THE CIVIL WAR DAYS

OF

CAPTAIN CHARLES D. ROUSH

COMPANY B, 6TH PENNSYLVANIA REGIMENT RESERVES

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CONTENTS

Introduction 1
Personal Background 2
War Background 3
The 6th Regiment Organizes and Moves South 4
The Battle of Drainesville, Virginia 9
The Winter Lull 11
The Company Moves South 14
The Second Battle of Bull Run 21
On to South Mountain 24
Company B After Roush's Injury 31
The Postwar Years 32
PREFACE

It has always bothered me that so much of what has come before us has been lost from our memories and recordings. These parts of our past surely have played a profound role in shaping our present. As a consequence, over the years, I have taken satisfaction in gathering pieces of history and recording them for the benefit of future generations who might be interested in various aspects of what came before.

A couple of years ago, on a tension-filled summer evening, while helping my family facilitate my mother's permanent move out of the familiar confines of her long-term home, I stumbled upon--in the bottom of a rarely used bureau drawer--some long-forgotten parched papers, several items of a soldier's Civil War equipment, and the Diary of Captain Charles D. Roush, my paternal great-great grandfather, who had served for the Union in America’s great war between the states.

The faded pencil script did not lend itself to easy reading. And Captain Roush was not an overly introspective or analytical recorder of events. Nevertheless, this was the Diary in which he faithfully recorded events while he marched in 1861 and 1862 through the rolling hills of Maryland and Virginia, not knowing what the War would bring next and whether at its end he would be among the survivors. Its contents, as a consequence, were the words and thoughts of a man wrought up in a momentous struggle, enduring far more tension, drama, and fear than most of us, perhaps fortunately, ever encounter.

What follows is based largely on Roush’s Diary. It is supplemented with an overview of the battles in which his Company
B engaged, as well as numerous other identifiable facts that can still be gleaned from history's scattered recordings regarding this man.

I greatly appreciate the valuable input I have received from several of the descendants of Captain Roush. Cousin Fred Brown of Camden, Delaware, a great grandson, provided important historical insight. My aunt, Edna Spruance, provided a copy of "Our Line of Browns in America," by Reuben Fisher Brown and Louise Brown Peach, which helped put together many of the pieces in Captain Roush's puzzle. Both recall the story of the unfortunate disappearance of Captain Roush's sword, which as late as the 1940's hung over the homestead's fireplace mantel. My academically oriented siblings, Nick and Sally, and journalist son, Justin, were kind to read over the draft and provide useful suggestions on its improvement.
THE CIVIL WAR DAYS OF CAPTAIN CHARLES D. ROUSH, COMPANY B, 6TH PENNSYLVANIA REGIMENT RESERVES

Introduction

Those who engage in public acts at certain propitious times gain historical recognition, whether desired or deserved. Society’s fascination with their lives or times leads to the formation of a written record that endows these individuals with a public memory beyond their own experience. My great-great grandfather, Charles Roush, by dint of timing and seized opportunity, fell into this mold. Consequently, unlike with most of us, parts of his life can be pieced together long after he is gone.

His involvement in the Civil War placed him in the midst of an historical event that now captures the imaginations of many a lay historian. Writings abound of this internal American conflict, what his pension file at the National Archives in Washington labels “The Rebellion.” Men (mostly) still reenact its activities on the original battlefields. Indeed, most of us at the start of the 21st Century continue—at some level—to debate the issue which lay close to the heart of that bloody war: white America’s difficulty with accepting the black man on equal footing. Thus, Charles Roush’s unique experience has lasting significance today.

But who is to say that his life, rather than any of a host of other family members, deserves to be uncovered and recollected. Others might have been just as significant or, at least, as interesting. What was Mary, his wife, like? What were her contributions to society? What kind of father and mother did he have? What kind of father was he? What contributions did his children make?
Charles Roush played a small role in one of America’s greatest dramas. He also had the discipline to record some of his thoughts in a diary. Thus, fortuitously, he provided the fodder for the text that follows.¹

**Personal Background²**

Charles Dunkle Roush, born on Christmas Day 1821 in Mifflinburg, Union County, Pennsylvania, was the second of the five children of Samuel Roush and Maria Elizabeth Dunkle. His father was a prominent county politician, serving various terms from 1835 to 1862 as the Register, Recorder, and Prothonotary for Union County.³

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1 Roush’s Civil War diary is on file with the author.

2 Much of the personal information on Roush and his family comes from his Civil War Pension Files at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Upon his discharge he applied for and received an Invalid’s Pension. After his death, his wife gained a Widow’s Pension. Their application papers reveal many of the personal facts told in this section.


   Minor contradictions appear in all of these sources.

3 Samuel Roush’s obituary asserts, “Such was his popularity . . . that, notwithstanding the political connection of the county was against him, he was retained in the office term after term, and was always courteous, obliging and thoroughly versed in his duties.” Undated, untitled newspaper clipping, with inscription by Charles Roush, February 2, 1873, on file with the author.
Charles Roush grew to be a tall, slender, dark-complected man; he stood six feet and weighed 165 pounds. Before the War the New Berlin resident apparently worked as a pharmacist. In 1844, at age 22, Roush was commissioned as Captain of the New Berlin Artillery, which was attached to the Pennsylvania state militia. 4

Roush’s first wife, Mary Ann Benner Roush, died at age 24 in 1848; their two sons died in infancy. In October 1853 at age 31 Roush married 17-year-old Mary Ann Seebold at a Lutheran ceremony at her father’s home outside New Berlin. They had two daughters, Alice (born in 1854) and Margaret (“Maggie”) (born in 1859).

For Charles Roush, his short, disabling career as an Union officer began at age 39. He served the Union first defending the Capitol and then on battle fronts in Virginia and Maryland from July 1861 until his injury at the battle of South Mountain, Maryland, and his consequent exit from the army in September 1862. His official honorable discharge came on January 10, 1863. Shortly thereafter, in 1868, he moved his family to Camden, Delaware, where the family grew and many of his descendants still reside.

