



Rich Pawling plays “Taps” beside the grave of William Henry Christman of Tobyhanna Township, the first soldier buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Pawling, a Civil War reeanactor from Sinking Spring, Pa., was part of the “Taps 150” celebration at the cemetery on May 19, 2012. More than 200 buglers distributed themselves throughout the cemetery, paying tribute on the 150th anniversary of its writing.



“Each man is a hero and an oracle to somebody”

Ralph Waldo Emerson – “Letters and Social Aims,” 1876

The William Henry Christman Story

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By Rick Bodenschatz

with Kim de Bourbon, contributing editor

The differences of social, political and economic ideals between the Northern and Southern states were destined to be decided on the battlefields of the American Civil War. Tobyhanna Township on the Pocono Plateau of Pennsylvania contributed to the preservation of the Union with several residents joining the armies of the North. Some gave their lives in battle and others died while in service. All of our Civil War veterans deserve our highest recognition, but one in particular stands out as being notable on a national level.

William Henry Christman of Pocono Lake, Tobyhanna Township, in Monroe County, Pennsylvania, was the first soldier buried at the new Arlington National Cemetery, on May 13, 1864.

This story is not complete without the details of the entire Christman family, for William was fully devoted to his family’s support, and through his writings his love of family is understood. Although this story initially is a focus on William, the subsequent record of his family provides for greater appreciation of the Christman history.

Christman Family Early Years

William Henry Christman was born October 1, 1844 in the Lower Macungie area of Lehigh County, Pennsylvania, to his parents Jonas and Mary Anna (Albeit) Christman. He was christened on January 9, 1845 in Goshenhoppen, Pa. (today's Bally). As a child, William left that area with his family and settled to the north, at the base of the Pocono Mountains in Jackson Township, Monroe County. He and his family are recorded in the 1850 Jackson Township census, showing William at age 6.

35		Sarah Ann	4	7	
36		Jane	3	11	
37		Lewis	1	11	
38		George Christman	21	11	Shoemaker
39	24	24	Jonas Christman	29	11
40		Ann	29	7	
41		Barnabas	8	11	
42		William	6	11	

**Christman family – Jonas, Ann (Mary Anna), Barnabus and William —
as recorded in 1850 Jackson Township census**

The family again moved north, to the Pocono Mountain Plateau some time before the census of 1860. Shown on that census, the Christman family is recorded as residents of Tobyhanna Township, Monroe County. William is recorded to be age 16, and the family is listed to be in the postal area of the Stoddartsville Post Office. Jonas, father of William, is recorded as a laborer in this census. It is not known if the family lived in the Stoddartsville area or their eventual home in Pocono Lake. With post offices of residents being listed in the census, only one post office – Stoddartsville – existed in the township at that time.

The Christman Family was showing on the census with three sons and four daughters. Barnabus (18), William (16), Ann Maria (11), Emeline (10), Mary (8), Timothy (4) and Sophia (1). And then in 1863 Jonas and Mary had a fourth son, John.

The community was young and still evolving, with the small population struggling for their new lives together. A primary industry for the mountainous area of the Pocono Plateau was logging, lumbering and wood products. As the land was cleared, the fast-growing farming industry became lucrative. Jonas Christman was known to support his family as a wagon driver for successful farmer Frederick Miller.

Then the Civil War changed life forever. Wars affect brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers. The Christman family of the Civil War era is a prime example. Barnabus Christman, the older brother of William, was killed in action in a fierce battle at New Market Cross Roads, Va., on June 30, 1862. He was 20 years of age.

William's Early Career

As older brother Barnabus went off to war and then died in battle, William assumed the lead for contributing to the subsistence of a large family. By this time his father, Jonas, had a number of physical disabilities which would not allow him to continue work. William sought any opportunity available, and worked for local farmer Hiram Hay and sawyer William Bonser, being paid with food provisions and cash. By the 1860 Census, William at age 16 was listed as a laborer.

According to Timothy Miller, a young area farmer at the time, William worked for him on a regular basis from 1860 to 1864. Miller knew William "all his life." According to William's pension records, he also worked on his parents' lot as a tenant farmer. By the time duty called, William showed he was not afraid of a day's hard work. As later will be established, this also demonstrated his devotion to the support of his family.

VOLUNTEER ENLISTMENT.

STATE OF  TOWN OF

Pennsylvania Easton

I, William Christman born in Lehigh Co
in the State of Pennsylvania aged Twenty one years,
and by occupation a Sabotier Do HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE to have
volunteered this Twenty fifth day of March 1864
to serve as a Soldier in the Army of the United States of America, for
THREE YEARS, unless sooner discharged by proper authority:

Do also agree to accept such bounty, pay, rations, and clothing as are, or may be,
established by law for volunteers. And I, William Christman do
solemnly swear, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the United States
of America, and that I will serve them honestly and faithfully against all
their enemies or opposers whomsoever; and that I will observe and obey the
orders of the President of the United States, and the orders of the officers
appointed over me, according to the Rules and Articles of War.

Sworn and subscribed to, at Easton Pa
this Twenty fifth day of March 1864 } William Christman
BEFORE: W. H. P. Marshall

I CERTIFY, ON HONOR, That I have carefully examined the above-named Volunteer, agreeably
to the General Regulations of the Army, and that, in my opinion, he is free from all bodily defects and
mental infirmity, which would in any way disqualify him from performing the duties of a soldier.

W. H. P. Marshall
EXAMINING SURGEON.

I CERTIFY, ON HONOR, That I have minutely inspected the Volunteer, William Christman
at his enlistment, and that he was entirely sober when enlisted; that, to the best of my
belief, he is of lawful age; and that, in accepting him as duly qualified to perform the
duties of a able-bodied soldier, I have strictly observed the Regulations which govern the recruiting
of soldiers. He has Blue eyes, Dark hair, Dark complexion, is Six
feet high. Scar on left side of neck
Large Brown moles on back

W. H. P. Marshall
RECRUITING OFFICER.
Capt & Prov Marshal
11th Dist Penn a

date of enlistment, in Company
1864, at Easton Penn
W. H. P. Marshall
11th Dist Penn a

Mastered into the serv
67th Regiment of Pen

United States, for three years or during the
11 day of March

William Henry Christman's Volunteer Enlistment
 See enlargement on Page 20

A Second Son To War

During the Civil War the two most frequent locations of military enlistment for residents of Monroe County were the county seat of Stroudsburg (33rd Reg. Pennsylvania Volunteers), and Easton in Lehigh County (67th Reg. Pennsylvania Volunteers). Both were significant infantry units of the Union army.

Although Barnabus decided to volunteer for the 33rd in Stroudsburg, William chose the 67th in Easton for his volunteer enlistment. Reasons of the choice of this location are unknown. Perhaps he felt less safe with the 33rd in which his brother was killed? Was it because there were still Christman family in Lehigh County? As the financial enlistment bounty was significant, being important to William and his family, was it more assured in Easton? Or was it simply because the Easton-Wilkes Barre Turnpike (today's Route 115) was a much better road in the late Pocono winter?

On March 25, 1864, at the age of 20, William Henry Christman enlisted "... as a Soldier in the Army of the United States of America for ... Three Years." Upon enlistment he became a private. Although his Volunteer Enlistment form was completed with his age being 21, birth, census and other military records correctly show he was age 20 at enlistment.

Christman's enlistment papers describe him as having gray eyes, sandy hair, and a florid complexion. His height is recorded to be five feet, seven and one-half inches. It was noted at enlistment that he had a scar on the left side of his neck, and three brown moles on his back. He was also listed as being single, with the occupation of laborer.

As the war dragged on, it became increasingly difficult for the states to attract volunteers, so a draft was implemented to supplement the volunteers. However, financial incentives were still an important part of volunteer recruiting. It is noted in William's records that he was a recipient of a \$300 enlistment bounty. Of this, he received a \$60 advance bounty with the remaining \$240 to be paid in installments.

Christman also received an advanced month's pay of \$13.41. According to pension records and depositions of his parents for application of the pension, William sent his bounty and advance pay home. Further, according to a second letter home on April 13, 1864, an additional \$35 was sent. As established later, the purpose of this money in large part was to buy land for a family farm.

Company G, 67th Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers

On July 24, 1861 John F. Staunton of Philadelphia received authority from the Secretary of War to recruit a regiment. A camp was established at Carmac's woods, near the city.

Camp Carmac Woods became the training camp for the newly formed 67th Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers. It was located at present day North 11th Street and Montgomery Avenue, near where Temple University is today located. The 67th's first company was raised from Carbon County, with subsequent companies formed principally from residents of the counties of Monroe, Wayne, Jefferson, Schuylkill, Indiana, Westmoreland, Luzerne, Northampton and Philadelphia. Each company made serious efforts to have its members from the same county.

