Dr. John Fletcher White
(1839 – 1892)
Son of Samuel Lewis White and Rebecca Masterson
Compiled by Beth Bradford-Pytel

The following is a compilation of information regarding the life of Dr. John Fletcher White, son of Samuel Lewis White and Rebecca Wilson Masterson; grandson of Christian White and Elizabeth Stonebraker.

“White, Dr. John F.
Occupation: M.D. at Lawrence Furnace.

I. R. Nov. 23, 1877: Dr. J. F. White, who formerly lived at Lawrence Furnace has returned there to practice medicine. We are glad he is a Lawrence Countian again.

I. R. January 1, 1880: Doc Dempsey is going to occupy his room next to Dr. White's office, as a wall paper store.

I. R. March 3, 1887: SAVAGE, MRS. W. J. The deceased was formerly, Miss Mame White, daughter of Dr. J. F. White, and a most estimable young lady. Only a few weeks before her death, and while upon her sick bed, she was wedded Mr. W. J. Savage, who is left thus early in life, with an irreparable sorrow. Died February 22, aged about 19.

I. R. July 23, 1891: A Change. Dr. O. Ellison, who has served for two years on the Pension Medical Board of this county, retires from the position and Dr. J. F. White has been appointed in his place.

I.R. Jan. 21, 1892: Dr. J. F. White is quite sick, with pneumonia, it is reported. Drs. Williams and Shattuck conducted the pension’s examination today.

I.R. Feb. 11, 1892: Dr. J. F. White, a prominent physician of this county died at his residence near Lawrence Furnace, last Thursday. He was taken sick with pneumonia some weeks ago, and was very sick from the start. Two weeks ago he was reported dead, but the rumor turned out to be untrue. The sad news is now too true. Dr. White was well known all over Lawrence county, for he has lived here for many years, and has been prominent in political circles. At the time of his death he was one of the Pension Medical Examiners of this county.

I.R. Feb. 18, 1892: APPOINTED. Dr. C. G. Gray has been appointed Medical Pension Examiner in place of Dr. J. F. White, deceased. Dr. Gray is a capable physician, has had experience in the office and will make an acceptable and efficient examiner.”

PHOTO: Portrait of Dr. John F. White circa abt. 1875, courtesy of the BZS Collection; taken by Louis L. Hitt, 19th century photographer / artist who had a studio at No 58, West 3rd Street, Ironton, Lawrence Co., Ohio. Photo was not part of the original article.

SOURCE: “Medical Professionals of Lawrence Co., Ohio” by Sharon M. Kouns; pg. 55-56
John Fletcher White was born in Barboursville, Cabell Co., West Virginia and around 1845, the family moved to Gallia Co., Ohio. His father, Samuel Lewis White was a traveling hatter. His younger brother, Charles L. White, Esq. became an esteemed attorney in Ohio. In his biography noted in the History of Hocking Co., Ohio, it explains the history of the family and the hardship of their parents to support 8 children. In 1855, John and Charles (about a year apart) chopped over 200 cords of wood to help supplement their parents’ income. Both men served in the Civil War, put themselves through school and became successful professionals.

**BIOGRAPHY OF CHARLES L. WHITE**  

"DR. JOHN FLETCHER WHITE – was born in Barbersville, West Virginia, January 18, 1839. His parents are Samuel Lewis and Rebecca Wilson (Masterson) White. Mr. White was married in Centerville, Gallia County, Ohio, August 14, 1862, to Sarah Elizabeth Waddell, who was born in Centerville, May 29, 1841. The following are their children: Eva Belle, born May 28, 1863; Carrie Alice, June 1, 1866; Mary Rosetta, November 15, 1868; Jennie Irene, April 29, 1873, died July 19, 1873. Mrs. White is deceased. Alexander M. and Hannah (Buck) Waddell were the parents of Mrs. White. Mr. White was Commissary Sergeant of Company M, 7th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry. He enlisted October 10, 1862, and was discharged at Nashville, Tennessee, July 5, 1865. He is located in Elizabeth township, and is engaged as a physician, and also in the merchandise business at New Richland. His post office address is Ironton, Lawrence County, Ohio."

