Alexander's Story

The Story of Alexander Beaver,
Private in the 57th North Carolina Regiment
in the War Between the States

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Alexander (Sandy) Beaver

Authors

The section “Birth and Pre-War Years” which includes “Young Alexander,” “Alexander and Matilda,” and “Children and Polly Hartman” was written by David Beaver, great-grandson of Alexander. Alexander’s World of the 1860’s through end of this essay was written by Bonnie Beaver Johansen-Werner, great-great-granddaughter of Alexander.

Preface

This is a work in progress. While everything in this report is documented, input is still welcome to correct inaccuracies and provide information where questions exist. Input may be sent to Bonnie Johansen-Werner at: johansenwernermusic@comcast.net or call at 815-727-0973.

Birth and Pre-War Years

Young Alexander

There seems to be some mystery about the exact birth date of Alexander. Most of his siblings have their birth dates recorded at Organ Lutheran Church in Salisbury, North Carolina but Alexander’s is missing. Further, most of his siblings show a baptism date in those church records when their father - John Rans - sponsored them in baptism but Alexander’s name does not appear in these records either. Also, most of his siblings are shown as members during their lives but again Alexander is missing from this list. His birth year is established from his military records which state he volunteered for the Confederate Army in July of 1862 at age 30. This puts his birth year as 1832 or 1833.

Although Alexander is mentioned as a male in the household of his parents - John and Elizabeth - in the 1840 Census, he is clearly seen as a 17 year old laborer on his parents farm in the 1850 Census, giving us another indication of his birth year. In the 1860 Census, Alexander is listed as a 26 year old ‘day laborer’ and his wife Matilda is a 25 year old ‘housekeeper’ living with Aunt Polly Hartman.

Alexander and Matilda

Rowan County records show Alexander marrying Malinda Glover on November 20, 1856. We have no idea how they met or got acquainted. Matilda - as she was usually called - was born on October 25, 1833 in Rowan County, according to family and cemetery records. We have 2 different accounts of her parents.

From a brief account in the ‘Rowan County Heritage,’ Matilda was the daughter of John Glover and Betsy Hill who were Methodist and lived just south of Salisbury, a little north of St. Paul’s Church community. Unlike the Beavers, the Glovers were of Scotch and English heritage but arrived in Rowan County about the same time as the Beavers. This may explain the absence of a marriage record at Organ Lutheran Church. They may have been married in the Methodist Church. Also, no Glovers are mentioned in any Organ Church Records.

Ancestry.com shows Matilda’s mother as Elizabeth Pitman who is married to John Glover and has the same children as above. Her ancestry may be different than Anglo-Saxon.

The birth dates from Census Records more support the first account. Eventually Matilda would attend St. Paul’s Lutheran Church.

We catch our first glimpse of Matilda in the 1850 Census as a 16 year old teen living on a farm with her parents. Her father is a shoemaker which agrees with the account in the Rowan County Heritage article (below). His occupation proved helpful to the Confederate cause during the war. Listed on the same Census page are the ‘inmates’ of the County Home, a further confirmation of the validity of this account.

> John Glover b. 1804, d. 1863 was a farmer and a shoemaker. He married 12 Mar 1827 Betsy Hill. Their farm was located on the Old Concord Road adjacent to the Old Rowan County Home property about 3 miles south of Salisbury, N. C. Very little

is known about John and Betsy Hill Glover. John died suddenly while crossing a rail fence on his farm in the winter time of 1863. They were of the Methodist faith and were probably buried in the old Shiloh Methodist Meeting place graveyard of Faith road and Heilig road. Their children were: Lydia, Matilda, William Henry, Adeline (Arvilla), Abraham Monroe, John A., and Jeremiah (Jerry). The above information and that following was taken from a booklet compiled by Mrs. Glenn (Addie Glover) Ketner.

Children and Polly Hartman

By 1858 their first child arrived, a boy they named Martin. Then on March 25, 1860, their second child was born, this time a girl named Mary Elizabeth. The 1860 Census shows our Beaver family lived with an aunt and neighbor named Polly Hartman who is head of the household. Alexander is 26 years old and a 'day laborer.' Matilda is 25, Martin is 2, and Mary is 2 months.

We imagine this arrangement was temporary until Alexander could afford his own farm. It also may have been requested by his Aunt Polly who was alone and needed the help. Whatever the reason, Polly Hartman was close to this family and would play an important part in their lives after Alexander's death in 1863.

Their third child - Lewis Jeremiah - was born May 2, 1862. This is my (David's) grandfather. Alexander was now 30 and probably dreamed of having his own farm, maybe purchase some acreage from his father John Rans but big changes were going on - changes that would affect his life and that of his family.

Alexander's World of the 1860's

To understand the life of a soldier that Alexander was soon to enter, it is helpful to take a look at life in Salisbury, life in the South, and details of the travels and duties of the 57th North Carolina Regiment, in which Alexander and his brother Crawford fought.

A Rural Life

Of the total manufacturing in the United States prior to the Civil War, only 18 percent of it occurred in the South. Farming was the principal Southern occupation and most Southerners felt it was a much healthier way of life than the manufacturing undertaken in the north. (Arnold, p. 22) In contrast to Hollywood portrayals that lead some to believe that plantation life was the norm, a middle-class of small farmers actually prevailed. Some of them were poor and struggling. Out of every four Southern households, only one held slaves. And of those slave-owners, half of them owned fewer than five slaves. (Arnold, 18) The few wealthy planters who owned mansions and plantations totaled about 45,000 people, just one-half of one percent of the population. The principle crop on these plantations was cotton. Small farms averaged less than 100 acres and raised some cotton plus food for themselves. Farm life was so common that only ten percent of Southerners lived in cities. (Arnold, 22)

Attendance at school was not the norm. Only one-third of white children received an education. Children attended school if they happened to live close enough to a school to get there and if their parents did not need them at home. Some students learned to read, write and do sums from their parents. (Arnold, 23)

Railroads

Railroad service in the South was in it's infancy at the beginning of the Civil War. Gauges (distance between the two rails) of various railroads were not standard, varying from 4 feet 8 inches to five feet. Cars of one gauge could not run on rails of another gauge. In towns outside of North Carolina, significant business built up in some towns around the fact that one rail line ended at one side of town and all passengers and cargo had to be off-loaded, transported across town, and reloaded on different cars of a different rail road. (Trelease, 88) However, the entire North Carolina Railroad

(NCRR) was of one gauge and connected with a series of railroads that could take passengers or freight across North Carolina to Richmond. To go from Salisbury to Richmond required taking the NCRR to Raleigh, where one transferred to the Raleigh and Gaston (R & G) which ran north to Weldon. The R & G connected to the Petersburg Railroad, running to Petersburg, Virginia, and then the Richmond and Petersburg (R & P) ran to Richmond. By 1856 most of these railroads had agreed to run freight from one rail line to another without transshipment (Trelease, 107)

The North Carolina Railroad was chartered in 1850 with plans to go from Goldsboro on the east to Raleigh, Greensboro, Salisbury, and Charlotte. (Trelease, 13) The NCRR was built at the 4 foot, 8 inch gauge, which was to become standard (Trelease, p. 43) and allowed connection to Virginia by the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad, which ran north from Raleigh. The average life of rails at this time was 10 years, with the ends wearing out first, (Trelease, 47) a problem that sometimes resulted in a rail jabbing into a railroad car. (Trelease, 13)

A bustling town, Salisbury was the junction for the North Carolina Railroad (NCRR) and the Western North Carolina Railroad (WNCRR). These two railroads built joint stations in Salisbury, one for local freight, one for through freight, and one for passengers, completed in 1859. (Trelease, 51) Only two years prior the NCRR had built a passenger station in Salisbury, giving Salisbury an abundance of railroad stations. However the joint passenger station blew down in a windstorm a year after it was built, not an uncommon problem. (Trelease, 51)

Attitude towards secession

In 1860 North Carolina was loyal to the Union. Those in North Carolina who favored secession were mostly centered in the eastern part of the state where rice and cotton plantations were more numerous. The rest of the state was quite ambivalent towards secession. (Eaton, 33)

But then South Carolina troops fired on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861. And though North Carolina was still deeply divided over secession, when President Abraham Lincoln issued a call to all loyal states to provide troops to fight the rebellion, the majority of North Carolinians refused to send troops to fight other Southerners and thereby joined the rebellion. Governor Ellis replied to Lincoln, “I can be no party to this wicked violation of the laws of the country and to this war on the liberties of a free people. You can get no troops from North Carolina.” (*Official Records,* 3, I, 72 in Brown, rev., 3).

“It is highly probable that the typical soldier, Northern or Southern, had no clear idea why he was fighting. Defense of the homeland from invasion was enough of an imperative for many Southerners to volunteer. ... Many volunteers went forth to war as to an exciting adventure, cherishing the illusion that it would be short ...” (Eaton, 83)

In contrast, though, was the attitude of some regarding substitutes to fight for individuals. There was a thriving trade in hiring substitutes to fight for oneself. Some men were willing to pay $1000 for a substitute (Eaton, 85) This privilege obviously existed only for those of wealth.

As the war dragged on past a year in 1862, the numbers of volunteers began to drop. In response, the Confederate Congress passed a conscription law in April of 1862. The main purpose of this law was to retain soldiers who had enlisted for only twelve months. This law also drafted all “able-bodied men between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five for a three-year period of military service.” Since Southerners considered being drafted a disgrace, the act allowed thirty days for citizens to enter the army in a honorable way. (Eaton, 85) This act had an obvious impact on Alexander Beaver who was around 30 years old at the time. Either he had to enlist, or he had to desert his home and move to the north. Although some in the south chose to move, that was a very rare decision. It seems certain that Alexander had no choice but to enlist in the Confederate army.

Salisbury in 1861.

Alexander, Matilda, and their family lived in a thriving community. Established in 1755, Salisbury was by 1860 the county seat of Rowan County. It had a population of 2400 which made it the fifth largest town in North Carolina. Rowan County had 14,586 people in 1860, 26 percent of which were slaves. (*Carolina Watchman,* 24 June, 1861 quoted in Brown, rev., 1) Located in a rich farming area, Salisbury had good rail connections, a mild climate, and traditional businesses such as "dry goods stores, a hardware store, and even a foundry for making iron and bronze castings." A shoe factory was to open in 1862. (*Carolina Watchman,* 16 December, 1861, in Brown, rev., 1)

When the war first began, in April of 1861, soldiers' relief societies were formed. On July 29, 1861, the Ladies' Relief Society for the Sick and Wounded Soldiers was formed in a meeting at the courthouse. Their goal was to make the life of soldiers easier by sending them food, clothing, and personal items. (*Carolina Watchman,* 9 Sept. 1861; 6, 12 Jan. 1862. in Brown, rev., 5) Would Matilda Beaver, Alexander's wife, join such a society? Perhaps not since she already had two children and was working as a house servant.

Soon after secession, the citizens of Salisbury were actively supporting the war effort. Men were training in the streets and preparing to form a volunteer military unit (*Carolina Watchman,* 13 May 1861 in Brown, rev., 3) A Bible Society was formed to produce Bibles since they could no longer be purchased from the North. (*Carolina Watchman,* 24 June 1861, Brown, rev., 4) And women of Salisbury began making caps for North Carolina soldiers, using North Carolina cloth. (*Carolina Watchman,* 16 May, 1861. Brown, rev., 3)

When the Confederates won the battle of First Manassas (Bull Run), the churches in Salisbury declared Sunday, July 28, 1861 as a day of "thanksgiving and praise to Almighty God for our signal victory at Manassas." (*The Carolina Watchman,* August 5, 1861 in Brown, p. 54)

A prison was opened in Salisbury in December of 1861. The prison had a huge impact on Salisbury. It was built specifically to house prisoners of war, but it also housed civilian prisoners who included civilians, dissidents, political prisoners, convicts (Union and Confederate), and civilian hostages. (*Official Records,* 2, III, 856; 238, In Brown, rev, 71) It was built along the railroad and had a significant impact on the city as time went on. (Brown, 2) By the spring of 1862 "townspeople often heard the melodies of old and familiar hymns coming from the prison. (Mangum, A. W., *Salisbury Prison,* p. 751 in Brown, p. 138) Services were held each Sunday with preaching usually done by Union ministers. On the occasions when local preachers conducted services there was a problem with political allegiances. Local ministers would pray for the "success of (their) side rather than that of the prisoners." There was also conflict between Protestants and Catholics. (*Gray Manuscript,* 178; 183; 192 and W. A. Mangum, *Salisbury Prison,* p. 764-5 in Brown, 138)

When the commandant of the Salisbury Prison departed in March of 1862, the citizens became concerned. The policy at the prison had been fairly lax and prisoners were allowed to walk the streets of the city. When Gibbs departed, the citizens formed "a police auxiliary to help protect themselves." A plan was devised by the Town Council that used volunteer citizens to form "thirteen classes or companies to do duty every thirteenth night . . . " The patrols were organized to suppress "mobs and riots, for the arrest of persons engaged in treasonable conspiracies." (*Minutes of the Town Council of Salisbury, N. C.,* March 26, 1862, in Brown, p. 42) Whether the citizens were protecting themselves from prisoners or from disgruntled locals is unclear. At any rate, this plan did not last long. Members of the patrols failed to appear for duty and, when most of the prisoners of war left for prisoner exchange, the need for the patrols diminished. (*The Carolina Watchman,* March 24 and June 9, 1862 in Brown, 43) One wonders if the patrols consisted mostly of men who lived in

town rather than on outlying farms. These men would feel the greatest threat to the security of their families and businesses.

Enthusiasm for the war spread into many corners of the city. The Presbyterian church of Salisbury, in April of 1862, "offered its church bell to the Confederate Government '...to be used if necessary in manufacturing cannon for the defense of our country.'" Later that year the Ladies Aid Society was asked by this church to "...take up and prepare for use as blankets for our soldiers the carpets of our Church ..." (Presbyterian Church *Sessional Records,* Book II, p. 12 in Brown, 35.)

