

Itinerary

Of

Edward Leroy Tabler

*During His Three Year Service In The Union Army
Enlisted As A Private In The 51st Illinois Infantry Volunteer Regiment*

- 1/1/1862 Camp Douglas, Chicago, Illinois. Tabler begins enlistment.
- 2/6 Morris, Illinois, via the Chicago & Rock Island Railroad, Tabler's face infected with erysipelas. Morris is about 60 miles southwest of Chicago, in Grundy County.
- 2/14 Chicago, Illinois, via the C&RI Railroad, responding to captain's letter summons. Apparently, Tabler would travel overland between Morris and his home in Aux Sable, about 7 miles east of Morris.
- 2/15 Cairo, Illinois, via Centralia on the Illinois Central Railroad. Troops not allowed to leave the train at Centralia. Centralia is about 267 miles south of Chicago, and about 60 miles east of St. Louis, Missouri. Centralia to Cairo was another hundred miles. That troop train was in a hurry.
- 2/22 Camp Cullum, Kentucky Shore, via steam ferry across Ohio River.
- 3/4 Bird's Point, Missouri, via steam ferry across the Mississippi River, thence to Bertrand, Missouri on the Cairo & Fulton Railroad.
- 3/9 Sikeston, Missouri, by forced march of 8 miles in pouring rain. Sikeston is almost due west of Bertrand.
- 3/10 New Madrid, Missouri, by forced march of 20 miles, at night, in rain. Made a demonstration against the enemy. New Madrid is almost due south of Sikeston.
- 4/7 Point Pleasant, Missouri, marching about 12 miles.
- 4/8 Tiptonville, Tennessee, after crossing the Mississippi River on a steamboat, and marching 5 miles pursuing enemy.
- 4/9 New Madrid, Missouri, by steamboat up the Mississippi with about 4,000 prisoners from Island #10.
- 4/17 Down the Mississippi by steamboat towards Osceola, Arkansas, and Fort Pillow, Tennessee. But planned assault on Fort Pillow is called off. Osceola and Fort Pillow are at almost the same latitude, so they are sometimes used interchangeably to indicate the southernmost control of the Mississippi River by Union Forces at this time. Osceola is about 70 miles south of New Madrid, toward Memphis, Tennessee.

- 4/19 Cairo, Illinois, by steamboat, then up the Ohio and Tennessee Rivers toward Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee, often referred to as Shiloh.
- 4/22 Pittsburg Landing, or Hamburg Landing about 6 miles upstream (south). The Adjutant General's report says the 51st landed at Hamburg Landing, and General Pope's headquarters were undoubtedly established at Hamburg, but both Tabler and Smith indicate they first disembarked at Shiloh or Pittsburg Landing.
- 5/3 Farmington, Mississippi, engaged the enemy, routing 1400 rebels, killing 150 enemy and wounding 20. Union losses 20 wounded.
- 5/7 Marched about 5 miles to within a half mile of Corinth, Mississippi, then marched back about 5 miles. Both sides lost 7 men.
- 5/8 Driven back about a mile by the enemy. Tabler had a very narrow escape, and the Union lost knapsacks and blankets and 100 men. One year later, on 5/9/1863, Tabler refers to their defeat at Farmington.
- 5/31 After rebels evacuated Corinth, pursued enemy to Tuscumbia River, and halted to repair bridge burned by the retreating Confederate forces.
- 6/1 After repairing bridge, pursued enemy to Danville and then about 5 miles to Rienzi, Mississippi, camped on a hill. Rienzi is about 15 miles due south of Corinth.
- 6/2 Pursuit of about 8 miles to Booneville, Mississippi, where cars were burned.
- 6/3 Reconnaissance about 8 miles toward Baldwin, Mississippi, routed the enemy, and fell back to Booneville at 10 A.M. Baldwin (Baldwyn) is about 12 miles south of Booneville.
- 6/6 Marched about 9 miles northwest and camped. (He must have camped somewhere in the vicinity of present-day Jumpertown, Mississippi.)
- 6/11 Marched 10 miles toward Corinth, through dust 6 inches deep, notes total eclipse of the moon.
- 6/12 Marched at 7 A.M. about 18 miles to vicinity of Corinth, and camped until 7/20.
- 7/22 Burnsville, Mississippi, after marching about 14 miles the previous day, marched from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M.
- 7/23 Iuka, Mississippi. after marching 8 miles at night, in the rain.
- 7/25 Tuscumbia, Alabama. Marched at 7 A.M.
- 7/26 Big Bridge, Alabama. I could not locate this town, but it must have been in the vicinity of present-day Town Creek, Alabama. Marched at midnight 11 miles, and another 6 miles after breakfast. Town Creek is about 18 miles east of Tuscumbia, on a direct line to Courtland, Alabama.
- 7/27 Courtland, Alabama. Marched at 5 A.M., 8 miles. The Adjutant General's Report says the 51st Illinois Infantry Regiment was assigned to guard the

