

53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry

Company C

"The Sentinel" December 2022

Newsletter of The James Creek Guards



"Clubs Are Trumps!"

This Month:

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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

THE BIZARRE STORY OF THE LIGHTNING MULE BRIGADE

Robert S. Davies, November 11, 2022,
blueandgrayeducation.org



Colonel Streight and his federal brigade rode mules to raid Alabama | public domain

In 1863, Col. Abel Streight and his federal brigade had one of the wildest adventures of the Civil War. Riding mules, these infantrymen intended to raid the Confederate Western & Atlantic Railroad which supplied, from the railroad hub of Atlanta, the southern armies in Tennessee. These raiders would also attempt to destroy other locations of military value that they came upon.

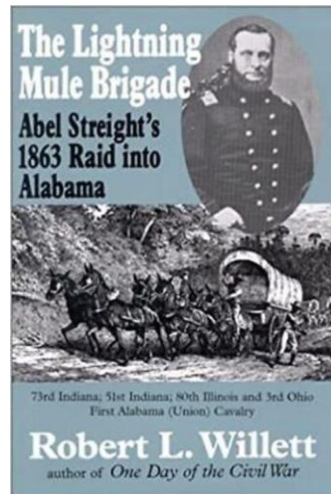
Streight's "lightening mule brigade" consisted of almost 1,800 men from the 80th Illinois Infantry, 51st Indiana Infantry, 73rd Indiana Infantry, the 3rd Ohio Infantry, and companies B and E of the 1st Middle Tennessee Cavalry, men who later served in the 1st Alabama Cavalry. The Alabamians came from areas

where the raid would pass, today's Cullman and surrounding counties. Streight's success hinged on decisions, determination, and luck of the respective commanders.

Streight's force made remarkably good time considering that jackasses make poor cavalry mounts. Few of these soldiers knew anything about mules and what they received were largely unbroken or broken-down animals. Starting at Day's Gap in today's northern Cullman County on April 30, 1863, Streight's men largely fought running skirmishes with mostly Tennessee cavalry of Confederate Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest. Across Crooked Creek, Hog Mountain, Ryan's Creek, Blountsville, Black Warrior, Gadsden, and Leesburg, the story of this wild ride included cannon, legendary personalities, much skirmishing, and later a bizarre murder and a daring prison escape. As he progressed across Alabama, Streight anticipated support from unionist Alabamians but the people, instead, came to Forrest's aid. On May 3, Streight surrendered with 1,460 men at Cedar Bluff, Alabama. Forrest had bluffed Streight into falsely believing that his 450 men outnumbered the federals. Forrest became one of the most celebrated commanders of the Civil War, in part, because he stopped Streight.

Into the History Books

Many federal raids into Alabama took place, most successfully, but usually they have been forgotten. Commemorating this particular campaign began with Rucker Agee, president of the Alabama Historical Association, and Milo Howard, director of the state archives. They marked the route with some of Alabama's first state historical markers in 1953. Agee published the route in 1958. His report gave enthusiasts a tool to find history. Books followed by the Blountsville Historical Society (1963), Fullenwider (1998), Willett (1999), and Beck (2016) with numerous accounts in local histories and newspapers. Dan Fullenwider, and later John Paul Myrick and Michael Bates, reviewed the route to help have it marked in some counties.



Promotion Leads to Preservation

Fred Wise did not know that when he moved to Alabama that he had bought the Crooked Creek battlefield. Once he found out, being a Civil War memorabilia collector, he opened a museum—the Crooked Creek Civil War Museum. The Civil War Battlefield Trust has acquired forty acres at Hog Mountain and added interpretive signs, saving part of one of many endangered Alabama sites.

Blountsville's historical society holds reenactments of the raid in a park made from period log buildings. As a sign of the intensity of this raid, in their post office, is a letter to Forrest from the citizens pleading for help!



At the Crooked Creek Civil War Museum | Find A Grave

THE DIARY OF BENJAMIN JAY CUSHING (53RD PVI, CO. G) -

Transcribed and provided to me by Thomas Kear, a direct descendent of the Cushing brothers. Any typos or grammatical errors were left in place.

