

Fincastle Herald

Fincastle, Virginia

Circa 1865

The glorious beauty of the day was just peeping over old Purgatory Mountain, casting in gleaming splendor a golden, brilliant sheen upon the still water of the majestic James and melting into mellow radiance the morning mist, which blushed with maiden beauty at his majestic kiss. The gentle and sweet lullaby of the falls came floating up the river to add another sentiment to the scene being enacted on its banks.

It was early in '61; the dogs of war had been turned loose; fathers, mothers, sisters, and sweethearts had gathered at old Jackson to bid goodbye - alas, some of them forever! - to as brave and gallant a company of young men as ever offered their lives a willing sacrifice to their country's call. Among this brave band was Lieut. E. P. Hayth, brother of Mr. Moorman Hayth of Fincastle.

The boys are off, amid hugs, tears and kisses, to join the gallant 2nd Virginia Cavalry and in a short time they were doing picket duty near Washington City.

Old Botetourt claims the honor of having captured the first Yankee on Virginia soil, and Lieut. Hayth, of the 2nd Virginia Cavalry, made the capture. At this stage of the war the reigns of military law had not been tightly drawn and we frequently find the boys engaged in little acts of freedom that were not permissible later on - such as playing prisoner's base with the Yankees,

foraging the buttermilk, and sometimes, they would somehow bring into camp a quart of old rye. One day a Yankee rode out alone towards our lines. This was a challenge, and it was accepted by Lieut. Hayth. Mounting a fleet little horse, Hayth started out saying "Boys, I will capture that Yankee sure!"

Wishing to get the Yankee as far from his base as possible, Hayth did not start directly towards him, as was the custom, but started down our lines, all the time, however, getting nearer and nearer the Yankee lines. This ruse fooled the Yank, and when he had tolled him as far from his friends as he could, like a cyclone, Hayth whirled his horse and was soon in hot pursuit, firing as he went, and soon the Yankee held up his hands calling "Don't shoot, I surrender." Hayth brought him into camp, amid the plaudits of both men and officers.

Hayth was the hero; and had the vote been taken there, he would have been made commander-in-chief of all the armies in the South. Lieut. Hayth fought through the war to its close; came home, and raised a large family, but now, alas, is peacefully sleeping in the soil he so gallantly fought to save. Peace to his ashes.

As copied from a July 30, 1919, issue of the Daily Review, of Clifton Forge, Virginia which reprinted the item from an old copy of the Fincastle Herald, published immediately after the War Between the States.