol. XVII, Part 1, 159, 193.

¹⁷Wood, op. cit., p. 75.

points they got up to the parapets of the enemy's forts and planted their flags on the outer slope of the embankments, where they still have them.¹⁸

Again, the Ninety-fifth Illinois was in the thick of the battle and again it lost a great many men: 18 killed and 83 wounded. According to Brigadier General Ransom, the Ninety-fifth Illinois' "loss was much heavier than that of any other regiment in my command."¹⁹

In the second assault, the Ninety-fifth lost several of its officers and, for a time, thought that Colonel Humphrey was among the casualties. Humphrey explained later that while he was leading his regiment, he got too far ahead and crossed a ridge that his men could not reach. The firing became so intense that he had to lie on the ground and wait for the firing to stop; at nightfall he was able to get up and rejoin his men.²⁰ General Ransom had been so certain that Humphrey had been killed that he had ordered a coffin for him, and the coffin was

¹⁸U.S., War Records Office, op. cit., Ser. I, Vol. XXIV, Part 1, 37.

¹⁹Ibid., Part 2, 159, 297. See also Belvidere Standard, June 2, 1863, p. 3 and July 7, 1863, p. 2.

²⁰U.S., War Records Office, op. cit., Ser. I, Vol. XXIV, Part 2, 299-301.

there when Humphrey walked in.²¹

Regimental historian Wales Wood gave quite a colorful account of the attack and of Humphrey's ordeal:

At ten o'clock A. M., on the 22nd, the charge began again furiously. The Ninety-fifth, on this occasion, also gained an advanced position on the crest of a ridge near the enemy's works, encountering one of the most sweeping and destructive fires to which troops were ever exposed. Colonel Humphrey, in advance of and leading his regiment, enthusiastic [sic] with the desire to storm the fortifications in his immediate front, determined to accomplish it, if among human possibilities, and with that natural daring which characterized the man, pressed onward over that ridge, then being swept by rebel musketry, and plowed up by rebel shot and shell. The regiment attempted to follow their leader, and bravely rallied to the charge, but to advance was to meet certain death, and it was plain that a farther prosecution of the undertaking would annihilate the regiment.

After passing over the ridge mentioned, Colonel Humphrey lay down closely upon the ground, as it was impossible for a human being then to be visible above it and live. In this condition, with the mad cannon balls screaming over him, and plowing around his body, covering him with dirt, and benumbing his limbs, he remained until evening, when he noiselessly crept from his precarious position, and appeared so suddenly and unexpectedly in camp. . . .²²

²¹Shannon, op. cit., p. 41.

²²Wood, op. cit., pp. 76-78.

For his valor, Colonel Humphrey received special notice and praise from General Ransom.²³

It is interesting to note that Company D's Sergeant Onley Andrus, who had complained steadily about the lack of action and real battle, began to complain about the involvement of the Ninety-fifth Illinois in too much fighting. He blamed the situation on Colonel Humphrey, claiming that Humphrey had insisted that the regiment be taken off guard duty at Lake Providence and sent into battle. Andrus assessed Humphrey's motivation in a letter home: "He is looking for Stars and is willing to sacrifice every man in his Regt to accomplish his aims." Andrus further generalized, "For there is none in the Regt that are so blind as not to see what he is up to, and he has anything but the love of the men of his command."²⁴ If such a statement was true, there was no hint of it in either the regimental history or in any of the letters or articles in the Belvidere Standard.

The total cost for the two assaults was 1,267 killed, wounded, or missing.²⁵ The Ninety-fifth Illinois

²³U.S., War Records Office, op. cit., Ser. I, Vol. XXIV, Part 2, 298.

²⁴Shannon, op. cit., p. 53.

²⁵Illinois at Vicksburg (n.p.: Illinois-Vicksburg Military Park Commission, 1907), p. 41.

had had 25 killed and 137 wounded.²⁶ After the two attacks hostilities continued at such a pace that on May 25 many of the dead and injured were still on the field. The odor was so offensive and the wounded were in such obvious agony that the Confederate General Pemberton suggested a truce ". . . so that the dead and dying might receive proper attention." Grant agreed to the idea and the troops cleared the field.²⁷

In spite of the losses incurred by the Union forces, General Grant was confident of eventual success, for in his report of the assault of May 22, 1863, he claimed, "The enemy are now undoubtedly in our grasp. The fall of Vicksburg and the capture of most of the garrison can only be a question of time."²⁸

Grant did, however, decide to cease trying to storm the fortifications at Vicksburg and determined instead to lay siege to the city. His troops dug in around the city and the Union navy controlled the river. Grant reasoned, "As long as we could hold our position, the

²⁶U.S., War Records Office, op. cit., Ser. I, Vol. XXIV, Part 2, 159.

²⁷Buel, op. cit., III, 489.

²⁸U.S., War Records Office, op. cit., Ser. I, Vol. XXIV, Part 1, 37.

enemy was limited in supplies of food, men, and munitions of war, to what they had on hand. These could not last always."²⁹

Consequently, the Union troops, knowing the rebels were trapped, strengthened and fortified their own positions. Piling sandbags in front of the trenches and logs atop the sandbags, the soldiers had such protection that they could almost walk erect with impunity.³⁰

Living conditions during the siege were extremely poor. The men had difficulty getting clean water, such difficulty that one Wisconsin regiment dug a well 100 feet deep to try to alleviate the situation, only to be rewarded with muddy water. Most of the regiments sent groups of men to fill barrels with water from the Mississippi, but that water was not good either.³¹ The problem with water may well be the reason for the single illness report for Private Albert D. J. Cashier during the entire war, for it was reported that Cashier suffered from

²⁹Buel, op. cit., III, 518.

³⁰Bruce Catton, This Hallowed Ground (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1956), p. 260.

³¹Ibid., p. 259.

"chronic diarrhoea" during the Vicksburg campaign.³²

Another report verified Cashier's usually "rigorous health," noting that his health, as well as his "apparent abandon," made him one of the soldiers selected whenever "dependable men were absolutely necessary."³³

Specific mention was again made of Cashier during the Vicksburg campaign, namely in a report of his capture. According to the report, Cashier was captured by the rebels while he was on a "skirmishing expedition," but he "seized a gun from the guard, knocked down the man and fled back to the Union camp."³⁴

Descriptions of the living conditions at Vicksburg lead to speculations about Cashier's undiscovered secret. Historian Bruce Catton revealed,

An Iowan wrote home that "we are all as dirty as hogs" and infested with vermin; they had not had their clothes off for four weeks, and in the trenches they could hardly get enough water to drink; to make any attempt to keep clean was completely hopeless.³⁵

³²U.S., Bureau of Pensions, File on Albert D. J. Cashier. (Hereinafter referred to as Bureau of Pensions File.)

³³Pittsfield Republican (Pittsfield, Illinois), May 14, 1913. The clipping is on file at the Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Home, Quincy, Illinois.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Catton, op. cit., p. 259.

That the practice of not changing clothes often was not unusual is acknowledged by Wiley, for he stated, "Seasoned campaigners commonly slept in their trousers and shirts."³⁶

These notations are mentioned to point out that under such conditions, it would not be so difficult for a woman to disguise successfully as a man as it would if the soldiers bathed or changed often. Unanimously, the men of the Ninety-fifth who filed depositions concerning Cashier affirmed that they had never seen Cashier undressed and had not known of the existence of a woman in the regiment.³⁷

Mary Livermore, a nurse who served during the war, discussed women who had enlisted as men and pointed out that the women were usually revealed "by accident or casualty."³⁸ Cashier, according to the records, was never injured or seriously ill, a factor which probably aided his continued service with the regiment.

³⁶Bell Irvin Wiley, The Life of Billy Yank, the Common Soldier of the Union (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1952), p. 23.

³⁷Bureau of Pensions File.

³⁸Mary Livermore, My Story of the War: A Woman's Narrative of Four Years' Personal Experience (Hartford, Connecticut: A. D. Worthington and Company, 1889), pp. 119-120.

The Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry, as part of Ransom's brigade, was kept busy during the long siege, working constantly to move the trenches and fortifications nearer to the Confederate fortifications. On July 3, 1863, when the city of Vicksburg was finally surrendered, Ransom's brigade had actually dug a trench under one of the main Confederate forts and had planted a mine there.³⁹ When the Union troops marched into the city on July 4, Captain Elliott N. Bush reported, the Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry Volunteers ". . . was considered worthy and well-qualified to be of the honored few to march first into this heretofore stronghold of treason."⁴⁰ After their arrival the men of the Ninety-fifth were assigned to picket duty within the city.⁴¹

Shortly after Grant's forces had captured Vicksburg, Major General Nathaniel Banks took the city of Port Hudson; thus the Union gained control of the Mississippi River from Cairo, Illinois, to the Gulf.⁴² Besides the value of freeing the transportation routes to the Union

³⁹Wood, op. cit., pp. 80-81.

⁴⁰Belvidere Standard, July 14, 1863, p. 2. See also Wood, op. cit., p. 81.

⁴¹Shannon, op. cit., p. 57.

⁴²Wood, op. cit., p. 81.

forces along the Mississippi, the control of the river also served to cut off many of the Confederate supply routes; many of the Confederate forces east of the Mississippi had been getting their supplies from Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana.⁴³

On July 12, 1863, General Ransom's brigade was sent to occupy the city of Natchez, Mississippi. The brigade was able to do so without a fight, apparently having surprised the city.⁴⁴ Again, the Ninety-fifth Illinois was accorded the honor of being allowed to enter a captured city first. Colonel Thomas Humphrey related in a letter that the Ninety-fifth Illinois had picket duty and described it ". . . pleasant duty for a beautiful area." He added that the people of Natchez seemed to be out of touch with the war.⁴⁵

One of the specific tasks assigned Ransom's brigade was to capture supplies being sent to the Confederate forces. Natchez was a good location for the task, for General Ransom discovered that a large herd of cattle intended for the Confederate Army was being pastured only

⁴³Shannon, op. cit., p. 57.

⁴⁴Wood, op. cit., pp. 81-82.

⁴⁵Belvidere Standard, August 4, 1863, p. 2.

a few miles east of the city. Since Ransom had no cavalry, he secured mounts for a unit of infantrymen and sent the unit of 200 men to capture the cattle. The herd of 5,000 cattle was easily taken from the small number of guards and was driven back to Natchez.⁴⁶

Two companies of the Ninety-fifth Illinois, commanded by the then healthy Captain Charles B. Loop, were part of the mounted infantry unit.⁴⁷ The force as a whole was led by Major Asa Worden, Fourteenth Wisconsin Infantry.⁴⁸

Other major prizes captured by the mounted infantry were munitions, cotton, and horses. The ammunition was taken after General Ransom was told that 150 wagons had been ferried across the Mississippi a few days before his arrival. He immediately ordered the mounted unit in pursuit and they succeeded in capturing 312 muskets and 11 boxes of artillery ammunition. In addition, the men destroyed much ammunition which could not be taken back to Natchez.⁴⁹

⁴⁶Wood, op. cit., pp. 82-83.

⁴⁷Belvidere Standard, August 11, 1863, p. 3.

⁴⁸Wood, op. cit., p. 83.

⁴⁹Ibid. See also Shannon, op. cit., p. 57.

A week later Major Worden took his unit eastward to look for other Confederate supplies. Besides the discovery and destruction of stores of ammunition, the troops found supplies of Confederate cotton. A later expedition undertaken with 350 men covered over 100 miles. During this tour Worden's unit destroyed sugar, saddles, small arms, a cotton factory being used to make cloth for the Confederate Army, railroad cars, molasses, and Confederate uniforms. In addition to all of this Worden's men captured 10 rebel prisoners.⁵⁰ Most of the sugar, cotton, and cattle captured by Ransom's brigade was sent down the Mississippi to Generals Grant and Banks.⁵¹

While part of Ransom's forces were on such expeditions, the other men served on guard duty, tried to convince some freed Negroes to continue working on nearby plantations as free laborers, and recruited other freedmen into the army.⁵² The influx of freed Negroes into Natchez was so great that the Union troops had to build a "corral" outside of town for many of them and to give them government rations. Many of the Natchez citizens were afraid

⁵⁰Wood, op. cit., p. 50.

⁵¹Belvidere Standard, August 4, 1863, p. 2.

