

53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry

Company C

"The Sentinel" October 2024

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

JAMES WILSON BARNETT DIARY -

THE 1862 DIARY OF JAMES WILSON BARNETT, 53RD PENNSYLVANIA INFANTRY

By Griff (Spared & Shared)

For more info, see <https://www.facebook.com/Griff.CWLetters>

(continued from the Sept. edition of "The Sentinel")

Saturday, November 1, 1862—Marching orders this morning. Started about ten. Marched eight miles. Bivouacked in a wheat field. A very heavy picket sent out.

Sabbath, November 2, 1862—Our Division took the lead this morning. Reached Snicker's Gap by noon. Marched up the mountain at a rapid rate and found the enemy hastening up the other side but we got there first & got the position. Our Brigade went up to the summit on the left of the pass and from our picket line had a fine view of the enemy. Sykes' Division relieved us at dark and we marched down to the Valley and and camped.

Monday, November 3, 1862—Last night several of us went over to Humphrey's Division to see some of our friends but the lost of them were on picket. This morning Singleton and Tom Davis came over. Both look well. Marched at nine a.m. Reached the splendid farm of a Col. Carter of the Rebel Army (but killed at Malvern Hill) near Ashby's Gap—a distance of eight miles.

Tuesday, November 4, 1862—Had marching orders this morning.

Wednesday, November 5, 1862—This afternoon we received orders to be ready to march. Started at three. Made a very rapid march of eight miles. Reached an old mill by dark and were sent out on picket (53rd).

Thursday, November 6, 1862—Took up the line of march at an early hour this morning. Crossed the railroad (Manassas Gap Road) at Piedmont and wound round the hills to Rectorville. We halted at two p.m. and pitched our tents. The clouds became very black and the wind rising threatened to bring us some snow. Harry Fulton came over from headquarters to see us.

Friday, November 7, 1862—Quite stormy and snowy today. This is a forsaken looking country—bleak and barren. Today I was ordered to report to the Quartermaster as clerk. It may prove to be worth something and may not.

Saturday, November 8, 1862—Last night we got marching orders. The troops started at the appointed time, 7 a.m., but the train did not get stretched out until four p.m. We had a very tedious march of 11 miles over a bad road and did not get parked till ten at night. Did not get with the regiment.

Sabbath, November 9, 1862—Troops started at seven but the train did not stretch out till eleven. Marched about 8 miles over a hilly country to Warrenton where we camped. reached the regiment about three p.m. Put up our tent. Got supper and went to bed to sleep.

Monday, November 10, 1862—he great event of today was the leave taking of Gen. McClellan. He took his final departure. The cause we know not, but it has caused great sorrow throughout the army. When he rode along the line of troops, McClellan looked sad and yet magnificent.



General George B. McClellan Bidding Farewell to Army of Potomac, November 10, 1862, Watercolor by Alfred R. Waud

Tuesday, November 11, 1862—Gen. McClellan left in a special train for Trenton, New Jersey. All seem to regret his leaving very much yet it may all be for the better.

[No entries November 12-14, 1862]

Saturday, November 15, 1862—Orders came last night to march at seven this morning. Rations were drawn and issued last night. At the appointed hour this morning the column moved. Our trains did not move till ten. Our course lay along the Warrenton Railroad for some five or six miles, when we kept to the right, striking the Va. Central Railroad two miles below Warrenton Junction where we camped for the night. Went a mile to get some rails to make a fire. Got some coffee and retired.

Sabbath, November 16, 1862—Troops started at seven. Trains got started about ten. Marched 14 miles through a barren pine region, thinly populated and abounding in nothing. Camped on a large plantation. Water tolerably convenient. I do not see how the country we came through can support any population whatever. Barrenness reigns supreme.

Monday, November 17, 1862—Column moved at daylight. The 53rd [Pennsylvania] having the advance. Trains started out at the usual time. After having travelled 10 miles, heard quite heavy cannonading in front which proved to be our advance batteries (Capt. Pettit) shelling the Rebels across the river at Falmouth. We went into park two miles from the village and put up for the night, finding it impossible to get to the regiment. Drew the balance of clothing due on estimate.

