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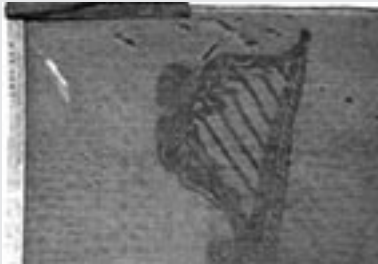
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## Chapter 6

# Edward Higginson in the Civil War

## 23rd Illinois Infantry Volunteers by Cal Bivens

### 23rd Illinois Infantry



*A green flanker guidon of the 23rd Illinois Infantry. The Regimental colors no longer exist but almost certainly included the harp theme, which was common to almost every Irish regiment.*

The organization of the Twenty-third Infantry Illinois Volunteers commenced under the popular name of the "Irish Brigade", at Chicago, immediately upon the opening of hostilities at Sumter. It served until the war had fully closed.

Among the officers lost in battle, was its illustrious Colonel, James A. Mulligan of Chicago, who fell while commanding a division of the Army of West Virginia at Kernstown on July 24, 1864, and perished while in the hands of the enemy July 26, 1864, of three desperate wounds. ❀



*Confederate prisoners of war at Camp Douglas, Chicago, Illinois, around 1864.*

### First Muster & Capture *(Before Edward joined.)*

The formal muster of the 23rd was made June 15, 1861, at Chicago, where the regiment occupied barracks known as Kane's Brewery on West Polk Street, near the river.

The entire Regiment was captured at Lexington, Missouri, on September 20, 1861, after three weeks of siege by the Confederates. General Fremont ordered the 23rd Regiment to muster out. But the army commander, General McClellan, retained it and directed that its organization should be considered as in service from the date of its original muster.

### Edward Higginson enters the Civil War

Edward Higginson entered the army on January 6, 1862, as a private in Company A, 23rd regiment Illinois Volunteers, in Chicago. He was enlisted by Captain Patrick J. McDermott of the 23rd Illinois at Chicago, to serve 3 years. His papers show that when he enlisted, Edward was 28 years of age, 5'10" tall, of light complexion, with brown eyes and brown hair.

### Reassembled at Chicago

The men of the 23rd Illinois assembled at Camp Douglas in Chicago, a Confederate prisoner-of-war camp, where they were assigned to guard prisoners until June 14, 1862.

Camp Douglas, built as a Union Army training post, was constructed in the form of four squares at 31st Street and Cottage Grove Avenue near Lake Michigan on the south side of the city. The Barracks were built around all four of the squares; one street ran from the center of each square to the square adjoining. The ground was level and very sandy.

Between 1862 and 1865, the camp housed about 26,000 prisoners in temporary, wooden barracks. In 1862, the first prisoners arrived—about 8000 from the capture of Fort Donelson.

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## Life of a Recruit

**Rally! All Irishmen in favor of forming a regiment of Irish volunteers to sustain the Government of the United States in and through the present war, will rally at North Market Hall. Come all. For the Honor of the Old Land, Rally! Rally for the defense of the New.**—*Chicago area recruiting poster targeting Irish immigrants in 1861.*

### Recruits for the Civil War

Edward Higginson entered the army as a recruit. This term was used for privates who joined the regiment after it had initially mustered into US Service. At certain times during the war, the State of Illinois (and other states) was instructed by the War Department to stop organizing regiments and to use recruits to refill existing regiments that had been reduced in size from battle or disease.

By the summer of 1862, Illinois had sent over 130,000 men off to the war. The 23rd Regiment of Illinois Volunteer Infantry, was also known as the “Chicago” or “Illinois Irish Brigade,” “First Irish Regiment,” or sometimes as “Mulligan’s Irish Brigade” after the unit’s commander, Colonel James A. Mulligan. It was raised by him in Chicago in June, 1861.

At the start of the Civil War, nearly 15% of US residents were foreign-born, with the majority migrating to Northern states where the demand for manual labor was strong. Of these immigrant groups the Irish were the most numerous.

A common practice of the time was that of recruiting an entire regiment in a small area, a

city neighborhood, a county, or a congressional district. If the local area was populated heavily with members of a single ethnic group, recruiters played upon the preference of many foreign-born men to join regiments comprised of and led by men from their native country.

### Incentives/Enlistment Bounties

The country was still essentially rural, and agriculturally oriented. Average incomes ranged from \$300.00 to \$1,000.00 per year.

Bounty systems operated at the federal, state, and local levels for cash or property bounties to induce enlistment in regular, volunteer, or militia forces. In May 1861, with the President’s first call for volunteers, the War Department offered \$100 to three-year volunteers and regulars. Under the July 19, 1864, amendment to the Enrollment Act, \$100, \$200, and \$300 went to one-year, two-year, and three-year troops, respectively.

Local and state governments raised substantial cash bonuses for enlistees, but none seem to have used land bounties as had been done in earlier conflicts. Veterans did receive preferred treatment under provisions of the Homestead Act of 1862. In 1872, Congress entitled every officer and enlisted man who served in the Army for 90 days or more during the Civil War to enter and receive a patent for 160 acres of public land.

