

IDENTIFIED UNION SOLDIER SIGNATURES

Blenheim Attic and House Walls

Historic Blenheim and the Civil War Interpretive Center

3610 Old Lee Highway
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
(703) 591-0560 www.fairfaxva.gov

Massachusetts

22nd Massachusetts Infantry
STONE, George F., Pvt. Co. D

Michigan

1st Michigan Cavalry

BOLTON, Marvin, Pvt., Co. G
DOWD, Samuel P., Pvt., Co. F
FLOWER, Consider E., Pvt., Co. F
JOHNSON, Charles H., Pvt., Co. M
KARN, George, Pvt., Co. G
PUTNAM, William H., Pvt., Co. C
REYNOLDS, Samuel W., Pvt., Co. F

New Jersey

1st New Jersey Infantry

MYERS, William C., Pvt., Co. H

New York

4th New York Cavalry

ABEL, Jeremiah, Bugler, Co. C
CRONIN, Daniel, Pvt., Co. C
HART, William, Capt., Co. C
HOWELL, James H., Pvt., Co. C
KREPS, William H., Cpl., Co. C
MCCULLOUGH, Robert, Pvt., Co. C
WHEAT, Benjamin D., Pvt., Co. C

13th New York Infantry

MARSHALL, Matthew Mead, Pvt., Co. F

16th New York Infantry

JONES, Abram, Pvt., Co. D
CONANT, Charles H., Cpl., Co. D
DOWSEY, Richard H., Pvt., Co. D
RUGAR, Jacob W., Pvt., Co. C
THAYER, Alfred, Pvt., Co. C

29th New York Infantry

BECK, John, Pvt., Co. K
DAILINGER, John L., Pvt., Co. K
GUNDERMANN, Ferdinand H.,
Sgt., Co. G
HAINGARTNER, John L., Pvt., Co. K
HORSTMAN, Leonhardt, Pvt., Co. G
KAHLER, Conrad, Sgt., Co. G
KNAPP, John, Pvt., Co. K
KUNZE, Julius, Pvt., Co. K
KURZ, Wilhelm, Pvt., Co. K
MEYER, Adam, Pvt., Co. K
PFEIL, Herman, Pvt., Co. K
RAEFLE, Theodor, Pvt., Co. K
SCHAUMBERGER, Carl, Sgt., Co. D
STRAUBE, Frederick, Pvt., Co. D
TRETBAR, Clements, Pvt., Co. K

44th New York Infantry

ANGUS, Walter, Pvt., Co. K
BROADWAY, Gilbert T., Pvt., Co. B
BRYANT, Henry D., Pvt., Co. D
FISHBECK, Charles A., Drummer, Co. A
FISHER, Henry J., Pvt., Co. B

HERENDEEN, George B., Sgt. Major,
Field & Staff

JUDSON, Hiram A., Pvt., Co. B
PHILLIPS, Amos, Pvt., Co. B
RICE, Horace N., Pvt., Co. C

54th New York Infantry

CRAMER, EDWARD, CPL, CO. A
DOBENECKER, Ferdinand, Pvt., Co. D
HARMS, Charles (Carl), Pvt., Co. I
MULLER, Henry, rank unknown, Co. E
RETTBERG, Bernhardt, Cpl., Co. A
SEEBER, August, Cpl., Co. I
SULZER, Ferdinand, Pvt., Co. A
TAPPHORN, Theodor G., Pvt., Co. A
THIEDE, Carl, Pvt., Co. D

58th New York Infantry

DORING, August, Bugler, Co. G
SCHLINGERMANN, Charles, Pvt., Co. H

64th New York Infantry

MAY, Francis M., Cpl., Co. I

65th New York Infantry

WELTE, Joseph S., Pvt., Co. C

136th New York Infantry

CLOW, Benjamin, Pvt., Co. B
COATS, Morris H. Pvt., Co. A
DIPPY, George, Cpl., Co. B
LUTHER, Bruce, Sgt., Co. B
MCELHENY, John, Pvt., Co. A
PERINE, Thomas, Pvt., Co. B
ROBINSON, Milton O., Pvt., Co. F
SHELDON, Arthur, Pvt., Co. K
SMITH, Charles, Pvt., Co. B
WOOLHISER, George W., Pvt., Co. K

Pennsylvania

18th Pennsylvania Cavalry

BARGER, Andrew Jackson, Pvt., Co. C

72nd Pennsylvania Infantry

WILLIAM PENN HOSE COMPANY,
No. 18

73rd Pennsylvania Infantry

BARNED, Numa, Pvt., Co. B
GREENAWALT, Henry, Pvt., Co. G
HOOK, Lewis F., Pvt., Co. G
HURST, William A., Pvt., Co. B
REED, William, 1st Sgt., Co. F
SAUREMILK, Henry, Pvt., Co. G
TAYLOR, Robert, Pvt., Co. G
WALTER, Lewis, Capt., Co. G

