

Nathaniel Shatswell

This biography of Nathaniel Shatswell was written by Phillip F. Grenier in 2003. Shatswell's personal effects were donated to the town in 1993.

The Early Years 1835 -1861

Nathaniel's forbearer John Shatswell and his family arrived in Ipswich in 1634. The following year, in April of 1635 he was granted 6 acres in the High Street area of Ipswich. In 1685 the family would build their homestead, which still stands at 88 - 90 High Street, and this is where, in 1835, the good, brave and noble Nathaniel Shatswell, as were many of his ancestors and all his siblings, was born and 70 years later, in 1905, would die.

Nathaniel Shatswell was a distinguished looking man, he stood six feet tall, he was lank and lean; and in his adulthood he sported a prominent moustache and even more prominent chin whiskers. He has been described as ... "a man of indomitable will, cool, firm and with a wonderful power of commanding men." He was ... "modest, quiet and unassuming in his demeanor; he has shown himself capable and efficient in every position he has been called upon to fill." The Shatswells were " ... thrifty farmers distinguished for their pluck and indomitable energy." Nathaniel's father, John was a farmer who was hard working and taught Nathaniel the need for and honor of hard work.

As a youth Nathaniel would attend the Pudding Street School (Pudding Street ran from Lord Square to East St.) just a hop and a skip from his High Street home. He would then complete his formal education at the Ipswich Latin Grammar School. At the time of his death the Ipswich Chronicle's obituary would note, "... he was educated in the Ipswich schools and in the still broader field of life."

Out of school and having just turned 19 years of age, and as is with most young men since recorded time, Nathaniel would soon feel the pangs of rebellion and the need to get away from his parents to experience freedom, independence and adventure. Therefore in the spring of 1855 he bid his tearful mother and somberly resigned father goodbye at the Ipswich train station, boarded the train and left for the big city of Boston, East Boston that is. Upon his arrival in Boston he would secure a job in a planing mill and looked forward to gaining fame and fortune. In December of 1855 feeling the call of service to State, so ingrained in the Shatswells, the young and impressionable lad enlisted in the Boston Fusiliers, a local militia group.

In the Spring of 1857, two years after his arrival in the big city; perhaps missing his family and the beautiful environs of Ipswich, most likely finding the city inhospitable as compared with the small town of Ipswich (population 3,000) and compounded by the fact that he had yet to achieve his fame and fortune he had so anticipated; Nathaniel, probably somewhat crestfallen and humbled, returned to Ipswich, to his family and to work on his father's farm.

The years would go by and so now it was 1860 and Nathaniel began courting Miss Mary Stone, daughter of neighbors William and Mary Lord Stone. Mary and Nathaniel were both 25 years old. They had been life-long neighbors in Ipswich, gone to the same schools and soon came to realize their feelings for each other. They had their whole lives ahead. Everything looked so wonderful and promising. They made no immediate plans, but as lovers are wont to do they dreamed of the tomorrows, of getting married one day, settling down, raising a family and growing old together .

In 1860 a formidable topic of conversation around Ipswich, as was throughout the big and small towns and cities of the United States was the growing conflict between the Northern

and Southern states. When and wherever young northern men gathered their talk would soon turn to the conflict. They were full of bluster in their rhetoric; they might have spoken about wanting to go south and show those Johnnie Rebs a thing or two. Mary was disturbed by the national mood because she knew should war come Nathaniel would most likely be one the first to sign up. Her worst fears would soon come to be realized. But still there was hope that these disagreements could be peacefully resolved through further compromises. Unfortunately, during this period President Buchanan was politically impotent, he hoped things would remain in “status quo”, at least until he left office at the end of the year. In the November 1860 Elections Abraham Lincoln was elected president. He carried the Northern states but did not even appear on the ballot in ten of the Southern states. Still he won with a plurality of the votes 1,866,000 though it was only (39.8%) of the vote cast. There were four politically diametrical presidential candidates running in 1860 so the returns were thinly spread. Upon Abraham Lincoln's election the South exploded and throughout Southern states the new president was hung in effigy. Secession appeared now unavoidable.

On December 20, 1860 South Carolina became the first state to secede from the Union. By the time Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated, March 4, 1861 seven southern states had seceded. Then at 4:30 a.m. April 12, 1861, under the command of Confederate General P.G. T. Beauregard the Confederate Batteries surrounding Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, S.C. opened fire on the fort, at that time of day a mere speck on the Charlestown Harbor horizon, barely visible as dawn began showing her rosy fingers through the mist. Ironically the Commander of Fort Sumter was Major Robert Anderson USA who, years ago had been General Beauregard's artillery instructor at West Point and in fact, Major Anderson had kept General Beauregard on as his assistant at the Point for one year following his graduation because of his excellent skills at gunnery. The long anticipated and dreaded fight had begun.

