

# Stephen Ward

(Steven Ward)

## 55th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment

Residence Bellefontaine OH; a 24-year-old Farmer.

Enlisted on 5/29/1863 as a Private.

On 5/31/1863 he mustered into "D" Co. MA 55th Infantry

**He was Killed on 11/30/1864 at Honey Hill, SC**



# Stephen Ward

## 55th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment

In the Mid-1980's, an Enfield Rifle, Cartridge box and a field shaving mirror were sold at an estate sale by an African-American (Black) family, who were descendants of a Colored Soldier from the 55th Massachusetts Infantry Regiments. These items were sold off individually and after a 30+ year search, have been reunited. Unfortunately, the record of the sale is not available, and the family history is gone, but luckily each item was Civil War period marked with the soldier's name: **Steven Ward**.

The name **Steven L Ward** is stenciled on the flat area of the Enfield opposite the lock, as well as on the field Shaving mirror, and the name **Steven Ward** is stenciled on the underside of the cartridge box flap, and the backside of the shoulder strap. These two versions of the name are helpful, but present a challenge for a positive identification since no living descendant exist, and will require extensive research of the names and each item for characteristics unique to the 55th Massachusetts infantry.

## Stephen Ward

The Civil War data-base list two Union soldiers named **Stephen L. Ward**, and eighteen soldiers with the name **Stephen Ward**, of which three were African-American (Colored). Many of these soldiers can be eliminated because they had late enlistments; served in non-combat or non-infantry units, or were not issued Enfield rifles. This narrows the list to the two soldiers with the name Stephen L. Ward, and the three African-American (Colored) privates.

Of the two named **Stephen L. Ward**, one was from the 1st Michigan Light Artillery and enlisted 9/6/1864 and mustered-out 8/1/1865. His enlistment period is late in the war and he would not have been issued an Enfield Rifles. The second soldier was from the 13th New Jersey Infantry, and though he had an early enlistment of 8/25/1862 and survived the war, his unit did not receive Enfield rifles, but carried Springfield Rifles. Based on these facts, these two soldiers can be ruled out in regards to these identified items. This leaves the three African-American (Colored) soldiers with the same name **Stephen Ward**.

The first enlisted on 7/19/1863 into the US Colored Troop, 4th Cavalry, New Orleans. This unit was issued cavalry carbines and would not have received Enfield rifles. The second enlisted on 5/27/1865 into Company A, 128th United States Colored Infantry. As a late-war Federal unit, it is possible it received Enfield rifles, but more likely Springfield rifles. Also, as a late-war enlistment, this soldier would have been issued a model 1864 cartridge not the 1861 version.

The third Colored soldier is **Private Stephen Ward** of the 55th Massachusetts Infantry. He enlisted 5/29/1863 into the 55th Massachusetts Infantry and was killed in action on 11/30/1864 at Honey Hill, SC. He was born in Tennessee and was most likely a slave who escaped to Ohio. This 55th was issued Confederate Enfield Rifles from captured blockade runner ships, purchased in Prize Auctions by the State of Massachusetts. This, as well as some other details mention later, make it highly probable this identified group belongs to Private Stephen Ward of the 55<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry.

## Blockade-running and Prize Law

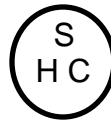
Civil War blockade-running could be a highly profitable enterprise. Outbound ships carried compact, high-value cargo, while inbound vessels brought necessities supplies including military supplies and weapons such as Enfield rifles. The definition of “**prize**” is property taken at sea from an enemy. “In admiralty law, the term prize is used to signify any goods, the subject of marine capture; property taken at sea from an enemy, jure belli; a technical term expressing a legal capture; maritime capture effected by maritime force only, ships and cargoes taken by ships. Officers and crew of the capturing ship divide the spoils after adjudication by a Prize Court, which can order the sale or destruction of the seized vessel and distribution of any proceeds to the captain and crew of the seizing ship, usually at auction.

The state of Massachusetts purchased capture Confederate Enfield rifles and related supplies. For examples, the **44th Massachusetts** infantry was outfitted with Enfields and equipment captured off a British Blockade runner ship. Their history reads “The corps is armed with Enfield rifles captured from an English steamer and their belts, bayonet-sheaths, and cap-pouches were similarly obtained. The **54th Massachusetts Regiment** was also outfitted with capture Confederate imported English Enfield Pattern 1853 Rifle Muskets, as well as the **55th Massachusetts Regiment**.

## Confederate Imported Enfield 1853 Rifle

The 1853 Enfield Rifle carried by Private Steve (Stephen) Ward has Confederate inspection cartouches on both the barrel, and the underside of the stock. In fact, the mark on the barrel is extremely rare and is the only known example of this style I have seen.

On the barrel are the letters SHC within a circle



On the underside of the stock to the rear of the trigger guard is double stamped CROWN SHC



# US PATTERN 1861 CARTRIDGE BOX & PLATE

This Civil War leather 1861 Federal Pattern rifle musket cartridge box is used to hold forty paper cartridges. This cartridge box was the type issued to Federal infantry through the 1860's and has a large outer flap with its oval, brass box plate with a bordered rim with two letters "US" on the face. The fine condition plate has a very pleasing patina, and is secured on the inside of the flap with piece of original leather. Sewn to the outer flap, in a straight line, is the leather closure latch tab, which is complete. A round brass finial on the box bottom was used to secure the tab. The outer flap exhibits moderate cracking to the finish. The implement pouch on the inside is complete. The two cartridge tins are present and can be easily removed. Both of the japanned black roller buckles that secure the shoulder strap to the bottom of the box remain, as well as the backside belt and strap loops present. On the inside of the main flap is stenciled the name **Steven Ward**. The shoulder strap is not original, but a field altered waist belt. This is a very unusual alteration, which I have never seen on a cartridge box. For most Union troops, obtaining a new cartridge box or shoulder strap was relatively easy, but for Color'ed troops this was not the case. As with the cartridge box, the name **Steven Ward** is stenciled on the inside of the shoulder strap. This field alteration is another good indication the box was carried by an African-American (Color'ed) soldier from the 55th Massachusetts since this style box was issued to troops enlisted prior to 1864, and the Pattern 1864 cartridge box would go to soldiers with a later enlistments date, such as the soldier in the 128th United States Color'ed Infantry.

## FIELD SHAVING MIRROR

A Civil War Period Field Shaving mirror is not a common item, especially one that is identified. Like the Enfield, Cartridge Box and shoulder strap, this mirror has the name Steve L Ward stenciled on it.

## STENCIL IDENTIFICATION

On May 7, 1987, The Discovery of Nineteen African-American Color'ed Soldiers from the 55th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry was made by Relic Hunters Robert E. Bohrn, and Eric Croen on Folly Beach, South Carolina. No doubt **Private Steven Ward** was one of these nineteen soldiers. Also discovered was an Identification Stencil of Private Harrison Pearl, Co, K, 55th Massachusetts. This discover is proof that soldiers of the 55th Regiment used such stencils, and Private Steven Ward would have had the same to mark his belonging such as the Enfield, Cartridge Box and strap, and the mirror.



## 55TH MASSACHUSETTS INFANTRY REGIMENT



A photograph of 59 members of the 55th Massachusetts Infantry in uniform.

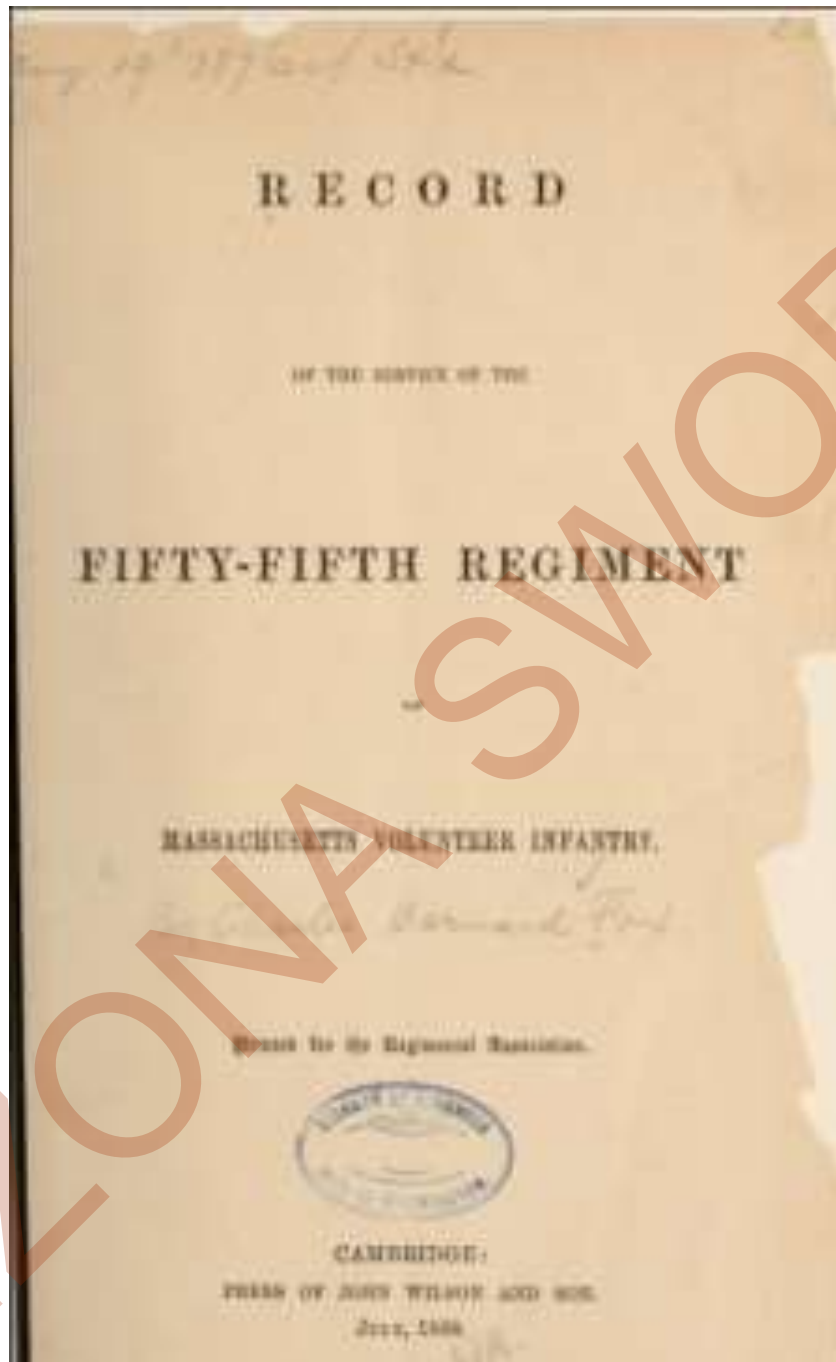




The 55th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry was the second regiment of Black troops created by Massachusetts. It was the sister regiment of the 54th Massachusetts whose early months were depicted in the movie "Glory." Some of the officers who would later serve in the 55th had seen previous service in the 54th. At one point, the commanders of the 54th and 55th were brothers from Philadelphia. These were true sister regiments.

In July of 1862, Congress passed the Second Militia Act, which allowed black men to perform limited service in the army. Congress did not place black recruits on an equal field with whites. While the lowest-ranking white soldier was paid \$13 per month (about \$300 today) black men were to be paid only \$10 and three dollars of that was deducted every month to pay for their uniforms! Blacks were to risk their lives for \$7 a month, or about \$170 in today's money. [The Militia Act of 1862; Thunder at the Gates: The Black Civil War Regiments That Redeemed America by Douglas R. Egerton published by Basic Books (2016) pp. 50-52 hereinafter "Egerton".]

## 55th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry A Second “Brave Black Regiment”



On New Year's Day, 1863, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. While that executive order is remembered today for freeing the slaves in the rebellious states of the Confederacy, it also authorized the recruitment of Blacks into the army as soldiers. A week earlier, on Christmas Eve, Confederate President Jefferson Davis had promised that black men caught in Union uniforms would be enslaved and that the white officers leading them would be executed as “criminals deserving death” for inciting a slave revolt. [Proclamation by the Confederate President December 24, 1862; Douglas R. Egerton pp. 60-65. In his December 24 Proclamation, Jefferson Davis described the Emancipation



Proclamation as an attempt to incite a violent uprising of slaves in the Confederacy. He wrote; “the President of the United States has by public and official declaration signified... his approval of the effort to excite servile war within the Confederacy...”]