74th Pennsylvania Infantry

BUSCH, Christoph, Pvt., Co. E
CARL, Hermann Franz, Pvt. Co. E
FISCHER, Moses, Pvt., Co. B
GRUENNAGEL, Frederick, Sgt., Co. I
REICHLE, Christian, Pvt., Co. E
SPIEGEL, Christian, Cpl., Co. I

75th Pennsylvania Infantry

LUST, John, Pvt., Co. H
SCHLAICH, John Pvt., Co. I

83rd Pennsylvania Infantry

BOWMAN, Thomas J., Pvt., Co. H
BUTTERFIELD, Hamilton, Pvt., Co. B
CLARK, Daniel W., 2nd Lt., Co. G
CLARK, Henry C., Cpl., Co. F
COLTON, Spencer, Pvt., Co. B
FREEMAN, Asa, Sgt., Co. D
GROGER, Charles Watson, Pvt., Co. D
HOYT, Samuel, Pvt., Co. G
JOHNSON, George H., Pvt., Co. B
MCCRACKEN, William, Cpl., Co. B
MOORE, Amos R., Drummer, Co. B
MUSE, Addison, Pvt., Co. B
PETTIGREW, Joseph C., Pvt., Co. G
PROUDFIT, Robert H., Sgt., Co. D
THOMPSON, Henry W., Drummer, Co. C

95th Pennsylvania Infantry

GOODWIN, Samuel W., Sgt., Co. H
GREELEY, Joseph M., Pvt., Co. D
HAUSE, John R., Musician, Co. D
MILLS, Walter P.C., Pvt., Co. B
WRIGHT, John S., Pvt., Co. E

West Virginia

1st West Virginia Cavalry

Durrett, Henry C., Capt., Co. A

Wisconsin

26th Wisconsin Infantry

FERNEKES, Peter, Capt., Co. E
FROEHLICH, Julius, Cpl., Co. H
HOENE, Julius W.F., Pvt., Co. I
KOEGE, John, Cpl., Co. I
REIFENSTUHL, Frederick, Pvt., Co. I
ROOK, Peter, Sgt., Co. C
SCHLOSSER, Philip J., 1st Lt., & Adjutant
SCHOLZ, W. Joseph, Pvt., Co. A
VAN EWYCK, Henry, Cpl., Co. A

U.S. Army 1st Battalion Engineers

FERNAND, Cassius M., Pvt., Co. B
GOSS, Warren Lee, Pvt., Co. B

Units represented, no names:

6th U.S. Cavalry, Co. H.

1st Maryland Light Artillery, Co. B

Center is open Tuesday-
Saturday, 10am-3pm
Tours of House and Site,
1pm FREE

HISTORIC BLENHEIM CIVIL WAR INTERPRETIVE CENTER

BLENHEIM SOLDIERS

ATTIC GUIDE

In late July 1861 Union soldiers entered Albert and Mary Willcoxon's home and destroyed windows, banisters, and furnishings. Sometime between then and early 1862 the family lived elsewhere, but close enough for Albert, a secessionist, to sell food and supplies from his 367 acres of land to the Confederate army. He owned 6 enslaved people, of which little is known.

Between March 1862 and June 1863, hundreds of soldiers left what would be their enduring marks of charcoal, graphite, or crayon on the attic and the walls of the first and second floors. Since 1998, there have been 121 soldiers' names positively identified, along with their regiments, companies, and hometowns. They represent 23 Union regiments from Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. About two-thirds of those names are found in the attic.

The Willcoxon home, now known as Blenheim, had been built only a couple of years before the beginning of the Civil War. The plaster had not cured fully and therefore was lacking paint or wallpaper. In essence, the walls were an empty canvas that soon became a "diary on walls." The attic walls remained unchanged by the four generations of Willcoxon family members who lived there post-war. They contain the most distinct and best-preserved soldier names, drawings, and sayings in the house.

The Blenheim attic exhibit in the Civil War Interpretive Center is a life-size replica of the attic stairwell and the north room. As you walk through the "attic" and learn about some of these soldiers, perhaps you can answer the question:

***"WHY DID THEY WRITE ON THE
WALLS?"***

WHEN DID THEY SIGN THEIR NAMES?

March 1862

The first Union soldiers who left their names on the walls arrived with thousands who had left Washington, D.C. On March 10, the small strategic crossroads of Fairfax Court House became under Union control for the remainder of the war. General George McClellan was commanding the Army of the Potomac and sent soldiers to Centreville and Manassas to find the Confederate Army had evacuated to the west and south.