**War Background**

The War Between the States began in April 1861 with the Confederacy’s assault on Ft. Sumter. While there were numerous minor skirmishes in the Virginia region during June and July, the first major confrontation came on July 21 at Bull Run (in the North’s nomenclature) or Manassas (in the South’s). The adversaries in this

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4 Document on file with author.
dramatic Confederate victory suffered over 700 dead and 2500 wounded. Historians have viewed Bull Run as "one of the most decisive tactical victories of the war."5

By August/September 1861 the Confederates were encamped at Manassas, while the Union Army worked steadily to increase its forces surrounding the south of Washington. For several months the principal armies lay within 30 miles of each other, "the quiet camp life broken only by an occasional skirmish or midnight alarm." The Confederates then held Munson’s Hill, less than six miles south of the northern Capitol. 6

In September the Union Army began a move to wrest back control of the Potomac, which the South had blockaded further south in Virginia. By late October the Union forces occupied a line from Fairfax Court House to Leesburg. The most northern point for the Confederates, who had abandoned Munson’s Hill, was near Centreville, Virginia, 20 miles southwest of Washington.

The 6th Regiment Organizes and Moves South

On July 27, 1861, six days after the Union’s loss at the first battle of Bull Run, the 116 men of Company B, 6th Regiment of the Pennsylvania Reserve Volunteer Corps, were mustered into service


in Washington, D.C. Each volunteer signed up for a three-year term "unless sooner discharged."

The initial components of the 6th Regiment had begun organizing as early as April 22, 1861, a week after the War's first hostile death, when Massachusetts troops traveling south through Baltimore encountered fire from Secessionist sympathizers. Roush enrolled in the Regiment on May 16 in Middleburg, Snyder County. All the men of Company B were from Snyder and Union Counties.


Information relating to the chronology of events for Roush's regiment that occurred prior November 20, 1861, the date of his first diary entry, comes primarily from Bates, supra, History of Pennsylvania Volunteers, Vol. II, 692-701.

Roush's Compiled Military Service Records, on file at the National Archives, Washington, D.C.
Unlike many Union army recruits, some like Roush had previous military experience with the state militia.¹¹

On June 22 the Regiment’s organization was set. It was placed in the Third Brigade, headed by Col. John S. McCalmon, a part of Gen. McCall’s Division. In command of the 6th was Col. W. Wallace Ricketts. Roush, who helped organize Company B, served as its Captain, with Levi Epler and William Hardy as his First and Second Lieutenants. The rest of the company consisted of five sergeants, eight corporals, two musicians and 92 privates. ¹²

In late June the regiment moved to Harrisburg and performed “guard duty and received instruction on the manual of arms.” On July 11 the men transferred to Greencastle, Pennsylvania, and received their equipment, which for Company B included Harper’s Ferry muskets.

On July 22 the regiment moved by rail via Harrisburg, through Baltimore and on to Washington. While marching from one train station to another in Baltimore, a private slipped on the pavement,

¹¹ Document on file with author.

¹² Bates at 693 n.*. An infantry regiment normally consisted of about ten companies of 100 men each. Four to six infantry regiments made up a brigade (commanded by a Brigadier General) and three brigades comprised a division. Two or three divisions made up an army corp, commanded in the Union army by a Major General. A small army could consist of just one army corp, while a principle army would be formed of two or more corps. In practice, due to injury, capture and desertion, these units in the Union army were often one third to one half undersized. See McPherson at 330.
fired his gun, and wounded a Sergeant in the leg. At first all thought they had been fired upon by southern sympathizers, as had happened on April 19. After the command was halted and the true cause discovered, however, their march continued.  

The Regiment reached Washington on the 24th, encamped on the east lawn of the Capitol, and was mustered in on July 27. They then marched to Camp Tenally at General McCall’s headquarters. Here Roush wrote a letter to his daughters. The men did guard and

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13 Bates at 692.

14 Record of Military Events, Company B, supra.

15 He urged Alice and Maggie to “be good children. Obey your Mother and be kind to her and do as she tells you. That is the wish of your Father, who is far away from you, encamped out on the plain in defense of his country.” Copy on file with author.
picket duty and helped construct defensive forts around the Capitol. Even this preparatory period took its toll on the volunteers. Soon malaria from the low lands of Washington spread through the Regiment, sending the sick rolls into the hundreds. In July and August two Company B members died from disease, while one received an honorable discharge. Two changed their minds and deserted.\textsuperscript{16}

As cooler weather arrived, the health of the regiment stabilized. Stationed at Camp Pierpont, Virginia, just a few miles from the Capitol, it continued to train by drilling, performing picket duty and learning the ways of war. Although monotonous, this preparation later paid off. Unlike many other troops on both sides that in 1861 were being thrust into battle, Company B benefitted from having been together for several months. Consequently, its men were not unprepared amateurs when conflict arose.

Military records indicate that on November 3 Roush sought and was granted a week's leave for "a visit to my family and [to] attend to important business in New Berlin."\textsuperscript{17} He then returned to Washington from Snyder County on November 20, 1861, and the next day reached Camp Pierpont in Fairfax County, Virginia. His diary then began.

For the next month Roush settled into an administrative routine. On his second day at Camp Pierpont he began a four-day stint as an officer for a courts marshal. A week later, one of his men went AWOL, ending up drunk with a short-lived spree in

\textsuperscript{16} Bates at 693; Postwar Currier & Ives Chart listing Company B's men and the military history of each.

\textsuperscript{17} Compiled Military Service Records.
Soon the uly and men and us, this sh sides tld from its men sought nd [to] med to and the a. His strative our-day his men ree in

Washington. On November 29 Roush received his first letter from home since his visit. A friend from New Berlin visited him on the 30th. Military authorities had to arrest another of his company members on December 7 (for not having his full equipment out while on duty). Another was discharged and sent home. On the 16th Roush sat on the Council of Administration to set supply store prices and to arrange for the collection of taxes.

The Battle of Dranesville, Virginia

Company B faced its first major battle on December 20, 1861. The 6th Regiment broke camp at 6 a.m. and marched from its encampment near Langley out the Leesburg Pike to Dranesville, where it joined four other Pennsylvania Regiments and where, Roush reported, beginning at noon a “bloody fight” was had. He described a successful effort: “we routed the Secess complete.” Company B took one prisoner and many blankets, overcoats, guns, and knives from the defeated southern soldiers. In the hour and a half battle Roush reported that several of his men had their clothes cut, but none was wounded. Official reports indicate that overall the North suffered seven dead and 61 wounded, while 43 southerners died and 143 were wounded. Company B returned to camp at 9 p.m., having marched 25 miles for the day. Roush shared no insight in his diary into the purpose of the Dranesville battle or its strategic place in any overall Union effort. Instead, he wrote as one who was but a small

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18 Lossing at 64.