### Army Life

A soldier had to pay for any clothing lost in battle or on the march. If the clothing wore out then he could claim reissue without charge. This seems incredible.

Costs for replacements:

overcoat .....	\$7.20
dress coat .....	\$6.71
blanket .....	\$2.95
blouse .....	\$2.63
trousers .....	\$3.03
pair of shoes .....	\$1.14
hat .....	\$1.35
drawers.....	\$0.50
socks.....	\$0.26
undershirt.....	\$0.88

Enlisted base pay was as follows:

Private.....	\$13.00 /mo
Corporal .....	\$14.00 /mo
Sergeant.....	\$17.00 /mo
Sgt. Major.....	\$21.00 /mo

### Allotments

A general order was issued in 1861, which provided means for a soldier to allot a specified sum of money to his parents or other designee. A soldier signed a roll. This was endorsed by his company commander and forwarded to the state treasury, which in turn sent it out to the soldier’s town or village.

This roll designated to whom and how much money was to be paid. Local officials notified the donee of the allotment or grant. At the same time of enrolling, tickets were issued to the soldier. He mailed these to his donee. The donee presented the ticket when he/she was notified by the village official. The two instruments were matched and the payment was made.

Considering mails, plus cumbersome rolls, this system probably was fraught with error but it at least had the merit of insuring money reached the proper party. This may explain the lack of pay info on Edward. He may have sent money home to Mary. ❀



Headquarters of the 23rd Illinois Infantry, New Creek, Virginia, 1862. The man leaning against the cabin looks like the regimental commander Col. James Mulligan. Photo from *The Civil War Through the Camera*, text by Henry W. Elson 1912, Patriot Publishing Company, Spfld., MA.

Col. James A. Mulligan of the 23rd Illinois Infantry was in command of the prison and he had his own and the 65th Illinois under his command. He was a gallant, chivalrous Irishman, a kind, humane man, and the very soul of honor. He was relieved in the spring and ordered to the army of the Potomac—*Sam C. Mitchell, a Confederate prisoner at Camp Douglas*

Mr. Mitchell's memoir supports the Adjutant General's history which records that Colonel Mulligan reformed the poor management system at the camp and granted the prisoners much more humane treatment than had his predecessor.

The 23rd regiment guarded prisoners at Camp Douglas, Chicago, until June 14, 1862, when the regiment was moved to Harper's Ferry, Virginia.

Special Orders No. 10, issued on June 18, 1862, by order of Edwin Stanton, Secretary of War, directed that the 23rd Illinois, with its battery of artillery attached, then enroute for Annapolis, Maryland, halt at Harper's Ferry until further orders. The regiment was thusly halted.

### Harper's Ferry

The town of Harper's Ferry lies at the juncture of the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers, along the route heading south from the town of Frederick, Maryland.

The 23rd Illinois Infantry, initially attached to the Railroad District of the Mountain Department, was later assigned to the 8th Corps.

On June 22, 1862, Gen. Wool ordered the 23rd and its light battery to New Creek, a town about 91 miles west of Harper's Ferry, in Hampshire (now Mineral) County, where there was \$1.5 million worth of supplies and equipment earmarked for Gen. Fremont's command. The move was necessitated by

reports of rebel activity in the area. The regiment departed at 5 A.M. on June 23.

The 23rd Illinois seems to have been moved back to Harper's Ferry later, as the muster sheets for July and August 1862, show Edward present for duty at Harper's Ferry.

The men were afterward moved again to New Creek, West Virginia—the base of operations for the 23rd Illinois until April, 1863. The Regiment was assigned to the 5th Brigade, 1st Division, 8th Corps. Colonel Mulligan commanded the Brigade and Lieutenant Colonel Quirk the Regiment.

### September 1862

#### **September 1: Relief of Clarksburg, W. Virginia.**

Clarksburg was 89 miles west of New Creek.

#### **September 3: Relief of Parkersburg.**

Parkersburg (73 miles from Clarksburg and about 274 miles west of Harper's Ferry) was on the Ohio River on the western border of West Virginia.

### January 1863

#### **January 3–4: Relief of Col. Washburn, Moorefield.**

On January 3, 1863, the 23rd Regiment made a forced march of 40 miles in 10 hours from New Creek to Moorefield, Hardy County, to the relief of the Union force of Colonel Washburn there attacked by General Jones, who thereupon withdrew.

The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was extending its road to Wheeling, West Virginia. The route was completed in January 1863.

### April to August 1863

#### **April 25, 1863: Moved to Grafton.**

#### **April 26, 1863: Moved to Phillippi.**

The Regiment moved 15 road miles south of Grafton and were engaged with Confederate Gen. Imboden.

