

This is a revised version of a full-length article that was previously published in *THE HESSIANS: The Journal of the Johannes Schwalm Historical Association Vol 21 2018*

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**My Family in the Union Army during the Knoxville Campaign Nov 1863 – Feb 1864**

**By Ross H. Schwalm**

During the Fall of 1863, two of my second great uncles served in the Union Army near each other during several battles near Knoxville, Tennessee. This article tells what happened to each of them up to the completion of the Knoxville Campaign.

**Movement to the Western Theater**

Due to General Burnside’s failure during the Fredericksburg Campaign, he was relieved of command of the Army of the Potomac. He was ordered to the Department of the Ohio and requested that his old unit, the 9<sup>th</sup> Corps, be part of his department’s forces. This was so ordered and the 48<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> PA, as part of 9<sup>th</sup> Corps, were soon on their way to the Western Theater. My second Great Uncle, Robert Thompson, 48<sup>th</sup> PA, left Falmouth, VA on February 9, 1863 by train traveling to Aquia Harbor on the Potomac River in Stafford County, VA. The 48<sup>th</sup> loaded the U.S. Transport *North America* for a boat trip to Newport News, VA and a camp along the James River.<sup>1</sup> My other second Great Uncle, Samuel Schwalm, 50<sup>th</sup> PA, left camp at Falmouth, VA on February 13, 1863 via a train to Aquia Harbor and was taken by boat to Fortress Monroe in Hampton, VA.<sup>2</sup> The 48<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> had time to rearm, refit, and recover from the rigors of campaigning in 1862.

The 50<sup>th</sup> PA left Fortress Monroe on March 22, 1863 on the ship *Coroner*. They traveled up the Chesapeake Bay to Baltimore and then moved by rail along the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad to Parkersburg, WV. They boarded the steamer *Jacob Strader* on March 26 and traveled down the Ohio River to Cincinnati. The good citizens of Cincinnati treated the regiment to dinner on March 27. The next day, the regiment crossed the Ohio and took a train to Nicholasville, KY. They marched to Camp Dick Robinson, 18 miles south of Nicholasville and the Kentucky River.<sup>3</sup> The men of the 50<sup>th</sup> PA concluded that they were getting a first-class education in geography.<sup>4</sup> This movement was approximately 850 miles by boat, rail and foot movement from Fredericksburg, VA to Camp Dick Robinson.<sup>5</sup> The 50<sup>th</sup> did patrols in Kentucky to find partisan bands loyal to the Confederacy and to prevent Confederate cavalry units from harassing loyal Unionist citizens of Kentucky.<sup>6</sup> Samuel Schwalm assessed this duty as dangerous in a letter to his wife by concluding “O my God, keep us all well and alive so we can see each other once more in the world.”<sup>7</sup>

Robert Thompson and the 48<sup>th</sup> PA took a slightly different route to get to Kentucky. On March 26, 1863, the regiment left Fortress Monroe on the ship *John A. Warner* and headed to Baltimore. They took the Northern Central Railroad to Harrisburg, PA, and then west on the Pennsylvania Central Railroad to York, Mifflin, Altoona, and Pittsburgh. They crossed over to Ohio via Caddy’s Junction, and on to Newark and Columbus until they finally arrived in Cincinnati, OH, on March 29. They crossed the Ohio River on March 30 and eventually went into camp in Lexington, KY on March 31 for Provost Duty until September 1863.<sup>8</sup>

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## 1 **Duty in support of the Vicksburg Campaign**

2 By early June 1863, Union General U. S. Grant had Confederate Forces trapped in Vicksburg, MS.  
3 His major concern was that relief forces may attack his siege forces from eastern Mississippi or Alabama.  
4 He requested additional forces from the military leadership in Washington, DC, and the 9<sup>th</sup> Corps was  
5 ordered west from Kentucky to reinforce General Grant.<sup>9</sup> Only part of 9<sup>th</sup> Corps moved further west.  
6 The 48<sup>th</sup> PA remained in Kentucky but Samuel Schwalm and his fellow soldiers of the 50<sup>th</sup> PA broke camp  
7 and headed west. General John G. Parke would command the 9<sup>th</sup> Corps during this movement and in  
8 the subsequent operations. The 50<sup>th</sup> left Somerset, KY, on June 4 and marched to Nicholasville. They  
9 took the train to Covington, KY and crossed the Ohio River to Cincinnati on June 8. They traveled by  
10 train to Cairo, IL and boarded the *Dacotah* for a trip down the Mississippi River. While anchored in  
11 Memphis, TN, Samuel Schwalm had time to get a letter off to his wife about his travels. He confessed  
12 that "I aint right well yet I was Sick yesterday."<sup>10</sup>

