

and the blockading squadron of Sanibel Island in San Carlos Bay, and a large number carried on transports to Pine Island, landing about where St. James is now situated.

So annoying was the condition that an unsuccessful attempt was made by Colonel J. C. Munnerlyn's battalion, commanded by Major William Footman, to capture and destroy the place, resulting, however, in its evacuation. Major Footman, after formally demanding a surrender and being denied, raised a terrible racket. A day was spent in cannon and rifle practice, one those bloodless battles, one man killed, a lot of pickets, horses and cattle captured, was the result so far as Major Footman knew, but the most desired result was going on in the front, while Footman was retracing steps, having given up the undertaking as a bad job, the Federals were packing up and hurrying down the river to Punta Rassa, where they placed themselves under cover of their gunboats. The failure to capture the place at that time, under the circumstances connected with it, was as might have been expected.

Two hundred and seventy-five men, poorly armed, with one field piece, attacking five companies of well-armed men, with block houses, breastworks and three field pieces, mounted at commanding points, could not be expected to succeed. While the Confederates could not hurt the enemy much, they gave it a terrible fright, for the next morning the nest was warm, but the bird had flown.

In mentioning this little unpleasantness, in which Fort Myers played a conspicuous part, mention should be made of the fact that Major Footman completely surprised the garrison when he sent in his flag of truce and politely demanded an unconditional surrender, except that the officers and men be treated as prisoners of war. A picket post was a mile out from the front -- ten men well armed with Enfield rifles. This fact Major Footman ascertained from a reliable source. He was determined to capture that picket guard.

The night preceding the attack on Fort Myers, the battalion was marching leisurely in a long single file, at a point twelve miles from Fort Myers, along the old military road leading from Fort Myers to Fort Thompson. It was very dark and raining when a halt was made. Major Footman rode down the line and called for Captain Hendry. Being answered, he said: "Captain, I want ten men who can tread on eggs and not break them. Make a detail from your company, dismount them, and place them in command of one of your best lieutenants and have him report to me at once." This order was quickly complied with, when Lieutenant George W. Hendry, in command of ten men of his own choosing, reported to Major Footman.

The Major said to him, in substance: "There is a picket post, one mile from Fort Myers, on a little creek or branch (Billy's Branch). Proceed to that point and capture the picket without firing a gun if possible. I rely upon you. Your plan must be one of your own. Good night."

Lieutenant Hendry had a hard, difficult and perilous job before him and came as near to accomplishing it as it was possible for him to do. The country was so covered with water and the night so dark, and the pickets without camp fires, that it was absolutely impossible to locate them. He passed within a few yards of the guard on post and did not know it. The picket guard heard the wading in the water and thought it was a herd of cattle passing by. When the day dawned, Lt. Hendry returned to the battalion, meeting it a few miles from Fort Myers.

The Major, still determined to capture that picket post, ordered Lt. William M. Hendry, of Capt. Wall's company, to select from the whole battalion ten men and make a dash upon the picket post. Lt. Hendry then, is now no other than "Uncle Marion" Hendry, present clerk of the Circuit Court. The order was positive to capture without the firing of a gun if