The 67th saw extensive action throughout the Civil War, and at the end was present at Appomattox Courthouse for the surrender of the South. In 1864 a much earned furlough and reorganization returned the 67th to Philadelphia late in March, immediately following Ulysses S. Grant assuming command of the Army of the Potomac. This coincided with Christman's enlistment as he began his new Army career.

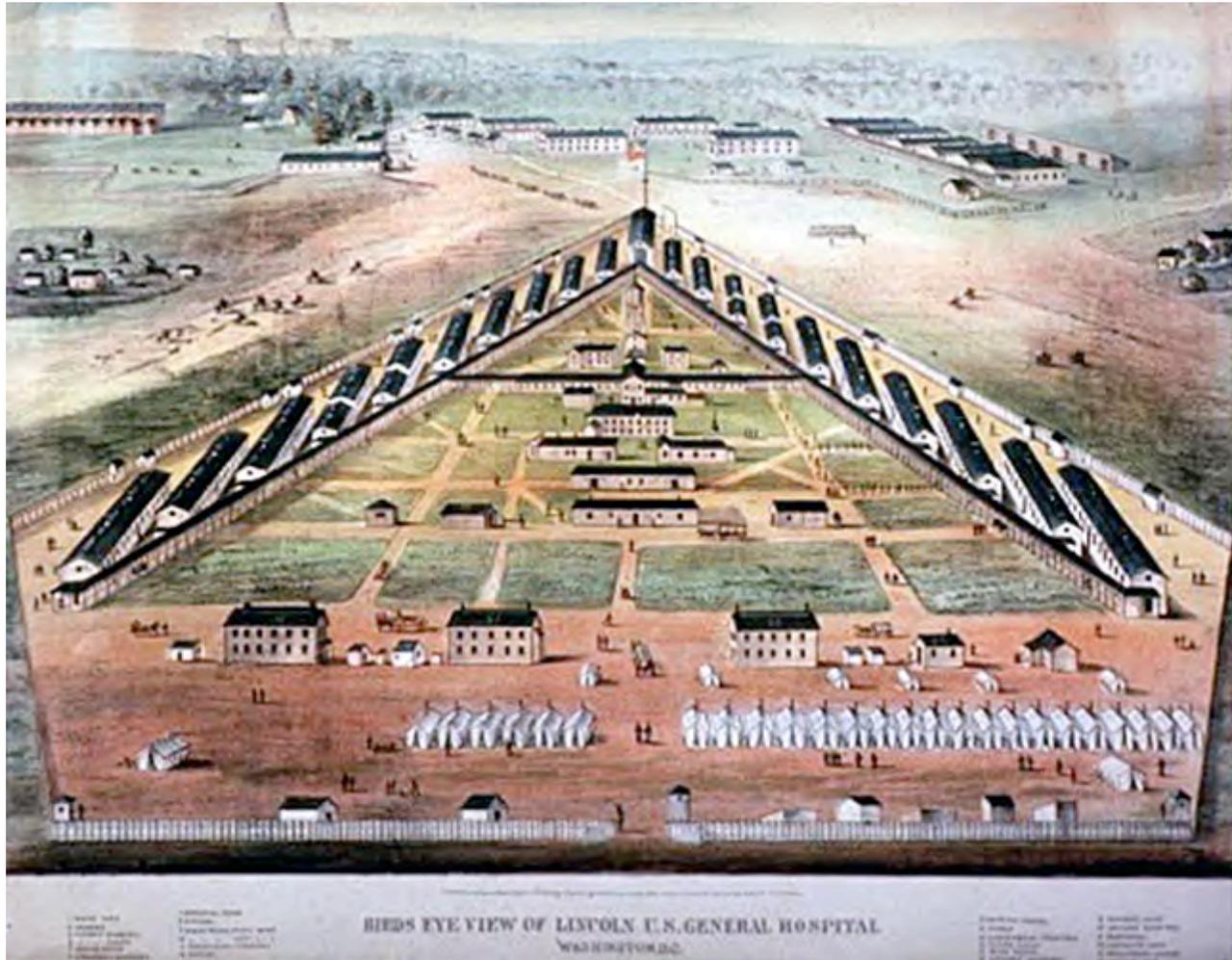
On April 7, 1864, Pvt. Christman wrote his famous letter to mother and father. Writing from "Camp Cat," he reported,

*"thad I like it very good we have enuph to eat and drink ant mure we
about want for the preasant time."*

William indicates his good spirits by closing his letter with the following postscript:

*So pleas excuse my pour riting
For I hapto write on my plait
So I cant write as good as I ate*

See reproduction of the April 7, 1864, letter and its full transcript on Pages 21-22



Lincoln General Hospital

The Last Battle

With its 30-day furlough ending in April 1864, the 67th was ordered to Washington, DC. Once there, they received orders to continue by transport to Belle Plain, Va. Located on the Potomac River, it was a main river landing for vessels to transport supplies, troops, and prisoners. Here they spent about a week in duties, and then within a few days received orders to go on to Culpepper County, Virginia, and the thick of the war. This is located southwest of Washington, D.C., and northwest of Fredericksburg.

On April 22, Pvt. Christman was stricken with rubella, or the measles, as recorded in the 67th Pennsylvania Regimental Hospital records. With his worsening condition, on April 30 he was directed by military order to a general hospital and was admitted to Lincoln General Hospital, Ward 19, on May 1. Located on Capitol Hill in

Washington, at 15th and East Capital Streets behind the U.S. Capitol, (two blocks from today's RFK Stadium), this 2,575-bed military hospital was specifically built for the Civil War and was demolished a short time after the war ended. See more about Lincoln General Hospital on Page 25.

As health care, sanitary conditions and nutrition were less developed, it is not surprising that more died in the Civil War of illness and disease, than of battle injuries. The 67th reflected these conditions. While 79 soldiers lost their lives from battle, 153 lost their lives to disease. Pvt. Christman is of the latter group, for he perished in the hospital on May 11. The cause of death listed on his Record of Death and Interment was peritonitis (inflammation of the abdomen wall).

Christman fought his own private battle in the hospital for these 11 days in the beginning of May 1864. As were the conditions of the time, complications were evident as measles were also listed in his pension records as a cause of death. We know that both conditions could be fatal during those years. Which condition ultimately caused his death? Did one condition weaken him, while the other claimed his life? Did the measles evolve into peritonitis, as serious cases in those times made that possible? As peritonitis was a major problem from stomach and intestine wounds in war hospitals, did he become infected from unsanitary conditions after his admission to the hospital for measles?

Pvt. Christman's Record of Death and Interment shows that at the time of death he possessed one blouse [shirt], one pair of pants and one hat, which were sent to his father on June 21. Also listed on this record was his age at 20, his conjugal condition as single, and his residence before enlistment as Tobyhanna [Township], Monroe County, Pennsylvania.

No. 1.
RECORD OF DEATH AND INTERMENT.

Name and number of person interred.	William Christman
Number and locality of the grave . . .	Ward 19
Hospital number of the deceased . . .	
Regiment, rank, and company . . .	67 Penna Vols, Private, Co "B"
Residence before enlistment . . .	Tobyhanna Monroe Co Penna
Conjugal condition, (and if married, the residence of the widow) . . .	Single
Cause of death	Peritonitis
Age of the deceased	Twenty
Nativity	Pennsylvania
References and remarks	Address, Jonas Christman Tannsville Monroe Co Pa
Date of death and burial	Died May 11. Buried May 13 1864

Duplicates sent to the Adjutant General of the United States Army, and to the Sexton of the Cemetery.

Memoranda:
Effects of personal effects consist of
 One 111 Blouse
 One 111 pair Pants
 One 111 Hat
Effects of personal effects sent to father June 21 1864

William Christman Record of Death and Interment
See enlargement, Page 23



From left: Union Maj. Gen. Montgomery C. Meig, Mary Custis Lee (in 1830), and Gen. Robert E. Lee

Arlington's First

In April 1861, Robert E. Lee committed his allegiance to the new Confederacy and resigned his commission from the U.S. Army. With this action, he no longer felt it was safe for he and his wife to continue their residency at Arlington House, their Virginia mansion and estate across the Potomac River from Washington. When the Lees left their home, federal troops moved in to occupy the 1,100-acre estate.

As the war's mortal casualties mounted, logistically convenient cemeteries and available burial locations quickly filled. The decision was then made to create a military cemetery on the grounds surrounding Arlington House. A secondary purpose was, by turning it into a cemetery filled with soldiers of the North, to render the property undesirable to the Lees should they ever attempt to reoccupy the estate.

