

# Civil War Engagement At Sullivan's Barn

By Jerry Long  
c.2025



**A History of Muhlenberg County, Otto A. Rothert,  
John P. Morton & Company, Inc., Louisville, KY, 1913, pp.277-279:**

On or about May 10, 1864, there took place what is known as the Fight at Sullivan's Barn. Captain Henry L. Vickers, a recruiting officer for the Southern army, whose home was near Paradise and who while a member of Company C, Ninth Kentucky Infantry, was wounded at Shiloh, was scouting in Ohio and McLean counties and had with him sixteen Confederates, most of whom were recruits. In their march through Ohio County this squad appropriated a horse belonging to Ashby [sic] Woodward. When Woodward discovered that his animal had been taken he declared he "would get his horse back or die in the attempt." He reported the robbery to his brother, Captain Steven Woodward, of the Twenty-sixth Kentucky Infantry, who was an officer of the Home Guards of McLean and Ohio counties, and who immediately organized a pursuing party of about thirty-two men.

In the meantime Captain Vickers and his squad rode toward Green River, crossed that stream at Point Pleasant, four miles below South Carrollton, and at about four o'clock in the evening arrived on the Raleigh Sullivan farm in Northern Muhlenberg, three miles west of Green River. Knowing that he had come to the home of a Southern sympathizer, Captain Vickers asked Sullivan for food for his men and forage for his horses, which request was readily complied with.



Sullivan's Barn, near Moorman in Muhlenberg County, Ky

After feeding their animals in the barn all the men walked to the house, a distance of about one hundred yards, to eat the meal that had been prepared for them. They, however, failed to put out any sentries. This was either through an oversight or because Captain Vickers felt confident that such a precaution was unnecessary. At any rate, he evidently anticipated no trouble or attack, and least of all did he suspect that the owner of the stolen horse had traced the theft to them and that a pursuing party was near at hand.

While Captain Vickers and his men were enjoying their meal, Robert N. Sullivan, the son of their host, heard two gunshots fired somewhere on the north or far side of the barn. The boy rushed into the house and gave the alarm. These two shots had been fired by Captain Woodward's pursuing Federals, who, believing that they were close upon the Confederates, wished to learn whether or not Vickers' men were concealed in the barn, and also desired to draw their fire in order to approximate the size of the squad.

As soon as Captain Vickers learned that the Federals were upon him he rose from the table, and grasping a revolver in either hand and calling to his men to follow him, ran toward the barn. Most of Captain Woodward's soldiers were in the barn, and Captain Vickers was therefore unable to form any idea as to the size of the party he was attacking. There being only a few Federals in sight, he told his comrades they "would soon chase the Yanks away," and ordered them to rush forward and to fire as they advanced. When they had covered about half the distance to the barn, crossing the little ravine that separates the two elevations upon which the house and barn stand, one of the Confederates, Mitchell, a boy about sixteen years of age, was shot through the bowels and fatally wounded. The Confederates continued their advance, and in the meantime the Federals fell back on the north side of the barn.

This retreat gave Captain Vickers' men temporary possession of the building. While attempting to hold a position near the entry until his men could get their horses, Captain Vickers sought to shield himself behind a narrow post. This post probably saved his life, for while he was standing behind it a Federal soldier fired at him with a gun loaded with buckshot, two of which lodged in Captain Vickers' neck, inflicting painful though not serious wounds. The shooting continued for about five minutes, when the Confederates, having regained their horses, hastily retreated under fire. They ran down the road and around a hill, and soon got beyond the reach of bullets.

As a result of this fight the young Confederate, Mitchell, who had been shot, died in the Sullivan home a few hours later. His body was interred in the New Hope Church burying-ground near by and remained there for a number of years, when it was exhumed by relatives and taken to Daviess County. Captain Vickers was captured and sent to Camp Chase, Ohio, where he was imprisoned until the close of the war. A young unwounded Tennessean was captured near the barn. The Federals lost one man, Ashby Woodward, who was shot through the heart. His corpse was taken to his home near Livermore. Only one of Captain Woodward's squad was wounded—a man named King, who was shot in the leg. A horse owned by the Federals, another belonging to the Confederates, and five of Sullivan's sheep that were penned up in the barn preparatory to shearing, were killed in the fight.

That night Captain Woodward quartered his troops in the Sullivan house, which he kept well protected during his stay by posting sentries in the immediate neighborhood. The next morning he returned to Ohio County with his two prisoners; not with the stolen horse, but with the corpse of Ashby Woodward, who the day before had declared that he "would get his horse back or die in the attempt."

[Note by Jerry Long – Ashby Woodward in the preceding article is Ashford Woodward (1843-1864), of Ohio County, KY.]



**Hartford Republican, Hartford, KY, Friday, 24 November 1911, p.2:**

[The following article was difficult to transcribe. The microfilm copy was very light and the colloquial language was hard to match.]

