

Bowling Green Ky.

1259 - College St.

July 17. 1957.

Dr. W. L. Krabb.

Peabody College
Nashville Tenn.

Dear Sir:

My father John W. Stark (born Oct 18 - 1841 in Edmonson Co Ky. Died mch. 23. 1915 at his home 1259 College St Bowling Green Ky.) (my father's childhood home was a beautiful old fashioned black) - when quite a lad he removed to his grandfather James Stark near Gainesville Ky. Allen Co. - He was assigned two slaves by his grandfather.

At the age of 18 he enlisted (1862) in Confederate Army as a member of Capt. Wm. B. Ridgely Company of "Buckner's Guides" serving under Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner until close of conflict.

The Company was composed of men familiar with all parts of Ky, and were intended for guides for General Simon Bolivar Buckner.

whose Army first occupied Bowling Green from the South. — The officers were namely: —
 1st Lieutenant Thos H. Lines, Butler Co. 2nd Lieutenant James H. Bernam, 3rd Lieutenant Gus Warfield, 1st Sergeant John H. Hines.

John W. Stark at one time acted as guide to General Albert Sidney Johnson, and General Pollock, to inspect the "ford" for defending Bowling Green. — He also guided a detachment of Texas Rangers in a scouting trip to Glasgow Ky and from there north of Glasgow Ky.

He was recommended as a boy of very outstanding character ^{and one of the best men of eastern Ky.} and was reflected to "carry dispatches" (belonged to Secret Service or as it is expressed now "Army Intelligence")

General Albert Sidney Johnson headquarters while in Bowling Green was the "Miss Jennie Blackburn brick residence on Adams St."

And from there my father John W. Stark was sent with a "dispatch" to General Pollock (2nd trip to Pollock) just before the "Battle of Mill Spring." — When he arrived General Pollock was in consultation with his Generals.

After reading the "Dispatch", Pollock said quote: — "Pretty boy how would you like to see the fun in the morning. One of my aides is sick, and you can act as 'Voluntary Aide' —"

He was recommended as a boy of "outstanding character" and was selected to carry dispatches (belong to secret service - as they expressed now Army Intelligent) one of the best men of Eastern Ky.

When General Albert Sidney Johnson headquarters was the Miss Jennie Blackburn home on Addam St (A beautiful old fashion brick residence) in Bowling Green Ky. John W Stark was sent with a dispatch to General Gollicoffer (who was on the north side of Cumberland River this was 2nd trip he had made to Gollicoffer) just before the "Battle of Mill Spring" when father arrived Gollicoffer was in consultation with his Generals (in his tent) After reading the dispatch Gollicoffer said quote: - "Pretty Boy how would you like to see the fight in the morning? One of my aides is ill and you can act as Voluntary Aide" - He replied that he would be honored to act as aide. - My father, John W. Stark said Gollicoffer thought it would be military strategy to cross Cumberland river at Fishers Creek was swollen and surprise the enemy - but the Yankees outnumbered them and the Confederates had to retreat. - He was by General Gollicoffer's side

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When he was slain at the "Battle of Mill Springs"
He was the first soldier he saw slain to
him he looked as large as an elephant.

He with General Crittenden crossed over river
in little steam boat (he lost his furs) where
he was given horse, counter sign and dispatch
to take to General Albert Sidney Johnson in Bowling
Green Ky. - It was a miracle he wasn't captured
for as he reached a "dense forest" at dusk
a yankee soldier approached him and called
"halt" and used profane words - Father was
in shadow of trees and he replied, "Don't
you know I am one of your own men?"
The yankee quote: "used profane words
move on then" - Father crossed Cumberland
river three times, it took him some
time to reach Franklen Ky. - where by showing
his secret service badge and informing the
officer in charge that he was bearer of
important dispatch he was allowed to board
the military train.

