

## Field Report: Latta Plantation Winter Encampment

Respectfully submitted to the Commander of the 2 Regiment Company B, 88thNYSI Irish Brigade

January 8, 1864

Troops arrived late in the evening, it was bitter cold. The lads started a fire to keep warm while camp was set up. Our supply wagons finally caught up with us so we had A frame Tents. This would be our garrison camp until we received further orders. We were joined by the 24<sup>th</sup> Michigan, and the 11<sup>th</sup> Iowa.

January 9, 1864

Roll Call at 7:30: followed by a great breakfast prepared by Pvt. "Cookie" Sherrill. First call for drill was at 10 AM. We drilled to keep the lads sharp. We work on company into line from right and the left, until the Capt. Bush of the 24<sup>th</sup> Michigan was satisfied with our precision of moment.

The lads search for food, finding root vegetables, potatoes, Sweet potatoes , Carrots , and cabbage. Pvt Williams, being the best shot in the company, went hunting and killed a deer. Pvt. "Cookie" Sherrill prepared a fine stew, for our main meal of the day.

That afternoon, the lads from 24<sup>th</sup> played music for the troops to help keep our spirits up. Fine tunes from the fife and drum.

More drill in the late afternoon and we were ordered to practice firing. Firing by Company, by rank and by file.

As the sun went down, it got very cold. We had more to eat to keep our bellies filled. The fire was hot and kept us as warm as possible. Temperatures reach the low teens.

January 10, 1864

The 88<sup>th</sup> was up early Sunday morning, 10<sup>th</sup> of January. It was extremely cold, dishes and cups frozen to our table. Cookie had the coffee ready, and a fine breakfast was served. I went out to look for the 24<sup>th</sup> Mich. and 11th Iowa. They had more their camp during the night to try and fine a warmer place to camp in the woods.

The troops assembled to listen to some fine Fife and Drum music from the 24<sup>th</sup> Michigan, which helped raise our spirits on this cold winter day. Late that morning, we assembled the troops for drill. Our boys looked very sharp and crisp in the moments and attention to orders. The 88<sup>th</sup> was a site to see.

Pvt . Hopkins was put on report for talking in the ranks. His punishment was read to the entire camp, riding the horse for 20 min. I posted a guard, to ensure the punishment was enforced. Unfortunately the Guard, Hopkins, and another man deserted camp. The men were assembled. Capt. Bush ordered, Corporal Byant and Pvt. Williams to search for the cowards. Soon we heard a shot. Pvt. Williams had shot one of the deserter after they had been ordered to halt, but still kept running. All three men were captured and put to trial. The wounded Pvt. pleaded guilty, the other two pleaded innocent. All three were found guilty by the Military court and sentence to Death by firing squad. The condemned men were forced marched out to the clearing. Firing squad in place, the cowards, were given a chance for last words, then the preacher read some hopeful scripture for their sorry souls. The men were blindfolded.

Capt. Bush gave the order fire. The bodies were removed of their brogans, and bodies were remove and buried without honors.

The Men are ready for the spring campaign that awaits us. Hopeful that this terrible conflict will be over soon and we can all go home.

Respectfully Submitted:

Your Obedient Servant,

1<sup>st</sup> SG O'Madden

88<sup>th</sup> NYSI CO. B

Irish Brigade

