

# 53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry

## Company C

"The Sentinel" October 2025

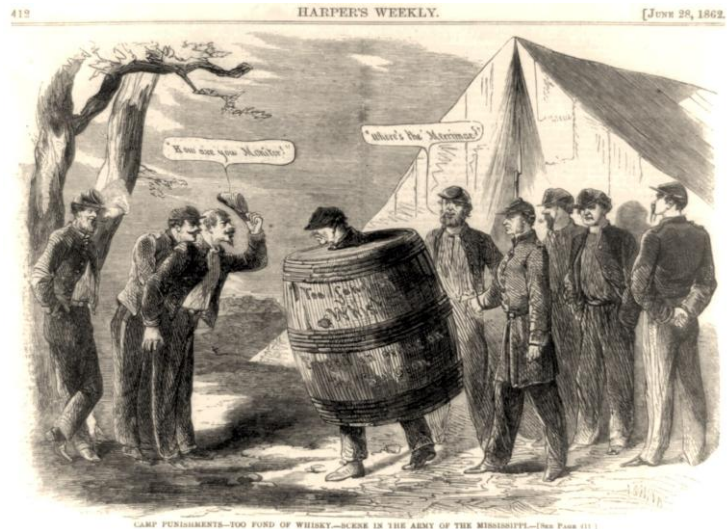
Newsletter of The James Creek Guards



"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*

## THE DENT-GRANT HOME

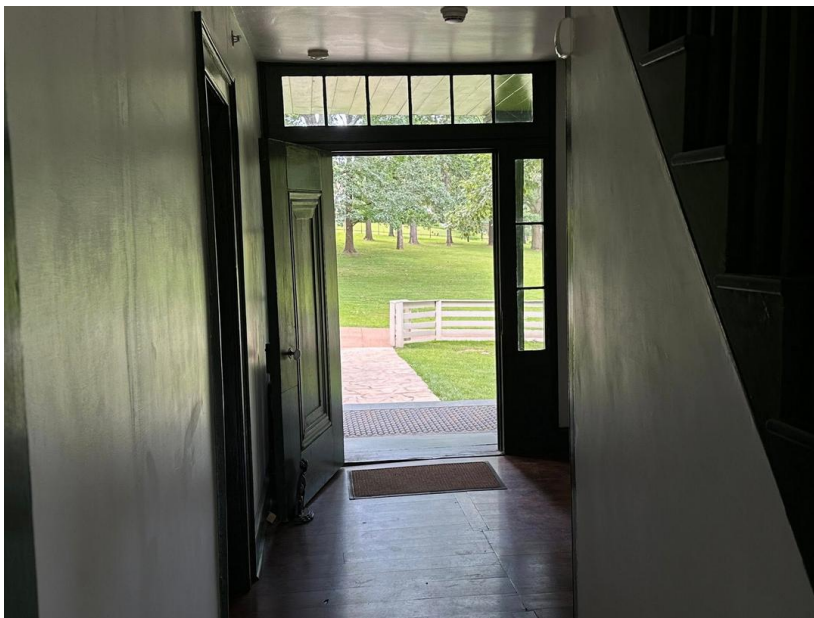


Part of our recent Route 66 included the Dent-Grant home (called "White Haven") near St. Louis. This was the home owned by Frederick Grant, father of Pres. U.S. Grant's wife, Julia. It was her childhood home. After they met and married, the Grants lived in the home with her parents for 5 years in the 1850s. Once the in-laws passed, the home became the Grant's home including an 850 acre farm, The historic home site is now part of NPS. Grant's Farm is an adjacent property not owned nor part of NPS. A nice visitors center and museum are also on the home site which house numerous artifacts and photos from before and after Grant's presidency. The Grants did not live at the home after his

presidency. The home was built between 1812 and 1815. The Dent family owned slaves and many a times in the home, Frederick Dent and U.S. Grant argued over slavery. There are various outbuildings on the property, as well, including a double summer kitchen, ice house, and chicken house. The home itself is nearly vacant as nearly all of the furniture was placed in storage during Grant's presidency although some furniture belonging to the Grants resides at Grant's Galena, IL home. The home was privately owned by people outside of the Grant family until NPS took it over in 1986. Much of the home is original although a side addition was built in the 1830s.





