

COMPANY E, 115TH REGIMENT N.Y. INFANTRY VOLUNTEERS

by W. H. Shaw

Note: This is the start of a four part series on Company E, 115th Regiment written by W. H. Shaw in 1864.

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In undertaking the task of sketching Company E, of the 115th Regiment New York Volunteer Infantry we feel ourselves utterly incapable of becoming the Historian of so noble and patriotic a body of men as composed that Company, whose deeds of valor are already written in blood, and whose names are inscribed on the Cap-stone of the pinnacle of fame. Composed as it was, of almost all nationalities, and of all religious Creeds, the men went forth at the call of their Country, knowing nothing of creeds or nationalities, feeling themselves bound together by the indissoluble ties of love to this, their native and adopted Country, forgetting all else, and having as a body, no higher aim than the salvation of their Country from threatened destruction by its unnatural enemies.

Leaving pleasant homes, fond parents, loving wives, idolized children and other loved ones, they bid them good byes and imprinting a sweet kiss upon the lips of dear ones, and many with tearful eyes pronounced their last farewell to all such, turned their faces southward, to receive, instead of the fond caresses of kind friends, the murderous shot, shell and bullet, of a cruel and heartless enemy, and not a few of them the blighting curse of the various prison hells of the so called southern Confederacy.

The original members of the Company were recruited in Fulton County, and in probably as short a space of time as any Company in the service outside of our large cities. All the circumstances of the Company's enlistment need not be stated, yet it is proper to say just here, that the citizens of Gloversville were instrumental in a large degree, and should have full credit for the quick time made in enlisting in this Company. They placed at the disposal of the recruiting officer who subsequently commissioned as Captain of the Company, Nelson B. Randall, (now a Baptist preacher) to do the talking, a printing office to do the necessary printing, two livery stables for transportation, and about \$1500 in money to [be] used for paying extra bounties, and

in the almost incredible short space of one hundred and forty-four hours, the Company consisting of one hundred and twenty-five men was recruited and reported at Camp Fonda for duty. Johnstown also furnished three or four speakers for different points in the County at which meetings were held. Well do we remember the long rides and sleepless nights of that week, when Fulton County was one boiling, seething cauldron of excitement, when stern realities of an internecine war was threatening the life of our Nation when the legend "our Country must and shall be preserved at all hazards" was written in letters of bold relief upon the countenance of every patriotic citizen, from one end of the County to the other. Under the pressure of the fact that it was a life or death struggle for the existence of free thought-filled speech, a free press, and the freedom of our various institutions there built up for the advancement of the cause of humanity. The Board of Supervisors of the County met in extra session and authorized the payment of an extra bounty of four dollars per month, the same to be paid to the wife or family of each volunteer, for one year. Let us say just here, that it would have been an act placed to the everlasting credit of the succeeding boards of supervisors and to the County, had they kept up that four dollar bounty to the families of volunteers during their entire term of enlistment. Upon arriving in Camp Fonda, it was ascertained that we had in our Company more men than the regulations governing the U.S. Army would allow, therefore the number in excess, were given the alternative of returning, or of being transferred to some other Company. Two or three returned to their homes, the balance of about twenty, though very reluctantly, allowed themselves to be transferred, and yet while they remained in service, claimed Company E their military home.

The following is a complete transcript from the Muster-in-roll of the Company, now in possession of the Captain of the Company, giving the name, age at enlistment, and where enlisted.

Commissioned Officers:

Capt. William H. Shaw, age 33, Mayfield
1st Lieut. Frank Abott, 25, Johnstown
2d Lieut. Aaron C. Slocum, 27, Northville

Non-Commissioned Officers:

Orderly Sergeant, Jacob L. Haines, age 33, Mayfield
1st Sergt. Charles L. Clark, 34, Johnstown
2d Sergt. Robert Stewart, 35, Johnstown
3d Sergt., Henry Wright, 21, Johnstown
4th Sergt., Melville B. Foote, 23, Northampton
1st Corp., Matthew Van Steenburgh, 34, Northampton
2d Corp., Harvey C. Christie, 21, Mayfield
3d Corp., Geo. Van Renschler, 23, Bleecker
4th Corp., Isaac Colony, 28, Oppenheim
5th Corp., Webster Shaver, 21, Ephratah
6th Corp., James H. Taylor, 30, Johnstown
7th Corp., Peter J. Keck, 23, Oppenheim
8th Corp., Frederick Meyer, 21, Ephratah

Musicians:

Joseph B. Benson, 32, Northampton
John H. Hale, 18, Mayfield

Wagoner:

Wing A. White, 32, Northampton

Privates:

Alfred Allen, age 22, Johnstown
James H. Austin, 19, Johnstown
Henry I. Billington, 36, Ephratah
George W. Buel, 24, Oppenheim
James B. Brooks, 26, Northampton
Edward Burgess, 32, Northampton
John L. Bradt, 41, Mayfield
Darias Baker, 29, Mayfield
Peter Burns, 25, Johnstown
Henry Barkley, 29, Northampton
James Bolster, 26, Oppenheim
Charles J. Bishop, 24, Mayfield
Theron Bowman, 21, Northampton
Franklin H. Barker, 21, Oppenheim
Eli Brooks, 21, Northampton
Benjamin A. Baker, 24, Mayfield
Henry J. Cool, 43, Oppenheim
Orren Cross, 36, Johnstown
Samuel Clemens, 23, Oppenheim
Hermon Cool, 31, Johnstown
Augustus C. Canfield, 28, Oppenheim
Daniel B. Doxtader, 21, Johnstown
Philander Doxtader, 28, Stratford
Charles R. Dibble, 20, Stratford
David H. Dalrymple, 29, Stratford
James H. Eldrid, 21, Northampton
Benjamin Ferguson, 30, Mayfield
Nelson H. Farichild, 21, Johnstown

Paul Firpo, 31, Johnstown
Joshua Getman, 26, Ephratah
James H. Getman, 18, Ephratah
George C. Groves, 27, Mayfield
William R. Holliday, 38, Johnstown
George B. Harrison, 27, Northampton
Albon W. Hamer, 26, Northampton
Jamed L. Hallett, 28, Mayfield
Albert Helibrandt, 22, Johnstown
John Hall, 23, Johnstown
Cornelius V. Hall, 22, Mayfield
John Hilton, 21, Johnstown
John J. James, 32, Northampton
James R. Jacoby, 31, Ephratah
Stephen A. Johnson, 23, Mayfield
John Sanders, 23, Ephratah
Aaron Johnson, 18, Johnstown
Stephen J. Kirkwood, 26, Mayfield
Andrew Keck, 29, Oppenheim
William H. Keck, 22, Oppenheim
William H. Loucks, 23, Ephratah
Moses Loucks, 23, Ephratah
George H. Luck, 22, Northampton
Joshua Lake, 25, Johnstown
Eli D. M. Lee, 22, Ephratah
Simon P. Little, 19, Stratford
Hugh Mc Laughlin, 27, Johnstown
Archibald Mc Glochlin, 19, Johnstown
David L. Mann, 23, Johnstown
James N. Mantaney, 24, Oppenheim
Simon Mosher, 24, Oppenheim
Stephen Mowers, 23, Stratford
Cornell Mc Alister, 19, Mayfield
Philip Plank, 44, Johnstown
Thomas D. Perry, 22, Mayfield
Stewart Putnam, 22, Johnstown
Levi Phillips, 18, Oppenheim
James H. Platt, 19, Northampton
Charles Rhodes, 23, Northampton
Abram Rathmire, 35, Johnstown
John A. Rhodes, 25 Northampton
Hiram Rhodes, 22, Northampton
Chas. W. Sauer, 31, Bleecker
Peter P. Shuler, 23, Bleecker
Sanford W. Shaw, 21, Mayfield
Benjamin Scott, 31, Ephratah
George H. Smith, 46, Ephratah
Nathan H. Snyder, 22, Johnstown
William H. Scorsby, 20, Stratford
John A. Smith, 18, Oppenheim
William H. Suits, 18, Northampton
Jeremiah Steenburgh, 34, Ephratah
James C. Tompkins, 28, Johnstown
William Van Auken, 21, Johnstown

James Van Auker, 21, Johnstown
Peter Van Loon, 25, Oppenheim
Joseph Wood, 37, Ephratah
Reuben T. Wells, 27, Mayfield
Reuben S. Wright, 21, Johnstown
John W. Ward, 26 Oppenheim
Eli Young, 21, Johnstown

**SOURCE: THE FULTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN; THURSDAY, APRIL 25,
1889; VOL XIX, NO. 44, PAGE 2.**

COMPANY E, 115TH REGIMENT N.Y. INFANTRY VOLUNTEERS

by W. H. Shaw

**Note: This is the second of a four part series on Company
E, 115th Regiment written by W. H. Shaw in 1864.**

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Immediately after our arrival at Camp Fonda, and having reduced our excessive numbers to that allowed by the army regulations, the next and most important operation to be performed, was that of transforming one hundred and three men, from the status of free American Citizens, to that of so many mere automatic machines, to do the bidding of one man, was a task by no means trifling or insignificant.

Human nature had to be studied, the different and varied temperaments of that hundred men had to be carefully diagnosed, their peculiarities, their likes and dislikes, their home surroundings, their religious views, and in fact all the little details to go to make up the whole man had to be noted and photographed on the mind and memory of the commanding officer, especially if he wished to succeed in his undertaking.