19 The company’s Record of Military Events at the Archives indicates: “Company B was engaged in the Battle of Dranesville on Friday the 30th day of December 1861 and came off the field in good order without losing or having a man wounded.” The date is apparently incorrect.
part of a large machine, with little knowledge of his role in any overall conception.

Bates relates that on the 20th the Pennsylvania regiments formed a column “and speedily moved towards the field of battle. The Ninth Reserve was posted on the right, the Sixth in the centre, the Kane Rifles on the left and the Tenth and Twelfth in reserve.” He then reports:

While the position was being taken by the Reserves, the enemy opened fire from a battery posted on the Centreville road, which was promptly responded to by a section of Easton’s Battery of the First Pennsylvania Artillery, the first discharge eliciting cheers from the entire line. Immediately after, the Sixth, then on the pike, with its right resting a short distance from the intersection of the pike with the Alexandria road, was ordered forward, and after crossing a field and ascending a gentle slope, entered a wood, into which it advanced a short distance, when the Ninth was met slowly retiring, having encountered the rebel force under such circumstances as to make it doubtful whether it was the enemy or the Kane Rifles. His true character was not long in being developed and volley after volley was exchanged without an attempt by either party to advance. At length a charge was ordered upon his battery. At the word “forward” the regiment bounded the fence in front, crossed the open field and in a moment had driven him from his position in confusion, capturing one caisson and some prisoners. 20

20 Bates at 693.
The Winter Lull

Little occurred at Camp Pierpont for the next couple of months other than the routine of drills and guard and picket duty. It would not be until March 1862 that Company B would return to active maneuvers. During the interim, life was tame for Roush. Although on a slow Christmas “nothing [was] doing in camp,” two days later a package arrived from home containing “a variety of eatables.” A couple of days later he received another package, this one containing mittens and stockings from the women of New Berlin and vicinity. Roush distributed these welcome cold weather items on New Year’s Day, on which he and his fellow brigade officers also presented Gen. E. O. Ord with a sword, belt, sash and spurs.

On January 6, 1862 Roush sent home via a returning company member $105 to his father, Samuel Roush, $20 to his brother, David, and $75 to his wife, Mary. Roush enjoyed a couple of days leave in Washington, where he stayed with an acquaintance and shopped for several clothes items for himself. He regularly exchanged letters with Mary. On the 15th he entertained for dinner a number of Union County visitors.

A special event came in late January when Roush’s wife, father and sister, Margaret, arrived to meet him in Washington for a

21 David, born in 1829, was Samuel and Maria’s youngest child. For many years he published a newspaper in Iowa. The 1870 United States Census identifies him as a printer, unmarried, and living with Charles Roush’s family in Camden, Delaware. He died in 1900 in Philadelphia and is buried with much of his family in the Odd Fellows Cemetery in Camden. Roush Family in America at 240.
one-week visit.\textsuperscript{22} He spent the night of January 27 at the St. Charles Hotel and headed out the next day to meet everyone at the train depot. Unfortunately, the trains were not running on time. They arrived six hours late, well after Roush had returned to the company of several home town acquaintances. Consequently, he did not get up with his visitors until the next day, meeting them on Pennsylvania Avenue and then procuring a pass to cross the chained bridge over the Potomac into Virginia. During the stay they visited the House of Representatives, the Patent Office and the Smithsonian Institution. He also took all to Camp Pierpont, leaving his wife and sister in the charge of Dr. Charles Bowers at a nearby Army hospital. After the visitors left, Roush entered into his diary another of his many reported health maladies: he caught a cold on February 8 and suffered a bad headache the next day.

Current events and doctrine came to Roush and his men through official military channels. Later in the month he received word of the beating of Burnside’s expedition, the capture of Fort Donelson, Tennessee, and the capture of General Price’s units. On February 20 officers read to his regiment the Declaration of Independence and Washington’s Farewell address. During this time

\textsuperscript{22} Roush’s mother died in 1857; as a widower, his father seems to have kept a close relationship with Mary Ann.

Throughout his diary Roush merely referred to Mary Ann as his “wife.” He never offered any information regarding her other than conclusory statements that she visited or sent him a letter.

Margaret (1824-1904) was Charles’ only sister. Her twin brother died in infancy. The 1870 Census had her living with Charles in Camden, Delaware. She is buried in the Lewisburg Cemetery. Roush Family in America at 240.
light skirmishes took place at Occoquan, Virginia, but none involved the 6th Pennsylvania.

In March Roush participated in what historians have called General McClellan's "promenade" of northern Virginia. Instead of moving the now 200,000-strong Army of the Potomac southward to retake Manassas and push the southern forces back to Richmond, McClellan hesitated and opted for a circular show of force. Roush and the others marched for over a week in mid March out to near the front line and then pulled back to camp near Washington. The fruitlessness of this exercise led Lincoln to relieve McClellan of his primary duties. It might well, however, have toughened up the troops. Bates reports that when the regiment arrived back at Alexandria on the 16th, it had endured "one of the most fatiguing marches, through rain and mud, shelterless and hungry, experienced during its whole term of service." 

It also produced failing morale in Company B, which was plagued by bad weather for much of March. In one storm while camped at Camp Smoke Hollow, Roush complained that it had rained so long and hard that the men without tents "almost perished. Almost soaked to death." Indeed, patrols had to be sent out to bring back and arrest those who sought to escape these conditions. On March 26,

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23 Much of McClellan's defensiveness was based on his view that 90,000 Confederate troops were camped at the Manassas-Centreville line. In fact, as it turned out, only 45,000 were camped there, what would have been an easy target for the much larger Union army. McPherson at 423-24.

