

Remembrance Day Parade, November 18th

OUR CAMP JOURNAL

Volume 27, Issue 4

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

November 2023

159th Cedar Creek



Roster of attendees:
Sgt. S. Giovannini (aka Bitterman)
First Cpl Dan Patterson
Pvt. Don Miskey
Pvt. "Killer" Caleb Gosmeyer
Pvt. E. Schwetje

Recruits/potential new members:

Pvt. Jason Posey
Pvt. Noah Posey

Civilians:

Sarah Lafferty
Della Lafferty

Early rain failed to dampen the spirits of the 7th Maryland members in attendance for the 159th Anniversary of the Battle of Cedar Creek in Middletown, Virginia, October 21st and 22nd.

The weekend turned crisp, bright and sunny for the battles on the historic fields surrounding the Heater House.

The army of Gen. Sheridan once again fell victim to an all out rebel assault only to recover magnificently to re-take the field and overwhelm the final semblance of enemy activity in the Shenandoah valley. It was a glorious affair.

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Upcoming Campaigns

NOVEMBER

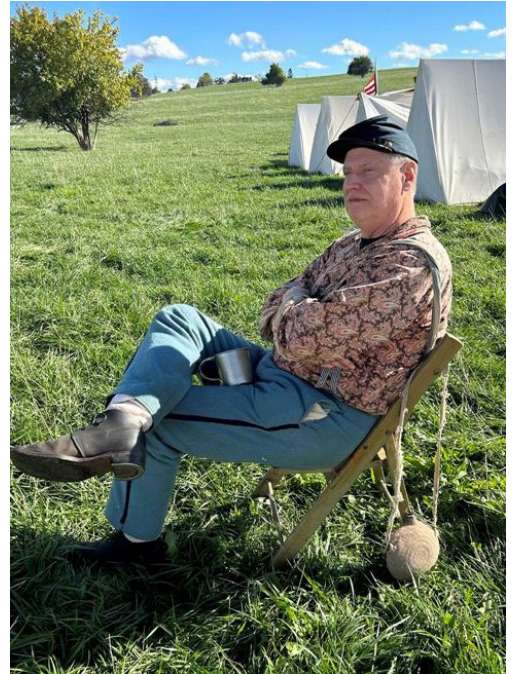
***November 17-18: FVB Annual Meeting & Remembrance Day Parade * (COMPANY)**

DECEMBER

Early December /TBA: Fort Ward Christmas in Camp (INDIVIDUAL).

December 25th: MERRY CHRISTMAS! (COMPANY)

159th Cedar Creek



(Continued from page 1)
The troops took time to relax and unwind between the scheduled set-to's.

Cedar Creek, the last major field event of the reenacting year, is always a grand time to catch up and look forward to the coming campaigns.

Additional photos on page 8.