The following year, the anti-Emancipation Democratic New York Journal of Commerce declared that, “The only motive for adopting the black soldier system was the fanatical idea of negro equality...and the determination of the radicals to do everything possible to raise the negro to the social and political level of the white.” While this social revolution was not “the only motive” for enlisting blacks, abolitionists thought that black enlistment would not only speed the successful conclusion of the war, but that it would also place the American people in the debt of African Americans for saving the Union, ensuring the expansion of rights for African Americans. [Egerton pp. 3-4.]

Massachusetts Governor John Andrew wanted to use black enlistment as a means of defending the Emancipation Proclamation. The Proclamation took away private property, slaves, from their masters without due process. The Emancipation Proclamation was legally justified, according to Lincoln, as a measure to win the war. By immediately recruiting black soldiers, Andrew believed, according to one of his advisers, he would “silence all doubts as to the legality of the Act of Emancipation by taking it out of the civil acts & making it a purely military one.” In other words, once black soldiers were in the field, there could be no reversing of the Proclamation. [Lincoln’s Hundred Days: The Emancipation Proclamation and the War for the Union by Louis P. Masur published by Belknap Press of Harvard University Press (2012); Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation: The End of Slavery in America by Allen C. Guelzo published by Simon & Schuster (2006); Emancipating Lincoln: The Proclamation in Text, Context, and Memory (Nathan I Huggins Lectures) by Harold Holzer published by Harvard University Press (February 2012); The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery by Eric Foner published by Norton (2010) pp. 240-247; Egerton p. 66.]

Governor Andrew was also a firm anti-slavery man. On January 26, 1863, he received authorization from Secretary of War Edwin Stanton to begin recruiting black men for segregated regiments to be officered by whites. Andrew protested, insisting that black officers be named to staff the new units. He was not able to alter the racial prejudices embedded in the Federal policies allowing the establishment of the first black regiments and as such, all of the officers for the new regiments were to be white. [Egerton p. 66.]

Gov. Andrew began organizing two black infantry regiments, the 54th and 55th Massachusetts Volunteers. He insisted that these units be led by battle-tested young officers from abolitionist families. The 54th was commanded by Robert Gould Shaw from Staten Island while Norwood Penrose (Pen) Hallowell commanded the 55th Massachusetts. [Egerton]

Pen Hallowell came from a Philadelphia Quaker family. Quakers opposed slavery, but they were also pacifists and many of them did not vote. His brother Edward Needles (Ned) Hallowell wrote to him in 1858 that he felt that he had to break with his religion on its anti-political stance. He reminded Pen that Quakers were required to pay taxes and that this act gave them responsibility for how those taxes were used. He told his brother that he was “bound to vote to protect” enslaved blacks. [Egerton pp. 29-30.]

Both Pen and Ned Hallowell were abolitionists in their student years and the entire Hallowell family was active in opposing the Fugitive Slave Law. In 1859, the brothers showed their willingness to risk their lives when they helped hide a Virginia runaway slave named Daniel Dangerfield from a Philadelphia mob. The two young Quakers hid him in a tomb and armed themselves to protect the black man when they drove him out of town to safety. Pen accepted the risky duty of commanding black soldiers knowing that white officers in black regiments risked being executed if captured. His brother Ned joined the 54th Massachusetts to serve under Colonel Robert Gould Shaw. [Egerton pp. 30-31.]

The presentation of the colors of the 55th involved a ceremony tying the State of Ohio to the regiment. Ohio not only represented the largest contingent of men in the regiment, but there were actually ten times as many soldiers from the Buckeye State as from Massachusetts. The flag of the 55th was a present from the Black women of Ohio. The following is from Record of the Services of the 55th Colored Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry by Charles Fox p. 4 hereinafter "The Record".

The regiment remained without its colors for some time after its organization, using on drills and parades a flag which had been presented by the young ladies of Dorchester to the Wide Awakes of that town. This delay was occasioned by the non-arrival of a gentleman from Ohio, who had been delegated to present to the regiment a stand of colors, the gift of the colored ladies of that State. These consisted of a national color of heavy silk, and a regulation infantry color of embroidered blue silk. This color was too heavy to be carried in service, and was besides one, to which, as a State organization, the regiment was not entitled. It was left in Boston, but was afterward sent to the regiment while near Savannah; and, upon the muster out of the regiment, was deposited by Col. Hartwell in the hands of Gov. Andrew, and now remains with Mrs. Andrew. With these colors there were also two guidons of silk, small national flags with oak staves. On the 18th of July, Gov. Andrew presented to the regiment, in the presence of a large assembly of its friends, both the State and Ohio colors. In addition to these a set of markers of blue silk was afterward presented to the regiment by ladies residing near Blue Hills. The State color from Massachusetts, and the national from Ohio, were taken with the regiment to the field, carried through most of its service, and, being much worn, were exchanged for others about the time of the occupation of Savannah. Most unfortunately these service-worn flags, while on the way northward, were destroyed by fire at the express-office in Beaufort.

Here are the birthplaces of the men of the 55th

STATISTICS OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH REGT. MASS. VOLS.

BIRTHPLACE.

Maine . . . . .	1	New Jersey . . . . .	8
Vermont . . . . .	1	Pennsylvania . . . . .	139
Massachusetts . . . . .	22	Maryland . . . . .	19
Rhode Island . . . . .	3	Virginia . . . . .	106
Connecticut . . . . .	4	North Carolina . . . . .	30
New York . . . . .	23	Georgia . . . . .	6
Alabama . . . . .	5	Tennessee . . . . .	24
Mississippi . . . . .	9	Michigan . . . . .	8
Louisiana . . . . .	1	Wisconsin . . . . .	7
Arkansas . . . . .	1	Iowa . . . . .	9
Missouri . . . . .	66	District of Columbia . . . . .	10
Ohio . . . . .	222	Nova Scotia . . . . .	1
Indiana . . . . .	97	Canada . . . . .	3
Illinois . . . . .	56	Africa . . . . .	1
Kentucky . . . . .	68	Unknown . . . . .	11

Only 22 of the men in the regiment were from Massachusetts. 106 came from Virginia. The largest contingent came from Ohio-222. While the majority were born free, 345 came from slave states.

Here is the table of occupations of the men of the 55th Mass:

TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS.

Farmers . . . . .	596	Firemen . . . . .	2
Laborers . . . . .	74	Coppersmith . . . . .	1
Barbers . . . . .	31	Machinist . . . . .	1
Waiters . . . . .	50	Rope-maker . . . . .	1
Cooks . . . . .	27	Fisherman . . . . .	1
Blacksmiths . . . . .	21	Tinker . . . . .	1
Painters . . . . .	7	Harness-maker . . . . .	1
Teamsters . . . . .	27	Caulker . . . . .	1
Grooms . . . . .	7	Glass-grinder . . . . .	1
Hostlers . . . . .	9	Musician . . . . .	1
Coachmen . . . . .	3	Moulder . . . . .	1
Coopers . . . . .	5	Confectioner . . . . .	1
Sailors . . . . .	20	Tobacco-worker . . . . .	1
Butchers . . . . .	8	Clergyman . . . . .	1
Iron-workers . . . . .	2	Broom-maker . . . . .	1
Shoemakers . . . . .	9	Baker . . . . .	1
Masons and Plasterers . . . . .	16	Student . . . . .	1
Brick-makers . . . . .	3	No. who had been slaves . . . . .	247
Whitewashers . . . . .	2	No. pure blacks . . . . .	550
Stonecutters . . . . .	2	No. mixed blood . . . . .	430
Printers . . . . .	3	No. who could read . . . . .	477
Boatmen . . . . .	6	No. who could read and	
Teachers . . . . .	6	write . . . . .	319
Clerks . . . . .	5	No. church-members . . . . .	52
Porters . . . . .	5	No. married . . . . .	219
Carpenters . . . . .	6	Average age . . . . .	23 $\frac{1}{2}$ years
Wagon-makers . . . . .	2	Average height . . . . .	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet <sup>1</sup>
Millers . . . . .	2		
Engineers . . . . .	3		

You will note that 247 had been slaves.

Also note that at least five of the Black men were immigrants.

From the start, the 55th had a mixed experience as a Black regiment in a white army. It was a center of attention for the many anti-slavery activists in the Boston area, as well a focus of hope for African Americans. It was also the target of official discrimination by the army. From the Record page 6:

While large bounties were being paid to other organizations, the men of this received only the fifty-dollar bounty from the State, paid a few days before their departure. Uncertain whether, in case of capture, the government who had accepted them as soldiers could or would protect them as such; doubtful whether, if prisoners in the hands of the enemy, instant death or slavery — worse than death — might not be their portion; destined to wait for months for even that poor recognition of service, the pay of a private soldier, these men took their lives in their hands and went forth cheerfully to the fight for the cause of the Union and the freedom of their race. It is due to such devotion that their errors to which all are liable be passed lightly over.

When the regiment left Boston in July of 1863 it was supposed to travel to New York and then board transports to the South. These plans were changed when the New York Draft Riots made the marching of a Black regiment through the city seem too provocative.

The Fifty-fifth was first ordered to proceed by land to New York, and then embark for Newbern, N.C.; but the occurrence of the draft riots caused a change of route to be deemed advisable by the Department at Washington. In anticipation of marching "through New York," the regiment for several days had been carefully drilled in street-firing, and it was matter of disappointment to most of them that their route was changed. There may well be doubt if this taking counsel of fear was wise, when it is remembered with what an ovation the Ninth United-States colored troops, not long after, marched down Broadway, and what a re-action in public feeling might have been produced by a thoroughly drilled and disciplined colored regiment, marching firmly and boldly, as they had a right to do, through New-York streets. Certainly it could not have been necessary to run away from that besotted *canaille*; and a bolder course would have brought out the old, and made new, friends of freedom. Agreeably to orders, however, the regiment broke camp at Readville on the morning of Tuesday, July 21, 1863; were conveyed by the Providence railroad to Boston; marched through some of the principal streets to Battery Wharf; and embarked safely on the steamer "Cahawba," with instructions to report to Brig.-Gen. Wilde, at Newbern, N.C. All the baggage, except the personal baggage of the officers, had been placed on board the night before, and every movement was made with great promptness.



The flag of the 55th Massachusetts.

After the 54th Massachusetts's assault on Battery Wagner near Charleston in July, 1863, the 55th was dispatched to South Carolina to join in the siege operations there. The regiment was put to work building the gun emplacements and trenches that would eventually compel the Confederates to abandon Battery Wagner. From *The Record* page 12:

During the operations which resulted in the evacuation of Forts Wagner and Gregg, the men of the Fifty-fifth were employed upon every important work of the approaches from right to left, including the "Swamp Angel" and Block Island. After the evacuation, they worked also upon Wagner, Gregg, and the intervening batteries, and all this under a fire, more or less constant, from the guns and mortars of the enemy. The testimony of the engineer and ordnance officers under whom they served in the trenches and batteries, as given in reply to questions officially asked, was substantially as follows:—

"Under similar circumstances, they accomplished at least a third more fatigue duty in a given time than the details from white regiments. That there were few, if any, shirks; the details mustering full. That there was no marked deficiency in mechanical skill, for the work they were required to perform."

While the heavier siege-guns were being mounted at the front, the work was exceedingly arduous,—the details often amounting to five hundred men in twenty-four hours, a large part of the work being at night. Fortunately, this period of extremely severe duty was not of long duration.