#### **April 26, 1863: Altamont (Detachment).**

#### **June 8, 1863: New Creek, Virginia.**

#### **July, August 1863: Edward Present.**

#### **July 1863: Pursuit of Lee.**

In July 1863, the Regiment was on the flank of Lee in his retreat from Gettysburg.

#### **July 6, 1863: Hedgesville and Back Creek**

25 miles NW of Harper's Ferry, in Berkeley County, an engagement with Wade Hampton at Hedgesville.

#### **August 16, 1863: At Petersburg, West Virginia.**

This was about 25 miles south of New Creek.

**September and October 1863****September 4: Petersburg Gap.**

Edward was on furlough to Chicago, September and October of 1863. He returned and was present for muster. The army charged him \$26.62 for round trip transportation while on furlough to Chicago, Illinois.

Also in Edward's records was Order extract No. 390, dated October 24, 1863: To Capt. T. Moore AQM (assistant quartermaster) from W.C. Thorpe, Capt. 13th Infantry USA (Regulars) and Military Commandant:

*Please furnish transportation for Edward Higginson, Co A 23rd Ill. Vols., on furlough granted by Brig Gen Kelly to New Creek Va. Deduct. From Capt. Moore to the B & ORR (the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad) please furnish transportation for one man from Wheeling to New Creek.*

This shows Edward returned from furlough near the end of October. It is difficult to believe that he didn't see his family when he was home on furlough. Perhaps this is when they moved to Blackberry.

**November/December 1863; January 1864**

The muster roll for November and December 1863, show Edward present for duty and a 62 cent charge for balance due on transportation while on furlough.

**November 8–9: Moorefield.**

In November 1863, the regiment destroyed the camp of the Confederates under General John D. Imboden, near Moorefield, Virginia.

**December 8–25: Demonstration, Kanawha Valley, West Virginia.**

The regiment participated in a show of force, possibly a diversion for another operation.

**December 31 to January 5: Hampshire/Hardy Co.****January and February 1864**

Edward is present. His name is spelled "Higgison" on muster sheet. The copyist notes the spelling of "Higginson" on present column of muster roll.

**January 29–30: Between New Creek and Petersburg.****January 27 to February 7: Hampshire/Hardy Co.**

Operations in along the Virginia border/Appalachian foothills. Moorefield is in Hardy County.

In the months of January and February, 1864, while stationed at Greenland Gap, W. Virginia, First Lieutenant John J. Healy, as special recruiting officer, re-enlisted about 300 of the Regiment as veterans, and in May following, they came to Chicago on thirty days' furlough, as the Twenty-third Regiment Illinois Veteran Volunteers.

In 1864, Union General Philip H. Sheridan used Harper's Ferry as his base of operations against Confederate troops in the Shenandoah Valley.

The south was now in the final stages of losing the war, and yet one last offensive effort came when Gen. Jubal A. Early and a small corps was dispatched from Lee's forces defending Richmond and Petersburg, Virginia. The objective was to capture the capital of Washington, and perhaps force Grant to divert troops away from the siege of Richmond and Petersburg. Harper's Ferry now was well fortified, with massive cannons mounted in Maryland Heights protecting the approaches to the town.

**March and April 1864**

Edward is absent; on veteran furlough to June 1864.

**April: Regiment veteranizes at New Creek.****June 1864****June 12: New Creek.**

The regiment had about 350 men, according to a report of Gen. Kelley. The next day a detachment of 150 men was sent to Martinsburg to report to Gen. Sigel to form part of a supply train guard.

**June 17: Orders for Col. Mulligan.**

The 23rd Illinois was to be ready on 12 hour notice to prepare to move to Martinsburg with all surplus baggage, stores, and shelter tents and 100 rounds of ammunition to be carried on the person. The regiment was to be allowed two "flies" and one wagon.

**June 20: Order for the regiment to move at once.**

They moved by rail for Martinsburg. The regiment left June 22 and arrived the night of June 23. All troop movements were completed by June 28.

**July and August 1864: Reorganization****July: 23rd Illinois was back in the mainstream.**

Confederate General Jubal Early's little army, was moving up the Shenandoah Valley towards Washington D.C., and reached Winchester on July 2.

Union General Franz Sigel was in Martinsburg, with about 5,000 men, and there was another Federal force about half that size in Harper's Ferry.

Gen. Early sent one of his two corps to each of the towns in hope of capturing the Federals and their supplies.

Sigel, nicknamed "the Flying Dutchman," sensibly skedaddled again, quickly consolidating his forces in Harper's Ferry and setting them up in entrenchments on Maryland Heights, burning bridges behind him. For whatever Sigel's other failures, he was the first Union commander in

Harper's Ferry to not simply wait there to be swallowed up.

Early arrived at Harper's Ferry on the fourth of July and saw that Sigel's troops were solidly dug in. Early knew he would suffer terribly trying to dislodge the Federals, and he had more important things to do. He left behind a brigade to keep an eye on Sigel and make demonstrations to keep the Federals quiet, and then moved the rest of his command northward.