24 Lossing at 278. He was demoted from general in chief to commander of the Army of the Potomac only. McPherson at 424.

25 Bates at 694.
while still encamped near Alexandria, Roush wrote that the entire regiment was "very much demoralized."

**The Company Moves South**

In early April the mood picked up. Lt. William Sinclair was elected Colonel of the regiment. McClellan began to transfer the greater portion of the Army of the Potomac. He shipped about 121,000 troops south to Fortress Monroe on the Chesapeake Bay, at the head of the peninsula straddled by the York and James Rivers. The Pennsylvania 6th stayed behind with the troops left to guard Washington in the event of a sudden Rebel attack. On April 9, Roush got the news of the battles farther west, of Grant's effort at Shiloh and the battle at Island No. 10 in Tennessee.

Finally, on April 11, the Pennsylvania 6th began to move south toward the action. It spent that night two miles from Centreville on ground that had hosted the Rebels during the winter. There Roush encountered 15 to 20 graves of Alabama troops. Upon leaving Centreville and heading for Manassas, Roush noted that he passed about 150 dead horses.

Roush drew inspiration from the scene at Manassas battlefield. He wrote--for the first time drawing emphasis by underlining--that he got a "piece of the tomb stone of Lt. Col. Barto, Acting Brigadier Genl., Georgia, his last words: They have killed me but never give up." The next day his company confiscated Rebel property left behind, a number of books and blankets. On the 15th he received reports that Rebel pickets were just four miles south of Union lines.

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26 Lossing at 280.
For the next two weeks Company B camped along the Orange and Alexandria railroad at Catlett’s Station, Fauquier County, amid heavy rains and much mud. There, Roush bought a pistol and rigging for $18.50. On the 30th Roush got a respite from the weather. He retired to a nearby farm house to make out the company pay rolls. He wrote, “don’t feel well am weak stayed all night kind folks treated me well.”

On May 2, 1862, the company broke camp and marched with the division to the north side of the Rappahannock, opposite Fredericksburg which became its headquarters. From the broader perspective, McClellan’s army of 100,000 men was then positioned just outside Richmond. Lincoln was holding a corps, which included the 6th Pennsylvania, headed by Gen. Irvin McDowell, at Fredericksburg as a defensive cover for Washington. Union plans were for McDowell, the victim of the first Bull Run disaster, eventually to link up with McClellan at Richmond.21

Roush’s mood turned positive. Spring was in the air and the war was going the Union’s way. He camped on “a delightful place in a clover field . . . [it was] a beautiful day.” He wrote Mary, and received another letter from his cousin, Sue, with whom he seemed to be exchanging letters as often as with Mary. On May 11, he received the good news of the fall of Norfolk and the destruction of the once-feared, iron-clad Virginia (the reconstituted Merrimac).

On May 11 the “cavalry had a small skirmish beyond Fredericksburg. Our cavalry took 13 prisoners and one Lieutenant

27 McPherson at 454 & 460. McPherson describes McDowell: “A teetotaler who compensated by consuming huge amounts of food, McDowell did not lack intelligence or energy— but he turned out to be a hard-luck general for whom nothing went right.” Id. at 335.
and separated a large force.” Two days later, in the company of a Capt. Wright, Roush did some sightseeing when he crossed the pontoon bridge and “rode through all the principal streets [of Fredericksburg] some very fine residences and beautiful yards around the buildings and also visited the Tomb or Monument of the Mother of Gen. George Washington in the suburbs of Fredericksburg and also the graves of the Gordon family.”

On May 17 Gen. E. O. Ord took leave of the brigade, having been promoted to Major General, and assigned to the command of a division. He was succeeded by Brig. Gen. Truman Seymour, who was assigned to the 3d Brigade.  

The 23d featured a division review, a three-mile march, and some special visitors: we “were reviewed by the President and Secretary of War and they complimented us saying [we] were the finest Body of Men they saw or received during this war.” Fearful of Stonewall Jackson’s efforts in the Shenandoah Valley and the risk it posed to the Capital, the next day Lincoln ordered McDowell to suspend his movement toward Richmond and to send two divisions to defend against Jackson. Once again, the 6th Regiment found itself in a holding pattern.  

On May 25 Roush noted, “B.J. Anderson, my servant, wants to go home.” The troops at Fredericksburg apparently were paying close attention to the turning of the tide in the Shenandoah Valley Campaign between Jackson and Fremont, Shields and Banks. On June 2 Roush excitedly noted “we were paid off.” He received $1500, of which he sent home $200 to his wife and $165 to his father.

28 Bates at 694.

29 McPherson at 457.
On June 10 the order came for Roush to move. With Jackson no longer a significant threat in western Virginia, McDowell’s troops could move forward. The 6th Regiment left camp opposite Fredericksburg and marched five miles down river to Boat Landing, where they encamped until the 13th, when they boarded a steamer and headed out the Rappahannock. Prior to leaving Roush had time to visit “a splendid property belonging to Capt S, now in the Rebel Army.”

The trip to White House, Virginia, a large supply base on the small Pamunkey River, appears to have been quite an adventure for Roush. His company boarded at 5 a.m. and encountered “a delightful country along the Rappahannock, one hundred & sixty [miles] from Frederick to the Bay & 160 to White House, crossed the Chesapeake Bay during the night, fine voyage in salt water.” They reached Yorktown at 6 a.m. and arrived at their destination at 2 p.m. Roush was singularly impressed with the commercial results that scarce amounts of fresh water created. Fresh water on the steamer was selling at 10 cents a cup, exclaimed a startled Roush. It cost five to ten cents for water “for cooking a tin of coffee.” A seller “got almost any price for good water.”

For two weeks at White House little happened. He took a march by the house where General Washington romanced “his wife under a tree now the property of Gen. Lee.” He reported writing letters, hearing shots fired, and being “sick on my stomach.” On the 20th the company moved closer to Richmond, camping at Turnstall’s Station, just east of Richmond on the Richmond & York River railroad, and staying several days, during which time Roush sat on a courts marshal.

