

Three Mattesons and the Gettysburg Gun



Matteson Historical Congress of America
70th Annual Reunion
Warwick, RI August 6-8, 2010

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THE
HISTORY OF BATTERY B

*FIRST REGIMENT RHODE ISLAND
LIGHT ARTILLERY*

IN THE WAR TO PRESERVE THE UNION
1861 - 1865

BY
JOHN H. RHODES
Late Sergeant in the Battery

ILLUSTRATED WITH PORTRAITS AND MAPS

PROVIDENCE
SNOW & FARNHAM, PRINTERS
1894



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Battery B, 1st Regiment, RI Light Artillery Mustered on August 13, 1861 at about 3:30 pm

AS ORGANIZED AND MUSTERED.

Four commissioned officers and one hundred and thirty-seven men,
namely :

Captain.

First Lieutenants.

RAYMOND H. PERRY,

GEORGE W. ADAMS,

HORACE S. BLOODGOOD,

FRANCIS A. SMITH.

Quartermaster-Sergeant.

First Sergeant.

WILLIAM S. DYER.

JACOB B. LEWIS.

Sergeants.

CHARLES H. ADAMS,

JOHN T. BLAKE,

SILAS G. TUCKER,

GEORGE W. BLAIR,

JOHN MCCOOMBS.

MARTIN, THOMAS J.

THOMPSON, JAMES

MASON, HENRY A.

TRESCOTT, JOHN F.

MASON, LUCIUS M.

WALKER, PARDON S.

MATTESON, BENJ. F.

WARDLOW, JOHN E.

MATTESON, GEORGE R.

WELLS, WILLIAM P.

MATTESON, WILLIAM F.

WHIPPLE, ALBERT J.

MAXCY, WILLIAM H.

WILKINSON, ROBERT



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William F. Matteson

- Part of the original Muster of August 13, 1861
- Taken prisoner at the battle of Ball's Bluff on October 21, 1861
 - Also known as "Harrison's Island" and "Leesburg"
- Not present at the Battle of Gettysburg

Captain Harvey, and others. Colonel Lee, of the Twentieth Massachusetts, carried the last round that was fired. It was not discharged more than six or eight times. The horses were all killed, the piece and limber captured, and three men, Corp. William H. Tanner and privates Charles Cornell and William F. Matteson, taken prisoners by the enemy.



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Benjamin F. Matteson

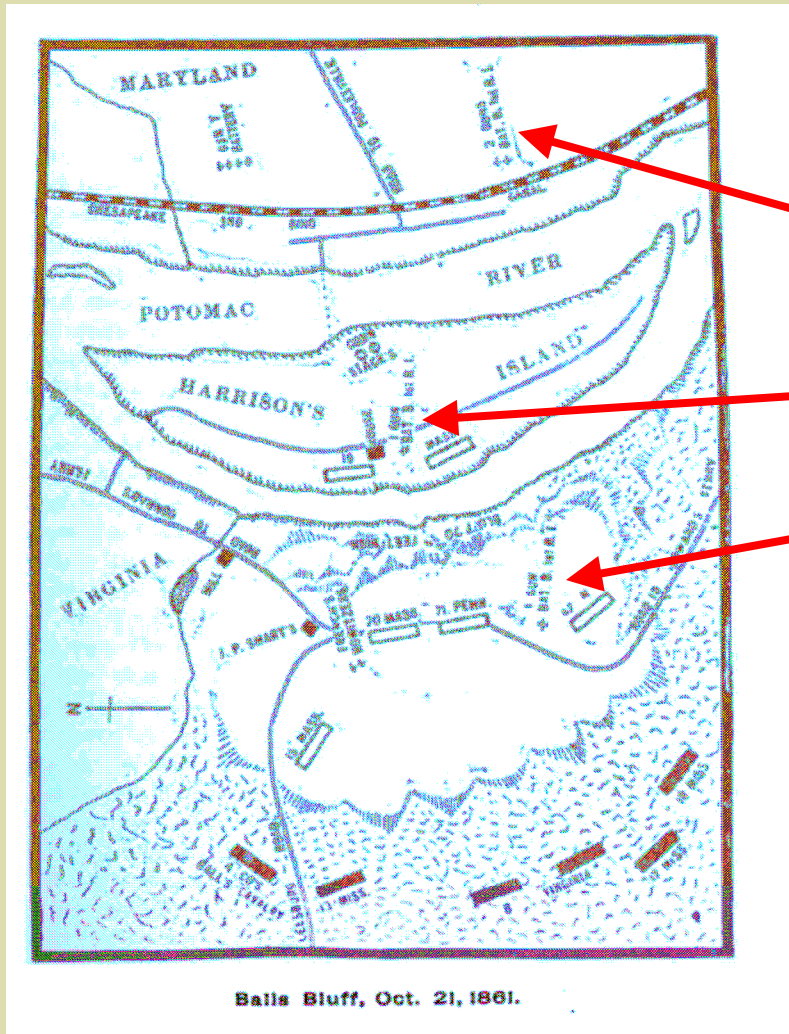
- Part of the original Muster of August 13, 1861
- Wounded at the battle of Ball's Bluff on October 21, 1861
- Taken to hospital in Maryland
- Not present at the Battle of Gettysburg
- Listed as a "tinner" in 1869-70 Sherburne, VT business directory.

