



A Connecticut Yankee goes to war - survives 23 battles over 3 years

George Anson Stocking enlisted into the 14th CT Regiment as a private on July 12, 1862 but he was mustered in on August 20, 1862, as a 1st Sergeant. He was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant, Company D on November 13, 1863.

Wounded February 6, 1864, Morton's Ford, VA; Wounded Wilderness, VA May 6, 1864.

Promoted 1st Lieutenant, Company on November 18, 1864.

He was in 23 battles and engagements including Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Falling Waters, Bristoe Station, Blackburn's Ford, Mine Run, Morton's Ford, Wilderness, Laurel Hill, Spotsylvania, North Anna River, Tolopotomy, Cold Harbor, Petersburg, Deep Bottom, Ream's Station, Boydton Plank Road, Hatcher's Run, Hatcher's Run (one month later), High Bridge and Surrender of Lee's Army, May 30 to April 10, 1865.

After the Civil War, George returned to Waterbury and was a skilled mechanic as well as a tool and dye cutter. He married Annie Dearth of Bristol, RI on February 11, 1869. They lived in Waterbury and eventually moved to Glastonbury where George was Superintendent of Williams Brothers Silver Company. His second son, William Raymond followed him as Superintendent of the same company when he retired.

They also had another son, Herbert Anson and a daughter, Ruth Marshall. Ruth married William Harper Potter, Jr. and they had two sons, William Harper III. and Robert Marshall. Robert Marshall Potter is Jeff Potter's father.

Prior to the start of the Civil War, George Anson Stocking was restless. In 1860 he ran away from home at age 16 to join an armed regiment and become a soldier, apparently to his parents dismay. However, he adored and loved his parents and family and wrote to them faithfully over the course of his harrowing and death-defying years as a soldier in the Union Army. The following are selected letters he wrote home over those five years. The experiences he witnessed are carefully transmitted to his concerned family as well as his skill and experience in understanding battle strategy and blunders as he was promoted up through the Union ranks. It is a remarkable story, but enhanced by several photographs that were taken over the five years. A thousand life altering experiences acted to age his appearance and viewpoint of the war but his soulful eyes remain the same in 1865 as they were in the lad of 16, just five years before.

LETTERS HOME TO WATERBURY, CONNECTICUT

Camp Griffin, NY

Nov. 24, 1860

Dear parents,

I meant to have written before but I was so busy that I could not. Henry came down yesterday but not till after I was sworn in. You may think that I have been ungrateful but fate decreed what I have done. I might be worse off than I am. I have got good officers and Capt. Trotter has made me Sergt. and says if I do well that I shall have the position of 2nd Sergt. He says he cannot hold me but he

wants me to stay and says that he will do all in his power to make me happy.

I am satisfied and hope you will consent to my staying. Henry will tell you what the Capt. told him and you must consider that such a chance does not come very often. I shall be home next week and we can talk it over. My love for you is strong. I know I have left a good home in a mean and ungrateful way but forgive me and when I come home, I will explain all I can.

*With much love to all I am Your Loving son,
G. A. Stocking*

Reply from his mother Susan A. Stocking

December 11th, 1860

My Dear Son,

We received your letter Monday night. Was very glad to hear from you and that your cold is better. I feel very anxious you should take care of your health. It has been fine weather ever since you left until today. This afternoon it has grown very cold. I have thought of you almost constantly since the change, fearing you would take more cold. Do be careful of yourself. We are all well at present but my heart continuously mourns for your absence from us but I hope it will prove for the

best for us all. If you hold fast your integrity and keep your heart with all diligence, I have no fears for the rest if sinners entices the content thou not-----.

Ten o'clock father has just come home to his tea and Henry a little while before. They are working very hard. Little Sarah talks much about you. She prays for you every night of her own accord. Poor Charlie Chatfield is dead--died this morning. I will mail this letter in the morning and in the afternoon send your guitar so you can look out for it, and we have been thinking about your father's large cloak in the garret. Do you remember it and would you like to have it sent to you to wrap yourself in at night when it is very cold. If so, I should like to send it to you when you write. You will please let me know.

I hope you will not allow yourself to get careless habits while in camp. I think it would be very easy to run in to them before you are aware of it. Strive against it my Son. Remember cleanliness is a virtue. It is getting late and I must close. Do not fail to write every week someone will answer promptly. We are glad your Capt. has confidence in you. I hope your faithfulness will all ways merit it. Good night my Son and that God may

bless you keep you is the earnest prayer of your loving mother.

