WOBURN CIVIL WAR CHRONICLES with Leon Edmund Basile

Outline of Chapter Eight (Events of November 1862):

In the Leon Basile manuscript, Chapter Eight has 80 pages of text, five pages of endnotes (79 endnotes), and six illustrations. Several interesting things took place that month, particularly as follows:

GENERAL McCLELLAN IS RELIEVED OF COMMAND, AND WOBURN'S REACTION.

On pages 11-16 of the manuscript, citing several sources, it states that President Lincoln felt that General McClellan had been too slow after the Battle of Antietam, having not given battle to Gen. Robert E. Lee. As a result, on Nov. 5 Lincoln wrote to Gen.-in-Chief Halleck, directing him to relieve General McClellan from the command of the Army of the Potomac, and to give that command to Maj. Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside. At the same time, he was to relieve Maj. Gen. Fitz John Porter from the command of the V Army Corps (where many Woburn soldiers serving, including the Woburn Union Guard), and to give that command to Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker. On the evening of Nov. 7 General McClellan received the order relieving him when General Burnside and Brig. Gen. C.P. Buckingham personally visited him in his tent. Burnside asked McClellan to remain with the Army of the Potomac for a few days. Later that evening McClellan wrote his farewell to the army. (See *A Union Town...*, 1: 483 for portrait of McClellan.)

On pages 24-28 of the ms., citing the Nov. 21 issue of the *Budget*, was a letter written by Pvt. John F. Gleason of the Woburn Union Guard. In it, he stated that at sunrise, Nov. 10, General McClellan's farewell address was read to the men as they stood in silence. Private Gleason stated: "You know what a hold he [McClellan] has on the affections of his men... It is doubtful if history contains an instance where a commander was able to inspire his men with more enthusiasm than the idol of the Army of the Potomac. The sad countenance, the tearful eye, and the spiritless manner in which subsequent orders were obeyed, showed the deep feeling that existed throughout the ranks..." Later that morning the V Army Corps "was drawn up on both sides of the pike leading from Warrenton." McClellan and his staff rode by, the men cheering him, bands and bugles blaring, and cannons fired. Men flung their caps in the air and flags were dipped. McClellan and his men had "a sweet sad look," but one regiment in the brigade, not identified, remained still, too sad to cheer for "Little Mac." Then, on Nov. 12, the V Army Corps was formed again, and General Porter's farewell letter was read to the men. Later that day General Porter and his staff "rode along the line, and was received with a great deal of enthusiasm." (General Porter had been popular among his men. The reason for his removal, and a description of his life is given on pages 19-20 of the Leon Basile ms.)

On pages 41-42 of the ms., citing the Nov. 15 issue of the *Middlesex Journal*, the newspaper editor stated that the "announcement of the removal of Gen. McClellan... created a profound

sensation throughout the country." The editor felt that McClellan was too cautious, although "an able commander when compelled to give battle..." The editor even believed that Gen.-in-Chief Halleck had charged McClellan of disobedience, and therefore McClellan should have been removed weeks earlier or compelled to resign. The editor also felt that Lincoln was "not stern enough." Continuing the editorial, it stated that General Burnside would "meet the rebel army whenever and wherever it is to be found, [and] will infuse new spirit and hope..." The editor then gave interesting points, which are given in the ms., but cannot be given here.

MAJ. GEN. AMBROSE E. BURNSIDE, THE NEW COMMANDER OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.

On pages 16-18 of the ms., citing various sources, is a description of Maj. Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside (1824-81). He was born in Indiana, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, and a veteran of the Mexican War and Indian Wars. He was stationed in Rhode Island when he resigned from the Army in 1853 and built a factory, and patented the famous Burnside Carbine. After that he was the Treasurer of a railroad company in Chicago and New York City. At the outbreak of the Civil War he returned to Rhode Island and, as Colonel, commanded the First R.I. Vols. (Inf.). He was appointed Brig. Gen. of Vols. in August 1861 and Maj. Gen. in March 1862, serving successfully in North Carolina and Virginia. He wore large "mutton-chop" sideburns, the word "sideburns" said to have been coined as a variant of his surname.

When Burnside replaced McClellan as commander of the Army of the Potomac, he had his own plan of action and Gen.-in-Chief Halleck did not agree with it, but Lincoln consented to it, believing that it might succeed if executed rapidly. The details of Burnside's plan is in the ms.