**A STORY OF THE LOYAL SOUTH**

As Told by Uncle Irad Hipsley, 90 years old.

A Skirmish which Brought about Results Desired,  
of Which Congress Once Took Notice.

(By Captain W. E. Bennett, Jr., U. S. Army, for The Republican.)

Ft. Lawton, Wash., Aug. 11, 1911.

My Dear Editor: – I visited my old uncle June 23. I found him somewhat deaf and absent minded but his memory tolerably clear concerning happenings at the time I write.

In compliance with the request that I write up his account of this incident and the state of affairs existing at that time, I beg leave to submit the following taken from the old gentleman's own words on this occasion, and on the occasion of a visit made him in 1907, at which time I took the story just as he told it and as near as I could in his own words, told in his own old fashioned style. In answer to my request that he tell me all about the incident, and to my frequent questions he told it substantially as follows:

That little scrap. Well, there ain't much of a story to tell about. It was jest a little shootin 'scrape, like I expect you have seen yourself, already. Haven't ye? I don't know, I replied, let me hear it and maybe I can tell you.

"Well I ain't much of a story teller. I don't believe if I did tell anything it would be fitten to read or anybody would want to read it after it had been printed nohow. But bein' as I feel like bein' accommodatin' jest now, since dinner is over an' there ain't, as I said, much to tell about it, nohow, I'll tell all about it that I remember. Wait till I get a chaw of tebacker first.

It was a long time ago – lemmie see – it was – I recollect now, it was in the fore part of May, '63, I believe. We had a right smart of rain that spring an' ever 'body was behin' hand with their work I had broke up all my ground, but there had come a wet spell an' I had to stop before I got to plantin' corn.

Them was troublesome times for a long time. Dangerous for some people, an' not perticlerly healthy for a whole lot more of them. There wasn't much killing about here. Once an' awhile somebody would git killed or packed off. There was some few horses stole, and sometimes we heard tell of some feller getting horse whipped, or bein' held up an' his money taken away from him but in other parts of the country we heard of killin's an' lots of other meanness goin' on. When the niggers heard they was freed most of 'em was afeard to leave feard somebody would kill em.

When the war first broke out, the Gov'nor of the state give it out he wasn't goin' to have nothin' to do with it an' wasn't goin' to send men out for either side. He refused right out to send

any men when President Lincoln asked him to do it at the first time. He 'xpected he was goin' to have trouble over it I reckon, the State was pretty much split up on the question, lots o' folks believed in the Union an' a good many believed in the South. So as to keep down trouble an' to show I reckon, that he meant to be honest an' do just what he said he would, the Gov'nor called the militia out an' armed them all as fur as he had muskets an' powder an' lead to go 'round, I reckon.

There was two bodies to this force he fetched out. One he called State Guards, the other he called Home Guards. The State Guyards it seems were all rebels to start with. All of us in an' about this here neighborhood who wasn't rebels was mustered in as Home Guyards if we wanted to. Lots of fellers staid out an' didn't take sides neither way, all thru the whole time. They staid at home an' tried to git rich raisin' tebacker.

As I jeist said there warn't 'nough muskets to arm all the Home Guyards. What they got wern't much account nohow. So lots of us owned an' packed our own guns. There was lots o' other places it was the same way. There was still some game in the woods about here then, lots of 'coons, 'possums, an' squirrels, an' ground hogs an' sometimes a deer, an' lots of turkey close to Rough Creek flats. All of us hunted some time when the weather wasn't fitten to work ev'ry body could kill squirrels with a rifle that was big enough to pack a gun, an' everybody was tolerable good shootin' at a mark, sometimes as much as a hundred, or a hundred an' fifty yards off, shooting off han'. Most people them times in fac' 'maged they might as well try to farm without a grubbin' hoe about, as to try it without a gun o' some sort aroun'. Most ev'ry body had a rifle The guns was all flint locks up till a few years before the Civil War. The fashion to have percursion caps come about jest after the Mexican War, an' ev'ry body who was able to buy 'em, (they cost a quarter a box then) had their guns worked on an' fix't so as to use 'em. Ole man Barnett Hudson, livin' near Buford was a gunsmith an' fixed lots o' guns for men who wanted him to. He didn't charge much for his work, so 'bout ev'ry body in this neighborhood wanted a gun fixt took it to him. So ev'ry body who knowed how to shoot an' owned a gun wanted to keep it and use it when he was mustered in the Home Guyards. The Gov'nor wasn't able to keep Lincoln soldiers an' Rebelss out o' the State long. He wanted to, I s'pose, the people was split up considerable in the'r opin'n on that subject, an' he couldn't, that' all. Your gran' pap Bennett, as I recollect, he was a young man then, you never seed him, had a company made up already, it they was wanted, ready to go. Your gran' pap was a Union man, same as most the rest of us. So as it was, ever'thing was needed to eat set them to fittin' was somebody to start it.