⁵²Shannon, op. cit., p. 58.

of the large numbers of the freedmen and asked the Union Army for protection; others claimed loyalty to the Union, hoping that such a claim would restore their slaves to them under the terms of the Emancipation Proclamation. Ransom refused the pleas of the latter group and insisted that the Negro laborers be paid for their work.⁵³ Of the Negroes taken into the service, the Ninety-fifth's Colonel Humphrey reported that they had ". . . demonstrated their ability to make good soldiers."⁵⁴

Ransom's brigade was not without danger during its occupation of Natchez. Confederate Colonel John L. Logan approached the city on July 31 with a force of 1,500 men on horseback. His job was to try to reopen the trade route across the Mississippi. Word, however, of Logan's intended attack had reached General Ransom and the Union forces were ready. Meeting Logan outside of the city, the unit of makeshift cavalry, supported by the infantry and artillery, was able to drive Logan's forces back. In the engagement Logan suffered a loss of 61 men: his chief of cavalry was killed, 15 men were wounded, and 45 were

⁵³Wood, op. cit., pp. 87-88.

⁵⁴Belvidere Standard, August 4, 1863, p. 2.

captured.⁵⁵

Logan hovered around the city, skirmishing with Union forces periodically, and generally harassing Ransom's men. Several times, reports of planned raids were received during the night and the Ninety-fifth was roused from sleep. There were, however, few serious encounters.⁵⁶ Ransom repeatedly asked for a full cavalry unit with which he could really battle Logan, but never received one; Ransom complained, "It is a terrible annoyance to have this vagabond (Logan) so near me, and not be able to fight him."⁵⁷

The Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry was obviously held in esteem by Ransom, for during the occupation of Natchez Ransom was asked to send the regiment to General John McArthur. In reply, he sent the Seventy-second and kept the Ninety-fifth.⁵⁸ While the Ninety-fifth was in Natchez, some of the men were allowed to go home on

⁵⁵Wood, op. cit., pp. 85-86.

⁵⁶Shannon, op. cit., p. 62.

⁵⁷Wood, op. cit., p. 86.

⁵⁸Shannon, op. cit., p. 63.

leave.⁵⁹ There is no mention by the regimental historian or by the Belvidere Standard which men were on leave; therefore it is not known whether Cashier left the regiment.

During October, 1863, the Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry, then under the command of Brigadier General Thomas Kilby Smith, was ordered to Vicksburg, where it remained until February of 1864.⁶⁰ While under General Smith, the Ninety-fifth Illinois was attached to the Second Brigade, First Division, Seventeenth Army Corps.⁶¹

The tasks assigned the Ninety-fifth Illinois during the four-month period included building additional fortifications around Vicksburg and serving on garrison duty.⁶² After having served somewhat longer than a year, the Ninety-fifth's ranks were quite depleted. As a result of this situation, plus President Abraham Lincoln's call for 300,000 more soldiers, the regiment sent Captain Charles

⁵⁹Wood, op. cit., p. 90. See also Belvidere Standard, November 3, 1863, p. 3; and Dyer, op. cit., III, 1087. Dyer lists the regimental veterans' leaves as for March and April. Newspaper reports indicate that both Dyer and Wood were right.

⁶⁰Shannon, op. cit., p. 58.

⁶¹Dyer, op. cit., III, 1087.

⁶²Illinois at Vicksburg, op. cit., p. 263.

B. Loop, Captain James Nish, Captain A. S. Stewart, and some noncommissioned officers home for recruits.⁶³

On December 1, 1863, the Standard announced:

Capt. Loop and Lieut. [James] Tisdell have opened a recruiting office on the South Side . . . where any desirous of enrolling themselves in the ranks of the gallant Ninety-fifth, can find an enlistment roll.

A War Meeting, for the promotion of recruiting the ranks of this bully regiment, in which can be found so many of our friends and neighbors, will be held tomorrow evening at Fuller's Hall. Let our citizens rally and have a patriotic time. The old battle scarred flag of the regiment will be exhibited.⁶⁴

While the recruiting was going on, a letter was printed in the newspaper praising "Colonel 'Tom'" (Humphrey). The letter claimed that Humphrey ". . . becomes more popular every day, not only with his own regiment, but with all his associate officers."⁶⁵ Shortly after the letter was printed, Colonel Humphrey arrived in Belvidere on leave. He spoke to the townspeople about the war, delivering a fiery, colorful patriotic speech. One passage declared:

But suddenly these visions [of America] are scattered to the winds by the leer-eyed brute

⁶³Wood, op. cit., pp. 90-91.

⁶⁴Belvidere Standard, December 1, 1863, p. 3.

⁶⁵Belvidere Standard, January 5, 1864, p. 3.

secession thrusting his distorted and disgusting proportions before me, with his left hand grasping the nation by the throat while his right upholds a dagger dripping with the green poison of treason.⁶⁶

Later in the speech Humphrey attacked those who had refused to serve in the army and had improved their financial holdings:

Scores of years from now, a surviving hero of the Siege of Vicksburg will be more honored than the most wealthy of you who have increased your riches from our country's necessities. . . . Centuries from now they will be remembered, and their descendants will be honored in the land, when ill-gotten wealth, unless benevolently used, will have taken to itself wings--when the original possessor will be forgotten, and his offspring will pass unnoticed, glad thus to escape the finger of scorn.⁶⁷

The transcript of Humphrey's stirring oratory covered almost the entire front page of the Standard.

The recruiters for the Ninety-fifth needed more than rousing speeches, however, because the enlistments were slow in coming. Even after extending the time allotted for recruitment efforts and publishing a plea for ". . . a repetition of the patriotism displayed on former occasions,"⁶⁸ the representatives of the

⁶⁶Belvidere Standard, February 9, 1864, p. 1.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Belvidere Standard, March 3, 1864, p. 3.

Ninety-fifth Illinois were barely able to attract enough men to meet the minimum number of privates, 640. Regiments were allowed up to 820 privates.⁶⁹

The Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry Regiment was not entirely idle while the recruiters were at work, but it was virtually free from fighting. In February, 1864, General William T. Sherman led one of the first expeditions from Vicksburg, leaving the Ninety-fifth Illinois to guard the city.⁷⁰ Sherman's intent was to invade "interior sections of the Confederacy" which had been relatively free of Union troop movement. To accomplish this goal the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Army Corps marched toward Jackson, Mississippi, taking different routes. Just outside of the city, the Union forces met and dispersed the Confederate forces. Immediately, Sherman led his men across the Pearl River and headed east for Meridian, Mississippi. Having reached the city with little opposition, the Union forces were able to destroy Confederate arsenals, commissary stores, and railroad communications.⁷¹

⁶⁹Shannon, op. cit., p. 58. See also Wood, op. cit., p. 91.

⁷⁰Wood, op. cit., pp. 92-93, 96-97.

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 92-93.

In March, 1864, shortly after Sherman's return, the Ninety-fifth was selected to accompany Major General Nathaniel Banks on an expedition up the Red River. For this move, the regiment was assigned to the brigade of Colonel Lyman Ward, Fourteenth Wisconsin Infantry. The corps itself was commanded by Brigadier General Andrew Jackson Smith.⁷²

The three divisions selected left Vicksburg on March 9, 1864, to meet General Banks at the mouth of the Red River. The Ninety-fifth Illinois, transported aboard the steamer John Raines, landed two days later. Though Banks and his troops had not reached the mouth of the river yet, General A. J. Smith started up the Red River on the twelfth. With only a minor skirmish on the first day, the Union forces reached Fort DeRussey on March 14 and defeated the Confederate forces there, capturing 300 men in the process. Two days later the Ninety-fifth Illinois was ordered to destroy the fortifications.⁷³

According to Colonel Thomas Humphrey,

The works were very formidable, being by far the most scientifically and permanently constructed works of the enemy I have seen,

⁷²Ibid., p. 97.

⁷³Ibid., pp. 97-98.

and with our limited appliances, very difficult of destruction.

Having dismantled the wooden reinforcements and stacked them so that they could be burned, the men returned to camp. At 7 p.m. Humphrey was told that at 8 p.m. the magazines would be exploded. In preparation, the Ninety-fifth moved away a short distance and sought shelter. As of 10 p.m. no explosion had taken place; so the men moved back to their camp area, many of them going to bed. Thirty minutes later the ground erupted and the air became thick with timbers, lumps of hard clay, and other solid objects. Samuel Snyder, Company A of the Ninety-fifth, suffered a broken leg when he was struck by a clay projectile and several others were wounded. Immediately following the initial explosion, an "iron field-piece" burst and the flying fragments killed several men in the brigade, including one member of the Ninety-fifth.⁷⁴

General A. J. Smith's force left the Fort DeRussey area and moved farther up the Red River, stopping at Alexandria, Louisiana, on March 17 to wait for General Banks.⁷⁵

⁷⁴U.S., War Records Office, op. cit., Ser. I, Vol. XXXIV, Part 1, 386-387.

⁷⁵Shannon, op. cit., p. 59.

On March 25, 1864, two companies of the Ninety-fifth Illinois, Private Albert Cashier's Company G and Company D, were ordered to take prisoners to New Orleans aboard the steamer Meteor.⁷⁶ After the delivery of the prisoners, a card was printed in a New Orleans newspaper praising the "courtesy and humanity" displayed by the members of the Ninety-fifth. Having noted the praise, the Belvidere Standard commented, "Undoubtedly the rebs expected that our boys would show themselves big brutes . . . in their treatment of prisoners of war. . . ." The paper also mentioned that one of the prisoners was a former Belvidere man who was ". . . now anxious to obtain his release by taking the oath of allegiance."⁷⁷

Early in April the two companies rejoined the rest of the army at Grand Ecore, Louisiana. The infantry units for the Red River campaign were supported by 20 gunboats and iron-clads as well as a fleet of transports, a force that historian Fred Albert Shannon called ". . . the most formidable naval expedition ever attempted on the Western rivers."⁷⁸ April 8, 1864, the large unit began to move

⁷⁶Wood, op. cit., p. 101. See also Belvidere Standard, April 12, 1864, p. 3. The Standard names Companies G and B.

⁷⁷Belvidere Standard, April 12, 1864, p. 3.

⁷⁸Shannon, op. cit., p. 59.

on both land and water. The Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry was split, with Cashier's Company G serving as sharpshooters.⁷⁹

The river fleet traveled about 70 miles up the Red River and neared Shreveport, Louisiana, having met little opposition. On April 10, however, the fleet heard that the land forces commanded by General Banks had been defeated at Pleasant Hill, Louisiana, and were retreating to Grand Ecore. Responding to the news, the river force immediately turned back. The return was more hazardous than the trip upriver, for the Confederates had placed artillery and sharpshooters at strategic places along the Red River. In the four to five day return trip, the Ninety-fifth Illinois had one man killed, 11 wounded.⁸⁰

Of Banks's defeat, Fred A. Shannon observed:

Banks seems to have had little faith in the Red River Expedition from the start, and he was utterly discouraged by his defeat by Taylor at Sabine Cross Roads on the eighth and at Pleasant Hill on the ninth of April. He had lost 2,900 men at the former engagement . . . and 1,100 the next day.

But the Confederate estimated losses in the two battles totaled 3,500 and from a military

⁷⁹U.S., War Records Office, op. cit., Ser. I, Vol. XXXIV, Part 1, 380.

⁸⁰Shannon, op. cit., pp. 59-60. See also U.S., War Records Office, op. cit., Ser. I, Vol. XXXIV, Part 1, 387-389.

point of view there was still much chance of success for the Northern forces. A. J. Smith wanted to continue the campaign, but Banks had had enough of it. Both armies at Pleasant Hill had considered themselves whipped, and they retreated equal distances from the field. Each was surprised on the following day to learn that the other also had fled. But Banks had not the heart to continue the campaign.⁸¹

When the retreat, which now involved all of Banks's forces, resumed, Colonel Lyman Ward's brigade was assigned to be the rear guard. The Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry, then with the land forces, was the last regiment, the one most vulnerable to expected Confederate attacks. On April 22 and 23 the brigade successfully warded off vigorous enemy attacks. After frequent skirmishes with the enemy, the Union forces finally reached Alexandria on the twenty-eighth of April.⁸²

At Alexandria the retreating force had to stop to build a dam because the river had fallen so low that the boats could not get through. The Confederate forces, taking advantage of the delay, constantly harassed the troops; but the Union soldiers were able to defend their positions. Having finally succeeded in getting the boats through the previously shallow area, Banks continued his

⁸¹Shannon, op. cit., p. 60.