As soon as possible, the men exchanged their citizen apparel for that of the Union blue, and at once the boys began to put on the airs of veterans of a "hundred battles fought and victories won". Of course, each man was then on his good behavior, and no sooner had he donned the blue, than he became infatuated with the idea that it was his Christian duty, and a duty he owed to his Country, to his maker and his family, to place himself on exhibition before his parents, his wife or his sweetheart, that they might see and realize for themselves, that he was a real live genuine defender of the glorious Old Stars and Stripes. We were not yet mustered into the service of the United States, yet permits were granted, and while some were home on a twenty-four hours leave of absence, others were in Camp, going through the many intricate twisting and turnings, preparatory to become full fledged soldiers. The Company drill at Camp Fonda was, however, a mockery or farce, yet it served the purpose of diverting the minds of the men from their pleasant home surroundings, and of giving them a slight glimpse of the promised land of well drilled thoroughly disciplined, and finely equipped soldiers. As far as Company E was concerned, that object was fully accomplished. The men while on drill or other military duty, seemed to vie each with the other, which could be most obedient to orders and quickest to learn both the correct position of as soldier, and the position of a true soldier.

Camp life at Fonda, however, was not exactly the camp life subsequently experienced by the men on southern fields, in southern hospitals and prison pens. Here, they seemed to be, and no doubt were, enjoying the most magnificent picnic of their whole lives. Our stay at Camp Fonda was but one continuous gala day. Even while on duty, the boys all seemed to enjoy themselves just as well as though they were not so many cogs in the great wheel that was destined to, and did crush the greatest rebellion with which this earth was ever cursed. The Camp was open and free of access at any and all times for visitors, and the opportunity of visiting the boys was embraced by nearly or quite all the relatives and sweethearts of the members of company E, to see just how their soldier boys looked in Camp and drill, as that farce was called.

We still well remember some of the fathers and mothers, as they tearful and no doubt prayerfully watched their boys while on duty trying to execute the various commands given by their officers. The boys have done their best, not only while the old folks were present and watched their every movement in Camp Fonda, but ever after, or at least while in the service. The officers, like the men, were doing the best they could under the circumstances. But one of the Commissioned officers, the Captain, had been in the service before, and that too in the cavalry, therefore was almost deficient in infantry tactics, except Scott's old school tactics as was the youngest and most inexperienced man or boy of the one hundred and three. Several of the men had been members of the old Black Horse Cavalry, therefore had some idea of military discipline. First Sergeant, J. L. Haines had occupied a similar position in the old 7th Cavalry, while Sergeant C. L. Clark, had not only served in the 7th Cavalry, but has served in a battery of artillery during the Mexican war. However, both officers and men, managed somehow to comply wit the requirements of army regulations as they understood them, which of course, was very imperfectly.

CAMP FONDA INCIDENTS

In a promiscuous gathering of a thousand men or even one hundred men, picked up from the various walks of life, there will naturally occur, little incidents outside the natural course of regular routine business, that would attract the attention of the general student of human nature, and that too, all the way from the sublime to the most ridiculous, and the clans at Camp Fonda in August 1852 (sic), were not an exception to the general rule. Company E had not yet learned the art of war, and not to any great extent the laws of self preservation (every soldier knows what that means) although the boys managed to "pass muster" every time.

The Contractor, if our memory serves us correctly, for furnishing supplies, or in other words, our boarding house boss at Camp Fonda, was John Hank Starin, as he was familiarly known to the boys. The long board shanty that stood back a short distance from the road, and dignified by the title "dining room" was usually very well supplied with good substantial food, as John was particularly inclined, and no doubt intended to feed the men as human beings should be fed. However, he would get deceived occasionally by those of whom he procured his provisions, and the boys would occasionally get hold of something labeled "beef", but upon chewing a small piece of it awhile, it would swell in their mouths, and form a sort of India rubber ball the size of a hen's eggs or larger. - On such occasions the boys enjoyed themselves by pelting the table waiters, the cooks, with such balls and even John H. if he put in an appearance, at

such times was obliged to take his share of "beef". Butter that was strong enough to walk alone and carry a well filled knapsack, would sometime take unto itself wings and fly through the air, and quite often would also ornament the person of the poor table waiter as well as leave its imprint upon the devoted head of the contractor. But then, the boys got thoroughly cured of their toned epicurean ideas before the war ended, and Company E was subsequently known to take in a whole team of dead mules, without so much as taking the hair off. However, the men of Company E always looked back to "hotel de Starin" as an oasis in the desert of their military life and travels.

