**Charles Alfred Baer**

In August 1863, Reverend Charles Alfred Baer, “Alfred” to his friends, made the trek from Norristown, Pennsylvania to Gettysburg. His intended purpose, besides viewing the scene of the great battle that had taken place a month previous, was to attend to bi-annual meeting of the Seminary’s Board of Directors, on which Baer sat. Baer’s journey took 19 hours by train, arriving in the town at 1pm on Tuesday, August 11.

The Seminary Board met at St. James Lutheran Church that afternoon and evening. As can be imagined, Baer reported that most of the talk amongst the directors was about repairs of the Seminary in the wake of the battle. On Wednesday, the group traversed the battlefield in the company of Professor Michael Jacobs of Pennsylvania (Gettysburg) College. He visited Letterman General Hospital on York Pike and the Seminary Hospital. By Thursday, August 13, Baer was back on a train, headed for home.

Along the way, however, Baer took ill. “The water of Gettysburg made me quite sick,” Baer confessed to his journal, “On Friday I took medicine and [again] on Saturday.” By Saturday evening, August he had returned to Norristown, where he continued to work. His health, however, was not the same. “His care for the sick and wounded at Gettysburg seriously impaired his health,” the Yale obituary record would later write, “and he finally sank under an attack of typhoid fever” on September 9. His funeral was held one month to the day after his arrival in Gettysburg.

**Willie Cunningham**

Willie Cunningham was six years old when the soldier of the Third Division, First Corps, Army of the Potomac passed near his father’s farm. Living less than six miles from the Mason-Dixon line, the Cunningham Family—father John, mother Margaret, six children, along with Augustus Jenkins, the African-American farmhand—had likely lived in fear that the war would pass their way. In 1862, word had come that JEB Stuart’s cavalry were nearby, causing John to send his horses away to safety. Now, thousands of troops were marching to the sound of the guns.

For three days, the fighting would just beyond the borders of the Cunningham farm. On July 2, men of McLaws’ and Hood’s Divisions, Longstreet’s Confederate Corps, used the land just to the south and east of the Cunningham’s property to stage their attack on the southern end of the Union lines. And as the fighting raged, the wounded came. John Cunningham’s barn, empty and ready to accept the harvest, was converted into a hospital for the Georgians of William Wofford’s brigade. “All night long,” family lore would hold, “the wounded were carried in on stretchers…thorough the pouring rain.”

The Cunningham’s ordeal did not end when Lee’s Army retreated south. Hundreds of wounded men, too broken to travel, were left in the barn and on the fields surrounding it. The women “baked all the bread the big brick oven would hold every day” for six weeks. All the flour from the 1862 crop of wheat that John Cunningham had grown was used. To make matters worse, “the growing grain in the fields was tramped down, so two years’ wheat was lost.”

The Cunningham children were enamored with their visiting soldiers. “Mother was unable to keep the children away from the homesick soldiers,” one daughter would later write, “When mother would go to the barn to take milk to the wounded, she would sometimes find a soldier asleep in the hay with a sleeping child on each arm”

“The children broke out with sores, were infested with vermin, and all of them had itch. Typhoid fever was rife among the civilian population…Father and Mother had followed two little coffins to the old Marsh Creek burying ground…Willie a boy of five, had contracted blood poison from being about the wounded men.”

**Nathaniel Lightner**

“They had taken full possession. My four barrels of flour and everything in the cellar and spring house were soon used up...on the third day after the battle I got down to the house. There was not a board or rail of fencing left on the place. Not a chicken, pig, cow, or dog to be found. The mules had eaten up the orchard of four-year-old trees, down to the stalks. The garden was full of bottles and camp litter; the meadow of the hides and offal of the beeves which had been shot down in their tracks and dressed on the spot, as meat was needed.”

“Such smells as came from the festering wounds, from the blood and medicines, stained floors and from the chloroform! Then the stench from the slaughter yard in the meadow became sickening. Blue-bottle flies swarmed on the walls of the shop and house of an evening, and the night air was terrible. Why did we stay? Why come back? What else could we do? We had no money to pay board, we had nothing and a large family to care for. We had been putting all our money into the place. We must set to work as fast as we could to fix it up and get ready for winter. Six weeks later they took the last of the wounded away and let us have the house. We tried to clean it up and live in it, but it made us sick...Nine years afterward I tore all the woodwork and plaster out and made the house new from the bare walls. Then we came back, but my poor wife did not live long in our new home. She had never been well from that first time we tried to live in it.”

“War is awful...Everything suffers in war;...grain and grass are eaten up or trodden into the ground in an hour. Springs and wells are the soldiers' boons and are supped up to the last drop. The water even of that dirty, bloody creek over there, where thousands of cavalry and artillery horses were watered, was greedily used by the soldiers.”

**Sarah Broadhead**

“Early this morning I went out to the Seminary, just outside of town, and which, until the retreat, was in the hands of the enemy. What horrible sights present themselves on every side, the roads being strewn with dead horses and the bodies of some men, thought he dead have nearly all been buried, and every step of the way giving evidence of the dreadful contest. Shall we—for I was not alone—enter the building or return home? Can we endure the spectacle of hundreds of men wounded in every conceivable manner, some in the head and limbs, here an arm off and there a leg, and just inside a poor fellow with both legs shot away? It is dreadful to behold.”