

Civil War Incident at Brake's Run, Hardy County, West Virginia

The following was extracted from pp. 93-94 of T. K. Cartmell's *Shenandoah Valley Pioneers and Their Descendants - A History of Frederick County, Virginia*, facsimile reprint published 1989 by Heritage Books, Inc., 1540E Pointer Ridge Place, Bowie, Maryland 20716.

"Coincident with the foregoing [NOTE: "the foregoing" refers to the Claypole Rebellion during the Revolutionary War], the following, which occurred eighty-one years subsequent to the period referred to: It was while Genl. Turner **ASHBY** was enjoying a needed rest after his arduous achievement, guarding and protecting the rear of Genl. **JACKSON'S** Army, as he slowly fell back from **BANKS'** advance on Winchester in the Spring of 1862. The Valley Army was in camp in the vicinity of Lacey Springs, North of Harrisonburg. **ASHBY** was informed that it was important to the Service to send a small force of Cavalry to Moorefield and take observations of any Federal columns moving from West Virginia points towards the Valley; and while on this expedition, to discover certain parties in that section that had been reported to Jackson as enemies who secretly reported every movement of the Confederates to the Washington Government; and that when discovered, the system must be destroyed.

"**ASHBY** proceeded at once to select men who were by their residence familiar with the country. For this service the author's Company was detailed--Company B of the 17th Battalion, **ASHBY'S** Brigade, W. H. **HARNESS**, Captain. The officers and men were enjoined to avoid engagements with the enemy. The Company, by circuitous marches, crossed the mountains and Lost River; thence over the mountain via Howard's Lick, and halted at *Gunpowder Springs* near Moorefield, fully obscured from view either by citizens or the Federal troops then occupying the Moorefield Valley. The next day the Company was divided into three detachments, to reconnoitre the Post. Information had been obtained from trusted persons that there was a nest of *Swamp Dragons* far up on South Fork, on Brake's Run, and that they must be the men we were expected to capture.

"Capt. **HARNESS** was too well known in that section to take the lead; and he detailed the writer to head the detachment, composed of as wary and brave men as ever bestrode a horse. They started out well aware that prudence was the better part of valor. It was well known the Federal scouts wore grey uniforms and it was deemed best to approach the house and play the *Jesse Scout* trick of war. This was regarded by some as reckless, as the detachment might be ambushed. The writer was allowed to try the experiment of deception.

"The few men found in the house readily accepted the situation, and eagerly told what they knew about Rebels, expressing a desire that we would some day capture that Captain **HARNESS**, Samuel **ALEXANDER**, Jim **LOBB** and several others, members of our Company. They had just returned from the Federal Camp and had heard this scouting party had gone in that direction, and were fully prepared to expect their arrival any hour. This was a bit of news that had to be heeded; and the party was preparing to move off, when **BRAKE** the owner of the property insisted the boys must have dinner. This was hastily taken by a few, the remainder standing guard to give notice of the approach of Federals. **BRAKE** was informed that he and his party must accompany the detachment to camp and there be identified as loyal and true; which was agreed to. **BRAKE**, his son-in-law, **POPE**, and several others were soon on the trot, marching towards Moorefield, but when within three miles of the camp, our little column filed to the right, crossing the mountains to Lost River, and thence to the Valley Headquarters, where the prisoners were interviewed by Genl. **JACKSON**.

"It is needless to say they soon discovered the trap they had fallen into. They were kindly treated by our party; and when a squad of Co. A, of **ASHBY**'s Command, made a dash to take them from our guards while resting at **COOTE**'s store in Shenandoah County, Captain **HARNESS** and the writer and one Guard, Jim Cunningham, had bullets to pass through our clothing, and a man named **MASON** of Co. A, one of the attacking party, was badly wounded in the foot. This Co. A recognized two of the prisoners as members of a gang that had killed one of their men. This digression must now end. The author hopes some survivors of the old Company may read these incidents and be able to recall the hardships of that expedition. Fuller notice may be given this expedition later on."

This material was extracted by Perry Brake who adds the following note: If Cartmell did indeed give "fuller notice" to the expedition later in the book, it could not be readily found in the book. The "Brake" mentioned in the writing is undoubtedly Leonard BRAKE, 1804 - 1891, who had two daughters married to Popes: Ann Rebecca married Henry W. POPE; and Margaret married Peter POPE.