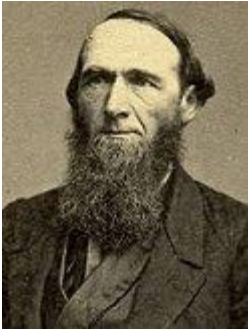


Abner Mitchell: Letters of a Civil War Soldier — June 2007 - May 2008



Shepaug Valley Middle School eighth-graders, under the guidance of their history teacher Michael Croft, guest-curated this exhibit which explored the Civil War era through the letters of a local Union soldier. Abner Mitchell, a Washington resident, was drafted into the Civil War in August of 1863 with family tragedy mounting. Despite town pleas to send a substitute, he left "Baby Mary" in the hands of relatives and answered the call of duty, entering into Company B of the 6th Regiment of Connecticut Volunteers. Abner met his fate at the battle of Deep Run, Virginia, in 1864.

The Shepaug Middle School students pieced together Abner Mitchell's life through the letters that he sent from the battlefield to his family in Washington. Michael Croft's history classes transcribed 49 Mitchell letters this year, "a discovery that usually gets sent to a college professor," Croft said. Together the class created a book and the museum exhibit. The project was featured on Diane Smith's *Positively Connecticut* show on CPTV in April. Diane Smith filmed scenes at the Shepaug Middle School, the Gunn Memorial Museum and around the town of Washington.