MAJ. GEN. JOSEPH HOOKER, THE NEW COMMANDER OF THE V ARMY CORPS.

On page 20 of the ms., citing several sources, is a description of Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker (1814-1879). He was born in Hadley, Massachusetts, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, and a veteran of the Seminole War and Mexican War. He resigned from the Army in 1853 and lived in California and Oregon. In the Civil War he was appointed Brig. Gen. of Vols. in May 1861 and Maj. Gen. in May 1862. He was wounded in the Battle of Antietam (Sept. 17, 1862). For a short time he commanded the V Army Corps, and then the Centre Grand Division under General Burnside. He then replaced Burnside and commanded the Army of the Potomac from Jan. 26 – June 28, 1863, including the Battle of Chancellorsville. He then served in the Western Theatre and the Northern Dept. of the Army, retiring from the Army in 1868.

THE DEATHS OF PRIVATE CHARLES H. PERRY AND PRIVATE HUGH CONNELLY.

On pages 53-54 of the ms., citing various sources, it states that Pvt. Charles H. Perry, Co. E, 16th Regt. Mass. Vol. Inf., died of diarrhea at the Fairfax Seminary Hospital, Alexandria, Va., on Nov. 18, 1862. He was born in New Brunswick, had been a currier prior to enlisting in July 1861, and although a resident of Somerville his service should have been credited to Woburn. He was

single, age 23 when he enlisted (one source says that he died at age 32-33, but could not have been more than 25 if his age at enlistment was correct). Other sources state that he died on Nov. 19, 1862, April 22, 1863, and April 22, 1864! He was buried at the National Cemetery, Alexandria, Va., with the 1864 date, although his name and unit match.

On pages 55-56, 69-71, and 78 of the ms., citing various sources, it states that Pvt. Hugh Connelly, also spelled Connoly in sources, Woburn National Rangers (Co. K, 39th Regt. Mass. Vol. Inf.), died on Nov. 25, 1862, of typhoid fever, the first member of the company to die. He was born in Ireland in 1841, was a currier by occupation, unmarried, and enlisted at age 21 in July 1862. He died at Offutt's Cross Roads, Md., one source says at Camp Grover and another says at the Brigade Hospital at Camp Davis. In a Woburn National Rangers letter dated Nov. 26-27, published in the Dec. 6, 1862, issue of the *Middlesex Journal*, it stated that Private Connelly (spelled as such) "was one of our stoughtest and most hardy looking men, and little did we think that he would be the first to leave us. He was in the hospital about a month."

In a different company member's letter, written from Camp Grover, Offutt's Cross Roads, published in the Dec. 5 issue of the *Woburn Weekly Budget*, it stated that on Nov. 26 Private Connelly's "body was placed in an ambulance, preceded by the drum corps, and followed by four files, with reversed arms, and then the company. We followed the body to the grave near the chapel." After a hymn was sung by four members of a different company in the regiment, the chaplain read selections from Scriptures and made a prayer. Then three volleys were fired over the remains. That letter also stated that Private Connelly was not well known among the members of the company until formed in camp. However, Connelly was working in Woburn when he enlisted, and the letter-writer believed that Connelly's relatives resided in Boston.

In Barrett's account in the "Military History of Woburn," Jan. 13, 1872, installment in the *Middlesex County Journal*, he stated that on November 25, 1862, "we followed to his last resting place, Hugh Connolly [Barrett's spelling], who had passed away the day previous, at the regimental hospital. He had been sick, or unfit for duty for some time, but we little thought he would soon leave us. He was not much known in Woburn, having a few relatives there, and was a comparative stranger in the company, when we went to camp." (Note: By Nov. 1867, a veteran of the company, Charles K. Conn, had collected 32 bust portrait photographs and had them photographed as a composite, with the title "Martyrs of Co. K, 39th Mass. vols." Copies were then sold in Woburn. (See *Woburn Journal*, Nov. 23, 1867.) The Glennon Archives, Woburn Public Library, owns a copy. On Nov. 9, 1998, p. 8A, the Woburn *Daily Times Chronicle* published the 32 portraits but not in the original format of the composite. The 32 portraits consist of 12 soldiers killed or mortally wounded, including Capt. Willard C. Kinsley who commanded the company for the last year of the war but was not a Woburn resident, 6 who died of disease, 13 who died as POWs or ex-POWs, and E.J. Houghton, a former member of the

company who was killed in a fight while he was in the U.S. Navy. Some of these men died after being discharged, but from wounds or illnesses sustained in service. HOWEVER, the 32 portraits do not include HUGH CONNELLY, as apparently Charles K. Conn had not located a photo of him.)