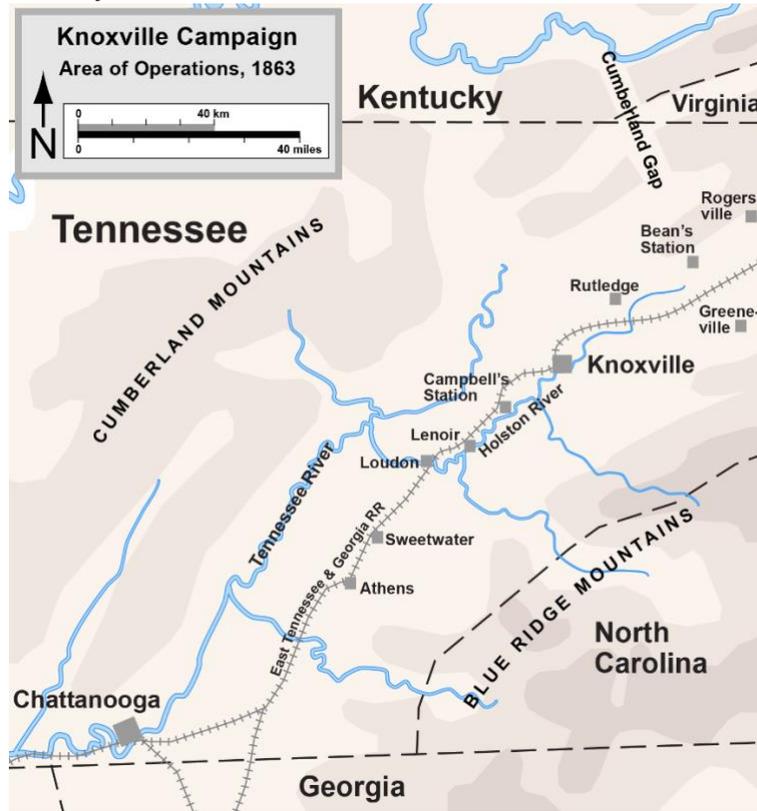
13 The 50<sup>th</sup> PA arrived at Haynes Bluff on the Yazoo River north of Vicksburg on June 14. They  
14 eventually moved to a position near Birdsong Crossing on the Big Black River, east of Vicksburg, to  
15 prevent the Confederates from attacking General Grant's siege forces. The Confederates surrendered at  
16 Vicksburg on July 4, 1863. General Grant ordered US General William Tecumseh Sherman to attack  
17 Jackson, MS and defeat Confederate General Joseph Johnston to remove all enemy forces from  
18 Mississippi. Earlier in the campaign, Johnston was defeated in May, but he had returned to Jackson  
19 during an attempt to relieve Vicksburg. The 50<sup>th</sup> PA was part of General Sherman's operation and  
20 crossed the Big Black River at Birdsong Crossing on July 5. The 50<sup>th</sup> PA was part of an attack on  
21 Confederate forces to the north of Jackson, MS on July 16 which occurred while Confederate General  
22 Johnston was withdrawing to the east.<sup>11</sup> There is a street named "Pennsylvania Avenue"<sup>12</sup> in northern  
23 Jackson which was the defensive position manned by the 50<sup>th</sup> PA.

24 After the threat to General Grant was removed, the 9<sup>th</sup> Corps, including the 50<sup>th</sup> PA, returned to  
25 Kentucky via the reverse route they followed in June. The 50<sup>th</sup> PA departed from Haynes Bluff on August  
26 10, 1863 and arrived back in Kentucky by August 18.<sup>13</sup> Rest and recovery did not last long as actions in  
27 southern Tennessee soon had the 50<sup>th</sup> PA on the move again.

## 28 **Operations in Eastern Tennessee**

29 Eastern Tennessee had long been a target for the Union leaders for political and military  
30 reasons. General in Chief Henry W. Halleck finally saw an opportunity to move into eastern Tennessee  
31 with the victories in the Western and Eastern Theaters. He ordered General Burnside to take Knoxville,  
32 which the Confederates evacuated, with his Army of the Ohio on September 2, 1863.<sup>14</sup> General  
33 Burnside only had the 23<sup>rd</sup> Corps available as the 9<sup>th</sup> Corps was still not fully prepared due to late arrival  
34 back in Kentucky from the Vicksburg Campaign.<sup>15</sup> Map 1 gives you a general overview of the location of  
35 the actions during the Knoxville Campaign.

