WOBURN CIVIL WAR CHRONICLES with Leon Edmund Basile

Outline of Chapter Ten (*Events of January 1863*):

In the Leon Basile manuscript, Chapter Ten has 75 pages of text, four pages of endnotes (65 endnotes), and six illustrations. A number of interesting things took place that month, particularly as follows:

NEW YEARS DAY 1863 AND LINCOLN'S EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION.

On page 4 of the Basile manuscript, citing the Jan. 2, 1863, issue of the *Woburn Weekly Budget*, it states that on New Years Day (Thursday, Jan. 1), the schools were closed and boys enjoyed coasting (which we now call sledding), but it did not mention girls coasting, perhaps due to the type of clothing females wore in that period. There was also sleighing in Woburn. On pages 1-4 of the ms., citing *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* and an issue of the *Middlesex Journal*, Basile gave the full text of the Emancipation Proclamation and the *Journal* published an editorial on the Proclamation.

THE WOBURN UNION GUARD IN WINTER QUARTERS AT POTOMAC CREEK, VIRGINIA.

On pages 10-12 of the ms., citing a letter written by Pvt. John F. Gleason of the Woburn Union Guard (Co. F, 22nd Regt. M.V.I.) on Jan. 9, 1863, at Potomac Creek, Va., and published in the Jan. 16 issue of the *Budget*, it described the way the company was at that time. The men were in Winter Quarters (camp of the regiment), in "log cabins." They had morning and evening roll calls, guard mountings daily, frequent drills, and occasionally fatigue duty. One day the men adorned their quarters with trees and evergreens, giving it a festive look. Private Gleason stated that copies of President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation had been distributed throughout the Army, and Gleason said "[a]s a military necessity, it is well received..." Private Gleason also reported that the V Army Corps (the corps the regiment was in) was reviewed by General Burnside, accompanied by Generals Joseph Hooker and George G. Meade, although some of the regiment could not attend because they were on picket duty. Gleason wrote: "There was little or no enthusiasm manifested, although the troops seem willing to follow [Burnside] anywhere except to the 'slaughter pen,' at Fredericksburg again."

THE GRAND UNION FESTIVAL AT LYCEUM HALL, WOBURN, ON JANUARY 15, 1863.

On pages 5-6, 13-15, and 20-22 of the ms., citing various January issues of the *Budget* and the *Journal*, it describes the planning and execution of the Grand Union Festival, to raise funds in aid of soldiers' relief societies and to benefit sick and wounded soldiers in hospitals. On Saturday evening, Jan. 10, a meeting was held to make "arrangements to assist the Ladies of Woburn" on the festival. Admission was to be 25 cents at the festival, where ladies would sell such foods as cake, fruit, pies, confectionaries, cold meats, etc.

Despite inclement weather, the festival took place on the evening of Thursday, Jan. 15, at Lyceum Hall in Woburn Center, and it was a success, with a large attendance. The hall was nicely decorated with festoons of evergreen on the walls, a large flower basket suspended from the center of the hall, and streamers were draped from the center of the ceiling to the sides and corners. "[O]ver the stage were a cluster of shields and flags..." On one wall of the stage was a group of arms [rifles and perhaps swords] and the motto "Relieve the sick" and on the other side "similarly arranged" the motto "Honor the brave" and over the entrance in large letters the word "Union." In the hall there were tables holding items for sale such as fancy articles, engravings, books, toys, cakes, confectionaries, etc., and the ladies selling them made rapid sales. There was also an ice cream room and an oyster room, and upstairs (usually used as the armory hall) was the supper room.

