

Medical history of the 19th Regiment, Kansas Cavalry Volunteers

Mahlon Bailey, the regimental surgeon, recorded this medical history of the 19th Kansas Cavalry. This history includes information on the hasty physicals given to new recruits, wounds received in battle, and other medical problems encountered on the trail, as well as general information about the day-to-day activities of the soldiers. Located at the end of the report is a chart detailing the medical problems of the regiment, including the number of cases of dysentery, gonorrhea, pneumonia, ulcers, burns, and sprains (among many others). At the end of these charts, Bailey expresses his appreciation to the commanders of the regiment, thanking them for following his medical advice and showing concern for the health of their soldiers.

Creator: Bailey, Mahlon

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Barly, Malton

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Medical History

of the 19th Regiment of Kansas Cavalry Volunteers.
This Regiment was organized by Gov. Crawford
in October 1868 - at Topeka - enlisted for six
months to serve in a winter campaign against
hostile Indians on the plains. The organization
of the Regiment was completed in less than
two weeks after the arrival of the first
recruits, hence the examination of the men
was made in a hurried manner. A few
succeeded by the aid of their company officers
in getting mustered that were not really fit for
soldiers. A large number were young men
between the ages of 18 & 21. Very few over
30. & all together were a fine lot of men
physically - the best Volunteer Regiment I
ever saw. The men were from all parts of the
State, a great many from Malarial districts
hence there was considerable Ague in
the beginning, but it disappeared very fast
after we got on the plains.
As is always the case when recruits first
go into camp, there was a great many
cases of Diarrhoea & Dysentery or a kind of a
combination of the two diseases & I think ought
to be called ^{however} Sympetritic Diarrhoea. Generally
of a mild form & none of the cases assumed
that severe chronic form which proved so fatal
during the late war.
The Regiment left Topeka on the 5th of November
leaving only one man (a case of Remittent fever)
behind. The men were well provided with
clothing - including ponchos - but were without
tents, or shelter of any kind.

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On the 8th it rained all day, I noticed in the evening
+ turned my cold. I left a bad case of Pneumonia
at Emporia under charge of Dr Jacobs - The man
suffered severely -
On the 10th we arrived at Camp Bracher
on the Arkansas River at the mouth of the
Little Arkansas. Here we remained one day +
received 5 days rations of Hard bread per +
Coffee. I left in Hospital one case of
Pneumonia, one case of Accidental Gun -
Shot wound + one case of Pericostitis
On the morning of the 14th we crossed the
Arkansas River + left the last village of civilization
+ directed our course South West under the
guidance of a Scout known as "Apache Bill"
On the night of the 16th after raining all day,
it turned intensely cold, froze hard. The wind
blew a perfect hurricane from the North. We
were encamped in bleak place among sand
hills. Several of the men had their toes frozen
but with the exception of one severe case of
Pneumonia, no other ~~severe~~ bad results from
the night's exposure.
On the night of the 18th while in camp on Medicine
Lodge Creek between 200 + 300 hundred horses
stampeded, several men were slightly hurt which
swelled the list of Convulsion for the month +
delayed the Regiment one day, which was an
important item as the distance to Supplies was
about an hundred miles, forage all gone + rations
nearly out. The time however was improved
by sending out details to obtain buffalo meat
On the night of the 21st it commenced snowing +
continued for 36 hours, not less than two feet of snow
fell