On June 26, while Company B was camped at Turnstall’s Station, Lee attacked McClellan’s troops a short distance away,
northeast of Richmond, beginning what is known as the Seven Days’ battles. This fighting, characterized by hazardous Confederate advances and northern retreats, resulted in 30,000 men killed or wounded. Lee lost 20,000 men, nearly a quarter of his army. Constantly concerned that he was vulnerable and outnumbered, McClellan chose to pull back to Harrison’s Landing on the James River. The battles were a Confederate victory, yet won at much cost.\textsuperscript{30}

On June 28 Company B drew up into a line of battle at nine in the morning and so remained until 4 p.m., when it received orders to pack up and retreat. “The enemy was approaching,” wrote Roush. They retreated to White House, arriving at 5 p.m. where Colonel Sinclair ordered them to throw away all knapsacks and other bulky property and to burn all bridges and public property. That night Roush’s men helped destroy “an immense amount of property” that had been kept in Union stores.

While McClellan’s forces were involved in battle and retreat outside Richmond, Roush’s men boarded the John Brooks on the Pamunkey River on Sunday the 29th, passed Yorktown in the late afternoon, and arrived at Fortress Monroe at 11 p.m., “all safe.” They spent the next day in port on the John Brooks, where Roush received a letter from his wife. The steamer took them on July 1 up the James River to their destination, City Point, across the James from Harrison’s Landing, a Union supply base. They disembarked and camped in a wheat field, cutting the wheat to make beds to lie on.

The next day Roush encountered the Army of the Potomac in retreat to Harrison’s Landing. A great many of the retreating men of his division were “pretty well cut up, a great many wounded among

\textsuperscript{30} McPherson at 464-72.
en Days’ Confederate killed or his army. Numbered, the James at much

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and retreat ks on the n the late fe.” They received the James mes from urked and b lie on.

omac in in ng men of ed among us.” On July 3 the troops continued pouring in; “the trains are still coming in.” Although the generals had called off the battle, sporadic fighting continued. Company B “was drawn up in line of battle,” with the enemy shelling them and then “our Batters [sic] opened on them . . . and silenced them in a short time.”

For the next week matters quieted down. On July 4 the 6th Regiment was transferred to the First Brigade, a part of Major General Fitz John Porter’s Fifth Corps. It exchanged its arms for Springfield rifles. About 200 men were detailed to build a bridge across a swamp. More troops continued to arrive, as did a letter from Mary Ann. Excitement swirled on the 7th when Company B Private Samuel Spotts drowned in the James River at noon “cause unknown.” The company buried him that evening at a woods near Harrison’s Landing. The next night “the army was received by the President at moonlight,” the company’s second encounter with the Commander-in-Chief.

A curious event soon unfolded. On July 12 Roush sent home his trunk, for reasons not clear. A few days later he complained of a “bad cold” and lack of sleep. Then, without warning Roush’s diary announced that on the 18th he “sent in my Resignation” from the Army, but it was “sent back refused.” He added, “Reason I sent it in is I am opposed to a political abolition war, which this has turned into. I have lost all interest in it.” Thereafter he wrote, “(sick),” suggesting that his physical condition was related to that of his mind. For the next several days, although he said nothing more of his loss of interest in the politics of the Union cause, he said a lot about his health: “not well,” “felt fatigued,” “don’t feel well this morning, bad cough.”

31 Bates at 697 n*. The 6th Regiment was then headed by Lt. Col. Henry B. McKean.
McPherson has noted that “disease was a greater threat to the health of Civil War soldiers than enemy weapons.” “Sickness hit hardest in their first year. The crowding together of thousands of men from various backgrounds into a new and highly contagious disease environment had predictable results.” Indeed, as McPherson describes, “illness also influenced the denouement of the Peninsula campaign in Virginia.” Sickness was rampant at Harrison’s Landing: nearly a fourth of the men were sick, many with malaria, dysentery and typhoid. “With the sickliest season of the year (August-September) coming on, the administration decided over McClellan’s protest to withdraw his army from the Peninsula.”

Although on July 24 Company B received notice that McClellan’s army was to march north, not until four days later was it ordered to be ready to march at a moment’s notice. Before they left there were several exchanges of fire. On August 1 they were shelled from across the James. Although several of their men were killed, they “drove the Rebels off.”

During this lull before the march, Roush complained constantly of ill health. He also was not sleeping well. Although on August 2 he reported feeling better, he noted that he “always feels worse towards evening.”

Action picked up on the 3rd when the company went out to fight all that night and the next day, not returning to camp until the 5th. Company B had a fight at Marmill Hills and “drove the Rebels back.” Roush reported it to be “very hot.” But then events for Company B stalled.

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32 McPherson at 487.

33 Id. at 488.
On the 8th the sick were moved and the artillery prepared to move out, which it did the next night. Although Roush's company got orders to march to the river on the 10th, it was countermanded and they returned to quarters and put up shelter tents. Roush was packed to move on the 12th, and stayed packed on the 13th, when Generals McCall and Reynolds arrived from Richmond, and the Division received them with a 'grand reception.'

During this time minor problems beset Company B. Private S. Ritter was arrested for discharging powder and Emil Winnok was kicked in the face by a Colonel's horse and sent to the hospital. Roush's health appears by now to have greatly improved. Gone from his diary are the references to illness, the last such entry being on August 2.

The Second Battle of Bull Run

Finally, on August 14 the move north away from the Peninsula came. Companies A, B and D boarded the ship Columbia at Harrison's Landing at midnight and went down the James past Fort Monroe. On the 16th they landed at Acquia Creek, on the Potomac, and went by rail the ten miles southwest to Fredericksburg, where they arrived at 5 p.m., encamping above the railroad at the former headquarters of Gen. McCall.

With more troops pouring into the area, Company B received orders to begin a major march on the 21st. After marching all night the 21st and all the next day, the men arrived at a ford on the Rappahannock. They had marched 18 to 20 miles that day, "the hardest march we have had." On the 23d they marched all day, 15 miles, hungry and tired, and passed Rappahannock Station, which had been vacated by the newly designated Army of Virginia under Major Gen. Pope, who was heading north toward Manassas, in what was to
be the Second Battle of Bull Run. McClellan at this time had taken his troops north to Alexandria.

For the next several days Company B camped in the Warrenton area, about 15 miles southwest of the Manassas/Bull Run battlefield. Provisions were increasingly scarce. Roush ventured into town, but found that there “was nothing to buy or get.” On the 26th and 27th Company B was directed to guard the Signal Corps from the top of a hill with a large chestnut tree, called the “view tree.” On the afternoon of the 27th they left the hill and marched to the main road, where they found the army moving and their regiment gone.