THE DEATH OF MAJOR ELISHA BURBANK, WOBURN'S HIGHEST OFFICER AT THE TIME.

In pages 66-69 of the ms., citing various sources, it states that on Oct. 30, 1862, Col. James L. Bates, now commanding the 12th Regt. M.V.I., wrote from his headquarters near Sharpsburg, Md., to Major Burbank. In part, it stated: "You, Major, have a noble record... You have shown to the country that you are a fearless man... Your country will remember your bravery and reward you for it." He was also glad that Major Burbank's wife had joined the Major, to comfort him.

Major Burbank died on Nov. 29, 1862, although State records state that he died on Nov. 30. Town records state that he died in a hospital in Frederick, Md., age 52. In the Dec. 5 issue of the *Budget* it reported the death, stating that he had died in a private hospital in Frederick. It further stated: "Major B. was a brave soldier and was highly esteemed by the men under his command, and his loss will be severely felt. We have lost a good citizen, one who while he resided among us took a lively interest in the affairs of the town, and who has held several town offices." [See our book *A Union Town*..., Vol. 1, in Index under "Burbank, Elisha."] The *Budget* further stated that his remains were brought to Woburn and his funeral was held at the Unitarian Church on Dec. 4, presided by Reverend Thayer of Boston and Rev. Dr. Rufus Stebbins of Woburn. The pall bearers were officers of the 11th and 12th Regts. M.V.I.

The Dec 6 issue of the *Middlesex Journal* also reported on the death, and gave many of the same details that the *Budget* had. However, it added that at the funeral the hymn "Weep o'er the heroes as they fell" was used, which had also been used in Capt. Samuel Ingalls Thompson's funeral the previous August. The newspaper also noted that for Major Burbank's burial, many citizens, some in carriages and others on foot, proceeded to the burial. He was buried at the Stoneham Cemetery, now called Lindenwood Cemetery, at Lot 553, Grave 3, in Sect. 3A on Cedar Ave., at the large "MOORE" tomb.

In Barrett's Roster, in the installment in the *Woburn Journal*, June 11, 1880, issue, it states: "His well known military antecedents at once brought him into prominence, and he soon received a commission as major [in the 12th Regt. M.V.I.]. He carried into his new career the same conscientious and faithful performance of life's duties, as that which characterized his course as a citizen and a business man. Entering the service honored with the esteem and confidence of his fellow citizens, such as was possessed by few, he soon won the love and affection of his command. His untimely death caused a vacancy hard to be filled, and he was sincerely lamented by all with whom he was associated. His remains were brought home for burial, and the funeral services were such as were worthy of the man, soldier and patriot, and of the town

whose honor he assisted to sustain. Upon the formation of a Post of the G.A.R. [Grand Army of the Republic, Post 33], it was unanimously decided to adopt the name of E.M. Burbank, in memory of a brave and faithful soldier, and subsequently the town secured his portrait from the gallery of fallen heroes, in which his many friends had placed it [details on the gallery will be given in a later volume of *A Union Town During the Civil War: Woburn, Massachusetts*, if it is completed], as a fitting tribute to his manly worth and patriotic services."

Note: Regarding the oil painting portrait of Major Burbank, as well as the others in the Gallery of Fallen Heroes, it is unknown as to where they currently are, or if they still exist. However, a wartime photograph of him can be seen in our book *A Union Town...*, Vol. 1, page 374.

