EXPERIENCES OF
A. P. RHYNE - COMPANY H 49th REGIMENT
RANSOM'S BRIGADE
1861 - 1865
CONFEDERATE ARMY
Mount Holly, N. C.
May 1, 1927.

Mr. Rhyne Cannon,
Charlotte, N. C.

My dear Grandson:

As you asked me to write you a letter and give you a sketch of my services and the principal battles I was in during the Civil War between the States A.D. 1861-1865, thinking it might be of some pleasure and satisfaction to you when reading that War History between the States, I will try and give you a rough sketch of it, but will ask you to make allowance for bad spelling and grammatical sentences, as I lost my chances for an education by volunteering when I was between 18 and 19 years old, and at the time I am writing this, I am past 60 years old.

I was born on the 29th day of February, 1844 and volunteered in Capt. C. Q. Petty's Company the latter part of 1861, that was being organized in Gaston County, North Carolina, and when we mustered up about 100 men we were ordered to Camp Mangum about four miles from Raleigh, N. C. where there were several other companies, and we were known as the 49th Regiment. We elected Capt. Ramsour from Lincoln, our Captain, and we went to Raleigh and drew our uniforms, and what guns we could get and stayed and drilled at Camp Mangum about 60 days and then ordered to Goldsboro, N. C. and drilled there 30 days and then ordered to Richmond, Va. when George B. McClellan, Commander in Chief of the Northern Army, ordered his march and attack on Richmond. So, in 90 days from the time we were organized we were fighting around Richmond.

We did not drill and play about for 9 or 12 months like you all did in the World War, but were well enough drilled and disciplined to give George B. McClellan's Army a good wallop and we came very near surrounding and capturing his whole army. Our Colonel Ramsour was such a good fighter he was promoted to be a Brigadier General at once, and we elected Leroy M. McFay, Col. of the 49th Regiment, and were assigned to Robert Ransom's Brigade and served through the war as Company H 49th Regiment, Ransom's Brigade and were in the fighting around Richmond.

We were ordered to Manassas Junction about 28 miles from Washington and were in the second Manassas fight which was a pretty big fight, as you will see by reading the History of that fight. We gave them another good whipping. We were then ordered back to Richmond and stayed there for some time, and then we were ordered to the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and then across the Potomac River into Maryland, and ordered to join Jackson's Corps at Antietam Creek, but the Yankees cut us off and we did not get there. And the Yankees got between us and General Jackson's Corps at Antietam and were about to get between us and the Potomac River, in fact they had our Brigade almost surrounded, and we formed a line of battle and watched their maneuvers for a whole day and General Ransom found a country road and as soon as dark came he ordered us to a ford that crossed the Potomac River at Point of Rocks just below Harpers Ferry, where the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers come together. If we had had a hour we the Yankees would have had us completely surrounded. We had no ford and formed another line of battle, but they did not come across after us. We were then ordered to Harpers Ferry where
John Brown was hung on a sour Apple Tree at the Commencement of the War, as you will read in the History.

The mountains are very steep on the South side of the Shenandoah River and we commenced pulling our cannon by hand up the mountains on the Shenandoah side, on the Potomac River, and blocked their way up toward Winchester. They had about 25,000 men there at Harper's Ferry and we opened our cannon on them and they saw we had them surrounded, and we did not fire many cannon until they ran up the flag and surrendered around 25,000 men and supplies to us, and the two or three days we were doing that, General Burnside put his whole Army against Jackson's Corp at Antietam Creek, while we were at Harper's Ferry, and Jackson held them in check, while we were marching from there via Winchester and Martinsburg which was about 60 miles. When we got to Martinsburg we could hear the Cannon roaring between Jackson's and Burnside's men, and we crossed the Potomac River at a ford there, which is 15 or 16 miles from Sharpsburg and we soon stopped Burnside's Army. Jackson fought them in the day and fell back at night, and formed a new line of Battle for several days; and when Lee's Army got there we formed a line with Jackson's men near Sharpsburg, and fought and lay in line of Battle several days and when Lee got ready on the 17th of September we were ordered to forward the whole line, and we charged and were victorious again and slept in line of battle that night on the grounds the Yankees had slept on the night before.