A “hard and big” march on the 29th caught them up with their regiment. And for Company B, the war then intensified. There was an engagement with Stonewall Jackson’s troops on the Bull Run ground under Gen. Sigel’s leadership of the First Corps, of which “we got the better.” Company B camped for the night at 9 p.m. and was not allowed to have any food. On the 29th at 4 a.m. Roush’s men were roused and ordered to be ready for battle on empty stomachs at 7. Heavy firing and shelling ensued. Company B was shelled several times on or near the old Bull Run battleground. It went into battle at 4 and “came off the ground” at 6 p.m., when its members were ordered to “lay by our arms and allowed no food nor anything to eat.” Unknown to them, a few days earlier Stonewall Jackson’s troops had moved into Manassas and raided the Union’s supply houses, taking all they could and torching the rest. This interrupted the Union supply line from Alexandria and prevented the delivery of rations to the army farther to the south.34 When the fighting subdued for the day, six men of Company B suffered significant battle wounds. Pvt. Jacob Zechman later died of his Bull Run wounds.

34 McPherson at 526-27; Lossing at 296-98.
With full scale battle raging, Roush wrote nothing of his health, visitors, or letters from home. War had his full attention. At night of the 30th he recorded that hectic day on the Bull Run battlefield:

charged their position with a heavy cannon along. Moving back to support the 1st Regiment. Still in the same position at 12 o’clock. A great deal of skirmishing. The battle began in earnest at 2 p.m. and kept up to night. The Reserves made a charge at 5 p.m. and held the position 2 hours. Lost one man killed [Pvt. John Steever] ongoing in the charge. Fell back to Centreville. Got there 12 at night. Lay right down without eating and fell asleep. Had no provisions for 3 days.

This Union setback on the 30th at Bull Run cost its army 800 lives, 4000 wounded and 3000 missing. The South suffered 700 killed and 3000 wounded. Over the three days of battle both sides suffered about 25,000 men killed, wounded or missing. The defeated Union army then retreated to Centreville to meet up with reinforcements. There Company B finally received adequate rations.

On September 1, Roush reports, the flag of truce went up to permit each side to bring in the wounded. His company was relieved from duty as advanced picket guard at 4 p.m., when it marched to Chantilly, where, in a tremendous rain and muddy terrain, another fight was had against Jackson’s weary corps. In this severe battle in which Union generals Kearney and Stephens were killed, the losses on each side were large.

35 Lossing at 160.
Fighting discontinued for several days as the Union troops returned to northern Virginia to rest and regroup; Company B camped successive nights at Fairfax Courthouse, Arlington Heights, Manson’s Hill and near Bailey’s House. Roush received his first mail in two weeks, including two letters from his wife. He reported that he had requested shoes. Northern morale was now at an ebb. Just weeks before, the Union army had been on the outskirts of the Southern Capitol; now they were in retreat to their own capitol. Then a new threat arose.

On to South Mountain

On September 4 Lee’s 55,000 ragged troops began a bold initiative, an incursion into Union territory. They crossed the Potomac into Maryland near Point of Rocks with plans to assail Baltimore and then move on Washington. By the 6th they had entered Frederick and were camped near the Monacacy, far from their supply lines and well into the Union part of the state. Lee’s request for popular support brought no response.\textsuperscript{36} His incursion did provide the fodder for the heroic story of Union loyalist Barbara Fritchie, an

\textsuperscript{36} McPherson at 534-36; Lossing at 300.
troops camped at Anson's in two weeks. He had a bold request to provide chie, an elderly Frederick resident who is said to have defied Lee's order by boldly flying the Union flag.\textsuperscript{37}

By now Lincoln had reluctantly given McClellan full charge of the troops defending the Capitol; the Armies of the Potomac and Northern Virginia were now combined. McClellan, with unusual promptness, responded to news of Lee's invasion by moving about 80,000 rejuvenated men, including Company B, from northern Virginia into western Maryland. The army was organized into three wings, the right, center and left. General Ambrose Burnside commanded the right wing, which consisted of the First Corp, led by Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker and the Ninth Corps, led by Maj. Gen. Jesse Reno. The Third Division of Hooker's First Corp was led by Brig. Gen. George Meade. Its First Brigade, commanded by Brig.

\textsuperscript{37} As Lossing relates, Fritchie kept the Union flag flying from the dormer window of her home. After a Rebel soldier saw it and shot it down, she is said to have snatched it up. Lossing at 301-02. As Whittier immortalized the incident:

Far out on the window sill
She shook it forth with a royal will;
"Shoot, if you must, this grey old head,
But spare your country's flag," she said.
A shade of sadness, a blush of shame,
Over the face of the leader came:
The nobler nature within him stirr'd
To life at that woman's deed and word;
"Who touches a hair of yon grey head,
Dies like a dog! March on!" he said.
All day long through Frederick street
Sounded the tread of marching feet.
All day long that free flag tost
Over the head of the rebel host.

25
Gen. Truman Seymour, consisted of the 1st, 2d, 5th, 6th and 13th Pennsylvania Regiments. Col. William Sinclair, who headed the 6th Regiment, was Roush’s immediate superior.38

On the 7th the right wing moved to Leesboro, Maryland and on the 9th to Brookville in Montgomery County. Hesitation struck for the next couple of days. Roush reported that on the 10th they advanced five miles, but then “something kept back for fear of an attack.” On the 11th he “expected a fight today,” but none materialized. Company B and the rest of the First Corp then proceeded on the Baltimore and Frederick (Old National) pike, through Ridgeville, across the B & O Railroad (where Roush reported the Rebels had been the day before), and then through New Market to just east of Frederick, where on the 13th they camped at the bridge by the Monacacy River. As yet, they had seen no hostile action in Maryland.