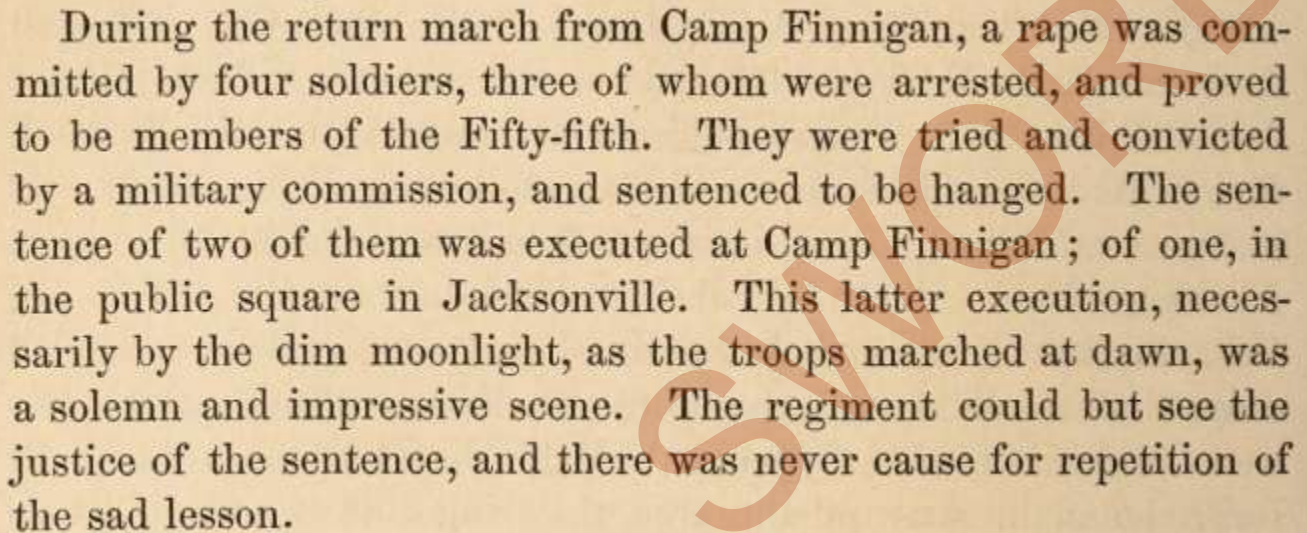
The Confederates were forced to abandon Wagner and on September 7, 1863 several companies of the 55th Massachusetts and the 10th Connecticut moved on the fortification, when they discovered that Confederates were trying to make their escape, they captured one hundred of them.

In spite of the good service of regiments like the 54th and 55th Massachusetts, General Gilmore, in command of the operations, gave them and other Black units a disproportionate share of the backbreaking work of digging trenches, unloading ships, and cleaning camps. Several white officers accused the general of seeing the Black soldiers as only fit for the work of slaves. Col. James Beecher, half-brother of the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, commanded a regiment of former slaves. He argues that the constant physical labor his men were subjected to destroyed discipline because they were treated less like soldiers and more like they were enslaved. Ned Hallowell began to refuse to have the men of the 55th perform a disproportionate share of the labor. Soldiers in the Black regiments carried on their own campaign for equality, with one soldier in the 54th Massachusetts going so far as to write a letter of protest to Abraham Lincoln. The president forwarded the letter to the War Department. Finally,

on November 25, 1863, Gilmore changed policy, ordering that “colored troops will not be required to perform any labor which is not shared by the white troops.” [Egerton p. 204]

The regiment’s colonel, Ned Hallowell was forced by his wounds received at Antietam to leave his post as commander of the regiment in September. He would resign in November.

The 55th was then sent to Jacksonville, Florida to participate in an effort to detach the sparsely populated state from the Confederacy. While in Florida, on February of 1864 a white woman accused a group of soldiers of raping her. From The Record on page 22.



During the return march from Camp Finnigan, a rape was committed by four soldiers, three of whom were arrested, and proved to be members of the Fifty-fifth. They were tried and convicted by a military commission, and sentenced to be hanged. The sentence of two of them was executed at Camp Finnigan; of one, in the public square in Jacksonville. This latter execution, necessarily by the dim moonlight, as the troops marched at dawn, was a solemn and impressive scene. The regiment could but see the justice of the sentence, and there was never cause for repetition of the sad lesson.

Some African Americans noted that white soldiers accused of raping Black women were rarely executed. [Egerton p. 218]

After this terrible incident, the 55th participated in the Olustee Campaign, although arriving at the battlefield after the Union force had already retreated. The regiment did fire on Confederate skirmishers pursuing the retreating Union troops, but they then followed the rest of the expeditionary force. Considering the executions of Black soldiers by the Confederates after the battle, the men of the 55th were spared that horror. After this defeat, the regiment was returned to the operations around Charleston. There they engaged in frequent small skirmishes with Confederates. All the while, the issue of unequal pay rankled the soldiers. As sickness took a toll among the white officers of the regiment, the commander tried to obtain officers commissions for three Black sergeants. This request was turned down, and the regiment suffered from a shortage of officers as a result. [The Record pp 33-34]

The pay issue was not resolved until more than a year after the regiment had first shipped South. Irrevocable damage to the men’s morale was done, even though the United States grudgingly paid them off.

The question of the pay of the regiment now began to assume a definite shape. Aug. 22, after various rumors, orders were received from the War Department, announcing that the pay of all colored troops was to be the same as that of all other volunteers, from Jan. 1, 1864, and providing for payment on the same basis, from date of

enlistment, of all enlisted previous to that date who were free "on or before April 21, 1861," to which latter fact each man was required to make oath. No form of oath was prescribed; but against the names of those who should so swear were to be placed upon the pay-roll the words, "Free on or before April 21, 1861," which would entitle the soldier to his full pay from enlistment. What motives of policy led to the adoption of this provision were not known to the regiment. It affected few in the Fifty-fifth, for the only instruction given to the men was, that one who was not actually held as a slave on the date specified was perfectly justified in calling himself a free man. Beyond this each was left to his own judgment. This proviso was unjust in the extreme to regiments that had enlisted like the Fifty-fourth and Fifty-fifth, as part of the regular quota of the State, and only served to show how strong was the hold of prejudice upon the country, and how slowly the situation was appreciated by many of even the most loyal men.

While this would seem to have settled the issue, the fact that to be paid in full the soldiers had to swear they had not been slaves was humiliating. Whites were not required to take such an oath. And why should Black men be paid less because white men had once claimed to own them? It was ironic that some of those white "owners" might now be fighting for the Confederacy.



To an outside observer all trouble from the pay question would now seem ended. Such, however, was not the case. So many times had the men been deceived, intentionally by their enemies, unintentionally by their friends, that they feared some deception, some few going so far even as to consider the whole thing a trap to ascertain who had been held as slaves, in order to return them to their masters at the close of the war. The non-commissioned officers of the regiment were called up, after the papers were prepared, and the matter was explained to them. An explanation was also made to the regiment on parade, and the men were told that if any of them still doubted, all reasonable and proper questions would be answered by their officers. The companies were then called upon to take oath before the regimental commander. It was a time of much anxiety. In no two companies was the feeling the same: to no two could the case be presented in exactly the same way. Several men, natives of Massachusetts who had been always free, felt it as a deep disgrace that such an oath should be required of them, and only after full consideration yielded for the benefit of their comrades. Only a few men, mostly from one company, held out and refused to take the oath, and they not from any scruples of conscience. They had cause to regret it afterward, in the trouble they had about their pay. Only two or three acknowledged having been slaves. That others were so held, there was not much doubt; but their officers were not required to go behind the oath,

and how far the men were guilty of false swearing would be rather a nice question. It may have been that all these men had a right to call themselves "free," whatever the slave-holders said, — free before God, if not before man. If all army oaths had been as just in intention, the government and morality would have been the gainers.

The actual payment of the money was not completed until October 7.



Andrew Smith

In late November, the 54th and 55th participated in an expedition to sever the Charleston and Savannah rail line in support of General Sherman's operations. On November 30 the expedition encountered a smaller Confederate force at Honey Hill and were repulsed. The battle led to the awarding of a Medal of Honor to Corporal Andrew Smith in 2001.

In February 1865 the 55th was part of a large Union force pushing on towards the Cradle of the Confederacy in Charleston. The city had been the object of serious Union attempts at capture for two years and on Sunday, Feb. 19 the word came that the Confederates were abandoning the city. The Record (p. 56) describes the experience of the 55th marching into the liberated city and the joyous welcome it received.

(its evacuation. Words would fail to describe the scene which those who witnessed it will never forget, — the welcome given to a regiment of colored troops by their people redeemed from slavery. As shouts, prayers, and blessings resounded on every side, all felt that the hardships and dangers of the siege were fully repaid. The few white inhabitants left in the town were either alarmed or indignant, and generally remained in their houses; but the colored people turned out *en masse*. Assiduously had they been taught to regard the “Yanks” as their enemies; carefully had every channel of information been closed against them: but all to no purpose. “Bress de Lord,” said an old, gray-haired woman, with streaming eyes, and hands clasped and raised toward heaven, “bress de Lord, I’s waited for ye, and prayed for ye, long time, and I knowed you’d come, an ye has done come at last;” and she expressed the feelings of all.)

Some white residents of Charleston did not care for the city they thought they owned to be occupied by Black soldiers, according to *The Record*:

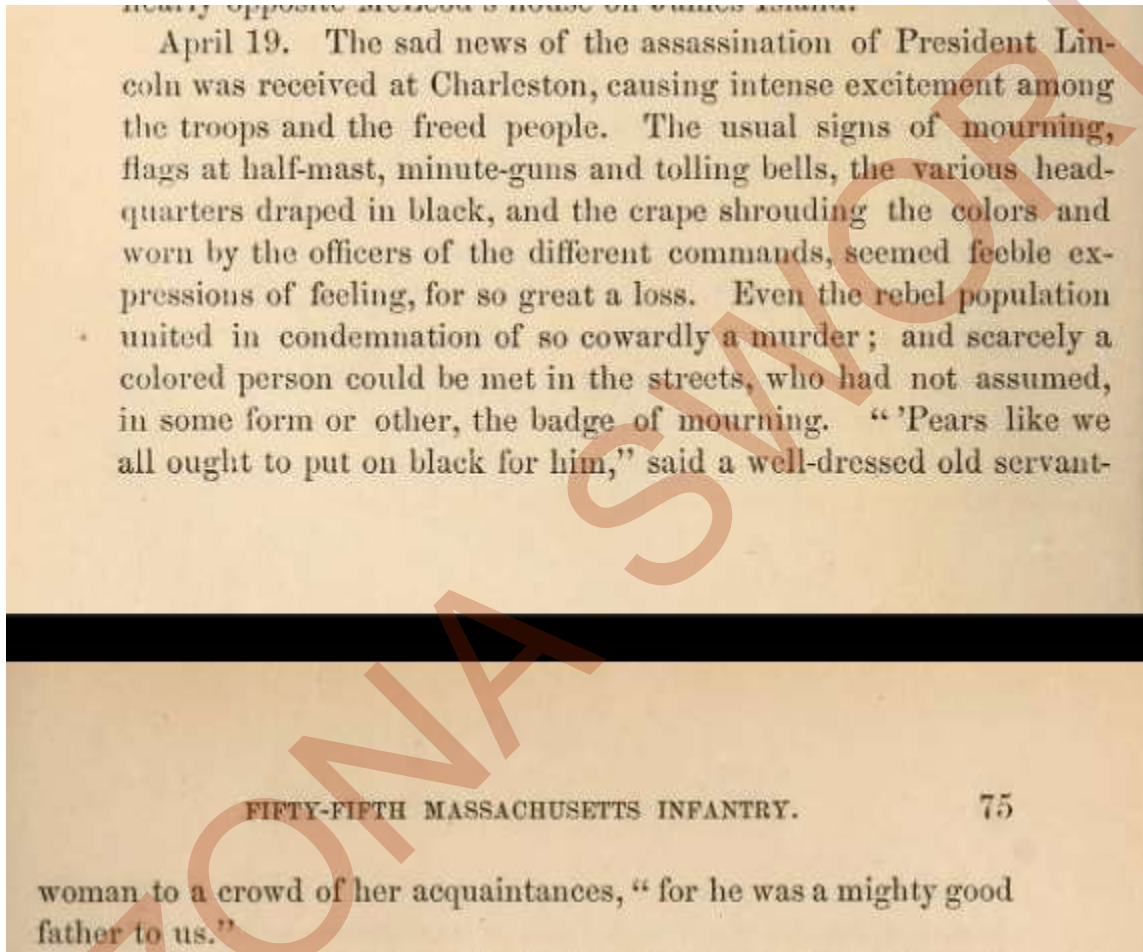
FIFTY-FIFTH MASSACHUSETTS INFANTRY.

