WOBURN CIVIL WAR CHRONICLES with Leon Edmund Basile

Outline for Chapter Nine (Events of December 1862):

In the Leon Basile manuscript, Chapter Nine has 176 pages of text, seven pages of endnotes (118 endnotes), two illustrations, and one map. This chapter is very long because it includes the big Battle of Fredericksburg, in addition to other interesting things which took place that month. However, all of the chapter Outlines are limited to five pages each, plus any illustrations.

WOBURN NAVAL OFFICER HENRY WYMAN MENTIONED IN THE OFFICIAL RECORDS.

On page 3 of the manuscript, citing the *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion* (*O.R.N.*), we find that Actg. Master's Mate Henry Wyman and another officer of the same rank were ordered to sail a Confederate schooner captured on Dec. 1, 1862, from the Bahama Banks to Key West, Florida. Aboard the schooner had been found coffee, salt, cartridge paper, Confederate currency, and both a Confederate and a British flag. (For biographical information on Henry Wyman, see our *A Union Town...*, Vol. 1, pages 854 and 862.)

MORE DETAILS ON THANKSGIVING FOR THE WOBURN NATIONAL RANGERS.

On pages 13-14 of the manuscript, citing the Dec. 13, 1862, issue of the *Middlesex Journal*, we find a letter co-written by the three officers of the Woburn National Rangers, dated Dec. 2. It was a "thank you" letter to the Woburn citizen who had shipped the provisions for the Thanksgiving dinner. In our previous chapter, it was unclear when the provisions arrived. Here, the officers clearly stated that some of the boxes had arrived on Nov. 25, prior to Thanksgiving, and the remaining three boxes arrived on Nov. 28, the day after Thanksgiving. The foods included onions, apples, chestnuts, brown bread, pickles, and boiled fresh beef.

THE GOLDSBORO EXPEDITION WITH THE WOBURN MECHANIC PHALANX, FIFTH REGT. MASS. VOL. INFANTRY, AND MARTHA E. (*JAMESON*) MILLER IN KINSTON, NORTH CAROLINA.

On pages 33, 128-36, and 145-49 of the manuscript, citing several sources, it covered the participation of the Woburn Mechanic Phalanx in the Goldsboro Expedition in North Carolina, as well as events witnessed by former Woburn resident Martha Miller in Kinston, N.C. In letters published in the *Budget*, Sergt. Horace N. Hastings stated that on Dec. 10, 1862, the Woburn Mechanic Phalanx and its brigade were on line at 7 A.M., carrying three days' rations in their haversacks, while their knapsacks were packed in Army wagons, but they would not strike their tents until the next day, Dec. 11. In total, there were four Union brigades in the expedition, as well as regiments not brigaded, 60 pieces of artillery, a large squadron of cavalry, and 250 baggage wagons, ambulances, etc. Although the Phalanx did not know it at the time, their expedition would last for eleven days, covering 180 miles coming and going, between Newbern and Goldsboro, the latter being northwest from Newbern (see map in Outline for Chapter

Seven, 7-9). Along the way, there would be the small battles of Kinston (Dec. 14), Whitehall (Dec. 16), and Goldsboro (Dec. 18), but none of the Woburn soldiers became casualties in them. During the expedition, Woburn's Acting Lieut. Edwin F. Wyer of Co. E, Fifth Regt. M.V.I., visited Martha Miller in Kinston. Shortly after, Mrs. Miller wrote a long letter about her experiences during and after the Battle of Kinston, which was published in the *Middlesex Journal* on Jan. 24, 1863. She was one of few Woburn citizens known to have moved to the South prior to the outbreak of the Civil War (see our book *A Union Town During the Civil War...*, Vol. 1, page 363, regarding Martha Miller and her husband, as well as our Outline for Chapt. 7, p. 4, on her recent visit to Woburn). Although her long and interesting letter is given in the Basile manuscript, for space reasons it cannot be given in this Outline. For those who read that letter in the Woburn newspaper at the time, it is unclear how many of them felt sympathy on Martha Miller's situation living in North Carolina. (Much after the war, Martha died in 1909 in Westborough, Mass., and is buried in Woburn at Woodbrook Cemetery, Crescent Path, Sect. 10-E, Lot 244.)

WOBURN SOLDIERS IN THE BATTLE OF FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA, AND THE DEATH OF PVT. THOMAS MURRAY OF THE WOBURN UNION GUARD.

