

53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Company C

"The Sentinel" August 2026

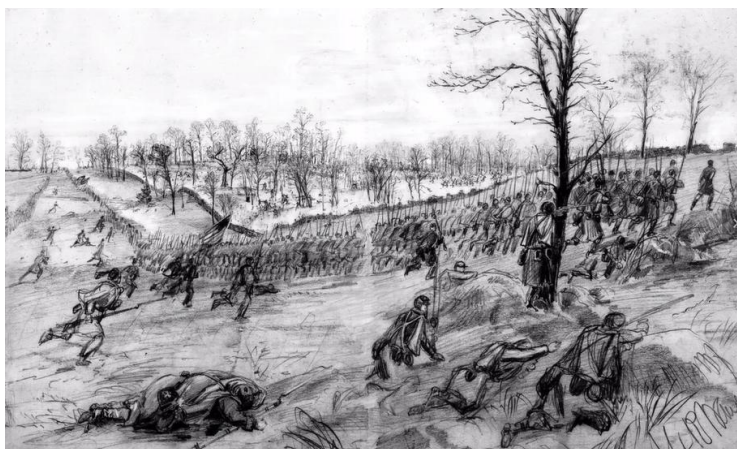
Newsletter of The James Creek Guards



"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

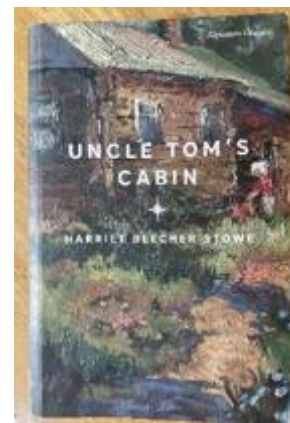
BOOK REVIEW - UNCLE TOM'S CABIN

Author: Harriet Beecher Stowe

Reviewed by: Mike Espenshade

Paperback; 1851, Union Square & Co.; 536 pp text; \$9.95 new from Barnes and Noble.

I cannot believe that it took me this long to read this masterpiece! Arguably the most influential book contributing to the ignition of the Civil War, Stowe creates an engrossing story read across 5 continents. The first American novel to become an international bestseller. More than three thousand copies of the book were sold on the day of its release. Within a year, over three hundred thousand copies were in circulation in 120 editions, eventually available in 40 languages. The book, whose primary subject is the devastating effect of slavery on both its victims and its perpetrators, catalyzed slave-related political movements up and down the Eastern Seaboard. This is the book that, according to legend, caused Abraham Lincoln to exclaim upon meeting the author, "So you're the little woman that made this great war!"



The book's extraordinary impact stems from the author's "sentimentalism" style making direct appeals to the readers' hearts to produce an outpouring of tears, thus the name "tearjerker". Emphasizing scenes of domesticity and scenes of mourning and loss, the story ranges among several families, free and enslaved, in their various stages of living under the lawful institution of slavery - which seems incredible to the modern reader. Stowe's personal experiences across the North and South lend authenticity to the conditions, language, conversations, and feelings of the characters revealed in the book.

Read this book. It will include you among the millions of readers who have been seriously moved to better understanding of living in the times in this country. Times that are, fortunately, changed for the better, mostly, by the success of the Union in our tragic Civil War.

Like all wars, the Civil War was not all gunfire and panic. It was a conflict driven by supply and transport, with tremendous effort made by the men “behind the scenes”. In Feb 1862, the United States Military Railroad (USMRR) was established to unite the various northern railroads (and any captured southern rail assets) into a single focus – win the war. Brilliant structural designers and experienced railroad leaders Herman Haupt and Daniel McCallum led the USMRR and its Construction Corps of heroic builders of track, bridge, roundhouse, warehouse, etc. Example, the rebuilding of the N. Carolina Cedar Creek bridge (530 ft long, 88’ high) was completed in 72 hours. Rebuilt the Chattahoochee bridge near Atlanta in 1864 (780’ long, 90’ high) in 4 ½ days! Laid/rebuilt 45 miles of track in Tenn in 1863 in 4 days.

When the progressive leaders on both sides began to utilize the rails for transport of troops, supplies, wounded, etc. the key advantages became compelling. As a result, the rail lines became military targets of prime importance, and the tide of battle was often turned by the ability of the railroads to rush up reinforcements and keep up a steady flow of ammunition, rations, and forage.

In the Confederacy, the rail lines were of various gauges and dilapidated in condition. To aggravate matters, the CSA seized and controlled the southern railroads for military use over the States Rights theory of ownership that already existed – hampering their war effort. By wars end, the USMRR controlled 419 locomotives (including purchases and captures). The CSA had only a tiny fraction of this number.