57

prevost-marshal. Little disorder, however, occurred. Some pigs, geese, and chickens came to untimely ends, both regularly and irregularly, as was to be expected, and some of the white inhabitants complained that the colored troops insulted them, which, when it is considered that they thought it an insult for a black man to address them without first removing his hat, was also to be expected; but no one was hurt, and no complaints brought against the men of the regiment were found to rest on any substantial basis. The troops had been besieging the place for nearly two years, knowing it as the birthplace and hot-bed of rebellion, yet no unusual effort was required to restrain them.

In April, the men of the 55th saw thousands of refugees leaving the plantations of South Carolina, certain that the Confederates were defeated and that slavery would soon end. According to *The Record*; "To them it appeared a flight from slavery to freedom. Many, it is to be feared, perished from want and disease in an over-crowded city." [p. 73]

Word came on April 19 of Lincoln's assassination:



By the end of April, the major Confederate armies had surrendered, but the 55th became aware of attacks on the African American population in the area.

Reports having been continually received at district headquarters, that, since the return of the expedition to Eutaw Springs, outrages had been constantly perpetrated on the colored people at many points in St. Andrews' Parish, and that, notwithstanding the surrender of Lee and Johnston, and the President's proclamation, they were still continued, the Fifty-fifth received orders; May 2, to be in readiness, with six days' rations, to proceed to Adams' Run, and a section of the Third New-York Battery was sent over to accompany them. Meanwhile Capt. Torrey, of Gen. Hartwell's staff, started out, in company with Capt. Ellsworth, Lieut. Gannet, and Sergt. Fountain, with a flag of truce, to communicate, if possible, with Major Jenkins, said to be in command of the cavalry in our front; but he failed to find either Major Jenkins or any of his command.

The occupation duties occupied the regiment for the next couple of months, but the Fourth of July was celebrated in style. According to *The Record* (p. 82) "The Fourth of July was celebrated with a review of all the troops, firing of salutes, music, &c. The inhabitants of the town, and from miles around, black and white, turned out to witness the military display. Many were the gray uniforms to be seen among the crowd, the wearers of which must have seen with surprise the precision of the firings, marching, and drill of the colored regiments."



2nd Lt. James M. Trotter was born a slave but he was freed by his father.

Based in Orangeburg, South Carolina, the men of the regiment helped construct a school with some acting as teachers. Lieutenant James Monroe Trotter of the 55th, one of the army's first Black officers, devoted himself to visiting local plantations "to see that they were treating properly the colored people." Egerton (p. 295).

In July, German immigrant General Carl Schurz passed through on his information gathering tour of the South. Then word came that the regiment would be returning to Boston. As it began its departure from South Carolina, the 55th was cheered by the Germans in the 54th New York Volunteer Infantry. The 54th NY, nicknamed the Schwarze Jaeger Regiment, was recruited in Brooklyn and Manhattan. In September the regiment was mustered out.

On Saturday, Sept. 23, the Fifty-fifth was paid off, and discharged from the service of the United States. On the following Monday, the regiment was received at Boston by the recruiting committee, and by a committee of the colored citizens, and marched through some of the streets to the Common, escorted by Capt. Gaul's company of militia, the "Shaw Guard," and several associations of colored citizens. The streets were lined with friendly spectators, and cheers and hearty greetings told plainly enough of the confidence and regard that the regiment had secured for itself at home. After a "Dress Parade" on the Common, the last orders were given, "The Parade is dismissed!" "Break ranks, march!" An hour was given to a bountiful collation furnished by the friends of the regiment, to greetings from those of the home friends who had succeeded in "getting inside," and to parting words with comrades. The regiment then quietly disbanded, most of the men taking the afternoon trains for their homes at the West. 32 commissioned officers and 822 enlisted men were mustered out; of these, 18 officers and 653 men had left Readville in 1863, and had served with the regiment from its organization.

The Record gives the summary of the deaths of men in the regiment (p. 110)

CAUSES OF DEATH.	
Disease.	Typhoid fever . . . . . 33
	Chronic diarrhœa . . . . . 8
	Pneumonia . . . . . 8
	Consumption . . . . . 6
	General debility . . . . . 6
	Dysentery . . . . . 2
	Small-pox . . . . . 1
	Measles . . . . . 1
	Congestive chills . . . . . 1
	Unknown (mostly died away from regiment) . . . . . 46
Sentence general court-martial . . . . . 4	
Accident . . . . . 4	
Murdered . . . . . 1	
In action, or from wounds received . . . . . 54	
	175

There is also a month-by-month record of sickness and death within the regiment. Note that nearly all desertions took place after the end of the war.



Private Nahum Gardner Hazzard

ARIZONA SWORDS



STATISTICS OF ENLISTED MEN.

DATE.	AVERAGE SICK. Present.	DEATHS.			DESERTION.
		Diseases.	In action or from wounds.	Other causes.	
1863.					
July . . . . .	-	7	-	-	3
Aug. . . . .	119	10	-	-	-
Sept. . . . .	156	8	-	-	-
Oct. . . . .	198	10	-	-	-
Nov. . . . .	122	10	-	-	1
Dec. . . . .	116	6	-	-	-
1864.					
Jan. . . . .	112	4	-	-	-
Feb. . . . .	49	1	-	3	-
March . . . . .	18	1	-	-	-
April . . . . .	47	5	-	-	-
May . . . . .	97	2	-	-	-
June . . . . .	63	2	-	1	-
July . . . . .	80	3	11	2	-
Aug. . . . .	89	2	-	-	-
Sept. . . . .	72	5	-	-	-
Oct. . . . .	58	2	-	-	1
Nov. . . . .	53	1	30	1	-
Dec. . . . .	20	6	10	-	3*
1865.					
Jan. . . . .	16	3	1	1	1
Feb. . . . .	8	7	-	-	-
March . . . . .	34	9	2	-	-
April . . . . .	39	-	-	-	-
May . . . . .	23	2	-	1	-
June . . . . .	41	-	-	-	-
July . . . . .	58	4	-	-	21
Aug. . . . .	-	1	-	-	-
Sept. . . . .	-	1	-	-	-
		112	54	9	30

\* During the year; exact date unknown.

This table shows when new men were received into the regiment.

RECRUITS RECEIVED.			
1863 . . . . .	1	Oct. 12, 1864 . . . 10	March 25, 1865 . . . 6
Jan., 1864 . . . . .	15	Oct. 23, 1864 . . . 48	Feb. 1, 1865 . . . 19
March 14, 1864 . . . . .	1	March 12, 1865 . . . 16	April 15, 1865 . . . 1
May 7, 1864 . . . . .	1	March 20, 1865 . . . 31	April 17, 1865 . . . 1
June 14, 1864 . . . . .	1	March 22, 1865 . . . 1	May, 1865 . . . . . 1
Total . . . . .			153

The roster of enlisted men can be found beginning on page 113 of The Record.

**Some Men of the Regiment**



William Dupree of the 55th:

ARIZONA SWORDS



Nicholas Said, the former African slave had lived in Europe, Africa, Canada, and the United States:

## 55th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment

The **55th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment** was the sister regiment of the renowned Massachusetts 54th Volunteers during the latter half of the American Civil War. The enactment of the Emancipation Proclamation by United States President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863 had opened the way for the enlistment of free men of color and newly liberated slaves to fight for their freedom within the Union Army. As the ranks of the 54th Massachusetts quickly reached its full complement of recruits, an overflow of colored volunteers continued to pour in from several other states outside Massachusetts—many of whom simply had not arrived in time—prompting Governor John Albion Andrew to authorize yet another regiment of colored soldiers sponsored by the Commonwealth. Thus, the 55th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry came into being.

Although Union forces had achieved a victory at the Battle of Antietam in September 1862, two years of war had taken a great toll in men and resources. Yet, in spite of this, free men of color remained largely excluded from taking up arms as soldiers in the defense of the Union and their own continued liberty. In his Pulitzer Prize winning book *Battle Cry of Freedom* noted historian James M. McPherson wrote: “Despite the service of black soldiers in the [American] Revolution and the War of 1812, Negroes had been barred from state militias since 1792 and the regular army had never enrolled black soldiers. The prejudices of the old order died hard.” In a speech delivered on March 21, 1863, the great abolitionist orator Frederick Douglass recounted how he had “...implored the imperiled nation

to unchain against her foes, her powerful black hand.” Under the leadership of Governor Andrew, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts took decisive action to do just that. Both the 54th and the 55th regiments were mustered in at Camp Meigs in Readville, Massachusetts, near Boston, and were trained there in that camp. The two regiments ultimately brigaded together, fighting and dying side by side during the campaign at Honey Hill, South Carolina, on November 30, 1864. It was from the 54th Massachusetts that officers Norwood Penrose Hallowell and Alfred Stedman Hartwell were promoted and mustered in as Colonel and Lieutenant Colonel, respectively, to lead the newly formed regiment, with Charles Barnard Fox of the 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry mustered in as major. Together with the 2nd and 3rd North Carolina Colored Volunteers (which later became renumbered as the 36th and 37th U.S. Colored Troops respectively), it was a part of "Wild's African Brigade" led by Edward A. Wild for much of the war.

Following departure from Boston for North Carolina and before seeing action in battle, Colonel Hallowell took a furlough to the north in order to seek treatment of a severe wound he had suffered at Antietam, and ultimately resigned his commission never to return to active duty. In turn, officers Hartwell and Fox were promoted to lead the regiment as Colonel and Lt. Colonel, respectively, with Sigourney Wales mustered in as major. Coincidentally, the newly formed regiment received its regimental colors from Governor Andrew on July 18, 1863, the very day that the Massachusetts 54th launched its fateful assault on Fort Wagner at Morris Island, South Carolina.

Due to the Commonwealth's relatively small black population, both the 54th Massachusetts and, subsequently, the 55th Massachusetts, were made up of free men of color recruited from other states, including Ohio, New York, and Pennsylvania. The State of Ohio provided 222 recruits to the 55th Massachusetts, more than any other northern state. Among these was James Monroe Trotter of Chillicothe, Ohio, father of William Monroe Trotter, an early civil rights activist and a co-founder of the Niagara Movement, the direct predecessor to the NAACP. William Monroe Trotter was also a graduate of Harvard University and numbered among the 100 Greatest African Americans as compiled by Molefi Kete Asante, Ph.D.

At the time of formation, the colored troops of Massachusetts were promised a pay rate of \$13.00 per month, equal to that of all other active recruits throughout the Union Army. This promise was not initially honored, principally due to inaction of the U.S. Congress. On principle, these men almost unanimously chose to forgo their pay altogether until this discrepancy was fully rectified. And according to the Civil War Index: "Like the 54th, a grave injustice was done the men of the 55th in the matter of pay, as the Federal paymasters offered the men but \$10 a month. This, they consistently refused to accept, and serious trouble with the men was narrowly averted in consequence." By one account, James Monroe Trotter "was the first soldier to step forth and say to the paymaster 'No, sir; we'll never take it. We are soldiers, we will accept nothing less than the soldier's pay. We are perfectly willing to take the soldier's fare, but we will not degrade the name of an American soldier.'" This circumstance persisted for a period of eighteen months before the matter was finally settled through action taken by the War Department.

In her 1995 article 'History of 55th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry', Civil War historian Katherine Dhalle stated the following: "The war that had taken so many lives had also seen fit to form many survivors into the leaders of a new, reunited country. Despite frustrations, disappointments, obstacles, and restrictions, the men of the 55th bore their military office well. Instead of retreating in the face of adversity, whether it be the enemy, their fellow officers, or their own government, they continued in their quest to promote freedom and preserve the Union at all costs. For this they deserve our unending respect and admiration. As well, the brave men of the regiment, both black and white, who fought side by side, and lived through the inequities of a discriminatory government, deserve to be remembered as the heroes they are. Nothing less would be acceptable."



## History of 55th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry

by Katherine Dhalle

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So much has been written recently about Colonel Robert Gould Shaw and the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. The movie *Glory* brought their story to the silver-screen and enhanced our historical and cultural awareness of the role black soldiers played in the Civil War. Yet few people know that there was a sister regiment to the 54th - - the 55th Massachusetts. Even fewer know that the 55th trained at the same camp as the 54th and like her sister regiment, went without pay for nearly 18 months. Ironically, on July 18, 1863, just hours before the 54th Massachusetts launched its historic, ill-fated charge on Fort Wagner in far-away South Carolina, the 55th was presented its regimental colors by Massachusetts Governor John A. Andrew. Both regiments would experience the same bigotry at the

hands of the government and their fellow soldiers, and both regiments would eventually be brigaded together and would fight and die, side by side at Honey Hill, South Carolina on November 30, 1864.