The Village of Fonda in one direction and of Johnstown in the other, were not so far distant that it required a very great exertion or length of time to reach either place, and the boys soon learned that they had plenty of friends in either Village, who were always ready, and more than willing, to entertain them with all sorts of refreshments, from a liquid to the most solid and substantial. With inducements so flattering, temptations so strong, and invitations so urgent and often and leaves of absence so plenty, the camp at times, had the appearance of a deserted grave yard. This state of things soon came to be quite an annoyance, and the Colonel of the regiment made an attempt to enforce a sort of military discipline, which by the way, was the climax of all the Camp Fonda farces, by making details from the different companies and placing a guard around the camp, with strict orders to let no one, except officers pass outside the lines, without a written pass from the commanding officers of the company to which the man belonged, and countersigned by the then acting Adjutant of the regiment. Old soldiers like "Lew" Clark and G. M. Renschler of Company E, only laughed at the slim show of authority by one who knew nothing whatever of a genuine military life or discipline, and from those two experts the men soon learned the trick of getting away with what was yet, a citizen camp guard, with neither sword, pistol or gun with which to protect either the camp or themselves. However, the officers and enlisted in of Company E seemed somehow to have a sort of mutual understanding, that orders or no orders, guard or no guard, there should always be enough of the Company in Camp and ready for duty, to execute any orders or perform any duty required of the Company. That understanding was faithfully and religiously adhered to, not only in Camp Fonda, but ever after while the war lasted. And let us say right here, lest we should forget it, that a better one hundred and three men never broke bread, shouldered a musket, chewed hardtack and mule, stole a chicken or shot a southern rebel, than those that composed Company E.

Fathers and mothers of those who had enlisted to fight the battles of their Country were often in camp, just to see how their boys were getting along. or care for any that might be sick, or dress the wounds of any that might have been unfortunate enough to get wounded during their absence for altho that was only a rendezvous for the gathering of the troops, yet some of the good old ladies seemed to think it a genuine battle field.

We recollect that one day an old lady came into camp and inquired for the Captain of Co. E., and after cornering him in the center of the field, and going through the ordinary salutations, she inquired of him if he knew her dear boy, giving his name? Oh yes, I do, quite well, he's a nice young man, answered the Captain. Well now, she said, I have come to see you about him. He ain't strong and healthy, and I didn't want him to go to war, but he allowed he would, and if I didn't let him go, he'd run away and go. So I told him if he'd join your company, I'd give him consent. And now Captain, I've come to see you, and see if you would take care of'im? Of course I will, replied the young man with shoulder straps. Oh yes my dear madam, I'll take the best care of your boy; I always take good care of my men. Well now Captain, will you see that he don't have it too hard in the army, and see that he don't get hurt? Of course I will Mrs. _____, my men never get hurt. They always come out safe every time. Well Captain will you bring him home when you come? Oh yes, my dear madam, most certainly I will. I'll bring him home a corps, or corporal, or sergeant, or brigadier, or something else, and possible he may yet be a senator or governor or something else. At any rate I'll bring him home. I hope you will, she replied. At this point the tears as large as small pumpkins began to roll down her cheeks and of course the Captain left quite abruptly, as he couldn't stand the old lady's tears half as well as he could rebel bullets. Cases of this kind were of daily occurrence during the last few days we were in Camp Fonda.

We have now been in camp Fonda nearly or quite two weeks, and Company E had come to be known as the "Country Company", "Mountain Rangers", &c, not that the men were any more countryfied, or that the altitude from whence they came was any greater than from whence they come was any greater than from whence came the other Companies of the regiment, but no doubt that jealous feelings originated because the men were a little more on their dignity, better disciplined, or something else. Sometimes they were known as the Gloversville Company, not from the fact that more of the men came from that locality than any other, but perhaps from the fact that Gloversville people seemed to take a greater interest in the welfare of the Company than that of most any other locality, they having contributed more for its

enlistments; but enough of that for the present, as we will have occasion at a later period to mention this subject again.

As the time was drawing near for the regiment to be mustered into the service of the United States and leave for the seat of war, the men of Company E conceived the idea of making their Captain a present of some kind, and make it a surprise as well as present, therefore appointed a committee of whom Sergeant Haines was chairman, raised the money, sent to Albany and purchased a pair of shoulder straps and bugle ornament for the Cap, which were of gold embroidery, an elegant sword and belt, together with a 12 foot silk sash, eight inches wide, the whole costing \$150. these mementoes of the good opinion of his men after three years' wear and tear during the war the captain has still in his possession.

To be a good soldier, and take care of one's self in the army, especially in a volunteer force as was ours, it is quite necessary that the men, and for that matter the officers too, should be fully instructed in all the branches of military life, and especially that of providing and caring for the inner man. We don't know how it was with other companies, but Company E while at Camp Fonda practiced in all the arts of War, except that of loading an Enfield rifle, and when the men reached southern plantations they were not obliged to go hungry and starve themselves on account of a lack of knowledge necessary to keep soul and body together, therefore some of the farmers within a radius of three miles of Camp Fonda, breathed easier when the 115th left for the front.

Everything being in readiness the regiment was drawn up by Companies on the 26th day of August, 1862, and mustered into the service of the United States by W. G. Edgerton, Captain 11th Infantry U.S. Army, and then the men felt themselves bound by a sacred tie to the service of the Country.

