ON THIS DAY IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY
December 29

The town of Sutton was burned by Confederate raiders on December 29, 1861.

CSO: SS.8.22, ELA.8.1

Investigate the Document: (West Virginia Adjutant Generals’ Papers, Ar382, Box 17)
1. To whom is this letter addressed?
2. What is the letter reporting?
3. What two other structures were burnt as Union forces were pursued by the Confederates?
4. Union forces retreated to ______?
5. How many wounded were there as a result of the battle?

Think Critically: Who was the commander of the company? Where was he during the encounter? Who actually commanded the Union company during the encounter with Confederate forces? Does this letter from Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Maley Harris give you the impression that the Union company was caught off guard?
Clarkesburg Dec. 31st. 1861.

SIR: T. W. Pickering,

I am to inform you that I have learned this morning that the town of Fulton in Braxton Co. has fallen into the hands of the rebels. The amount of military stores which we had there I learn was small. The town was held by a company of cavalry belonging to the 8th Va. commanded by Capt. Rowan who unfortunately was absent and had been several days from his command. His 1st Lieut. was also absent. The company under the command of the 2nd Lieut. act.
I am told with great coolness and bravery defending the town from behind fortifications erected by Col. Gideon of the 30th Jan. on his first driving the rebels from that country. From half past nine A.M. until 4 O'clock P.M., against a greatly superior force and only retiring when their ammunition was exhausted. They report that from the light which arose behind them on their retiring and which continued for some hours, they made no doubt that the rebels burnt the town. They also report that they were pursued for several miles that in their retreat towards.
Oxon and that the two Churches at the Flat Woods, eight miles this side of Sutton which had been used during the fall by two companies belonging to the 3d Va. that were encamped at that place for some two or three months during the fall and that have but recently been ordered away. From these were also burnt by the rebels in their pursuit.

All the accounts taken together and I have taken pains to collect information having connected with a number of intelligent persons who were present at the time of the burn.
The attack made it appear probable that the rebel forces engaged in the affair amounted to probably five hundred. They are reported as being uniformed and well armed. We lost none in killed, but there were two wounded; one a boy that belonged to a wagon train that had been pressed into the service from this county who was engaged haul ing wood into the town at the time of the attack. He had a horse killed and was wounded in the leg rather severely I understand. Our fat