In January of 1863, after the incorporation of the Emancipation Proclamation, Governor Andrew asked for and received permission from the War Department to recruit a Negro regiment for the Union Army. Recruiting efforts began in earnest when George Stearns, a friend of the Governor's formed a string of recruiting stations across the northern states. To complete his endeavor, he enlisted the help of John Mercer Langston. Langston was so successful in his assignment that when more men that necessary showed up for enlistment, the 55th Massachusetts was formed. Everywhere Langston went, he found colored men enthusiastic for the Union, and ready and anxious to prove their loyalty by their deeds.<sup>1</sup> From Ohio alone, a total of 222 men enlisted in the 55th - - a number almost twice as large as Pennsylvania and far greater than any other northern state.

Recruits for the 55th began arriving at Camp Meigs in Readville and they immediately moved into the barracks recently vacated by the 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry. Norwood Penrose Hallowell and Alfred Stedman Hartwell were designated Colonel and Lieutenant Colonel respectively, both having been promoted from the already-formed 54th. Charles B. Fox of the 2nd Massachusetts was promoted to Major.

On May 28th, Robert Gould Shaw and the 54th Massachusetts left Boston and marched into history. That same day, the recruits of the 55th were transferred to the barracks thus vacated, and the routine of drill and discipline began<sup>2</sup> and continued until July 21st when orders were received for the 55th Massachusetts to embark for Newbern, North Carolina. The regiment had originally been ordered to proceed to New York, but the recent Draft Riots in that city curtailed any such plans. Owing to the excited state of the public mind, and a heavy shower, which commenced before the column reached the wharf, the contemplated review by the Governor on the Common was omitted. The regiment marched through Boston with loaded muskets and fixed bayonets and five rounds of ball cartridges per man.

Shortly after their arrival in North Carolina, news came of the severe repulse of General Gilmore's forces at Fort Wagner and the 55th was ordered to report to Folly Island, next to Morris Island. For over six months the regiment was at work in the trenches on Morris Island, and on picket duty and fatigue duty. It was this duty that in September of 1863, led to the Confederate evacuation of Forts Wagner and Gregg as well as the construction of the Swamp Angel battery. On this battery was erected a 200 pounder Parrott gun which was used to shell the City of Charleston.

On September 24th, Colonel Hallowell left for the North on a 30-day furlough to receive treatment for an old wound in his arm that he had received at the Battle of Antietam. He would not return to the regiment and was obliged to resign his commission. Alfred Hartwell and Charles Fox were soon mustered in as Colonel and Lieutenant Colonel with Sigourney Wales as Major.

About this time, rumors regarding the pay of the regiment's enlisted men began circulating the camp. When first organized, the 54th and 55th had been assured by both the War Department and Governor Andrew that they would receive the same pay, rations, and clothing as white troops.<sup>5</sup> However, the men were offered the sum of only \$10.00 per month, less \$3.00 for clothing allowance. The enlisted men refused almost unanimously to receive this offer, preferring to await a decision of the War Department, or the action of Congress, to give them their just dues.

Governor Andrew pressed the issue of a supplemental pay act and this law passed the Massachusetts Legislature on November 16th. On December 11, 1863, Major Sturges, paymaster for the state and Mr. Edward W. Kinsley, a Boston merchant arrived at the camp on Folly Island to offer the men the difference between the \$10.00 a month, and the promised \$13.00...but the men respectfully declined it. They felt that their manhood was at stake. They were regarded as good enough to be killed and wounded, and to work in the trenches side by side with white soldiers, so they said they would wait until they got their dues.

In February of 1864, the regiment was ordered to Jacksonville, Florida to join an expedition under General Truman Seymour. On February 19th, six companies of the 55th were marched out approximately 13 miles in the support of Seymour's forces (the 54th among them), who on the 29th, would fight and lose the Battle of Olustee. At no time was the 55th engaged and on the 22nd, the entire regiment would return to Jacksonville and later be moved to Palatka, Florida.

From that camp on April 7th, Colonel Hartwell wrote to his old friend Edward Kinsley: I can hardly write, talk, eat or sleep, I am so anxious and indignant that pay is not forthcoming, or official assurance of pay, for my men. Can anything be done to hasten this thing? No man staying home can imagine how great and terrible is the wrong done these men, and the distress they suffer. I do all I can to make things right, and there is a great deal to almost discourage us. The wives of the men, they say, often reduced to degradation that drives the husbands almost crazy. Leave nothing undone; my dear sir, to get us the greenbacks very soon. Upon the regiment's return to Folly Island, Colonel Hartwell attempted to gain approval to go North in an attempt to pursue the pay issue. He left for Hilton Head on April 25th but would return to camp on the 28th having failed in his endeavor.

Because of the refusal of the Government to settle the pay issue, morale within the unit was faltering. Several mutinous disturbances among the enlisted men occurred that discouraged Hartwell even further. To counter-act these problems, he proposed the commissioning of men of African descent to the grade of 2nd Lieutenant. On May 24th, 1st Sergeant John Freeman Shorter was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant by Governor Andrew but the Department Commander, General John P. Hatch refused to accept his discharge as Sergeant and muster as Lieutenant because men of African descent could not be commissioned in the United States Volunteers.

On June 5th Hartwell once again traveled to Hilton Head to gain permission to go to Washington regarding the pay issue. Armed with a letter of introduction from the Post Commander, Hartwell met with General Foster who chose to send Colonel Edward Needles Hallowell of the 54th Massachusetts in his place.

Further frustrated by the receipt of anonymous threatening letters from the enlisted men, Colonel Hartwell took it upon himself to pen the following letter on June 13th to the Secretary of War: Sir: Application is respectfully made that this Regiment be mustered out of the service of the United States, for the reason that the men have not been paid according to the contract made by the Government. Shortly after, Hartwell received a reply from Major J. F. Anderson, Aide-De-Camp of General Foster: General Foster is in receipt of your favor of the 13th inst., and directs me to inform you that...he considers the letter to the Secretary of War as ill-timed. The General Commanding is afraid that your letters show an inclination to make trouble, or at least appears that your course is not calculated to allay the existing difficulties.

On July 2nd, the 55th was brigaded with the 103rd New York and the 33rd U.S.C.T. and ordered to attack Fort Lamar, a large Rebel earthwork fortification on James Island, South Carolina. Although the

Fort was not taken during this skirmish, (known as the Battle of River's Causeway), two brass 12-pound Napoleon guns were captured by the 55th from a Confederate artillery group that had been stationed about a mile in front of Lamar. These guns were returned to Folly Island and permission was received from the Commanding General to have them placed in front of the 55th headquarter, where they remained for a long time as trophies.

August 22, 1864 finally brought the pay issue to a close. Word was officially received that all colored troops were to receive equal pay from January 1, 1864, and providing for payment on the same basis, from date of enlistment, of all enlisted previous to that date who were free on or before April 21, 1861, to which latter fact each man was required to make oath.<sup>12</sup> The task of administering the oath fell to Lt. Colonel Fox. He wrote of his experience: Never may I have such another three hours experience. I felt that I must not fail and I knew that no two companies could be treated alike...I had to use all the little eloquence I was master of to try to turn them from selfish thoughts of themselves...to the thousands of their brethren in the living death of slavery, until the last man raised his hand, saying with tears and bred a freeman to submit to such a humiliation.<sup>13</sup> In the end, only a few men refused to take the oath, more out of stubbornness than principle and only two or three acknowledged having been slaves.

For the regiment, October 7th turned out to be a banner day, the day they were all finally paid off. The process took three days to complete and when it was finally completed the men had sent home to their families the amount of over \$60,000. As well, it is not known that in a single case any man present with the regiment failed to repay his debts. On October 18th Colonel Hartwell left for the North on a 30-day furlough.

During his absence, the regiment continued at Folly Island until November 23rd, when instructions were received from General Hatch to be ready to move at a moment's notice. The expected expedition was to be the destruction of the Charleston and Savannah Railroad and then an advance on the village of Grahamville which would leave Savannah and Charleston vulnerable. When the regiment arrived at Hilton Head on November 28th, Colonel Hartwell was there to meet them. He had been appointed to command a brigade consisting of the 54th and 55th Massachusetts as well as the 102nd and 26th U.S.C.T.

The Battle of Honey Hill, South Carolina, took place on November 30, 1864. In Hartwell's words: We landed at Boyd's Neck, and at daylight next morning started for the railroad. After Marching a few miles and encountering slight opposition from the enemy, we came upon them, heavily entrenched behind an earthwork, and a battery of field pieces.<sup>15</sup> Hartwell continues: The leading brigade had been driven back, when I was ordered in with a portion of my brigade; and I was also knocked out. I was hit first in the hand just before making a charge, then my horse was killed under me, and I was hit afterwards several times while they were taking me to the rear.<sup>16</sup> One of my aides, Captain Crane, was killed, and another, Lieutenant Hill was blown from his horse by a concussion of a shell and taken to the rear.? During the furious fight, the Color-bearer was shot and killed and it was Private Andrew Jackson Smith (later promoted to Color- Sergeant), who would retrieve and save both the State and Federal flags. Despite the fact that the expedition and its goal was unattained, Savannah would be taken by Sherman in December. The coastal railroad would survive less than two months, Grahamville would burn, and Charleston would fall.

To the men of the 55th, this engagement gave the opportunity which the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts had at Fort Wagner, of proving that a black regiment, well-disciplined and well officered, could behave as gallantly under fire as the best troops in the service.



While Colonel Hartwell was recuperating from his wounds, the 55th stayed encamped at Boyd's Landing until January 11, 1865, when the men were ordered to board steamers and head for Fort Thunderbolt near Savannah. During his convalescence, Hartwell had been Brevetted a Brigadier General for his bravery at Honey Hill. Now, on the 30th of January, the regiment was pleasantly surprised at his arrival at the camp.

February 10th would find Hartwell and the 55th involved in yet another attack on James Island. Known as the Battle of Grimball's Causeway or the Last Fight for Charleston, each side would retreat after the brief skirmish with no sufficient gains made.

On February 18th, news was received that Confederate General Hardee had evacuated Charleston. The 55th was ordered to bring up the rear of the advancing Union troops on their way to occupy this seat of secession. Along the way, the regiment was ordered to forage for cattle and to supervise the large numbers of contrabands who joined in the march. After a few days upon Sullivan's Island, we were transferred to Charleston. We landed just before sunset and I [Hartwell] had the pleasure of marching through Charleston with a brigade at the head of which was the Negro regiment, the 55th Massachusetts.

In the latter part of February, and all of March and April, the regiment was involved in Expeditions into the interior of South Carolina to ascertain the number of enemy forces that might still be in the area. During this time, the 55th was ordered to rebuild several bridges over the Santee and Biggin Creeks. Two companies of the regiment participated in the rescue of four members of the 54th New York who had been captured by rebel cavalry at Moncks Corner, South Carolina. As well, the entire regiment would be placed on call as a reserve unit to back up General Potter's movements within the interior and they would also return to James Island. Since the Confederates had recently evacuated the area, the 55th Massachusetts was responsible to visit, garrison, and dismantle all the rebel guns at the line of batteries on the island.

On May 1, 1865, Hartwell was placed in command of a brigade consisting of the 25th Ohio, 55th Massachusetts, 102nd U.S.C.T., and a section of Battery B of the 3rd New York Artillery. This brigade was ordered to Orangeburg, South Carolina, and would be a part of the Northern District, Department of the South. Their assignments consisted of provost duties, giving the oath of allegiance to civilians and paroled southern soldiers, and setting up a Commission on Labor to ensure that ex-masters and freedmen entered into equitable contracts for work and remuneration.

While all of this was going on, the contracts between the black soldiers and the government were still unsettled for those Sergeants who had been commissioned but not mustered as 2nd Lieutenants. But things were to change, for on the 22nd and 28th of June, Sergeants John F. Shorter, William Dupree and James M. Trotter were finally mustered into the regiments as 2nd Lieutenants. However, despite this bit of goodness, Trotter wrote: There is much feeling in the Regiment among the officers against these promotions of colored men in Regiments with white officers; but all the best officers are in favor of it...Some talk of resigning on account of these promotions. I cannot say that they will do so...I do not know how it will all turn out, but Dupree and I will try to do our duty as officers let prejudice be as great as it may.