1863 (Both Benjamin and his brother Leavitt were both wounded at Fredericksburg in December 1862)

Jan. 1, 1863 – Armory Square Hospital, Washington D.C. Through the goodness and mercy of God I am blessed with health, life, and strength on this New Year's morning. In Hospital all day.

Jan. 2 – Got a pass and went with Doc. Blakesler to the Paymaster's Office, visited the Washington Monument in the afternoon, and also the Museum of the Smithsonian Institute. The Dr. carried in my name for a furlough.

Jan. 3 – Forenoon busy reading and talking with the patients. In the afternoon go up to the Corner of 18th and G St. to get transportation on a furlough for an Indiana boy but could not get it. Came back by the express Office but found no box there for me.

Jan. 4 – In the Hospital add day as no passes given Sunday. Have a very quiet pleasant day. Have a few words addressed to us in the afternoon by a Minister who came with the regular Chaplain. Plenty of good books to read here had a call in the evening. Lieutenant Horton and Brother.

Jan. 5 – A beautiful warm morning. Have warm pleasant weather here most of the time and no snow yet, stay in the hospital all day, And busy myself reading, writing, mail one letter to Ulysses.

Jan. 6 – Still in the Hospital where remained all day. This confinement is very tiresome. Read a package of letters from the Regiment by Lieutenant Baker, which are very acceptable to me in this lonely place. Write to Wilson.

Jan. 7 – Have a call this morning from Lieutenant Baker. Remain in the hospital as usual, reading and writing as usual. Cold weather has come at last.

Jan. 8 – Got a pass and went up to the 149th Boys. Went to the Capitol in the afternoon and listened to a speech from the Senator from Delaware on the suspension of the Habeas Corpus by the President.

Jan. 9 – Reading and writing and visiting with old messmates who called to see me.

Jan. 10 – In Hospital all day. Time passes quietly and pleasantly in spite of absence from friends and comrades. Doctor Galen carried in my name today.

Jan. 11 – Busy reading most of the time. Have good singing in the afternoon by some ladies who came with the Chaplain.

Jan. 12 – Went before Doctor Bliss for inspection for a furlough.

Jan. 13 – Got a pass and went up to Co H's quarters, and also to the Government workshop to see B. Horton, and around, back at 5 P.M. Sent a letter to Wilson.

Jan. 14 – Received my furlough today and went and tried to get my transportation and could not get it til next morning.

Jan. 15 – Went in the morning to get my papers and succeeded, started at 3 o'clock P.M. and reached Baltimore at 5 o'clock, started at half past 8 for Harrisburg, reached there at ½ past one in the morning.

Jan. 16 – Reached Sunbury at daylight and Elmira at 12 o'clock A.M., waited for the 5 o'clock train til 5 o'clock Saturday morning.

Jan. 17 – Started at 5 o'clock A.M. for Wellsville reached there 10 o'clock, took the stage for the Forks & got a ride from there with the mail boy to Chancy. Reached home just at dark, absent from home 10 months and 11 days.

Jan. 18 – Went to meeting at Lewisville and enjoyed meeting with Christians once more although unworthy to be numbered among them.

Jan. 19 – Took M down to her school, called at Mr. Bennett's on my way home and also at Marks, got home about night.

Jan. 20 – At home visiting with Elder Scott and Mr. And Mrs. Merrill. Was into Mr. Olmstead's a short time in the evening and also at Chanceys.

Jan. 21 – Went down to Harrison Valley to the funeral of Johny Harrison. Saw Martha, took her and Sarah R and went up to the Elders and staid all night. Snowed hard all day.

Jan. 22 – Got home from the Valley at 12 A.M. found Mr. Olmstead's folks here, and visited with them all the afternoon. Write to Wilson in the evening.

Jan. 23 – Went down to Lewisville visited with Mrs. Lewis and family.

Jan. 24 – Took Em to the Teacher's Institute in Bingham, at home in the evening.

Jan. 25 – At home til noon then took Em home. How different from the noise and strife of camp is a quiet home with its cheerful scenes, and pleasant associates. “Home thy joys are passing lovely.”

