

**PROVIDENCE PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
**Special Collections**  
**Collection #002-03-11**  
**2nd Rhode Island Infantry, Co. F. photographs**  
1861

**OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION**

Number: Collection #002-03-11

Title: 2nd Rhode Island Infantry, Co. F. photographs

Creator: Brady, Mathew B., approximately 1823-1896

Dates: 1861 July 17-18

Quantity: 1 folder, 7 items (total .05 linear feet)

**ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

Acquisition: Found in collection, 2016

Accruals: No accruals are expected.

Custodial history: Materials found within RI General Photograph Collection.

Processed by: The collection was reprocessed by Jessica Rogers-Cerrato in 2021.

Conservation: Not applicable.

Language: Materials are in English.

**RIGHTS AND ACCESS**

Access: This collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Providence Public Library, Special Collections department.

Preferred Citation: Researchers are requested to use the following citation format:  
*[item number], [item title], 2nd Rhode Island Infantry, Co. F. photographs, Special Collections, Providence Public Library.*

Property Rights: Providence Public Library owns the property rights to this collection. Consideration of the copyrights is the responsibility of the researcher.

**INFORMATION FOR RESEARCHERS**

Separated material None.

Published description None.

Location of originals Not applicable.

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|--------------------|---|
| Location of copies | <a href="http://www.provlibdigital.org">www.provlibdigital.org</a> under item numbers VM013_FIC0263-VM013_FIC0268   |
| Publication note   | Banks, J. (2017). ON THE EVE OF FIRST BLOOD: Rhode Islanders Before First Bull Run. <i>Military Images</i> , 35(1), 18–21.<br><a href="http://www.jstor.org/stable/24865790">http://www.jstor.org/stable/24865790</a>   |
| Subject headings   | Civil wars<br>Soldiers<br>Soldiers--United States--1860-1870<br>Military camps<br>Brady, Mathew B., approximately 1823-1896<br>United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865<br>United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Military personnel<br>United States. Army. Rhode Island Infantry Regiment, 2nd (1861-1865)<br>Bull Run, 1st Battle of, Va., 1861<br>Centreville (Va.)<br>Virginia, Northern.<br>Virginia, Northern--History, Local.<br>Photography.<br>Group portraits<br>Portrait photographs--1860-1870.<br>Albumen prints--1860-1870.<br>Cartes de visite--1860-1870.<br>photographs<br>wet collodion process |

**SEE ALSO**

The Rhode Island State Archives holds the full records for all RI companies in the Civil War. The finding aid can be accessed here: <https://catalog.sos.ri.gov/repositories/2/resources/649>

Finding aid for: Letter from Corporal Francis Ronien of the 2nd Rhode Island Infantry to his brother Henry, C0366, Special Collections Research Center, George Mason University Libraries. [https://scrc.gmu.edu/finding\\_aids/francisronien.html](https://scrc.gmu.edu/finding_aids/francisronien.html)

C. Fiske Harris Collection on Civil War and Slavery, Manuscript Collection, Special Collections, Providence Public Library.

C. Fiske Harris Collection on the Civil War and Slavery, Ephemera Collection, Special Collections, Providence Public Library.

Rhode Island Soldiers and Sailors Historical Society Collection, Rhode Island Collection, Providence Public Library.

**HISTORICAL NOTE**

The photographs in this collection are believed to have been taken by famed Civil War photographer Matthew Brady and depict members of the 2nd Rhode Island Infantry, Company F, six weeks after the volunteers had joined up on June 5-6, 1861, and only two or three days prior to the First Battle of Bull Run. The setting is not far from the site of the upcoming battle in Manassas, VA. Some of the men pictured here would meet their ends in this battle and so these images represent the last days of their lives. A letter from Corporal Francis Ronan (also spelled Ronian, Ronien, Ronain, and Romain) of the 2nd Rhode Island Infantry to his brother Henry, written on July 15, 1861, seems to confirm Brady as the photographer. This letter has been catalogued and digitized by the George Mason University Libraries Special Collections Research Center.

Company F of the 2nd Rhode Island Infantry was accepted into state service at Pawtucket, Valley Falls, and Central Falls, Providence County, Rhode Island, on 7 May, 1861. Ensign L.A. Tower, 1st Rhode Island Detached Militia, Company E, resigned from his initial post and was appointed captain of 2nd Rhode Island Infantry, Company F, on 1 June, 1861. The First Battle of Bull Run, also known as the First Battle of Manassas, was the first major battle of the American Civil War. Fought on July 21, 1861 in Virginia, the battle was ultimately won by the Confederates, led by General Pierre G.T. Beauregard. Union forces, led by Brigadier General Irvin McDowell, attempted numerous tactics to overtake the Confederates, but to no avail. Captain L.A. Tower was killed at the first battle of Bull Run, and First Lieutenant G.W. Weeden, 2nd Rhode Island Infantry, Company G, was appointed the new captain of Company F the following day on 22 July, 1861. Defeated, the Union army left Manassas for Washington, D.C., which led many to conclude that the war they were fighting was far from over.

