

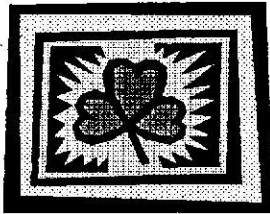
NewsLetter

Benton County Genealogical Society

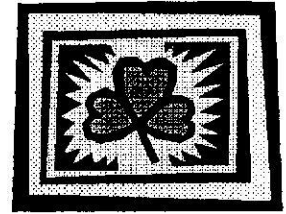
Volume Fourteen

Number Three

March 1999



Experiences of a Union Soldier in the Civil War



[continued from February 1999 issue]

Howe and myself, with an Indian boy named Foster, messed together and by joining our fortunes made a pretty fair outfit for housekeeping. I was the fortunate possessor of a quart cup. Foster was not quite so well off; he owned a three quart tin pail and, as we never had enough to fill it, it was a waste of wood to heat it. Howe was an autocrat of the first water; he was the undisputed owner of an old shovel blade. Perhaps you wonder what we could do with this; what we could not do would be much easier. It served us for a frying pan, gridiron, oven, in fact was a whole cookstove, furniture and all, and required but little wood to use it. I have often cooked dinner for the three of us with a stick of pine not half as big as a broom handle. We managed it by one of us whittling the wood into shavings; one tended the dish and one lay on the ground and served as bellows to keep the heat up. We never used more than three shavings at a time on the fire.

I think it was sometime in the first of June that things got so bad in camp that we had to organize a police force for our protection. There were, of course, many rough characters among us who were only made worse by the usage they got in prison. It did not take them long to find each other out, and

they organized a regular band for plundering the rest of us; and as they worked together in gangs of from six to twenty, it was impossible to resist them; and they had things all their own way until the camp was in a perfect panic of terror; and no one dared be seen on the street with anything of value about him. They committed several murders and finally got so bad we were obliged to organize in self defense.

Having organized out police, we armed them with good clubs which Major Wertz furnished, and they proceeded to arrest all of the raiders (as we called them) that they could find. I have forgotten the number, but I think it was considerable over a hundred. As fast as caught, they were confined to the little stockade between the north gates. The gates were like

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Workshops 13 March: Computer, New England, Military

The March meeting will break up into workshops of specialized interest groups. The Military group will meet in the library to review available records. The New England & New York group will discuss some outside resources. The computer group will cover the specific topics of most interest to members. This is a chance to learn more about BCGS.

THIS AND THAT

- BCGS has two microfiche readers available to be given to members. There is also a 6 foot white oval table for a \$30 donation. Call Gene Newcomb if interested.
- There is an urgent need for a volunteer available May 9-15 to arrange and receive items for the garage sale. You don't have to price, and Damaris will guide you. For those who don't know, all our book money comes from these sales. Dues only cover the rent. Please donate non-clothing items.
- Also needed is someone with the talent to paint a sign. We want to add a board to the Museum sign during meetings.
- Is your name tag missing, address correct? Please sign up at the meeting to have these corrected.
- Our April program will be Mary Gallagher on identifying and preserving family items.

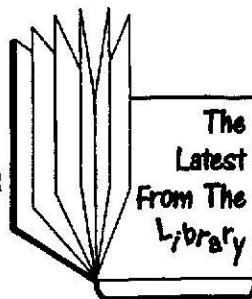
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the lock of a canal, so that one of them were always closed. The pen was large enough to hold several hundred men and made us an excellent jail, the rebs using the south gate while we used the north one. After we had arrested all suspected persons, a judge was elected; a court was organized with proper officers, a jury empanelled and the trial began. I think it lasted about two weeks and ended with the acquittal of many; several were sentenced to ball and chain; several to run the gauntlet. Of these, one was killed outright, and I think two died after, while I have no doubt that several others died from the effects of the beating they received. Six of the leaders were sentenced to death; a scaffold was built in the main street about half way from the south gate to my quarters, which were at the end of the street.

My friend Howe superintended the building of the scaffold, and the prisoners were executed in the presence of the whole camp on the 11th of July 1864, if my memory is not at fault. Major Wertz furnished a guard to bring the men from the jail, and also the material needed. I have forgotten the names of the unfortunate men who were hanged. It was the first execution I had ever seen. I hope I may never be obliged to witness another. A detailed account of the affair with the causes that led to it was forwarded to Washington, and that was the last I ever heard of the matter. After this there was but little trouble in the camp, and it was safe and orderly as could be expected, perhaps more so now that the lesson had been so severe, but it seemed the only way.