Before it was even officially designated, on Friday, May 13, 1864, Pvt. William Henry Christman was laid to rest in Arlington Burial Ground, what was soon to become Arlington National Cemetery. The official Arlington Cemetery Register of Burials lists Private William Christman as the first soldier buried at this new cemetery. A month later on June 15, Maj. Gen. Montgomery C. Meigs formally appropriated 200 acres of the grounds surrounding Arlington House for use as a national cemetery.

Much will go unanswered as how Pvt. William Henry Christman became the first military person to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Most certainly, as the plan for the new cemetery unfolded, a military order would have been issued for various sources to send the fallen to Arlington for burial. As there had to be a "first," the lot fell to Pvt. Christman.

Although Pvt. Christman was the first buried on May 13, he was the first of several buried that day.

Also interred that day was Pvt. William H. McKinney, 17th Pennsylvania Cavalry, age 17, being the first to have family present at funeral. Another burial that day was Pvt. William Reeves, 76th New York Infantry, the first draftee to be interred. Among those buried the next day was Pvt. William Blatt, 49th Pennsylvania Infantry, the first battle casualty interred. On Sunday, May 15, the first two Unknown Union Soldiers were interred.



Arlington House, east front, June 28, 1864. The home was taken over by Union forces that year, with Maj. Gen. Montgomery C. Meigs appropriating 200 acres of the grounds around the house to become a national cemetery.

The site for the first burials was selected on the mansion grounds, at a location about a half mile northeast of Arlington House and a few hundred yards from the Potomac River. Records show that the first graves were most likely dug by a former slave of the Lee family, John Parks, according to his family history. Parks himself became an institution of the cemetery as it evolved over the years, digging graves and performing maintenance duties.

Specific records of Pvt. Christman's burial ceremony do not survive. Records of the second to be buried, William McKinney, noted that he was to "be interred with the usual military honors." Records for soldiers buried four days later show that a funeral service was conducted by Rev. E.W. Jackson, Chaplain, U.S. Army. Military historians state that the procedure of the day in 1864 would involve an army chaplain and possibly a bugler to sound "Taps." By 1864, the tradition of "Taps" at military funerals was taking hold.

Hallowed Ground

Pvt. Christman did not take a distinguished military career to his grave. Much is to be said of those who make the "supreme sacrifice" by dying in combat for our country. With Pvt. William Henry Christman, a case might be made that he does not deserve the same level of respect of a fallen hero. Yes, he was the first to be buried in Arlington, but it was an apparent happenstance of a person who never saw battle, and died of disease.

But he did take with him a sincere dedication and patriotism for his country and a responsibility to the cause for freedom. Although he died with less than two months service in a less than glamorous way during the time of war, he represented the embodiment of a true American. One who as a laborer understood his responsibilities as an American, one who had the incentive to improve his fate, one who had respect and love for family and one who loved his country, volunteering to put his life on the line for it. William Henry Christman died for family and country.

For this reason, Pvt. Christman well represents the ideals of all true Americans in being recognized as the first soldier to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery.



William Henry Christman grave in Arlington National Cemetery
(September 29, 2011 – Bud Fakoury, US Navy, Retired)

Private Christman Forever Known

Pvt. Christman is widely recognized by Arlington National Cemetery as its first-buried soldier. Much has been written of Christman by the cemetery over the years. Pvt. Christman is featured on tours of the grounds, on the official commemorative map of the cemetery, and on its web site.

As Arlington has grown with more than 300,000 burials to date, some confusion of gravesite identification has occurred. This has been especially true during the times of war, when burials increase significantly on a daily basis. In 2011, a detailed project to document each gravesite through records and photographs was implemented by Company D of the 3rd U.S. Infantry, known as the Old Guard, that is responsible for the cemetery. The project has been entitled "*Task Force Christman*" in honor of the first soldier buried at Arlington, in the quest to "get to right from the very first." *See more on Task Force Christman on Pages 26-28.*

As Arlington National Cemetery is the most famous of our cemeteries, it is only natural that William Henry Christman would be famous as its first. Since that distinction, he has been honored thousands of times. Several presidents have referred to Christman in memorial speeches. Thousands of tributes have penned Christman to represent all who have fallen to protect our freedom. He is mentioned in hundreds, if not thousands of books, and when surfing the Internet, he is without question easily referenced.

William and His Family

Jonas and Mary Christman were married May 9, 1841 in Goshenhoppen, and in that decade moved their family north from the Lehigh Valley area in quest of a new life. No doubt Jonas was looking for substantial employment in more virgin areas offering the hope of success. The Pocono Mountains were rich in natural resources, especially the lumbering industry.

In the 1850s the lumbering industry continued to provide jobs to laborers for cutting and transporting of timber. Sawmills further opened the job market, providing rough and finished lumber for the building industry. Then

manufacturing of wood products followed, with small factories manufacturing wood shingles, shoe pegs and even clothes pins.

The clearing of the mountain then opened the region to farming, adding employment opportunities for the unskilled. Laborers were needed for these blossoming industries as sparsely populated Tobyhanna Township started to grow into a community. The 1860 census showed 518 residents in the township, and of those, approximately 175 were males between age 12 and 60. It was still a small society.

During the 1850s Jonas Christman was known to support his family as a wagon-driver. But in 1859 he became bedridden with a severe case of chronic rheumatism. His five-week bout had devastating affects, leaving him without use of one of his arms. This did not provide promise for a laborer and wagon-driver. Jonas' attending physician, Dr. Scheffer, stated, "Jonas never recovered from the attack" of rheumatism.

Jonas testified in pension depositions that due to his illness, in 1859 he could not maintain the mortgage payments on their 89 acres of timberland. It was reported that the property was sold for \$125 at foreclosure sale to William Bonser, a local sawyer.

By 1860, Jonas apparently was back driving, but tragedy struck him again, as he fell off a wagon and fractured his right hip. The accident left Jonas with a right leg shorter than his left, by one and one half inches, making walking difficult. According to pension deposition records, Mary stated that Jonas was not able to work from 1860 to 1864.

Christman, B. F.		F - 4 Res	33 Regt.	1 - 656
Enrolled-	6-9-61		at Stroudsburg	
M.I.	7-17-61	as Pvt.	at Hbg.	
M.O.				
Discharged				
Age at enrollment-	20		Complexion	Light
Height	5'-9 1/2"		Eyes	Dark
Hair	Brown		Occup.	Farmer
Residence- Monroe County				
Remarks: Killed in action at New Market Cross Roads, Va. 6-30-62				

