

53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry

Company C

"The Sentinel" January 2023

Newsletter of The James Creek Guards



"Clubs Are Trumps!"

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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

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR 2023 TO ALL 53RD PVI MEMBERS AND ALUMNI AND FRIENDS!

STEPHEN FOSTER

By Norm Dasinger, Jr., November 28, 2022, blueandgrayeducation.org



Irving Berlin said, "The songs of Stephen Foster ... have been a source of inspiration to every writer of popular songs." After Foster's death in 1864, Harper's *New Monthly Magazine* proclaimed, "The air is full of his melodies. They are our national music."

Stephen Collins Foster wrote over 300 compositions. Twenty-six of those were black minstrels, including his best known "Oh Susanna," which sold over 100,000 copies after the 21-year-old published it.

James Taylor recorded the song in 1970 on his album *Sweet Baby James*, and Laura Ingalls Wilder printed a verse from it in her book, *Little House on the Prairie*.

Stephen Foster | LOC

His most popular song, however, was “Old Folks at Home,” better known as “Swanee River,” which conveys a sentiment that has almost universal appeal: yearning for lost home, youth, family and happiness.

His most groundbreaking composition was “Nelly Was a Lady,” published in 1849. It is the first known song for the mass market to name a black woman as a “lady” and to portray a married black couple as a faithful, loving husband and wife destroyed by slavery.

In 1855, abolitionist Frederick Douglass made this remark concerning Foster’s songs “Old Kentucky Home” and “Uncle Ned”:
The tunes “can make the heart sad as well as merry and can call forth a tear as well as a smile. They awaken the sympathies for the slave, in which anti-slavery principles take root and flourish.”

In a special on Stephen Foster produced by PBS for its American Experience audience, the network included this statement, “His [Foster’s] intention was to write the people’s music, using images and a musical vocabulary that would be widely understood by all groups ...[He] sought to humanize the characters in his songs, to have them care for one another and to convey a sense that all people ... regardless of their ethnic identities or social and economic class – share the same longings and needs for family and home”.

Once located in Pittsburgh's Schenley Plaza was an 800-pound memorial to Foster, who was born in Pittsburgh. Nearly 50,000 Pittsburghers lined the parade route for its dedication in 1900, and 3,000 schoolchildren sang Foster tunes before his daughter unveiled the statue, and descendants of President James Buchanan laid a wreath at its base. It depicted a barefoot black man playing a banjo at Foster’s feet.



Stephen Foster statue by sculptor Giuseppe Moretti

FAMOUS PHOTOS FROM THE GRAND REVIEW (1865)-



It's a famous photo by Mathew Brady (or, more likely, one his employees), taken in May 1865. The caption from the negative sleeve reads: "Washington, D.C. Grand Review—The stand in front of the President's house occupied by the President and Cabinet, Grant and Sherman and reviewing officers." Source: [LOC](#).

As you likely all know, the Grand Review of the Armies was a military procession and celebration in the national capital city of Washington, D.C., on May 23–24, 1865, following the Union victory. Elements of the Federal Army paraded through the streets of the capital to receive accolades from the crowds and reviewing politicians, officials, and prominent citizens, including U.S. President Andrew Johnson, a month after the assassination of U.S. President Abraham Lincoln.

On May 10, Andrew Johnson had declared that the rebellion and armed resistance was virtually at an end, and had made plans with government authorities for a formal review to honor the troops. Three of the leading Federal armies were close enough to participate in the procession. The Army of the Tennessee arrived via train. The Army of Georgia, also under the command of William T. Sherman, had just completed its Carolinas Campaign and had accepted the surrender of the largest remaining Confederate army, that of Gen. Joseph E. Johnston. It arrived from North Carolina in mid-May and camped around the capital city in various locations, across the Potomac River from the Army of the Potomac, fresh off its victories over Robert E. Lee in Virginia. It had arrived in Washington on May 12.

At 9 a.m. on a bright sunny May 23rd, a signal gun fired a single shot and Maj. Gen. George Gordon Meade, the victor of Gettysburg, led the estimated 80,000 men of Army of the Potomac down the streets of Washington from Capitol Hill down Pennsylvania Avenue past crowds that numbered into the thousands. The infantry marched with 12 men across the road, followed by the divisional and corps artillery, then an array of cavalry regiments that stretched for another seven miles. The mood was one of gaiety and celebration, and the crowds and soldiers frequently engaged in singing patriotic songs as the procession of victorious soldiers snaked its way towards the reviewing stand in front of the White House, where President Andrew Johnson, Ulysses

S. Grant, senior military leaders, the Cabinet, and leading government officials awaited. At the head of his troops, Meade dismounted when he arrived at the reviewing stand and joined the dignitaries to salute his men, who passed for over six hours.