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Map 1: Knoxville Campaign Area of Operations, 1863<sup>16</sup>

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3 By September 1863, the situation for the Confederate States and their armed forces looked very  
4 bleak. General Robert E. Lee lost the Battle of Gettysburg in July and had to withdraw back to Virginia.  
5 The surrender at Vicksburg and the defeat at Jackson resulted in the Confederacy being split in two with  
6 the Union Army and Navy in control of the total length of the Mississippi River for the first time since the  
7 start of the war in 1861. A Confederate stronghold in Knoxville, TN had to be abandoned as operations  
8 near Chattanooga, TN had gone badly for Confederate Forces. The Union Army of the Cumberland,  
9 under the command of General William Rosecrans, maneuvered Confederate General Braxton Bragg out  
10 of Chattanooga.<sup>17</sup> Unable to support his Army of Northern Virginia with food and forage, along with the  
11 need for military forces in other theaters, General Lee detached General James Longstreet and his corps  
12 to move to eastern Tennessee in support of forces attempting to defeat the Union forces in Northern  
13 Georgia.

14 Eastern Tennessee became a focus of all operations for both the Union and Confederate  
15 leadership in the Fall of 1863. Armies on both sides were in motion with movements within eastern  
16 Tennessee and the states bordering this area in what can easily be described as a fluid environment.  
17 General Burnside started the 23<sup>rd</sup> Corps moving south from Kentucky towards Cumberland Gap, which  
18 was captured on September 9, 1863. This allowed 9<sup>th</sup> Corps forces to begin movements south. Samuel  
19 Schwalm and the 50<sup>th</sup> PA<sup>18</sup> as well as Robert Thompson and the 48<sup>th</sup> PA<sup>19</sup> both broke their camps in  
20 Kentucky on September 10, 1863, for movement to Knoxville. The 50<sup>th</sup> PA had less than 100 men to start

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1 the march to Knoxville.<sup>20</sup> The Vicksburg campaign and subsequent sickness outbreak reduced the  
2 regiment of 800 men to the size of a company. Nevertheless, it completed the march of approximately  
3 150 miles through the mountains of Kentucky and Tennessee to get to Knoxville on September 25,  
4 1863.<sup>21</sup> The 48<sup>th</sup> PA marched even farther completing 221 miles and arriving at Knoxville on September  
5 28, 1863.<sup>22</sup>

6 Simultaneously with Union Forces moving to Knoxville, General Longstreet's forces started  
7 arriving to support Confederate General Bragg near Chattanooga as early as September 17.<sup>23</sup> With  
8 additional forces from Knoxville and from Virginia, General Bragg outnumbered Union forces near  
9 Chickamauga Creek. Bragg went on the offensive and defeated Union General Rosecrans at a battle that  
10 took place on September 19 – 20. General Rosecrans retreated to Chattanooga after a stunning loss.

11 Union leadership in Washington assessed the situation and decided to put General Grant in  
12 charge of all forces in the Western Theater. The first order of business was to start flowing forces to  
13 Chattanooga to shore up the defense. Grant ordered Sherman to move his forces from Mississippi to  
14 Tennessee. Grant also relieved General Rosecrans and replaced him with General George Thomas,  
15 known as "The Rock of Chickamauga" for his stalwart defense which saved the Union Army from  
16 complete destruction.<sup>24</sup>

17 As Union forces flowed into Chattanooga, Confederate General Bragg was not successful in  
18 forcing a surrender. He decided on a new course of action in October which was to send General  
19 Longstreet's forces north to defeat General Burnside's forces in Knoxville and then return to support a  
20 new siege on Chattanooga. The written orders to Longstreet were given on November 4, 1863.<sup>25</sup>

21 General Burnside, to protect his growing base at Knoxville, sent his forces northeast to find and  
22 destroy Confederate forces in the area. Both Robert Thompson<sup>26</sup> and Samuel Schwalm,<sup>27</sup> along with  
23 their regiments, conducted operations against Confederate Forces at Bull's Gap, Blue Springs and the  
24 pursuit to Rheatown. In August 2014, I visited this area and found the road, towns and terrain similar to  
25 what the 48<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> PA Regimental historians described. Analysis of Google Earth maps indicates that  
26 from Knoxville to Bull's Gap the elevation rises from 900 to 1500 feet as you move east. There are  
27 numerous hills and dales that my ancestors had to deal with in bringing the enemy to a fight. Of course,  
28 the Confederates had to deal with the same conditions. The battle areas run between two rivers so  
29 moving east or west puts you on a slope often going away from your direction of movement. My  
30 ancestors were fortunate in their return to Knoxville as both rode an old Confederate train that was put  
31 back in service when the Union army occupied the city. They did have to march part of the way on  
32 October 14 to meet the train and rode back on October 15.<sup>28</sup>

33 After about a week of rest in Knoxville, Samuel Schwalm and Robert Thompson were on the  
34 move again to find Confederate forces now rumored to be west of Knoxville. General Burnside once  
35 again called upon the 9<sup>th</sup> Corps, his old unit from his days in North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland, to  
36 sally out of Knoxville to the west. The 50<sup>th</sup> PA moved on October 21 and marched 30 miles to Loudon,  
37 TN.<sup>29</sup> Their mission was to defend the crossing of the Holston River by being on the south side of the  
38 river. Whoever controlled the bridge there could prevent a land attack route directly into Knoxville.  
39 Robert Thompson and his fellow soldiers of the 48<sup>th</sup> PA moved by train to Loudon on October 22.<sup>30</sup> They

