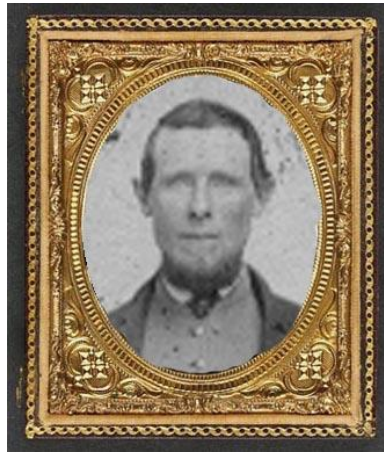


**WHAT OUR ANCESTOR - BARTLEY CANE (1843-1917)  
EXPERIENCED AT CEDAR CREEK, VIRGINIA ON OCTOBER 19, 1864**



Bartley Cane (1843-1917)  
ca. 1857

To the Children, Grandchildren, Great Grandchildren, and Great Great Grandchildren of Finley Kane and Elizabeth G. Martin, my parents – I hope this finds you all doing well during these trying times.

The following narrative will hopefully, shed some light on one of our ancestors who also lived through a very trying time in the history of our nation. It should make today's difficulties and challenges seem more manageable in comparison.

I urge you to share this story with your family and encourage them to share it with theirs in the future. It is a story that should never die within our family.

Bartley Cane (it was spelled at times Cain, Kane, and O' Cane) was already a seasoned veteran of combat having enlisted in 1861 when President Lincoln issued the call for 76,000 volunteers to defend the Union after the firing on Fort Sumpter. He served throughout Maryland, Washington DC, and Virginia during his term of service which ended at war's end in 1865.

He married Frances Young during the war and made his home in Paw Paw in what would become West Virginia.

She "kept the home fires burning" while he was away on the battlefield.

Think of them while you contend with the political and racial turmoil we are going through today. It could be worse!

One Hundred Fifty-Six years ago, on the 19<sup>th</sup> of this month, our ancestor and my paternal Great Grandfather, Bartley Cane was serving as the **1st Sergeant of Company E of the 54<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry regiment** and was involved in one of the pivotal battles of the American Civil War.

He was severely wounded, being shot in the face at some point in the battle. Fortunately, he recovered, otherwise none of us would be here today.

**THINK ABOUT THAT!**

He was able to rejoin his regiment in time to be present (although as a prisoner of the Confederates) as the Army of Northern Virginia was surrendered by General Lee to General Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia.

Sadly, no personal journals from him or from prior generations of our family have come to light. What follows is based solely on official reports, interviews, and published histories of the battle and his later record.

The following narrative assembled from several uncredited sources describes what he would have experienced that fateful day.

This is strictly for family use and is not intended to be scholarly in nature or intended for any publication. It is intended to help keep his memory alive within the Martin extended families that are his descendants.

Paul Martin October 2020

## **PROLOGUE**

*“October 11th, 1864 was a beautiful autumn day in the Shenandoah Valley. In their defensive positions along the northern banks of Cedar Creek, Maj. Gen. Philip Sheridan’s Union soldiers relaxed, not expecting a Confederate attack. Lieutenant James Fitts, 114th New York Infantry, noted, “we supposed there was no longer an enemy of respectable strength...nobody dreamed of attack.” Many of Sheridan’s 32,000 soldiers voted in their camps, most supporting President Abraham Lincoln. Sheridan’s two powerful cavalry divisions arrived and took their positions on the Army of the Shenandoah’s flanks.*

*But not far south, an enemy of “respectable strength,” around 14,000 men, was looking for a fight, not only to drive Sheridan from the Valley, but also to gain revenge for “The Burning,” the Union’s punitive operation against the Valley’s farmers and crops. Rebel Army of the Valley commander Lt. Gen. Jubal Early had sought guidance from Confederate commanding General Robert E. Lee, and wrote, “I think I can defeat his (Sheridan’s) infantry and thwart his movements...” Receiving Early’s message late on October 11th, Lee responded, “it will be necessary for you to keep your troops well together, to restore their confidence, improve their condition...enforce strict discipline...keep yourself well advised of the enemy’s movements and strength, and endeavor to separate and strike them in detail.” Lee added, “move against him (Sheridan) and endeavor to crush him...I have weakened myself very much to strengthen you. It was done with the expectation of enabling you to gain such success...”*

*There was no doubt what Lee wanted Early to do. The next day, October 12th, Early marched his army north, following Sheridan and seeking battle.”*

Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park

## **THE BATTLE OF CEDAR CREEK, VIRGINIA 19 OCTOBER 1864**



The Battle of Cedar Creek, by Julian Scot, 1872



View of Massanutten Mountain from Thoburn's Position

Following “The Burning” of the Shenandoah Valley (late September –early October 1864), the Union Army of the Shenandoah Valley encamped among the bluffs north of Cedar Creek.