On the following day at 10 a.m., Sherman led the 65,000 men of the Army of the Tennessee and the Army of Georgia, with an uncharacteristic semblance of military precision, past the admiring celebrities, most of whom had never seen him before. For six hours under bright sunshine, the men who had marched through Georgia and those who had defeated Gen. John Bell Hood's army in Tennessee now paraded in front of joyous throngs lining the sidewalks. People peered from windows and rooftops for their first glimpse of this western army. Unlike Meade's army, which had more military precision, Sherman's Georgia force was trailed by a vast crowd of people who had accompanied the army up from Savannah—freed blacks, laborers, adventurers, scavengers, etc. At the very end was a vast herd of cattle and other livestock that had been taken from Carolina farms.

Within a week after the celebrations, the two armies were disbanded and many of the volunteer regiments and batteries were sent home to be mustered out of the army." Source: [Wikipedia](#).

If you look at hi-res versions of the various Grand Review photos (the photos in tiff format) showing the reviewing stand and zoom in, you can see quite a few famous people sitting together. The only time they were all photographed with each other. Among them include Gen. Grant, Gen. Sherman, Sec. Edwin Stanton, Sec. Gideon Wells, Gen. Eli Parker, Pres. Johnson, etc. You can access various hi-res photos from the LOC via this link: <https://bit.ly/3hsy2hM>. Below is a zoomed-in view from a high-res version of another one of the reviewing stand photos. This one possibly taken during a break or the beginning or end since Wells is standing up, the line of guards is no longer present in front of the reviewing stand, and some of the crowd (with umbrellas indicating it was very hot and sunny) are in the street. There are 71 various photos from the LOC of the Grand Review available at the link above. Some show the reviewing stand and others show the men of the Federal Army marching through Washington. I suggest you take a look at the many hi-res version of these photos as there are lots of interesting things to see in them.



As Corporal Abial Hall Edwards (originally in Company K of the 10th Maine and later with Company K of the 29th Maine) wrote to his wife on May 26th, he described that Tuesday, May 23, as a "splendid day just cool enough to be pleasant" and wrote that the welcome the soldiers received would be long remembered by all. He talked about the large crowds, the decorations and pageantry, and the banners written with warm wishes. The majesty of the event impressed Edwards as "probably the greatest thing ever seen on this continent." He rode on horseback at the front of his brigade with General George L. Beal. In a letter to his sister Marcia, he told her about seeing Generals Grant and Sherman and President Johnson on the reviewing stand. He felt would never see their like again. Edwards talked about the camaraderie between soldiers and said a cavalry man from the 6th Pennsylvania Cavalry gave him his saber that he had with him in the Shenandoah Valley as a part of Sheridan's Army and at Richmond. Edwards wore the saber all day. Edwards told her that it was the greatest day of his life.



In this alternate view, you can see Gen. Grant looking towards the camera. Gen. Parker (on Gen. Grant's staff) is visible in this photo seated at the left (face is blurred).

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)

Feb. 1 – Attend Church in the forenoon. Preaching by Elder Easter.

Feb. 2 – Attended Putnam's funeral who died Saturday night (Jan. 31). Funeral sermon preached by Elder Scott. Went home with Cousin Amanda Olney. Spent the evening at Mr. Cadys.

Feb. 3 – Stopped at Mr. Olmstead's on the way home also at C. Johnson's reached home at noon, Charles and Martha got home in the evening.

Feb. 4 – Went over to Wm. Freeman's, took Chloe, Martha, and Cousin Sarah. Came home late in the evening after having a cold ride.

Feb. 5 – At home, a very cold stormy day. Write to Wilson in the forenoon.

Feb. 6 – Went into the woods this morning, but soon got tired of hunting as the snow was 3 feet deep. Went over to Mr. Merrill's in the evening for the first time, very windy and the snow flying.

Feb. 7 – At home all day. Chloe quite sick with the sore throat. I went after the Doctor in the evening but could not get him.

Feb. 8 – The Doctor came this morning. Went out to the School House to meeting for the first time since I came home, and enjoy it much. Go to Lewisville in the evening.

Feb. 9 – Took Em down to her school for the last time I suppose, get home at noon.