A Rebel general by the name of Polk, he was some sort of preacher too, I think, come into the State with a' army from somewhere in Tennessee. This sat things a billin'. The State Guyards all slipped off an' went for Jeff Davis. Lots o' ' other young fellers who maybe would 'a staid at home went for him too. The Home Guards for the most part was for the Union an' what of 'em that didn't go into the Union Army staid at home an' was Home Guards till an' nothin' more all the time. If it hadn't been for my old people at home, I 'xpect I would have gone to the army too, an' my ole carcass might be layin' on some of them old Southern battle-fields today But as it was I thought it was my duty to stay at home with my ole paw an' mother and look after them an' be a Home Guyard. They was both ol' an' I knowed they wouldn't neither of 'em live very long. I was married an' had a wife an' a little gal. They all lived with me, so I wasn't jest fixit to go.

"A lot of the fellers who was rebels in belief didn't go. They staid at home and didn't bother nobody or nothin' an' was not mistreated in no way by us who had different opinions from them.

Old Doctor Aleck Rowan was one of these. Ev'ry body in the country liked the ol' doctor He was a good man. Nobody ever go sick, no difference who it was, whether he liked 'em or not, the ol' doctor would be the first person there to doctor 'em if they had sent for him an' he was able

to go, an' he would 'tend to 'em till they got well or died, an' they most always got well too, if not too bad off before he got there an' doctored 'em.

He was an' ole fashion' Virginia gentle man, an' a rebel. Some of the Rowans went to the rebel army. His house was always open to his frien's an' nobody ever come to his place an' went away hungry. Soldiers of both armies was constantly comin' home an' goin' back an' the doctor lived right on the Livermore road. This o' course made it a place where all the rebels comin' along would stop an' feed. He always had plenty of every thing, an' they was welcome to it.

Feelin's got bitter an' some of the folks kinder thought hard of the ol' doctor for harborin' rebels, but he was good towards ev'ry body an' he was let 'lone.

Onetime a bunch of rebels come thru Hartford. They took Andy Barnett an' some more Union soldiers that happened to be at home an' carried them off an' killed 'em. They stole some horses too, an another time a squad of 'em robed the town an' 'burnt the court house. Well this was hard to stan' fer but we couldn't help it, fer we didn't know there was any rebels in the country an' didn't hear 'bout it till they had done been killed and the rebels gone. We held a meetin' amongst ourselves an' talked about it. All of us who wasn't in the army concluded to stay at home and be what we started out to be Home Guyards an' nothin' else. We wouldn't bother nobody if they didn't bother us. Jess Green Benton had been in the army for a while an' we elected him our captain. Captain Jess Green was a popular man amongst his frien's. He was a fightin' man too. Anybody who didn't like him was 'fraid o' him. He thought we was right in the stand we took, an' told us he didn't 'xpect to go back to the army ag'in, an' he would be our leader, when anything was undertook. We all was satisfied with this an' went home. It wasn't long before a squad of rebels come thru and carried off Obed Chapman, a neighbor of ourn. His wife came gallopin' past my house to give the warnin'. I got my hoss and gun an' drapped down Tom's Branch to the Livermore road to wait for the rest. They weren't long a comin', for every body spread the news, an' ev'ry one of us knowed where to come to, if there was trouble. Tom's Branch on the Livermore road was one o' them places, for here it was all thick woods then, an' we could watch anything comin' or goin'.

When Captain Jess Green got there we went on to Dr. Rowan's. They had been there, had eat their dinners an gone on. We asked which way they had gone. Nobody could tell us. Some of our crowd wanted to burn the doctor's house, but we wouldn't let 'em. We went on takin' the direction we thought they went. We got to the flats, trailin' them an' we met Obed comin back afoot. They didn't tell him were they was goin' an' of course he couldn't not tell us. So we turned 'round an' went back home.

Obed Chapmen had been an officer in the 12th Kentucky, I think he was, he was discharged then, though, an' was a home at his stable shellin' corn when he was took. They couldn't have took him to a better place than the doctor's though I don't reckon. Obe was a Free Mason, an so was the doctor. This may be why they turned him loose, when they got out of sight. Some o' our men told 'em at the doctor's as we was leavin' tho' 'fore we met Obe coming back, if we found him hurt we intended to come back an' kill him an' burn his house up. This kind o' hurt the doctor's feelin's, I s'pose, an his frien's in the rebel army got holt of it, before long I reckon.

A little while after this, in May, the time you ask about, about 20 more o' them come thru. They came out the Hartford road to Buck Horn, they stopped at the blacksmith shop an' tacked on some hoss shoes, then went to Jess Green Benton's place an' axed for him. He wasn't at home. (He wasn't far off though). They sed they was on a peaceable trip through the country an' would like very much to see some of these here Home Guyards, an' in particular Captain Benton, that they had heard a whole lot about him and had come to see him.