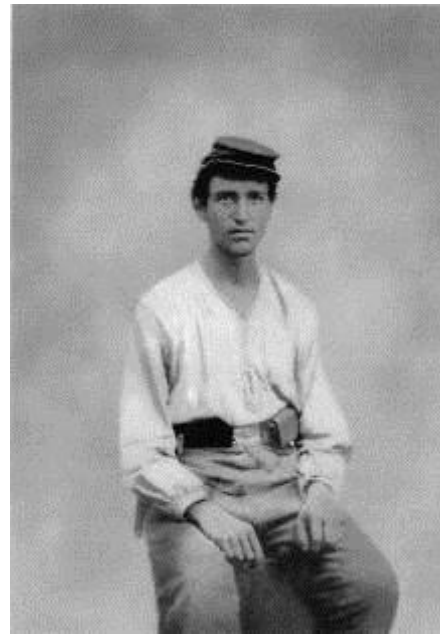
S. A. Stocking

George would wait over a year to become eligible to join the Union army, getting enlisted in August 1862. The following letter lists his regiment and his anxiousness to head south into battle.

Hartford

August 23, 1862

Dear Parents,



As we start Monday for Washington, I thought I would write a few lines to let you know that I am well and all right. I have had a good deal to do since I came back getting ready to start. We get paid today. I shall send home most of it. We are the COLOR COMPANY, Co C. I wish Henry was in our company. He would like it---better than the state Militia. I shall send you my picture as soon as we get to

*Washington as we shall not get our dress coats until then.
Give my respects to all of my friends.
From your son,
G. A. Stocking*

George would soon be thrust into battle in a most epic way. Color Company C began the infamous battle of Antietam in Sharpsburg, MD on September 17, 1862. Company C was under Gen. Joseph Hooker's command who led the first Union assault. Then Gen. Joseph Mansfield's soldiers attacked, followed by Gen. Edwin Sumner's men as McClellan's plan broke down into a series of uncoordinated Union advances. Savage, incomparable combat raged across the Cornfield, East Woods, West Woods and the Sunken Road as Lee shifted his men to withstand each of the Union thrusts. After clashing for over eight hours, the Confederates were pushed back but not broken, however over 15,000 soldiers were killed or wounded.

(for more on Antietam, see

<http://www.nps.gov/anti/historyculture/index.htm>)

The next day, September 18, the opposing armies gathered their wounded and buried their dead. That night Lee's army withdrew back across the Potomac to Virginia, ending Lee's first invasion into the North. Lee's retreat to Virginia provided President Lincoln the opportunity he had been waiting for to issue the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. Now the war had a dual purpose of preserving the Union and ending slavery.

George's letter home is dated two days later:

*Battle Ground near Harper's Ferry
Sept. 19th, 1862
Antietam, Maryland
Dear Parents,*

*As I have a little time I will write you a few lines.
Our Regiment has just come out of action. We have
had a terrible fight.... Our Regiment was reinforced
and the whole rebel lines were driven back. O that
was a joyful moment. Our men cheered and
marched forward and held the whole field....The
fighting has commenced again. We have killed
them in heaps and shall thrash them all to pieces.
I am well and in good spirits. We have lost 5 killed
and 6 wounded out of our Company.... General
McClellan says that he is happy and that
everything goes well. Burnside is giving them
thunder. The men love them and will go anywhere
with them with love to all, I remain your
affectionate son,
G. A. Stocking*

Bolivar Heights, Md.

October 10, 1862

*From all appearances, I do not see the war will ever
end till the North separates from the South. They
(South) are terribly earnest. Our government is not.
We gain a victory by sacrificing the best blood in the
army and they let the enemy slip out of our hands*

when we expect to capture the whole of the southern army the next day after the battle Sharpsburg.

Camp near Leesburg, Va.

October 31, 1862

Dear Parents,

I feel different about such things now than I did once. It makes me sad to think of the many brave ones that had given up their lives for their country. It makes war seem so terrible. I just think of the widows and orphans at home, their hearts breaking for the loves ones that have fallen and to think of the way these brave men that are sacrificing their lives for their country's cause are treated by these miserable speculators. I hope and pray the time will soon come when the abuse now existing in the army will be stopped. The men would fight better....