Many of the regiments only stayed in Fairfax Court House for a few days; and most moved from here to McClellan's unsuccessful Peninsula Campaign or to the Shenandoah Valley. With the position of the Willcoxon home on a major road (Fairfax Court House Falls Church Road), and at the highest point NE of the small village, it may have been an easy resting and training spot for soldiers--- waiting to receive orders.

September 1862-January 1863

The 11th Army Corps, commanded by General Franz Sigel, occupied Fairfax Court House until late November. Upon leaving for Frederickburg in December 1862 the 11th Army Corps was forced to leave many of their sick behind. Blenheim served as part of the Reserve Hospital system for the corps. Close to 1800 men were sick in and surrounding Fairfax Court House. Those whose health improved were sent back to their regiments; others were sent to more permanent hospitals in Alexandria, Washington, D.C, or closer to their homes. Still others were discharged, or died of their ailments.

More than 750,000 soldiers died during the Civil War. Even with upwards of 200,000 battlefield deaths, closer to 480,000 soldiers died from disease. Intestinal disorders, such as diarrhea, typhoid fever, and dysentery were some of the largest killers. Others died from pneumonia and tuberculosis. Contagious diseases such as measles, chickenpox, mumps, and whooping cough were spread among the soldiers who were

living in overcrowded and often unsanitary conditions.

Spring 1863

The 22nd Army Corps was responsible for the Defenses of Washington and was assigned to sites ranging up and down the Potomac River, as well as the forts that ringed Washington, D.C. The 1st Michigan Cavalry, 1st West Virginia Cavalry, and the 18th Pennsylvania Cavalry were units from that corps whose soldiers' signatures have been verified on the attic walls. Archaeologists have found military artifacts related to the 18th Pennsylvania Cavalry and general cavalry-related artifacts on site. Of the three cavalry units, only some companies of the 1st Michigan Cavalry stayed at Fairfax Court House for a length of time. In late June 1863 each of these cavalry troops headed to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

Understandably, when the Willcoxon family began to repair their lives after the Civil War, they covered the living spaces on the first and second floors over time with paint and wallpaper. (Taking care of repairing the farm damage was most likely foremost on their agenda.) Yet touching the attic walls for the Confederate family was off limits. Was it that they didn't use the space much and so they could ignore it, or did they realize the historical significance of the walls in their home?

RESEARCH

Research on the Blenheim soldiers began in late 1997, by the Blenheim Research Group. Names were deciphered, checked in the *Official Records of the Rebellion* and other basic published resources from the Civil War era and later. Once a name and regiment were confirmed, service files and pension files (if they existed) were pulled from the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, D.C and copied. The files, often voluminous, were fully transcribed and annotated. Separate soldier files were made extracting the essential information.

To further expand the knowledge of the soldiers, queries were made to historical societies, genealogical groups, and sources in individual

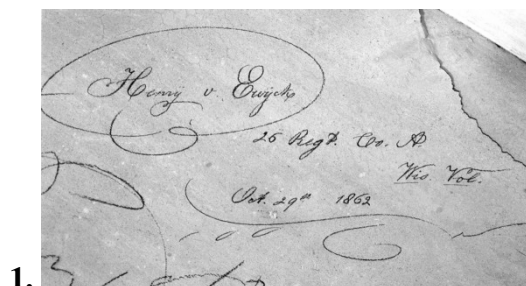
states, and through the ever-increasing information made available on the World Wide Web.

The goal has always been to create a three-dimensional figure from each soldier's name. In learning about the background, life as a soldier and beyond, we begin to understand the common man.

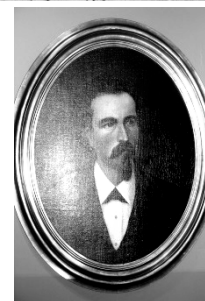
We gratefully acknowledge the dedication of Mr. C.K. Gailey and the late Mrs. Patricia A. Gallagher, whose research skills and extensive knowledge of the Civil War have made this quest possible. Likewise, the independent research efforts of Art and Julia Little have been much appreciated.

City of Fairfax, Office of Historic Resources

MEET THE SOLDIERS –



1.



*Henry van Ewyck,
26 Regt Co A Wis Vol
Oct 29th 1862*

Henry van Ewyck was a sign painter from Farmers, Wisconsin, who enlisted in the 26th Wisconsin Infantry, Company A, "Flying Rangers" in August 1862. Van Ewyck was the lone Dutchman in a predominantly German-speaking regiment. Known as "The Sigel Regiment," it was part of the 11th Army Corps headed by General Franz Sigel. Abraham Lincoln had instructed this most renowned German, now in America, to recruit 12 regiments from German communities all across the nation.

