

Quick Step News

Volume 8, Issue 3

November 2005

Speaker

Jack Washington

Camp William Penn

Monday, November 7, 2005

HSMC 7:30 PM

December Meeting

I am looking for 6 members who would like to give 10-minute presentations on something of interest to them involving the Civil War or family research. So far there are 2 members who have expressed an interest in doing so. Please see me at the November meeting or contact me. There will also be refreshments served at this meeting

Newsletter

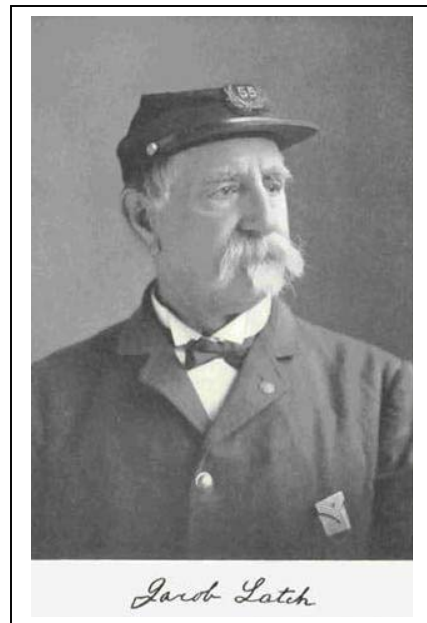
Please feel free to send (mail or e-mail) the newsletter to a friend of perspective member.

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2005-06 Dues Are Now Payable

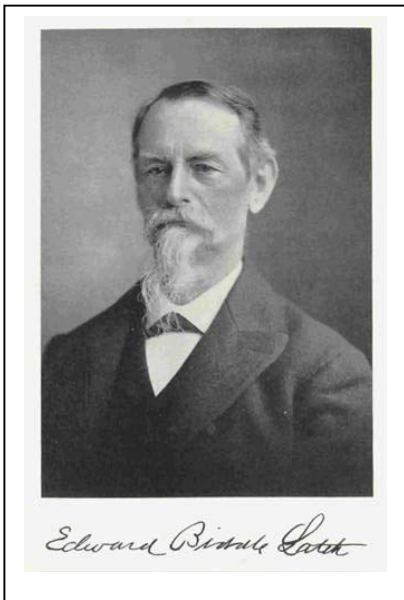
The Latch Brothers



Jacob Latch, second son of Gardiner and Henriette Latch, made a splendid soldierly record during the Civil war. He enlisted in 1862 in Company I, One Hundred and Twenty-first Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers, Colonel Chapman Biddle commanding, and served until the close of the war, participating in the most important campaigns and sanguinary engagements of the great struggle. His service was in Virginia under Generals McClellan, Burnside, Hooker, Meade, Warren, Grant, Sheridan, Reynolds, and others of the great captains who commanded the Army of the Potomac, or such of its corps as his regiment was identified with.

He fought in the battle of Fredericksburg, December 13, 1862, and in the following year took part in the notable "mud

march" under Burnside, January 20-25, and in the battle of Chancellorsville, May 3-5, 1863. He was also engaged with his regiment in the famous battle of Gettysburg July 1-3. Serving with the rank of first sergeant, the dreadful mortality among the commissioned officers of his company left him as the ranking officer after the last named battle, and he held the command with honor to himself and to the admiring satisfaction of the regimental commander. Sergeant Leach was a participant in all of the famous battles and minor engagements which took place under General Grant- the Wilderness, May 5-7, Spottsylvania, May 8 and 20, the North Anna, May 23-27, the Topotomy, May 20-31, Bethesda Church, June 1-5, Cold Harbor, June 5-12, Petersburg, June 17 to August 15, the Weldon railroad, August 16, Poplar Grove Church and Preble Farm, October 1, and the Applejack raid, December 6-12, all in 1864. He was also present in all the operations of the closing days in 1865, and took part in the engagements at Dabney's Mill and Hatcher's Run, February 6-12, the Boydton Plankroad and Gravelly Run, March 31, Five Forks, April 1, and the capture of General Lee's army at Appomattox Court House, April 9, 1865. He was with his regiment when it marched down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington City, in triumphal procession shortly after the cessation of hostilities, and was honorably mustered out with the colors.



Edward Biddle Latch acquired his education in the public schools. He learned mechanical engineering at the Norris' Locomotive Works, remaining for six years, 1851-1857. He was appointed a third assistant engineer in the United States Navy, September 20, 1858. He was attached to the United States steamship "Atlanta," Paraguay Expedition, 1858-59; United States steamship "Sumpter," on the west coast of Africa in the suppression of the slave trade, 1860-61. Edward was promoted to second assistant engineer, 1861; attached to the United States steamship "Hartford" (Admiral Farragut's flagship) West Gulf Squadron, 1862-64.