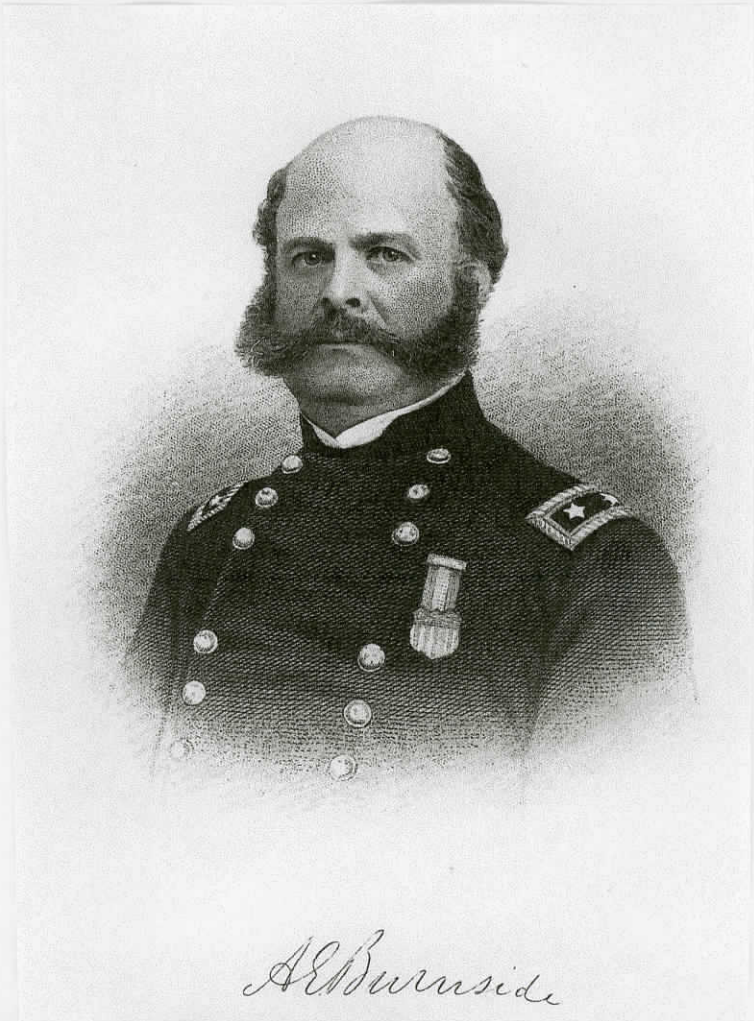
WOBURN SOLDIERS AT THANKSGIVING.

On pages 33, 41, 53, 56-57, 62-65, 70-71, and 73-74 of the ms., citing mainly soldiers' letters in the two Woburn newspapers, in late November and early December 1862, it describes what the three Woburn companies did for Thanksgiving, as well as one Woburn soldier who was in a hospital in Penn. and had a real Thanksgiving feast. In mid-November Reverend Bodwell of the First Congregational Church suggested that boxes of food be sent to the three Woburn companies. As it turned out, three large boxes were sent for the Woburn Union Guard and ten boxes for the Woburn National Rangers (both of them in Maryland at the time), but none for the Woburn Mechanic Phalanx, perhaps because they were farther away (in North Carolina).

For the Woburn Union Guard, on Nov. 27 Governor Andrew's Thanksgiving Proclamation and Address was read to them. The men had heard that boxes had been sent, but had not arrived. The boxes were to arrive on Dec. 1, but the men were ordered out on an expedition. They returned to camp on Dec. 2 and found that the boxes had been *en route* for 2 weeks and some of the turkeys and pies spoiled or tainted, but enough were edible for a good meal.

For the Woburn National Rangers, they did not have to drill on the holiday, and one member said that the boxes arrived just in time. He said that they played "base ball" in the morning and at Noon they ate their special foods. Another member said that they played "foot ball" in the morning and afternoon, but said that some of the boxes did not arrive until Nov. 28. Neither of the two soldiers gave the bill of fare.

For the Woburn Mechanic Phalanx, on Nov. 25 Lieutenant Converse announced that he had obtained 76 live chickens and other foods, so on Nov. 26 many of the men were detailed to pluck the chickens. On Thanksgiving Day morning they had baked beans. At 10 AM the regiment assembled and Governor Andrew's Thanksgiving Proclamation was read by the Chaplain and made a prayer and remarks. Six to eight men of each company were on guard duty, while the rest celebrated. The Phalanx had fricassee chicken for dinner, then the regiment had a "mock dress parade." They had tea, hard bread, and "dough-nuts" for supper.