That day McClellan had learned that Lee’s troops on the other side of the South Mountains were in a vulnerable position, split into four parts. He accordingly resolved to push his army through the

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38 A chart outlining the organization of McClellan’s Army of the Potomac at this time can be found, *inter alia*, in Jay Luvaas & Harold W. Nelson, Guide to the Battle of Antietam (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1996), pp. 285 *et seq.*
South Mountain passes and divide and conquer them.\(^39\) This offense—the Battle of South Mountain—began on the 14th.\(^40\)

Seymour's troops (six Pennsylvania regiments including the 6th) got off to a leisurely start and soon marched through Frederick, where they received a warm welcome in the form of water and pastries from the townspeople.\(^41\) Staying on the National Pike, they then crossed over the southern portion of Catoctin Mountain and passed through Middletown at about 1 p.m. As of yet everything appeared as if there would be no action that day.

When Seymour's Brigade had come to within a half mile of

\(^{39}\) McClellan's report described this terrain:

The South Mountain range near Turner's Pass averages perhaps 1,000 feet in height, and forms a strong natural military barrier. The practicable passes are not numerous and are readily defensible, the gaps abounding in fine positions. Turner's Pass is the more prominent, being that by which the National Road crosses the mountains. It was necessarily indicated as the route of advance of our main army.

\(^{40}\) McPherson at 537.

Turner’s Gap at the South Mountains, the action picked up. Facing them and protecting the gap were five Alabama regiments under Gen. Robert Rodes, which held a superior position up the mountain, but were greatly undermanned compared to Seymour’s troop size. At about 3:30 p.m. the Pennsylvania Reserves formed a line of battle east of Frostown and between the Frostown and Zittlestown Roads. Seymour’s Brigade held up the northernmost (right) side, with the 6th Pennsylvania on the far right of the brigade.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{42} Today, Frostown Road west of Frostown is called Dahlgren Road. Zittlestown Road, which now appears to be called Michael Road, also runs east-west.
Meade began the assault at 4:00 p.m. Seymour's troops pressed west, toward the mountain and the Rebels, through a wooded slope on the north side of Zittlestown Road. At about 5:00 p.m. 6th Regiment Col. Sinclair dispatched Capt. William Ent's Company A and Roush's Company B to sweep the woods north, turn the Confederates toward the south, and hold the knob of the mountain. Bates then relates how Companies A and B:

[M]arched from the wood, passed the enemy's flank and firing into it one volley, made straight for the mountain top. When within one hundred yards they received the fire of the enemy protected by a ledge of rocks which capped the summit. Immediately companies C, D and E . . . were ordered to their support, and forming to the left of the first two, the line advanced at a charge. The numbers of the enemy were largely in excess of those of the Sixth, but the five companies, restrained during the earlier part of the battle, dashed like a steed released from his curb against the very muzzles of their guns. The enemy staggered by the impetuosity of the charge, yielded the first ledge of rocks and retreated to the second, from behind which he delivered a most galling fire, causing the advance to reel under the shock and threatening its annihilation. The rebel line to the left, which had been passed by these companies, had in the meantime been compelled to yield to the persistent hammering of the other regiments of the Reserves. The cheers of the Brigade were distinctly heard by both, when the rebels, broken in spirit by the severity of their losses and the determined front presented by the Reserve, fled down the mountain side. These five companies had performed an important service and driven before
them in confusion the Eighth Alabama Regiment. The loss was twelve men killed, two officers and thirty-nine men wounded.43

Unfortunately, Captain Roush found himself among the latter statistics. As battle ended, Meade’s troops began to count their losses. The First Corp suffered 170 killed and 720 wounded, with 43 captured or missing.44 Seven of their captains and lieutenants were killed and 16 wounded, including Roush. Company B suffered its greatest losses of the War. Five of its men were killed; eight were wounded.45 Injury in a hard-fought battle did not deter Roush from being faithful to his diary. His September 14th account of this fateful day began with his notation that on this cool morning his unit moved out at 5 a.m., marching on through Frederick, Middletown and then to the “Blue Ridge.” He then added (as best can be read): “Had a terrific Battle. I was injured on the right foot on the instep about 6 o’clock p.m. Was carried off the ground to a small house. Had my wound dressed. Had a good deal of pain during the night. My company pretty much cut up. I was the only command officer when engaged with the 6th Alabama.”

On the next day an ambulance took Roush off the battlefield to Middletown, where he stayed in a private home that served as a hospital. There a New York physician, who was “very much of a gentleman and kind,” extracted the musket ball from his foot. On the 16th he noted that he was “doing as well as can be expected.” He

43 Bates at 696.


45 Currier & Ives Chart, supra.
also reported that Pvt. David Shell of Company B, who had also been wounded at South Mountain, died in the hospital at 10 that evening.

Unbeknownst to Roush, the injury spared him from the rigors of the bloody Battle of Antietam, which occurred on the other side of South Mountain a few days later. Despite the Union success, 6000 were killed and 17,000 wounded. The casualties at Antietam were twice as many as suffered by American soldiers at the Normandy beaches on June 6, 1944.46

On the 17th, as blood was spilling in Antietam, Roush was among the many wounded at the Middletown hospital, some of whom he knew from other units. Roush rested there until the 20th, when he left for home by way of Baltimore. He took an overnight train out of Baltimore that day, arriving at Lewisburg about 6 a.m. on Sunday the 21st of September. A friend, John Hess, brought him home. His last diary entry noted the “considerable pain in my leg during the trip.”

Captain Roush’s fifteen-month brush with battle was now over.

Company B After Roush’s Injury

After South Mountain, the 6th Pennsylvania moved onto the Antietam battlefield, where on September 17 it suffered a loss of 132 men. This included eight enlisted men dead and four captains wounded. Company B incurred two wounded and one dead. It spent most of the rest of its three-year term in Virginia, camping near White Oak in late 1862, near Fairfax Station from January to April 1863. In May and June 1863 it camped at Uniontown, Maryland. Thereafter it camped at Rappahannock Station, Warrenton Junction, and near

46 McPherson at 544.
Bristow, all in Virginia. Levi Epler came to replace Roush as Captain of Company B.47

Its final big battle was at Fredericksburg in December 1862. Fought in the open in lines perpendicular to the Rappahannock, the 6th Pennsylvania incurred serious losses. Of the 300 men who went into action, ten were killed, 92 wounded and 19 missing. Company B had one killed, nine wounded and one missing, its heaviest toll other than South Mountain.

By its final battle, at Bethesda Church, Virginia, the regiment was down to 150 men. The regiment suffered more losses, but Company B did not. At last the time had come to return to Harrisburg. The end of Company B’s three-year term came on June 11, 1864, when it mustered out, and those still alive and well went home, with the War behind them.