It was at about this time, if I remember right, that the stockade was enlarged, which relieved us greatly. There was another circumstance happened about this time that seemed a special providence in our favor. There was a terrible thunderstorm one afternoon, and the little brook became a river of no mean size and undermined the stockade, tumbling several rods of it flat to the ground, and obliging there's to turn out every man to guard the gap until they could repair it. It was great fun for us, and we made the most of it. After the shower was over, we discovered one of the finest springs I ever saw flowing from within the dead line. It was on the north side of the swamp, on the west side of the stockade, and was truly a Godsend to many a poor wretch, and I have no doubt saved several hundred lives. We named it Providence Spring, and I was informed a few years since that it was still flowing.

After the fall of the stockade, Wertz got frightened and planted a large white flag in the main street about fifty yards from each of the gates and gave notice that any



by Jean B. Grube, Librarian

CD - Vital Records Index, British Isles, 1538-1868 (5 CDs)

Family Tree Maker; User's Tutorial and Reference Manual, 3rd ed. (with 3.4 version CD) Gift of Lew Williams

CD - Family Tree Maker World Family Tree, Vol 8, pre1-1600 to present. Gift of June Green

Coroners' Records in England and Wales*

Abstracts of Rockbridge County, Virginia Circuit Court Will Book 1, 1809-1874*

History of Ross County, Ohio, 1779-1889, by Henry Howe*

History of Hamilton County, Ohio, 1790-1889, by Henry Howe*

A Guide to County and Municipal Records on Microfilm (Missouri)*

Ulster Emigration to Philadelphia, 1803-1850. Gift of Pat Coolican

Destiny of the Scotch-Irish; a Presbyterian Migration, 1720-1835. Gift of Jean Grube

The Hulce/Hulse Families in America; Descendants of Elisha Hulce/Hulse, 1725-1796, Goshen, NY. Gift of Jean Grube

♦ Jackie Savage Marshall, our New Hampshire member, has remembered us with a donation of CDs. Distance doesn't matter when we're friends. Thanks, Jackie.

Thanks Are Due

BCGS couldn't function without the many volunteer hours that are donated each year. Sometimes we forget to stop and express our appreciation to those people who do this work in spite of distractions, employment, physical ailments, and family crises. This month we thank:

Lee Gentemann

Who has made our Benton County USGenWeb page outstanding. Check it out at:

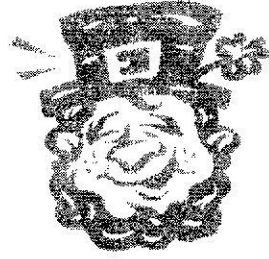
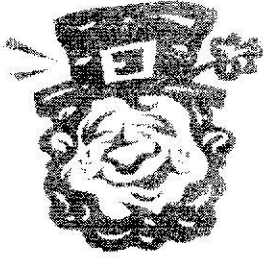
[Http://www.rootsweb.com/~orbenton/](http://www.rootsweb.com/~orbenton/)

crowd gathered between the flag and the gates would be fired upon by the battery. For sometime after this things moved on without much change, and time hung heavy on our hands. We had evening concerts and dancing parties, though the last were not much in favor. The exercise was too hard for all but the new men. We also had prayer meetings, theaters, preaching, prize-fights, gambling, boxing, all and everything that could be thought of to get rid of the time.

A very favorite amusement, and one that never failed us, was for a dozen or so of us to get together and tell of the nice dinners we had enjoyed in the days gone by, and see which of us could order the finest meals. I am afraid if any of us had eaten some of the meals named, we should have been forever out of the reach of hunger. It may seem strange to you, who probably

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never missed more than a few meals at a time, that a lot of men should amuse themselves in so childish a manner, but if you will try our bill of fare for a month or two, you will feel differently about it. I think the fourth day without food is the hardest to bear; after that one gets faint and sick and it's not so hard to bear as the horrible craving of the first days. I don't recollect of going longer than three days without rations but four or five times; once nine days with a pint of raw meal, twice five days without anything, and four days once without anything. Three days without rations was so common an occurrence that I never tried to keep track of the number of times. This may be hard to believe, and if I were the only survivor left from Andersonville, I should hesitate long before asking people to listen to anything so incredible; but though our numbers are few, there are enough of us left to make our united testimony worthy of consideration and belief; and I appeal to my old comrades as to the truth of any statements made here without the least fear of contradiction.

I think it was sometime in August that my friend Howe was invited to go out and help kill the beef for the hospital. As this meant full rations, he was glad to go; and Foster and I always shared in George's good luck so we were glad to have him. In a short time he (being very quick and handy) was promoted to boss butcher, and then his trouble commenced. He had sixteen men under him who were bound to seize the first chance that afforded to escape. He had tried it times enough to know the almost absolute certainty of failure; and, being satisfied from the reports of new arrivals that the end must come soon, he refused to join them and warned them not to let him hear any of their plans for he did not know what Wertz would do with him; and, if he knew nothing, he could tell nothing; but being all together and not allowed to separate, of course, he soon knew of their plans as well as themselves. His uncertainty about Wertz was soon over; the men were missing one morning, and George failed to report till the rebels came for the day's meat. It was impossible to describe Wertz's rage. It is a wonder he did not kill him himself; but he cooled down at last and, seizing Howe, started to hang him; but after choking him nearly to death, he changed his mind and let him down; and after bringing him to asked him where the men went. When Howe told him if this was all he wanted, he had better left him hanging, for he would sooner die than tell, Wertz only laughed at