Author George B. Abdill, an engineman himself, uses his railroad experience and parlay to translate these remarkable photos and stories into a stunningly relatable history lesson for us all. This impressive collection of images, many published for the first time, share the construction, destruction, re-construction, guerilla warfare, daring chases, incredible escapes from ambush, fantastic bridge-building results, incredible track-repair efforts, new innovations at every turn, sacrifices galore, etc.

Have you heard of the “rail twister”? Invented by Haupt’s man, E. C. Smead, a pair of this handmade, handheld iron U-shaped tool could “tear up a track as quickly as you can say Jack Robinson and spoil the rails so nothing but a rolling mill can ever repair them!”. ... and they did. The USMRR men were civilians in civilian clothing, but shared the rigors and sleepless nights with the military. Built railcars to mount and fire huge mortars. Build floating car barges to transport 6 railroad cars across wide rivers or bays.

I immensely enjoyed this book. Every page revealed new education for this reader. The work involved to win the war, “just” from the rail perspective, is simply unbelievable. Great reference material = get this book.

ABE LINCOLN AND “REAL” HIGH-WATER MARK OF THE CONFEDERACY

Benjamin Franklin Cooling | June 15, 2026 [Blue and Gray Education Society](#)



Mr. Lincoln’s city.

President Abraham Lincoln under fire at Fort Stevens, as depicted in Harper’s Weekly | public domain

It’s ironic that not a month after Americans celebrated Independence Day in 1814, the British captured and burned the public buildings of the nation’s capital. The first of the country’s “days that will live in infamy” nearly repeated itself fifty years later, when another enemy came dangerously close to Washington.

The Washington of 1814, a small, largely insignificant village except as the seat of government, and Washington in 1864, a vast political, military, logistical, and social center amid the trauma of civil war, were linked by one important theme: the nation’s capital had to survive, and survival required protection. Whereas Washington had virtually no defenses in 1814, by 1864 it had become “Fortress Washington,” the most fortified city in North America, perhaps even the world. The War Department oversaw a circumferential network that included more than 68 enclosed armed forts, 93 unarmed batteries for field artillery, 30 miles of interconnected rifle trenches, signal stations, telegraph lines, storehouses, arsenals, hospitals, and factories—all dedicated to protecting



Fort Stevens during the Civil War| public domain

The summer of 1864 was critical. July was critical. And the ten days from July 4 to 14 proved especially decisive. During this period, the Confederacy launched its third invasion of Northern territory amid a stalemated war and a looming presidential election in which Union military success or failure would heavily influence national politics.

Against this backdrop, Confederate General Robert E. Lee undertook one of the war's boldest gambles: an effort to break Union General Ulysses S. Grant's stranglehold on Richmond and alter the course of the war in the East. Confederate General Jubal Early, commanding perhaps 15,000 men, became Lee's instrument to threaten Washington itself—and in doing so, potentially affect the political future of the nation.

In the end, as Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington, famously said, it was “a damned close-run thing.” A combination of factors saved the capital: 90-plus-degree heat and drought, Confederate fatigue, a blocking action by Union forces in Maryland, superior Northern infrastructure, and the overwhelming resources available to the Union war effort. Without them, the 1864 invasion might have profoundly altered the history of the United States—and perhaps the world.

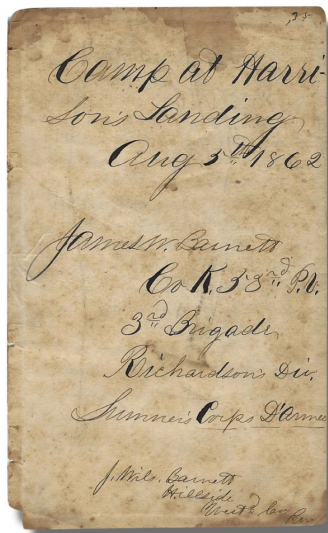
Oh yes, Lincoln was there watching the encounter at Fort Stevens, and he was nearly shot. He also witnessed, from the inner limits of Washington, D.C., only 4 miles from the White House, the Confederate forces withdraw, retreating first into Maryland and eventually back into Virginia. [Editor Easter-Egg..if you read this sentence, email me and let me know.]

Overall, the campaign had the potential to become a monumental game changer in the story of the Civil War and its outcome. The true high-water mark of the Confederacy was not Vicksburg, Gettysburg, or Antietam. It was the parapet at Fort Stevens. There, the Confederacy's last real chance for success died.

A damned close-run thing indeed!

