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# 169<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry Newsletter

April 2014

## The Time Traveler.

### Part X.

Col. McConihe, Lieut.-Col. Alden, and Major Colvin were mustered-in at their new ranks as field officers of the 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y., the regiment having been brought up to standard. The destruction of the U.S. Army Transport *Maple Leaf* on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1864, by a Confederate torpedo on the St. Johns River, resulted in the loss of the 169<sup>th</sup>'s equipment and personal baggage, as well as that of two other regiments. The regiment participated in the expedition on the 2<sup>d</sup> to Cedar Creek, Fla., as a diversionary force. Grant's build-up for the spring campaign in Virginia led to the transfer and reorganization in late April of the X Corps, now part of the Army of the James, at Gloucester Point, Va.



Sunset on the St. Johns River (1878)  
George Herbert McCord (1848-1909)

Collection of the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, University of New Orleans



Shoulder strap insignia of a colonel in the U.S. Army

Col. Clarence Buel's resignation was accepted and approved by the War Department on February 29<sup>th</sup>, 1864, clearing the way for field officer promotions in the 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y. The *Troy Daily Press* reported on March 4<sup>th</sup> several promotions in the regiment, including that of Lieut.-Col. John McConihe to colonel, Major Alonzo Alden to lieutenant-colonel, and Captain James A. Colvin, Co. A, to major.

Other promotions included 1<sup>st</sup> Lieut. James F. Thompson, Co. F, to the captaincy of Company A, and 2<sup>d</sup> Lieut. Thomas D. Jellico, Co. F, to 1<sup>st</sup> lieutenant. Serg't. Richard B. Van Alstyne, 44<sup>th</sup> N.Y., who hailed from Chatham, Columbia County, N.Y., was transferred to the 169<sup>th</sup> and commissioned as 2<sup>d</sup> lieutenant of Co. F.



U.S. Model 1860 Light Cavalry Saber belonging to 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Thomas D. Jellico, Co. F, 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y., manufactured by Christopher Roby & Co., Chelmsford, Massachusetts (1864)  
Collection of the National Museum of American History,  
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

*David Miller, Associate Curator at the National Museum of American History, states in his letter of November 17, 2009: "Since Jellico was an officer, he would have needed a sword due to his rank. A light cavalry saber was probably the most useful regulation sword available to a combat infantry officer in 1864."*

Reporting that the regiment was now "fully officered," the *Daily Press* applauded the promotions and reputations of Cols. McConihe and Alden:

"The promotion of Lieut.-Col. McConihe is a deserved recognition of the services of a reliable, competent and faithful officer. We have reason to know that the news of his appointment will be received with every demonstration of joy by the regiment. No officer has done more to promote the efficiency and general welfare of the regiment than Col. McConihe, and it is safe to presume that the organization will continue to earn distinction and renown under his command. Major Alonzo Alden, who has been promoted to the Lieutenant-Colonelcy, is highly esteemed by the officers and members of the regiment, and will bring

to the discharge of his duties experience and a thorough regard for the best interests of his command."

The Troy *Daily Times* echoed the sentiments of the *Daily Press* on the 5<sup>th</sup>:

"ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-NINTH. – The promotions in this regiment, given in yesterday's second edition, are republished on our fourth page. The advancement of our townsman John McConihe to the Colonelcy, is a deserved compliment to a brave soldier, a skillful officer, and an estimable, popular young man. In *Frank Leslie* for March 12<sup>th</sup> appears a likeness of the Colonel, among other commanders of reënlisted regiments, with a neat sketch of his life. Lieut.-Col. Alonzo Alden is a soldier of whom Troy may well be proud. Major Colvin is also highly spoken of. Our favorite regiment is well-officered."



**The McConihe Brothers (ca. summer of 1862)  
Collection of the New York State Military Museum,  
Saratoga Springs, New York**

The *Daily Times* followed-up on the 11<sup>th</sup> with a reprint of an article which first appeared in the *Washington Chronicle*:

"Lieut.-Col. John McConihe, of the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth Regiment New York Volunteers, has recently been promoted to the colonelcy of the regiment. It was formerly stationed here on provost guard duty. Colonel McConihe was, on entering the service, Captain of

the First Nebraska Volunteers, and was wounded at the battle of Shiloh. He is one of three patriotic brothers who have seen active service since the commencement of the war. Captain William McConihe, of the old Second New York Volunteers, (one of the brothers,) served in the battle of Big Bethel, the Peninsula war, and Pope's campaign, and was wounded at Chancellorsville by a ball through his breast. Major Samuel McConihe, (the second brother,) of the Ninety-third New York Volunteers, has been with the Army of the Potomac since its organization."

Col. McConihe, at age 29, was the youngest man to hold that rank in the U.S. Army, according to *The Chronotype, An American Memorial of Persons and Events*, Vol. 1, No. 6, June-July, 1873, p. 194, published by the American College of Heraldry and Genealogical Registry of New York:

**SOME OF THE FIRST AND LAST  
THINGS OF THE LATE WAR.**

**FROM "TOWNSEND'S NATIONAL RECORD."**

"In April, 1864, Col. John McConihe, of the 169<sup>th</sup> New York Volunteers, was the youngest Colonel in the army."

The article from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* is presented in its entirety:



MARCH 12, 1864.

**OUR VETERANS.**

WE give portraits of several of the Colonels of our veteran regiments, whose re-enlistment for the war has done more than perhaps any other act to determine the great struggle. It was the confident boast of the rebels and their Northern friends, that the soldiers would not re-enlist; but the brave men who had for three years upheld the flag of the country could not desert it. They rally again around their Colonels, to continue to the end the heroic history of the regiments.

**Col. W. Krzyzanowski, Commanding 2<sup>d</sup> Brigade, 3<sup>d</sup> Division,  
11<sup>th</sup> Army Corps.**

Col. Krzyzanowski is a Polish gentleman, whose participation in one of the many struggles for freedom made him an exile. When the rebellion broke out in 1861 he was a resident of Washington, and joined a militia company as a private, but was soon made Captain. After the term of its three months' service, he received a commission to raise a rifle regiment in New York. In October he led from this city the 58<sup>th</sup> N. Y. S. V. He has since been in 13 battles, having since July, 1862, commanded a brigade. At Cross Keys he particularly distinguished himself, and was the first to enter Gettysburg. During the battle



his horse was shot under him while far in the advance, and he was sent to the West after the battle of Chickamauga, and the recent glorious victory added to its high renown; Gen. Meigs saying in his report that he never thought these troops could fight as they did. All his regiments have re-enlisted, asking but one question – whether he was to lead them.

**Col. George L. Prescott, 32<sup>d</sup> Mass. Vol.**

Col. Prescott is a native of Middlesex County, Mass., and at the beginning of the war left his business in Concord to take the field as 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in the 5<sup>th</sup> Mass. militia. After three months' service with it, he raised a company for three years' service, which became the nucleus of the 32<sup>d</sup> Mass. volunteers, organized at first as a battalion under Major Parker. After some duty at Fort Warren, it was sent to Harrison's landing, July 4, 1862, and attached to the 1<sup>st</sup> division, 5<sup>th</sup> army corps. Capt. Prescott was soon made Lieut.-Colonel, and as such fought with his regiment at Antietam and Fredericksburg. After the latter battle, on the resignation of Col. Parker, he received the command of the 32<sup>d</sup>, and led it through the battles of Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, losing in the latter bloody fight one-third of his effective force. The remnant of the regiment – 335 men – enthusiastically re-enlisted for the war.

**Col. Orlando H. Morris, 66<sup>th</sup> N. Y. V.**

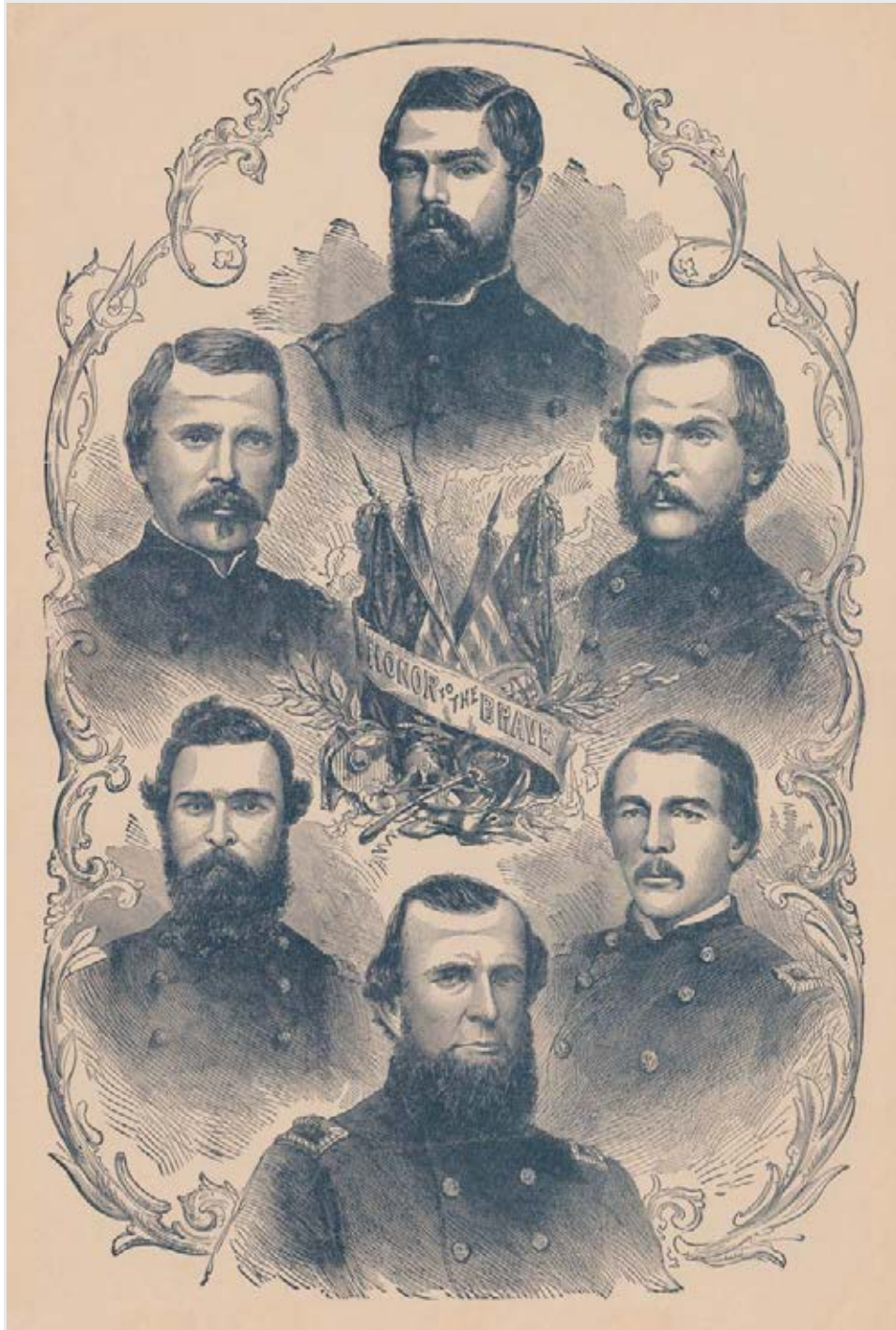
Col. Morris is the son of Gen. Wm. L. Morris, an officer in the U. S. service in the war of 1812. He was born in New York, and graduated at Columbia College in 1854. He embraced the profession of the law, in which his father had already won distinction; but in Nov. 1861, left New York as Major of the 66<sup>th</sup> Volunteers.

His regiment was assigned to the 2<sup>d</sup> corps, forming part of the 3<sup>d</sup> brigade in the 1<sup>st</sup> division, and well deserves the name of veterans, having fought at Fair Oaks, Gaines's Mill, Peach Orchard, Savage Station, White Oak Swamp, Malvern Hill, under McClellan; at Centreville, under Pope; at South Mountain and Antietam, under McClellan; at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, as well as at Gettysburg and Bristow Station, under Meade. One hundred and fifty heroes came back with their Colonel, bearing their battle-torn flags, to re-enlist and gather other brave men around them.

Col. Morris has led his men in action, displaying skill, courage and intrepidity. He was severely wounded at Gettysburg, and deserves the high reputation he has acquired.

**Lieut.-Col. Robert Avery, 102<sup>d</sup> N. Y. V.,**

is a native of Wyoming valley, Pa., born Sept. 22, 1839. He entered the service as Captain in Sept. 1861, and with his regiment was at first employed in garrison duty near Washington. After Banks retreated up the Shenandoah valley, his regiment joined Sigel's army and fought desperately at Cedar Mountain, losing one-fourth its officers and men. It also took share in the other operations of Gen. Pope, and distinguished itself at Antietam. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of Jan. 1863, Capt. Avery was made Lieut.-Col. He led his men at the battle of Chancellorsville, receiving a severe wound – a Minié ball passing through his neck, carrying away a part of his lower jaw. From the effect of this he became paralyzed in the left side, and was for a time confined to the hospital. When his regiment was ordered to Tennessee he could not leave it, and though still suffering and often unable to leave his tent, took command of the advance line of skirmishers in storming Lookout



Col. W. Krzyzanowski, 58<sup>th</sup> N. Y.    Lieut.-Col. R. Avery, 102<sup>d</sup> N. Y.    Col. O. H. Morris, 66<sup>th</sup> N. Y.  
 Col. P. Kelly, 88<sup>th</sup> N. Y.    Col. G. L. Prescott, 32<sup>d</sup> Mass.    Lieut.-Col. J. McConihe, 169<sup>th</sup> N. Y.

**COLONELS OF VETERAN REGIMENTS RE-ENLISTED FOR THE WAR.**

Collection of the Author

*Col. John McConihe was killed in action at Cold Harbor, Va., June 1, 1864; Col. Orlando H. Morris was killed in action at Cold Harbor, Va., June 3, 1864; Col. Patrick Kelly was killed in action at Petersburg, Va., June 16, 1864; and Col. George L. Prescott, mortally wounded at Petersburg, Va., June 18, 1864, died the following day.*

Mountain. At the last moment, and just as the battle was won, Col. Avery was struck in the right thigh by a bullet that shattered the bone so badly as to require amputation. He was again compelled to leave his regiment; but on the return of his regiment to New York on furlough after re-enlisting, he was so far recovered that he met them and resumed command. It is feared, however, that, with all his zeal, his wounds will prevent further active service.

**Lieut.-Col. John McConihe, Commanding 169<sup>th</sup> N. Y. Vols.,**

is a citizen of Troy, N. Y., and a graduate of Union College. Having graduated at the Albany Law School in 1856, he removed to the far West, and located himself at Omaha, the capital of Nebraska Territory. He soon became Private Secretary to the Hon. W. A. Richardson, Governor of the Territory, and subsequently to Gov. Samuel W. Black, previous to which he creditably held the position of Adjutant-General of the Territory. In 1860 he was the Democratic candidate for Mayor of Omaha, but was overcome by the opposition.

At the first call to arms, in 1861, he was made Captain of a company of hardy frontiersmen on the famous 1<sup>st</sup> Nebraska regiment, and commanded it through the campaigns in Missouri and Tennessee in 1861 and 1862, and at the bloody battle of Shiloh was severely wounded, after displaying marked courage and ability throughout the two days' contest.

He was then promoted to be Lieutenant-Colonel of the 169<sup>th</sup> New York volunteers, which gallant regiment Col. McConihe has ably commanded, to the satisfaction of all, since April last, in the campaign in Virginia and during the siege of Charleston, S. C. His admirers in Troy, N. Y., recently sent him, at Folly Island, S. C., a costly sword, with silver scabbard, mounted in gold and inlaid with jewels, as a testimonial of their appreciation of his fortitude and endurance as displayed throughout the war. For months Col. McConihe was campaigning with his wound yet unhealed, the shattered arm unserviceable, and is a young officer of untiring energy, undaunted courage and established ability.

**Patrick Kelly, Colonel of the 88<sup>th</sup> Regiment New York Volunteers,**

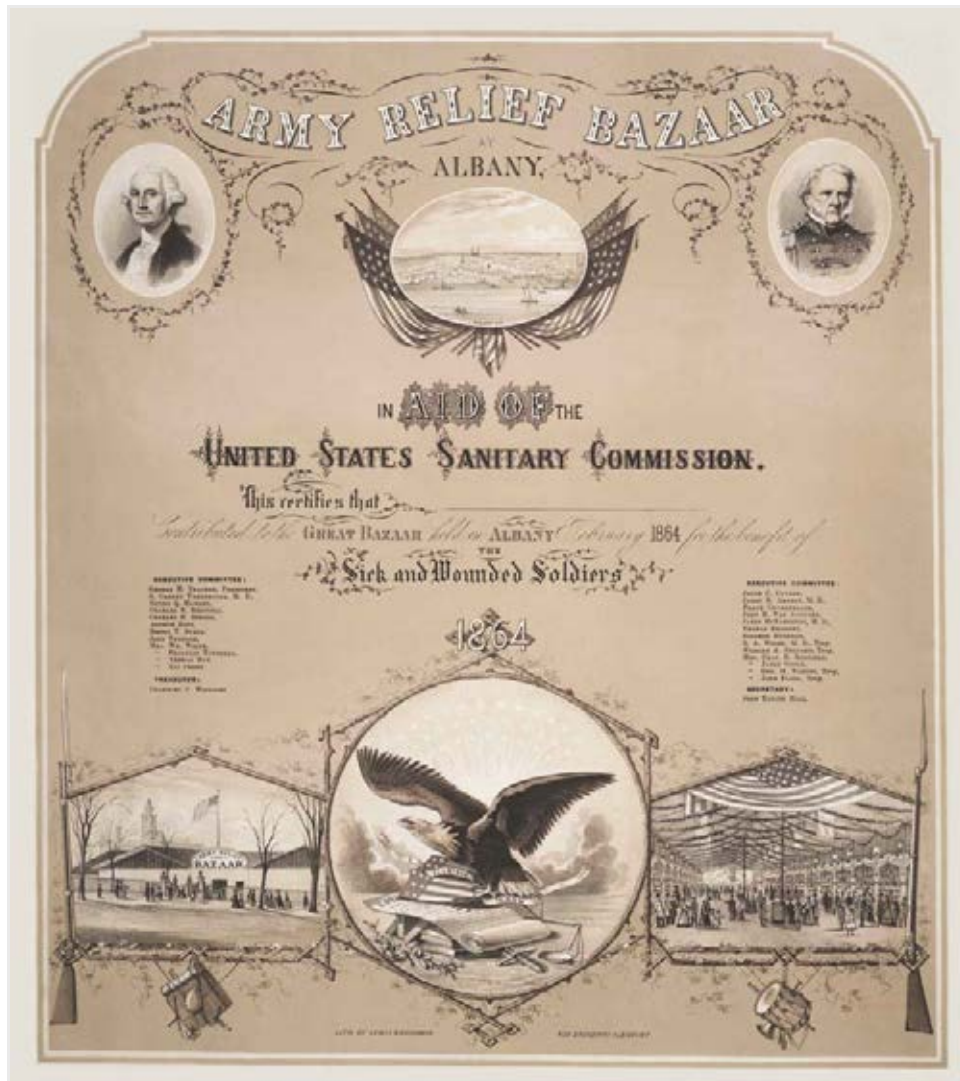
and Acting Brigadier-General of the Irish Brigade, was born at Castle Hackett, near Tuam, county of Galway, Ireland, in the year 1822, and emigrated to the United States in 1849. He joined the 69<sup>th</sup> regiment N. Y. S. M. in 1852, and passing through all the grades from private to captain, accompanied that regiment when called to the defence of the capitol of the Nation, and for his gallantry upon the historic battlefield of Bull run was commissioned Captain in the 16<sup>th</sup> regiment U. S. infantry.

On the return of the 69<sup>th</sup> regiment to New York, Capt. Kelly took an active part in the organization of the Irish Brigade, and entered the field with it, as Lieut.-Col. of the 88<sup>th</sup> regiment, and was promoted to the Colonelcy after the celebrated "seven days."

Gen Meagher having resigned in May, 1863, Col. Kelly has since commanded the Brigade.

A courteous gentleman, a true friend and a brave soldier, the Union army has no better representative than Col. Kelly as "the man for Galway."

Col. Kelly commanded the 88<sup>th</sup> in every battle which took place on the Peninsula, and from Antietam to Gettysburg, and is now actively engaged in recruiting this famous veteran regiment at Tammany Hall.



Advertising poster for the Army Relief Bazaar, February, 1864  
 Lithograph of Lewis & Goodwin, Albany, New York (1864)  
 Collection of the New York State Library, Albany, New York

Col. McConihe's letter on the 10<sup>th</sup> to Lavinia Newton of Cincinnati indicates that he was looking forward to returning to his regiment in Jacksonville:

"I have been sick with diphtheria and remained in the house nine days. But I am all well again and thinking of soon returning to the regiment, which has recently been ordered down to Florida. I will not probably get away before the 20<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup> of this month. We have about ceased recruiting and I find myself with little to do, although the hours fly swiftly by.

"I sent you papers announcing my promotion, and would have sent one to Harry, had I but known his address. What do you think of my portrait in Leslie, and is that picture not better than a photograph? If you think not, I will have a photograph painted for you with the colonel's straps!

"The Sanitary Fair at Albany closed last night, and we all got home about 12:30 P.M. There was much fun, and the young people seemed to enjoy themselves hugely, yet in many respects it was a great, overshadowing bore and swindle. I gambled away about \$60 and have



nothing but a dressing case to show for it. But it was done for the soldiers – I mean, the conquering female heroes of the fair.

"There is nothing especially new with me, as I have been quiet, on account of my sickness. I cannot tell when I shall get away, but it may be on the steamer which sails on the 18<sup>th</sup>. At all events, I am getting everything ready to move then. I will write you before I go, and when I get away. I will make up long letters to pay for these miserable short ones."

A letter written on the 6<sup>th</sup> by 1<sup>st</sup> Serg't. Frederick F. French, Co. D, to his friend Thomas F. Kelly of Glens Falls, N.Y., provides a report on the regiment's activities since its arrival in Jacksonville, omitting, he said, "anything respecting our operations here, or our strength, as our mails are liable to capture while being conveyed down the river." An extract of the letter was kindly shared with your correspondent by Fred L. Ray, author of *Shock Troops of the Confederacy: The Sharpshooter Battalions of the Army of Northern Virginia*:



Letter by 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant Frederick F. French, Co. D, 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y., March 6, 1864

"This day, while my regiment is at a halt, resting our weary limbs beneath the shade of the orange and oak trees on the moss covered bank of the sparkling St. Johns, I eagerly improve a few leisure moments to address a few lines to my much esteemed friend, who I trust they will find enjoying good health and surrounded with all the happiness of civil life. My health, I am proud to say, is as good as I could wish it.

"We have already had one battle [Olustee] and expect another soon. How soon it may take place, I cannot say, neither do I care, as I presume we were sent here for the purpose of conquering the Rebels of this State. And it being the universal opinion of the senior soldiers that they can be conquered by Federal bayonets only, we propose adopting that method for driving them from the soil which they have so basely polluted. I have already served one-half of my term of enlistment and I would regret returning to the North after having served three years and find this rebellion yet unsettled...

"I must necessarily omit anything respecting our operations here, or our strength, as our mails are liable to capture while being conveyed down the river. We are daily, or rather, weekly in receipt of news from Generals Grant, Sherman, and others, all of whom appear to be attended with success in their operations against the enemy.



**Surrender of a Confederate Soldier (1873)**

**Julian A. Scott (1846-1901)**

**Collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.**

"Desertions from the enemy are daily coming into our lines. Within a few days, upwards of 400 have rallied beneath the Old Banner of Freedom and voluntarily taken the Oath of Allegiance. They positively assert that the Rebel army of this State is utterly demoralized, and in a state of starvation. However, as this is the report of Rebel deserters, it is not to be relied upon, because first, a deserter is a coward, and secondly, he has broken the oath which bound him to the cause for which

he enlisted. He, therefore, should not be allowed to cross our lines until he had made clear passage with the bayonet. I for one am not ready to believe them, even under oath.

"Friend Thomas, I am happy to be able to state that I find this climate much more agreeable than I had ever anticipated. The only great fault which I will be ungenerous enough to make known is the heat of the weather, which at this date is during the day is as warm as the month of August. In the North, the nights are somewhat cooler. Owing to the heavy news I learn from the homes of the old residents of this town, this is quite a healthy locality, the only disease known to prevail here during the summer months is the fever and ague [a malarial fever marked by recurring paroxysms of chills, fever, and sweating].



**Sharpshooters (1912)**  
**N. C. Wyeth (1882-1945)**  
**Private Collection**

"The most desperate enemy that we have to contend with here is the Florida Indians, who have organized themselves into roving bands of bushwhackers and occasionally steal upon our picket lines under cover of night and disturb our sentinels. Many of the Redskins are sharpshooters. During the recent battle, they betook themselves to the tree-tops and picked off many of the officers of the Colored Troops.





**A Friendly Game**  
**Julian A. Scott (1846-1901)**  
**Collection of the Tuscaloosa Museum of Art, Tuscaloosa, Alabama**

"While I am writing, Corporal Murphy [Corp. Patrick Murphy, Co. D] is busily engaged in a game of 45's\* with some of his comrades. The corporal is in good health and spirit and I am of the opinion that he should be fortunate enough to obtain another furlough to the North, where he might again mingle with the softer, or rather gentler sex, and inhale the secrets of social life. He will, by struggling a little, conform himself to good order and military discipline and at the end of his term return to the North a gay and rambling soldier."

[\*Forty-Fives, also known as Forty-Five, Forte Fives, Auction Forty-Fives, Auction 120s, 120, Growl, Spoil Five, Maw and Strong Fives, is a trick-taking card game that originated in Ireland. It is often played in the maritime provinces of Canada, where it is known as Forte Fives.]

Serg't. George M. Whitcomb, Co. D, wrote a letter to his parents Eli and Harriet Whitcomb on the 6<sup>th</sup> expressing his concern about an outbreak of smallpox in Sandy Hill, N.Y., which had struck members of his family:

"I now take my pen in hand to answer yours of the 21<sup>st</sup> directed to Rob, [Priv. Robert Whitcomb, Co. D], but he was not here, so I opened it, being anxious to hear how you were getting along. And I was glad to hear that you had got over that terrible disease and hope that mother and Charley and Line has got well of it by this time, and all others that may have the misfortune to catch that awful disease. But thanks be to kind Providence it found me well, but I cannot vouch for Rob, for I have not seen him in two weeks, as it is now about that length of time since we left there, and he was left behind to take care of the quartermaster's things, but I heard from him last night and he was well.





**Orange Tree, Nassau (1885)**  
**Winslow Homer (1836-1910)**  
**Private Collection**

"Well, father, since I last wrote you, we have moved about 200 miles farther south, down in the State of Florida, where they grow lemons and oranges, and the fruit trees are all in full bloom down here now; that is, peach trees and plum trees, and the oranges are just getting ripe. And let me tell you, it is quite warm weather here now through the day-time, about such weather as you get up there in the month of June. I wouldn't believe that there could be such a change in the climate from New York State here, but it is so.

"But as we don't have much to do, we don't suffer any at all. I have not been on duty but once now in almost three weeks. About all that I do is to read, eat, and sleep, and what do you suppose that I will be good for when I get home, God only knows. But I trust that if I am spared to get back there, that I will be good for something else besides a canaller [canal worker] or anything else that will cause me to break his Holy Sabbath day, for I think that I have done that quite enough to send me to everlasting perdition had I been cut-off in them days. But thanks be to God! He has spared me to see my folly and to turn to Him. I trust that though dead to this world, still I may live in Heaven with Him and all of the Saints in glory, and although I may not live to see Sandy Hill again, I do try to live by the grace of God so that I may be ready to meet Him at any time.

"And father, although you have got over the smallpox, remember that you have not got a lease of your life, and just think of it if God had taken you from this world when you were sick. Would it have been well with you? I got a letter from Frances Nelson the night before we left Folly Island, and she said that they had been over to Uncle Levy's and that they were all sick over there.

"Tell mother that she must not worry about us at all, for there is an eye upon us here as well as there was at home, and although dangers surround us, that almighty arm is always outstretched to save us from all harm. And for my part I feel just safe here as ever I did at home, but God knows my heart. I would like to go home and see you all, but I pray to God that the sun may soon shine on the day that I can see you



all, but I am a little fearful that I shall never see that little one, for Catie writes me that she is very sick. But God gave her and God will take her away if it is His good pleasure, and all that I can say is thy will, oh God, not mine, be done."

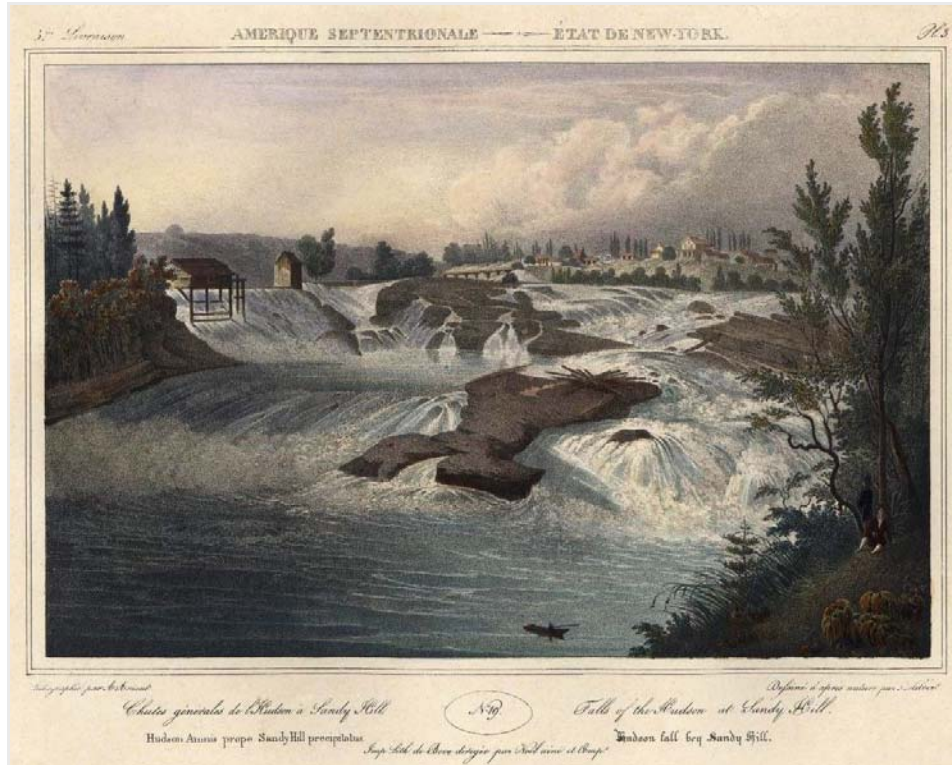
George's infant daughter, Georgia M. Whitcomb, whom he had never seen, would survive her illness. Her mother Caroline (aka "Catie") recounted the story in a letter on February 12<sup>th</sup> to Priv. Robert Whitcomb's wife, Sarah:

"I will write a few lines to you to inform you little Georgia is very sick. She has been sick for about two weeks, and on Wednesday and Thursday, she seemed to be a little better and rested good last night, but



**The Doctor (1891)**  
**Sir Luke Fildes (1843-1927)**  
**Tate Gallery, London**





**"Amerique Septentrionale, État de New-York"**  
**"Chutes générales de l'Hudson à Sandy Hill" – Falls of the Hudson at Sandy Hill**  
**Lithograph by A. Arnout, France (ca. 1850)**  
**Private Collection**

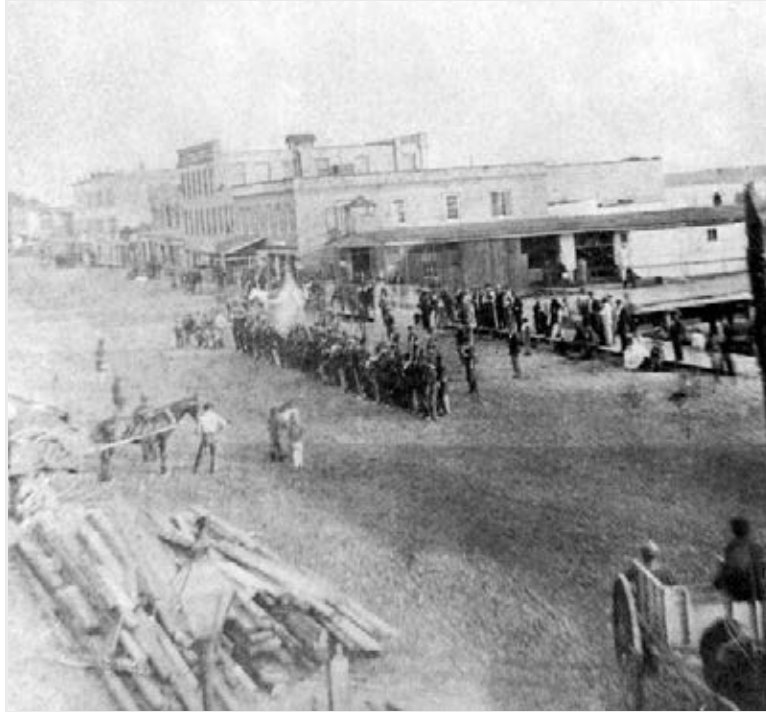
this morning, between 8 and 9, she had a fit and it did not last but a little while, and I went right to the Falls for the doctor, and when he came she seemed to be quite lively and smart. But he had not been gone long when she had another one, and that was between 3 and 4, and that was not so long as the other. It is now between 1 and 2 Friday night.

