

# 53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry

## Company C

"The Sentinel" November 2022

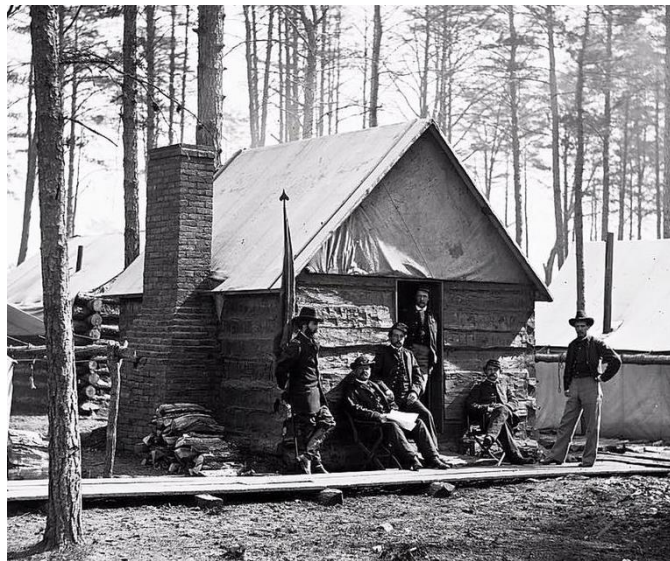
Newsletter of The James Creek Guards



"Clubs Are Trumps!"

### This Month:

1. Book Review - "Landscape Turned Red"
2. Yankee Cavalry in East Alabama: Croxton's Raid
3. Civil War Letters From The 53<sup>rd</sup>
4. Book Review - "A Team Of Rivals"
5. Event Summary - USAHEC
6. A Tribute to Our Pard, Marlin Troutman
7. From The Desk Of The President
8. The Civil War Merchant
9. 2022 Calendar of Events
10. 53<sup>rd</sup> PVI Contact Info

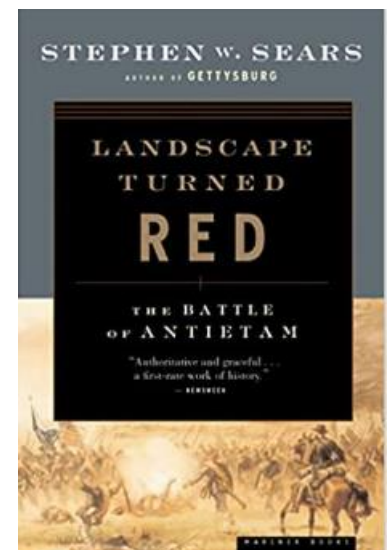


*I am always looking for newsletter content, so please forward your articles, book reviews, event summaries/photos, stories, etc.) to me for inclusion in a future edition of "The Sentinel". - Matthew Steger, editor*

## **BOOK REVIEW - STEPHEN SEARS, LANDSCAPE TURNED RED: THE BATTLE OF ANTIETAM**

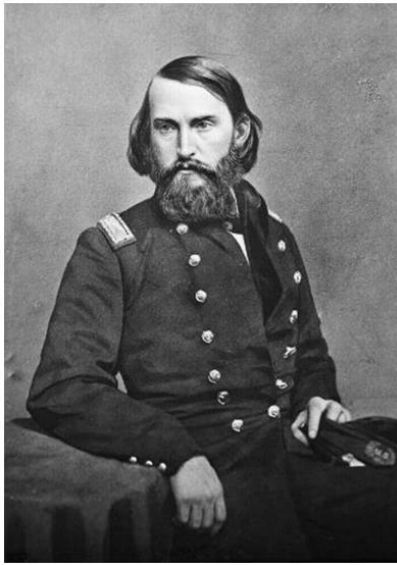
Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1983. 374 pages, softcover  
By Paul Parvis

Mr. Sears is no stranger to many of us given his numerous titles pertaining to other battlefields such as the excellent *To the Gates of Richmond: The Peninsula Campaign*. Again, there are numerous books about Antietam—no I don't own all of them, however, this is another five-star book you should consider reading. More narrative than personal accounts, it is extremely well organized and an absorbing reading experience – it includes maps and period photographs. I have read this book four times beginning in 1996 and offer it for \$3.00.