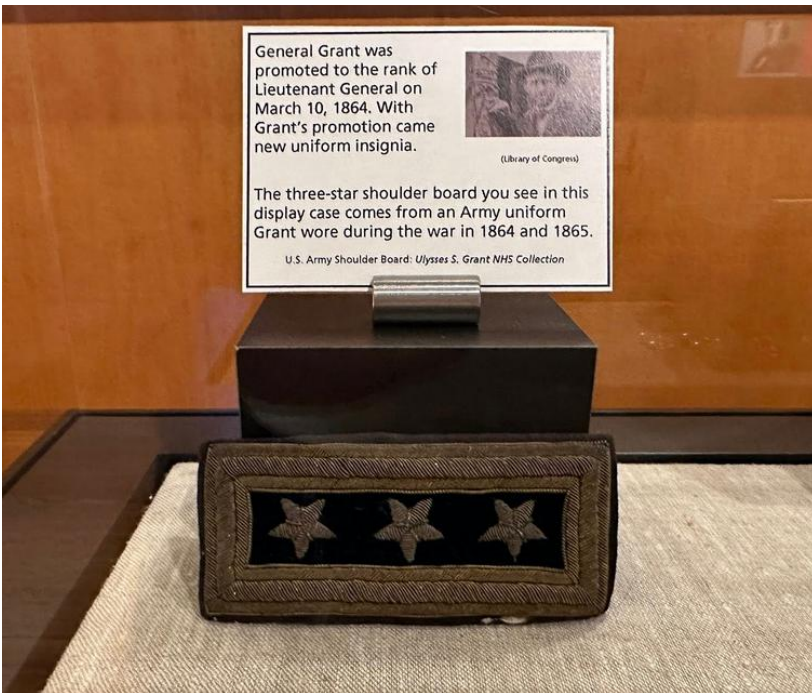




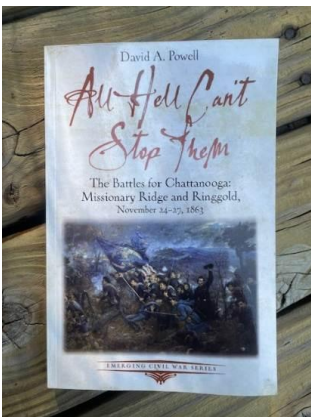
Right, the slave quarters.

Below, the ice house and poultry house.





**BOOK REVIEW: ALL HELL CAN'T STOP THEM – THE BATTLES FOR CHATTANOOGA: MISSIONARY RIDGE AND RINGOLD – NOVEMBER 24-27, 1863**  
**EMERGING CIVIL WAR SERIES**



Author – David A. Powell  
 Reviewed by Mike Espenshade

Paperback; 2018, 2023 Savas Beattie LLC; 160 pp text; 121 pictures, 8 maps, Driving Tour, 4 interesting Appendices, Order of Battle. Notes provided online. \$16.95 from Amazon. Grant started deploying his now-enlarged army facing east from Chattanooga against Bragg's defenses facing him from Missionary Ridge and adjacent Tunnel Hill to the north. In what began as a diversionary feint, Hooker's men took Lookout Mountain on November 24, 1863 forcing Bragg to consolidate



his defensive position. That same morning Sherman's corps built a pontoon bridge and crossed the Tennessee river above Chattanooga to stage his assault on Tunnel Hill from the north the next day.

Although surprising the Confederates, Sherman took most of the day (to Grant's dismay) to array his troops before assaulting and taking Billy Goat Hill, mistakenly thinking it was Tunnel Hill. Giving the Rebels time to reinforce Tunnel Hill, Sherman's men failed in a series of poorly coordinated and bloody assaults all day long on the 25<sup>th</sup> to take Tunnel Hill from CSA Gen Patrick Cleburne's men. By late afternoon, four divisions of Union infantry made their way eastward from the Orchard Knob area to assault the west face of Missionary Ridge. Meanwhile, Hooker's men continued north from Lookout Mountain and pushed the Rebels northward past Rossville and well onto Missionary Ridge from the south. Bragg weakened his center to reinforce the southern and northern points of His Missionary Ridge Line just as Union Maj. Gen. George Thomas' infantry assaulted from the west against Bragg's center around 4:30 pm. Thomas pushed across the open fields to occupy the poorly defended trenches, along the foot of the ridge.