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1 replaced the 50<sup>th</sup> PA who marched six miles back to Lenoir Station which put them on the northside of  
2 the Holston River. The mill at Lenoir Station was valuable to the local population to create fabric from  
3 cotton. The 50<sup>th</sup> PA started to prepare winter quarters around Lenoir as this was a very good defensive  
4 position to keep an eye on the river and to protect the railroad.<sup>31</sup> While in this static position, men of  
5 the 50<sup>th</sup> PA, who recovered from previous operations, started arriving and the strength of the regiment  
6 reached 519 by November 7, 1863.<sup>32</sup> This bode well for the upcoming campaign. On October 27, the  
7 48<sup>th</sup> PA was ordered to move back to Lenoir Station. This move was completed on October 29 and they  
8 were now back with the 50<sup>th</sup> PA.<sup>33</sup> The 48<sup>th</sup> settled in and prepared to camp here through the winter.  
9 Nearly two divisions of the 9<sup>th</sup> Corps were now located at Lenoir Station. Although this consolidation of  
10 forces seemed to support a secure situation, my relatives soon had to quickly go into action against  
11 Confederate forces. I visited this area in August 2014 and the train still operates through Lenoir Station  
12 to Knoxville in the east. The mill partially stands here and is a historic site with two markers. The first  
13 marker explains the mill operations before the Civil War and the second describes the actions in and  
14 around the mill during the Civil War. There is a modern bridge over the Holston River, now named the  
15 Tennessee River, to Loudon.

16 General Longstreet had his forces moving quickly after he received his orders on November 4.  
17 Four brigades of cavalry led by General Joseph Wheeler started movement towards Knoxville the same  
18 day the orders were received. By November 12, General Longstreet had Wheeler's cavalry and two  
19 divisions of infantry west of Knoxville.<sup>34</sup> He had logistical problems and a determined enemy in front of  
20 him, but he divided his forces and proceeded to attack. He sent his cavalry to the east on the south of  
21 the Holston River to attack the Union outposts south of Knoxville. He simultaneously attempted a direct  
22 attack on Loudon on November 13.<sup>35</sup> This was enough to cause General Burnside to start his forces  
23 moving. The 48<sup>th</sup> PA broke camp at Lenoir on November 14 and headed towards Loudon. They helped  
24 to delay General Longstreet's forces on November 15<sup>36</sup>. Due to an odd loop in the Tennessee River  
25 north of Loudon, General Longstreet was able to move forces a few miles downstream and put a  
26 pontoon bridge across the river out of view of the Union 23<sup>rd</sup> Corps at Loudon.<sup>37</sup>

27 General Burnside realized that his forces at Loudon and Lenoir Station could be cut off if the  
28 Confederates could move quickly now that they were across the river with a path directly towards  
29 Knoxville. The 50<sup>th</sup> PA was pushed forward in the dark on November 14 to blunt the Confederate forces.  
30 Characteristic of this whole campaign where opposing forces were often attempting to find each other  
31 and give battle, the 50<sup>th</sup> PA ran into Confederate forces less than 100 yards into the woods and an  
32 engagement broke out all along the line. The 50<sup>th</sup> held their position until dawn with no protection from  
33 a cold and rainy night. On the morning of the 15<sup>th</sup>, the 50<sup>th</sup> withdraw back to Lenoir and were ordered  
34 to destroy supplies.<sup>38</sup> The 48<sup>th</sup> PA also started to withdraw on the 15<sup>th</sup> and marched all night along the  
35 Kingston Road to a defensive position to the south of the road near Campbell's Station,<sup>39</sup> a stop on the  
36 railroad from Lenoir Station to Knoxville. The 50<sup>th</sup> PA made this same move, but it was on November 16  
37 after they completed destroying supplies. They stopped on the north side of Kingston Road by 1:30 PM  
38 on the afternoon of November 16.<sup>40</sup>

39 The withdrawal of Union Forces with regiments as parts of brigades while delaying Confederate  
40 forces from Lenoir to Campbell's Station was one of the great chess matches of the Civil War. The

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1 terrain in this part of Tennessee is a series of roads through open farm land with small streams running  
2 north to south. This allowed the Union forces to engage, withdraw, reposition and engage again. Nearly  
3 every time General Longstreet moved forces to flank a Union position, General Burnside and his brigade  
4 commanders adjusted to the threat by organized rearward movements. Burnside also had his artillery  
5 positioned on consecutive pieces of high ground that allowed visibility of both friendly and enemy forces  
6 and engagements to support Union movements. Burnside's commanders also had the advantage of  
7 having been across this terrain in the movement to Loudon and Lenoir in the previous weeks. All five  
8 authors in the references –Augustus, Birch, Bosbyshell, Crater, and Hess – cover these movements in  
9 fine detail.