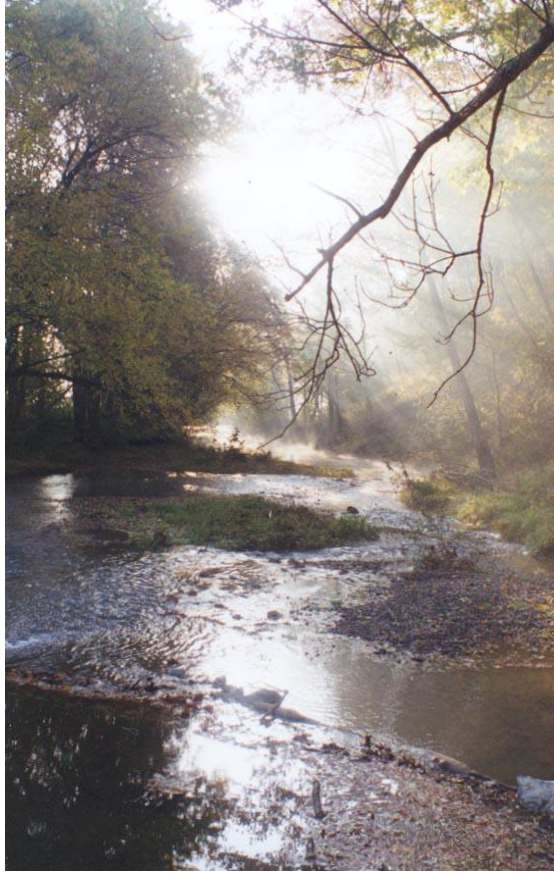
Anchoring the army's left flank was the Army of West Virginia (also known as the 8th Corps), commanded by Brig. Gen. George Crook. Numbering approximately 4,200 men, the 8th Corps' two divisions were positioned east of the Valley Pike in a staggered formation.

Holding the front line were the 1,700 men of Col. Joseph Thoburn's 1st Division, (including the 54<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry) overlooking Cedar Creek and the North Fork of the Shenandoah River.

The 2nd Division commanded by Col. Rutherford B. Hayes (future President of the United States) was encamped across a broad plateau approximately three-quarters of a mile north.

On the morning of October 19, 1864, one of the most indelible images remembered by both sides was the nearly impenetrable fog that covered the landscape around Cedar Creek. For the Confederates, it would help muffle sounds of their movements and for the Federals, when the attack came, the effect of the shrill rebel yell of the Confederates would be terrifyingly amplified.

Our ancestor – First Sergeant Bartley Cane of Company E, 54<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry was there.



Cedar Creek – 1994

October 19, 1864 dawned cool and dark with a heavy fog blanketing the north bank of Cedar Creek. The 54<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania, of Crook's VIII Corps was asleep behind its trenches just north of the stream in the Union's forward-most position, 4 miles north of Strasburg, Virginia. At 4:30 am, shielded by the fog and darkness, Confederate General Kershaw's division crossed the creek and were upon the Union outpost before the defenders were aware of what was happening.

Company E of the 54<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania were probably just rousing themselves from a long and seemingly peaceful night's rest after a long and tiring march down the Valley Pike when firing from the Union pickets began as the Confederates emerged from the early morning fog along Cedar Creek.

The company and the entire regiment was forced out of its position and back north towards the Union XIX Corps camps and the Valley Pike. The battle continued to go badly for the Union troops as they were routed and, despite spirited resistance, were forced to fall back down the Valley Pike through Middletown towards Winchester by mid-day. It appeared to be a complete Confederate victory. Colonel Thoburn, 1st Sergeant Cane's Division Commander, was killed in the initial attack. <sup>1</sup>

As Colonel Peter McGlashan, commanding the Confederate's 50th Georgia Infantry described the density of the fog and the beginning of the attack:

*“The faded gray uniforms of our men were so nearly the color of October grass they could not distinguish us. But we could see their dark blue uniforms readily . . . the pickets were evidently uneasy. They could hear some movements in front but could not see anything.*