The Union was dissolved and War was now a reality!

On April 15, 1861, three days after the assault on Fort Sumter, President Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 troops for, “3 months of service”. Nathaniel Shatswell, as was to be expected, gave this request not a moment of thought, and as Mary had feared, was one of the first to sign-up with the Ipswich Volunteers. On June 15, 1861, a mere nine days before Nathaniel was to leave for the War, he and Mary were married by the Reverend Edward Constant at the First Church in Ipswich. On June 24, 1861, after tearful goodbyes and Nathaniel promising Mary that he would be careful and return home to her in no time. He told her how much he loved her and how he would miss her. In his attempts to sooth Mary's fears, he promised her he'd be most careful; that the war would be of a short duration and soon be over and that he would then return unharmed. He assured her that she really had nothing to fear. He then boarded the train with his fellow Ipswich Volunteers and headed off for Boston.

It had been predicted by the Northern politicians and military leaders that the war would last no more than ninety days, that it would quickly be over and they would humble the South in a matter of months if not weeks. But, it would be four long years of blood, sweat and tears before the war would end and Nathaniel's promise to Mary of his return would be fulfilled; and during those four long years 3 million Northern and Southern boys would fight and 600,000 would lose their lives.

The War Years 1861 - 1865

April 15, 1861

Federal orders came down that 20 companies were to be sent from the State of Massachusetts to Washington, D.C. and there to be mustered into the service of the United States. On April 22, 1861 the citizens of Ipswich assembled at the Town Hall and listened to stirring patriotic and bellicose speeches by local prominent citizens advocating the young men of Ipswich to enlist in the Ipswich Volunteers.

A Company of Volunteers was proposed and subscriptions were solicited from the local "better off" citizens. \$4,377.68 was raised for the War effort. A Town Military Committee was formed to oversee the recruitment of volunteers and was made up, citizens: Eben Cogswell, Richard T. Dodge and Aaron Cogswell. Officers of the Volunteers were chosen: Nathaniel Shatswell would be the Company's 1st Lieutenant, Robert S. Southgate would be its 2nd Lieutenant; a captain to be chosen at a later time. The Ipswich Company would come to be known as the "Heard Guard" in recognition of the generous financial support of wealthy businessman Augustine Heard.

The Company of sixty-two men left Ipswich bound for Boston via train the morning of June 24, 1861 and that afternoon they would muster on Boston Common. When the Ipswich Company left, it was under the command of John Hobbs - Captain, Nathaniel Shatswell - 1st Lieutenant, Robert Southgate - 2nd Lieutenant, Milton Shattuck - 3rd Lieutenant and Nathaniel Johnson - 4th Lieutenant. Upon arrival in Boston they would become part of the 14th Massachusetts Regiment. From the Common the Regiment marched to Fort Warren in Boston Harbor where they were mustered into the US Army as the 14th Regiment Infantry Mass. Volunteers. The Ipswich group would be designated as Company A.

After mustering into the US Army, officers were Nathaniel Shatswell-Captain (having been promoted upon the Company's mustering into the USA), Milton Shattuck - 1st Lieutenant and Lee Worcester - 2nd Lieutenant. The Regiment left Boston by train on August 7, 1861 arriving in Washington D.C. the next day and then bivouacked at Fort Albany, Va. For the next three years the Regiment would serve as a defense of the Capitol at Washington, D.C.

Daniel Potter, a lad of 20 would become the first Ipswich casualty of the War. He would die from typhoid fever, which he contracted while stationed at Fort Albany, Va. His body would be returned to his heartbroken widowed mother in Ipswich. His remains arriving in Ipswich on December 2, 1861 and after proper services, they were interred in the Old Burial Ground on December 6, 1861.

December 31, 1862

Captain Shatswell would be commissioned a Major and the next day, January 1, 1862 the 14th Mass. Regiment would be reorganized and become the 1st Mass. Heavy Artillery.

May 5, 1864

After three years of relative safety in guarding the Capitol, the Regiment left Washington to become part of General U. S. Grant's Army Of the Potomac and to participate in the Richmond Campaign. They would come under the direct command of General George Meade and for the next six months they would be involved in almost constant fighting.