"The impulse of victory" moved the men's hearts and without orders they "with one courage" scrambled up the steep slope with a loud cheer. Over 30 "V's" of blue infantry regiments followed their flags up the slope and took over the ridge top's incomplete breastworks, capturing thousands of Rebel prisoners and nearly 50 cannon. Pursuit of the completely routed Rebels down the eastern slope was called off due to darkness and disorganized (while jubilant!) Union formations. The Rebels on Tunnel Hill still held their positions and threatened a counterattack. Cleburne's men escaped eastward during the night towards Ringold Gap (12 miles to the southeast) to form a rearguard defense and buy enough time for Bragg's wrecked army to escape towards their railway center at Dalton Ga. On November 27, Hooker's men bravely assaulted Cleburne's well-planned Rebel defensive lines on wooded ridges and the Ringold Gap, but retreated after being unable to budge the Confederates. Cleburne had again saved Bragg.

The author does a very admirable job describing and condensing these battle actions - which are of course better detailed in heavier volumes done by other authors - but also including important, but less known actions. These include Union Cavalry Col. Eli Long's 1,500 man raid behind the lines November 24-27 that destroyed one of the Confederacy's last copper rolling mills at Cleveland, Tn. This caused serious stress on the Confederacy in their production of percussion caps and bronze field guns, limiting that production to a few mills located in North Carolina for the rest of the war.

The author also adds the nicely done Driving Tour into this handy volume in the *Emerging Civil War Series*. The poorly preserved landscape all along Missionary Ridge, now nearly totally occupied by modern housing, is witnessed in this section of the book.

## **ORIGINAL LETTER - 1862: LIONEL STANLEY TO THOMAS E. BECK**

From [sharedandspared.com](http://sharedandspared.com) Reprinted with permission

his letter was written by Corp. Lionel Stanley (1841-1904) of **Co. H, 53rd Pennsylvania Volunteers**. Lionel enlisted in October 1861 and wrote this letter from Harrison's Landing on the James River following the unsuccessful Peninsula Campaign. He was wounded in his side by a piece of shell and left on the battlefield at [Bristoe Station](#) on 14 October 1863 whereupon he was taken prisoner and held at Andersonville Prison until 19 November 1864 when he was exchanged. [His prison record at Andersonville states the was "held at Andersonville and survived"—his capture site being "Auburn, Va."]



Lionel was the son of English emigrants, Thomas Stanley (1800-1868) and Anne Stowe (1803-1880). After the war, Lionel married Ellen Elizabeth Beck (1844-1922)—the younger sister of Thomas E. Beck (1841-1900) who was the recipient of this letter. Thomas and Ellen Beck were the children of Jacob Beck (1790-1871) and Susanna Haas (1794-1848) of Northampton County.

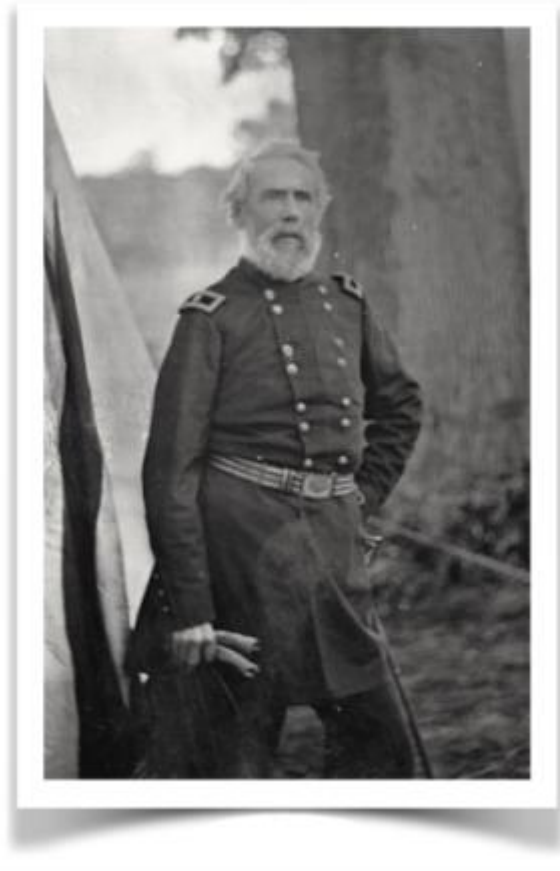
### TRANSCRIPTION

Harrison's Landing, Virginia  
Sunday, July 27th 1862

Friend Thomas,  
I have just finished dinner and come out in the woods to find shade but leaving my pen, I will scribble a few lines with the pretty pencil I found on the battlefield of Fair Oaks. Your kind letter came to camp