**OBITUARY OF CHARLES L. WHITE**


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**PORTRAIT:** Commissary Sgt. John F. White taken most likely after the Civil War. Courtesy of the Collection of David Scott White; hand tinted studio photograph.
During the Civil War, at age 23, John F. White was appointed on October 10, 1862, to serve as Commissary Sgt. for Co., M, 7th Ohio Cavalry - Union. His role was to manage the logistics of food and water making sure the soldiers were fed. The 7th Regiment, Ohio Cavalry was raised in southern Ohio nicknamed the "River Regiment" as its men came from nine counties along the Ohio River. Many of the men from Gallia Co., Ohio were enlisted in Companies L and M. The M regiment was mustered out on July 3, 1865, at Nashville by Captain James P.W. Neill. On a march, John was captured in Kentucky and managed to escape. On a separate scout, many of his fellow comrades were captured in Rogersville, Tennessee and sent first to Belle Isle prison in Richmond, Virginia, then transferred to the POW Camp in Andersonville, Georgia where many died from starvation and disease. John tells his story in the following letters he wrote during active duty. The syntax of his writings shows his high intelligence at a young age.

Roster: 7 Ohio Volunteer Cavalry
The Civil War in Gallia Co., Ohio: http://www.galliagenealogy.org/civil%20war/civilwar3.htm

The Letter was written at Camp Ella Bishop, near Lexington, Ky. Jan. 21st, 1863

“Mr. Harper:—Dear Sir:

We have repeatedly written to our friends while in the service since we left the border of our State at Camp Ripley, Jan. 2nd, ’63, but learn that our letters for some reason have failed to reach their point of destination; therefore we sincerely request that we be allowed space in your respectable paper for the purpose of informing the friends of Co. M, 7th O.V.C. that we are all well, with the exception of Sergeant Hively and Alexander Boggs, who are in the Hospital, but are now convalescent. We were six days on our march from Ripley, to Lexington, a distance of about seventy-five miles. We passed through much fine country, as we traveled through the counties of Mason and Bourbon, where I was informed that land rates at from forty to fifty dollars per acre. The worth of old Kentucky cannot be told until the accursed institution of slavery is eradicated from her soil, and School Houses, Churches, and Academies, are erected in the place of negro huts and the aristocratic slaveholders' palaces, whereby knowledge and the principles of religious liberty may be thoroughly instilled in the minds of the people and disseminated throughout the length and breadth of her domain.

We arrived here on the 8th inst., where we have been encamping for now eleven days, on what is called the old Henry Clay Farm. It is in reality a nice place and a beautiful country, but we would undoubtedly admire it more were it not for the enormous amount of mud we have to encounter, but we live in the joyful anticipation of this drying or freezing up soon, which would render it much more pleasant. We have a good Captain and Lieutenants. Let me here state that Lieut. Carr, is estimated as second to no other officer in Camp. Jim Campbell is still the same mysterious, incomprehensible self. He is monarch of all he surveys and his rights there are none to dispute.

As before mentioned, the boys of old Gallia and Jackson, J. W. Swanson, H. Nutt, Wm. Mossbarger, J. E. Perkins, John J. Smith, E. P. Stubbs, and Samuel Norman, are well and in fine spirits. Now that the taps have blown I close this epistle with the fond expectation of hearing from our friends and relations soon and often.

Yours Respectfully,
John F. White”

SOURCE: The Gallipolis Journal ~ January 29, 1863
Another letter written by John Fletcher White while at Camp near Mr. Sterling, Ky., March 7th, 1863

“Mr. Harper:

Dear Sir:—We have been absent from camp near Harrodsburg on a scouting expedition for the last seventeen days, which has deprived us of the privilege of hearing from or communicating with our correspondents in old Gallia and Jackson, for what we consider a long time. We therefore request the publication of this communication in your highly respected Journal, which will supercede [sic] the necessity of my writing many private letters, inform our friends and relations as to our whereabouts, and at the same time briefly narrate what came under my observation during a march of fourteen days—and I might say nights too, for we seldom stopped for the night, and scarcely slept at night only on our horses.

We left Harrodsburg on the night of the 20th of February, 1863. Marched that night as far as Danville, a distance of ten miles, remained there until the morning when we obtained ten days' rations and resumed our march for Crab Orchard, through rain, snow, and sleet, where we arrived about 8 o'clock P.M. I will not here undertake to give a description of the manner in which we put in that night. The next day Capt. Campbell, Major McIntire and Lieut.-Colonel Miner, started with a detachment of men from various Regiments, with a portion of the 7th O.V.C., taking the major part of our company in the direction of Mt. Vernon, but I have not received any intelligence from them only as it came through the medium of the daily press, since they left us.