Tuesday, November 18, 1862—This morning the Quartermaster and Whitney went out to find the regiment while I packed up the clothing and loaded it. They came back in an hour or so and took a team with rations to the regiment. Our train moved on two miles and parked. In the afternoon orders came to draw three days rations at the Brigade Commissary. Two days were taken to the regiment and the remainder left in park. All of the regimental wagons went in except one which was loaded with rations.

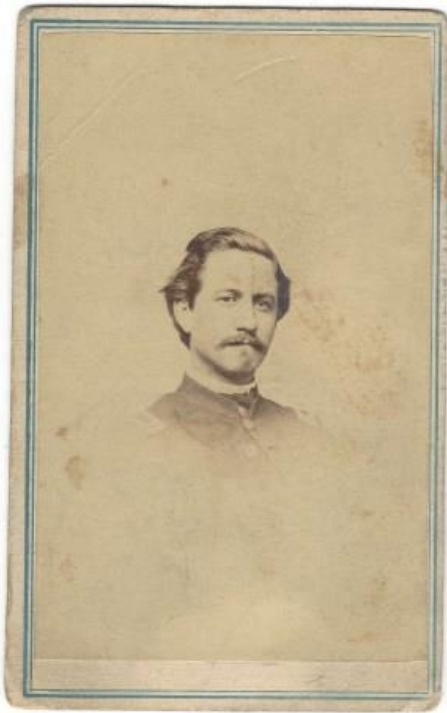
Wednesday, November 19, 1862—This morning at daylight, I started to the regiment with the team in advance of the train. Found them lying in front of Fredericksburg and having a good view of it. One day's beef was drawn and [] together with one day's hard bread. The clothing on hand was also []. None of our troops have yet crossed the river and the Rebels seem to be quite busy in removing supplies &c. from the town. Why they did not cross when the column first came up is a query.