The wimmen, for they was no men about just then, says, "well, get down an' tie your hosses an' feed 'em, 'well fix you somethin' to eat if you are hungry. There is plenty for all o' you. You can see some of the Home Guyards 'fore long if you wait.

Most of the crowd was wearin' rebel uniform. They concluded to go on tho, an' not stop, as it wasn't morn 9 o'clock, Jess Green come in a little while after they had left. News come after awhile that it was a Captain Vickers an' a crowd o' rebel soldiers an' recruits, that they intended to get some hosses, an' to take Steve Woodward, an' Port Hudson, who was at home then. Steve Woodward was a captain in the 17th Kentucky, an' Port Hudson a 1st lieutenant in the 26th Kentucky, I believe. I ain't sure what regiment they belonged to, but they was both regular soldiers. Steve an' Port was notified about this as quick as possible of course an' told to hide out. They come on past Old White Oak to Edwin 's (meaning Edwin Hipsley 's place) then on past Steve's, then on past Ashford Woodward' where they took a hoss an' on up to the Doctor's where they stopped an' got dinner. They was a sassy crowd, an' from what folks said about 'em afterwards acted like they owned the country. I didn't git acquainted with none o' them till the next day. I had been over to Edwin's for something that mornin', and was comin' home when I was told about their bein' about an' to be on the lookout. I come on home. I run (molded) me a few bullets, got my gun an' shot pouch, saddled up my ol' mare an' dropped down Toms branch to wait. It wasn't long before Edwin come along with Bill King. Bill was a regular soldier. He belonged to the 12th Kentucky. Your gran'paps company I believe. He had on his uniform an' had fetched his army carbine an' his pistols as I reckon. He was a young man then, no more than a boy. We wasn't there long before Capt'n Jess Green come his self an' there was a considerable number of the gang there too, before long. Capt'n Jess counted us an' says, "Well, boys there is 'nough here now to start with, I expect more to come along soon. This thing has gone on long 'nough. I'm goin' to fight this time. I inten' to follow 'em till I over take 'em if it is clear to the rebel army." I don't remember whether Capt'n Jess was a Church member or not, but he was just mad as could be that mornin' an' he cussed like a sailor. He says "now if any o' you are afraid say so right now an' go back home. I don't want no cowards along". One feller left some of his folks sick at home. We thought he ought to go back, but he said he had somebody to look after 'em an' would go with us. I didn't say nothing to my folks at home about it, when I left, for I knowed it wouldn't do 'em no good to know about it, an' they would be unasy, so I didn't tell 'em where I'd be in un til I got back. They didn't know where I was.

Every body tol' Capt'n Jess they would follow him an they thro was ready. He tol' us to girt up our saddles good an' tight, see that our guns was in condition, an' that ev'ry one of them was loaded. For he didn't know jest where we might run into them, but to by leerful when we did, to try to keep from gittin shot ourselves an', fur ev'ry body to try to kill one of 'em ar take him alive, he wan't partic'lary which so long as we got to give 'em a lickin' they wouldn't fergit.

It had set in rainin' agin' we rode over to the Doctor's. They had been there but was gone. We found out they had took hosses at other places. Before we got to the Doctor's Port he joined us. He was an officer in the army an' had on his shoulder straps an' blue coat. He was carryin' his ol' rifle he had fetched frum home. Capt'n Jess offered to turn the command over to him, but Port tol' him no, he would go 'long as a private an' help all he could. At the Doctor's, just as we left, Steve Woodward an his brother, young Ashford, jined. They had follered an' had been watchin' the crowd frum the woods back of the Doctor's place. Steve had on his captain's uniform. Jess axed him to take command, but like Port, he said no, he would go 'long as jest a private an' help out any way he could. They both had good rifles an' good hosses. Young Ashford hadn't been married very long. His daddy-in-law had give his wife a mighty fine hoss when she was married, 'an this was

the one the rebels had took.' He was mad over losin' this hoss, an' said on leavin' he would bring back that hose or not come back his self. Ha was tol' several times to be car'ful, but he was mad. He wasn't afeared o' nothin' an' wouldn't listen to nothin' anybody tol' him. I have thought lots o' times since, if he had listened to Steve the nex' day he might have been livin' yit. Steve an' Port an' Capt'n Jess all tol' him he would be sure to git killed if he walked up to them fellers like he did to other folks ev'ry day. But he wouldn't pay no 'tention to nobodys advice, an' jest fer this reason, an' maybe nothin' else, we had to fetch him back dead, an' didn't git the hoss back, either.

We had all, that went along, got together after we left Doctor Rowan's I don't know as I can remember them all now or not, that was in the crowd. There was:

Captain Jesse Green Benton, Kentucky Home Guards, Commanding.

Captain Steven Woodward, 17th Kentucky, U. S. Volunteers.

Lieutenant Porter Hudson, 26th Kentucky, U. S. Volunteers.

Private William King, Company "E" 12th Kentucky Cavalry, U. S. Volunteers. These all belonged to the army.

