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— HISTORY —

# 'Squirrel-hunting backwoodsmen' accurate

*(Part two of two)*

Lt. Stowell Lincoln Burnham (1837-63), came from one of Windham's most prominent families, and had a remarkable Civil War career. He was born in Windham, went out west in the 1850s, enrolled in the 82nd Ohio regiment, and fought in some of the war's most significant campaigns.

He spoke to a *Chronicle* reporter in December, 1862 while on leave, and recounted how his regiment had taken many beatings from the Confederates, and had lost significant numbers.

Lt. Burnham returned for duty in early 1863, and the following May took part in the Battle of Chancellorsville, also known as the Battle of the Wilderness, where Gen. Robert E. Lee's outnumbered Confederate forces inflicted a damaging defeat on Gen. Hooker's federal forces. Burnham recounted his part in the battle in a letter to the *Chronicle*.

His unit was constantly under "fearful fire from musketry and canister;" and wounded Union Army soldiers were constantly retreating from the thick woods. The bombardment was so heavy that Burnham's unit were unable to return fire. He was ordered to secure some rifle pits, and resist the next Rebel attack. "We took our position and waited the

approach of the yelling and whooping crowd who were driving us back like chaff."

But Burnham's unit held fast, "and many a Southern home will attest the accuracy of the aim of our squirrel-hunting backwoodsmen." Shortly afterwards, Burnham's rifle pits were overrun by two Confederate regiments, and Burnham and his men fought their way to safety.

Two months later, Lt. Burnham took part in the Battle of Gettysburg.

His unit was under the command of Gen. Oliver Howard at Cemetery Hill, and suffered heavy casualties on the first day of the conflict. Burnham was wounded when a ball passed through his hand, but refused to have the wound dressed he put on a glove and remained. He was then hit in the leg and arm, and his horse shot from under him, and shortly afterwards was fatally shot. Burnham's body was left on the field.

The Confederates buried him after taking his sword pistols, boots, money and watch. Burnham's brother-in-law later exhumed the body, embalmed it, and shipped it back to North Windham.

Lt. Burnham's funeral took place on July 22, 1863, in North Windham.

He was "buried in the beautiful cemetery near the spot where he was born." The North Windham meeting house was trimmed in black; the United States flag was trimmed in black, and the pillars of the church were also draped in black. Clergymen of different denominations conducted the services, and recounted Burnham's "patriotic devotion, heroic courage, daring, and high-toned, generous and chivalric qualities."

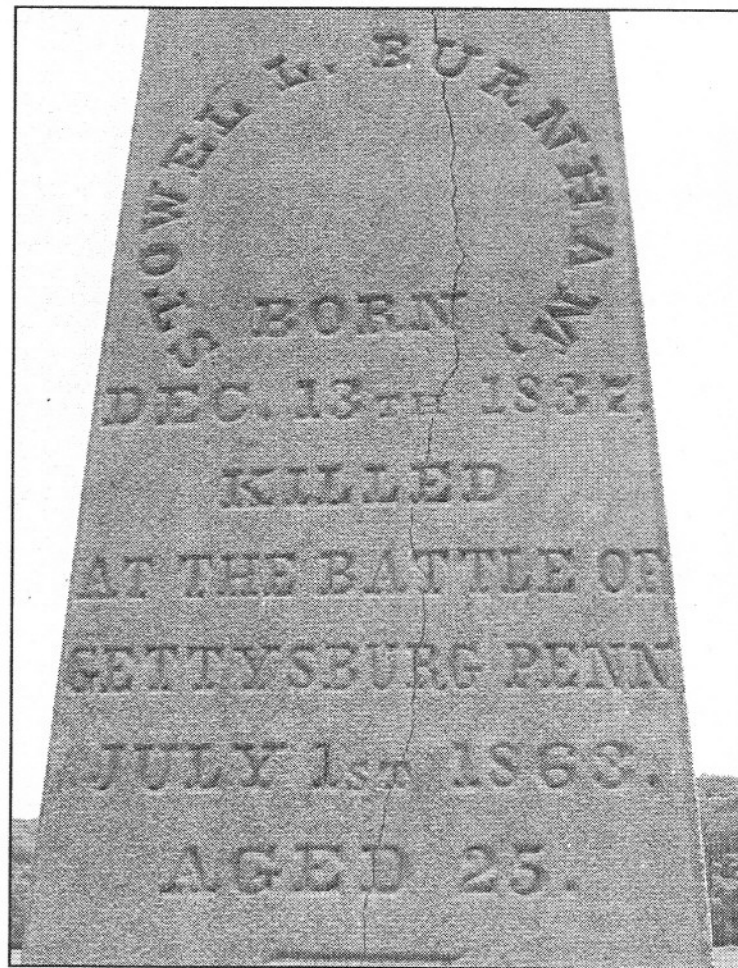
The coffin was placed in the church during the service, and wreaths were placed upon it.

As the flag-draped coffin was lowered into the grave, the Rev. Burlingame remarked that, "He sleeps his last sleep; he has fought his last battle; No sound can awake him to glory again."

The North Windham meeting house has gone, but the cemetery is still intact.

Burnham's impressive monument stands in the center, at the highest point.

It lists Burnham's engagements thus: McDowell, Va., May 8, 1862; Cross Keys, Va., June 8, 1862; Cedar Mount, Virginia, August 9, 1862; Bull Run, Va., August 29 to 30 and September 1 to 6, 1862; Chancellorsville, Va., May 1863; Gettysburg, Pa. July 1, 1863.



Fran Funk  
Burnham's monument, North Windham