Jan. 26 – Took Em to her school in the morning, visiting at the neighbors all day. Stayed at Mr. Bennett’s all night. Had a good visit.

Jan. 27 – Went over to C Barnabys and Mrs. Parkers found Putnam very sick. Went out a hunting in the afternoon, killed one partridge, went home after dark, found old acquaintance there.

Jan. 28 – Started for Coudersport with Chancy and wife and child, reached Coudersport noon found the folks all well.

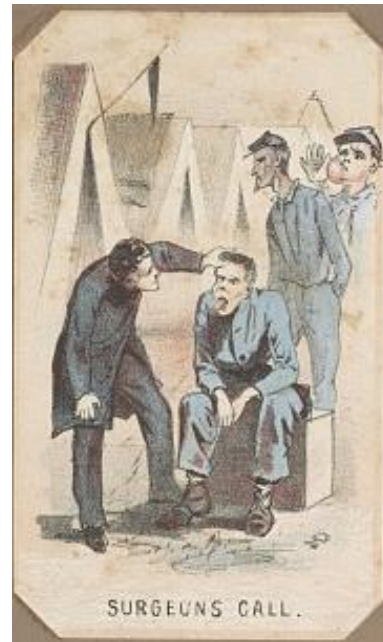
Jan. 29 – At Coudersport all day. All visiting at Henry’s in the evening, Playing on the melodian and singing.

Jan. 30 – Left C. at noon for home, stopped at David Olmstead’s and made an evening visit. Herbert took us all home.

Jan. 31 – Went over to Mr. Parkers found Putnam still very sick. Went to Lewisville in the afternoon and to Mr. Bassett in the evening.