### **July 3, 1864: Leetown.**

At 6 o'clock the morning of July 3rd, the Rebels attacked Federal forces at Leetown and Darkesville, on the Winchester Pike. Major-General Ransom led the force attacking Colonel Mulligan at Leetown. The Rebel cavalry made an assault on federal cavalry at Darkesville, and 1,100 cavalry went into the Union rear at North Mountain and on the Williamsport Road.

Colonel Mulligan led his infantry out of the trenches after the initial cavalry charge and by hard fighting drove the Rebels back upon Generals Rodes' and Ramseur's Divisions, then returned to the trenches.

Rodes and Ramseur had marched their men twenty miles that day and they were not in a condition to fight. General Early refused to order them to support General Johnson.

It was a losing fight for the defenders at Leetown, although they stubbornly held the attackers at bay the entire day.

Colonel Mulligan, having only the 10th West Virginia and 23rd Illinois Infantry Regiments, five pieces of artillery, and 1,000 dismounted cavalry



*Harper's Ferry from Maryland Heights. Maryland Heights is where Edward Higginson was wounded by a minie ball. Photo from Library of Congress.*

men, was unable to defend Leetown in the face of such overwhelming odds. No help could be sent to him, as General Sigel was preparing to retreat from Martinsburg.

Sigel ordered Colonel Mulligan to do the best he could with his small detachment, to fall back as slowly as possible, fighting a rear guard action to cover the retreat of the main army to Kearneysville and Shepherdstown, where it was possible for his men to ford the river.

All stores were sent off on railroad cars, and the remainder loaded on wagons. The troops from Martinsburg were withdrawn when Colonel Mulligan was compelled to retire toward Kearneysville.

Colonel Mulligan fought Major-Generals Ransom and Early, unaided, on to Martinsburg. The exact strength of the enemy was unknown at the time. The Rebels had cut the railroad and the telegraph lines, making it impossible to communicate with Generals Hunter and Kelley.—*From an After Action Report by Gen. Franz Sigel. (General Sigel planned to cross the Potomac River that night at Shepherdstown, join Brigadier General Max Weber's forces at Harper's Ferry and operate from there.)*

### **July 4–7, 1864: Operations at Harper's Ferry.**

Gen. Weber's troops were "hotly engaged" with the rebel advance; reportedly 2,000 cavalry with infantry support and a section of light artillery. The attack commenced July 4, against the federal picket posts on Bolivar Heights and forced the pickets to fall back to the rifle pits about Camp Hill, near Harper's Ferry. Hearing of the approach of the Rebel main body, said to be 20,000 men, Weber withdrew to defensive positions on Maryland Heights.

Gen. Sigel arrived at Harper's Ferry and took up positions on Maryland Heights. The town had been evacuated by Gen. Weber.

Colonel Harris was given command of the 1st Brigade, 3rd Division in the new organization. The brigade still contained only the 10th West Virginia and the 23rd Illinois Infantry Regiments.

### **Edward is Wounded**

#### **July 6–7, 1864: Maryland Heights.**

On July 5, the Union forces were massed on Maryland Heights, extending from the Heights to Ft. Duncan. July 6th, the Rebels attacked the Union advance about three miles out from Sandy Hook on the Sharpsburg Road. Sigel's troops on Maryland Heights prepared for action.

## Civil War Information

### Questions with answers from Cal Bivens

Q. What does *relief* mean as in *relief* of Clarksburg or *relief* of Parkersburg mean?

A. This was usually when the local garrison was besieged or under imminent threat, a column or columns of troops would be sent to lift the siege or reinforce/resupply the beleaguered defenders.

Q. What is the definition of *mustered*?

A. Mustering is when the regiment is gathered into formation and the roll is called. Any absent personnel have to be verified by the mustering officer. First muster is at the initial organization of the regime. In the Civil War, replacement troops who joined the regiment after first muster, were called recruits to differentiate them from those who were assigned to the regiment from the start.

Q. *Present for muster*—does that mean roll call?

A. Yes. Just like calling the roll in school.

Q. What does *detachment* mean?

Example: Altamont April 26, 1863, Detachment.

A. A detachment, in this case, is a small unit detached from the regiment for some errand (such as scout, guard duty, foraging, etc.). It is usually company size or smaller. It is sometimes used to refer to a garrison. It could also, a unit stationed at a fort or similar post.

Q. What does the word *flies* refer to? The regiment was to be allowed *two flies and one wagon*.

A. I'm working on this one. I don't actually know what this is. It could be the trailer/cart type vehicles I have seen being pulled behind wagons. ❀

### Benefits and Pensions

In 1861, a government act authorized that a volunteer who was wounded or otherwise disabled in service should be entitled to the same benefits which accrue under the same circumstances to regulars. The widow, if there was one, or, if not, the legal heir of such that die in battle, should receive \$100.00 in addition to all arrears in pay and allowances as might exist at the time of death. In July of 1862, it was ordered that all officers and enlisted men who were totally disabled by wound or disease dating from March 1862, should receive the following pensions:

Lt. Col. and up.....	\$30.00
Major .....	\$25.00
Captain .....	\$20.00
First Lieut. ....	\$17.00
Second Lieut.....	\$15.00
Enlisted men .....	\$8.00 ❀



### Weaponry—The Henry Rifle

The .44 cal. Henry did not have that much recoil, but they just did not balance quite right. These rifles weighed in at almost nine pounds. The magazine capacity was 13 rounds; if you put one in the chamber the Henry becomes a “14 Shooter.”