Falmouth, VA

December 26, 1862

I am sick of war--horrible, cruel civil War. The terrible scenes I have passed through and the daily scenes of a camp life, have wrought a change in my feelings. I feel different

now then I did before we were led like sheep to the slaughter at Fredericksburg--up to certain death with no hope of ever coming out alive and no chance of victory. I tell you it took all of the courage that I possessed to chase up to them batteries and stand there under fire we stood under and still you could not see the rebels--they were so completely hid behind the works. Whose fault it was that we were so badly licked, I don't know. I hope they will be forgiven for the lives of the brave men they so uselessly sacrificed in that bloody field. You will be surprised at the way they have used our company in the last battle. The official report sets our Company at 8,000. We lost higher--15,000. You will be astonished but still it's the truth. If the people of the North can end the war, for God's sake end it. It is the prayer of every soldier and it comes from suffering men....

March 14, 1863

Once more I write you. ... You wrote in your last that Gilbert's body had reached home. It must be a good consolation to have it lay where you can go and see it once in a while. He makes another who had given up his life for his country. May his sleep be as quiet

and peaceful as the beautiful place where he lies. I think sometimes, it would be just as well to lie in our beautiful cemetery at home with the gentle zephyrs of summer and the wild winds of winter blowing over us while the noble river at the foot of the hill murmurs its requiem the year round at the brave life's storm with its sorrows and troubles yet not over with but His be done. We all look forward to this coming campaign with dread. The struggle will be desperate and many of us who have gone through two and one half years of hard fighting will go to our last sleep. Yet, I suppose some of us will come back.

Near Hagerstown, MD

July 11, 1863

I wrote you a letter after the battle of Gettysburg which you have probably received by this time. We have been marching after old Lee all the time since. We are suffering more than my pen can tell you but we do not murmur if only we can only force General Lee to give us one more fight. We shall annihilate him. He is now at Hagerstown. While I am writing, the 12th Army Corps are skirmishing with his pickets. The Army is anxious to fight. We

want to end the war as soon as possible. I think the end is not far distant. We hold Vicksburg. General Lee has received a succession of terrible defeats that he may well never recover from and the prospects of destroying his army are bright. It is astonishing to witness the courage and devotion that the Army displays at present.

Camp on the Rapidan, VA

February 7th, 1864

Another week has passed and a shining week it has been. We have crossed the Rapidan once more. Our Regiment as usual has suffered terribly. We lost over 1 hundred men. We had to wade the river. The water was up to our waists. We went over Saturday morning, we skirmished all day with good success. While we were getting supper, the rebels attacked us and tried to get possession of the food. We made a desperate charge on them and drove them into their rifle pits. W. Nelson was wounded in the leg. Alex McNeil, we suppose is taken prisoner--he may be killed.

Captain Doten was taken prisoner. I was in back as usual, escaped with a bruised leg. Was struck with a spent ball on the shinkbone. Am most sick

from my bath but hope I shall get over it. We feel very gloomy and sadfull 1/2 of our brave boys are either dead or lying wounded and for what. In reality nothing. We have accomplished nothing at all only showed our bravery and daring. General Warren did not get to the river until we had crossed. He was very angry about it. Said he would not have had it happened for anything. Whiskey is at the bottom of it all. General Hays was drunk all day. He was the first man to wade the river and the first on the rifle pits.



April 24th, 1864

You must not judge by the picture because I look a good deal pleasanter in reality. Col. Perkins is here he has been dismissed for disability. So I am left without anyone to help me. My picture would have looked better but I just had my whiskers taken off.

Hospital near Chancellorsville

May 7th, 1864

Once more I write you full of thankfulness that I have been spared through another desperate battle.

The most desperate that has yet been fought. I am wounded in the head, not dangerously but severely. I don't know how soon we shall be sent to Washington but it will be soon. I will write you when we arrive there. We have got the best of them so far. The morning that I was wounded, we drove them 3 miles as fast as we could advance in line of battle. Then Longstreet's Corps came up and massed and checked us. Our boys are carrying everything before them. The fighting is terrible-- every attack lasts for 3 or 4 hours. It does not seem possible that a man could come out of it. Out of our Regt. 10 of our officers are wounded. Rockwood, my 1st Lt. and myself were wounded at the same time. Capt. Simpson was by me when I was struck. He was all right then but has not been seen since last night.