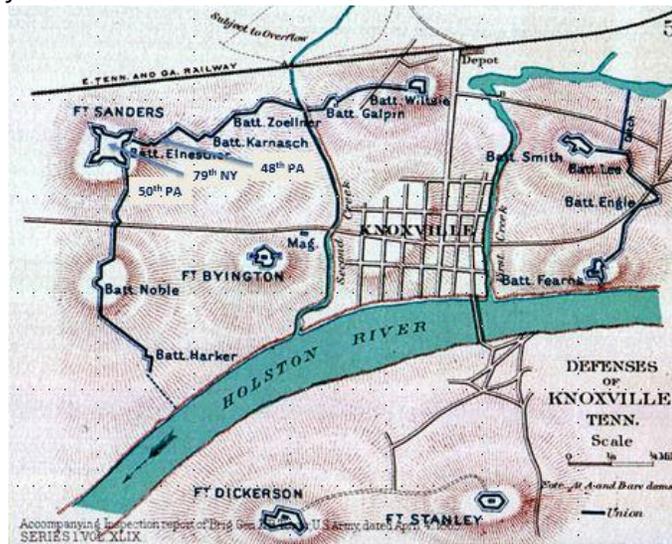
10 After visiting this area in 2014, I can still recognize the roads, creeks and hills where these  
11 movements occurred. Campbell's Station is now named Farragut after Union Admiral David G. Farragut  
12 who was born in this area. These operations are collectively called the Battle of Campbell's Station.  
13 When the chess pieces stopped moving on the afternoon of November 16 to end the Confederate  
14 offensive, Robert Thompson and Samuel Schwalm ended up approximately 200 yards apart to the east  
15 of Turkey Creek and Concord Road.<sup>41</sup> The Union forces halted the Confederate forces as darkness  
16 descended upon the battlefield around 5:30 p.m. Both the 48<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> PA retired to positions inside of  
17 the defenses of Knoxville. The 50<sup>th</sup> arrived around 3:00 a.m. on November 17.<sup>42</sup>

18 On November 18, Union Brigadier General William P. Sanders' cavalry forces assumed rear  
19 guard duties. His mission was to hold off the Confederates to allow time to get the defensive positions  
20 prepared within Knoxville. During one engagement, Sanders was shot and eventually died at 11:00 AM  
21 on November 19. A strongpoint in the northwest corner of the Knoxville defenses, called Fort Loudon  
22 by the Confederates who built it, was renamed for the fallen general.<sup>43</sup> Fort Sanders was the key  
23 position in the defense of Knoxville and became the most famous part of the battle that took place on  
24 November 29, 1863.

25 Leading up to the attack on Fort Sanders, Union forces prepared defenses. Robert Thompson  
26 and the 48<sup>th</sup> were positioned in earth works in the north of the city.<sup>44</sup> Fort Sanders was to the left (west)  
27 of the 48<sup>th</sup> position. Samuel Schwalm and the 50<sup>th</sup> PA were positioned just south of Fort Sanders facing  
28 west.<sup>45</sup> Fort Sanders was primarily occupied and defended by 10 guns of artillery, the 79<sup>th</sup> New York  
29 Infantry Regiment with four companies from the 17<sup>th</sup> Michigan Infantry Regiment outside the fort acting  
30 as the reserve.<sup>46</sup> The Map 2<sup>47</sup> shows the approximate locations of the units near Fort Sanders.

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Map 2: Defenses of Knoxville with Regiments annotated near Fort Sanders

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The 48<sup>th</sup> PA historian notes the period of time from November 17 – 28 as one of skirmishes with Confederate forces probing the Knoxville defenses.<sup>48</sup> The 50<sup>th</sup> PA improved the defenses during this same period but, after the first few days, they had to resort to only working at night because sharpshooters made it too dangerous during the day.<sup>49</sup> Burnside cut the food rations as the Confederate siege stopped resupply. General Longstreet was ordered to end the siege quickly and then get back to Chattanooga. This prompted him to finally order an attack on the position that both the Confederates and the Union knew was the key to the defenses of Knoxville – Fort Sanders. On November 29, 1863 at sunrise, following a 20-minute artillery barrage, the Confederates attacked across snow-covered ground up hill towards Fort Sanders. Some of the rounds intended for Fort Sanders went long and impacted among the soldiers of the 48<sup>th</sup> PA. The attack lasted less than a half an hour and the Confederates were soundly defeated.<sup>50</sup> The ditch in front of Fort Sanders was filled with Confederate casualties. In total, the Confederates had 129 killed, 458 wounded and 226 captured with Union losses of approximately 12 killed or wounded. The 50<sup>th</sup> PA had three wounded in this fight.<sup>51</sup> I visited the site of Fort Sanders in August 2014, and urban development completely covered it. You can see the hill where Fort Sanders was located as a steep road comes north from the river and down to the railroad as would have been possible in 1863.