Memphis & Charleston Railroad, from Hillsboro, Alabama, to Decatur, Alabama, about 11 miles. Tabler says his camp was established 8 hours' march beyond Courtland, on the railroad, guarding a bridge. Tabler was in Company K. But Smith says Companies H&K were left at Courtland, Companies E&G about three miles further on, Company C at Trinity Station, and the other Companies from Trinity Station to Decatur, Alabama. (It is about 7 miles from Courtland to Hillsboro, about 5 miles from Hillsboro to Trinity Station, and about 6 miles from Trinity Station to Decatur. It may also be helpful to the reader to know that variant names exist for Courtland (Ebenezer), Hillsboro (Gilmerville, Hillsborough), and Trinity Station (Fennels Turnout).

- 8/24 Decatur, Alabama, marching from 6 A.M. to 11 P.M., the regiment is concentrated, preparing to march to Nashville, Tennessee.
- 9/9 Columbia, Tennessee, forced marches all the way, their rear attacked. On this march, racing General Bragg's army all the way, they crossed the Tennessee River at Decatur, burning everything in camp the enemy might use, and the ferry boat and the pontoon bridge, then straight north through Athens, Alabama, waded the Elk River near Elkton, Tennessee, then along side the Nashville & Decatur Railroad to Pulaski, Tennessee, to Columbia on the Duck River.
- 9/12 Within 3 miles of Nashville, Tabler says they came within 12 hours of being cut off at Holly Tree Gap (He uses the variant name: Hollow Tree Gap). Holly Tree Gap is between Franklin and Nashville, near Brentwood, Tennessee.
- 9/15 Nashville, Tennessee. Tabler says the prospect of the war looks gloomy, celebrates his 22nd birthday on Sunday, 9/21.
- 11/7 Mitchelville, Tennessee, about 40 miles north of Nashville, near Kentucky border, to get supplies. Nashville has been under siege from 9/11 to 11/6.
- 11/10 Nashville, with a supply train of over 400 wagons.
- 12/11 Camped on a hill 6 miles south of Nashville.
- 12/26 Battle of Stones River began.
- 1/7/1863 After the battle of Stones River, Tabler camped on Stones River, 3 miles south of Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Camp is named Camp Bradley, after the colonel who replaced their former commander Roberts, who was killed at Stones River while cheering forward his men.
- 2/13 Salem, Tennessee, about 4 miles southwest from Camp Bradley, to be on picket duty for several days. (The modern Post Office for Salem is Overall, Tennessee.)
- 2/25 Returned to Camp Bradley, near Murfreesboro, relieved by a brigade from Davis' division.

