

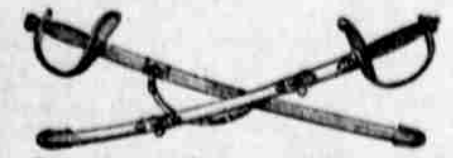
"BEN GRIERSON."

His Ride Through Mississippi in April, 1863.

THRILLING STORY OF A RAID

A Modest Music Teacher Who Became a Major General.

"Grierson's Luck"—A Man Who Never Made a Failure—He and His Brigade of Cavalry Ride through the Heart of Mississippi from North to South—Then They Turn Westward and Come Out at Baton Rouge, La., May 2.



The early part of the year 1863 was a dull and dreary time in the north. It was a time of waiting and discouragement. From the battle of Stone River to that of Chancellorsville, in May, there was little to break even the monotony of the months.

Complaints were universal at home and in the field. Those at home grumbled because there was no fighting. Many of those in camp complained bitterly of scant and bad rations, of worthless rags issued to them for clothing.

During this melancholy winter a correspondent wrote of President Lincoln:

"The president looks haggard and careworn—who wonders at it! Yet he preserves his good nature, and some new story or bon mot from him is always in circulation. The last was uttered on Saturday at the public reception, when a western paymaster, in full major's attire, was introduced and said: 'Being here, Mr. Lincoln, I thought I'd call and pay my respects.' From the complaints of the soldiers, responded the president, 'I guess that's about all any of you do pay.'"

Almost the only thing to break the discouraging monotony were some rattling cavalry fights and raids.

Up to 1863 the Confederates mostly had these raids all their own way. But by 1863 the north had learned lessons in more ways than one. The fruits of one of these lessons appeared in

GRIERSON'S MISSISSIPPI RAID.

Early in the year 1863 an adventurous spirit had proposed to Gen. Grant to make a bold cavalry raid around and in the rear of Vicksburg. The object of the raid would be to destroy railroads and bridges, and thus prevent supplies and reinforcements from being easily brought into Vicksburg. The raid was in this manner to aid in the reduction of Vicksburg.

At first Grant said nay to the scheme. The first of April, however, he summoned his bold projector, and bade him go in and win.

The man who proposed this raid through the heart of Mississippi was Col., afterward Maj. Gen., Benjamin Henry Grierson.

He was a western man, living in Illinois, and was 35 years old when the war began. He was born in Pittsburg, Pa., however, and, like Horace Greeley, was of Scotch-Irish parentage. Gen. Grierson was one of the most picturesque and interesting characters that the north produced during the war. His career is invested with a romance that will render it fascinating to the American reader in all time to come.

At the time the war began Benjamin Grierson was living in Jacksonville, Ill. He is described as being "full of a vivid, elastic life, overflowing with enthusiasm." Like Gen. John A. Logan, that other Illinois man, Grierson was slender and dark. He was very quick and graceful in his movements, and seemed to have a physique of iron endurance. There was no shoulder strap pomposity about him, even after he became a major general. He was modest, gentle and genial in his manners, and such he remained.

But his ability in the cavalry field was pronounced from the beginning. In the early part of the war he was aide on the staff of Gen. Prentiss, serving without pay. Indeed, a writer in The United States Service Magazine says that Grierson served without pay throughout the whole war. In December, 1861, he became major of the Sixth Illinois cavalry, and in a few weeks his battalion was the best drilled and disciplined of the cavalry troops in the west. In March, 1862, the Sixth Illinois cavalry, armed only with "rusty sabers," started to join Grant at Pittsburg Landing. At Paducah, Ky., Governor Yates of Illinois, likewise on the way to Grant, encountered the regiment. Maj. Grierson called to pay his respects to the governor, on board the steamboat. The governor led the dark haired cavalryman back to a party of ladies in the cabin, and introduced him to them as Col. Grierson.

His colonel had resigned, and, unknown to the major, every officer of the regiment but one had petitioned the governor to appoint Grierson their colonel, and the governor had done so.

In 1862 Col. Grierson's regiment was ordered to Memphis, and here he showed himself no less accomplished in field than in camp. He and his men dashed out from headquarters like a whirlwind, and pounced upon bands of Confederate bushwhackers and guerrillas in west Tennessee and northern Mississippi. He showed them that dash, daring and hard riding were not all on one side of the line. He seemed never to sleep, but to watch day and night and be ready for the mount and gallop at any moment.

Once he came very near being caught. He and forty of his men were dismounted and at dinner, seventeen miles back of Memphis. With the dripping pork slice poised in mid air, just before it touched their mouths, 400 Confederates suddenly hove into sight.