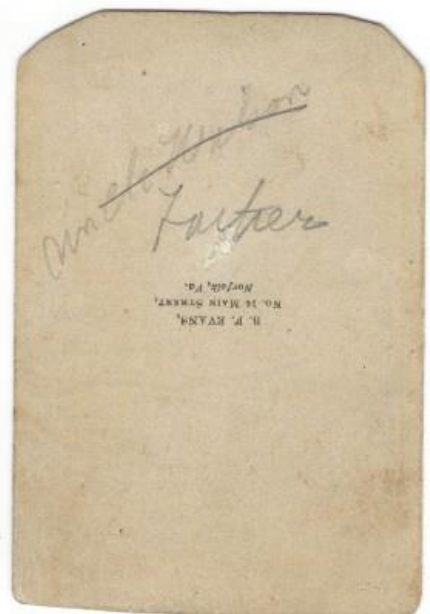
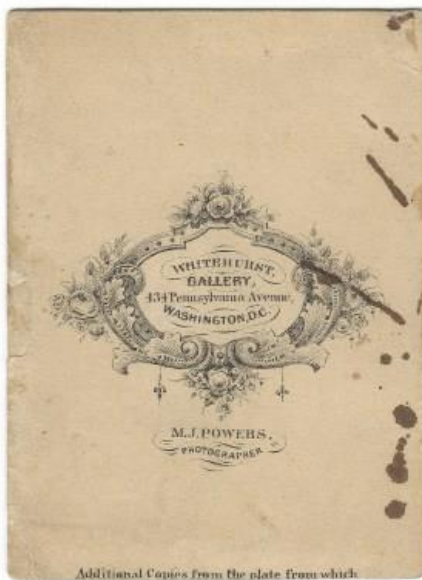
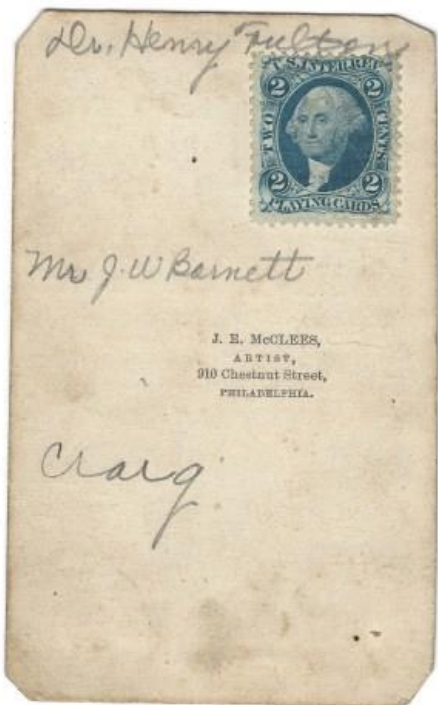
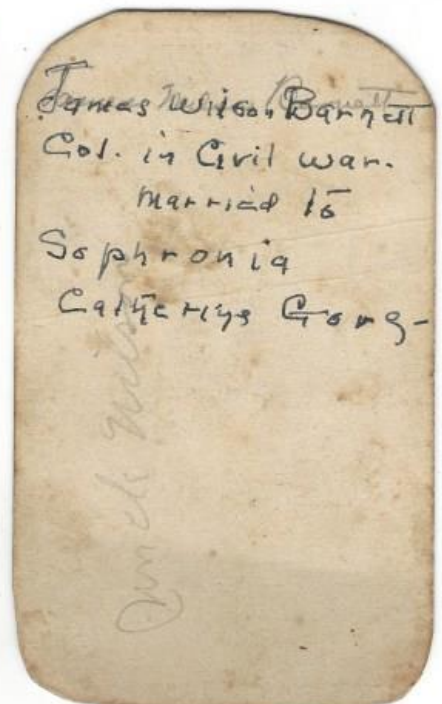
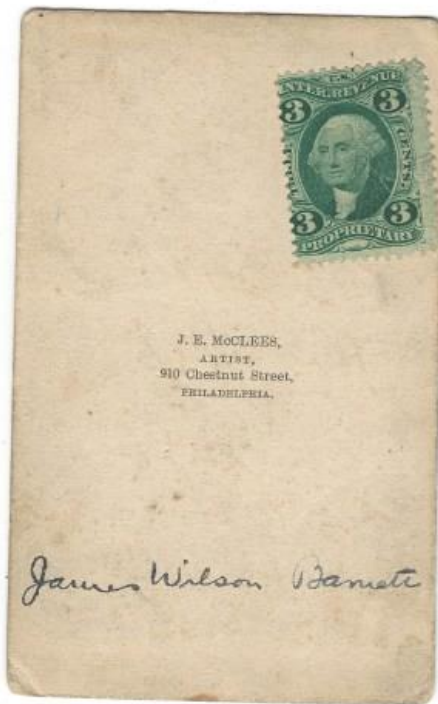
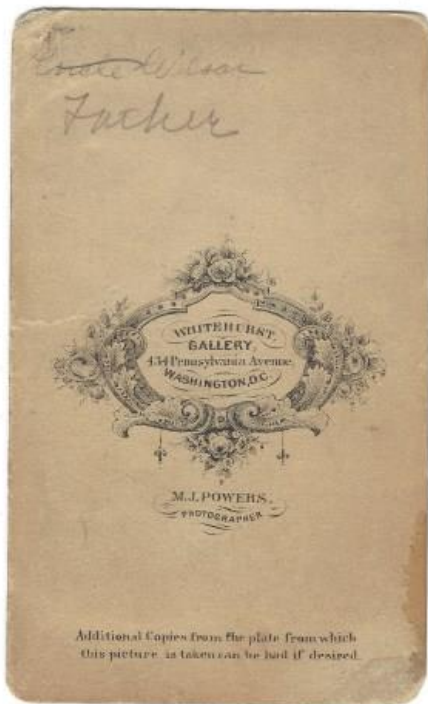
Thursday, November 20, 1862—This has been a dreary, wet day, and very unpleasant. Forage is very scarce and the poor mules suffer very much for want of it. All of our supplies must come from Aquia Creek and the roads are so thronged that it is difficult to get along with a train of wagons. Fredericksburg lies directly opposite us and we have a very good view of it. Our pickets are within hailing distance of the enemy. They sometimes talk together.

Friday, November 21, 1862—Drew fresh beef this morning. Before we were done issuing, orders came to pack up and move to town. The quartermaster started away this morning with all of our teams but one to Aquia Creek for supplies and we have but that one team to do all the moving with. I remained at the camp till dark, went down and fixed up our tent, while Whitney went back for another load. We have things quite nice now. The regiment is comfortably quartered in the town.