Men who had not yet enlisted were doing regular drills in Salisbury. (Brown, 33) Trains leaving Salisbury were full of troops. East bound trains departing Salisbury in March were "... heavily loaded each trip with men and supplies." (*Carolina Watchman,* March 31, 1862, in Brown, 40)

Shortages occurred in Salisbury due to the war. Paper shortages caused a suspension in the publication of the *Daily Carolina Watchman.* (*Daily Carolina Watchman,* 25 Oct. 1864, Brown, rev., 6) Spinning wheels came out of attics, persimmon seeds were used for buttons, and silk dresses were converted into war balloons. Weather was wet and prevented planting fall wheat. So food shortages were exacerbated early in the war. (Brown, rev., 6) The war balloons were used for reconnaissance. Most often they were attached to a tether and took one reconnaissance officer into the air to survey a battle site and learn of the position of the enemy. (*Balloons in the American Civil War,* http://www.centennialofflight.gov/essay/Lighter_than_air/Civil_War_balloons/LTA5.htm)

Smallpox was a continuing concern in Salisbury. There was significant fear of the new vaccine for this disease, but even more fear of the disease itself. Citizens felt that smallpox had been brought to the city by prisoners. Several actions were taken. One was an order from the Town Council that all people in Salisbury be vaccinated for smallpox. Another was ordering that a hospital be built outside the City to keep smallpox patients. The last order, which did not happen until 1864, was to request the "Garrison commander to bury all small pox victims in the Lutheran Cemetery, [which was also] the public graveyard, at the depth of at least five feet." They also prohibited members of the Garrison from coming into town. (Town Council Minutes, December, 1862; January 11, 1863; January 25; 30; March 11, 1864; in Brown pp. 129-130.)

Individual freedoms, for which the South declared it was fighting, were being curtailed as so often happens in times of war. "Martial law was first declared in Salisbury in June 1862 and extended in December 1862 to include a ten-mile-wide strip surrounding the town. Martial law meant that once arrested a person could gain his freedom only as a result of a court hearing which was often delayed." (*Official Records,* 2, III 890., in Brown, rev., 11-12) In spite of the strong support for the war in North Carolina, the infringement on civil rights was a cause for protest. Editor Bruner of the *Carolina Watchman* charged "that the Confederacy was trampling the 'constitutional rights of the citizens in the dust,' the very rights, he said, for which 'we are contending.'" (*Carolina Watchman,* 9 March 1863., in Brown, rev., 12.)

Mustered

Alexander enlisted as a private in the 57th Regiment, Company C, on July 4, 1862 when the company was formed (Jordan, 1). It is likely that he was spurred to enlist by the Conscription Act of 1862. He is listed on a Company Muster Roll for Company C of the 57th North Carolina Regiment. The Muster Roll states that he enlisted on July 4, 1862 in Salisbury by J. W. M. for a period of "3 years or war." Although the war had extended for a year at this point, it is possible that most Southerners still felt that the war would be short with the Confederates winning a victory quickly. (National Archives Record Group 109, *Company Muster Roll* for July 17, 1862) National Archives Group 109 records contain the North Carolina Civil War records which amount to about 125,000 envelopes. Each envelope has the information for one soldier, information that may include his

service record, letters, regimental returns, hospital and prison registers, parole ledgers, promotion lists and other information (Jordan, p. xi) Company C was one of ten companies in the 57th North Carolina Regiment, of which five were recruited from Rowan County. (Jordan, 1) Archibald Godwin was the Colonel of the Regiment, moving into this position after being commandant of the Salisbury prison, a position he really despised (Brown, 43)

We can follow Alexander's activities throughout his war service to a certain degree by tracking these service records as well as the letters and records of other servicemen from the 57th Regiment. The Company Muster Roll of "July 4 to Aug. 31, 1862" lists Alexander as "present" which confirms his involvement with the regiment through all of July and August. (National Archives Record Group 109, *Company Muster Roll,* July 4 to Aug. 31, 1862).

Other Beaver kin who enlisted in Company C of the 57th Regiment on July 4 include Crawford Beaver, Alexander's brother, George M. Beaver, and Tobias Beaver (Jordan, 124-5). Other Beavers in the 57th Regiment were Allen A. Beaver and Rindhold Beaver, who was a musician, in Company A (Jordan, p. 100). Enlisting from Cabarrus County were Moses Wilson Beaver, Wiley Beaver, and William Beaver who fought in Company F. (Jordan, 161)

Alexander's Uniform and Equipment

It is hard to know what Alexander's uniform looked like. Even though there were specific regulations for uniforms, the Confederacy had difficulty finding enough manufacturers to provide sufficient uniforms. Therefore, some men had uniforms pieced together by their family, others wore a mix of assigned uniforms and pieces appropriated from fallen soldiers, particularly shoes, and some had uniforms that fully met regulations.

Privates in the South, such as Alexander, "wore homespun suits of gray or butternut; some were wrapped in blankets of rag carpet, some had shoes of rough, untanned hide, others were in Federal blouses, and a few sported beaver hats." (Eaton, 84)

When possible a Confederate uniform included a jacket with a short-waist, "trousers, cap, light cotton of flannel underwear, and a cotton shirt." The jackets and trousers were made of "jean" which was a wool and cotton blend that was very coarse. It was hot in the summer but worked well the rest of the year. Buttons on the jackets were made from wood, bone, or brass and some were embossed with the seal of the state from which the soldier came. Jackets and pants were dyed with natural ingredients to make them gray. However, the dyes faded, turning brown, which coined the nickname "butternuts" for Confederate soldiers. ("The Confederate Soldier," http://www.nps.gov/archive/gett/gettkidz/reb.htm)

An army cap was issued, but many men wore broad-brimmed felt hats to get better protection from the sun. A picture was found in Margie Beaver's (Alexander's granddaughter) house of a Confederate soldier who might be Alexander. In this picture, the soldier (Alexander?) is wearing a felt hat.

Privates' uniforms, along with those of noncommissioned and regiment officers, were supposed to have sky blue trousers rather than the dark blue trousers of others. Also privates wore no stripes or facing. This, the official prescription for a uniform, was rarely followed. (Faust, Patricia L., editor, *Historical Times (Illustrated) Encyclopedia of the Civil War,* www.civilwarhome.com/uniforms confederate.htm) It is impossible to tell if Alexander has regulation trousers in his photo.

"Regulations for the Uniform Dress and Equipments, of the Volunteers & State Troops of North Carolina," which was issued in 1861 by the N. C. Adjutant General in Raleigh, established the ideal for North Carolina uniforms:

> Coats for enlisted men, which would include a private such as Alexander, were to be a "sack coat of gray cloth (of North Carolina Manufacture) extending half way down the thigh, and made loose, with falling collar, and an inside pocket on each breast, six coat buttons down the front, commencing at the throat; a strip of cloth sewed on each shoulder, extending from the base of the collar to the shoulder seam, an inch and a half wide at the base of the collar, and two inches wide at the shoulder; this strip will be of black cloth for Infantry, red for Artillery and yellow for Cavalry. Buttons for all North Carolina soldiers were to be "North Carolina Gilt Buttons." Trowsers for enlisted men will be of North Carolina gray cloth, made loose, reinforced for mounted men, with a stripe of cloth down and over the outer seams. The stripe will be black for Infantry, red for Artillery and yellow for Cavalry, one inch wide for noncommissioned staff of regiments; and Sergeants -- three-fourths of an inch wide for corporals and one half inch wide for privates. Hats for all soldiers were to be "a black felt hat of light material; the body of the hat one and one half inch less in circumference at the crown than at the base, to be looped at the right side." Hats for enlisted men included "the letter of the Company and number of Regiment of brass in front. The hat band being red for Artillery, yellow for Cavalry and black for Infantry." (N. C. Adjutant General, *REGULATIONS FOR THE UNIFORM DRESS AND EQUIPMENTS, OF THE Volunteers & State Troops OF NORTH CAROLINA* 1861, http://www.geocities.com/e6ncst/uniform.html)

Notice the conflicting information in the description of jackets. Rules for uniforms were not consistent throughout the South, with official regulations varying from state to state. And with a shortage of manufacturers to make uniforms, it was impossible to get uniformity even among soldiers of any one state. The photo found at Margie Beaver's home shows a soldier wearing a short-waist jacket.

Many reports of Confederate soldiers describe them as being dressed in homespun (Polley, *A Soldier's Letters to Charming Nellie,* in Commager, Henry Steele, *The Blue and the Gray,* 247; Eaton, 84). Soldiers were dependent upon wives, sisters, and girlfriends to help keep them clothed. Even when uniforms were issued, soldiers often abandoned the official wool and cotton shirt for a more comfortable shirt brought from home. ("The Confederate Soldier," http://www.nps.gov/archive/gett/gettkidz/reb.htm) We cannot know if Alexander received a uniform or how much Matilda was involved in keeping him well clothed. Certainly her time was limited with three young children at home and working as a house servant.

Soldiers also received a belt set that included a bayonet, scabbard, leather cartridge box, and cap box. ("The Confederate Soldier," http://www.nps.gov/archive/gett/gettkidz/reb.htm) There seems to be some question as to whether all soldiers actually received rifles and belt set when they enlisted. Apparently shortages prevailed and some soldiers were armed only when possible or when able to get arms off of dead Union soldiers or Union prisoners.

It would be very interesting to find a person with expertise to study the photo of our Confederate soldier in depth to identify the make and model of the rifle carried or to see if there are any identifying marks on the buttons or the belt buckle.

Training

Learning to use a muzzle-loader was one of the early skills taught in a soldiers training. By the second year of the war Confederate soldiers were using English-made rifles, caliber .577. Some soldiers used captured rifles, which were American-made Springfield rifles, caliber .58. These rifles had greater accuracy and force than the earlier rifles, due to spiral grooves inside the barrel. The range for the Springfield was 1400 yards, about the distance of 14 football fields. It was necessary to stand to load a muzzle-loader. "The bullet and charge of powder were enclosed in a paper cartridge,

and the soldier bit off the tip of the cartridge before inserting it in the muzzle and pushing it down the barrel with a ramrod. This practice had a curious hangover years later in army regulations that disqualified a man for service if he lacked certain teeth." (Eaton, 95)

Musket loading was a detailed process, involving nine steps for each reload. Soldiers had to break open, using their teeth, a cartridge that contained a bullet and gunpowder. The powder was poured down the barrel of the gun, followed by a bullet, and all was tamped with a ramrod. (Ray, p. 38)

Apparently marksmanship was quite poor, perhaps owing as much to the quality of the rifles as to the skill of the men holding them. Soldiers tended to aim too high and their sight was clouded by the black powder from the rifles that produced a haze over the battlefields. It was a common saying during the conflict that it took a man's weight in lead to kill an enemy soldier. (Eaton, 95-6) The 57th prided themselves on their precision, though we have no official records of marksmanship.

Launching a successful attack took precision preparation. Soldiers had to "move forward steadily, elbow to elbow, keeping a safe distance of thirteen inches from the soldier in front. The fighting line might have to shift to the right or left, or quickly close up a gap left by the deadly cannonfire." (Ray, 37)

Staying in this precision line wasn't easy in battle. The situation on the field could cause the men to become scattered so staying organized was key to a successful charge. In most units this process was assisted by the use of a bugler or drummer boy. Drummers, often boys, beat a cadence for their unit, helping to hold the unit together. "It was the drumbeat that told the soldiers how and when to manuver as smoke poured over the battlefield. And the sight of a drummer boy showed soldiers where their unit was located, [helped] to keep them close together." (Murphy, 40)

Each company and regiment had its own flag which also helped them stay organized in battle. When the unit charged in battle, the standard-bearer led the charge. The enemy often aimed for the standard-bearer. When one bearer fell, another soldier picked up the flag to lead the company. (Gillis, 31-2.)

At some point in an advance, officers might call a halt to "reassemble their scattered men and prepare for a final dash toward the opposing lines." They might also give an order to "fix bayonets" for the soldiers to quickly fit long steel blades over the ends of their musket barrels. (Ray, 39) Hand to hand combat lacked control and was "vicious." Muskets were "fired at such close range that the blast from their muskets scorched their victims. However, the men could usually fire no more than one shot when fighting face to face. There was not enough time to reload" so they fought however they could. They might use their muskets like clubs, use their bayonet, or grab nearby stones or fence rails to use as weapons. (Ray, 40) In other situations, the soldiers in the front row fired and then dropped back to reload while the second line of soldiers fired. (Gillis, 33)

To perfect all of these skills, drills were a very important part of the daily regimen and allowed soldiers to perfect the skills that would allow them to march into battle in "close formation in long, thin lines, frequently double lines, preceded by skirmishers . . ." Orders would often direct the men to lie down to escape bullets of the enemy while waiting for orders to advance. (Eaton, 96-7)

At some point soldiers learned how to produce the famous rebel yell. This yell preceded a charge and seemed to have a profound effect on the enemy. "One soldier described it a mingling of Indian whoop and wolf-howl." It's use was common in battle and sent pangs of fear into the enemy. (Murphy, 34.) If the thousand soldiers of the 57th practiced this around Salisbury, one can only wonder at the reaction of the local citizenry.

Private John Hefner from Company E of the 57th North Carolina Regiment, in a letter to his wife in August, wrote about the results of the drills. "I believe, that we have the best Company in north carolina. . . ." A concern for hygiene was mixed with the drills. "'[W]e take a march to the Crick once a day to wash and drill,' Hefner wrote in his July 18 letter. 'I am very well satisfied.'" (*John Marcus Hefner Papers,* Private Collections, NCDAH, "August" 1862, in Jordan, 1) Hefner and the rest of the Regiment would have an opportunity to prove they were the "best" to the rest of the Confederate forces sooner than many of them wished.