By early 1863, 23rd Illinois Infantry became one of several units armed with Henry rifles—at least in part. The Henry is a very unique rifle and a rare one. Only a little over 14,000 were produced. It is interesting to note most of the Henrys used in the Civil War were privately purchased.

Some time before September, 1863, Messrs Adams of Wheeling, Virginia, sold a Henry to John Brown who was a Lieutenant of Company C, 23rd Regiment of Illinois Volunteers. He in turn wrote to the New Haven Arms Company requesting 15 to 20 more Henrys to be purchased by his men.

Lt. Colonel S.A. Simison, the commanding officer of the 23rd Illinois Infantry, in a letter dated February 25, 1865, to the President of the New Haven Arms Company, wanted to know at what price he could arm his entire battalion with Henrys. He also stated that he purchased 50 Henrys in the winter of 1863. In using these 50 Henrys, Colonel Simison was able to judge the effectiveness of the Henrys and made the decision to seek to arm his command. ❀



Maryland Heights and Harper's Ferry.—<http://www.nps.gov/archive/hafe/maps/maryland.htm>

The Rebels appeared to the federal front on the Maryland side of the river. After three days of brisk skirmishing around the heights, the Rebels withdrew on the night of the seventh.

The Rebels advanced closely to the Federal lines on the north, and intended an attack with one brigade of infantry against the left, where the lines were the weakest. This attack was frustrated by a counter attack from the Union right. The Rebels showed an extensive line from the Potomac to Elk Ridge Mountain. Besides his skirmishers, no large columns were visible.

There were about 3,000 infantry in the Federal front. Five thousand more were reported moving up from Antietam Creek. During the previous day, 600 of General Stahel's cavalry advanced against the enemy from Pleasant Valley, through Solomon's Gap, and met the enemy on the west side of Elk Ridge Mountain, about five miles away. General Stahel was ordered with his whole cavalry, and with the 200 artillery armed as infantry, and four pieces of artillery from Pleasant Valley, to move to Rohrsersville.

Union lines on the north of the position engaged the enemy. An immense train of the Rebels passed within sight near Shepherdstown. Prisoners taken were of the 12th Georgia Regiment.

General Weber's staff advised him he could not hold Harper's Ferry and he retreated to Maryland Heights on the evening of July 4, after burning the railroad and pontoon bridges.

When the 10th West Virginia Infantry and other foot soldiers arrived at Sandy Hook, exhausted by the forced march, they occupied positions on Maryland Heights. The Union Cavalry stopped at Wevertown but was soon sent to Point of Rocks to harass the enemy at the crossing. About 7,000 of the Southern forces occupied Martinsburg and began reorganizing for the push to Harper's Ferry. The supplies they had expected to find at the abandoned quartermaster depot had been removed by the Union troops which was a great disappointment to them as they needed to continue the raid.

Generals Rodes and Ransom crossed the Potomac July 5, and began maneuvering for battle. The Union guns on Maryland Heights opened on them, and the Confederate commanders soon saw it would be impossible to hold Harper's Ferry, even if they did succeed in capturing it. They withdrew most of their troops from the dangerous position, leaving roving patrols in the area to hold the Union Army on the Heights.

President Lincoln called on Pennsylvania, New York, and Massachusetts for 100 day men to help stop Early, and ordered General Hunter back to the Valley of Virginia, a place he had been trying to reach for some time.

Two thirds of General Sigel's army was composed of these nearly useless summertime soldiers and as he could only rely on his 10th West Virginia and 23rd Illinois Infantry—he refused to leave the safety of Maryland Heights.

Colonel Harris had his brigade entrenched on Maryland Heights with four other regiments of infantry and two battalions of the 5th New York Heavy Artillery.

General Sigel predicted the Southern Army would attack from the Maryland side of the river which proved correct, for early on the 6th, they began firing from there. The battle continued for thirty-six hours, almost without interruption. But the artillery duel was a battle of harassment, for it became evident the move was a time gathering

feint to permit the Confederates to harvest as many supplies as possible for their impoverished army.

### Upon Being Wounded

The muster sheets for July and August 1864, show Edward Higginson as: “Absent: wounded at Maryland Heights, July 7, 1864. In Hospital at Frederick, Md.”

When a soldier was wounded, if he could walk or be recovered by his companions, he was first treated by his regiment’s field medical staff. The staff consisted of an assistant surgeon and an enlisted hospital steward, working at a field aid station. There, they would be patched up as quickly as possible.