Saturday, November 22, 1862—Everything went on swimmingly today till evening. We were issuing rations when orders came to pack up and move all the baggage out of town immediately. With a good deal of hurrying, we succeeded in getting everything packed and loaded by nine, sending the teams out to park. W & I stayed in town with our Co. K. I was expected that the Rebels would shell the place and we thought to stay and see the fun. Col. Brooke took up his quarters in a house preferring that to a tent.

[end of diary]





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 month's image is entitled "A Deserter".



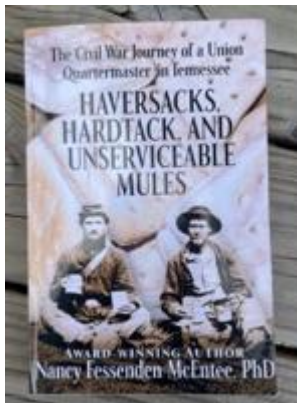
QUARTERMASTER UPDATE

Recently, the unit bought a good portion of former member's, Marlin Troutman, CW equipment estate including clothing (frock, great coat, trousers, vests, sack coat, shirts, etc.), leathers, blankets, 1863 Springfield, etc. I updated the quartermaster list and gave first choice to our new members, then the rest of the 53rd PVI roster, and lastly shared it with our NR parads. If you are looking for any gear or know of a newbie into the hobby, please visit the updated quartermaster list on the website's Equipment Page. The link is available about halfway down the page: <http://www.53rdpvi.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/53rd-Quartermaster-List-updated-Sept.-18-2024.pdf>.

BOOK REVIEW: HAVERSACKS, HARDTACK, AND UNSERVICEABLE MULES THE CIVIL WAR JOURNEY OF A UNION QUARTERMASTER IN TENNESSEE

by Nancy Fessenden McEntee, PhD

Reviewed by Mike Espenshade



Paperback; 2017; McEntee; 300 story pp.; 28 pictures, 21 pp notes, 19 pp Index/bibliography. \$21.00 from Stone's River NPS Bookstore.

This is the well-researched story of Webster Colburn, describing his experiences as he slowly rose from being a private in the 3-month 1st Wisconsin Infantry, then enlisting in the 3-year 3rd Wisconsin Artillery in September 1861. There, he rose eventually to 2nd Lt. in the battery while also assuming responsibilities as a quartermaster in early September 1862. He struggled through both roles until November 1863 when his sole duty was quartermaster. Slow promotion to captain by 1865 was caused by an instance or two of him facing minor charges by resentful peers. After a stressful 2 years as quartermaster with ever-expanding responsibilities, he finally left the army by June 1866 to marry a Chattanooga girl. They had 11 children (3 dying in childhood) before he died in 1918.

This work will impress you with the myriad responsibilities of the Quartermaster role, ranging from providing all elements of supplies, food, transportation (wagons, ships, trains), camp gear, tools, clothing, all leather gear, horses and mules, ammunition and all the paperwork to procure and account for all the above. Several documents example the details involved: including ordering and accounting for buckles, braids, awls, socks, wagon wheel grease, hospital buildings, tent stakes, shovels, brushes, hats, horse shoe nails, ambulances, wagon tongues, hay,

All quartermaster officers were required to be bonded to protect the government from graft and theft. Colburn needed his father to fund the \$10,000 bond (approximately \$210,000 in today's money) before being accepted in the Department.

The book well details many of the incessant reports, clarifications, recounts, and the never-ending disputes about inventory - or why a horse got sick - that was required of Colburn and his support staff - mostly civilian - whom he was responsible to hire. His involvement in the accounting for the health and procurement of horse/mules dominates his story. He needed to be resourceful during a time of scanty supply of these critical beasts of burden to serve all the wagons, guns, and mounted officers.

The author does a good job fitting all Colburn's personal story and the minutia of his job into the western campaign(s) perspective happening at the time. Note: she often uses simplistic sentence structure to provide for, it seems, pre-high school reader comprehension.