(In last week's sketch, read, Sands Johnson, instead of John Sanders)(to be continued next week)

SOURCE: THE FULTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN; THURS., May 9, 1889; VOL XIX, NO. 46, PAGE 4.

COMPANY E, 115TH REGIMENT N.Y. INFANTRY VOLUNTEERS

by W. H. Shaw

Note: This is the third of a four part series on Company E, 115th Regiment written by W. H. Shaw in 1864.

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LAST TWO DAYS IN CAMP FONDA

In sketch No. 2, we found ourselves mustered into the service of the limited States on the 26th day of August, 1862, and from that time to the 29th, the scene at Camp Fonda was just exactly indescribable, and if any one can imagine the disturbance caused by the Confusion of tongues at the Babel encampment, which history gives an account of happening several thousand years ago, they may multiply that by twenty and the thing will be about Correct, as far as Confusion was Concerned. The Camp was not only well filled with soldiers for the next two and a half days, but their friends and relatives seemed to multiply like the locusts of Egypt, and for numbers, the soldiers part of the Crowd was but a tithe of those present, as every relative, as far distant by Consanguinity or affinity, as eighth or tenth Cousin, was in Camp, to give their relation a party blessing or a new pair of wool socks, while their numerous friends and neighbors loaded the boys with little presents, such as pick knives, handkerchief, razor straps, pocket pistols loaded with liquid shot and many other little trinkets, such as farmers thought soldiers might need in Case of being wounded by a rebel, or bitten by a rattlesnake.

However, the time came on the morning of the 29th, that the citizen and the soldier must become two distinct and separate bodies, when the latter were formed in line, to receive from the ladies of the old eighteenth Congressional district, two strands of Colors, one, that of the Empire State, and the other, the stars and stripes, both of which proudly floated on the gentle breezes, as they were silently and sweetly wafted along through the old historic Mohawk Valley and as those flags kissed the mild zephyrs and bathed themselves in the sunshine, each man in that iron hearted line, made a solemn but silent vow, to protect those ensigns of liberty and freedom, even with his own heart's blood, a vow which many of the old regiment paid with their lives, as a sacrifice laid upon the altar of their country.

Off To Meet The Johnnys

Our march from the Camp ground, down the hill, and through the village of Fonda, to the train of first-Class-passenger Cars of the N.Y.C.R.R., that were to convey us on our way rejoicing, was but one continuous ovation, receiving the blessing of fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers and aunts, while others showered upon the men volley after volley of flowers in all forms, from a single stem, to a huge bouquet, and at eleven o'clock every man was on board, when the iron horse gave a puff or two and the train moves out slowly, and Fonda with all its then bewitching attractions to many of the men, and some of the officers, was left in the rear, and Company E, accompanied by the balance of the regiment, were winding their way down through the Mohawk Valley toward the seat of war.

Mose, Josh, Levi, George and Jake

Soon after leaving Fonda, the men became domesticated, and accepted their several situations, and quite a number of them who had never before enjoyed a free ride on the cars, and in fact, some had never been inside of one before, seemed to enjoy the thing as though they were going to attend a mammoth picnic, and in a little while began to relate their Camp experiences, in a manner most amusing "Mose" Loucks, with his squeaky musical voice, told us how he went up a tree, crawled out on a limb, and borrowed one of the Colonel's turkeys, and wound up with, "by gosh all fir locks boys, if that eternal limb had ever broke and let me down I'd a lost that turkey sure." But the limb didn't break, and a few of Company E had a midnight turkey dinner. Josh Lake, one of the best shots in the army, never stole a turkey. His favorite game was chickens. All the hens and roosters within a radius of three miles of Fonda, were well acquainted with that gentle voice, of which Josh was the owner. They even knew his whistle, and would trot out to the road whenever they heard nothing but his footsteps, and cackle or crow, "here I am I, Joshua". And of course Josh interviewed the bird. George Van Rensselaer, not being an Israelite, of course never refused a good roaster and during the two weeks that Company E laid at Fonda roast pig was not an uncommon dish, when the boys had an elegant gilt edged "bill of fare", as sometimes they did Lew Clark knew just how to lay in a good stock of almost anything that was good to eat, and was never at a loss for a scheme to obtain such things at the least possible expense. He wouldn't have been a good soldier if he had not passed a good examination on that point. While at Camp Fonda, his class in mathematics was well attended, and became quite proficient in the rules of subtraction, multiplication and division, i.e., they learned to subtract from the farmer or merchant, multiplying their own larder, and divide with the Captain Jake was also

one of the kind of soldiers that had leaning toward self preservation through the means of a well filled haversack.