⁸²Wood, op. cit., p. 105.

retreat, burning Confederate cotton and part of the city of Alexandria before his departure on May 14.⁸³

The remainder of the retreat to the mouth of the Red River was marked by repeated skirmishes, as well as one final battle at Yellow Bayou, Louisiana. In this last battle of the Red River expedition, both sides suffered large losses; but the Union army managed to defeat the Confederate forces and take 300 prisoners. On May 21, 1864, Banks's retreating forces reached the mouth of the Red River.⁸⁴

Of the Red River campaign, Wales Wood concluded, "Thus ended, ingloriously, the great, expensive and fruitless attempt to penetrate to the head-waters of the Red River." Wood's analysis of Banks's actions was quite similar to that of Shannon, for Wood called General Banks "disheartened" and stated, ". . . it was a general belief in the army that a few more days of perseverance would have placed the great object of the expedition in possession of the Union troops." Giving Banks credit for a sincere belief that his troops would be "annihilated" if he did not retreat, Wood added, "The retreat was imperative,

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Shannon, op. cit., p. 60.

however, but was obeyed with feelings of reluctance and disappointment."⁸⁵ Not all of the men were so kind; the Standard related that some of the men of the Ninety-fifth ". . . don't speak in very flattering terms of Gen. Banks."⁸⁶

After its return from the Red River expedition, the Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry expected to be sent back to Vicksburg; for it supposedly had been transferred from the Seventeenth Army Corps only temporarily. Instead, the regiment was ordered to Memphis, Tennessee,⁸⁷ and was assigned to Brigadier General Manning F. Force, Third Brigade, Third Division.⁸⁸

Soon after their arrival, the men of the Ninety-fifth were ordered to join the forces of Brigadier General Samuel D. Sturgis and were placed in a brigade with two other Illinois Infantry regiments, the Eighty-first and the One hundred thirteenth. On June 1, 1864, the troops left Memphis by railway, heading for an ill-fated battle

⁸⁵Wood, op. cit., pp. 107-108. See also Buel, op. cit., IV, 372.

⁸⁶Belvidere Standard, June 7, 1864, p. 3.

⁸⁷Shannon, op. cit., p. 61.

⁸⁸U.S., War Records Office, op. cit., Ser. I, Vol. XXXVIII, Part 4, 293.

at Guntown, Mississippi. Eight days later the Union forces reached Ripley, Mississippi, where they left the train and began the march to Guntown. On June 10 General Sturgis, having advanced with his cavalry units five or six miles ahead of the infantry, met the forces of the Confederacy's Major General Nathan B. Forrest. The infantry, though marching in extreme heat, was told to double-time in order to get to Sturgis's aid. Many of the infantrymen suffered from sunstroke and exhaustion.⁸⁹ Lieutenant William Avery of the Ninety-fifth reported that men ". . . lay by ones, twos, and dozens beside the road."⁹⁰

The Ninety-fifth hurried but did not double-time. Colonel Humphrey reasoned that his men were so tired that if he tried to force them to march too fast, they would not be in "as good and efficient condition possible" for the battle.⁹¹ Colonel George B. Hoge of the One hundred thirteenth Illinois reported later,

My entire command, except the Ninety-fifth Illinois, seemed to be about equally exhausted, this regiment having come up at

⁸⁹Wood, op. cit., p. 110. See also U.S., War Records Office, op. cit., Ser. I, Vol. XXXIX, Part 1, 119-121.

⁹⁰Belvidere Standard, June 28, 1864, p. 2.

⁹¹Wood, op. cit., p. 110.

a more moderate gait, still all suffering more or less from exhaustion.⁹²

Exhausted as they were, the men were immediately thrust into battle. The conflict was a slaughter: the cavalry gave way leaving the infantry exposed, and the depleted ammunition supply was not replenished.⁹³ Though the infantrymen fought desperately, they eventually had to retreat some distance. In time, Sturgis ordered "a general and hasty retreat."⁹⁴

The Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry suffered extreme losses during the carnage. The regiment was, during the course of the battle, led by four different officers. The first, Colonel Thomas W. Humphrey, was killed early in the battle; his successor, Captain William H. Stewart of Company H, received wounds in both thighs and was taken from the field; and his successor, Captain Elliott N. Bush, Company G, was killed. The final regimental leader of the day was Captain Almon Schellenger, Company K, who

⁹²U.S., War Records Office, op. cit., Ser. I, Vol. XXXIX, Part 1, 165.

⁹³Ibid., 123.

⁹⁴Wood, op. cit., p. 112.

led the group in retreat.⁹⁵ Though Schellenger (sometimes spelled Schellinger) was able to organize an orderly withdrawal of part of what was left of the Ninety-fifth, many of the regiments scattered in all directions and Guntown-scarred soldiers straggled into Memphis for days.⁹⁶

Most of the men destroyed their guns, apparently wishing neither to carry them nor to let them fall into enemy hands. Lieutenant John D. Abbe, Company K, who made it back to Memphis in three days, reported that for the last two days he and the men with him had no food. One of the lucky groups, Abbe's men met a train that had been sent to rescue them. Of his rescuers Lieutenant Abbe recalled:

. . . a moment after hearing our condition, the contents of their haversacks were flying through the air in a perfect shower as they threw them at our boys. I have stood with feelings of perfect indifference when the storm of death was howling around and many I loved were falling in the strife, but when I saw a body of men, entire strangers to us, robbing themselves to appease our hunger, and doing it with such a readiness, I must

⁹⁵Shannon, op. cit., p. 61. The officer next in rank to Humphrey was Lieutenant Colonel Leander Blanden, but he was not with the regiment at Guntown. See Belvidere Standard, July 21, 1864, p. 3.

⁹⁶Wood, op. cit., pp. 112-113.

confess I could not stand by unmoved. The tears started, and I was not the only one thus affected.⁹⁷

The loss suffered at Guntown was overwhelming. The Ninety-fifth's brigade had 748 men of 1,674 killed, wounded, or missing,⁹⁸ and the regiment itself lost 82 men.⁹⁹ The valiant Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry was lauded by Colonel Andrew W. Rogers, Eighty-first Illinois, who testified, "I can bear witness to the courage of the Ninety-fifth Illinois Volunteers . . . which were under my immediate view and fought side by side with us during the engagement."¹⁰⁰

Praise for the actions of Brigadier General Samuel Sturgis is not so easy to find. Regimental historian Wales Wood asserted bluntly that the disaster was the direct result of the general's "incompetency and lack of courage." Wood charged, "When the important crisis of battle came, which demanded his counsel, presence and action, he was nowhere to be found near the front, where the

⁹⁷Belvidere Standard, June 28, 1864, p. 2.

⁹⁸U.S., War Records Office, op. cit., Ser. I, Vol. XXXIX, Part 1, 103.

⁹⁹Belvidere Standard, July 5, 1864, p. 3.

¹⁰⁰U.S., War Records Office, op. cit., Ser. I, Vol. XXXIX, Part 1, 123.

fierce contest raged. . . ."101 Fred Albert Shannon similarly indicted Sturgis:

General Sturgis, who had grossly mismanaged affairs from the start, remained during the battle at a safe distance and gave hardly any orders except the final one to retreat when his own hiding place was about to be overrun. Then he raced from the scene, leaving his army to get away the best it could.¹⁰²

The devastating blow dealt at Guntown took its toll of men and morale. After returning to Memphis, the Ninety-fifth Illinois was given a respite so that the regiment could recruit more personnel and the men could recover from the shock and exhaustion.¹⁰³ The rest seemed to help, for on July 16, 1864, Sergeant Onley Andrus reported that only two members of the regiment were listed as sick.¹⁰⁴ On July 26 Lieutenant Colonel Leander Blanden returned to the Ninety-fifth Illinois and took command. Working to restore the regiment to fighting form, Blanden

¹⁰¹Wood, op. cit., p. 114. The italics are Wood's.

¹⁰²Shannon, op. cit., pp. 61-62. See also Belvidere Standard, July 21, 1864, p. 3. A Board of Investigation was assigned to study "the disaster to the late expedition made under Brig. Gen. Sturgis" and the testimony is printed in U.S., War Records Office, op. cit., Ser. I, Vol. XXXIX, Part 1, 147-217.

¹⁰³Wood, op. cit., p. 118.

¹⁰⁴Shannon, op. cit., p. 90.

saw that the men's clothing and weapons were replaced, then drilled and disciplined the group to "its former condition of prosperity and efficiency."¹⁰⁵

Thus renewed, on August 3 the Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry was ordered to embark on an expedition along the White River in Arkansas. Traveling aboard the steamer White Cloud, the regiment left Memphis for St. Charles, Arkansas, where it was assigned to a division commanded by Colonel Jonathan B. Moore, Thirty-third Wisconsin Infantry. For almost a month the Union troops at St. Charles constructed fortifications in preparation for an expected attack.¹⁰⁶ Since there was no assault, Moore's division left St. Charles on September 1 and advanced up the White River, arriving at DeValls Bluff (also spelled Duvalls and Devalls) on the third. The division proceeded upriver to find the Confederate force reported to be near Augusta, Arkansas. At this point there is a discrepancy in accounts: the regimental history claims, "A sharp skirmish took place near Augusta, in which the enemy met with severe loss."¹⁰⁷ Yet, Onley Andrus commented, in a

¹⁰⁵Wood, op. cit., p. 118.

¹⁰⁶Shannon, op. cit., p. 82.

¹⁰⁷Wood, op. cit., p. 119.

letter written the next day, that the regiment had "failed to find any rebs."¹⁰⁸

The division subsequently returned to DeValls Bluff and entrained for Brownsville, Arkansas. At Brownsville the Ninety-fifth Illinois was placed under the command of Major General Joseph A. Mower, who left Brownsville on September 17, 1864, in pursuit of the Confederate forces under Major General Sterling Price. Forcing the men to march long hours, Mower reached Cape Girardeau, Missouri, on October 4.¹⁰⁹ The troops had marched about 325 miles in less than three weeks; and, to add to the trial, several of the soldiers wore out their shoes and had to march barefoot.¹¹⁰

The intent of the forced march, to catch and confront Price's forces, was thwarted. Price had reached Missouri and had advanced farther north, out of Moore's reach. While Price was meeting defeat from Union troops under General A. J. Smith, the Ninety-fifth traveled by boat to St. Louis, Missouri, thence to Jefferson City, Missouri. On October 16, 1864, the regiment reported to

¹⁰⁸Shannon, op. cit., p. 96.

¹⁰⁹Wood, op. cit., pp. 120-121.

¹¹⁰Shannon, op. cit., p. 99.

Sedalia, Missouri, for guard duty, a task which included reception and transfer of Confederate prisoners captured during the battles between Price and Smith.¹¹¹ After Price was defeated, the Ninety-fifth Illinois, along with the rest of General A. J. Smith's command, returned to St. Louis. Once there, they were assigned to Benton's Barracks, which is five miles outside of St. Louis.¹¹²

Resting near St. Louis only 12 days, the Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry embarked upon the steamer Isabella for Nashville, Tennessee. General Smith's forces had been ordered to rush to the aid of Union forces which were battling Confederate troops led by General John B. Hood. On November 30, 1864, as Smith's unit landed at Nashville, Major General John M. Schofield was defeating Hood at Franklin, Tennessee, 20 miles south of Nashville. Later Schofield joined forces with Major General George H. Thomas at Nashville and the combined troops fortified their position south of the city, preparing for an attack by Hood. During these preparations, Colonel Leander Blanden of the Ninety-fifth Illinois was placed in command of the Second Brigade and Lieutenant William Avery took

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 83.

¹¹²Wood, op. cit., pp. 123-124.

command of the regiment.¹¹³

From December first to the fifteenth the Union stronghold at Nashville awaited the attack. Since no attack came, General Thomas launched a surprise attack against Hood. After fighting until nightfall, both sides girded themselves for an assault the next day. The ensuing battle was a virtual standoff until the middle of the next day; then, as planned, the Union's entire force charged the Confederate lines, causing the enemy troops to flee to Franklin. Hood's loss was staggering:

". . . nearly all of his artillery had been captured, a large proportion of his men taken prisoners, and his killed and wounded left strewn over the various battlefields."¹¹⁴

For over five weeks the men of the Ninety-fifth Illinois participated in the pursuit of the remnants of Hood's army. The cavalry units led the chase and engaged in what little fighting there was, sending prisoners back to the infantry regiments. During this time the weather turned cold and snow fell; again, some of the men, as the

¹¹³Shannon, op. cit., p. 106. See also Belvidere Standard, December 13, 1864, p. 3.

