

JONATHAN BIGGS

Jonathan Biggs was born in Clark County, Illinois, but at the time of his enlistment in the 123rd Illinois Infantry, he listed his residence as Mattoon.

Jonathan Biggs joined the 123rd Illinois Infantry, which was being formed in Mattoon by Colonel James Monroe, on 6 September 1862. Biggs was appointed Lt Colonel of the Regiment. There was a large complement of men from Mattoon in the 123rd Illinois Infantry, principally in D, H and I companies.

The 123rd Illinois Infantry left Mattoon by rail on 19 September 1862 and just 19 days after leaving Mattoon, on 8 October 1862, found itself engaged in the battle of Perryville, Kentucky. The 123rd Infantry, in its initial action, did not acquit itself well, sustaining a high percentage of casualties. Their performance was attributed to a lack of time to train and form cohesive units.

Lt Colonel Biggs was one of the many wounded at Perryville and left on the field for dead. That evening he revived and as the evening cooled, he was able to make his way back to the Regiment.

After recuperating, Biggs returned to duty as the Executive Officer of the Regiment and continued to see service through the end of the war.

After a rough beginning, leadership and training contributed to make the 123rd Infantry a highly effective unit and the Regiment was recognized as such. Colonel Monroe and Lt Colonel Biggs formed a solid command group.

On 6 May 1863, the Regiment joined the Wilder Brigade, as mounted infantry. The Wilder Brigade became known as the Lightning Brigade and attained considerable recognition. The 123rd Infantry played a significant role in the Brigade's success.

While the 123rd Illinois was attached to the Wilder Brigade, Colonel Monroe was killed, at the battle of Farmington, Tennessee.

Lt Colonel Biggs was awarded a field promotion to Colonel on 7 October 1863, and took over the leadership of the Regiment. Biggs would continue in the role of Regimental Commander through the end of the war, participating in several engagements, including the Atlanta Campaign.

During the last months of the war, Colonel Bigg's command was attached to the brigade of Brigadier General James H Wilson. Wilson's Brigade was charged with destroying the Confederate arsenal at Selma, Alabama. The actions would come to be known as Wilson's Raid, which found the brigade battling the legendary Confederate General, Nathan Bedford Forrest.

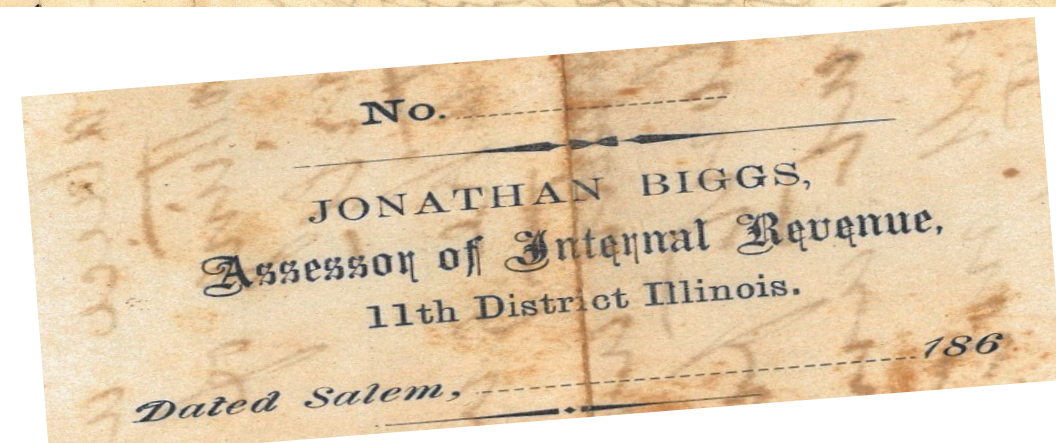
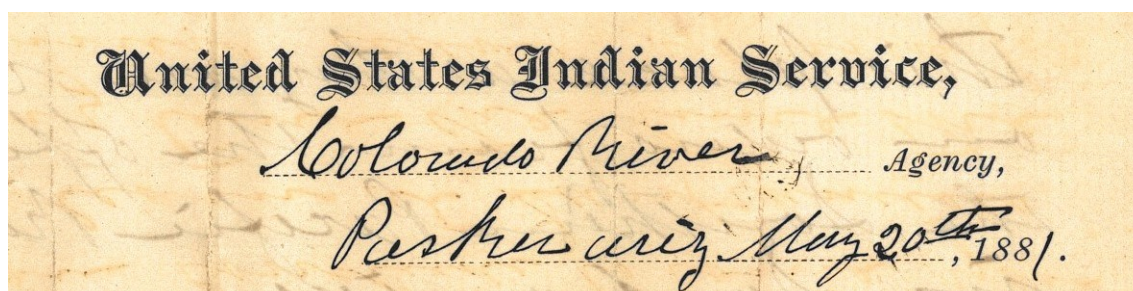
Colonel Biggs was wounded again at the battle of Selma, Alabama, on 2 April 1865.

Colonel Biggs was captured and held briefly as a prisoner at Selma. Ironically, this would be the last major engagement of the Civil War, as General Lee surrendered to General Grant at Appomattox Courthouse just 7 days later, which led to Bigg's release from captivity.

On 13 March 1865, Colonel Biggs was promoted to Brevet Brigadier General.

General Biggs was mustered out of the Army on 28 June 1865.

Jonathan Biggs served with the 123rd Illinois Infantry from its organization on 6 September 1862 until it was mustered out on 27 June 1865.



Biggs would go on to serve with the Internal Revenue Service and as an Indian Agent in the Arizona Territory.

In 1878 he ran unsuccessfully for the State Legislature.

Following his post-war service with Federal Agencies, Jonathan Biggs settled in Westfield where he engaged in farming and cattle buying.

General Jonathan Biggs died on 29 October 1883, in Westfield, Illinois, at the age of 57. His battle wounds contributed to poor health for the remainder of his life. He is buried at Good Hope Cemetery, in Westfield, Illinois.



Grave marker of
General Jonathan Biggs