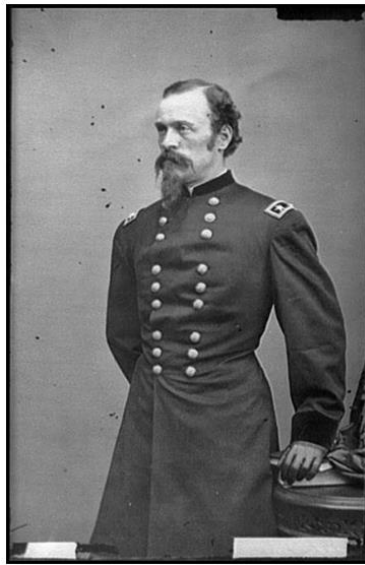


## YANKEE CAVALRY IN EAST ALABAMA: CROXTON'S RAID

By Norman Dasinger, Jr., November 26, 2021  
Blue and Gray Education Society



BG John T. Croxton | LOC



Maj. Gen. James H. Wilson | LOC

On Monday, April 24, 1865, 1,500 Union soldiers under the command of Brig. Gen. John T. Croxton arrived near present-day Heflin in eastern Alabama. That night, these horse soldiers encountering little or no opposition, and following a very active day, encamped along the Tallapoosa River.

Croxton was one part of a 15,000-man Union cavalry force raiding through Alabama from Florence south to present-day Birmingham, Selma, Montgomery, and Columbus, Georgia. At the time, it was the largest cavalry force ever assembled in North America and was commanded by 27-year-old Maj. Gen. James H. Wilson.

On March 30, 1865, near present-day Birmingham, Wilson ordered Croxton to take his 1,500-man brigade and detach from the main force. Croxton was ordered west to Tuscaloosa

to burn the university and the military cadet school located there, and then head east across central Alabama, burning any suitable targets, including iron works, railroad stations, factories, post offices, grist mills, and some homes.

While moving from Talladega north, on the morning of April 23, 1865, a brief skirmish took place against a small Confederate force at Munford, where the last Confederate soldier—A. J. Buttram—was killed. Following this bloody encounter, the Yankees continued into Calhoun County and destroyed the Oxford Iron Works, near present-day Anniston. On the morning of the 24th, the Yankees burned all the railroad box cars and the station at Blue Mountain, sent a detachment onto Jacksonville, and then started east toward present-day Cleburne County. They finally stopped for rest at the Belltown community south of Heflin that evening. The Union soldiers within this raiding force included men from Iowa, Michigan, and Kentucky, and many were armed with repeating rifles.



*A print showing Ulysses S. Grant, Commanding General of the Union Army, accepting Confederate General in Chief Robert E. Lee's surrender on April 9, 1865 | public domain*

Their ultimate goal was to rejoin Wilson's main column as it moved east from Alabama into Georgia. On the 25th, Croxton continued through Arabacoochee, Alabama, and then onto Carrollton, Georgia. His force arrived in Macon, Georgia on May 1, and there rejoined Wilson just in time to help capture Confederate President Jefferson Davis.

As they moved through east Alabama and into Georgia, Croxton and his men did not know that Gen. Robert E Lee had surrendered his army in Virginia over 14 days earlier.

## **CIVIL WAR LETTERS FROM THE 53<sup>RD</sup>, COMPANY C**

*What will follow in the next year or so are letters from a member of Company C who signed himself as "PILUM." All letters appeared in the Huntingdon Globe newspaper. The letters include the period January 1862 through December 1863. I have divided longer letters into more comprehensible paragraphs; otherwise, all wording has not been changed. Enjoy! Rick Sauers*

Camp California, Va., Jan. 29, '62.

Dear Globe:—"Fall in for drill," was the common and well known sentence amongst the men of the 53d regiment, P. V., until a few weeks ago, when it was changed to "stay in your quarters or you will swamp." On last Friday morning the ground was froze so that the boys could again come from their muslin habitations, and enjoy the gentle breezes of a Southern clime.

Saturday and Sunday the weather was fine, especially on Sunday, the sun shone most beautifully and the ground began to dry off very finely. The men were all out taking advantage of the fine weather after their confinement of almost two weeks of continual rain and mud. But on Monday morning the sky was again overspread with dark clouds, and all the bright hopes and fair visions of the poor soldier were blasted, for towards evening the rain again to fall quite freely.

But the morning was enlivened and made cheerful to the officers and men of the 53d, by the preparations that were being made to present our Colonel and Lieut. Colonel with swords. At nine o'clock the drums beat, and soon all the companies were out in full trim. The companies were marched to the parade ground, and formed in line of battle. An open square was then formed under the supervision of Capt. Bull of Company A, and Mr. Hatch, Adjutant of the regiment. The Colonel, Lieut. Colonel, Quartermaster and the Chaplain of the Regiment then took their position at the open part of the square. The presentation speech was then made by Capt. Wintrode of Company C, in favor of the non-commissioned officers and men of the regiment. The captain made quite an elegant speech, though not very lengthy. Colonel Brooke in return made a fine speech. He remarked, that while he was able to wield that sword, and only when his body was laid low in the mother earth, then, and not until then, would he forget the kindness shown toward him by the men of the 53d, in presenting him with the sword.