Guard Duty at Salisbury Prison, July and August, 1862

Many of the companies of the 57th Regiment spent time in July and August of 1862 working as commissary and prison guards at the Salisbury Prison in addition to their drills. A list of which companies did duty has not been found, but the odds are at least even that Alexander and Crawford spent some time as guards at the prison. Guard duty was looked down upon as less than soldierly and historian Weymouth Jordan indicates the work was tedious. The soldiers of the 57th were probably happy this was only temporary duty. Descriptions of the prison vary. Some prisoners in the spring of 1862 describe it as a country club. One of the prisoners, Col. John S. Crocker, wrote home on May 20, 1862: 'We have a beautiful grove and a fine flower garden embraced within our parole, and it is a great luxury to promenade these grounds. We send out to the market by an old negro provided for the purpose and purchase such articles as needed. Being deprived of free correspondence with the dearest object I have on earth is one of the greatest burdens of this imprisonment.' (Crocker letter, 20 May 1862 in Brown, rev., 147) Another prisoner, Colonel Michael Corcoran, wrote that he "together with others enjoyed the privilege of daily exercise on a large lot of ground attached to the prison." (Corcoran, p. 97 in Brown, rev., 147)

Baseball games were played almost daily at the prison in the spring of 1862. These games were reported in the prison newspaper, *The Stars and Stripes in Rebeldom*. (Bates, *Stars and Stripes in Rebeldom*, 127 in Brown, rev., 148) and it is possible that Alexander witnessed some of those games. At least one source suggests that baseball was invented in North Carolina (Brown, rev., 148). Baseball continued into July and a baseball game was the main entertainment on July 4th. "There was wide-spread betting on the outcome of the game, even though no one had any money. Gray ended his account of the day's activities by observing that the cheering at the ball game was of the sort never 'before heard in Salisbury, I opine.'" Reports of baseball games continued into later in July. (*Gray's Diary,* 4 July 1862, 204-5, in Brown, rev., 148-9)

Another major activity at the Salisbury Prison in 1862 was theatrics. That this was a major undertaking is clear in this description by W. C. Bates, editor of *The Stars and Stripes in Rebeldom:*

> In Salisbury, another great agent for amusing, interesting, and benefitting the men was found in the theatricals. Three of the rooms (containing two hundred men each) had a nicely arranged stage, with all the paraphernalia of theatrical accomplishments, as side-slips, curtains, and footlights. Machinists, carpenters, and decorators all had their task to do; while the 'corps dramatique' comprised every degree of talent, from high tragedy to low comedy. Pantomimes and songs alternated with Shakespeare and sterling comedy. (Brown, 136)

Did Alexander witness any of these dramatic events? If so, what was his reaction? Did his farm boy upbringing allow him an appreciation for drama?

When reading about the relaxed atmosphere at the prison it is hard to appreciate how much the soldiers of the 57th disliked guard duty. In a letter to his wife, Private James C. Zimmerman of Company D wrote on July 12 "'you would think [the prison] the stinkines place in the world[.] [I]t is enough to make a ded man heeve. . . .' " (*James C. Zimmerman Papers,* July 12, 1862, in Jordan, 1)

Not a pretty description. Maybe he did not appreciate baseball or theatrics. Or maybe he had night guard duty and was extremely bored. A prison outbreak made life a little more interesting for the guards on July 18 "when '6 to 8 Deserters broke oute [causing] a great alarm . . . and firing of guns.'" (John Marcus Hefner Papers, July 18, in Jordan, 1)

It is hard to determine how many prisoners were at the prison in the summer of 1862 when Alexander and Crawford enlisted. By early May of 1862 there were over 1400 prisoners. (*Carolina Watchman,* May 19, 1862 in Brown, rev., 72.) Until now both the South and the North had been exchanging prisoners on a regular basis at the end of each battle. But a controversy over the capture of a Confederate leader stalled the exchange process and the numbers of prisoners of war in Salisbury increased. Negotiations resulted in the paroling of most of the prisoners of war by the end of May. (Brown, rev., 72) Louis Brown says they were "exchanged in May 1862" and therefore, the number of prisoners of war were outnumbered by "civilians, dissidents, or political prisoners, convicts, both Union and Confederate deserters, and civilian hostages." The total number of prisoners at any one time between June 1862 and October 1864 was 500. (*Official Records,* 2, III, 856; 238, in Brown, rev., 71) Soldiers from the 57th North Carolina who served as prison guards had a different sense of the situation though. On July 8 Private George Rhyne wrote to his wife to say he had "'seen a thousand yankies [at the military prison] and . . . bin in a mong them . . . . [S]ome of them looks like sheep killing dogs and some . . . as brave as a lion. . . .'" (*Rhyne Houser, and Hess Letters,* July 8, 1862, in Jordan, 1)

There must have been some prisoners of war remaining in July and August because Weymouth Jordan in *North Carolina Troops 1861-1865 A Roster Vol. XIV Infantry* discusses a number of companies of the 57th Regiment escorting troops out of Salisbury, presumably for prisoner exchange. The reduction in prisoners of war was most likely a result of the Dix-Hill Cartel which was established in late July of 1862. The Cartel arranged terms for the exchange of prisoners. Troop escorts were made on August 11, August 15, and August 25. It is likely that Alexander was part of one of those transports, but we don't know which one.

Transfer to Virginia

Riding the Rails

The rail system in Salisbury was excellent, which partially explains why it had been chosen as a location for a major Confederate prison. The train arrived in Salisbury from Charlotte to the southwest on the North Carolina Railroad (NCRR). It left Salisbury on the same line and went to Greensboro. From Greensboro, still on the NCRR, the train headed east to Raleigh. (Some maps show at Greensboro the Piedmont Railway line running north to Danville, Virginia to connect with the Richmond and Danville Railroad. But Alexander did not travel on the Piedmont because, even though the Piedmont rail line appears on an 1861 map of North Carolina, several sources clearly state that the Piedmont line was not opened until 1863, in which case, Alexander could not possible have ridden on it. (Trelease, 187) In Raleigh it was necessary to change to the Raleigh and Gaston (R & G) railway, heading north to Weldon. At Weldon, the troops took the Petersburg Railroad north to Petersburg where they then took the Richmond and Petersburg (R & P) to Richmond. (Trelease, Map 2)

There was a shortage of passenger cars so soldiers mostly traveled in boxcars, which were overcrowded with poor ventilation. To get air, soldiers kicked holes in the cars or pulled boards off the cars. (Trelease, 158) In May, 1862 the Concord *Carolina Rag* declared that "the present condition of the N.C.R.R. is absolutely frightful. Crashes, smashes up, collisions, broken ankles, running off the track, and accidents of every imaginable description, are of such frequent occurrence that they are scarcely noticed by the newspapers and [are] looked upon by the community as small matters of course." (Trelease, 168)

Undoubtedly, riding the rails could be interesting. The Raleigh and Gaston Railroad, which the troops of the 57th rode north out of Raleigh, was built with strap iron rails fastened to wooden stringers. "In time, the strap iron was apt to come loose at the ends and project upward as trains passed over, sometimes penetrating the wooden coach floors. (These lethal objects were commonly referred to as snakeheads.) (Trelease, 13) There was often a shortage of water on the rail cars. Though water tanks or stations were placed evenly along the track, usage was so high during the war that some wells ran dry supplying them. (Trelease, 158) In 1862 the stockholders inspection committee complained about the plight of wounded soldiers having to travel without water. (Trelease, 165)

In spite of all this, there is no evidence of complaints about the railroad from soldiers in the 57th Regiment. It was probably the first rail trip for many of the soldiers, including Alexander and Crawford, and the fascination probably outweighed the discomforts.

Arrival in Virginia

Three companies escorted troops to Virginia on August 11, and two companies, again escorting troops, were involved in the August 15 journey. The original intent for the regiment was to be at Drewry's Bluff in Virginia, on the James River at a location between Petersburg and Richmond. Private William Wagner wrote to his wife on August 26 "[A]t first we went to Richmond, ... and then to [the] Bell Island [prison camp] and thene to Richmond and then a bout Twelve Miles Below Richmn nd near drures Bluff about Two Miles Below the Bluff in an ole pine field and stade 2 or 3 days and then we cleaned off a camp in the woods about foure or 5 hundred yards from the ole field and mooved thare and stade 6 days and yesterday Evining we mooved a gain. . . ." Wagner's letter was written from "Camp CamBell," Proctor's Creek, Chesterfield County. (*Letters of William F. Wagner,* August 26, 1862, in Jordan, 2)

The next group of soldiers, which included two companies and possibly prisoners, were delayed until August 25 due to a shortage of railroad cars. (Jordan, 2) Since so many prisoners had left earlier in the summer, these escorts probably had few prisoners and were somewhat uneventful trips. Private Zimmerman of Company D was in the group that departed Salisbury on August 25. He wrote home about the trip on September 4.

> "We left Salisbury last monday a week was a weak ago and started to Richmond we had a fine ride on the cares to Petersburg there we stoped and stayed all night next morning [August 26] we was ordered to march three miles out of town and strike up camp we fixed up our tents three times [moved camp three times] as soon as we got fixt up and thought to stay awhile we was ordered to go to Richmond last Sunday morning [August 31] so Sunday all day we was cooking our rashins till in the night it a raining as hard as it could so on monday morning we started back to Petersburg . . . [where] we was to have transportition on the cares [to Richmond] but we had to take it a foot to Richmond with all our nopsacks and lugage Twenty five miles we marched about seventeen miles the first day started from our camps at nine oclock . . . [and] marched in the night [until after nightfall] the swet pored off two or three dropp at every step a cloud come up just at dark and rained hard we just had to take it ruff shod through the rain it was eleven oclock when we come to camp we kindled up a little fire about half of us could get to it so we had to lay on the wet groung in our wet clothes I nearly frose towards day we reached Richmon the next day from there we went six miles north of that place and staid all night in the edge of the old field with tents next morning we came back one mile to where we are now we received our new guns this morning our company got Rifles only seven companies are togeather[.] (Zimmerman Letters, September 4, 1862. See also *M. A. Walker Letters,* September 4, 1862, . Jordan, 2)

On August 28, according to a letter Walker wrote on that date, the regiment was at Camp Stonewall, near Petersburg. "We are . . . right behind the brest works. [T]he best works is seven miles long[.] [T]here is fifteen hundred negroes at work on the fortification[.] [T]he yankeys are fifteen miles from here[.] [T]here is fighting to day about city po[i]nt[.] I herd the cannons rore. . . ." (*M. W. Walker Letters,* August 28, 1862, in Jordan, 2)

Camp Salisbury (Brook Creek, near Richmond), September, 1862
At some point the remaining 3 companies of the 57th North Carolina reconnected with the seven companies who escorted troops. The decision to have them at Drewry's Bluff was short lived. Private Walker wrote home of their journey to Richmond: "the men were given 'nothing to eat hardly for three days' and arrived at Richmond 'about half mad.'" (*M. A. Walker Letters* in Jordan, 3) They could not have been excited about their new location, which was named "Camp Salisbury." Walker wrote it was "a sickly place . . right in the bottom of brook Creek." (*Wagner Letters,* Jordan, 3) They remained in this location the first two weeks of September. This location was near Brook Creek which was "five miles north of richmon on the [Brook] turn pile." (*Patton Papers,* Jordan, 3)

Today Brook Creek is known as Brook Run. "It runs east-west, about six miles north of Richmond. Interstate 85 bisects it today." Specifically where the camp was located is hard to say. But the reference in one of the letters said the regiment was located "'five Miles north of richmon on the turn pike.' [Since] Brook Road crosses Brook Run" that might indicate the location of Camp Salisbury. (E-mail from Robert E. L. Krick, Historian, Richmond Natl. Battlefield Park, September 24, 2007. Bob Krick@nps.gov, Letter quoted is from *Patton Papers,* Alexander Patton to Ellen Patton, September 10, 1862, Jordan, 3)

At this time the Regiment was not assigned to any Brigade on a permanent basis yet. An unidentified letter writer wrote that the 57th "could enter a North Carolina Brigade if the Colonel desired it; but [he] fears they will be thrown into a Virginia Brigade, and believes it will result in mischief." (*Carolina Watchman* (Salisbury), October 13, 1862. Jordan, 3)

By some time in September it seems certain that all soldiers of the 57th Regiment arrived at Camp Salisbury, along with their sister regiment the 54th North Carolina. Drills and training continued regularly, improving the same skills they had learned in North Carolina, particularly riflery and advancing.

<u>Camp regulations</u>
Soldiers were kept busy when they first arrived in camp just getting the camp established. The 57th regiment had ten companies, each with approximately 100 men, and so the camp covered a significant amount of land. It is likely that they attempted to follow army regulations in laying out their camp which prescribed a fixed grid pattern, "with officers' quarters at the front end of each street and enlisted men's quarters aligned to the rear." The camp was set up somewhat like the lines the unit would draw up in a line of battle. The colors of each company were displayed on the outside of their tents. Regulations were adjusted if local terrain made them impossible to follow. (*LIfe in a Civil War Army Camp,* http://www.civilwarehome.com/camplife.htm) Whether the area at Brook Creek actually had any streets is questionable, though they may have created some. "We are in a flat level country," Private Zimmerman wrote. (*Zimmerman Letters,* September 4, 1862, Jordan, 3) Private Walker of Company F wrote home "[Y]ou can see for miles and the watter is the worst kind and no [fire]wood atall." (*M. A. Walker Letters*, September 4, 1862, in Jordan, 3)

Tents in the summer were made of canvas. (Murphy, 55) Sibley tents, designed to hold 12 men, most often housed 20. (*Life in a Civil War Army Camp,* http://www.civilwarhome.com/camplife.htm) In the winter soldiers had permission to build houses. They were very creative with these efforts.

Ammunition chests became tables. Bayonets driven into the ground became candlestick holders. Fireplaces were made from sticks daubed with mud, using a barrel for a chimney. (Ray, 23)

Daily rations

Reviews of army rations from soldiers of the 57th tend to be mixed. Private Zimmerman was not thrilled. "[W]e have Corn bread and beef to eat and not very plenty at that," (*Zimmerman Letters,* September 14, 1862, Jordan, 3) Private Walker was a little more upbeat. "'We g[e]t plenty to eat,' he wrote on September 18, 'such as it is.'" (*Walker Letters*, September 18, 1862, Jordan, 3)

Walker's comment "such as it is" may have referred to the meat they received. Food ranged from "tasteless to disgusting. A large amount of food rotted by the time it reached the troops. To keep beef and pork from going bad the army frequently pickled the meat in a briny saltwater solution. The process made the beef so salty that the soldiers usually soaked the foul-smelling pieces in water for several hours before attempting to eat them." Apparently the soldier's cooking skills were not helpful either. They tended to prepare the meat by "frying it in globs of grease, which caused countless stomach problems . . . . One doctor in the Union army reported that he was having trouble preventing 'death from the frying pan.'" (Ray, 30-31.)