- 3/4 Eagleville, Tennessee, Capt. John G. McWilliams commanding Regiment, a sally against enemy forces, about 13 miles southwest of Overall, on the Salem Pike.
- 3/8 Franklin, Tennessee, to assist General Granger against General Van Dorn. Adjutant General's report places the 51st at Spring Hill, but Tabler says different.
- 3/9 Spring Hill, Tennessee, routed some rebels, found some honey beehives.
- 3/11 Duck River, or Rutherford Creek, rebels escaped across the river to Columbia, Tennessee.
- 3/12 Franklin, Tennessee, disappointed that their quarry got away. Tabler won't swear in print, "We did not like it much D thing the Rebs got away." A 20 mile march that day.
- 3/14 Camp Bradley, after passing through Triune and Eagleville, a march of 28 miles, and wearing out one pair of shoes. (Variant name for Triune is Hardeman Cross Roads. It's in Williamson County, due west of Murfreesboro.)
- 3/19 Moved camp about a mile down Stones river, which flows Northwest into the Columbia River. Because Companies H and K are now so small, they will do duty combined. The 51st and 42nd Regiments usually serve together, alternating with the 22nd and 27th Regiments.
- 4/20 Salem, Tennessee, for several days picket duty.
- 4/25 Camp Bradley. Tabler says he will never forget this place!
- 5/29 Salem again, picket duty.
- 6/2 "Old Camp Shaeffer". Is this a different camp? Or just the renamed Camp Bradley?
- 6/14 Salem, picket duty.
- 6/20 Camp Shaeffer, on Stones River.
- 6/24 Liberty Gap, slowly driving the enemy back.
- 6/25 Millersville, the enemy being driven inch by inch.
- 6/27 Beech Grove, after a pretty severe fight. Beech Grove is about 18 miles southeast of Murfreesboro, on a direct line to Manchester.
- 6/28 Manchester, Tennessee, after 13 mile march guarding supply train.
- 7/1 Tullahoma, Tennessee, without resistance.
- 7/3 Cowan, Tennessee, located on the Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad, after passing through Winchester.
- 7/9 University of The South, at present-day Sewanee, Tennessee, atop the Cumberland Mountains. Sewanee is about 7 miles east of Cowan, and about 9 miles north of Tantelon (Tantallon).

- 7/10 Marched southward about 7 miles toward Bridgeport, Alabama and halted, Companies H and K got lost on the railroad.
- 7/14 University Station, returned because no forage to be found.
Got full rations first time in 20 days.
- 7/19 Marched about 8 miles on Bridgeport road, formed a line of battle, but no enemy.
- 7/20 Marched back to University Station, "Here's your mule !".
- 7/31 Bridgeport, Alabama, on the Tennessee River, after passing Lost Cove, Tantallon and Anderson, Tennessee, and Stevenson, Alabama. (I'm puzzled by Tabler's mention of Battle Creek, for I cannot find it on his route south. Present-day Battle Creek rises east of University Station, and issues into the Tennessee River north of Bridgeport. I'm also puzzled by his failing to mention passing through Stevenson. But, since he speaks of a brigade "back" at Stevenson, at 8/8/1863, I am convinced he did pass through Stevenson. Furthermore, Smith says, "... the army march over the mountain, passing through Tantalon and Anderson. Go into camp at Stevenson, Alabama." on page 84.)
- 9/2 Crossed Tennessee River, marched 4 miles, camped at foot of Raccoon/Sand Mountain.
- 9/4 On top of Raccoon Mountain.
- 9/5 Trenton, Georgia. at the eastern foot of Raccoon Mountain.
- 9/6 Lookout Creek, in Lookout Valley, after 9 mile march.
- 9/10 Back to Stevenson, as supply train guard.
- 9/12 Valley Head, Alabama, after double-teaming up Sand Mountain, walking all the way because his fellows got drunk. Valley Head is about 26 miles southwest of Trenton, Georgia.
- 9/13 Up Lookout Mountain.
- 9/14 Down Lookout Mountain, and a 23 mile march northward through dust so thick it hid the ground from view.
- 9/16 Up Lookout Mountain again, and down again to within 12 miles of Lafayette, Georgia, where General Negley was forced to retreat the other day. (I believe this had to be in McLemore's Cove. Smith says they passed through Steven's Gap, and The Adjutant General's Report says the 51st marched from Steven's Gap to McLemore's Cove.)
- 9/18 Marched north about 12 miles, six miles in the night and very thick dust.
- 9/19 Marched a number of miles at the double-quick, made a desperate charge to support General Crittenden's Corps, the 51st losing half their number. For Tabler, the Battle of Chickamauga had begun.
- 9/20 Driven back toward Chattanooga, to Mission Ridge.