During the evening instrumental music was played by the Woburn Brass Band under the direction of P.L. Converse, Esq., as well as the singing of National airs by church choirs under the direction of G.M. Champney. Rev. J.S. Kennard of the First Baptist Church made an address and Rev. Dr. Rufus P. Stebbins of the Unitarian Church read a poem he had composed for the occasion. His manuscript was then auctioned off and sold for $4.00 for the festival. Fr. John McCarthy of St. Charles Borromeo Church (Catholic) was unable to attend, but he had donated $10.00 for the festival. In total, the net proceeds of the festival was about $500.00 to assist the Sanitary Commission. Another event later that month, in the form of a Tableaux and Concert, would take place, to also raise funds for the Soldiers' Aid, and will be described below.

THE WOBURN UNION GUARD IN GENERAL BURNSIDE'S MUD MARCH.

On pages 38-40 and 43-46 of the ms., citing a letter written by Pvt. John F. Gleason of the Woburn Union Guard (Co. F., 22nd Regt. M.V.I.) on Jan. 27, 1863, at Potomac Creek, Va., and published in the Feb. 6, 1863, issue of the *Budget*, as well as two standard reference books, Pvt. Gleason stated that they had just completed their second attempt to advance upon Richmond (the Confederate Capitol) under Gen. Burnside. The mud along the roads and around the Rappahannock River made the advance too difficult. The regiment had gotten orders on Tues., Jan. 20, to prepare to march the next day. Due to the rain and mud, they could only advance about three miles on Wed., Jan. 21, covered with mud. On Thurs., Jan. 22, it was still raining, and "stuck in the mud." Being infantrymen, they were able to advance but very slowly, but the artillery caissons and wagon trains were stuck in the mud and its horses unable to move, some horses dying of exhaustion. On Fri., Jan. 23, the regiment was ordered to corduroy the road (meaning to cut trees and put the logs on the road), and to back-track to their camp at Potomac Creek. On Sat., Jan. 24, they proceeded toward their camp, making five miles that afternoon and reached camp that night.

Back at their Winter Quarters (the camp of the regt.), the regiment was ordered to drill in brigade formation, and that camp of instruction duty was to be followed. Pvt. Gleason stated that men would joke "Burnside stuck in the mud!" When he wrote this letter, he did not know that on Jan. 26 Burnside was relieved of command of the Army of the Potomac, replaced by Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker. Gen. Hooker would hold that command until June 28, 1863, including the Battle of Chancellorsville in June, then be transferred to the Western Theatre.

THE WOBURN MECHANIC PHALANX IN CAMP AT NEWBERN, NORTH CAROLINA.

On pages 50-53, 55-57, & 62-65 of the ms., citing letters written by Sergt. Horace N. Hastings from their headquarters (Co. G, 5th Regt. M.V.I.), dated Jan. 28 & 30, 1863, and published in the *Budget* on Feb. 6 & 13, 1863, and a letter written by Sergt. Oliver W. Rogers, from the same location, dated Jan. 29, 1863, and published in the *Journal* on Feb. 7, 1863, it states the following: Sergt. Hastings's long letter of Jan. 28 included a nice description of each of the six large tents of the company, with the names of many of the men in each of them, and how they kept occupied, such as sewing, carpentry, shaving, reading, writing, and cleaning rifle. Also each day some men were detailed to work on the construction of an earthwork. In Sergt. Rogers's letter he reported that 75 boxes and barrels had just arrived from Woburn, in which there were such things as pies, cakes, sauces, preserves, cigars, tobacco, many apples, a bologna, etc. In Sergt. Hastings's letter of Feb. 13 he reported about the same 75 boxes and barrels, which had been sent by the Phalanx Associates and other Woburnites, and said in the boxes and barrels were some of the same things that Sergt. Rogers had listed, as well as cheese, sugar, tea, chocolate, cocoa, halibut, mustard, pepper, buckwheat flour, onions, dried beef, pickles, dried sausages, butter, fish, crackers, and matches, and that everything arrived in good condition.

THE DEATH OF PVT. WILLIAM T. BARRETT OF THE WOBURN NATIONAL RANGERS.