While on the "Hartford" as second assistant, upon the detachment of Chief Engineer Kimball (who was ordered on special duty at the Neptune Iron Works, New York City) he was placed in charge of her machinery by the commanding officer (Captain, late Rear-Admiral, Palmer), before Port Hudson fell, retaining charge of the same until the "Hartford" steamed into New York harbor on August 10, 1863, bearing the pennant of, at the time, Rear-Admiral Farragut. During his attachment to the "Hartford" Mr. Latch participated in the following engagements: Forts Jackson, St. Philip, and the Confederate fleet in the Mississippi river, April 24, 1862: the Chalmette Battery, New Orleans, April 25, 1862; first passage of the Vicksburg batteries, June 28, 1862; second passage of the Vicksburg batteries, July 15, 1862; passage of the Port Hudson terrible batteries, March 15, 1863; Grand Gulf, March 19, 1863; Warrenton, March 28, 1863; Grand Gulf, March 31, 1863; Forts Morgan, Gaines, and Powell, also the Confederate fleet, including the ram "Tennessee," "Selma," "Gaines," torpedoes, etc., Mobile Bay, August 5, 1864. He was promoted to first assistant engineer, 1863, attached to the United States steamship "Wachusett," East India Squadron, 1865-68; Naval Academy as instructor in the engineering department, 1869-70. He was promoted to chief engineer, 1870; United States steamship "Congress," special service, 1870-72; member of board inspection, 1873-75; receiving ship "Colorado," 1876; sick leave, 1876-77; retired, November 22, 1878.

Since his retirement Mr. Latch originated and developed the Mosaic system of Chronology. He wrote numerous elucidation's of the scriptures, and of ancient relics in their relationship to universal history by the Mosaic System of Chronology. He developed the Mosaic laws for determining the distances of the planets from the sun. He is the editor of The Greater Light, a Philadelphia monthly, and the author of "A Review of the Holy Bible," 1884; Indications of the Book of Job," 1889; "Indications of the Book of Genesis," 1890; "Indications of the Book of Exodus," 1892; "Indications of Romans" (in The Greater Light, 1900-1); "Indications of the Revelations" (in The Greater Light, 1901-3); "Indications of Leviticus" (now running in The Greater Light, 1904). His present address is Merion, (Academy Post Office), Montgomery county, Pennsylvania. His early political affiliations were with the Whig party, but later he took an active interest in the affairs of the Republican party. He is a member of the Baptist church, and his fraternal relations are with the Order of Free and Accepted Masons.

The Latch family has roots back to Valley Forge and the Revolutionary War. Jacob Latch the grandfather of the Latch brothers served in the Continental Army and was given the name "Washington's Runner" (the reason is not known). The family resided on farms in the area of City Line and Lancaster Ave. Most likely Latches Lane in that area of Lower Merion takes its name from the family.

As for Jacob, he was married to Emeline Cooper. The couple had three sons, but only one, Gardiner survived to adulthood. Jacob is found in the 1880 census records residing in Philadelphia at 208 Orthodox Street. He was a widower and employed as a house painter. His last census listing is in 1900 when at the age of 72 and retired he lived with his son at 1904 Orthodox Street in Philadelphia (Between Frankford and Torresdale Aves.). In 1893 Latch applied for a Federal pension.

Edward Biddle Latch was born in November of 1833. He remained single throughout his life and an Engineer in the US Navy. He is last found in the 1900 census residing with his sister in Merion Square. He died in April of 1911. At the time of his death a mention of it and his literary works was published in the magazine *The Nation*. Also in 1911 William D Ashford published "Historical Sketch of Edward Biddle Latch".

William Hardstaff

William Hardstaff died yesterday morning at his home, 315 Hector Street. He was sixty years of age and had lived here about forty years. He is survived by a widow, a son William, of Philadelphia, and Mrs. Horace Miller of the Gulf and Mrs. Rhine Krieble, of this borough. The funeral services will be held on Thursday afternoon at one o'clock. The interment will be made in the Odd Fellows, Cemetery, Merion Square.

William Hardstaff was employed as a day laborer. He was a member of Company F 43rd Pennsylvania Militia serving from July 6, 1863 to August 13, 1863. He died on July 30, 1905. The death notice above was published in the *Conshohocken Recorder* on August 1, 1905.

**Reports of Col. Chapman Biddle,
One hundred and twenty-first Pennsylvania Infantry,
commanding regiment and First Brigade
O.R.--SERIES I--VOLUME XXVII/1 [S# 43] -- Gettysburg
Campaign**

HDQRS. FIRST BRIG., *THIRD DIV., FIRST ARMY CORPS,*
In the Field, near Gettysburg, Pa., July 2, 1863.

Lieut. W. L. WILSON,

Actg. Asst. Adj. Gen., Third Div., First Army Corps.