*Finally, one picket, [more] sharp-eyed than the rest, cried out: “I see them!” and fired . . . A rattling volley from the picket line followed . . . Still the line swept on in utter silence. The whole picket line, now thoroughly alarmed, broke for the woods, but were soon halted by their officers, who were cursing the men for running on a false alarm. They had scarcely formed line, however, when we were on them.*

*This terrible approach of a silent line of battle they could not see appalled them and they fled in terror without firing another shot, yelling out their alarms to the troops in camp. Then ringing through the air came the command: ‘Now men, fix bayonets. Forward, double quick, charge! With a wild, fierce yell that seemed to rend the clouds above, the line rushed up the slope and dashed at the intrenchments.’”*

Using the cover of the fog, the Confederates overwhelmed Federal defenses and continued pressing their advantage until mid-morning when the fog began to lift and the momentum of the assault slackened due to a determined Union resistance.

*“The awful conviction came to mind in a moment, that the Eighth Corps, so gallant in all its former engagements, had been entirely and instantly changed into a disorganized mass of stragglers.” - Record of the 114th New York State Volunteers on the Union Left*

## **COLONEL JOSEPH THOBURN AND THE 1<sup>ST</sup> DIVISION**



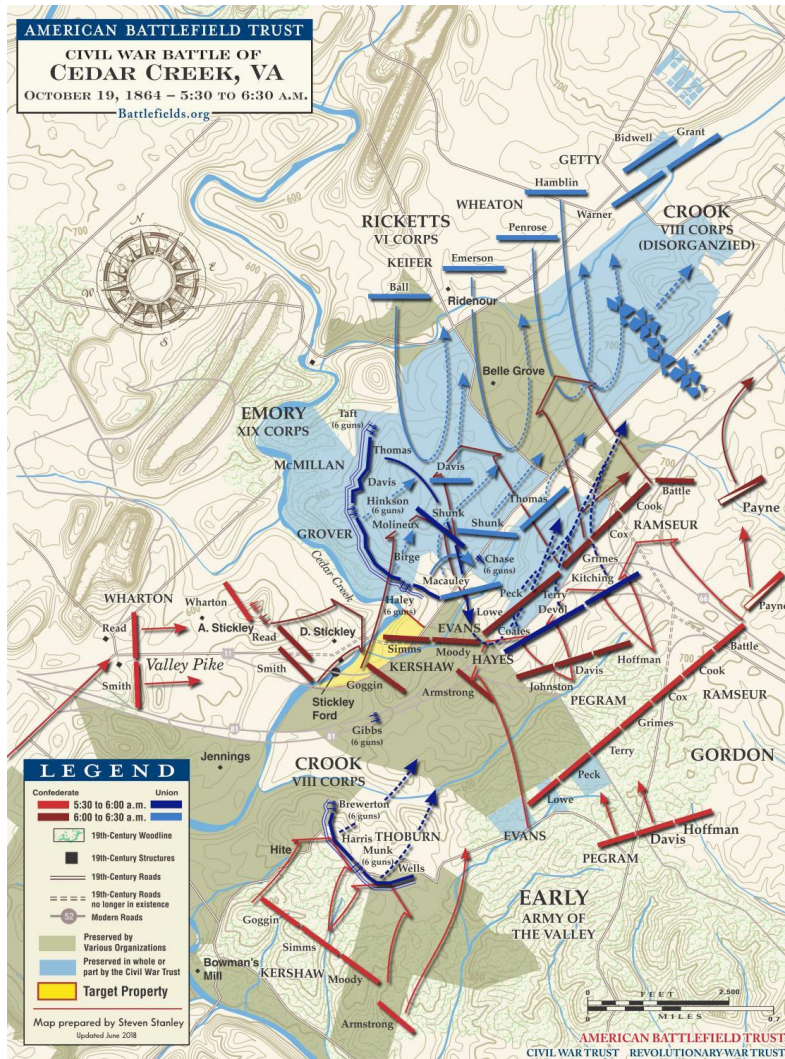
Colonel Joseph Thoburn  
(April 29, 1825 – October 19, 1864)