On pages 57-58 of the ms., citing the Jan. 31 & Feb. 7, 1863, issues of the *Journal*, and other sources, it states that Pvt. William T. Barrett of the Woburn National Rangers (Co. K, 39th Regt. M.V.I.) had died of typhoid fever on Jan. 29, at the Lincoln Hospital, Washington, D.C. Pvt. Barrett was the second member of the company to die, and was 24 years, 8 months old. He was born in Boston in 1838, the son of John & Mary (Southern) Barrett, and he was married to Ellen T. Dow. He was a resident of Woburn and had been a clerk prior to enlisting in the Summer of 1862. He is buried in the Woodbrook Cemetery, Woburn, at Chapel Ave., Lot 416.

THE SOLDIERS' AID TABLEAUX AND CONCERT AT LYCEUM HALL, WOBURN, JAN. 29, 1863.

On pages 42-43 & 58-61 of the ms., citing the Jan. 24 & 31 and Feb. 7, 1863, issues of the *Journal*, and the Feb. 6 & 13 issues of the *Budget*, it states than in the Jan. 24 issue of the *Journal*, its readers learned that on Thurs. evening, Jan. 29, there would be a number of tableaux, of patriotic and other subjects, under the direction of the Woburn Soldiers' Aid

Societies. The event would also include a social and appropriate instrumental music under the Music Committee. This entertainment was to benefit sick and wounded soldiers in hospitals, and would be held at Lyceum Hall, Woburn Center, tickets cost 25 cents.

Both the *Middlesex Journal* and *Woburn Weekly Budget* covered the event, but varied in some details. In this Outline the details will be combined, giving the best understanding available. (For those who are not familiar with a tableau, they are best known now by a "Live Nativity" scene.) In the Jan. 31 issue of the *Journal* it stated that the event of Thurs. evening, Jan. 29, "was a gala season for the large audience which assembled in Lyceum Hall, to witness the Tableaux given in aid of wounded soldiers... Rarely are the people of any community permitted to witness an exhibition, got up by their own townspeople, possessing so much merit, beauty and real enjoyment..." The Tableau Committee consisted of – M.M. Tidd, Benj. Champney, C.T. Lang, and A. Sonrel, assisted by a number of ladies." The Feb. 6 issue of the *Budget* added that the Concert Committee consisted of G.M. Champney, W.H. Clarke, and A. Bancroft. "[T]hough the intervals between the tableaux were necessarily long [changing scenes], the audience was very patient and showed by their applause that they were pleased. The tableaux were interspersed with music by Mrs. Cutter and Mr. Sonrel, Mr. [W.H.] Clarke, G.M. Champney, Mr. [T.] Bricher, and the Orthodox [First Congregational Church] Choir. Miss Houston, of Boston, well known as an accomplished vocalist, generously volunteered to sing on this occasion, and her singing, though under disadvantage [perhaps noise changing scenes], was excellent, especially in the patriotic song 'Shoulder Arms!' which she rendered in a very spirited manner." Both the *Journal* and *Budget* also stated that at one point of the event a comical singing group of brothers named the Peak Family of New Hampshire sang several songs.

The actual tableaux were as follows:

"Nun Scene" or "Convent Scene" which, according to the *Journal*, represented "nuns... about entering a convent, and kneeling before a cross met on their way...," while the *Budget* said it represented "nuns assembled in the chapel for vespers," and it listed the names of nine young women.

"Adhem Ben Adem" or "Ben Adhem and the Angel" was based on a once famous poem. According to the *Budget* in one scene "Ben Adhem wakes and beholds the angel writing" and the other scene was "the angel showing him that his name leads all the rest." G.M. Champney represented Ben Adhem and Miss Kate Woodberry (WHS 1858, teacher at WHS) represented the angel.

"The Goddess of Day" had a golden chariot being drawn by twelve young ladies "representing the hours of the day," and the *Budget* listed thirteen names, one of them apparently standing in the chariot.