On the same day, Hartwell penned the following to Governor Andrew: The colored Sergeants are mustered. The result is now uncertain...I propose to await the resignation of officers who have declaimed against this action of the government, and then if I find their influence not for the best and that the policy of having colored officers is not to be adopted by the government, I shall recommend them to resign for their own good and the good of the regiment.

Fortunately, General Hartwell never had to ask for the resignation of these black officers and the regiment was mustered out of service August 29, 1865. The war that had taken so many lives had also seen fit to form many survivors into the leaders of a new, reunited country. Despite frustrations, disappointments, obstacles, and restrictions, the men of the 55th bore their military office well. Instead of retreating in the face of adversity, whether it be the enemy, their fellow officers, or their own government, they continued in their quest to promote freedom and preserve the Union at all costs. For this they deserve our unending respect and admiration. As well, the brave men of the regiment, both black and white, who fought side by side, and lived through the inequities of a discriminatory government, deserve to be remembered as the heroes they are. Nothing less would be acceptable.

## The Fifty-fifth Massachusetts Colored Regiment March in the streets of Charleston, February 21, 1865



***“Marching on!”—The Fifty-fifth Massachusetts Colored Regiment singing John Brown’s March in the streets of Charleston, February 21, 1865***

*Photo Source: Drawing from Harper’s Weekly, March 1865; image is at the Library of Congress, Reproduction Number: LC-USZ62-105560 (w film copy neg.) LC-USZ62-117999 (w film copy neg.)*

The *Record of the Service of the Fifty-fifth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry* – a book about the history of this majority black regiment during the Civil War – tells of an event that was

miraculous for the times. It is hard for us, today, to realize how sublime and surreal it was that on February 21, 1865, African American soldiers entered the city of Charleston, South Carolina, liberating the enslaved people there from bondage. It was an event that was unthinkable just several years earlier. But 1865 was the Year of the Unthinkable – and for the enslaved people of Charleston, the Year of Jubilee. And freedom came with the face of black men in blue suits. For northerners, South Carolina was considered the Cradle of the Confederacy. It was, after all, the first state to secede from the Union; ten other states would follow her lead and combine to form the Confederate States of America. The shooting war between the Union and Confederacy started on April 12, 1861, when Fort Sumter – a United States military fort that protected the entrance to Charleston harbor – was attacked by Confederate forces. The fort surrendered to the Confederates after two days of artillery shelling. Four years of fighting followed; anywhere from 620,000 to 750,000 men died, and that doesn't include those who were injured or missing in action. The American Civil War was an American bloodbath.

But African Americans saw South Carolina in a different negative light. At the start of the war, South Carolina was the blackest state in the Union: 57% of its residents were slaves, and another 1.4% were free blacks. Working conditions throughout the state could be harsh, especially in the rice fields along the Atlantic coast. Although the coastal town of Charleston was something of an outlier in this overwhelmingly rural state: it was an urban enclave with a white majority (in 1860, Charleston had a population of 23,000 whites, 14,000 slaves, and 3,200 free blacks). As the state's major trading center, it was bustling with economic activity, including slave trading businesses that engaged in the sale of property in human beings. This place of white wealth was the site of many black broken hearts.

And if it had been South Carolina's choice, it would remain that way. In its 1860 secession declaration, the state asserted that “we affirm that these ends for which (the United States) government was instituted have been defeated, and the Government itself has been made destructive of them by the action of the non-slaveholding States. Those States have assumed the right of deciding upon the propriety of our domestic institutions; and have denied the rights of property established in fifteen of the States and recognized by the [Constitution](#); they have denounced as sinful the institution of slavery; they have permitted open establishment among them of societies, whose avowed object is to disturb the peace and to eloign the property of the citizens of other States. They have encouraged and assisted thousands of our slaves to leave their homes; and those who remain, have been incited by emissaries, books and pictures to servile insurrection.” A new, Confederate nation would remove these threats to their system of bondage, but the war with the Union would have to be won first. A loss to the Union might make the state's worst nightmares come true.

Over the course of the war, the Union made attempts to capture Charleston and the military forts around it. Most famously, the 54th Massachusetts Infantry regiment – a majority black regiment – was repulsed in its attack on Fort Wagner in July 1863. The unit suffered heavy casualties. Although defeated, their spirited attack and sacrifice was recognized and celebrated throughout the northern states. Many years later, in 1989, the 54th Massachusetts became the focus of a movie named [Glory](#).

But the Union would finally have its day. In January 1865, Union forces led by General William Sherman entered South Carolina from Georgia, and the Confederates could not give them much opposition. In February 1865, Confederate General Pierre Gustave Toutant-Beauregard ordered that Charleston be evacuated, although many residents remained thereafter. On February 15, the mayor of Charleston surrendered the city to Union General [Alexander Schimmelfennig](#). This was followed by a procession of nearby Union troops into the city, which was headed by regiments of black troops.

The 55th Massachusetts Infantry and 21st United States Colored Infantry regiments led the way. The 21st USCI, formerly known as the 3rd and 4th Regiments of the South Carolina Volunteer Infantry (African Descent), included former slaves from the South Carolina Low Country, not too far away. The significance and symbolism of their actions – that they were black men who were freeing black people from slavery – was neither lost on them, nor on the enslaved people they liberated. Jubilee was indeed at hand.

The *Record of the Service of the Fifty-fifth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry*, which charts the history of the regiment, recounted the arrival of black troops into Charleston. It was an event, they said, that would live in memory forever:

...after a short delay to await the return of foraging parties, the line of march was resumed for (the town of) Mount Pleasant, opposite Charleston... the Fifty-fifth was the first body of troops to enter the town after its evacuation. Words would fail to describe the scene which those who witnessed it will never forget, — the welcome given to a regiment of colored troops by their people redeemed from slavery, as shouts, prayers, and blessings resounded on every side, all felt that the hardships and dangers of the siege were fully repaid. The few white inhabitants left in the town were either alarmed or indignant, and generally remained in their houses; but the colored people turned out en masse. Assiduously had they been taught to regard the "Yanks" as their enemies; carefully had every channel of information been closed against them: but all to no purpose.

"Bress de Lord," said an old, gray-haired woman, with streaming eyes, and hands clasped and raised toward heaven, "bress de Lord, I's waited for ye, and prayed for ye, long time, and I knew you'd come, an ye has done come at last;" and she expressed the feelings of all...

Daylight was fading when the line was formed to march through the city to a camping ground on Charleston Neck. Before the march commenced, three rousing cheers were given by the men of the Fifty-fifth, and given with a will. They were then told that the only restriction placed on them in passing through the city, would be to keep in the ranks, and that they might shout and sing as they chose.

Few people were on the wharf when the troops landed, or in the street when the line was formed; but the streets, on the route through the city, were crowded with the colored population. Cheers, blessings, prayers, and songs were heard on every side. Men and women crowded to shake hands with men and officers, many of them talked earnestly and understandingly of the past and present. The white population remained within their houses, but curiosity led even them to peep through the blinds at the 'black Yankees.'

On through the streets of the rebel city passed the column, on through the chief seat of that slave power, tottering to its fall. Its walls rung to the chorus of manly voices singing "John Brown," "Babylon is falling," and the "Battle-Cry of Freedom"; while, at intervals, the national airs, long unheard there, were played by the regimental band. The glory and the triumph of this hour may be imagined, but can never be described. It was one of those occasions which happen but once in a lifetime, to be lived over in memory for ever.

# THE BATTLE OF HONEY HILL

## Chapter XII

### A Brave Black Regiment

#### The History of the 54th Massachusetts, 1863-1865

by Captain Luis F. Emilio

Our arrival with other troops at Hilton Head was in consequence of General Foster's orders to cooperate with General Sherman in his "march to the sea," for the latter had telegraphed General Halleck from Kingston, Ga., November 11, 1864.

"I would like to have Foster break the Charleston and Savannah Railroad about Pocotaligo about the 1st of December."

A force of some five thousand men was gathered at Port Royal and organized as the "Coast Division," under command of General Hatch. Gen. E. E. Potter's First Brigade was composed of the Fifty-sixth, One Hundred and Twenty-seventh, **One Hundred and Forty-fourth** and One Hundred and Fifty-seventh **New York**, Twenty-fifth Ohio, Thirty-second, Thirty-fourth, and Thirty-fifth United States Colored Troops; Col. A. S. Hartwell's Second Brigade, of the Fifty-fourth and Fifty-fifth Massachusetts, Twenty-sixth and One Hundred and Second United States Colored Troops. Lieut.-Col. William Ames commanded the artillery, consisting of Batteries B and F, Third New York, and Battery A, Third Rhode Island. Capt. George P. Hurlbut, Fourth Massachusetts Cavalry, had a detachment of his regiment. Admiral Dahlgren formed a naval brigade of sailors and marines with some howitzers for duty ashore under Commander George H. Preble, and ordered the gunboats "Pawnee," "Mingoe," "Pontiac," "Sonoma," "Winona," and "Wissahickon" to take part.

Our regiment started on this expedition in light marching order, with Lieutenant-Colonel Hooper, commanding, Acting Major Pope, Surgeon Brigs, Assistant-Surgeon Radzinsky, Adjutant Howard, Quartermaster Ritchie; Company C, Captain Homans and Lieutenants Bridgham and Spear; Company E, Lieutenant Chipman, commanding, and Lieutenant Cousens; Company G, Lieut. David Reid, commanding, and Lieutenant Webster; Company H. Captain Tucker and Lieutenant Stevens; Company A, Lieutenant Knowles; Company D, Lieutenant Emerson, commanding, and Lieutenant Hallett; Company I, Lieut. Lewis Reed; Company K, Lieutenant Leonard, commanding, and Lieut. Charles Jewett, - a force of twenty-one officers and 540 men. Captains T. L. Appleton and R. E. L. Jewett were on staff duty with General Hatch.

A large fleet was ready at Port Royal, the decks of the transports crowded with troops; and the pier at Hilton Head was full of stores and men awaiting transportation. During the 28th, Captain Pope's companies were transferred to the steamer "Golden Gate," on which was Colonel Hartwell. After

Companies A and E under Captain Homans were taken upon the steamer "Fraser," General Hatch made the "General Hooker" his flagship.

Orders were issued that the fleet start before daylight on the 29th at a signal light; but just as anchors were hauled up, a heavy fog came drifting in, preventing much progress. Owing to a mistake, the naval vessels did not move until 4 a.m., by which hour it was clear overhead, but the fog clung to the water below. However, they crept up Broad River, and at 8 a.m. entered a creek and were soon at Boyd's, where a dilapidated wharf served as a landing; not an army transport was to be seen, for they had either run into the wrong estuary, grounded, or come to anchor in consequence of the thick weather.

As the naval vessels approached, loud "holloas" came from a picket of the Third South Carolina Cavalry through the misty atmosphere; and their fires were seen burning in front of some huts. Soon uncultivated fields, stock grazing, and fine woodland about a plantation house were discovered as the fog lifted. From the landing a tortuous wagon-road led to Graham Ville, a village some eight or ten miles distant, near the Charleston and Savannah Railroad. Only a squadron of the Third South Carolina Cavalry and one field-piece were in the vicinity at this time. General Foster had selected this line of advance instead of the fortified roads leading to Coosawhatchie and Pocoligo. General Hatch's flagboat, the "Fraser," flying a blue pennant with a single star, on which were Companies G and E, was the first army vessel to arrive. The Fifty-fourth men, headed by Lieutenant-Colonel Hooper, sprang ashore eagerly, and were the first troops to land. A skirmish line was formed, and advanced without opposition, though several of the enemy's cavalymen were seen along the edge of the stream. Moving about half a mile, the companies were then halted and disposed to watch the enemy and resist attack. The Naval Brigade landed and advanced to the first cross-road, pushing a small force farther to the right, which met a few of the enemy. It then moved to a second cross-road and halted. The Thirty-second United States Colored Troops, one of the first regiments to arrive, was sent to support the blue Jackets.