Military Record of Private Barnabus F. Christman

War Erupts, A Son Volunteers

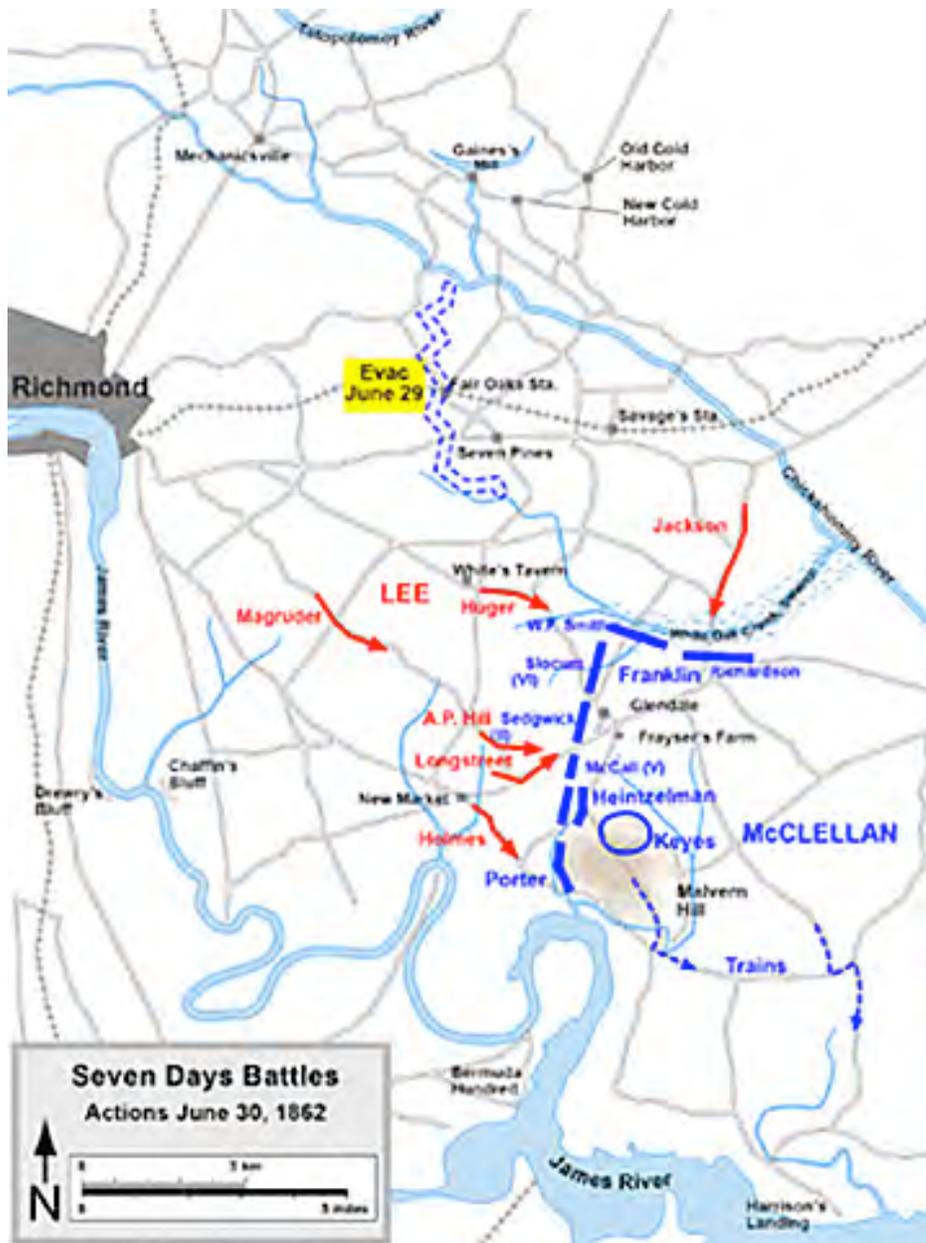
Before war erupted at Fort Sumter in April 1861, the peacetime army of the United States was remarkably small, with only 16,000 soldiers and sailors. President Lincoln immediately put out the call to the states for volunteers to raise an army. By this time, a great deal of excitement was casting a lure far and wide. Although many residents within Monroe County were of antiwar sentiment, that was experienced more so in the larger towns, such as Stroudsburg. But on the Pocono Plateau, the oldest son of Jonas and Mary heard the call to duty.

On June 8, 1861, with the rebellion less than two months old, at age 20 Barnabus F. Christman enlisted in the 4th Regiment Reserve Infantry at the Monroe County seat in Stroudsburg. Barnabus was assigned to Company F, composed mostly of Monroe County volunteers. The 4th Regiment was later designated the 33rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry. Christman then traveled to Harrisburg where he was mustered in on July 17th as a private, for a three-year enlistment. By December Barnabus was part of a vastly expanded 675,000-man army.

Barnabus was a bit taller than William at the same age, standing five feet, nine and one half inches tall. His military record further described him as having brown hair, dark eyes and a light complexion. Before his enlistment, records state his occupation as a farmer. No doubt, to this point, he too was supporting the Christman family in his labors.

He eventually marched to war with his unit into Virginia on October 9, 1861. By December, they found themselves in the far southeast of Virginia, near Langley. As happened to so many recruits, Barnabus was reported as sick. Recovering, he moved towards Richmond with his unit as the Union Army of the Potomac targeted the capture of Richmond.

As they met the enemy in full battle, losses mounted and the fighting was fierce. At Frazier's farm in the area of New Market Cross Roads, the regiment was attacked by the Confederate forces with vengeance.



As they met the enemy in full battle, losses mounted and the fighting was fierce. On June 30, 1862, at Frazier's farm in the area of New Market Cross Roads, the regiment was attacked by the Confederate forces with vengeance.

As the 4th Regiment was supporting artillery that was protecting a line of retreat, the 11th Alabama attacked, inflicting the loss of 25 killed in action and 51 wounded.

Barnabus F. Christman lay on the field of battle, killed in action.

General McCall describes the battle as *“one of the fiercest bayonet fights that perhaps ever occurred on this continent. Bayonets were crossed and locked in the struggle; bayonet wounds were freely given and received. I saw skulls crushed by the heavy blow of the butt of the musket, and, in indeed that Greek had met Greek, when the Alabama boys fell upon the sons of Pennsylvania.”*

The enemy was successfully held in check, and the Reserves retired to Malvern Hill.

Private Barnabus F. Christman fought a valiant fight that was not in vain. The Christman family had sustained a great loss on top of their misfortunes, but this time it was the ultimate sacrifice for country and family.

Despite All, Life Must Continue

When Barnabus Christman left home for the army, so did a substantial supporting family member. As happened with families in those times, and as William later demonstrated, this dedication to the support of family was paramount. For this reason, it is suspected that Barnabus, like so many others, sent home at least part of his \$13 a month army wages. For a poor family in those days, that amount of money was substantial.

As we know, William was a laborer by age 16 in 1860 and contributed to the support of his family during the Civil War. His mother, Mary, also provided a substantial part of their minimal lifestyle by working hard to support both husband and children. She produced income by working as a midwife and *"picking herbs in the woods for the market."* At home, Mary toiled at cultivating crops for the family, repairing fences and taking care of the horses. In essence, she functioned as the head of the household.

We also know that earlier in 1864, before William's enlistment, Jonas was offered a part-time job carrying the mail. Jacob Stauffer of Tannersville held a large contract carrying the U.S. Mail in Northeastern Pennsylvania, with a stable of 90 horses to perform the contract. His son Isaac Stauffer moved to Houser's Mill (today known as Pocono Lake), and besides ordaining himself as the "King of the Poconos," with lumbering, manufacturing and eventually a resort inn operation, he also was involved in the mail contract.

In deposition, Isaac Stauffer stated that he provided Jonas with a job and a team of horses. He described the Christmans as *"poor people always in debt"* and that *"they were poor as Job's turkey."* By 1864 the Christmans' possessions were reported to consist of a buckboard wagon, a few household goods and a cow that William had bought for the family before his enlistment.

The War, the Draft and William's Decision

By 1864, the military draft was in full swing. In March 1864, the second Federal draft was scheduled. As the military preferred willing volunteers before forced draftees, it delayed the draft by one month in hopes of stimulating recruiting. Those eligible for the draft knew that by volunteering, they would receive a \$300 bounty, or signing bonus, with the first month of army pay issued in advance.

In July 1862, the adjutant general of Pennsylvania ordered each county to enroll all persons liable for military service into lists of draft-eligible men. The Monroe County Commissioners appointed Deputy Marshall John N. Stokes, who in turn appointed men in various townships to assist in the enrolling. A now-familiar Tobyhanna Township man was appointed to this duty: Isaac Stauffer.

Although Monroe County as a whole had exceeded its quota of enlistments to this point, the 17 political municipal divisions within the county had to stand on their own. Seven of those had deficiencies for which men had to be drafted, and Tobyhanna Township had to contribute 11 of their men through the draft. Attempts to avoid the draft were somewhat common, and all seven of the municipalities were very rural, providing the opportunity *"that draftees could seek the shelter of the native timber and avoid induction into the army."*

No doubt, in the small community of Tobyhanna Township, all the residents depended upon each other. As it was known that Isaac Stauffer provided employment to Jonas Christman before William's enlistment, and William referred to Stauffer in his letter home after enlistment, Stauffer's appointed position by the county for the draft process played in William's decision to enlist. Stauffer would have first-hand knowledge of how many draftees were needed, and the likely selection process.

As a savvy business person and appointed official, Stauffer would know that a draftee would not receive the \$300 bounty signing bonus, so alternatives may have been presented to Jonas and William. Also knowing the Christmans as *"poor people always in debt"* (perhaps to Stauffer himself), it made sense for William to gain the financial edge of enlistment.

Christman, Wm.	G - 67 I	2 - 660
Enrolled: 3-25-64	At: Easton, Pa	
M.I. 3-25-64	As: Pvt.	At: " "
M.O.		
Discharged		
Age at enrollment: 21	Complexion: Florid	
Height: 5'7 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	Eyes: Grey	
Hair: Sandy	Occupation: Laborer	
Residence: Easton, Pa.	(Born) Lehigh Co., Pa.	
Remarks: Died at Wash. D. C. 5-11-64. Buried at Wash. D. C. 5-11-64.	Buried with Com. Winchester, Va. 5-11-64	

Pvt. William Henry Christman's military record
 Incorrectly cites Easton, Pa., as residence (written after his death)

Family Leadership

With the death in battle of brother Barnabus in 1862, William was the oldest son. Growing into a productive adult, he assumed the responsibility to his family in lieu of his father's physical ability to provide. Known to have bought a cow for the family, this must have been a significant accomplishment for a family of little means.