"Sarah, I have just took little Georgia up and nursed her and she went back to sleep again. Tell mother and father when you get a chance that I would like to see them, but I can't, not yet. In a while, I hope, little Georgia will be better by morning. It is almost 3 o'clock and I must close, for I have got a letter to finish to send to George."

In his customarily excellent letter on March 9<sup>th</sup> to his wife Elizabeth ("Lizzie"), Corp. Lyman Ostrom, Co. A, writes about life in Jacksonville, progress of the war, the regiment, and camp gossip. Of special interest is his account of Confederate saboteurs laying torpedoes (mines) in the St. Johns River:

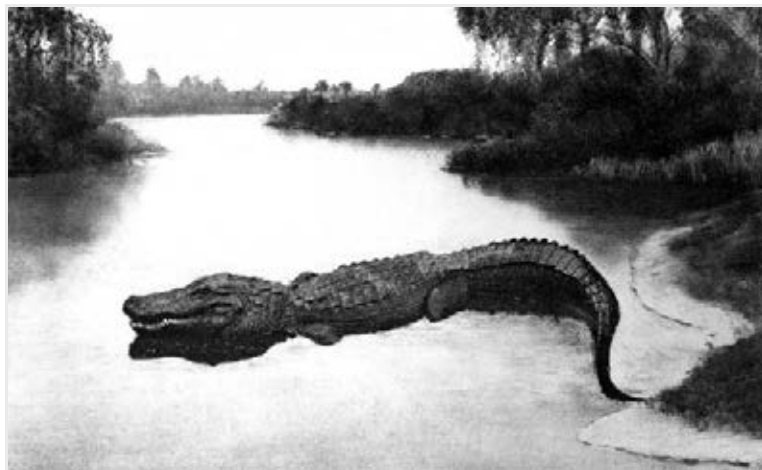
"Having this P.M. to myself, I will spend a portion of it giving you a brief account of the people and country here. In another letter I stated stock here was plentiful, but all kinds of farm produce scarce. There is good and the best evidence that the people of the South are suffering for the comforts of life. The clothing of most of those I have seen was barely sufficient to keep them comfortable. It is not uncommon to see children running about naked, and those who were on the expedition to near Lake City state at one place they found two young women with nothing but sheets or their undergarments to cover their nakedness. Our men went to a sutler's wagon and threw out calico to them.

"The people, generally aside from the blacks, are a miserable, dark-complexioned, mean, squalid, degraded set, and I would have good



**Union infantry and local civilians, Bay Street, Jacksonville, Florida (ca. 1864)**

reason for believing that God had pronounced a curse upon both the people here and the land. The land somewhat resembles that of Clifton Park, but I think it of much better quality, while from the situation of most of the state the sea breeze sweeping over it keeps the heat from being oppressive, even in midsummer. Yet while as a whole the soil of this state is regarded as being productive and it was settled the earliest of any of the U.S., (St. Augustine being the oldest settlement by 70 years), the population of Florida at the beginning of the war was about the same size as Rensselaer County, while the state is larger than New York state. Is anything better or worse needed to prove the blighting effect of slavery? Like the poison of a venomous serpent, it infects the very air surrounding it and makes itself the dread of civilization and intelligence.



"In the stream about here are large quantities of fish, though not fish alone, but alligators, serpents, etc. Some of the men of the regiment a





few days ago caught an alligator and shut him in a pen. Monday, I saw a rattlesnake killed by some of the 13<sup>th</sup> Indiana boys that when alive must have been five feet long. The people here say there is another kind of snake more poisonous than the rattle. Yesterday, some of the company cut a hollow tree and a snake ran out of it, more than six feet long. The tree is a cypress and I have seen it today. It is 29 feet in circumference, and at the large end the hollow is seven feet in width. Mosquitoes, flies, lizards, etc., are plenty, also. Don't you think it delightful here? Well, after all, Jacksonville itself has been a beautiful place. We are not stationed in Jacksonville exactly, however.

"Our duty here is light. The fortifications are very nearly completed and there is not much besides picket to do, but when the recruits come they will probably have us drilling.

Thursday evening.

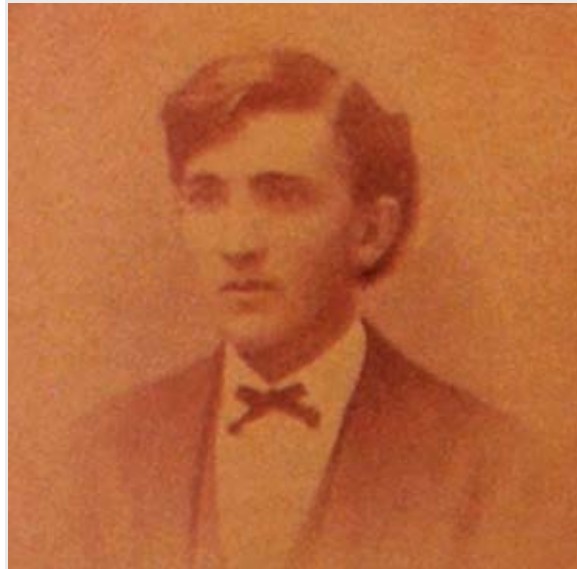
"Since last night, a large amount of rain has fallen, mostly in showers. We have had some very heavy thunder. The weather is warm. Our band is the only one in our brigade. Winters' playing is a great addition to it. [Priv. David F. Winters, Co. A, mustered in on January 27, 1864, and would be promoted to Chief Bugler on September 1, 1864.] The leader is not reënlisted but paid by the officers [Henry A. Ensign, mentioned in the December 2013 newsletter]. Next to him, Winters is the best player in the band, and should he leave, I think W. would be the leader.

Friday evening.

"...Captain Colvin, it seems, is to be major after all [Capt. James A. Colvin, Co. A]. There is no certainty as to who is to be captain if Colvin is promoted; we hope B. N. Smith [1<sup>st</sup> Lieut. Bernard N. Smith, Co. B].

But the greatest item of Nassau gossip is that Sarah Meade has jilted Henry Slack and he is dangerously ill and insane as the result [Serg't. Henry A. Slack, Co. A, in Troy with the recruiting detachment]. Capt. Colvin received a letter with the account of it and I am told the story runs this way: Slack and Sarah were engaged before his enlistment. Mrs. M. was not opposed, Mr. was, having another person in view for

Sarah, and as a result she has acceded to her father's wishes, at least so far as Slack is concerned.



**Henry A. Slack in a pre-war photograph**

"One evening, she and Slack were at Haag's visiting, Beckwith and Nellie being home. About 10 o'clock, Sarah wished to go home, and as usual Slack accompanied her. All that is known of what occurred after is that in a short time the gate was heard to close, and a man pass up the street, supposed to be Slack. He went to Seely's and the room he usually occupied when there. For a long time a noise was heard, and on going to the room he was found to be so insane as not to know any person.

"At last accounts he was some better, but the doctor regarded him to be in critical condition. Two or three days ago he was promoted to sergeant in the company.

"Our new recruits have not arrived yet, or the main body of them, but are daily expected.

Sabbath.

"Today is warm. Everything is quiet and promises to remain so here for some time. Indeed, there is little prospect of a move here for a long while yet. I have reasons for thinking but must withhold them. There is little danger of being attacked here either, as we are too well prepared, and I have no doubt but that the Rebels are as well aware of it as ourselves. I am told Gen. Finegan's\* wife is living in Jacksonville and we are well aware that a 'gray back' succeeds occasionally in getting outside of our lines. Four or five passed down the river by our picket lines Thursday, but so far from here as to be out of the range of our guns. Some 50 shots were fired at them. [\*Confederate Brig.-Gen. Joseph Finegan, commanding Middle and East Florida.]

"Among the Southerners here it is hard to tell an enemy from a friend. They are as treacherous as the Prince of Darkness, though of course there are honorable exceptions. While in town Friday, I noticed a class had come in of late of more favorable appearance than those I had noticed before. I saw several ladies in the street who were quite fair looking and well dressed, and I saw several men of honor and intelligence. I am told by those who have conversed with them that the women are more bitter in their language toward us than the men. Per-



haps the latter are reserved from motives of policy. They regard Gen. Pemberton as the vilest of traitor, and if we wish to learn the true sentiments of the Southerners, we have only to praise Gen P.'s leadership [Confederate Lieut.-Gen. John C. Pemberton, a veteran of the Seminole Wars, discredited following his defeat and surrender at the siege of Vicksburg, Miss., in the summer of 1863].

"Though it was reported some days ago that Mobile was captured, we are now informed there is nothing reliable about the rumor, while the Rebels claim that we have been beaten of late at Mobile, Dalton, Cumberland, and indeed in every quarter. They claim Grant's badly whipped. We know nothing of the true situation of our military affairs and we shall anxiously await and look for the news the next mail will bring us. There was a rumor in town yesterday that Richmond was in the possession of Butler and Kilpatrick. [Maj.-Gen. Benjamin F. Butler, commanding the Dept. of Virginia and North Carolina, and Brig.-Gen.

H. Judson Kilpatrick. In February of 1864, Kilpatrick was in command of the 3<sup>d</sup> Cavalry Division, Army of the Potomac, during an unsuccessful raid on Richmond meant to free Union prisoners of war.]



"I forgot to mention among the not very pleasant things in this vicinity that within a few miles are a plenty of panthers, catamounts and crocodiles. Cattle I have seen are only about half as large as ours in the North, and poor at that. Their horses are very small, and when used are generally attached to a miserable old cart with the driver mounted on the horse's back. I have even seen women going along this way.



**Union Army Sergeant-Major**

"The sergeant-major of the regiment says he is well-acquainted with the new minister at Nassau and he is 'a fine man and splendid fellow.' Quite fascinating to the ladies [Serg't.-Maj. Edgar Vanderzee, promoted to that rank on March 2, 1864].

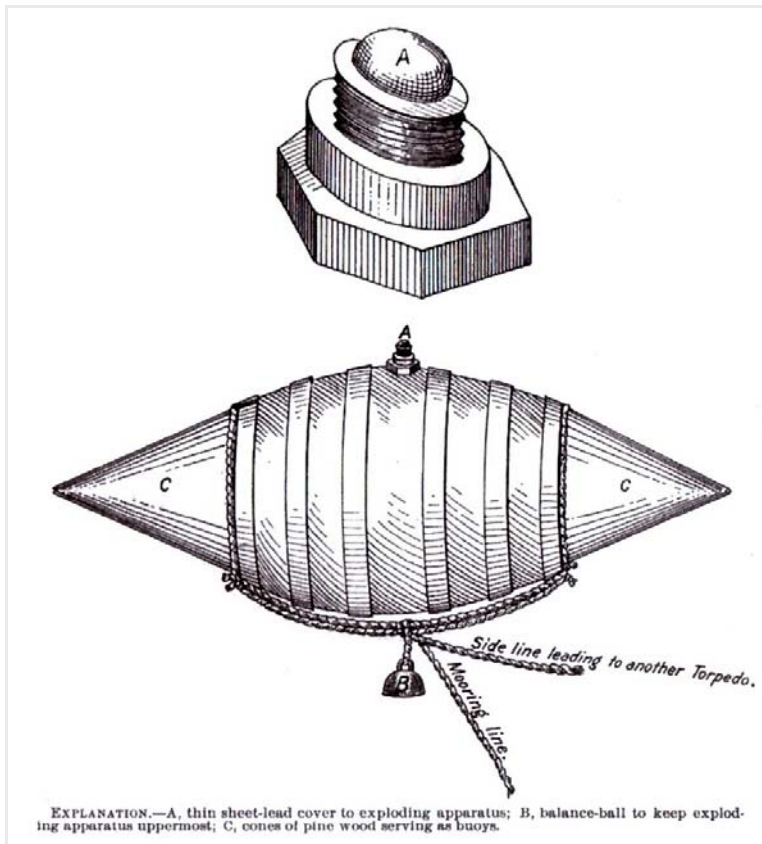




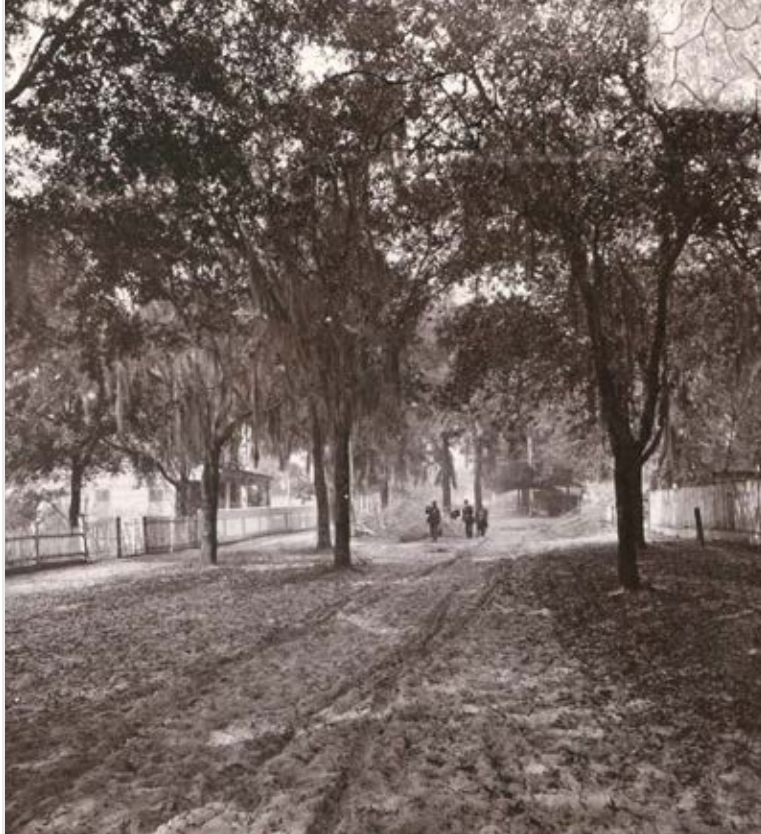
Swamp near Jacksonville

Evening.

"Two torpedoes were discovered today in a swamp near the river by some of our regiment on picket. It is supposed they were placed there with the intention of floating them out and destroying one or more of our boats as they passed. They were probably placed there Monday night when I was on picket, and in the morning a small board was discovered near the same place. The torpedoes are now lying at regimental headquarters.



Sketch of torpedo found in St. Johns River, Florida, off Cedar Creek, May 10, 1864, by U.S. surveying steamer "Vixen," C. O. Boutelle, assistant, Coast Survey, commanding.



**In 1864, Union forces dug rifle pits in the streets of Jacksonville and concealed them with tree limbs and brush. Two of the pits can be seen in the distance.**

"A man was arrested today by our boys as he was trying to pass our lines. There will probably be a small fight no great distance from this place in a few days, but without any reservation I can state that it is not at all probable we shall take part in it, so don't get the hysterics.



**Union army bakery, Bay Street, Jacksonville (December 11, 1864)**

"We are now having fresh bread once more, baked in an oven made for our regiment and made by some of our men, and better bread I have never eaten.

"Thereafter every afternoon half the men here are to drill, skirmish, and drill for three hours. Does that look like leaving immediately? I think not. I do not think there will be any severe fighting in this Department for some time, but rather that the great aim will be to restore this

state to the Union by other means. A very large proportion of them appear to be already 'on the fence' – to serve God or Belial.

"Now Lizzie, do not have so much anxiety about me. I do not think there is occasion for it, and should there be more than there really is, God can and I feel will take care of me. I feel Him very near and precious to me, though at times surely tried and tempted.



"Blue Bellies," by Robert Stack

"By the way, the insults and wrongs I have been made to feel so long reached the climax, as I think a couple of weeks ago, and I now have it in my power to have two of Colvin's greatest favorites and my persecutors severely punished if I choose, but I have informed Colvin that all I asked was to be treated as a man, and if I could have assurance of his I would overlook it; if not, the matter should go farther. Colvin has given them a severe talking to, and they now treat me so well that I have no cause for complaint. Colvin admitted to me that he was aware there was a pressure against me. He still credits or claims to the reports of what I should have said when home, even though those who have been home since on furlough, I have not heard a word of my saying as reported.

"Colvin claims to be a man not given to prejudice, but I am obliged to think otherwise, and he thinks he does not know his prejudices are strong. He thinks that when asked if he drank or played cards, that I should not have tried to evade the question but told just as it was. Well if I had, I think the story would have been worse by the time it reached the regiment, but hereafter he must not find fault if inquired of I tell more than I have before or did when home. I think 'murder will out,' however, without my telling it in his case.

"The rumor that Richmond is taken is gaining ground. There is also a statement that Congress has passed an act that soldiers enlisted in 1862 for three years will be allowed 90 days before their term in the U.S. service expires to get north and mustered-out of service. If this is true, we shall have but about 15 months of field service yet. Have you seen anything of such an Act? I feel that I can trust God in all things and am much encouraged."

Lieut.-Col. Alonzo Alden, in command of the regiment at Jacksonville, wrote in his memoirs that he was almost shot by Colored troops who were on picket duty:

"The writer was very thankful for a narrow escape from being shot by our own troops on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March. In a letter of the 14<sup>th</sup>, I say:



"I was division officer of the day yesterday, and in making the rounds in the nighttime, in the pinewoods, several of the colored sentinels fired their rifles at me before a word of challenge was given. The darkness saved me. The colored troops were very nervous and fearful of capture by the Southerners, and to be captured by them meant certain death."

A small extract of a letter on the 18<sup>th</sup> from Priv. James Caton, Co. D, to his sister Matilde Caton of Sandy Hill, recently sold at auction, stated that the Union army intended to hold Jacksonville for good. He mentioned that the regimental mail was robbed but later recovered, although some letters were burned:

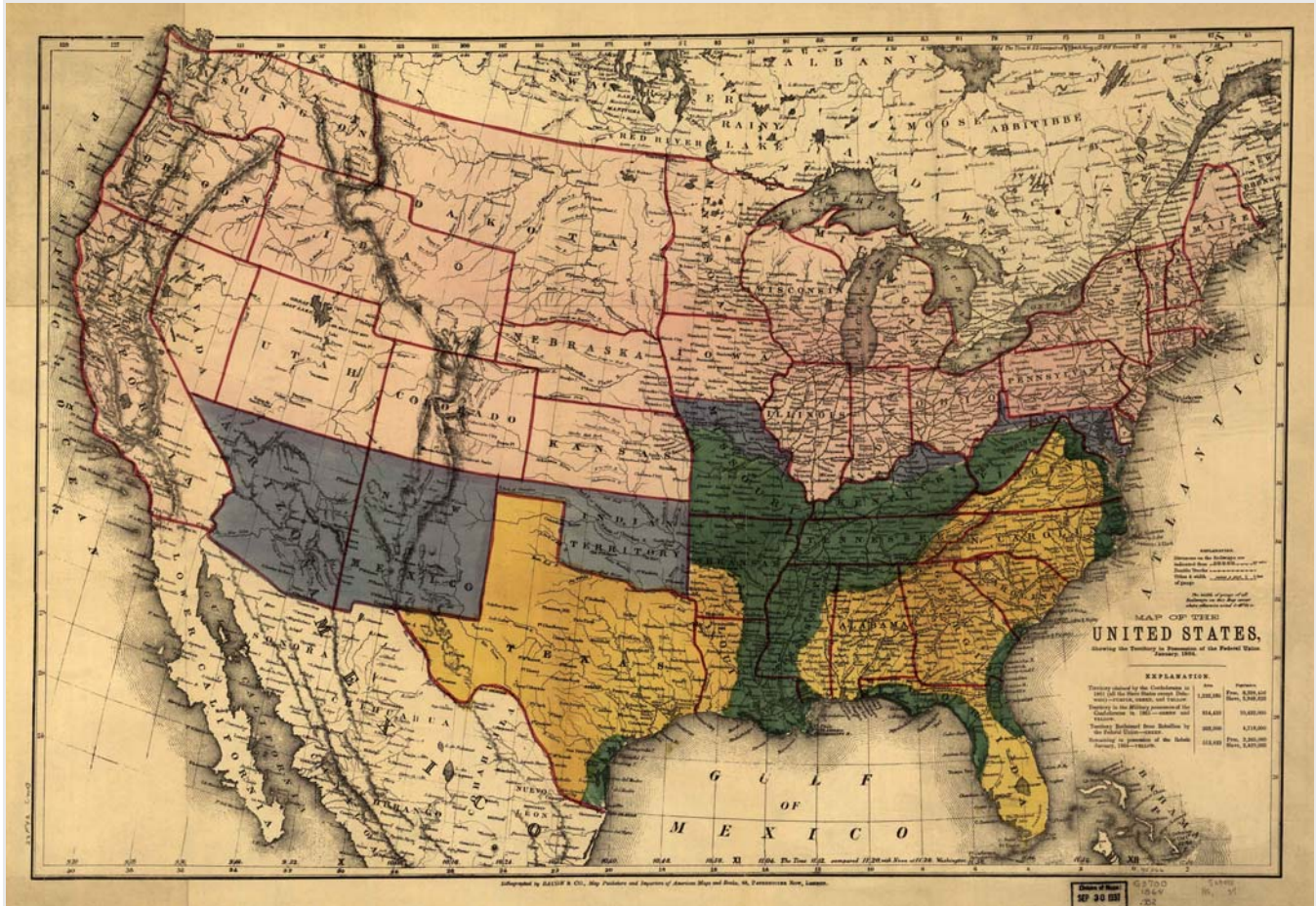
"We are encamped at the above-named place just outside the town, and how long we will remain here I do not know. We are here as the defences of the town and I think that our forces intend to hold the place for the future. This makes the third time that our forces have attempted to hold the place..."

"I enclosed ten dollars to you in a letter but our regimental mail was robbed by someone and the letter was burning and found again but the letter I sent you was not among them and I was quite sore... I hope you have received it... if you have not... I will report it to the commanding officer and he will recover it for me..."

"The town had been a very nice one once but it is in a very bad state now on account of part of it being burned about a year ago by our forces when we were obliged to leave it..."

Wagonmaster Robert Whitcomb, writing to his parents the same day from Folly Island, S.C., where he was in charge of the regiment's equipment and baggage awaiting transport to Jacksonville, expressed his wishes for their regained health. He hoped that he, George, and their brother Melvin E. Whitcomb, a recently drafted private in the 98<sup>th</sup> N.Y., would "all live to see this damn war to an end and get back there alive."





**Map of the United States Showing the Territory in Possession of the Federal Union, January 1864**  
**Published by Bacon & Co., London (1864)**  
**Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.**

"Yours of the 21<sup>st</sup> of February has just come to me, and it gives me a sad heart to read that you are all sick, but I hope that you will all recover. As for me, I am in good health and I got a letter from George this morning and he says he is well. I have not seen him since the 23<sup>d</sup> of February. Your letter went to the regiment in Florida and George read it and sent it to me, and I hope that you will be able to say in your next that you are all well. I don't know how long it will be before I go to the regiment, but I hope not long.

"You don't say a word about Mel, and I haven't heard a word from him. Father, I hope I am mistaken, but it seems to me that we have got scattered around so that you never can see us all together again and sitting in your presence. But I hope that we shall all live to see this damn war to an end and get back there alive.

"Father, I don't know what to write, for there han't any news here. George says it is all quiet down in Florida, and no hopes of any fight. Father, what is Si a doing? Write and tell me all the news and I hope you will have some good news to tell me next time.

"We got the New York papers here this morning, but there is no news of importance, only they have commenced fighting about [the election for] President.

"Excuse a short letter this time, and I hope the Lord will see fit to restore you all to health. My love to you all and hoping that we may meet again."



Col. McConihe's letter to Mrs. Newton, also on the 18<sup>th</sup>, reported that the lull in recruiting would soon end, no doubt due to the upcoming campaigns of the spring. Every available soldier would be needed to achieve victory:

"Yours of the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. came duly, and I assure you I am delighted at the continuance of yours and John's friendship. May it be in the future as in the past, an abiding faith.+

"I thank you for your congratulations on the birds and I can testify that they have not as yet oppressed me. I am sorry the wood-cut is no better, but don't get mad at it. The said picture has a strong resemblance to old Mr. Evans! Don't you think so? When I get to New York, I shall be pleased to sit before a first-class camera and be reflected on pasteboard. The result will be sent to you and I hope it will be satisfactory.

You ask about that poor arm. It does not trouble me in the least, yet it is not as strong as the other, and never will be. It is quite tender, and I think a good knock would trouble it. You may remember the artery was pushed to the surface on the underside by the ball, and the doctors say said artery, in case it continues to enlarge, must be taken up and shortened. I do not worry about it, as it is a question of time, and a matter about which there is no haste, and at present no necessity. The arm and hand are useful and natural, and, looking at them, you would not discover they had ever been tortured.

"Yes, I won that dressing case in a raffle, and have it at the house. I have been having leisure moments this month, as recruiting has been dull, and the regiment being above the minimum. I have not used much exertion to obtain recruits – neither has there been any bounty since the 12<sup>th</sup> inst. We shall commence recruiting again next week, and I may not get away before the 1<sup>st</sup>.

"I have but one brother in the service now, Major Samuel, who is with his regiment, the 93<sup>d</sup> N.Y. Vols., in the Army of the Potomac. Captain William served his time in the old 2<sup>d</sup> N.Y. and was mustered out with his regiment, just after the Battle of Chancellorsville, where you may remember he was shot in the breast, and, I believe, carries the ball yet. He is in the quartermaster's office in Washington City.

"It snowed very hard here last night, but the warm sun is fast melting Earth's white fleece."



**U.S. Model 1832 Foot Artillery Short Sword and Scabbard  
Produced by the Ames Manufacturing Company, Chicopee, Massachusetts**

Union and Confederate military strategy called for expansion, standardization, and reorganization of field artillery batteries so that they could better support infantry operations. Gen. McClellan wrote to Secretary of War Stanton on October 1, 1862, calling for a wholesale transfer of volunteer infantrymen to make up for manpower deficiencies in the artillery service, and his advice was accepted, and transfers of "detached volunteers" began to fill the batteries of the U.S. Regulars and state militias. 1<sup>st</sup> Serg't. William Quinn, Co. G, was one of these transfers, as reported on the 14<sup>th</sup> in the *Troy Daily Whig* from a letter by Capt. Spencer W. Snyder, Co. D:

"PROMOTION. – Orderly Sergeant William Quinn, of Troy, late of Capt. McCoun's Company, 169<sup>th</sup> Regiment, and brother of Maj. Timothy Quinn, has been promoted to a second lieutenancy in the Third New York Artillery. The promotion was earned by brave services performed in the field, and is worthily bestowed."

The promotion of Lieut. Quinn was followed by the promotion of your correspondent's great-great-grandfather, 3<sup>d</sup> Serg't. Patrick J. Aylmer, Co. G, to 2<sup>d</sup> sergeant of his company.

The departure of new recruits from Troy for the seat of war was inevitably accompanied by the efforts by skeddaddlers and bounty jumpers to flee their responsibilities, as reported by the *Daily Times* the same day:

"Sunday passed very quietly. Snow and rain fell during the day – the former in mammoth flakes throughout the afternoon. – On Saturday afternoon the departure of nearly fifty more recruits caused a series of local sensations. Marshal Hughes' success in defeating the efforts of skeddaddlers and bounty-beaters, was continued. Several attempts to escape were frustrated. One John Smith had dug his way into a cellar adjoining the State street barracks, when officer Hurlbut brought him out."

The *Daily Whig* revealed on the 14<sup>th</sup> that though Marshal Hughes lost only six men, some 250 escaped from Albany. One of those men was Priv. Sanford Hogle, Co. E, who got away, as reported by the *Daily Press* on the 15<sup>th</sup>:

"ARREST OF TROY BOUNTY JUMPERS. – We learn from Utica papers the particulars of the arrest of a Trojan named Wm. McIntosh, in that city, charged with enticing one Sanford Hogle, another Trojan, to desert from the 169<sup>th</sup> regiment. Hogle enlisted in Capt. Frank W. Tarbell's company, of this regiment, on the 27<sup>th</sup> ult. On the 8<sup>th</sup> inst. he went to Albany, was mustered in, and immediately received \$300 in bounty money, paid by Rensselaer county. He then asked permission to go out to a saloon to get something to eat, and it was granted. He went out with Wm. McIntosh, who appeared to be his particular crony, and has not been seen by his officers since. Next day, McIntosh started west on





the Central. In the meantime, Capt. Tarbell had started off in pursuit of McIntosh with the hope of finding Hogle. He arrived in Utica the same evening (the 9<sup>th</sup>), and next morning, as he was taking a walk, came across McIntosh and arrested him; soon after which the latter unguardedly made admissions fatal to his liberation, one of which was that he knew Hogle was to desert the day they were in Albany. Going to the Northern Hotel, the Captain found that McIntosh had written on the register for his name the curious word 'Callasellsokyeg.' His trunk was found to contain various articles of Hogle's clothing, including his soldier's overcoat. On the examination it also appeared that he had made an appointment to meet Hogle at a place in Utica. McIntosh was taken before U. S. Commissioner Boyce, by whom he was held for trial at the Quarter term.

"On Friday last, Deputy U. S. Marshal Donaldson came to Troy and visited the house of MRS. ELIZABETH HOGLE, the mother of the deserter, for the purpose of arresting her, and making further discoveries. A daughter pretended that the mother had gone away, but she was found hidden in the house and brought to Utica.

"Her case was examined by the Commissioner, Friday, C. O. TAPPAN, Assistant District Attorney, acting as counsel for the Government, and J. T. SPRIGGS for the prisoner. She was committed until Tuesday next for further examination."

And then we have the curious story of two men, one named "Carroll" and the other Matty McMahan, who were purportedly bailed out of jail to serve in the 169<sup>th</sup>, as reported by the *Daily Whig* on April 5<sup>th</sup>:

"AS WE ANTICIPATED. – Our article on the Bounty Jumpers caused quite a little fluttering in certain quarters yesterday. Rather strange it is though that our evening contemporaries should simultaneously appear with a similar article, commending our course in calling the attention of the public authorities to these rascals, and yet undertake to correct 'errors' alleged that we have made. They both admit wrongs to have been done, but say that 'Neither Carroll nor Matty McMahan were bailed out of jail' to serve as soldiers. Now we reiterate our statement and say *they were*, and that the evidence is on file in the County Clerk's office. Our contemporaries can satisfy themselves of this fact by examination of the records there, if they will take the trouble to look.

