

Book Review: *Battery H, First Ohio Light Artillery. The James Barnett Papers. General James Barnett, Captain James Huntington, and Second Lieutenant William Parmelee, Jr.* Written and edited by Edward C. Browne, Jr. Milford OH: Little Miami Publishing Co., 2009. 202 pages, \$19.95, paperbound. <www.littlemiamibooks.com> Reviewed by Dan Reigle for the *Ohio Civil War Genealogy Journal*, <www.ogs.org>.

OCWGJ readers are familiar with Little Miami Publishing's previous book drawn from the James **Barnett** Papers at Western Reserve Historical Society, *A Magnificent Irishman from Appalachia: The Letters of Lt. James Gildea, First Ohio Light Artillery, Battery L* (Julian Mohr, 2003; see *OCWGJ*, 2005, Volume IX, No. 3, page 130.) The 1st OLA regiment operated as separate batteries throughout the war, and this new book from Little Miami Publishing deals with Battery H in the Shenandoah in 1862, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, and the 1864-1865 operations near Richmond. It includes **Barnett's** material on the battery, collected but never published, as well as the writings of Captain James F. **Huntington** and Lt. William E. **Parmelee** Jr. on Chancellorsville and Gettysburg.

Captain **Huntington**, who organized the battery and commanded it until November 1863, was the great-great-grandfather of Edward C. Browne, who compiled, edited, and annotated this book. In his efforts, Mr. Browne has added a great deal of value to the original texts. The book is essentially a compilation of two sets of documents: General **Barnett's** unfinished and unpublished history of the battery, written from information submitted to him by Captain **Huntington** and others, and the writings (articles written for newspapers and *MOLLUS*) of Captain **Huntington** and **Parmelee**, who rose from enlistment as a Private to a commission as Lieutenant during the war. Such a documentary compilation puts a great burden on the compiler to tie them together, provide ample background, and ensure that the reader does not get lost. This is accomplished very ably by the editor with excellent introductory sections on the personal histories of both **Huntington** and **Parmelee** and on the military history of the battery, and with substantive endnotes that identify the people and events being discussed in the documents. The depth and breadth of the editor's research are illustrated by the revised unit roster based on his research of the 265 men who served in the battery some point during the war, most of whom were from the Marietta and Toledo areas.

The writings themselves are of great interest for the general insight they bring into the life of an artillery battery, as well as the substantial discussions of the battery's engagements, especially at Port Republic, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. Students of those battles will find these accounts of value. There are comments about subjects that we 21st century readers may not think about (forage requirements for the battery's 130 animals every day,) and observations that show high regard for men whose names are no longer widely recognized (Major General A. M. **Whipple**, Battery L's division commander when he was mortally wounded at Chancellorsville: "a brave soldier and a high-minded gentleman.") The description of the April snowstorm in the Shenandoah in 1862 and Bugler Herbert **Walker's** letter to his parents describing the Mud March illustrate the suffering caused by exposure to bad weather, as well as its impact on military operations. There are anecdotes that are humorous (the affectionately-named Independent Mule who declined to submit to any sort of coercion such as a halter, but who later performed admirably when needed to replace a mule who had died;) and others that are quite remarkable (the six horses who survived the battery's entire period of service from Camp Dennison to muster out.) One gets the impression that Captain **Huntington**, while not a professional military officer, was a hands-on artillery officer, very serious about learning the technology and tactics applicable to his unit and his equipment. He and several volunteers, at great risk, recovered their forge during the battle of Chancellorsville which had been lost when the pole that connected it to the team harness was broken, explaining "A battery without a forge during an active campaign was in a bad way." In another situation in 1862 in which the Army supply system could not provide the battery with enough nails to keep half of its horses shod, he collected all the scythes that could be found in the local area, and the unit made its own horseshoe nails. His pre-war experience in the hardware business in Marietta may have served him well in that respect.

Thanks to Robert Krick's discovery of the Barnett Papers during his research for *Conquering the Valley: Stonewall Jackson at Port Republic*, and to Edward Browne's skill and effort in compiling the Battery H documents, we now have a second excellent battery history from the 1st OLA Regiment.

(Editor's note: Readers with specific interest in Gettysburg are also referred to Mr. Browne's article in *The Gettysburg Magazine*, "Battery H, 1st Ohio Light Artillery: Controversy in the Cemetery," Issue No. 26, 2002, pages 114-128. <www.gettysburgmagazine.net>)