ORIGINAL LETTER - 1862: JAMES WILSON BARNETT, 53RD PA INFANTRY

Courtesy of sharedandspared.com (reprinted with permission)



In 1860 he was a 20 year old divinity student living on his parent's farm in Derry Township, Westmoreland County, PA. His parents were John and Nancy (Morrison) Barnett. James mustered into service as Private, Co. K, 53rd Pennsylvania Infantry sometime after 16 September 1861. [Note - Typos and other grammatical errors were left in place.]

Inside cover of Barnett's Journal

After the Battle of Antietam in September 1862, James was appointed Commissary Sergeant of the regiment and later Quartermaster Sergeant. He passed an examining board and was commissioned First Lieutenant, 10th Regiment, US Colored Troops, and mustered and joined the regiment on 22 November 1863. He was appointed acting regimental Assistant Quartermaster in February 1864, and was acting Brigade Quartermaster (in 1st Division, 25th Army Corps) from June to September 1864. He was back with his regiment from January to April 1865, then detailed again to Brigade staff (in 3rd Division, 25th Army Corps), then at Corpus Christi, TX. From October 1865 to January 1866 he was Brigade Assistant Inspector General, briefly back with his regiment, then in March

and April 1866 the Depot Quartermaster at Houston, TX.

After the war, he taught school for a year and was a clerk in a Pittsburgh, PA store. He opened his own store in Johnstown, PA in 1868, then, in 1870, with 2 partners, two more stores, in Derry and Hillside, PA. He ran the Hillside store as sole owner after 1874. At the 1870 census he was living with his parents in Derry Township but by 1880 he was a dealer in general merchandise living in his own place with his wife and 5 children. In 1900 he was ticket agent for the Pennsylvania Railroad, but by 1910, still living in Derry, was the postmaster at Hillside, PA. He'd finally retired completely by 1920.

[Note: This diary is in the personal collection of Greg Herr and was transcribed and published on Spared & Shared by express consent.]

Transcription

Camp at Harrison's Landing, August 5th 1862
James W. Bennett, Co. K, 53rd P. V., 3rd Brigade
Richardson's Division, Sumner's Corps D'Armie

The only image of James Wilson Barnett not in an officers' uniform so this might be the image he had taken at Harrison's Landing in August 1862. There is no back mark on the image.

Monday, August 4, 1862—Went down to the artists and got picture taken. Cost \$1.00. Were paid off on Sabbath for the two months ending June 30th. Making the fifth payment, sum total one hundred and twenty-three dollars and fifty-five cents (\$123.55) I sent home \$15. I altogether I have sent home \$80 and from various sources have received \$30 in addition to the above. Deducting the amount sent home from the sum total leaves \$73.50. What I have spent since entering the service on the 16th of September 1861. A rather large sum considering that Uncle Sam has kept me in grub and clothing. Tuesday, August 5, 1862—The first item of importance that I have to record is my ne memorandum is the taking of Malvern Hill by our forces this morning by portions of Hooker's and Sedgwick's Divisions. The cannonading commenced about six a.m. and was very heavy for two hours. The affair was attended with a good deal of loss on both sides. We packed up expecting to be called out but when the news came of the success of the expedition, we felt much relieved. Two hundred prisoners were taken, 5 killed, eleven wounded on our side. Received a letter from Father & one from J. S. this morn. John sent me his pen. Wrote home & to A. F. Sent a gold dollar to father.

Wednesday, August 6, 1862—Are under marching orders today. Went with Ed to the artists. Got his picture taken. I stand behind him leaning against a tree. Gen. French drilled us in Division drill till eight p.m. A few minutes after, orders came to march in ten minutes.

Thursday, August 7, 1862—Marched out within half a mile of Malvern Hill. Remained an hour and marched back to a hill a mile and a half from our fortification where we remained till this morning. After daylight all of our Division left us except the 57th and a battery (Frank's). All of our troops having gone in except some few regiments that had been left on picket. The sun was scorching hot and we suffered a good deal. In the afternoon most of us left our stacks and sought the shelter of trees.

Friday, [August 8, 1862]—Slept well last night on corn husks. This morn one of the 11th came up. He is one of the released prisoners who came down from Richmond on Thursday. All of the 11th that were taken during the seven days fighting. Orders came near noon for our Brigade to go to camp. Though but three miles, it was a most terrible hot and fatiguing march. The roads were dusty and the heat intense. The men suffered very much. Went to the river to bathe this evening.

Saturday, [August 9, 1862]—Went over to the 11th last eve. Saw several of my old friends. Rob, Roy, Jos. Walkinshaw, and others. They were rather the worse for their hardships and were very glad to get back. McNulty, Holther & some more were up here today. They give a sorry account of their captivity and have no desire whatever to try it over. It seems that the rebels are somewhat short of provisions and cannot supply the prisoners with a sufficient quantity of food. All they got daily was half a ration of bread and beef full of maggots, a little soup. This was rather hard fare. And if all the soldiers knew it, would shun capture.



