

Reuben Reed's Report, 1864

In 1865, the Civil War finally came to an end. The conflict had lingered on in the previous months, even though the Confederacy had already lost much of Arkansas, and federal troops controlled everything north of the Arkansas River, having taken Fort Smith, Helena, Little Rock, and other points in between. Only the southwestern part of the state remained in Confederate hands during the war's last year. Even so, a lot of activity continued.

The following report dated July 13, 1864, from Captain Reuben C. Reed at Arkadelphia, described some of the area's military events to Arkansas Governor Harris Flanagin. Flanagin, an Arkadelphian, had moved with the Confederate capital to Washington (Hempstead County) months earlier when Union troops took control of the capital in Little Rock. This excerpt from Reed's report, shows that the upper Ouachita River and the Military Road remained in the midst of troop movements and activity:

“We will keep you posted as to their movements in this direction and you may be assured, Gov., that we will give you notice of any scout that comes near enough to this place or moving in the direction of Washington. There has been no Federals at Billingsleys. There was a few scattering Gray Backs, four in number at one place slipped in to see their families. Capt. McDonald went to hunt them up. They lived near where Capt. McD's place is. About two hundred went up by Hot Springs to Farr's Mill about daybreak the next morning. They were fired upon by Capts. Thrasher & Crawford's men about (25 or 30). They killed two or three feds. Two of Capt. McDonald's men was in the attack. Sgt. Davis' horse was wounded. The Feds came dashing out. Our men fell back, the Feds left soon after for Little Rock via Cedar Glades. About seventy five Ark. Feds went down on Clear Creek about 12 or 14 miles above Rockport to the right. Lieut. Newton with twenty five men went after them but before they got there the Feds had gone back. The Feds captured two men belonging to Capt. Cook's Co. I sent a scout up to Rockport as soon as I had notice of them coming out and found the direction they were going and if I had a supply of ammunition I should have taken my whole company. As it was I kept in readiness to move on them should they have moved in this direction and if I had supposed there was any danger of their coming or any chance of getting on them before they left I should have written to you forthwith. “

The original document containing the above report has been preserved by the Arkansas History Commission (State Archives) in Little Rock.