The rations issued us were parched corn on ears or cob, and a piece of fat meat and we could not make a fire to broil that, but we thought it was good and lived pretty well on it.

The 18th of September we lay in line of Battle and Burnside began to retreat and we were ordered to come back across the Potomac River and camped near the town of Martinsburg for several weeks. You will notice they have the fight down as if it was at Antietam Creek or Antietam, and I claim that is wrong, it should be called the Sharpsburg Fight where they met General Lee's army and where the fight was ended. On the 17th day the Battle was decided at Sharpsburg. On that day in the morning Ransom's Brigade was ordered to the right of the Turnpike or Macedon Road leading from Martinsburg to Sharpsburg and there we met the Yankees about 3 hours before day in an apple orchard and we charged them and they ran and we were ordered back across the road again to the left of the Turnpike about 3 miles southwest of the Dunkard Church; and as we were marching along just about daybreak our Adjutant called to our Colonel that the Yankees were coming at charge bayonets on his right and the colonel told him he could not fire a gun without orders. The adjutant told him he did not have time to wait for orders, and the adjutant gave command by company right half wheel and we did so and that put us facing them and we killed one of their Generals, and they stopped and lay down and then put up a white flag and we stopped firing and they got their general and took down the flag and commenced firing again.

And we commenced firing and peppered them so heavy they fell back and we lay there in line until about half past 9 o'clock and we were then ordered to the right just in front of the Dunkards Church and there we met 4 Regiments of Yankees and they had their flags rolled up and there were about 100 men fired and our Colonel commanded them to cease firing and the Yankees yelled, "Come on we are()}
Our Colonel asked what troops they were, and they yelled, "come on they were friends" and our colonel said to our Adjutant, "Go over there"; and just as the Adjutant got in a hollow about half way between us the Yankees yelled, "Will you surrender your men prisoners of war?" and the Adjutant said, "No!" and he saw they were going to fire at him and he dropped in the hollow and it appeared as if they very near all fired at him, but over him and too low for us. They did not hit him. Neither did they kill and wound more than 50 of our Regiment and we fired and charged them and put our bayonets on as we charged and we ran them behind or north of the church as far as a very deep hollow. Their reinforcements were lying as thick as they could be, and as we had only one Regiment we fell back under the cover of the hill that Dunks Church stood on. And in about 30 minutes or more they recruited and charged us again and we lay still until they got pretty close to us and we arose and fired and charged them again and ran them back to that deep hollow and fell back near the church, and was ordered to lie down behind some rails they had thrown up at the edge of a field and in sight of their cannon battery that we had run their cannonaders from, and they commenced loading the cannon with balls and grape shot and poured them into the rails and kept them almost standing on their ends. I had a hickory tree just in front of me and never did lie down, and they peppered us severely. Our Colonel gave us orders to fall back under the cover of the hill, where we first lay down and General Ransom found out how the 49th Regiment was being pressed and sent the 35th Regiment up to support us and they never charged any more and they fell back. Both armies fired over the adjutant there in the morning and neither touched him there in the hollow near the church, and when we got to him he jumped up and charged with us. We lay down in line of battle and stayed there all night, and most of the next day, and as I said previous, the rations we got issued to us there was parched or burnt corn on the cob and a piece of fat meat.

On the evening after that, or the 19th about dark, we were ordered to fall back across the Potomac River at a Ford some distance below Martinsburg and camped on the banks of the River. The next day about dark we were ordered to Martinsburg and marched almost all night, and when we did go into camp that night, there were not more than around sixteen men stacked arms out of about 75 men in our company. They had all dropped out and were almost completely exhausted. The next day we were ordered right back over the road we had marched over the night before and picked up about all of our strugglers of the march the night before, and we went into camp on the bank of the Potomac River, where we previously had camped, and stayed there in camp about 15 miles below Martinsburg for about 30 days.