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On the 22nd it was impossible to move. We were encamped in a little brushy valley & fortunately had plenty of wood entirely out of rations. Difficult to get buffaloes on account of the snow which made it impossible to see a hundred yards. ~~the~~ a great many of the men actually suffered from hunger & the limited amount of buffalo that was obtained saved the necessity of eating horse flesh not only for this day but for the next six days. On the 28th we moved out expecting to find the Cimarron River in a few miles wound around among sand breaks all day & encamped within three miles of the Cimarron & about 20 miles below where we should have struck it. The men & horses were becoming very much exhausted. The next morning parties were sent out to procure buffalo meat. & in the afternoon Col Crawford took all that had horses in condition to trace which amounted to but little more than half of the regiment & struck out to find Camp Supply an indefinite distance & course. & succeeded after three days marching in finding it. The balance of the Regiment under command of Major Perkins remained in camp being unable to make subsistence entirely on buffalo meat to live, which was plenty by going a few miles from camp. Salt water was carried from the Cimarron in canteens to season the meat with & with out any thing else we succeeded in living. The men however suffered considerably from dysentery in a mild form. My supply of Opoids was soon exhausted & I prepared a mixture of Olive Oil, Turpentine, Tincture of Opoids & Cresote which proved to be very efficient. a number of the men indulged in eating large quantities of Hackberries which in a few cases produced rather serious results. The seeds became impacted in the rectum causing complete obstruction & could only be removed by using a Syringe.

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While here I evaporated just one half pint of water from the Cimarron River & obtained, - when perfectly dry - 94 grains of Salt. What is properly the Salt plains of the Cimarron is a narrow strip along the South side of the river opposite this point. On the night of the 26th of Nov. we received rations & forage by Capt. Wiley who had been sent out on the 22^d to find Camp Supply & procure provisions.

On the 1st of Dec the detachment joined Col. Crawford at Gen. Sheridan Supply depot. Situated on the north fork of the Canadian near the mouth of Beaver Creek. 300 miles South west of Fort Huachuca where we remained for 7 days & started to Ft. Cobb. left a detachment of about 300 dismounted men under command of Maj. Simons & in charge of the Surgeon of the post. ~~10~~ 10 of the number on Sick Report 3 of whom were wounded by accident. Upon the arrival of Br. Alderman 2^d Asst. Surg. of the Regiment sometime in December, he took charge of the Detachment. His reports & the reports of a detachment of about 80 men sent to Ft. Dodge & also the reports of two Companies that were detailed to escort trains are not included in my reports - ~~the~~

We arrived at Ft. Cobb after a 12 days march. During very cold weather the Regiment ~~however~~ was provided with shelter tents - had plenty to eat & enjoyed excellent health. We moved South to the East end of the Wichita Mountains in the forepart of January & remained for about two months. Good Country. Excellent water & plenty of fuel. ~~As~~ the reports for January & February show there was almost no sickness at all.

The weather was generally mild. no snow, Considerable rain,

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and with the exception of a rather about every two weeks, was decidedly pleasant. The men built fire places to their "Bunk" tents, generally had rations sufficient, to which was added, no small amount of game. Such as Deer, Antelope Turkey &c.

On the 2^d of March the Command under Gen. Custer consisting of the 7th U.S. Cav. Mounted & the 19th Kansas - Dismounted started west in search of the Cheyenne Indians. The men suffered considerably from sore & blistered feet, but it very soon became evident that the Infantry could not march the Cavalry & when on the 5th day out Gen. Custer divided his Command he sent about two thirds of the Cavalry & only one third of the Infantry a short route to Supplies & with the balance of the Command made a march of some 300 miles in 17 days on short rations, when were utterly exhausted & the men decoured with a relief the mules that were killed because they could travel no further & decided ~~the~~ ^{the} better ~~that~~ that the Texas cattle that had been furnished by the Commissary Department. After the expedition, marches were continued at the rate of about 25 miles per day ~~for~~ until our arrival at Ft. Hays, a good many of the men became tired & foot sore, but fortunately there was a long number of empty wagons along, that after considerable delay were obtained to transport those that were unfit to march.

The total distance marched by the Regiment was about 1200 miles. $\frac{2}{3}$ of the distance on foot.

