After the Union defeat at Chancellorsville, Virginia in May of 1863, the path was open for a second Confederate invasion of the North. Pennsylvania seemed particularly vulnerable as it was not only in the likely path of an invading army but it also rumbled with anti-war sentiment precipitated by the unpopular conscription law.

To meet these threats, Pennsylvania Governor Andrew Curtin on June 26 called for an emergency muster of up to sixty thousand volunteers to serve for ninety days or less, as needed. Twenty-eight regiments answered this call. Among them was the Thirty-ninth Pennsylvania Volunteer Militia Infantry, recruited largely from the coal mining region around Schuylkill County.

As was customary with militia, the men were allowed to elect their own officers. For colonel, they chose James Nagle, a Mexican War veteran who had risen to brigadier general in the Civil War before resigning his commission in May of 1863 for reasons of health. Because of his experience and seniority, Nagle was put in charge of the brigade, leaving the day-to-day command of the 39th Regiment to be exercised by the lieutenant colonel, James Hepburn Campbell, a recently-defeated U.S. congressman from Pottsville.

The forty-three year old Campbell was not merely a political choice. He had already seen some military service: first as a member of the ad-hoc battalion of volunteers led by Kentucky abolitionist Cassius Marcellus Clay which had helped guard the nation's defenseless capital during the critical early weeks of the war; later as major of the 25th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, a three-month regiment organized in response to President Lincoln's first call for volunteers.

When that regiment's term expired, Campbell resumed his seat in Congress, where he vigorously supported the war effort—a stand which undoubtedly contributed to the defeat of his re-election bid in November of 1862. His marital
enthusiasm undimmed by this political disappointment, Campbell quickly volunteered to meet the emergency posed by Lee's invasion. His regiment was quickly filled, its enlistment spurred by the County Commissioners' generous offer of five dollars a week to the families of all volunteers.

Campbell's militia regiment was formally mustered into the regular service on July 4, 1863, the day after the Union victory at Gettysburg had rendered moot its original reason for enlisting. There was, however, still work for it to do. It joined with the regular army in the chase of General Robert E. Lee's retreating Army of Northern Virginia. When that army made good its escape across the Potomac River, the Pennsylvania militia regiments were assigned scattered missions. Some were sent to Gettysburg to clean up the battlefield; others chased after Confederate raider John Morgan, then cutting his way through Ohio. Still other regiments were sent to various cities to guard against anti-draft riots like the one which had recently paralyzed New York City. Philadelphia was considered a prime target for rioters, as was Pottsville, a prospect which worried Campbell.

This fear was not unfounded. Schuylkill County was one of the strongest centers of anti-war "copperhead" sentiment outside the midwest. The coal miners, a rough lot, largely Irish by birth and Democrat by political conviction, had little enthusiasm for the war and positive hostility to the draft. In 1862 this hostility had verged on open rebellion, leading to the tacit suspension locally of the conscription call. Emboldened, the draft resisters inaugurated a reign of terror which foreshadowed the post-war activities of the "Molly Maguires." Enrolling officers were ambushed, mine owners threatened with sabotage and lurid tales circulated of loyal men dragged from their beds and shot to death in their own homes. According to reports, the draft resisters were drilling two thousand armed men, while the government, its forces depleted to meet the Confederate invasion, could count on no more than two undermanned companies of the Invalid Corps. Local authorities pleaded for a fresh regiment of reinforcements to be sent to Pottsville.

The Thirty-ninth could hardly have relished the prospect of suppressing a rebellion in its own home town, but it was spared this necessity when the government prudently decided to postpone the conscription call to September. Freed from further onerous or arduous duties, the regiment spent its last days of military service enjoying a bucolic camp ground near Greencastle. It was mustered out on August 2, 1863.
This was Campbell's farewell to arms. Shortly thereafter he was offered an appointment as United States minister to Sweden and Norway, a post he retained until 1867. Returning to Pennsylvania, he devoted himself to his legal practice and his farm until his death on April 12, 1895.

Campbell's Civil War letters to his wife Juliet, from which the following excerpts are taken, can be found in the William L. Clements Library of the University of Michigan. This collection of over one hundred letters, some of which are exceptionally well written, is a valuable but largely unknown source for certain aspects of Pennsylvania's participation in the Civil War. It contains candid interviews with Secretary of War Simon Cameron, Abraham Lincoln and Mrs. Lincoln. It also vividly documents the hectic early days of the war, the arrival in Washington of Pennsylvania's "First Defenders" and the formation and activities of the 25th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry.

Camp Muhlenberg
Near Reading
Sunday June [sic, should be July] 5/63

My dear wife

I am very well—It rains—Let it pour. I thank Heaven for it. It will swell the Potomac and mountain streams. What will become of Lees routed columns? Let it rain!