And while I have it in mind, I want to tell you that A. D. 1869 I met a man by the name of Charles Leeper from Chester, Penn. selling my Mt. Holly yarns and was up in Philadelphia to see him, and one day while sitting in his office there were about a dozen men, old soldiers, came in and commenced talking to him about a Reunion they were going to have at Antietam Creek Fight. And I said to them,
"Why don't you have a Reunion at Sharpsburg where you met General Lee's Army where
the fight was ended?" Leper said, "Rhyme, what do you know about it, you were too
young to have been there." I told him I might have wished I was, but was not, and
asked him where he or they fought on the 17th day of September, and he said they
commenced fighting about 9 hours before daylight that morning in an apple orchard.
I said, "You did," and he said, "Yes on the right of the Turnpike or Macadam Road
leading from Martinsburg to Sharpsburg." I said, "What did you look there?" he said
"We ran like the devil." I asked him what they did that for and he said, "Think if
you had have struck a crowd like that you would have run too." I did not tell him
that I was in that body of soldiers, but asked him if they were moved from there and
he said yes they were moved across the Turnpike just in front of Dunkards Church
and went on to say that there they struck some of the biggest fool soldiers they met
during the whole war, and I asked him in what way, and he said they asked them to
surrender and they said, "No," and they fired at them, and they fired back and charged
without a Bayonet on their guns. I said, "They did," and he said, "Yes." I asked him,
"What did you do to them?" He said, "Would have flew if we could." I said, "What
time of day was that?" and he said, "Little after 10 o'clock." I said, "There was but
one Regiment there were they." He said he did not see but one but "We did not know
how many there was behind them." I asked him was there anything unusual around
there where he was? At first he said, "No," and studied a few minutes and said
nothing but a big hog lying there in the hollow (where the adjutant was). I said,
"I was one of the Nobs that charged over that Hog after him." He said, "The devil
you say!" And they gathered me up and carried me around for sometime and appeared
to have been glad to meet me and we talked the fight over for some time and he said,
"You can truly say you ran us and did it good fashion," and was friendly as
could be, and told me of what a good time they were going to have at the Reunion,
and wanted me to go with him but I could not go. I told him I would want to have the
Reunion at Sharpsburg about Dunkards Church, and that apple orchard, and they spoke
about where they fought in the morning, as I was in front of them at both places.

And they would have me go around with them to introduce me to others that
were there at those two places, and did not attend to any business that day.

Early in October, we received orders to march from Martinsburg towards Rich-
mond and Fredericksburg. It was reported Gen. Burnside was sending his men by rail-
road in that direction. I suppose he thought he could get his men there before
General Lee could march that far, and would be able to take Petersburg, and perhaps
Richmond without much trouble, but we marched day and almost all night and hardly
took time to cook what little rations we got, and by the time Burnside got his men
to Fredericksburg and his Pontoons Bridges ready to cross the Rappahannock River, we
were there waiting for them to cross over into the town, and we formed a line of
battle about 8 miles from town and lay there in about 5 inches of snow for 2 days,
and when they did cross we were ordered to charge across a large field towards the
town, and when we came to the Moore's house on a hill, lay down there for a short
while and were ordered to charge down Moore's Hill in the edge of the town, and took
a rock wall about 4 feet high from them. The wall made part of the street around
Moore's Hill, and we lay down in the streets and the wall was almost bomb-proof posi-
tion for us. The ground was almost level for about 1½ miles in front of it.
The Pontoon bridge was across the river near that place and we supposed they hurried their men across, anyway it was not long until they charged us to try to run us from behind the Rock Wall. But we cut them down so rapidly they could not get near us. It was not a great while until they charged us again with four ranks deep, but they did not get much closer to us. In about an hour and a half they charged us with four ranks deep and what we called Zouaves in rear, and they came in about 400 yards of us but there were not enough of them left to get back and tell the tale how badly we did slaughter them. They charged us so rapidly we had to have men running up and down our battle line borrowing ammunition for us and all we had to do was to lie down behind the Rock Wall and load up and put our guns on the wall and fire. I don't believe they killed as many as 50 men out of our Regiment that day, and we had them piled up in front of the wall for considerable distance, in some places three double. If they had kept on charging us there, I think we could have almost slaughtered their whole army, if they could have kept us in ammunition. They could not run us without any wall to support us, and ought to have had sense enough to not try it.