Our companies on the "Golden Gate" started at the signal; but about daylight the pilot admitted that he was lost. When the fog lifted and land was seen nearby, a boat was sent ashore to obtain information. At last, the proper course was ascertained, and the craft made Boyd's Landing, the fourth transport to arrive. Captain Pope landed his men on the rude wharf one at a time, and then joined Lieutenant-Colonel Hooper up the road. Captain Homans's companies on the "Fraser" moved on time, but the steamer grounded. After a while she floated, and this detachment also disembarked at the landing and joined the regiment.

In the afternoon the creek was crowded with craft. General Foster was there at 2 p.m., and General Potter at 3:30. The latter infused new life into affairs. Small boats, were employed to put men ashore. General Potter moved out with the larger part of his brigade about 4 p.m. At the cross-road the general and Commander Preble had a consultation. Concluding that the map furnished was incorrect, and that the Naval Brigade was on the wrong road, General Potter moved the whole force back to the Coosawhatchie cross-road. There the Naval Brigade remained; and Potter's troops, continuing on to Bolan's church two miles distant, marched to the left in the direction of Savannah, when they should have turned to the right at the church to reach Grahamville. It is said that the guide employed-was either ignorant or faithless. Potter continued the march on the wrong road until after midnight, when he retraced his steps, going into bivouac about 2 a. m., on the 30th, at Bolan's church. About this rude structure painted white, the troops rested without fires, the pickets disturbed by occasional shots on the Grahamville road during the night. Our failure to seize the railroad on the 29th or very early the next morning was fatal to success, for the enemy took prompt and effective measures to oppose us. Their small cavalry force in the vicinity was collected; word was sent in every direction of our landing, and

that reinforcements must arrive the next morning or the positions would be given up. General Hardee could spare no troops from Savannah, but ordered two regiments from Charleston to Grahamville. But fortune favored the enemy by the opportune arrival at Savannah at 2 a.m., November 30, of Gen. Gustavus W. Smith with a force of Georgia militia brought from Macon by a roundabout way. Governor Brown had refused to allow his State troops to serve elsewhere than in Georgia; but General Smith permitted himself to execute the instructions of General Hardee, and the cars holding the Georgians were shunted from the rails of the Gulf to those of the Charleston and Savannah Railroad; the leading brigade arriving at Grahamville about 8 a.m., on the 30th. With Smith's and the local force, it was hoped to protect the railroad until the arrival of other troops later in the day. Col. C. J. Colcock, the district commander, who was "temporarily absent," arrived at Grahamville at 7 a. m. It was arranged that General Smith should advance about two miles to Honey Hill, which was already fortified for defense, and that Colonel Colcock should take some cavalry and one field-piece, and move in advance of that point to support his pickets and contest our advance. Colonel Hartwell at the landing made his headquarters at Boyd's house, and saw to the disposition of the troops as they arrived. The regiments were bivouacked in the fields; and the troops, not knowing how moments necessary for success were being lost, were in fine spirits.

Before daybreak on November 30, the regiments of Potter's brigade at the landing moved to join him, followed by Colonel Hartwell, with the Fifty-fifth Massachusetts and the remaining artillery. The Twenty-sixth and One Hundred and Second United States Colored Troops had not arrived at that hour. At about 7 a.m. our cavalry beyond Bolan's church reported the enemy advancing down the Grahamville road. General Hatch moved his column at 7:30 p.m., preceded by the One Hundred and Twenty-seventh New York, skirmishing. For half a mile the road was bounded by dense woods, then a cotton-field, beyond which were thick woods reaching to a creek crossed by a causeway. Across this field our skirmishers at 8:15 a.m. met the enemy's light troops, who retired slowly.

Our advance had crossed the field, when, at 8:30 a.m., the first cannon-shot was heard, coming from the enemy. General Hatch formed line of battle, and Lieut. E. A. Wildt's section, Battery B. Third New York, shelled the Confederates. Then our skirmishers entered the woods, and Col. George W. Baird's Thirty-second United States Colored Troops, moving along the causeway by the flank at the double-quick, through a severe fire which wounded Lieut.- Col. Edward A. Geary and killed or wounded a number of men, cleared the head of the causeway. Before this retirement the enemy set fire to the dead grass and stubble of an old field beyond the swamp which delayed our progress as intended, and they continued to annoy our advance with occasional shots. Over part of the way still farther onward the troops were confined to the narrow road in column by woods and swamps, while the skirmishers and flankers struggled through vines and underbrush. At a point where the road turned to the left, Colcock made his last stand before seeking his works at Honey Hill; and in the artillery firing that ensued the brave Lieutenant Wildt received a mortal wound.

General Smith was in position, protected by the earth works at Honey Hill. In his front was a swamp thick with underbrush and grass, through which flowed a sluggish stream. This stream was about one hundred and fifty yards in front of the earthwork, and was crossed by a bridge, the planks of which were torn up. - Bushes and trees covered the slight elevation occupied by the enemy. Their left reached into pine lands; the right along a fence skirting the swamp. The enemy's position and the bridge were concealed from our troops, coming up the road to the turn, by a point of woods. Just before the turn was reached, as one came from Bolan's church, a wood-road ran from the main road to the right, with an old dam between it and the creek.

General Smith's force engaged in the battle is given as about fourteen hundred effectives, and consisted of the First Brigade of Georgia Militia, the State Line Brigade of Georgia, Thirty-second and Forty-seventh Georgia Volunteers Athens Battalion, Augusta Battalion, detachments from four companies Third South Carolina Cavalry, and two guns each of the Beaufort Artillery and DePass's Battery, and three guns of the Lafayette Artillery. It is believed, however, that this force exceeded the total as given. General Smith posted his main body at the earthwork supporting the guns in position, a heavy line of skirmishers on either flank and a small reserve, giving Colonel Colcock the executive command.

Our skirmishers, on turning the bend of the road, were at once met by a heavy fire which drove them to cover General Hatch, perceiving that the enemy held a strong position, directed General Potter to put his troops into line, and the One Hundred and Twenty-seventh New York formed on the left of the road, then the Fifty-sixth New York and the One Hundred and Fifty-seventh New York on the extreme left. To the right of the road, he sent the **One Hundred and Forty-fourth New York** and Twenty-fifth Ohio. Lieut. George H. Crocker, with the section of Battery B, Third New York, was ordered into battery at the turn. Although it is difficult to establish the relative time of events, it is believed that these dispositions having been made, the Thirty-fifth United States Colored Troops, Col. James C. Beecher, charged up the road. It went forward with a cheer, but receiving a terrible fire, after severe loss, was forced to retire and form in support of the artillery.

Colonel Hartwell, commanding the Second Brigade, with eight companies of the Fifty-fifth Massachusetts under Lieut.- Col. Charles B. Fox, hearing volley firing breaking the pervading stillness, moved rapidly to the front. There the leaders filing along the wood-road, three companies became separated from the regiment when Colonel Hartwell ordered a charge in double column. Twice forced to fall back by the enemy's fire, their brave colonel giving the command, "Follow your colors!" and himself leading on horseback, the Fifty-fifth turned the bend, rushed up the road, and in the face of a deadly fire advanced to the creek But it was fruitless, for the pitiless shot and shell so decimated the ranks that the survivors retired after losing over one hundred men in five minutes, including Color Sergeant King, killed, and Sergeant-Major Trotter, Sergeant Shorter, and Sergeant Mitchell, wounded. Colonel Hartwell, wounded and pinned to the ground by his dead horse, was rescued and dragged to the wood by the gallant Lieut. Thomas F. Ellsworth of his regiment. Captains Crane and Boynton were both killed after displaying fear less gallantry. The One and Twenty-seventh New York supported this charge by an advance, but after the repulse retired also. On the right the Twenty-fifth Ohio and Thirty-second United States Colored Troops, swinging to the left, moved from the wood-road, forcing the enemy's left back to their works, but being met by a murderous fire, were brought to a stand, sustaining their position with great tenacity under severe losses for a considerable time. To this line the Battalion of Marines from the Naval Brigade was brought up later, forming on the right of the Thirty-second; and the three companies of the Fifty-fifth Massachusetts under Maj. William Nutt, which had separated from their regiment, formed to the left of the Twenty-fifth, while the **One Hundred and Forty-fourth New York** remained in support.

General Smith, on the part of the Confederates, was obliged to put his reserve into action when the full force of our attack was made. A Confederate officer wrote, when the action was at its height: " The noise of the battle at this time was terrific, the artillery crashing away in the centre, while volley after volley of musketry ran down both lines and were reverberated from surrounding forests."

It was 5 a.m. when reveille sounded for the Fifty-fourth, and two hours after, the regiment moved from bivouac; It was the rear-guard, and was directed to secure the communications for the division. The regiment marched rapidly over good roads with a bright sun overhead, making the morning hours



delightful. Not a hostile sound reached their ears as the men moved at route step, with only the tinkle, tinkle of pans and cups striking the bayonets, for music. After marching about two and a half miles, we came to the Coosawhatchie cross-road unprotected even by a picket. Lieutenant Colonel Hooper, deeming it imperative that this important point should be covered, detached Captain Pope with Companies C, O, G. and K to remain there until relieved. He then moved on with the other companies to Bolan's church, where Companies A and I under Lieut. Lewis Reed were left to picket the road beyond. Pushing forward again over a road clear of troops, Lieutenant-Colonel Hooper proceeded with only Companies E and H. Nearing the front, from which came sounds of battle, some stragglers and soldiers were encountered sitting on or about the fences at the sides of the road. As we approached, they took off their hats, and after hurraing, shouted, "Here's the Fifty-fourth!" Farther on the sailors were found halted. They were in good spirits, calling out, "Go in, boys! No loading in nine times there!" Still farther onward at about noon Lieutenant-Colonel Hooper was met by Col. William T. Bennett, the chief of General Hatch's staff, to whom application was made for orders. Bennett seemed excited, according to the lieutenant-colonel's account, and said but little else than "Charge! charge!" pointing to the front. Lieutenant-Colonel Hooper naturally asked, "Where" but received no other reply than "Charge!" Desirous to render service but realizing the folly of attempting to carry out such orders with but two companies when there was no concerted movement, and the artillery just at that time not being served, Lieutenant-Colonel Hooper moved his men to the left of the road and attempted to enter the wood by company front. Vines and underbrush, however, offered so great obstructions that at last, pushing on ahead, the men, followed him as best they could. He formed line not far from the road on wooded ground sloping to the creek, through the middle of which ran a fence.

There the men were ordered to lie down, to avoid the enemy's fire, which at times was sharp, and to which they were directed not to reply, but husband their ammunition. Firing came in their direction too from the rear, and as it was found to proceed from the One Hundred and Twenty-seventh New York, stationed behind and somewhat to the left, Lieutenant Colonel Hooper sent word of our position, and it was discontinued. Hugging the ground, although the firing in front swelled out at times into volleys, we suffered comparatively little. The whole left was paralyzed, in the position occupied, throughout the action. Such was the nature of the ground that it could have easily been held with a smaller force, and a part of the troops been spared for more enterprising work on the flanks. Meanwhile at the Coosawhatchie cross-road the wisdom of having that point guarded was demonstrated.

Captain Pope's account is, "I immediately threw out one company (K) under Leonard on the Coosawhatchie road as skirmishers, and with the others threw up a barricade across the road. Soon Leonard reported a body of cavalry coming down the road, and at the same time a naval ensign with two boat howitzers manned by sailors reported to me, sent back by Hatch from the main force. I was very glad to see them and at once sent word to Leonard to fall back as fast as the Rebel cavalry advanced. This he did; and when within easy range I ordered the ensign to fire. He gave them shrapnel with good aim, and they were apparently surprised, as they had seen nothing of artillery."