wounded, and died Oct. 22, 1862. John Aspinwall, Henry W. Bromley, Benjamin W. and George R. Matteson were also wounded. The wounded and others succeeded in getting across the river to the Island. They were then taken across to the Maryland side and sent to the hospital. Merritt Tillinghast, a driver, after the gun was aban-



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Map of the Battle of Ball's Bluff, Oct. 21, 1861



Here they are!

Two guns

One gun

One gun



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George R. Matteson

- Part of the original Muster of August 13, 1861
- Wounded at the battle of Ball's Bluff on October 21, 1861
- Taken to hospital in Maryland

wounded, and died Oct. 22, 1862. John Aspinwall, Henry W. Bromley, Benjamin W. and George R. Matteson were also wounded. The wounded and others succeeded in getting across the river to the Island. They were then taken across to the Maryland side and sent to the hospital. Merritt Tillinghast, a driver, after the gun was aban-



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George R. Matteson

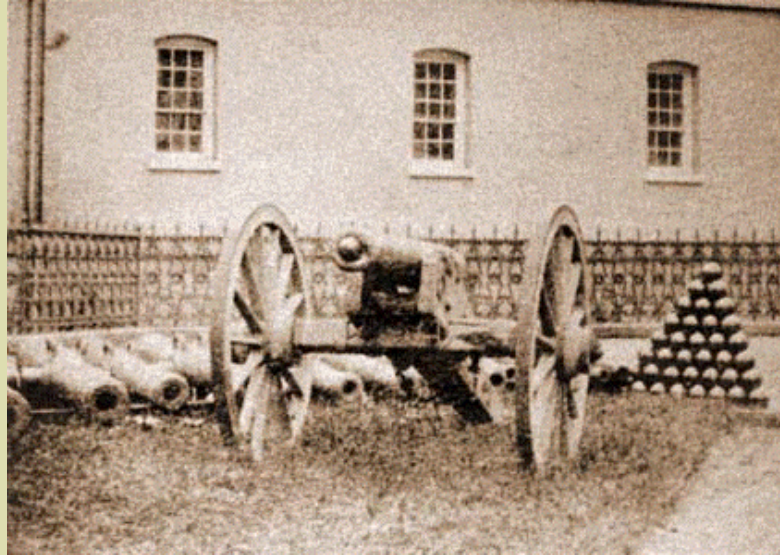
- Promoted from Private to Corporal on September 7, 1862
- Served at the Battle of Antietam (Maryland) September 17, 1862
- Wounded again at the Battle of Gettysburg July 3, 1863
- Mustered out as a Private August 12, 1864 having served his three years commitment

Gardner and Ezekiel W. Seamans. Clothing and boots were issued to those in need of them. Privates George R. Matteson and William W. Pearce were promoted to corporals *vice* Napoleon B. Clarke and George H. Talbot, reduced to the ranks for breach of disci-



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The Gettysburg Gun



- One of six brass field light twelve-pounder “Napoleons” of the Battery B First Regiment Rhode Island Light Artillery
- At the battle of Gettysburg: “the gun and gun carriage had been struck three times with shell, and also showed thirty-nine bullet marks” – *Sgt. John H. Rhodes*



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The Gettysburg Gun



- Displayed in Washington until 1874 as a “Curiosity of War”
- Returned to the Benefit St. armory in Providence in 1874.
- Displayed outside the RI statehouse from 1904-1962



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The Gettysburg Gun



- In 1962 it was conjectured that the gun may still have its powder
- An affidavit from George R. Matteson, taken in 1908, proved that the gun was still loaded.
- Two pounds of black powder, still explosive, was removed.



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RHODE
HISTORICAL



ISLAND
SOCIETY

COLLECTIONS

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The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or the
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AFFIDAVIT OF GEORGE R. MATTESON, BATTERY B, 1ST R. I.
LIGHT ARTILLERY.

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND &c. PROVIDENCE, SC.