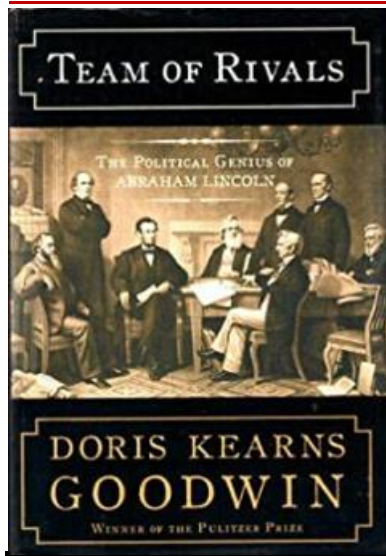
Lieut. Colonel McMichael in turn made quite a humerous speech, which, at the close of his remarks, drew from the men, the most vociferous cheers. After this, Rev. Barber, Chaplain of the regiment, by invitation made some useful remarks to the men, telling them while they thus showed their high respect for their Colonel, he (the Colonel) also expected the men to obey and follow him wherever he may go. He entreated them earnestly to stand by their officers, and when they are led on the field of battle to fight valiantly for the "right," and for the reconstruction of this grand government. After this the men were dismissed by company and then drill commenced, which was the skirmish. The men went through the evolutions quite briskly, showing that they were well pleased with the performances of the morning.

Very heavy firing is heard down the Potomac this evening, but it does not awaken any particular excitement, as such is often the case when the Rebels spend all their powder in trying to hit some small oyster tugs as they pass their powerful batteries.

More anon.  
PILUM.

[*Huntingdon Globe*, February 4, 1862]

## **BOOK REVIEW - A TEAM OF RIVALS**



Paperback; 2005; Simon & Schuster; 757 pp.; in addition: >34 pages of pictures, 125 pp sources and notes, 35 pp index. \$1.99 used. Borrowed from Mark Fasnacht.

**#1 NY Times Bestseller Prize winner Doris Kearns Goodwin!!**

Reviewed by Mike Espenshade

Deserving of this award (and many other awards) in my view! A brilliantly narrated and exhaustingly researched story of Lincoln, key members of his cabinet, and their relationships. An engagingly intimate look at Lincoln's private life and public actions, this book brings to life this man who may have been the most extraordinary individual in American history.

The author, well established and awarded by previous and subsequent literary works, delivers a gripping piece of fresh perspectives, astute analysis, and sensitive portrayals of Lincoln and three major characters (William Seward, Edwin Stanton, Salmon Chase) and others. She involves you in their professional upbringing and challenges for a clear understanding

of how these men came to be America's highest-ranking officials. Who - all from different political viewpoints and intentionally enjoined by Lincoln to "represent the people" for better government - learned from Lincoln's leadership how to work together as a team.

I especially loved the author's occasional inclusion of stories of Lincoln's jokes, anecdotes, and superb choice of words to simply express a complex ideal or moral position.

Kerns Goodwin describes well the changing, multi-layered political and popular elements that challenged this Administration from the start. Then, add a civil war on top of things.

The loss of two sons to sickness, his unstable wife Mary, a divided country, an unsupportive populace, and an unruly Cabinet staff all conspired to create the landscape for Lincoln's greatness of character to manifest itself. The Cabinet members soon began, in spite of themselves, to appreciate Lincoln for the man he was.

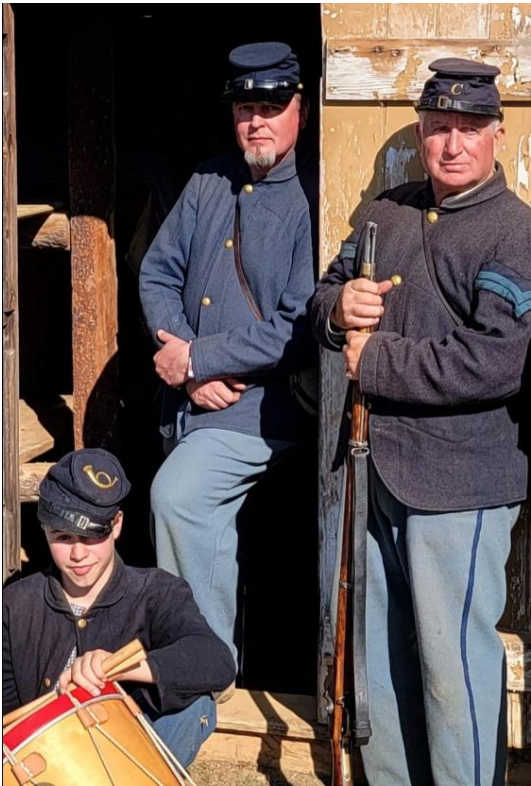
The reader's biggest takeaway from this valuable effort is perhaps how to emulate, even a bit, from Lincoln's divine-like patience, kindness, forgiveness, and endlessly magnanimous dealings with all - especially with those who acted against him.