*Near Petersburg, VA
September 4th, 1864*

You have no idea of the friendly feelings that exist between the two armies in front of us. We can throw a stone into the rebel lines--still there is no shooting instead you will see our boys and the rebs meet halfway and sit down on the grass and play cards

or exchange papers and coffee and tobacco. You would hardly think that the same men in half an hour might be fighting with a deadly hate burning in their bosoms toward each other but it is a fact that no matter how many orders they receive to shoot in our working parties I they will not do it. They are Finnegan I's Floridians. They desert very fast. Sometimes in day light they come over to us.

*Fort Davis, VA
October 2nd, 1864*

*My dear parents,
Once more I write you thankful that I am spared so to do, for I have passed through many a peril and danger the last week. Yet, I am still spared as a monument of the mercy of my heavenly Father.*

Near Petersburg, VA

October 29, 1864

Another week has rolled by and still I am spared to write you.. I am well. Our corps has been engaged in another desperate engagement and have been victorious. Wednesday afternoon at 3 o'clock we left camp and moved to the left of the 5th Corps with 4 days' rations and no trains except ammunition. The rumor was that we were going to cut the Danville RR. We encamped for the night on the Weldon RR. At 8 o'clock in the morning we left our bivouac and went into the direction of the southside RR. Things began to assume a desperate look. We all expected a second Reahms station. After going about a mile, we halted and loaded our pieces and the 4th Ohio and the 14th Conn. vols we deployed as skirmishes. We advanced steadily for about a mile further, when we carne on the Reb pickets. We charged them and drove them into their line of works which they had thrown up that night. They were expecting us. We were now some miles from our lines, completely isolated from any help. Things now looked desperate as only part of the Corps was up and they were getting heavy reinforcements from Petersburg. At this time, General Meade

came up and ordered our Brigade to charge. We did so in good style and drove them from the works in front and held them. At this time they made a heavy charge on our right-flank and drove it back and took two pieces of artillery. Things looked blue. I began to wonder how Libby Prison looked. Well says Colonel Moore, we will all go together because it is death to try to get back. At this crisis, the Jersey Brigade of the 3rd Division arrived and made a counter charge and drove the Johnnys like chaff and retook the canon and a lot of prisoners. Firing now began on our left flank and in our rear I we were completely surrounded. Our cavalry now did some splendid fighting. Rushing from point to point in the rear and repulsing all the efforts of the Rebels to capture the entire force as was their intentions. We then changed our tactics and charged them and drove them at all points and our Calvary opened a route to our lines. At dark, our Genr'ls seeing we did not have force enough to take the railroad, on account of their being so well prepared, drew of our force in safety. We arrived in our lines at daybreak. We now are encamped in the rear. Expect to occupy our old positions in the trenches tonight. We lost our Major, wounded, and

*fifteen men, killed and wounded in the Regiment.
[tytent mate} Lt. Bartholamew, was killed. I miss
him very much. His last words were, teil my
mother I died like a soldier for my country. It is
astonishing we did not lose more in so hard a fight
but our loss was very small.*

Burkeville, VA

April 23, 1865

*Another Sabbath has come and I once more write
you. Thankful that I have been spared to do so. I
am well and allover the fatigue attendant on the
last campaign. I wrote you last week as soon as we
got into camp and sent it by the first mail. I could
not write you any sooner as no mail left the army
until the campaign was over. I received your letters
and was glad that you were all well but very sorry
that I could not relieve your anxiety.*

*The weather here is beautiful--very warm--the trees
are in full bloom and everything is green and full of
loveliness. Even the gloomy pines look beautiful,
allowing I suppose to our good spirits at the
prospects of a speedy return to home and friends.*

*Yet, still the midst of our rejoicing f there arises one
great grief--the death of our noble President. When*

*we received the news of his death, there arose a wail
of agony and grief throughout the whole army. It
was sincere, from the heart. Even his enemies grieve
for him. May our Father in heaven guide his
successor so that he may be able to fill his place. In
the midst of life, we are in death.*

*Just when he had almost finished his great work, he
was called away. Why do not you at home serve the
copperheads at home as we do the rebels here who
rejoice at the assassination of the President. One of
them last week said he had ought to have been shot
4 years ago. The guard blew his brains out. Then
loaded his musket and asked if there were any more
who wanted to say those words over again. They all
kept quiet.*

Ruth Stocking b. 1873



George Anson Stocking
Annie Dearth m. 1872



1865? age 21

1864 age 20

1862 age 18



George Anson
Stocking 1860
age 16