The price of available, undeveloped land was relatively inexpensive even for those days, selling for a dollar or less per acre. Primarily, this was because the original ownership had capitalized from it by the cutting of the timber from it, or if still standing, the timber rights were retained by the original owner when the land was sold. But in either case, the land eventually was no longer needed and was sold at reasonable prices to clear the stumps and boulders, and use the rich soil for farming.

Upon William's enlistment, he seized the opportunity to use his newfound financial resources to take the next step in his life by the purchase of land. With his sending of bounty and advance pay home, William writes to his father,

"...father I want you to write me weter [whether] you have that note from Jacob Stoufer. I want you to take them papers all out put them in My trunk ant keep them their til I com back. father I want you to get thad deed for thad land ant get thad money from Timathy Miller ant pay it on thad land but mind yo thad you get a good deed"

William's entire meaning is not entirely clear but to his father. However, it does imply that money was owed to Jacob Stauffer as William is directing his father to pay off a note. It is also apparent that he feels their ownership of land can be concluded by obtaining a clear and valid deed for the land.

Perhaps the deed was attached to the referenced note? Whether Timothy Miller was involved in the planned land acquisition is not clear. Perhaps William is just requesting his father to collect his final wages from Miller, for whom William worked before enlistment.

In Pvt. Christman's April 3 letter, he further demonstrates his concern and love for family as he inquires with apparent concern for his siblings having been ill when he left home for the army.

"father I want you to write me how the gildren is weter they ar well again"

William quite clearly demonstrates his devotion to his family in his letter. He begins his letter by reporting his well being to alleviate any family concerns, followed by instructions for the financial transactions of the "note" and the acquisition of land. Then he closes by showing his love of sisters and brothers in asking about their health.

Life for Christman Family Turns Positive

Jonas Christman moved twice in the 1840s and 1850s in his attempts to improve his family's lot in life.

While still being poor, he was first struck down with disabling rheumatism, then the crippling misfortune of a broken hip. But with three sons good support was possible if not for the Civil War. However, bad luck continued with the loss of his oldest son in battle, followed by the death of his second son caused by the rampant spread of diseases in the army.

His third son, Timothy, born in 1856, was not old enough to provide any substantial support through the 1860s. To date, nothing is known of the Christman family from the time of William's death in May 1864 until 1869. We do know that the parents and family were not eligible for survivor pension benefits under the then-current regulations.

No deed records have been found showing Jonas Christman got "*thad deed*" with the money William sent home. However, in a deed transaction recorded in 1885 (discussed later), Jonas is showing for the first time having owned a 40-acre tract with house, barn and other improvements. Since the only other deeded property in his name was a tract of 321.91 acres purchased in 1870 which was intact in 1900 without improvements, this 40-acre property is likely to be the land purchased with William's assistance.

In 1869 Jonas Christman decided to participate in community affairs and was elected to the position of Tobyhanna Township supervisor. The duration of his term is unknown. In deposition, Christman stated that his mail delivery job was a full-time position by 1870. So it appears things were starting to turn positive for Jonas and his family at this point.

Then on April 14, 1870, the sale of a property to Jonas Christman was registered in the deeds of Monroe County. Jonas Christman purchased from Abraham Peters a wooded tract of land containing 321 acres and 91 perches for \$40. Although the \$40 price tag may seem to be a nominal cost, it came with barter, not uncommon in those days. As part of the deed, Peters retained the rights to the timber, and Jonas had almost one year to cut the timber for Peters.

The deed to Jonas Christman stipulated that he had until April 1, 1871, to clear the land and put the timber in the river Tobyhanna [Tobyhanna Creek] in acceptable saw log form, so it could be transported to market. The deed further stipulated that Christman would be paid a sum of \$4 per thousand foot board measure of timber, for the work. Reserved for future harvesting were 94 acres. The deed shows an estimate of 100,000 foot of timber available to be cut.

This tract of land is located very close to Pocono Lake, which was formed by Tobyhanna Creek. The initial purpose of this lake was to establish headwaters to transport timber to market. Although some timber was placed in the lake for sending over the spillway, the more common method was to stack walls of timber along the shore of Tobyhanna Creek below the spillway.

When this preparation was complete, the water would then be released from the dam in the early morning hours of 3 to 4 a.m. Enough water force would be built up by 7 a.m. allowing the loggers to topple the logs into the onrushing waters. This great force of water would carry the timber over the miles of the Tobyhanna Creek

to the Lehigh River, on to White Haven and eventually to the Delaware River in Easton, providing for transit on that river to Philadelphia.

As Jonas Christman was physically challenged, and his 14-year-old son Timothy was not of full productive strength for logging, he apparently planned to hire local loggers for the project. That labor pool was certainly readily available throughout the region. Because the property remained in his possession beyond the deadline, Jonas must have fulfilled the terms of the contract and the requirements within the deed.

This 322-acre tract of land ownership passed from Jonas to son Timothy, perhaps through Mary. On May 4, 1899 Timothy sold the tract for \$15 to himself, Isaac Stauffer (King of the Poconos), Mary Hamill, John Redkey and the Tobyhanna Water Storage and Supply Company. Due to the sale price, it is conceivable that Timothy received shares of stock in the company.

By this time Stauffer had many enterprises, with one being involved in the Pocono Lake Ice Company, formed in 1900. With the large ice houses, a capacity for 40,000 tons of storage on Pocono Lake, and a side rail from the new Wilkes-Barre and Eastern Railroad running by the property, the enterprise became significant.

The Judicial Career of Jonas Christman, Esquire

For reasons unknown, but perhaps due to the influence of community leader Isaac Stauffer and Jonas' short stint as a township supervisor, Jonas Christman made the decision to run for the elected office of justice of the peace for Tobyhanna Township. As shown from records filed with the county, Gov. John Geary certified the successful election of Christman. He was elected to a five-year term, beginning on April 8, 1871.

Christman continued his judicial career until his death. Although he was not elected for a second term in 1877, he was back in judicial office by 1881. Samuel Eschenbach had served a number of terms since 1851 and won election in 1876.

But apparently he could not finish his term, and Jonas Christman was appointed to fill out the term by Republican Gov. Henry Hoyt. Christman filled this office from May 3, 1881, until the next election in 1882. However, during the period he was not in judicial office, Jonas managed to get himself elected to a new term as Tobyhanna Township supervisor in 1879.

County and state records show Jonas Christman, Esq., winning the election of 1882. He was confirmed to a five-year term by Gov. Hoyt, starting on the first Monday of May 1882. Esquire Christman must have been a popular and successful justice of the peace, for he again won reelection in 1887.

Gov. James Beaver confirmed his election as duly recorded, starting his next five-year term on the first Monday of May 1887.

One duty as a justice of the peace is to perform civil marriages. Here is the record of one performed by Henry Christman:

*Gregory - Altemose - April 6, 1890, in Tobyhanna Township, by Jonas Christman, Esq.,
Mr. Richard Gregory to Miss Alice Altemose, both of Long Pond, Pa.
Stroudsburg Times, Thursday, April 17, 1890*



Jonas Christman, Pocono Lake Cemetery

Within three months of that wedding, Jonas Christman died while in office, on July 26, 1890, at the age of 74. He is buried at the Pocono Lake Cemetery in Tobyhanna Township, not far from where he worked and lived.

Mother's Pension

Under the regulations established by the Department of the Army and funding provided by the US Congress, Pvt. Christman's mother did not qualify for a survivor's pension. However, through pressure of veteran's groups, political leaders and concerned citizens, action brought forth a change that allowed Mary Christman the opportunity to apply for mother's benefits in 1885.

Records show that she was granted a pension based upon her dependence on William for her support, before his enlistment in the army. The pension, granted on April 23, 1885, paid Mary \$8 a month until her death in 1902. Although Mary received more than \$1,600 total pension during those years, the depositions that she and Jonas provided for that application, now maintained at the National Archives, provides priceless information about their lives. See *Mary Christman's Declaration for an Original Pension of a Mother on Page 24*.

NAME OF SOLDIER:		Christman, William H. (S.M.)		
NAME OF DEPENDENT:		Widow, Mother, Christman, Mary A.		
RATINGS:		9. 67 Co. Inf.		
DATE OF FILING	CLASS	APPLICATION NO.	CERTIFICATE NO.	STATE FROM WHICH FILED
	Widow,			
	Widow,			
	Mother,			
1879/Jan 6	Mother	253997	214004	
ATTORNEY:				
REMARKS:				



The Christman Family Home

The historic site survey form from the Pennsylvania Office of Historic Preservation describes and pictures the approximate age of the “house, ca. 1870.” As the timber from 230 acres was harvested in 1870, a case can be made for the readily available building materials for construction. With Jonas seeking office as the justice of the peace, that office carried the responsibility to provide for adequate facility for the public to conduct business with the esquire. Well into the 20th Century, it was quite common for a justice of the peace to host his duties, with a home’s living area doubling as an office.