May 19, 1864

The Regiment would be plunged into “the thick of it” at Spottsylvania, Va. “In this prolonged and intermittent battle, the very heaviest casualties of all- including both killed and wounded- came, with one exception, upon the 1st Mass. H.A”.

During the one-hour of battle, casualties for the 1st Mass H.A. are 91 killed and 304 wounded. Leading the advance at Spottsylvania on May 19, 1864, the Senior Major of the Regiment, Major Rolf, was killed at the first fire and the command devolved to Major Shatswell, who would command the Regiment from that time until the close of the War. During the height of battle Major Shatswell was struck in the head by a minnie ball; though he was severely wounded and profusely bleeding he refused to quit his command and so after some medical treatment he returned to battle and bravely led his command to victory. Again the Regiment was engaged at North Anna, May 23-27, 1864, and on June 2-3, 1864 at Cold Harbor, the most desperate battle of the Richmond Campaign, in the first few minutes of battle between 5,000 to 7,000 Union men would be cut down, the Confederate casualties are unknown. In this battle Major Shatswell’s horse was struck and killed yet he continued with the attack and successfully repelled five subsequent attacks. Years later, March 14, 1866, Colonel Shatswell would submit a claim to the War Department for his killed horse and he would receive \$200.00 in compensation. On June 16, 1864 Major Shatswell would lead his command in a night attack on Petersburg, while charging the rebel lines, he had his sword shot away from his side by a minnie ball, but unphased he proceeded at full tilt for a successful charge towards the enemy line. “On June 18, he was struck by a rifle ball, which penetrated a small book filled with papers in the pocket of his blouse, and lodged in the cover”. The shot would knock him from his horse but he recovered, regained his horse and continued the attack. He would keep the book and squashed minnie ball as a souvenir of his having once again cheated death.

Further engagements followed and at Deep Bottom in August 15 - 16, 1864, leading his command across an open field he helped relieve a battery that had been pinned-down for a long time. There would be more fighting, on August 25, 1864 at Weldon Railroad and then once again at Poplar Springs October 2, 1864 the Regiment suffered heavy losses. On October 27 at Boydton Plank Road the whole Corp was cut off from the rest of the Army. Major Shatswell successfully charged the front line of battle under heavy fire. The rebel assault was repulsed and the day won.

In January 1865, the consequence of a severe cold contracted during the battle of Weldon Railroad, Major Shatswell developed severe chronic rheumatism that would plague him the remainder of his days and yet he did not allow this to interfere with his life. He was granted a sixty day leave and returned home to Ipswich and to Mary’s loving care to recuperate. On January 26, 1865, during his recuperation in Ipswich, he received word that he had been brevetted to a Lieutenant Colonel.

As the time for his returned approached, evidence indicated an end of the war, so when it was time to leave, Mary was more accepting, though she wished he did not have to return. He would return to duty March 5, 1865 as the war was in fact coming to its long anticipated end. Major Shatswell would have the privilege and honor of being present at Appomattox Court House, Va. On April 12, 1865 to witness General Lee’s surrender to General Grant.

As the nation was beginning its long arduous healing process, it was once again plunged into deep sorrow by the assassination of President Lincoln on April 14, 1865 a mere nine days after General Lee’s surrender. Colonel Shatswell had been a supporter of President Lincoln from the start and so was deeply saddened and affected by his untimely and tragic death. Colonel

Shatswell would have the honor of participating in President Lincoln's funeral ceremonies in Washington, D.C .

Prior to his mustering out of the army in August of 1865 Colonel Shatswell was promoted to full colonel for “meritorious conduct under heavy fire” during the Richmond Campaign. And thus his military career would come to an honorable and satisfactory end. He had survived one of our nation’s most trying of times and now he was ready to return to his wife and the comforts of home and community with the hopes a long, happy and peaceful life. Over the course of the next four decades he would come to realize these dreams and live in relative peace, comfort and happiness till his final day .

Post War Years 1865 -1905

After being mustered out of the Army on August 16, 1865 in Washington, DC. Nathaniel returned to Ipswich and the family homestead on High Street. He returned to farming and the “teaming of hay”. He would purchase tillage on Green’s Point and salt marsh and peat land around Plum Island. Farming until old age, in spite of his war-induced rheumatism, would curtail his activities only a few short years before his death at age 70 in 1905.

