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— Irene Oliveto

HISTORIC PHOTOS DONATED TO SOCIETY

MOUNDSVILLE — A pair of photographs featuring Marshall County men serving in Company M, First West Virginia Volunteer Infantry during the Spanish-American War, has been donated to the Marshall County Historical Society Museum by the Barnes County Historical Society in Valley City, ND.

Linda Fluharty, a Marshall County native and historian who maintains Marshall County genealogy Web pages, was instrumental in bringing about the donation.

According to an article in the Moundsville Echo from June 4, 1909, cited by Fluharty, Company M was recruited in Moundsville and reported to Charleston. There, on May 7, 1898 they took their oath and received their designation. Although the company never was called to fight or sent overseas, the men did spend three months in training camp at Fort Thomas in Chicamauga, Tenn., before being sent to Knoxville, Tenn. for another three months. The rest of their enlistment was spent in Columbus, Ga., where they were mustered out on Feb. 4, 1899.

An article in the Moundsville Echo in 1923 marked the 25th anniversary of Company M's departure from Moundsville. Capt. A. L. Hooten, who was the group's first commander, recalled that the day the men left was fair and warm. He called it "the biggest occasion Moundsville had experienced up to that time." Hooten recalled that a long-expected telegram arrived that morning summoning the men to Charleston. When the courthouse bell rang the men quickly changed into their uniforms and gathered at the railroad station. Thousands were there to send them off. "We all thought we were going straight to the fighting," Hooten said. The company narrowly missed going to the Philippines.

Both photographs apparently were taken when the men were stationed at Chicamauga. One photo depicts First Sgt. James W. Nielson and Trumpeter Will E. Stultz. The second photograph is of the officers and non-commissioned officers of Company M in camp.

How the photographs came to Marshall County took place when Wes Anderson of the Barnes County Historical Society decided they should be returned from North Dakota to their home county. When he did a Google search, Fluharty's genealogy pages surfaced. Fluharty said Anderson knew nothing about the photographs, nor how they had become part of the Barnes County Historical Society's collection.

Fluharty did some additional research, and was able to fill in some of the missing answers for Anderson.

First Sgt. Nielson's mother, Mary, was the sister of Isabelle Stewart Sampson Spurr. Isabelle was the wife of Archdea-



Photo Provided

Irene Oliveto of the Marshall County Historical Society holds the two photographs depicting the officers of Company M, 1st Reg. West Virginia Volunteers, who served during the Spanish-American War.

con Benjamin Moore Spurr, who was rector of All Saints Episcopal Church in Valley City, ND.

When Archdeacon Spurr received a church call to West Virginia, he and his family moved to Marshall County. Mary Nielson and her husband, Whylie, bought the house that the Spurrs owned in Valley City. However, how and why James W. Nielson traveled to Marshall County and later enlisted in Company M is not clear.

The Spurrs would go on to found Reynolds Memorial Hospital in Glen Dale. Irene Oliveto, chair of the Marshall County Historical Society museum and

genealogy committee, expressed her appreciation to Fluharty and Anderson for their donation.

"Family members will have an opportunity to see their relatives during a fascinating chapter of American history," she said. "The fact that these photos traveled from Tennessee to North Dakota and now back to West Virginia is an intriguing story in itself."

The Marshall County Historical Society Museum at 13th Street and Lockwood Avenue, Moundsville is open on Thursdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. April-October, or by appointment by calling 304-845-3692.