Sabbath, August 10, 1862—This is another very warm day and the flies are as bad as ever. They are an almost intolerable nuisance. There was preaching this morning in the 64th. I did not get there in time to hear the text as I was up assisting to draw rations. It was a good sermon. I received a letter from Mr. J. Culbertson this morning. Everything seems to indicate an onward movement at no distant day. Orders for baggage were read this eve on dress parade. Richmond is again to be attacked in front and rear. God grant that our arms may be successful and but little blood be shed, and that rebellion may speedily be crushed out.

Monday, August 11th 1862—Last evening we were told that we would march at one today. This morning we were ordered to pack up all our baggage and carry it out. we did so, only keeping tent and gum blanket. The knapsacks were taken down to the river to be put on transports. Appearances indicate that we are going to make a big move but we don't know where we are bound for—whether to the rebel city or northward. It does seem a little as though the Peninsula was to be abandoned and the James left to the gunboats entirely. Perhaps it is as well so. It has been and is one vast charnel house where the bones of brave comrades and their rebel foe lie moldering.

Tuesday, August 12, 1862—Last night I was detailed with a squad of nine men to load the knapsacks on the boat. We packed them into and old canal boat which was to hold the baggage of French's Brigade. It was rather an old hulk and there will be some danger of them getting wet. We got through at midnight. This morning an order came round for roll call every hour, and to be in readiness for marching at a moment's notice. The sutlers have packed up and left. Everything seems dull and lifeless. All seem to be waiting for the order to march and all too are anxious to get away. This state of uncertainty is what we all dislike.

Wednesday, August 13, 1862—This is a cool pleasant morning—not near so warm as it has been for several days. No more signs of a speedy movement today than were yesterday. This evening copious orders were read on dress parade from which I would infer that we are to make a big march. Some think it will be towards the York [River] and connect our lines with those of Pope. I rather think we will move up the [James] river and attack Richmond in the rear. But whether we move on the rebels or away from them, I don't think that our movement will be the result of fear. The officers of the 11th came down from Richmond today.

Thursday, August 14, 1862—Was down to see Col. Gallagher today. He is quite unwell. They give (the officers) a hard account of their treatment while in Richmond prison. And the clothes and appearance of each bears out their testimony. Quite a number of them came up to our quarters this eve. Ate supper with the Captain and had a jolly time generally. Our company officers got a keg of ale with which they treated their visitors and also their company. I expect there will be a rather high time in [Co.] K tonight. Some of the officers did not present a very sober appearance on dress parade. Lieut. Weaver is acting Quartermaster—Rice being sick.

Friday, August 15, 1862—The Orderly of Co. G was buried this morning. He died yesterday. A man in Co. H fell over dead. Do not know what ailed him. It was a very sudden death. It is said that we will march at five a.m. It is as yet to us a mystery where. Have been waiting very patiently all day for the order to march. Everything is torn up and in marching trim. I suppose the advance has left ere this and on their way down the peninsula. Our pickets are out yet as far as usual & the Rebs will be apt to be surprised in a day or two to find Harrison's Landing & the Yankee Army goners.

Saturday, August 16, 1862—At eleven got orders to march. Was in line in a few minutes where we lay for an hour. After fixing up things around our camp in a manner to suit our taste, we "fell in" and took up the line of march. We made frequent swoppegs [?] before getting outside our fortifications, marched four miles at a moderate pace and passed some very fine farms. Halted for the night in a large bottom and side by side to a cornfield. We made good use of our opportunity and enjoyed a good big mess of roasting ears—roasting them on the coals. Oh! Secessia!

Sabbath, August 17, 1862—Started pretty early this morning and made a big day march of 16 miles and through rough, wooded country. Passed by Charles City Court House—a rather dilapidated looking place for a county seat. At dark arrived at the Chickahominy half a mile from its junction with the James River. Crossed it on a pontoon bridge half a mile long. It was solid, noiseless, and a great success. It proves a great benefit to our army. Camped for the night on the point of land between two rivers. One other Division (Slocum's) is camped on this side.

Monday, August 18, 1862—Moved at eight this morning. Passed through a tolerable looking country. A great deal of timber land but not very heavily wooded. A great [deal] of scrub and underbrush. Stopped for the night on a farm near the James. Strolled around and found a cornfield which was laid under [] for a large quantity of roasting ears. They were delicious and formed quite a feast for us. The roads were quite dusty today and made the marching very disagreeable.

Tuesday, August 19, 1862—Left camp at an early hour and marched to Williamsburg where we halted an hour. In the afternoon we marched three miles out from town and camped. Williamsburg is a very

pretty rural village and wears the aspect of one of the old provincial towns. The homes are scattered and the streets very much shaded. It is indeed a pleasant place, or rather was before the war commenced.

