

Logan County Genealogical Society "Ancestry"
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Southern West Virginia Courthouses During
the Civil War



"Those Yankees burned the courthouse during the War of Northern Aggression" or maybe "It was burned during the period of Southern Rebellion."

Pick whichever you suits you or just say that the courthouse must have been burned during the "Late Unpleasantness". Most of us have come across this reason for not finding that one key piece of information about at least one of our ancestors, that one fact that could tie our research to earlier generations. Most of the time, it is not true. Those of us in southern West Virginia, unfortunately, will find that the courthouse did, indeed burn. Here is an excerpt entitled "West Virginia in the Civil War—Logan County."

**Boone, Logan, and Mercer Courthouses Burned
Fall 1861-Spring 1862**

Three courthouses in southern West Virginia were burned as acts of war the first year of the Civil War—Boone, on September 1, 1861; Logan, on January 15, 1862; and Mercer, on May 1, 1862. The Boone and Logan courthouses and adjacent buildings were burned by Union troops, while that of Mercer, at Princeton, was burned by order of the Confederate commander on retreating from the town, despite the fact that the entire area was predominantly Southern in loyalty. Logan County had contributed heavily to the Confederate army with the Logan Wildcats, Chapmanville Greys, Logan Hunters, and Captain Hugh Toney's Company. These companies were units of General McCausland's 36th Virginia Infantry. Union Brigadier General Jacob D. Cox, sent Colonel Edward Siber and six companies of men into the area. The regiment was united on the morning of January 14, and the march on Logan began. The troops passed on both sides of the river. When the regiment reached its destination on the evening of the 14th, it was found completely evacuated by the male population, but every man that had a gun had taken position on the steep mountain side opposite the town. A sharp skirmishing fire was opened on the advance element on both sides of the river. The heavy rains of the 13th and 14th caused the Guyandotte to rise rapidly, and fearing that he would be cut off by high water, Colonel Siber ordered evacuation of the town and all public buildings burned.

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The Man to Blame-

Report of Col. Edward Siber, Thirty-seventh Ohio Infantry.



JANUARY 12-23, 1862.- Expedition to Logan
Court-House and the Guyandotte Valley, West
Virginia.



HDQRS. THIRTY-SEVENTH REGIMENT
OHIO VOLUNTEERS
Camp Clifton, January 23, 1862

SIR: The high stand of the waters in Coal River did impede me from sending you particular reports concerning the expedition to Logan and the Guyandotte Valley. It was not before the evening of January 11 that I could get real information about the enemy I have been sent to pursue. On this evening some Union men opposite the side of Boone-town informed me that from Little Coal River to Guyandotte a great number of the inhabitants formed a company, which they called "Black Striped Company," and which may number about 60 or 70 men, for the most part of the poorest class, who never did act in any greater force than 10 or 15 men, but which such band did overrun the country between Guyandotte, Mud, and Coal Rivers. In consequence of this information I forded the Little Coal River on the morning of the 12th of January, and moved the same day four companies, under command of Major Ankele, to Chapmanville and on to the Guyandotte, whilst one company, under Captain Messner, advanced by Turtle Creek towards the head of Mud River. One company remained with me at Ballard's, on Spruce Fork. All these detachments met with no resistance, because all male inhabitants of this part of the country had fled previous to their arrival to the other side of the Guyandotte. But the next morning, when Major Ankele moved up the right bank of the Guyandotte from Chapmanville, his column was fired at from every house on the opposite side mortally wounded Captain Goecke, of Company B, which exasperated the men of the regiment so much, that a number of them threw themselves in the river and reached by swimming the opposite bank, destroyed the

houses from where they had been fired at, took away some rifles, and made some prisoners.

Having received the report of these unexpected hostilities, I hastened with the companies from Turtle Creek to join those in the Guyandotte Valley, which I reached in the morning of January 14. Marching with the whole detachment under my orders immediately and on both banks of the Guyandotte to Logan, I found this place completely evacuated by the whole male population, which, armed with rifles, had retreated to a steep mountain on the other side of the Guyandotte, where at the same time appeared a number of horsemen, and where had been assembled a number of bushwhackers. By all these was opened a sharp skirmishing fire upon my advanced scouts on the other bank of the Guyandotte and upon pickets which occupied the town. Corporal John Behm, of Company C, was killed on this occasion. The enemy, however, were driven back with loss of men on the road to Sandy. I remained during the night in the court-house at Logan, having occupied the position around it. Seeing, however, that this position was completely commanded by the mentioned mountain on the other side of the Guyandotte, the waters of which began by the heavy rain suddenly to rise, I ordered for the next morning at 4 o'clock the evacuation of the place, which under these circumstances could not be held without more sacrifice of life; and as the inhabitants of this town had acted with so much animosity and treachery, as besides the court-house of Logan and other public buildings of this place had been long ago converted into barracks, used as a principal point of refuge for the rebel cavalry, I thought it to be my duty to deprive the enemy of such position, only valuable to him and useless to us, and ordered to set fire to these buildings before my departure. I retreated through Crooked Creek Hewitt Creek, and Spruce Fork to Boone, and succeeded in crossing Little Coal River before it became completely unfordable, but was stopped, for some days at Peytona by the high waters of Big Coal River.

I have to report that, with the exception of a Union settlement in Hewitt and Spruce Fork, the whole population between Little Coal And Guyandotte are in the highest degree hostile to the Union; that especially at Big Creek, Mill Creek, Upper Hewitt, and on both sides of Guyandotte those men lived who composed the so-

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called Black Striped Company. As these men had fled to the other side of the Guyandotte I could not take them up in their houses, and it appears to me that this can only be done by a small detachment of light cavalry who arrive before the news of their march has reached the country. I have sent a list of those men who are reported most dangerous to Brig. Gen. J.D. Cox; also some prisoners.

I am, most respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. Siber.

Colonel Thirty-seventh Regiment Ohio Volunteers.

L. Thomas,

Adjutant-General U.S. Army, Washington, D.C.



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