Our Regiment is full and partly organized. I was mustered in yesterday as Lieut. Col., Filbert as Major. Our good friend Mr. [William] Pollack as Qr. Master. Dr. Halberstadt has been tendered the position of Surgeon. I did not oppose it. My opposition would have defeated him. Say nothing of it.

Let James come down on Tuesday morning train. He can bring my black carpetbag with a clean change for himself, and for me the following.

One hundred dollars in 5 dollar bills U.S. Currency. I enclose a check. Mr. Smith can draw the money.

2d. my silk sash in one of the Bureau drawers.

3. The cape of my Army cloak.

He will get out at the Depot and walk at once to the Camp on the left
hand side of R.R. going down. Our camp is on the left hand side of Road. Allow one mile from Depot. Let him inquire for Col. Nagle's Regt. He can easily find us. Any one will point out to him Gen. Nagle's head Quarters. He may stay over one day. He must not bring Ellis. In a few days if we remain here, you and Ellis shall come down.

Love, worlds of love to you darling, and all the dear children. Mr. Dobson will see you, and give you further details.

Ever your loving husband
James H. Campbell

Mr. Dobson has given me the money for the check so James need not trouble himself about that part of the business —

Camp Muhlenberg
Heads Quarters Col. Nagles
Regt Pa. M.
July 8, 1863

My dear wife
James will give you all details of news. We are all hard at work preparing to leave to-day as we have had an intimation to that effect. We are ready, all armed, clothed and equipped [sic]. We have a splendid Regiment, nearly 1,000 strong, and we could add another 1000 to it if we desired to do so. I think we will take the cars for the front, say Chambersburg or Gettysburg.

I am well, but it is very hot, and pretty hard work—Will our Surgeon come? Was it not the refinement of cruelty not to oppose him? Let him come. He is welcome. Pollack is a comfort to me. He makes an excellent Q. Master.

* * * *

The news [of the Union victory at Vicksburg] makes the heart live again. Beyond precedent is it splendid. We live as a nation yet and will live. Gen. Sigel is here.

Good bye love. I will write when we reach some destination.
Your own loving husband
J.H.C.

Camp near Chambersburg
July 11/63

Dear Wife

Ten minutes after writing to you yesterday, we received an order to march. Left Shippensburg at 9 A.M.—Band in front, splendid Reg't 900 strong and up the rich and beautiful valley, but war blasted now, our steely serpent wound its way. Disappointed about horses, our field and staff were not mounted. I walked the eleven miles with the rest. Was it hot. Often in the overwhelming heat I made an effort to keep my brain from reeling. But I am well. Went into that Library of Col. A. K. Mc'Clures' in passing and had a good cool drink. It helped me mightily. We are encamped about one 1/2 miles beyond Chambersburg. In our front is Green Castle—11 miles. Some Rebel cavalry paid the place (Green Castle) a visit yesterday. Nothing in front of us but Col. Jno. Wyncoops Cavalry, 900 strong. We expect a brigade of N.Y. and Pa. troops to join us every minute. We are encamped in a beautiful grove. The rebel camp was here some two weeks since. Never saw a Rail Road so destroyed as this. Not only torn up, but dug up, and blown up, and rails bent and broken.

We may be in time to participate in the approaching struggle. Lee is in a tight place, around Hagerstown and Williamsport [Maryland]. He has 60,000 men and all his artillery and will fight hard. I suppose as soon as a division is formed here, we will be thrown forward. It may be a day or two, or a week. We cannot tell. Our pickets sent in a deserter last night from the Rebel army. We sent him to Gen. Couch—Oh for some mountain water—Some cool climes. Poor Frank how hot it must be on the Yazoo. Write to me by my military title care Col. James Nagle, 39 Pa. Reg., Chambersburg.

Love to all.
Darling —

Lee has escaped! What a forced march we made in the exhausting heat of yesterday. My brain reels while I think of it—16 miles over the hills to this place some 15,000 strong. Reached Camp at 9 P.M. Men slept where they fell. In roads, on the wet grass, in the gutters. Men died by the road side—But no matter. This morning we were ordered to Hagerstown at 6 A.M. Countermanded. Lee had crossed. I am well. Our next move I know nothing of. I am well. Slept in my blanket on the wet grass last night by a camp fire. Baggage train not up. Good bye.

Love as ever
James

Camp below Green Castle
Head Quarters 39th Regt. P.M.
July 21, 1863
3 p.m.