The 26th Wisconsin Infantry reached Fairfax Court House on October 15, 1862 and was united with other members of the 11th Army Corps. Henry's elegant signature, in the house's attic stairwell, is dated October 29, 1862. His service file shows that in November–December 1862 he “was left sick in Fairfax Court House and has deserted from there.” He made his way to Ohio and reportedly deserted with a friend and was “Said to be in Canada.” However, van Ewyck had a change of heart and rejoined his regiment on April 5, 1863* and was even promoted to corporal in September.

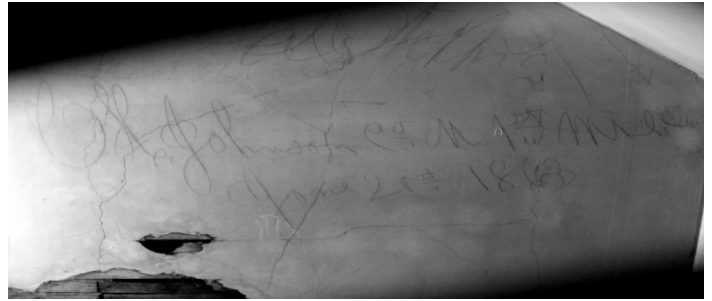
Henry survived the war and lived the remainder of his life in Milwaukee with his wife, Maria, and 6 children. He continued his painting business until his death from diabetes at age 51 on April 26, 1891. He is buried in Union Cemetery, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Five generations of the van Ewyck family have visited the Blenheim attic to see their ancestor's signature. Many had never met before and began trading family information.

Henry van Ewyck was much more than a house and sign painter. Family members have in their possession two paintings showing his artistic talent. One is a distinguished self-portrait; the other is a delightful landscape with cows, painted on metal.

***MANY UNION SOLDIERS WERE CAPTURED, KILLED OR IMPRISONED FOR DESERTING THE ARMY. WHY WAS HENRY VAN EWYCK WELCOMED BACK INTO THE ARMY AND EVEN PROMOTED?**

(By early 1863, 125,000 Union soldiers had deserted from the Federal forces. Concerned with the dwindling numbers of soldiers, Lincoln, on March 10, 1863, granted amnesty to Union deserters if they returned to their companies and regiments within sixty days.)



Charles H. Johnson, 1st Michigan Cav, Co M, June 20, 1863

Charles H. Johnson was a 19-year-old cavalryman when he took a waxy sepia-colored crayon and charcoal and brashly signed his name several times on the attic walls. The date of June 20, 1863 not only reveals when he wrote in the attic, but also, coincidentally, marks the day that West Virginia entered into the Union.

In detailed letters to his family, Private Johnson reflected on the two months time he spent at Fairfax Court House drilling, on picket duty, on interim marches to other towns, and special detail. Quiet descriptions of the landscape, and narratives of camp and home are a far-cry from the bloody events that unfolded when his unit fought at the Battle of Gettysburg in early July.

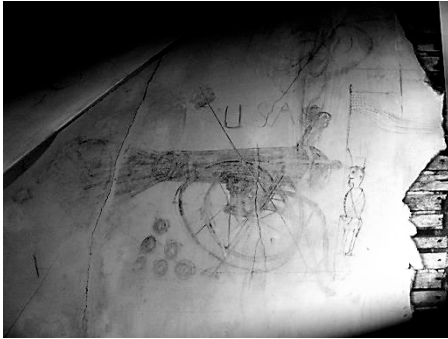
Charles survived the war, reenlisted in to the Veterans Volunteers of the 1st Michigan Cavalry working as a Quartermaster Sergeant. In the Summer of 1865 his regiment was sent to Fort Laramie in Wyoming Territory to serve in the Indian Campaign. He mustered out of service in Spring 1866.

In 1867, Charles was married to Harriet Emily Branch. Together they made their home in Boyne Falls and Traverse City, Michigan and had 5 children, two who died in infancy and one who was adopted. As an elderly widower, Charles Johnson moved to San Jose, California to live with his daughter until he died on April 20, 1924.

A collection of his war-time letters--including those written at Fairfax Court House--are in a special collection in the University of California, Santa Barbara. They provide a personal and vivid picture of daily activities of this young cavalry soldier. Other collection items, such as photographs, a colorful marriage certificate and a housewife (sewing kit) made by his sister, help to

create a more intimate portrait of Charles H. Johnson, known as “Charley”.

JOHNSON, LIKE MANY OF THE SOLDIERS, WOULD OFTEN COMPLAIN IN LETTERS IF FAMILY AND FRIENDS DID NOT WRITE. HOW DO YOU THINK IT FELT TO BE FAR FROM HOME WAITING TO HEAR FROM LOVED ONES? HOW DO WE COMMUNICATE DIFFERENTLY TODAY?



3.

Cannon, flag, and soldier

The artist of this pictograph spent great care drawing this very flat, yet effective, representation of a soldier shooting a cannon. Images of war are found in the attic, mostly in the form of ships. As none of the soldiers were in the Navy, perhaps they were responding to newspaper reports of naval battle of the Merrimac and the Monitor...