Read this book.

### **EVENT SUMMARY - USAHEC**

The USAHEC event returned in 2022 split into 2 weekends. One in Sept. and ours in October. As usual, it was an easy, laid back event. On the schedule was our firing demo at 10AM Saturday and rest of the day was spent talking to the public, spending time with our pards, and free time to visit the site and see other timelines from American military history ranging from the French Indian War up to the Iraq War. The emphasis this year was in WW2 tanks and other heavy equipment. We were accompanied at the event by our 1<sup>st</sup> MN pards. Photos are courtesy of Eric Ford:







## **A TRIBUTE TO OUR PARD, MARLIN TROUTMAN**

By John Nyeste

When Matt asked me to write a few words in remembrance of Marlin for the newsletter, I thought, how do you put down in a couple paragraphs the experiences of a friend you spent weekends in the field with for many years. I don't think I can.

The collective character of an organization, in large part, is dependent on the individual character of its members. This is especially true for a reenactment group like the 53rd where it so closely depends on the members ability to get along with each other and work together toward a common goal. By my admittedly incomplete

count, the 53rd has had over 130 members come and go since 1980. Some we can barely remember, some we'll never forget. Once in a while you get lucky and snag one of those "never forget" ones into the group. Marlin was one of those. While my records are incomplete, I think he joined in 1987. The first roster I see him on is in 1988. The last roster I have is 2013 where he shows up as a member. While the participation of every member is important, some members you really look forward to spending time with in camp. Again, Marlin was one of those.



He always seemed to have a positive attitude, an easy laugh, and always had a joke to share. Those of us who knew him remember his love of his army coffee. He shared with us the heat, the cold, the rain, and what seemed rare, a perfect weather weekend in the field. His contributions to the group included doing the art work on the 53rd's current colors. Please read his full obituary linked on a post in the 53rd's Facebook page to appreciate all he accomplished in his life. Read the 53rd's Facebook page comments of the members who knew him to get a feel for the affection we felt for him. When you newer members who never met him talk to those of us who did know him, ask us about him and we'll share our memories. I hope the 53rd can, in the future, enroll more men of his quality. I "soldiered"

with him for 20 years and I have no regrets. Marlin's Obit: <https://obituaries.dailyitem.com/obituary/marlin-troutman-1085934302?fbclid=IwAR3bvJ17rL61UHGwxa6GaMO4kjAaqB-VnQejrBOYzM0pcDeC8lg7egzujNM>



## FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

”CHECK YOUR EMAIL!”

## THE CIVIL WAR MERCHANT

(if you have something for sale or are looking for something, email me to include it in a future edition of “The Sentinel”)

### For Sale –

(1.) Listed by Rick Kramer for a friend. All items are in good shape unless noted otherwise. Contact Rick directly for any inquiries/questions - [auction8@comcast.net](mailto:auction8@comcast.net)

Keune McDowell Kepi - some brim cracking \$20.00

Grey Blanket with black stripe \$35.00

(2.) Dave Townsen, a fellow pard of mine in the old 83<sup>rd</sup> PVI, is selling off most of his CW gear. You can contact him directly at: [grumpydave58@comcast.net](mailto:grumpydave58@comcast.net) with any inquiries about items, pricing, etc. He lives in Mechanicsburg and he has quality gear.

(3.) Kerry Williard is handling the selling of Dave Swigert items for Dave’s wife. Marc and I met several months ago to look at the items, give them descriptions, and give approx. values. Several of the items have been sold yet some remain. The list is current as of 24 Jan. 2022. Contact Kerry directly with any and all inquiries: [shamokin71@aol.com](mailto:shamokin71@aol.com) (see the updated list below)