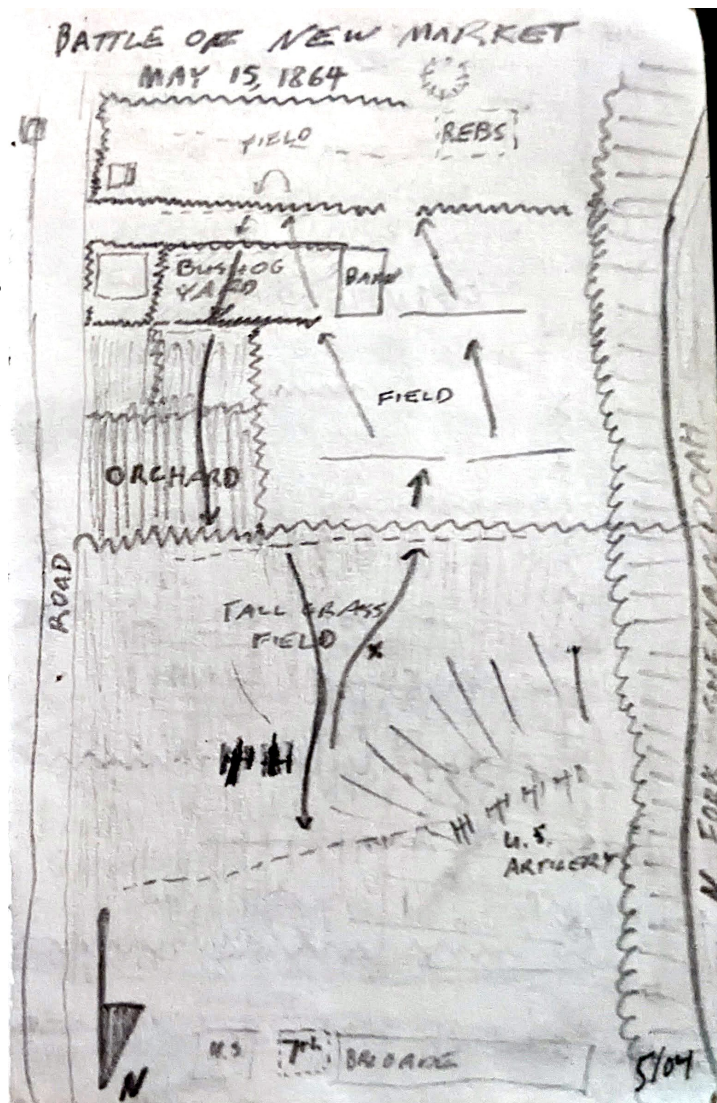
FROM THE PAGES OF PRIVATE ELLIS

The sound of minié balls
Bullets whizzing over-
head like bees. We could-
n't help but duck our
heads and try to drop to
the ground. It was May
1864.

Or at least it felt like
May 1864. It was the
opening battle of the
140th Anniversary of the
Battle of New Market,
140 years, to the day. The
high pitched buzzing
sound, not really bullets,
was created by reverber-
ating echoes of confeder-
ate rifle shots from across
the farmyard between the
house and the barn of the
Bushong Farm. The line
of men not willing to stay
and catch lead from the
secesh, we began our
withdrawal to the rear,
initially in good march-
ing order. The Virginia
worm fences and orchard
behind us however made
quick work of the "good
marching order", break-
ing our company lines
and creating the greatest
of disorders. The best of
disorders; the type that
make our officers howl
and that create so many
opportunities for us to
play our best roles for
each other. In the or-
chard, we lost some of
our best men of the com-
pany: our First sergeant,
Steve Bush, and our sen-
ior corporal, Jeff Bush.
It was my first oppor-
tunity to march the com-
pany off the field, a bre-
vet corporal. [It was my
first brevet promotion
and was the beginning of
my climb up the ranks,

eventually to become first sergeant of the company].

In addition to the excitement of the battle, the dress
parade also provided opportunities for excitement. To
set the stage, there had been much discussion amongst
the officers of the brigade regarding the reports of
first sergeants during dress parades. It was decided
that each sergeant would announce the number of
their company, followed by "All present and accounted



Above: The hand-drawn map of the Bushong Farm battle field with annotated troop movements. The brigade entered the battle over the crest of the hill between batteries of artillery. The pair of cannons marked the point that the VMI Cadets were able to advance, turning the US guns on federal forces.

for, sir" without any flourish or additions. First, the likelihood that any company would be all present AND accounted for is zero. There will always be a detail, picket duty, wounded, etc. Second, you tell a Bush brother not to do something and you'll get an ear to ear grin just after they proudly announce, "6th COMPANY, THE MEN OF THE OLD LINE, THE MARYLAND BOYS, ALL PRESENT OR ACCOUNTED FOR, SIR!" .

One additional note of caution from the battlefield. Regardless of what is happening on the field, remain aware of the state of load of your rifle. A soldier in another company had a misfire. Our first sergeant, Steve Bush, being a sound safety officer, investigated. Clearing out the cone and attempting to fire the rifle with a new brass cap. The rifle let off a blast with a kick like a mule! It is estimated that the soldier just kept loading their rifle unaware of repeated misfires until the fourth round ignited for our sergeant. [Poignantly reminiscent of Sgt. 'Buster' Kilrain in 'Gettysburg' explaining, "Some of them, they load

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Sgt. Steve Bush

President's Message

I must say: No mainstream event has consistently given me the pleasure that Cedar Creek has brought each and every year. After bowing out the first two times after joining the 7th (first conflicted with a vacation, the second with Emma's birth) Sgt. Guy Beaven lead me into the vortex of heck and really got things started for the morning tactical. We fired only a few shots that morning, but what a cyclorama seat Guy gave us for the main event. Everything was going on in every direction.

I've done four "Cedar Creeks" since then and every one of them has been memorable. This year brought it full circle as I was given the honor of starting things on Sunday morning. It was quite a dance

wasn't it Pvt. Ethan Criswell?

With Cedar Creek now behind us, our camping events are over for the year. It's always hard to believe that we've arrived at this point. It seems only yesterday that we were at Appomattox listening to Capt. Matt Fox tell us "I wish Miss Cheryl was here; we're all gonna starve!"