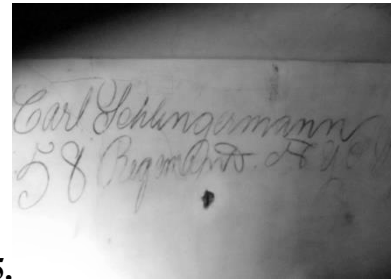
4.

*M M Marshall
13th N.Y.S.V
March 11, 1862*

Matthew Mead Marshall wrote his name and the date of March 11, 1862 on two walls of the attic. This is the earliest date soldiers are recorded in the house. Marshall is the only member of the 13th New York State Volunteers who has been identified in Blenheim.

The 13th NYSV, before arriving at Fairfax Court House, was on guard and picket duty along the Potomac. As with a number of the first regiments who entered the house, the 13th NY had already been on the battlefield at 1st Manassas/Bull Run.

Matthew led a very sickly life following the war. He sustained an injury while constructing earthworks in Yorktown, soon after being in Fairfax Court House. He had a scrotal hernia, which was inoperable. Unable to continue work as a bookbinder he first lived with his father. He was usually too ill to even leave his home. From 1879-1889 he resided in the National Military Home in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, often in great pain. He died there on March 31, 1889 at age 51/52.



5.

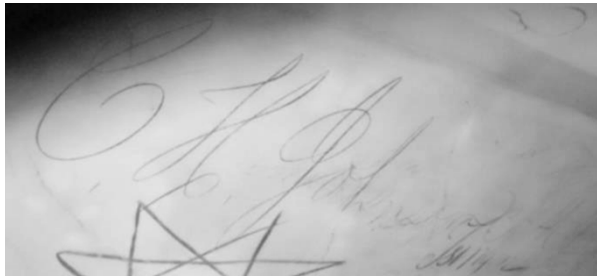
*Carl Schlingermann
58 Regement N.Y.S.V.*

Charles (Carl) Schlingermann was born in Herne, Prussia in 1842 and emigrated to New York City in June or July 1861. By late September 1861 he was a Private in Company H of the 58th New York Infantry.

In Spring 1862 the 58th New York Infantry was pulling duty in the Defenses of Washington as part of Bohlen's Brigade in Blenker's Division in the Army of the Potomac. Other German-speaking regiments in this Division included the 29th and 54th New York Infantry; the 73rd, 74th, and 75th Pennsylvania; and the 4th New York Cavalry--all are represented on the Blenheim walls.

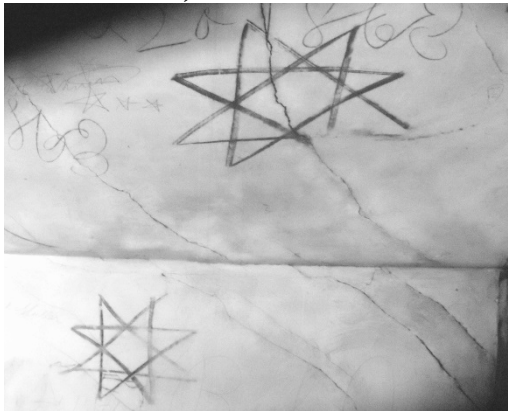
At the 2nd Battle of Manassas/Bull Run the 58th NYSV was with Pope's Army of Virginia. On August 30, 1862 Private Schlingermann was mortally wounded. He was transported to Washington, D.C. where he died on September 16 at Armory Square Hospital of “vulnus sclopticum” (gunshot wound). He was buried at the Military Asylum Cemetery which is the former

name of the Soldier's Home that is located on Harewood Road in northeast Washington. D.C. near Lincoln's Cottage.



6. *Charles H. Johnson, 1st Michigan Cav,
Co M, June 20, 1862
(see #2)*

**WHY DO YOU THINK CHARLES JOHNSON
WROTE HIS NAME SO LARGE
ON THE WALL, AND SO MANY TIMES?**



7. Stars--Symbols, Quilt Patterns, or Games?

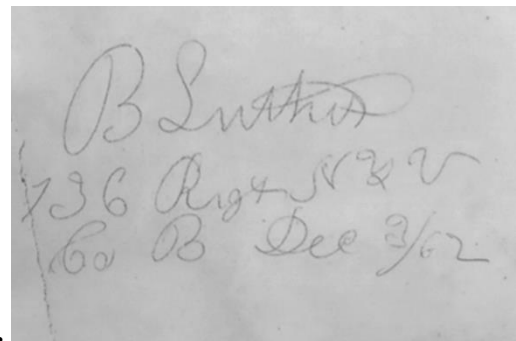
This portion of the attic is covered with charcoal drawings of stars. Some are 5-sided, some are 8-sided...what do they mean? We believe they were drawn by German-born soldiers as they seem to write large, and in charcoal on the walls with stars. We have discovered that this was a popular German game—drawing the star without lifting the charcoal.