In the deed from 1885, the house was described as:

A Plank Dwelling House 18 X 30 feet two stories;

A Log Barn 24 by 40 feet,

a Pig pen 12 by 12 feet.

A Lot of Apple and other fruit trees.

A well of water near the Dwelling and a Stream of water passes through and the Tobyhanna Creek passes by and the Public Road leading from Tomkinsville [today Pocono Pines] to Stoddartsville passes along by said premises.

Approximately 100 years later the survey conducted by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (See Pages 29-20) provides the following:

Architectural Description:

Exterior:

2½ story, 3 bay facade, 2 bay side, rectangular, stone foundation, clapboard siding.

“Pennsylvania Farmhouse”, gable roof, slate shingles, patterned on facade end columns and bracket supports, vertical board enclosure around porch.

Interior: (no entry)

Associated Buildings:

blacksmith shop, 1½ story, gable and entry, gable roof, asphalt shingles, clapboard siding, 2 bay side.

As the legacy of William Henry Christman and the Christman family lives with us today, so does the Christman family home. It today rests primarily as it was originally built, along Route 940 in Tobyhanna Township. It is still used as a family home. (See Page 19). It has been reported that the blacksmith shop was destroyed by inclement weather in the last few years. The barn burned several years ago but a significant portion of its stone foundation remains.

Home Ownership Changes

On September 28, 1885, the Jonas Christman family home and property of 40 acres was sold at sheriff's sale by James Fisher, Esq., and high sheriff of Monroe County. But the circumstances do not seem to be typical, as Mary Christman bought the property at that auction for \$805. The deed was recorded in Mary's name two days later on October 1.

Why this occurred is unknown. Did it have something to do with the pension granted to Mary earlier in the year by the U.S. Government, as the surviving, dependent mother of William? As Jonas had been and was until his death the justice of the peace, it is very likely he would have known many people in the legal, law enforcement and government part of the community. Was it a legal maneuver on his part for some reason? Did he and Mary grow apart? Did he owe real estate taxes that he could not pay, but where would Mary have obtained the money for the purchase?

Mary did continue to live in the family home, as proven by the next transaction.

On January 11, 1896, Mary sold the family home for \$500. However, again it was within the family. The property was purchased by John F. Christman, her youngest son. It is very apparent that an arrangement had been made to "help mother-help son." Terms within the deed state that, "*John Christman ... agrees to with the Said Mary A. Christman ... to properly ... maintain and keep on the said premises the said Mary A. Christman and to furnish medical attention in case of sickness and to pay the funeral expenses of said Mary A. Christman at her death.*"

As Mary was now 71 years old and in the twilight of her life, another son was now seeing to her care. The deed further reinforces the arrangements, for John Christman and his heirs are subject to the "*proper maintenance and keeping of the said Mary A. Christman on the said premises and the payment of all medical attendance necessary, and funeral expenses.*" Mary was not to want for comfort or care in her remaining years.



Timothy Christman, Pocono Lake Cemetery – Sophia Christman, Stoddartsville Cemetery

The Christmans' Final Story

Of William's siblings, nothing to date has been found of Anna Maria (b. 1849), Emeline (b. 1850) and Mary Catharina (b. 1852). Other than the sale of the family home and property in 1896, his promise of care to his mother, and the purchase of a land tract from Timothy on May 4, 1900, nothing further is known of John F.

The third son, Timothy (b. April, 1856) most likely remained part of the family and was a supporter until he married Elizabeth Henry (b. 1860) in 1881. They had six children. The youngest, Leroy Francis, was born in March 1900, just a year before Timothy's death. Deed records show that Timothy acquired land in the immediate vicinity of the original family property in 1879, and later along the old Sullivan Road intersecting with the proposed new road to replace it (Route 940).

Timothy died on March 20, 1901 at the age of 45, and is buried at Pocono Lake Cemetery next to his father. His wife, Elizabeth, later remarried to James Singer.

Sophia, born on June 16, 1859, also had a shortened life. She died at the age of 16 years on October 23, 1875. The cause and circumstances are unknown. Also not known is why she is buried in Stoddartsville Cemetery, which is a considerable distance, and not Pocono Lake Cemetery, which is exceptionally close to the family home. She was buried with the Christman surname.

The pension records for Mary show that she died in 1902 at the age of 77. Her exact date of death and burial location are not known. During Mary's life she gave birth to eight children and outlived at least four of them, having lost three of her four sons. She survived her husband Jonas by 12 years. There is little doubt about the strength of Mary, having to provide for the children during the poverty years while Jonas could do little work. Through all of that, living to the age of 77 demonstrates the fortitude of Mary Anna Christman.

The William Henry Christman Legacy

Neither Barnabus nor William lived to marry and raise children. Leroy Francis Christman, son of Timothy and Eliza, had a son named Elwood, and Elwood had a daughter named Barbara Christman Page.

Barbara lives within our area today, being the great-great granddaughter of Jonas and Mary Christman, the great-granddaughter of Timothy Christman, and the great-great grandniece of William and Barnabus Christman.

The direct line of the Christman family lives on even further, with Barbara having her own children and grandchildren whom will carry on the Christman legacy. Also in the direct line of the family is Charles Kerchner, Jr., of Emmaus, Pa., a third cousin, three steps removed, of William Henry Christman.



THE HOUSE THAT WILLIAM CHRISTMAN BUILT

With the money and instructions William sent home from the army in April 1864, his father Jonas was able to purchase the family farm of 40 acres. The home, left, still stands today in Pocono Lake, and is owned outside the family

Pictured is Barbara Christman Page, the great-great granddaughter of Mary and Jonas Christman and the great-great grandniece of William.

The house shows modern improvements since the historical survey photos were taken in the late 1980s: vinyl siding, new windows and door, and a rebuilt porch.

DOCUMENTS & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

VOLUNTEER ENLISTMENT.

STATE OF  TOWN OF

Pennsylvania Easton

I, William Christman born in Lehigh Co
in the State of Pennsylvania aged Twenty one years,
and by occupation a Laborer Do HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE to have
volunteered this Twenty fifth day of March 1864
to serve as a Soldier in the Army of the United States of America, for
THREE YEARS, unless sooner discharged by proper authority:

Mustered into the service of the 17th Regiment of Pennsylvania

Do also agree to accept such bounty, pay, rations, and emoluments as are, or may be, established by law for volunteers. And I, William Christman do solemnly swear, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the United States of America, and that I will serve them honestly and faithfully against all their enemies or opposers whomsoever; and that I will observe and obey the orders of the President of the United States, and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to the Rules and Articles of War.

Sworn and subscribed to, at Easton Pa this Twenty fifth day of March 1864 by William Christman
Esquire Wm. H. Potts

I CERTIFY, ON HONOR, That I have carefully examined the above-named Volunteer, agreeably to the General Regulations of the Army, and that, in my opinion, he is free from all bodily defects and mental infirmity, which would in any way disqualify him from performing the duties of a soldier.

Enlisted States, for three years or during the war, as a Volunteer, on the 25th day of March 1864

W. H. Potts
EXAMINING SURGEON.

I CERTIFY, ON HONOR, That I have minutely inspected the Volunteer, William Christman, at his enlistment, and that he was entirely sober when enlisted: that, to the best of my belief, he is of lawful age; and that, in accepting him as duly qualified to perform the duties of an able-bodied soldier, I have strictly observed the Regulations which govern the recruiting of soldiers. He has Blue eyes, Dark hair, Dark complexion, is Six feet Four inches high. No scars on left side of neck. Two brown moles at back of neck.