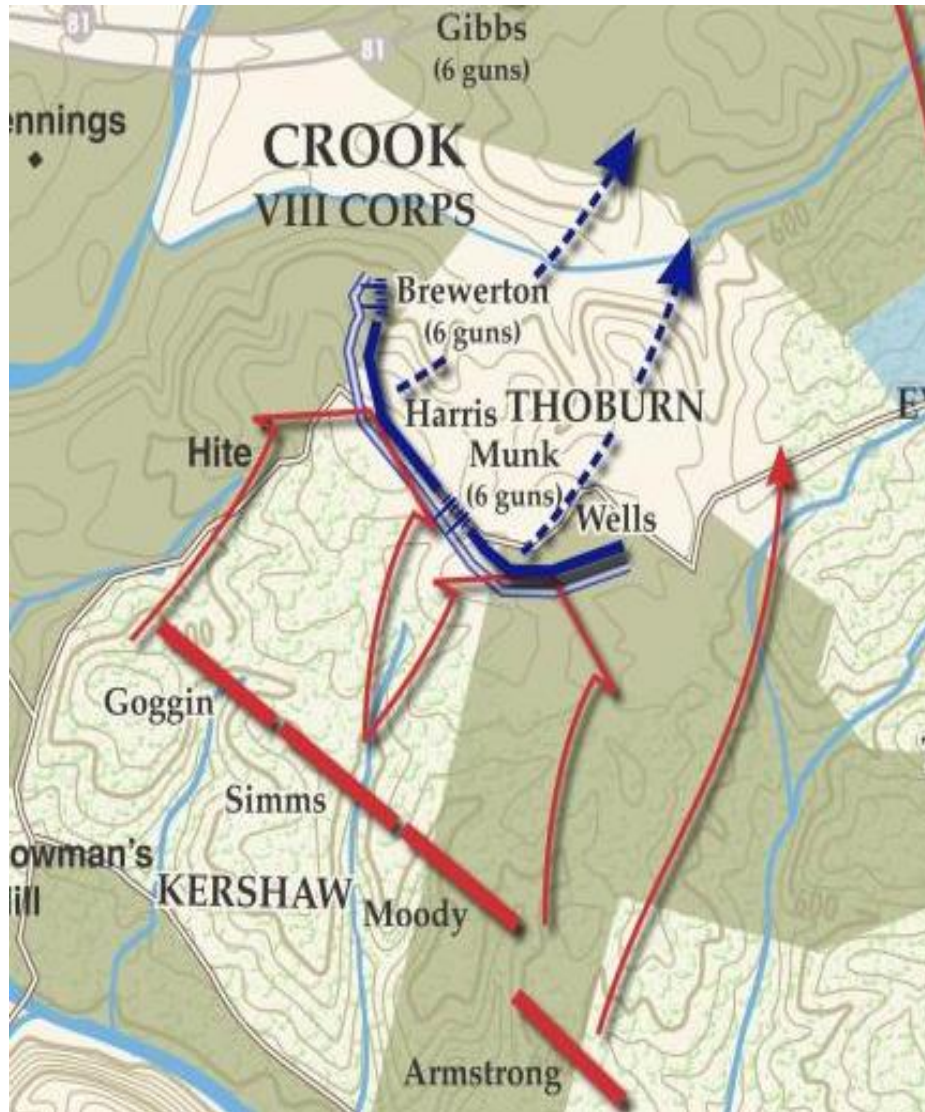
Col. Joseph Thoburn, a surgeon before the war, had quickly volunteered in 1861 and had seen extensive action in both West Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley. Nearly all of his men were battle-tested veterans.

Upon taking their position along Cedar Creek in early October, Thoburn had his men dig a series of strong entrenchments near modern Bowman's Mill Road. Unfortunately, almost none of these fortifications survive today, although they were described vividly by a Confederate soldier who attacked them during the battle:

*The enemy was posted on an almost impregnable position on the bluff overlooking Cedar Creek... The enemy's breastworks were built of strong timbers, with earth thrown against them, with a deep trench on the inside.... In front of this breastwork, and from forty to fifty feet in breadth, was an abattis\*....*

\*abattis—tree branches with their ends stripped and sharpened into points and then intertwined (a pre-cursor to modern barbed wire).





Bartley's Company E was on the Union left, in Harris' brigade

Following an all-night march along the base of the Massanutten Mountain, including two river crossings, the Confederates rolled out of a dense fog in the pre-dawn hours of October 19th. Early's plan worked perfectly, as it caught the majority of Thoburn's men completely by surprise. Most were still in their tents\* and the few who managed to form a line were quickly overwhelmed. One Confederate described the scene as they overran Thoburn's position:

\*As 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant of his company, I feel it was probable that Bartley was not "...still in his tent", but up and beginning preparations for what he assumed would be a quiet day.