The rest was all our own men. They was, as near as I remember: John Shown, Ned Shown, Iraad Hipsley, Edwin Hipsley, Ashford Woodward, Old Dick Stevens,, Henry Stevens, Lige Hoover, Len Hoover, Sam Hoover, John Hand, John Bennett, George Wash Bennet, and one or two more, maybe I have forgot about. There was 17 or 18 of us all tol'. Wie all had good hosses, ev'ry body could ride an' ev'ry body could shoot, an' nobody seemed afraid.

Leavin' the doctor's we follered the way they went down the Livermore road do where they lef' it an' turned into the flats. We trailed them to where they crossed. Rough Creek, where the ol' locks used to be. From thar' we follered 'em to Green River. They had crossed the river jest before dark. It had rained all day. We was all wet an' hungry, We didn't cross the river that night. They had crossed over at the Point Pleasant ferry. We stop't fer the night an' sent word to the Livermore Home Guyards where me was at, an' for them to send us word if they run acrost any of the gang an' \_\_\_ us. We crost the next mornin' 'fora day. We tried to pick up their trail, but it had rained all night an' we couldn't do it. We scouted aroun' a long time tryin' to find some track of them an' couldn't. Nona of us knowed this part o' the country particularly well. Somebody happened to remember that th'r was a man named Sullivan (probably Sutherland) Island Station who had married one o' ole man Bill Rowan's daughters. He was a well to do man an' maybe they might be thar, We started out an' found his place. We thought we might as well inquire any way. We was all hungry an' our hosses needed feedin'. We rode up to his place. He had a good nice house an' a big stable. The gate was open an' we rode into the hoss' lot. We had scarcely got inside till frum the stable thar was about twelve or fifteen shots fired in our direction. Shore 'nough the whole gang was thar'. When the shootin' commenced a couple o' men showed themselves at the house an' darted back inside. They 'xpected we'd git cut o' there if we was shot at I s'pose, but we didn't. All their shots went high. Over our hands. Didn't hit nobody. We all fell off'n our hosses as soon as we was fired at. Port an' Steve an' Capt'n Jess all yelled out to stay with 'em. We had 'em. an' Port he shot the gate. Surrouand' the stable, so they can't git away was the nex' order and we started to do it. They commenced shootin' at us ag'in an' come so clost some of had to look for somethin' to hide behin'.

We commenced to shoot back, but mor'n half our guns was wet an' wouldn't go off. A feller showed his self under the shed an' blazed away at us. Bill Kink [sic, should be King] drawed a bead an' fined. He throwed up his han's an' went down. He fell clost to the door an' another feller started out to help him. A rifle cracked an' he fell 'crost the door sill. Jest here Ashford Woodward

an' one or two more started for the stable. They was tole not to try it. They hardly started till a shot from the stable killed Ashford. The others took kiver.

We kep' working gradual like, so as to surroun' 'em an' keep cut off an' holed up in the stable till we could git more men there. Then we 'tended ti stick fire to the stable an' roast 'em out and git the whole gang. This was what Capt'n Jess was giggerin on we found' out aft'wards. Port but got ni a good humor with him after we, had worked roun' 'tiwix the stable an' the house. They had took kiver b'hind a big pile o' wood, an' was watchin' the stable all the time. I had dropped down behin' a stump a little piece away and was tryin' to pick some powder into my ole gun. It had got wet an' wouldn't go off. I busted three or four caps tryin' it. Port it seems, seed one o' them thru a crack in the stable. We had forgot about them fellers we had seed run into the house when we first come up. He rested his rifle on the wood pile an' aimed. The cap busted but it didn't go off. He drapped down, put on another cap an' started to aim ag'in. Jest then a feller fired from behind a big gate post at the yard gate jest behind him. I looked up jest then. I knowed from the way Port jumped he was hit. He turned anoun' an' started right at the feller behin' the gate post. I saw the feller but my gun wouldn't go off. He made as if he was goin' to shoot Port once or twice agin. But ever time he showed his head he saw Port lookin' thru the sights of his rifle right at him an' a comin' right on to him. Port was about three steps away I rekon, an' the man says "I'll surrender if you won't kill me." Port says "throw what you've got over the fence then, an' come out holdin' up both han's an' I won't hurt you. He don it. The other two men with Port had been watch'n that direction too with their rifles ready. The man turned over two pistols an' a carbine. Another one of 'em behind the fence called out "I want to surrender too." Port says "come out then holdin' up your han's" an he did. We foun' out afterwards that Port's rifle was wet jest like some o' the rest. He never did git the load out of it till the stuck it in the fire after he got home. I was a little mad at Port at that time, but go in a good humor with him after that. The feller's bullet struck him on the shoulder, tore off a shoulder strap, dug up the hide, an' cut him a consider'ble gash in the neck. He wasn't hurt much. John Shown was hit once. He got a pretty good scatch but wasn't hurt much either. Ashford Woodward was the only one of us that was killed.