In addition to the meat, soldiers received "dessicated vegetables," an odd mix of beans, onions, turnips, carrots, and beets that were all dried and then pressed into bland cakes. Also mixed into the cakes were "roots, stalks, and leaves" earning the mixture the nickname of "baled hay." Hardtack was a common bread ration, though Confederates more often received corn bread. Apparently the corn bread was no better than hard tack. One soldier remembered "The corn bread would get so hard and moldy that when we broke it, it looked like it had cobwebs in it." (Ray, 31) Surely Alexander missed Matilda's cooking as much as he missed being with her and the children.

The main focus of work in September was building fortifications. Private Zimmerman indicated "[W]e are working on brest workes in a half a mile of our camp, ... two hunred of this Ridgment and two of an other. . . . [W]e have hard times. . . ." (*Zimmerman Letters,* September 18, 1862, Jordan, 3) The reference to soldiers from an "other" unit probably refers to the 54th North Carolina.

Illness, September, 1862

On September 4 Walker reported that 'about fifteen' members of Company F were sick with 'something like the chils and feaver.' (*M. A. Walker Letters,* September 4, 1862, Jordan, 3) New cases of measles and mumps, which had plagued the regiment since at least mid-August, also broke out. (*Zimmerman Letters,* September 4, 1862, Jordan, 3) This spell of illness continued. On September 10 Sergeant Alexander Patton wrote to his sister that "'only a bout 36 privates [in Company I were] able for duty.' " (*Patton Papers,* September 10, 1862 Jordan 3) Four days later Private Zimmerman wrote to his wife that "about thirty' members of Company D were sick." (*Zimmerman Letters*, September 14, 1862, Jordan, 3) "We have a great Deal of sickness in the Regiment." (*M. A. Walker Letters,* September 18, 1862, Jordan, 3) Fortunately, mortality remained low. Weymouth Jordan studied the figures he compiled from service records of the regiment. He concluded that only three deaths occurred in the 57th North Carolina in September. (Jordan, 3)

Camps were infested with mosquitoes, lice, and fleas. Sanitation was poor and the importance of it unknown. Soldiers drank contaminated water and suffered from typhoid fever, malaria, and diarrhea. Treatments were questionable. For instance, pneumonia could be treated by rubbing "burning alcohol on a sick soldier's chest, appli[ng] hot bricks to his feet, or even cut his wrists." (Ray, p. 52)

It is at this point that we need to ponder whether this sickness infected Alexander too. It is likely that he fell ill. The Company Muster Roll for Sept & Oct., 1862 is not as helpful as one would like. That

Muster Roll does not state whether he was present or absent. But it does state that he was "wounded Dec. 13, and sent to Richmond." (National Archives, Record Group 109, Company Muster Roll, Sept. & Oct., 1862, 57 N. C.) It is entirely possible that Alexander was absent during a portion of September and October. One wonders if this report was filed in October of 1862, how can it state that he is wounded in December. It seems obvious that the report was not completed until December or later. At that time the person completing the report simply could not remember if Alexander was present with his unit for the early fall months.

But another document may lend some insight. In the envelope at the National Archives where Alexander's records are kept is a record for A Brewer listing a hospitalization on September 25, 1862 (National Archives Record Group 109, Morning Report of General Hospital No. 8, Richmond, VA, September 25, 1862). At first reading, both David Beaver, Alexander's great-grandson, and Bonnie (Beaver) Johansen-Werner, Alexander's great-great granddaughter and the author of this paper, assumed that A. Brewer was a different person from Alexander and that his file accidentally got into Alexander's envelope at the National Archives. In curiosity, this writer obtained a copy of Weymouth T. Jordan's *North Carolina Troops 1861-1865 A Roster* which lists every soldier who fought in the 57th Regiment. After checking all 10 companies of the 57th, it is apparent that no one by the name of A. Brewer ever enlisted in the 57th or 58th Regiment. How was this error made? Perhaps the person writing the Morning Report on September 26 was exhausted and didn't hear Alexander's name clearly. Maybe he too was suffering with fever. Perhaps Alexander was weak and mumbled his name (dog tags were not instituted until W.W.I). Whatever happened, it seems likely that this report actually belonged to Alexander Beaver. Considering some of the available treatments, Alexander was fortunate to survive this September illness.

We also do not know how long Alexander was in the hospital. As already stated, the Muster Roll for September and October did not indicate whether he was present or absent for those months. The Muster Roll for November and December of 1862 is equally unhelpful. It states that Alexander was "absent" for the entire period of time. Yet it also says "Sent to Reichd. Decr. 14, 1862. Wounded on arm Decr., 13." (National Archives Record Group 109 Company Muster Roll Nov. & Dec., 1862, 57 N. C.) Obviously since Alexander was wounded on December 13, he had to have returned to his company at some point after he was hospitalized in September and could not have been absent for the entire period of November and December. Since most of the Company was healthy by the end of November, we can guess that Alexander returned to his regiment sometime in October or November.

Alexander's brother Crawford was definitely with the company throughout September and most of October. We hope that Alexander returned to the 57th in time to be reunited with his brother before Crawford took ill with typhoid fever on October 23. (Jordan, 125) One, if not both, of the Beaver brothers were involved in all, or at least most, of the events of Company C throughout the fall.

Charles City Courthouse (towards Williamsburg), September, 17, 1862

The Battle of Sharpsburg took place on September 17 and the 57th was not involved. While that battle was taking place, the 57th marched towards Williamsburg, about 56 miles to the southeast. It is unknown why the regiment moved towards Williamsburg. Weymouth Jordan guesses that the march was "probably connected with a skirmish at Williamsburg on September 9 that sparked temporary Confederate hopes of recapturing the town. Private John Hauser of Company G was not excited about the march. "I tell you marching is hard. . . . [W]e started to go to Williamsburg but . . . went [only] as far as a place called Charles City Court house and stade their a cuply days an then we got or ders to come back. . . . [W]e got to our camp last knight about dusk[.] [T]he distance going an coming is about 80 miles and I tell you the[re] was a heap sot down beside of the road[.] [T]he[y] jist give out. . . . I mae the trip but it went mity hard." (*Houser Letters*, September 27, 1862. Jordan, 3-4) Charles City was about half of the distance to Williamsburg from Richmond.

When a march was ordered, the men cooked all of their rations and packed them in their haversacks which were canvas bags made with a sling to hang over the shoulder. A typical pack for a march included meat, coffee, sugar, and hardtack. Hardtack was a biscuit or cracker made of flour, water, vegetable oil, and salt. Fresh hardtack was fairly tasty. Old hardtack, which is what soldiers most often received, was hard and infested with small bugs. A three-day ration of hardtack was six to eight crackers. It could be eaten as a cracker, crumbled into coffee, or softened in water and fried with bacon grease. ("Civil War Food" on Gettysburg National Military Park Kidzpage, www.nps.gov/archive/gett/gettkidz/hardtack.htm. This site includes a recipe.)
The haversacks the soldiers carried were made of cotton cloth with a cloth sling and button to close the top flap. Those in the South were not waterproofed or painted and so grease from rations soaked through the cloth and stained the soldier's trousers. As soon as possible, Confederate soldiers discarded them for a Federal haversack picked up from the battlefield or taken from a prisoner of war. Soldiers also carried canteens that were made either "of thin tin in the shape of a narrow drum or wood that was carved and strapped into a similar shape." The wood canteens were very heavy and tin ones easy to dent. Frequently they leaked so badly that Confederates discarded them as soon as they found a captured Union canteen. Soldiers also had a tin plate, knife and fork, spoon, and a tin cup they called a boiler. It was so named because of the wire over the top of the cup that allowed soldiers to boil things over the fire in their cups. Knapsacks that were first made in 1861 became a rare item as the war progressed. The soldiers would wrap their personal items in their blanket, roll it up and tie the roll at one end. This "horse collar" as they called it, was worn over the shoulder." (*The Confederate Soldier,* http://www.nps.gov/archive/gett/gettkidz/reb.htm)

Confederate soldiers also made a dish called "coosh" which began with bacon "cooked in a frying pan with some water and corn meal added to make a thick, brown gravy similar in consistency to oatmeal." ("Civil War Food" on Gettysburg National Military Park Kidzpage, www.nps.gov/archive/gett/gett kidz/hardtack.htm). Because fresh vegetables were so rare in the Confederate soldiers diet, soldiers tended to straggle when marching to search for food. They would dig sweet potatoes or pick apples. Desperation pushed them to pick green corn from fields, which often then caused diarrhea. (Eaton, 92)

The march towards Williamsburg must have been harder than any of their previous experiences. Private Zimmerman wrote, "[W]e had . . . to throw a great many of our clothes away, ... [A]t one place we throwed away over two hundred garments pants coats shirts drawers allmost all right new. . . . One shirt and drawers and a blanket is as much as one can carry with his gun and amunition.' (*Zimmerman Letters,* September 27, 1861, Jordan, 4)

Return to Camp Salisbury, October, 1862
When the 57th Regiment returned from Charles City Courthouse they again settled at Camp Salisbury. Apparently their food improved immediately, but a new scourge of illness hit. Zimmerman emphatically wrote, "[I]f we stay here we will all get down sick and die, ... [W]hen we was here before we all took sick nerly[.] [S]ince we came back the rest of us are getting sick[.] I think any man of sence could see that this is a unhelthy place an if he cared for his men he would move some where els. . . . About two therds of our regment is sick. There is 30 in our company able to do duty." (*Zimmerman Letters,* October 5, 1862, Jordan, 4)

The month of October was difficult for the regiment. As stated earlier, we don't even know if Alexander had returned at this time or if he was still in the hospital. Weymouth Jordan searched the *Official Records (Army)* and discovered, "On October 1 General Smith reported that 621 officers and men of the 57th were present for duty; on October 20 he reported 587 officers and men present. By October 31 the figure was down to 570. (*Official records (Army)*, ser. 1, 18:751, 759, 764, in Jordan, 4) Maybe Alexander did not return until November, which may have been a blessing if he missed the Charles City Courthouse march.

Life at home
80 to 90 percent of able-bodied men in the South, or roughly one million men, fought for the Confederacy during the Civil War. In addition the Confederate military "took about 40,000 slaves away from plantations to use as laborers and servants." (Arnold, 24-25) Those who remained, wives, children, and the infirm, now were responsible for raising crops and supplying their own needs. In addition, the Confederate government instituted a tax on farms, requiring them to give 10 percent of their crops to the army. (Arnold, 27) The burden on Matilda, Alexander's wife, must have been great.

She may have continued working for Aunt Polly as a house servant. Did she also have to work land for her own food supply? Did Aunt Polly allow her the use of some land? Did she make clothes to send to Alexander? How was she coping with three small children? Martin, their oldest, was 4. Mary Elizabeth was now two. And young Lewis Jeremiah was five months old. Was Matilda still working for Aunt Polly? Was she able to bring the children to work as she kept Aunt Polly's house? Or did the children stay with someone else so Matilda could work?

Another question relates to how tight was money without Alexander there to help both with his presence and with earnings. It is well known that the Confederate army often let months go by without paying the soldiers their salary of $11 a month. The pressure on the children may have been intense. "A man looking back on his Southern Civil War childhood wrote, 'starvation is one of the sharpest memories of my childhood. . . by the time I was seven or eight years old, I had to work almost like a man, helping mother to keep life in myself and my younger sisters and brothers." (Arnold, 33) One wonders if Alexander and Matilda's oldest child, Martin, had similar feelings.

Camp Vance, October 10, 1862
W. F. Wagner wrote to his wife that the regiment relocated on October 10 to a new settlement "stuble field" about "2 1/2 miles north from Richmond on the gordonsville Road." (*M. A. Walker Letters,* "October 1862," in Jordan, 4) Private Zimmerman wrote that "We are two miles nearer Richmond thand we was last week." (*Zimmerman Letters,* October 16, 1862, Jordan, 4).

Illness remained a problem for the regiment. Weymouth Jordan surveyed mortality figures for October and discovered that "seventeen members of the 57th North Carolina died of disease during October." (Jordan, 4) Private Zimmerman wrote his wife on October 27 that he was beginning to recover from a series of "'chills and feavor,' 'Mumps,' and 'yellow Janders [jaundice].'" (*Zimmerman Letters,* Jordan, 4) Another unknown soldier wrote an undated letter to the *Carolina Watchman* and said that "'about 400' members of the regiment were 'on the sick list.'"(*Carolina Watchman* (Salisbury), October 13, 1862 in Jordan, 4). On November 2nd, Zimmerman wrote that his estimate was that "'only about two [hundred] and fifty men' were 'able for duty out of Eleven hundred sixty in the Ridgment." (*Zimmerman Letters,* Jordan, 4)

Other aspects of Camp Vance seemed to be an improvement over Camp Salisbury. When Weymouth Jordan reviewed the existing letters from the regiment, he noted that "complaints about bad water and lack of firewood disappeared from the men's letters." (Jordan, 5) Private Hefner reported on October 26 that there was "plenty to eate at this time[.] [W]e get beef and baken and flower and shoogar and sometimes sheld beans and peas.'" (*Hefner Papers,* October 26, 1862, Jordan, 5)

<u>Baptisms and prayer meetings</u>
The same unknown soldier noted previously wrote that regimental prayer meetings were "regularly kept up, and well attended." (*Carolina Watchman* (Salisbury), October 13, 1862, Jordan, 5) Other

soldiers wrote home about services in camp. Private Wagner "heard P. C. Henkle [a visiting Lutheran minister from Catawba County] preach last nite which done me good to my heart . . . . [T]hare was 2 Baptised and 15 confermed[,] [H]e all so preached to day at Elevin oclock. . . . [H]is tex . . . is found in st John the 5 chapt 25 vers." (*Hefner Papers,* October 17, 1862, Jordan, 5)

It seems that only a minority of Confederate soldiers belonged to a church. But many of them prayed and read their Bibles conscientiously. One chaplain was assigned to every regiment, receiving pay of $80 a month, a princely amount compared to a private's salary of $11 a month. (Slaves in Virginia were paid $30 a month.) In spite of the generous pay for chaplains, however, there was a shortage of them. Someone estimated there were less than two hundred chaplains in the armies of the Confederacy. This is compared to five to six thousand ministers located within the limits of the Confederacy. (Eaton, 101, 100)

Morale

Morale in the regiment was difficult. The men had suffered from illness, marched to destinies only to return to camp, suffered from food deprivation, and now they were hearing of difficulties from home. Food shortages at home, theft, and extortion were all causing distress. A letter in the *Carolina Watchman* on October 13 read "I have been troubled . . . more than ever before in my life, on reading accounts of robberies in Rowan. There is great excitement among the men who have left their wives and children behind to come here to defend the country. The practices of the extortioners and robbers are unnerving us, and making us indifferent as to our duties here, and careless of life itself. If our friends at home fail to protect our families and they send to us their cries for help, who shall say what will be the consequences! I beg you as a friend to look after the welfare of my family, and encourage them all you can." (Jordan, 5)

The "practices" that this unknown writer sent to the *Watchman* referred to the scarcity of food and goods due to planters and large farmers hoarding food and speculating in it. Governor Zebulon B. Vance of North Carolina and Governor J. J. Pettus of Mississippi received many letters from poor men and the wives of soldiers complaining bitterly that the wealthier class would not sell food for Confederate money, and that they held corn and wheat for a rise in price. (Eaton, 243)

Beyond this, the weather was turning on them and the clothing situation was poor. The clothing they threw away in the march to Charles City Courthouse would be really welcome now. Many were shoeless, a condition that plagued the entire Confederate Army. In mid-October they experienced six straight days of rain and "very cold" weather (*Hefner Papers,* October 17, 1862, Jordan, 5) Now, roughly 250 miles from Salisbury, they were experiencing a winter chillier than they had ever known before.