Feb. 10 – W got Mr. Leet's team and take Martha down to Elder Robertson's and bring back Harriet Merrill who had been teaching school for her.

Feb. 11 - Take the team home in the morning and go down to Lewisville and make Mrs. O.H. Lewis a visit in the afternoon, go over to Elder Scotts and stay over night.

Feb. 12 – Call on Mr. Whipple's folks on my way home, and several more of the neighbors. At home during the afternoon.

Feb. 13 – Visited the Academy during the afternoon exercises, get home in the evening. Chanceys folks make an evening visit at our house.

Feb. 14 – At home all day, Martha came from her school. All go up to Chancys in the evening and spend the time pleasantly hearing music and singing. Surely home scenes are pleasant, after being deprived of them for a long time.

Feb. 15 – Attend Church at Lewisville. Sacred scenes of peace and pleasure, Sabbath scenes and tolling bell – I must bid them all farewell. As well as dear friends, Parents, Brothers, and Sisters.

Feb. 16 – Left home for the second time to return to the seat of War. Charles and Cousin Sarah go with me to Corning. Stopped at Knoxville and reach Corning at 7 o'clock in the evening.

Feb. 17 – Went and had a no. of pictures taken. Made an evening's visit at Mr. Vandames with Cousins Lydia Benton, Sarah, and Hiram.

Feb. 18 – John Cook and wife and Cousin Savila came down to Corning and had a short visit with them, bid all good bye and leave at 3 o'clock 40 mi. for Elmira, Leave Elmira at 5 o'clock.

Feb. 19 – Reach Baltimore half past 8 o'clock A.M. Leave at 10 o'clock for Wtn. Reach it at noon. Go in the afternoon to draw my ration money.

Feb. 20 – In Hospital all day. Apply for a return to duty paper, also for and to draw my pay with. Write to Chloe and M.

Feb. 21 – Went and drew two month's pay, and also got an order from the Provo Marshal for transportation to my Regt. Visit George Davidson.

Feb. 22 – In the hospital reading in the forenoon and writing in the afternoon. Snowed 5 or 6 inches during the night.

Feb. 23 – Went to the Provo Marshal to try to get a pass to go direct to the Regt. Went into the Senate Chamber in the afternoon.

Feb. 24 – Leave the Armory Square Hospital. Went and saw L. Merrill and went to see George Davidson but he had gone home. Sent 45.00 to cousin Hiram by express, sent him the receipt by mail, wrote to Chloe.

Feb. 25 – Visiting with Lyman Merrill. Go up to the Senate Chamber in the afternoon. Expect to leave in the morning for the Regt.

Feb. 26 – Take the cars for convalescent Camp reach there at noon, and am sent to the camp of distribution, and into the quarters of the 2nd Army Corps.

Feb. 27 – Leave for Alexandria at 2 o'clock P.M. take the boat for Aquia Creek, reach there just after dark, go to the Soldier's Retreat but find it full of deserters. Sleep outside on the ground.

Feb. 28 – Take the cars for Falmouth at 9 A.M. reach there at 11 o'clock. March to Gen. Couch's Head Qts. Then to Hancocks and then to the Regt. Find the boys all well and am glad to get back once more.

CIVIL WAR LETTERS FROM THE 53RD, 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.,
February 10, 1862.

Dear Globe:—Nothing of any great importance has occurred since my last letter. The mud has dried up since to a great extent; the roads which were then almost impassible, are now so that wagons can again pass with perfect ease. The weather has for the last few days been exceedingly fine, especially yesterday and to-day. The sun shines brightly to-day, and it is as warm as in some bright spring day amongst the mountains of old Huntingdon county. You may feel assured the boys are all glad at the change, for it was, during a few weeks past, almost beyond endurance, and almost put the soldier in the notion that, if Virginia is always so detestably muddy, it is not worth fighting for. But the fine weather of the past few days, together with the glorious news from the West, has again cheered up the men with new vigor, so that you no longer see a sad brow, but all are eager to have an opportunity to distinguish themselves, as did their brethren in the West.

On last Monday a snow of about three inches fell, but the most of it melted next day. Snow, it appears, cannot lay long upon the "sacred soil." For this we cannot account, unless the soil of southern fire-eaters is too hot for it; this is all the reason we can give, and it even appears to be a little too hot for the fire-eaters themselves about here, for they have nearly all left.