My dearest —

This is a glorious day. Sun and wind and swaying shadows and the murmer [sic.] of leaves innumerable in Camp—All quiet—only dull routine of camp life: all moves well and in order in my Regiment. Sanitary condition and discipline good. The drummer has just sounded the call for company drill, and has given me the drum to write this upon. I am seated on a camp stool purchased this morning, in the shade writing to the darling of my youth and manhood, the best wife in the world. This morning Judge Parry paid us a visit. We were glad to see him with his budget of news from home. On Sunday last Col. Frick17 hungry men [of the 27th Pa. Emergency Infantry] swarmed through our Camp and camped one night near us. At our head quarters we fed some twenty of the officers. Col. Frick, [Sgt. Major] Lin Bartholomew,18 [Lt. Col.] David Green,19 [Quar-
termaster Sgt. Norman] Willits, [Adjt. Wm. L.] Whitney et al. partook of our mess fare. We were glad to see them. They thought they were going to Pottsville but were ordered to Mercersburg some ten miles from here on the same front.

Two days since I thought we would be ordered back soon—now the powers that be seem to pause, as if Lees movements were not just decided enough, or as if we might be wanted in connection with the draft. We will know in a few days. We will not be wanted here long. We will be moved back to Chambersburg soon I think and probably eastwards. We all feel that if we can be of service we are ready to go ahead. If not we would like to be discharged. . . . Darling you will have no trouble in Pottsville about the draft. I think the N. York riots settled that, and Capt. Jones will have a strong force at hand. But if any out break shall be threatened run no risk, but pack up the silver and take the children, and go to Phila until all danger is over. You can close the House—Run no risk—use your judgment. Take the advice of John Bannan, Jones, and such men, and if there is danger, do as directed. There may be violence in the Country, I hardly think it will reach the towns. Capt. Jones will have a good force with Cannon at his Command—Still darling run no risk—I hope you are well. It will not be long until I see you. Love to the children and friends. And believe me as ever

Yours truly

J. H. Campbell

Head Quarters 39th Reg. P.M.
Camp near Green Castle
July 25, 1863
Saturday 10 A.M.

My dear wife,

I have written you a note in pencil to day, and sent it to the mail. This will not probably be sent, unless Gen. Nagle leaves for home to day. He will leave probably for a few days, as he has not been at home since we left. Nor have I.—The morning is beautiful, warm with a fine breeze. I was up
at 5 A.M. Saw the sun come up in splendor—Walked with William (you know what William) one mile to a brook, and had a delightful wash. Then we had breakfast, for we have established a mess, composed of the Maj, Quarter Master, Surgeon [Dr. George T. Wieseman] and myself. For breakfast we had strong coffee. William saw to that. Eggs, beefsteak, bread and peach butter. Not so bad. Only three tin plates for four so William and I eat off one plate! We have a splendid Regiment and I am very proud of my command. We drill often. Yesterday we had both Brigade and Regimental drill. You should see our 900 move. Band in front, and the sun on the steel! In one march the Band played in compliment to me “The Campbells are coming.” Our camp is one mile below Green Castle. The Rail Road runs along side of a noble grove of lofty trees, and in that grove with shade and sunlight our camp is pitched. No streets are so clean, no Head Quarters so nice as ours. We have six Regiments around us, and ours is the model camp. All we want is a flag. A Regimental color. And if you and Emily could get it up. We have red-headed Woodpeckers and Grey and Red squirrels in this camp, and a few farmers and their sons and daughters sometimes pay us a visit. Order reigns here. I am Autocrat and administering the laws. I sleep on my stretchers with blankets—sleep profoundly—Maj. Filbert and William occupying the same tent with me—a markee. We are the happy family, and have much fun and no jangle.—Where we are going we do not know—Wherever we can do good.

How beautiful this camp is this morning. Sun and shadow, the murmer of the leaves and the white walls of our city.

We have letters in camp this morning giving accounts of impending dangers at Pottsville. One from your Mr. Nichols has been handed around. Run no risk. Capt. Jones and the neighbors will protect property. You protect yourself and the children. I cannot think the Town of Pottsville will be molested. But run no risk. . . . We will not be here long. We will be ordered down to the blue Potomac, or massed at Chambersburg on the Rail Road. It is not finished to this point, or ordered back to Schuylkill to look after Rebels [i.e., prisoners] there. All conjecture.

Health of the camp is good. I look closely after its sanitary condition. I am well, William is well. He has a fit of grumbling because Emily will not
write. Next to her letters, yours offer him comfort. I tell him she has written and directed to Chambersburg. And yet the P.M. there must be stupid, for I wrote to him directing him to forward all letters for our Regiment to this point. This morning however I dispatched a special messenger to make special inquiry for mail matters. Why does Mr. Smith not write. Home news town doings etc. etc. Tell him to. Kind regards to all neighbors.—The Rebels made fearful havoc through this valley. Every family has its tale of wrong to tell—in every field you can see traces of wars ravages. But fearfully did they pay for it at Gettysburg. The drum beats “Orderly call” and I must close.—Darling I miss you more than ever, and long to be with my love. But patience and courage, all will yet be well—William wants a leave for a few days, you may see him. Love to all my darlings. Good bye.