The 8-sided star was adopted by Moravians, who did move into Germany and also to the United States. Perhaps the use of the 8-pointed star for this game was adopted from this religious group.

A HOUSE BECOMES A HOSPITAL

Between September 1862 and January 1863 there were close to 1800 soldiers ill in the Fairfax Court House area with typhoid fever, diarrhea, fevers, and various ailments. Obviously, this house was too small to hold everyone. The Willcoxon family home became part of the 11th Army Corps Reserve Hospital system that utilized other houses, buildings, and land in and surrounding Fairfax Court House. Often only the sickest soldiers were brought indoors. Most soldiers were kept in tents as part of the temporary field hospital.

Mary Willcoxon and her two children traveled to Middleburg in November 1862 during the time of the illness in heir home town. They had a pass from Aldie to Middleburg and were driven by “a colored driver,” perhaps a family slave. [Note: the mention of this driver is the only wartime and post-war information we have on the 6 slaves owned by the Willcoxon Family]. But where did they start from?

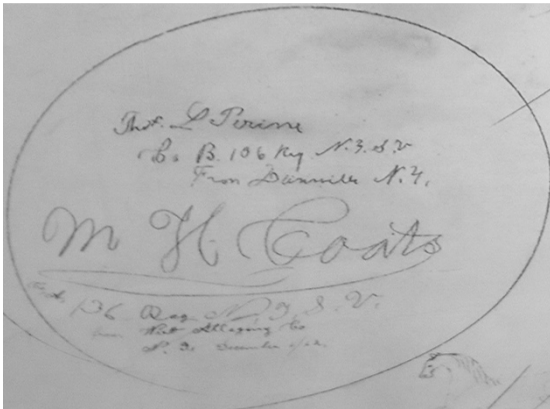


8. *B Luther
136 Regt NYV
Co B Dec 3/62*

The long-term effects of the war took its toll on many soldiers. Many survived to old age with various ailments acquired by the wear and tear from soldiering. Others, like Bruce Luther died at age 35. Sgt. Luther was a member of Co. B in the 136th New York State Volunteers, who signed his name in the attic in Fall 1862. As one of the regiments of the 11th Army Corps, eight soldiers from the 136th NYSV are listed on the register for the Reserve Hospital for the 11th Army Corps at Fairfax Court House, Va. “Luther Bruse,” was listed as Patient # 1496 on Register #353. He is listed as being admitted on December

13, but his signature is dated December 3. No illness is designated.

The 6'-tall Luther was later promoted to a 1st Lt. and was "slightly wounded in [the] face" during the Atlanta campaign on May 29, 1864. He mustered out in June 15, 1865 and returned to his hometown of Dansville, New York. Bruce Luther married and--according to his files--he died in 1869 of consumption (tuberculosis) that he contracted while in the service.



9.

*Thomas L. Perine
Co. B 136 Reg N.Y.S.V.
From Dansville N.Y.*

Thomas L. Perine was 27 when he enlisted in the 136th New York State Volunteers, Co. B., as a private. He was a 5' 11" farmer with light complexion, red hair, and blue eyes. He was admitted as Patient #823, Register #353, on November 28, 1862 with diarrhea. In his application for an original pension on May 22, 1880 he said he spent 2 weeks sick in Fairfax, Va.

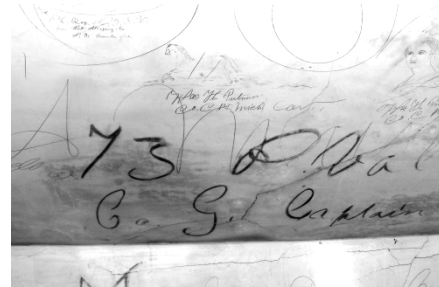
Unfortunately, someone had not relayed this information to the Adjutant General (the regimental secretary) of the 136th New York Infantry, who listed him as a deserter. It eventually was straightened out, but this was not unusual record-keeping during the Civil War.

10. M H. Coats
*Co. A 136 Reg N.Y.S.V.
From West Allegany Co
NY December 6/62*

Morris Coats, from the 136th New York Infantry, was pivotal in confirming the house's use as a field hospital. Willcoxon family oral history had suggested that the house was used during the

Civil War as a hospital. The discovery of the registers for the Reserve Hospital for the 11th Army Corps at Fairfax Courthouse, Fall 1862, helped to prove the family lore when analyzed with soldiers service and pension files.