The Postwar Years

After returning to New Berlin, Roush sought to heal his wound. A May 1863 surgeon’s report indicated some optimism: “the ball entered the right foot in front just above the ankle joint and now completely disables him -- my opinion however is that in a year or so he may recover with considerable usefulness in the limb.”48 The wound never completely healed. Although Roush soon gave up crutches, he appears to have needed a cane for the rest of his life.

47 Record of Military Events, Company B.

48 Roush’s Pension Records.
After the war, Roush worked in the Auditor General's Office in Harrisburg. He later became a stockholder in a local newspaper in New Berlin operated by Levi Sterner. Sterner reported that his family and the Roushes soon left New Berlin and moved to Camden, Delaware. They were among a sizeable number of Pennsylvania neighbors who picked up and moved to Kent County in the years just following the War's end. Their lives greatly intertwined. In 1847 Levi Sterner's sister, Elizabeth, married Jacob G. Brown. In 1868 these two left Milton, Pennsylvania and bought 400 acres of Kent County farmland on which Jacob Brown grew peaches and apples.  

Succeeding Jacob in this business was his son, Abraham Nathaniel Brown, who in 1879 married Alice May Roush, the daughter of Captain Charles and Mary Roush. They soon moved into the Roush farm near Wyoming and raised eight children, most of whom stayed in the Camden-Wyoming area.\(^{50}\)

These newcomers from Pennsylvania brought their church with them. In 1872 they founded St. John’s Reformed Church with its church building in Wyoming. This was the first organization of the Reformed Church on the Delmarva peninsula. Charles D. Roush was an Elder, while Jacob Brown and Aaron Wetzel served as Deacons. The Roush, Brown and Wetzel families comprised about

\(^{50}\) _Id._ at 46. Alice’s sister, Maggie, married Absalom Hetzel of Philadelphia and had two daughters. She appears to have lived in the Philadelphia area. _Roush Family in America_ at 240.
half of the congregation.  

Drawing inferences of Roush's life from his widow's application for a widow's war pension can distort the picture of the man. Nevertheless, poor health appears to have dogged him the rest of his days. Walking with the help of a cane, Roush could not perform manual labor and fatigued easily. He could not do any "ploughing or anything that require[d] him to be much on his feet." He could do little himself to work his farm, and "could only give general supervision" over it. Levi Sterner stated that before the war he was of perfect health, but it radically changed after South Mountain. Whatever the cause, he died in Camden on 26 June 1881 at age 59. He lies buried in the Odd Fellows Cemetery in Camden.  

Mary Roush's pension application sought to link the war injury with Roush's cause of death, a kidney ailment then known as Bright's Disease. His Camden physician contended to the pension commissioner that he died due to his "unhealed and suffering gunshot wound of the ankle." This he linked to Roush's kidney disease, which he had diagnosed upon Roush's move to Camden in 1868. His neighbor, Aaron E. Wetzel, reported that his disability was not so serious at first, but gradually grew worse. He suffered pain in the back and in the region of kidneys. Wetzel stated that Roush "frequently had difficulty voiding water." William Postles of Camden added that he "could only ride short distances without being compelled to urinate." Another neighbor, Levi Proud, summarized that "he died in great agony, complaining of his back and kidneys."

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51 Our Line of Browns at 30.

52 Roush's father, Samuel, died in Camden in February 1873; his mother, Maria, died in October 1857. Samuel Roush was also buried in the Odd Fellows Cemetery in Camden.
Although the pension commission originally found no linkage between the war wound and her husband’s kidney ailments, Mary Roush did eventually receive her widow’s war pension of $20 per month. She apparently hired an attorney who prepared a petition signed by 15 of Roush’s “honorably discharged” company members. The petition was a fine example of late 19th Century flourish, proclaiming in part:

Whereas, the United States Government did pension the said Capt. Charles D. Roush as he most justly deserved until the date of his death. Therefore we wish to present the further fact that when Capt. Roush went to the front in defense of his country, there was a brave wife left at home with two little girls, babies aged respectively 2 years and 7 years, and no provisions in this world to keep them from want but the stout heart and willing hands of that brave mother, who had buckled the sword upon her husband Capt Charles D. Roush, and bid him God Speed in defense of his country. When the Captain was brought to his own home wounded from the field of battle, and when during the tedious months of his inability, his faithful wife Mary A. Roush, watched and waited and nursed and prayed, who can think but that she was the greater Sufferer. But in the hour of the monster death removed the brave Captain from her home and care on the 26th of June 1881, the pension that had been his throughout her service was withheld by the government they had both blighted their lives to save. Great Lord, can this be the justice thou wouldst have thy children measure to the weaker
The following Obituary of Charles Dunkle Roush appeared in the Camden-Wyoming newspaper:

The funeral of Capt. Charles D. Roush was conducted by the Rev. N. J. Miller, pastor of St. John's Reformed Church, Wyoming, Delaware, and the Rev. Dr. Hayward of the same place. Charles D. Roush was born in Union County, Christmas 1822 [sic]. His soldierly bearing, united to a stamped Christian character made him a man of commanding appearance. The title which he bears he earned during the late Rebellion by bravery and unflinching heroism. He fought at Gainesville [sic], Bull Run, and South Mountain and was wounded at the last named place.

After the Rebellion he was discharged with credit, the duties pertaining to the head clerkship in the Auditor General's Office, of Pennsylvania. In 1860 [sic] after the close of the Session of the Pennsylvania Legislature, of which he was a member for several terms, Captain Roush removed to Delaware. It was not long before he became identified with the interests of the State and took prominent part in the development of her resources and the promotion of social life.

53 Years later, her grandson, Charles Roush Brown, a self-described Camden “farmer and fruit grower,” sought unsuccessfully to gain a pension increase for his 80-year-old grandmother. Letter on file with the author.
As a Master of Fruitland Grange No. 16 and in his last office as Secretary of the Grange Fire Insurance Company, he secured for himself the approbation of those with whom he came into contact. The large course of people which assembled at his funeral to pay a last respect to his remains manifested the regard in which he was held.\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{54} The Roush Family in America at 237-38.