Wednesday, August 20th 1862—Marched to Yorktown today. Camped near our old camping place. The probability is that we will have to march to Newport News. Kearny and Hooker's Division are embarking tonight. Go to Burnside.

Thursday, August 21st 1862—Left early this morning and going outside of the Rebel fortifications, took a road leading most of the way between the two lines. Halted three hours at Warwick Court House and got our dinner. Found an orchard not far off and got as many peaches and apples as could carry. Marched five miles further making 16 miles for the day and camped for the night. It was a pretty hard day's march and very many of the boys gave out. Our company was rear guard and had great difficulty in keeping up stragglers. We were about played out ourselves.

Friday, August 22, 1862—Newport News. Arrived here this morning after a short march of five miles. It rained very hard the last half hour of the march but it didn't incommode us very much. By the time we got our tents pitched, the rain had ceased. We are camped above the point on a bluff overlooking Hampton Roads. It is a beautiful and pleasant location. This afternoon I sauntered down to the landing which is inside the fortifications and found it to be a very business-like place. There are barracks for several thousand men and a great number of army stores and sutler shops. Franklin's Corps are embarking today. We will likely go as soon as possible.

Saturday, August 23, 1862—Am on guard today. Our stacks being right on the edge of the bluff. The sea breezes wafted o'er the "Roads" are a luxury well worth enjoying. It is indeed pleasant to sit on the bluff. The salt water foaming on the beach below making music melodious to the ear—the zephyrs playing with the sea air—while the broad expanse of water the shipping on its bosom and the landscape around found a panorama equally grateful and pleasing to the eye. We received a large mail today which had been waiting on us nearly a week. I got four letters—one from home, [], M. R., & sister M. J. P. The boys are fishing for crabs in the river today.

Sabbath, August 24, 1862—Orders came to go on board a vessel this morning. Got on the steamship *United States* about noon—our regiment and the 64th. Gen. French was on board.

Monday, August 25, 1862—Our corps is getting on board the different vessels as rapidly as possible. Will not get away till morning. The most of the troops will be loaded this evening.

Tuesday, August 26, 1862—Cast anchor at an early hour and steamed down the roads past the fortress and rip raps and our noble ship ploughed her way up the bay. Our boat is very much crowded.

Wednesday, August 27, 1862—Cast anchor last night in the river and today were taken on shore by a lighter. Remained about two hours when we were ordered on board again. Steamed up the river and cast anchor off Alexandria at ten p.m.

Thursday, August 28, 1862—Landed at Alexandria. Marched out to Camp California and camped a short distance from our old camp. The place seems quite familiar. I did not think when we left it last spring that we would return under the present circumstances but such are the fortunes of war.

Friday, August 29, 1862—Got marching orders this morning and ordered to have four days rations. Wallace is quite unwell and is likely to have a hard spell of sickness. Ed. Wils, Hummes, Hols. Horbach, and Blakely are also sick and will have to be left behind. The boys got somewhat rapid today and pitched into some sutlers' wagons rather roughly, tumbuling the articles out and making way with them. The sutlers were selling their truck at high rates for which there was no excuse & the boys thought they would punish them "instantly."

Saturday, August 30, 1862—Marched last eve at five. Passed through Alexandria and took the road for Arlington Heights where we arrived about midnight and bivouacked. This morning we marched a mile further to the Georgetown Aqueduct where we again halted and pitched tents. Any number of hucksters came around and the soldiers soon got to relieving them of their loads. While in the midst of them, orders came to march immediately by leaving tents behind. Heavy firing has been heard all day in the direction of Bull Run.

Sabbath, August 31, 1862—Marching to within 3 miles of Centerville last night. This morning came on and took up a position on the heights. The battle yesterday proved very disastrous to our arms. McDowell's Corps retreated in great disorder to Centerville. I saw several of my old acquaintances that were in the battle. Lieut. Dalby of Hillside was killed. McDowell is severely censured and Pope seems to be played out. There was evidently a want of generalship on our side. The veterans of McClellan's army covered themselves with glory. There appears to be a good deal of disorder. No fighting today.

BENJAMIN CUSHING DIARY -

A few years back, I had started reprinting diary entries (month-by-month) of Benjamin Jay Cushing's diary. I am now picking it back up again... this month is in July 1864. He was in Company G. [Note - Typos and other grammatical errors were left in place.]

