

## ***A TALK WITH UNCLE TOM WOOLERY - Confederate Veteran, Lone Survivor of Company, Reviews Old Times and Recalls Interesting Incidents***

"Well, son, here I am. They told me you wanted to see me." said Uncle Tom Woolery the other day as he walked into the Eagle office. As I had not seen Uncle Tom on the street for several days, I telephoned to his home, asking that he drop in the first time he came down town.

"You've been in this county quite a while haven't you, Mr. Woolery?" I asked. "Well, not so long, only eighty-eight years," he replied. He was born in 1843 and will celebrate his eighty-eighth birthday, January 18th.

"Wasn't traveling rather difficult when you were a boy?" was the next question, by way of a start. "Well, not so bad. When I didn't go horse back I walked. but there were no fences to bother with in those days.

When we wanted to some some place we right across the nearest way. But I never rode a bull courting like Sam Cole did. He swam across the Missouri River on one to go to a dance. Folks mostly didn't get far from home as we think of distance now a days. I remember though one venturesome party went all the way to the Osage River. And one of them was killed by the Indians before they got back."

Asked about his military experience, Mr. Woolery said that a company of home boys met at Houck Springs in 1862, and chose a leader. He took them across the Missouri River to join Pendleton's command. Arriving there they found Pendleton's forces scattered by militia, and the company was obliged to swim back. He entered regular service under the command of General Joe Shelby, taking an oath of enlistment to serve for a period of three years or for the duration of the war. The war had ended at the end of three years and his company was mustered out in 1865.

Mr. Woolery, like other Confederate and Federal veterans who saw real military service, says that irresponsible individuals are to blame for the criminal violence, murder and pillage suffered by friends of both sides of the great controversy. Members of the regular troops of both armies, with few exception, conducted themselves as soldiers and gentlemen.

"You ask me what was the worst scare I ever had in my life? That's pretty hard to answer. About the most uncomfortable and warmest place I was ever in was St. Helena, Ark. on the Fourth of July, 1864. The Federal soldiers were in rifle pits where we couldn't get them and a gun boat in the river kept pelting us with grape.

"One always feels a little shaky though just before starting into action. When you got going it was not much more exciting that quail shooting. But when you're lying in the brush somewhere trying to get a little sleep and are woke by a disturbance and wonder what and where it is, it bothers you."

Speaking of the first fight at Boonville, brought on by Gen. Lyon's vigorous policy, Mr. Woolery said that he had not yet joined the army, being a boy of seventeen. He was out in the field plowing on that day when he heard the fire of artillery. Not very much plowing was done, he admits.

Speaking of the battle of Wilson Creek, in which General Lyon was killed, Mr. Woolery says that Uncle Billy Doyle of this count had charge of the headquarters wagon for General

Sterling Price, and the night before the battle had camped right in the bed of the creek which was dry at the time they arrived. During the night a heavy thunderstorm came up and with great exertion they managed to get all supplies and men located on higher ground. Within a very short time the creek was an unfordable stream. And when daylight came the forces of General Lyon were in formation on the opposite bank. Among local men participating in this fight were James Speed, Lieutenant George Oglesby. D. Smallwood, (whom General Price called the best cavalryman in the Confederate service), Sam Cole and Dick Hudson.

Mr. Woolery tells an interesting incident of Dr. "Bob" Howlett of this county. After a furious engagement at Elk Tavern, Ark., Dr. Howlett worked until midnight caring for the wounded of his company. Just as he had finished a Federal officer came, stating that they had fifty wounded for whom they were unable to reach a physician, and asked Dr. Howlett to care for his men. So the doctor spent the rest of the night working with the Union Troops, not finishing his treatment of the enemy wounded until after daybreak.

For a number of years after the conclusion of the war there were three flourishing camps of confederate veterans in this county. Now, Mr. Woolery says there are but about six left and part of them are Virginians.

In the course of his service in the Confederate Calvary he served as drillmaster, as sergeant, ranked as captain but never received a commission.

Thomas Franklin Woolery, the son of Stephen and Hannah Briscoe Woolery, is the last living representative of a family of thirteen children.

**The above information was taken from the Bunceton Weekly of January 9, 1931 and was submitted by Nancy LaGore.**