

# OUR CAMP JOURNAL



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"We are but few in number but formidable." -Pvt. James Shelton, 7th Md. Co. B

January 2024

## The Bayonet

By Pvt. Bill Hart

This is not intended to be the be-all and end-all on the subject, just my ponderings. (ed. note – *Pondering*: the process of thought used by wise elders when considering matters of both large and small import.)

I have often heard it said that the bayonet was not used in Civil War combat. Then the speaker backs down a bit and says, "Well, maybe a few times." British General and well-known military historian J.F.C. Fuller <sup>(1)</sup> stated that the Civil War

proved that the bayonet was as obsolete as the pike. The major basis for that statement seems to be that the number of wounds from bayonets is nearly infinitesimal as opposed to gunshot and artillery wounds. A post on the National Museum of Civil War Medicine states, "Few men were treated for saber or bayonet wounds . . ." <sup>(2)</sup> A post on the *CivilWarAcademy.com* site states that "Soldiers in combat seldom ever used their bayonets in fighting," and

"Only about 1% of Civil War casualties were actually a result of a bayonet wound." <sup>(3)</sup> Finally, "Swords, sabers, and bayonets were responsible for only a minuscule number of wounds treated by surgeons— no more than 0.4 percent of the total." <sup>(4)</sup> Kind of a sampling of what you may find about bayonet wounds in the Civil War.

I have found nothing about the methodology of such statements. Civil

War hospitals and field treatment facilities were notoriously chaotic. How anyone obtains reliable and accurate data on wounds is such circumstances is questionable at the least. I therefore question the actual figures, the certainty of the percentages. I do not question the conclusion that bayonet wounds were much less frequent than bullet wounds.

The number of wounds

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## FROM THE PAGES OF PRIVATE ELLIS

Pemberton Mansion, on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, not far from Salisbury, became a home away from home for the 7th. Some of the best stories I heard when I first joined the company were from Pemberton Mansion. Some of the best I'd be a part of were, too!

Before my time: "It's a hornets nest in there" fleeing from the woods where our line met with Confederate skirmishers.

Apparently, everyone was quite impressed with our pards impression, if only they were actually acting. It was not however the "Sessesh" our pards were fleeing from, but actual hornets! (Not to be confused with Private Lynch at a Battle of Gettysburg screaming about imaginary bees and causing the entire Brigade to change their course across the field!)

On one of my trips to

Pemberton, after setting up camp across the main field from the house on Friday evening, we sent out skirmishers to probe the position of the "Sessesh". Thankfully willing to play, they came out in force, pushing us back. Fighting along a Virginia worm fence, was quite the experience! Popping up and leaping forward between the zig-zagged rails, hoping that your pard provided enough cover to keep the



other side from leaping forward towards you. Occasionally, you'd hear a "Too close! Too close!" and both sides would flee.

*(Continued on page 2)*

# Upcoming Campaigns

Information regarding the date and location (unless held via virtual meeting) of the 7th Maryland Reg't. 2024 Annual Meeting

will be sent via the email list when confirmed.

Generally the 7th MD meeting

is held following the Federal Volunteer Brigade meeting in January. The 7th MD tends to adopt the FVB event list.

## FROM THE PAGES OF PRIVATE ELLIS

*(Continued from page 1)*

While Friday night was fun, Saturday night's fight was significantly more so. Hearing some shouting in the yard of the house, it turns out it was our own Sergeant Bush in a standoff with one of the Confederate officers, pistols drawn, but neither firing (unknown at the time but both were out of rounds). Then nearby, Corporal Bush yelled to declare he'd gotten one of the "Sessesh" we'd all been hunting the night before! Sgt. Bush, needing assistance called out to Jeff, "I want to see the body! Drag him over!"

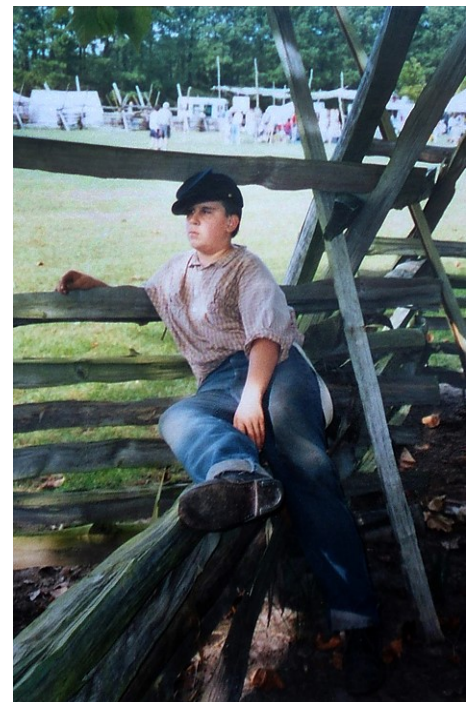
When Jeff arrived at the yard, he said, "so how's this gonna end?"