- July 1 - Drew two days of Coffee, Sugar, Hard Bread, Beans, Dried Apples, and one of Pork. Half ration of whiskey and a little vinegar. It has become a long tiresome Job to draw ration. Commence digging a well in the afternoon and stick to it til 11 oc at night, get down about 10 or 11 feet. Take a bath before going to bed
- July 2 - Slept rather late. Draw beef the first thing in the morning & one days soft bread, digging the well, get it about 15 feet deep and the watter comes in very fast. Recd a letter from E- The Sutter came up today, find out that he got my Bounty money to the amt. of \$236.00
- July 3 - Writing in the morning. Draw two days rations of C-e, Su & Sunday H B and a little of almost all kinds of Army rations, Reed a letter from G. H. Olmstead & from Chloe and Gene. Reading or writing nearly all the afternoon. Cool pleasant weather. A little firing on the right at night.
- July 4 - Drew one days fresh meat the first thing in the morning. The Bands played "Hail Collumbia" to usher in the 4th July & Unc. Sam gave us a loaf of soft bread to cheer us up,-& renew our wasted strength. Reading and writing in the afternoon. Everything passed off quietly through the day without any particular demonstration.
- July 5 - Busy til afternoon drawing and isueing rations. Drew a large quantity of Pickles which were contributed by the Sanitary Commission, also a head of cabbage to the companies. Reading & writing in the afternoon as usual. Have a short call from a couple of the Haggel boys & also Dr. Ellison of Coudersport who expects to go back soon.
- July 6 - Get beef in the morning. Reading or writing nearly all day. Quite an excitement got up just at night by the Provo Marshals taking Sergt. Davis & Sergt. Major & the Sutter over to Div. Hed. Qts. The Sergts. were given to understand that they were not to act as Sutters Clerks any more. I was fortunate in not being in at the time as Orr had requested me to help him & I told him I would, but had not got about it & now enlisted men are not allowed to set foot in the tent.
- July 7 - Busy all the forenoon drawing rations. Drew a few flat turnips, not one to a man. After dinner reading all the time til supper had to be got. Find it a very disagreeable job to do my own cooking. Sergt. is boarding with me also at present,
- July 6 Draw 1 ds. beef in the morning. Nothing particular going on lately. Reed. a letter from Sister Charlott J. Pratt and learn that Cousin Charley Cushing was among the missing in the battle of the "Wilderness" Quite heavy cannonading on the right & musketry. Learn that the rebs made a charge and lost many men, did not accomplish anything.
- July 9 - Reed. an Exa. and a letter from J.W. Stevens. Write to Sister Charlott Pratt. Draw two days rations, 1 of soft bread & quite a variety of vegetables, though small quantities of each, 1 hed. of cabbage per Co. Some pickles and potatoes furnished by the Sanitary Commission.
- July 10 - Were waked in the night by the waggons coming up and loading Sunday the book boxes & Officers baggage. Reed. a letter from home & from Emma. Busy reading and writing in the forenoon, Pack up, and move to the left about half a mile, and pitch tents, and drew beef after dark.
- July 11 - Drew two days rations in the morning which takes til noon. Quite hot weather. Get orders to pack up just at night & be ready to move at short notice. Expect to move after dark. Draw a barrel of pickles just at night given us by the Sanitary Commission.
- July 12 - Was waked up at 3 oc and started before light, marched to the left about 2 miles. Stop & the pioneers are set at work tearing down the breastwork. A large body of Cavalry came up from Citty Point & went out on the Plank road. All the 1st Div. moved out about 3 miles & started back at 11 oc. Got back about 1 oc & laid down til morning.
- July 13 - Started a-little after Sunrise & went back to the same ground we left on the 21st. Had a very dusty march & extremely hot day. Draw one days rations. Have orders to put up tents in regular order. Have got in a very dusty place & have to go 1 mile after watter. Drew beef at night, 1 days. Put up a tent with Stevens, Mann & Cony in Co. G.