When Nathaniel Shatswell first left Ipswich in 1855 as a young man of 19, he was seeking his fame and fortune, but his time had yet to come. Two years later in 1857, he would return to Ipswich a little older and wiser though not much richer. In 1861 he would leave Ipswich, this time on a different mission and at the head of a Regiment of Ipswich Volunteers. Four years later, in 1865 he would return to Ipswich a more mature and wiser man. Though he might not have found his fortune, there is no doubt that he did find fame and glory and in so doing brought much pride to the town of Ipswich.

1869 would see Nathaniel accepting a position at the County House as an assistant to Dr. Hurd, the highly respected Superintendent of the County House and Asylum for the Insane on Green Street in Ipswich. He, Mary and infant daughter Fannie would move into the Superintendent’s House at the County House on Green Street and would remain there for several years before moving back to the Shatswell Homestead on High Street. He would remain at this position until 1890.

His first daughter Fannie White Shatswell was born. On November 18, 1872 his second daughter Annie Lord Shatswell was born. In 1888 his daughter Fannie would marry John Ober and they would move into the family homestead on High Street with the Colonel and Mrs. Shatswell and stay there until they moved to Arlington, MA. some time after their marriage.

In 1883 feeling the call for a return to community service “the Colonel”, as he would come to be referred to, threw his hat in the ring and ran successfully for the Board of Selectman of Ipswich, (years ago the term of office for selectman was one year). And so Colonel Shatswell would seek and win election and re-election and serve acceptably for the next four successive years (1883 - 1887). It was reported that Colonel Shatswell was a staunch Republican, though he was never a “bitter partisan” and was well respected by all for his honesty his integrity and his fairness. He had been a supporter of William McKinley in his presidential run and was heart broken when on September 9, 1901 an assassin’s bullet cut the President down as he visited the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, N.Y. President McKinley would linger for five days before succumbing to his injuries on September 14, 1901.

“The Colonel” was a member of the local John T. Heard Lodge AF and AM of which he was a past master and at the time of his death was a third degree Mason; a member of Winslow

Lewis Commandery of Knights of Templar; the Royal Arch Chapter and the Order of the Eastern Star; the Daniel W. Dennison Colony U a P F and he was also an enthusiastic member the General James Appleton Post Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). Up to the time of his death he made every effort to attend the annual GAR "Encampments", his health permitting.

Twenty-five years after his return from war, in 1890, he would leave his beloved Ipswich one final time to accept the position of curator at the Museum of the Department of Agriculture in Washington D.C. He would remain in Washington D.C. until 1894 and then return to Ipswich, never to leave town again.

Upon his return to Ipswich he again involved himself in town politics running and winning a seat on the Board of Selectmen in 1894. This time he would serve but one term and then returned to his main interest farming full time until old age compounded by his infirmities forced him to halt these activity.

In 1895 his daughter Annie would marry Robert Holbrook and she would, as did Fannie, move to Arlington, Ma. "The Colonel" and Mary were now alone. For the next three years he and his beloved Mary would enjoy the fruits of comfortable old age. But then in 1898 death would call upon the Shatswell family, on February 2, 1898, after 37 years of wedded bliss Mary would die succumbing to heart disease compounded by pneumonia. She would be buried in the Shatswell Family plot in the Old Burial Ground on High Street. After one year of mourning, the Colonel would marry Mrs. Susan Hobbs Buzzell, the widow of Issac Buzzell, who 38 years earlier had served under the Colonel in the 14th Regiment. Both the Colonel and Susan were 64 years old. The ceremony took place at the First Church in Ipswich; being performed by the Reverend Edward Barney.

Six years later on Thursday December 14, 1905 Colonel Shatswell would die at the age of 70. The Ipswich Chronicle in its obituary would note, "The Colonel had been unwell for several days but his illness was not considered to be of a serious nature until Thursday afternoon when he had an attack of faintness which resulted in complete exhaustion and continued until nearly eight o'clock when he passed peacefully from earth." Primary cause of death was listed as "Heart Disease" with contributory cause "Acute indigestion". On Sunday December 17, 1905 the funeral would take place from the First Church of Ipswich, the same church where the Shatswell family had worshiped and celebrated life and death over these many generations. The church was packed with relatives, friends, town dignitaries as well as former fellow veterans and Masonic and GAR brothers. The ceremony would be performed the by Reverend Edward Constant who, thirty-four years earlier, had married the Colonel and his first wife Mary. The Reverend Waters of the South Church (author of Ipswich in the Massachusetts Bay Colony) would assist Reverend Constant. Interment would be in the Shatswell plot in the Old Burial Ground. He was laid to rest alongside his first wife Mary and his parents John and Annis Shatswell.