That day ended the first Fredericksburg Battle and we gave General Burnside's men a good walloping again. We lay around there a few days and the odor from the dead Yankees was so bad we were ordered to dig ditches about 4 feet wide and 4 feet deep and about 100 yards long and roll them up in blankets and throw them into the ditches until filled, and we covered them up. Some of our soldiers did not have very good blankets and shoes and there was a great deal of swapping done for better ones. There were several hundred citizens stayed in the town during the fighting, in basements and ice houses and not a great many got killed. There was one man that was sick, and during the fighting he got up and went into another room and while he was out a cannon ball struck the bed in the room he had left and tore it all to pieces, filled the house with feathers, and did not hurt him. General Burnside was removed after that fight as Commander in Chief of the Yankee Army and in a short time General Grant was appointed Commander in Chief, and it was not long until he ordered the exchanging of prisoners stopped. I heard said they never would whip the Rebels if they didn't stop exchanging prisoners.

I understand after the Civil War the Government ordered the Yankee soldiers that we killed there and filled those ditches up with taken up and made a nice National Cemetery on Moore's Hill with them. You can get an idea of what a great slaughter of men was there by referring to the Civil War History. We were ordered from there in a short time to Petersburg and Richmond, and we camped at Drewy's Bluff and threw up breastworks and fortified Drewy's Bluff, and when General Robert E. Lee ordered his army to Pennsylvania, the second time our Brigade was ordered to go along with him, but the next day the Yankees commenced moving around Petersburg, and our Brigade and Jenkins and a few others were ordered back to guard from Richmond to Wilmington, N. C. and we were kept on the run as much as if we had been with Lee's Army, but for that reason we were not in the Gattysburg fight, which I am sorry of, as if we had been there, I imagine we would have given them a different history to write up. General Ransom lived near Carysburg and Weldon and was at home on a furlough and the Yankees planned to come up to Weldon N. C. and blow up the Bridge that crosses the Roanoke River at Weldon which was the only way we could get any provisions and men via railroad from the South.
General Matt Ransom was at home on furlough and found that the Yankees had
made arrangements to run up there and blow the bridge up at Weldon, and he ordered
the 49th Regiment from Richmond to Carysburg to stop them and when we got there
found out there were one of three roads they could come and he ordered two compa-
nies on the left hand and six companies on the center road which was by his (the
General’s) house, six or seven miles from there and we started out marching and
met them about 3½ miles on the other side of his house at Boone’s Mill, and the
roadway across the creek was on the dam and we planted the only two cannons we had
there to protect the roadway and formed a line of battle with the six companies
of men along the bank of the creek and when the Yankees came up we opened fire on
them and they formed a line and charged us, but we kept them from crossing the
creek. They had 1500 or 2,000 men and one cannon battery and they charged us
several times, but could not move us. They charged up near enough at the mill dam
to see our cannon pits and when we ran them back again we heard them tell their
officer in command that we had breastworks there and he told them there was but
a few men there and he ordered them to charge us again, but we kept them from cross-
ing the creek. Our six companies had been fighting them then about seven hours
and as they had so many more men than we did, it looked like we would be compelled
to retreat, but an idea came into the General’s head and he told Colonel McAfee to
run back on the hill and repeat his command, and he called out for General Jenkin’s
Brigade to move up on the right and for Moore’s battery to be put up on the heights
on the left and the Yankees heard it and they ran for their gun boats, but we did
not follow them very far. General Ransom’s wife wanted to leave home, but General
Ransom told her no, to stay there until they got fire to their house, for by stay-
ing she might save it, but if she ran away they would be sure and burn it. I saw
Mrs. Matt W. Ransom in Blowing Rock in 1922 and went to see her and we got to
talking about the fight near their house and she could tell me all about it and
her wanting to leave home. And said to me if it had not been for General’s strategy
there, she thought we would have had to run, as they had about 2,000 men against
575 or 600.