Mathew Brady (c.1823-1896), was a 19th-century American photographer who was celebrated for his portraits of politicians and his photographs of the American Civil War. He was one of the earliest photographers in American history and is often considered the father of photojournalism.

**SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION**

This collection contains 7 items: 6 of which are photographs mounted on cards. The photographs were taken at Bush Camp in Centreville, Virginia and feature 3 or more soldiers in uniform carrying rifles and posing informally for the camera. Text at the base of the cards partially identifies some of those pictured. The 7th item in the collection is a small scrap of paper which states the regiment, location, and date of photographs; it is signed by R.L. Johnstone.

**ORGANIZATION OF THE COLLECTION**

The items are organized alphabetically by the last name of the first soldier noted in the handwritten caption on the footer of the photograph card. The accompanying note paper appears last.

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION**

| Item | Title  | Description   | Date            | Box | Folder |
|------|--|---|-----------------|-----|--------|
| 1    | Godfrey, Hughes, Davidson; 2nd Regiment, Co. F of the RI Volunteers                        | Informal group portrait of members of the 2nd Regiment, Company F of The Rhode Island Volunteers F taken at Bush Camp in Centreville Virginia. Identified soldiers from left to right: Charles A. Godfrey, Benjamin C. Hughes, Jonathan Davidson. Dimensions: 3 x 4 inches  | 1861<br>July 17 | 1   | 1      |
| 2    | Johnstone, Barnes, Worger, Taylor, Newman, Smith; 2nd Regiment, Co. F of the RI Volunteers | Informal group portrait of members of the 2nd Regiment, Company F of The Rhode Island Volunteers F taken at Bush Camp in Centreville Virginia. Identified soldiers from left to right, reclining : Samuel Newman, Albert L. Smith. Standing left to right: Robert L, Johnstone, Barnes (either Joseph C. or Lewis N.), William Worger, Peter Taylor. Private Joseph C. Barnes and Private Albert L. Smith were wounded and taken prisoner during the First Battle of Bull Run. Joseph C. Barnes was mustered out on July 26, 1862. Albert L. Smith was later discharged for disability on July 18, 1862. Dimensions: 3 x 4 inches | 1861<br>July 17 | 1   | 1      |
| 3    | Potter, Manning, Frazier, Douglas; 2nd Regiment, Co. F of the RI Volunteers                | Informal group portrait of members of the 2nd Regiment, Company F of The Rhode Island Volunteers F taken at Bush Camp in Centreville Virginia on July 17th & 18th 1861. Identified soldiers, seated: David L. Douglass. Standing left to right: Thomas R. Potter, John Manning, William H. Frazier. "Tent No. 27" is written on the back of the photo. Dimensions: 3 x 4 inches   | 1861<br>July 17 | 1   | 1      |
| 4    | Robertson, Osgood, Salisbury, Douglass, 2nd Regiment, Co. F of the RI Volunteers           | Informal group portrait of members of the 2nd Regiment, Company F of The Rhode Island Volunteers F taken at Bush Camp in Centreville Virginia on July 17th & 18th 1861. Identified soldiers, reclining: David L. Douglass. Standing left to right: Robert Robertson, Francis A. Osgood, Smith Salisbury. Dimensions: 3 x 4 inches   | 1861<br>July 17 | 1   | 1      |

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|   |   |  |                 |   |   |
|---|---|--|-----------------|---|---|
| 5 | Ronain, Newell Brothers;<br>2nd Regiment, Co. F of the<br>RI Volunteers | Informal group portrait of members of the 2nd Regiment, Company F of The Rhode Island Volunteers F taken at Bush Camp in Centreville Virginia on July 17th & 18th 1861. Identified soldiers: Francis T. Ronan (left), and the Newell brothers (James & John, unable to identify which brother is which) stand center and right. Private John Newell was wounded and taken prisoner during the First Battle of Bull Run and later mustered out May, 21, 1862.<br>Dimensions: 3 x 4 inches | 1861<br>July 17 | 1 | 1 |
| 6 | Wood, Kidder, Jenks; 2nd<br>Regiment, Co. F of the RI<br>Volunteers     | Informal group portrait of members of the 2nd Regiment, Company F of The Rhode Island Volunteers F taken at Bush Camp in Centreville Virginia on July 17th & 18th 1861. Identified soldiers left to right: George Wood, George Kidder, Theodore W. Jenks.<br>Dimensions: 2.5 x 4 inches  | 1861<br>July 17 | 1 | 1 |
| 7 | Johnstone note; 2nd<br>Regiment, Co. F of the RI<br>Volunteers          | Handwritten note on scrap of lined paper accompanying photos. Text reads, "Groups of members of Co # 2nd RI Vols Taken at Bush Camp Centerville VA July 17th & 18th 1861," and it is signed by R.L. Johnstone.<br>Dimensions: 5.25 x 3 inches  | n.d.            | 1 | 1 |