

Samuel Wrightstone (1841-1864)

Samuel Wrightstone was born 1841 to John Wrightstone and Margaret Hart. In 1850 he lived with the family in Conewago Township York County Pennsylvania. By 1860 Samuel would live about a mile from his brothers, John and Michael, in the Monaghan Township, Lewisberry Area of York County. Samuel lived in the home of J. Myers and his wife Rachael, working as a farm laborer.

On September 10th 1862, a 21 year old Samuel Ritston (Wrightstone), ¹ went to the 2nd ward in Harrisburg Dauphin County, and was enrolled into federal service by Captain Gowan. Samuel was assigned to Gowan's Calvary Company. On September 17th 1862, Samuel was mustered in for a 3 year term of service by Captain Norton, and assigned to Company E of the 18th Regiment, Pennsylvania Cavalry (163rd Volunteers). ²

After some brief training, Samuel and his 18th regiment were on duty at Bladensburg and Germantown Pennsylvania and in the Defenses of Washington till June 1863. The 18th was then quickly dispatched to Chantilly Virginia, and became involved in a number of skirmishes. The 18th continued duties throughout northern Virginia and Maryland, engaging in the campaigns known as the Battle of Antietam and the South the Battle of Sharpsburg.

During the Battle of Gettysburg, General Meade commanded the Union Army of the Potomac, his commanders deployed troops to protect Union flanks, and to look for Confederate activity. During this time the 18th Pennsylvania Cavalry was attached to the 1st Brigade, 3rd Division Cavalry Corps. On June 30th 1863, about noon, the 18th were 13 miles east of Gettysburg, in Hanover, where they engaged Confederate forces of Major General Stuart's Cavalry and Horse Artillery.

After the Confederate forces were forced to withdraw from Hanover, the 18th moved north towards Hunterstown. In the early afternoon of July 2nd, the 18th arrived on the field of Gettysburg, and quickly moved over the road from Gettysburg to Abbottstown, where they were attacked at sundown near Hunterstown by Stuart's Cavalry which was driven from the field after an engagement of two hours.

During the late afternoon of July 3rd, the 18th charged with the 1st brigade upon the Confederate's infantry's right and rear positions; behind the stone wall to the north on the outer edge of the woods of Bushman Hill towards Emmitsburg Road. ³ After the battle, the 18th moved into the town of Emmitsburg Maryland.

On November 18th 1863, while the Regiment were on duties at Germania Ford Virginia, Samuel was captured in an attack by Confederate forces. ⁴ He was taken as a prisoner of war, ⁵ and sent to the Andersonville Prison, also known as Camp Sumter. ⁶

On August 29th 1864 Samuel died of dysentery, and is buried at the Andersonville National Cemetery, Plot: Section: E, Row: 7245. ⁷