*"Such a sight as met our eyes as we mounted their works was not often seen. For a mile or more...towards the rear was a vast plain.... Tents whitened the field from one end to the other...while the country behind was one living sea of men and horses—all fleeing for safety. Men, shoeless and hatless, went flying like mad to the rear.... Such confusion, such a panic, was never witnessed before by the troops..."* Unknown Confederate Soldier

Three of the four Union artillery batteries were quickly captured, as Thoburn's line collapsed. In the confused retreat that followed, Col. Thoburn desperately attempted to rally his men before being struck and mortally wounded. Soon after, Col. Hayes' 2nd Division came under attack. Although it fought gallantly, Hayes' line was also quickly overwhelmed. Despite the long odds, the Confederate attack had worked perfectly, with the 8th Corps routed and fleeing. The Union left had completely collapsed.

Bartley's Company E of the 54<sup>th</sup> was among those first stampeded in the dawn assault. It was a part of Harris' Brigade who failed to heed a warning from Col. Wildes of noise in the front. Harris reportedly turned over and went back to sleep.

The 54th was not able to enter the trenches in numbers that made a difference and the Confederates were over the top and amongst them or flanking them where they had little chance but to flee.

Wildes' brigade was largely in formation, but flanked and while retaining formation, they too withdrew albeit in better order until after almost a mile, Generals Wright and Emory sent them back in to stem the flow. At that point, most order was lost and they resumed their retreat.

Many of Harris' brigade were shot while retreating, some stood with other units after crossing the Valley Pike (either with Wildes' brigade or with the 19th Corps units as they retreated in stages across the plateau.) In the afternoon, units of the 8th Corps were in support of the 6th Corps during the counterattack, but their support is listed as of little circumstance in the Confederate reversal in the evening.

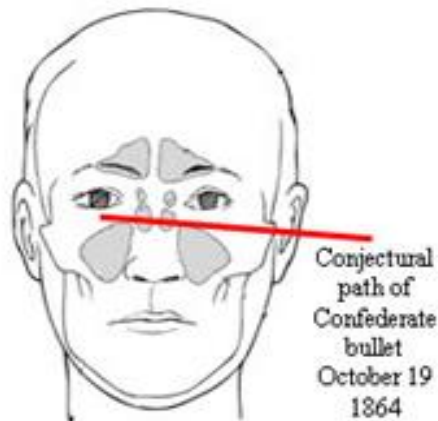
At some point in the early phases of the Battle, 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant Cane was wounded in the face. Whether wounded in the initial pre-dawn attack by Kershaw's Division or the delaying action at the Valley Pike, or at some other time in the battle, the bullet is likely from a .577 caliber Enfield Rifled Musket which is carried by many of the North and South Carolinians of Kershaw's Division involved in the Confederate assault. The bullet is nearly an inch long and weighs nearly an ounce.



If he was transported to Stephen's City during the day hours and since he was not captured by the Confederates, that would likely mean that he made it to the Valley Pike where others' supported his removal and he was not simply abandoned to his wounds in the Brigade campgrounds. Just an educated guess there.

1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant Cane's Muster Roll for September and October 1864 states that he was absent with the notation "...wounded In G H [General Hospital] Newtown, Va. ...".

It is probable that the wounded Sergeant Cane was taken to St. Thomas' Episcopal Church in Middletown on the north edge of the battlefield for initial treatment. He would have been carried into the chapel where surgeons were standing in pools of blood as they treated Federals and Confederates alike, amputating limbs and bandaging wounds.



Bartley's Probable Wound



Period Image of a Very Similar Facial Wound

His wound must have appeared very severe. No doubt his whole face was covered with blood and badly bruised with both eyes blackened, teeth knocked out, and badly swollen. He would have been in extreme pain which was not eased as the physicians attempted to probe for the bullet. They could not find or remove it.