Today Colonel Shatswell keeps a watchful eye over his beloved Ipswich from his final resting place in the Old Burial Ground on High Street.

This is an after action report that Major Nathaniel Shatswell wrote on December 16, 1864, it was transcribed as written by Phillip F. Grenier in April of 2003. The original is stored in the Town Clerk's vault at the Ipswich Town Hall.

Regimental History from December 11, 1863 to December 16, 1864 Headquarters 1st Massachusetts December 16, 1864

General,

In compliance with your request of the 1st instant I respectfully submit the following record of my Regiment from December 11th 1863 to the present date. From December 11th 1863 to May 15th 1864 the Regiment occupied a position of the fortifications of Washington south of the Potomac and was employed in the repairing fortifications building Military Roads.

May 15th The Regiment assembled at Fort Albany and marched to Alexandria (5 miles) with orders to join the Army of the Potomac took Transport the same day for Bell Plain arrived at Bell Plain the 16th Disembarked and bivouacked on the ridge near the landing reported to Brig. Gen. R. O. Tyler and were assigned to the 2^d Brigade of his (Tyler's) Division (Col. Tannah Commanding) Composed mainly of Heavy Artillery Regiments from the fortifications of Washington and Baltimore. May 14th Marched with the Division to Hd. Quarters Army of the Potomac near Spotsylvania, Va. (23 miles) passing through Fredericksburg no transportation was furnished the Command on this march all Regimental and Company Desks and Officers baggage had to be left at Bell Plain a portion of the records of the Command were lost a portion of them were taken care of by the agents of the Sanitary Commission and reached the Command the early part of July. On arriving at Army Headquarters at 2 o'clock A.M. May 18th regiment bivouacked on the left of the Fredericksburg road until 6 A.M. then moved about one mile to the right of the road and took up a position as support for a Battery it was here the Command except Co. I was first under fire of the Enemy being frequently shelled during the forenoon at 4 P.M. marched up the road 2 miles and bivouacked in the road for the night. At 2 P.M. 19th Marched 2 miles to the Harris Farm the Brigade was massed near the House in support of a Battery situated at that point at 4 P.M. the Enemy were reported in the woods in our front when 2 Companies (F and D) were ordered out as skirmishers to ascertain their position and strength as it was believed that only a small force of the Enemy were in our front intending to make a dash at the supply train passing over the turnpike from Fredericksburg. The 1st Battalion (Major Rolf) advanced as support for the Companies of skirmishers and became engaged the 2^d Battalion (Major Shatswell) was then ordered in on the right of the 1st and for a time the Regiment was alone opposed Rhodes Div. of Ewells Corps. The men stood up to their work manfully and held the Enemy in check until reinforcements arrived when we fell back to reform the line and advance again. The Regiment went into the fight with 1617 (sixteen hundred seventeen) officers and men and lost (2) two Commissioned officers (Major Rolf and Lieut. Graham) killed and (15) fifteen wounded (53) Fifty three Enlisted men killed (297) Two hundred and ninety seven wounded and (27) Twenty seven missing. The Regiment remained on the field all night the Engagement lasting until about 10 P.M. returning to the bivouac of the previous day at 10 A.M. of the 20th at sunset orders were received to be ready to March at a moments notice Marched at 1 A.M. May 21st taking the road to Milford passed through Bowling Green at 11 A.M. arrived at Milford Crossed the river and bivouacked for the night. Marching (34 miles) 22^d. Threw up breastworks as an attack was expected 23^d. Marched at 6 A.M. arrived at the North Anna river (21 miles) at

3 P.M. were held as a reserve the men lay on their arms all night 24th “Battle of North Anna River” held as reserves the men lay on their arms all night 24th “Battle of North Anna River” held as reserves. Casualties (1) one Enlisted man killed and (11) Eleven Wounded. The Brigade organization of our Division being broken up each Regt. was divided into 3 Battalions each to act as a Regiment “in all Movements”. 24th Marched at 3 1/2 A.M. Massed in a filed about 1 mile in rear of front line sent out Pioneers to destroy the Bridge that crossed the River about the Enemies position had two men wounded while destroying the Bridge lay in mass until 12 M. Marched down the North bank of the river (North Anna) bivouacked at 2 A.M. of the 28th having Marched (22) Twenty two miles. Marched again at 9 AM. Crossed the Pamunky River on pontoons below Hanoun Court House at 2 P.M. bivouacked for the night about 3 miles from the river on the extreme left of the line (distance marched 15 miles) 29th The Regiment was ordered to report to May. Gen. D.B. Birney Company 3^d Division 2^d Army Corps and assigned to the 2^d Brigade of his (Birney's Div Col. Tannah taking command of the Brigade). Marched at 12 M joined the Brigade and went into position near Salem Church threw up breastworks on the afternoon at sunset Moved to the right and threw up works during the night 31st Battle of Tolopotomy Regs held as reserve in the morning at 9 AM. moved to the front threw forward a heavy skirmish line and occupied Enemies works lay under a heavy fire of artillery all day. Casualties (5) five Enlisted men wounded on the line and (3) Three , missing from Pickett line.