W. H. Potts
RECRUITING OFFICER.
Capt & Prov. Marshal
11th Dist Penn a

date of enlistment, in Company 17th at Easton Penn a
Wm. H. Potts
Capt & Prov. Marshal
11th Dist Penn a

William Henry Christman's Volunteer Enlistment

RECEIVED
OFFICE
JUN 5 1881
PENSION

Philadelphia April 7 1864

Camp Get valentia elly dear mother I this
morning take the opportunity to inform you
afew lines that I am well at this present
time and hope that my few lines will
find you the same father I must tel
you that I like it very good we have
enough to eat and drink and more we dont
want for this present time
father I must tel you that I want you
to take good care of my close
and father I want you to write me
witer you have that note from Jacob Stumper
I want you to take them papers all and put
them in elly trunk and keep them there til
I come back father I want you to get that
dead fat that land and give that note
from hiram hay and get that money from
timothy ellien and pay it on that land
but mind el that you get a good deed
father I want you to write me how the children
is witer they ar well again
father I haint know where for to write for this
present time

So good by for this time

from your clear son
William Henry Christman

So please excuse my poor writing
for I had to haptu write on my flat
so I cant write as good as I ate

William Henry Christman Letter to Home, April 7, 1864

Transcript of Christman letter

Philadelphia, April 7, 1864

*Camp Cat valenter My dear Mother I this
Morning thake the opertunnitty to inform you
ufue times thad I am well at this present
time ant hope thad my ful lines will
find you the same father I must tel
you thad I like it very good we have
enuph to eat and drink and mure we about
want for the preasant time
Father I Must tel you thad I want you
to take good care of my close
ant father I want you to write me
weter you have thad note from Jacob Stoufer
I want you to take them papers all out put
them in My trunk ant keep them their til
I com back father I want you to get thad
deed for thad land ant get thad note
from hiram hey and get thad money from
Timathy Miller ant pay it on thad land
but mind yo thad you get a good deed
father I want you to write me how the gildren
is weter they ar well again
father I haïnt know more for to write for this
preasant time*

So good by for this time

from you dear Son

William Henry Christman

So please excuse my pour riting

For I hapto write on my plait

So I can't write as good as I ate

Source: U.S. Pension Office June 25, 1881
Transcribed by Rosalind Jones

RECORD OF DEATH AND INTERMENT.

Name and number of person interred.	<i>William Christman</i>
Number and locality of the grave . .	
Hospital number of the deceased . .	<i>Ward 14</i>
Regiment, rank, and company	<i>67 Penna Vols. Private, Co "H"</i>
Residence before enlistment	<i>Johanna Monroe Co Penna</i>
Conjugal condition, (and if married, } the residence of the widow) . . . }	<i>Single</i>
Cause of death:	<i>Peritonitis</i>
Age of the deceased	<i>Twenty</i>
Nativity	<i>Pennsylvania</i>
References and remarks	<i>Address, Jonas Christman Jannsville Monroe Co Pa</i>
Date of death and burial	<i>Died May 11th Buried May 13th 1864.</i>

Duplicates sent to the Adjutant General of the United States Army, and to the Sexton of the _____ Cemetery.

Memoranda:

*Effect of present
to further
W.H.C.*

*One 111 Blouse
One 111 pair Pants
One 111 Coat*

William Henry Christman Record of Death and Interment

H Declaration for an Original Pension of a Mother. H

State of Pennsylvania, County of Monroe ss.

On this 5th day of November, A. D. one thousand eight hundred and seventy-six, personally appeared before me, Clerk of the Court, the said being a court of record within and for the county and State aforesaid, Mary A. Christman, a resident of the County of Monroe in the State of Pennsylvania, aged 58 years, who, being duly sworn according to law, makes the following declaration in order to obtain the pension provided by Acts of Congress granting pensions to dependent Mothers: That she is the (1) wife of William H. Christman, and Mother of William H. Christman, who is enlisted under the name of William H. Christman at Leavenworth, Pa., on the 20th day of March, A. D. 1864, in (2) the 67th Regt. of the 186th P. I. who (4) died of measles on Peshawar Co. General of Meades - Prisoner - see letter of General John H. Reynolds to England, Pa. - died in Lincoln Hospital, Washington D.C.

on the 11th day of May, A. D. 1864; that said son, William H. Christman, left no wife nor child under sixteen years of age surviving; that she was (5) a widow dependent upon said son for support; that her husband, who aforesaid, Jones Christman, aged fifty-eight years, (6) crippled from Rheumatism for thirty years.

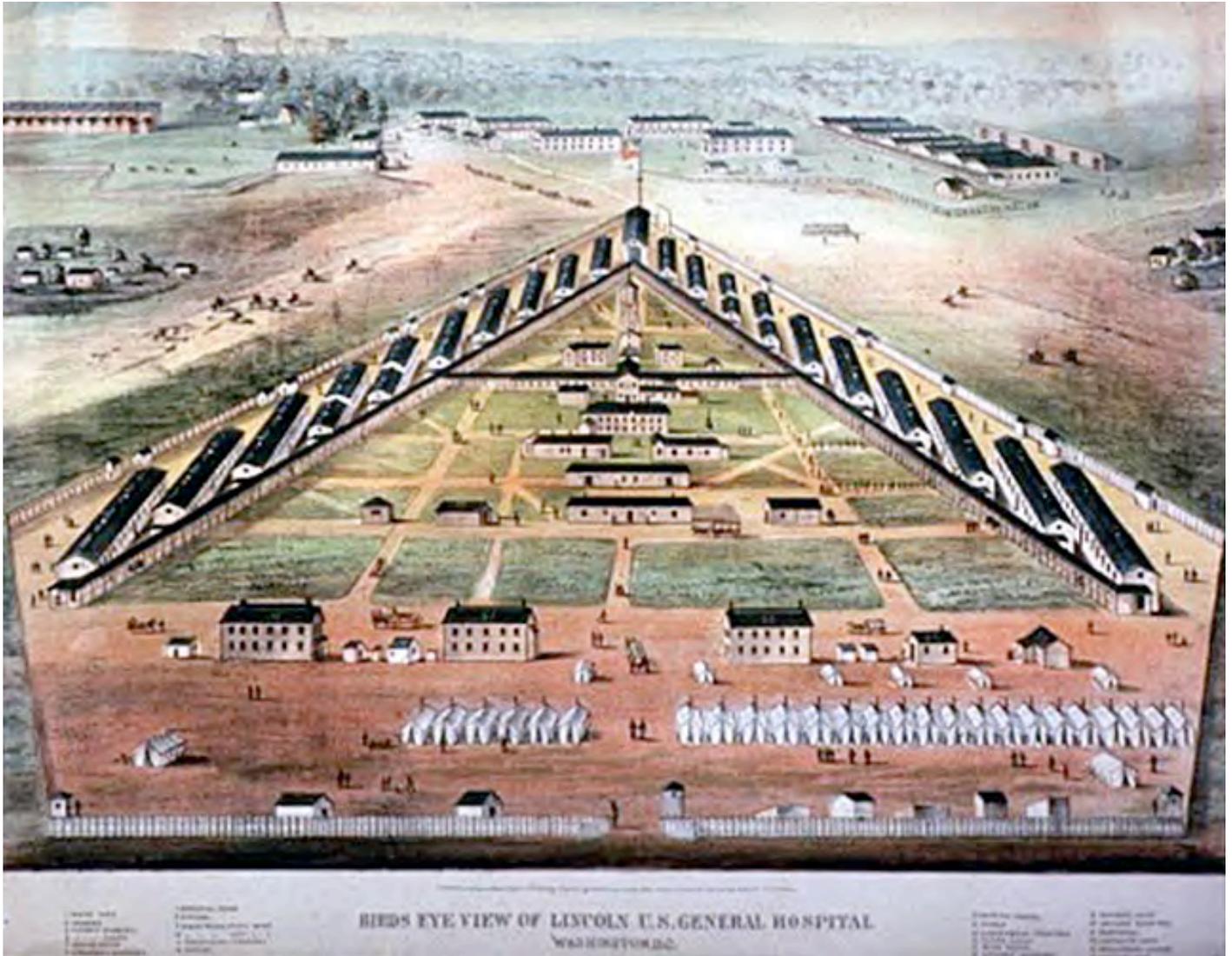
That there were surviving at date of said son's death his brothers and sisters, who were under sixteen years of age, as follows:

- Sophia Christman, born 1863
Mary Christman, born 1863
John Christman, born 1863
William Christman, born 1863

That she has not heretofore received any pension; that she has not aided or abetted the rebellion; that she hereby appoints J. B. ... as her Attorney to prosecute the above claim; that her residence is at No. ... in ... State of Pennsylvania and that her post office address is ...

RECEIVED AUG 17 2008

Mary A. Christman's Application to Receive Her Son's Military Pension



Lincoln General Hospital

East Capitol and 15th Streets, Washington, D.C.

Opened in December 1862, Lincoln General was the largest of the military hospitals in the area built by the Army to take care of the Civil War casualties. It was located on Capitol Hill, 15 blocks east of the Capitol building.

The hospital complex included 20 pavilions, arranged in two lines forming a V, and 25 tent wards, which provided altogether a bed capacity of 2,575. The kitchen and dining rooms were connected to the pavilions by means of a covered pathway. In addition to the headquarters (marked by the flag), there were officers quarters, quarters for nuns who provided nursing service, barracks, guard house, separate quarters for contrabands, and service facilities such as water tank, laundry, barber shop, carpenter shop, stables and a morgue ("Dead House").