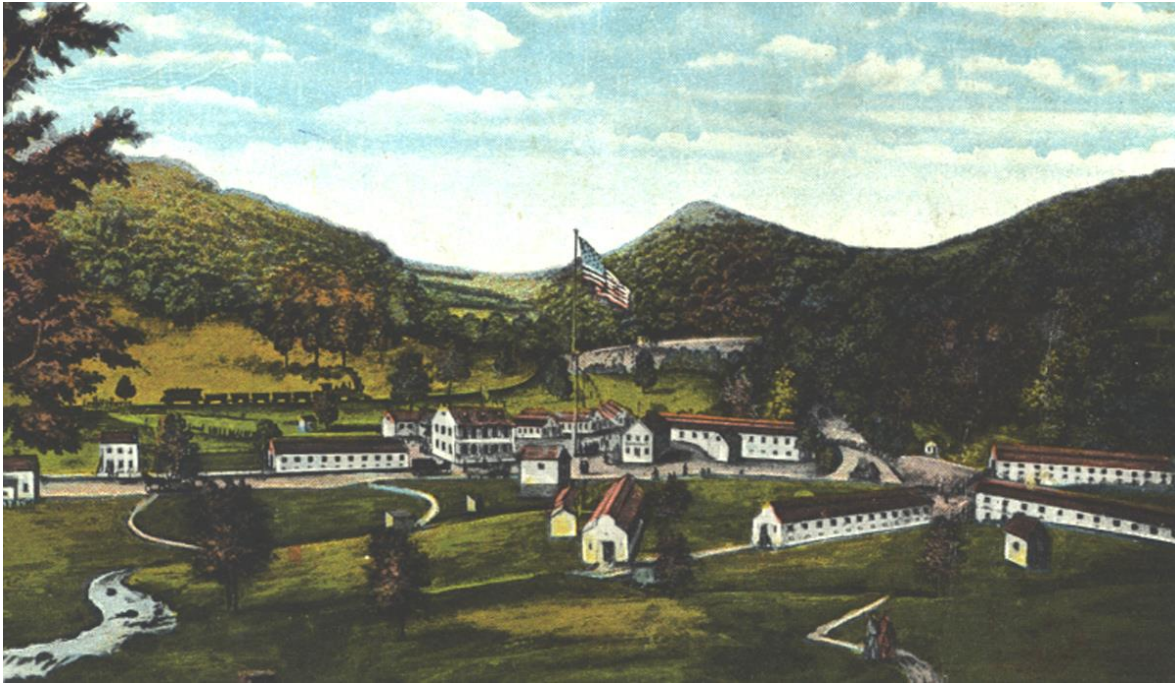
Giving up, they dressed the wound to the best of their ability and sent him to the field hospital set up in Newtown (present-day Stephen's City) 2 miles down the road towards Winchester.

After more treatment at Newtown, Bartley was sent to the United States Army General Hospital at Cumberland, Maryland to recover from his wound. The hospital Muster Rolls show him present at Cumberland from October 24, 1864 until sometime in January 1865. The actual hospital location was a couple of miles northwest of Cumberland at Clarysville.

The Muster Rolls show him present during the entire period, so it is unlikely that he was sent home to recuperate. Since the hospital was so close to Paw Paw West Virginia (33 miles), it is possible that his wife, Frances came to the hospital to care for him during his convalescent leave. If so, this certainly speeded his recovery and may even have saved his life. His wound, highly susceptible to infection, could have easily proven fatal in a field hospital with limited personal care.

While Bartley was being treated, the tide turned in the battle as General Sheridan arrived from Winchester. The Union rout was stopped, their lines reformed and they successfully pushed the

Confederates back securing a significant victory for the Union, and forever cutting off the “Breadbasket of the Confederacy” to the rebels.



Army General Hospital at Clarysville, Maryland - 1864

The Union victories in the valley served to turn the tide of public opinion in the North. On the 20th of October, Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday of November to be observed as a national holiday of “Thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens.”

Sheridan was promoted by Lincoln to the rank of Major General for his victory at Cedar Creek:

*“...for the personal gallantry, military skill, and just confidence in the courage and patriotism of your troops, displayed by you on the 19th day of October, at Cedar Run [sic], whereby, under the blessing of Providence, your routed army was reorganized, a great national disaster averted, and a brilliant victory over the rebels for the third time in pitched battle within thirty days. “*

On the 8th of November 1864, President Lincoln was reelected. The victory at Cedar Creek played a large part in his defeat of the Democrat George McClellan as well as the preservation of the Union.

**Cedar Creek After Action Report, Commander, 54th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, 3d  
Brigade, 1st Division, 8th Corps**

***HDQRS. FIFTY-FOURTH PENNSYLVANIA VOL. INFANTRY,***

*Cedar Creek, Va., October 25, 1864.*

*COLONEL: In compliance with your order asking a report of the part taken by the  
Fifty-fourth Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry in the action of the 19th of October, I  
have the honor to submit the following:*