- July 14 - The Baggage Waggon came up & the Officers put up in regular order. Busy building tent with Gee. Stevens & Lieut. Mann. Busy writing in the afternoon to Emma and to the "Old Folks at Home". The whole Div. was ordered out to work tearing down the rebs old forts, were kept at it all night.
- July 15 - Draw 1 ds. Beef first thing in the morning and two days rations in the forenoon. The brigade is still kept out on fatigue. The Reg. did not come in from work til 1 oc in the night. Were engaged in tearing down the old rebel Forts. Draw 3 days potatoes sent us by the Sanitary Commission.
- July 16 - Doing a little policing in the forenoon, also helping dig a well and doing a little washing. All have orders in the afternoon to put up raised bunks of poles. Stevens & I went about a mile and split out slats of, rails & brought them in, built a bed, & finished our weeks labors in the Army once more.
- July 17 - Drew two days rations the first thing in the morning, which Sunday takes nearly all the forenoon. Reading and sleeping in the afternoon. Was waked about 11 oc & ordered to fall in. But were sent back with orders to fall in at 3 oc in the morning, which they did but did not go out.
- July 18 - Drew one days beef early in the morning. Had a settlement with A.S. Orr in regard to the Chester Co. Bond which he took & got cashed. Reed. 9 dollars from him. Took out of the \$36.00 which he reed. for the bond, 25.00 for stuff sold of his at camp near St-g, also 2.00 which I had had of him in Sutters goods. The ballance of the \$36.00 he paid me in cash.
- July 19 - Drew two days rations in the forenoon. Rained hard all the time I was out and continued to rain nearly all the afternoon. Busy reading "Harper's Magazine" or writing home. Fix up a Cupboard on a small scale to keep our eatables in, out of the way of the flies, which are becoming very troublesome.
- July 20 - The Brig. fell in at 3 oc & were taken out at light to work at some digging in front. Busy myself getting breakfast. Then police & clean up generally. Then sit down to write to Emma. One days whiskey came up to issue to the men on fatigue. There is issued only half rations, * gill per man. The Brig. came in at dark.
- July 21 - Drew Beef the first thing in the morning & then two days of everything else in the forenoon. Busy reading most of the time. Reed. the Exa, last night. Have plenty of reading matter lately. Harper's Weeklies and Magazines which have come to the Lieut. Help dig the well deeper after dark. Went out * mile after I get through to see the cannonading going on after dark.
- July 22 - Busy as usual with getting a little breakfast & cleaning up a little, In the afternoon went down to the front & went along, the line to the extreme left of the 5th. There was no firing and the rebs, as well as our men were on top of their works & looking at our men, were not over 100 yds apart in the nearest place, and are not afraid of each other as long as they are agreed to keep the peace. See our men at work building strong works & digging a road 4 ft deep the whole length of the line. Drew fresh beef after getting back.
- July 23 - Busy drawing rations all the forenoon. Drew a j ration of whiskey for the fatigue men after dinner. Writing to E-a in afternoon. Also have a general time cleaning up and policing & cleaning up our quarters. Washing a little although it is Sat, afternoon. Learn for the first time that Capt. Jones has sent in his resignation & also the Lieut. of Co. G. So that we shall soon be without an officer for my old company.
- July 24 - Sat up rather late last night, & did not get up very early in Sunday the morning. Get breakfast the first thing, and then reading or sleeping the remainder of the time. Cool cloudy day and looks very much like rain. Set up quite late waiting for the mail but it did not come.
- July 25 - Drew two days rations Soft Bread, Sugar & Coffee, which takes til almost noon. The Reg is out on fatigue again & 1 .am done. Reed. a letter from Home & one from E-a. Capt Jones is discharged from the Service and will leave soon. Drew one days fresh beef, Drew one half ration of whiskey at night. The Reg, did not come in til after dark, No mail to-night.
- July 26 - brew one days rations in the morning. Get orders to pack up the Co. Boxes & Officers Baggage, load it up at 12 & get ready to move at 3 oc. Draw 2 ds. rations of everything.-Start at. 4 oc and march toward City Point. Cross the Appomatox after dark & march to the James River and cross it. All got very tired. Stopped about 3 oc in the morning & go to sleep.
- July 27 - Waked at daylight, formed in line of battle. The 1st & 3rd Brig., took Four Guns after a sharp fight and a few prisoners. I went back to the Brig, Hed. Qt. wagon and staid all day. Took a

good bath in the river, and had a good rest during the day. Went to a large building with the Coms. Sergt. of the 64th and staid all night.

July 25 - Got up at dawn & went out to the Brig. Found the Reg. were all out on picket. Came back to the Herd and Staid til night. When the Cattle were taken out and beef issued. Went. out to find the Reg. and traveled almost the whole length of the picket line, did not get in til 9 oc. Reg. came in about 10, did not get through til 1 oc, W_ent back to the herds, staid all night.

July 29 - The Div. all came back into the field last night & built breastworks and lay in them or behind them all day. Went into camp in regular order. All busy putti ng up tents til 4 oc P,M, when they had orders to desist & rest themselves as much as possible. Start at dark and march all night & find ourselves in front of Petersburg at 6 oc Saturday morning.

July 30 - Fix up a shade and lay all day in one dace. It is a very hot day. Draw two days rations in the afternoon. A heavy cannonading commenced at light and was kept up nearly all day, two or three forts were blown up by a mine, and there was several charges made by our men and fighting going on nearly all day. March to the old Camp after dark. Find everything gone and have to build up new, which is quite a task for us being tired and sleepy.