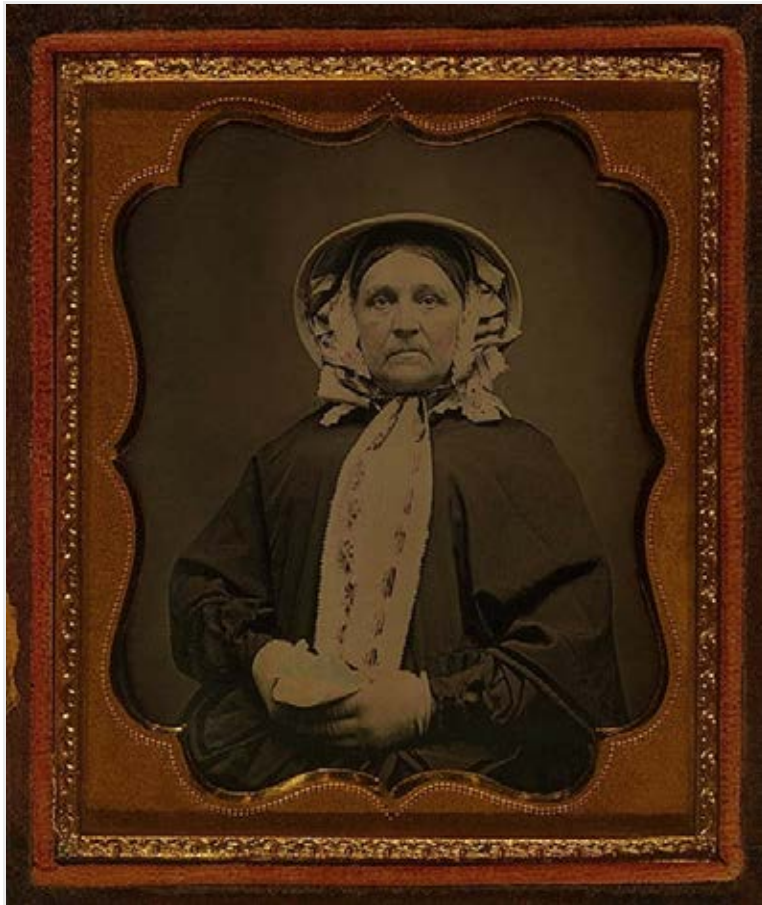
"Both these criminals were in jail on charges of grand larceny and were enlisted in the 169<sup>th</sup> Regiment sometime previous to the mob at the jail. On that occasion they had been arrested for the second or third time. The District Attorney seems to have felt the importance of preventing criminals to escape by enlistment, if we may judge from a letter he has published, which he addressed to the Enrolling Board in December last."



[Addendum:] "THE *Times* in its anxiety to correct what it believed to be the error of its neighbor, says Matty McMahon was in jail for an assault on Officer Hurlburt at the time of the riot. 'T isn't true."

Did these men enlist in the 169<sup>th</sup>? The official register of the regiment indicates that a Priv. Mathew McMahon, Co. A, deserted on October 14, 1862, well before the imbroglio of a year and a half later. If he was the same man, the regiment may have been trying to place him under custody for a court martial. As for the man referred to as "Carroll," three men named John Carroll enlisted in the regiment in February of 1864. One was killed at Petersburg, Va., on June 30, 1864; another was detached in New York City, and the third was never assigned to a company.

The *Daily Whig* published another article that day which was intended to shame those who would consider deserting from the army:



"CHARGED WITH DESERTION – A NOBLE MOTHER. – Nathaniel Smith, charged with being a deserter from the Eighteenth Regiment, was arrested in Castleton, in this county, and brought to Albany a few days ago. He was placed in the hands of the Veteran Guard, until a hearing could be had. His mother, on learning that he had deserted from the old flag, burst into tears and said: 'I have sacrificed four sons to my country – two minors; I have buried my husband and children; but I never knew what trouble and grief was before. To have one brought back as a deserter is more than I can stand. I do not blame the officers for doing their duty, but I do you for deserting. Go, my son; you are bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. I would rather have seen you brought home

a corpse than to find you alive branded as a deserter. But go, my son; do your duty as a man and a soldier, remembering that your mother's prayers are with you, and do not come home again until you can come as a man who has nothing to fear."

Executions for the crime of desertion were more common at the seat of war than back in the Northern states, but in the case of two men from Cohoes, N.Y., the U.S. Army sent a message that bounty jumpers would suffer the same fate as those who deserted in the field:



"Lincoln," by Alfred Rudolph Waud (1828-1891)  
Published in "The Youth's History of the United States" by Edward S. Ellis,  
The Cassell Publishing Company (1887)

Executive Mansion, Washington, D.C., April 21, 1864.

*Gen. Dix:* Yesterday I was induced to telegraph the officer in military command at Fort Warren, Boston Harbor, Massachusetts, suspending the execution of Charles Carpenter, to be executed to-morrow for desertion. Just now, on reading your order in the case, I telegraph the same officer withdrawing the suspension, and leave the case entirely with you. The man's friends are pressing me, but I refer them to you, intending to take no further action myself.

A. LINCOLN.

The New York *Tribune* reported on the 26<sup>th</sup> the execution of Carpenter and his accomplice: "Privates Charles Carpenter and Matthew Riley, two unassigned recruits of the Vermont volunteers, suffered the extreme penalty of military law on Friday last, at Fort Warren, Boston Harbor, for the crime of desertion. They deserted the service in December, 1863. Carpenter, after deserting, disguised himself, and commenced business as a bounty or substitute broker. They were convicted and sentenced to be shot before a general court martial that met on January 30, which sentence was approved by Gen. Dix. Maj. Cabot was charged



**Fort Warren, Boston Harbor, Col. J. Dimick, 1<sup>st</sup> U.S. Artillery Commander – Rebel Officers were Confined here as Prisoners of War (1862)**  
**From the Journal of Private Robert Knox Sneden, 40<sup>th</sup> N.Y.V., Topographical Engineer of the III Army Corps, Vol. I, 1861 April 12 - 1862 May 5**  
**Collection of the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia**

with the execution of this order." The *Daily Whig* reported the sad story of the men's funeral on the 25<sup>th</sup>:

"FUNERAL OF TWO DESERTERS. – The largest funeral ever held in the village of Cohoes took place yesterday. Two men, named Charles McCarthy, alias Carpenter, and John Riley, alias Elias Roach, were executed at Fort Warren, Boston harbor, on Friday, being convicted by a court-martial of desertion and bounty-jumping. Previous to enlisting both resided in Cohoes. McCarthy had resided in this city, where he was engaged to be married. Riley was a private in the old Second N. Y. V., and while there was considered a very good soldier.

"It is charged that these men had enlisted and jumped the bounty four or five times. This, however, was denied by them, and is contradicted by their friends and acquaintances in this city and Cohoes. They enlisted in a regiment at Brattleboro, Vermont, receiving \$500 bounty each, and were captured there while attempting to desert. We have not seen a statement of the details of the trial, and therefore write from current reports. An effort had been made through parties in Washington to obtain a reprieve, and telegraph answers had been received assuring friends that 'it was all right.' From this fact it was supposed that a reprieve was on the way for these unfortunate men. But if ever sent, it failed to arrive, and they were therefore shot, in accordance with the sentence of the court-martial in their case. McCarthy's intended bride was present as a mourner at the funeral."

Despite the problem of desertions, Rensselaer County was believed to be the first county in the country to fulfill its quota of volunteers for the last two calls by President Lincoln for additional men, according to the *Daily Whig* on March 23<sup>d</sup>:

"RENSSELAER COUNTY OUT OF THE DRAFT. – The statement made by us yesterday morning, that the quota of Rensselaer was full was officially confirmed by the Report of the Enrollment Committee made yesterday



**The Spirit of 61 – God, Our Country and Liberty, !!**  
**Published by Currier & Ives (1861)**  
**Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.**

to the Board of Supervisors. We publish the proceedings of the Board elsewhere. This is a most gratifying fact. It seems that not only is our quota filled, but that we have a surplus of forty-five men over. Thus our city and county has been the first to respond to the demand of the President under both the last two calls for additional men, and we believe Rensselaer is the first county in the Union in both instances to meet this demand. To the Enlistment Committee of the Common Council and the Board of Supervisors, and to Ex-Mayor Van Alstyne, much credit is due for this most honorable record of the promptness and patriotism of the men of our city and county."

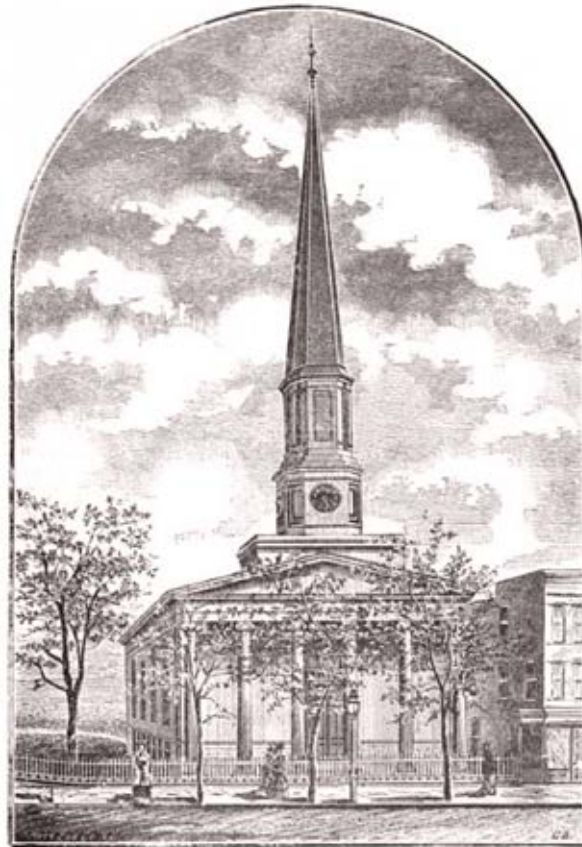
Orders were received on March 25<sup>th</sup> by Col. McConihe and his recruiting detachment to proceed to Jacksonville. The regiment reported eight hundred and fifty men for duty, and was in all respects "up to the standard of active commands in the field." The *Daily Times* provided the details:

"REJOINING THE REGIMENT. – Orders were received this morning by the recruiting party of the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth Regiment, to rejoin their respective commands. They will probably start in the next steamer. The regiment is now up to the minimum standard – entitling Col. McConihe to be mustered in as its commandant at once. He will



be accompanied by Capt. Snyder, Capt. Cary, Capt. Vaughn and Acting-Adjutant Clark Smith. Capt. Tarbell, with Sergeant Ezra Crannell and Corporal J. D. Havens, will remain to receive any further recruits. Lieut. W. H. Merriam, whose rank and *status* in the regiment are an undisputed fact, will accompany Col. McConihe and the recruiting party. He will probably be detached at once upon the staff of Gen. Foster. If not, it will be his good luck to take command of the company in which he is First Lieutenant, in the absence of Capt. Tarbell. In anticipation of this honor, our friend is said to be studying Hardee and practicing the bayonet exercise. Joking aside, however, his numerous friends will rejoice that he has been enabled to obtain a position in which he will prove himself the most genial staff-officer in the Department of the South."

Before departing from Troy, the officers and men of the recruiting detachment attended the funeral of Capt. Hiram Wilson of the 93<sup>d</sup> N.Y. at the Third Street Baptist Church in Troy, as reported by the *Daily Times* on the 28<sup>th</sup>:



**First Baptist Church, Third Street, Troy, New York**  
Published in "The City of Troy and Its Vicinity" by Arthur James Weise (1886)

"CAPT. WILSON'S FUNERAL. – The imposing military and civic display, added to the immense concourse of friends and spectators present at the funeral of the late Capt. Wilson yesterday afternoon, have not been equaled on any similar occasion for a long time past. The body, which had lain in state at the Common Council room since Saturday morning, was removed to the Third street Baptist church about 3 o'clock. That spacious edifice was literally packed. In the central pews were the mourners, officers and soldiers from the Albany barracks, the Troy City Artillery, officers of the Twenty-fourth Regiment, Col. Levin Crandall

and Major Hyde, of the One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Regiment, Colonel John McConihe, Capts. Vaughn, Snyder and Tarbell, and Lieuts. W. H. Merriam and Clark Smith, Adjutant of the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth Regiment, several officers, representatives of the old Second Regiment, Mayor Thorn and several other prominent city officers, and the Masonic Fraternity, represented by Apollo, King Solomon's and Mount Zion Lodges, who turned out in large numbers. The side pews and galleries were filled with spectators.



**Captain Hiram S. Wilson, 93<sup>d</sup> N.Y.**

"Dr. Baldwin's remarks were exceedingly brief, but admirably adapted to the occasion. He dwelt with particular impressiveness upon the suddenness of the decease. Only a week ago he had met the lamented soldier at the wedding of a friend, in Troy, and he never had appeared so stalwart, so strong, so healthy, as at that time. In five days afterwards he was a corpse. Dr. B. also advertised to the fact that while we all know that death must come to us sooner or later, none of us are aware of the exact time and place when the blow will fall. This gallant soldier had anticipated death on the battle-field; he had braved the dangers of swamp and bullet, and had fallen far from scenes of danger, at a time when he least expected it..."

"The suddenness of Capt. Wilson's attack and death were alluded to by Dr. Baldwin, yesterday. The New York *Herald* says that the deceased was poisoned by the bite of a rat. On Tuesday, he discovered a slight pimple on one of his fingers, which was thought to be a mere trifle at first, but which soon caused Capt. Wilson the most painful suffering. His whole arm became black, and from the symptoms presented, it is supposed he was poisoned by the bite of a rat, dog, or some other animal of that character. Hart's Island is said to be infested with rats of the most daring and venomous character, and hence it is deemed probable that Capt. Wilson has been the victim of a rat bite. Several doctors were called in; but, notwithstanding all the efforts made to save him, Capt. Wilson expired on Wednesday morning while sitting in a chair and perfectly conscious. The affair caused the most profound sorrow among all the officers on Hart's Island, as Capt. Wilson was much beloved and esteemed for his good qualities as an officer and a man. Gen. Jackson, the commandant of the post, considered the deceased as one of his best and most efficient officers. The commissioned officers on Hart's Island held a meeting on Thursday, and adopted appropriate resolutions."

The recruiting detachment departed from Troy on the 30<sup>th</sup>, as reported by the New York *Herald* and reprinted in the *Daily Times*. The article mentioned that Col. McConihe was the youngest colonel in the army:

"COLONEL JOHN MCCONIHE, the new commander of the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth Regiment New York Volunteers, Gillmore's Department, and General Foster's Brigade, sails in the *Fulton* to-day, to join his command. Colonel McConihe will be accompanied by Capt. D. J. Cary, Captain Spencer W. Snyder, Captain Augustus Vaughn, Lieutenant W. H. Merriam and Lieutenant and Acting Adjutant Clark Smith. The One Hundred and Sixty-ninth Regiment now reports eight hundred and fifty men for duty, and is in all respects up to the standard of active commands in the field. Colonel McConihe, though the youngest colonel in the army, has seen much arduous and honorable service since April, 1861. He was severely wounded at Shiloh, and has an excellent reputation for ability and courage.' – *New York Herald, to-day*.

"The compliment to our townsman is well bestowed. We wish him and his noble regiment, honor and success."

The *Daily Whig* wrote on April 2<sup>d</sup>, "They sail from New York on Monday on the steamer *Fulton*, and take with them the best wishes of this community for a career of usefulness and an ultimate safe return home." The colonel wrote to his friend John Newton on the 30<sup>th</sup>, just prior to his departure from Troy:



"I wrote a letter to Mrs. Newton about ten days ago, and you can imagine my disappointment yesterday, upon discovering that my orderly had neglected to put it in the office. I mention the circumstance in order that you may know the cause of the delay.

"On the 28<sup>th</sup>, I sent by mail a ring containing a lock of my hair to your wife, which I wish her to wear and keep until my return, and in case I never come back, to retain it in remembrance of me. Whether she was serious or not when she requested me to send her a lock of my hair, you can see. I have gratified her by complying with the wish, and I trust the

same will be received, as sent, as a token of my honest and continued friendship and esteem for you and Mrs. Newton.

"I go to New York Friday night, and sail for Port Royal Monday next. I would be pleased to hear from you and Mrs. Newton in New York, and think a letter sent by return mail to me at the St. Nicholas Hotel would reach me before I left. At all events, you might write, and in case it does not arrive, I will leave instructions to have it forwarded.

"My photographs have not been received yet, but will be finished before I leave and sent you. With many wishes for your (both of you) continued good health, happiness, and prosperity, and with my regards to Mr. Graham, I am now, as in the past, your true friend."



Sketch of an officer (June 25, 1864)  
Edwin Austin Forbes (1839-1895)

Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

The end of March brought some good news to former Capt. William H. Wickes, Co. H, dismissed from the service on February 12<sup>th</sup> and sentenced to six months' imprisonment at the Albany Penitentiary for presenting false vouchers to the War Department for recruiting expenses. Capt. Wickes received a full pardon on March 29<sup>th</sup> from President Lincoln of the charges brought against him and was reinstated in his rank and position. The official register of the regiment indicates that William did not rejoin the regiment.

The following letter, obtained from Capt. Wickes' court martial file at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., is a character reference signed by eleven officers of his regiment:

Folly Island, S.C., November 25, 1863.

Capt. W. H. Wickes,

*Sir:* We the Undersigned Members of the 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y.S.V., having but recently heard of the cause of your prolonged absence from us, take this



method of extending to you our warmest sympathy, at the same time assuring you your proverbial good character while with us is sufficient evidence to us that you are guiltless of any charges that are or may be brought against you.

John McConihe, Lt. Col., 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y. Vols.  
 S. N. Kinney, R.Q.M., 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y.V.  
 F. W. Tarbell, Capt. Co. E, 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y. Vols.  
 Wm. H. Lyon, Lieut. Co. H, " " "  
 J. H. Dunn, Lieut. Co. C, 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y.  
 B. N. Smith, Lt. "B" Co.  
 E. R. Smith, Lt. K Co.  
 C. E. Morey, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieut., Co. C  
 Henry Mulhall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut., E Co.  
 Spencer W. Snyder, Capt. Co. D  
 Walter S. Birdsall, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. " "

Folly Island S.C. Nov 25 1863

Capt. W.H. Wickes

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 E. R. Smith Lt. K Co.  
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 Henry Mulhall 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. E Co.  
 Spencer W. Snyder Capt. Co. D  
 Walter S. Birdsall 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. " "

Letter from the officers of the 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y. to Captain William H. Wickes, Co. H, 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y., Folly Island, S.C., November 25, 1863

On February 16<sup>th</sup>, Capt. Wickes submitted a written deposition from the Albany Penitentiary to the court presenting the facts of the case according to his own perspective. He stated that a certain "William Platt," representing himself as a major serving in the War Department, misled him concerning the need to furnish expense vouchers for recruiting expenses, (for lodging and meals provided by the captain to recruits of Company H), in order to obtain reimbursement. Capt.

Wickes, unfamiliar with such procedures and believing what he was told, was then instructed by the alleged major to prepare fictitious journal vouchers.

Capt. Wickes stated in court that his total recruiting expenses were around \$500, yet the total sum of the journal vouchers was \$606, which may reveal the basis for Platt's scheme. Representing himself falsely as an officer in the War Department, he would offer to fix the paperwork for newly arriving regiments, thereby inflating the amount claimed and pocketing the difference.

State of New York  
Albany County

William H. Wickes being duly sworn says that he is now imprisoned in the Albany Penitentiary by force of a sentence of a Court Martial which recently tried this deponent at the City of Washington upon charges of presenting false vouchers to the War Department for this deponent's expenses in recruiting a Company of Volunteers for the 169<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Volunteer Infantry, in which Regiment this deponent served as Captain for about a year and a half. That deponent has never in fact received a dollar on account of such expenses, that every dollar of the amount for which such vouchers were made was expended in recruiting said company. That deponent being ignorant of the rules of the War Department kept no vouchers for such expenses. That soon after the Regiment arrived in the neighborhood of Washington a Man by the name of William Platt appeared amongst the Officers of the Regiment claiming to be a Major in the employ of the War Department and alleged that he was sent to have the Officers' recruiting expenses reduced to shape to the end that they may be paid. That deponent told said Platt that he had no vouchers for his expenses; Platt said it would make no odds, that the Department did not care for the actual vouchers, but only for Journal ones to cover the account; said Platt told the other Officers of the Regiment the same thing; and several of the Officers and this deponent amongst the number believed the statement of said Platt and suffered him to make their accounts and forward them to the Department. That deponent was at that time very ignorant of Military business and verily believed that in furnishing fictitious vouchers signed by the persons named in them for an honest account he was acting in entire consistency with the wishes of the War Department and in such a manner as to do no wrong to his Country. And that although it struck this deponent at first as an entirely wrong mode of doing business, this deponent's suspicions were not aroused from the fact that Platt claimed to be a major and employee of this Department, and deponent's associates believed and acted on his suggestions. That deponent's means are very limited indeed and with the loss of his recruiting expenses to the extent of about five hundred Dollars, the loss of his pay would bear upon his family with great severity.

Wm. H. Wickes

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 16<sup>th</sup> day of February, 1864.

Louis D. Pilsbury,  
Commissioner of Deeds



Stereoview of the Albany Penitentiary, Albany, New York

In the aftermath of Capt. Wickes' conviction, petitioned requests for remission of his sentence were submitted to President Lincoln by officials from Rensselaer and Albany Counties and the townsmen of Sand Lake. Character references were also provided by Col. Clarence Buel and Lieut.-Col. John McConihe:

Troy, N.Y., February 16, 1864.

This is to certify that I am personally well-acquainted with Capt. William H. Wickes of the 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y.S.V. He has been under my command since the organization of the regiment in the fall of 1862 – has borne a high character for morality and integrity. I have always found him a faithful and zealous officer and one in whom I retained implicit confidence, and to the best of my knowledge he was universally regarded in the regiment as a faithful officer and a man of upright character.

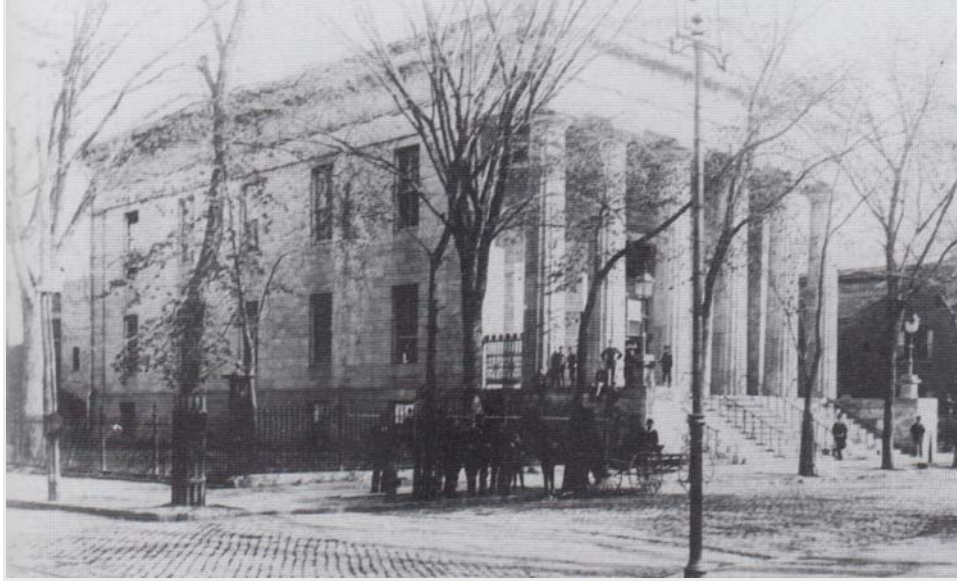
Clarence Buel,  
Col. 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y. Vols.

Recruiting Rendezvous,  
169<sup>th</sup> Reg't. N.Y.S. Vol. Infantry,  
Troy, N.Y., February 16<sup>th</sup>, 1864.

This is to certify that Captain William H. Wickes of Co. H, 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y. S. Vol. Reg't., has been under my immediate command most of the time since the organization of the Regiment, (the Colonel being absent much of the time on detached service and on account of wounds), and that I have invariably found him to be an upright, faithful, and capable Officer. He was a professor of religion and constant in his participation in religious duties. He was earnest in his patriotism, attentive as an Officer, and proper in his daily life.

I never knew him, in or out of Camp, on duty or off duty, to act otherwise than as an *Officer and Gentleman*, in the strict acceptation of those terms.

John McConihe,  
Lt. Col. 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y. Vols.



**Rensselaer County Courthouse, Troy, New York**

*The courthouse, the second at the site, was opened in 1831 at the southeast corner of Second and Congress Streets, and replaced by the present courthouse in 1898.*

His Excellency Abraham Lincoln,  
President of the United States.

The Undersigned respectfully represent that Captain William H. Wickes of the 169<sup>th</sup> Regiment of New York Volunteer Infantry is an old and respected Citizen of Rensselaer County where he has resided from his birth and until he entered the service of the United States about a year and a half ago. That until the preferring the charges against him upon which he was recently tried before a Court Martial at the City of Washington his character as a moral and religious man and as a Loyal and Patriotic Citizen was unblemished. That he is the head of a large, reputable family and most thoroughly respected in the community. That as your petitioners are informed and believe Captain Wickes never intended to wrong the Government in the matter for which he was tried. That he had incurred large expenses in recruiting a Company for the service but being unacquainted with the modes of business pursued at the War Office he failed to keep any vouchers for his expenses. That upon his first arrival in the neighborhood of Washington with his Regiment nearly a year and a half ago a man by the name of William Platt, claiming to hold the rank of Major and to be in the employ of the War Department, presented himself to Captain Wickes and the other Line Officers of the 169<sup>th</sup> Regiment and asked him and them if they had been repaid their recruiting expenses, stating that he had been sent by the Department to have the accounts made out. That Captain Wickes told him he had no vouchers for his expenses. That said Platt then told said Wickes that the Department did not want the real vouchers but only journal vouchers to represent the Real expenditures. That Captain Wickes, relying upon the alleged Official character of said Platt, made out the Bills and procured the Journal vouchers charged against him as false, being in fact fictitious vouchers actually signed by real names for an honest claim, and suffered said Platt to present them to and file them in the War Department. That



Captain Wickes was not alone in reposing confidence in this pretended agent of the War Department. Quite a number of the other Officers of the 169<sup>th</sup> Regiment, reposing a like confidence in the representations of said Platt, were induced to make out and did make out and deliver to said Platt accounts of their recruiting expenses and sustained them by similar vouchers. That after the making out and rendering such accounts by Captain Wickes, he served the Country in his position as Captain honorably and faithfully almost a year before he learned that any fault was found with the Bills so rendered, he in the meantime never received a dollar upon them.

We regret to learn that Captain Wickes has been convicted of presenting false vouchers and sentenced to be dishonorably dismissed from the service with the loss of his pay and allowances and to be imprisoned for the period of Six Months. The undersigned, fully believing that Captain Wickes never intended to wrong the Government and knowing that other honorable men fell into the same snare, one at least of whom has been restored to his position in the Regiment, earnestly solicit the remission of his sentence and that Captain Wickes may be restored to the position which he occupied in the service of the United States.

Dated Troy, N.Y., February 16<sup>th</sup>, 1864.

G. Robertson, Jr., Rensselaer County Judge  
J. H. Battershall, Sheriff Rensselaer Co.  
Francis N. Mann, Ex-Judge of Renss. Co., N.Y.  
[Illegible signature], Deputy Collector, 15<sup>th</sup> District [illegible]  
Roger A. Flood, County Treasurer  
Isaac McConihe, Ex-Judge and Co. Tr.  
C. C. Parmenter, Ex-Judge of Rensselaer Co.

To his Excellency Abraham Lincoln  
President of the United States.

The undersigned, although residents of the City and County of Albany, are well informed as to the character and Standing of Captain William H. Wickes of the 169<sup>th</sup> Regiment of New York State Volunteers of the adjoining County of Rensselaer, and from his Excellent character Respectfully Solicit from the President the remission of his Sentence.

February 16<sup>th</sup>, 1864.

Hamilton Harris	John H. Reynolds
Thomas N. Elliott	Amos Dean
[Illegible signature.]	Geo. Dawson
Jno. G. Treadway	Theodore Townsend

To His Excellency Abraham Lincoln  
President of the United States:

We, the undersigned citizens of the Town of Sand Lake, County of Rensselaer and State of New York, would respectfully represent that Capt. Wm. H. Wickes, now confined in the Penitentiary at Albany, for misconduct in the Army, was until his entering the military service of the United States, a citizen of this Town for nearly twenty years, and that he bore an untarnished reputation at home and abroad for uprightness of character and respectability of citizenship, having received from the present Administration the Office of Postmaster of Sand Lake.

And further, we would express our deep sympathy for him, believing that his crime has come more from unfortunate circumstances than from



View of Glass Lake, Sand Lake, New York (ca. 1862)

Joseph Henry Hidley (1830-1872)

Collection of the Rensselaer County Historical Society, Troy, New York

a deliberate and settled determination. In view of these things, we would beseech His Excellency the President, to grant the pardon of our former townsman, and thereby restore, from long confinement, a father to an anxious family, and a citizen to the Republic.

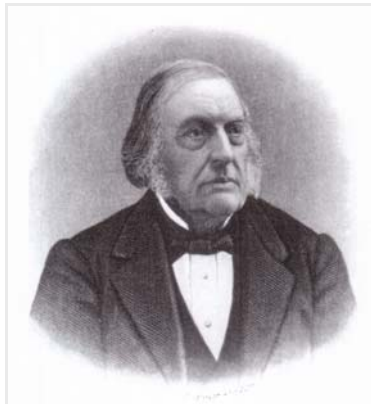
[Signatures.]

To the Honorable Ira Harris,

*Sir:* We, the Townsmen of Sandlake, request you to see the President personally and urge the accomplishment of the same.

Yours truly,

Dr. E. W. Carmichael, Sandlake, N.Y.



U.S. Senator Ira Harris (New York)

*Senator Ira Harris was called as a Witness for the Defence at Capt. Wickes' court martial, and when asked to state the general reputation and moral character of Capt. Wickes, he responded: "His reputation is perfectly good. His character is that of an honest, upright man, above all reproach." There were no further questions for the Senator.*



# The Troy Daily Times.

MARCH 30, 1864.

PARDONED. – The friends of Capt. Wm. H. Wickes, of the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth Regiment, will be pleased to learn that he has received a full pardon from the President of the charges brought against him – presenting false vouchers to the Government – and been reënstated in his rank and position.



**Captain William H. Wickes, Co. H,  
169<sup>th</sup> N.Y. Vols.**

M. M. 1253

*Presenting false vouchers.*

Dishonorably dismissed with the loss of his pay and allowances and to be imprisoned for 6 months.

A Petition numerously signed by influential men of Rensselaer County, N.Y., praying that he may be restored to duty.

Another Petition signed by over an hundred names praying for his release from confinement and restoration to service accompanied the other papers.

The Judge Advocate General says that there is nothing discovered in the records justifying interference in the decision of the Court.

March 14<sup>th</sup>, 1864.

Entered March 17, 1864.

The Judge Advocate General makes another report at the instance of the President in which the opinion is expressed that the additional papers in this case, referred to him by the President, do not elicit any fact that could operate to make him change the views entertained in his former Report...

Pardon, for the unexpired part of the imprisonment.

A. Lincoln.

March 29, 1864.







**Tropical Landscape (Undated)**  
**Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902)**  
**Private Collection**

On March 26<sup>th</sup> the *New South* published an account of the goings-on in Jacksonville in a letter from its correspondent on the 22<sup>d</sup>. Some of the town's citizens had begun to return, mostly Union sympathizers, but among them were a significant number of Confederate spies who watched troop movements and reported what they saw to the enemy:

"On Thursday night last the enemy's cavalry made a raid at Magnolia, a watering place on the St. John's river, distant from Jacksonville about thirty miles, and fired all the buildings in the place. Among the buildings were three large hotels, two of which were capable of accommodating two hundred guests each. In quiet times Magnolia was a popular resort for the *elite* of Florida, many of whom repaired thither for the benefit of their health. Shortly after Gen. Seymour occupied Jacksonville, a small force of men was sent to Magnolia on the steamers *Nelly Baker* and *Cosmopolitan*. They made a landing without opposition, inspected the buildings, took from one of them a quantity of sugar and turpentine, and then returned to Jacksonville. Medical Director Swift has for some time contemplated establishing a general hospital at Magnolia. It offered numerous advantages for the sick and wounded, one of which was a magnificent sulphur spring which was carefully encircled with a wall of stone. The buildings were large, airy, and in good condition, and in every respect suited for the reception of patients. The rebels doubtless had been made aware of Dr. Swift's intention and destroyed the place accordingly.

"Last week the rebels sent a flag of truce to our lines at Jacksonville. The object was to gain permission for two citizens who had been living at Lake City to enter Jacksonville where they formerly resided. The request was granted.