Turns out no one was loaded and everyone just ran for cover! It was the best fight of the weekend.

Second best, we had pushed a squad of Confederates back to one of the barns. We were getting close to routing them when we heard, "Fix Bayonets!" Looking for some hand-to-hand fighting we started to charge until we saw the line of glinting bayonets! Needless to say, they won that one! It didn't end up much of a fight, but we would laugh

at that one for years to come.

The best part of every weekend at Pemberton though was telling jokes around the fire and having Jeff Bush in stitches! These were some of the best memories of my time in the company. All a testament to the close knit family spirit of the 7th Maryland, Company A.



Above, an idle young Pvt. Dan Hart awaits the action.

Left, defending the breastworks at Pemberton Mansion.



# The Civil War Correspondents Memorial Arch

Astride the ridge known as South Mountain, near Burkittsville at Crampton's Gap, lies Gathland State Park. The home of an unusual man, [Gathland](#) was an architecturally unique estate made up of as many as twenty structures, many of them built of rugged stone, individual in purpose and design. A number of buildings still stand, and the remains of others may be seen by visitors to the Park.

Born on January 30, 1841, George Alfred Townsend became the youngest war correspondent of the Civil War. He served both at home and abroad, and later became one of America's most important journalists and novelists of the Reconstruction Era. His pen name, Gath, from which the Park derives its name, was formed by adding an H to his initials and was inspired by a biblical passage: (11 Samuel 1:20) "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askalon."

In 1884 Townsend purchased a tract of land on South Mountain, an area particularly attractive to him because of its proximity to Antietam and other historical sites of the Civil War. Closely associated with this historical aspect, the natural beauty of the site and the imposing views of the valleys appealed to him.

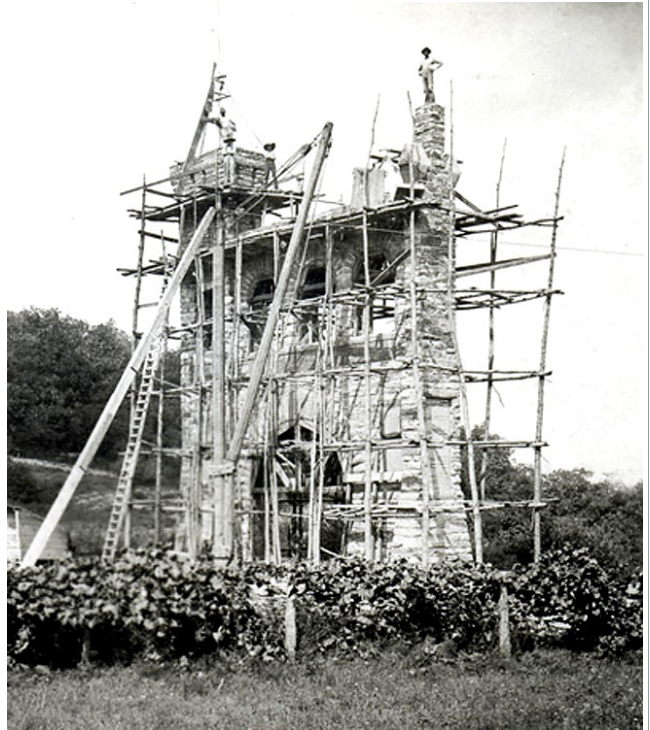
The planning, design and construction of buildings was a hobby with Townsend, and he pressed forward with plans to convert his Mountainside into a retreat from the pressures of his strenuous writing schedule. Among his first efforts was Gapland Hall built in 1885, soon after Townsend acquired the land, and enlarged at one time to include eleven rooms. Probably occupied by his wife, Bessie, this building was partially restored in 1958, and now houses the Park Visitor's Center. The Den and Library Building was erected in 1890 - it contained a large library, a study and writing room, and ten upstairs bedrooms. The foundations of this building are still intact, but the walls have long since crumbled, and only fragments of the original building remain.

Gapland Lodge, built in 1885, was a stone building, thought to be used as servants' quarters; it now serves as a museum building. West of Gapland Hall are the remains of a mausoleum,

built by Gath in 1895. A large bronzed dog graced the top of the tomb, and a white marble slab over the door bore the inscription "Good night Gath." This building was perhaps intended to become Gath's final resting-place but the dog was stolen, the building deteriorated into rubble, and there is no evidence that the tomb was ever used as a burial place. Townsend himself died in New York in 1914.