Slight wounds could be bandaged, with the soldier then returning to the front. Serious cases would be sent back to the regimental hospital, run by the regimental head surgeon. Here, operations such as amputations and other surgery were performed.

Later in the war, major operations were usually performed in larger hospitals organized at the brigade or division level—if the soldier could survive long enough to be transported there. After treatment here, the soldier might have to be sent to one of the general, permanent hospitals for recovery and further treatment.

These facilities were built around major cities such as Washington D.C., Philadelphia, New York City, and Chicago. If he were disabled and otherwise still unfit for duty, the trooper would be discharged on a surgeon’s certificate. Beginning in late 1863, he could also be transferred to the Invalid Corps (later the Veteran Reserve Corps), which performed guard and provost marshal duties, and provided assistance in the hospitals.

### *July 9, 1864: Frederick, Maryland.*

Edward was admitted with gunshot wounds to the left arm and left leg, to the US Army Hospital at Frederick, Maryland, an 1114 bed facility.

### Colonel James A. Mulligan Dies

Col. Mulligan of Chicago, fell while commanding a division of the Army of West Virginia at Kernstown, in Shenandoah Valley, July 24, 1864. He perished July 26, while in the hands of the enemy, three desperate wounds, received while at head of his own Regiment, to which he had galloped in the confident and justified expectation that he would be able to make it the steady rear-guard of an overwhelming rout, caused by the advance of all of Early’s army upon an unsupported and meager force.

## What’s a Minie Ball?

Some 90% of all battle wounds were caused by the small arms projectile known as the Minie Ball. Of those wounded by small arms projectiles, 15% or 234,400 men died as a result of its use.

In 1855, the U.S. Infantry adopted new standards for small arms that introduced muzzle-loading .58 caliber rifles and rifled muskets designed to use the newly developed conical Minie Ball bullet—an enormously important development in the history of ordinance.

The Minie Ball got its name from its inventor, Captain Claude Minie of the French Army. It was conical in shape and made of soft lead, with two or three grease grooves around its body. The cylinder-conical ball usually had a cavity. Upon firing, the hot gases produced by the burning black powder charge, expanded into the hollow base of the ball, forcing the soft lead into the rifling grooves inside the barrel of the musket. These grooves, which spiraled as they traveled the length of the barrel, imparted a spin to the ball, increasing the effective range to 300 yards, or more; up to 600 yards to hit either the man or the horse he was riding. This was a remarkable improvement over the predecessor of the .58 caliber musket, the .69 caliber smoothbore. The .69 caliber was modeled from the French muskets donated during the American Revolutionary War. The .69 caliber smoothbore had a maximum effective range of about 100 yards, or less.

The majority of Civil War cartridges consisted of the Minie ball and 60 grains of black powder enclosed in a paper cylinder. The Minie ball was made primarily in .54, .58, and .69 caliber sizes which weighed from 1 to 1 ½ ounces. At 600 yards, a .58 caliber Minie Ball fired from a Springfield or Enfield rifled musket could penetrate six 1-inch pine boards. This bullet had greater range, accuracy and penetration than anything previous.

The heavy, slow moving bullet wrought frightful damage. The soft lead flattened and sometimes broke apart as it hit flesh. If the thin walls of the hollow base collapsed on impact, it was only a big bone-smashing bullet. If the base stayed open the big hollow base became a hollow point with explosive force. Destruction of tissues, cartilage, vein, and bone tended to be massive. If a man was hit in the arm or leg, the bullet shattered the bone from 6 to 10 inches and necessity for amputation was frequent. ❀



**Aug 29, 1864: Consolidation.**

After the Battle of Kernstown and the death of Col. Mulligan, the 10 companies of the Regiment, 440 men and officers, were consolidated into five companies—Battalion 23rd Regiment Illinois Veteran Volunteer Infantry. The 23rd served out the war in the Shenandoah area. Lieutenant Colonel Simison was assigned to command.

Company A's 24 men and 74 men from Company B, were consolidated into Company B. This is how Edward came to be listed on the muster rolls even though he remained in the hospital.

Cap. Patrick McDermott of Company A, the man who had recruited Edward, was mustered out at the expiration of his term of service, September 14, 1864.

**September 1864: Edward Transferred  
September 20, 1864: Hospital Number 45**

Edward was transferred to the US Hospital, number 45, at 16th and Filbert St., Philadelphia.

**Edward's Hospital Admission Report**

Edward Higginson: age 28; married

Residence: Lodi, Illinois

Wife or nearest relative: Mary Higginson

Rank: Pvt, Co. A

Regiment: 23rd Illinois

Admitted: September 20, 1864

From: Frederick City

Diagnosis: Gun S. Wd. through left forearm;  
injury left leg

On what occasion wounded: Maryland Heights

Date: July 6, 1864

Nature of missile or weapon: Minie Ball

**October 1864: Edward Transferred Again**

The latter part of October 1864, Edward was transferred to the 1329 bed Haddington US Hospital in West Philadelphia.