"Sergeant Finney of Co. B, and Private Patterson of Co. A, both of the Independent Massachusetts Cavalry Battalion, were captured by the enemy while making a reconnoissance within his lines. The same parties



**A Flag of Truce**  
 Published in "The Soldier In Our Civil War, Vol. II" (1893)

had twice before been on a similar scout and after having passed through and around the rebel camp, succeeded in coming away safely, bringing with them much valuable information. Finney and Patterson are shrewd, capable men and their capture was an unfortunate circumstance. The rebel officer who came with the flag of truce, remarked that they were the greatest know-nothings he had ever met with. He could not get a word of information from either, and one of them invariably limited his answers to a short 'yes' or 'no.'

"D. Gross, Post Medical Director, has thoroughly systematized his Department and keeps everything in the best order. He is ably assisted by Dr. Wm. A. Smith of the 47<sup>th</sup> New York Regiment and Dr. Tremaine, the latter acting in the capacity of executive officer. Dr. Smith recently went to Hilton Head to remain a few days for the benefit of his health. From the day the Expedition first arrived he has ever been conspicuous in fulfilling the duties of his profession with a zeal and constancy that has secured him many encomiums.



**Hospital No. 2, Jacksonville (December 11, 1864)**

"We are favored to no small extent in having for our Postmaster Mr. Day, of the Sanitary Commission. He attends to postal matters in a manner that would lead us to believe he was an old hand at the

business. The office is rapidly approaching one of considerable importance, inasmuch as the great number of troops here and in the vicinity is the source of much letter-writing. Mr. Day also has charge of the Florida branch of the Sanitary Commission, and we can imagine he does not enjoy much leisure.

"There is nothing of moment to report from Pilatka. The troops under Col. Barton, have built extensive earthworks in front of the town and do not apprehend any demonstration by the enemy. The communication between here and there is frequent, and the men are well-supplied with all they need in the way of subsistence. Pilatka is a fine, healthy locality and we are pleased that so many of the boys have been so fortunate as to be sent there on duty. We hope they may be able to drive in some of the beef which is about them.



**Federal signal tower, Jacksonville (December 12, 1864)**

"Since communication by flag signal has been open to the mouth of the St. John's, the Signal Corps is in full operation. Capt. G. S. Dana, the Chief of the Corps here, is considered in every respect the man for the place. The Lieutenants serving with him are well-posted in their duties and we doubt not they will sustain the reputation for zeal and efficiency which has been so long accorded to them. The necessity for a line to the mouth of the St. John's has been felt for some time and we are glad to see it has been established.

"As a general thing the weather for the past week has been delightful. A little rain, however, would be welcome, for the dust and sand are getting to be anything but pleasant. We have long since come to the conclusion that Jacksonville is a much superior place to Hilton Head. Sand abounds in both places but here we have houses to shelter and trees to shade us. Citizens are beginning to appear in a large number. Most of them are engaged in trade, and two or three have exhibited



**City Market at Ocean Street and the St. Johns River, with the U.S. Hospital Transport "Cosmopolitan" in the background (1864)**

their enterprise in opening hotels. A good commodious hotel, well-kept, would be a paying institution at Jacksonville. At present we have two or three dwelling houses used as hotels, and although their proprietors do all in their power to accommodate the guests, they cannot possibly keep up with the demand. Officers and others coming here find it difficult to obtain accommodations, and we would repeat the suggestion that some good, active, enterprising man should apply for permission to erect a building of sufficient magnitude to accommodate three or four hundred guests.

"The demand for the NEW SOUTH is constantly increasing and its presence among us is looked for with intense interest. The paper has become an invaluable institution and without it the army would be deprived of one of its chief dependencies. I learn that two days ago one regiment made arrangements for receiving five hundred copies each week. Its popularity is unquestioned, and I have heard several officers remark that as a medium for dispersing the news of the week it could not be equaled.

"The number of patients now remaining in the Jacksonville hospitals does not exceed two hundred. About three weeks ago one or two cases of the smallpox appeared, but we are happy to state the disease has been confined to three or four cases. A pest-house has been erected on the opposite side of the river, whither the patients have been taken.

"It is thought by many that several parties living on the opposite side of the river, and who are in the habit of crossing every day or two, should be looked after by the Provost Marshal, as indications give weight to the suspicion that they convey dangerous information to the enemy. They come over to Jacksonville, take note of all that is going on, then re-cross the river, and at night, it is alleged, they repair to a point a few miles up, meet the enemy's scout, and in that way keep the rebels well-informed as to our movements. We have had sufficient experience to know that all the Floridians who claim to be loyal to the Union are not in every instance what they represent themselves to be. It would be advisable at any rate to keep a strict watch over them, and





**Emancipated slaves in front of the Provost Marshal's Office,  
Jacksonville (1864)**

make an example of the first case of perfidy. The colored people, as a general thing, are to be depended upon, and through one of them we divine more valuable information in one minute than we can get from a dozen of these Floridians on the other side of the river in a week's time. There are one or two women in Jacksonville, one of whom formerly lived in Baldwin, and who is now keeping a boarding-house, that is rather outspoken in her secesh sentiments, and we would recommend that unless she keeps a civil tongue within her head, the Provost Marshal to pay her a visit. We have in our midst some Floridians who are true and faithful to our cause, and they should in every way receive our encouragement and support."



**U.S. Military Prison, corner of Bay and Newman Streets,  
Jacksonville, (December 11, 1864)**

The *New South* published a second letter concerning the occupation of Palatka, Fla., located upriver on the St. Johns, this one written on the 16<sup>th</sup> by the correspondent known as "Tubal-Cain." The letter presented images of horror and beauty to the reader:



Detail from "Northern Part of Florida" (1864)  
 Drawn by H. Lindenkohl. Compiled and Published at the United  
 States Coast Survey Office, A. D. Bache, Superintendent  
 Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

*Palatka is located 62 miles south of Jacksonville.*

"On the 9<sup>th</sup> inst., an expedition left Jacksonville for this place; arriving the following morning. No enemy was found here. Our forces are now entrenched and hold the town – awaiting patiently for the enemy to come and see us.

"Reports from deserters and refugees say that Gen. Patton Anderson is between here and Gainesville, with ten or twelve thousand Confederate troops. These reports must be taken with a large grain of salt; as the credibility of Florida *corn-crackers* is not wholly reliable. And yet the enemy may be in considerable force in our front; and also along the line of the Fernandina and Cedar Keys Railroad.

"We learn of a diabolical atrocity, that Chamber's Cavalry committed on two negroes here, something like a year or more ago. These negroes had run away from Orange Springs, had crossed the St. John's, and were trying to get to St. Augustine, for Federal protection. They were unquestionably running away from their masters, and were in pursuit of Freedom. But they were captured, brought here, and hung on a tree, near the town. They had no civil or military trial; had committed no crime, but were executed – simply to 'put down the [Negro]' in Florida. One of these poor fellows was cut down before life was extinct – buried alive, as it were, and afterwards *his head beaten to pieces with muskets*. Such is life in the peninsula of the Confederacy.



**Florida River Scene (ca. 1887-1900)**  
**Martin Johnson Heade (1819-1904)**  
**Private Collection**

"The scenery here is beautiful, orange groves, banana trees, pomegranates and other tropical trees and shrubs abound. The bay south of the town is magnificent, and the noble St. John's is here a full three miles wide. Only four families were living here when our troops took possession of the town. They were too poor or lazy to move elsewhere. Pilatka had 500 inhabitants, and four large hotels. It was the head of steamboat trade in the interior of Florida, previous to the war.

"On the 14<sup>th</sup> ult. one of our gunboats captured at Lake George, a small steamer called *The Sumter*, with a small quantity of cotton, rosin and turpentine. *The Sumter* has been unloaded and sent up to the lake again, in pursuit of another Confederate steamer, said to have a large lot of cotton upon her.

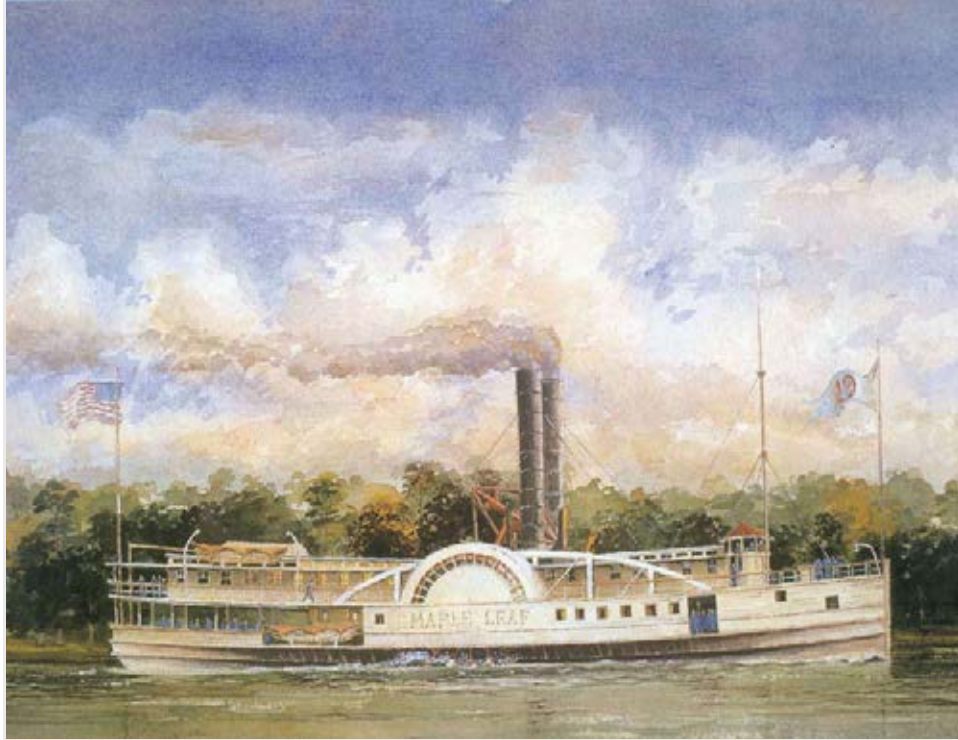


**St. Johns River steamer**

"Our command, under Col. BARTON, will advance this morning, to feel the enemy, and ascertain the correctness of reports as to his being in force. Nothing else new or strange. TUBAL-CAIN."

At 4 o'clock in the morning of April 1<sup>st</sup>, all of the hard work at Folly Island performed by 1<sup>st</sup> Lieut. and Quartermaster Sidney N. Kinney and Wagonmaster Robert Whitcomb to safeguard and transport the 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y.'s baggage and equip-





**U.S. Army Transport "Maple Leaf" by Donald G. Ingram**  
**Collection of the Museum of Florida History, Tallahassee, Florida**

ment to Jacksonville went to naught when the *Maple Leaf* struck a Confederate torpedo in the St. Johns River off Mandarin Point. The following dispatches recorded the event:

U. S. STEAM SLOOP PAWNEE,  
 Off Mayport Mills, Fla., April 1, 1864.

COMMODORE: I have just received information that the transport *Maple Leaf* was blown up by a torpedo when she was off Mandarin, distant 15 miles above Jacksonville.

The *Maple Leaf* was on her way down the St. Johns from Palatka, and my informant states that her bow was blown off.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEO. B. BALCH,  
*Commander and Senior Officer Present.*

Commodore S. C. ROWAN, U. S. Navy,  
*Comdg. South Atlantic Blockdg. Squadron, off Charleston.*

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HDQRS. DISTRICT OF FLORIDA, DEPT. OF THE SOUTH,  
 Jacksonville, Fla., April 1, 1864.

GENERAL: Since the departure of General Gillmore from the district there has nothing of interest occurred with the unfortunate exception of the loss of the steamer *Maple Leaf*, which was destroyed by a torpedo at 4 a.m. this morning. I had found it necessary to send the *Maple Leaf* to Palatka with troops. She arrived there safely, in company with the *Weed* and *Hunter*. The last two remained at that post in accordance with your instructions. On her return the *Maple Leaf* struck a torpedo at a point 12 miles above this place and sunk in about seven minutes.



Her upper works are out of water. A gun-boat has gone up to lie by her and make a report as to the amount of injury she has received. Two firemen and 2 servants are supposed to have been drowned. The baggage and camp equipage of the One Hundred and Twelfth and One Hundred and Sixty-ninth New York and the Thirteenth Indiana Regiments was on board, not having been removed from the steamer on its arrival from Hilton Head.



**Brigadier-General John P. Hatch,**  
commanding District of Florida

Colonel Barton reports skirmishing at his pickets. The rumors are that a large force of the enemy are concentrating in front of him. He does not attach much importance to the rumor, but remains well on his guard. I have sent him thus far one additional regiment of infantry and two small companies of cavalry. Will send the other troops as soon as possible. I am now organizing a boat battalion to scout the river, and hope that it, under the cover of a cavalry force, will be able to keep the river open hereafter.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JNO. P. HATCH,  
*Brigadier-General, Commanding.*

Brig. Gen. J. W. TURNER,  
*Chief of Staff.*

In his report on the 4<sup>th</sup> to Confederate Maj.-Gen. J. Patton Anderson, commanding the District of Florida, Capt. and Asst. Adj't.-Gen. E. Pliny Bryan complimented the men who sank the *Maple Leaf*:

CAMP MILTON, April 4, 1864.

GENERAL: I have the honor to report that in compliance with instructions from Col. D. B. Harris, chief engineer, I placed 12 torpedoes, containing each 70 pounds small-grain cannon powder, in the Saint John's River, near Mandarin Point, during Wednesday night, March 30. I found the channel wide, about 25 feet deep, with very muddy bottom.

Early Friday morning, April 1, I discovered a steamer, supposed to be the *Maple Leaf*, sunk off Mandarin Point. On account of the wind I

could not board her until Saturday morning, April 2, at which time she was fired in three places and burnt. The water was about 2 feet deep on the upper cabin deck. But few things could have been saved by the enemy, as the vessel must have sunk in a few moments. She apparently was greatly damaged by the explosion. A few mattresses, sofas, wash-bowls, and other unimportant articles were left in the upper cabin. From her length, width, size, and general appearance I suppose her to be a first-class vessel.

I take pleasure in bringing to your notice the names of the party engaged in the affair: Lieut. J. D. O'Hern, Corp'l. John Brantly, and Privates Musco Crenshaw and William Taylor, of Company F, and John Frisbee, of Company B, all of Second Florida Battalion.

I have the honor to be, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. PLINY BRYAN,  
*Captain and Assistant Adjutant-General.*

Maj. Gen. P. ANDERSON,  
*Comdg. District of Florida, Camp Milton.*



**Confederate Major-General J. Patton Anderson,  
commanding District of Florida**

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DISTRICT OF FLORIDA,  
In the Field, April 4, 1864.

Respectfully forwarded, for the information of the general commanding. Captain Bryan deserves much credit for the activity he displayed and labor performed in bringing about the result here reported. He has inflicted heavy loss upon the enemy, and taught him to be cautious in the navigation of our waters.

PATTON ANDERSON,  
*Major-General, Commanding.*

Brig.-Gen. Alonzo Alden wrote about the disaster in his memoirs, lamenting the loss of "personal effects, family souvenirs, private papers, company official books and papers, and nearly all regimental records of official character":



U.S. Army Transport "Maple Leaf," St. Johns River, Florida (center of image)

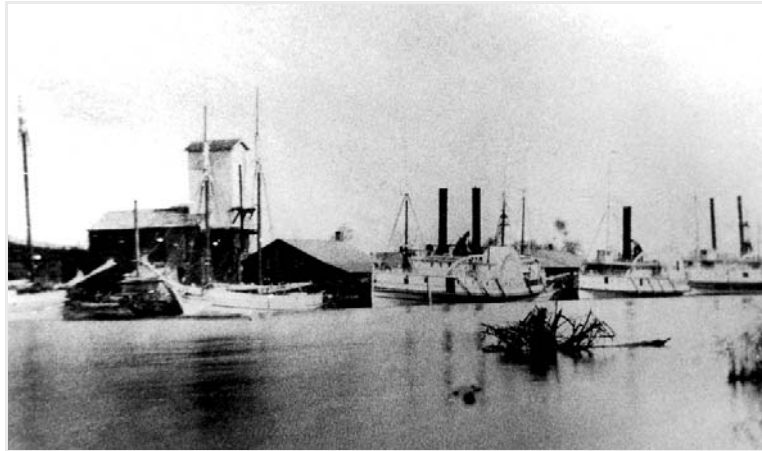
"When the 169<sup>th</sup> was ordered from Folly Island to Florida, about the 20<sup>th</sup> of February, our camp equipage and most of our personal baggage were left in charge of a commissioned officer, to be delivered to the regiment at some future time. Accordingly, on or about the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, 1864, the steamer *Maple Leaf* was laden with all the property described, and when within 15 miles of Jacksonville in the St. John's River, the steamer was wrecked by the explosion of a torpedo and sunk with all the property onboard. The loss was believed to be irretrievable and sadly unfortunate; for the officers had thereby lost nearly all personal effects, family souvenirs, private papers, company official books and papers, and nearly all regimental records of official character. The writer was especially unfortunate in the loss of his tactical work which was ready for publication. The boat also contained about \$5,000 worth of sutler's stores which were lost."

A Federal board of inquiry was convened on April 2-3 to investigate and report on the circumstances connected with the loss of the *Maple Leaf*, consisting of Col. Joseph B. Hawley, 7<sup>th</sup> Conn., Lieut.-Col. James Lewis, 144<sup>th</sup> N.Y., and Maj. J. W. T. Appleton, 54<sup>th</sup> Mass. The board assembled at the office of the Chief Quartermaster in Jacksonville and interviewed nine witnesses of the event. Testimony from Capt. Henry W. Dale follows:

"My name is Henry W. Dale of Chelsea, Mass. I have been in command of the side wheel steamer *Maple Leaf*, 600 tons burden, since August, 1862. She had been in the service of the Government since Sept. 3, 1862, and in the Department of the South (the last time) since Nov. 11, 1863. She was under a Charter from the first. Her last Charter was dated June 22, 1863, to continue an indefinite time. The owners victual and man the boat and keep in repairs, the government furnishing the coal.

"On [Saturday], March 26<sup>th</sup>, I received orders from Capt. Kelly, A. Q. M. Hilton Head, and sailed from Hilton Head for Pawnee Landing to report there to Brig.-Gen. Terry and take on board the camp and garrison."

son equipage of Foster's and Ames' Brigade. I took the material on board at Pawnee Landing and was by my original orders to go straight to Jacksonville, but Capt. Atwood ordered me to stop at Stono. He put on board mails and passengers for Hilton Head. I finished loading at Pawnee at 10 and one-half P.M. Sunday the 27<sup>th</sup> and reported at Stono after midnight. After receiving the mails and passengers as stated, I started immediately for the Head, where we arrived about 9 A.M. on the 28<sup>th</sup>, landed mails and passengers and reported to the Quartermaster's. Capt. Kelly ordered me to go to Jacksonville immediately. I left that afternoon but encountered heavy weather and put into Fernandina, Tuesday the 29<sup>th</sup>.



**Only known photograph of the U.S. Army Transport "Maple Leaf" (center)**

"We left on the 30<sup>th</sup> and arrived at Jacksonville about 5 P.M. on that day. After discharging the deck load, I received on board 87 cavalry horses and about that number of men and officers, by order of Capt. Walbridge. By his order I left at 9 P.M. that day for Palatka. We arrived there about 4 A.M. on the 31<sup>st</sup>. I had a government river pilot on board, Mr. Romeo, who was ordered to report to me by Capt. Walbridge, A. Q. M. After discharging the cavalry, I received orders to return at night to Jacksonville, from Lieut. Avery, A. Q. M. at Palatka. I was detained to wait for dispatches until 2 and one-quarter P.M., March 31, when I started down the river. The steamer, as to her speed, course, &c., was entirely under the direction of the pilot, of course. I had a sufficient crew and was well-manned in every department. I had a first and second officer, two quartermasters or wheelmen, and six men for the deck, two engineers and eight men for the engine. Nothing unusual occurred till 4 o'clock on the morning of April 1<sup>st</sup>. At that hour I was in bed and asleep but was awakened by a tremendous crash, and heavy report. The saloon was filled with a sickening stench and the timbers were breaking, as there was a great tumult. I sprang out and in two minutes the water was over the floor of the saloon. The wheels turned perhaps five times after the crash. The steamer immediately sank, so as to leave about three feet of water in the saloon. It was about four fathoms water. There were on duty forward, the second officer and three men, besides the pilot and quartermaster in the pilot house. All I can say of the course of the disaster is that it must have been a torpedo. I judge that it opened the vessel about thirty feet from the stem, right under her bottom. Everything gave way amidships in that portion of the boat. The floor settled immediately. I think it was a torpedo entirely submerged as it burst so far under. Had it been on the





**Replica of the torpedo that sank the "Maple Leaf," gift of the Kirby-Smith Camp #1209, Sons of Confederate Veterans Collection of the Mandarin Historical Museum, Jacksonville, Florida**

surface where it could have been seen, it would probably have burst at the bows and perhaps done little damage. We immediately got out all the boats, as soon as possible. We had four boats on board, one was under the saloon deck on the guard and could not be got at, two were on the cranes, one on each quarter, and one on the hurricane deck. We took off all the crew and passengers, numbering fifty-eight persons, and the mails. Two deck hands and two firemen went down with the boat, being in the forecabin at the time. They were colored men. We left the boat as soon as we could, about half an hour after the disaster, and reached Jacksonville before eight o'clock and reported to the senior officer of the navy, Capt. Balch, and to Capt. Walbridge, A. Q. M.

"The disaster occurred about twelve miles from Jacksonville, and off Mandarin Point, about three quarters of a mile from the east bank of the river and perhaps a mile or a mile and a half from the west bank. I have been up and down three times before, but always in the night with one exception. I don't pretend to know positively, but I think we were in the proper channel; we were so far as my observation goes.

"I think that we could have done nothing more than we did to save the vessel or the cargo. All public property was under water. There was nothing in the saloon but the personal effects of officers and passengers. I expected to see the enemy's small boats put off after us and thought it the better part of valor to get away as soon as possible with the passengers.

"After our getting to Jacksonville a gunboat was ordered to go up. The *Norwich* went up. I went on her with my officers and part of my crew. I could not see that anything had been done to the *Maple Leaf*. It was

about noon when we got there. When I left at 4 and one-half in the morning, we had just as much as the boat would carry and I left on the wreck three rebel prisoners of war. They had not been put under my charge and the military officers had got off first in a boat without taking them, so I left them. They were there when the *Norwich* came up, and reported that one man had been there from the shore and taken a little property out of the cabin. But I could not see that anything had been disturbed. It was impossible to do anything to save any property of consequence. Perhaps if the saloon deck were torn off, the main deck might be opened to let the cargo up; or perhaps a tug might wrench off the bows, and so let the cargo float. I consider the vessel and cargo a total loss and do not see how they can be saved. The expense and danger of working there are to be considered.

"I saw lights going up the river and coming down, but neither saw nor heard anything unusual to excite attention. I do not know how it might have been in the daytime, but I do not see how in the night we could have done any better. We had no light burning but the one in the binnacle and that was obscured. Lights were put out when we left Palatka by my orders and according to instructions.



**Captain Henry W. Dale,  
U.S. Army Transport "Maple Leaf"**

"The *Maple Leaf* would have been thirteen years old the coming summer. We considered her a staunch, serviceable boat. I have been outside with her in very heavy sea. I consider her well-built and strong. The shock of that explosion would have opened any vessel. It could not have come from the boilers, for no steam escaped, and the firemen ran up from below because the water was following them. I do not know of any ordnance stores or ammunition of any kind on board. If there was anything of the kind it should have been put in the aft part of the boat away from all fire and would have been if any officers had known it. Tents and sutlers stores were in the hold in the part of the vessel where the explosion took place. This is all that I can say of the matter."

More than one transport vessel would fall victim to Confederate saboteurs. The U.S. Army Transport *General Hunter* was destroyed on the 16<sup>th</sup>, very close to where the *Maple Leaf* lay in its watery grave:



**Wreck of Transport Steamers "Maple Leaf" and "Gen'l. Hunter,"  
St. Johns River, Florida, Sunk by Torpedoes (ca. April, 1864)  
Alfred Rudolph Waud (1828-1891)  
Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.**

U. S. STEAM SLOOP PAWNEE,  
Off Jacksonville, Fla., April 17, 1864.

COMMODORE: I regret to inform you that the steamer *General Hunter* was sunk by a torpedo yesterday at 9 a.m. whilst on her way from Picolata to this place. The *Norwich* was convoying the *Cosmopolitan* and *General Hunter*, the two leading vessels having safely passed, and drawing from 3 to 4 feet more water, when the explosion took place, and by which the *Hunter* was sunk in five minutes, with the loss of a quartermaster of the *Hunter*.

There were three gunboats up the river at the time, and had been employed convoying the transports up and down the river. It is fortunate the accident did not take place when the vessel was loaded with troops, or the loss of life must have been great. I have directed Lieutenant-Commander Bacon, of the *Unadilla*, who was in the vicinity at the time of the explosion, to assist in saving property from the wreck.

It is supposed that the *Norwich* and *Cosmopolitan* passed very near the torpedo, and that in making a turn in the channel the *Hunter* was blown off to leeward, as she had much surface exposed to the action of the wind, which was fresh, and having but little hold on the water she imperceptibly drifted out of the wake of the other two vessels. She was endeavoring to follow (as they all do) exactly in the wake of the gunboat.

I will send you reports from Lieutenant-Commander Bacon and Acting Master Meriam, commanding the *Norwich*, as soon as I can get them. As soon as the accident occurred, which took place near the wreck of the *Maple Leaf*, the *Norwich* and *Unadilla* proceeded to render every assistance in their power.

The *Mahaska* is down the river, where it is thought the enemy will try and destroy transports passing between Jacksonville and the river.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEO. B. BALCH,  
*Commander and Senior Officer Present.*

Commodore S. C. ROWAN,  
*Comdg. South Atlantic Blockdg Squadron, off Charleston.*



**View of Main Street and the Putnam Hotel, Palatka, Florida (ca. 1870s)**

HEADQUARTERS, DISTRICT OF FLORIDA,  
Jacksonville, Fla., April 16, 1864.

GENERAL: The evacuation of Palatka was completed in the most able manner, and great praise is due to Colonel Barton, commanding, for the admirable arrangements which resulted so favorably. Nothing was abandoned; the magazines, platforms for guns, and abatis were destroyed, and the garrison and all the inhabitants of the town withdrawn without accident of any kind. A large portion of the stores, particularly provisions and ordnance stores, were transferred to Picolata. I am now removing them to this place under convoy of the gun-boats.

I regret to have to report in this communication that the steamer *Hunter*, on a return trip from Picolata, having on board quarter-master's property, was destroyed by a torpedo near the wreck of the *Maple Leaf*. The *Cosmopolitan* and *Hunter*, convoyed by the gun-boat *Norwich*, were together at the time of the accident. The gun-boat and the *Cosmopolitan* both passed over the torpedo safely without perceiving it. The *Hunter* followed immediately in the wake of the *Cosmopolitan*, struck it, and sank immediately. One man, a hand of the boat, was drowned. The steward of the boat had his leg broken. No other person injured.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JNO. P. HATCH,  
*Brigadier-General, Commanding.*

Brig. Gen. J. W. TURNER,  
*Chief of Staff.*



In an article entitled, *Sinking of the Union transport steamer "Maple Leaf,"* April 6, 2014, by Rob Mattson, a contributor to the U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command's Civil War Navy Sesquicentennial Blog, we learn about the discovery of the wreck of the *Maple Leaf* in 1984 by Dr. Keith V. Holland of St. Johns Archaeological Expeditions, Inc.:



**Dr. Keith V. Holland of St. Johns Archaeological Expeditions, Inc. (1991)**

"Jacksonville dentist Dr. Keith Holland, born and raised in the city, always had an avid interest in the history of the Jacksonville area and the St. Johns River. He became particularly interested in the story of the *Maple Leaf* and in his spare time, researched the details of the sinking of the steamer (which included trips to Washington D.C). After much research, in June 1984 Keith and colleagues discovered what they were sure was the wreck of the *Maple Leaf* in the river bottom off Mandarin Point. Much of the wreck was buried under river sediment, and after obtaining some funding, and dealing with numerous permitting and legal issues, they began to excavate the wreck, which confirmed its identity as the *Maple Leaf*. Notably, their interest was not profit; nothing they brought up from the wreck was sold for personal gain. All material they recovered was turned over to the State of Florida after careful preservation work.

"The wreck of the *Maple Leaf* turned out to be an immense treasure trove of artifacts and material detailing the personal lives of Civil War Army personnel. The material recovered from the wreck includes military equipment (weapons, uniform buttons, other gear), personal effects (smoking pipes, personal grooming and other items, bottles and flasks of various types), and items plundered from raids on southern plantations (fine china, silverware, etc.). Even "organic" items such as leather, paper, etc. have been recovered. The anaerobic (=no oxygen) conditions of the St. Johns River bottom was an ideal environment for the preservation of the artifacts. National Park Service historian Dr. Ed Bearss has noted, "The wreck of the *Maple Leaf* is unsurpassed as a source for Civil War material culture... It is the most important repository of Civil War artifacts every found, and probably will remain so.'

"Many of the artifacts recovered from the wreck are archived in the Florida Museum of History in Tallahassee, but some of the artifacts, and a nice model and paintings of the *Maple Leaf*, are on display at the



**"Maple Leaf – An Extraordinary American Civil War Shipwreck"  
Second Edition (2014) by Keith V. Holland**

Mandarin Museum in south Jacksonville. On April 4-5, the museum opened a special exhibit to observe the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the sinking of the transport. They also had Union and Confederate living history displays on the museum grounds for folks to learn about the lifestyles of these folks during the war. Contributing blogger Seaman Rob was there with his Navy camp and display to help educate folks about the role of the USN on the St. Johns River during the war."

A video report entitled, *Maple Leaf: Time Capsule of the Civil War*, may be viewed on the website of the National Museum of the United States Army:

<http://thenmusa.org/maple-leaf.php#>

*"Submerged only 20 feet below the surface of the St. Johns River in Florida, the Maple Leaf remained hidden for almost 150 years. Her discovery in 1984 presented an unparalleled opportunity to increase public understanding of our nation's bloodiest conflict. The cargo of the Maple Leaf contains some of the best-preserved Civil War artifacts in recent discovery including, but not limited to, the personal belongings of three infantry regiments. Ceremonial swords, surgical equipment, and even souvenirs Soldiers collected from Southern plantations are only a few of the historical treasures preserved by the muddy banks of the St. Johns. Our upcoming exhibit highlights these lost artifacts, telling the stories of Soldiers and their daily lives as they struggled to cut off one of the main supply routes to the Confederacy."*

Selected artifacts from the U.S. Army Transport "Maple Leaf"





Selected artifacts from the U.S. Army Transport "Maple Leaf" (cont'd.)





Selected artifacts from the U.S. Army Transport "Maple Leaf" (cont'd.)



**Selected artifacts from the U.S. Army Transport "Maple Leaf" (cont'd.)**



**Foot locker lid belonging to Priv. Joseph M. Morton (aka Munson), Co. F, 112<sup>th</sup> N.Y.**



**U.S. infantry waist belt, brass oval U.S. buckle, and percussion cap box**



**Brass shoulder scales, pocket knife, comb, and padlock for the foot locker**

**Selected artifacts from the U.S. Army Transport "Maple Leaf" (cont'd.)**



**Canteen**



**Shoes**



**Selected artifacts from the U.S. Army Transport "Maple Leaf" (cont'd.)**



**Tinted eyeglasses and brass U.S. eagle breastplate for a cartridge box sling**



**Flute for the regimental band**



**Cast iron and brass scale for the regimental quartermaster or surgeon**



Two items from the *Maple Leaf* have been identified as belonging to men of the 169<sup>th</sup>, including a rubberized poncho or rain coat belonging to Priv. Joseph B. Follet, Co. K, (see p. 63 of the October 2013 edition of the newsletter). Priv. Follet transferred to the Veteran Reserve Corps on September 20, 1863, and his poncho was left with 1<sup>st</sup> Lieut. and Quartermaster Sidney N. Kinney.