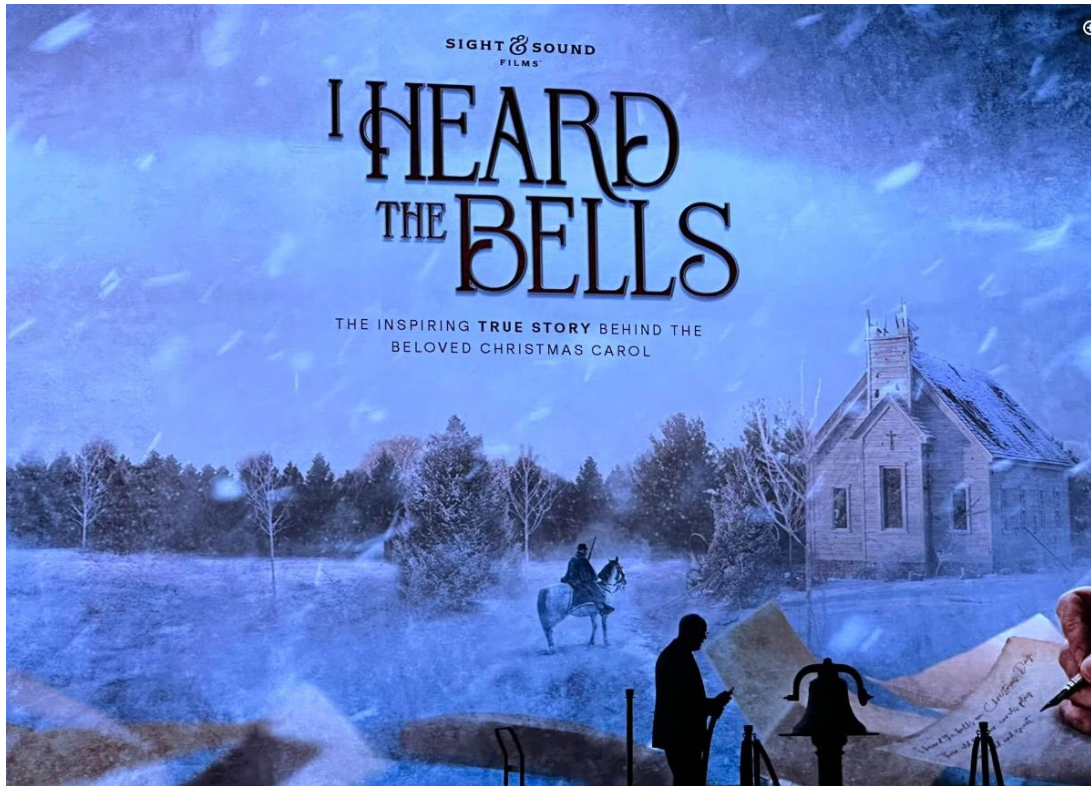
WINSLOW HOMER SOUVENIR CARD

Noted American artist Winslow Homer (1836 ~ 1910) created a series of drawings entitled “Life In Camp” originally published circa 1864 by L. Prang & Co. The series was exhibited in "The Civil War in America" at the Library of Congress in 2013. This image is entitled “Surgeons Call”.



“I HEARD THE BELLS” MOVIE PREMIERE

On 13 November, Sight & Sound Films held its world premiere at Sight & Sound Theater for their new movie “I Heard The Bells”. Numerous members of the 53rd PVI and some of our NR pards took part in this film which is based upon Longfellow’s poem of the same name. Before the film was our red carpet walk and photo op. Then a light dinner and then the movie with a ‘behind the scenes’ film preceding it. The movie turned out very well. It hits theaters nationwide December 1st and will be streamed at some point. We all made it into the closing credits.



REMEMBRANCE DAY

The annual Remembrance Day event was held on 19 November with the NR annual meeting in the morning followed by the parade. The weather was sunny and in the upper 30s. In attendance marching in the parade were Sgt. Steger, Corporals Espenshade and Brumbaugh, and Drummer Thomas. Private Ford was also present doing photos/videos. After the parade, we all met the 53rd monument for photos. Photos courtesy of Adam Baker and Eric Ford.



The 53rd PVI was part of 5th company which also included our parads from various other groups including the 8th OH and Sykes Regulars.



Some shots of us afterwards over at the 53rd PVI monument.



ANNUAL 53RD PARTY INFORMATION

Our annual party will be held on 14 January at the Dobbin House. Cost is \$30 per person. The guest speaker will be 53rd PVI alumni Bot Roda who will be speaking on his experiences with cinema and Civil War history. Cocktail hour begins at 5:15pm. Dinner at 6pm. We have the room until 9pm. Cash bar. Please RSVP with how many in your party by 3 January to Pete, Eric, or Matt.

2023 53rd PVI dues will remain \$40 (\$10 of which includes the per man NR liability insurance). If you are attending the annual meeting on 7 January, you may bring a single check to pay for your 2023 dues AND your annual dinner cost. Checks are payable to **53rd PVI**. If you are not attending the annual meeting, please mail your 2023 dues and party payment to me (again, a single check is fine) by 3 January. Hope to see everyone at the annual meeting and party. Stayed tuned for more updates and the official invite.

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

Gentlemen,

First, as a reminder, the business meeting is postponed until January 7th. Sgt. Fasnacht will again host the meeting. The meeting will begin promptly at 9:00am. We'll have our traditional pot luck lunch following the meeting. Please bring a dish to share.

The election this year will be for the civil offices of VP and Treasurer. Pete Zinkus (VP) and Matt Steger (Treasurer) have accepted nominations. The window for nominations is closed. Write-in nominees will be accepted on your ballot. Ballots will be emailed to all dues paying members. I will also include each member's number of ballots they earned based on their attendance in 2022. Ballots are to be printed and turned in at the meeting. Voting by email will only be counted for those NOT in attendance at the meeting. Those instructions will be listed on the ballot.

I have a tentative event schedule planned for 2023. If you have an event to propose, please let me know ASAP so I can add it to the list for discussion/consideration.

Please RSVP for the Holiday Party no later than January 3rd. Payments can be made at the meeting along with your 2023 dues.

Traci and I wish all of you a Merry Christmas!
Eric

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

(2.) 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 (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 cchildren		\$1.00
Accoutrements			
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
Misc Items			
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
Armaments			
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 – 160th 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 53rd PVI and/or the National Regiment (links below).

53rd PVI Contacts

President: Eric Ford (reenactor53@gmail.com)

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

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

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

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

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

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

53rd 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>