Though the battles are winding down, we are coming to the most important and solemn event of the year. Remembrance Day in Gettysburg brings everything we've been doing all year into perspective. When I look at all those Union graves in the cemetery, then realize just how small a portion of the total losses those few thousand actually represent, well, it's very sobering to me. Do whatever it takes to be a part of these ceremonies. It really is that important!

Remember to clean your weapon (don't neglect your bayonet) and yourself. Polish the brass and dust off the uniform, for the soldiers really did try to look their best for these types of ceremonies. Our final battle of the year brings us to Fredericksburg. I believe Guy has gone nearly every year that I've been in the 7th and he slowly convinced us to show up in force. It's only a one day event but what a day it can be. The 7th was the largest company there last year and we convinced Colonel [Ron] Palese to bring the rest of the second regiment this year. This will ensure no more "Antietam hits". I bring this event to your attention now so you can start making plans to attend.

Until we see each other at Gettysburg take care and may God bless us all.

Editor's note: This column is reprinted from the November 2005 issue of *Our Camp Journal*. Steve Bush, former president of the 7th Maryland, company Sergeant and Former Federal Volunteer Brigade Sergeant Major, passed away October 28, 2014. His words today remind us of who he was and his intense passion for the folks of the 7th Maryland and the reenacting hobby.

Civil War Thanksgiving

A Guide for Preparing a 19th Century Holiday Meal

The major holiday meals were Christmas (although even that was given a major makeover into its present day form by Charles Dickens in the postwar years), New Years and Easter. Which, if you think about it, are all seasonally-based solstice-and-equinox holidays, the observance of which goes back for thousands of years. Starting as pagan celebrations, they have been given new overlays as new religions have come and gone, while still retaining their nod of thanks to the forces of nature as the path of the sun makes its annual wobble across the sky.

Thanksgiving is the Great Harvest Festival, the time to note that the frantic work of growing the food that will sustain us through the harsh winter months has now been packed away and it's time to relax and enjoy some of the bounty.

Pea Soup

Put one quart of split peas to soak over night in soft water; the next morning wash them out, and put them into a soup-pot with two carrots, two onions, a stalk of celery, and four quarts of water; let

this boil four or five hours; have boiling water at hand to add, as the water boils away much faster in pea soup than any other kind; strain the soup through a very coarse sieve; have a piece of salt pork boiled in another pot one hour; then take it out and skin it; put the sop and the pork back into the pot, and boil it gently one hour, frequently stirring it with a large spoon. Great care should be taken that it does not scorch. (From *Mrs. Putnam's Receipt Book and Young House-keeper's Assistant*, New York, 1860)

Battered Oysters

Make a light batter of three eggs, a dessert-spoonful of butter, a little wheat flour, pepper and salt to the taste. Drain your oysters from the liquor, and stir them into the batter; then drop the mixture from a ladle into boiling lard, and let the fritters cook until they are of a rich brown. This batter is sufficient for a quart of oysters. (From *The Carolina Housewife*, Sarah Rutledge, Charleston, South Carolina, 1847)

Pumpkin Chips

Cut slices from a high-colored pumpkin,



and cut the slices into chips about the thickness of a dollar; wash them, dry them thoroughly, and weigh them against an equal weight of sugar; add to each pound of sugar half a pint of lime or lemon-juice, boil and skim it, then add the pumpkin; when half boiled, take the slices out of the syrup and let them cool; then return them, and boil until the pumpkin becomes clear. The peel of the lemons or limes, pared very thin, boiled until tender, and added to the chips when nearly done, is an im-

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Civil War Thanksgiving

(Continued from page 4)
 provement. (From *The Carolina Housewife*, Sarah Rutledge, Charleston, South Carolina, 1847)

Roast Turkey

Tips on Turkey Trimming

The sharpness of the breast bone, which is a defect in the appearance of a fowl on the table, may be remedied in the following way: When preparing it to be cooked, take a small sharp knife, and pass it up the body, cut off the little slender bone which join the *hug-me-close** to the side. Then push down the breast bone by pressing heavily upon it. A little practice will make it easy to do this.

*This is the bone on each side of the neck of a fowl, which answers to the collar bone in the human frame.

The Actual Roasting

Take out the inwards, wash both the inside and outside of the turkey. Prepare a dressing...fill the crop [neck] and body of the turkey with the dressing, sew it up, tie up the legs and wings, rub on a little salt and butter. Roast it from two to three hours, according to its size; twenty-five minutes to every pound, is a good rule. The turkey should be roasted slowly at first, and basted frequently. A little water should be put into the dripping pan, when

the meat is put down to roast. (Both the above items from *The Young Housekeeper's Friend* by Mrs. Cornelius, Boston, 1863)

Stuffing for Roast Turkey, Fowl, Veal, &c.