Joining General Lee, Culpeper Court House, November 7, 1862

Around November 6 the 57th North Carolina, along with the 54th NC, were assigned briefly to Brigadier General Joseph R. Davis's Brigade of Major General Samuel G. French's department of North Carolina and Southern Virginia. This lasted for no more than a day or two though before the two regiments were ordered to report to General Lee with the Army of Northern Virginia. The two regiments left Camp Vance on November 7 to join Lee near Culpeper Court House. (*M. A. Walker Letters,* November 9 and 24, 1862 and *Official Records (Army),* ser. 1, 19 (pt. 2):694-695, 697, 699, 705, 709-710, 715, in Jordan, 5) The journey, of about 90 miles, took some time. Private Wagner wrote on November 9, "[W]e left our ole camp last friday and it was a snowing as hard as it could from morneing till nearly 12 o clock. [T]he snow was about 4 inches deep and we marched to Richmond and such a mud and water I never traveled in and we got [there] too late for the morning trane and then we had to ly [over] in Richmond til 8 o clock in the Evining and I never in all my days was as near frose as I was that day[.] [W] ditent git to a bit of fire from that morning till next and [it] snowed alittle all day. . . ." (*Letters of William F. Wagner,* November 9, 1862 in Jordan, 5-6) Jordan reports that the

57th "then moved by rail to Mitchell's Station and went into camp 'about 5 miles' from Culpeper Court House. (*Zimmerman Letters,* November 7 and 9, 1862 in Jordan, 6)

At Culpeper Court House the 57th and 54th joined with the 6th North Carolina and the 4th and 44th Alabama Regiments to form Brigadier General Evander M. Law's Brigade. Law's Brigade was part of General John B. Hood's Division in Lieutenant General James Longstreet's Corps. Hood ordered General Godwin to drill the 57th until it was "fit to go in[to] battle." Private Zimmerman reported how the men were suffering. Colonel Godwin kept the men marching and maneuvering six hours a day: "three in the fore noon, and three in the after noon and [we] never stop till the time is out. . . . [T]hey keep us busy all the time . . . and if we dont obey we are punished severley and have to do wors than a negro under a mean master." (*Official Records (Army),* ser. 1, 19 (pt. 2):552 in Jordan, 6)

Fredericksburg, November 15
The Army of the Potomac (Northern Army) moves into place
General Burnside, recently appointed to lead the Army of the Potomac, picked Fredericksburg as the place where he could quickly move into the South, take Richmond which was only 50 miles away, and end the war. Burnside knew he had to move quickly to avoid Lee's army. Burnside reached Fredericksburg in time, but the pontoons he requested in advance from Harper's Ferry were delayed until Burnside's troops had been amassed across from Fredericksburg for a week, a delay that would prove critical. Burnside had 121,402 "effectives in his six corps of three divisions each," with the addition of artillery and more corps to arrive before the battle. The strength of the north amounted to over 200,000 arms. The delay in arrival of the pontoons gave Lee time to gather troops on the ridges surrounding Fredericksburg. (Foote, 34-5)

Early dreams that the war woud be won quickly, fostered by both the North and the South, had evaporated. But Lincoln had sent Burnside forth in the hope that he would deliver a crippling blow to the South by conquering Richmond, thereby providing a quick end to the war. Needless to say, Lee felt otherwise.

Numerous regiments from the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia began arriving in the Fredericksburg area ultimately reaching 78,511 "effectives, supported by 275 guns." With the exception of two corps of cavalry, this was Lee's entire army. (Foote, 35) Lee spread his troops along the ridges of Fredericksburg, able to watch the northern army as it collected. Lee wisely chose to wait for Burnside to attack, figuring he had more strength in waiting for the northern troops to cross the river and be trapped in the valley. He did not know what Burnside intended, but his intuition proved correct.

The first corps of Lee's army amounted to five divisions under the command of Longstreet. (Foote, 35) Included in the First Corps was Hood's Division, which included the 57th North Carolina. (*Fredericksburg Order of Battle, Army of Northern Virginia,* http://www.civilwarhome.com/anv fredericksburg.htm) Longstreet's Corps was spread out from north of Fredericksburg down to the Deep Run. Hood's Division was at the south of this arrangement.

The Second Corps was under the command of General Stonewall Jackson. He had three of his four divisions "posted at eight-mile intervals downstream, one on the south bank of Massaponax Creek, one at Skinker's Neck, and one near Port Royal, while the fourth was held at Guiney Station, on the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad, eight miles in rear of Longstreet's right at Hamilton's Crossing." (Foote, 35)

The 57th North Carolina, which spent three days slogging through "any amount" of mud 'shoe mouth to [a] half-leg deep,'" began straggling in to Fredericksburg from Culpeper Courthouse on November

22. “Wet, exhausted, mud-caked members of the regiment were still arriving, some without their knapsacks and other discarded impedimenta, the next morning.” Private Walker wrote “the boys are all in good spirit [and] the[ir] health is generly good all though we have tolerable hard times[.] [W]e have to eat our bread and meat with out salt half of the time . . . an no tents to sleep in[.] [W]e havent got anything with us but what we caried on our backs. . . . [Y]ou may juge for your self what por times we have.” (*M. A. Walker Letters,* November 24, 1862; *Zimmerman Letters,* November 24, 1862 in Jordan, 6-7)

The next day Private Hefner wrote home. “I can inform [you] that I never saw as many broke down men in my life. . . It was the Mudst time and the slickest time I ever saw. . . .I have saw some part of the elephant.” (*Hefner Papers,* November 23, 1862, Jordan, 7) Private Zimmerman said “that a great many gave out and some died[.] I hel[d] out though it was a bargin[.] [T]he officers told the gard if the men did not come to stick the bayonet in them.” (*Zimmerman Letters,* November 24, 1862 in Jordan, 7) Apparently thoughts of desertion were nipped vividly in the bud.

On November 21 or 22, under threat of attack, Lee ordered the evacuation of Fredericksburg, removing all women and children to protect them. This attack never took place, but the precaution saved many lives when the attack finally occurred days later. (Lee, http://www.civilwarhome.com/lee.htm)

Lee had planned to have Hood’s, Pickett’s, and Anderson’s Divisions go back toward the North Anna River. But as Burnside hesitated to move his men, Lee wavered also. He had Hood’s Division, as well as Pickett’s and Anderson’s, join McLaw’s and Ransom’s Divisions near Fredericksburg. “After marching several days in the rain, the men lay stiff and sore in their makeshift camps. Nearly 40,000 Confederate soldiers bivouacked in and around Fredericksburg, but Lee ha[d] still not decided whether to fight there or retreat to the North Anna.” (Rable, 78.)

The shoe shortage affected the enlisted men the most. By the middle of November “more than 6,000 men in Longstreet’s corps” (which included Hood’s Division) “were barefoot. Even after a large shipment from Richmond, some 2,000 men still had no shoes, and perhaps as many as 3,000 others wore shoes that would never with stand another march.” (Rable, 91) In early November Longstreet issued a general order that directed his men to “fashion moccasins from the hides of recently slaughtered cattle.” The hair side of the hide was turned in to provide warmth. These moccasins were problematic, though. They smelled and became slippery in mud and snow. When marching the leather stretched, but it dried at night and shrank. In addition, the moccasins wore out quickly. They were so difficult that some men preferred going barefoot. Others wrapped their feet in rags and straw. (Rable, 92)

It is obvious that life was not easy in the Fredericksburg area. The railroad stop for mail was five miles from Fredericksburg and service was erratic. Letters were often lost or never found their recipient. Soldiers found it hard to write while sitting on the ground with fingers freezing, and encouraged their loved ones to write long letters even if the soldiers letters were short. (Rable, 95) Bad weather continued to plague the men. Most days it rained, a cold rain. Some days it snowed, a wet, heavy snow that soaked through everything. Men might wake to an inch of water in their tents. (Rable, 100)

But there were some lighter moments. A Union band presented a concert for the troops, Confederate included, who were stationed at Fredericksburg. The Union musicians played some of their favorite pieces when a voice called from the Confederate side of the Rappahannock, “Now give us some of ours,” at which point the band played *Dixie, My Maryland,* and *Bonnie Blue Flag.* (*U. S. Army Bands in History, The Civil War.* http://bands.army.mil/history/default.asp?chapter=11)

On November 25 Burnside's pontoons began to arrive. By now, though, Burnside was aware of the gathering Confederate troops across the river. So instead of moving quickly, which had been his original plan, he stalled to devise a new course of action. The delay lasted nearly two weeks. (Foote, 34) When he saw the troops gathered above the town of Fredericksburg, he considered throwing his pontoon bridges "across the [Rappahannock] River at Skinker's Neck, ten miles beyond of Lee's immediate right." But surveillance showed that Jackson had troops massed there, so Burnside figured that Lee had figured out his plan. Therefore, Burnside revised his plan once more to cross straight into Fredericksburg, a plan that suited Lee well. (Foote, 38)

On December 5 winter struck in earnest. There was rain followed by sleet, topped with several inches of snow. (Rable, 136) The next day there was snow on the ground and bitter cold. "Water froze five feet away from a campfire." (*Savannah Republican* quoted in Rable, 136) The temperature dropped into the low twenties on December 7 and dropped to 16 degrees on the 8th. Men stayed warm by building huge fires. "Cutting and gathering wood" took up "much of their time, and areas near the camps were soon stripped of trees." The smoke was irritating and sparks on windy nights would set coats and blankets afire. "Many of the Confederate regiments did not receive tents until the first week of December." (Rable, 136)

Food in camp was short because the army remained on half-rations. They did have beef which was described by various solders as "tough," "blue," and "dry." They also receive[d] flour, bread, or crackers which were indigestible." (Rable, 137) Part of the problem with food supplies was the deteriorating equipment and roadbed of the North Carolina Railroad. "The road's decrepitude contributed directly to the dwindling supplies reaching Lee's army during the winter of 1862-63." (Trelease, 184)

As mentioned before there were 5 divisions in Longstreet's Corps. Hood's was but one of these divisions and his men were positioned on the far right of Longstreet's line, near Hamilton's Crossing. They were already in place when Lieutenant General Thomas (Stonewall) Jackson's Corps arrived on November 29. Jackson's Corps was positioned to the right of Hood's Brigade, guarding Lee's right flank. And here they remained day after day, while waiting for the Army of the Potomac to make a move.

<u>Thursday, December 11, 1862</u>
Early in the morning on December 11, Burnside's troops began putting up 3 pontoon bridges. In the dark, Lee waited and listened. When it was determined that the Federal engineers had reached mid-river with the bridges, a Confederate brigade from Mississippi opened fire on them. This scattered the northern troops and the Rebel army paused to save ammunition. When they heard work on the bridge resume, they opened fire again. This process was repeated with the engineers working longer periods under fire. When the morning broke and the fog began to lift, Federal patience broke and they returned fire, at 10 a.m. (Foote, 41-2) Union fire was now hitting the beautiful Southern town, setting some houses on fire and badly riling the Rebels who took offense at the destruction of the town. Sometime after noon the Union commander knew that they would not dislodge the rebels, so they began using the pontoon bridges as "assault boats in order to get across the river and pry the snipers out" with bayonets. Once the assault forces landed, they engaged in street fighting, which occupied the Confederates and allowed the north to lay the rest of the pontoon bridges. (Foote, 43)

Alexander and the rest of the 57th North Carolina were downstream from this action, probably within earshot, and maybe within eyesight, waiting with mixed feelings for their opportunity to be part of the battle. Cold and wet, they waited in anticipation, excitement, and most likely, fear.