¹¹⁴Wood, op. cit., pp. 136-140. See also Buel, op. cit., IV, 457-460.

result of much marching, wore out their shoes and had to proceed, "leaving the crimson prints of their bare feet in the snow."¹¹⁵ Early in January, 1865, the Ninety-fifth reached Clifton, Tennessee, where the pursuit ended. The march, Wales Wood claimed, was ". . . the severest campaign in which the Ninety-fifth was ever engaged."¹¹⁶

While in Clifton, the Union troops rested and were supplied with new shoes and uniforms. January 8, 1865, the Ninety-fifth Illinois was placed on board the Leni Leoti for transportation to Eastport, Mississippi. At Eastport the Ninety-fifth began constructing its winter quarters; the log huts that were built kept the men well protected from the cold temperatures and the wind. Just as they were getting settled, the troops in Colonel Moore's division were ordered to leave camp to search for Confederate troops. With the Ninety-fifth Illinois leading the march, the division reached Corinth, Mississippi, on January 18. Word had preceded the force, however, and the enemy soldiers had escaped, burning commissary stores before they left. After a few hours' stay in Corinth, the

¹¹⁵Shannon, op. cit., pp. 107, 112. See also Belvidere Standard, January 31, 1865, p. 3.

¹¹⁶Wood, op. cit., p. 146.

Union troops started back for Eastport.¹¹⁷

The weather turned considerably colder in Eastport, but the huts were comfortable. The real problem arose when rations began to run out and supplies were not replenished. The men, who had expected a supply transport to arrive any day, became so starved that they finally resorted to eating corn which had been intended for the animals.¹¹⁸ In spite of their extreme hunger, some of the men retained a sense of humor about the situation. Onley Andrus, for instance, told his wife, ". . . we wont [sic] be confined to corn many days. The comissary [sic] has promised us Hay & Oats for the next issue."¹¹⁹

On February 6, 1865, the Ninety-fifth Illinois left Eastport aboard the Adam Jacobs for New Orleans, Louisiana. In order to make the trip by water, the steamer had to go north from Eastport on the Tennessee River up to the Ohio River, thence on the Ohio to Cairo, Illinois, and thence on the Mississippi River south to New Orleans. On February 13 the men arrived at Vicksburg and awaited orders to proceed. A week later the command

¹¹⁷Ibid., pp. 149-152.

¹¹⁸Ibid., pp. 152-154.

¹¹⁹Shannon, op. cit., p. 119.

came and the troops continued to New Orleans, arriving on February 21.¹²⁰

The Ninety-fifth camped five miles below the city on extremely muddy land.¹²¹ It was so muddy that the regiment considered it "the most disagreeable encampment" encountered.¹²² Just before the Ninety-fifth was ordered to begin the Mobile campaign, the Seventeenth Army Corps of which it was a part, commanded by General A. J. Smith, was designated as the Sixteenth Army Corps. At the same time the Ninety-fifth was assigned to the Second Brigade of Colonel Jonathan Moore's Third Division.¹²³

In March the Sixteenth Army Corps was directed to join the forces under General E. R. S. Canby at Fort Gaines, Dauphin Island (also spelled Dauphine). At this point, Albert Cashier's Company G, along with Companies F, H, and K, was ordered to remain behind temporarily to help transport equipment to the island. The sand surface of Dauphin Island was a pleasant change from the muddy

¹²⁰Wood, op. cit., 157-160.

¹²¹Shannon, op. cit., pp. 108, 119.

¹²²Wood, op. cit., p. 160.

¹²³Ibid., pp. 160-161. See also Dyer, op. cit., III, 1087. Dyer puts the Ninety-fifth in the Second Brigade.

land in New Orleans.¹²⁴ Before the campaign against Mobile actually began, there were several changes in the division's chain of command: Major General E. A. Carr became the commander of the Third Division, displacing Colonel Moore, who moved down to command the First Brigade, to which the Ninety-fifth Illinois had been transferred. Consequently, Colonel Leander Blanden, who had been the brigade leader, replaced Lieutenant Colonel William Avery as regimental commander, a move not appreciated by many of the men in the regiment.¹²⁵

The first move directed by General Canby was largely a diversionary tactic. He ordered Moore's brigade to cross from Dauphin Island, which was at the entrance to Mobile Bay, to Cedar Point, a location on the west side. The four regiments in the brigade were instructed to try to sound like three regiments each by beating three tattoos in the evenings and by playing three reveilles in the mornings.¹²⁶ The day after the arrival at Cedar Point, the brigade noisily made its way toward Mobile, trying to convince the Confederate defenders that the city

¹²⁴Wood, op. cit., pp. 161-162.

¹²⁵Shannon, op. cit., p. 124.

¹²⁶Wood, op. cit., p. 167.

MAP 4

THE MOBILE CAMPAIGN



Source: U.S., War Records Office, Atlas to Accompany the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (2 Vols.; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1891-1905), I, Plate CX.

would be attacked from the west. Staying on the west side of the bay only a few days, the brigade rejoined the bulk of Canby's army and prepared for the siege.¹²⁷

In the line of approach to Mobile were two forts, Spanish Fort (sometimes referred to as Fort Spanish) and Fort Blakely. The Union troops passed Spanish Fort on March 26 and camped near Fort Blakely, hoping, again, to deceive the enemy. Then, early on March 27, Canby ordered an assault on Spanish Fort; the Sixteenth Army Corps led the attack. The enemy was ready and met the advance. After Canby's forces succeeded in driving the Confederates back to the fort, a siege began. The siege of Spanish Fort lasted until April 8, when the Union troops finally stormed the fort.¹²⁸

The Ninety-fifth Illinois once more distinguished itself, as it had at Vicksburg and Guntown. On the first day of the attack the regiment reached and held a position only 300 yards from the fortifications, and on subsequent days the regiment inched closer until, on the final day of the siege, the trenches of the Ninety-fifth were within 40 yards of the enemy. From there Blanden led his men

¹²⁷Shannon, op. cit., p. 125.

¹²⁸Wood, op. cit., pp. 170-171. See also Buel, op. cit., IV, 411.

over the enemy rifle pits and into the fort, the first Union regiment to gain entrance.¹²⁹

For the success of the regiment, Colonel Blanden was praised by Colonel Moore: "Col. L. Blanden, of the Ninety-fifth Illinois, for the manner in which he pushed his works and handled his men, deserves special notice."¹³⁰ Blanden, in turn, credited his men for

. . . the brave, efficient, and persevering manner in which they have conducted themselves from the beginning to the end of the investment.

Throughout the whole siege, they have labored almost unceasingly, by day and night, with pick and spade, as well as with arms, all intent upon accomplishing the common object.¹³¹

One of the two major obstacles standing before Mobile, Alabama, had been conquered and Major General Frederick Steele, who had come up from Pensacola, Florida, had the other obstacle, Fort Blakely, under siege. On April 9, 1865, Steele, supported by Canby's force, attacked and captured Fort Blakely. The next day,

¹²⁹Wood, op. cit., pp. 172-173. See also Belvidere Standard, May 2, 1865, p. 3.

¹³⁰U.S., War Records Office, op. cit., Ser. I, Vol. XLIX, Part 1, 272.

¹³¹Ibid., 273.

Mobile surrendered.¹³² The Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry, which was to serve for four more months, had participated in its last major battle.

Since the war, as far as the men knew, was still not over, the Sixteenth Army Corps began a long march for Montgomery, Alabama, on April 13. Enroute, the troops heard rumors that the Confederate General Robert E. Lee had surrendered to Union General Ulysses S. Grant, but hesitated to believe them. On the nineteenth, however, the truth of the rumors was officially acknowledged and the whole camp resounded with cheers.¹³³

The Ninety-fifth continued toward Montgomery, stopping in Greenville, Alabama, along the way. Because the residents of Greenville were unconvinced that Richmond had been captured, General A. J. Smith ordered the soldiers to commandeer the printing shop and print copies of the correspondence which had passed between Lee and Grant. This tactic convinced the people;

. . . then their confidence and belief in the safety and success of their cause subsided, and they unwillingly accepted the truth that the great armies of the rebellion were fast disbanding and that the last days of their

¹³²Wood, op. cit., pp. 175-176.

¹³³Ibid., pp. 177-180.

attempted Southern Confederacy had indeed
come.¹³⁴

April 23, 1865, the Sixteenth Army Corps left Greenville for the two-day march to Montgomery. Meeting no resistance, the troops, with the Ninety-fifth Illinois second in line, entered the city. Aware that the war was over, the men were eager to be mustered out and to return home. The Sixteenth Army Corps, though, was ordered to patrol areas of Northern Alabama.¹³⁵ The Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry's assignment was to Opelika, Alabama, to keep order and "to find Government property. . . ."¹³⁶

The men of the regiment liked the food and climate at Opelika, but they wanted to go home and were growing resentful of their detention. On July 15, orders finally arrived; the regiment was ordered to march back to Montgomery, thence to Vicksburg where they were to be mustered out. As they passed through Montgomery, the men whose tours of duty were not complete were transferred to the Forty-seventh Illinois Infantry.¹³⁷

¹³⁴Ibid., pp. 182-184.

¹³⁵Ibid., pp. 184-185, 193.

¹³⁶U.S., War Records Office, op. cit., Ser. I, Vol. XLIX, Part 1, 133.

¹³⁷Wood, op. cit., pp. 201-206. See also U.S., War Records Office, op. cit., Ser. III, Vol. V, 158.

When the Ninety-fifth Illinois arrived in Vicksburg, the men discovered that their orders had been changed: they were not mustered out, but sent by the steamer Molly Able to St. Louis. Again their hopes were frustrated, for they were ordered to Springfield, Illinois. Finally, on August 17, 1865, the Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry Volunteers were mustered out. After waiting for their pay, the men returned to their homes.¹³⁸ Companies B, G, and K arrived in Belvidere on August 22 and were honored at a public reception.¹³⁹ From this point on, each man pursued his own future. For Albert D. J. Cashier of Company G, the transition from soldier to civilian was made without any revelation of his secret. He became a nurseryman in Belvidere.

¹³⁸Shannon, op. cit., pp. 137-138.

¹³⁹Belvidere Standard, August 22, 1865, p. 1.

CHAPTER III

CASHIER'S LIFE AFTER THE WAR

Albert D. J. Cashier's decision to stay in Belvidere was apparently based on plans made before his separation from the service, for he and a fellow Private, Samuel Pepper, also of Company G, started a nursery business immediately after their return from the war.¹ How long Cashier remained in Belvidere is debatable because there are conflicting stories. Robert Horan claimed in a deposition, "After his discharge he came here to Belvidere and staid [sic] here until the following spring. I would see him quite often during that time while he was living here."² Another Belvidere deponent, Joy H. Saxton, who had known of Cashier before enlistment, stated that before the war Cashier had worked for a farmer named Sawyer,³ but, Saxton reported, he did not see Cashier after they

¹U.S., Bureau of Pensions, File on Albert D. J. Cashier, Deposition of Robert Hannah. (Hereinafter referred to as Bureau of Pensions File.)

²Ibid., Deposition of Robert Horan.

³Deponent Charles Ives disagreed with Saxton; Ives claimed that Cashier had worked for a farmer named Avery. See Bureau of Pensions File, Deposition of Charles Ives.

were discharged from the service.⁴ It is not known how long the partnership with Pepper lasted, but no one mentions the relationship after the Belvidere period.

Albert Cashier himself gave two versions. Such a discrepancy in facts stated by Cashier was quite common, a factor which makes research about him challenging and confusing. Contradictions, as they occur, will be noted. In the instance of his residences after the Civil War, Albert Cashier gave the following accounting in his Declaration for Pension in 1907: Kankakee, 1865; Pontiac, Illinois, 1866; Belvidere, 1867; Pontiac, 1868; Saunemin, 1869.⁵ In 1913, however, he listed Saunemin as his only residence after leaving the service, other than his residence in 1913, the Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Home.⁶ It is apparent that neither of the claims by Cashier agrees with Robert Horan's statement.

If Albert Cashier did live in Kankakee and Pontiac before he went to Saunemin, a small town in Livingston County, nothing is known of his life during that time.

⁴Bureau of Pensions File, Deposition of Joy H. Saxton.

⁵Bureau of Pensions File.

⁶Ibid.

Those who recalled Albert Cashier's arrival in the Saunemin area placed it in 1869, which would concur with the first listing he gave. His first employment was at the Joshua Chesebro farm. Cashier lived and worked there for some time, herding cattle and doing odd jobs.⁷

Later Cashier moved into the town of Saunemin and worked, among other places, at Cording's Hardware Store. The owner's son, W. A. (Bert) Cording, recalled that Albert used to clean the store in the evenings and then sleep on the floor of the store. In addition to earning a place to sleep, Cashier also ate meals with the Cording family quite often.⁸ While living at the store Cashier manifested a great fear of being robbed, for he insisted on using three or four locks on the door at night.⁹

Eventually his initial employer, Joshua Chesebro, bought a lot and built a small one-room home for Cashier.¹⁰ Even in his own house the man did not feel

⁷Ibid., Deposition of Anah Chesebro. See also Deposition of Nettie Ross.