June 1st At daylight withdrew to position occupied the previous morning changed position frequently during the day at 10 P.M. Marched for Coal (sic) Harbor arrived at 2 P.M. June 2^d weather very hot and the roads dirty (distance marched 24 miles) June 3^d Battle of Coal (sic) Harbor four Companies “B”, “F”, “H”, and “K” reported to Col. Smyth Comdr. 3^d Brigade 2^d Division 2^d Army Corps were engaged in the charge on the Enemies works in the morning and the repulse of the Enemy in this night charge reported back to the Regiment next day. From June 4th to 13th occupied a position on the Shady Grove road Near Packers Mills under fire nearly all the time Casualties during the time (2) Two Enlisted men killed (13) Thirteen wounded and (16) Sixteen Missing. At 10 P.M. of the 12 withdrew from our position and marched to the left, at 4 A.M. June 13 Crossed the York River R.R. at dispatch station Crossed the Chickahominy at Long Bridge at 3 P.M. marched all day at 10 P.M. massed near the James for the night (Distance 34 miles) June 14th crossed the James River near Fort Pawhattan in transports 15th Marched for Petersburg arrived at the Fortifications near the Dunn House shortly after the charge and capture of the same by Colored Troops (Distance 23 miles) Threw up works during the night. June 16th Charged the enemies works in our front at sunset were repulsed with heavy loss viz (2) Two Commissioned officers killed (6) Six wounded (23) Twenty three Enlisted men killed (126) one hundred and twenty six wounded and (5) five missing. Held our position until morning when by flank movements to the right and left the Enemy were obliged to fall back loss 14th (9) Nine Enlisted men wounded. June 18th Charged the Enemies works near the Hare House at sunrise. Carried the works driving the Enemy through the woods and across the Petersburg Pike to a rear line of Works, at 12 M another charge was ordered which failed for want of proper support held our position on the Pike 5 P.M. when the Brigade was relieved and moved to the left of the Hare House and threw up works during the night where we remained until the night of the 20th under fire day and night. Casualties from 17th to 20th including the Battle of the 18th (6) Six Command Officers wounded (4) Four Enlisted men killed (45) forty five wounded and (1) one missing (The missing man has however turned up wounded). On the night of the 20th orders were received to go to the rear as was supposed for a short rest as our Brigade had been tasked night and day for some time past but the