Probably Townsend's most unique and certainly his most lasting architectural endeavor at Gathland is an unusual monument erected in 1896 as a memorial to his fellow war correspondents. Ruthanna Hindes, in her book "George Alfred Townsend" describes the monument in some detail:

"In appearance the monument is quite odd. It is fifty feet high and forty feet broad. Above a Moorish arch sixteen feet high built of Hummelstown purple stone are super-imposed three Roman arches. These are flanked on one side with a square crenellated tower, producing a bizarre and picturesque effect. Niches in different places shelter the carving of two horses' heads, and symbolic terra cotta statuettes of Mercury, Electricity and Poetry. Tables under the horses' heads bear the suggestive words "Speed" and "Heed"; the heads are over the Roman arches. The three Roman arches are made of limestone from Creek Battlefield, Virginia, and each is nine feet high and six feet wide. These arches represent Description, Depiction and Photography. The aforementioned tower contains a statue of Pan with the traditional pipes, and he is either half drawing or sheathing a Roman sword. Over a small turret on the opposite side of the tower is a gold vane of a pen bending a sword. (Note: This weather vane may now be seen in the Park Museum.)



Above, The monument under construction in 1896.

At various places on the monument are quotations appropriate to the art of war correspondence. These are from a great variety of sources beginning with Old Testament verses. On the north side of the monument is inscribed the following:

O wondrous youth  
Through this grand ruth  
Runs my boy's life, its thread  
The General's fame, the battle's name  
The rolls of maimed and dead  
I bear with my thrilled soul astir  
And lonely thoughts and fears  
And am but history's courier  
To bind the conquering years  
A battle's ray, through ages gray  
To light to deeds sublime  
And flash the lustre of my day  
Down all the aisles of time  
*War Correspondent Ballad - 1865*

Perhaps the most striking feature of all are the tablets inscribed with the names of 157 correspondents and war artists who saw and described in narrative and picture almost all the events of the four

(Continued on page 6)

## Fanny Crosby – The Blind Musician

*“You can’t save a man by telling him of his sins. He knows them already. Tell him there is pardon and love waiting for him. Win his confidence and make him understand that you believe in him, and never give him up!”*

– Fanny Crosby

One of the most fascinating characters of the 19th century was the blind hymnist, Fanny Crosby (1820–1915). Imagine if you will a stack of 18 good-sized church hymnals— that’s what the 9,000 hymns Crosby composed, in whole or in part, during a 50-year period would fill. You would be hard-pressed to find a postbellum hymnal without several of

her compositions included. In fact, a few of her better-known hymns are still gospel standards. Crosby’s hymns have been criticized as “gushy and mawkishly sentimental” by modern standards and critics have sometimes attacked both her writing and her theology.

The fact remains that she exerted an enormous influence on a considerable body of American hymnody, and some of her hymns are still being recorded today. Her “Blessed Assurance” was on a record called “Amazing Grace: A Country Salute to Gospel” that won a Grammy Award in the Country Southern Gospel category in 1996. Crosby was born with vision on a farm in Putnam, N.Y. She was blinded when a traveling doctor treated her eye in-

fection at six weeks old with hot mustard poultices, a treatment that burned her corneas. Shortly thereafter the family suffered another tragedy when her father passed away, forcing her mother to take work as a maid to provide for them.



For her part, Crosby never indulged in self-pity despite her difficult circumstances. She was fortunate to have had an extended family to provide care while her mother worked. She wrote later, “It seemed intended by the blessed providence of God that I should be blind all my life, and I thank him for the dispensation. If perfect earthly sight were offered me