A brass token from the store of Oliver Boutwell of Troy, N.Y., a miller of grains, was also recovered:



**Brass store token, Oliver Boutwell, Troy, N.Y. (1863)**

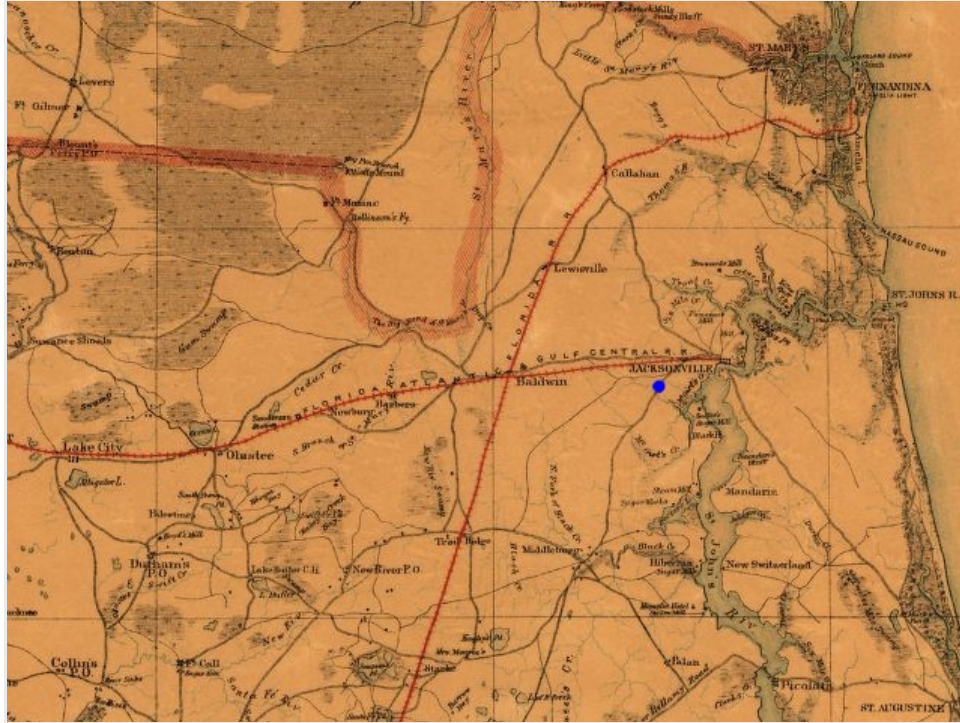
"Oliver Boutwell began business as a baker at 314 River Street, Troy, in 1831. In 1833 he moved to 7 Grand Division Street, and in 1836 he admitted his brother, Phardice, to partnership. The following year Oliver withdrew, and in 1837 established himself as a miller near 'Sloop Lock,' continuing alone until after the Civil War. The firm, known as O. Boutwell & Son, were millers and dealers in flour, wheat, rye, oats, and corn. During the Civil War, an extensive issue of store tokens was put out by 'Oliver Boutwell, Miller, Troy, New York.' There are several varieties of these tokens and many very slight die variations. They were issued extensively in a large part of the Eastern United States, probably close to 1 or 2 hundred thousands of these tokens must have been issued. They are for the most part quite common, but several varieties are probably quite rare." – *Stack's Rare Coins, New York, New York.*

There is little question that the area of the ship's hold containing the equipment and baggage of the 169<sup>th</sup> (and the 13<sup>th</sup> Indiana) has barely been touched, as most of what has been recovered thus far seems to have come from the 112<sup>th</sup> N.Y.

All items shown are part of the collection of the U.S. Army Center of Military History and the Collections and Conservation Department, Bureau of Archaeological Research, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State, Tallahassee, Fla. Exhibits from the collections are periodically on display at the Museum of Florida History in Tallahassee, the Jacksonville Museum of Science and History, and the Mandarin Museum in Jacksonville. The possibility of taking an exhibit to the states of New York and Indiana is currently under consideration.

On April 2<sup>d</sup>, the 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y. participated in an expedition to Cedar Creek, 10 miles west of Jacksonville, serving as a diversionary force. Under the command of Col. Guy V. Henry, the expedition included Henry's Light Brigade, (40<sup>th</sup> Mass. Infantry, mounted, and Independent Battalion of Mass. Cavalry), supported by the 75<sup>th</sup> Ohio, mounted, 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y., and Elder's Horse Battery (aka Battery B, 1<sup>st</sup> U.S. Artillery, equipped with four 12-pounder Napoleon guns).

The enemy's pickets were driven in and at the creek was found a considerable force, estimated at two regiments of cavalry and two of infantry. The 75<sup>th</sup> Ohio was thrown forward as skirmishers and soon determined that the enemy occupied a strong position. To attack, Henry's men would have to cross an open country which would have entailed a heavy loss of life. Skirmishing continued for some time, the Union loss being eight men wounded. The enemy's loss was estimated at 20 or 30 killed and wounded, as that number was seen to fall during the engagement.



Detail from "Northern Part of Florida" (1864)

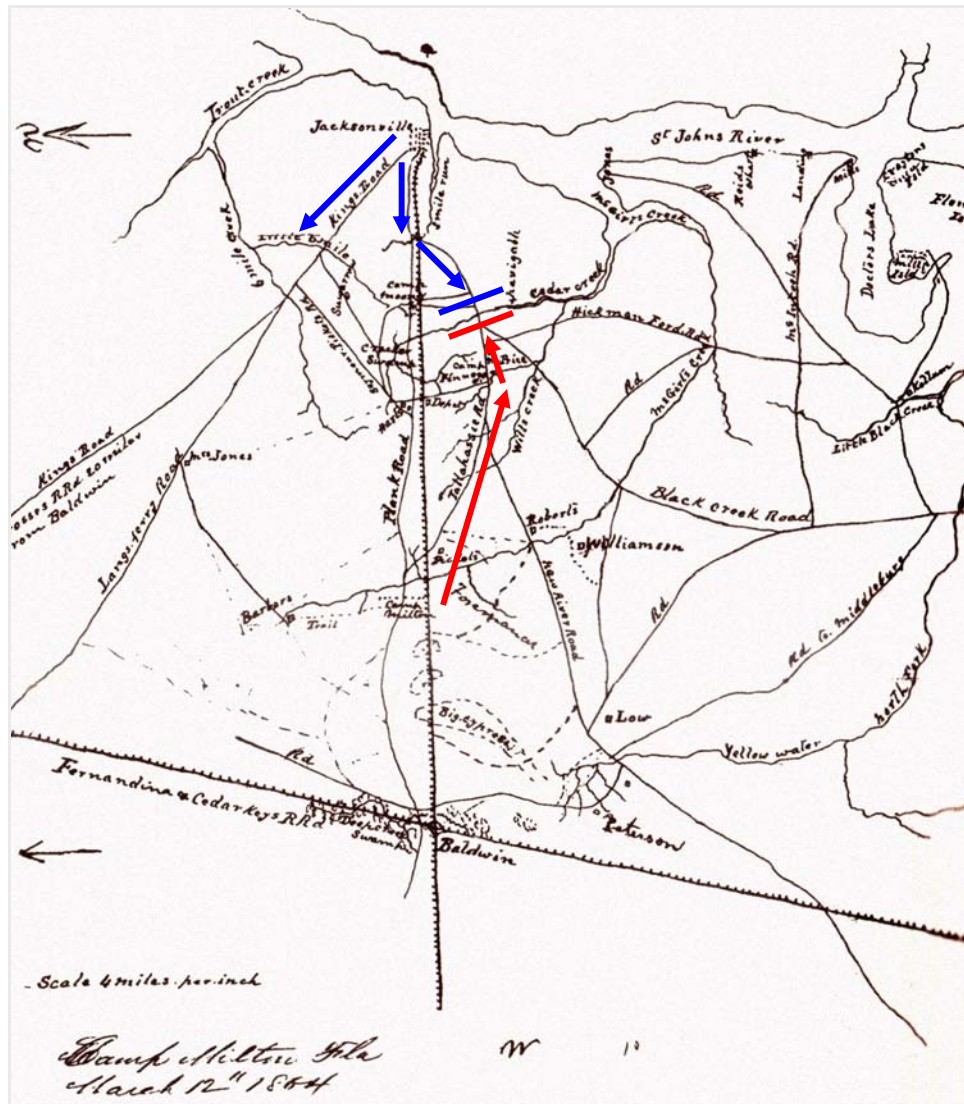
*The location of the skirmish at Cedar Creek, Florida, April 2, 1864, is designated by the blue dot.*

Brig.-Gen. Alonzo Alden describes the expedition in his memoirs using the French term *coup d'œil*, meaning "a glimpse":

"April 2<sup>nd</sup>, Colonel Henry, commanding a cavalry brigade with the 169<sup>th</sup>, constituted a reconnoitering party to investigate the doings and ascertain the purposes of the enemy in their manifest preparations by a *coup d'œil*, about seven miles in the direction of Cedar Run, in the vicinity of one of the recent battles of General Seymour with General Finegan. We found that the enemy had entrenched their position, and were either fortifying themselves against an expected attack or were strengthening their base of operations from which to lay siege against Jacksonville. We engaged the enemy in light skirmishing, enough to develop their weakness; had five men slightly wounded, apparently inflicting more serious casualties upon the enemy, and then withdrew to our camps more unconcerned about the enemy's seeming activity."

In his historical sketch of the regiment, published ca. 1879, Gen. Alden reported that the regiment remained in the field until returning to camp on the 11<sup>th</sup>:

"A convenient and beautiful camp, an excellent parade ground and light duties were conducive to a continental state of mind, to practical and theoretical military schools and discipline which were indulged in to a greater degree at this place than ever before since the organization of the regiment. The picket line was but 1½ miles to the front and entirely in a shady grove and therefore picket duty was pleasant rather than irksome. Thus the time passed unmolested until about April 1, when the 169<sup>th</sup> participated in an expedition and skirmish about ten miles from Jacksonville on the King's road. The enemy had fortified themselves on the opposite bank of Cedar creek and they could not be



Map of the Vicinity of Jacksonville, Florida  
 Drawn by Lieutenant-Colonel George W. Scott, 5<sup>th</sup> Florida Cavalry (March 12, 1864)  
 Collection of the Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida

dislodged without a battle which the object to be accomplished would not warrant, and consequently the expedition returned, April 11."

Col. Henry's report on the evening of the 2<sup>d</sup> indicates that he sent one squadron of cavalry up the King's Road, to the northwest of Jacksonville, supported by five companies of infantry and one company of infantry along the Plank Road, which ran parallel to the Florida, Atlantic and Gulf Central Railroad. The 75<sup>th</sup> Ohio was "thrown forward as skirmishers" at Cedar Creek:

HEADQUARTERS LIGHT BRIGADE,  
 April 2, 1864.

LIEUTENANT: I have the honor to report that, in accordance with instructions from the general commanding, I made a reconnaissance this afternoon. My force consisted of three squadrons of cavalry, four pieces of artillery, and two regiments of infantry, the Seventy-fifth Ohio and One Hundred and Sixty-ninth New York. One squadron of cavalry I



sent out on the King's road, supported by five companies of infantry, and one company of infantry along the Plank road. This force was to attract the enemy's attention, while with the main force I attacked their right. I drove in the pickets of the enemy with my cavalry, but they fell back to Cedar Creek. The Seventy-fifth Ohio was then thrown forward as skirmishers. The enemy was posted in the woods at the creek, in a very strong position. To drive them from it was necessary to cross an open country, which would have resulted in some loss of life, without any reason, as we would have been obliged to retire and be exposed to fire both ways. The enemy seemed to have a front of about 1,200, deployed as skirmishers, on their left. They gave way after some skirmishing, and proceeded toward Camp Finegan. All the passes across Cedar Creek seemed to be barricaded.



**Col. Guy V. Henry, 40<sup>th</sup> Mass. Mounted Infantry,  
commanding Light Brigade**

We lost none killed, but 8 wounded. We captured 25 head of cattle and 1 horse. The rebel loss must have been some 20 or 30, as a number were seen to fall.

The men behaved well, particularly the Seventy-fifth Ohio, who skirmished very finely.

I am, lieutenant, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GUY V. HENRY,

*Col. 40<sup>th</sup> Mass. Mounted Infy., Comdg. Light Brig.*

Lieutenant R. M. HALL,

*Acting Assistant Adjutant-General.*

From Gen. Alden's memoirs and Col. Henry's report, we may conclude that five companies of the 169<sup>th</sup> were sent up King's Road and another company was sent down the Plank Road in order to divert the enemy's attention. As for the remaining four companies of the regiment, they would either have been sent with the



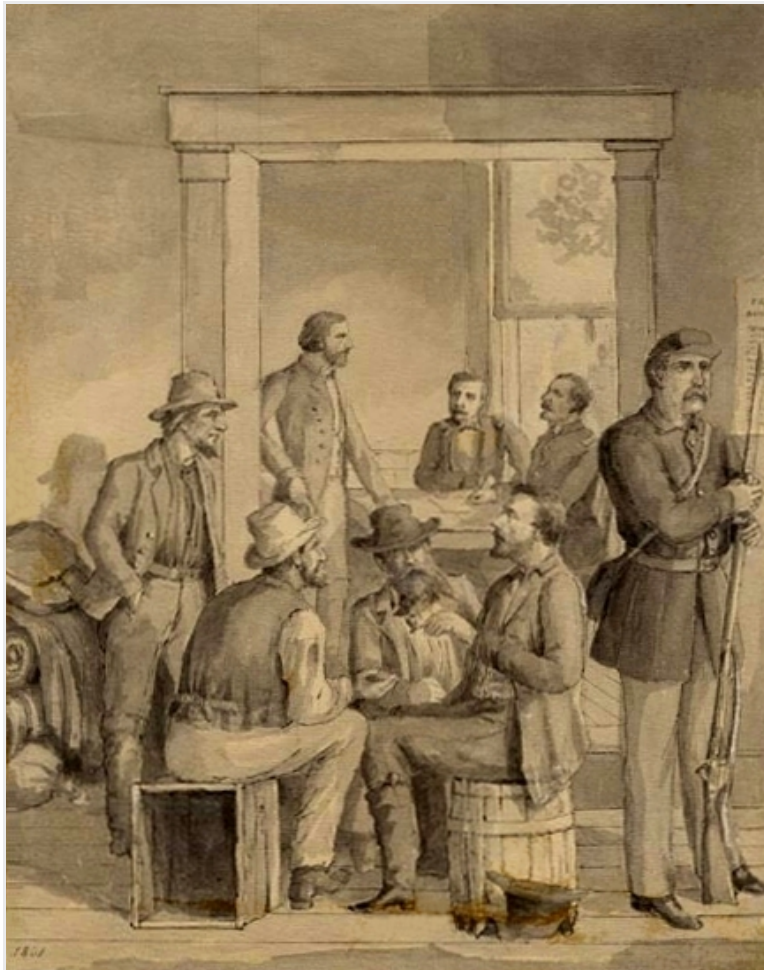
main force along the Tallahassee Road to Cedar Creek or held in the rear as a reserve.

A report by Gen. Hatch on the 3<sup>d</sup> describes the disposition of Confederate forces to the west of Jacksonville:

HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT OF FLORIDA,  
Jacksonville, Fla., April 3, 1864.

GENERAL: There is no change in the situation here. The enemy occupy the same position as when General Gillmore was last in the district.

A reconaissance made yesterday by Colonel Henry with his cavalry, supported by two regiments of infantry, developed a strong line at Cedar Creek, probably two regiments of cavalry and two of infantry.



**Confederate Prisoners**  
**Joseph Hubert Diss Debar (1820-1905)**  
Collection of the West Virginia Division of Culture and  
History, Charleston, West Virginia

A young man named Margroum came through the lines yesterday; he is intelligent, although uneducated. To-day a captain of the Sixty-fourth Georgia Infantry, accompanied by 1 private of his company, came in. I send all three to your headquarters. They have taken the oath of allegiance, and desire to go North. Ten deserters, banded together for their protection, crossed the river yesterday, and were to-day sent in by the boat battalion. All tell about the same story. The enemy in our front is about 10,000 strong; about 12,000 rations are issued. The force in

front of Palatka is about two regiments. The Georgia captain had been for some time in arrest, charged with making false muster.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JNO. P. HATCH,  
*Brigadier-General, Commanding.*

Brigadier General J. W. TURNER,  
*Chief of Staff.*

The casualties yesterday were 8 wounded; the enemy reported to have suffered severely.

A letter on the 4<sup>th</sup> from Tubal-Cain, correspondent of the *New South*, decried the "diabolical instincts of the Rebels" and their "infernal schemes" with torpedoes. He also reported on the recent action at Cedar Creek. The article is presented in its entirety:

# THE NEW SOUTH.

PORT ROYAL, S. C., APRIL 9, 1864.

## AFFAIRS IN FLORIDA.

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**Destruction of the Steamer Maple Leaf by a Rebel Torpedo – Loss of Five Lives – More Skirmishing at Pilatka – Position of the Confederate Army in Florida – Desertions from their Ranks – A Reconnoissance in Force – The Enemy's Lines Driven in – Casualties on the Union Side – Change of Commander, etc.**

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Correspondence of THE NEW SOUTH:

JACKSONVILLE, Florida,  
April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1864.

There is no limit to the diabolical instincts of the Rebels, providing they can gratify their infernal schemes without danger to themselves. At first they planted torpedoes at springs, where some poor Union soldier got blown to pieces because he wanted just a drink of water. Next they planted sub-surface torpedoes around their camps and fortifications, to destroy a few infantry and cavalry, in mere wanton barbarity. Now they place their devilish inventions underwater, leaving them for days and nights, until some unsuspecting keel goes over them, and a vessel, freighted with hundreds of souls, is blown to atoms.

I have now to record the first successful explosion of one of their torpedoes on the St. John's. It occurred on the first instant, and destroyed the United States Transport *Maple Leaf*, which was on her return trip from Pilatka to this place. She had left Pilatka about midnight, on the 31<sup>st</sup>; and when fifteen miles above here, near Mandarin, at 4 o'clock in the morning, she ran on or against a torpedo, which exploded some thirty feet from her bow, causing her to sink in two or three minutes. At the time of the disaster, the *Maple Leaf* had between fifty and sixty

persons on board, all asleep except the officers and crew of the watch in charge of the boat. Most fortunately all escaped in the life-boats, excepting two firemen and three deck-hands, who were asleep in the fore-castle and were either killed by the explosion or drowned. The boat immediately sunk in 27 feet of water; leaving only her hurricane deck, masts and smokestack out of water.

It is impossible to say what kind of an infernal machine destroyed the *Maple Leaf*. There is a great diversity of opinion, but from all I can learn, I think the torpedo was stationary and submerged. It had been placed there some time, anchored in the channel; for had it been stationed the day or night previous, I think the rebels would have been on the lookout to have captured the survivors. The *Maple Leaf* was commanded by Capt. W. H. DALE; was owned in Boston, by Lang & Delano, but was chartered to the Government. She was of 600 tons burthen, and was valued at fifty thousand dollars. She was built in 1852, at Kingston, Canada East, and formerly ran on Lake Ontario. In addition to the loss of life, and the steamer, she had on board the camp and garrison equipage of three regiments of Foster's Brigade. Also the personal baggage of the officers – in all valued, probably, at twenty thousand dollars more.

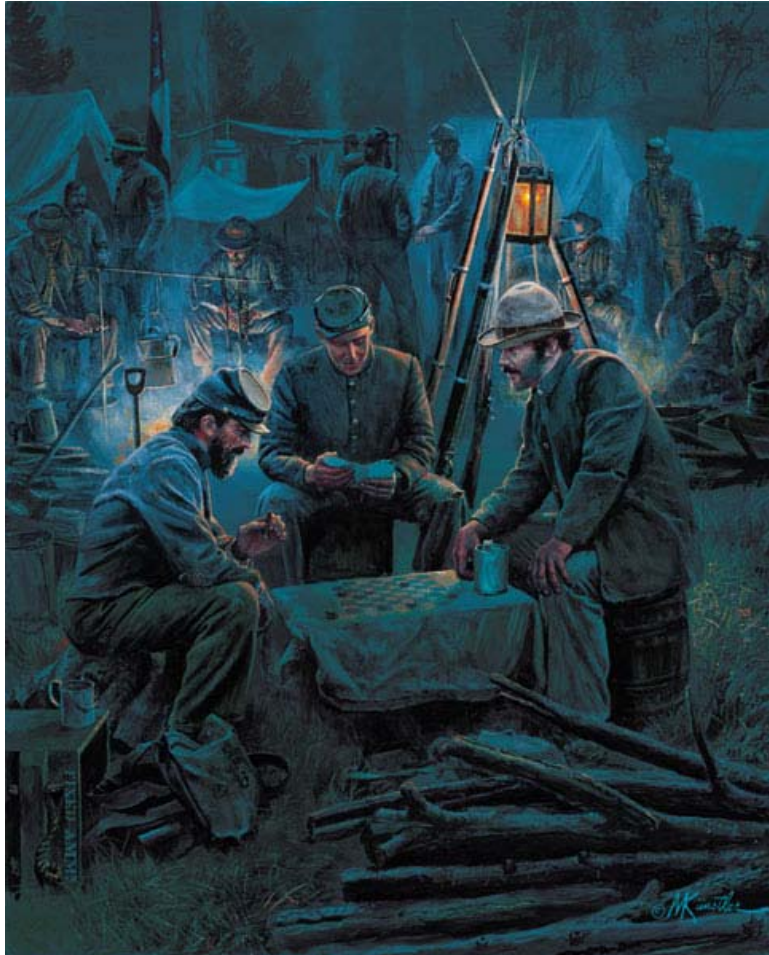


"Norwich," Port Royal, S.C.  
Xanthus Russell Smith (1839-1929)  
Collection of the Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library,  
Wilmington, Delaware

Up at Pilotka, our forces under Col. Barton are favored with a skirmish almost daily. The rebel cavalymen dash at our pickets, capture one or two, get shelled by our batteries and gunboat stationed there, and then retire, coming again the next day for similar pastime. Last week there were three attacks of this kind, and this week I presume they are diurnal. The precise object of the rebels is probably for reconnoissance; yet as they always find our forces on the alert, and hardly get sight of the town, I do not think it pays. The opening of our batteries, there, *show their positions*, which may be very valuable to the rebs if they intend to assault, and attempt the capture of that post.

The Rebel out-posts are in a bad way. A few days since a cavalry picket of the enemy, of ten men, were surprised above Pilotka and captured. Besides the men, they also captured their horses, and brought all back to Pilotka. But on the same night, the first, the rebels captured four of our men – a sergeant and three privates of the 1<sup>st</sup> Massachusetts Cavalry,

who were on the outer picket near Pilatka. So one over an offset for the other – we gaining a little on the Rebs.



**Letter From Home, by Mort Kunstler**

The Confederate army in Florida is now located as follows. About eight thousand infantry are at Baldwin, which is strongly fortified. At McGirt's Creek, midway between here and Baldwin, is a camp of three thousand troops, two-thirds of which are cavalry. Here is an earthwork, and several block-houses. At Camp Finegan is another camp, nearly all cavalry, with two batteries. The vidette and picket line of the enemy is this side of Cedar Creek. Another rebel force, I cannot say how large, is between Gainesville and Pilatka, being stationed there to watch our forces at Pilatka. The whole Confederate army, now in Florida, is from fifteen to sixteen thousand, and possibly may reach twenty thousand, but I do not believe it exceeds the first estimate.

Desertions from the enemy are quite numerous; more or less come in daily. They are mostly Floridians, and express themselves as thoroughly disgusted with the Confederacy. They are generally comfortably clothed, and well armed – having the Enfield rifle in most instances. A large number of these deserters were members of the East Florida Cavalry, and when on picket or vidette duty, run their horses into our lines. We then get some additional horses for the Quarter-Master's Department.

A reconnoissance was made to the front a few days ago, which resulted in showing the positions of the enemy, south west of the King's





**Moment of Decision (1893)**

**Julian A. Scott (1846-1901)**

Collection of the Tuscaloosa Museum of Art, Tuscaloosa, Alabama

Road, and in front of Cedar Creek. When within a mile and a half of the creek, the Rebel pickets were discovered and skirmishing began – the enemy falling back and re-crossing the creek. The skirmish lasted a considerable time, but we met with only a few casualties. The object of the reconnoissance being accomplished, our forces returned to camp. The following are the casualties: Corporal H. H. Hawer, Co. B, 1<sup>st</sup> Mass. Cavalry, hand; Saddler G. V. Partridge, Co. B, 1<sup>st</sup> Mass. Cavalry, leg; Private A. Copeland, Co. B, 1<sup>st</sup> Mass. Cavalry, arm; Private R. B. Walsh, Co. E, 40<sup>th</sup> Mass., hand.

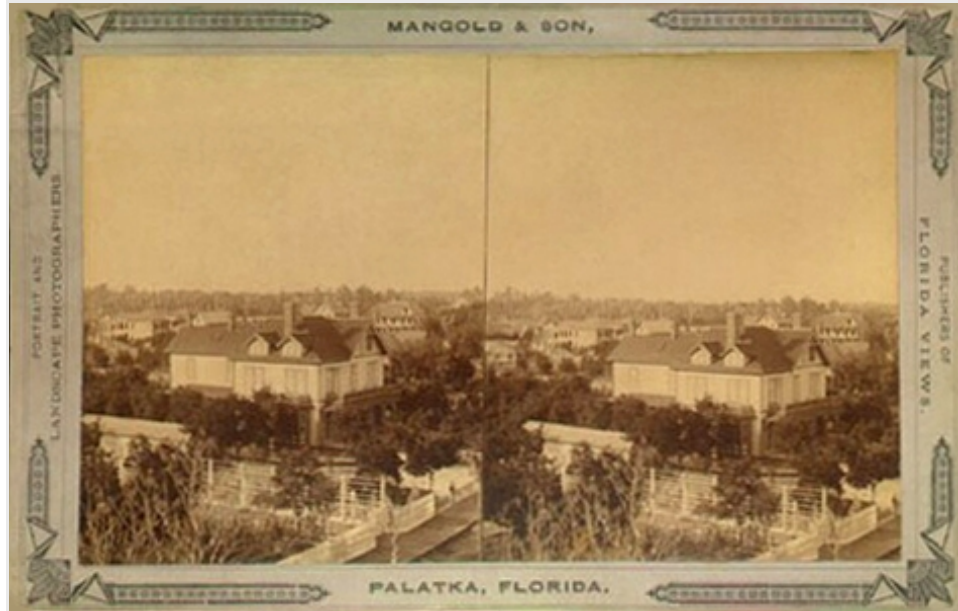
We all sincerely regret the departure of BRIG.-GEN. SEYMOUR, whom we believe to be a commander of eminent ability, high social characteristics, and possessing a great heart, both for his friends and his country.

TUBAL-CAIN.

Tubal-Cain followed-up with another letter on the 20<sup>th</sup>, published on the 23<sup>d</sup>, on which he lamented the loss of the *General Hunter*. Regarding rumors that Jacksonville may be abandoned, the correspondent emphatically stated, "Such is not the intention of the Commander of the District of Florida, nor of the military head of this Department":

"The misfortune of the Federal transports have culminated in the loss of the fine steamer *General Hunter*, which was blown up by a rebel torpedo on the night of the 15<sup>th</sup>. The *Hunter* was loaded with Commissary and Quartermaster's stores, and was going up the St. John's from Jacksonville to Piccoleti, some thirty-five miles above here, where we had a brigade of contraband troops.

"It is somewhat singular that the *General Hunter* was blown up in the same locality where the *Maple Leaf* was destroyed, three weeks since. The wrecks of both steamers are nearly abreast of each other, and they will answer for the beginning of a graveyard for Federal steamers on the St. John's. The *Hunter* was so well known in this Department that a



**Stereoview of Palatka, Florida (post-war)**

description of her is almost superfluous. She was constructed expressly for Major-General Hunter, was of elegant proportions, very fast, and was of four hundred tons burthen. She was owned by the Government and was valued at about \$60,000.

"There is little probability of either the *Hunter* or the *Maple Leaf* ever being raised. There would be no difficulty in getting them up, but there being no dry-dock to repair them, in this Department, they will be left, very probably, as monuments to the diabolical instincts of the Rebellion. The loss of life on the *Hunter* was small, only one person being lost. Both these transports were exceedingly valuable in this District, and will be greatly missed on the *St. John's*.

"Our out-post at Pilatka was abandoned last week. This was rendered absolutely necessary on account of the transfer of troops elsewhere. The evacuation was very creditably performed; all the guns in the redoubts were brought off; the *abatis* thoroughly destroyed, the look-out pulled down, and everything of military value secured and transferred to this post. The policy or wisdom of temporarily occupying small out-posts like Pilatka, is questionable. It was of no military importance, and its occupation held out hopes to the citizens there, and its vicinity, which will be destroyed by the withdrawal of our forces.

"On the day that Barton's troops left Pilatka, a reconnoissance was made by Major Stephens, First Massachusetts Battalion, accompanied by a portion of the Third New Hampshire Mounted Infantry, and a battery. This command went as far as 'Eight Mile Hummock;' discovered a camp of Rebel cavalry which they shelled, also drove in his vidette, and then retired to Pilatka, without the loss of a man. No Confederate infantry were discovered in this reconnoissance; and it is questionable if any Rebel force, other than cavalry, have been near Pilatka since its occupation by Federal troops.

"In our front, here, the Confederate army continues in force, and is probably not far from fifteen thousand men. The main body still remains at Baldwin, with cavalry camps at McGirt's Creek, and at Camp Finegan. It was rumored, a fortnight since, that a portion of the Rebs had been withdrawn and sent back to Savannah and Charleston. Information from confidential sources, however, does not confirm that



Bridge at McGirt's Creek, Camp Milton Historic Preserve, Florida

report, but tend to strengthen the belief that Anderson is in our front with his entire army.

"Rumors are afloat that Jacksonville will be abandoned before long. *Such is not the intention of the Commander of the District of Florida, nor of the military head of this Department.* We have expended much in fortifying the town, in improving its appearance, and also its sanitary condition; and I see no reason to abandon a place so easily held, of so healthy a locality, and one which we are bound in all honor to maintain and defend. We have occupied and abandoned the town *twice previously*, and to perpetrate so grave an error, a third time, would condemn the Federal Government, and make its promises of protection a by-word and a mockery. Not that the native Floridians are so *exceedingly loyal*, but a faithful promise from the Government, through its military commander, should be inviolate and sacred, and nothing short of military necessity should destroy it."

TUBAL-CAIN.

Serg't. George M. Whitcomb responded on the 3<sup>d</sup> to a letter from his parents informing him of the death of his younger brother Charles, who died of smallpox when the disease swept through Sandy Hill and struck the Whitcomb family. Serg't. Whitcomb wrote of going to Palatka and safely returning back to camp before the *Maple Leaf* was destroyed. He was pleased that his brother Melvin was seeking a closer relationship with God:

"I have no news of interest, only a week ago to-night I went up the river, about 50 or 60 miles from here to a place called Pilatka, and everything went off nicely and I got back to camp all safe. But Wednesday night there was another squad went up to the same place, and on her way back the next night, she ran into a torpedo and blew a big hole in her bottom, and she went down in a few minutes. Yes, in one moment, there was five deckhands and two firemen that was sent to give up their account to the Judge of all the Earth while you would be counting 25. But there was no soldiers lost. Sammy Harris [Corp'l. Samuel P. Harris, Co. D.] who we used to call Sammy [word is too light], and two or three other men out of our regiment, was on the boat when she went down, but they all was safe and returned to camp, but came very near being lost.

"The mail has just got here but brought me no letter. Rob got here last Wednesday in the afternoon after an absence from the regiment of five weeks. He got quite a large mail to-night, three letters, I believe.

"I am very sorry to hear of the death of Charley, but I hope that God has taken him home to dwell with him where there is no sickness, pain, nor death, and I do believe that he has, for I hardly think that God holds him accountable for anything that he ever done. I only wish we were all as well-off as he is. I think that you must miss him very much. It hardly seems possible to me that he is dead.

"It is Monday on a rainy day of weather and I am very lonesome, as I always am when it rains. Well, I suppose that you would like to know what we are doing down here. We don't have much of anything to do now, only go on picket every three days and drill a little once in a while. It is a very nice, pleasant place down here.