I, George R. Matteson, of the city and county of Providence in the State of Rhode Island, on oath make affidavit and say that on the 13th day of August, A. D. 1861, I enlisted in Battery B, 1st R. I. Light Artillery. That on the second and third days of July, A. D. 1863, I was at the battle of Gettysburg in the State of Pennsylvania; that on the third day of July, A. D. 1863, while our battery was engaged in action with the enemy the Gun to which I was attached in the position as number six (a fixer of ammunition) was injured upon its face by the bursting of a shell thrown by the enemy during the afternoon of July 3rd, 1863, just prior to Pickett's charge.

The bursting of the shell disabled and killed numbers two and one.

Number two dropped the ammunition which he was about to insert in the gun and Sergeant Straight picked it up and placed it in the gun. As it could not be rammed in he took an axe and attempted to drive the solid shot into it and it now remains where he drove it to the best of my information.



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I saw the acts of the Sergeant for I was present.

After the battery was ordered to the rear I remained upon the field to witness the charge and while so waiting I was wounded and on the fourth day of July, A. D. 1863, I was sent to hospital.

The Gun is known as the GETTYSBURG GUN and is now in the Rhode Island State House.

GEORGE R. MATTESON.

State of Rhode Island, &c.
Providence, SC.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 21st day of February, A. D. 1908.

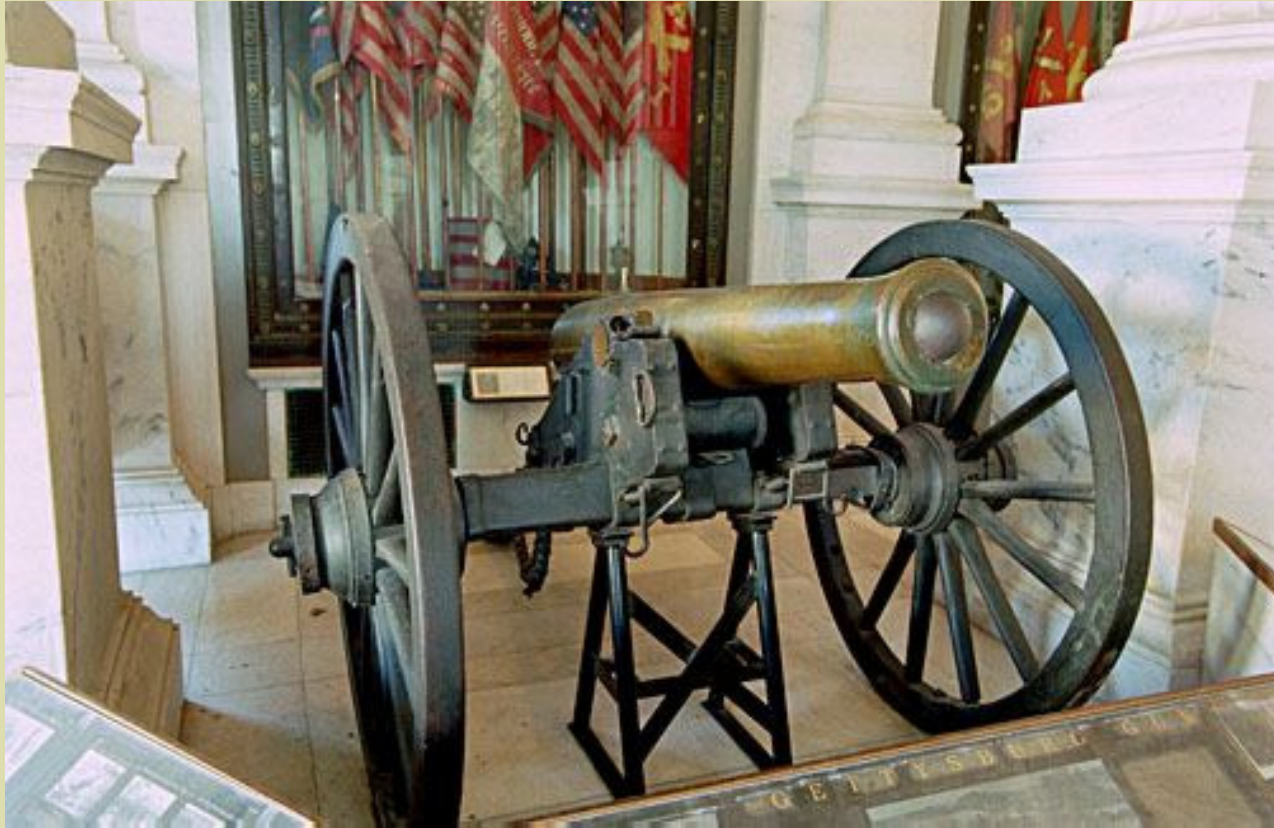
Benjamin L. Dennis,
Notary Public.

[SEAL]



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The Gettysburg Gun



Now on permanent display at the Rhode Island Statehouse



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George R.
Matteson



From the George E. Matteson collection



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