We were ordered back to Carysburg and camped in the town near the R.R. Station
and in a few days the Yankees made a raid on Tarboro, and we were double-quicked to
Weldon and went by train to Tarboro, but the Yankees ran back that morning and we
went into camp in the edge of the town and stayed there about fourteen days and was
then ordered to Kinston and our Company was ordered down the Neuse River about
fifteen miles on Picket on the road from Kinston toward Newbern and Colonel Faison’s
56th Regiment was on Picket at Green Swamp about twenty miles from Kinston on another
road from Kinston toward Newbern. In about ten days Colonel Faison sent General
Ransom word that he believed the Yankees were maneuvering around him somewhere, and
General Ransom sent a courier post haste to tell him not to send such word as that,
but he must find them, and he took his couriers down there next morning and crossed
over a little stream over a bridge and just as he and his couriers got to Colonel’s
Headquarters and he commenced abusing the Colonel for sending such word he locked
back toward the bridge and said yonder the Yankees were in the road he had just come
along, and he ordered Colonel Faison’s Regiment to go for the Gum Swamp and get out
the best way they could and he whirled his horse right back toward the Yankees and
just as he got close to the bridge which had a little fill to get on the bridge,
that the Yankees had blocked and expected him to try to cross back, just as he got close enough to them he pulled out his pistol and commenced firing and they dodged down behind the fill and he went on the other side of the fill and made his horse jump about a 12 foot ditch and got away. The Yankees were under the bridge when he went across, going down and could have shot him, but wanted to take him as a prisoner. There was an old negro man that was raised down there, that had piloted the Yankees through the swamp and was about one week getting them through, but they did not capture more than fifteen or twenty men of Faison's Regiment as they ran and got in the swamp and the Yankees were afraid General D. H. Hill's men were coming and they ran back toward Newbern and General Ransom got back to Kinston okoh.

General Ransom sent a dispatch by courier to Capt. G Q. Petty down on the River to get across the Neuse River in boats or anyway and march back to Kinston at once and we did so and were then ordered to Gom Swamp to help Colonel Faison's Regiment out, but by the time we got there the Yankees had run back toward Newbern and camped one night at Deep Gulley and they put out pickets for the night, and so did we. I happened to be in charge of our pickets and when I went around to relieve them about two o'clock I found one by the name of Laben Clemmer on front picket sound asleep and as he had always been a good soldier I did not report it at headquarters and saved him of being court-marshalled and shot. The Yankees ran the next morning toward Newbern, we were then ordered back toward Kinston and back to Garysburg, near Walden, and in a short time General Robert Hoke and D. H. Hill wanted to charge on the Yankees at Elizabeth City and we were ordered to go and I was sick and could not march and was ordered to go before the doctor and be excused and he wanted to send me to the hospital and I did not want to go and asked the doctor to give me a furlough home and he said it was no use as they would not give a dead man a furlough now and besides he did not have any blanks so could not fill up one. I told him to write one and if he would I thought I could get it signed. So he said in order to humor me he would do so and did and I took it to Colonel McAfee and got him to sign it and asked him to send it to General Matthew Ransom and have him to sign it and I would risk coming home on it. He did so and I was at home when Lee surrendered. The furlough was for sixty days time and when I got home I weighed 130 pounds and at the expiration of the sixty day furlough I only weighed 115 pounds and was no better and I went to Salisbury before the Board and got the furlough extended for sixty days more and at the expiration of that furlough I only weighed about 90 pounds and I went to Raleigh, N. C. before the Board of Doctors and there was a Doctor Tracey on that Board that was from near Yorkville and he knew my father and when I stepped in before the Board he asked me what I wanted and I told him I wanted to get the time of furlough extended. He said yes, they would do so and would give me a discharge as I would not be able for duty any more and I said they could do as they pleased but I was getting well. Doctor said, "My young man, it is a fine thing for you to think so." I told him I knew I was getting well and he said that was alright. I told him I wanted to come back home that night and he said I could do so and they would send me the discharge, but I never received the discharge papers.
When General Sherman's army was down near Wilmington, the Yankees came in
here from Tennessee or somewhere. There were a lot of them camped near Dallas and
some at Vessalee Ford and some near Tuckaseage and we had some pretty good horses
and they found it out in and through the negroes and I was at home and found out
they were coming over home to get our horses and I had my brother and a black man
by the name of Dave take the horses out and I took their breakfast to them and
we hid the horses in an old pine field thicket near Goshen Church and the Yankees
were hunting them and came within about 700 yards of where we hid them and then went
back along the dirt road that goes from home up by Goshen Church and I thought that
was all the Yankees that were there and I came through the woods to home and there
were a whole company of men there at home and the Sergeant met me at the gate and
asked me where I had been and I told him I was walking about and he asked me where
those horses were I took out from home that morning, and as I had not taken them
out I told him I never took any out. The Captain told me I had and I told him the
horses were too young for their service anyway and that they were private property
and we went walking toward the house and the Captain said you are paroled and I
said, "No", and he said you are my prisoner, and I told him I expected he would
take me and just as we came to the porch my father told me the Yankees were upstairs
running their sabers through the bed and I told the captain if he did not bring
them down and out of the house I would report him as soon as we got to headquarters
and he gave the Sergeant orders to bring them out and asked for the smoke house keys.
I told father to let him have them and he unlatched the doors and took two or three
hams and looked at me and said I will have those horses if I have to stay here 6
months to get them. I told him they had no right to them and if he got them they
would have to steal them.