Friday, December 12, 1862

The Confederate soldiers awoke to a surprise. The valley of Fredericksburg, "which the day before was yellow with the stubble of grass and grain, was now blue with Yankee uniforms, the monotony relieved only by the glistening of burnished arms and the bright colors of a hundred flags. Massed between railroad and river, division upon division, artillery in front, cavalry in rear and infantry in the center, and protected by the heavy siege guns planted on the low range of hills crowning the north bank of the stream, Burnside's army was an imposing, awe-inspiring spectacle." (transcript of letter dated December 20, 1862; author anonymous, in *Confederate Veteran* 4 [September 1896]: 305 in Jordan, 8)

Hood was busy locating and rearranging the men of his division. First, at Deep Run, Hood reinforced his skirmish line along the Bowling Green road. Concerns over his right flank caused him to withdraw most of the skirmisher's to Hamilton's Crossing. In the meantime, General Lee brought Jackson's division from below Fredericksburg to place them on the right of Longstreet. For reasons unknown Hood's Division was relieved by Major General A. P. Hill's Division of Jackson's Corps. So Hood's Division was about a mile to its left, but by night they returned to their original position. In this position they took up "the second or reserve line, extending along the range of hills from the vicinity of Hamilton's Crossing to Dr. Reynolds' house." (*Official Records (Army),* ser. 1, 21:623, Jordan, 8) Private Zimmerman, who wrote prolifically about the regiment, said "[O]ur regiment lay there all day, [with] the burns and shells flying over our heads doing us no injury though some fell verry close. (*Zimmerman Letters*, December 22, 1862 in Jordan, 8) So now they were cold, wet, fearful, and insulted by the Federal pelting.

Lee was also moving troops, ordering Jackson to bring some of his troops closer to provide support for Longstreet. But then Lee waited. He was waiting for Burnside to attack and Burnside was still busy getting his men across the Rappahannock. This took much of the rest of the day. And once the men were across, they had a party ransacking the houses in town. "Cavalrymen ripped the strings from grand pianos to make feed troughs for their horses, while others cavorted amid the rubble in women's lace-trimmed underwear and crinoline gowns snatched from closets and bureau drawers. Scarcely a house escaped pillage. Family portraits were slashed with bayonets, pier glass mirrors were shattered with musket butts; barrels of flour and molasses were dumped together on deep-piled rugs." (Foote, 44-5)

Saturday, December 13, 1862

Daybreak on Saturday saw a fog so thick that it could not be pierced. Longstreet's Confederate divisions were arranged north to south, commanded in order by Major Generals Richard Anderson, Lafayette McLaws, George Pickett, and John Bell Hood, covering five miles. Alexander and the men of the 57th North Carolina were still in Hood's division. A fifth division, under Brigadier General Robert Ransom, was in reserve. Jackson's Corps was on the right of Longstreet. Lee himself stood on the top of a hill where he could see all of Fredericksburg, his troops in both directions, including most of Jackson's troops, and the Union masses in the town below. (Foote, 46)

By 10 a. m. the fog began to thin. As it lifted, some Federal batteries began firing. But Lee held a return fire, waiting until 10:30 a.m. when he had Longstreet fire from Marye's Heights, the "tall north end of the long ridge." (Foote, 49)

The first blood, though, was drawn on the Confederate right, near Hamilton's Crossing. Army of the Potomac General Meade was advancing with Federal troops on the Confederates at the far right of Lee. Major General John Pelham, an artillerist with Jeb Stuart's Southern Cavalry, immediately moved two guns forward to respond to the assault and began firing furiously, with such success that a Union general thought Pelham was a full battery. Jeb Stuart ordered Pelham to retire four times before Pelham listened .... when he was nearly out of ammunition. (Foote, 49-50)

Meanwhile the assault by the Union on Marye's Heights, just above the center of Fredericksburg, began in earnest. The Confederates were embedded at the top of a hill, behind a stone wall that ran along a sunken road on the heights. The Confederates had been reinforcing the wall with dirt for days. Confederate cannons were also stationed on Stanbury Hill. At about 11:30 a.m. Union soldiers emerged from below the hill and made the first wave of an assault. The Confederates raked them in their front at point-blank range from the Marye's Heights. These Union soldiers were also raked from the left from Stafford heights. Soon, Union soldiers who did not fall, dead or injured, were in retreat. Again the assault came from the Union and again it was repelled. Wave after wave of men came forward, regiment by regiment, a thousand men at a time. Six times Burnsides troops charged the Confederates at Marye's Heights and each time they were repelled, until literally thousands lay dead or wounded. (The Fredericksburg Campaign, http://www.civilwarhome.com/fredricksburgcampaign.htm)

57th called into action

On the Confederate right, meanwhile, there was also considerable action. Franklin's troops from the Union Army launched a frontal assault on Jackson. This attack was initially slowed by fire from the Confederate battery lasting three hours. At 1:00 p.m. the Federals mounted a new effort. and penetrated a boggy woods which the Confederates thought was impassable. After slogging through a bog, a Pennsylvania division under Major General George G. Meade startled a brigade of South Carolinians who had stacked their arms, thinking that other Confederates were in front of them, not Union soldiers. The South Carolinians quickly grabbed for their rifles, many of them shot as they leapt for their weapons. Others fled in fear and panic. Their commander, Brigadier General Maxcy Gregg, was mortally wounded. Quickly though, "two reserve divisions of Jackson's Corps crashed into the Federals, and Confederate units on both sides of the breach joined the fray. Under fire from three sides and inadequately supported by Franklin, Meade with drew." (Jordan, 8)

But Franklin and the Federal army were not finished. At 3 p.m. he tried once more. This assault began with the New Jersey Brigade of Brigadier General A. T. A. Torbert, reinforced by two regiments from another brigade. They emerged just north of the woods where they were concealed by a "skirt of timber" and they moved up the ravine on Deep Run toward Law's position and our North Carolina troops. "Shortly thereafter Torbert's men defiled from the woods about 500 yards from the Confederate works, drove a line of skirmishers from the tracks of the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad, and prepared to attack a Confederate battery. The 54th and 57th North Carolina - 'all dressed in homespun' and presenting to the 'fastidious eyes' of Hood's veterans 'a very unsoldierly appearance' -- were then ordered forward. (*Official Records (Army),* ser. 1, 21:623 in Jordan, 8, 10)

Confederate staff officer Clarence R. Hatton remembered, "'[i]n order to get into line of battle,' the two regiments 'had to go over a corduroy road through [a] swamp with front of fours under heavy artillery fire as well as the sharp rifle fire of the enemy. . . .'" (Hatton, Clarence R., "Gen. Archibald Campbell Godwin," *Confederate Veteran* 28 [April 1920]: 134 in Jordan, 10) With Federal fire "singing and exploding" over and around them, the men formed a line of battle and, along with the 16th North Carolina of Brig. Gen. William D. Pender's Brigade, charged the enemy line "with fixed bayonets." (*Biblical Recorder* [Raleigh], January 14, 1863 in Jordan, 10).

Alexander was somewhere in the midst of this. It could not have been pleasant. Private W. F. Wagner wrote "[t]he Bum shells was a fliing and bursting over our heads. . . I hope to God I will never git in a nother such a [s]crape[.]" (*Letters of William F. Wagner,* December 18, 1862 in Jordan, 10)

"Soon the rifle fire from the cut became terrific, then double-quick, and with the Rebel yell, a sudden rush . . [and the three regiments were] at the railway cut with loaded guns. The enemy was driven out, killed or captured, and over the cut . . [the North Carolinians] rushed. . . ." (Hatton, *Gen.*

Archibald Godwin, in Jordan, 10) They routed the Federals at the railroad, and then three regiments came under fire from a woods to their left, pushing the 54th North Carolina to change front to cover the left flank of the 57th. The 57th,"'dealing death by the bushel," continued its "magnificent charge . . across the plain . . . under the concentrated fire of a battalion of artillery" (*Daily Progress* (Raleigh), December 20 (second quotation) and 27 (third quotation), 1862 in Jordan, 10) and drove the Federals "without intermission or let up" about a half mile to point near the Bowling Green road. There Hood recalled the badly overextended regiment to save it from "certain capture." (*Incidents at Fredericksburg,* 305 (fourth and fifth quotations) in Jordan, 10) They headed to the railroad cut for shelter where Private Hefner later wrote, the north "shot at us some three ours [sic]." (*Hefner Papers,* December 18, 1862, Jordan, 10)

Another account of the attack is found in George Rable's book *Fredericksburg! Fredericksburg!:*

> "Spoiling for action, these Scotch-Irish and German troops brought courage as well as naivete to the assignment. Like many raw recruits, they had fretted that the war might end before they saw any fighting. Now they were determined to silence the veterans' jibes and win Hood's respect. They not only routed the New Jersey regiments along the railroad but also pushed to within 300 yards of the Richmond Stage Road. In their enthusiasm, however, they advanced too far and came first under artillery fire before they were blistered by infantry rounds. 'It was an awful sight to see their poor fellows going up in the air,' a Union artillerist admitted as he counted eighteen Rebels knocked down by a single shot. Yet it took several messengers from Hood to end this heroic and foolhardy charge." (*OR,* 622-24; Confederate Soldier Reminiscence, *My War Story,* NCDAH quoted in Rable, 250-251)

Is this the time Alexander receives his shoulder wound? At whatever point he was wounded, he was part of an extremely impressive action by his unit. Major General J. B. Hood, commander of the division that included the 57th North Carolina, wrote an official account of the actions of his regiment some days following the battle. He was tremendously flattering of his men's conduct:

> On the 13th, during the engagement on the right of our line, a considerable force of the enemy defiled from the right bank of Deep Run, and, forming line of battle, advanced, driving our skirmishers from and occupying the railroad. Two of Brigadier-General Law's regiments, the Fifty-seventh North Carolina, Colonel A. C. Godwin commanding, and Fifty-fourth North Carolina, Colonel J. C. S. McDowell commanding, were thrown forward, the Fifty-seventh leading, and in a gallant style drove the enemy from the position he had gained, following him up to within 300 yards of the Bowling Green road, and punishing him severely. These regiments, with the Fourth Alabama [Law's brigade] in support, held the railroad until dark, when they were relieved by other troops from my command, who retained possession of it until the enemy recrossed the river, on the night of the 15th.
>
> As usual, Brigadier-General Law was conspicuous upon the field, acting with great gallantry, and had his horse killed under him while personally directing the movements of his brigade.
>
> It is with much pleasure that I call your attention to the gallant bearing of both the officers and men of the Fifty-seventh North Carolina Regiment, Colonel A. C. Godwin commanding, in their charge on a superior force of the enemy posted in the strong position he had gained. Equal praise is due the Fifty-fourth North Carolina Regiment, Colonel J. C. S. McDowell commanding, for their able support of the Fifty-seventh, and especially for their display of discipline in changing front under fire to cover the left flank

of the Fifty-seventh from the fire of a force of the enemy occupying Deep Run below the railroad, to which they became exposed in consequence of their pursuit of the force they had dislodged. Indeed, I cannot in justice omit to mention the bearing and morale of my entire command during the time the enemy was in our front, as evidenced by their earnest desire to be led to battle and their presence at all times, as, to the best of my knowledge, not a single officer or man left ranks without proper authority. The members of my staff were, as usual, at their posts and zealous in the discharge of every duty devolving upon them.

Below will be found a summary of the casualties of my command*.

For further particulars, attention is called to accompanying reports of brigade commanders.

I am, major, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. B. HOOD,
Major-General, Commanding.

	K[illed]	W[ounded]	M[issing]
57th North Carolina	32	90	2

(Hood, p. 622)

Another vivid account is found in Frank O'Reilly's book *Stonewall Jackson at Fredericksburg, The Fredericksburg Campaign.* Here we understand the benefits of the days and months of precision drills:

General Law rushed his entire brigade into position along the timberline directly behind the guns. He took with him several tested regiments, but chose to let two inexperienced Tarheel units lead the way. The colonels of the 54th and 57th North Carolina had petitioned Law for the honor and the general obliged them for their enthusiasm. Seeing Latimer's artillerists start to abandon their pieces, Law was forced to take more drastic measures. He could no longer hope to support the artillerists, instead he needed to save their guns from capture.

Law ordered the 54th and 57th North Carolina to drive the Federals away. The generals led the two regiments into the open and marched them forward with parade-ground precision. Colonel Archibald C. Godwin's 57th North Carolina took the right and Colonel James C. S. McDowell's 54th the left. Together they mustered 900 troops. Law marshalled the regiments in perfect alignment as they glided toward the Union line. The Confederates closed to within 125 yards of the railroad before Law gave the order to charge. Godwin's 57th North Carolina bolted across the open flats with McDowell's 54th trailing close behind.

The nervous Carolinians started blazing at their enemy immediately, and inadvertently caught the remnants of the 16th North Carolina in their fire. Pender's officers managed to stop the fire and narrowly averted disaster. The 16th's soldiers disgustedly asked the rookies to "distribute their favors" to the Yankees instead.

Colonel Godwin seized the regimental colors and headed his 57th North Carolina for the railroad. An admiring Texan called the attack 'the prettiest sight I ever saw.' Godwin reached the railbed and defiantly planted his standard on top. The graycoats surrounded their colonel and laid down a murderous fire into the Jerseymen. A Rebel recounted that

'blood flowed as from a butchered hog.' A Yank agreed that 'it was an awful place for men to go.' The lines thundered at each other from a mere 30 yards apart.

The force of the Confederate response startled Union General Torbert and he immediately asked for the supports he had been promised. The 23rd New Jersey and two of Russell's regiments pushed to the front. Several companies of the 3rd New Jersey may have also joined the 23rd's new recruits.

The reinforcements came under a scathing fire almost immediately and the men began to drop. The 23rd New Jersey went in slowly, bogged down by all their equipment. Inept officers had ordered the men forward while still lugging their knapsacks. At least one Jersey soldier complained, 'they took us in bad.'

[Union officers] 'Baldy' Smith and William Brooks began to doubt the wisdom of Torbert's foray. They feared 'that a general engagement might be brought on' if more troops became involved. So the Sixth Corps commander decided not to risk escalating the altercation any further and demanded that all of Torbert's supports withdraw. The 4th New Jersey, combined with a few companies of the 15th New Jersey, found itself completely abandoned in a mismatched battle with two hefty Rebel regiments.

Colonel William B. Hatch grudgingly backed his New Jersey troops away from the railroad. When he saw the Southerners tailing him closely, he ordered the Jerseymen to turn again and rally on his colors. In the next moment, the New Jersey colonel collapsed with a mortal wound that destroyed his right leg. Major James M. Brown, heading the 15th New Jersey contingent, also fell when a ball mauled his thigh. He had entered the field while still recuperating from a wound he sustained during the Peninsular Campaign, in which a bullet shattered his jaw and partially paralyzed his tongue. He struggled throughout the action at Fredericksburg, issuing orders in painfully broken English.