⁸W. A. Cording, personal interview, Saunemin, Illinois, February 7, 1969.

⁹Daily Pantagraph (Bloomington, Illinois), June 28, 1962, p. 7.

¹⁰The Story of Jennie Hodges alias "Albert Cashier" (Pontiac, Illinois: Central States Threshermen's Re-union, n.d.), (n.p.).

PLATE 2

ALBERT D. J. CASHIER'S HOUSE



Source: Leader photo.

safe; Bert Cording stated, "She used to imagine people would break into her house. She bought five or six padlocks from my dad. . . . She was changing padlocks all the time."¹¹ James Patrick Lannon claimed that not only did Cashier use several locks but also he ". . . nailed the doors and windows shut when he was going to be gone over night."¹²

Several members of the Patrick Henry Lannon family knew Cashier well and recalled his many peculiarities. The family lived just across the street from Albert and often invited him over for meals. Three of P. H. Lannon's children, Ida M. Lannon, Mrs. Edward (Bernice) Brand and the late James P. Lannon, have been interviewed periodically by newspaper reporters who wanted to do features on Saunemin's strange "hero."¹³

Several unusual incidents relate specifically to meals. For instance, Cashier almost always accepted an invitation for lunch or dinner, but only after he insisted he was not hungry. In fact, he often continued insisting

¹¹Kankakee Daily Journal (Kankakee, Illinois), December 16, 1965, p. 47. See also Daily Pantagraph, June 28, 1962, p. 7. The use of the feminine personal pronoun is explained later.

¹²Daily Pantagraph, May 17, 1950, p. 3.

¹³Patrick Henry Lannon was the writer's great grandfather; James Patrick Lannon was her grandfather.

he was not hungry the whole time he ate.¹⁴ At times someone in the family would inadvertantly hurt Albert's feelings; in return, Cashier would refuse to go over for dinner. He would, however, always accept the food that Mrs. P. H. (Bridget) Lannon invariably sent over on a tray.¹⁵ During another of his moods, his "mads," the Lannons called them, Albert told several townspeople that the only reason the family had him over for meals was so that they could sneak over to his house and steal his china.¹⁶

Obviously, a person such as Albert D. J. Cashier would be well known in a small town. Many of the older residents recall quite vividly Albert's stint as the town lamplighter. Early in the evening Cashier would go all around the town, carrying a short stepladder, and light the kerosene lamps, then go back around town later to put them out. During the day the lamplighter had to spend time washing and filling the lamps.¹⁷

¹⁴Daily Pantagraph, May 17, 1950, p. 3.

¹⁵Ida M. Lannon, personal interview, Saunemin, Illinois, February 7, 1969.

¹⁶Daily Pantagraph, June 28, 1962, p. 7.

¹⁷Vern C. Gray, personal interview, Bloomington, Illinois, December 10, 1968.

The children of the town had mixed reactions to Cashier. Those who lived nearby seemed to like him even though they thought he was peculiar. Ruth Morehart, who lived within a block, remembers most vividly that Cashier baked delicious cookies and often let the children come into his house for cookies and milk.¹⁸ Mrs. Edwin (Irma) Smith used to visit Albert, too, and recalls that his house "always reeked of tea."¹⁹ One day Mrs. Smith and some other children went to Cashier's house to eat some corn on the cob. Just as the youngsters finished buttering the corn and were ready to bite into it, Albert warned them not to eat. He claimed, "That's the wrong butter dish. That one is poisoned--to fool the rats."²⁰ In a similar instance, Albert once gave a group of children some peanuts, then told them that the peanuts were poisoned.²¹ Ida Lannon says of such incidents, "Albert often did things like that. He'd give us food then tell

¹⁸Ruth Morehart, personal interview, Dwight, Illinois, July 3, 1969.

¹⁹Mrs. Edwin (Irma) Smith, personal interview, Pontiac, Illinois, April 10, 1969.

²⁰Daily Pantagraph, May 17, 1950, p. 3.

²¹Mrs. Edward (Bernice) Brand, personal interview, Saunemin, Illinois, February 7, 1969. See also Daily Pantagraph, June 28, 1962, p. 7.

us it was poisoned; Mother didn't seem to think he had done it, but he was so peculiar she couldn't be sure."²²

Some of the children who did not know Albert so well accepted his temperament and quirks with less equanimity. Some thought his house was haunted.²³ Others just feared him. One former Saunemin resident, Vern C. Gray, remembers that one day he and a friend were just sitting on a fence when Albert Cashier walked by. Gray's small dog barked at the man. The barking made Cashier so angry that he glared at the boys and threatened to go home to get his gun so that he could shoot the dog. The boys were afraid Cashier really would do it, but he failed to return. Gray ". . . couldn't understand how a man who served during the Civil War would be afraid of a little dog."²⁴ Perhaps part of the difference in various children's memories of Albert can be accounted for by noting their behavior toward him. Many of the boys liked to taunt Cashier by calling him "drummer boy." This always infuriated the man and he would yell at them that

²²Ida M. Lannon, personal interview.

²³Daily Pantagraph, June 28, 1962, p. 7.

²⁴Vern C. Gray, personal interview.

he was a "fighting infantryman."²⁵

Early in 1900 Albert Cashier became janitor of the Christian Church, which was adjacent to his house. One of the ministers of the church, J. C. Lappin revealed, "I called on him often and he always asked that we have prayer together. He was a very devout Christian."²⁶

As janitor, Albert's duties included cleaning the church and building a fire in the furnace. One cold winter morning in 1904 the church caught fire and, despite the efforts of the town bucket brigade, burned to the ground. Several townspeople attributed the fire to Albert's lack of judgment when stoking the furnace.²⁷

One of the most memorable things about Albert D. J. Cashier was his obvious pride in having served during the Civil War. As a member of the Grand Army of the Republic, Cashier took special pride in marching in the Decoration Day parade.²⁸ Mrs. Irma Smith recalled that

²⁵Daily Pantagraph, May 30, 1962, p. 13.

²⁶Letter from J. C. Lappin of Fairfield, Illinois, to Gerhard P. Clausius, Belvidere, Illinois, March 2, 1959. Dr. Clausius, a Belvidere optometrist, had published an article about Cashier and received letters about it from several people. The letters are in the possession of Dr. Clausius.

²⁷Daily Pantagraph, June 28, 1962, p. 7.

²⁸Ruth Morehart, personal interview.

he always liked to tell people about the battles he was in and that he told of them so vividly she never doubted but that he actually had served in the army.²⁹

Another memorable trait of Albert D. J. Cashier was his affinity for telling "tall tales," tales which had often obvious factual flaws. Two stories incorporated Albert's obsession with robbery. In the first, he related that he walked to Pontiac to get some money for his employer. On the return trip some other men tried to steal the money, but Albert fooled the men "by hiding the money under the straw in back of the wagon and driving home. . . ." ³⁰ He apparently forgot that he had said he walked to Pontiac. Another time Cashier credited himself with foiling a robbery attempt by calling the sheriff on the telephone. The hitch in this tale was that at the time the incident supposedly happened, Saunemin had no telephone service.³¹

Of more significance to this study, however, is Cashier's habit of stating conflicting, sometimes demonstrably untrue, information about his background.

²⁹Mrs. Irma Smith, personal interview.

³⁰Daily Pantagraph, May 17, 1950, p. 3.

³¹Ibid.

For instance, while he was sick, he told the nurse caring for him ". . . that his parents were buried at Kankakee, and that he sent money there every year to have their graves decorated and that he sent the money through the post-office." The nurse spoke with her brother, who had been the postmaster for several years; and he maintained, ". . . Albert never sent any money through that office."³²

Albert Cashier lived in Saunemin from about 1869 to 1910 without, as far as is known, the secret of his sex being discovered. But in 1910 his luck changed. The first discovery took place when Albert was ill. Mrs. P. H. Lannon had a nurse from Chicago living in her home and taking care of her daughter, Elizabeth. When Mrs. Lannon heard of Albert's illness, she sent the nurse over to aid Albert. The nurse was gone for only a short while, then came running back to the Lannon house and yelled, "My Lord, Mrs. Lannon, he's a full-fledged woman!"³³ The nurse left town shortly thereafter and Mrs. Lannon did not tell anyone of the discovery.³⁴

³²Bureau of Pensions File, Deposition of Nettie Ross.

³³Daily Pantagraph, June 28, 1962, p. 7. See also The Story of Jennie Hodges alias "Albert Cashier," op. cit.

³⁴Ida M. Lannon, personal interview.

In November Albert Cashier's secret was discovered again. At the time, Cashier was doing yard work for State Senator Ira M. Lish. According to the Pontiac Daily Leader, "He was sitting in such a manner that when Mr. Lish backed the car out it ran over Albert's leg, breaking it just above the ankle."³⁵ Unfortunately for Albert the report was not quite accurate, for his leg was broken near the hip joint. Consequently, when Dr. C. F. Ross arrived and began to set the fracture, he realized that Albert was, in reality, a woman. Cashier was very upset about their discovery and begged Dr. Ross and Senator Lish not to tell anyone. The two men decided that there would be no point in publicizing the information and agreed to Albert's plea.³⁶ One other person had to know, however, and that was the nurse secured to care for him. The nurse, Mrs. Nettie Ross, who was the daughter of Joshua Chesebro but not related to Dr. Ross, acknowledged later that she too had known Albert's secret and had told only her family about the discovery.³⁷ The Chesebro

³⁵Pontiac Daily Leader (Pontiac, Illinois), November 11, 1910, p. 4.

³⁶The Story of Jennie Hodges alias "Albert Cashier," op. cit.

³⁷Bureau of Pensions File, Deposition of Nettie Ross.

family felt close to Albert, since he had lived with them for a while when he first arrived at Saunemin, and decided to "bury the knowledge within the family."³⁸ Anah Chesebro, Mrs. Ross's sister, explained that she had visited Albert while he was sick and that ". . . he as much as admitted to me that the secret was known."³⁹

It is a credit to the people involved in the discoveries that the information did not become widely known. In fact, Mrs. Irma Smith, Dr. C. F. Ross's daughter, claims that her father never said a word about Albert's secret until after it became widely publicized.⁴⁰

The injury to Cashier's leg virtually incapacitated the man, for he was, in 1911, about 66 years old.⁴¹ Consequently, Dr. Ross and Senator Lish decided to try to have Albert admitted to the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home at Quincy, Illinois. On the Application for Admission, April 29, 1911, Cashier said that his place of birth was

³⁸Ibid., Deposition of Leroy S. Scott.

³⁹Ibid., Deposition of Anah Chesebro.

⁴⁰Irma Smith, personal interview.

⁴¹Even his true age was uncertain. The information he gave when applying for a pension placed his year of birth at 1843. Later he said he was born in 1844.

Ireland.⁴² Dr. Ross certified that Albert suffered from "The Disabilities and weakness of age--with weakened mental Faculties." Dr. Ross's opinion was verified by the surgeon at the Home, Dr. D. M. Landon, who pronounced Cashier ". . . incapable of earning his living by reason of his physical disability arising from General Disability and Infirmities peculiar to Senility."⁴³

Cashier left Saunemin for the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home on May 5, 1911.⁴⁴ At the time of Albert's admission, Dr. Ross and Senator Lish told Colonel J. O. Anderson, superintendent, that Albert was a woman and asked that he help keep the secret. Anderson agreed. None of the official records at the Home list Cashier's sex as female.⁴⁵ Since Albert D. J. Cashier was quite ill, he was kept in a hospital room. For a time, his secret was safely guarded; the nurses who took care of him were sworn to secrecy.⁴⁶

⁴²When he enlisted, he claimed his birthplace was New York.

⁴³Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Home, Quincy, Illinois, File on Albert D. J. Cashier. (Hereinafter referred to as Soldiers' and Sailors' Home File.)

⁴⁴Pontiac Daily Leader, May 5, 1911, p. 3.

⁴⁵Soldiers' and Sailors' Home File.

⁴⁶ibid.

While Cashier was at the Home, however, an attempt was made to have his pension increased and that move, coupled with a sanity hearing, finally doomed attempts to protect the knowledge of Cashier's true sex. Newspapers began to announce the discovery.