In pages 24-32 & 40-120 in the manuscript, citing numerous sources, Basile covered the Battle of Fredericksburg, Va. (Dec. 13, 1862) in some detail, particularly the participation of units which had Woburn soldiers in them. It also included the names, ranks, and units of the 128 Woburn soldiers who were on the rolls in the Army of the Potomac on the day of the battle. One of those soldiers, Pvt. Thomas Murray, was killed in action, and seven others were wounded. Details on these casualties will be given below in this Outline. The Battle of Fredericksburg, located about 60 miles southwest of Washington, D.C., was a major battle in the Eastern Theater of the Civil War. On the Union side it was commanded by Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside, Army of the Potomac, which he divided into three Grand Divisions, the Right by Maj. Gen. Edwin Sumner, the Center by Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker, and the Left by Maj. Gen. William Franklin. In total, Gen. Burnside had nearly 119,000 men. On the opposite side was Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee, Army of Northern Virginia, with over 78,000 men.

Due to space requirements for this Outline we will only give the following: In the Army of the Potomac, the Right Grand Division (Sumner) included 10 Woburn soldiers on the rolls, in seven different regiments. Their ranks consisted of 1 Asst. Surgeon, 1 Sergt., 1 Corpl., and 7 Pvts. The Center Grand Division (Hooker) included 96 Woburn soldiers on the rolls, in eleven different units, and included the Woburn Union Guard. Their ranks consisted of 1 Maj., 2 Capts., 1 First Lieut., 1 Second Lieut., 2 First Sergts., 5 Sergts., 11 Corpls., 1 Fife Maj., 1 Musician, and 71 Pvts. The Left Grand Division (Franklin) included 22 Woburn soldiers on the rolls, in four different regiments. Their ranks consisted of 5 Corpls. and 17 Pvts. Of all of these units which had one or more Woburn soldiers in them, most were Massachusetts Infantry Regiments, as well as one

Mass. Cavalry Regt., while the rest consisted of two U.S. Artillery Regts. and New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont Infantry Regiments.

In total, the Army of the Potomac suffered almost 1,300 men killed in action that day, as well as 9,600 wounded and over 1,700 captured or missing, for a total of 12,653 casualties. The Confederates suffered 5,300 casualties.

The Woburn casualties were as follows: Killed in Action was PVT. THOMAS MURRAY (also spelled Murry and Murphy in various sources) of the Woburn Union Guard (Co. F, 22nd Regt. M.V.I.). He was born in Ireland in 1834, married, a tailor by occupation, and enlisted and mustered into national service at age 27 on Aug. 10, 1861. The *Budget*, Dec. 26, 1862, stated that he was "struck with a shell as the regiment was going into battle." He was buried on the battlefield but no identified grave is known. The wounded soldiers from Woburn were as follows: Pvt. James Kernon, Co. A, 12th Regt. M.V.I., flesh wound in arm, he would return to duty; Pvt. Walter C. Thompson, Co D, 13th Regt. M.V.I., wounded in hip or thigh, he would return to duty; Corpl. William B. Smith, Co. F, 22nd Regt. M.V.I., left thumb shot off, he would be transferred to the Veterans Reserve Corps; Pvt. Rodney N. Flagg, Co. F, 22nd Regt. M.V.I., wounded in neck or shoulder, he would return to duty; Pvt. Thomas Brannagan, Co. G, 22nd Regt. M.V.I. (also spelled Brannigan and Branigan in various sources), wounded, he would return to duty; Pvt. Patrick Kelley, Co. G, 22nd Regt. M.V.I. (also spelled Kelly in one source), the *Journal*, Dec. 20, 1862, says he was wounded in his side, while Wyman, *Complete Record*, says he was wounded in his neck, he would be transferred to the Veterans Reserve Corps; Pvt. James O. Hovey, Co. D, 2nd Regt. Vermont Vol. Inf., says in Vermont, *Revised Roster*, that he was wounded on Dec. 16, 1862, so either he was wounded in the aftermath of the battle, or it was a typographical error for Dec. 13, he would return to duty.

THE DEATH OF CORPL. THOMAS COTTON FIELD, CO. G, THIRTEENTH REGT. MASS. VOL. INFANTRY.

On pages 117-18 of the manuscript, citing various sources, it describes Corpl. Thomas C. Field and his death. He was previously mentioned in our book *A Union Town During the Civil War...*, Vol. 1, pp. 430 & 440. Although a resident of Woburn, he was born in Lisbon, Maine, Feb. 13, 1844, the son of Amasa and Mary E. Field, and was a student, age 18, when he enlisted in Co. G (Stoneham Grey Eagles), Thirteenth Regt. M.V.I., on July 10, 1861, mustered into national service on July 16, and promoted to Corpl. on Aug. 1, 1861. He had been wounded in his ear in the Battle of Antietam, Md., Sept. 17, 1862. He was not present at the Battle of Fredericksburg, Va., as he died that day (Dec. 13) in a hospital at nearby Falmouth, Va., of typhoid fever. It is said that he was buried in that town, but no identified grave is known. In the *Budget*, Dec. 26, 1862, it states: "he has left a circle of friends who deeply mourn his loss. He had resided here but a comparatively short time when the war broke out, but it was long enough for him to gain

the esteem of those who knew him. He was one of the first to respond to his country's call, and did his duty bravely and well." In the *Journal*, Dec. 27, 1862, headed "DECEASE OF ANOTHER WOBURN SOLDIER," it states: "We again find it our sad duty to chronicle the deceased of another of our town's soldiers. Mr. [Corpl.] Thomas C. Field, of the 13th Regiment, and son of Mrs. Field of this town, died recently in one of our hospitals, of typhoid fever. No particulars concerning his sickness and death have been received, and his mother knew nothing of his illness until she heard of his death."