About that time the Yankees that had my brother Milas running around trying to
make him show them where the horses were hid came up and the captain said to me that
my brother said I took the horses out and must bring them in and my brother Laban was
standing there and I said to him, "Did you say that!" and he said, "No". I was afraid
to ask Milas as I thought he might have told them that. Captain said he would have
the horses if he had to camp there and I told him I did not see how I could keep him
from staying and he sat down on the porch steps a little while and about sundown he
commanded his men to mount their horses and said to me come on and I went out to the
gate where they were getting on their horses and they did not have a spare one for
me and they wanted to go up to John Davidson's to steal a fine horse he had hid out.
The Captain told me I could go and stay until they came back and I said I would not
promise that. He asked me why and I told him he may never come back and he said if
they were not back by 10 o'clock the next day I could go where I pleased, and I
promised to be there.

After it got dark I wanted to go to the black man Dave that I left with the
horses in the pine field thicket, but was afraid that they were watching me and I
went out and looked around a while and as I could not find any one I struck off in
the opposite direction to where I had the horses and would stop behind the trees
until I went about a mile and a half away from where the horses were and then I went
to where the darkey and horses were and told him to get a black man by the name of
West Rhyne to help him take them up to the Shipp Cane Brake near Lincolnton which
was about 20 miles and then I went back home and went to bed.
The next morning the company of Yankees came back with Davidson's fine horse and a nice mule and called for me and I went out on the porch and the Captain said, "You are here are you?" and I said, "Yes," and he said, "Did you go to them horses?" I said, "I did" and he said, "You had better bring one in, as they are going pretty fast." I told them the horses were about twenty miles from here now and that if they ran off and left me I might not come and they had a very poor horse and told me to get on him. I told them to put a saddle on him and I would try him. They said they did not have any and I told them I would not ride him and they said they were going fast and I told them they had no right to try to make me run. The Captain detailed 5 Yankees to bring me and the balance of the company galloped off for their camp near Tuckaseege Ford. The 5 Yankees they left to bring me had a nice fat mule and they asked me if I would ride that and I told them if they would put a saddle on it or fix blankets on it, if it could be rode, I would ride it. They got down and put blankets and rope stirrups on the mule for me and we caught up with the Company before they got to camp near Tuckaseege. After 12 o'clock they had gathered up about 12 Rebels and gave us all horses or mules and started with us for Dallas where their Brigade was camped and we crossed the South Fork at Spencers Ford near Spencer Mountain Cotton Mill, and when we reached Dallas they took us to the camp about 1½ miles and put us Rebels in a line and asked us if we would take oath never to raise arms against the United States again as long as we lived and when they came to me I said I would not take such an oath and they said we will take you to Washington, D. C. I told them that was alright too, and the Colonel and Major started off toward the General's Headquarters and the Major said to the Colonel ask me what sort of an oath I would take. They came back and asked me and I told them I would take an oath not to raise arms or fight until I was exchanged, and they said that was good enough as I never would be exchanged. They said, "You are not whipped yet," and I said, "No we are overpowered for a while." They said, "You don't know General Robert E. Lee has surrendered his army to General Grant!" I said "No," but I had heard it. They replied it was true and they took me and the balance of the Rebs down to Daniel Hoffman's Hotel in Dallas, N. C. and paroled us that night. Daniel Hoffman was my Grandfather and I stayed there that night and the next morning I could not find a horse about. They had hid them all cut to keep the Yankees from taking them, and I had to walk home that day, which is about 12 miles.

If I had been well I would not have minded that as I was used to marching. That wound up my services in the Rebel Army. I am sorry I thought so little of my parole as to lose it or throw it away as I would like to have it to send to you with this letter.

Your affectionate Grandfather,

A. P. Rhyme.

[Signature]