## Philadelphia Hospitals

Philadelphia had 11 military hospitals during the war. In the 1860s, wounded arrived at the depot of the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad at Broad Street and Washington Avenue, and were processed at the adjacent Citizens Volunteer Hospital, a 236 bed facility. Then they were moved to one of several temporary hospitals that ringed the city.

**November and December 1864:  
Edward, Absent, Wounded in Hospital at  
Frederick, Maryland**

*I have the honor to report that I have examined in accordance with your order...Private Edward Higginson Co. A 23 Ill. Gunshot wound left fore arm-ulna injured neerly healed. I consider him able to travel without danger to life.—T.W. Miller, Medical Director, Chicago, Illinois, Dec. 7, 1864.*

This note is somewhat of a curiosity to me. It indicates that Edward was sent to Chicago after he was wounded and examined by a doctor there. The episode is vague as there is no other documentation with it.—*Cal Bivens*

**January through June 1865: Edward Absent**

Edward was absent as he had been wounded and was in the Hospital at Frederick, Maryland, Fredericton US Army General Hospital, since July 1864.

The muster sheets do not accurately show the whereabouts of Edward. He was transferred to other hospitals and the mustering officer, whose job it was to verify his whereabouts did not get accurate information regarding those transfers. There is a record of Edward being paid \$7 on February 8, 1865.

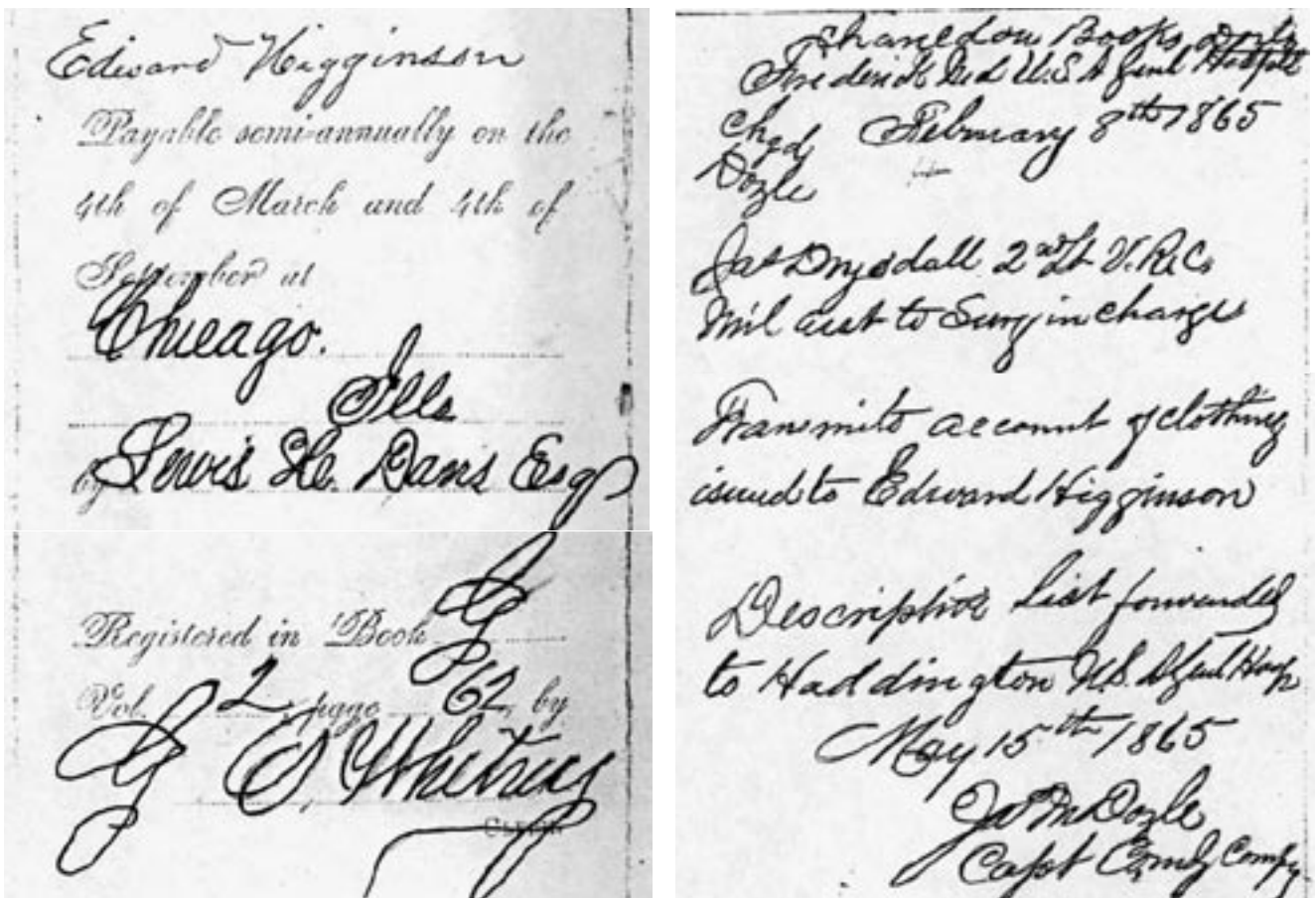
**May 12, 1865, Satterlee Hospital.**

A hospital report dated June 26, 1865, noted that Private Edward Higginson of Co. A 23rd Reg't. Illinois, Army of the Potomac, was admitted to Satterlee, USA, General Hospital May 12, 1865, with gunshot wounds of the left leg and arm.