On the night of the same day, between the hours of ten and eleven, we were ordered to Richmond, a distance approaching fifty miles. We arrived there the next evening shortly after dark, but learned that we were a day behind the times; the rebels had been there the day before, stealing horses, robbing stores, and committing depredations and outrages too intolerable to be borne by a free and intelligent people. We were cheerfully welcomed by the good Union people of this place, where we remained that night and part of the next day, when we moved forward in the direction of Winchester, at which place we thought to stop for the night, but on our arrival there we learned that the rebels were in force at Mt. Sterling, therefore we moved on for Mt. Sterling that night, eighteen miles distant. We went within about three miles of town, when a halt was called by Col. Runkle, who was in command of the entire force there. Major Raney and Lieut. Carr, proposed marching right into town with a force sufficient to take them by surprise, but was ruled down by the cowardly Colonel. The next morning about sunrise we advanced slowly in the direction of town, saw nothing until within one mile of town, where we scared up the pickets, perhaps fifty in number; this brought serious reflections across the mind of the Brigadier General, who imagined that the rebels were secreted behind a ravine that was between us and the fugitive rebels, and therefore drew us up in line of battle, squared the battery, and threw a shell in that direction, (no rebels being there, judging of the number killed, wounded and missing). The main body being about three miles beyond town, made good their escape.—We followed rapidly for about one mile beyond town, where we, to the great surprise of the people and men themselves, halted all that day. However, small squads of scouting parties went out and brought in a few prisoners, recapturing the wagons and mules which they had taken from the 14th Kentucky stationed here, prior to our advent into this part of the country. That night we were ordered to be in readiness to form into line of battle at the first sound of the bugle, in case of engagement, but no enemy that night.

The next day about three o'clock P.M., we started in pursuit of the enemy, and after marching until dusk we saw no very strong indications, but here received a dispatch announcing that there was a large force marching for Lexington, under John Morgan and Humphrey Marshall, when we faced about and went on double quick in that direction. About eight o'clock the next day we reached Paris, where we ascertained that the dispatch was utterly false, and had been forged by rebel citizens to let rebels come back to Mt. Sterling. The trick was pretty effectually carried out; but I notice we left the perpetrators incarcerated within the gloomy walls of a dungeon, to await their doom.
The next day a small party under command of Major Raney, left for Winchester, a distance of fourteen miles from Paris. We went into town with a dash, found no soldiers, but the place was full of butternut gents, who came into town with the expectation of seeing their rebel friends in the army, but instead of that, they found a Federal force, who had the town under martial law. No man was allowed to pass out of town. But when we put out our pickets, a scouting party of forty approached, four of them dressed in Federal uniform, and captured the pickets, after we had advanced six miles in the direction of Lexington and camped in a meeting house. The next day we marched back to Winchester where we found encamped a Federal force, consisting of the 100th Ohio, 10th, 2d and 14th Kentucky, also the 45th Ohio, and a portion of the 7th O.V.C. The next morning being the 2d of March 63, we left about 8 o’clock A.M. for Mt. Sterling once more. One Battalion of the 7th O.V.C., in command of the gallant Major Norton, being in the advance, was ordered to make a dash in town. About this time we came in sight of their pickets, about two miles from town, under full headway. Then the men who had the fastest horse(s) and the longest spurs got before. We captured several pickets before they got to town, but on entering we met a force nearly equal to that of our own, who turned on us for a fight. They fired one volley among us, wounded one man only, and then skedaddled. As we followed in hot pursuit through town, hats, caps, and coats, flew in every direction. The pavements were thronged with women and children, who were jumping up and down, waving handkerchiefs, aprons, and flags, and shouting “Glory to God and victory to the Union,” which connected with the hallooing of the men, the taking of prisoners and firing of pistols and carbines, augmented a scene which never before greeted the ears of men raised in a civilized country. We pursued them six miles to a stream, where their main force was situated. We killed five or six, wounded several, and captured twenty-six prisoners. The curses of the men were deep and bitter because they were not allowed to cross over the stream, where it has since been well known success would have crowned the slightest effort. Col. Runkle was immediately arrested and sent to Lexington, where if he gets his just deserts, he will be dismissed from the service in disgrace, and his name stigmatized with infamy down to the latest posterity.