A E Burnside

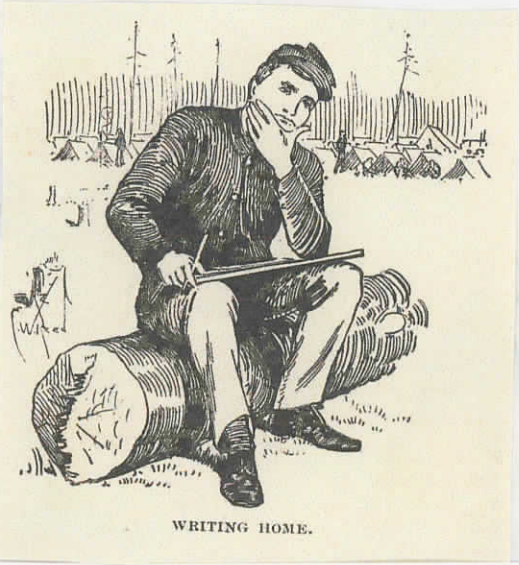
8 – 1 Maj. Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside (1824-1881) was born in Indiana. A graduate of the U.S. Military Academy and veteran of the Mexican War and Indian Wars, he later was in business in Rhode Island, then was Treasurer for a railroad. At the outbreak of the Civil War he was Col., 1st Rhode Island Vols. (Inf.). He was appointed Brig. Gen. of Vols. in August 1861 and Maj. Gen. of Vols. in March 1862. He commanded the Army of the Potomac from Nov. 1862 to Jan. 1863, including the Battle of Fredericksburg (Dec. 13, 1862). (Portrait is frontis. of the book *The Antietam and Fredericksburg* by Palfrey.)



8 – 2 Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker (1814-1879) was born in Hadley, Mass. A graduate of the U.S. Military Academy and veteran of the Seminole War and Mexican War, he later lived in California and Oregon. In the Civil War he was appointed Brig. Gen. of Vols. in May 1861 and Maj. Gen. of Vols. in May 1862, and wounded at Antietam. He commanded V A.C. Nov. 10-16, 1862, then Center Grand Div., then Army of the Potomac Jan. 26-June 28, 1863, including Battle of Chancellorsville (May 1-4, 1863), then served in the Western Theatre. (Portrait from Miller, *The Photographic History of the Civil War*, Vol. 10, p. 169.)



8 – 3 Maj. Gen. Fitz John Porter (1822-1901) was born in Portsmouth, N.H. A graduate of the U.S. Military Academy and veteran of the Mexican War and Utah Expedition, in the Civil War he became Brig. Gen. of Vols. in 1861 and Maj. Gen. of Vols. in 1862. During the 2nd Bull Run Campaign General Pope accused him of "disobedience, disloyalty, and misconduct in the face of the enemy," but Porter remained in command of the V A.C. until Nov. 10, 1862. He had been popular among the V A.C. (including the Woburn Union Guard) since its inception in May 1862, but he was court martialed, found guilty in Jan. 1863, and "cashiered" from the Army. As a civilian he had numerous professions in Colorado and New York, but he continued to try to clear his name and return to the Army. He was finally reappointed in 1886 at his Regular Army rank of Col., with no back pay, then he retired from the Army. (Portrait from Miller, *The Photographic History of the Civil War*, Vol. 10, p. 183.)

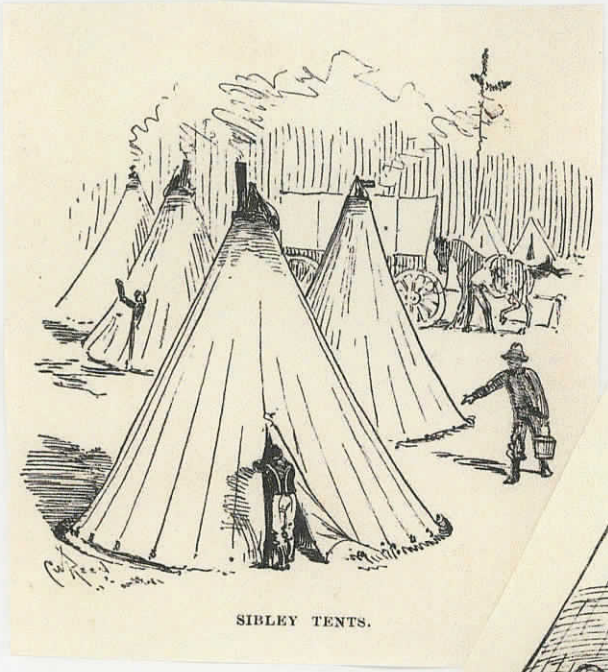


WRITING HOME.