**June 26, 1865: Discharged for disability  
at Philadelphia.**

John E. MacDonald, the Surgeon Commanding Satterlee General Hospital signed a Certificate of Disability for Discharge for Edward Higginson on June 7, 1865. The document follows:

*Private Edward Higginson of Lt. David Costins (actually Costine) Company A of the 23rd Regiment of Ill. V. Vols. was enlisted by Capt. (Patrick J.) McDermott of the 23rd Regiment of Ill. V. Vols. at Chicago, Ill. on the 6th day of June 1862, to serve 3 years. He was born in Down Co., Ireland, is 28 years of age, 5'10" high, light complexion, brown eyes, brown hair, and by occupation when enlisted (no occupation given). Said soldier has been unfit for duty for 60 days. Left Regiment June 6, 1864, and was sent to Frederick City Hospital thence to 16th & Talbert St., thence to this hospital May 12, 1865.*



Document copies courtesy of Dorlene Tolle Higginson.

MacDonald then wrote: *I certify that I have carefully examined the said Private Edward Higginson of Lt. David Costens Company and find him incapable of performing the duties of a soldier because of the lameness of left leg and loss of use of left arm cause of gunshot wounds rec'd in action at Harpers Ferry. Disability total.*

(David Costine had enlisted as a sergeant from Chicago in March 1864, and was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant in September 1864, and 1st Lieutenant in March 1865. He served in Co. B of the consolidated regiment. Edward never actually mustered with Co. B, but was transferred to the company while in the hospital.)

Edward Higginson was discharged from the military June 26, 1865, at West Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The document further stated that: *The soldier wishes to be addressed at Blackberry, Kane County, Illinois.*

Blackberry Township is on the southeast corner of Virgil Township. The railroad ran from Lodi Station through Blackberry Station to Geneva, the county seat, in a direct line. Blackberry Station was originally called Milo and later renamed Elburn.

### Application for Invalid Pension

On June 27, 1865, Edward Higginson appeared before the Prothonotary of the District Court in the County of Philadelphia, state of Pennsylvania, to file an Application for an Invalid Pension. Edward gave his address as P.O. Lodi Station, Kane County, Illinois. He stated his enlistment and discharge data and the nature of his wounds: "by reason of which the arm and leg are nearly useless."

Edward listed the hospitals he had been in since being wounded:

- US Hospital at Frederick, Maryland, June 9, 1864.
- US Hospital at 16th & Filbert St., Philadelphia, about the middle of September 1864.
- Haddington US Hospital, Philadelphia, late October 1864.
- Satterlee US Hospital, Philadelphia, abt. May 1, 1865.

Edward's occupation when he enlisted was given as farmer. Edward appointed W.N. Ashman of 1307 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, to be his attorney to represent him in his pension claim. William Brown and William Shuster of Philadelphia signed as witnesses. ❀

## Satterlee Hospital



*Satterlee Hospital, the last hospital Edward Higginson was sent to in Philadelphia.*

### **History of Satterlee Hospital**

West Philadelphia Hospital was renamed Satterlee Hospital, for General Richard Satterlee. The hospital opened for the sick and wounded soldiers of the Civil War on June 9, 1862.

Over 3100 beds in seven acres worth of one-story buildings could not contain all the Union casualties after the battles of Wilderness and Spotsylvania. Hundreds of tents were put up to house the wounded on its 16-acre grounds.

Since Satterlee Hospital was near the Schuylkill River, the sick and wounded could be transported by steamboat to a nearby landing, and from there, carried to Satterlee.

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, from 2 to 5 p.m. were visiting times. There was a large reading room, a library, a piano, a store, a Stationary and Newspaper Depot, a Barber Shop, and a Printing Office, which published, Hospital Register. There was also “a fine Band of Music.”

Satterlee Hospital was one of the hospitals Great Grandpa Edward Higginson stayed in after he was wounded in the Civil War.

The Satterlee Hospital closed in 1865 after having cared for more than 60,000 men. The buildings were razed and became residential housing in the 1890s.

Currently, there is a marker in Clark Park, which contains a portion of the former hospital grounds, that says:

### **Satterlee U.S.A. General Hospital**

*One of largest and most complete Union Army hospitals during the Civil War. From 1862 to 1865. With 4,500 beds in one story buildings and hundreds of tents, it occupied over 16 acres north of here. Named for Gen. Richard Satterlee, Union Army Medical Purveyor.*