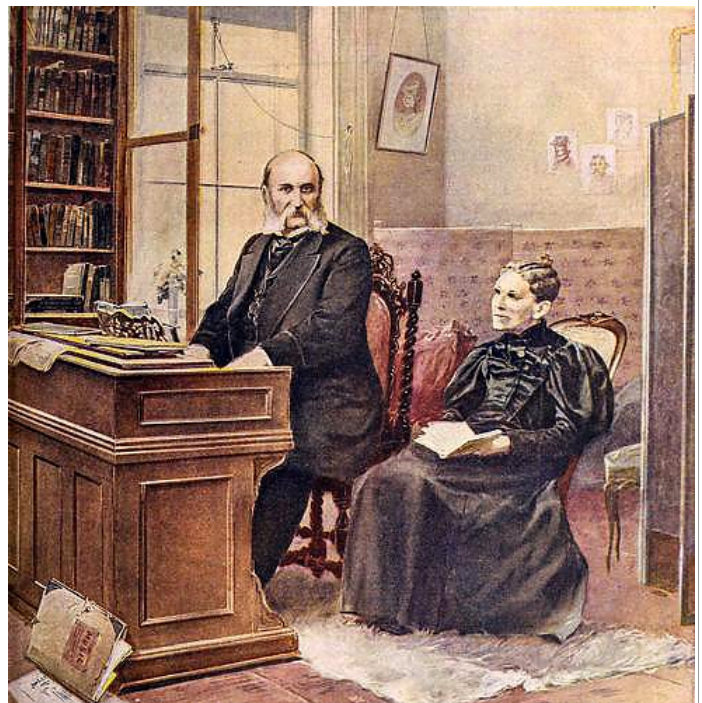
tomorrow I would not accept it. I might not have sung hymns to the praise of God if I had been distracted by the beautiful and interesting things about me.”

The Crosby family had strong roots in New England. Fanny’s great-grandfather Charles fought at Bunker Hill against the British in 1776 and she grew up hearing stories of his exploits. In her own words, “When Gen-

eral Warren was killed at Bunker Hill it was a Crosby who caught up the American flag as it fell from his hands.” Another relative, Enoch Crosby, was once captured and imprisoned by the British soldiers he was spying upon. He is considered in some literary circles as the inspiration for James Fennimore Cooper’s second novel, *The Spy: A Tale of the Neutral Ground* (1831).

At age 15 Crosby left for New York City, which at that time meant Manhattan, to attend the New York Institute for the Blind. She used her gift of memory to absorb the lectures she attended. She joined the faculty there at age 23 and taught history and rhetoric classes. Crosby devoted many of her Civil War-era poems and songs to the abolition of slavery. Her satirical “Song to Jeff Davis” deemed the Confederate president worthy of death by decapitation. She was so staunchly pro-Union that after the Civil War began, she often wore a small U.S. flag pinned to her bodice. Once a Southern lady visiting a restaurant in New York found this display offensive and snapped, “Take that

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Fanny J. Crosby, The Blind Poet, and Ira D. Sankey, Composing A New Hymn. *The Christian Herald and Signs Of Our Times*. March 25, 1896.



# The Bayonet

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treated at a medical facility is not an accurate accounting of the frequency of the use of the bayonet. The bayonet is a weapon of shock and intimidation. It is sometimes used in sheer desperation when no other course presents itself. The image of a horde of screaming soldiers running at you bristling with glittering sharp pointed blades is fearsome in the extreme. The intent of the charge is to send the enemy fleeing without the necessity for actually bayoneting the enemy (most Americans are notoriously squeamish about such an action regardless of training and if faced with the choice would prefer to bash out the brains of the enemy with the butt of the rifle rather than run him through with a blade even though such clubbing usually results in much more brutal consequences). If a bayonet charge is successful, the enemy either runs or surrenders.

The bayonet was used in battle during the Civil War. I have read a number of accounts about bayonet charges during that conflict. Besides the 20<sup>th</sup> Maine's charge at Gettysburg made famous by the novel, *The Killer Angels* and movie it inspired, *Gettysburg*, the 1<sup>st</sup> Minnesota on Cemetery Ridge and the 137<sup>th</sup> New York on Culp's Hill both used the tactic at Gettysburg. I've turned up others in my reading but can't recall at the moment where but they did occur, trust me.

I've heard it said and seen it in writing that the bayonet in the civil war was only fit for use as a tent peg, for digging, for skewering meat to cook over a fire and as a candle holder. Addressing those in order, the bayonet as a tent peg. With a dog tent two men can come up with

two such tent pegs. Four will do but normally six are required, sometimes as many as eight and if a soldier was called for picket or other duty that required his appearance with full accoutrements, a tent peg is lost. So although it can be used as such, I don't find it practical. I'll buy digging as they serve in a pinch for loosening compacted soil which may then be scooped out with a canteen half, plate, or tin cup and we've done that in reenacting. Also in reenacting we've used the bayonet to skewer meat and they serve admirably for that task. The use of a bayonet as a candle holder is documented in the well-known *Hardtack and Coffee*.<sup>(5)</sup>

It does work well in that function but I have to question even that as a regular practice. A soldier is subject to inspection or dress parade at almost any time. Cleaning wax from the socket and screw of a bayonet is not the work of a few seconds while one is rushing to prepare for inspection. I might add that although I've never seen it in writing, I've also used mine as a horseshoe peg and it serves that purpose splendidly.

