

Frederick C. Whattler, Company "G" Field Musician

Contributed by Holly Oler

Frederick Whattler enlisted April 17 and was mustered at Bolivar Heights May 3, 1863. He was in Harper's Ferry according to his service records for April. The roster in the Maryland archives shows him as a deserter, May 20, 1863. On May 31 he was dishonorably discharged.

The Surgeon of a Convalescent Camp in Virginia best tells Frederick's story with a letter written October 23, 1863. (The *italicized* words are where we could not translate the cursive writing)

"Colonel, In the case of drummer Frederick C. Whattler, Co. G 7th MD ordered discharged *May* 19th and "reported on rolls for May and June, 1863 deserted date not given" I have the honor to report:

Whattler is a child 13 years old and small of his age and hardly to be considered morally responsible. He says that he left his regiment at Harpers Ferry without leave, in May last, to visit an officer in Charlestown expecting to return the same day. When taken prisoner, carried to Richmond and after drifting about in military custody until his exchange two months since, Came to this camp October 1st. I know of the youth and irresponsibility of this child, I respectfully recommend that the charge of desertion be removed.

Very Resp. ----, Stanford B. Hunt Surgeon, USA"

His service records contain his prisoner of war record. It also contains a disability discharge on the grounds that 13 years old makes one unfit for duty.

We do not know where in Virginia this camp was. Dr. Hunt was recorded as being in Newport News Convalescent Camp in May of 1862. However we are not sure he was still in that location a year later.

We know from his discharge papers that Frederick came from England but we could not find any records of Frederick before or after the war (US or England, census or other). There are no Whattler's recorded in Maryland or Virginia. There was a Frederick C Whattler we found and it was a christening record from Kent for February 24, 1850. The parents of that child, the father a laborer and the mother a laundress were recorded as living in Kent in an 1881 census.

This 5 month ordeal is all we really know of our Frederick.

Sources: Service and Pension Records, Census records, New Jersey Historical Society Website