Yours lovingly

James

Notes
5. The drawing for the draft was held in Pottsville under armed guard on September 23, 1863. Of the 3,334 names drawn for Schuylkill County, only 72 actually entered the army. Wallace, *Memorial*, 284-294.
6. Peter A. Filbert (b. 1833), a Pottsville businessman, entered the Union army as a lieutenant in the 10th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry and rose to lieutenant colonel of the 96th P.V.I., seeing action at Harrison's Landing and Fredericksburg.
7. Dr. Andrew H. Halberstadt was one of the family of physicians who served Pottsville for three generations. He had been a member of the medical faculty of the University of Pennsylvania and was active in the army surgical department throughout the Civil War. The reason for Campbell's ambivalent attitude towards his appointment is unclear but, as it turned out, the position of surgeon in the 39th P.V.M. was filled by Dr. George T. Wieseman.
8. James Campbell, elder son of James Hepburn Campbell.
9. James Nagle (1822-1866) had been a captain in the 1st Pennsylvania Infantry during the Mexican War. On the outbreak of the Civil War he was commissioned colonel of the 6th P.V.I., and when the term of that three-months' unit expired he became colonel of the 48th P.V.I. acting as a brigade commander at the Second Battle of Bull Run. Promoted to brigadier general, he was instrumental in carrying the "Burnside Bridge" at Antietam, helping to save the day for the Union. He resigned his com-
mission in May of 1863 because of heart disease. His final service to the army was in 1864 as colonel of the 194th Pennsylvania regiment, a hundred-days organization which served in the Baltimore region.

10. Ellis Lewis Campbell, younger son of James Hepburn Campbell.

11. The German born Franz Siegel (1824-1902) left his native land in the wake of the Revolution of 1848. Settling in Missouri, he became a political leader and was appointed a Union general more for his political influence with German-Americans than for his military prowess. In the summer of 1863 he was on leave from his command with the Army of the Potomac because of ill health and was tapped to be a corps commander in the Department of the Susquehanna.

12. Alexander Kelly McClure (1828-1909), journalist, author, influential Pennsylvania Republican and confidant of President Lincoln's was, in 1863, editor of the Franklin Repository of Chambersburg.

13. John E. Wyncoop was a cavalry officer (7th Pennsylvania) who had distinguished himself at the Battle of Stone's River. At the time of the Gettysburg campaign he was in Pennsylvania on a recruiting mission and was selected by General Darius Couch to act as Chief of Cavalry in the newly-formed Department of the Susquehanna, under which the Pennsylvania home guards served. Afterwards, he was appointed colonel of the 20th Pennsylvania Cavalry and later commanded a cavalry brigade under General Sigel in the Shenandoah Valley.

14. Darius N. Couch (1822-1897), a West Point graduate (1846), served in the Mexican and Seminole wars before resigning from the army to pursue business and scientific interests. In the Civil War he rose to Major General, commanding the II Corps at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, after which he asked to be relieved due to disagreements with his commanding officer, General Joseph Hooker.

Couch was therefore available to be put in charge of the Department of the Susquehanna, which was formed to meet the emergency of Lee's invasion. After the war Couch dabbled in politics and business, and then returned to the army where he concluded his military career as Adjutant General.

15. A relation of Mrs. Campbell's serving in the military campaigns in the West.

16. Edward Owen Parry (b. 1807), a Pottsville lawyer and political figure, elected judge in 1862.

17. Colonel Jacob G. Frick of Pottsville fought in the Seven Days' Battle as lieutenant colonel of the 96th P.V.I. and at Fredericksburg (where he lost 140 men) as colonel of the 129th P.V.I. He was mustered out in May of 1863 and was almost immediately elected colonel of the 27th P.V.M. Colonel French was described by a superior officer as "every inch a soldier, a rigid disciplinarian, an efficient and worthy officer." Wallace, Memorial, 510.

18. Lin Bartholomew, a Pottsville attorney and Republican politician whose Civil War experience included a stint as Secretary of War Simon Cameron's private secretary.

19. David Bright Green (1831-1893), a Yale graduate (1852) whose military experience included action at Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. After the war he would form a short-lived law partnership with Lin Bartholomew and then serve as judge from 1867 to 1893.


21. John Bannan (1796-1868), the head of a prominent Pottsville family, had fought as a private in the War of 1812. In 1861 he again offered his services to the government but was turned down because of his advanced age.