EVENTS OF THE WOBURN NATIONAL RANGERS (CO. K, 39TH REGT. M.V.I.) IN DECEMBER 1862.

On pages 22-23, 124-25, and 137-45 of the manuscript, citing several sources, it states that as of Dec. 7, 1862, the company was at Camp Grover, Offutt's Cross Roads, Md., and their tents had been "stockaded and ten bunks are in each tent and two men in each bunk, so we can manage, by piling wood into the stoves to keep pretty comfortable..." (Stockading meant building log-cabin type walls, with canvas roofs. These were for Winter Quarters, and in the regimental history, Roe stated that by late Dec. 1862 the camp was called Camp Davis, named after the regimental commander, Col. P. Stearns Davis.) On the evening of Dec. 20, the regiment got orders to march the next morning to Poolesville, Md. They were accompanied by the 14th Regt. New Hampshire Vol. Inf. The Woburn National Rangers went on picket duty at Edward's Ferry.

CHRISTMAS 1862 IN WOBURN AND AT THE FRONT.

On pages 153, 156-59, & 167 of the manuscript, citing issues of the *Woburn Weekly Budget* and the *Middlesex Journal*, it describes Christmas in Woburn and in the three current Woburn companies in the Army. In the Dec. 26 issue of the *Budget*, in an article headed "Christmas," it stated that on Christmas Day, which was on a Thursday, the stores in the town were open for the morning. Children received toys, and in the evening there was a social at the First Congregational Church, followed by a concert there. The organist was William H. Clarke and the singers were children. In the Dec. 27 issue of the *Journal*, it had an article headed "Concert and Reception," and it covered it similar to the *Budget* article.

Soldiers' letters published in the newspapers in Jan. 1863 described Christmas for the Woburn companies. For the Woburn Union Guard (Co. F, 22nd Regt. MV.I.), at Potomac Creek, Va., Christmas was a regular day for the men, except they got a serving of whiskey and an extra plate of "skouse," which might have meant lobscouse, a mixture of meat, vegetables, and hardtack. For the Woburn National Rangers (Co. K, 39th Regt. M.V.I.), at Edward's Ferry, Md., the men had visited "all the houses for pigs..., chickens, turkeys, geese and ducks. The boys have made prisoners of about two hundred of the feathery tribe; so we did not go altogether without our Christmas dinner, and had several good meals afterward." For the Woburn Mechanic Phalanx (Co. G, 5th Regt. M.V.I.), at Newbern, N.C., Sergt. Horace N. Hastings wrote: "We had quite a

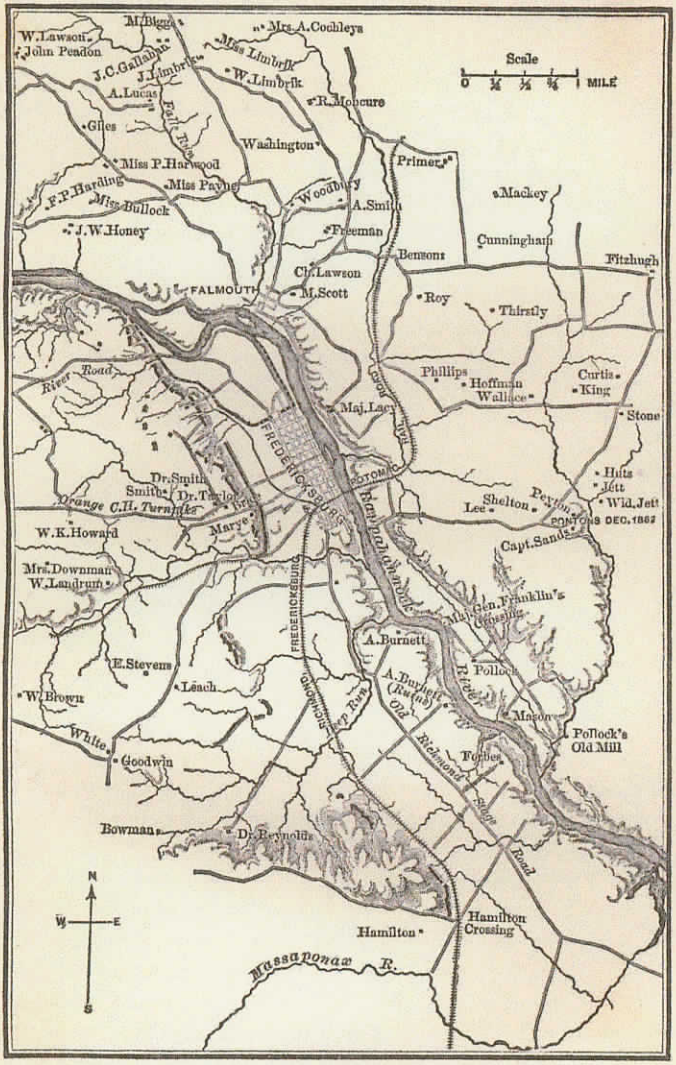
merry christmas [*sic*], dining on beef steak, and topping off with pies, cake, etc., which came to hand the day before in boxes to several of the company, who passed the luxuries around in their messes in a very generous manner. Excepting poultry, and the contents of one or two boxes which were delayed on their transit out, the articles sent have arrived in good condition and gladdened the hearts of all the recipients. It would surprise the casual observer to see how nicely a can of fresh tomato sauce unsolders and opens in camp, and I might mention other luxuries if I chose, which are passed around with each other's compliments in genteel and taking style."

