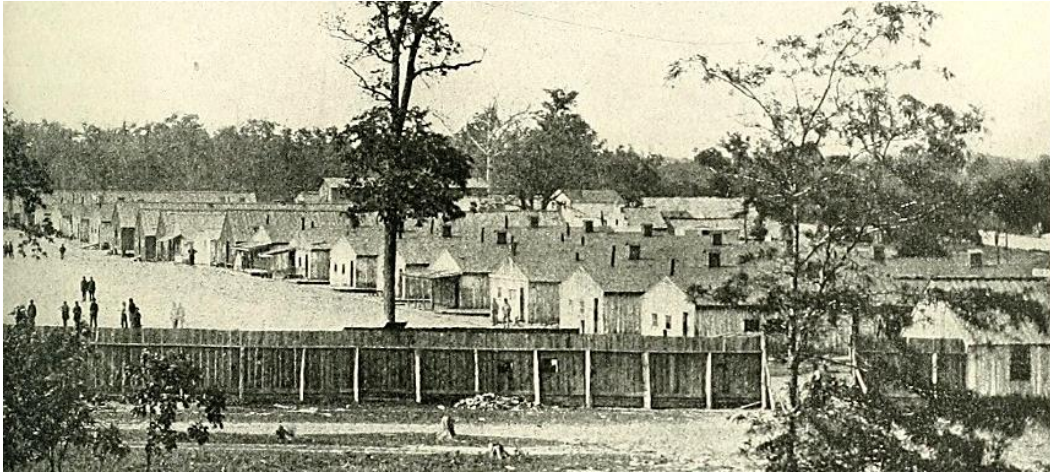


## **My Ancestor – Cpl. Sheridan Sullivan Sabine**

It is my privilege to be a member of *Lt. Cmdr. Edward Lea Camp No. 2 of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War*. I joined the Camp based on the Civil War service of my 3<sup>rd</sup> great-grandfather Sheridan Sullivan Sabine. He was resident of Chatham, a small village in Sangamon County, Illinois, and served as a Corporal in *Co. A, 3<sup>rd</sup> Illinois Cavalry Regiment* during the war.

Cpl. Sabine's wartime service was brief. He mustered-in at Camp Butler, Illinois, near Springfield, Illinois, on August 21, 1861, and was mustered-out in April 1862.



**Camp Butler in 1862**

Cpl. Sabine was not wounded in battle: rather, it seems that my ancestor was one of the many soldiers of the Civil War who endured the ravages of disease. Sent into the Missouri theater with his unit in 1861, we have a record of him being hospitalized due to scarlet fever at a post hospital in Rolla, Missouri on January 10, 1862. The following month - on February 16<sup>th</sup> - he was recorded as furloughed. Then he dropped from the unit rolls again two months after that.

However, because he never received his proper discharge paperwork, we have a rich vein of official correspondence from 1865, during which he sought - and was eventually granted - his correct and complete discharge documentation.

In a somewhat comedic footnote to history, we also have 1865 correspondence from Cpl. Sabine requesting reimbursement for a sorrel horse. In 1861, he had brought the horse in question with him on campaign, but he had left it behind in 1862, for a fellow soldier's use, when he returned home. That fellow soldier, though, turned out to be no good. Here's an excerpt from Cpl. Sabine's letter on the matter:

"I have a horse somewhere in MO. The last that I heard from is it was in Springfield in the hands of one Jack Brooks belonging to the same company that I did. Co. A 3rd Cav Ills. Vol. I have a letter from one of the company & he stated that Brooks was considered a deserter there he is about six feet high black hair & eyes rather stooped shoulder & has a good deal of blow about him."

The horse, no doubt, wished to labor toward the Union cause - but the deserter Brooks took him to parts unknown. In lieu of the horse's reappearance, Cpl. Sabine requested \$125 from the government. Sadly, we do not know the fate of the horse or of this request.

The scarlet fever which struck Cpl. Sabine while on campaign was apparently debilitating. Not only did he never return to service, but we also have him affirming in an 1865 letter that he was unable to travel; and he eventually died too soon, in 1876, at the age of only 37. Though he did not fall in battle, nor even during the

war, Sheridan Sabine is another of the war's victims: a man taken young, because he made the decision to serve his country.

The erstwhile Cpl. Sabine's final years were productive despite the ravages of his illness. He remained as civic-minded a citizen as he was when he volunteered for war. He succeeded his father as U.S. Postmaster for Chatham, Illinois; and he even found time, in 1872, to file U.S. Patent No.131635, on an "Improvement in Wash-Boilers."

Though his body was rendered infirm, his mind, and his heart for his country and community, continued to labor toward the civic good.

Sheridan Sabine's service is in itself a footnote in the grand epic of the Civil War. He won no glory on any battlefield, and he wrote his name in no book of martial valor. Yet he did the most essential thing: he did his duty. And he paid for it, eventually, with his life.

For his willingness to say yes to patriotic obligation, to endure its consequences, and to remain active and devoted in service to his fellow citizens even in his ailing years, I am proud to be his descendant.

I am also proud to be an inheritor of a country handed down by millions like him: modest men from modest places, who live modest lives until the day they are called to their best selves in the hardest times.

Our task is not just to remember them, *but to deserve them.*

*... submitted by 3<sup>rd</sup> great-grandson Joshua S. Trevino*