After this repulse and some time had elapsed Captain Pope was relieved by the Thirty-second United States Colored Troops, and moved on. Halting at the church for dinner just as fires were lighted, heavy volleys were heard, and he again moved forward at the double-quick. Nearing General Hatch and staff, the enthusiastic Capt. T. L. Appleton of "ours" flung up his cap, shouting, "Hurrah! here comes the old Fifty-fourth!" The road was found blocked with ambulances, caissons, and wagons causing the men to be strung out. It; was about 1:30 p.m. Captain Pope continues, saying, "I saw General Hatch speak to Colonel Bennett, chief of staff, who at once rode to me and said, 'Follow me.' I replied, " I would like a moment to close my men up, Colonel," when he said in a most excited manner, "General Hatch's orders are for you to follow me." . . . Well, after Bennett's remark I had only to follow, which I did. Arriving near

the section of artillery posted at the intersection of the roads, he halted, and said, 'Go to the rear of that battery, file to the left, and charge.' I obeyed orders, all but charging. Arriving on the right of the battery, I looked round for the first time and found only Lieut. David Reid and eight men. How the shot tore down that hill and up the road! I could see where the Fifty-fifth had charged, and their dead lying there. I went back, and only two men followed me." Lieutenant Reid and Corp. R. M. Foster of Company C were there killed. Captain Pope joined Colonel Beecher, Thirty-fifth United States Colored Troops, in the front battle-line, and after nearly an hour, hearing a familiar cheer on the right of the Thirty-fifth, found his companies there. Captain Homans's account is that the four companies were following Captain Pope, when, owing to the blockaded road and the passage of a light battery at full gallop, few were able to cross the road and they lost their leader.

In consequence, the column halted, uncertain where to go. Homan's took command and led to the right along the wood road and formed on the right of the Thirty-fifth United States Colored Troops. Adjutant Howard, the colors, and guard, owing to a mistaken order, did not follow Lieutenant Colonel Hooper's companies, but joined the four companies when they came up. In the position taken, Homans ordered the men to lie down. Color Sergeant Lenox, writing of that time, says, " We were hurried up and went into the woods on the right side of the road, and took our position near where there were, I think, three pieces of artillery. The gunners had a hard time of it. I believe two of the cannons were disabled. I saw two of the horses struck by shells, and an officer pitching out cartridges with his sword, and in a few minutes the caisson blew up. The woods were so thick in front that the movements of most of the force could not be seen.... Wagner always seemed to me the most terrible of our battles, but the musketry at Honey Hill was something fearful. The so-called 'Rebel yell' was more prominent than I ever heard it."

It is probable that the battery at full gallop which Captain Homans refers to was Battery F. Third New York Artillery, relieving Battery B. which Lieutenant Crocker had fought long and gallantly, although wounded.

Our last regiment to reach the field was Col. H. S. Chipman's One Hundred and Second United States Colored Troops. That officer took command of the Second Brigade.

After a severe contest our right fell back to the line of the old dam. Reconnaissance made from this force to the right front found no enemy. As the afternoon wore on, the sounds of battle sometimes stilled down to scattering shots, to rise again into crashes of musketry and cannon discharges. After a while the musket ammunition ran low; and as the supply received was small, it was sparingly used to repel attack. It was reported to General Hatch by deserters that the enemy was receiving reinforcements by railroad; and indeed Gen. B. H. Robertson arrived with the Thirty-second Georgia, a battery, and a company of artillery.

Our Fifty-fourth companies on the wood-road held an angle of the line much exposed to the enemy's fire. They at times blazed away into the woods they fronted. Lieutenant Emerson was severely wounded in the face; and Lieutenant Hallett in the left thigh. Captain Homans received a severe contusion on the inside of the left leg, a pocket-book with greenbacks therein saving him from a mortal wound. Besides the officers, one enlisted man was killed, twenty-one wounded, and three missing. Sergeant-Major Wilson states that sometime in the afternoon, with Sergt. H. J. Carter, Corp. John Barker, and Privates J. Anderson, Thomas Clark, and Peter J. Anderson, all of Company G. he went out from Captain Homans's position, and brought back Lieutenant Reid's and Corporal Foster's bodies. The former was killed by a grape-shot.

Meanwhile Lieutenant-Colonel Hooper with Companies E and H maintained their line unchanged on the left of the main road. During the afternoon Lieutenant-Colonel Hooper made a personal reconnaissance of the ground in front, and returning, sent two notes to General Hatch, saying that with two regiments the enemy's right could be flanked. His suggestion was not acted upon. Lieutenant Chipman was wounded in the left arm, and thirteen enlisted men wounded. At one time that day Colonel Beecher: Thirty-fifth United States Colored Troops, who was wounded, came along in rear of our line acting in a dazed sort of way. Fearing he would be killed, Lieutenant Colonel Hooper sent two men to assist him to the rear.

At about 3:40 p.m., Battery F's section was relieved by two of the heaviest naval howitzers under Lieutenant-Commander Matthews. In hauling back, the army guns by hand, the One Hundred and Second United States Colored Troops lost a number of officers and men. When the naval guns began firing, the sailors worked their pieces in a lively manner on their hands and knees. The enemy's fire slackened at 3:30 p.m. They made no serious attempt to advance at any time; neither did we make further aggressive movement. Preparations were made for retirement at dark by General Potter, who bore himself with conspicuous gallantry at the front throughout. He caused a reserve of two regiments supported by artillery to be first posted half a mile in rear; and when darkness covered the field, the retreat began and was executed by means of successive lines. One section of the naval howitzers fired until the ground was abandoned about 7.30 p.m. The retirement was effected without alarm or loss.

When the order came for the Fifty-fourth to move, Captain Pope filed off, meeting Lieutenant-Colonel Hooper's companies, which were coming into the road from the left. Our few ambulances, crowded with sufferers, had departed; and as many wounded remained, the Fifty-fourth and Fifty-fifth were broken squads to remove them were improvised from muskets, shelter tents, and blankets, by which means and bodily help the Fifty-fourth alone carried one hundred and fifty wounded from the field. When we came to Bolan's church, the whole vicinity was weirdly lighted by great fires of fence-rails and brush-wood. A confused turmoil of sounds pervaded the night air, from the rumbling of artillery, the creaking wagons of the train, and the shouts of drivers urging on their animals. The church, cleared of seats, afforded resting-places for the wounded, whom Surgeon Briggs of the Fifty-fourth and his assistants were attending there or outside. Stores of every description were strewn about to make room in the vehicles for their further conveyance to the landing. General Potter arrived at Bolan's church about midnight. Having disposed troops to cover it, he addressed himself to the task of further retirement, and did not cease therefrom until 3 p.m., December 1.

After moving back to the church, the Fifty-fourth took a large number of wounded onward, many men making more than one trip. Our regiment bivouacked on the ground occupied the night before. General Hatch's front line was kept at the Coosawhatchie cross-road, where the guns were placed in position, supported by the Naval Brigade and the Thirty-fourth and Thirty-fifth United States Colored Troops.

Regarding this battle, General Potter reports of the troops: "Nothing but the formidable character of the obstacles they encountered prevented them from achieving success." Capt. Charles C. Soule, Fifty-fifth Massachusetts, a participator, in his admirable account of the battle in the Philadelphia "Weekly Times," says. "The generalship displayed was not equal to the soldierly qualities of the troops engaged. There appears to have been a lack of foresight in the preparations." He gives our loss, from official sources, as eighty-eight killed, six hundred and twenty-three wounded (of which one hundred and forty were slight cases), and forty-three missing: a total of seven hundred and fifty-four. Of the Fifty-fourth (with six companies engaged, numbering sixteen officers and three hundred men), the loss was one officer killed and three wounded; and of enlisted men, one killed, thirty-five wounded, and four missing: a total of forty-four. Lieutenant Reid, who was killed, fully expected his fate. He gave last injunctions

regarding his family before leaving Morris Island to a brother officer. At Hilton Head he purchased an emblem of the Freemasons, with which order he was affiliated. Lieutenant Chipman wrote:

"I can remember poor Reid that morning before we broke camp at the landing. He was blue enough, and said to me that it was his last day on earth; that he should be killed in the fight. Lieutenant Reid was a faithful, experienced, and brave officer, and met his death in the forefront of battle, his body lying in advance of the artillery pieces until brought back."

The Confederates fought steadily and gallantly. But their position more than counterbalanced our preponderance of numbers. It is doubtful, however, if we had more than thirty- five hundred men engaged. Lieut.-Col. C. C. Jones, Jr., in his " Siege of Savannah," gives their loss as four killed and forty wounded. But the Savannah "Republican" of Dec. 1, 1864, stated, " Our loss was between eighty and one hundred killed and wounded." Our defeat lost us results which are thus summarized by Lieutenant-Colonel Jones " The victory at Honey Hill released the city of Savannah from an impending danger, which, had it not thus been- averted, would have necessitated its immediate evacuation."

As Sherman's army on November 29 was about Louisville, Ga., threatening Augusta, it would seem now that if our movements had been delayed a week, when Sherman was near Savannah, Hardee's whole army might have been captured, as the enemy then would not have dared to detach against Foster, and our force could have cut the railroad, thus preventing escape of the Confederates by the only available route.

It would seem with the light of the present that our position was as strong for us to hold as was the enemy's. This granted, the natural criticism is, would not the battle have been better fought to have held the position with a portion of our troops and pushed out the main body well on one flank or the other, drawing the enemy from his work to fight us and preserve his communications?

ARIZONA

## COMPANY D. — Continued.

NAME.	Age.	Rank.	Residence.	Occupation.	Present Residence.	REMARKS.
Sarmon, Trofman . . .	20	Private.	New-York City.	Sailor.		Killed Nov. 30, 1864.
Stafford, Charles H. . .	21	"	Delaware Co., O.	Waiter.		" "
Tanner, Bolden . . .	31	"	Tipton, Ind.	Farmer.		
Taylor, Samuel . . .	27	"	Logan Co., O.	"		
Taylor, George W. . .	19	"	Russellville, O.	Wheelwr't.		Killed Nov. 30, 1864.
Taylor, John . . .	19	"	Jackson, Tenn.	Farmer.	Boston, Mass.	
Thompson, James . . .	38	"	St. Louis, Mo.	Cook.		Discharged Folly Island, S.C., June 15, 1864.
Tust, Willis . . .	24	"	Cynthiana, Ky.	Farmer.		Killed Nov. 30, 1864.
Ward, Stephen . . .	20	"	Bellevue, O.	"		
Webb, Frank . . .	25	"	Mitchell, Ind.	"		
Whyte, George W. . .	18	"	Delaware Co., O.	Mason.		Corporal July 14, 1865.
White, Richard M. . .	22	"	Salem, O.	Teacher.	Savannah, Ga.	Regimental Commissary Sergeant Dec. 12, 1863.
Williams, Charles . . .	18	"	Pike Co., Mo.	Farmer.		Deserted July, 1865.
Williams, Robert . . .	22	"	Philadelphia, Pa.	"		
Wilkinson, Dennis . . .	21	"	Crawfordsville, Ind.	"		
Wilson, Robert . . .	18	"	Pottas Co., Mo.	Driver.		Discharged June 1, 1865, disability.
Wright, William . . .	23	"	Lafayette, Ind.	Cook.		Discharged Folly Island, S.C., May 19, 1864, disability.
Wright, William H. . .	29	"	Guilford, N.Y.	Farmer.		
Washington, George . .	"	"				

## RECRUITS.

NAME.	Age.	Rank.	Residence.	Occupation.	Present Residence.	REMARKS.
Evans, Peter . . .	19	Private.	Boston, Mass.	Waiter.	U. S. Army.	Battal; recruit 1863.
Allen, William . . .	25	"	"	Printer.		Recruit Feb. 1, 1865.
Cooks, Joseph . . .	34	"	"	Grinder.		" "
Davis, William . . .	19	"	Baltimore, Md.	Farmer.		" "
Harrison, William . . .	18	"	Boston, Mass.	Laborer.		" "
Ferry, C. O. . . .	19	"	"	Mariner.		" "
Fatterson, Robert P. . .	19	"	"	Laborer.		" "
South, Edward . . .	25	"	Dartmouth, Ky.	Farmer.		Deserted July, 1865.
Thomas, James W. . .	31	"	Boston, Mass.	Green.		" "
Wooler, William . . .	29	"	"	Driver.		" "
Montgomery, John W. .	36	"	"	Teacher.		March 20, 1865.
Barrows, John . . .	30	"	"	Gunsmith.		" "
Brown, Peter . . .	21	"	Concord, Mass.	Laborer.		" "
James, John . . .	22	"	Salem, Mass.	Barber.		" "
Washington, George . .	25	"	Boston, Mass.	Laborer.		Recruited Dec. 6, 1864, by Captain Le Earned.

# Stephen Ward

(Steven Ward)





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ARTIFACTS  
STORIES





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