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The opposing forces agreed to a truce to allow the removal of the dead and wounded. The siege continued after the truce ended, and Longstreet looked for another way to attack. But information from Chattanooga changed the situation entirely. He and Burnside both knew that Sherman was heading north from Chattanooga with a relief force and that Bragg suffered a defeat near there. General Longstreet ended the siege on December 4 and headed east towards Virginia going north around Knoxville towards Rutledge, TN. General Sherman entered Knoxville on December 6 to find half-starved and poorly clothed men who were in high spirits because they survived the siege.<sup>52</sup> With Knoxville reinforced, Burnside pursued the Confederates. He called upon the 9<sup>th</sup> Corps and General Parke to execute this task. Both Robert Thompson and Samuel Schwalm along with their regiments

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1 were part of this pursuit to the northeast of Knoxville starting on December 7, 1863.<sup>53</sup> This took the 48<sup>th</sup>  
2 and 50<sup>th</sup> PA over familiar ground they had seen in September and October. They moved along roads  
3 through Strawberry Plains, Blaine's Crossroads all the way to Rutledge. This route put General Parke's  
4 forces on the north side of the Holston River. While in Rutledge, food supplies were short<sup>54</sup> and the men  
5 also had to prepare for an attack by Confederate forces.<sup>55</sup> The weather was very cold, and roads  
6 became impassable to cavalry and infantry. The Union was able to advance as far as Bean's Station east  
7 of Rutledge and fought an engagement with Confederate forces on December 14. The Union forces  
8 made a hasty retreat and the conditions did not allow the Confederates to move fast enough to cut  
9 them off.<sup>56</sup>

#### 10 **A Time of Decision**

11 The rest of December passed uneventfully. From the senior leadership of both nations down to  
12 the individual soldier, decisions about the future ran through everyone's mind. For the Confederate  
13 government, they had to decide where to give battle and where to defend. For General Longstreet, he  
14 could not accomplish his objective of capturing Knoxville as it was now reinforced. He had no orders to  
15 move to anywhere else. The Union government was faced with the reality that many of the forces  
16 recruited in 1861 were now coming up on the end of their three-year enlistments. General Grant was  
17 now in Knoxville and had a better picture of the conditions of the terrain and the men and animals that  
18 must fight to defeat General Longstreet.

19 On the individual level, Samuel Schwalm and Robert Thompson were faced with decisions to  
20 reenlist. Samuel Schwalm had been in nearly continuous warfare from the day the 50<sup>th</sup> PA left Camp  
21 Curtin in Harrisburg, PA in October 1861 until the end of December 1863 which found the 50<sup>th</sup> in camp  
22 at Blaine's Crossroads, TN. His term of enlistment expired in August 1864. He decided not to reenlist  
23 but a majority of the 50<sup>th</sup> PA did on January 1, 1864 and were given a furlough to return to Pennsylvania  
24 to see loved ones.<sup>57</sup> Robert Thompson had a different experience in the war so far. In his first major  
25 engagement, Second Manassas in August 1862, he was wounded and spent over four months in the  
26 hospital and then most of 1863 in relative quiet until the Knoxville Campaign. He was now 21 years old  
27 and no longer needed his mother's permission by signature as he did when he first enlisted at age 19 in  
28 1862. He decided to reenlist for three years unless sooner discharged by proper authority and did so  
29 with the rest of the 48<sup>th</sup> PA men at Blaine's Cross Road on January 1, 1864.<sup>58</sup> I visited Blaine's  
30 Crossroads, now called Blaine, in August 2014. There is still a crossroads there with the west to east  
31 road coming from Knoxville to Rutledge. The south to north road comes from the hills of eastern  
32 Tennessee to the mountains that must be crossed to get to Kentucky. To be in this place where my two  
33 relatives had to decide their future was an interesting experience.