The attempt to gain an increase in pension led to a full-scale inquiry. The initial application for pension, dated May 9, 1891, stated only the claim that Albert D. J. Cashier was qualified for a pension. The one document on file gives no indication of investigation of the claim or of its acceptance or rejection. Papers dated October, 1899, allude to the previous application and note Cashier's age at enlistment as 19.⁴⁷ There was no record of a physical examination in the Bureau of Pension file sent to this writer. Bell Irvin Wiley, however, reported,

In 1899 she applied for a pension and none of the three surgeons who examined her in connection with the filing of the claim indicated any suspicion of her not being a man, though one of them listed in his report some minor ailments which suggested an intimate examination.⁴⁸

⁴⁷Bureau of Pensions File.

⁴⁸Bell Irvin Wiley, The Life of Billy Yank, the Common Soldier of the Union (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1952), p. 338.

Since no record was sent, it is impossible to discover who the physicians were and what "minor ailments" were reported. A certificate from the Adjutant General's Office verifies the Civil War record of Albert D. J. Cashier and adds that he was mustered out because his services were no longer needed.⁴⁹

A Declaration for Pension filed from Saunemin in 1907 indicated that Cashier had previously received a pension under Certificate number 1001132. The new application was to ask for reconsideration ". . . under the provisions of the act of February 6, 1907." On March 3, 1913, the Illinois State Bank of Quincy, Illinois, was appointed conservator for Cashier; subsequently a new Declaration of Pension was filed.⁵⁰ Though no official mention is made of it, Albert's true sex must then have been revealed to the Federal Government, because an investigation was begun. The Bureau of Pensions determined to prove whether the person at the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home was indeed the same person who fought with the Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry Regiment.

The government decided to gather depositions from members of the regiment who were still living. Two of

⁴⁹Soldiers' and Sailors' Home File.

⁵⁰Bureau of Pensions File.

the men, Robert Horan and Charles W. Ives, traveled to Quincy to see Cashier in person. Horan, who had been a Corporal in Company G, had read of the discovery in advance. He related:

When I got there I walked into the room and I saw him sitting there with a man named Scott. I asked Scott to step aside and I then spoke to Albert. She did not recognize me at once but she did when I told her who I was. We were not introduced to each other before that meeting. When I first saw her I recognized her at once as being the Albert J. D. [sic] Cashier who served in Co. G, 95 Ill. If I had not read these reports in the paper I am positive that I would have been able to recognize her. I am positive that the person I saw there is the identical Albert J. D. Cashier who served in Co. G 95 Ill [sic] Inf.⁵¹

Horan later also identified the double photograph as that of Albert D. J. Cashier; the picture on the left was taken during the war and the one on the right was taken at the Home.⁵²

Another former officer of Company G, Charles Ives of Omaha, Nebraska, acknowledged:

When I met her I identified her at once as the same person who served in my Co. under the name Albert D. J. Cashier. She had changed of course, but I had no trouble in

⁵¹Ibid., Deposition of Robert Horan. After reviewing the statements, Horan mentioned that the initials should be "D. J." instead of "J. D."

⁵²Ibid. See frontispiece for picture described.

identifying her. She had a weak mind when I saw her at Quincy. I spent the day there, and I am positive that the woman, Albert D. J. Cashier . . . was the same person who served in my Co., in the Civil War.⁵³

Of the visits Leroy S. Scott, an employee at the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home, revealed, "For quite a while she kept looking at Mr. Ives and then exclaimed, 'You are Lieut. Ives!' She recognized Mr. Horan also." Scott reported that "half a dozen" men from Company G had come to see Cashier, and ". . . all the members of the company who have visited her have told me they never suspected the secret of her sex."⁵⁴

Two other members of Company G were interviewed by examiners for the Bureau of Pensions and identified Cashier by viewing the double photograph. Both Robert Hannah and Eli Brainerd affirmed that they had not suspected that Cashier was really a woman, but both mentioned remembering that Cashier had not had to shave. Brainerd, as well as several others, also noted that Cashier had unusually small hands and feet.⁵⁵

⁵³Ibid., Deposition of Charles W. Ives.

⁵⁴Ibid., Deposition of Leroy S. Scott.

⁵⁵Ibid., Depositions of Robert Hannah and Eli Brainerd.

The records at the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home show that when Albert Cashier was admitted, he was receiving a pension of 12 dollars per month. He had, ". . . property, real and personal, of the value of 250 dollars."⁵⁶

Early in 1913 the doctors at the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home decided that Albert D. J. Cashier was too ill and too senile to be cared for at the Home; thus they began proceedings to have him adjudged insane. The initial document, Application to Try the Question of Insanity, was filed on February 20, 1913. Six days later two doctors, C. E. Ehle and H. F. Litchfield, who had been appointed to examine Cashier, did conclude that he was insane.⁵⁷ The physicians' specific report listed Albert's major difficulty as "chronic state of confusion." They admitted that he was not destructive and did not require restraint, but commented that he was noisy "at times," did not sleep well, and had no memory. The doctors stated that the patient was a white male, a farmer, and a Catholic; thus they continued the official

⁵⁶Soldiers' and Sailors' Home File.

⁵⁷Illinois, Adams County, Court Records, Report of Commissioners on Petition Alleging Albert D. J. Cashier to Be Insane. (Hereinafter referred to as Court Records.) Records are in a separate file on Albert D. J. Cashier at the Courthouse, Quincy, Illinois.

practice of considering Cashier a male.⁵⁸

On March 27, 1914, the Adams County Clerk, J. A. Connery, issued a warrant for the commitment of Albert D. J. Cashier to the Watertown State Hospital in East Moline, Illinois. The Warrant of Commitment, which authorized the sheriff to deliver Cashier to the hospital, contains part of a sentence which reads, ". . . you are hereby authorized to take your aids and assistants, if deemed necessary, *one of whom shall be a female of reputable character and mature age. . . ." The asterisk refers the reader to a note stating, "Erase this line if the patient is a male. . . ." The line was crossed out. On March 28, 1914, Albert D. J. Cashier was delivered to the Watertown State Hospital.⁵⁹

As was noted earlier, it was during the Pension Bureau investigation and the sanity proceedings that the public became aware of Cashier's masquerade and realized that "he" was really a "she." The Pontiac Daily Leader verifies that ". . . not until she became ill at the soldier's home did the public become apprised of her

⁵⁸Ibid., Interrogatories and Report by Jury or Commission in Insane Cases. This report is the first to list Cashier's religion as Catholic.

⁵⁹Ibid., Warrant of Commitment.

sex."⁶⁰ The Quincy Whig related,

The little woman does not know that the story of her secret has now been chronicled in every newspaper over the country. . . . She chatted freely yesterday with the reporter but was elusive of answering pointed questions.

The Whig article claimed that other residents of the Home had not known that a woman was living there. There had been rumors to that effect, but the men did not know who the imposter was or, in fact, whether there was such a person.⁶¹

The Belvidere Republican, reporting Cashier's appeal for a raise in pension, acknowledged her masquerade, noting that she

. . . fought bravely through all the war
. . . taking her place in the battle line
with the other heroes and marvelously, es-
caping injury which would cause her to be
sent to the hospital where the fact she was
a woman would necessarily have been dis-
closed.

A paragraph attached to the article claimed that the men in the regiment had discovered her sex "long before her army service ended." The article asserted further:

Several survivors of the regiment living in Belvidere and vicinity had a knowledge of

⁶⁰Pontiac Daily Leader, April 4, 1914, p. 8.

⁶¹Quincy Whig (Quincy, Illinois), March, 1914. The clipping is on file at the Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Home, Quincy, Illinois.

the Cashier case but never discussed the matter until the question was raised by federal investigators after Cashier entered the Soldiers' Home at Quincy.⁶²

Such a claim, as has been noted earlier, was not borne out by the Bureau of Pension records.

Acquaintances of Albert began to recall other "peculiarities" once they knew of the disguise, peculiarities that in retrospect seemed significant. Mrs. Merlyn Van Doren, whose mother did laundry for Albert, revealed that Albert wore red flannel underwear. Other residents of Saunemin began to remember that she always wore her shirts buttoned up tight and sometimes even wore a handkerchief tied around her neck. Even on hot summer days, Cashier did not loosen her collar and "never went swimming with the others."⁶³

Others remembered personal comments that had been made or questions that had arisen. P. H. Lannon, realizing that Albert had no noticeable beard, once asked her if she shaved. She answered that she did;⁶⁴ and Mrs. Bernice Brand recalled that Albert did have a shaving mug and brush; but she never knew whether Albert used

⁶²Belvidere Republican (Belvidere, Illinois), February 4, 1914.

⁶³Daily Pantagraph, June 28, 1962, p. 7.

⁶⁴Ibid.

them.⁶⁵ Another time, Mr. Lannon was told to "Shut up," when he commented that Albert ". . . didn't have much of an Adam's apple." Ida Lannon reminisced, "After we knew Albert was a woman, we often wondered about the hard work Albert did--janitoring at the Christian Church, mowing lawns, cleaning railroad crossings, and such."⁶⁶

Looking back, the people admitted that they never really suspected that Cashier was a woman; they just viewed her as an eccentric man.⁶⁷ As Vern Gray commented, if people did wonder, they did not say so; for "some things were not discussed those days."⁶⁸

Of particular interest to the Saunemin residents was the realization that Albert D. J. Cashier may have been one of the first women voters in Illinois. Though no official voting records were kept at the time, several people can remember her having voted in a number of elections.⁶⁹

Albert Cashier was apparently unaware of the amazement she caused because she was protected from the

⁶⁵Bernice Brand, personal interview.

⁶⁶Daily Pantagraph, June 28, 1962, p. 7.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Vern C. Gray, personal interview.

⁶⁹Daily Pantagraph, June 28, 1968, p. 7.

knowledge that the discovery had been made public. She lived the rest of her life at the Watertown State Hospital for the Insane. The hospital itself is located near the Rock Island-Moline area on a site that is now part of East Moline, Illinois; the hospital was first opened in 1898.⁷⁰

After she first arrived at Watertown, Albert was forced to wear women's clothing and was placed in the Women's Ward.⁷¹ Cashier apparently fought against having to wear dresses, for she had not done so in over 50 years. Eventually she relented.⁷² The only official comment made about her during her entire confinement there was in a report sent to Adams County. On January 1, 1915, Cashier was said to be in fair physical condition and "unchanged" mental condition.⁷³ If there are further

⁷⁰Newton Bateman, Paul Selby, and Richard V. Carpenter, Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Boone County (2 vols.; Chicago: Munsell Publishing Company, 1909), II, 584.

⁷¹The Staff Echo (East Moline State Hospital, East Moline, Illinois), November 15, 1961, p. 2. See also Soldiers' and Sailors' Home File, Letter from W. J. Singleton of Quincy, Illinois, to Mrs. Mary Rooney of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, December 2, 1915.

⁷²Illinois, State Department of Public Welfare, Welfare Bulletin, October, 1939, p. 9.

⁷³Court Records, Report of Adams County Patients, January 1, 1915.

records concerning Cashier, they are not available.

On October 10, 1915, Albert D. J. Cashier died at the Watertown State Hospital of an "intercurrent" infection. She was given a military funeral by Colonel Graham Post, Grand Army of the Republic,⁷⁴ at the Angevine Funeral Home in East Moline on October 12.⁷⁵ Cashier, who had been a member of the G.A.R. for years, was dressed in her uniform and her casket was draped with an American flag.⁷⁶

After the service in East Moline, Cashier's body was sent to Saunemin for burial. Again, Cashier was given full military honors. Her funeral service, conducted by two ministers, was arranged by H. T. Swan, Commander of Post 486, Saunemin, Illinois.⁷⁷

Cashier's place of burial, marked by a plain tombstone, is near the Joshua Chesebro plot in the Sunnyslope

⁷⁴The Staff Echo, November 15, 1961, p. 2.

⁷⁵Letter from J. Eugene Sullivan of East Moline, Illinois, to writer, March 29, 1965.

⁷⁶The Staff Echo, November 15, 1961, p. 2.

⁷⁷Court Records, Report of W. J. Singleton, Conservator.

Cemetery, Madison. The tombstone itself says nothing of

PLATE 3

Albert D. J. Cashier's unusual life; it is simply

CASHIER'S TOMBSTONE

inscribed, "Albert D. J. Cashier, Co. G, 95 Ill. Inf."



Source: Pantagraph Photo.

