

Death of Colonel Redfield

ISSN 0003-4827



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Recommended Citation

"Death of Colonel Redfield." *The Annals of Iowa* 9 (1910), 520-520.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.3637>

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to come will never realize, and never be able to pay the debt of gratitude which they owe to these defenders of the Union. Their full reward must come from Him who controls the destinies of Nations.

DEATH OF COLONEL REDFIELD.

From the collection of papers of Mr. Joseph M. Griffith, recently presented to the Historical Department by his grandson, Simon Casady, Jr., is the following, copied in the hand writing of Col. Griffith:

Headquarters of the 39th Iowa Infantry,
Rome, Ga., Oct. 10, 1864.

Israel Redfield, Esq.,
Redfield, Iowa.

Dear Sir:—

It is my painful duty to inform you and through you the family of our late Lieut. Col. James Redfield of his death on the field of battle at Alatoona, on the 5th inst. All communication with the North, excepting by telegraph, has been cut off; hence this delay.

Colonel James Redfield left Rome, Ga., on the evening of the 4th inst. in command of his regiment. He was in excellent health and cheerful spirits. The object of the expedition was to guard supplies at Alatoona from the enemy. No one anticipated a battle, but on the evening of the 5th they were attacked by a large force of the enemy and were engaged all day. The 39th was in the front, and under their gallant leader performed deeds of *valor unequalled* in the history of this campaign. The results will show you their determined and desperate fighting. There was in the engagement two hundred and eighty rank and file of our regiment; of these, ten were commissioned officers, five of whom were killed outright, two wounded and captured, and only three left. The total loss to the regiment was 163, nearly two-thirds of the whole. Col. Redfield had orders to hold his position at every hazard, and as it was a very exposed one and was charged by the enemy massed in column, the officers were necessarily exposed to a murderous fire. The Colonel was passing along the lines, cheering and animating the men to fight to the last, when he was hit by a musket ball. It passed through his heart, and he fell *facing the enemy*, without a groan or a struggle. His expression of countenance was natural and as when sleeping.

The fall of their gallant and loved leader only inspired the boys with new deadly determination, and they fought the enemy then in a hand-to-hand encounter. Their bodies lay side by side, and we have the satisfaction of knowing that no *traitor* touched his person after he fell. The railroad was cut by the enemy and the command had to remain for two days. Every exertion was made to bring the remains to this place, but it was found to be necessary to inter them in Coatesville, where they will rest until communication with the North is opened, when the command will have the sad pleasure of forwarding them to such place as the family may direct.

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