*On the morning of the 19th, before daylight, when I was first apprised of picket-firing  
in our front, I ordered the regiment to turn out under arms, which was done by the  
companies forming in their quarters and afterward marching up to the breast-work in  
our front. Before the line could be properly formed the enemy, apparently in a mass,  
were observed advancing along the whole front and already at the abatis. My  
regiment opened and maintained a fire until the enemy getting in our rear from the  
extreme left of the line of works, were compelled to fall back to avoid capture, and in  
so doing some 24 were taken prisoners, 2 killed, and 5 wounded. As there was no  
order given to fall back, a portion of the regiment was rallied at the skirt of the woods  
in the camp, and disputed the advance of the enemy for a time, during which Lieut.  
Joseph Peck, acting adjutant, was killed while urging the men to their duty. Arriving  
on the turnpike the regiment was partly rallied with the colors and formed with a  
portion of the Nineteenth Corps, after which it moved back to a point in rear of the  
Sixth Corps, where a detachment of a few hundred of different regiments of the Army  
of West Virginia were rallied, after which it moved forward with said detachment and  
engaged the enemy in a skirt of woods, driving him out and holding it for nearly one  
hour, **in which one man was severely wounded\*\***. Afterward again moved back with  
the detachment to a new position in rear of the Sixth Corps. After this, the respective  
brigades and divisions being again reformed, my regiment conformed to the  
movements of its own brigade during the remainder of the day, which was that of a  
reserve and support to artillery, until evening, when it advanced with the whole line to  
Cedar Creek, going into bivouac on nearly the same ground occupied before.*

*I am, colonel, very respectfully, your obedient servant,*

***JOHN SUTER,***

*Capt., Comdg Fifty-fourth Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry.*

*Col. MILTON WELLS,*

*Comdg. Third Brig., First Brig., Army of West Virginia.*

ADDENDA

**HDQRS. FIFTY-FOURTH PENNSYLVANIA VOL. INFANTRY,**

*Cedar Creek, Va., October 24, 1864.*

*Col. MILTON WELLS,*

*Commanding Third Brigade:*

*COLONEL: In compliance with your order calling for a report of the conduct of officers on the 19th instant, I have the honor to submit the following:*

*There were no commissioned officers of the Fifty-fourth Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry sent to Winchester. Captains Davis and Long and Lieutenant Dunlap were with me throughout the entire day with the regiment. Captain Moulton and Lieutenants Rehr, Gageby, Troutman, and McCracken were on different parts of the field with squads of men of this and other regiments of our brigade, doing service partly with the Nineteenth Corps, and joined their regiment in the afternoon and evening of the same day. This accounts for all the officers for duty in this regiment.*

*Very respectfully, your obedient servant,*

**JOHN SUTER**

*Captain, Comdg. Fifty-fourth Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry.*



Captain John Peter Suter  
1837-1887

\*\* It is quite likely that Bartley Cane was the "...one man severely wounded" referenced in Suter's After-Action Report. But we may never know for certain.

According to dentists and facial surgeons interviewed, the area of Bartley's wound which I described to them would lie in the sinuses on either side of the nose. Fortunately, this area is relatively "safe" in that no major arteries, nerves, or other vital organs (aside from the eyes) would be involved.

Their viewpoint is that he was indeed most likely the "one man severely wounded" in Suter's report.

In December 1864 the 54<sup>th</sup> moved to Washington and thence to City Point, arrived on the 23d, and encamped on Chapin's Farm. It was assigned to duty in the Army of the James. Bartley rejoined the 54<sup>th</sup> in January 1865 at City Point, Virginia

The men assigned to Company E were being reassigned to other companies within the regiment in compliance with orders from the War Department. Special Order number 61 dated February 7, 1865 resulted in Bartley becoming the 1st sergeant of Company F when he returned to duty sometime in January 1865.

He remained 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant of Company F through the final days of the sieges of Petersburg, Virginia and on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1865 was in the final assault on the Confederate Battery Gregg that ended the Petersburg campaign forcing Lee to retreat to his eventual surrender at Appomattox.

The 54<sup>th</sup> was actively involved in the final pursuit of Lee's and Longstreet's forces but the entire regiment and 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant Cane were captured at the battle of High Bridge, Virginia on April 5, 1865. They remained prisoners of Longstreet's corps until the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia to General Grant four days later on April 9, 1865.

Bartley was mustered out of Federal Service with his regiment at Camp Parole, Maryland on July 15, 1865.

**Bartley Cane** served the entire war as a citizen of Ireland, receiving his naturalization certificate on October 4, 1867. He returned home from the conflict still carrying the Confederate bullet from Cedar Creek in his head.

After the war, he and Frances lived in Johnstown Pennsylvania (where he continued his trade in the steel mills there), Cumberland Maryland, and Paw Paw, West Virginia, and Alleghany, Pennsylvania.

By 1885 he had turned to farming and they headed west, settling first in Ashland, Kansas, then Woodward, Oklahoma Territory in 1893, where Frances passed away on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 1903. In 1905 Bartley and his daughter, Ellen Claire (Nellie), along with his granddaughter and grandson moved to the new town of Amarillo in the Texas Panhandle.