Nearing Albany

There are several others whose recitals of solid facts and fancies, pleasantly related, of doing in and around Camp Fonda, for which we must wait until some future time. As we have passed through Amsterdam and Schenectady, where thousands of people greeted our arrival and departure, and we are now slowing the train for a stop in Albany, where we arrived at 2 o'clock P.M., and marched into the "Delavan House," or Vacant stores in the Delavan block, where Company E., with the balance of the 115th, were bountifully refreshed with all the good things that the old Dutch city could at that early date afford. Of course they could do better now, as they have a new Capitol and a larger and better jail.

Down The Hudson Valley

After lunch, we were given a free sail across the Noble Hudson river, on an old ferry boat, to Greenbush, where we again boarded a train of cars in waiting for us, and soon we were gliding along down the east shore of the river we had just crossed. For an hour or two the men seemed to be in a sort of contemplative mood, though all seemed pleased with the beautiful scenery along the river, until the shades of the evening and the emblem of death covered the face of the earth with darkness. About this time the effects of the water the boys drank in Albany began to manifest itself, and while some were stupefied, others were jolly and happy, then again some would be delirious, and call for more Albany water, and were determined to have another drink at all hazards. Of the latter class, was James Montaney of Co. E., who imagined that it was his duty to somehow or other, to get another drink of fire water. We were at this time, near Peekskill, the night was dark, and the train running at the rate of thirty miles an hour, the car doors all locked, and no chance, seemingly, for Jim to get out. But Jim was equal to the occasion. Watching his chance, he raised a window, and quick as thought, slid out, head first. Of course the train couldn't be stopped for one man, and we gave the young man up for lost, and was so going to report him in our morning report the next morning. The train sped on reaching New York about 2 o'clock on the morning of the thirtieth, and from the station the regiment marched to the Park Barrack, then on the site now occupied by the post office. In that then beautiful and sweet scented place on earth, reeking with the filth left of the thousands of soldiers who had gone before us, we bivouacked upon the filthy floors until daylight, when the men awoke, began to realize their situation, as so many swine in a large pen Contractors'

rations, such as they were, were served to both men and officers, or such of the officers as chose to accept them. Some of us will never while life lasts, forget our experience in the filthy Park Barracks of New York City in August 1862. At about nine o'clock the men were formed in line for roll call, and when the name of James Montaney was called, he at that moment stepped up in time to answer to his name. His was a most miraculous escape from death. When he went out the car window, he struck on the grassy side of the embankment, rolled down into the river, crawled upon the track again, followed along to the Peekskill station, took the first train for New York, arriving safe and sound, and in time to prevent his name being recorded among the missing, not in action, but from a railroad train. Jim is still living, and a resident of Monroe, Oswego County.

SOURCE: THE FULTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN, THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 1889, PAGE 4, VOL. XIX NO. 50.

<http://fulton.nygenweb.net/military/shaw1.html>

COMPANY E, 115TH REGIMENT N.Y. INFANTRY VOLUNTEERS

by W. H. Shaw

Note: This is the fourth of a four part series on Company E, 115th Regiment written by W. H. Shaw in 1864.

In sketch No. 3, we brought up the never to be forgotten Park Barracks, in New York. There we breakfasted, dined, and supped, and about six o'clock P.M., took up the line march for the old Battery, or some point near it where we embarked on a sort of craft identified by the term of "transport". We often thought that we would give most anything for the

name of the old tub, on which we were conveyed from New York, by water to Amboy, N.J. Those of our men who had never been on ship board before, were highly delighted with that short "ocean voyage" as some of them termed it, while those who were made a little sea-sick by the rolling of the heavy laden and filthy old hulk were not as generous in their praise of the pleasures of a sea voyage. We reached Amboy twelve o'clock at night when we were given the alternative of going on foot march through the Jerseys, or taking our chances by the rickety old tumble down cattle cars, furnished by the then most contemptible and insolent monopoly that ever our world was cursed with, the old Camden and Amboy railroad company. The night was dark, and we were not acquainted with the Jersey highways and the distance to Philadelphia being about eighty miles, we decided to try the cattle cars which was no doubt an improvement on walking.

CAYADUTTA BRASS BAND

We had with us, as an ornamental appendage, the Cayadutta Cornet Band, and as our train entered the Quaker city about daylight, the Band commenced playing the Star Spangled Banner, or something of that sort, when one of the descendants of Uncle Billy Penn, stepped up to Aleck Mills, and accosted him about thusly: "Friend, does thy men of brass instruments know how to play the tune called Yankee Doodle, or Star Spangled Banner?". "Oh yes sir uncle, they can play anything but poker". "Well then, wilt thou instruct thy men to play something else beside God Save the Queen, as that tune is distasteful to the descendants of the founder of our city?" Now it is barely possible that some of the band were playing God save the old lady, while some others were, no doubt, blowing away at Home Sweet Home, and some others were practicing on Fisher's Hornpipe or Devil's Dream while yet others were whacking away at the Girl I left behind me. Whichever it might have been, we have no doubt of "broadbrim's sincerity in thinking that the band was playing God save the Queen or most anything else except the Star Spangled Banner. Aleck was so overcome with laughter, that it took him two and a half days to pucker his mouth sufficient to fit the horn he was trying to blow.