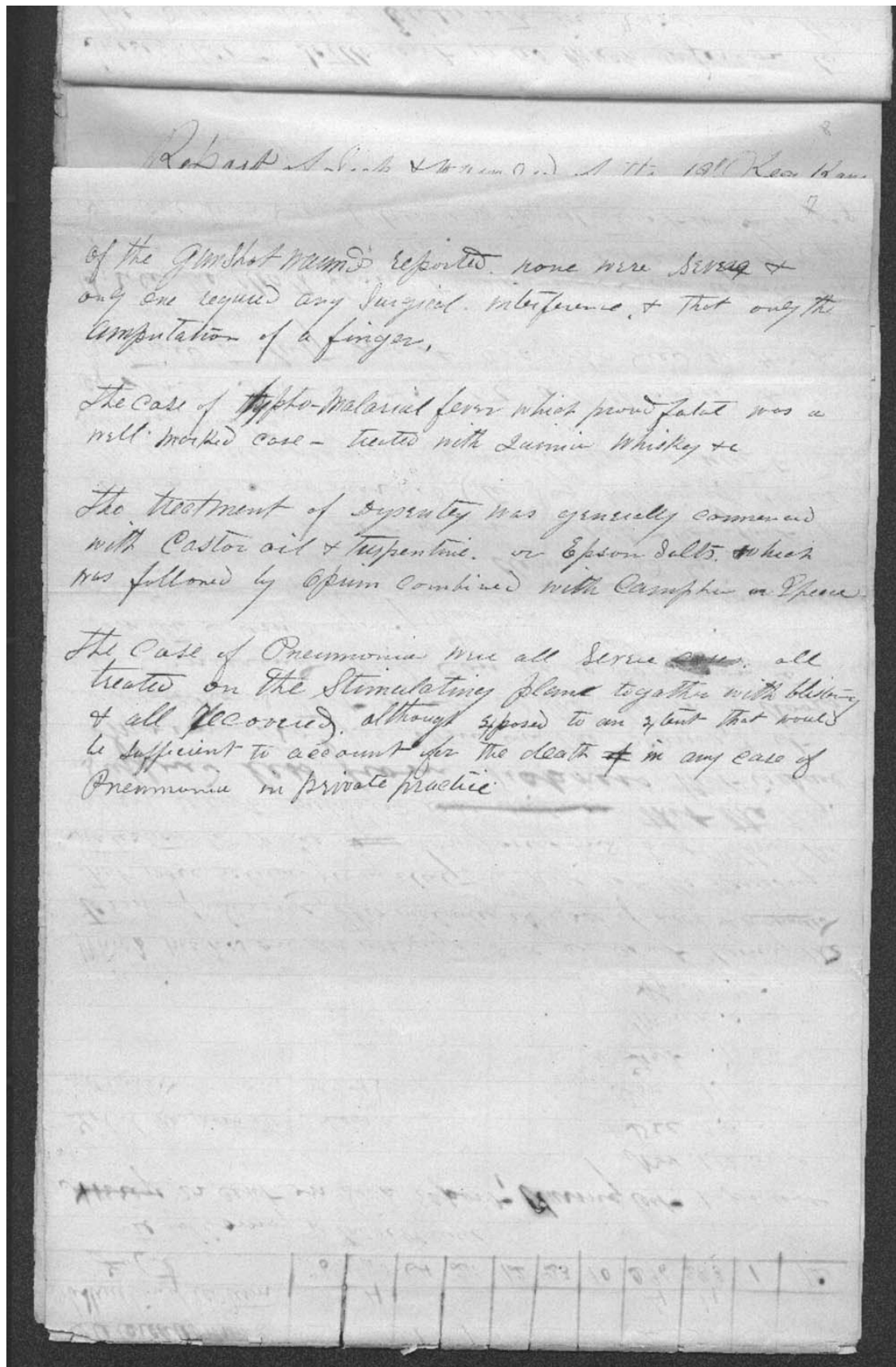
I shall not enter into any description of the country over which we marched further than to say, that after leaving the Arkansas River at Wichita one hundred & fifty miles S.W. of Topeka, with the exception of the immediate vicinity of the East end of the Wichita Mountains there is no country over which we passed that is not appropriately named the "Great American desert." & in every thing that constitutes a Country

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Susceptible to Settlement is as much inferior to the Plains west of Ellsworth in Kansas, as those Plains are to a good Agriculture country. In fact the whole region South of the Arkansas & especially South of the Cimarron river & ^{west} of the Wichita Mountains is one vast desert of red Clay & Sand, with scattering Gypsum ^{& Salt} deposits.