The 53d was detailed last Monday to do picket duty. The picket line along this Division is about five miles from the nearest encampment, so the regiment that does picket duty moves within about a mile from the picket line, where temporary tents are put up, made of tree-tops and such other material as the soldier happens to find. A regiment is on duty four days, and is then relieved by some other regiment. In this way one regiment relieves the other until the whole Division has performed its share of picket duty.

Our regiment went out on Monday and remained until Saturday morning, when it was relieved by the 66th New York. The rebels kept dark while we were out, not one showing himself. It was good

for them that they did not make their appearance, for our boys were on the lookout for them. We were fortunate in having none of our men shot by rebel scouts, which is often the case when on picket, yet we were unfortunate on account of one of our men shooting himself accidentally. He was a private in Company E, by the name of Price, from Lewisburg, Union Co., Pa. He shot himself in the back, the ball passing through him. He lived until Wednesday morning when he died, it having occurred on Tuesday morning. He was quite young, and was much liked by both officers and men. On Thursday morning a private in Company I, almost shot off, accidentally, three of his fingers, one of which the doctor has since taken off.

Picketing is certainly by far the hardest duty a soldier is obliged to perform. For four long days and nights he must stand out, exposed to all kinds of weather. These nights are cold here, not so much perhaps, as they are among the mountains of Pennsylvania, yet they are certainly cold for the weary sentinel, who has not had sufficient sleep for perhaps several nights before. He is relieved every two hours, but no warm stove or bed does he find, but a bed upon the mother earth with one blanket to cover him. Could he sleep upon the ground when perhaps, over and anon, he is awakened out of his slumber by the standing sentinel, as some noise in the woods gives warning of an approaching foe or when his time comes to stand trick. This is the work of the picket, and hard it certainly is, yet the men are always up and doing, when the time comes to go on picket.

More anon

PILUM

[*Huntingdon Globe*, February 18, 1862]

2023 ANNUAL MEETING INFO

Next Saturday (7 January 2023) is our annual meeting at 1st Sgt. Fasnacht's home in Klinefeltersville. If you need directions, please ask. The meeting will start promptly at 9AM so please arrive early. We will discuss new and old unit business, annual party, treasurer's report, 2023 event schedule, civil officer elections, etc. We will have lunch after the meeting. Please bring something to share for lunch and please email 1st Sgt. Fasnacht ASAP to let him know what you plan on bringing.

For those that have not yet already paid, annual dues, party money, and the Gettysburg 160th event fee are due at the annual meeting and may be paid in full with a single check payable to "53rd PVI".

2023 annual dues are \$40/man (which includes our \$10/man NR liability insurance). Annual party is \$30/person. Gettysburg 160 event fee was \$15/person for those that pre-registered with me (I registered us as a group).

As noted in various prior emails from Eric and myself, if you plan on attending the Gettysburg 160 event and were not part of the unit registration, you are on your own to register yourself via the event website. The event fee is going up to \$25 or \$30 as of 1 January 2023.

Final reminder- all annual party RSVPs must be in by Tuesday Jan. 3rd. As noted in the various prior emails, you may email Eric, Pete, or myself with your RSVP. That RSVP must include how many will be in your party.

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 "Upset His Coffee".



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 a few years ago to look over 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 31 Dec. 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 children		\$1.00
Accountments			
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 - undried		\$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 Duffie Bag		\$3.00
1	drawers for use as patches		\$1.00
Armaments			
1	1861 Springfield Rifle - Armi Sport		\$900.00

2023 PRELIMINARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Note – we will finalize our official 2023 calendar of events at our annual meeting on January 7th. The below-listed events are based upon the NR's schedule as agreed upon at the NR annual meeting in November as well as some other potential dates/events that we have discussed for 2023.



- 14 January - Holiday Party – Gettysburg
- 5 February - Winter Drill - Landis Valley (ELF and Sykes Regulars invited)
- 18-19 February - NR School of Instruction (Gettysburg)
- 29 May - Memorial Day Parade (Hummelstown) **MAX EFFORT**
- 21~25 June – Gettysburg 160
- 15~16 July - Landis Valley Civil War Days **MAX EFFORT**
- 14~15 Oct – USAHEC Army Heritage Days (Carlisle) **MAX EFFORT – PAID event**
- 18 November - Remembrance Day (Gettysburg) - NR Annual Meeting and Parade

For updated event info and other news, please check out the Facebook pages of the 53rd PVI and/or the National Regiment (links below) and keep an eye out in your email.

53rd PVI Contacts

President: Eric Ford (reenactor53@gmail.com)

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

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

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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>