34 The 48<sup>th</sup> PA and 50<sup>th</sup> PA each had enough men reenlist to be designated "Veteran Volunteer"  
35 infantry units which means they would not be disbanded but be authorized to recruit and enlist  
36 additional soldiers. They also got the honor of coming back to fight until the end of the war after their  
37 30-day furlough. The 48<sup>th</sup> started its march back to Kentucky on January 13, 1864. They arrived in  
38 Pottsville, PA, on February 3, 1864 to begin their furlough.<sup>59</sup> The 50<sup>th</sup> reenlistment men left for the  
39 march back to Kentucky in early January. This was no easy march in the middle of winter with little

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1 rations, poor clothing and worn out shoes. They eventually made it back to their homes in  
2 Pennsylvania.<sup>60</sup>

3 The men who did not reenlist, like Samuel Schwalm, were reassigned to the 79<sup>th</sup> NY Infantry, the  
4 heroes of Fort Sanders. The 79<sup>th</sup> only had a few more months to serve and decided not to reenlist but to  
5 stick it out. The 79<sup>th</sup> was also reinforced with other soldiers who did not reenlist from the 51<sup>st</sup> NY, 45<sup>th</sup>  
6 PA, and 100<sup>th</sup> PA regiments.<sup>61</sup> The New Yorkers had little trouble getting to know their new regimental  
7 mates. “Many of these men were Pennsylvania Dutch, and of all the jawbreaking names, those that  
8 these Bucks County Dutchmen answered to were the worst. But we soon became familiar with them,  
9 and the orderly sergeants were able to call them off as glibly as our own Smiths, Browns or Thompsons.  
10 Our contingent proved to be – as we well knew before – good soldiers, and we were only too glad of  
11 their company, to swell the ranks of our mere skeleton of a regiment.”<sup>62</sup>

12 The 79<sup>th</sup> NY (reinforced) marched to Strawberry Plains, TN on January 17, 1864 to prevent the  
13 Confederates from using the railroad bridge across the Holston River at this location.<sup>63</sup> On January 18,  
14 Samuel Schwalm took some time to write a letter to his wife and children. He explained why he decided  
15 not to reenlist and how he was now assigned to the 79<sup>th</sup> NY. He provided instructions to his wife about  
16 several matters as well as his new address.<sup>64</sup> When this letter was published in 2011, the location was  
17 deemed as illegible in the original letter. Upon further analysis, the word “Strawberry” can be seen and  
18 “Blaines” is really the word “Plaines.” The 79<sup>th</sup> NY encamped at Strawberry Plains from January 17 – 22  
19 when it withdrew after several skirmishes with the Confederates and the railroad bridge was burned  
20 sufficiently to not allow the Confederates to use it.<sup>65</sup> With this historical location fact confirmed, all  
21 owners of *The Civil War Letters and Experiences of Samuel Schwalm of the 50<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Volunteer*  
22 *Infantry Regiment* can pen correct the location of Letter 21.

23 The 79<sup>th</sup> NY (Reinforced) was rear guard for the withdrawal back to Knoxville. They reached  
24 Knoxville at eight o’clock on Sunday, January 24 but continued their march another five miles to Erin  
25 Station, below the city and on the railroad line.<sup>66</sup> They set up camp and remained here until February 1,  
26 1864. During this time, Samuel Schwalm penned another letter home on January 27. This letter is also  
27 marked as “illegible” but on closer examination of the original letter, the word “Erin” can clearly be  
28 seen.<sup>67</sup> Samuel validates his movements with the 79<sup>th</sup> NY as described in this and the previous  
29 paragraphs in the first section of the letter. With this historical location fact confirmed, all owners of *The*  
30 *Civil War Letters and Experiences of Samuel Schwalm of the 50<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry*  
31 *Regiment* can pen correct the location of Letter 22.

32 The 79<sup>th</sup> NY (Reinforced) moved again on February 1 when they crossed the Holston River. They  
33 set up a new camp and eventually moved to Strawberry Plains by February 24. They continued moving  
34 in search of the Confederates until reaching Morristown on February 29. They supported operations  
35 until ordered back to Knoxville which was reached by Saturday, March 19. They soon headed over the  
36 mountain to Kentucky and back to Baltimore, MD.<sup>68</sup> The reinforcements were detached and returned to  
37 their parent units. The 48<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> PA, refreshed from furlough, rejoined their mates who continued  
38 the fight in Tennessee.

Irish Brigade Camp #4 Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War  
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1           Reenlistment or temporary reassignment, the outcome, for both Robert Thompson and Samuel  
2 Schwalm, ended up being the same. Both went on to fight in the Overland Campaign of 1864.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert B. Thompson Muster Record.

<sup>2</sup> Crater, 39.

<sup>3</sup> Birch, 188-189.

<sup>4</sup> Birch, 189.

<sup>5</sup> Author calculation using Google Earth mapping tools in 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Birch, 192 – 194.

<sup>7</sup> Hoptak and Schwalm, Letter 17, 28.

<sup>8</sup> Robert B. Thompson Muster Record.

<sup>9</sup> Birch, 196 – 197.

<sup>10</sup> Hoptak and Schwalm, Letter 18, 28 - 29. Author's note: The name of ship was not mentioned in any other source of information. It is also my military judgement that Samuel was more than sea sick and likely had malaria. The rest of the unit eventually got malaria upon return to Kentucky, but Samuel did not as he likely had built up an immunity to it. Letter 19 on page 19 applies.