July 31 -Fix up things a little and then write home. Draw 1 ds. Sug, Cof, Sunday & H B, & Pork, Draw one days beef in afternoon. Have a very hot day so that we can hardly sleep or rest. There is a great deal of building going on and fixing up things although we have no intimation that we shall stay long. Orders at night to pack up everything but not strike tents and be ready to march at short notice.

UPCOMING EVENTS

8-9 August – ***Landis Valley*** – Our annual Landis Valley event but this year is extra special due to it being America's 250th birthday (the event is called "America 250 Celebration: Military Days" this year) and will include other time periods as well. The 53rd will be hosting other NR units and a new recruit is planning on attending so it is imperative that the 53rd have a good showing as far as attendance. Tony Albright of the 7th PA Res. will again be cooking Saturday dinner and Sunday breakfast; a meal cost (TBD) will apply. If you have not done so already, please let Eric know ASAP is you are attending and if you are partaking in the meals. Two (2) firing demos are scheduled daily so please bring, at least, 30 rounds and sufficient caps. Stay tuned for more updates as we get closer to the event but please ensure that this event is on your calendar. **53rd MAX EFFORT!**

29-30 August – ***Baker Mansion (Altoona)*** – Dr. Jared Frederick has invited the 53rd PA to attend a 2-day event at the Baker Mansion in Altoona. Part of the 53rd PA, Company C was originally recruited from this area and there are some original 53rd veterans buried in a nearby cemetery. Rusty and Jacob did a single-day event at the site last year. The 2026 event came to us after our annual meeting so it was not on our original schedule. We may also have, at least, one new recruit attending.

19 September – ***3rd MD's Antietam Living History*** – One day living history at the Maryland State Monument across the road from the Dunker Church (corner of Dunker Church Rd. and Smoketown Road). 3 firing demos are planned so bring sufficient rounds (generally 7-9 rounds per demo). Be set up and ready for some drill no later than 9AM. Parking is in the grass field down the road across Dunker Church Road from the NPS Visitors Center; you can dump your gear in camp and then park your car. Any and all questions should be directed to Jimmy Thomas of the 3rd MD (jatjr424@gmail.com).

3-4 October - ***Seminary Ridge Living History*** – Our initial living history weekend on the grounds of the Seminary Ridge Museum in Gettysburg. Plans are still being worked out but please put this on your schedule to attend. **53rd MAX EFFORT!**

Extra Event -

12-13 September – ***USAHEC (Carlisle)*** - It was decided to take this event off the official 53rd schedule since we have other events a few weeks before and afterwards. Several of us have expressed interested in still attending, however. Email me ASAP so I have you on my list for parking passes, schedule, etc. that you will need prior to the event. Since this is not a 53rd event, what we get paid will be split amongst attendees. Since this is an extra, non-official event for the 53rd, please prioritize official 53rd events. In other words, please don't attend USAHEC if doing so will cause you to skip the Altoona and Antietam events.

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 –

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 April 2025. This is not the unit's quartermaster, but a separate list of items that Kerry is selling for the Swigert estate. Contact Kerry directly with all inquiries:

shamokin71@aol.com (see the updated list below)

Quantity	Item Description	Detailed Description	Price
Uniform Clothing			
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
Accoutrements			
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
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
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

2026 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

7 January – Annual Party/Banquet – Dobbin House (Gettysburg)
 21~22 February – NR School of Instruction – Gettysburg – 53rd Max Effort
 14 March – Cartridge Rolling Party – Kleinfeltersville
 17~19 April – NR Camp of Instruction (Ft. McHenry) – 53rd Max Effort
 15~17 May – Bull Run Re-enactment – Brandy Station (NR)
 25 May – Hummelstown Memorial Day Parade
 14 June – Hummelstown – America 250th Living History
 8~9 August – Landis Valley “America 250 Celebration: Military Days” – 53rd Max Effort
 29~30 Aug. – Altoona (Baker Mansion)
 19 Sept. – 3rd MD Living History at Antietam
 3~4 October – Seminary Ridge Museum Living History – 53rd Max Effort
 7~11 October – Bulltown, WV. Organized by the 116th PA (NR)
 17~18 October – Cedar Creek Re-enactment
 14 November – NR Annual Meeting and Remembrance Day Parade (NR)
 TBD December – 53rd PVI Annual Meeting



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: Alec Bohnenblust (pntbll499@gmail.com)

Vice President: Jacob Dicks (jdwarrior@yahoo.com)

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

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

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

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

2026 Field Officers: Sergeants: Matthew Steger (1st Sgt.) & Marc Benedict

Corporals: Mike Espenshade & Mike Brumbaugh

53rd PVI Private Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/53rdPVI>

53rd PVI Public Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61586734625435>

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

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