Cemetery, Saunemin. The tombstone itself says nothing of Albert D. J. Cashier's unusual life; it is simply inscribed, "Albert D. J. Cashier, Co. G, 95 Ill. Inf."

CHAPTER IV
THE SEARCH FOR HEIRS

The death of Albert D. J. Cashier did not complete her story; her death initiated official attempts to discover just who she really was. The task of establishing, or trying to establish, the real identity of this woman who lived over 50 years as a man belonged to W. J. Singleton, President of the Illinois State Bank of Quincy.¹ Singleton, then Vice-President, had been appointed conservator for Cashier on March 3, 1913, at the time she was adjudged insane.

Upon her death, the bank was named ex-officio administrator of her estate. Singleton, who filed an itemized financial report, revealed that Cashier had accumulated \$589.40 by the time of her death, having received \$334.45 from the Bureau of Pensions during 1915. Of that money, \$170.94 was expended for her stay at the Watertown State Hospital, for funeral expenses, and for legal expenses incurred. Thus, W. J. Singleton was to

¹Illinois, Adams County, Court Records, Order Approving the Report of the Illinois State Bank of Quincy, ex-officio administrator. (Hereinafter referred to as Court Records.) Records are in a separate file on Albert D. J. Cashier at the Courthouse, Quincy, Illinois.

spend nine years trying to find legal heirs for Albert D. J. Cashier's estate, an estate amounting to \$418.46.²

In order to decide where to begin, Singleton probably turned to the records in Cashier's pension file and in the files at the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home. As was noted earlier, when Cashier enlisted, she gave New York as her birthplace; but after her sex was discovered and she went to the Home, she said that her birthplace was Belfast, Ireland. Shortly after Albert D. J. Cashier arrived at the Home, Colonel J. O. Anderson, Superintendent, put her under the care of Leroy S. Scott, an employee. Scott talked with Cashier several times to try to discover who she really was. In relating his experience to the Bureau of Pension investigator, Charles F. Cain, Scott noted first that Cashier, as the sanity hearings verified, was often confused, having only, according to Scott, "lucid intervals." Though Cashier did not want to talk of her origin, the persistent Scott was able to discover some of her history. He related:

She talked about gathering sea shells and I took it from that that she was born on the coast of Ireland. She first told me she was born at Balbriggan. I wrote the Parish Priest there and he replied he could not find

²Ibid., Final Report of Illinois State Bank of Quincy by W. J. Singleton, Conservator.

any record. I then told her she could never get her increase of pension without giving better information. In her talks with me she often spoke of an aunt Nan, and thought she must be quite an old woman by that time. I finally got from her that her Aunt Nan's surname was Hodgers. She then told me she was born at Clogher Head, Ireland. With the information as to the surname Hodgers I wrote the priest at Clogher Head. In turn he gave my letter to a Patrick Hodgers who replied to me. I sent the priest Albert's picture and he gave it to Patrick Hoadgers [sic] who wrote me he recognized it and that some of the old neighbors recognized it. The priest wrote me that her father was unknown, and that no record of the birth could be found, that the records of the Catholic church were not kept prior to 1857, that when she was born she lived in a Protestant parish. After I secured the information from Patrick Hodgers I read his letter to Albert and she then acknowledged that her name was Hodgers and admitted that her uncle's name was Dennis Hodgers. She then told me that her uncle was a sheep buyer and she used to go with him and herd the sheep.³

Soldiers' and Sailors' Home records indicate that Cashier told Colonel Anderson that her name was Jennie Hodges.⁴

³U.S., Bureau of Pensions, File on Albert D. J. Cashier, Deposition of Leroy S. Scott. (Hereinafter referred to as Bureau of Pensions File.)

⁴Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Home, Quincy, Illinois, File on Albert D. J. Cashier. (Hereinafter referred to as Soldiers' and Sailors' Home File.) The discrepancy in the spellings of Hodges and Hodgers may be of little significance because Cashier herself was illiterate. All written statements were recorded by someone else; then she signed her "mark." Cashier had no real control over spelling.

Aware of the above information, W. J. Singleton and Colonel J. O. Anderson continued the investigation begun by Leroy S. Scott. Exactly what steps the two men took is not known; but in 1915, a Clogherhead, Ireland, newspaper printed a short article which told of an "Albert F. [sic] Cashier," a woman who had fought in the "American Civil War" and was later discovered to have been a "Hodges" from Clogherhead. The local paper mentioned Cashier's death and suggested, "If there are any friends of the old lady still about Clogherhead they should forward the particulars of their relationship to this gentleman [Colonel Anderson] as she left considerable property and money behind her."⁵

The first official claim was lodged from Dundalk, County Louth, Ireland, on January 27, 1916. Michael Rooney wrote a letter in which he claimed that the heirs to Cashier's estate were his two sisters, his brother, and himself. One year later Michael Rooney submitted a notarized affidavit. His claim is quoted in full:

I, MICHAEL ROONEY of Barrack Street Dundalk, in the County of Louth, Gardener, aged 40 years and upwards make oath and say as follows :-

⁵Newspaper clipping enclosed with letter from Father J. Corry of Clogherhead, Ireland, to writer, March 29, 1965. The clipping is in the writer's possession.

1. I say that my grandfather was Patrick Hodgers of Clogher (near Drogheda) County Louth, Ireland. He was a coachman with a Mrs. Thompson at Annagassan, some six miles from Clogher aforesaid.
2. He married Bridget Skelly of Greenmount near Annagassan, County Louth, and a child of the marriage, Jane Hodgers, my mother, married Joseph Rooney and died in the year 1904 leaving a family of four children her surviving, viz., Michael, this deponent, Joseph, who resides at No. 1713 McAllister Street, San Francisco, U. S. A., Margaret, who resides at Mooremount, Dunleer, County Louth, and Mary, who resides at Lower End, Dunleer, County Louth.
3. I say that my Mother, the said Jane Hodgers, was born in or adjacent to the townland of Clogher or Clogherhead, County Louth, Ireland, about the year 1831. Her mother, Bridget Hodgers (nee Skelly), referred to in paragraph two, having died shortly after her (Jane Hodgers) birth, the latter was taken to be reared up by the Skelly people as her Father Patrick Hodgers, went to America at that time.
4. When my mother, Jane Hodgers, had grown to girlhood she went to Annagassan aforesaid to keep house for a man named James Byrne, and whilst in his employment became acquainted with my father, Joseph Rooney, and married him as I am informed and verily believe. My mother is now dead some eleven years.
5. I say that from the information before me, I am of opinion my grandfather, Patrick Hodgers aforesaid, got married a second time, that is, in America shortly after his arrival there about the year 1832, and that his daughter Miss Hodges (or Hodgers which it should be) is the deceased referred to and a half sister to my mother the said Jane Hodgers.
6. Accordingly, I make claim that I am, with my brother and two sisters referred to in

paragraph two, the sole next-of-kin of the said deceased Miss Hodges or Albert D. J. Cashier.⁶

There are three weak points in Rooney's claim. First of all, the records do not indicate that he presented any proof that his grandfather, Patrick Hodgers, remarried after arriving in the United States. Second, he presented no evidence that his grandfather, even if he did remarry, had a child or children of the second union. Finally, his story ignored the fact that Cashier, after her discovery, claimed she was born in Ireland. He may, however, have been aware that Cashier initially claimed New York as her birthplace; but it is doubtful because correspondence indicated that both Singleton, the ex-officio administrator, and Anderson, Superintendent of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home, proceeded on the belief that Cashier was originally from Ireland.⁷

There is no record of action taken on Michael Rooney's claim. Eight years later, Joseph Rooney, Michael's younger brother, wrote to John W. Reig, then Managing Officer at the Home, to discover why no money had been sent. After explaining that he and his sons had

⁶Court Records, Affidavit of Michael Rooney, Estate of Miss Hodges otherwise Albert D. J. Cashier, deceased.

⁷Soldiers' and Sailors' Home File; Court Records.

gone to fight in the World War and had not been able to pursue the matter earlier, he said, "Her right name was Hodges, or Hodgers, and she was a half sister of my mother. When she died, she left some money in the bank . . . but this money was never received by any of us."⁸ No reply is on file; but one must have been sent because on January 19, 1924, two weeks later, Joseph Rooney sent a letter that was obviously a reply to some questions. His response to a request for more data was to refer Reig to the affidavit of Michael Rooney and to enclose a clipping from a 1916 Quincy newspaper; the clipping was a summary of the affidavit.⁹ To complicate matters, on November 24, 1924, Joseph Rooney's attorney, Leo J. Rabinowitz, wrote to John W. Reig to press Rooney's claim; Rabinowitz asserted that Cashier's real name was Elizabeth Hodgers.¹⁰ Reig replied that there were no records connecting Cashier with the name Elizabeth

⁸Soldiers' and Sailors' Home File, Letter from Joseph Rooney of San Francisco, California, to Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Home at Quincy, Illinois, January 5, 1924.

⁹*Ibid.*, Letter from Joseph Rooney of San Francisco, California, to John W. Reig of Quincy, Illinois, January 19, 1924.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, Letter from Leo J. Rabinowitz of San Francisco, California, to John W. Reig of Quincy, Illinois, November 24, 1924.

Hodgers.¹¹

The only other claim was made by Hugh Hodges of Kellybush, County Louth, Ireland. His aunt, Mrs. Mary Rooney¹² of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, had written to W. J. Singleton in 1915. Singleton had replied with a description of Cashier's funeral service in Saunemin and a discussion of her disguise, discovery, and last years.¹³ After Hugh Hodges found the letter to his aunt, he pursued the matter by writing to the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home. He asserted that Cashier's real name was "Miss J. Hodges" and that she was his father's sister. He added, "If the money is to the good yet, I hope your honorable county bank officials will not forget me in the distributing of it, as I, the son of Patrick Hodges, and living in the home where Jennie emigrated from."¹⁴ There is no record of a reply.

¹¹Ibid., Letter from John W. Reig of Quincy, Illinois, to Leo J. Rabinowitz of San Francisco, California, November 28, 1924.

¹²There is no information regarding the possible relationship between Mrs. Mary Rooney and the previously mentioned Rooney family.

¹³Soldiers' and Sailors' Home File, Letter from W. J. Singleton of Quincy, Illinois, to Mrs. Mary Rooney of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, December 2, 1915.

¹⁴Ibid., Letter from Hugh Hodges of Killybush, Ireland, to The Superintendent of the Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Home of Quincy, Illinois, December 11, 1923.

The information given by Hugh Hodges was accompanied by no verification, nor did his claim explain any details concerning the life of Albert D. J. Cashier, alias Jennie Hodges or Hodgers, such as how and when she came to the United States. Hodges apparently did not press his claim, for there is only the one letter in the files.

Apparently W. J. Singleton did not think that any of the claimants had proven their relationship to "Albert D. J. Cashier, alias Jennie Hodges, deceased," for in June, 1924, he began proceedings to settle the estate; he said that ". . . the names and residences of the heirs of said deceased are unknown. . . ." ¹⁵ On July 21, 1924, Singleton further stated he ". . . made due and diligent inquiry to ascertain who the heirs of said estate are but has been unable to find out who the heirs in fact of said estate are. . . ." He then deposited the money remaining in the estate, \$281.86, in the Adams County treasury. ¹⁶

In trying to establish which, if either, of the explanations was true, this writer wrote to Clogherhead,

¹⁵Court Records, Petition for Order for Notice of Final Settlement.

¹⁶Ibid., Report of the Account of the Illinois State Bank of Quincy, ex-officio administrator.

Ireland, and asked for information about ". . . one Jennie Hodgers, purportedly born in Clogher Head [sic], Ireland, on December 28, 1844."¹⁷ The parish priest, Father J. Corry, replied promptly and sent information concerning the baptisms of five children of Denis and Catherine Hodgers. He explained,

At that particular time, in the history of this country, only the date of baptism is given. But we know here that it was the custom to have the child baptised [sic] on the day it was born or at latest on the day following.

You will note that the member of the family baptised nearest to the date which you gave me was called Mary - 25th of December 1843 and evidently she changed it to Jennifer in after years.¹⁸

He added that Mary Hodgers' nephew, Hugh Hodgers, had died since Father Corry arrived in the parish in 1953. Relatives, who have changed the family name to Hodgins, still live in Clogherhead.¹⁹

Father Corry enclosed a copy of the birth certificate of Mary Hodgers and a clipping from the local newspaper. Before he closed, he commented,

¹⁷Letter from writer to Librarian--or Anyone, Clogher Head, Ireland, March 8, 1965. A copy of the letter is in the writer's possession.

