

Charles F. Stone

Machias

October 7 1862

Charles Stone, a member of the 6th Maine Infantry Regiment, drew the standard pay for a first lieutenant in the Union Army, \$105.50 per month. Like many others, he made sure some of that money went home in an allotment to pay for family expenses. The rest he kept with his belongings and personal papers.

In the summer of 1862, Stone's belongings were stored on the headquarters train of Union general John Pope because Stone had been assigned to detached service as a Signal Officer, and those officers went with the Army's commander.

In a letter to Governor Israel Washburn, Stone writes of his uneasiness in his temporary post because, *"I am deprived of the companionship of many friends and also am away from those noble fellows who chose me as one of their leaders."*

Confederate General Jeb Stuart added to Stone's discomfort on Augusta 22, 1862, when he sent his 1,500 cavalymen on a raid at Catlett's Station.

The attack was aimed at disrupting the operations of the railroad. Finding Pope's headquarters train was a bonus. Stuart's men captured over 200 prisoners, took a large number of horses, seized a collection of Gen. Pope's orders and dispatches, and took more than \$250,000 in cash.

Among the losses were Stone's paperwork and pay.

"I was unfortunate enough to lose my commissions together with personal baggage to the amount of over one hundred & fifty dollars," he writes.

Comparatively, the money was easier to replace than the commissions. In the 6th Maine, where he knew everyone, the paperwork mattered less than when he was working far afield and few knew him. He needed the commission papers as proof of rank and status in the army.

Stone, as Signal Officer, communicated with flags, torches and by telegraph. The use of flags was most common. Stone would rapidly wig-wag coded messages, which were interpreted by the receiving signalers. In turn, commanders would issue timely orders, move troops; or attack or withdraw.

Eventually returned to the 6th Maine, Stone was later promoted to the rank of Captain. He resigned from the service in 1863.