A. T. A. Torbert's Unionists could not fend off the aggressive butternuts any longer and broke. The 15th New Jersey dipped back into the Deep Run gorge and the 4th New Jersey stampeded for the Richmond Stage Road. Torbert desperately needed help and ordered the 23rd New Jersey to cover the shattered 4th Regiment. The Jerseymen fell in windrows as they tried to blunt the Confederate attack. One of Torbert's soldiers complained that the retreat 'was a more difficult movement to execute than the advance.'

Law's Confederates excitedly pursued the Federals, who fled before them 'like wild turkeys.' Colonel Godwin's 57th North Carolina drove straight after Torbert's men while McDowell's 54th North Carolina followed with slightly more caution. The 23rd New Jersey could not even begin to slow the Confederate throng. Many of the Unionists shucked off their knapsacks in an effort to escape. A survivor gasped, 'I don't know how we ever got out with our lives.'

E. McIvor Law's Southerners struck a weak seam in the Federal line and advanced to within 300 yards of the Richmond Stage Road. They headed for 'Baldy' Smith's Sixth Corps' left, which dangled helplessly in the air. Reynolds' First Corps had formerly guarded that flank, but Gibon's and Meade's divisions were shattered nonentities regrouping in the rear. Birney's Third Corps' division had taken Meade's place, but no one covered the gap left by Gibbon's division. Birney said the area was 'without a soldier, without a man.' The Sixth Corps had only its artillery to rely on and Torbert's Brigade rendered that useless by obstructing most of its fire.

At the same time, belated reinforcements raced up from the pontoon crossing. General Daniel E. Sickles' division of Stoneman's Third Company arrived in sensational fashion as befitted its commander. A rakish Tammany Hall politico, Daniel Sickles entered his first battle as a division commander seeking glory. General George Stoneman heightened the anticipation [by] sending a stream of winded aides to hurry the fresh division forward. Exhibiting a surprising degree of finesse, Sickles shook his brigades into line and sealed the gap between Brooks' Sixth Corps division and Birnet's division.

He threw in Brigadier General Joseph B. Carr's brigade on his right. [Carr] had previously doled out two-thirds of his command for several supply assignments, so he carried into battle only the 26th Pennsylvania of Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin C. Tilghman and the 1st Massachusetts of Lieutenant Colonel Clark B. Baldwin. Sickles backed Carr's Brigade up with Colonel George B. Hall's New York Brigade. Between Carr's and Hall's troops Lieutenant Francis W. Seeley planted his Battery K, 4th United States Artillery. Sickles formed a second line with Brigadier General Joseph W. Reves' brigade.

The last of Torbert's men stumbled to the rear as Sickles' division came into position. The Sixth Corps' artillery let loose on the approaching gray[coats] and Sickles' guns chimed in as if on cue. The hole and obstructions that permitted the Carolinians to penetrate so close to the Richmond Stage Road suddenly vanished in a resounding volley from the Federals.

No matter what he tried, General Law could not temper his roo[kies] recklessness. His two regiments seemed overwhelmed with fervor as they dashed toward an entire Union army corps like a runaway train. At the he[ad] of the attack, Law's horse went down and the general lost all hope of check[ing] the assault. The Confederates simply went on without him.

Crossing a gentle rise, the Carolinians came abruptly face-to-face [with] the Union Sixth Corps, hunkered down in the Richmond Stage Road. [The] Southerners reeled under a sudden and deadly fire from both infantry and artillery. The 15th New Jersey continued to play on the Rebels' left flank plunging afierce fire into the butternuts from Deep Run. Sickles advanc[ing] portion of the 1st Massachusetts to the area of some burnt chimneys ---- buildings that had been torched the night before, and wheeled on the Ret[----] right. The Confederates found themselves being hemmed in on three sides in return, Law's exposed men found very few Federals that could shoot because they covered themselves so well. Smith's Sixth Corps and Sickles' division took advantage of the embankments lining the Richmond Stage Road while the 15th New Jersey blended into the dense tangles of the Deep Run ravine. (O'Reilly, 170 and 173).

A soldier by the name of Joseph B. Polley, a member of Hood's Texas Brigade, heard a member of the 57th North Carolina exclaim on the regiments withdrawal, "Durn old Hood, anyhow! He jes' didn't have no bus'ness ter stop us when we'uns was a-whippin' the durn blue-bellies ter h-ll an' back, an' off we'uns hadder bin you Texicans, he'd never o' did it." (Polley, quoted in Commager, 246-247)

Yet for all the bravado, each side had bled more than enough. This sharp skirmish produced 224 casualties in the 57th North Carolina alone (somewhat amazingly, the 54th North Carolina got off rather easily with 46 casualties) and nearly 100 in the rest of Law's brigade (including some surprisingly heavy losses from artillery in supporting regiments that had not even crossed the railroad). For the entire Federal Sixth Corps more than a third of the casualties (162) were among Torbert's men. The fight had lasted only fifteen minutes." (Rable, 251)

At the end of this attack at Deep Run, Franklin ended offensive action against the Confederate right. The 57th retreated to lick their wounds. "[T]hat evening we retired back to a thick woods" [Private Zimmerman wrote]. "The next morning we was drawn up in line of battle and lay under the bums of the enemy all day[.] [I]n the eavning we commensed throwing up brestworks and worked all night.[.] [W]e got them ready by light that day being Monday [December 15]. . . . [T]hey shell[ed] us a while in the morning doing no harm[.] [T]hat night we lay back of our works in the open air with out much fire and it was very cool. Next morning I was glad the enemy had cross[ed] over the river[.] [T]hey fought a little that day and quit so it has been very still silence. . . . Tuesday we buryed our dead[.] [W]ensday I was over a part of the battle field. . . . I saw any amount of horse[s] killed laying on the field. . . . [S]ome places you could count thirty. . . . I always wanted to be in one battle to see how it did go but I never want to be in another one." (*Zimmerman Letters*, December 22, 1862, Jordan, 11.)

Aftermath of the Battle

The conduct of the 57th and 54th Regiments was highly lauded. "General Law was delighted by the performance of the 54th and 57th North Carolina, describing the conduct of the inexperienced Tar Heels as "'admirable. I cannot speak in too high terms,' he wrote 'of their steady courage in advancing, and the coolness with which they retired to the line of railroad when ordered. Colonel Godwin, commanding the Fifty-seventh, and Colonel [J. C. S.] McDowell, commanding the Fifty-fourth, ably assisted by Lieutenant Colonels Jones [5th] and [Kenneth M.] Murchison [54th], handled their commands with great skill and coolness.' In a personal message to Godwin and his men, General Hood also extended his 'congratulations upon the gallant and brilliant manner in which you charged the enemy in the battle of Saturday, 13th December -- a charge which elicited the admiration of every one who witnessed it.' He had 'no fears,' Hood continued, 'of the conduct of such troops in any future encounter.' and he relied 'confidently' upon them to sustain 'the reputation . . . gained in this their maiden effort.'" (*Official Records (Army),* ser. 1, 21:624; *Daily Progress (*Raleigh), December 27, 1862. See also *Official Records (Army),* ser. 1, 21:622; *Spirit of the Age* (Raleigh), January 5, 1863, Jordan, 11) In later years Hood recalled this episode somewhat differently (and probably with some embellishment): "They [the 16th, 54th and 57th regiments] pursued the broken enemy across the railroad for a mile into the plains. Although scourged by a galling flank fire, it was not until repeated messengers had been sent to repress their ardor that they were recalled. I verily believe the mad fellows would have gone on in spite of me and the enemy together; and as they returned, some of them were seen weeping with vexation because they had been dragged from the bleeding haunches of the foe, and exclaiming: 'It is because he has no confidence in Carolinians! If he had been some of his Texans he would have let us go on and got [*sic*] some glory.'" (Quoted in John Marshall Williams, "Fifty-fourth Regiment," in Clark, *Histories of the North Carolina Regiments,* 3:268-269. See also *Official Records (Army)*, ser. 1, 21:554, 634. Jordan, 11)

Wounded

Alexander was one of the 90 men wounded, with his injury occurring some time on December 13 (National Archives Record Group 109, Regimental Return, Dec. 1862; Report of casualties, in Maj. Gen. Jno. B. Hood's Division, in the engagements in front of Fredericksburg, VA., Dec. 12 and 13, 1862, report dated near Fredericksburg, Dec. 22, 1862, Series 1, Vol. 21, 621). Although there is no record of the time of his injury, one can assume that he was wounded at some time during the battle in Deep Run. Hood describes his injury as "wounded slightly." Perhaps it was slight enough that he could retreat with the rest of his company. Or perhaps he actually fell on the battlefield and had to be pulled out. He may have continued fighting for a period of time after receiving the wound. Or perhaps he hunkered down until he got caught up with the retreating company. He may have spent much of the evening or next morning trying to find his way to the medical corps at the rear. However it happened, he was part of very valiant fighting.

Ambulance Corps

Whenever he got there, Alexander likely received some rudimentary treatment by the ambulance corps. Even though his wound was "slight," it was enough to send him to the hospital. Treatment on the battlefield was primitive. He may have spent the night of the 13th behind the lines but near the battlefield, waiting treatment while more severe cases were handled first. If so, he likely listened to and/or watched amputations of arms and legs done without anesthetic or with the use or crude opiates. Surgery was performed on a door or wagon boards with "factory like speed." When no anesthetic was available, or the anesthetic was not strong enough, assistants held the patient still while the surgery was completed. "Shrieks of pain rang through the woods around the outdoor hospitals. . . . a large hole was dug . . . and into this the legs and arms were thrown as they were lopped off by the surgeons." (Ray, 56.)

Sanitation was nonexistent. Clean water simply was not available in the woods. The same bucket of water might serve to cleanse numerous wounds as well as provide drinking water for injured soldiers. Wounds were cleaned out with doctors bare fingers or the aid of dirty cloths. "Sometimes weeks after the operation soldiers would find fragments of cloth in their wound and still burn with fever from infection." (Ray, 54-56.)

Wounds were expected to suppurate (discharge pus). No one expected a wound to heal without inflammation and the process was expected to be long, painful, and exhausting. (Miller, 230) And antiseptics on the battlefield were rare. It was not considered important to clean a wound, except to remove large pieces of foreign matter. Injured men covered their own wounds with a "dirty handkerchief or piece of cloth from a sweaty shirt. Elastic bandages for controlling hemorrhage were unknown, the surgeon relying . . . on packing the wound with astringent, coagulant, and generally harmful chemicals." (Miller, 232)

Back in Salisbury

What Matilda knew of Alexander's situation at the end of 1862 is unknown. She probably saw Crawford, Alexander's brother, when he was home on furlough in November and December to recuperate from typhoid fever. But Alexander had been healthy when Crawford last saw him, and Crawford knew nothing firsthand of the accomplishments of the 57th North Carolina at Fredericksburg.

Crawford missed the Battle of Fredericksburg, which was probably a fortunate turn of events for him. He had been hospitalized at Richmond on October 23 with typhoid fever. Then he was home on furlough from November 25 until Christmas. He returned to duty sometime prior to March 1, 1863. (Jordan, 125) By the time Crawford returned to the regiment, Alexander was in the hospital in Richmond. When Crawford returned from furlough, was it possible that he was in the hospital and saw Alexander?

December 16, 1862, Winder Hospital

From the battlefield, Alexander was taken to Winder Hospital in Richmond. The ambulance journey was probably not very pleasant. Ambulances were often two wheeled horse-drawn carts, though in later stages of the war four-wheeled ambulances became more common. Some soldiers rode in wagons when sufficient ambulances were not available. The pain of the rides is more vivid when one remembers the conditions of the roads .... muddy, rutted, some of them corduroy roads, most likely uniformly uncomfortable. (Eaton, 99)

"I can never again get out of view the sights I saw of human misery," Mary Chesnut wrote in her famous diary on August 23, 1861 when she visited a Richmond, Virginia military hospital. "I sit thinking, shut my eyes and see it all . . . Long rows of ill men on cots; ill of typhoid fever, of every

human ailment; wounds being dressed; all horrors to be taken in at one glance.'" (Savage, 36) Mary wrote these words over a year before Alexander entered Winder hospital in Richmond. Little, however, had changed.

Winder was one of a large network of hospitals in Richmond. Most hospitals went by the name "City Hospital" followed by a number to distinguish them. Chimborazo, the largest hospital in the world at the time, and Winder Hospital were the exception, each having 7800 beds. (Eaton, 100) Chimborazo became the largest hospital in the world. It had five divisions, each of which had 150 wards that could treat 60 wounded or sick soldiers at any given time. Over 76,000 men received treatment at Chimborazo during the War. (Savage, 40)

Alexander was admitted to Winder Hospital on Tuesday, December 16, 1862. (National Archives record Group 109, Register of Medical Director's Office, Richmond, Va, Confederate Archives Chapter 6, File No. 157, 116.). He was in Division 3, one of 3 divisions at Winder that had soldiers from North Carolina. In Richmond, patients were assigned to hospitals geographically. Chimborazo received patients from Maryland, Tennessee, Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri. Soldiers from North Carolina went to General Hospital No. 24, and to the 3rd, 4th, and 5th divisions of Winder Hospital. Winder was located on the west terminus of Cary Street. Soldiers from other states were apportioned to various other General Hospitals in Richmond. (Richmond Sentinel, *Soldier's Guide,* August 10, 1863) Winder was a large complex of 98 buildings that was built shortly after the Civil War began. It was built on the training grounds of Camp Jackson. It's modern day boundaries are the present city streets of Winder, Amelia, and Hampton Streets, and Allen Avenue. On the north of Winder Hospital was Jackson Hospital and the two facilities shared some activities. (Waitt, Jr., www.mdgorman.com)

By June of 1864 the Richmond Whig newspaper called Winder "The largest hospital in the Confederacy (*Richmond Whig,* 15 June 1864, Waitt) It housed 3000 patients when it first opened. It expanded quickly to 4300 patients, housing them in five divisions, to which "a sixth was added plus a tent division." The hospital was well situated, having a number of natural springs and deep wells. It also had a large library, a "central register of patients, information house, cook-houses, bakeries, food-processing facilities, employees barracks, treatment and surgical buildings, warehouses, 125 acres of farmland used for growing supplies, recreational facilities, bathhouses, etc., provided regular transportation service to downtown, operated own river and canal boats." Winder was named for General John Henry Winder who was Provost Marshal and commander of prisons in Richmond at the time. (Waitt)

The surgeon-in-charge of Winder was Dr. Alexander G. Lane. The 2nd division of the hospital was destroyed January 21 of 1864. There were no injuries or death, but the loss was reported as totaling $50,000. A "well-equipped fire brigade" was maintained by the hospital. A number of the former hospital buildings are now residences in Richmond, mostly on Powhatan Street. (Waitt)

Medical Care

Deering J. Roberts, M. D., Surgeon, Confederate States Army wrote a report in 1911 detailing medical service in the Civil War. The report was written mostly from memory because many papers, reports, and records pertaining to medical care in Richmond were burned by the Federal Army during the conflagration of Richmond on April 2, 1865. (Miller, 238) It must be noted that not all records were lost and those who search for information about their ancestors should pursue all avenues to gain information.