Mince a quarter of a pound of beef suet (beef marrow is better,) the same weight of bread crumbs, two drachms of parsley leaves, a drachm and a half of sweet marjoram or lemon thyme, and the same of grated lemon-peel and onion chopped as fine as possible, a little pepper and salt; pound thoroughly together with the yolk and white of two eggs, and secure it in the roast with a skewer, or sew it in with a bit of thread. Make some of it into balls or sausages; flour them, and boil, or fry them, and send them up as a garnish, or in a side dish.

This is about the quantity for a turkey poult; a very large turkey will take nearly twice as much. To the above may be added an ounce of dressed ham; or use equal parts of the above stuffing and pork sausage meat pounded together. (From *The Cook's Own Book; Being a Complete Culinary Encyclopedia* by "A Boston Housekeeper" (Mrs. N. K. M. Lee), Boston, 1832)

Modern editor's note: A drachm is an actual

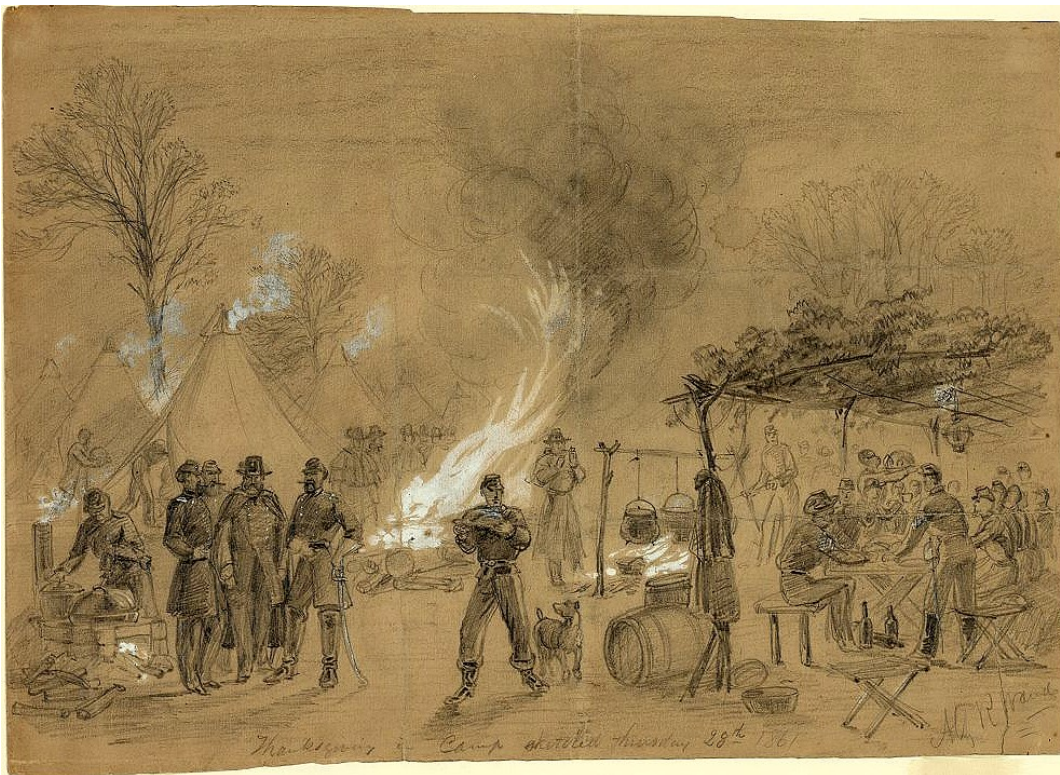
quantity, but for purposes of brevity you may substitute the terms "pinch," "smidgen," "skosh," or "just a bit" and use as much of each as seems proper to you.