"Belshazzar's Feast" had one scene as the feast "a riot of mirth" and a scene of handwriting on the wall. The *Budget* listed nine men and seven young ladies for this subject.

The next subject was included in the *Budget* but not in the *Journal*. It was called "A Turkish Harem" and showed a Turk represented by Mr. Bracket "reclining on a divan surrounded by his favorites." The *Budget* listed ten young ladies, including two pairs of sisters.

Next was a series of three scenes based on the poem which Rev. Dr. Rufus P. Stebbins of the Unitarian Church had written and recited at the Grand Union Festival on Jan. 15. The first scene was "The Soldier's Departure from Home" in which the soldier "bids farewell to his wife, children, and aged parents." The second scene was the "Contest for the Standard" or the "Fight for the Standard," the standard meaning a flag. In that scene it shows the soldier or Color Bearer assisted by a comrade, defending the colors against an attack. The third scene was "The Battlefield After the Contest" or "After the Fight." In it, it shows the soldier "badly wounded but still grasping the flag" and the "Arrival of Aid through the Sanitary Commission," in which members of the Sanitary Commission attend to the wounded soldier. The *Budget* listed seven men and four ladies in the series of scenes and among the men was a real Woburn wounded soldier, John L. Parker, and two others who would enter the service later in 1863, R.E. Jameson in the Army and William Snow in the Navy. One of the ladies was again Miss Kate Woodberry.

The final tableau was the "Goddess of Liberty" represented by Miss Laura Webster. The *Journal* wrote that it "was equal in brilliancy, if not superior, to any of its predecessors,-- in short, to use the words of another, 'it was truly magnificent.'"

The performance was repeated for children at the Sat. afternoon matinee, Jan. 31, admission only 10 cents. In this performance the Peak Family was not available, but it added the scene "Taking the Veil" representing nuns, and "Faith before the cross" by Miss Celia Wyman. Also The Choristers chanted "Thy will be done" by Lizzie, Susie, and Ada Gould, Mr. S.R. Priest sang a song, and there was a whistling solo by an unidentified young lady. In the Feb. 6 issue of the *Budget* it stated that "the hall was again crowded." Between the two performances (Jan. 29 & 31) it raised about $200.00 for the Soldiers' Aid. (In the Feb. 13 issue of the *Budget* it corrected and added some of the names of young ladies who had appeared, apparently in the "Convent Scene.")

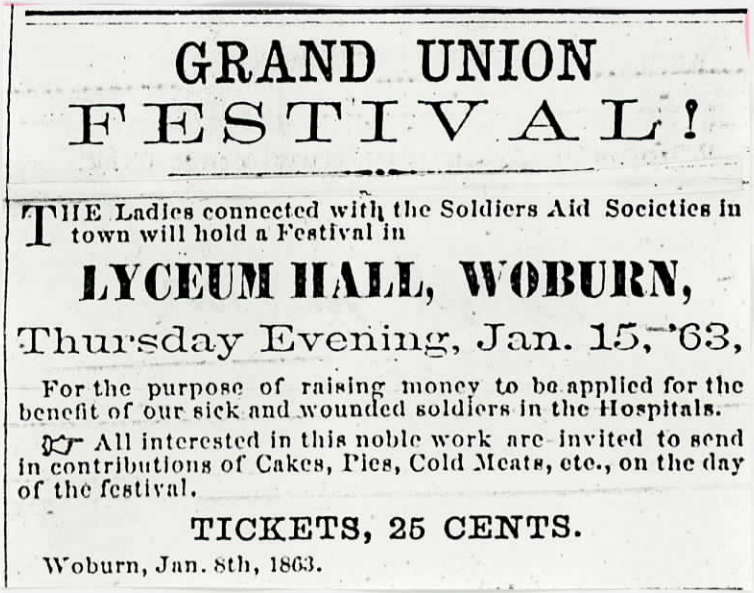


SIGNING OF EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

10 – 1 An old print from Ritchie's engraving, based on Carpenter's painting "First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation before the Cabinet, Sept. 22, 1862." Seated (L to R) Stanton, Lincoln, Welles, Seward, Bates. Standing (L to R) Chase, C. B. Smith, Blair. (Author's collection.)