SOLDIERS' RETREAT, PHILADELPHIA

We had now left the cars and marched to the Soldiers' Retreat, where we were breakfasted in a large and commodious building, which the Philadelphians had fitted up especially for the feeding of all soldiers passing through the city on their way to the seat of war. The Quaker city was noted all thro' the four years of war, for its hospitality to the soldiers. At the Retreat, our boys were bountifully refreshed with the good things abundantly supplied and it was a matter of general comment, the difference in

hospitality, quantity and quality of provisions, between New York and Philadelphia. Although this was on Sunday morning, the boys could not be restrained from giving those in charge of the Retreat, three hearty cheers for their generous hospitality

It was now the last day of August, 1962, and one of those beautiful Sunday mornings whose golden light seemed to be more brightly beaming than usual, when the men were as bright and cheerful as though at a wedding feast, and as for the old Chaplain he was all smiles, and only wished for an opportunity to preach in the Quaker city, that he might in a more general and religious manner, thank the people for their generosity, and at the same time tell them what he tho't of rebels and their northern sympathizers. - While all these preliminaries were being gone through with, the members of Co. E, that had been treated to the same kind of hospitality on a previous occasion, while members of the old Black Horse Cavalry, were inspecting real estate in the vicinity of the Retreat and renewing old acquaintances.

OFF FOR BALTIMORE

About the time company E had completed their inspection, a train of second-class freight cars were ready, and into which we were marched like so many cattle and away the train moved toward the city of Monuments. "Our first stop was at Wilmington, Delaware, at which place the people greeted us with cheers and a display of the old Stars and Stripes. In a short time we were on the move again and nothing of interest occurred between Wilmington and Baltimore, only the display of stars and stripes from doors or windows of almost every farm house and especially by the colored population, which were by no means insignificant in numbers.

Baltimore was reached at about 4 o'clock P.M. where we were again ordered on shore, formed line and marched across the city to the Baltimore and Ohio railroad station, where we remained till dark. While waiting for the train, the men of our command and especially those of company E who had previously paid their respects to the Monumental city, felt themselves, and in fact were, under no particular restraint, and were perfectly willing to show the rest of the boys around the city. In doing so, they quite naturally came in contact with not only sympathizers of the cause that was lost before ever it was found, but also real, genuine rebels, who manifested their displeasure at the appearance of so man d—d Yankees in their midst. However, such little ungrammatic expressions didn't scare the Yankee boys worth a cent, but tended to create in their patriotic breasts, a bitter contempt for any thing that savored in the least of

secession and in several instances during our short stay in that semi hot bed of treason, loud mouthed rebels paid dearly for their waste of breath in denunciation of the only flag on earth that is worthy of being defended by the life blood of its admirers.

EN ROUTE TO HARPER'S FERRY

At the appointed hour in the evening, the men were all on hand, and again we were stowed away in freight cars of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, and the next morning, Monday, September 1, 1862, we were landed at Sandy Hook, Maryland, a distance of forty miles from Baltimore. Here the farce of arming the regiment was gone through with, and when company E's turn came, which was last to be armed and equipped as the law directs, each enlisted man was given an old Belgian rifle, which, by the way, was worth just the price of so much old iron in an ordinary junk shop, a cartridge box, belt, bayonet, scabbard and the usual accoutrements given to a soldier on such occasions, together with four rounds of ammunition for each man. Quite an outfit for the defense of our glorious nation. We were also supplied with two days' rations for each man, and in that condition company E was ordered out on the line of the Shenandoah railroad. Leaving the regiment to take care of itself as best it could, we took up the line of march, passed Point of Rocks, crossed the Potomac at Harper's Ferry on pontoons, the chivalric F.F.V's having destroyed the bridge, and boarded a Shenandoah Valley train of cars and after four or five hours' ride, reached Cameron station, where we relieved a company of the 12th U.S. Infantry, with orders to the Captain of company E, to issue a proclamation declaring the territory under his jurisdiction under martial law. That of course was a new idea to us, as we knew nothing about martial law or any other law, and cared a great deal less than we knew.

WARLIKE PREPARATIONS

Having now settled down to business, isolated from the regiment, and alone in the enemy's country, we were thrown upon our own resources for every thing we needed. Headquarters was established in an old house that stood near the railroad track, a detail of men was made, and a line of pickets established around our camp, and the men instructed what to do in case the enemy advanced on us, which of course we knew he wouldn't do.