Our men had worked aroun' by this trime an' had 'em out off. Capt'n Jess then a rifle cracked an' he went the Livermore boys. Cap'n Vickers I reckon guessed what we was up to an' didn't stand to be ketched in no sich a trap. They had stopped shootin' at us and we could hear somethin' goin' on in the stable. Some of us thought they was fixin' to surrender maybe, an' was fixin' to ax 'em to. All of a sudden the doors was throwed open an' the whole gang galloped out o' the stable, on their hosses, shootin' as they came. The feller we had started for the Livermore men. had lef' the gate open an' they saw it was a good chance to git away. This took us all sorter by surprise. We wasn't expectin' it, an for a minit didn't know what to do. Everybody, who could though, shot at 'em. One man's hoss went down with him. He hit the ground a runnin' and run right fer a big roan mare belonging to brother Edwin. He put his foot in the stirrup an' went up. Jest then fire cracked an' he went clear on over on t'other side, hit the groun' an' knocked the breath ounten him. The others got clean away. He surrendered It was Capt'n Vickers his self. The bullet fired at him had jest grazed the back o' his neck, cuttin' the hide an' creasin' him.

We searched the stable an' the house. We foun' one o' them dead one pretty bad wounded, an' ketched another one of 'em up in the lof' hidin' under some hay.

Out o' the whole gang we got six of them. One killed, two wounded, (one, o' them, Capt'n Vickers we took prisoner) an four prisoners. We got five fine 'leven pistols, five carbines, an' five sabers, an' ran the rest o' the gang out o' the country. We took the hoss's an' sold them an' divided up the money.



We stayed all night at Sullivan's. Our wounded rebel died that night. We got a wagon an' took Ashford's body back home. The Livermore men got there after the gang had cleared out. If our guns had been in good shape an' they had come up same time we did, we might 'a' took the whole gang.

We started home bright and early next mornin' an' got to Edwin's about two o'clock. The news o' the scrap had got home 'fore we did. Several o' the neighbors was there.

I was detailed with two more of us to help carry our four prisoners to Cloverport. It was the only time in my life I ever packed a pistol. They give me one to guard these men with. I was sick an' tired of it too long 'fore I got back home.

Captain Vickers was a gentleman, he was. He laughed an' talked with us 'long the way, an' made his self agreeable. We turned him an' his men over to the Union commander at Cloverport an' then come home.

A long time after the war when they was givin' pensions to the Union soldiers, a bill was pass it. They wouldn't do it because we wern't swore into the service."

Did any of your enemies ever try to settle scores with you over this affair later, I asked. "No," he replied. "Some few times after that a squad or so of them would come thru but they always go in an' right, out ag'in. They never bothered nobody nor stole nothin' any more. They didn't ask to see no more Home Guyards, an' we didn't bother them none since they was jest passin' thru peaceable like, an' wern't after harmin' of anything, or anybody."



**The following were some of the participants  
in the engagement at Sullivan's Barn:**

George Washington Bennett (1844-1931) – Union Home Guard  
John Bennett – Union Home Guard  
Jesse Green Benton (1821-18823 – Union Home Guard  
Obed Bennett Chapman (1832-1899) – Union Army  
George W. Gosnell (1845-1928) – Confederate, captured  
John Hand – Union Home Guard  
William Robert Haynes (1845-1923) – Confederate, captured  
Edwin Hipsley (1815-1866)– Union Home Guard  
Irad Hipsley (1821-1912)– Union Home Guard  
Elijah (Lige) C. Hoover (1834-after 1880) – Union Home Guard  
Leonard (Len) G. Hoover (1825-1907) – Union Home Guard  
Samuel (Sam) Ford Hoover (1818-1891) – Union Home Guard  
Allen Porter (Port) Hudson (1823-1888) – Union Army  
William (Bill) C. King (1827-c1872 ) – Union Army  
James Thompson Mitchell (1847-1864) – Confederate, killed  
Dr. Alexander Richard Rowan (1798-1878) – Confederate sympathizer  
John Shown (1821-1915) – Union Home Guard, wounded  
Dick Stevens – Union Home Guard  
Henry Stevens – Union Home Guard  
Henry L. Vickers (1845-1915) – Confederate captain, captured  
Ashford Woodward (1843-1864) – Union Home Guard, killed

Stephen Woodward (1828-1923) – Union Army



## **Ashford Woodward (1843-1864)**

**Autobiography of Mike Moore The Jolly Irishman, by Mike Moore,  
published in 1908 by the Stone Printing Co., Owensboro, KY, p.51:**

Ashford Woodward was killed this fall, near Island Station, while trying to recapture his horse, which was stolen, with others, by guerrillas who were hid in a barn. He had, only a few months before this sad event, married the eldest daughter of John G. Atherton, who is still alive at the remarkable age of 87 years, and the oldest member now living of Buck creek church.