The following is a consolidation of the monthly reports of the Regiment which ~~shows~~ ^{gives} the number taken Sick & wounded during each month, it shows that the total number taken Sick was 262, & the number wounded 34, & also that more than half of the number of cases for the term of service from Oct 25th 1864 to April 18th 1865 occurred in the month of November, which can be accounted for by the sudden change from civil to Camp life, the ~~great amount~~ ^{excessive wet weather} want of shelter & sufficient provisions, although for the month the number taken on Sick report is large in comparison with the other months. Still the cases were generally mild, only requiring to be taken from duty for a few days, & the morning report shows ~~no~~ ^{not} that the average no. on Sick report was just a little over one per cent.

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Subduction of Rectum										2	2		
		4								4	4		
Total	16	150	64	21	12	23	10	296	283	1	12		

The following is the average
Average per cent on Sick report, During Oct. 1 per cent

Total No. taken Sick. 262
Wounded 34

Nov. 1.13 " "
Dec. 1.3 " "
Jan. 1.1 " "
Feb. .7 " "
March .6 " "
April .75 " "

Which makes an average of one per cent during the term of service, This includes all case of Sick & wounded that were relieved from duty. I have not the necessary statistics to make ~~any~~ comparisons, but I think the above reports indicate ~~that the Reg.~~ that the Reg. suffered less from sickness than is usual among troops even on the plains, & it also shows that as far as the health of troops is concerned there can be no objection to winter campaigning, & the great objection that active operations ^{must stop} when winter sets in on the plains is I think thoroughly demolished by last winter's campaign. In fact as far as health & comfort of troops are concerned (to say nothing of other military advantages) I would prefer winter to the summer months.

Of those sent to Hospital all recovered & were returned to duty except one, who died in Hosp. at Ft. Hayes

Besides the death from typhoid malarial fever reported above there was one man accidentally shot & instantly killed. Also one man died of disease in the detachment under charge of

W. H. H. H.

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Is, Ashman. One man died of disease & one accidentally killed in the Companies that were detached from the Regiment. Making in all six deaths. Four from disease & two killed.

While I speak with pleasure of the good health & few casualties in the Regiment. I regret to say that we interfered to no alarming extent with the comfort & good health of the hostile Indians, whom we found, but punished not, for the atrocious deeds committed but a few weeks before upon defenceless citizens of our own State. Deeds, which 1200 brave men of Kansas volunteered to avenge, on the first sound of the bugle ~~for~~ to arms! Men who were able & willing to stand any exposure, march any distance, endure any hardships necessary to capture & severely to punish in a manner that would hereafter secure these poor homes & families from the merciless savages. ~~Committed last summer & fall~~ & the wives & children of the frontier settlers from the merciless savages of Savage brutes who considers every act of kindness indications of fear & the fostering care of the Government an admission of its inability or fear to punish them.

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Before closing I wish to extend to ^{the} Commanding
& all the officers of the Regiment my regards for
the prompt assent at all times to all measures
suggested by the Medical Officers in regard to the health
of the & Sanitary Condition of the Command
& their non-interference ⁱⁿ matters pertaining
to the Medical Dept.

I also take the privilege to express my high
respects for Asst. Surg. S. E. Russell (who was
constantly with the regiment) for the prompt &
skillful manner in which he performed his duties
always ready & willing to do all in his power to
aid the Sick & no less vigilant in guarding against
malingers. Also Asst. Surg. Fickman who had charge
of a detachment of the Reg. & proved himself to be
an efficient officer & a gentleman.

I further if the Medical Officers of the Regiment
were more fortunate in one thing than another
it was in having a Hosp. Steward (J. E. Lund) that
in every thing pertaining to the duties of a Steward
could not be excelled. He combined with
superior qualifications an unflinching energy
& a disposition to promptly do all his
duties that will long be remembered
by those connected with him.