Some of the men not on picket were allowed to go out among the inhabitants, for the purpose of buying, begging or borrowing a little tea, coffee, applejack butter, or most anything to mix in with the dry hardtack with which we were scantily supplied. This little enterprise was not entirely

a success, as they few inhabitants in the Shenandoah valley were of the radically rebel sort, that thought that it would be more than sacrilege to even sell a Yankee anything in the food line, even for hard cash. Night came on, and just before retiring, Sergeant Haines visited the pickets, giving them their instructions for the night, returned to head-quarters and we all slept as soundly as though we had been in our northern homes. In this we, include the pickets.

Tuesday morning found us all around the head-quarters campfire, as the pickets relieved themselves by coming into camp without orders, and as the Captain thought that from our isolated condition the company would be safe with the men all in camp, as with half of them on picket, and in fact, the whole proceeding thus far looked more like a picnic than it did like real war. During the day the men, or quite a number of them were sent out among the farm houses, or on plantations, to try their luck again for subsistence stores with rather better success than the day previous. In the meantime, some of the boys had discovered a family that claimed to be Unionists, and would therefore bake us some biscuit or hoe-cake, provided the men would furnish the material. It so happened that some of the men purchased or borrowed a small quantity of flour, and others found some corn meal, and thus between the two, the men were well supplied with hoe-cake and biscuit for supper, and soon the boys began to think that a soldier's life was not exactly the hardest lot that could befall a man. During the day two or three old Virginians came into camp on horseback, and of course claimed to be good Union men, and as proof of their loyalty to the old flag, they were left at home, and as a further proof of loyalty, offered to sell us anything they had that we could make use of. Our second night at camp Cameron, was but a repetition of the first, only a little more so. During the night of September 2nd, we distinctly heard the blowing up of the magazine at Winchester, and in the early morning of the third, the trains began to pass along towards Harper's Ferry, heavily loaded with troops, and sometime during the forenoon, company E was ordered to join the regiment, at Charlestown. This was our second military order, and we very reluctantly obeyed it, as we thought we had a good place and wanted to hold it.

MARCH TO CHARLESTOWN

After the troops further up the far famed Shenandoah valley had passed down the road, company E took up the line of march, struck the Harper's Ferry and Winchester pike, covered the retreat of the army and reached Charleston about four P.M., where we found a promiscuous gathering of infantry, artillery and cavalry, seemingly in a very badly demoralized condition. Nine out of every ten of the officers and men were cursing somebody or something and

especially Jeff Davis and his horde of rebels south and rebel sympathizers north. We at last found the balance of the 115th N.Y. Infantry volunteers, that we had left three days before.— They were congratulating each other that they were still alive, and wondering how much longer this civil war was going to last. The boys of company E informed the rest of the regiment that we had been having a magnificent picnic, and if what we had expected was all there was of war, we hoped it would last till Gabriel's trump sounded its last bugle note.

Charlestown, one of the hot-beds of secession of the so-called Confederacy, became somewhat noted as the place the immortal John Brown was tried and sentenced to be judicially murdered, and it was with much interest that a large number of the members of company E viewed the old court house in which the rebel mock trial was held. Some of the boys even went through the farce of the trial occupying as nearly as possible the position of each officer, from judge, down to the constable and jury. The people of the so-called city showed not only their disgust, contempt or fear of the Yankee soldiery but ignorance, by closing their houses and places of business, if any such they had, when we were there, for at that time all our troops had money to pay for all they called for, and as for confiscating personal property, they had not, as a rule, learned the art. As for company E, they need not have been afraid of us, for at that time we were well supplied with provisions purchased at Cameron station, therefore had no necessity for practicing the art of self preservation for the inner man, a science in which many of our company graduated with honor from the school at Camp Fonda. And in fact, from the general appearance of the town of Charlestown, the boys thought there was nothing worth the time it would take for a thorough examination of the place.

ADVANCE ON BOLIVAR HEIGHTS

After considerable consultation and explanations of the why's and wherefores of the Winchester disaster, it was decided by the General in command, to retire to Bolivar Heights, a small village situate on the plateau above Harper's Ferry, therefore the army moved out from Charlestown in regular military style and reached Bolivar Heights a ridge of land above the village and running parallel with the Shenandoah river about sundown of September 3, 1862, and for the first time this company bivouaced on the cold ground, as we had nothing but mother earth for a bed, and the blue arched, starry decked heavens for a covering. Some of the men thought this a little rough, but were ready to suffer most anything for the sake of their country. We were now, not only on the sacred soil of what was then old Virginia, but at the seat of war and

actually in the field and ready for service, and company E didn't care who knew it. The 115th N.Y. Volunteers being attached to company E, was brigaded with the 39th New York Infantry and the 8th Vermont Volunteers, the whole commanded by Col. De Utassy, of the 39th N.Y., a blustering foreign gentleman who was possessed of more gab than brains.

In our next sketch will be given the ins and outs of the Harper's Ferry disaster, as we saw it; our march to Annapolis as paroled prisoners of war; our trip to Chicago and return to Washington, D.C., and Arlington Heights.

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