8 – 4 "Writing Home" is a drawing made by a former Woburnite, Charles W. Reed, published in the book *Hardtack and Coffee* by John D. Billings, p. 63. To write home, soldiers needed either a pen and small bottle of ink, or a pencil, as well as stationery and stamps (3c stamps for most). In addition to writing to relatives or friends, generally two or three enlisted men in the Woburn military companies wrote a series of letters to the editors of the two Woburn newspapers. These soldiers generally did not sign their letters with their real names, but instead used initials (often not even the initials of their names) or gave a *nom de plume*. Having no desks, some got a piece of wood from an empty hardtack box.

On right is a cancelled U.S. stamp, Issue of 1861, 3 cents profile bust of George Washington, Scott #56. (Author's collection.)



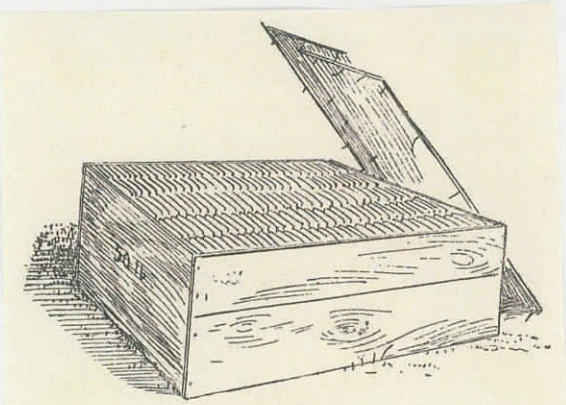


SIBLEY TENTS.

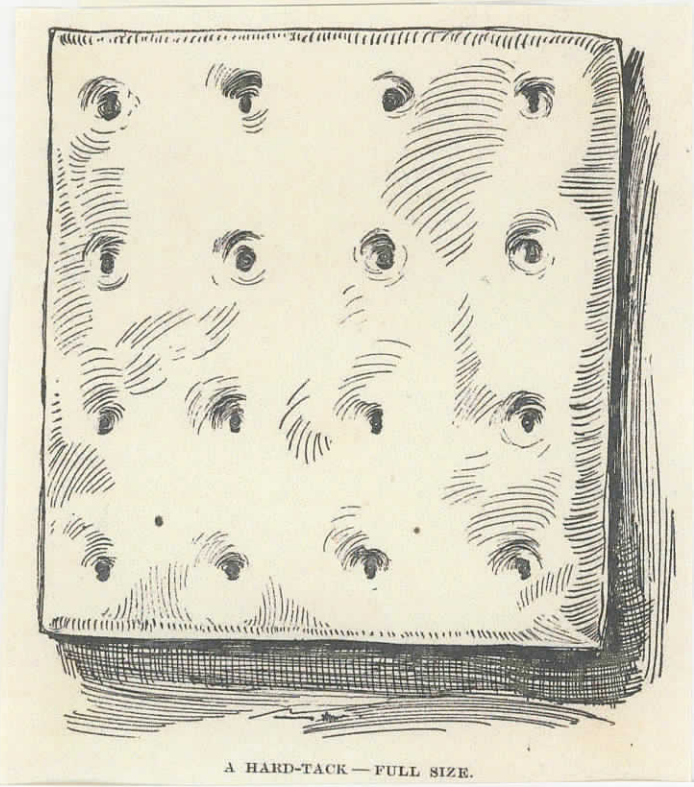


SIBLEY TENT. — INSIDE VIEW.

8 – 5 "Sibley Tents" and "Sibley Tent – Inside View," drawn by former Woburnite Charles W. Reed, published in the book *Hardtack and Coffee* by John D. Billings, pages 46 and 62. The Sibley tent, shaped similar to American Indian tepees, was patented in 1856 by U.S. Army officer Henry Hopkins Sibley (1816-1886), who was a Confederate General in the Civil War. This illustration shows a tent with a stove in the middle. Woburn soldiers who wrote letters to the local newspapers often mentioned Sibley tents.



A BOX OF HARDTACK.



A HARD-TACK — FULL SIZE.

8 – 6 "A Box of Hardtack" (50 lbs.) and "A Hard-Tack – Full size," drawn by former Woburnite Charles W. Reed, published in the book *Hardtack and Coffee* by John D. Billings, pages 114 and 116. A hardtack was approx. 3 x 3-3/16" and perhaps 3/16" thick. Woburn soldiers often called it hard bread. It was a staple for Union soldiers.