Like most other military hospitals, Lincoln General was taken down shortly after the Civil War. The area once occupied by Lincoln General is now a residential district.



3rd U.S. Infantry soldiers, known as "The Old Guard," photograph headstones at Arlington National Cemetery with GPS-equipped smartphones to check burial locals against burial records. (U.S. Army/J.D. Leipold)

TASK FORCE CHRISTMAN

December 28, 2011

Soldiers complete documentation of Arlington National Cemetery

By Sgt. Luisito Brooks
U.S. Army News Service

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, Va. (Army News Service) — Day or night, rain or shine, these men had a mission to complete.

Soldiers with Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard), finished photographing and documenting the location of every tombstone, grave marker and cremation site in Arlington National Cemetery, Va., Dec. 23, 2011.

"We are calling ourselves Task Force Christman, after Private William Christman, who was the first soldier buried here," said Maj. Nate Peterson, commander, Delta Company. "The primary purpose of this process is to establish an accountability of all remains in Arlington National Cemetery. The cemetery dates back to 1874 when the cemetery was run by Union soldiers who just had bad record keeping practices over the years. What we are doing is verifying what's on record and correcting anything that's not."

Peterson added the detailed information will be housed in a large electronic database. Over a period of a few months, the task force dedicated numerous hours to cover the more than 259,000 sites spread across 624 developed acres of the cemetery.

"Our unit walked over every inch of the cemetery taking pictures of the front and back of every tombstone. We also tagged every site with a GPS locator with its section and grave number," said Spc. Al Carney, an infantryman with Delta Co.

It was evident for Carney the importance of the completion of this task.

"What we are doing here is for the families of the fallen because it helps pay respect and keeps track of where they lay," said Carney.

Like Carney, the demeanor of every soldier involved in the documentation process was very focused and solemn.

"This mission is taken very seriously by the Army," said Peterson. "How we conduct ourselves as professionals in the military is the same attitude we carry here taking pictures."

With the process now over, Peterson said he is proud to have honored our nation's heroes in such an exceptional way.

"This is an unprecedented mission because it has never been done before and it probably will never be done again," said Peterson. "What we are doing is paying tribute to our fallen comrades."

August 31, 2011

Soldiers document Arlington National Cemetery headstones with smartphones

By J.D. Leipold
U.S. Army News Service

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) — Since early June, about 100 soldiers and volunteer students have spent their nights silently walking between the seemingly endless rows of marble at Arlington National Cemetery, stopping to crouch and clear the grass from the base of each headstone.

Then they step back, crouch again and snap photos with smartphones of the front and back of each headstone — 219,619 of them including the 726 new burials since the project began. They've also photographed 43,096 columbarium wall niches where urns filled with cremated remains rest.

Next they enter the section and grave numbers, the GPS latitude and longitude, how many are interred under one grave, and other information, then they double-check the information and email it in a package to a task force of specialists who begin the process of matching headstone information with digitized records that are then compared for accuracy.

The photo documentation is just the first step in the cemetery's efforts to correct issues on grave identification, said cemetery officials. The problems had come to light over a year ago when it was discovered that the cemetery was operating on an antiquated accountability system that often meant interred remains were not where they were supposed to be.

As the soldiers have been capturing images of the headstones, the cemetery is also digitally mapping the cemetery through aerial photography which will add an additional layer of accountability and will eventually provide the added benefit of enabling the public to locate and view the gravesites of loved ones over the internet.

Much of the documentation work on the ground has been accomplished by Delta Company Soldiers of the 3rd U.S. Infantry, known as "The Old Guard," between 10 in the evening and 6 in the morning.

Capt. Nate Peterson, Delta company commander, said the reasons for working late night into early morning were partly to avoid the 100-degree-plus temperatures and humidity and because his soldiers could more aptly control the lighting in the evening. He noted his team was off the grounds by the time the first funeral was underway. An average of 27 funerals take place at the cemetery daily.

On this day, the soldiers were at the start of 15,000 reshoots. Sometimes the angle of the original photo submitted was keystoned and/or blurry, or the marble was too reflective of the flash or the email didn't make it



Old Guard Soldier Pfc. Chris Bodell photographs a headstone with a smartphone at Arlington National Cemetery on Aug. 30, 2011. Images of 219,619 headstones and 43,096 columbarium wall niches will be matched with digitized paper records and compared for accuracy (U.S. Army/J.D. Leipold)

to the data collection center. Bottom line -- if the photos aren't perfect, they're photographed again, Peterson said, adding that his team would get creative if just for the perfect angle.

"President Taft's marker is really tall and they wanted to make sure they got a nice head-on shot, so one of the guys put another guy on his shoulders, backed up and took the picture," he said.

Spc. Matthew Caruso, who has been with the Old Guard for about two years, said taking the photos has been an honor: "It's a good feeling knowing that you're doing something for the families of the fallen and making sure in this particular case that we're helping to fix any discrepancies in the cemetery."

A side note in Caruso's case was that he just recently found out from his grandmother that his grandfather was in the columbarium.

"It was personally interesting to me because I have a fallen grandfather there that I never heard about until recently. My grandmother told me he was buried here, a World War II veteran, so I did some research and found out where he was," said Caruso.

Tuesday Soldiers were working section 33, one of the oldest areas that contain the graves of servicemembers who lived from the late 1800s into the early 1900s. Most were veterans of the Spanish-American War. While the job hasn't been particularly challenging for an infantryman because it's been so repetitive, Pfc. Nicholas Cress said he keeps in mind that the job is "definitely not difficult compared to what most of these people had to go through."

For Pfc. Chris Bodell working through the dark nights has given him pause to think about the people reflected by the headstones.

"It's kind of a weird feeling looking at all of those who have come before me, wondering what they did in their careers," he said. "Looking at the graves, taking pictures to help document the people who fought in the Civil War and those who have died in the current conflicts — this is all so much bigger than just myself."



Christman family home photos taken in late 1980s in conjunction with the state historic preservation survey.

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL and MUSEUM COMMISSION Office of Historic Preservation Comprehensive Historic Sites Survey Form		COUNTY
		Monroe
		Township
		Tobyhanna
		CODE 089-18-14
		Map
		Stakeslee Quad
		038826
PROPERTY NAME Christman Family House		
038826		
I. IDENTIFICATION:		
Property Name <u>Christman Family House</u>		
Location <u>Rt 940</u>		
Township <u>Tobyhanna</u> County <u>Monroe</u>		
Owners Name <u>Mrs. Martha Kitchen</u>		
Address _____		
Telephone Number _____		
II. TYPE of Structure and Approximate AGE: <u>house, ca. 1870</u>		
III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:		
<u>Exterior:</u>		
2½ story, 3 bay facade, 2 bay side, rectangular, stone foundation, clapboard siding, "Pennsylvania Farmhouse", gable roof, slate shingles, patterned on facade, end chimneys, facade porch and turned columns. 2/2 sash windows, rear porch, turned columns and bracket supports, vertical board enclosure around porch.		
<u>Interior:</u>		
<u>Associated Buildings:</u> (if appropriate)		
blacksmith shop, 1½ story, gable end entry, gable roof, asphalt shingles, clapboard siding, 2 bay side.		
IV. INFORMATION SHEET PREPARED BY:		
Name _____		MONROE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Street _____		RD. #2, BOX 2337
City _____ County _____ State _____		SIMONSBURG, PA, 18360
Telephone Number _____		(717) 932-5002

State Office of Historic Preservation survey form on the Christman family home, completed in the late 1980s.

PHMC Cultural Resources Database

This information is provided by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC). While we believe the data to be reasonably correct, neither PAB nor the PHMC takes any responsibility for its accuracy.

Christman Family House

Built: c. 1870

Address: Rte. 940

Municipality: Tobyhanna Township, Monroe County

National Register Status: Undetermined

Key Number: 038826

Inventory Identification Number: 38734

Survey Code: 089-TB-14

PHMC Administrative Actions:

Date	Action
01/17/2000	Date Record Changed

Bibliography & Credits

A very special note of thanks to Mr. George Dodge, attorney-at-law, of Arlington, Va. Mr. Dodge is an active historian, serving as president of the Arlington Historical Society, and author of Historic Images of Arlington National Cemetery. Mr. Dodge's paper, "Arlington National Cemetery's First Civil War Burials," provided extensive information for this story. His hours of tedious research established the basis for which further research was made possible. Thank you, Mr. Dodge.

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