- 9/21 Threw up works at Rossville.
- 9/22 Fell back to within one mile of Chattanooga, continuing to build fortifications, repulsing the enemy. (The Adjutant General's Report states that the 51st crossed the Chickamauga Creek on the 22d, but this is an obvious error, since that creek is east of Rossville. As the O.R. clearly says, General McCook was ordered to cross his troops over the Chattanooga Creek on the 22d.)
- 9/26 Chattanooga, Tennessee, after Rosecrans visits his lines amidst loud cheering, Tabler reports "... the Army in fine spirits. Our loss heavy and the Rebel loss heavy." But Chattanooga is under siege, the Army of the Cumberland begins to starve.
- 10/13 Camp at Chattanooga is named Camp Lytle, after General Lytle who was killed there.
- 11/19 Camp Wagner, Tabler in a fatigue detail, but it is unclear whether Tabler is quartered there.
- 11/23 Orchard Knob, driving enemy from his breastworks and capturing a whole regiment.
- 11/25 Missionary Ridge, a half-hour charge up a 400 foot mountain, capturing a large number of prisoners and heavy artillery.
- 11/26 Chickamauga Creek, pursuing the enemy at night.
- 11/28 Twelve mile march toward Knoxville, Tennessee, in mud and rain, and far into the night, to relieve General Burnside, under attack by Longstreet.
- 11/29 Passed through Harrison, Tennessee, on a 16 mile march. Harrison is about 12 miles northeast of Chattanooga, up the south side of the Tennessee River.
- 11/30 Crossed the Hiawasse River, near where it empties into the Tennessee River, a march of 22 miles.
- 12/1 Decatur, Tennessee, a march of 12 miles. Decatur is about 35 miles northeast of Harrison, still following along the Tennessee River.
- 12/3 Philadelphia, Tennessee, a hard march of 20 miles on frozen ground , after an 18 mile march the previous day.
- 12/5 Crossed Little Tennessee River, marched on, total 14 miles.
- 12/7 Knoxville, Tennessee, after passing through Rockford, which is about 11 miles south of Knoxville.
- 12/16 Strawberry Plains, Tennessee, on the East Tennessee & Virginia Railroad for 18 miles, and then marched 10 miles to Blains Crossroads. (Here is another example of the advantage of a soldier's account versus the official account : The A.G.'s Report says the 51st moved to Blain's Crossroads by rail, but Tabler notes that they "footed" the last 10 miles.)
- 1/15/1864 Knoxville, two miles from town, after 15 mile march.

- 1/18 Kingston, Tennessee, after 38 mile march on prior two days, crossed to south side of Tennessee River, and marched 6 miles further south.
- 1/19 Marched back to the river, crossed to the north side.
- 1/26 Chattanooga, after crossing the Clinch River and marching 10 miles down the north side of the Tennessee River, then an 18 mile march the next day, 16 mile marches the following two days, 18 miles on the 25th, the final 7 miles on the 26th.
- 3/9 U.S. Sanitary Garden. Tabler, along with several others in K Company, was rejected for Veteran reenlistment, and did not go on furlough, but was assigned to extended duty as a gardener.
- 4/22 Cleveland, Tennessee, after a two day march of about 30 miles. For Tabler, Sherman's campaign against Atlanta has begun.
- 5/3 Marched 15 miles toward Dalton, Georgia, without resistance.
- 5/4 Marched 8 miles forwards, and one mile back, building fortifications.
- 5/8 Buzzard Roost, losing 4 men killed and 14 wounded.
- 5/9 Rocky Face, two men wounded.
- 5/13 Dalton taken, and then a march 8 miles beyond.
- 5/16 Resaca taken, losing Captain Lester killed, 20 men wounded. Then advanced to Calhoun, skirmishing all the way.
- 5/19 Pursued enemy to Adairsville, Georgia, without much opposition, about 10 miles due south of Calhoun.
- 5/20 One mile beyond Kingston, a brisk fight until dark.
- 5/21 The Etowah River, soldiers washing and cleaning.
- 5/23 Crossed the river, marched south until 11 P.M.
- 5/24 Marched forward about 10 miles, no opposition.
- 5/25 Dallas, engaged eleven days, losing a Lieutenant in Company K, and 11 men wounded in the Regiment.
- 6/6 Within 3 miles of Acworth, on the Western & Atlantic Railroad.
- 6/15 After advancing about 11 miles on the 10th, engaged the enemy, losing Captain Tilton wounded, and 12 men killed or wounded.

TABLER'S DIARY ENDS JUNE 27, 1864, JUST BEFORE THE BATTLE OF KENNESAW MOUNTAIN. FROM THIS POINT, THE ITINERARY IS OF HIS REGIMENT, EXCEPT FOR HIS LETTER FROM PULASKI, TENNESSEE, DATED NOVEMBER 7, 1864. SOURCES ARE THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S REPORT, THE O.R., AND BENJAMIN SMITH'S JOURNAL.