Sweet Potato Pudding

Take half a pound of sweet potatoes, wash them, and put them into a pot with very little water, barely enough to keep them from burning. Let them simmer slowly for about half an hour; they must be only parboiled, otherwise they will be soft, and may make the pudding heavy. When they are half done, take them out, peel them, and when cold, grate them. Stir together to a cream, half a pound of butter and a quarter of a pound and two ounces of powdered sugar, add a grated nutmeg, a large tea-spoonful of powdered cinnamon, and half a tea-spoonful of beaten mace. Also the juice and grated peel of a lemon, a wine glass of rose water, a glass of wine, and a glass of brandy. Stir these ingredients well together. Beat eight eggs very light, and stir them into the mixture in turn with the sweet potato, a little at a time of each. Having stirred the whole very hard at the last, put it into a buttered dish and bake it three quarters of an hour. Eat it cold. (From *Miss Leslie's Complete Cookery: Directions for Cookery* by Eliza Leslie, 1851 edition, reprinted 1863, originally published 1837, all in Philadelphia.)

The term "pudding," despite its nearly-universal reference to a dessert food today, was a meat or vegetable side dish during the Civil War period. As to measurements, Miss Leslie says in her Introduction that "four table-spoonfuls or half a jill, will fill a common wine glass; four wine glasses will fill a half-pint, or common tumbler, or large coffee-cup." Since a jill (or gill) was half a cup, half a jill is a small quantity indeed. Rose-water, which is water in which vast numbers of rose petals have been soaked, is tedious to make and difficult to buy. Four tablespoons of plain water with just a drop of vanilla or almond extract would be a creative substitute here. One nutmeg, grated, is anywhere

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"Thanksgiving in Camp", by artist Alfred R. Waud, drawn on November 28, 1861.

The Ladies' Knapsack.



Sarah Harris
Civilian

Cedar Creek did not go the way I had planned this year, but I can live with how the weekend turned out. I had big plans of company meals and prepping foods ahead of time, and then intricately loading the car with boxes and tent poles and a four year old kid and heading slightly south for the weekend. But things don't always work out the way we plan, and that's ok.

With the 7th MD still being somewhat 'iffy' at FVB and company events, I understand that I did not start advertising for company meals and a possible company street early enough. So after several members had already signed up with the 3rd MD for meals and camping on their street, Johnny Z reached out to me with an offer to fully combine the 3rd and 7th for the weekend. So I changed plans, signed up for company meals with the 3rd, and packed significantly less in my car, and I was ok with that. I'll tell you what, it has been a very

long time since I have experienced someone else planning, preparing and organizing company meals. We didn't make it into camp for breakfast each morning, but the stews that Mrs. Sharon [Rorhbaugh] had planned out and had over the fire for hours at a time were absolutely delicious. I had no problem cleaning dishes and being asked to cut vegetables and breads, because I knew the amount of planning the goes into a weekend like that and I was happy to help since that load had been taken off my shoulders. I enjoyed helping, and didn't miss the stress of coordinating food before, during and after an event, and I was ok with that.

I enjoyed Cedar Creek from a different point of view this year. My mind wasn't racing with meal prep details, so I had more time to do some hand sewing. It's always such a long time between times when I can hand sew, so I enjoyed being able to slow down and sew. I also had Della with me for the weekend, so

we played with her toys, went to the sutlers, and played hide and seek. Della had some help in finding me, I wasn't ok with that. Della also warmed up to some of the other kids in the FVB and enjoyed playing with them. I loved watching her run around and play and learn how to navigate a different type of social setting. She even felt comfortable enough to run off and explore with others, and I was ok with that.

Cedar Creek did not turn out how I had originally envisioned it, and that's ok. The weather was fantastic. The parking this year was a bit chaotic and not well thought out, but that's ok. Not all members of the 7th could make it out, but it was nice to see those who did. It was still an enjoyable weekend and nice to get out to camp again, and I'm ok with that.



Civil War Thanksgiving

(Continued from page 5)

from a teaspoon to a tablespoon of the powdered form so use as much as you think diners are likely to prefer. The "powdered sugar" called for here is not the modern form of this item either, and regular granulated sugar may be used. Mixing the spices into the sugar first assures that they will be evenly distributed through the dish.

To Boil Green or French Beans

These beans should be young, tender and fresh gathered. Remove the strings with a knife, and take off both ends of the bean. Then cut them in two or three pieces only; for if split or cut very small, they become watery and lose much of their taste; and cannot be well drained. As you cut them, throw them into a pan of cold water, and let them lay awhile. Boil them an hour and a half. They must be perfectly tender before you take them up. Then drain and press them well, season them with pepper and mix into them a piece of butter. You may boil with the beans a little bit of nice bacon, to give them a bacon taste--take it out afterwards. (From *Miss Leslie's Cookery*, above.)

Modern taste calls for much shorter cooking time, and a certain crispiness to the tooth known as al dente. Much of this will depend on whether the cook is dealing with fresh, frozen or canned beans as well. Deal with this as best suits the tastes of the diners, and follow the rest of the instructions to produce a proper historic replication.