hope could not be realized as the next morning June 21 orders came for another of the famous left flank movements at 9 o'clock crossed the Petersburg and Norfolk R. Road Taking our course through the Woods for the Jerusalem Plank Road which we struck at the Williams House finding the Enemies Comandry in our front and Covering the Weldon Rail Road we turned our attention to getting between the Comandry and Petersburg in hopes to strike the road inside of them failing in this we formed in line of Battle and threw up works on the James Farm the 1'st Division of the 2'd Army Corps passed us and threw up works on our left and the 2'd Division on our right June 22'd advanced with Brigade to throw up breastworks nearer the Enemies position a general advance of the whole Corps being ordered while engaged in this work we became flanked by the Enemy braking through the lines of "General Barlow's Division" who were getting into position on our left in the woods. Casualties (1) one Commissioned officer (Capt. J. W. Kimball) killed (1) One wounded and (6) Six captured two of whom were wounded (8) Eight Enlisted men killed (45) Forty five wounded and (179) One hundred and seventy nine captured advanced the same night and threw up works near the place of disaster in the morning remained in that position until July 6'th the time of service of the original members and the recruits enlisted in July and August 1862 having expired the Regiment was ordered to the rear to make out the necessary papers for the muster out of the men much delay and trouble was occasioned in mustering the men out by the loss of Company and Regimental Records at Bell Plain no old books or papers having been received since leaving that point and the lack of the supply of the required Blanks. The men were finally got off on the 9'th of July five days after their time had expired. Much dissatisfaction was felt on the part of the men at being mustered out in field and having to go to Boston and settle up on their own time but such being the orders of the Division Command (Gen. D.E. Birney) no appeal could be made while the men were under fire of the Enemies Artillery nearly every day. No Officers were mustered out who had not served three years in present grade July 12'th Regiment joined the Brigade and moved to the left of the Williams House to cover the shortening of our line the 6'th Army Corps having been sent to Washington remained in line of Battle 48 hours no enemy appearing and the Troops and Trains having been withdrawn the Division withdrew through the woods across the Norfolk R Road to the Petersburg and Norfolk turnpike the Brigade then went into Flank near the Deserted House July 15'th was the first time the Regiment had formed Camp since leaving the fortifications of Washington in May July 21'st moved to Fort Brass on the rear line of Fortification remained until July 26'th when the Regiment broke Camp and Marched to "Deep Bottom" North of the James River 24 miles arriving on the morning of the 27th at daylight were immediately ordered on as support for a skirmish line of the 1'st Brigade of our Division having to cross an open field under the Enemies fire of artillery fortunately one man was wounded in this affair our Brigade occupied a position on the flank during the day were not engaged the night of the 28'th. Marched back to the Petersburg and City Point R. Road crossing the Appomattox at Point of Rocks arriving at daylight the 29'th (Distance Marched 22 Miles) lay in mass all day after dark took up position in the front line of Entrenchments to the right of the Hare House July 30'th occupied a position in front line about 1/2 Mile to the right of the mine explodul in the morning had orders keep up a Continuous fire on the Enemy in our front whose works were about 200 yards distant The Regiment fired during the day an average of 150 Rounds per man with a loss on our part of only one man wounded. July 31'st returned to our position at Fort Brass remained two days then removed to our old camp near the Deserted House lained at this camp until August, broke Camp Marched to City Point (8) Eight miles the whole Division embarking on Transports the next day many were the conjectures as to our destination the most probable of which seemed to be that the

Division was to go to Washington and up the Shenandoah Valley about the next morning August 14th found us, the James River where we disembarked at daylight at Deep Bottom advanced over Strawberry Plain and bivouacked for the day and night during the night a heavy shower of rain fell the first for seven weeks much refreshing the men and making our labors of the next day comfortably light as the ground was wet and cool and water plenty August 15. The Brigade reported to Major Gen. D.B. Birney (our old Division Commander) now commanding the 10th Army Corps advanced through the woods in line of battle with skirmish line in front for more than five miles in the direction of the Charles City Road skirmishing nearly all the way the day was very hot and had it not been for the rain of the night previous many men would have been lost by the heat Casualties during the day (1) one Enlisted man killed (7) Seven Enlisted men wounded at sunset having developed the Enemies works on the Charles City Road in front of which was a deep morass and finding it impracticable to attack the works with our small force the Brigade was ordered to retire which was done in good order.

August 16th Regiment was stationed on the right flank of the Brigade as skirmishers to cover the advance and were not actually engaged Casualties (1) One Enlisted man killed August 18th returned to front of Petersburg arriving on morning of 19th (Distance marched 25 miles) Regiment ordered on Picket on the Jones Farm near the scene of its operations of June 22^d relieving a portion of the 9th Army Corps which with the 5th Army Corps had extended the line to the left and occupied the Weldon Rail Road Regiment remained on picket until the 25th of August when it was relieved and withdrew to near the strong house and threw up works remained until Sept 1st when the Right was ordered to the Garrison of Fort Alex Hayes the next fort in the front line left of Fort Davis remained at Fort Hayes until Sept 25 when the Regiment was relieved by a Regiment from the 9th Army Corps when it joined the Brigade in rear of the Jones House on the line of the Military Rail Road bivouacked there with orders to be ready to march at a moments notice until Oct 1st when the Brigade took Cars from Warren Station marched thence to the Peebbs House near poplar Grove Church Bivouacked for the night Oct 2^d moved out to the left of the Peebbs House on the Squirrie Level Road the 1st USSS went in Skirmishers the 1st Mass HA in line of battle as support advanced through the woods found the Enemy strongly entrenched with works well covered by abatis and slashing but as the Brigade advanced the Enemy retreated leaving only a skirmish line advanced and occupied the works then steadily advanced making connection with a Division of the 9th Corps on the right at 3 P.M. we developed the Enemies second line of works at this time orders were received from Gen Mott for our Brigade to make a demonstration on the Enemies Works to ascertain their strength and if possible carry them The Command was accordingly formed in a ravine about 500 yards from the works the 1st Mass HA occupying the 1st line as we advanced the Enemy a Battery that was masked in the angle of his works having a raking fire with Cannites and physical las (?) gained a position about 50 yards from the works our support not coming up were obliged to retire as the Enemy had been reinforced at this point by bringing Troops from the right and left making it impracticable to attempt to carry the work with our present force Casualties (2) Two Commissioned Officers wounded (2) Two enlisted men killed (9) Nine wounded and (8) eight wounded and captured as they could not be got off the field Oct 3^d, 4th and 5th Regiment assisted to build Forts Cummings Emory Seibert and Clarke covering the left and rear of our position at Peebbs House on the night of the 5th marched to the Jones House 7 miles 6th returned to Fort Alex Hayes. Remained at Fort Hayes until Oct 26th when the Regiment was relieved by the 111th N. Y. Volunteers and joined the Brigade in rear of the Jones House marching thence to the Weldon R Road near General Warrens Head Quarters at the yellow house