**Woodward's Valley Baptist Church Cemetery  
Ohio County, KY**



Ashford Woodward, Jr., son of  
Ashford Woodward & Dollie D.  
McCrocklin, born 26 February 1843  
Ohio County, KY & died 10 May  
1864 Muhlenberg County, KY



## **James Thompson Mitchell (1847-1864)**

James Thompson Mitchell was born 21 March 1847 New Albany, Floyd County, IN and was killed in the engagement at Sullivan's Barn on 11 May 1864 in Muhlenberg County, KY. He was the son of John Mitchell and Sarah Ann Smith, who were married in Ohio County, KY on 18 August 1831. James T. Mitchell is listed in his father's home in the 1850 & 1860 censuses of Davies County, KY

### **History of Daviess County, Kentucky, Inter-State Publishing, Co., Chicago, IL, 1883, p.169:**

May 8, 1864. — About this time some ten or twelve young men from the vicinity attempted the rash act of making their way to the Confederate army, and among them was James T. Mitchell, sixteen or seventeen years of age. On their way thither they encountered the Home Guards of Ohio County, about seven miles from Livermore, when a skirmish ensued, resulting in the killing of this youth and the capture of Captain Vickers, of Forrest's Cavalry, and several other soldiers, who had a hearing before Captain Grissom on Sunday evening, and were remanded to jail in Owensboro. The remains of young Mitchell were brought here and appropriately buried.

[Note: the same account was published in the Owensboro Monitor, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 18 May 1864, p.3, the following ending sentence was added – “The blood of this youth rests upon a those instrumental in the course he was pursuing.”

### **Elmwood Cemetery (section E) Owensboro, Daviess County, KY**



James T. Mitchell born 21 March  
1847 & died 11 May 1864



**William Robert Haynes  
(1845-1923)**

**“Cruelties to Southern Prisoners”  
by W. R. Haynes, of Whitesville, KY,  
Louisville Daily Courier, 7 November 1867, p.1,  
reprinted from the Southern Shield, Owensboro, KY**

Whitesville, Ky., Sept. 10, 1867.

Having a few days ago read a letter published in the *Shield*, from J. G. Wilson, President of the Huntsville Female College, Alabama, concerning the treatment of Confederate prisoners in Camp Morton and Fort Delaware, I see fit to submit the following for the "Independents in all things and neutral in nothing," hoping it may find a place in its columns, and be a *Shield* to the "dead past."

I was captured with my friend G. W. Gosnell, of Louisville, in May, 1864, while on our way to the Confederate army. We were first incarcerated in the Ohio county jail, where we met two others of our comrades, who were captured the day before. We were kept there one night, and then all sent to Owensboro jail. When we arrived there the hearse was bearing the corpse of Jimmie Mitchell to the cemetery. He was shot during the skirmish at Sullivan's barn, by a home guard, after he had clearly and distinctly said, with uplifted hands, "I surrender!" We were put in the lower apartment of the jail among the negroes, but threats being made to exterminate their colored friends, the authorities thought it expedient to elevate us to the upper story, which was accordingly done. A double guard was placed around the jail, some of which during the night fired two shots, making the balls range in the fence as though they had come from the upper window in the jail. Next morning sixteen of the blood-thirsty villains made their appearance in the room, with muskets presented, and ordered us to hand over our coats, which we did readily, but reluctantly. Instead of shooting us as we expected, the Dutch Captain began a search, at the same time saying, "My guard was fired on by some of you last night, and if I find shooting irons among you, the last damned one of you'll go up." This relieved us, for we knew they had done the shooting, and would find no arms among us. In the evening we were handcuffed and taken to Louisville, thence to Camp Morton. We arrived there on the 22d of May, 1864, and I was released on the 9th of January, 1865, by taking the amnesty oath. I shall say nothing in regard to my individual abuse, & c., for it is so insignificant when compared with the barbarous treatment of hundreds of others it would scarcely be noticed. I was an eye witness to many horrible scenes, similar to those portrayed by J. G. Wilson; have stood in the line at roll call and inspection when the order of "dress to the right," or "stand in line," was given only by a report of a pistol in the hands of Sergeant Baker, and the whiz of a ball down the line, which frequently crippled some innocent person. We were made to stand in line of "inspection" for two or three hours at a time, with hats off, and not allowed to move our feet. It mattered not how cold the ice-sleeted earth might be, or how piercing the winter winds, or how hot the burning summer sun, the external obeisance of pulling off hats to their highness was

always done at "inspection." Many have I seen jerked to the ground by this Baker for the slightest pretext. Men, half starved and half naked, who I learned had peaceful and happy homes in the South, in answer to their cries for mercy received repeated kicks which, no doubt, would have killed them, had it not been for the stimulating hopes of some day being permitted to return to their homes and hearing the voices of dear ones respond to their call. But, alas! many of them died in consequence of exposure from open barracks, & and c. I have seen men's hands and arms broken, and faces gashed for three inches for standing around the cook-house to get skins of the meat that were intended for the slop-tub.

