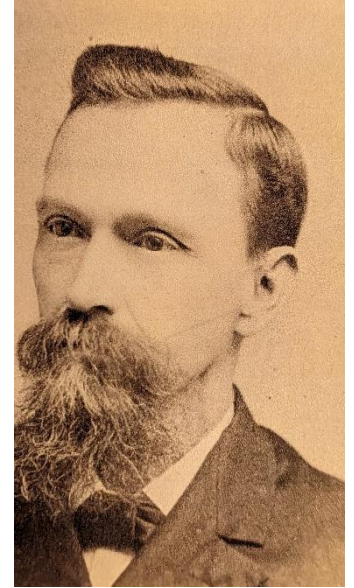


A Well-Documented Journey

My great-great-grandfather, Captain John R. Porter, fought in the Civil War. He answered Abraham Lincoln's (September 1861) call and volunteered to serve in the Union Army. He assumed the role of Captain in the 48th Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers, recruiting about 100 men to form Company I. During his time serving in the Union Army, he fought in some of the biggest battles of the early years of the War Between the States. Captain Porter's service took place in North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland. We have records of him fighting at the 2nd Bull Run, South Mountain, Chantilly, Antietam, and Fredericksburg, as well as other minor skirmishes. His Regiment trained extensively at Fortress Monroe (Newport News, Virginia). Like people on both sides, Captain Porter risked his life for the cause he believed in.



Captain Porter's time of service was in 1861, 1862, and briefly in 1863 — over 160 years ago. They didn't have the technology we have today, but there are written records documenting the travels of the 48th. The history comes from maps, newspaper articles, letters, soldiers' journals, and other official documents. Of particular interest to our family is a book entitled [The Story of the 48th - a Record of the Campaigns of the Forty-eighth Regiment, Pennsylvania](#). It gives a daily account of the travels and battles of my great-great-grandfather and first-hand statements from some of the officers and enlisted men who served with him. Records even show the placement of his Regiment on the battlefield. The book mentions Captain Porter by name in several places. It also identifies those wounded, killed, or those who died of diseases or from their injuries. The book is based on excerpts of letters written by those in the 48th Regiment. It gives a clear picture of what it was like at the time.

So, 160 years later, how do we know that what we have read is true? In April 2023, Kathy and I took a 1,300-mile road trip following the path of the 48th. We visited the battlefields and spoke to the Civil War Park rangers and historians. As soon as they knew of our ancestral involvement, they brought out historical data, and verified our information. Captain Porter's name was at the top of the list for Company I. Descriptions of the battles on historical markers were consistent with the information we had, as were the videos shown in the



Burnside Bridge, Antietam

Visitor Center at each battlefield. We had a first-hand look at the terrain of the battles and the journey they took to transport cannons and equipment to the battlefield. They marched extensively on foot but also traveled by steamer ship and briefly on freight trains. Amazingly, they could take cannons, tents, and supplies through rough terrain for hundreds of miles. We visited train stations, forts, and harbors where they had been. We saw the "earthworks" they had built as "lines of defense" to shield them in battle. We walked the paths they took, and we saw the rivers they crossed. At each location, I stood where Captain Porter had been and knew it had happened here.

Just as The Story of the 48th is a collection of first-hand accounts of the Civil War, the Bible is a collection of inspired writings by 35 authors. The authors of some of the New Testament books identify themselves as eyewitnesses to Jesus. Biblical scholars also tell us that some New Testament authors interviewed eyewitnesses to the events of Jesus time.

The Bible documents the history of mankind and the travels of Jesus and the disciples for the cause of freedom. The cause of freedom in the Bible is much broader than the objectives of the Civil War. Jesus' cause is about freedom from the penalty of sin. We toured battle sites and saw cannons and displays of weaponry. Archeologists have uncovered artifacts that verify events and locations described in the Bible. Many bible scholars lead trips to the Holy Land to see where it all happened, filming faith lessons on location. In essence, they are following the footsteps of Jesus, just as we followed the footsteps of Captain John Porter.

From the Northern perspective, the Civil War was about unifying a divided country that was at odds over a number of issues. Some were human rights issues, but others were economics, States' rights (who has the power), and an agricultural versus manufacturing way of life. Jesus' objective was for us to be "one with God," give up control, and trust in Him. Jesus' goal is the salvation of mankind.

Over 700,000 Americans gave their lives during the Civil War, as they fought for their beliefs. Most of Jesus' disciples were martyred while following Jesus, but they believed in an even greater cause. Jesus, Himself was put to death on the cross. And, then, He rose. For 40 days, he showed Himself to thousands of people as proof of the resurrection. Everything that was prophesized came true. It is all documented in the Bible. We can believe, and as a result, we can have eternal life.



What is the Point? We can trust the Word of God that is recorded in the Bible. We have ample documentation. We can believe.

The Bible Says: *"Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed"* (John 20:29).

Prayer: Most gracious, Heavenly Father. We want to follow in your footsteps on a path towards freedom. We know that your Word is recorded in the Bible, and gives us all we need to know to be unified with You. Amen.