The men dropped their food and took refuge wherever they might, behind trees, the fence or a rock. They were fired on and returned the fire obstinately. In a twinkling Col. Grierson mounted eighteen of his men, and with these charged upon the whole 400 Confederates. The very impudence of the thing seemed somehow to paralyze them, and their lines wavered and then turned back. A hundred of Grierson's men appearing by another road at the same opportune moment, the body of Confederates turned and fled.

The last year of the war Gen. Grierson, then a brigadier, was promoted to the full rank of major general of volunteers. After the war he remained in the service and was appointed colonel of the Tenth United States

cavalry. Before the war he earned his living as a music teacher. Such was the man who made the daring raid through Mississippi in the early summer of 1863.

By referring to the accompanying map the reader will see the route passed over by the doughty cavalryman. He was noted during the war as the man who never made a failure. Every enterprise that he undertook was successful.

April 17, 1863, Grierson and his men began their famous ride. He took three cavalry regiments, his own, the Sixth Illinois, Col. Loomis commanding; the Seventh Illinois, Col. Prince, and the Second Iowa, Col. Hatch. They started from Lagrange, Tenn., fifty miles east of Memphis. False movements had been made in various directions beforehand to deceive the Confederates, who might be on watch. But the real expedition struck out south at a rattling pace, and was soon over the border into Mississippi. The first day they reached Ripley, in that state. At Ripley, on the 18th, the command divided, the Second Iowa going southeasterly and crossing the Tallahatchie river. The main body went directly south, also crossing the Tallahatchie near the town of New Albany. A second time the command split, this time a battalion of the Seventh Illinois passing to the right of the main body and going directly to New Albany.

Skirmishing was kept up night and day with bodies of Confederate cavalry which were encountered in the vicinity of New Albany. The morning of April 19, Grierson again divided his main body. He sent out three detachments in as many different directions. His object was to make the Confederates believe he had come to attack them and destroy their cavalry. Meantime the main body proceeded rapidly southward. The Second Iowa was by this time within supporting distance on the left. After making feints as ordered, the three detachments soon rejoined the main column. Gen. Chalmers was in command of the Confederate forces in Mississippi, the region through which Grierson passed.



MAP SHOWING GRIERSON'S RAID.

From time to time small bodies of Confederates were met and routed. The night of April 19 Grierson and his men encamped at Pontotoc, destroying 400 bushels of salt which the Confederates had abandoned. April 20, early in the morning, Grierson started his prisoners, his least effective men and one piece of artillery northward, on the way back to Lagrange. They were incumbrances. The raid was now going to begin in earnest. The men that had been sent northward misled the Confederates into believing that the whole expedition was returning to Lagrange.

As before, the main expedition hastened southward. Where it was to come upon no man knew, least of all, the panic stricken people through whose country it passed like a tornado. Like a tornado, too, it was in its work of destruction. Grierson laid waste property and carried away food, horses and men. Near Dismal Swamp one of the largest tanneries in Mississippi was destroyed. Now the command united, now again separated, detachments flying this way and that, and whisking hither and thither, like the evolutions of flocks of great birds in midair. At Newton two trains of cars, with Confederate army supplies, were destroyed, and near the same town four bridges were torn up. At Raleigh the command halted, and Grierson sent out a scout to cut the telegraph wire, which at Lake Station would give the alarm of his whereabouts to Jackson and other points. The scout ran into a regiment of Confederate cavalry that had been sent to find Grierson. Strangely enough, the scout not only escaped capture himself, but also succeeded in deceiving the Confederates as to his commander's whereabouts. "Ben Grierson's luck" seems never to have deserted him. Hearing the scout's report, he quickly crossed the Leaf river and burned its bridges behind him, cutting off pursuit in the rear.

A singular adventure befell Capt. Forbes, with one company of the Seventh Illinois. He was more than a day's march east of the main body, when he suddenly came upon a large force of the Confederates at Enterprise, Miss., ten or twenty times as large as his own. He put a bold face upon the matter, and riding to the town under a flag of truce, demanded their surrender. Col. Goodwin, the Confederate commander, asked an hour to consider. Forbes granted it only too gladly, and, while the Confederates were considering, he and his company put spurs to their horses and galloped westward toward Grierson, blessing their lucky stars for their escape.

From Montrose Grierson turned slightly westward. It became evident now to the Confederates that he did not mean to return to Lagrange. Preparations were made to head him off and capture him. At Pearl river southern pickets were tearing up the bridge when Grierson reached it. He dashed into them and dispersed them, and crossed in safety. Ten minutes more and he would have been too late.