Beets

Wash the beets, but do not scrape or cut them while they are raw; for if a knife enters them before they are boiled they will lose their color. Boil them from two to three hours, according to their size. When they are tender all through, take them up, and scrape off all the outside. If they are young beets they are best split down and cut into long pieces, seasoned with pepper, and sent to table with melted butter. Otherwise you may slice them thin, after they are quite cold, and pour vinegar over them. To stew beets, boil them first, and then scrape and slice them. Put them into a stew-pan with a piece of butter rolled in flour, some boiled onion and parsley chopped fine, and a little vinegar, salt and pepper. Set the pan on hot coals, and

let the beets stew for a quarter of an hour. (From Miss Leslie, above.)

Pumpkin Pie

Take out the seeds, and pare [peel the pumpkin or squash; but in taking out the seeds do not scrape the inside of the pumpkin: the part nearest the seed is the sweetest; then stew the pumpkin, and strain it through a sieve or colander. To a quart of milk for a family pie three eggs are sufficient. Stir in the stewed pumpkin with your milk and beaten-up eggs till it is as thick as you can stir round rapidly and easily. If the pie is wanted richer, make it thinner, and add sweet cream or another egg or two; but even one egg to a quart of milk makes "very decent pies." Sweeten with molasses or sugar; add two teaspoonfuls of salt, two tablespoonfuls of sifted cinnamon, and one of powdered ginger; but allspice may be used, or any other spice that may be preferred. The peel of lemon grated in gives it a pleasant flavor. The more eggs, says an American authority, the better the pie. Some put one egg to a gill of milk. Bake about an hour in deep plates or shallow dishes, without an upper crust, in a hot oven. (From *Godey's Lady's Book*, 1860. This magazine, one of the most popular of the period in both North and South before the outbreak of the war, printed recipes sent in by readers.)

Pie Crust

A Common Paste for Pies,
pound and a half of sifted flour

Three quarters of a pound of butter, washed. This will make one large pie, or two small ones. Sift the flour into a pan. Put the butter into two equal parts. Put one half of the butter into the flour, and cut it up as small as possible. Mix it well with the flour, wetting it gradually with a little cold water.

Spread some flour on your paste-board, take the lump of paste out of the pan, flour your rolling-pin, and roll out the paste into a large sheet. Then stick it over with the remaining half of the butter in small pieces, and lad at equal distances. Throw slightly, and roll it out again. Then fold it up, and cut it in half or in four, according to the size of your pies. Roll it out into round sheets the size of your pie-plates, pressing rather harder on the rolling-pin. Butter your pie-plates, lay on your under crust, and trim the edge.

Some think it makes common paste more crisp and light to beat it hard on both sides with the rolling-pin, after you give it the first rolling, when all the butter is in. (From *Seventy-Five Receipts, for Pastry, Cakes and Sweetmeats* by A Lady of Philadelphia, published Boston, 1828. In fact the "Lady of Philadelphia" was none other than our Eliza Leslie noted above. This was her first book and the work which launched her career as the premier cookbook author of the 19th century.)

Making a full scale Thanksgiving dinner for a gathering of any size at all, is enough of an undertaking in itself. To anyone contemplating the further effort of making it "a Civil War Thanksgiving" we send our compliments, our admiration, permission to cheat with a pie crust from the grocer's freezer or dairy case.



Left, Thanksgiving in a Union camp, November 1864.

(Library of Congress)



159th Cedar Creek



OUR CAMP JOURNAL

FROM THE PAGES OF PRIVATE ELLIS



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

(Continued from page 3)

and load, they never fire. They just keep right on loading. Some of them come home with seven, eight bullets rammed up in the barrel, never fired a shot."]

Our company, known for our antics on the field, always maintained the utmost standard for safety. Dodging around to put on the good show but stopping, getting good footing, checking our surroundings, aiming for a clear and safe shot, only then firing. Followed again by our hustle and bustle and playing our parts for our pards in line



with us. I'm proud to say that while we loved putting on a show for the spectators, we loved even more putting on a show for ourselves and our pards in line. All a testament to the close knit family spirit of the 7th Maryland, Company A.



Mr. Lincoln's Address at Gettysburg

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, November 19, 1863

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate -- we can not consecrate -- we can not hallow -- this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled



here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain -- that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom -- and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Reprinted from Our Camp Journal, November 2005 edition, and by President Lincoln...of course