

The Filson Historical Society

Mss. Pirtle, Alfred, 1837-1926.  
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A Civil War Story. August 24,  
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In re. Pirtle's loss and recovery  
of a ring, Sept. 18, 1863.

# PIRTLE, WEAVER & MENEFFEE

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## INSURANCE

1211-1212 STARKS BLDG.

LOUISVILLE, KY.

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### A Civil War Story.

I see you looking at that seal ring, I wear on my right hand. There is a story connected with it, that is a little interesting.

The war had been on hand for about a year and a half, when the jewelers of New York started a fashion among the young officers of the service, to wear a breast-pin, or a ring, which was marked so that it identified the wearer. I fell into the fashion, and got our suttler, a fine fellow named "Boss" (that was actually his name,) to take the measure of the little finger of my right hand, and the first time he was in New York, to get me a blood stone, seal ring, which he did but it was too large, 'tho I managed to wear it some times. We were in camp at Cowan, Tenn. when it was brought, and it was pronounced, a beauty. The Army moved forward and no chance came up, by which I might send the ring to Ball, Black & Co. to have it altered to fit me. We laid in camp at Bridgeport, Ala. quite a while but the suttlers were not allowed to open for business, for the understanding was that every day we would cross the Tennessee river and march until we met the enemy. Therefore the ring was unchanged. History shows that weeks elapsed, when we did march, before the two armies, neared each other, and then it was, way over in the North West Corner of Georgia. On the 19th of September, 1863, I put the ring on my finger, for all signs pointed to a great battle, right away, and I thought maybe the ring will have a use before night. The roads had been dry for weeks, so that the dust was inches deep. on every road, great or small.

Rosecrans, the General of our Army, had been less an adept in strategy, than Bragg, of the Rebels, and he was bending all his skill and resources, towards consolidating his Army, in time to meet the Enemy, before he made us fight a battle. We bivouacked, the night of the 19th September, with the expecta

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tation of getting orders to move at any moment. During the night-march which followed, I was, at the moment, riding not far from Brig. Gen'l William H. Lytle, on whose staff, I had been for a long time. I, wanted to get something, from a skirt pocket, and placed my gauntleted hand back to find the skirt when after drawing off the gauntlet. As my hand had almost reached it's object, I felt my ring, leave my finger. Instantly I said in a commanding voice, "Halt". and dropped the gauntlet. As the whole group, was almost worn out and very sleepy too, they stopped <sup>u</sup> right in their tracks. "Dismount Simcox, and hold your horse and mine." Which he did as I reached the ground. As we had been getting orders on the march, night and day, had kept a piece of good candle in my haversack, just for the purpose of reading the papers. In a minute I had my candle and lit it and stooping down I put the candle in the dust, and the ring made a large shadow right before me. "Column, Forward", I shouted as I grasped the ring, and we moved on again. After a brief silence the General, wanted to know why I had halted them so abruptly, and I told him. The only thing he said was, "A man who has the luck to find an object dropped at the head of a column at this time of night and in six inches dust, is not going to be hurt in the battle to-day." Of the group, General Lytle and Simcox, were of our party the only killed or wounded the next day, in the battle of Chickamauga.

Alfred Pirtle

Louisville, August, 24th 1923.

I taught myself typewriting, after I was 80.