REMEMBERING THE LATE MAJOR ELISHA BURBANK, TWELFTH REGT. MASS. VOL. INFANTRY.

On pages 159-60 of the manuscript is a letter written by an unknown Army officer on Dec. 29, 1862, at Belle Plains, Va., and published in the *Budget* on Jan. 23, 1863. For this Outline, we can only give the first portion of that letter, as follows: "Mr. Editor:-- By letter and by newspaper we are apprised of the death of Major Elisha Burbank, of the 12th Reg. Mass. Vols. As an officer serving in the same brigade [note: but not the same regiment], and having been well acquainted with him, it is but justice to his memory and to his friends, that we should take upon ourselves to say of him what is in the minds of of [*sic*] all soldiers who were accustomed to see him in the field, or when his regiment was 'in battle array.' He was an honest, honorable man, a faithful, prompt, and industrious soldier, a brave officer, who would fearlessly perform his every duty, as one conscious in the manliness of noble intent to do his full might in the cause of his country. No truer or braver man was ever commissioned. He enjoyed the respect of his fellow soldiers, and the entire confidence of his men. If he did not discover brilliant parts, he possessed sterling qualities. He was the reliable man in battle, and in times of emergency. He has died lamented by the men of his regiment, of wounds received on the historic field of Antietam. How many closed their eyes upon earth that day! But none have transmitted a more noble record to their kindred and friends than Major Burbank..."

MAJ. GEN. NATHANIEL P. BANKS TAKES COMMAND OF THE DEPT. OF THE GULF.

On pages 125-27 of the manuscript, citing several sources, we learn that back in November 1862, President Lincoln directed that Maj. Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks take command of the Dept. of the Gulf, where Maj. Gen. Benjamin F. Butler had been in command in New Orleans, Louisiana. However, General Banks did not arrive in Louisiana until mid-December 1862. About a week after General Banks arrived there, General Butler left Louisiana. A small number of Woburn soldiers served there. (For a portrait of General Banks, see our Outline of Chapter Five, illustration 5-4.)



The Field of Fredericksburg.

9 – 1 Map – "The Field of Fredericksburg." The battlefield was almost 6 miles long and ran from just below Falmouth, down the west bank of the Massaponax River. The Confederates were west of the Union troops. (From Palfrey, *The Antietam and Fredericksburg*, facing page 142.)



9 – 2 A detail from the illustration "Burnside at Fredericksburg, December 13, 1862" by artist H.A. Ogden. (From Lossing, *A History of the Civil War*, Sect. 8.)



9 – 3 Corpl. Thomas Cotton Field (1844-62) of the Stoneham Grey Eagles (Co. G, 13th Regt. M.V.I.). (State records have his middle initial as "G" instead of "C.") See our book *A Union Town...*, 1: 430 & 440. He was born in Maine on Feb. 13, 1844, son of Amasa and Mary E. Field. A resident of Woburn, he was a student, age 18, when he enlisted in July 1861. He was wounded on his ear at Antietam, Md., Sept. 17, 1862, and died of typhoid fever at a hospital in Falmouth, Va., Dec. 13, 1862. He was buried in that town, his grave is unknown. Although the uniforms of the Grey Eagles might have been grey, they were definitely on the Union side. (Credit: Glennon Archives, Woburn Public Library, Woburn, Mass.)