and bivouacked for the night. On the 27th marched at Daylight taking the Halifax Road thence to the right on the Vaughn Road reaching the Boynton Plank Road at Noon At 2 P.M. the Brigade formed in line of battle supporting a Battery "C" 1st US Artillery at 4 P.M. the enemy appeared on our right flank an attempt was made to charge front but the action became general and the Enemy coming in such numbers that Prisoners were captured and recaptured finding that the Enemy could not be checked the Regiment was ordered to fall back in to the Road and reform leaving 1 section of Artillery in the hands of the Enemy after reforming on the road I took the left of the 1st Mass HA assisted by volunteers from other Regiments and the Brigade and by a quick dash across the field secured the section of Artillery and brought it safely off Casualties (1) Enlisted man killed (6) Six wounded and (12) Twelve Captured about 30 more of the Regiment were captured but succeeded in making their escape and reaching our lines after dark.

28th withdrew and marched to the Jones House dismounted returning to Fort Alex Hayes Oct 30th distance marched 43 miles. Regiment remained at Fort Hayes until Nov 28th when it was again relieved by a portion of the 9th Army Corps joined the Brigade at the rear marched thence to the extreme left of our line at the Peebbs House going into Camp outside the works and near the Vaughn Road with orders to make ourselves as comfortable as possible. Supposing that the Campaign was ended and that we were now to have Winter quarters the men went to work with a will and in 4 days had put up Comfortable log huts all supplied with fire places in hopes of remaining to enjoy them but on the 6th of December orders were received to March at daylight of the 7th accordingly the Division reported to Major General Warren Commanding 5th Army Corps for operations on the Weldon Rail Road Marched down the Jerusalem Plank Road across the North Anna River to Sussex Point House thence to Jarrett Station on the Weldon Rail Road thence down the R.R. to Blesfield burning the ties and bending the Rails returning over the same road arriving at the Fortification around Petersburg on the 13th of December. The men suffered severely on this raid as the weather was very inclement many of the men coming back over the frozen ground without shoes had no engagements on the raid (4) Enlisted men straggling from the Command and fell in to the Enemies hands. (Distance marched 96 miles) Dec 6th The Regiment is now encamped near the rear line of Fortifications between the Halifax and Vaughn Roads.

I annex herewith a Tabular list of Engagements with Casualties in each also the number of miles Marched during the Campaign

Very Respectfully Submitted

N. Shatswell

Major Commanding 1st Mass Heavy Artillery

This is a letter that Nathaniel Shatswell wrote to his wife on April 10, 1865, the day after General Lee surrendered at Appomattox. It was transcribed as written by Phillip F. Grenier in April of 2003. The original is stored in the Town Clerk's vault at the Ipswich Town Hall.

Clover Hill Appomattox County – VA
April 10th, 1865

Hurrah! Hurrah! The war is ended. Lee
surrendered his army yesterday at this
place. Everybody is wild with joy.
Our four years of toil and privation
is now getting its reward.
We have done some hard work for the
past ten days. Have lost few
men. On the 6th we charged and
captured the enemies wagon train of
400. Got my horse wounded in the
charge. Came out all right myself.

What a joyous time this will be
for the whole country when the
news reaches the North. You will
probably hear of it by tonight.
We have had no mail for a
week. Sent off our last a week yesterday.
This is Rebel paper that I
am writing on.
I am glad now that I did
not leave the service last winter.
I would not have missed the sight of
yesterday for the best farm in Ipswich.
I must close as the mail posts at
10 a.m. Love to all. Hoping to be
with you soon. I remain your
loving husband. N Shatswell