Morris H. Coats is listed as a patient on one of the registers in both November and December 1862, first listed with dysentery. His wall signature is dated December 6, 1862. In his pension file, Coats' 1888 deposition refers to being in the "Brick House Hospital" at Fairfax Court House afflicted with typhoid fever. An affidavit from a former soldier friend also places in there during that time period. An earlier Surgeon General's Report (1879) confirms information about the Reserve Hospital, 11th Army Corps. All studied together the documents prove the use of Blenheim as a hospital.



11.
*A Muse
83rd Regt PV
Co B*

Addison Muse was one of the many soldiers from the 83rd Pennsylvania who left their marks on the house walls between March 10 and 15, 1862. The 83rd Pennsylvania Infantry hailed from northwestern Pennsylvania. In Fall 1861/Winter 1862, they encamped in Arlington, Virginia. The 83rd PV made friends with the 44th New York State Volunteers and were brigaded together with them throughout the war. The

44th NYSV were thus at Blenheim at the same time. The two regiments were commonly known as the “Butterfield Twins,” named for their commanding officer, Daniel Butterfield, who is credited for composing the bugle call, “Taps”. The “twins” were known for their steadfastness at Little Round Top at the Battle of Gettysburg.

Private Muse had a difficult military career. He was captured and imprisoned in Richmond following the Battle of Gaines Mill on June 27, 1862. But it was from a wound acquired at the Battle of Fredericksburg that contributed to his ill health and early death. Muse’s finger was shot and he was sent to the College Hospital of Georgetown where it was amputated. He was out sick and then on furlough for the next two months, but was unable to fully carry a gun again for the regular army. Other ailments stemming from the wound seemed to plague him. He was sick in Washington, from May 1863-August 1864 and transferred to the Invalid Corps (Veteran Reserve Corps) where he continued his soldiering as a guard in Washington, D.C. He mustered out in late Fall 1864 and married his childhood sweetheart soon after. They had one child, but on June 5, 1872, Muse died of consumption (tuberculosis).

A fascinating document in his pension file is his entire diary from 1863. The diary is only 2 ½” x 3”, but Muse was able to descriptively document every day of that calendar year. It was part of his proof of showing that his ailments were a direct result of soldiering. The early part of the year has wonderful details about Georgetown and Washington, D.C.’s sites and sounds. If only we could find his diary for 1862 when he was in the attic!

DO YOU KEEP A DIARY? WHAT TYPES OF THINGS DO YOU WRITE ABOUT?

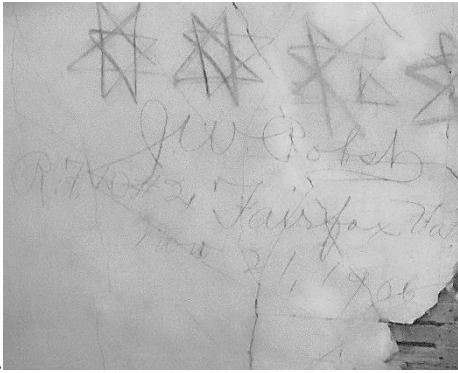


12.

*Theodor Raefle
29 Regiment Comp K NYV
1862
aus Hohenzollern Sigmaringin
Pruessen*

Theodor Raefle represents the strong German influence in the Blenheim Attic. More than 40 soldiers identified were born in Europe—mostly Germany/Prussia. Raefle was born in southwestern Germany (Hohenzollern Sigmaringen). Like Private Raefle, many soldiers from Company K of the 29th New York Infantry (also known as the First German Infantry), were mostly German and came from Philadelphia, rather than New York. Unfortunately, Raefle did not file for a pension, making it difficult for us to trace his life after the war. Also, his unusual name may have been changed decreasing the effort to find him. Theodor Raefle, as you can see, was quite artistic and prolific in this room. We think he might be responsible for a number of the more delicate drawings in the room.

WHEN DID YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS COME TO THE UNITED STATES? IS YOUR FAMILY NAME SPELLED THE SAME WAY AS YOUR ANCESTORS’ SPELLED IT?



13.

*JW Pobst
R.F.D. #2 Fairfax Va
Nov 21, 1906*

J. W. Pobst lived on a farm located by present-day Fairfax Circle. He was quite familiar with the Willcoxon family and surely knew Harry Willcoxon, the original owners' son who inherited the farm. Mr. Pobst couldn't resist adding his name to the walls in a few different places.

WRITINGS ON THE WALLS

Writing on walls (without permission) has occurred for centuries. Whether called graffiti or inscriptions, the act, of course, was not welcome by the people on whose property it was done. War graffiti is perhaps most well-known from the famous pictograph and message from World War II--"Kilroy is Here." Perhaps some of the reasons the Union soldiers wrote on the walls was simply to say who they were and that they were here. For some, like the large bold lettering of Charles Johnson, it was a brash sense of I am powerful and in control. If it was the writing of a sick soldier, it may be a more quiet, poignant, "remember me." And, as the translation of one German soldier's writing says, these were also "mischievous writings on the wall."