this morning while I was with the regiment on inspection and I take the earliest opportunity to answer it. I also received one from brother George at the same time. I was much gratified to learn that the crops were so good. One of my comrades who was wounded at Fair Oaks has just returned from home (Columbia county). He looks well and represents times as being dull up there. News with us is scarce, nor do we know when we will leave here. But I suppose we will not advance till we receive reinforcements. I hear that troops are to be placed in the field for 9 months and one year which in my opinion is a foolish idea as that, I think, will not be sufficient time to settle the dispute. I have no doubts about me respecting the number to be raised as thousands would rather enlist for a short period in order to see whether they would like the business. I hear accounts of great war meetings in all parts of the North and hope that our freemen will prove themselves worthy of such a country as the United States.

You gave a good account of your rambles on the 4th [of July] and I was pleased to hear that you enjoyed yourself so well. My comrades & myself have some good times swimming and diving in the [James] river which is wider than the West Branch considerably. There are a good many gunboats in the river here such as the [Galena](#), [Monitor](#), [Stepping Stones](#), Matanzas [[Maratanza](#)] &c. The rebels are making gunboats at Richmond and they think they can drive us from here. Let them try! Burnside is at Newport News.



*Gen. Edwin Vose ("Bull") Sumner*

Last Wednesday [23 July 1862] our (Sumner's) Corp was reviewed by General Sumner & McClellan. Next day there was a review of Heintzelman's Corps &c.

We were paid a little more than a week ago and expect 2 more months pay this week as the paymaster is here. Everything is dear here so that I generally prefer sending most of my money home to paying 4 or 5 [times the] price for things here.

The sun is very warm so that I do not feel much like writing. You will therefore look over mistakes of all kinds. Write soon as this comes to hand and please inform me how many are enlisting from the valley &c. After giving my love and respects to all inquiring friends, be assured this is from your old comrade &c.

— Lionel Stanley to T. E. Beck, P.P.

P. S. William and myself are well and some tell me I look stouter than I ever did. I asked John High why he did not answer you. He speaks of doing so. — L. S.

## **ANTIETAM LIVING HISTORY SUMMARY**

The 53<sup>rd</sup> PVI joined our ELF pards on Sept. 13<sup>th</sup> for a one-day living history event at Antietam NMP. Besides the 1<sup>st</sup> MD, 3<sup>rd</sup> MD, and 7<sup>th</sup> PA Reserves, we were also joined by members of the 9<sup>th</sup> PA Reserves and 72<sup>nd</sup> PVI. We were camped across the street from the Dunker Church and immediately near the Maryland Monument. We did 3 firing demos near the NY Monument as well as some drill. Our camp was located in a nice area which provided afternoon sun. The 4<sup>th</sup> US Artillery also did firing demos. Participating in the event from the 53<sup>rd</sup>: Sgt. Steger, Corp. Espenshade, and Privates Thomas, Orris, and Hinceman. Capt. Jimmy Thomas of the 3<sup>rd</sup> MD was our Captain. Photos are courtesy of Ira Seidel and your editor.







## **FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK**

Gentlemen,

I'm in the process of organizing dates/events for next year. If anyone has a recommendation, please let me know sometime in the next few weeks.

This year's annual meeting will be December 6th. Mark Fasnacht is again graciously hosting. For the newer guys, the address and more details will be included in the November and December newsletters. Please make every effort to attend the meeting.

SAVE THE DATE. Our annual banquet is January 17th at The Dobbin House. Details will be discussed at the meeting. If you have contact info for any former/retired members, please pass this along to them or send me their info so Jacob and I can keep them in the loop.

By now I'm sure that all of you know that I've decided to step down as President at the end of my term in December. If you're just now learning this, I sent out an email detailing my decision a few weeks ago. I just want to say again that it's been my honor to serve the 53rd in this role as well as your VP for many years. I've spoken to one of our members about the duties and responsibilities. I believe he will accept the formal nomination but I'm allowing him some time to make his final decision before I announce his name.

I'm also happy to announce that Matt has accepted my nomination for the National Regiment's Board of Directors. That vote will be held at the NR meeting on Remembrance Day. If elected, he'll step into Paul Parvis' seat as Paul's final term comes to an end. Along with Jimmy Thomas and Chris Wesp, Matt's addition to the Board will continue to drive the NR in a positive direction. Good luck Matt!