Bibliography

1. 1850 John Wrightstone Census: Conewago, York, Pennsylvania; Roll: M432_840; Page: 300B; Image: 382; 1850 United States Federal Census, Provo, UT, USA; Original data: Seventh Census of the United States, 1850; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M432, 1009 rolls); Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29; National Archives, Washington, D.C.
2. 1860 Samuel Righthstone (Wrightstone) Census: Monaghan, York, Pennsylvania; Roll: M653_1201; Page: 573; Image: 116; Family History Library Film: 805201; 1860 U.S. census, population schedule. NARA microfilm publication M653, 1,438 rolls. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.
3. Sural (Saml) Ritston (Samuel Wrightstone) Civil War Enlistment: National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington, D.C.; Consolidated Lists of Civil War Draft Registration Records (Provost Marshal General's Bureau; Consolidated Enrollment Lists, 1863-1865); Record Group: 110, Records of the Provost Marshal General's Bureau (Civil War); Collection Name: Consolidated Enrollment Lists, 1863-1865 (Civil War Union Draft Records); ARC Identifier: 4213514; Archive Volume Number: 6 of 7.
4. Samuel Ritston (Wrightstone) Civil War PA 18th Calvary Regiment: National Park Service. U.S. Civil War Soldiers, 1861-1865 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2007; National Park Service, Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System, <http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/>
5. Samuel Ritston (Wrightstone) Civil War PA 3rd Calvary Regiment: National Park Service. U.S. Civil War Soldiers, 1861-1865 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2007; National Park Service, Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System, <http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/>.
6. History of the Eighteenth Regiment of Calvary, Pennsylvania Volunteers, (163rd Regiment of the Line), 1862-1865, Illustrated, Compiled and Edited by the Publication Committee of the Regimental Association, New York, MDCCCCIX, Publication Committee; Theo F. Rodenbough, Henry C. Potter, William P. Seal, 1909.
7. Samuel Ritzston Prisoner of War: Historical Data Systems, comp. U.S., Civil War Soldier Records and Profiles, 1861-1865 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2009; Data compiled by Historical Data Systems of Kingston, MA; Historical Data Systems, Inc.; PO Box 35, Duxbury, MA 02331.
8. Samuel Ritzson (Wrightstone) Prisoner of War: Andersonville Prisoners of War [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 1999; Original data: Andersonville, Georgia. Andersonville Prisoner of War Database. Andersonville, GA, USA: National Park Service, Andersonville National Historic Site.

End Notes

¹ Samuel Ritston Name: This is our Samuel Wrightstone, whose last name was spelled as Rightstone, Righthstone, and Ritson, Ritston, Ritzston and Ritzson in the Civil War records for the 18th Pennsylvania Calvary. See Bibliography 1 through 8.

² 18th Pennsylvania Calvary Organization: The 18th regiment was organized at Pittsburg and Harrisburg from October to December 1862. It was consolidated with 22nd Pennsylvania Cavalry on June 24th 1865 in order to form the 3rd Pennsylvania Provisional Cavalry. The 3rd Calvary was mustered out October 31st 1865.

³ July 3rd 1863, 18th Pennsylvania Calvary Engagement: This area was the left flank of the Union Army's position during the battle of Gettysburg. In 2013 it is on South Confederate Avenue, known as Bushman Hill and Slyder Farm. The monument to the 18th Pennsylvania Cavalry Regiment is south of Gettysburg on South Confederate Avenue.

⁴ Samuel Ritzston (Wrightstone) Civil War Capture: Page 225, Regimental Roster, History of the Eighteenth Regiment of Calvary, Pennsylvania Volunteers, (163rd Regiment of the Line), 1862-1865, Illustrated, Compiled and Edited by the Publication Committee of the Regimental Association, New York, MDCCCXIX, Publication Committee; Theo F. Rodenbough, Henry C. Potter, William P. Seal, 1909.

⁵ Samuel Ritson Civil War Union Regiment: Samuel was 1st identified as belonging to the New York Calvary or Infantry; which is on his headstone; however official records were later corrected because of his name and units captured at Germania Ford Virginia.

⁶ Andersonville prison was the most well-known and notorious of all the Civil War prisons, north and south. It was in operation from February 1864 until May 1865, and during that time over 42,000 men were interned there confined in only 23 acres of space. The peak population in 1864 was nearly 33,000 men. More than 12,000 prisoners died at Andersonville and are buried in the National Cemetery on the grounds. It is still an active military cemetery. The site of the prison is now the Andersonville National Historic Site which is part of the U S. National Park Service. The Park's museum serves as a memorial to all American prisoners of war.

⁷ Samuel Ritzson-Ritston (Wrightstone) Andersonville Prison, Prisoner, and Date, Cause of Death and Burial: Code ID: 17245; Plot: Section: E, Row: 7245, Andersonville Prisoners of War , Andersonville, Georgia; Andersonville Prisoner of War Database. Andersonville, GA, USA: National Park Service, Andersonville National Historic Site; Union prisoners interned at Andersonville Prison, Sultana, and Cahaba Prison; <http://www.civilwarprisoners.com/search.php?database=andersonville>.