What is most fascinating is that Albert and Mary Willcoxon's family and descendants never covered the graffiti in the attic. Having only two children, the attic space was probably used more for storage than an extra sleeping area. Their son, Harry, who inherited the house, owned another farm in Centreville and mostly had renters living there and tending the farm. It was often rented until Barbara Duras Scott came to live there fulltime with her husband, Bill, in 1962. Again,

the graffiti in the attic was never touched except for the widening of the north doorway that did cut through the plaster and parts of names.

The effort made by the Willcoxon family and heirs to preserve this remarkable history was challenged after the death of William Scott in 1997 (ten years after Barbara Scott's death). Mr. Scott's brother and sister-in-law, Thomas and Mary Scott, boldly sold the property to the City of Fairfax in January 1999. As stewards of the house and property, the City has made a true commitment to historic preservation.

Historic Blenheim
Civil War Interpretive Center
3610 Old Lee Highway
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
(703) 591-0560
City of Fairfax
www.fairfaxva.gov

Finding Historic Blenheim

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The City of Fairfax owns and operates Historic Blenheim--through the Office of Historic Resources--along with the Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center and the Ratcliffe-Allison House. For operating hours and programs for these sites please call (703) 385-8414.

To help support Historic Blenheim, donations can be made to Historic Fairfax City, Inc. a City-chartered (501 (c) (3) advocacy organization for historic preservation in the City of Fairfax. The contribution should be designated for Blenheim and sent to HFCI, c/o 10209 Main Street, Fairfax, Virginia 22030. For further information please call (703) 273-5452.

Office of Historic Resources,
City of Fairfax, 2015



Historic Blenheim is now part of the Northern Virginia Civil War Graffiti Trail. To download a brochure, please go to www.brandystationfoundation.com.

HISTORIC BLENHEIM



AND THE CIVIL WAR INTERPRETIVE CENTER GALLERY EXHIBIT: "A Diary on Walls"

3610 Old Lee Highway
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
(703) 591-0560 www.fairfaxva.gov

The Civil War Interpretive Center is open
Tuesday-Saturday **10 a.m. - 3 p.m.**

*Guided tours of historic house and
grounds at 1 p.m.*

FREE ADMISSION

In July 1861, Federal troops rampaged through Fairfax Court House, Virginia, on a mission to suppress the Confederate forces at Manassas. A letter to the editor in the *Richmond Times Dispatch* described the destruction in and around Fairfax Court House before and after First Manassas: *....the house of Mr. Albert T. Willcoxon, a brick building recently erected and fitted up in handsome style, was entered by them, the window glass and sash almost entirely demolished, the doors torn from their hinges, the stair banister broken down and the furniture not removed split to pieces.*

The 367-acre Willcoxon farm-- 1 mile NE of Fairfax Court House--soon became a convenient and frequently used Union encampment site for both Infantry and Cavalry units. The house was situated on the highest elevation NE of the small village of Fairfax Court House and along one the few main roads (Fairfax Court House/Falls Church Road) heading to the strategic courthouse town. It was a prominent location from which to view troop movements across the open rolling farmland.

Destruction of the home took on a new form in 1862 and 1863 as visiting Union soldiers left their signatures, regiments, home towns, sayings, and pictographs on the walls of the house. The attic walls reveal the most legible and largest quantity of names, as the graffiti was never covered. Understandably, the Willcoxon family and 4 generations of descendants applied paint and later wallpaper on the first and second floor walls. The images revealed beneath those layers are often faint and sometimes impossible to read. Viewed as a collection, the more than 120 identified names of soldiers and messages from Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wisconsin are truly a “diary on walls”.

Visiting Blenheim....

In 1999 the City of Fairfax purchased the historic Blenheim house and the surrounding 12 acres. Bounded by 1950s, 60s, and 70s suburbia, the historic site is a reminder of the area’s rich agricultural heritage. The house was entered onto the National Register of Historic Places in 2001.

Visitors to the property can visit the Civil War Interpretive Center on Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10am-3pm. A site tour of the property--including interpretive waysides and the first floor of the **historic Blenheim House**--occurs each of these days at 1pm.



The Civil War Interpretive enhances the educational experience of the site for visitors. The gallery space exhibits put the context for the Union soldiers at Blenheim within the larger framework of the Civil War. The primary feature of the gallery is a **replica** of the house’s attic with life-size images of the graffiti. (The 2nd floor and attic in the house are not accessible due to structural support issues and flights of stairs.)

The multi-purpose assembly room is a program space for school groups, tour groups, lectures, and special programs. (To book a rental please call: 703 385-7858).

The **Gift Shop** carries a range of Civil War books, DVDs, original prints, games, and toys.