

The Charles Edward Bostwick Papers

Repository

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Creators

Charles Edward Bostwick

Extent

.01 linear feet, or 3 folders

Dates

Inclusive: 1862 – 1872

Conditions Governing Access

No Restrictions

Languages

English

Scope and Content

The collection contains some records from Captain Charles Edward Bostwick's service with the 128th New York Volunteers in the Civil War. It includes his appointment, a company roster, and a lithograph image of Camp Millington near Baltimore, Maryland.

Historical Note

The 128th New York Volunteer Regiment was formed in 1862 at Hudson, New York from men gathered from Columbia and Dutchess Counties. Captain Bostwick's Company B was gathered from Washington, Amenia, Dover, Pawling, North East, Stanford and Pine Plains. Stationed at Camp Millington near Baltimore, Maryland, they were sent into the field in 1862 to chase Confederate Cavalry out of southern Pennsylvania and saw no action.

In December of 1862 the 128th New York was assigned to the army of General Nathaniel Banks which set its sights on reclaiming the lower Mississippi basin for the North. During the trip south, disease ate through their ranks. The regiment was assigned to the 1st Brigade of General William T. Sherman's Division.

The 128th New York saw its first action on May 13th, 1862 at Pontachoula in a small engagement, and later took a central role in the Siege of Port Hudson. The Regiment lost its commander, Colonel David S. Cowles, along with many others, in frontal assaults on May 27 and June 14 that ended in a 48 day stalemate. The Confederate garrison learned of the surrender of Vicksburg to General Ulysses S. Grant after July 4, and finally relented, surrendering on the 9th. Combined with the capture of Vicksburg, the victory at Port Hudson opened the entire Mississippi River to the Union.

The 128th NY served as the garrison of Baton Rouge until March 1864 when they were assigned to the General Banks's Red River Campaign. During the Union retreat in late April 1864, the regiment's commander, Colonel James Smith was breveted General for the unit's bravery at the Cane River Crossing. The regiment then constructed an important dam from April 30th to May 10th, which saved the Union fleet at Alexandria. After the retreat to the Mississippi, the Regiment was returned to Washington.

In August of 1864, the 128th NY was assigned to General Philip Sheridan's Army of the Shenandoah with the mission of destroying the fields and crops of Shenandoah Valley. On September 19th, they defeated a rebel force at Winchester, and again on September 22nd at Fisher's Hill. After chasing the Confederates south out of the valley, the army turned around and headed back north, laying waste to all that they considered possibly useful to the South's ability to make war.

The 128th NY were the advance picket guards at the Confederate sneak attack at Cedar Creek at dawn of October 19th, 1864. Large portions of the regiment were captured before General Sheridan gathered the retreating and retook the field in the afternoon. The prisoners were removed with the retreating Confederates and sent first to Libby Prison at Richmond, and Salisbury Prison in North Carolina, and were only released in February 1865.

Provenance

The Charles Edward Bostwick Papers were donated to the Dutchess County Historical Society by Harry O. Bostwick of Pasadena, California on July 5th, 1952.

There is a monument dedicated to the soldiers of the 128th New York Volunteer Infantry at Reservoir Square at the junction of South Clinton Street and Cannon Street in Poughkeepsie.

Subject Headings

Civil War

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Container List

Small Collections Box 8

| File | Contents | Date |
|---------|--|------------------|
| File 41 | Appointment of Charles Edward Bostwick as Captain in the 128 th New York Volunteers | 1862 August 18 |
| File 42 | Roster of Captain Charles Edward Bostwick's Company B of the 128 th New York Volunteers | 1872 September 3 |
| File 43 | Lithograph of Camp Millington, Baltimore, Maryland | circa 1862 |