

On the 6th the section was ordered to return to Rolling Fork, and upon its arrival Lieutenant Ritter was complimented by General Ferguson and Lieutenant Wood on his management of his guns. On the 14th both sections of artillery and Major Bridges' battalion of cavalry were ordered to Greenville, and on the 16th proceeded to their old camp at Fish Lake.

The morning of May 18, 1863, dawned with splendid promise. The sun rose bright and clear, laughing away the mist and heavy fog that had hid the face of the Father of Waters, and stirring to activity the Federals and Confederates pitted against each other along his whole course. The Confederates encamped at Fish Lake were still jubilant over their recent success with the Minnesota, and the captured stores enabled them to indulge in luxuries to which they had long been strangers. Grouped picturesquely about their fires, they drank their morning coffee with all the gusto due the genuine berry. Chatting, laughing over the details of their recent exploit, some sitting, and some half-reclining on their elbows, under their bivouac shelters, they slipped the aromatic beverage in complete enjoyment. If their inner man was well-to-do, their outer man had no less reason to be felicitated on his surroundings. Their camp was snugly inclosed on all sides by a deep and primitive forest of cottonwood, magnolia and live oak.

The Marylanders of Major Bridges' command were surrendering themselves to the charms of this romantic situation, when an order was received which made them oblivious of it all. The news had just come in through scouts that lined the river for miles above that a number of transports laden with reinforcements for Grant's army at Vicksburg were coming down, and would reach Carter's Bend that morning. Immediately all was life and bustling activity, and the soldier's peculiar feeling of quiet delight at the approach of danger took the place of the more amiable sentimentality of a few moments before.

Major Bridges' force consisted of one section of artillery under command of Lieutenant Anderson, another under Lieutenant Ritter, each with about twenty-five men, and a small squadron of Texas Rangers, the whole command numbering about two hundred and fifty men.

Getting his command speedily in motion, he proceeded rapidly up the Greenville road, eight miles, to a point above Carter's Bend. The Mississippi here makes a detour of fifteen miles, and then, returning upon itself, forms a peninsula, the neck of which is but one mile across. It was thought best to take this position above rather than the one below the Bend, as in case of success there would be an opportunity to fire a second time below at the vessels that had been disabled in the first attack.

The four pieces of artillery were placed on the river bank unprotected, but masked by the thick brush that grew along the water's edge. The dismounted cavalry, acting as sharpshooters and supporting the Maryland section, were