- 6/27 Kennesaw Mountain, Colonel Harker killed, of the 3rd Brigade, Tabler's unit. Also two other officers wounded, and 54 men killed or wounded. Adjutant Henry W. Hall and Lieutenant A.V. McCormack killed.
- 7/3 Marietta, the enemy retreating.
- 7/4 Chattahoochee River, the Regiment marching on to Rosewell and crossing the river at Howell's Ferry, then returning to the 4th Corps on the 13th.
- 7/18 Nancy's Creek, fighting all the way.
- 7/20 Peach Tree Creek, 5 men wounded.
- 7/22 Within 2 miles of Atlanta, near the Augusta Railroad, General McPherson, 4th Corps, killed.
- 9/8 Atlanta, after skirmishes at Jonesboro, 2 wounded, and Lovejoy, 3 wounded. Camped on the Decatur Railroad.
- 9/28 Chattanooga, via the Western & Atlantic Railroad, and on to Bridgeport, Alabama, via the Memphis & Charleston Railroad. (Smith says they arrived in Chattanooga on the 26th.)
- 10/18 After moving to Alpine, Georgia, back to Chattanooga, where 192 drafted men join the regiment. (Tabler mentions these draftees in his letter from Pulaski, Tennessee, dated 11/7/1864, but he says there were 200 draftees.)
- 11/2 Swan Creek, encamped after arriving by train at Athens, Alabama, and marching 3 miles north.
- 11/3 Marched to Roaring Spring. (I haven't located this place yet, but it had to be almost due north of Athens.)
- 11/4 Crossed the Elk River, and marched to within 4 miles of Pulaski, Tennessee.
- 11/5 Pulaski, constructing a strong line of works.
- 11/22 Marched to Lynnville, Tennessee. (Tabler writes in his letter of 11/7 that from Chattanooga to Pulaski he marched about 150 miles and rode government cars about 90 miles. He marched from Athens to Pulaski, on muddy roads where a man will slip back about as fast as go forward.)
- 11/24 Columbia, Tennessee, racing General Hood's army all the way to Nashville. Rebel cavalry attacking their wagon train.
- 11/27 Evacuated Columbia, crossed Duck River, after dark, rear guard fighting all the way.
- 11/28 Placed in position on Franklin Pike, fronting town of Columbia.
- 11/29 Spring Hill, took up position to cover Franklin Pike. At 4 p.m. the enemy attacked, and after an hour's severe fighting drove back the Third Brigade, but not until the entire wagon train of the corps had passed into

- town. The regiment lost 12 wounded, including Capt. George I. Waterman, A.A.G., and General Bradley.
- 11/30 Franklin, Tennessee, on the Harpeth River. An hour before daylight the 2nd Division withdrew from Spring Hill, covered the retreat of the army to Franklin, where the 2nd and 3rd Brigades were placed in front of the main line. At about 4 p.m. the enemy attacked, the two brigades falling back by order. Reinforced by the 1st Brigade, the troops rallied, repulsed the enemy, and captured 733 prisoners and 12 battle-flags. Losses were Lieutenant Thomas killed, Captain Tilton and Lieutenants Johnson and Hills, wounded, 52 men killed or wounded, and 98 men missing.
- 12/1 Nashville, Tennessee, under siege.
- 12/15 Battle of Nashville, assaulted the left and center of Hood's army, capturing flags, prisoners, and three artillery pieces. Losses were 1 man killed, 5 wounded.
- 12/16 Pursued enemy, taking more prisoners and colors, and bivouacked at night near Brentwood Pass, on the Franklin Pike.
- 12/17 Continued pursuit of the enemy, with the remainder of the 4th Corps, through Franklin, Columbia, and Pulaski to Lexington, Alabama, where it encamped at the end of the month. Lexington is about 24 miles due north of Courtland.
- 1/1/1865 Mount Rozell, Alabama, encamped until the 3rd.
- 1/3 Crossed Elk River at Buck Island.
- 1/5 Huntsville, Alabama. The Army of the Cumberland went into winter quarters at Huntsville, the several Divisions each at its designated point, the 2nd Division Headquarters located in a plantation mansion about a mile and a half west of Huntsville.
- 1/6 Decatur, Alabama, the 3rd Brigade reinforcing the garrison there, where it remained at the close of the month. Tabler was discharged ex term on 2/28/1865, by Captain Montgomery, at Springfield, Illinois.