The barracks were fired into nearly every night among four or five hundred men.

It was the custom among the old men in the prison to parch bread and use it as a substitute for coffee. Three of the prisoners were once discovered by a Yankee named Mierau, (under the back of a slough that runs through the prison,) drinking this coffee. He forced them to stand on their heads, while he, with a pole, would hold their feet and backs to the bank for several minutes. He then called to Baker (who had a detail of workmen with spades, & and c.) to "come up and let's have some fun."! He made the men lay down. and ordered the workmen to pitch in dirt on them, which fell about eight or ten feet; at the same time he would pitch spades full of solid earth so high up that he might hear it thump as it fell on the men, and then he and Baker would indulge in humorous laughs at the groanings of the victims of their savage atrocity, as Satan's imps only can.

The truth of the above any ex-prisoner of Camp Morton can do me the justice to acknowledge, and that the half is not told.

W. R. HAYNES

**The following biography of William Robert Haynes (1845-1923)  
was published in the book:**

**Kentucky: A History of the State, W. H. Perrin, J. H. Battle, G. C. Kniffin,  
F. A. Battey Publishing Company, Louisville, KY & Chicago, IL,  
1886, Grayson County section, p.1110:**

WILLIAM R. HAYNES was born in Haynes Precinct, Grayson County, March 15, 1845. He is the youngest of four children born to Henry and Lurana (DeWeese) Haynes, natives of Ohio and Grayson Counties respectively, and of English and French extraction. He was reared on the homestead farm until he was nine years of age, when his parents moved to Cloverport, Ky. There his father engaged in the tobacco business for four years, and was ruined financially by having to pay a security debt. He returned to Grayson County and rented the original homestead farm, where he remained about one year, then moved to Leitchfield. Here he engaged in the hotel, livery and tobacco business, and remained from 1858 until the fall of 1864. He [Henry] was elected sheriff of the county in 1860, and served two terms. In 1864 he removed to Whitesville, Daviess County, where he lost his second wife, Rebecca, sister to his first, Lurana; thence to Webster County, where he died July 15, 1880, at the residence of his son, Dr. J. E. Haynes. William R. Haynes was educated principally at the schools of Leitchfield, and **in the spring of 1864 enlisted in the Confederate Army under Gen. Forrest; two months later, in the fight at Sullivan's barn, Kentucky, he was captured and conveyed to Camp Morton, at Indianapolis, Ind. There he was retained until January 9, 1865, when he was pardoned by President Lincoln.** He returned to Kentucky and located at Whitesville, where he taught school and studied law in the meantime. In 1868 he was admitted to the bar of Owensboro, and entered on the regular practice of his profession at Calhoun, where he remained eighteen months. He then removed to Dixon, Webster



County, and remained practicing his profession until 1874, editing for some time the *Webster County Appeal*; then came to Leitchfield, practiced his profession, and started the *Grayson County Herald*, the first newspaper in the county. In August, 1880, he was elected State's attorney for the Sixth Judicial District and is still serving. April 11, 1878, he was married in Breckinridge County, at Basin Spring Farm, by Rev. W. W. Lambuth, to Ellen Peyton Chick, the accomplished daughter and only child of George E. and Ellen J. (Peyton) Chick, natives of Kentucky. To Mr. and Mrs. Haynes four children were born: Luella (died in infancy), an infant, George Henry and Willie R. In 1876 Mr. Haynes was appointed and served as assistant State presidential elector; he has gained considerable prominence as a politician, and also as a literary man, having written among other things, the life of "Doc" Brown, the famous outlaw of Grayson County. Mr. Haynes is devoted to his profession, in which he is eminently successful.

**Rose Hill Burial Park, Oklahoma City, OK:**



Note: William Robert Haynes in 1900 moved to Lexington, Oklahoma Territory. He died at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County, OK on 8 October 1923. He was buried in the Rose Hill Burial Park in Oklahoma City, OK. In 1876 he was author of the book, Dock Brown Outlaw of Grayson County, Kentucky. See also biography of William Robert Haynes and article on "Dock Brown Outlaw of Grayson County, Kentucky" on the website West-Central Kentucky History & Genealogy.



**George W. Gosnell  
(1845-1928)**

**Cave Hill Cemetery, Louisville, KY (section O):**



He was born 22 February 1845  
Louisville, Jefferson County, KY and  
died on 30 September 1928 in  
Jefferson County, KY. He was the  
son of Edmund Howard Gosnell &  
Mary Elizabeth Baxter, who were  
married in Jefferson County, KY on 2  
July 1837.



**Jesse Green Benton  
(1821-1883)**

**Montgomery Cemetery,  
Gibson County, IN**



Born in Ohio County, KY;  
son of Benjamin Benton &  
Altha Chapman. Corporal,  
Co. D, 26th KY Infantry,  
USA.