Doctors and Nurses

There were around thirty-four hundred doctors and surgeons in the Confederacy. Though many were poorly trained, they fortunately did not resort to bleeding as treatment. Modern treatments included

"whisky, turpentine, blisters, purgatives, opium, quinine, calomel and blue mass, a mercury preparation." (Eaton, 99)

Nurses who attended Alexander were most likely both male and female for, while women were discouraged from becoming hospital nurses during the first year of the war, the Confederate government changed its position in September of 1862 to allow women to serve as nurses. The earlier position had been based on the concern that hospital scenes were "too horrible for feminine eyes." In addition, there was strong opposition to women working outside of the home. (Savage, 38-9) Nurses experienced great disdain from surgeons, but the need was great and hospitals were overwhelmed. (Savage, 44) Undoubtedly the female presence in the hospital was soothing both to the eyes and to the wounds.

Anesthesia

Anesthesia was first used in the Civil War as a result of a discovery made in 1842. But it was often not used in the field and military hospitals because it was not always administered properly, causing further deterioration in health. Chloroform, which was discovered as a pain-killer in 1847 by Dr. James Y. Simpson, was used by some surgeons. (Eaton, 98) As a side note, the Scotsman James Simpson is a probable ancestor of Duane Werner, husband of Bonnie Beaver Johansen-Werner, writer of this report and great-great-granddaughter of Alexander.

Cleanliness

Sanitation was a huge problem both in camps and in hospitals. A basic problem was that soldiers simply refused to be housebroken. They hated latrines and refused to use them. (Eaton, 99)

1863

Records concerning Alexander are somewhat sketchy in 1863. We have the Muster Rolls from Company C of the 57th Regiment which consistently state for January through April that Alexander was "absent." The Muster Roll of January and February, 1863, states "Sent to Richmond, wounded Decr. 14, 1862" (National Archives Record Group 109, Company Muster roll, Jan. & Feb., 1863, 57 N. C.). The Muster Roll of March and April states "Wounded in action Decr. 13, 1862, sent to hospital." (National Archives Record Group 109, Company Muster Roll, Mar. & Apr., 1863, 57 N. C.).

A possible conclusion to Alexander's story is that his wound gradually worsened as infection set in. If it had worsened severely soon after the Fredericksburg battle, he probably would have died quickly. Did he begin to heal and then worsen? Did he go through a series of improvements and setbacks? Amputation was a common treatment for infection in the Civil War. Did they amputate his arm? In the four months he spent in the hospital did his condition improve?

CSA Hospital, Farmville, Virginia

Another confusing record in Alexander's National Archives file comes from a Register of C. S. A. General Hospital, Farmville, Virginia. This register lists his date of death, April 10, 1863, his disease, which I cannot decipher, and his money as $66.00. It does not specifically say that he died at the Farmville Hospital, or was admitted to the Farmville Hospital. This report is undated. He is listed as A. Beaver, and it shows him as a Private in Company B, 57 Regt., N. C. (Register of C. S. A. General Hospital, Farmville, Virginia, Confederate Archives, Chapter 6, File No. 49, 21). This report raises more questions than it answers. Why is the company incorrectly listed? (Alexander belonged to Company C, not Company B.) Why is his full name not included? When did he get to Farmville? How long was he there? There must be some reason that Alexander's name appears on a Register of the Farmville Hospital. But if not, why would a report from Farmville Hospital be issued in the name of A. Beaver?

Could there have been another A. Beaver? An examination of the 57th Regiment roster shows that there were only two A. Beavers, Alexander from Company C and Allen A from Company A. Could the report from the CSA Farmville Hospital be referring to Allen Beaver? Hardly likely. For one thing, Allen was reported present with his Company each month from July 1862 through October, 1863. He was captured on November 7, 1863 at Rappahannock Station. So it is unlikely that he was in any hospital at this time. Secondly, the report from the CSA Farmville Hospital clearly stated that A. Beaver "died April 10, 1863." This is the date of Alexander's death. Surely this report does not belong to Allen Beaver.

So we must assume that Alexander was sent to the Farmville Confederate General Hospital at some point. This hospital was organized in 1862. Farmville was considered far from the action of the war. Safe from Union raids, it focused mainly on the care of soldiers and sailors with "cases of chronic diseases and convalescents from hospitals in the cities." Several tobacco buildings and warehouses were used for the hospital as well as some new buildings near the railroad. It began with only a few beds and grew to hold between 1200 and 1500 soldiers at a time. (Gage, 59) There was a second hospital in Farmville, called the Wayside Hospital. It was established in 1863 and located near the depot, for the quick treatment of soldiers in the process of transport. (Fitts, Brady, e-mail of October 13, 2007). It seems likely that Alexander was not in the Wayside Hospital.

A photo of a building that was probably the Farmville hospital was provided by Brady Fitts, Researcher at the South Central Virginia Genealogical Society. Unfortunately this building no longer exists because it collapsed in 1964 during renovation. (Fitts, e-mail.)

Return to Winder Hospital

Was Alexander considered a convalescent when he went to Farmville? Or did he have a chronic illness? The question might be answered if we can find a medical historian who can read the disease listed on several of Alexander's National Archive forms. Whatever his situation, he did not stay at Farmville, but returned to Winder Hospital on April 4, 1863. (National Archives Record Group 109, Register of Medical Director's Office, Richmond, Va., Confederate Archives, Chapter 6, File No. 153, 42.) According to that report, Alexander was now sent to Division 2 at Winder. Another archive report reinforces Alexander being sent to Division 2. This report is undated, but lists his death so it may be a late report. (National Archives Record Group 109, Register of Medical Director's Office, Richmond, Va., *Confederate Archives,* Chapter 6, File No. 153, 44). It is particularly interesting that Alexander was sent to Division 2, which was reserved for wounded from Georgia. (*Richmond Sentinal,* Soldier's Guide, August 10, 1863)

It might be ill advised to ponder for too long about Alexander's admittance to Division 2 because a Register of the General Hospital Camp Winder shows Alexander being admitted on April 5, 1863 to the 3rd division of Winder. (National Archives Record Group 109, Register of General Hospital Camp Winder, Richmond, Virginia, Confederate Archives, Chapter 6, File No. 233, 26.). Is there an error in reporting i.e. was Alexander never sent to Division 2? Or was he sent to Division 2 on April 4 and transferred to Division 3 on April 5? Since he dies just five days later, we can guess that he may have been quite ill at this time.

Back in Salisbury

Exactly when Matilda learned that Alexander was wounded is unknown. One wonders why he was never sent to Salisbury to recuperate. Other soldiers were sent back, namely his brother Crawford who received furlough in November and December of 1862 to recuperate from typhoid fever. If Alexander was well enough to be transferred to the Farmville Hospital, why wasn't he able to return to Salisbury to recuperate? Was this an option that was considered, but rejected for reasons we will never know?

Burial and Postlude
Alexander appears on a "Roll of Honor" of the 57th North Carolina. This Roll of Honor does not provide new information, but it does confirm that he entered service on July 4, 1862 at the age of 30 as a volunteer. He died April 10, 1863 and the remarks indicate he was wounded at Fredericksburg. (National Archives Record Group 109, Roll of Honor)

A significant amount of paperwork was generated regarding Alexander's death. Alexander's name appears on a "Register of Officers and Soldiers of the Army of the Confederate States who were killed in battle, or who died of wounds or disease." This register states "when received: Sept. 16, 1863" which presumably refers to when that particular office received information about Alexander's death. (National Archives Record Group 109, Register of Officers and Soldiers ..., Confederate Archives, Chapter 10, File No. 9,18). No new information appears on this register.

Alexander also appears on a "Register containing a record of the Property of Deceased Confederate Soldiers." This register again confirms that Alexander died on April 10, 1863 at Winder Hospital. (Confederate Archives, Chapter 1, File No. 28, page Alph, *Register containing a record of the Property of Deceased Confederate Soldiers*)
The last Muster Roll on which he appears (or that remains in his file in the National Archives) is the Company Muster Roll of May 1 to Aug. 31, 1863. (National Archives Record Group 109, Company Muster Roll, May 1 to Aug. 31, 1863. 57 N. C.) The remarks on this muster roll say "died from wound received in action at Fredericksburg, Decr. 13, '62." No mention of a disease is made at this time. Does that mean that the disease written on the registers at both General Hospital Camp Winder and C. S. A. Farmville did not kill him? Or was it just more honorable to say he died from wounds received at Fredericksburg?

Where is Alexander buried? For years we did not know. We thought he could be at Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond, buried in an unmarked grave. A Pyramid stands at Hollywood Cemetery honoring 18,000 Confederate soldiers who are buried there. (http://www.hollywoodcemetery.org/history.html) But we also thought it was also possible that Alexander was shipped back to a Confederate Cemetery in North Carolina. Embalming was a new science that moved forward rapidly during the Civil War expressly for the purpose of transporting soldiers home for burial. Considering the amount of paperwork that confirmed his death, it is a shame that no paperwork was generated to tell where he was buried. Considering how carefully he was tracked through the hospitals, even if it was imperfect, it is not hard to imagine that he was buried in a marked grave. But if a wood grave marker was used, which was somewhat common during the war, it might have deteriorated before cemetery records were kept.

In the summer of 2009 Hollywood Cemetery listed the names of Confederate soldiers buried there. This writer, idly checking online records once again, was astonished to see Alexander's name on the roll. Alexander does not have a grave marker, at least at the time of this writing. The family may decide to have one placed. Alexander is buried in Section T, Lot 272.

<u>Lingering questions</u>
Were letters exchanged between Matilda and Alexander when he was traveling through Virginia? Were letters written home while he was hospitalized? If so, none have survived. Were either of them literate? How was Matilda notified of Alexander's death? Did she receive a telegram; was she visited by a soldier to announce his death? How did Matilda react to being left a widow with three young children? What stories did she tell her children about their father? Did Matilda participate in the bread riots led by women in Salisbury in 1863?

<u>Pension</u>

Matilda must have learned of Alexander's death somewhat promptly. Her name appears on a "Register of Claims of Deceased Officers and Soldiers from North Carolina which were filed for settlement in the Office of the Confederate States Auditor for the War Department." The claim is presented by M. Beaver, wid. and was filed on June 11, 1863, exactly one month and one day after Alexander died.

The form leaves blank information regarding "Comptroller: When reported to" and "Number of settlements," as well as "Amount found due," and "By whom paid." This form states that he died in Richmond, Va. (Confederate Archives, Chapter 10, File No. 32, page 7, Register of Claims of Deceased Officers and Soldiers, June 11, 1863)

Matilda apparently filled out the same form a second time in October of 1863. Her name again appears on a "Register of Claims of Deceased Officers and Soldiers from North Carolina which were filed for settlement in the Office of the Confederate States Auditor for the War Department." The register states that Alexander died at Camp Winder. The claim was filed on October 2, 1863. (National Archives Record Group 109, Register of Claims of Deceased Officers and Soldiers, October 2, 1863, Confederate Archives, Chapter 10, File No. 32, 129). Was the first form temporarily lost? Misplaced? Did the Confederacy not have enough money to honor her first request?

As with many other things in Alexander's story, we will probably never know the answer to this question.

A Final Perspective

It is hard to find words to put into perspective a war in which over three million men fought and some 718,000 soldiers died from wounds or disease, at least 20,000 of them from North Carolina. (*The Price in Blood!,* http://www.civilwarhome.com/casualties.htm) These staggering death totals feed an ongoing debate as to whether a different method than war could have settled the differences between the Union and the Confederacy.

However, through this war many men came to meet soldiers ... men ... from other parts of the country and discover similarities and commonalities, ultimately promoting understanding. They saw wounded men on the battlefield from the other side, men who looked just like them. Sometimes sentries talked across a river on the eve of a battle. They discovered they had "the same likes and dislikes, the same fears." They discovered respect for each other. As one Confederate soldier said after "a long talk with a Union man, . . . 'We could have settled the war in 30 minutes had it been left to us.'" (Ray, 29-30) Though soldiers were taught obedience, some of them began to wonder if there was a better solution to the differences between the north and the south.

Likewise it is hard to get perspective on a war that snuffed out the life of a man in his early thirties, leaving a wife and three very young children. Alexander went to war to comply with the conscription law of his state and to protect his immediate and extended family from the threat of attack by federal forces. As with many soldiers in many wars, wider political considerations may have meant little or nothing to him. Alexander may have never met Union soldiers. But he may have watched them from a distance across the Rappahannock in the days preceding the battle. He may have heard the Union band play. He might have heard sentries talking across the river. He most likely saw Union soldiers face to face in battle, seeing them as ghosts in the haze and smoke of battle. He saw lands beyond his home and had a chance to learn, with many others, of how much people from other regions of the south and also from the north, had in common. Alexander's thoughts will never be known to us. But he, along with many other men, was part of a war that changed our nation, ultimately forging it into a stronger country. Alexander left a legacy for his children and children's children. A legacy he inherited from family members who forged a life in America a century earlier. A legacy of hard work,

of bravery, of love for family, of sacrifice, and perseverance. From Alexander and his experiences we remember, we learn, and, one hopes, we grow.