**Five Combines Locks, Glens Falls Feeder Canal, Hudson Falls, (formerly Sandy Hill), New York**

"I suppose that you begin to think about opening navigation again up there by this time, or you are going to tend those two locks again this summer? Father, if you do, you must be careful and not fall in the lock.

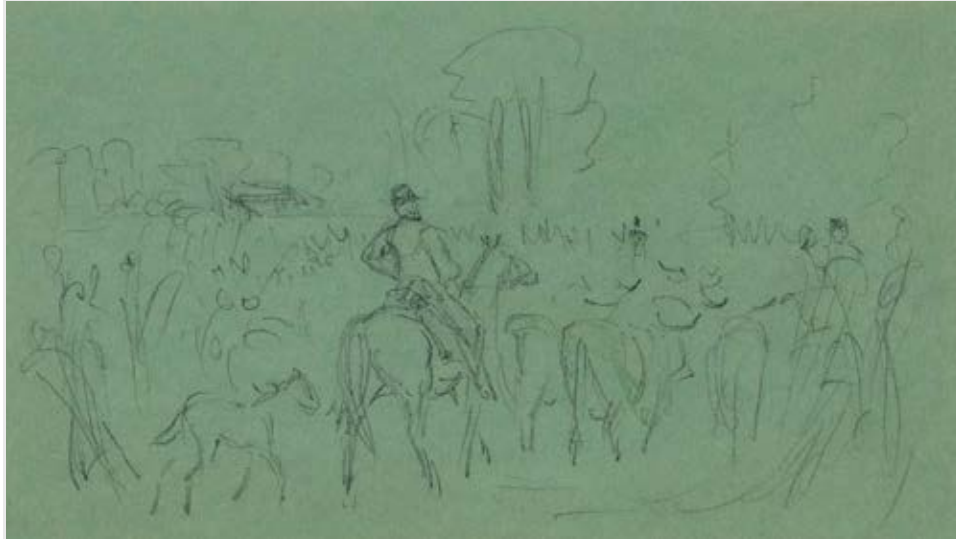
"I am glad to hear that Mel has thought it high time that he began to think about seeking the Lord, for we never should live a single moment without having our peace made with God. For we have no lease of our lives, and not knowing what moment God may call for us, it stands us in hand to be ready at all times, and God knows that it is my heart's desire to always be ready to go at any moment. God grant that it may be ours, one and all, to live here below so that at the last we may rise triumphant in the skies."

In a letter on the 4<sup>th</sup> to his friend Thomas F. Kelly of Glens Falls, (the same friend 1<sup>st</sup> Serg't. Frederick F. French corresponded with), Corp'l. Patrick Murphy, Co. D, blames the defeat of Union forces in February at Olustee on "the treachery of the guide that led our forces on the stronghold of the enemy instead of leading us in the rear of them." The letter, recently auctioned, also mentions the skirmish at Cedar Creek and the rebuilding of Jacksonville:

"Friend Thomas, I guess I will give you an account of the state of affairs in this Department at present. We are encamped at the above named place just outside the town and all in good health at present and the people that belong here pronounce the place very healthy. The town is strongly fortified and the place is being rebuilt very fast by its former owners that have come into our lines since we took possession.

"We had quiet a disastrous affair here, but it will be a lesson for us and learn our Generals not to trust to anyone but our own men, as it was all caused by the treachery of the guide that led our forces on the stronghold of the enemy instead of leading us in the rear of them. It is





**Driving in cows (ca. 1861-'65)**  
**Alfred Rudolph Waud (1828-1891)**  
Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

without a doubt that we could have captured the whole of the enemy's force here if the management of the affair had been conducted properly, but we gave them too much time of which the result is that we are about to try it over again some future day.

"The rebel force is very strong about eight miles from us, and five times the force cannot advance now as far as our forces did when we first took possession of the place. The country is one mass of woods for thirty miles into the interior, and very swampy at that, and without the assistance of a loyal guide you can imagine how we can get along at all.

"We advanced out about seven miles last Saturday and engaged them about two hours, driving them behind their fortifications and capturing about thirty head of cattle and one horse, had four men wounded for us, none killed, cannot tell you the enemy's loss, as the particulars have not reached us yet."

In a letter to his sister on the 4<sup>th</sup>, Corp. Alfred C. Carmon, Co. H, wrote about the destruction of the *Maple Leaf*, remarking, "all of our stuff has gone to grass." He also described the casualties at Cedar Creek. When asked if he ever got sick on any of the marches, he responded boastfully, "I never have been sick yet":

"I like the place here first rate! We are not camped in the city. We are out about a quarter of a mile. Then you think that we might stay in the houses. The houses are most all of them occupied. What there is are most all of them small. The large ones are used by the generals as their headquarters.

"Our stuff all came down from Folly Island on the boat and they wanted to use it for some other purpose, to go up the river with troops, I believe, so they did not have time to unload it. There was some of our boys went onboard to guard the things. The boat went up the river about 70 miles. She had to run up in the night to keep out of the way of the sharpshooters. When she had got about two-thirds of the way back, she run on a torpedo, which exploded, and she sunk in about five minutes, so all of our stuff has gone to grass. There was not many lives lost. Those that were lost were the hands on the boat.

"You asked me if I never got sick on any of our marches. I never have been sick yet. We have not had any marches of any account since last summer.

"Last Saturday, we went out on a reconnaissance. We went out about seven miles, when we got stopped by the Rebs. There was a few skirmishers thrown out and some pretty brisk firing was carried on for a little while. There was only four wounded on our side. There was not any of our regiment hurt. Those that got wounded belonged to the 40<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Cavalry. They were in advance all of the time. There was one or two wounded in the 75<sup>th</sup> Ohio. There was only two companies of that regiment out with us.

"It don't make any difference where you direct your letters. If you direct them to Folly Island, they would get to me just as quick as if you directed them here. I don't know whether we shall stay in this Department all summer or not.



**Entrance to Colonel Hart's orange grove, opposite Palatka**  
**James Wells Champney (1843-1903)**  
**Published in "The Great South – A Record of Journeys..." (1875)**

"We can get plenty of oranges here, for the picking of them. We have to go over the river and then walk about a half of a mile before we come to the grove. I wish that you could see an orange grove. It looks nice, I tell you. The trees hang so full and they are in full bloom already before the old crop is picked off."

Union army replacements recruited over the winter were sent south to restore regiments in the field to full strength. About 500 recruits, enlisted for different regiments, were sent off to the army on the evening of the 2<sup>d</sup> from the Albany Barracks, according to the *Daily Whig*, which added, "More will soon follow, and in a very short time there will be but few soldiers there."



**Officer off-duty (February 8, 1864)**  
**Edwin Austin Forbes (1839-1895)**  
Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

The *Daily Whig* reported on the 13<sup>th</sup>, however, that Capt. Frank W. Tarbell, Co. E, was still recruiting men for the regiment:

"CHANCES FOR BOUNTY YET OPEN. – For a few days there is a good chance to join a popular regiment raised here at home, and under the command of Col. McConihe, a Trojan well-known to our citizens.

"The bounties offered by Capt. Tarbell, the recruiting officer, are an inducement worthy of consideration, viz: \$500, of which \$400 is cash in hand. Soon this will cease, and those who would take advantage of this liberal offer should do so at once. The office is on Washington Square."





**Governor's Island and Fort, New York Harbor (April 1865)  
Collection of the New York Public Library**

The route to the seat of war was indirect for some recruits. Priv. Charles H. Manning, Co. A, mustered-in on February 18<sup>th</sup> and played the tenor horn in the regimental band. In his journal he recorded that he was sent on March 11<sup>th</sup> from Governors Island to Jacksonville, arriving on the 30<sup>th</sup>. He was likely sent to the island to attend the "School of Practice," established in the 1850s for training field musicians who enlisted in the U.S. Army and which operated throughout the war. On September 17<sup>th</sup>, he would write: "I bought a silver B-flat cornet for \$44.00 and commenced to learn to play. I have till now been playing tenor."



**Left: Nickel-Silver Cornet in B-flat, manufactured ca. 1864-'66  
by Gilmore, Graves & Co., Boston, Massachusetts.**



**Right: Alto Horn, also known as the Tenor Horn in the United Kingdom.**

*The cornet is a brass instrument very similar to the trumpet, distinguished by its conical bore, compact shape, and mellower tone quality. Civil War bands were often equipped with "over-the-shoulder" versions of these instruments, with longer horns to enable playing while standing or marching.*





Six studies of soldiers' heads (1862)  
 Winslow Homer (1836-1910)  
 Collection of the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, New York

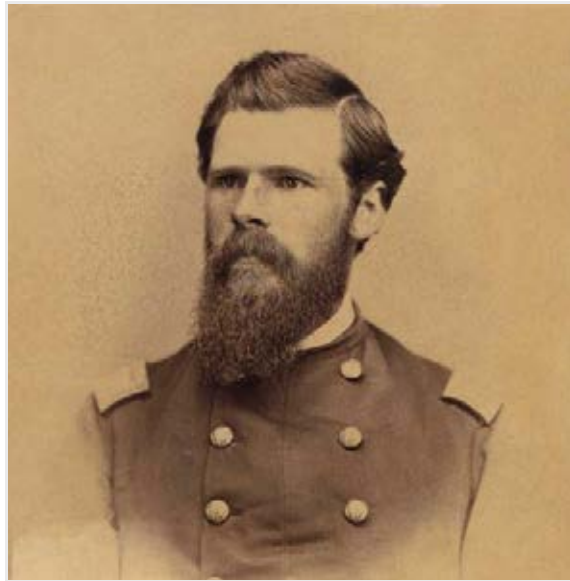
Not all of the new recruits were novices at warfare. Under a War Department policy established to help retain combat veterans in the Union Army ranks, veterans who re-enlisted for three years or the duration of the war would receive substantial re-enlistment bonuses. Gen. Alden wrote in his memoirs of one such individual who joined the regiment, his nephew, Priv. Charles L. Knox, Co. A:

"We had received from time to time new recruits for our regiment, and on the 17<sup>th</sup> a squad of 16 more arrived in charge of Lieut.-Colonel McConihe. Among the new enlistments was my nephew, Charles L. Knox, recently of the 38<sup>th</sup> New York, which had just been disbanded."

In his historical sketch of the regiment, Bvt. Col. and Lieut.-Col. James A. Colvin wrote of the return of Col. McConihe to the 169<sup>th</sup>, along with the need to re-equip the regiment in the wake of the sinking of the *Maple Leaf*:

"On April 11<sup>th</sup>, Lieut.-Col. McConihe rejoined the command with a number of recruits. He also brought his own commission as a colonel, and the commissions as lieutenant-colonel and major of Maj. Alden and Capt. James A. Colvin respectively. Under these commissions, on April 12<sup>th</sup>, these officers were mustered in the field roster then comprising the names of Col. John McConihe, Lieut.-Col. Alonzo Alden, and Maj. James A. Colvin. It was found necessary at this time to re-equip the regiment with tents, knapsacks, clothing, etc. as the steamer *Maple-Leaf*, which had been used for transporting the stores left behind on Folly Island, was blown up by a torpedo on the St. John's River, and sank to the bottom, carrying down all of the baggage and stores. Another change in the position of the regiment was then to come."

Gen. Alden wrote in his memoirs that the promoted officers of the regiment were pleased with the recognition of their services by the government, since they had been performing the same roles at a lower rank only due to a technicality:



**Major Alonzo Alden, 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y.**  
Collection of the New York State Military Museum,  
Saratoga Springs, New York

"On the 11<sup>th</sup> of April, 1864, the recruiting party commanded by Lieut.-Col. McConihe, having been absent from the regiment since December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1863, returned to camp at Jacksonville, Florida, armed with a certificate of the adjutant-general at Albany stating that 229 in excess of the requisite number of recruits to make a minimum regiment had been mustered into the 169<sup>th</sup> since January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1864.

"Accordingly, the field and line officers who had been recommended by the commanding officer of the regiment for promotion and had been commissioned but not mustered, were now certified by the U.S. mustering officer, whereby Lieut.-Col. John McConihe became colonel, Major Alonzo Alden, lieut.-colonel, and Captain James A. Colvin, major, and several line officers were advanced one grade in the line. On the principle that the laborer is worthy of his hire, the promoted officers rejoiced at this recognition of their services by the government, in behalf of which they had imperiled life and limb; although since they had performed the duties of the advanced grade they had received only the compensation for services of an inferior grade, because of a technicality of the military regulations."

Social events offered a diversion for the officers and men during their posting at Jacksonville, as described in a section of Gen. Alden's memoirs entitled, "Oiling the Military Machinery":

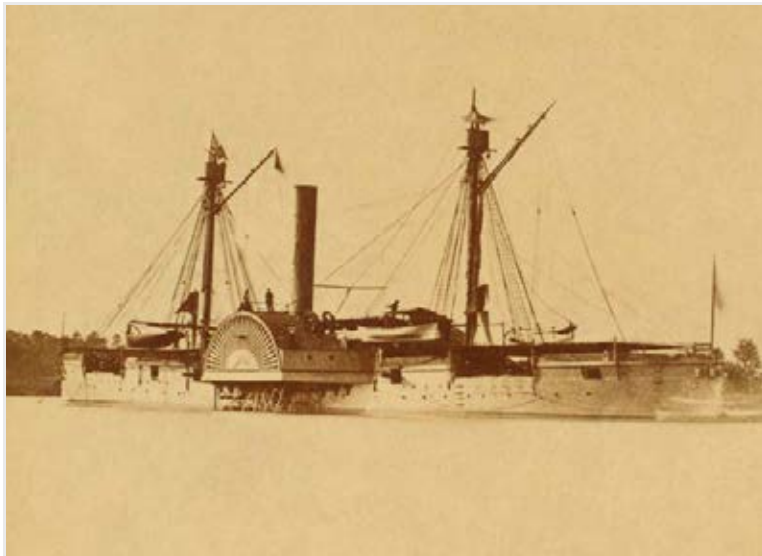
"The hardships of military service are sometimes mitigated by social pleasures and other congenial diversions, not unmilitary. For example: at our beautiful camp in the grove and in the elegant planter's mansion nearby which we had appropriated for our headquarters, we extended hospitality to many friends and strangers among the fair sex and distinguished men and officers, civil and military, from Jacksonville and from visiting steamers. I will relate one incident among many of a similar character that served to drive dull care away, and civilize and humanize



Illustration from "The Spy Wore Crinoline" by Walter Baumhofer (1904-1987)  
Published in "American Weekly" (April 24, 1955)

wartime. On the afternoon of April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1864, we were honored by a visit from a company of ladies from Fernandina, Florida, who came in the chartered steamer *Delaware* to witness our dress parade.

"Not only had our camp become renowned for its beauty, but our skirmish drills and the maneuvering of the regiment and the companies, and especially our dress parade, had become famous throughout the department. In the evening, a delegation consisting of most of the commissioned officers of the regiment, with the regimental band, returned the visit of our friends in the grand saloons of the *Delaware*, where we enjoyed a reception and dance.



The gunboat U.S.S. "Delaware"

"The next day, the same company of ladies, having spent the small bit of the night that was left in the cozy staterooms which the steamer afforded, paid their respects to the occupants of our headquarters as 'P.P.C.' In company with the general officer of the day, I personally

escorted our visitors to the most accessible sections of our outpost picket lines and received the mysterious challenges where passwords were exacted and given. Similar experiences, if repeated when the circumstances of war permit, will contribute to the mellowing process of the otherwise cold, un-sympathizing and rigid life of the martinet, and cause flowers to bloom along the pathway of every soldier.

"About the middle of April 1864, the atmosphere seemed vocal with rumors of the movement of troops. The inhabitants of Jacksonville, of both sexes and of every age, seemed to be more concerned than the soldiers. The few business houses in town were measurably prosperous with the Federals as customers, and the social caldron was kept in a state of ebullition by a liberal admixture of the Union soldier element. There had been, since our first arrival in Jacksonville, an evident delight among all the resident classes of the population because of our sojourn among them."

Lieut.-Col. Alden soon departed for Troy on a twenty days' leave of absence, having been constantly on duty with the regiment since its organization in 1862. The *Daily Press* reported his arrival in the city on the 27<sup>th</sup> for what would turn out to be a short-lived furlough:



Dinner party (ca. 1860s)

"Lieutenant-Colonel Alonzo Alden, of the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth regiment, arrived home yesterday, on a brief leave of absence. He left the regiment at Fortress Monroe, from whence it was under orders to march to Gloucester, Va. – The health of the regiment is excellent.

"The letter of our correspondent, 'T. S.,' which is to be found in another column, will be found well-worthy of perusal. It will be seen by it that Col. McConihe was acting Brigadier-General at Jacksonville, Fla.

"The recruiting detachment of the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth, now in this city, consisting of Captain Tarbell and four Sergeants, are under orders to leave on Tuesday next, to rejoin their regiment."

Priv. Theodore Schutt, Co. A, returned to his role as correspondent to the *Daily Press* after a three-month absence. In his letter of the 15<sup>th</sup>, we read about the return of Col. McConihe to the regiment. The article is presented in its entirety:





Moonlight over Jacksonville, Fla.  
James Wells Champney (1843-1903)  
Published in "The Great South – A Record of Journeys..." (1875)

## The Troy Daily Press.

APRIL 28, 1864.

From the 169<sup>th</sup>.

CAMP 169<sup>TH</sup> REGIMENT, N. Y. S. V.,  
JACKSONVILLE, FLA., April 15, 1864.

*Editors Daily Press:* – No great events will probably signalize the historic annals of this department during the approaching campaign. An occasional reconnaissance and skirmishing by our advanced pickets, will, unless our fortified positions are attacked, constitutes the material fighting for the summer. In the absence, then, of any military movement of importance in this latitude, this letter must of necessity prove characteristically local in all its details, but not totally devoid of interest, I hope, to the friends of the regiment at home. Among the arrivals by the steamer *Fulton*, due at Hilton Head on the 9<sup>th</sup>, was that of our new commander, Col. John McConihe, who safely arrived at Jacksonville on Monday, the 11<sup>th</sup>. Col. McConihe was accompanied by the following named officers of the regiment, all of whom with the exception of Lieut. W. H. Merriam, were attached to the recruiting detail which left Folly Island for Troy in December last: Capts. D. J. Cary, S. W. Snyder, Augustus Vaughn, Lieut. Wm. H. Merriam, and Lieut. and Acting Adjutant Clark Smith.

Immediately it was announced the Colonel had returned a *furor* of almost wild excitement seized the entire camp, and all other thoughts of prospective duties for the day, and preparations for drill and parade, became instantly subservient to the overshadowing entity that our popu-



lar commander had been elevated, and deservedly, to the highest position the regiment could confer, was about to appear among us again, and assume the duties of his responsible office. An eager throng soon surrounded the house occupied by Lieut.-Col. Alden and the staff officers, and lined the avenue by which the Colonel was obliged to make his approach to the building. The band, not a whit behind this spontaneous eruption of our devoted soldiers, made a contemporaneous demonstration, with their instruments, in front of headquarters, and as soon as the Colonel's black charger, bestrode by his well known rider, appeared, the band first touched the inspiring notes of welcome, which were seconded by a storm of applause from the men. The Colonel did not then and there make a speech; his heart was too full for that, but he bowed his acknowledgments, and, after greeting, in accordance with the usages of etiquette, Lt.-Col. Alden and Major Colvin, a scene of lively hand shaking and congratulatory exchanges on all sides ensued.



No Colonel in the army enjoys more fully the love and respect of the officers and men of his command, than Col. John McConihe. Possessing every requisite qualification of heart and mind, essential for so important a command, he is also the soldier's true friend, and the humblest private in the ranks can approach him with the same ease and assurance for counsel and advice, as the line officer. With that stamina of character that can enforce the strictest discipline, while it develops a

keen discernment of the soldiers' impulses and weaknesses, order and proficiency, neatness, confidence, and a laudable spirit of emulation, evidence the presence of a master mind to direct in one peaceful channel, such a heterogeneous mass of conflicting mental predilection, passion and sentiment, as is contained in a regiment numbering eight hundred and fifty souls.



**Single figure in uniform, seen from the rear (ca.1861-'65)  
Alfred Rudolph Waud (1828-1891)  
Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.**

I need not say that the interests of the regiment were consigned into able and most efficient hands, during the absence of Col. McConihe. Lieut.-Col. Alonzo Alden is an officer qualified by education and experience to maintain that enviable status hitherto attained by the regiment for its proficiency in drill, gallantry under fire, endurance on the march, and popular reputation for cleanliness, good conduct, and thorough discipline.

The following congratulatory order was published on dress parade on Tuesday afternoon, 12<sup>th</sup> inst.:

HEADQUARTERS 169<sup>TH</sup> N. Y. V.,  
JACKSONVILLE, FLA., April 12, 1864.

*General Order No. 20:*

Assuming command as your Colonel, it becomes my pleasing duty to acknowledge the cordial greeting which you all extended to me on my return



from the North. It has always been gratifying to me to be present with you, and I can assure you that nothing but a sense of duty has, for the past three months, separated me from the regiment. The efforts which, during that time, have been put forth to recruit the regiment, are evidenced to you by your refilled ranks.



**Lieutenant-Colonel John McConihe (ca. summer of 1862)**  
Collection of the Schaffer Library, Union College, Schenectady, New York

The Colonel commanding takes this opportunity to compliment the regiment upon its discipline, soldierly bearing, and fine appearance. Of you all, both officers and men, nothing but the best reports have been made; and, at your homes, it is now, and I trust ever will be, an honor to belong to the gallant 169<sup>th</sup>. Your country will honor you for the part which you have taken in this great struggle for National Life and Constitutional Liberty, and the sacrifices which you have made and the hardships which you have endured will long be remembered by a generous and grateful people to your immortal credit.

The Colonel commanding reassures you that it will be his aim and pride in the future, as in the past, to serve you and to advance the collective and individual interests of the regiment.

II. All existing orders will continue in force until countermanded by competent authority.

III. Lieut. Clark Smith is announced as the Acting Adjutant of the regiment, and will be observed as such.

IV. Major James A. Colvin is hereby appointed Regimental Referee, and each morning, immediately after guard mounting, all prisoners will be brought before him by the Officer of the Day.

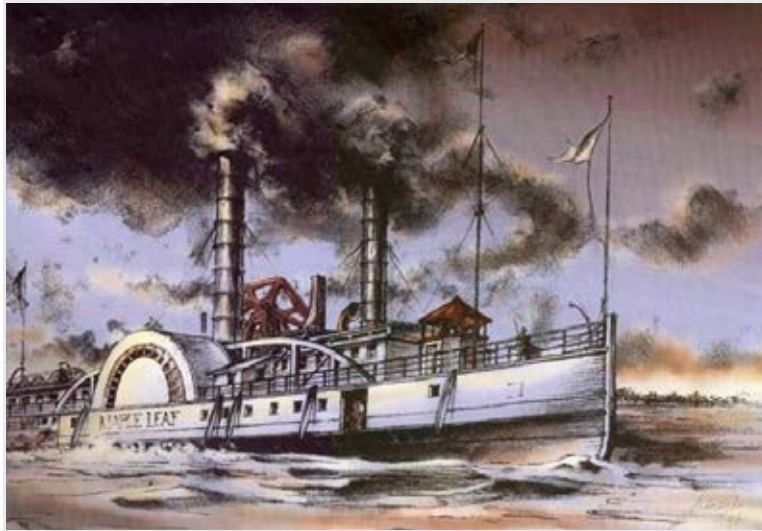
By order,

JOHN MCCONIHE,  
Col., 169<sup>th</sup> N. Y. V.



On Tuesday, having received their commissions by the *Fulton*, Major Alden and Captain Colvin were re-mustered into the service as Lt.-Colonel and Major, respectively. Lt.-Colonel Alonzo Alden is too well known at home, to require any praise from the pen of your correspondent. – Major James A. Colvin, who came out with the regiment as Captain of Co. A, is a fine drillmaster, thorough disciplinarian, and in every respect qualified to fill the responsible position this promotion accords him.

First Lieutenant James F. Thompson, of Co. F, has also received his commission and succeeds to the Captaincy of Co. A. Captain Thompson is an officer of tried courage and efficiency, and was selected by Gen. Vogdes to take charge of the many perilous scouting expeditions about the enemy's works on James Island and Charleston, while the regiment was at Folly Island, and it was thought his energetic efforts and daring ventures in that dangerous service that revealed to Gen. Gillmore the strength and number of the enemy's works about that Gomorrah of the South.



**U.S. Army Transport "Maple Leaf"  
Collection of the Jacksonville Museum of Science and History,  
Jacksonville, Florida**

Two weeks ago, the *Maple Leaf*, a fine steamboat in the government service, was blown up by a torpedo between this place and Palatka. She had just returned from Folly Island, and had on board a large amount of baggage, Quartermaster's stores, &c., belonging to the 169<sup>th</sup>. An attack upon Palatka being hourly apprehended, and the *Maple Leaf* being the only available boat on hand, no time was given to unload her, and she was immediately started up the river with reinforcements. It was on her return, and when about fourteen miles above this city, that she came in contact with the torpedo, by which four men were killed, and the boat and freight will probably prove an almost total loss.

Notwithstanding this terrible catastrophe, which should have taught the most extreme caution in the future navigation of the St. Johns river, the *Gen. Hunter* and this fine boat, was blown up within a few feet of the scene of the former accident on Saturday morning, 16<sup>th</sup> inst. Fortunately only one man, as I understand, was killed by this explosion, although the boat will probably prove a total loss.

The following order which was published on Dress Parade last night explains itself:



**Military encampment at plantation house (1864)**  
**Alfred Rudolph Waud (1828-1891)**  
 Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

HEADQUARTERS, PROVISIONAL BRIGADE,  
 Jacksonville, Fla., April 17, 1864.

C. J. Dobbs, 13<sup>th</sup> Ind. Vols., is hereby relieved from command of the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade. – Col. John McConihe, 169<sup>th</sup> N. Y. Vols., will assume command of the same.

Col. J. C. DRAKE.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Ind., Col. Dobbs, left Jacksonville by steamer yesterday – point of destination not known. It is rumored that the 169<sup>th</sup> will soon follow. Palatka has been evacuated, and it appears by present indications, that *concentration* has been inaugurated as a new policy into the government's conduct of the war. This is as it should be, and there is not a soldier of the army in this department but rejoices at this indication of sound sense on the part of the heads of the War Department.

A glee club is now in process of organization in this regiment. No better material for this laudable object can be found, perhaps, than exists in the 169<sup>th</sup>; and as the boys who have taken this matter in hand are thorough going and competent, I hope to be able to give a good account of this new institution in my next. The health of the regiment never was better, if so good, as at present.

Yours truly,

T. S.

An anonymous letter to the *Daily Times*, also on the 15<sup>th</sup>, by a member of the regiment known only as "*Persinus*," describing Col. Alden as a "harsh disciplinarian," stated that the 169<sup>th</sup> was "in the best condition as a unit command of any regiment in this department, and so acknowledged by all the general officers." The article, presented in its entirety, included a letter from Col. McConihe to the Hon. Joseph Hoxie, Agent for the State of New York, with statistics for the total strength officers and enlisted men in the regiment:

# The Troy Daily Times.

APRIL 26, 1864.

## From the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth.

Correspondence of the Troy Daily Times.

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., April 15.

There is some recent news not altogether destitute of interest to the friends of the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth at the North, which I will venture to send to you in the absence at Hilton Head of your regular correspondent in this department, "W. E. K." The regiment is just now most fortunately situated in reference to locality, having the most convenient camp, and accessories to health and general comfort, ever known to its history. The location is within full and near view of the town of Jacksonville, and the immediate situation of the headquarters and tents of the men beneath orange blossoms, magnolias, and a genial delicious umbrageousness. The climate is balmy, and never throughout the year otherwise than genial and healthy to an uncommon degree. The men it may be said have become truly accustomed to their enlistment, enjoying their soldier-life because they are familiar with its duties, which are less irksome by reason of this, than when the command first entered the service.



**Magnolias (1912)**  
**John Singer Sargent (1856-1925)**  
**Private Collection**

The regiment is now, thanks to the temperate but earnest and practical discipline of Lieut.-Colonel Alden, in splendid drill and fighting condition. Colonel Alden has hitherto been considered a harsh disciplinarian, and the men have oftentimes thought he dealt out overdoses of tactics and regulations to them. Now that they are in the best condition as a unit command of any regiment in this department, and so acknowledged by all the general officers, including Gen. Seymour, Gen. Hatch, commanding the district, and Gen. Ames, the boys freely admit the generous interest taken in their military welfare by Col. Alden, who now wears the affectionate soubriquet at their hands of "Old Casey." In point of numbers, the regiment counts upon

the rolls upwards of seven hundred men, and at dress parade presents a most animated military appearance, attracting crowds of witnesses from the other commands of the district. The recruiting party which left Troy on the evening of the 1<sup>st</sup>, proceeded to these headquarters by the United States steamer *Fulton*, arriving at Hilton Head after a stormy, but in other respects, a pleasant passage of four days. Thence the United States steamer *Delaware*, Capt. Wm. C. Hanford, commanding, bore the party to Jacksonville, where a most cordial reception awaited Col. McConihe, the new commandant of the regiment. Ensign's band (regimental) and all the men met the Colonel and his party as they rode up to his headquarters, situated in a spacious mansion, and sincerely greeted him and them with cheer upon cheer, the band playing stirring airs, and all earnestly joining in the general jubilancy. On the succeeding day, Col. McConihe, Lieut.-Col. Alden, and Major James A. Colvin, a most accomplished officer, were mustered into their respective positions, giving us a full band and staff, composed of able men, worthy of their country's confidence. Col. McConihe at once assumed command, in the following modest and impressive order:

HEADQUARTERS, 169<sup>TH</sup> REGT, N. Y. V.,  
JACKSONVILLE, Fla., April 12, 1864.

*General Orders No. 24* – Assuming command as your Colonel, it becomes my pleasing duty to acknowledge the cordial greeting which you all extended to me on my return from the North. It has always been gratifying to me to be present with you, and I can assure you that nothing but a sense of duty for the past three months separated me from the regiment. The efforts which during that time have been put forth to recruit the regiment are evidenced to you by your refilled ranks. The Colonel commanding takes this opportunity to compliment the regiment upon its discipline, soldierly bearing and fine appearance. Of you all, both officers and men, nothing but the best reports have been made, and at your homes it is now, and I trust ever will be, an honor to belong to the gallant One Hundred and Sixty-ninth. Your country will honor you for the part which you have taken for National Life and Constitutional Liberty, and the sacrifices which you have made and the hardships which you have endured will long be remembered by a generous and grateful people to your immortal credit. The Colonel commanding reassures you that it will be his aim and pride in the future, as in the past, to serve you and to advance the collective and individual interests of the regiment.

II. All existing orders will continue in force until countermanded by competent authority.

III. Lieut. Clark Smith is announced as the Acting Adjutant of the regiment, and will be observed and respected as such.

IV. Major James A. Colvin is hereby appointed Regimental Referee, and each morning, immediately after guard mounting, all prisoners will be brought before him by the officer of the day.

By order of                    JOHN MCCONIHE,  
Colonel commanding 169<sup>th</sup> N. Y. V.

The regiment may now once more be said to be in proper working order, and more fully prepared than ever before to do its appointed work, in the maintenance of the cause in behalf of which it entered the war in 1862. Gen. R. S. Foster, the commandant of the brigade, being absent on detached service, as a member of the General Gordon court martial, now sitting at Hilton Head, the troops of the First brigade, Second provisional division, are temporarily under the command of Acting Brig.-Gen. Cyrus J. Dobbs, the immediate commandant of the gallant Thirteenth Indiana Volunteers – a regiment renowned throughout this war for great bravery and daring exploits, under Colonel, now General Sullivan; Colonel, now General Foster; Colonel, now General





**The Battle of Rich Mountain, Va. – The United States Troops Under General Rosecrans, of General McClellan's Command, the Confederates Under General Pegram. – The Thirteenth Indiana Capture A Gun. Published in Frank Leslie's "The Soldier In Our Civil War, Vol. 2" (1893).**

Dobbs; and Colonel Wilson. The boys of the old Thirteenth are the especial friends and champions everywhere, of the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth, the highest cordiality reigning between them. Rev. Mr. Chapman, the goodly Chaplain of the regiment, is engaged in organizing a parish of his church at Jacksonville, receiving every facility and encouragement to this end, from the commanding Generals, Colonel McConihe and others. The old parish school house is being tastefully fitted up, and Mr. Chapman, who is especially fervent and devoted in his work, expects to hold two services each Sunday, commencing one week from to-morrow. The monthly inspection of the regiment by the Inspector-General, took place yesterday, in presence of Gen. Dobbs and staff, and a large number of others. The report of the Inspector-General affirms the condition of the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth to be superior in every respect to that of any other regiment subject to his knowledge. In the afternoon of yesterday, Colonel McConihe was called upon by Hon. Joseph Hoxie, of New York, who presented his credentials from Governor Seymour, accrediting him as the agent of the State of New York, to inquire into the condition of the New York troops in this Department. Col. McConihe made the following report, which will admirably serve to show the present condition of the command:

To Hon. JOSEPH HOXIE, Agent for the State of New York,  
on board the steamer *Dictator*, Jacksonville, Fla.