<sup>11</sup> Birch, 198-206.

<sup>12</sup> Author visited Jackson, MS on August 30, 2013 to confirm this street as the defensive position when compared to historic battle maps found at <http://www.davidrumsey.com/>.

<sup>13</sup> Birch, 211.

<sup>14</sup> Earl J. Hess, *The Knoxville Campaign Burnside and Longstreet in East Tennessee* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 2012), 10; Birch, 211.

<sup>15</sup> Birch, 211.

<sup>16</sup> Map of the Knoxville Campaign of the American Civil War. Drawn by Hal Jespersen in Adobe Illustrator CS5. Graphic source file is available at <http://www.posix.com/CWmaps/>, downloaded from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Longstreets\\_Knoxville\\_Campaign.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Longstreets_Knoxville_Campaign.png), on April 7, 2018.

<sup>17</sup> Hess, 10.

<sup>18</sup> Birch, 212.

<sup>19</sup> Bosbyshell, 117.

<sup>20</sup> Birch, 212. Author's note: The 50<sup>th</sup> PA received no new troops in 1863 according to Appendix A in Birch, 474.

<sup>21</sup> Birch, 212 -213.

<sup>22</sup> Bosbyshell, 122.

<sup>23</sup> Birch, 212 – 214.

<sup>24</sup> Biography of William S. Rosecrans at <https://www.civilwar.org/learn/biographies/william-s-rosecrans>, accessed on March 26, 2018.

<sup>25</sup> Hess, 32.

<sup>26</sup> Bosbyshell, 123 - 125.

<sup>27</sup> Birch, 216 & 220 – 221.

<sup>28</sup> Bosbyshell, 126 & Birch, 221.

<sup>29</sup> Birch, 221.

<sup>30</sup> Bosbyshell, 127.

<sup>31</sup> Birch, 221 – 222.

<sup>32</sup> Birch, 222.

<sup>33</sup> Bosbyshell, 128.

<sup>34</sup> Birch, 222.

<sup>35</sup> Gerald L. Augustus, *The Battle of Campbell's Station 16 November 1863* (Cleveland, TN: Cherohala Press, 2013), Map 1 on 14.

<sup>36</sup> Bosbyshell, 131.

<sup>37</sup> Augustus, 15.

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- <sup>38</sup> Birch, 223.  
<sup>39</sup> Bosbyshell, 131.  
<sup>40</sup> Augustus, 50 – 51.  
<sup>41</sup> Augustus, 69 – 70.  
<sup>42</sup> Birch, 225.  
<sup>43</sup> Hess, 81.  
<sup>44</sup> <http://48thpennsylvania.blogspot.com/2013/12/the-48th150th-east-tennessee-campaign.html> accessed on March 30, 2018.  
<sup>45</sup> Birch, 230.  
<sup>46</sup> Hess, 81.  
<sup>47</sup> The Official Military Atlas of the Civil War Map 5, Plate CXI located at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knoxville\\_Campaign#/media/File:Knoxville\\_defenses\\_1863.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knoxville_Campaign#/media/File:Knoxville_defenses_1863.jpg), accessed on March 30, 2018. Unit annotations added by the author. Note: Hard cover copy of this atlas is in the author's personal library.  
<sup>48</sup> Bosbyshell, 132 - 135.  
<sup>49</sup> Crater, 47.  
<sup>50</sup> 48<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Blogspot.  
<sup>51</sup> Birch, 230 – 231.  
<sup>52</sup> Birch, 231.  
<sup>53</sup> Bosbyshell, 137 and Birch, 232.  
<sup>54</sup> Birch, 232  
<sup>55</sup> Bosbyshell, 138.  
<sup>56</sup> Hess, 219.  
<sup>57</sup> Birch, 235 – 236.  
<sup>58</sup> Thompson Muster Record and Volunteer Reenlistment Record.  
<sup>59</sup> Bosbyshell, 142.  
<sup>60</sup> Birch, 236 – 237.  
<sup>61</sup> William Todd of Company H, *The Seventy-Ninth Highlanders New York Volunteers in the War of Rebellion 1861 – 1865*, (Albany, NY: Press of Brandow, Barton & Co, 1886) PDF/ePub version at <https://archive.org/stream/seventyninthhigh00toddrich#page/n7/mode/2up> , accessed on April 2, 2018, 413 - 417.  
<sup>62</sup> Todd, 417.  
<sup>63</sup> Todd, 417 – 418.  
<sup>64</sup> Hoptak and Schwalm, Letter 21, 30 & 48.  
<sup>65</sup> Todd, 419.  
<sup>66</sup> Todd, 421.  
<sup>67</sup> Hoptak and Schwalm, Letter 22, 30 & 50.  
<sup>68</sup> Todd, 424 – 426 and 435.