Mt. Sterling, the county seat of Montgomery county is quite a nice looking town, with a population of about one thousand inhabitants, but like the majority of towns through Kentucky, it is not marked with that degree of enterprise and rapid improvement, which is characteristic of the towns and villages in Ohio and other free States. We are sojourning here for a short time only. As soon as our horses recrutt [sic] a few days, we expect to return to camp at Harrodsburg.

Good health is prevalent among the men generally, who daily express a desire for a more vigorous prosecution of the war, that the rebellion may be successfully crushed out, and peace and tranquility restored to our once happy and prosperous county.

John F. White"

SOURCE: The Gallipolis Journal ~ March 19, 1863

The next letter written by John F. White describes the episode that resulted in the capture of many men from Companies L & M at Rogersville, Tennessee. They were taken first to Belle Isle prison in Richmond, VA and about 4 months later to Andersonville, Georgia.

Morristown, East Tennessee, Nov. 8, 1863

“Mr. Harper—Dear Sir:

Ere this reaches you, you will doubtless have been made acquainted with the casualties of the fight which took place on the 5th of this month, five miles north of Rodgersville, the county seat of Hawkins county, between the Confederate forces, commanded by Gen. Jones, and Gen. Carter’s Brigade, under command of Israel Garrard,
Colonel of [the] 7th O.V.C. At this date we hear many clashing rumors in regard to the number of killed, wounded and missing, therefore I give only what I know and gather from the most authentic sources, and chiefly confine myself to Capt. Campbell's Company, for the sake of brevity and the accommodation of friends in old Gallia. The enemy were guided by four rebel citizens, who had sworn allegiance to the Government, and just returned from incarceration at Knoxville. Thus we were betrayed, and our entire force surrounded by night. On the morning of the 6th, they opened on us from every side, and then a general engagement ensued, in which, the 2d Tennessee were all missing save about sixty, who cut through. The 2d Illinois Battery was captured, with sixty-five men (illegible?). The 7th O.V.C. cut their way through with a loss not to exceed one hundred and twenty-five men. But all the books, Quartermaster and Commissary stores, fell into the hands of the enemy, which leaves the men all here with their arms principally, but minus the blankets and grub, which they chiefly obtained by borrowing from their rebel friends.

The following are the names of those missing in Company M: Lieut. A. A. Carr; Sergeant H. F. Wood; William Furgerson (bugler); F. M. Corn; Silas Nelson; Leroy Butcher; Salmon K. Bickel; David Siders; David Viers; Oliver Cavilee; Lewis Dawson. This is the first thing like a defeat that we have ever met with, and I hope may be the last. We are not discouraged by any means; we know that war has its reverses as well as its victories. Good health prevails generally among the troops in East Tennessee. We have here a salubrious climate, plenty of good water, and a country well adapted to improvement, but the cursed institution of human slavery, which has ever defaced the moral brightness of our legislative page, has withered the spirit of mental improvement to such an extent, and so palsied the arm of industry, that it will take it a long time under the control of Yankees, before her rebellious subjects are subdued, and harmony restored permanently.

Yours truly,
John F. White, Co. M. 7th O.V.C.”

SOURCE: The Gallipolis Journal ~ November 19, 1863

After the war, John F. White moved to Cincinnati to study medicine and in 1870, graduated at which time he set up his practice in Pedro outside of Ironton, Ohio. Later in his career he was appointed by the Medical Board to review Veterans’ Invalid Pension applications. He was married four times, divorced once, and widowed twice and fathered eight known children. Wives: 1) Sarah Elizabeth Waddell, 2) Eva V. Nixen, and 3) Elizabeth Catherine Rutroft. In 1892 he died from pneumonia and is buried at Woodland Cemetery in Ironton, Lawrence Co., Ohio. His grave includes both a veteran’s marker and a double headstone with his wife Elizabeth with the following inscription:

“A Doctor, Teacher, Mason, Soldier and one of the Founders of the G.A.R”

GAR is Grand Army of the Republic veterans organization
Headstone Photo circa 2015 by C. Bruce