HEADQUARTERS, 169<sup>TH</sup> REGT, N. Y. V.,  
JACKSONVILLE, Fla., April 15.

*Sir*: I have the honor to report to you, in accordance with your request, the following facts concerning the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth New York Volunteers, viz:

Present for duty, enlisted men.....	568
"    sick.....	3
"    in arrest or confinement.....	5
<b>Total present.....</b>	<b>576</b>
Absent on detached service, enlisted men.....	27
"    sick.....	82
"    in confinement.....	10
<b>Total absent.....</b>	<b>119</b>
New recruits reported, but not yet joined the regiment.....	146
<b>Total enlisted men.....</b>	<b>841</b>
Officers present for duty.....	26
"    absent on detached service.....	2
<b>Total officers.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Total strength officers and enlisted men.....</b>	<b>869</b>

Of the eighty-two enlisted men reported *absent sick*, most of them were left behind when the regiment was ordered from the Department of Virginia and North Carolina, in July, 1863, and have never rejoined the regiment. Many of them have been detailed on some special service, and but few of them are supposed to be dangerously sick. It will be seen that but three men are reported sick, and the surgeon assures me this is all that he calls sick – yet some twenty-three others are excused from duty by the surgeon on account of various afflictions, such as boils, sore eyes, diarrhea, &c. Generally speaking, the health of the regiment never was better; and as for the discipline, appearance, soldierly-bearing and good conduct of the regiment, I, as a citizen of the Empire State, claim the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth is a worthy representative in the service of the United States, in this great struggle for the liberty, among the thousands of her patriotic sons, who have so gallantly volunteered to endure all hardships and brave all danger to uphold our country. The people of the State of New York have done so much, and still are laboring with all their intelligent zeal to provide for her sons in the army, that it would be superfluous for me to suggest any new idea to ameliorate the condition of the volunteer in the field. I am, Sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN MCCONIHE,  
Col. commanding 169<sup>th</sup> N. Y. Volunteers.

P. S. – I would suggest that the regiment has at present but one surgeon, and that it might be within the line of your duty to remind the proper authorities on your arrival North of the two existing vacancies in order that they may be speedily filled.

[The above letter from *Persinus*, was written just before the hasty and unexpected departure of the regiment Northwards. – *Editor Times*.]

In John Newton's memoir of John McConihe, he quoted the colonel in his letter to Mr. Hoxie as follows: "I, as a citizen of the *noble* Empire State, claim the 169<sup>th</sup> is worthy of her." Mr. Newton's transcription was made from the original letter.

In a letter to John Kellogg on the 14<sup>th</sup>, Col. McConihe wrote about his cordial welcome at Jacksonville and his mustering-in as colonel of the regiment. The colonel promised to describe these incidents in greater detail, "some evening in the future, over a glass of ale in your comfortable house":



**Moonlit Seascape (1902)**  
**Thomas Moran (1837-1926)**  
**Private Collection**

"I arrived at the headquarters of the regiment on Monday the 11<sup>th</sup> inst., having had a very agreeable trip the whole distance. The voyage from New York to Hilton Head was 'rough sailing,' but I was not seasick. Being the Senior Officer on board the goodly Steamer *Fulton*, I had command of the ship, and of course had every courtesy extended to me. Arriving at the Head, I made the necessary inquiries concerning a muster, and soon ascertained I must travel further to have my claims properly appreciated.



**U.S. Brig "Perry" confronting the American slave ship "Martha"**  
**off Ambriz, Portuguese West Africa, June 6, 1850**

"Saturday afternoon, the Steamer *Delaware* sailed with us on board, but Sunday morning we 'put in' to Fernandina in a gale to wait for the wind to subside. The day was passed very pleasantly visiting the famous Man-of-War *Perry* and riding over the island.

"Monday morning we landed at Jacksonville, I got upon my horse and rode out to camp. I trust you will not call me vain when I tell you I received a most cordial welcome, both from officers and men. It took all Monday, of course, to exchange greetings, but Tuesday I presented myself to the Mustering Officer and was immediately mustered into the United States service as Colonel of the 169<sup>th</sup> N. Y. Vols. for the term of three years, dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> day of March, A. D. 1864. The incidents attending the happy issue of this much talked-of event cannot be appreciated in a letter, but some evening in the future, over a glass of ale in your comfortable house, I will relate the superb dignity of my Colonial Countenance, when I held my right hand aloft and bowed my head, showing my approbation of the whole affair and without any mental reservation whatever, in meek submission to my fate. That afternoon I accompanied the Lieutenant-Colonel and Major to the same sacred spot and had them duly installed in their respective offices.

"The next day I had four Lieutenants promoted and assumed command of the regiment with the Eagles on either shoulder. I think, John, I have reason to be proud of this affair, as it was such a grand triumph of justice over red tape. At the Head I was told it would not be possible, but without losing heart or for a moment thinking my Star would forsake me, I sailed to Florida's coast but to succeed. All's well that ends well.



"I found the regiment in excellent health and good condition. The band especially has greatly improved with their new silver instruments, and we glory in the best band in the Department.

"Our camp is a very healthy one, just on the edge of town, with headquarters in a large, two-and-a-half story frame house, with several adjoining houses. Myself and the Lieutenant-Colonel occupy the two front rooms, the Adjutant and Quartermaster the back rooms, the Doctor and Chaplain the second story. The Major has an adjoining building, and we use one as a kitchen. Orange blossoms perfume the air in front of our porch, which extends along the whole front of the building, above and below, and beautiful lilies bloom in the front yard. In the rear there is a porch and a garden shaded by symmetrical magnolias and proud live oaks. A few garden flowers bloom in our loyal presence, while their many companions have been blighted by the withering hand of Secession.



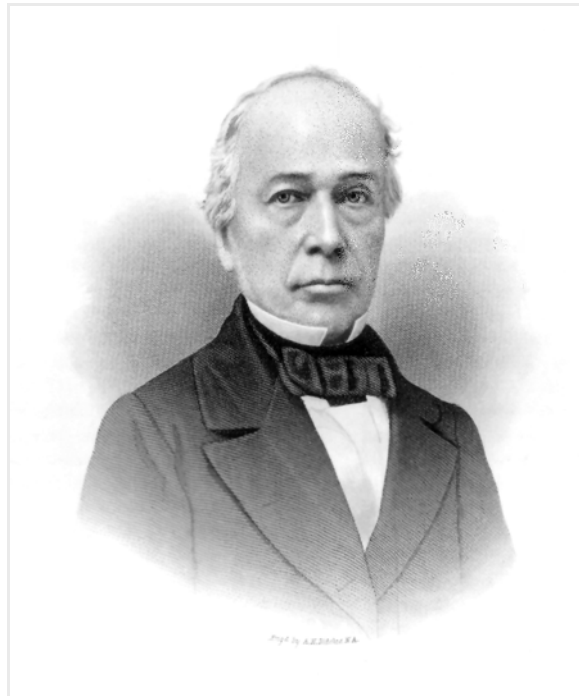
"It has been thus in every place I have visited in the South, and Florida is no exception. The Dead in the cemetery are about the only remaining Citizens of the pretty town of Jacksonville. May they inhabit their tenements undisturbed by this wicked rebellion.

"Everything is quiet here now, and no one seems to expect much action. I do not think the Rebels will attack us, nor we them.

"You must write me soon and tell me all about yourself and good wife since my departure. Give her my very best regards, as well as Miss Emma, and tell them I will send those photographs as soon as I receive them. Remember me to Mr. Townsend and his family, Mr. Hawley, and all inquiring friends.

"I enclose a few orange blossoms for Mrs. Kellogg, (*not Miss Anna*). Mr. Merriam sends his regards and says you need not send him any money just now, as he is flush."

Writing on the 15<sup>th</sup> to his father, Judge Isaac McConihe, Sr., John stated that the regiment "was in fine condition, the band played admirably, and the new recruits were fast-learning the ways of a true soldier." He also mentioned that his baggage, left at Folly Island when he departed for Troy, "was safe," it having been forwarded to Jacksonville on another steamer:



**Hon. Isaac McConihe, LL.D. (1787-1867)**  
**Engraving by Alexander Hay Ritchie (1822-1895)**

"We arrived here on Monday the 11<sup>th</sup> inst., after a rough but pleasant voyage. The reception which I received from the regiment was very gratifying to me, and as I rode up to headquarters the band struck up a welcome back again, and the soldiers gathered round the building, giving me three lusty cheers. I found the headquarters most comfortable and that my baggage left on Folly Island was all safe, while most of the officers had lost everything by the sinking of the steamer *Maple Leaf*. I passed the day in social greetings and on Tuesday presented myself for muster and was duly mustered as colonel of the 169<sup>th</sup>.

"I am now installed in my new office and doing full duty. It is not as warm here as I expected to find it, yet it is about such weather as you

have in June. The flowers are in bloom and the trees in full foliage. We are encamped in the edge of town and our quarters are a fine, two-story mansion, with garden in front planted with orange and magnolia trees and in the rear with live oak and magnolias. The air is fragrant with perfume and the climate is delightful.

"The regiment is in fine condition, with only twenty-three excused from duty. Our band plays admirably and the new recruits are fast-learning the ways of a true soldier.

"Palatka has been evacuated and a large number of troops are going away from this region. Do not be surprised to learn of the departure of the 169<sup>th</sup> from here soon, perhaps within a week."

Col. McConihe's letter to the Newtons on the 16<sup>th</sup> offered some interesting details about his welcome by the officers and men of his regiment: "My horses were at the landing, and as I approached the camp, the band struck up a welcome back, and the men shouted in lusty cheers. It was such a reception as I felt proud of, and I only regretted that I was not more deserving of it." The letter included a haunting prediction of his fate and that of many of the men of the regiment, writing, "Many of you must fall, and many of you, who shout for me to-day in joy, will soon follow me in death to your graves." He added, "I knew then, what they did not know, that the regiment would soon be in Virginia, participating in the overshadowing bloody struggle of the war."



**St. Nicholas Hotel, Broadway, N.Y., Uriah Welch, Proprietor  
Published by J. H. Bufford's Sons, Lithographers,  
New York & Boston (ca. 1880)**

"Your letter of Sunday, April 3<sup>d</sup>, 1864, directed to me at the St. Nicholas Hotel, New York, arrived here on Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup> inst., the day on which I was mustered into the service of the U.S. for the term of *three years*, as Colonel of the 169<sup>th</sup>, two happy and auspicious events to gladden my heart. Your letter was handed me just as I was about to mount my trusty black horse 'Sam,' and galloping rapidly to town, with the letter in my pocket, I presented myself for muster to the United States mustering officer, and while I was making out the preliminary papers, I read your letter. It was a fitting occasion to read such a missive of true friendship, and when I lowered my uplifted arm after taking the oath, my mind reverted to John and you, and to the good old days of the 'empty sleeve.' It was proper for both of you to have been present then, and I imagined your congratulations when I looked upon

the familiar handwriting. I thought how pleasant had been all my associations with you and John, and looked upon that letter, wide open on the desk, as I first signed my name as colonel, (three years from the 12<sup>th</sup> of March, 1864!), as a most favorable omen.

"Who can tell where the wounded captain or his whole-souled genial friends, John and Mrs. Newton, will be at the expiration of that time? In this connection, it will not be improper for me to say that your neighbors, Mr. Ellis Covnean included, would show good taste by omitting their poor wit and unsound reasoning on men and letters. If he can be induced to join my regiment, as an officer or enlisted man, I will attend to Mr. Covnean and assure him that he will never receive any long letters, and if he don't die of Covnea, he will return a hardened Covnean. His eyes will never be flaked reading letters.



"I was disappointed about that promised photograph for you, as the New York artist told me it would be finished in a week, yet two weeks rolled around and it was not ready. I remarked to the pretty siren behind the show case, when she, with her sweetest smile, said to me, 'Colonel, the picture will be so nicely done, that it will compensate for the delay,' (looking as mad as I ever get), 'Madame, your proprietor has not kept his word, and the picture, handsomely done, presented by you in person, with your rosy lips, asking forgiveness, at the Dry Tortugas, from I, a prisoner, would not compensate me for this disappointment. No, Miss, it may soften some men to see you smile at your proprietor's falsity, but I bid you good day, mad as mad can be, and you may send the evidences of your miserable establishment to me at Jacksonville, Florida,' and I walked out. As soon as it arrives, I will forward to you.

"On my return, I found the regiment in good condition, and I received a very impressive and cordial greeting from all, both officers and men.



*Colonel McConihe's horses were named "Dick" and "Sam."*

My horses were at the landing, and as I approached the camp, the band struck up a welcome back, and the men shouted in lusty cheers. It was such a reception as I felt proud of, and I only regretted that I was not more deserving of it. I wished that moment that the war was over and that all those shouting souls could but whisper to their loved ones at home, and hear the welkin [heavenly] ring with the cry of thousands, aye, millions of freed men, North and South, in welcome to their return. I looked upon the living mass, (some 700 men), and sadly thought it can never be – many of you must fall, and many of you, who shout for me to-day in joy, will soon follow me in death to your graves.

"I could not help it, Mrs. Newton, and these thoughts indeed made me sad. I knew then, what they did not know, that the regiment would soon be in Virginia, participating in the overshadowing bloody struggle of the war.

"I do not expect we shall remain here over *one week* at the farthest, and I shall leave the orange blossoms and magnolia trees of the South with a gladsome heart.

"Please do not consider this much of a letter, as I have not yet settled myself down in my old style. I will soon write you a long letter describing my headquarters, the orange grove in front (from which I send you a few blossoms), the magnolias and live oaks all around, and the Southern, two-story long-porched mansion which I occupy."

The 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y., 112<sup>th</sup> N.Y., and 13<sup>th</sup> Indiana were ordered on the 13<sup>th</sup> to embark for Hilton Head, S.C., and on the 22<sup>d</sup> proceeded without disembarking to Fortress Monroe, Va., reporting to Maj.-Gen. Benjamin F. Butler, commanding the Dept. of Virginia and North Carolina, for incorporation into the X Army Corps:

SPECIAL ORDERS, No. 154.

HDQRS. DEPARTMENT OF THE SOUTH,  
Hilton Head, S. C., April 13, 1864.





**Wharf built by Federal troops, Hilton Head, South Carolina (April 1862)**

I. The following-named regiments and companies will proceed immediately to Hilton Head and report at these headquarters. They will bring their camp and garrison equipage and 100 rounds of ammunition for the infantry (40 rounds with the men and 60 in boxes): One hundredth New York Volunteers, One hundred and forty-second New York Volunteers, Ninth Maine Volunteers, Eleventh Maine Volunteers, Third New York Volunteers, Eighty-ninth New York Volunteers, One hundred and seventeenth New York Volunteers, and First Connecticut Light Battery.

II. Colonel W. W. H. Davis, One hundred and fourth Pennsylvania volunteers, will proceed with the following-named regiments to Hilton Head, without delay: One hundred and fourth Pennsylvania Volunteers, Fifty-second Pennsylvania Volunteers.

III. The following-named regiments will proceed to Folly Island and report to the officer commanding the Northern District: Twenty-first U. S. Colored Troops, Thirty-fourth U. S. Colored Troops, Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Colored Volunteers, Fifty-fifth Massachusetts Colored Volunteers.

IV. The following-named regiments and companies will proceed immediately to Hilton Head and report at these headquarters. They will bring their camp and garrison equipage and 100 rounds of ammunition for the infantry (40 rounds with the men and 60 in boxes): Thirteenth Indiana Volunteers, One hundred and twelfth New York Volunteers, [One hundred and sixty-ninth New York volunteers](#), Ninety-seventh Pennsylvania Volunteers, Tenth Connecticut Volunteers, Twenty-fourth Massachusetts Volunteers, Fortieth Massachusetts Volunteers, Third New Hampshire Volunteers, Fourth Massachusetts Cavalry, Light Company B, First U. S. Artillery, Light Company M, First U. S.



**U.S. Pattern 1861 Rifle-Musket Cartridge Box**

*The box has a wallet on the front for gun tools and inner flap to protect the cartridges from bad weather.*



**.58 Caliber Minié Ball Cartridge**



*The paper cartridge held the ball and a charge of black powder.*



U.S. Pattern 1864 Rifle-Musket Cartridge Box

*The U.S. Pattern 1864 Rifle-Musket Cartridge Box was issued to new recruits of the 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y. in 1864 and 1865.*

Artillery, Light Company E, Third U. S. Artillery, Light Company C, Third Rhode Island Artillery.

V. The following-named regiments, having reported for duty in this department, will proceed to Beaufort, S. C., and report to the post commander: Twenty-sixth U. S. Colored Troops, Twenty-ninth Connecticut Colored Volunteers.

XIV. The following-named regiments of the Tenth Army Corps will proceed to Fortress Monroe by the steamer *Fulton*, and the senior officer will report in person to Major General B. F. Butler, commanding Department of Virginia and North Carolina: Eighth Maine Volunteers, Fourth New Hampshire Volunteers.

XV. Pending the action of the Secretary of War upon the application of Brigadier General T. Seymour to be relieved from duty in this department, he will proceed to New York and there await action upon his application.

By command of Major General Q. A. Gillmore:

ED. W. SMITH,

*Lieutenant-Colored and Assistant Adjutant-General.*

In the short time he was at Jacksonville, Col. McConihe served as acting brigadier-general of Foster's Brigade, (designated as the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 2<sup>d</sup> Provisional Division, Dept. of the South), as reported by the *Daily Times* on the 25<sup>th</sup>:

"A BRIGADIER. – Col. John McConihe, of this city, is temporarily in command of Gen. R. S. Foster's brigade, including the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth Regiment."

The colonel wrote of the imminent departure of the regiment in a letter to Mrs. Newton on the 18<sup>th</sup>, the 13<sup>th</sup> Indiana already having left for Hilton Head:

"You will see by the above that I am 'temporarily' in command of Foster's Brigade, yet I have not moved my quarters, nor released my command of the regiment.

"We are expecting to move from here to-morrow, or as soon as transportation arrives, and I issued the order this morning to dispose of all surplus baggage. We are to go somewhere via Hilton Head.

"Would it not be grand to be with Grant again and share with his troops the glories of the summer campaign?

"I will endeavor to let you know of my movements and give you my address. At the present hour I am ignorant of our exact destination.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Indiana (of our brigade) sailed for Hilton Head yesterday, and we will soon follow them.



Spanish moss on the banks of the St. Johns River, Florida (ca. 1886)

"My stay in Jacksonville has been short and pleasant, and I almost hate to leave Headquarters 'Mansion' with its orange trees, magnolias, and grand old live oaks. We are occupying a large, two-story house just in the edge of Jacksonville, and the house stands in the center of a garden, surrounded by a picket fence and beautifully shaded by luxuriant oaks, their branches drooping with the long, grey Southern moss, and by symmetrical magnolias, perfumed by the ever-blooming, rich-looking orange blossoms. I enclose you an orange blossom, picked from a tree in the front yard. I never saw anything so handsome as these oaks – luxuriant and thick, with dark green foliage, the gray moss droops from their waving branches, and the honeysuckle climbs to the very top, laughing, with its long red petals, at the passing breeze. This moss is a parasite, and steadily, yet slowly, claims the stout tree as its own; the foliage disappears, and the trunk, with its naked branches, reminds one of a strong old man, full of years, his long grey locks streaming down over his form. Century plants and huge bunches of flowering lilies bloom in the uncultivated yard.

"The air is balmy and the weather most comfortable. Everybody enjoys good health, and were it not our desire to participate in the stirring, and I trust, the closing scenes of the war, we would like to remain here in Florida. I have seen no region, from Nebraska to South Carolina, which





**U.S. Quartermaster's Office at Bay and Ocean Streets, Jacksonville (December 10, 1864)**

equals this portion of Florida. Jacksonville, situated on the bank of the St. John's River, has been an enterprising town, and resembles not the cities of the South, but appears modernized and Yankeeified. There are fine brick stores and buildings, and the gas lamps stand on each corner. Southern habits, with Northern improvements, abound everywhere.



**Post Commissary Office between Newman and Ocean Streets, Jacksonville (December 11, 1864)**

"The residents have mostly gone with their rebellious friends, and there remains but the deserted city, alongside the quiet abode of the dead in the cemetery on yonder knoll. The drums beat and the musket gleams around these once happy homes, and all but nature has bowed in submission to the deadening influence of war. When the war is closed, and we have embarked in our ironclad, I will direct it up the St. John's River and show you Jacksonville and my head-quarters.

"Mrs. Dr. Winslow went up to Palatka on Monday to witness the evacuation of that point by our troops, and on her return presented me the enclosed flower, picked up there by herself, and I send it to you. I



**"*Lonicera sempervirens*," the Great Trumpet Honeysuckle**  
Sydenham Teast Edwards (1768-1819)  
Published in "Curtis's Botanical Magazine" (October 1, 1804)

enclose also a honeysuckle picked from a live oak tree in the garden; also, the tip of a leaf of a century plant, and a specimen of the moss."

Corp. Carmon, in writing to his sister on the 18<sup>th</sup>, expressed his preference to remain in Jacksonville for the summer, but the White soldiers in Jacksonville were being replaced by Colored troops:

"I thought that I would write to you once more, as I had nothing else to do yesterday. I was over in the city to church. They have got a very nice church there. It is about as large as the Babtist church in Sand Lake.

"The White troops are leaving here pretty fast. I shouldn't be surprised if we were to get marching orders within a few days. One regiment of our brigade left here yesterday. Part of them are going home, and the rest are going to join the Army of the Potomac, I believe. For my part, I would rather stay here this summer, for I am afraid that if we leave here that we will get in the Army of the Potomac, and I don't want to get back in old Virginia again, for there is most too much marching there to suit me.

"Lieutenant-Colonel McConihe has got back to the regiment again. He has got promoted to the position of colonel of the regiment. Our

major has been promoted to lieutenant-colonel, and James Colvin, captain, Co. A, is now our major. I hear that Captain Wickes has been pardoned and restored to his command again, but I don't know how true it is.

"The weather is getting to be very warm down here now, but the wind blows like fun this afternoon, so it is not quite as warm as usual, but it is warm enough for all of that.

"Our band has got all new silver instruments. The health of the regiment is better now than it ever has been. The men are just learning how to take care of themselves. The regiment is about as large as it was when we left Troy.

April the 20<sup>th</sup>.

"We have got marching orders again. We start this afternoon at two o'clock to go onboard of the transports. Where we go, no one knows as yet, that is, no one in the regiment knows.



**1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Richard J. Horton, Co. H, 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y.  
Collection of the New York State Military Museum,  
Saratoga Springs, New York**

"I have not got time to write much this morning, as it is almost noon now. Dick Horton got back to the regiment last week [Serg't. Richard J. Horton, Co. H, had been detached for recruiting duty in Troy]. There is nothing going on down here except the moving of troops. The Colored troops are coming in every day and the White troops are leaving."



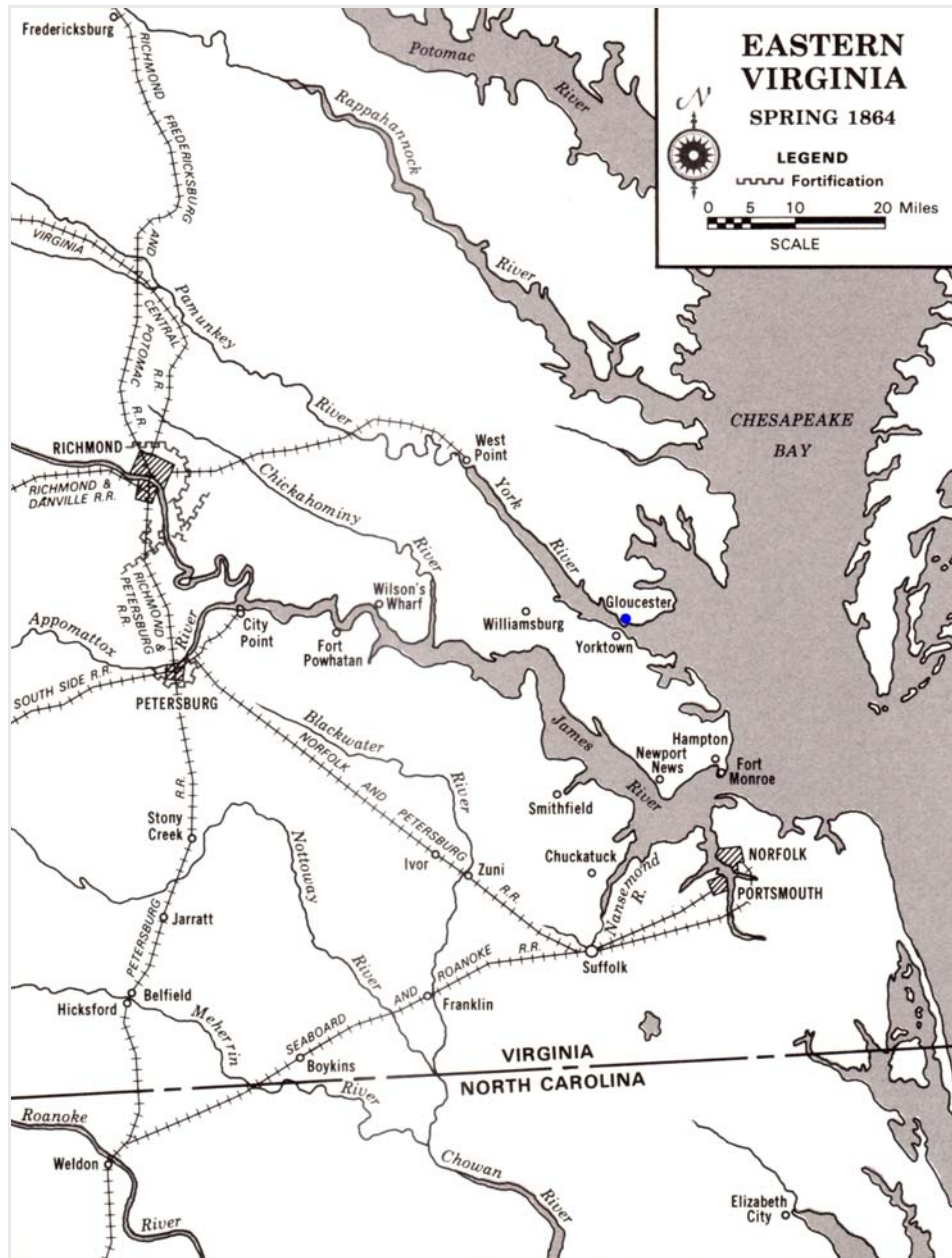
**General Ulysses S. Grant (1867)**  
**James Reid Lambdin (1807-1889)**  
Private Collection

On March 12, 1864, Lieut.-Gen. Ulysses S. Grant succeeded Maj.-Gen. Henry W. Halleck as general-in-chief of the armies of the United States. He would be responsible for coordinating the Federal efforts in all theaters in order to bring the war to a successful conclusion for the Union.

The great spring campaign of 1864 would include two major Federal offensives. One of these would be a drive by Maj.-Gen. William T. Sherman's armies from Chattanooga, Tennessee, toward Atlanta, Georgia. More importantly, because it aimed at Richmond and the Confederacy's most able field commander, Gen. Robert E. Lee, an overland advance toward the Confederate capital would be made by Maj.-Gen. George Meade's Army of the Potomac. Meade's advance was to be overland in order to engage Lee outside of Richmond's heavy fortifications while simultaneously covering Washington. Should Lee be forced into the Richmond defenses without having been destroyed, Grant anticipated crossing the James River and besieging the Confederate capital from astride its southern communication lines.

A subsidiary operation of major proportions was launched in the James River basin. In this operation, a Federal force of over 40,000 men, organized as the Army of the James under Maj.-Gen. Benjamin F. Butler, was to seize and fortify a base, sever the critical Southern supply line of the Richmond and Petersburg





**Map of Eastern Virginia, Spring 1864**  
 Published in "Back Door to Richmond: The Bermuda Hundred Campaign,  
 April-June 1864" by William Glenn Robertson (1987)

*Gloucester Point, Virginia, location of the camps of the X Corps,  
 Army of the James, is indicated by the blue dot.*

Railroad, distract the attention of Confederate reinforcements, and, if possible, capture Richmond. By the time all of this was accomplished, Grant and the Army of the Potomac would have disposed of the Army of Northern Virginia and would be ready to join Butler in administering the coup de grace to Confederate forces in Virginia.

Supplementing the two primary offensives would be three smaller operations. The first was to be an advance by an army under Maj.-Gen. Nathaniel Banks from Nw Orleans toward Mobile, Alabama. Second, Maj.-Gen. Franz Sigel would lead another small army into the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Finally, forces

in the coastal Dept. of Virginia and North Carolina would advance from Hampton Roads up the south side of the James River toward Richmond.

Established in April 1864, the Army of the James consisted of two army corps and a small cavalry division. Its commander, Gen. Benjamin F. Butler, was a prominent attorney at Lowell, Mass., before the war, serving two terms in the state legislature, where he distinguished himself by vigorously supporting the cause of labour and of naturalized citizens. Though he was affiliated with the Southern wing of the Democratic Party in the 1860 elections, he strongly supported the Union after the Southern secession. He was appointed a Union army officer for political reasons, and his military career was mercurial and often controversial. As a brigadier-general of the Massachusetts militia, he commanded the troops that occupied Baltimore and in May 1861 was promoted to the rank of major-general in command of Fort Monroe, Virginia. There he refused to return fugitive slaves to the Confederacy, using the logic that they constituted "contraband of war," an interpretation later upheld by his government. In June 1861 he lost the engagement at Big Bethel, Va., but succeeded in capturing the forts guarding the inlet at Hatteras, N.C., two months later.



General Benjamin F. Butler (1869)

Alfred James Wiggins (1823-1883)

Collection of the Cape Ann Museum, Gloucester, Massachusetts

Early in 1862 Butler was given command of the land forces that accompanied the victorious Union expedition against New Orleans. The city fell late in April, and from May to December Butler ruled it with an iron hand by executing a citizen who had torn down the U.S. flag, undertook sanitary measures to prevent an outbreak of yellow fever, and confiscated the property of Confederate sympathizers. Partly because of difficulties arising from his relations with foreign consuls concerning confiscated property, he was removed from this position in December of 1862 and given command of the Dept. of Virginia and North Carolina in November of 1863, which would be transformed into the Army of the James the following year.

Maj.-Gen. Quincy A. Gillmore, commanding the X Corps, was born in Ohio and graduated at the top of his class at the U.S. Military Academy in 1849. He received a commission in the Corps of Engineers, helped build forts from 1849 to 1852, taught at West Point from 1852 to 1856, and was head of the Engineer Agency in New York City from 1856 to 1861. At the outbreak of the war, 1<sup>st</sup>



**Major-General Quincy A. Gillmore,  
commanding X Corps, Army of the James**

Lieut. Gillmore was appointed chief engineer of the Port Royal expedition and was praised for his bombardment and capture of Fort Pulaski, outside Savannah, Georgia. Appointed brigadier-general in 1862 and major-general in 1863, he was given command of the Dept. of the South and the X Corps. He commanded the land forces which captured Fort Wagner and Morris Island, South Carolina and directed the reduction of Fort Sumter.

The X Corps, numbering 16,812 infantrymen and 1,114 artillerymen, assembled at Gloucester Point, Va., where it was organized into three divisions, commanded by Generals Alfred H. Terry, John W. Turner, and Adelbert Ames. Each division included three artillery batteries, in all 46 guns. The 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y. was one of the regiments of the 2<sup>d</sup> Brigade, under Col. Jeremiah C. Drake, part of Ames' (3<sup>d</sup>) Division. Serving in the brigade alongside the Trojans were the 13<sup>th</sup> Indiana, 9<sup>th</sup> Maine, and 112<sup>th</sup> N.Y.