I recommend this book for those interested in gaining a better perspective into the logistical happenings needed to support the Union Army.

GETTYSBURG NPS LIVING HISTORY EVENT SUMMARY

The weekend of 14~15 Sept., the 53rd PVI held its living history weekend at the PA Monument. It had been 5 years since we were able to do a living history event on the park property, partially due to covid and partially due to changes with Gettysburg NPS's living history program. Participating from the 53rd PVI were: Sgt. Steger, Corp. Espenshade, and Privates Orris and Thomas. We were supported by our fellow ELF and NR pards from the 1st MD, 7th PA Reserves, 8th OH, and 72nd PVI. We were also visited by Tony Albright and Ira Seidel.

As part of the schedule, I included mail call, skirmish drill, camp inspection, and company pay on top of our basic firing demos. We had a good turnout of spectators over the weekend.







ELECTIONS

Everyone,

As we roll into October, it's time to make nominations for the upcoming civil officers' election. This year, the offices of Vice President and Treasurer/Secretary will be on the ballot. Please discuss with your nominee(s) whether he is able/willing to accept the position before submitting his name. The positions will each be two-year terms. If you have any questions regarding the duties of VP or Treasurer/Secretary, please contact me. Submit your nominations to me no later than October 31st.

Cedar Creek is the next event on our calendar. Currently, a handful of us are making the trip. For anyone who is able to go, walk-ons are being accepted. Just let me know if you decide to attend so I can keep Ted and Jimmy Thomas in the loop. The 53rd will be attached to ELF for this event so we'll be under strong leadership and will no doubt have a great event.

SAVE THE DATE! This year's annual banquet is scheduled for January 18 at The Dobbin House. Full details will be made available at the unit meeting on December 7. This banquet will kick off the 2025 season and the 53rd's 45th anniversary year. Spread the word to those retired members in your contacts.

Eric

UPCOMING EVENTS

16 November – National Regiment Annual Meeting and Remembrance Day Parade – Private meeting of the NR Board of Directors and member units' representatives in Gettysburg followed by dress parade and the annual Remembrance Day Parade through Gettysburg ending near The Angle and the Bryan Farm. Parade form-up for Dress Parade behind Lincoln Elementary is at 12pm. Parade commences at 1pm. Please let Eric know if you plan on marching in the parade.

7 December – 53rd PVI Annual Meeting – Starting at 9AM sharp at Mark Fasnacht's home in Kleinfeltersville, we will discuss the 2024 season, unit business, elections, the treasurer's report, the 2025 schedule, and other unit business. Please arrive by 8:45AM at the latest and bring something to share with your parads for lunch afterwards. Please let Mark know if you are attending and what you plan on bringing for lunch.

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.) I have a C&D Jarnagin size 46 federal enlisted frock coat for sale. Still in great condition. Email me with any questions/inquiries: n3ntj@outlook.com

(2.) Kerry Williard is handling the sale of Dave Swigert items for Dave's wife. Marc and I assembled an inventory list with approximate values. Some items remain. The list is current as of 21 July 2023. 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
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

2024 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 13 January - Holiday Party - Dobbin House
- 10 February - Winter Drill - Landis Valley (note the new date!!)
- 2~3 March – NR School Of Instruction - Gettysburg
- 6~7 April - NR Camp of Instruction - Gruber Wagon Works (Federal Alliance)*
- 4~5 May - 160th Wilderness: Spotsylvania Court House, VA*
- 4 May - POSA Living History - Robeson, PA
- 18 May - Lancaster Cemetery Flag-in event
- 27 May - Hummelstown Memorial Day Parade **53rd MAX EFFORT**
- 20~21 July - Landis Valley Civil War Days **53rd MAX EFFORT**
- 14~15 Sept. - Gettysburg Living History - PA Monument **53rd MAX EFFORT**
- 19~20 Oct. - 160th Cedar Creek - Middletown, VA*
- 16 Nov. - Remembrance Day – Gettysburg, PA
- 7 Dec. – 53rd PVI Annual Meeting



*NR max effort events

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 check your email on a regular basis

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>

2024 Field Officers - Sergeants: Matthew Steger (1st) & Marc Benedict.

Corporals: Mike Espenshade (1st) & 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>

