

Confederate Veteran. 263

CONFEDERATES WERE CLOSE TO WASHINGTON,

Carter Berkeley, of Lynchburg, Va., replies to an inquiry in the VETERAN about survivors of the skirmish in front of Washington on the 11th of June, 1864:

The regiment in advance that day was the Sixty-Second Virginia Mounted Infantry, and with it was a section of McClanahan's Horse Artillery. The Sixty-Second was commanded by Col. George Smith, one of the most magnificent soldiers in the Confederate States army, and the battery was commanded by the writer. Col. Smith was a graduate of Virginia Military Institute, and his regiment belonged to Imboden's Brigade. He is now a distinguished lawyer at Los Angeles, Cal. This advance guard drove the enemy into Washington on the Seventh Street Road.



Engraving with compliments of H. C. Wagstaff, Atlanta, Ga.

My recollection is that we struck the Federals about Rockville, and pursued them to Washington. They made several stands, and, whenever they did, Col. Smith would dismount his men and charge them. I remember well that the pursuit and retreat were so rapid that it was almost impossible for the artillery to keep up, and the infantry were left far behind. The heat and dust were terrible. The Federals did not stop at the fort, but retreated down Seventh Street, as we could see by the column of dust. When we got there the fort was unmanned, and Col. Smith would have gone in, but was stopped by a courier bringing peremptory orders from Gen. Early to halt until the column arrived. We all waited impatiently, expecting to go into the city as soon as they got up, but before they did troops appeared in the fort, and began shelling us. I am sure that they were not expecting us, for we saw in papers issued that morning that Early had gone toward Baltimore. Why Gen. Early did not go into Washington I do not know, but take it for granted that he had information justifying him for not doing so. I am satisfied, though, that when we first got there mounted men could easily have ridden down Seventh Street to the long bridge, and could have crossed over to Arlington Heights. The Sixty-Second was a splendid regiment, and made a glorious reputation on many battlefields. At the battle of New Market they lost two hundred and fifty killed and wounded.