Respectfully,  
Eric

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**18-19 October** – 161<sup>st</sup> Cedar Creek Re-enactment (Middletown, VA). Based upon discussions at the Antietam LH, it seems like ELF (of which the 53<sup>rd</sup> is a member) and the NR, overall, should have a nice contingent attending. Event website to register: <https://ccbf.us/reenactor-participant-information/>. When registering, choose “NR” as your affiliated group. I've never been to Cedar Creek but am attending this year.

**15 November** - The NR annual meeting and the Remembrance Day Parade will take place in Gettysburg. Please let Eric know ASAP if you plan on marching with your fellow 53<sup>rd</sup> PVI and NR

pards. After the parade, we will plan a visit to the 53<sup>rd</sup> PVI monument to honor the original men of the 53<sup>rd</sup>.

**6 December** – 53<sup>rd</sup> PVI Annual Meeting at Mark Fasnacht’s home in Kleinfeltersville. All members are urged to attend. Meeting will begin promptly at 9AM so please arrive no later than 8:45AM. We will discuss the 2025 season, the 2026 schedule, NCO and civil officer elections, unit business, and more. Please also bring an item to share for lunch after the meeting and please let Eric and Mark know if you are attending. Also, let Mark know what food item you plan to bring so we don’t have multiple people bringing the same item.

## **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. *Hard Tack and Coffee or The Unwritten Story of Army Life*; by John D. Billings; originally published 1887, facsimile reprint of 1993; hard cover; excellent condition; 408 pgs.; 211 illustrations. A must-read for any new member. Will bring to Landis Valley event. Email to claim: [oldsolger@juno.com](mailto:oldsolger@juno.com) -- \$5.00

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; see the updated list below which was current as of April 2025. Contact Kerry directly with any and all inquiries: [shamokin71@aol.com](mailto:shamokin71@aol.com)

Quantity	Item Description	Detailed Description	Price
<b>Uniform Clothing</b>			
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	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
1 pairs	Grey Wool Socks -Modern		\$2.00/pr
2	Hats - Union & Confederate for children		\$1.00
<b>Accoutrements</b>			
1	Scabbord -Late war 7 Rivet		\$15.00
1	Gum Blanket	some cracking with oversized grommets	\$20.00
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
2	Soap Bar		\$1.00/ea
1	box rifle cleaning kit	pads, steel wool, rags, etc	\$5.00
1 Pair	shoe tree		\$3.00
1	Green Army Duffle Bag		\$3.00
1	drawers for use as patches		\$1.00

## 2025 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

18 Jan. – Holiday Party – Dobbin House, Gettysburg  
1 Feb. – Winter Drill – Landis Valley **[53rd MAX EFFORT]**  
15 Feb. – Cartridge Rolling Party **[53rd MAX EFFORT]**  
22-23 Feb. – NR School of Instruction – Gettysburg  
14-16 March – 160th Bentonville (NC)  
4-6 April – 160th Sailor’s Creek (VA) \*  
26-27 April – Ft. McHenry Drill  
3 May – POSA Living History – Robeson, PA  
17 May – Lancaster Cemetery Flag-in Event  
26 May – Hummelstown Memorial Day Parade **[53rd MAX EFFORT]**  
7-8 June – Manassas (ELF Event) **[NEW DATE!]**  
19-20 July – Landis Valley **[53rd MAX EFFORT]**  
9-10 August – Cedar Mountain \*  
13 Sept. – Antietam Living History **[53rd MAX EFFORT]**  
18-19 Oct. - 161st Cedar Creek - Middletown, VA  
15 Nov. - Remembrance Day - NR Annual Meeting and Parade \*  
6 Dec. – 53<sup>rd</sup> PVI Annual Meeting – Kleinfeltersville  
17 Jan. – Annual Party/Banquet  
\*NR max effort events



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) and check your email on a regular basis.

### 53rd PVI Contacts

President: Eric Ford ([reenactor53@gmail.com](mailto:reenactor53@gmail.com))  
Vice President: Jacob Dicks ([jdwarrior@yahoo.com](mailto:jdwarrior@yahoo.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>  
2024 Field Officers - Sergeants: Matthew Steger (1<sup>st</sup> Sgt.) & Marc Benedict  
Corporals: Mike Espenshade & Michael Brumbaugh  
53rd PVI Facebook Page: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/53rdPVI>  
National Regiment Website: <https://www.thenationalregiment.com>  
National Regiment Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/842904089142263>