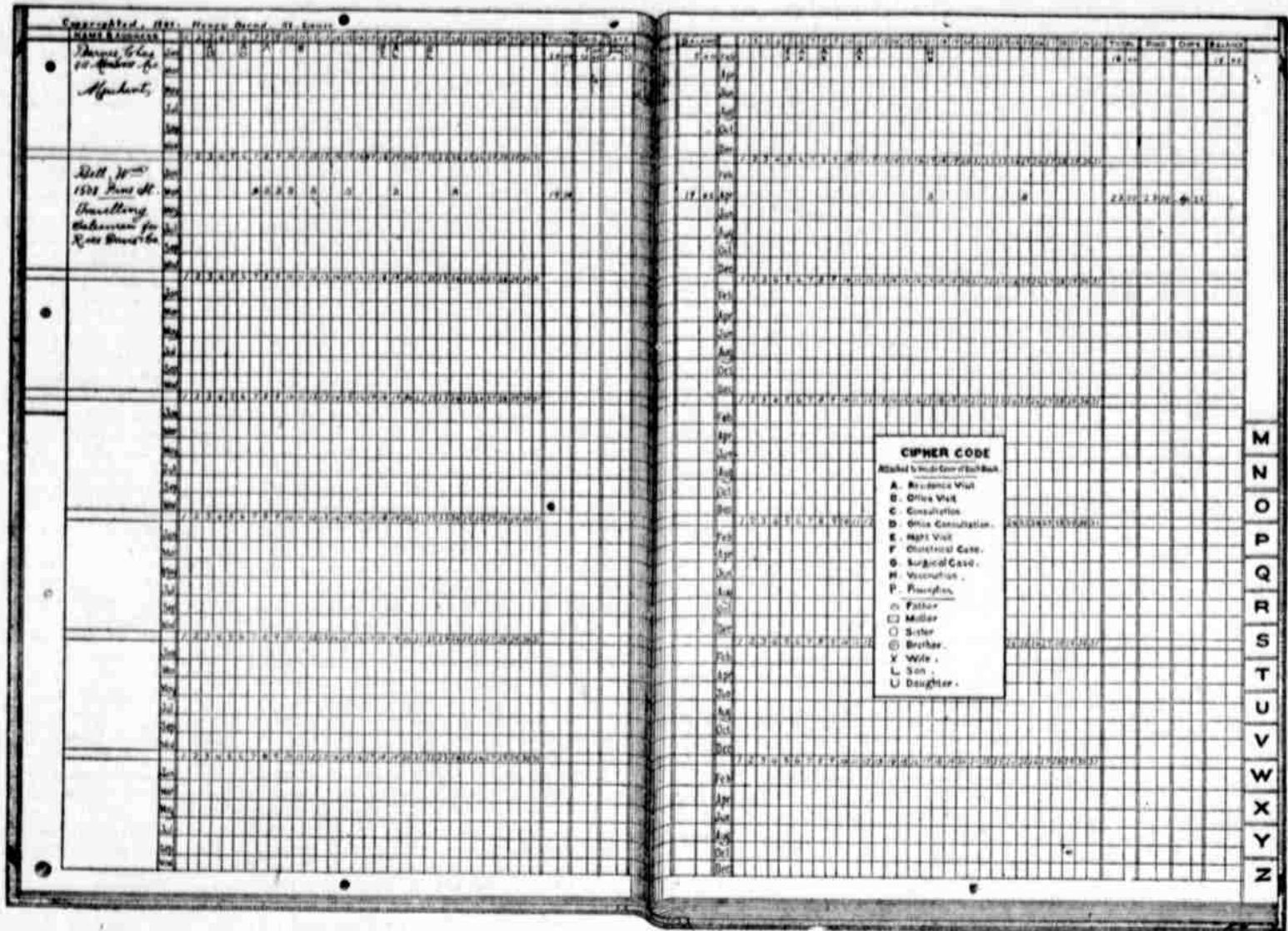
On the afternoon of May 2, 1863, a great body of wild looking men rode into Baton Rouge, La. It was as if they had sprung from the ground. They were dusty and haggard, and some of them were asleep, sitting bolt upright upon their horses.

No wonder. In sixteen days they had ridden 800 miles, from north to south, through Mississippi. They had destroyed over \$4,000,000 worth of property, cut two important railroad communications and captured over 1,000 prisoners and 1,500 horses.

They were Grierson and his men. "The strength of the south is overestimated," said Grierson afterward. "The Confederacy is a mere shell."

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