They took up residence as boarders with our widowed paternal ancestor Nathan C. Martin and his 8 children. Bartley worked as a hired hand and Nellie become his housekeeper. In 1907, she married Nathan C. Martin's eldest son, my grandfather Nathan Finley Martin.

The Confederate bullet Bartley carried in his head would cause the loss of his right eye and eventually work its way down and out the soft palate in 1912.

The event merited coverage in the Amarillo Daily News of Wednesday, March 13, 1912:

### ***CARRIED BULLET FOR OVER HALF CENTURY***

*"How it felt to carry a rebel bullet half a century, and then have it drop from the upper wall of the mouth, " can be explained by Barclay [sic] Cane, a veteran of the federal army.*

*Friday night, March 8, Mr. Cane, who is now nearly seventy-nine years of age, felt the leaden missile drop into his mouth from a slightly eruptive surface. He removed the bullet from his mouth, and for the first time for almost half a century, felt relieved of the ounce of lead from a rebel gun, fired at the battle of Cedar Creek, Virginia, October 19, 1864.*

*The bullet entered just under the left eye, extending through the nose and lodging under the right eye. For years after General Sheridan's men, among whom Mr. Cane held a place at the time of the battle at Cedar Creek, had been disbanded, the bullet rested snug and secure in the frontal section of the head.*

*Finally, the secreted leaden ball began to work badly and caused an almost constant wasting of the secretions through the nose and the right eye. This continued for almost a quarter of a century, and the case with its peculiar developments, baffled the physicians in charge. Nothing could be done to stop the waste, and after long suffering the right eye was sacrificed, wasting away. The discharges continued almost without interruptions, but aside from this pain had practically ceased.*

*Nothing unusual announced the approach of the emission of the bullet, but suddenly the lead dropped into the mouth, and was removed. There is little reason to believe that the member of General Early' 's command firing the bullet into the wearer of the blue uniform of the federal army, is at this time alive, while Mr. Cane, the victim of that wounding, is a rather hearty man for his years.*

*After being imbedded among the bones, tendons, veins, and flesh of the victim for almost half a century, the ball weighs just eighteen penny-weights, or has wasted somewhat in these years, whether by absorption or cast a little short, or had scattered a fragment before striking and lodging cannot be known. In speaking of the missile through which he has suffered so much, Mr. Cane said: "Yes, it's a rebel bullet, and I am glad to be rid of it. It cost me my eye and almost untold ill feelings at different times, but it had ceased to hurt me, the discharge from the eye and nose being the most troublesome feature.*

*This is perhaps the most unique case of a wounding ever developed in Amarillo. The aged veteran of the federal army has lived here for seven years with his daughter Mrs. Findlley [sic] Martin just to the northeast of the city. He entered the army from Maryland and was not seriously wounded aside from the time of which mention is here made.*

*The old man seems to think that the passing of the bullet from his head gives him an additional lease on life as the drain will now, he states be stopped, and he will*

*feel much better than heretofore. The bullet was displayed to a number of friends yesterday and it will be given display in the new shop of Frank P. Schlosser.*

The bullet remained a family heirloom until sometime in the 1940's when it disappeared.

Bartley's eighth child (fourth daughter) was Ellen Claire (Cane) Vincent, who would later meet and marry Nathan Finley Martin – my Grandfather. His father, Nathan C. Martin was also a Union Civil War veteran of the 86<sup>th</sup> and 129<sup>th</sup> Ohio Volunteer Infantry.

In December 1913, they went together to the Army and Navy Hospital in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Bartley was probably having problems from the old head wound from Cedar Creek and Nathan may have been fitted with new teeth to replace his own - worn down by "eating parched corn" during his army days.



OLD SOLDIERS", ARMY AND NAVY HOSPITAL, HOT SPRINGS, ARKANSAS  
DECEMBER 1, 1913

Nathan Martin, Front row, seated far left with hat, Bartley Cane, 2nd row, 5th from left  
(Martin Family Collection)

A photo shows both on the porch of the hospital surrounded by other old veterans of the conflict. It was probably the first taken of them together and perhaps the last photo of them ever taken in life.

Both veterans died in Amarillo in 1917 - Bartley on June 5, and Nathan on August 29th.

Both are at rest in Llano Cemetery in Amarillo, Texas a few yards from each other.



Bartley Cane at the age of 80 and his government-issued gravestone in Llano Cemetery

---