Uniform Clothing	Item Description	Detailed Description	Price
1	Trouser - Steel Blue each with suspendors	34 min waist/27" inseam-avg. condx and a little dirt w/ braces no watch pck	\$25.00
1	DK Blue Vest Size 42	3 pockets - light wear	\$20.00
1	Colored Pattern Shirt	blue plaid with white china buttons - sun faded - good condx	\$10.00
1	White muslin Shirt	19" at shoulder 14" neck - very short in body length	\$5.00
1	White muslin Shirt	20" at shoulder 16" neck - very short in body length - cuffs are stained	\$5.00
1 pair	Woolen Grey Gloves	modern - right hand is fingerless	\$2.00
1	Underpants - Night Pants - White	36" waist - knee stains - 25" inseam white muslin - rear repair	\$3.00
1	Lt Brown Scarf - Acrylic - Modern		\$1.00
1	Havelock - White - VG condx		\$2.00
3 pairs	Grey Wool Socks -Modern		\$2.00/pr
2	Hats - Union & Confederate for children		\$1.00
<b>Accountrements</b>			
1	Scabbord -Late war 7 Rivet		\$15.00
1	Gum Blanket	some cracking with oversized grommets	\$20.00
1	Shelter Tent - Both Halves - Heavy Canvas w/Loops w/Mildew		\$35.00
1	Bag of 7 wooden Tent Stakes w/Rope		\$3.00
1	Grey Smooth Face Canteen - Leather Sling Satinette Cover w/ Corded Stopper		\$20.00
1	Haversack - Tarred Black - Brittle Strap w/opwn seam		\$5.00
1	Haversack - Tarred Black w/Liner - Paint peeling Holes @ Strap Connection		\$10.00
1	Grey Smooth Face Canteen - Leather Sling Satinette Cover w/ Corded Stopper		\$20.00
<b>Misc Items</b>			
1 can	sno-seal (half full)		\$1.00
1	Wood Mirror - Haversack filler	sliding cover	\$3.00
1	Wood Comb - Haversack filler		\$1.00
1	Wooden button board		\$1.00
2	Coin Purses - Made from Tic Material		\$1.00/ea
1	Bag with Coffee	brown coffee	\$1.00/ea
1	shoe lace - undied		\$0.25/ea
2	Soap Bar		\$1.00/ea
6 1/2	Wax Candles		\$0.25/ea
1	pocket sharpenig stone	new	\$2.00
1	box rifle cleaning kit	pads, steel wool, rags, etc	\$5.00
3	match boxes w/ matches		\$0.25/ea
1 Pair	shoe tree		\$3.00
1	Green Army Duffle Bag		\$3.00
1	drawers for use as patches		\$1.00
<b>Armaments</b>			
1	1861 Springfield Rifle - Armi Sport		\$900.00

## 2022 CALENDAR OF EVENTS



15 January – Holiday Party – Gettysburg  
5 February – Winter Drill – Landis Valley (ELF and Sykes Regulars invited)  
26-27 February – NR School of Instruction (Gettysburg)  
23 April – Robesonia  
21 May – Cartridge Rolling Party (Kleinfeltersville)  
30 May – Memorial Day Parade (Hummelstown)  
11-12 June – Gruber Wagon Works Living History (Reading)  
16-17 July – Landis Valley Civil War Days (Lancaster) – NR Camp of Instruction **MAX EFFORT**  
16-18 September – 160<sup>th</sup> Antietam Reenactment (NR) **MAX EFFORT**  
15-16 October – USAHEC Army Heritage Days – Carlisle **MAX EFFORT**  
19 November - Remembrance Day (Gettysburg) - NR Annual Meeting and Parade  
7 January – Annual Meeting (Kleinfeltersville) – **NEW DATE!**  
14 January – Holiday Party/Dinner - Gettysburg

For updated event info and other news, please check out the Facebook pages of the 53<sup>rd</sup> PVI and/or the National Regiment (links below).

### 53rd PVI Contacts

President: Eric Ford ([reenactor53@gmail.com](mailto:reenactor53@gmail.com))

Vice President: Pete Zinkus ([zinkusp@gmail.com](mailto:zinkusp@gmail.com))

Treasurer/Secretary: Matthew Steger ([n3ntj@outlook.com](mailto:n3ntj@outlook.com))

Newsletter Editor: Matthew Steger ([n3ntj@outlook.com](mailto:n3ntj@outlook.com))

Webmasters: Steve Dillon ([steve@gofoxpro.com](mailto:steve@gofoxpro.com)) and Matthew Steger ([n3ntj@outlook.com](mailto:n3ntj@outlook.com))

53<sup>rd</sup> PVI Website: <http://www.53rdpvi.org>

2022 Field Officers - Sergeants: Mark Fasnacht, Marc Benedict, Matthew Steger. Corporals: Mike Espenshade & Michael Brumbaugh

53<sup>rd</sup> PVI Facebook Page: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/53rdPVI>

National Regiment Phone line: 800-777-1861 (code 61)

National Regiment Website: <https://www.thenationalregiment.com>

National Regiment Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/842904089142263>