Although the bayonet could be used as a camp tool, it was not simply a camp tool. It may not have been used extensively in Civil War battles but it was used and then often to good effect.

The use of the bayonet as a weapon in battle continues. Bayonet charges were used during World War II, the Korean War and the latest I was able to find was by Brits in Iraq in 2004 only 20 years ago. Bayonet charges have been used sparingly but seem to remain effective in at least some circumstances.

(1) Fuller, J.F.C., *Grant and Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship*, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1957, p. 47.

(2) Reimer, Terry, "Wounds, Ammunition, and Amputation", November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007. <https://www.civilwarmed.org/surgeons-call/amputation1/>

(3) According to the Confederate surgeon Simon Baruch of the 3<sup>rd</sup> South Carolina Battalion, "Bayonet wounds are almost harmless, when compared to the ploughed tracks which the terrible minie [bullet] bores through tissues.

... A bayonet wound almost invariably heals... and leaves no deformity behind, whilst the simplest ball wound requires weeks for a complete recovery and then, perhaps, leaves the sufferer with a contracted and useless limb." <https://www.civilwaracademy.com/civil-war-bayonet>

(4) Bollet, Alfred Jay, *Civil War Medicine: Challenges and Triumphs*. Tucson, Arizona: Galen Press, 2002, p. 84.

(5) Billings, John D., *Hardtack and Coffee*, Chicago, Lakeside Press, 1888, pp. 77-78



Secure Arms

# OUR CAMP JOURNAL

# The Civil War Correspondents Memorial Arch



*Civil War Re-enactors;  
America's Living Historians.*

(Continued from page 3)

years of the war—"

The unusual monument was dedicated by Governor Lloyd Lowndes on October 16, 1896, and in 1904 was turned over to the National Park Service to be maintained as a

National Monument.

After Townsend's death on April 15, 1914, his daughter sold Gathland. In 1943 the property was purchased by a church group and used as a summer conference site. Later it was acquired by members of the Frederick Chamber of Commerce and the Historical Society of Frederick County, Inc. On May

13, 1949, it was deeded to the State of Maryland to be administered as a State Park by the Department of Forests and Parks.

Source: "Maryland Park Service"



## Fanny Crosby

(Continued from page 4)

dirty rag away from here." Crosby, blind and middle-aged though she was, challenged the woman to "... repeat that remark at your own risk!"

During the Civil War years in New York, Crosby's already remarkable life took a sudden turn after composer William Bradbury gave her a hymn-writing test. He asked her to put her Christian-themed poetry to some of his melodies. She came up with lyrics that Bradbury considered much better than work of his other collaborators. Her first effort, "We Are Going," (1863) was published in his next hymnal. She later worked with Howard Doane, Ira Sankey, Robert Lowry, and other prominent hymn composers. Fanny Crosby was in great demand as a lecturer and preacher. Although completely blind, wherever she traveled and performed, she insisted on going alone.

While she received a stipend of a few dollars for each hymn published, she and her husband, a former student, lived in simple circumstances near the Bowery district. The Bowery, originally a respectable entertainment center in Manhattan's southern tip, had degenerated by the time of the Civil War into an area of lowbrow concert venues, gambling halls, beer gardens, and flophouses. It was also home to the infamous Nativist gang "the Bowery Boys," who took an active part in the mayhem during the New York Draft Riots of mid-1863.

Rather than improve her standard of living even for safety's sake, Crosby opted to donate any funds in excess of her modest living expenses to local rescue missions. On the evening of Feb. 11, 1915, when she was almost 95, Crosby dictated a letter to cheer a bereaved friend, including a poem which she recalled perfectly. She died later that night. Hymnist Elisa Edmunds Hewitt, who wrote "Will There Be Any Stars in My Crown," provided the memorial poem:

*Away to the country of sunshine and song*

*Our songbird has taken her flight,  
And she who has sung in the darkness so long,  
Now sings in the beautiful light.*

### About the author

Craig L. Barry was born in Charlottesville, Va. He holds his BA and Masters degrees from UNC (Charlotte). Craig served *The Watchdog Civil War Quarterly* as Associate Editor and Editor from 2003–2017. *The Watchdog* published



books and columns on 19th-century material and donated all funds from publications to battlefield preservation. He is the author of several books including *The Civil War Musket: A Handbook for Historical Accuracy* (2006, 2011), *The Unfinished Fight: Essays on Confederate Material Culture* Vol. I and II (2012, 2013). He has also published four books in the Suppliers to the Confederacy series on English Arms & Accoutrements, Quartermaster stores and other European imports.