him, and taking him out on the side hill in plain sight of the camp he stripped him of everything but a pair of drawers and set him in the stocks under the full glare of the sun, telling him to stay there until his damned yankee tongue rotted out or he would tell him what he wanted. Here, poor Howe with his head fastened to the post, his arms extended to their full extent, his feet raised level with his head and fastened to a plank, was kept by the brute for six days; and then, finding he could do nothing with him but kill him, he let him loose; and after he got so he could walk, sent him into the stockade.

When he got in, all he said was, "Perhaps after a while the old fool will find out what kind of stuff a Yankee is made of." Soon after Howe got back, there was a call from the guards, "Fall in"; and as I was always on hand if there was any show for getting into trouble, of course, I fell in with the rest. There were about two thousand of us wanted, and Howe and I were both taken but were soon separated, nor did we meet again until we met under the old flag in Wisconsin. We were taken by rail to Charleston, South Carolina, and there I spent two weeks, if not in perfect enjoyment, with a very great satisfaction. We were camped on the race track about a mile from the city and in full view of it and in easy hearing distance of what to us was the sweetest music, the Union battery. It was such fun to see those big fifteen inch shells burst a mile or so up in the air and then hear chunks rattle down through the houses from ridgepole to cellar bottom. Perhaps I should not call it fun, I know the rebels did not, but I will own it was fun for us at the time; and I think you would have enjoyed it too under the circumstances. Every night we listened for the song of the old swamp angel and got so we could tell every time she spoke, and there was no mistaking the sound of her messages. You that have heard them little six pound parrots singing around your ears, can imagine how the rebels enjoyed the visits of the three hundred pound shells of the swamp angel. Several times while we were there the city was fired, and one night a whole square was burned, the light from the fire showing our gunners the range; and they droned shells in so thick that it sounded like a dozen batteries in full play; and the rebels were forced to leave the fire to burn itself out at its leisure.

TO BE CONCLUDED IN APRIL

HAPPY
St. Patrick's
Day!

Members who have paid their dues for 1999:113

NEW MEMBERS:

- Liza Thorp Wilson**
- Peggy & Dennis Haney**
- Ann & Nelson Mills**
- Betty & Jim Reis**
- Lynn & Eric Preston**
- Charles Starnes**

Membership Information

President	David Kribs	929-6079
1st Vice Pres	Ken Biehman	758-3769
2nd Vice Pres		
Secretary	Charlene Talbot	929-6079
Treasurer	Gene Newcomb	
	newcomb@bcc.orst.edu	929-5715
Librarian	Jean Grube	758-7618
Membership	Leila Crawford	
	crawford@ucs.orst.edu	753-4153
Newsletter Editor	Dorothy Burt	
	dgburt@pioneer.net	424-3021
	Janice Barclay	
	Jbarc@pioneer.net	847-5610

Dues are \$10.00 single and \$13.00 family per calendar year. Dues paid after September 1st are credited to next year.

Web page URL <http://www.rootsweb.com/~orbentgs/>

The Benton County Genealogical Society will buy your used genealogy CDs for 1/2 their purchase price! CDs will be placed in our collection. After you've used it, sell it to us!

Canadian Interest Group

The Canadian Interest Group is for those searching for their roots in Canada. This group meets the third Tuesday of each month, from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the Albany Public Library. If you have a specific area of Canada you are interested in, please let me know so we can have books and printed materials there for you to look at. We have resources available for Manitoba, Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and some Quebec plus Canada in General. Car pooling can be arranged. Call Pat Rawlinson, 752-2243, for further info.

Odds And Ends

Our number at the OSU Thriftshop on Second Street in Corvallis is 492. Please keep your Santiam and Flav-R-Pak labels coming in to the Library. There is a plastic sack in the library to keep them in. Leila Crawford is in charge of the label program. All you need is the UPC Symbol from the label. Be sure that you leave some area around the label when you tear it off.

More Member Info

Our meetings are held on the second Saturday of September through June, in the NE Dining Hall of the College United Methodist Church, on the east side of the parking lot, in the 1100 block of Philomath. Business meeting is at 10:00 a.m. with the program at 11:00 a.m. Our Library, in the museum annex, is open to members and visitors on meeting days from 12:00 noon, or when the program is over until 3:00 p.m. IF we can keep enough volunteer librarians, it will be open every Tuesday afternoon from 12:30 until 3:00 p.m. Members in good standing may check out up to five books and return books any time the library is open.



L0 is Charter Honorary Life Member
Number is last of year; 8=1998
S=Single; F=Family; E=Exchange
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