¹⁸Letter from Father J. Corry of Clogherhead, Ireland, to writer, March 29, 1965.

¹⁹Ibid.

PLATE 4

PHOTOCOPY OF BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE
OF MARY HODGERSBirth and Baptismal CertificateDiocese of Armagh Parish of Blaghinhead

On examination of the Register of Baptisms of above Parish I certify that according to it Mary Hodgers, townland of Killyford was born on 25th day of December 1843, and was baptized according to the Rites of the Catholic Church on 25th day of December 1843 in the Church of Blaghinhead C. Lenth, Ireland by the Rev. Priest in Charge

Parents { Denis Hodgers
Catherine MaguireSponsors { Thomas M. Evey
Margaret MaguireSigned J. Berry P.P. } P.P.Given this 30th day of March 1965 at Parochial Hse.

Copy of certificate is in writer's possession.

By the by, I see there is reference in this cutting [clipping] to relations of the deceased sending in particulars of their relationship as they were entitled to inheritance of her estate. I understand they did so but not one of them received a cent from her estate. Perhaps you may be able to discover why they have been deprived of their inheritance.²⁰

Apparently Hugh Hodges had not been informed of the reason his claim was not accepted.

As can be seen, the information from Father Corry supports the claim of Hugh Hodges. Several points challenge its validity. First of all, the baby's name was Mary, not Jennie. One must remember, however, that Leroy S. Scott, who was able to learn Cashier's supposed surname, did not learn her first name. Scott's story, on the other hand, notes that his letter to a Clogherhead parish priest received the reply that no record of birth could be found. In fact, the priest told Scott that no records had been kept before 1857. The responses of the two priests present a confusing picture.

To compare further Father Corry's findings with those of Leroy Scott, one must note that the priest cited Denis [sic] Hodgers as Cashier's father, while Scott said she ". . . admitted that her uncle's name was Dennis Hodgers." Another problem, the discrepancy of year of

²⁰Ibid.

birth is somewhat disturbing. Cashier, as the several examples cited earlier reveal, was not known for accuracy; and during her stay at the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home she was acknowledged to be in a confused state of mind. It does appear significant that there was a Hodgers born in Clogherhead, Ireland, on Christmas Day, even though a year earlier than Cashier's final claim. One should remember that when Cashier first applied for a pension, she claimed that she was 19 when she first enlisted in August of 1862. If her birthday was on December 25, then her year of birth would have been 1843. The evidence, conflicting and confusing as it is, leads to no solid conclusions.

Attempting to solve the riddle of Albert D. J. Cashier's background becomes further confusing when one investigates other, unofficial, accounts that purport to explain who she was, as well as why she assumed a masculine role. A bulletin from the Illinois State Department of Public Welfare reports that according to "several nieces and nephews . . . in Ireland," she was Jennie Hodgers, and her parents were Patrick and Sallie Hodgers. The bulletin explains:

Her father was a coachman and horsetrader and was in the habit of traveling about the country attending county fairs with his family. They had dressed their daughter Jennie in boy's clothes from the beginning

for convenience and safety as they wandered from fair to fair. It is not known just when the family came to America.²¹

Another story, which Cashier reportedly told Charles W. Ives, is that she was a twin and that she and her brother both wore boys' clothing. According to this account, Cashier was called "Georgie." Ives could not remember what she said her brother's name was.²² In addition, one of the most popular explanations is that Cashier came to the United States from Ireland as a stowaway or cabin boy and had to dress as a boy to do so.²³ She gave this explanation to Colonel Anderson and it was one of the first accounts about her background to be publicized.²⁴

Yet another explanation given by Cashier was that her mother married a man named Cashier²⁵ and he subsequently

²¹Illinois, Department of Public Welfare, Welfare Bulletin, October, 1939, p. 9.

²²Bureau of Pensions File, Deposition of Charles Ives.

²³Letter from Mrs. Goldie Ross of Pemberton, Ohio, to Gerhard P. Clausius of Belvidere, Illinois, April 6, 1959. Letter is in the possession of Dr. Clausius.

²⁴Pittsfield Republican (Pittsfield, Illinois), May 14, 1913. Clipping is on file at the Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Home, Quincy, Illinois.

²⁵Father Corry claimed that records at Clogherhead revealed no family by the name of Cashier in the area.

moved the family to New York. After arriving in the United States, Mr. Cashier allegedly worked in a shoe factory and made his stepdaughter help him. To do this ". . . he had to dress her in boy's clothing and he called her Albert." While discussing such information with Leroy Scott, Albert Cashier would give no reason for leaving New York and moving west. She did, however, state that she kept wearing male attire after the war because she became a herder and the clothing was appropriate. Cashier did not, on the other hand, explain why she sought that kind of work.²⁶

The stories of Cashier's background and reasons for assuming the male role, just as the stories about any other aspect of her life, are confusing and conflicting. When she spoke to Scott, she claimed she had a stepfather; when she talked with others, she said she had a stepmother;²⁷ and at other times, she mentioned no step-parents at all.

Besides Cashier's explanations of her masculine guise which attribute the switch to her family circumstances, there is still another version, a version which

²⁶Bureau of Pensions File, Deposition of Leroy S. Scott.

²⁷Ibid., Deposition of Nettie Ross.

would place her sex role change later in her life. While recovering from her broken leg, Cashier told the nurse the following reason:

. . . the reason her assumed the male garb was that he and another man were in love. That both enlisted at the same time; that the lover was wounded and died. That before his death he asked Alberto [sic] promise that he would never again wear women's clothes, and he said he had not.²⁸

Thus, there are a variety of accounts about Cashier's family background and her reasons for choosing to live as a man. There is no way to prove the validity of most, if any, of the explanations because the only person who really knew, or really could have known, was Albert D. J. Cashier. Since Cashier was illiterate, there are no records written by her, only records recorded for her; there are no explanations written by her, only explanations heard, remembered, and related by other people.

After becoming aware of the many stories given, it is not difficult to imagine the frustration that must have been felt by W. J. Singleton, the man responsible for trying to determine her true heirs. It is not surprising that he, faced with claims based on discrepancies

²⁸Ibid.

and little proof, declared that it was impossible to determine the identity of the heirs of Albert D. J. Cashier, alias Jennie Hodges, or Hodgers.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The study of Albert D. J. Cashier has brought into focus the life of a common individual which had, indeed, uncommon facets. As a soldier, Albert D. J. Cashier, Company G of the Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry, traversed 9,960 miles and helped the Union to gain control of the Mississippi River.¹ Her regiment was active in the siege of Vicksburg, receiving the special honor of marching into the city among the first units. The Ninety-fifth Illinois accompanied Major General Nathaniel Banks on the Red River expedition, though the regiment, assigned to the river branch of the campaign, missed the conflict at Pleasant Hill, Louisiana, which convinced Banks to retreat. At the battle of Guntown, three successive commanding officers had to be taken from the field, dead or seriously wounded, and the ranks of Cashier's regiment were greatly reduced. Subsequently, the regiment had to rest, regroup, and recruit before it could embark on its final tour. At the last significant engagement of the war, Cashier's regiment again proved its skill and valor

¹Chicago Daily News (Chicago, Illinois), March 14, 1957, p. 30.

by being the first to storm and enter the Confederate stronghold of Spanish Fort. After finishing an assignment to guard Northern Alabama towns, the Ninety-fifth Illinois Infantry was mustered out of service on August 17, 1865.

During the war, Cashier was not a controversial figure; she rated no mention in the text of the regimental history, but was listed among the men of the regiment. Her presence in the regiment, however, made the day the regiment was mustered out, uneventful as it seemed, a day of unusual significance; for Albert D. J. Cashier was a woman who had served all three years in the war disguised as a man. Until August 17, 1865, there was always a chance that injury or accident might disclose the presence of this woman and, as a result, make her only one of the several women who had enlisted, only to be revealed and sent home. But Albert D. J. Cashier's secret was not discovered until over 45 years later. She was, as far as is known, the only woman to complete her tour of duty in the Civil War, the only woman to be mustered out with her regiment.

That such a guise could succeed reveals the deficiencies of the military system; deficiencies, for instance, in medical examination and hygiene. The difficulties that must have been faced by Cashier in daily life, experiences of traveling and living with a

group of men for three years, are almost too numerous to imagine. In addition, one can only speculate as to the inner life of a person who chose such an unusual role.

After the war Cashier maintained the masculine role. Though her life for about four years after the war is somewhat obscure, in 1869 Albert D. J. Cashier settled in the small Central Illinois town of Saunemin. She stayed in this Livingston County location for about 42 years. Albert--herder, lamplighter, janitor, general handyman--was notably eccentric; but the people of the town called on her services, often paying her with meals and, at times, a place to sleep, never really suspecting that this peculiar man was in fact a woman.

Albert has become a legend in Saunemin, one of the few historical figures the town can claim. She is remembered by many with affection and retrospective amazement. Stories about her, many undoubtedly fabricated or romanticized, abound; and special attention is given to Memorial Day services, largely because among the long list of names read is the name, Albert D. J. Cashier. The name itself reveals nothing of her story, but it reminds those who know it and gives them a chance to tell the new generation about it. Often, in the telling, many who are frustrated by not knowing who Cashier really was and who find calling a woman Albert uncomfortable resort

to naming her Alberta D. J. Cashier, a simple but unlikely solution.

The people of Saunemin have long enjoyed showing curious travelers, and reporters, Albert's gravesite. During this decade action was taken to preserve her house and put it on display. The house, a one-room cottage, had been moved from its location near the Christian Church shortly after Cashier left Saunemin.² Eventually the man who had bought the house, E. G. Bennett, sold it to Edwin R. Smith, who moved it to his property and converted it into an addition to his brooder. After Smith's retirement, the brooder was idle and the owner decided to tear it down; but Smith was convinced to leave the former house intact.³ Clarence Stoller of Gridley, Illinois, then the president of Central States Thresherman's Reunion, had intervened and Smith donated the house to the Threshermen, giving them permission to move Albert's house to the 4-H Park in Pontiac, Illinois, where it could be displayed. Plans were made to have Ida M. Lannon and Mrs. Edward Banker, a granddaughter of P. H. Lannon, decide what

²The Story of Jennie Hodges alias "Albert Cashier" (Pontiac, Illinois: Central States Threshermen's Reunion, n.d.), (n.p.).

³Edwin Smith, personal interview, Pontiac, Illinois, April 10, 1969.

furnishings should be included so that the house would be furnished as it was when Cashier lived there. Miss Lannon was able to supply the only known piece of furniture actually in Cashier's house which is still in existence, a rocking chair.⁴ In August, 1962, the house was moved and restored.⁵ It is open to the public each year during the Threshermen's Reunion.

Shortly after Cashier left Saunemin, still known to most people as a man, her masquerade was disclosed and was widely publicized. The Bureau of Pensions, which had granted her a pension shortly before the turn of the century with no apparent realization that she was a woman, conducted an investigation which confirmed her war service and admitted that, according to its records, Albert D. J. Cashier was the only woman known to have received a pension for fighting in the Civil War.⁶

This study shows the flaws in a system which admitted an individual was a woman, but continued to record her sex as male. Both the Pension Bureau records and the records at the Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Home, as

⁴Daily Pantagraph (Bloomington, Illinois), June 29, 1962, p. 7.

⁵Daily Pantagraph, August 30, 1962, p. 20.

⁶Daily Pantagraph, June 29, 1962, p. 7.

PLATE 5

IDA M. LANNON EXHIBITS CHAIR
ONCE BELONGING TO CASHIER



Source: Pantagraph photo.

well as all reports of Adams County previous to Cashier's death, maintain official consideration of Cashier as a man; an unusual situation, indeed.

The search for heirs of Cashier served only to exhibit the confusion and contradictions encountered in trying to discover the background of a person who switched both name and sex role for the major part of her life. Cashier's practice of telling varying accounts and explanations only served to prevent any certain knowledge of her real origin and motivation. An attempt to discover such information is especially difficult because Cashier lived in an age before people were constantly required to document their very existence.

The study of the life of Albert D. J. Cashier, the only woman to have received a Civil War pension, shows some of the difficulties that may be encountered in the study of local history. This is especially true concerning her final years and settlement of her estate. Official records often do not state things that are privately known and acknowledged. Or they may record only one side of a dialogue, telling none of the explanations or replies given by the other side. In such circumstances, the unusual facts that are known of the life of Cashier offer many opportunities for supposition

and conjecture about the unknown facts of her motivation and personality. In that regard, she remains a person of interest to the community and, in some degree, to the nation, but one that is essentially unknown.

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