He reached Bowling Green Ky at night
and was ushered in General Albert Sidney
Johnson room. (Blackburn residence on
Addam street) - He was shawing, lather
all over his face. - After reading the
dispatch he exclaimed quote: "It gave
"Gollicoffer" positive orders not to cross

Cumberland river. - He was so angry he almost frothed at the mouth.

He then questioned father, gave him Covert sign, sent him towards Glasgow Ky to try to locate "Thomas's Army." - On his return trip when he reached New bridge on Drakes Creek at Sweeney's Mill. he met Mrs Underwood who informed him the Confederates had retreated, and the Yankees were occupying Bowling Green. He expressed his appreciation for information, wheeled his horse, swam across stream and as he and his horse were exhausted and needed food and rest spent the night with a Confederate sympathizer. - early next morning (with Mr. Rag and two negroes to avoid suspicion) continued on his journey - when he reached Franklin he boarded military train. - On arriving at Nashville Tennessee he reported to General Hardee (author of Military Tactics) and was informed his Company was encamped in Livery stable. Army life was a hard life. frequently he would be caught out in snow storms (no Confederate sympathizer near) then he would try to sleep close to his horse with only

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a blanket to cover him. - He had several narrow escapes. ("God" was surely watching over him) On one occasion he was stricken with a severe case of Diarrhea (near Scottsville Ky). Fortunately a friend of his father's Lincol Chase Thy, where he was taken in and nursed until he was able to return to his Company.

While there a band of Yankees surrounded the house and searched every room, but luckily he had delicate features and wavy hair. This fine woman put a lace cap + gown on him, got in bed with him - The Yankees thought he was her daughter and didn't molest him.

I thank "God" for that wonderful woman. As he probably would have died if he had been captured by Yankees, as he was critically ill at the time.

Six months before end of Conflict he was captured - At the time he was teaching school in Warren County (right in heart of Yankee section) - He was staying at his Aunt Frances Stark Kelley at her beautiful ^{tiny story} brick home on Russellville Rd. (They at one time owned 1000 acres of land there & her husband Miles Kelley dealt in "Thoroughbred horses")

The home is still standing (1954). A Mr Sledge owned it in 1954 & before that time The Meylers Mrs Carl Herdman father.

The yankees evidently were afraid he would contact the Confederates. - I think he said Gen. Morgan's brother was there at some time and he was given a chance to escape at same time - He liked his brother the short time he was with him -

When he was released from Camp Chase he was a shadow of his former self. - So weak he could scarcely walk. - The food had been scarce. & when he alighted from train at Bowling Green Ky. he was delighted to see an old friend of his father, A Mr. Claypool, an influential citizen of Bowling Green Ky. who was kind enough to lend him five dollars.

Just before he enlisted in Confederate Army, he was invited to house party. - among the invited guests was his fiancée, Miss Elsie Crittenden Stark. - On this evening just before girls descended to first floor, the "hostess" expressed a desire to try on Elsie's engagement ring. not dreaming she would rush down stairs (before ~~going~~ returning ring to Elsie) - and tell father that she had given ring

to her etc. etc, — When mother descended the stairs the hostess was in close conversation with father. — Naturally father was infuriated and was the cause of lovers quarrel and broken engagement.

When he "returned from war" it was rumored ^{that} she was to wed another.

He then and there resolved that he would write to her and convince her, that he was the one she should marry.

When the letter was delivered, she consulted her grandfather Capt George D. Jewell of Barber Co near Ellettsburg Ky and he advised her to marry the one she loved the best. — I am happy to inform you she married my father John W Stark on the 16th of October 1867. — They had a beautiful morning wedding with breakfast served to all guests. Judge Logan Porter of Ellettsburg Ky was best man and Miss Nettie Button was maid of honor. — Reverend Mordukai Ham Esq. performed the marriage ceremony and they lived happily ever afterwards.

They made their home with his father, Charles C Stark (b May 21 - 1804 in Culpeper Co Va.) who inherited the beautiful two story brick of his father James Stark near Gainesville Ky.