

JOHN M. HEADINGTON.

I was born in Knox County, Ohio, December 13th, 1833. My parents were Nicholas and Ruth (Phillips) Headington, who emigrated from Maryland in the early part of the present century. I was educated in the common schools of Ohio and came to Portland in September, 1853, where I have lived ever since. In 1856 I commenced the study of law with Hon. J. M. Haynes, and was admitted to the bar in 1858. In May, 1858, I was married to Miss Nancey Bosworth, a daughter of Dr. Jacob Bosworth, who died in 1874. In August, 1862, I enlisted as a private in Co. H., 100 Regiment Indiana Vol. Inft. On the organization of the company I was elected captain of the company at Wabash, Indiana, where we first went into camp. We were at once ordered to Indianapolis and in old Camp Morton we began to school ourselves as soldiers. We graduated early, partly on account of our proficiency and partly because of necessity. On the 11<sup>th</sup>(?) of November, 1862, we started for the field of battle and landed at Memphis, Tenn., where we joined Grant's army on his campaign through Mississippi, which was defeated by the fall of Holley Springs in our rear, and we were forced to retire to Grand Junction, Tenn., here we spent the winter (1862 and '63) guarding the Memphis & Charleston railroad until June, 1863.

We went to Vicksburg and participated in what is known as the "Vicksburg campaign." In the fall of 1863 we came to Memphis and thence across the country to Chattanooga, where we joined with the army of Thomas and fought the battle of Chattanooga and Mission Ridge, here our regiment lost in killed and wounded a greater per cent, of our force than the loss of the famous 600 and greater than any other regiments engaged in that great battle except the 90th Illinois, on our immediate left, and the 40th Indian regiment in Sheridan's division. We marched to the relief of Burnside's at Knoxville after the battle of Chattanooga, though our men were worn out and barefooted or nearly so. We returned to Bellefonte, Alabama, where we spent the winter, and on the 1st day of May, 1864, we started on the "Atlanta campaign," which lasted until the 3rd day of September, and we were under fire every day from May 3rd to September 3rd, 1864. We made the march to the sea with Sherman, and after the fall of Savannah and a short rest, we made the campaign through the Carolinas and were at Raleigh, N. C, when the war closed. Our regiment participated in the battles of Vicksburg, Jackson, Chattanooga, Dalton, Snake Creek Gap, Resact, Kingston, New Hope Church, Rome, Dalas, Chattahoocha River, Big Shanta, Kenesaw Mountain, Manitta, Atlanta, Nickerjack Creek, Jonesboro, Lovejoy, Gresworldville, Savannah, Bentonville and a host of other smaller engagements and skirmishes, and I never fired a gun at the enemy when I was not with it.

In June, 1864, I was promoted to the rank of Major of the regiment and later on I was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel of the regiment. On the 22nd of November, 1864, while on the march to the sea, our brigade, then numbering 1,300 men present for duty, had an engagement with the enemy at Griswoldville, Ga., which I desire to mention particularly because of the fact that on account of our being in the rear of the wagon train and away from the great body of the army, the historian has never done us justice. The enemy, 10,000 strong, attacked us about noon and we were compelled to fight them with our 1,300 men until darkness closed the bloody scene, and we held our ground and slaughtered the enemy the worst they ever experienced. The southern papers admitted a loss of 614, but the estimates of our generals place their loss much higher. In that engagement I was in command of six companies of our regiment, (the 100th Ind.) and occupied the center of our lines where our loss was the greatest. Every horse in our brigade, including the artillery horses, were killed or wounded except mine, and six of the number (four killed and two wounded were killed or wounded within 30 feet of me. You may imagine we slaughtered the enemy when I tell you we shot at them 92,000 rounds of fixed ammunition besides what was thrown by the two pieces of artillery. After the close of the war I returned to Portland and resumed the practice of the law in this and adjoining counties, where I have remained ever since.

I commenced in the "free for all" a poor boy and have had many ups and downs like most people who have to struggle for themselves. In my early practice of the law, being poor in purse, I was compelled to practice in justices' courts all over the county, and occasionally a little over the line. We have had some lively times and many amusing incidents connected with the practice before justices of the peace. On one occasion I was called upon to defend a well-known farmer, who I will call Mr. "A." who was charged with the crime of perjury before one of the justices of the county. Mr. "A." was a very noisy man when excited, had a course, loud voice, and when he wanted to he could make more noise than a dozen wild beasts. On the way out, knowing so well his disposition to make a noise, I said to him, "I know your ability to make a noise, and I will warn you now if you don't keep still and let me do the talking I will withdraw from the case on the first outbreak, and if you don't promise to keep still I won't begin the case. He promised to keep still until the case was decided, and kept his promise, but when the justice, about midnight, in a room full of people waiting in breathless silence, made his decision "not guilty," he gave way to his pent-up feelings in his best and most improved style, so that in a few minutes he and the justice were alone in the room, all the balance having retreated as from a cyclone.

In early days in our practice in this county turnpikes and gravel roads were not dreamed of, and we were compelled to trudge through the mud on horseback. There were no buggies in the country to be had, and for about nine months of the year a horse could not have pulled them through the mud if we had had them. On one occasion we tried a case before Esquire "B." which lasted until late in the night. It was his first case and he tried hard to be on both sides of the case all through, and when both sides were done he deliberated for a time and finally said, "when the plaintiff rested his case I could have decided it easily, but since the defendant has got through it is so mixed up that the d – 1 can't decide it."

Esquire C, Q Township, issued an injunction enjoining a party from removing a lot of corn in the shock, and on the refusal of the defendant to obey the injunction he attached him for contempt. His attention was called to the fact that a justice of the peace could not issue injunctions, he demanded to be shown the law that prohibited him from doing so. One justice of the peace, Squire D., who was a justice for several years in Township, always held that a party arrested for a crime was presumed to be guilty or he would not have been arrested, and it was his rule to require the defendant to prove himself "not guilty," or he was sure to convict him, and on one occasion he found a party guilty of grand larceny, and seeing the statute provided for imprisonment in the state prison, proceeded to sentence him to the states prison.

In 1876 I married Laura E. Haines, with whom I am still living.

**Source: Reminiscences of Adams, Jay and Randolph Counties**

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