Maj.-Gen. William F. Smith, commanding the XVIII Corps, hailed from Vermont and graduated fourth in his class at the U.S. Military Academy in 1841. Known as "Baldy" to his friends, he was praised for his gallantry in the Seven Days' Battles and Antietam, but was demoted for insubordination after the disastrous defeat at Fredericksburg. As chief engineer of the Army of the Cumberland, he acquired legendary fame by restoring a supply line that saved that army from starvation and surrender, (the "Cracker Line"), and afterwards directed it to victory. Smith was promoted back to major-general by the U.S. Senate on March 9, 1864, prior to his assignment by Grant to the command of the XVIII Corps.



**Major-General William F. Smith,  
commanding XVIII Corps, Army of the James**

The XVIII Corps, numbering 16,978 infantrymen and 1,012 artillerymen, assembled across the York River at Yorktown, where it was organized into three divisions, commanded by Generals William T. H. Brooks, Godfrey Weitzel, and Edward W. Hinks, the division of the latter being made up of Colored troops. The corps was supported by ten artillery batteries, totaling 36 guns.

The Army of the James' cavalry division was commanded by Brig.-Gen. August V. Kautz and numbered 2,500 troops (including a section of a light artillery battery). Unattached troops included a regiment of mounted rifles, two cavalry regiments, and a company of heavy artillery.

Gen. Alden's memoir records his sense of regret over the failure to bring the state of Florida back into the Union before departing for "Old Virginia," stating that the U.S. government would have succeeded, "except for the rabid and rebellious utterances of a few fire-eating politicians":

"The old love of country among the people was gradually becoming rekindled and reestablished. This was manifest in the renewal of affection for its symbol, the Stars and Stripes, and the apparent development of culture as incidental thereto.

"There was no question but that a readjustment of statehood within former constitutional limitations and under the behests of the United States government could have been accomplished in Florida, except for the rabid and rebellious utterances of a few fire-eating politicians. We, the United States government, had extended the olive branch in the different stages of the Rebellion, but the controlling authority of the state refused to accept it.

"Our short campaign of two months in Florida was the palmiest period in the history of the 169<sup>th</sup>, and it was with regret that orders to leave the state were obeyed.



"On the 20<sup>th</sup> of April, 1864, the 169<sup>th</sup> Regiment embarked for Fort Monroe, Virginia, arriving off Hilton Head, South Carolina, on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Here it halted and was paid off, then proceeded to Fort Monroe, arriving on the 26<sup>th</sup>. From Fort Monroe, the regiment was ordered to proceed to Gloucester Point, on the York River, where it disembarked on the same night and bivouacked."

The *Daily Times* reported the general vicinity of the 169<sup>th</sup>'s new location in a brief article published on the 25<sup>th</sup>:

"AT YORKTOWN. – The One Hundred and Sixty-ninth regiment, Col. McConihe, is now at Yorktown, with Gen. Vogdes and staff, and the whole corps from Charleston. A year ago, to a day, the regiment landed on the same spot where it has disembarked. Since that time it has seen and done much – taking part in two sieges – Suffolk and Charleston."

Col. McConihe apprised Mrs. Newton of the regiment's arrival at Fort Monroe on the 25<sup>th</sup>, before dashing off to "call on the famous Butler":



Bird's-eye view of Fortress Monroe, Virginia, and its vicinity

Assistant Quartermaster's Office,  
Fort Monroe, Va., April 25, 1864.

Mrs. Newton,

I have just come ashore to receive orders from General Butler. We arrived here this morning, 49 hours from Hilton Head, and the small boat landed me. Whether the regiment will disembark here, or more further up, is as yet unknown.

Letters directed to me at this point will reach me. Excuse brevity, as I must go up and call on the famous Butler, 6 o'clock A.M.

Your friend,

John McConihe

Corp. Ostrom wrote to his wife upon arriving at Gloucester Point on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Referring to the place as the "Land of the First Families of Virginia," he commented on the wisdom of Federal operations in Florida, the coming campaign,

and questions among the men concerning the soldierly qualities of the Colored troops. Gen. Grant would have served the army well by adopting Corp. Ostrom's opinion about Gen. Gillmore: "We are expecting our corps, if commanded by Gillmore, will be used more for besieging operations than other purposes."



**Camp of the 100<sup>th</sup> Reg't. N.Y.S. Vols., Gloucester Point, Virginia, by "A.M.D."  
Private Collection**

"Tonight I am sitting and writing on historic ground, while for around me, as so often before, upon this same ground the tented field is reminding us that soon we shall perhaps be engaged in earnest strife with the armies of the enemy.



"We left Hilton Head Friday evening and reached the Hampton Roads last evening, where we cast anchor, and this morning ran up to Fortress Monroe. I sent there a letter ashore for you. We there received orders to report to this place and have only had time to pitch our tents since landing and eat our suppers.



**Life in Camp, Part 1 – Hard Tack**  
**Winslow Homer (1836-1910)**  
**Published by Louis Prang & Co., Boston (1864)**  
**Collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts**

"By the way, an incident occurred tonight worth mentioning and which shows how even small favors in the army are remembered. While on the Johns Island raid the 117<sup>th</sup> N.Y. went with us in place of the 13<sup>th</sup> Ind. They at one time were worse supplied with provisions since we just then having been supplied gave them a part of our share, so that some found themselves short afterward. They seemed very grateful and tonight, as we were feasting on 'hard tack' and water, we were agreeably surprised by some of the 117<sup>th</sup> bringing us enough ready-made coffee to plentifully supply our company. By the way, as they came along, they wished to know if this was Company A. So you see how well they had remembered us. Such little acts of kindness in the army seem to bind men much more closely than at home.

"In a few days, and perhaps tomorrow, we expect to begin to work our way toward Richmond. Ours is the 10<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, 2<sup>d</sup> Division, and 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade. Boyles will probably command our division. Brig.-Gen. Terry is temporarily in command of the corps. Gillmore is expected to command it. We are to go in light marching order and it is said the army will move in three columns, Meade in command of one, our column, and one from Norfolk. We are expecting our corps, if commanded by Gillmore, will be used more for besieging operations than other purposes.



"We find a great difference in the climate here and in Florida. Here the air is more cold, yet bracing. There it tends to make one more languid and I can easily see why the people of the South are possessed of such different passions from those of the North. I should have written ours is the First Brigade, Second Division, and Tenth Army Corps.



**General Butler and his staff**

"Foster is expected to command our brigade. His chief of staff, Capt. Davis, has been promoted to Butler's chief of staff with the rank of Lieut.-Col. He is a splendid officer. I presume Lieut. [Bernard N.] Smith will now be Foster's chief of staff. The reason of his not being our captain was that one captain of the regiment, who had been convicted of swindling the government and sentenced to imprisonment at hard labor for the remainder of his term of service, has received a full pardon and been reinstated. [1<sup>st</sup> Lieut. James F.] Thompson was the ranking lieutenant of the regiment.

"The 13<sup>th</sup> Ind. is still with us. Should Butler take the command, in person, of the forces that move from here, as Davis has a high opinion of our brigade, we may be given an important part to act; at any rate, from the standing and name of our brigade, if our corps does anything of importance, we shall quite probably act our part. Do not be too much troubled about me. God will watch over me as heretofore while I trust I shall not act a part of which you need be ashamed.

"In writing, direct to L. Ostrom, Co. A, 169<sup>th</sup> N. Y. Vols., Tenth Army Corps, Washington, D. C. I have \$30 to send you, and if I cannot get a chance to send it by express, I shall be obliged to send it by letter, as it is hardly safe to carry it about. The 25<sup>th</sup> of the month seems to be quite an important day in the history of our regiment. It was the 25<sup>th</sup> of September that we were mustered in the U. S. service and the regiment left Troy; the 25<sup>th</sup> of February that we landed at Jacksonville, and the 25<sup>th</sup> of April that we landed here.

"Since I am no longer in the Department of the South, I suppose I am at liberty to express my opinion of some things that come under my notice more fully than while there. First then, I believe on the whole that occupying and holding of such places as Fernandina, St. Augustine, and Jacksonville by small forces, thus weakening the main army and preventing it from making successful offensive movements, a great mistake.

"Secondly, I think the soldierly qualities of the Negroes was, in my opinion, at first to have been greatly overrated, while there has been a desperate attempt to bolster them up, and even to the prejudice of the White soldier and which the latter most keenly feels.





Scene from "Glory" (1989)  
Directed by Edward Zwick

"Thirdly, as intimated in my last, I believe the Negro question to be greater than the slavery question, and that the South has been more exasperated because of placing the Negro in the field than that of slavery, and that had it not been for this, many who are now in arms against the government would not be. As an instant of proof of this, said a Rebel major who is a prisoner and came with us to Hilton Head, 'The question of slavery is not one of so great importance and I should be glad to see them emancipated and colonized elsewhere, but to have them freed and remain among us is more than we can endure, for soon it will be a Negro gentleman and a White gentleman, a [Negro] rough and a White rough, and so through the whole list, and rather than endure this state of things, I will fight 50 years if my life is spared.'

"You may think I am growing despondent, but choose to look at things as they really are than as I would wish to have them.

"Read this letter by inversion, beginning with the last page, as I made a mistake in the beginning to write it, was so dark when I commenced.

"There are but very few White troops left in the department we have just left, and so strong a feeling against the Blacks in the army that I have often heard the wish expressed that the Rebels would attack and

kill every one of them. Many soldiers think they are doing our cause more harm than good and I think they believe so sincerely.



**Priv. Asbury C. Bacchus, Co. A, 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y.,  
Troy, New York (1864)  
Provided by Thaddeus Beblowski**

*"Priv. Asbury Bacchus and his brother, Musician Merville L. Bacchus, Co. A, are my wife's relatives. My mother-in-law told us that they lied about their ages to enlist and that they were only 14 and 15 years old when they enlisted." – Thaddeus Beblowski, November 26, 2013.*

"On second thought, perhaps it would be as well to direct to Fortress Monroe as Washington. I have a new tent-mate. His name is Asbury Bacchus. I believe he is not a devotee of the god of that name and think we shall agree well. He is quite young.

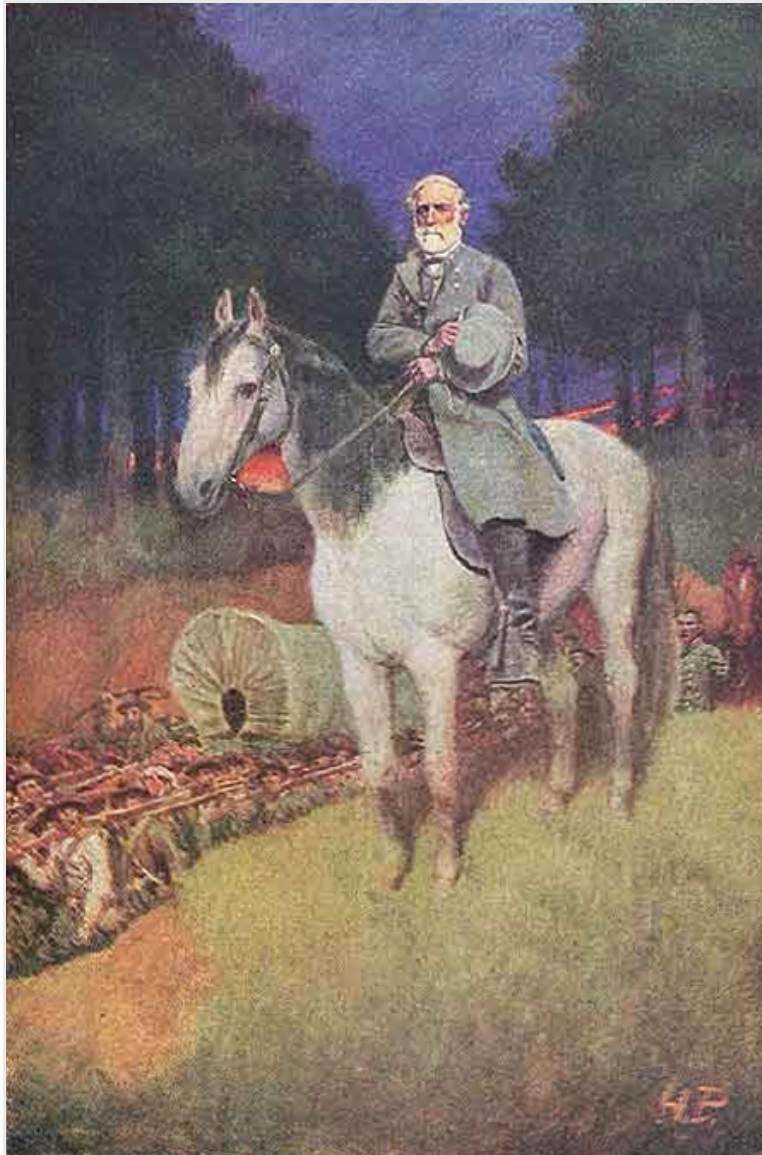
Tuesday.

"It is quite pleasant today. Lieut. B. N. Smith is now chief of Foster's staff.

Wednesday, [April 27<sup>th</sup>].

"Troops are coming in very fast. A large force is expected from across the river today or tomorrow. We may not yet move in several days. I shall try and write you as often as possible and will endeavor to keep you posted as to what falls under my service, but of course can promise to do but little more, as which I may learn from other sources will be mostly camp rumors. And you have already learned about how much they are to be relied on.

"It is possible we are to be reviewed by Grant before starting, and even probable. We expect our brigade will consist of our regiment, the 112<sup>th</sup> N. Y., 117<sup>th</sup> N. Y., 115<sup>th</sup> N. Y., and 9<sup>th</sup> Me. The report reaches us that Lee's movements toward or above Washington are quite threatening.



**General Lee on His Famous Charger "Traveller"**  
**Howard Pyle (1853-1911)**  
**Published in "Harper's Monthly Magazine" (February 1911)**

"I have been expecting a letter from you since arriving here, as it seems that the mails take but a short time for a letter to reach me and your last was written the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. It may be that letters you have written since have gone to Hilton Head.

P.M.

"We heard that Lee and Meade are fighting and Burnside's Corps were hurried through Washington yesterday to join Meade. It is thought Lee's object is to cripple Meade to prevent him moving for some time, and collect force enough to keep us back. It is possible that Lee may severely cripple Meade without defeating him. At any rate, our movement will now very much depend upon Meade's success.



[Note: On April 9<sup>th</sup> Grant sent orders to Meade to follow Lee's Army of Northern Virginia wherever it went. Grant made it plain that the destruction of Lee's army was his top priority. 'Wherever Lee goes, there you will head also.' The rumors heard by Corp. Ostrom of fighting during the last week of April were premature. Grant, Meade, and Burnside fought Lee at the battle of the Wilderness, Va., a week later, on May 5-6, 1864.]

"Write soon as possible. With renewed assurance of love and prayers for you, I am as ever yours,

- Lyman

Wednesday night.

"Ours is the Second Brigade, Second Division, and consists of the 169<sup>th</sup>, 112<sup>th</sup> N.Y., 8<sup>th</sup> Me., and 13<sup>th</sup> Ind. Capt. Davis has not yet left us. Maj.-Gen. W. F. Smith has taken command here at Yorktown.

"Tonight I handed [Maj. James A.] Colvin \$30 to express to you from Georgetown tomorrow. It is directed to Mrs. E. S. Ostrom, Trumansburg, Tompkins Co., N.Y.

"In the case of W. F. Smith, I wonder if the is in any way related to Maj.-Gen. W. F. Smith. Suppose the Smiths are all related. Write soon as possible, as I am anxious to hear from you."

In a letter on the 26<sup>th</sup> to his wife Fanier L. Marvin, Priv. Nathaniel D. Marvin, Co. H, reassured her that "a little fuss" he had with his brother, Priv. Barney M. Marvin, Co. H, was over with:



Principal landing and road to Yorktown, Va., Gloucester opposite (1862)

"We have left Florida and are now in Virginia again. We are near Yorktown now, but I don't know how long we shall be here. I suppose not long at any rate, for we have orders to have each man keep one blouse, one pair of pants, two pair of drawers, two shirts, three pair of socks, one rubber blanket, and two pair of shoes with him, and turn in what other stuff to be left to Norfolk. We was paid off the 22<sup>d</sup> of April and I shall send the allotment in this letter. The boys are all as well as common.



"I had a letter from Lewis and Sophia stating that your father had got a letter from me, and Mother read it and felt bad, because Barney and me had a little fuss. It did not amount to much and I had ought not to write anything about it, but I happened to feel just like it and I suppose I wrote more than I ought to. But you must tell Mother and all the rest that they need not feel bad about that any longer, for it only makes us the better friends. It is all 'get along with' now, and we are in a tent together, and he has wrote same to Susan about it before, so I guess I have wrote enough about that. You tell Mother I am sorry that I wrote anything about it, for I suppose by what Lewis and the rest of the folks wrote, that she felt very bad and was almost sick. Tell her that she must not feel bad about anything that came in my head, and if I write anything of that sort again, to not pay any attention to it."

Priv. Schutt provided an explanation to the friends of the regiment for the sudden transfer to Virginia in a letter on May 1<sup>st</sup>, published in the *Daily Press* on the 4<sup>th</sup>:



**Gloucester Point, York River, Virginia, opposite Yorktown (May 4, 1862)**  
 From the Journal of Private Robert Knox Sneden, 40<sup>th</sup> N.Y.V., Topographical Engineer of  
 the III Army Corps, Vol. I, 1861 April 12 - 1862 May 5  
 Collection of the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia

*Editors Daily Press:* – The friends of this Regiment at home will, no doubt, be little surprised to learn that we are now temporarily encamped upon the right bank of the York River, opposite a place famed as well in the annals of our Revolutionary history, as in the sanguinary chronicles of our current times.

"We left Jacksonville, Fla., on the night of Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> ult., and reached Gloucester Point on the afternoon of Monday, 25<sup>th</sup>, after a 'safe and prosperous voyage,' characterized by little incident, save the usual nausea and its concomitant experiences. The *Boston*, a fine river steamer, conveyed us to Hilton Head, where we were transferred to the new and decidedly fast sailing propeller, *Charles Thomas*. The *Boston* reached Hilton Head Thursday night, and early on Friday morning Paymaster ———, appeared on board with the pay rolls, which were promptly signed, and during the course of the afternoon the regiment was paid off.



**Designating Flag, Second Brigade, Third Division, X Army Corps  
Collection of the National Museum of American History,  
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.**

"The removal of the Tenth army corps from the Department of the South, and the massing of troops at this point, is a sufficient evidence of the great events which are soon to be developed in Virginia. Gen. Grant has determined upon *concentration*, and I believe that concentration means *victory*. Whether Gen. Lee, anticipating the plans of our great Western General, will, by a grand *coup*, before the organization of the Union army is completed, force the abandonment of the proposed programme by Gen. Grant, or await in his chosen positions, and behind formidable fortifications, the approach of the mighty Army of the Potomac, remains to be seen; or the problems may, unknown to the writer, already be solved, and the terrible clash of arms may be heard along the Rapidan or Rappahannock.

"Although the spring campaign has not opened very auspiciously in more remote quarters on the arc of the contracting circle of rebeldom, no one can doubt the success of the Union forces in Virginia. Such an army was never before marshaled to confront traitors in this State, and, I need hardly say, never will be again.



**Union Soldier Equipage  
Published in "The Medical and Surgical History of the  
War of the Rebellion, 1861-1865" (1870-1888)**

"What especial part the Tenth Army Corps is to play in this grand prospective tragedy, time alone can develop. It is to be an active one, however. Officers and privates have received imperative orders in regard to baggage and wardrobes. Officers are allowed 'one small valise,' so the order reads, enlisted men only such articles of clothing as are absolutely necessary, viz: One change of underclothing, one blouse, two pairs of shoes. All other articles of clothing and surplus baggage are to be packed and stored at Fortress Monroe, or expressed home, and the entire corps is enjoined to prepare for immediate and active service in the field.



"There is every probability, then, that the succeeding three or four months' history of the 169<sup>th</sup> regiment will be one of great incident, trial and peril, and its friends will accordingly watch its career with feelings of fear, pride and anxiety. Envious as the reputation of the regiment already is, every individual member of it will strive to add new luster to its fame; and if it is now 'Gen. Gillmore's favorite,' it will be the nation's favorite if opportunity ever occurs where that distinctive title can be earned. Among the new officers of our regiment, whose commissions have for some time been awaiting the action of the mustering-in officer, are Lieut. Wm. H. Merriam, Lieut. Eugene Van Santvoord, and Lieut. Alexander R. Bell, all three of whom were mustered by Lieut. Crozet, at Hilton Head, on the 29<sup>th</sup> ult. Lieut. Merriam has been assigned a position as Aide-de-Camp upon the staff of Gen. R. S. Foster, and no person within the knowledge of your correspondent is better calculated to fill that important position."

The *Daily Press* furnished additional details the following day about the latest promotions in the 169<sup>th</sup> in a letter from an unnamed source:



**Group of Union army officers**

"The following is an extract from a letter dated Camp of the 169<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Gloucester Point, opposite Yorktown, Va., May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1864:

The commission of Lieut. Eugene Van Santvoord dates from the 29<sup>th</sup> of February, 1863. Lieut. Van Santvoord's promotion since he joined the regiment has not been more rapid than his unexceptional conduct and fine military qualifications deserve. Enlisting as Drum Major, his prospects for an early commission did not seem so bright as those of the young men who made tactics their constant study; and although Lieut. Van S. was obliged to devote a great share of his time to the inexperienced members of his Drum corps, his hours of relaxation were spent in the study of Hardee and the "Revised Army Regulations." Proving an apt scholar, his talent and military knowledge could not long remain unappreciated and unsought by his keen-eyed, experienced superiors, and in January, 1863, he was promoted to the position of Sergeant-Major, vice Clark Smith, promoted to a Second Lieutenancy. The firm and impartial manner in which he discharged the important duties of his new office, at once commended him as a subject for higher honors, and hence, he now finds himself in the possession of an honorable, well-earned commission, at which his friends in and out of the regiment, must alike rejoice. It may not be inappropriate to add, in this connection, that Lieut. Van S. is a brother of the late lamented George Van Santvoord, Esq., of Troy, and not unlike him, possesses mental qualities, natural and acquired, above mediocrity.

The commission of First Lieut. Alexander R. Bell dates some months back, and possesses this anomaly; he was promoted from the humble grade of the ranks. Lieut. Bell is, nevertheless, a firm scholar, and wears the honors of his new position with the same ease and dignity as older officers of the line. I believe Lieut. Bell is from Whitehall, [Washington] Co., and came out as a member of Co. D, under Capt. Coleman. He has been assigned to duty in Co. A, which has long been deficient in this respect, its only Lieut., Clark Smith, having acted as Adjutant since the detachment of Adjutant Kisselburgh to the staff of Gen. Vogdes. Sergt. Vanderzee, of Co. H, has been appointed Sergeant-Major.

The health of the regiment continues good.

Lieut.-Col. Alden started for home from Hilton Head, on a furlough of a few days, a favor of which he is evidently deserving, having been constantly on duty with the regiment since its departure from Troy.



"The enemy is said to be some eight or ten miles from this point, but are not in any force, I believe."

As a footnote to the Merriam affair, his friends at the *Daily Whig* furnished their opinion on the matter on the 3<sup>d</sup>:

"LIEUT. WM. H. MERRIAM has been mustered into service at Hilton Head, S. C., in the 169<sup>th</sup> Regiment, and has been detached for duty on the Staff of Brig.-Gen. Robert S. Foster. The brigade is now in the Army of the [James]. Thus ends a contest that has lasted for six or eight months – Lieut. M. having finally triumphed without compromise in securing what should have been accorded to him in the first instance without opposition. The 'outer periphery' of his circle of enjoyment will be considerably extended by this deserved success."

In a letter started on the 30<sup>th</sup> to his mother, Sarah S. McConihe, Col. McConihe wrote about the inconveniences of camping in the field. As for the military review by Generals Terry and Butler, he wrote: "The troops were all in fine condition and I should think there were about 10,000 men on the field. Many of them were undoubtedly reviewed for the last time on Earth."



**Sarah Strong McConihe (1805-1893)**  
**Engraving by Alexander Hay Ritchie (1822-1895)**

"We arrived here on Monday the 25<sup>th</sup> inst., and I have been kept very busy ever since. In fact, I think more matters have been crowded upon me since my arrival than ever before in the same length of time. Our surplus baggage has been disposed of and I sent my trunk home by express. Our tents, excepting three, have been turned in and regiments are allowed but one wagon. Heretofore, we have been able to carry our field desks, but now we must rely on whatever comes handy on which to make out our papers and keep up correspondence. Neither have we any reliable data as to our destination and cannot, therefore, calculate for the future on anything. Sheets, pillow cases, and bunks are things of past history, and instead we enjoy blankets, saddles, and the ground. There are few luxuries to be had at any price, and it is with difficulty



**View of the Yorktown waterfront from the Archer Cottage after the Confederates abandoned the town (May 1862)**

we can obtain passes to get over to Yorktown, and there is little of anything when we get there. But I believe all this is needed to put a force in good marching and fighting order, and if we endure it with successful results, I shall rejoice at it. We have just gotten through with our muster and inspection, and the order has arrived to march out for a drill review, so I must close here.

Sunday, May 1, 1864.

"It is a rainy, gloomy Sabbath and most too cold for comfort. A fire would be very acceptable, but there are no means to have one. The review yesterday was a grand affair, barring the intolerable clouds of dust which almost obscured the columns. First, we were reviewed by General Terry and afterwards by General Butler. We left camp at 12 Midnight and returned at dark. Of course, like all reviews it was tedious. The troops were all in fine condition and I should think there were about 10,000 men on the field. Many of them were undoubtedly reviewed for the last time on Earth.

"It seems to me as if our movements were to be governed by those of the Army of the Potomac, and I of course look anxiously for news from that quarter. I think they will advance before we move, yet this is nothing but my own opinion. We are expecting to move from here on very short notice and at any hour, but we may remain here for several days. The 169<sup>th</sup> can fall in and march off with our single wagon in ten minutes' time.

"May 2<sup>d</sup>, no orders to move yet."



I would like to extend my special thanks to Dr. Keith V. Holland of Jacksonville, Fla., for providing me with his extensive photographic and video archive of artifacts recovered from the wreck of the U.S. Army Transport *Maple Leaf*. His encouragement of this work is sincerely appreciated.

I would also like to thank Fred L. Ray, author of *Shock Troops of the Confederacy: The Sharpshooter Battalions of the Army of Northern Virginia*, for permission to use a letter from his collection by 1<sup>st</sup> Serg't. Frederick F. French, Co. D.

A recent discovery was made by your correspondent of several photographs of soldiers of the 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y. deep within the archives of the New York State Military Museum at Saratoga Springs, N.Y., three of which are featured on pp. 3, 86, 111 of this month's newsletter. The latter two photographs were featured in earlier issues only as black-and-white images. I appreciate the help provided by Jim Gandy of the Museum for his technical assistance in accessing the photographs.



**Vaughn correspondence**

A collection of correspondence by Privates Orrin Vaughn and Lavalla G. Vaughn, Co. E, was recently auctioned. Whatever secrets are contained in those letters are out of the reach of those interested in the history of the 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y. Other letters recently auctioned to unknown parties include those written by 1<sup>st</sup> Serg't. Patrick Murphy, Co. D, and Priv. James Caton, Co. D.

Presented for your review and contemplation are photographs of gravestones for a number of soldiers of the 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y.:



**Private Bernard S. Uline, Co. H**

Elmwood Cemetery, West Sand Lake, Rensselaer County, N.Y.





**Private Francis W. Thayer, Co. B**  
Leavenworth National Cemetery,  
Leavenworth, Kans.



**Corporal Edgar Tatro, Co. E**  
St. Joseph Cemetery, Burlington,  
Chittenden County, Vt.



**Private Philip Wheeler, Co. C**  
Los Angeles National Cemetery,  
Los Angeles, Cal.



**Private James Watt, Co. G**  
Veterans' Home Cemetery, King,  
Waupaca County, Wisc.





**Captain Augustus D. Vaughn, Co. F** (on left)  
Albany Rural Cemetery, Menands, Albany County, N.Y.



**Private George Thomas (alias of William T. Myers), Co. G**  
East Dayton Cemetery, Tuscola County, Mich.

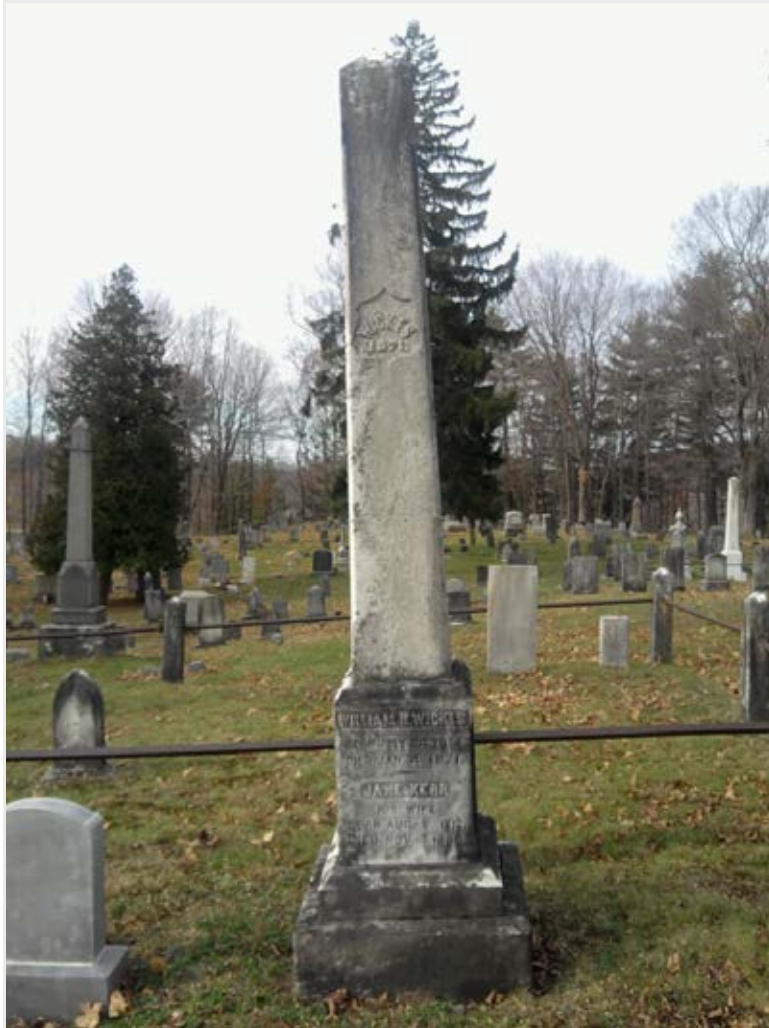


**Brevet Captain and 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Edgar F. Vanderzee, Co. E**  
 Evergreen Cemetery, Wynantskill, Rensselaer County, N.Y.



**Private James Waters, Co. F**  
 Boardman Cemetery, Whitehall, Washington County, N.Y.





**Captain William H. Wickes, Co. H**  
Sand Lake Union Cemetery, Sand Lake, Rensselaer County, N.Y.



**Private Owen Tansey, Co. B**  
 St. Mary's Cemetery, Troy,  
 Rensselaer County, N.Y.



**Private William H. Walsh, Co. B**  
 Old Mount Ida Cemetery, Troy,  
 Rensselaer County, N.Y.



**Sergeant Joseph Whitney, Co. C**  
 Long Lake Cemetery, Long Lake,  
 Hamilton County, N.Y.



**Private George H. Young, Co. H**  
 Jordan Cemetery, Waterford, New  
 London County, Conn.





**Corporal Stephen G. Woodcock, Co. E**  
Rush Lake Cemetery, Curlew,  
Palo Alto County, Iowa



**Sergeant Loren R. Woodcock, Co. E**  
Crown Hill Cemetery, Ruthven,  
Palo Alto County, Iowa



**Private Robert Watton, Co. I**

New Mount Ida Cemetery, Troy,  
Rensselaer County, N.Y.

Cheers,

- Steve Wiezbicki

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