LIEUTENANT: I have the honor to submit, for the information of the general commanding the division, the following sketch of the operations of the brigade in the action of Wednesday, the 1st instant, near Gettysburg, Pa.:

Early in the morning of the 1st, I was directed to move with the brigade and a battery of four pieces of artillery about 1½ miles in advance of the other divisions of the corps toward Gettysburg, where it was supposed the enemy were in considerable force. The route taken by the brigade brought us, about 11 a.m., to within 1 mile of the town, in a westerly direction from it. The heavy firing then heard indicated that a portion of our forces were engaged with the enemy. The brigade was accordingly pushed forward and formed in line as soon as possible on the extreme left, in a field one-third of a mile in front of the seminary and facing west. The battery was also placed in position, and its fire directed toward the northwest, on the left of a

piece of woods in which the First Division of the corps was then engaged with the enemy. In front of our line, and at the distance of three-quarters of a mile or more, were woods running nearly parallel with it, and between these woods and our line and toward our left were a brick house and a large stone barn. The barn affording cover to the enemy's sharpshooters, who were then skirmishing in front of us, a company of skirmishers was sent from the Twentieth New York Regiment for the purpose of protecting the battery. The position of the brigade was varied two or three times in order to shelter the men from the heavy artillery fire of the enemy, which at one time enfiladed them from the north. During the morning, rebel infantry were observed on the edge of the woods first referred to, and between 2 and 3 p.m. a large body of them, amounting to a division or more, advanced in two lines toward us. Of the four small regiments constituting the brigade, one (One hundred and fifty-first) had been previously detached to support a portion of the corps to our right and rear. The remaining three were drawn up in the following order: The One hundred and forty-second on the right, Twentieth New York in the center, and the One hundred and twenty-first on the left, the battery occupying a space between the One hundred and forty-second and the Twentieth. Notwithstanding the great disparity of the contending forces, and the left of our line being outflanked by at least one and probably two regiments, and the enemy's fire, direct and oblique, being very severe, the men of the brigade continued to hold their position for some time, until, being without any support, they were compelled about 4 p.m. to retire to a cover on the edge of the town, immediately in front of the seminary. Here they remained, doing good service, checking the farther advance of the enemy, till the batteries and many of the troops in the town had withdrawn in the direction of Belleview Cemetery, when they retired to that point. The total number of officers and men who went into the action was 1,287; out of this, 440 were either killed or wounded, and 457 are missing, leaving as the present effective force only 390 officers and men. As during the greater part of the time the general witnessed the behavior of the troops, it might seem scarcely necessary to make any reference to it, but I would be doing injustice to the officers and men were I not to say that their gallant conduct was even more than could have been expected from men under the trying circumstances of their situation, and in this opinion I think he will heartily concur. I respectfully refer to the list (herewith sent) of those who are reported by their regimental commanders as having particularly distinguished themselves. It gives me pleasure to make mention of the excellent conduct of Colonel Gates, of the Twentieth New York; Lieutenant-Colonel McCalmont, of the One hundred and forty-second Pennsylvania Volunteers, and of Major Biddle, commanding the One hundred and twenty-first Pennsylvania Volunteers. I desire also to call attention to the valuable services rendered me by Captain Warren (One hundred and forty-second Pennsylvania

Volunteers), acting brigade inspector, and Lieut. T. M. Hall (One hundred and twenty-first Pennsylvania Volunteers), acting assistant adjutant-general, during the action.

I regret to add that Lieutenant-Colonel McFarland (One hundred and fifty-first Pennsylvania Volunteers) was badly wounded while faithfully discharging his duties. The death of Colonel Cummins, of the One hundred and forty-second [Pennsylvania], a brave and efficient officer, has occasioned feelings of deep regret throughout the command.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

CHAPMAN BIDDLE,

Colonel 121st Pennsylvania Volunteers, Comdg. Brigade

MONTGOMERY CEMETERY

At long last 12 stones will be placed on veteran graves tomorrow (Nov. 5th). This project is part of an Eagle Scout Project. We had originally planned to do the work in the beginning of October but were deluged by rain. See more information in next month's "Quick Step News."

Story on the Latch brothers published in:
BIOGRAPHICAL ANNALS OF MONTGOMERY
COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA ELLWOOD ROBERTS,
EDITOR Pages 121-3

Charleston

Henry Timrod (1828-1867) Stanza 1, 2, 3 and 11

Calm as that second summer which precedes The
first fall of the snow, In the broad sunlight of heroic
deeds, The city bides the foe.

As yet, behind their ramparts, stern and proud, Her
bolted thunders sleep, --- Dark Sumter, like a
battlemented cloud, Looms o'er the solemn deep.

No Calpe frowns from lofty cliff or scour To guard
the holy strand; But Moultrie holds in leash her dogs
of war Above the level sand.

We know not; in the temple of the Fates God has
inscribed her doom: And, all untroubled in her faith,
she waits The triumph or the tomb.

**A word of thanks to our members and to all our
fellow countrymen who served in our armed
forces, let us remember them this Veteran's Day
especially those who made the supreme sacrifice
that we may enjoy the full bounty of freedom.**

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