10 – 2 An allegorical *carte de visite* titled "Emancipation," photographed by J.P. Soule, Boston, Mass., in 1863 and tinted in color from sepia image, from the painting by G.G. Fish. It shows the Goddess of Liberty holding the Emancipation Proclamation, a freed slave holding the U.S. flag, and another freed slave draped around her by the flag. (Author's collection.)



GRAND UNION FESTIVAL!

THE Ladies connected with the Soldiers Aid Societies in town will hold a Festival in

LYCEUM HALL, WOBURN,

Thursday Evening, Jan. 15, '63,

For the purpose of raising money to be applied for the benefit of our sick and wounded soldiers in the Hospitals.

☞ All interested in this noble work are invited to send in contributions of Cakes, Pies, Cold Meats, etc., on the day of the festival.

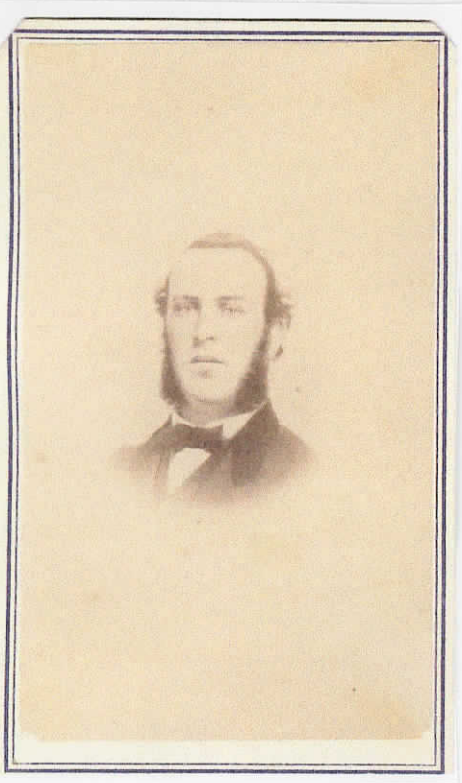
TICKETS, 25 CENTS.

Woburn, Jan. 8th, 1863.

10 – 3 An advertisement in the *Woburn Weekly Budget*, Jan. 9, 1863, for the Grand Union Festival, Jan. 15, 1863, at Lyceum Hall, Woburn Center. (Author's collection, copied from microfilm.)



10 – 4 A detail from a larger engraving in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, Feb. 14, 1863, p. 328. It shows Gen. Burnside's rainy Mud March in late Jan. 1863. The Woburn Union Guard and other Woburn soldiers in the Army of the Potomac suffered through it. (Author's collection.)



10 – 5 Pvt. William T. Barrett (1838-1863), Woburn National Rangers (Co. K, 39th Regt. M.V.I.). Born in Boston, was a resident of Woburn when enlisted in Summer of 1862. He died of typhoid fever in a hospital in Washington, D.C., Jan. 29, 1863 (one source says Jan. 25), survived by his widow Ellen. He is buried at Woodbrook Cemetery, Chapel Ave., Lot 416, Woburn. Photographed in Woburn by S. Webster Wyman when Barrett was a civilian. (Author's collection.)





10 – 6 Two *cartes de visite* of the Civil War era. Although not made in Woburn, the subjects may be dressed similarly to two of the tableaux at the event at Lyceum Hall, Woburn Center, Jan. 29. One of those tableaux was called "A Turkish Harem" and another tableau was called the "Goddess of Liberty." The *carte* on the left, showing a Turkish man and woman, published by Fredricks & Co., N.Y.C. The *carte* on the right shows the Goddess of Liberty, published by Moore Bros., Springfield, Mass. (Author's collection.)