

The Militia Coatee of John Quincy Adams Nadenbousch, circa 1860

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The following article features item CMH0148 from The Company of Military Historians' uniform collection. Mr. Moore is Registrar, Lee Hall Mansion.

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BERKELEY County, Virginia, civic and militia leader John Q.A. Nadenbousch was born on 31 October 1824. His grandfather, Philip, was purportedly a Prussian officer in the service of King Louis XV of France when he married Marie Jeanne of Lorraine. Philip Nadenbousch and his young bride immigrated to St. Mary's, Maryland, before the American Revolution. After Philip's death, the Nadenbousch family settled in Berkeley County around 1800.¹

John Nadenbousch received his education from local private schools. He married Hester Jane Miller on 13 December

1848 and resided in Martinsburg. Nadenbousch, one of the county's leading businessmen, operated a profitable grist mill and whiskey distillery. He also reactivated the local militia company (the Berkeley Border Guards) on 31 October 1859. The company's muster was part of a larger military response to John Brown's Raid at Harpers Ferry. Captain Nadenbousch held regular drills and soon received the respect of his men who presented him with a sword as a "token of esteem" on 10 March 1860.²

Nadenbousch's Berkeley Border Guards uniform coat (FIGS 1–4) consisted of a single-breasted cadet gray coatee of medium weight. The coat is fastened by nine U.S. staff buttons backmarked "HORSTMANN BROS. & CO." and decorated with nine rows of tan frogging spaced two inches apart and highlighted with red thread. The buttons have been removed



FIG 1. Front view.

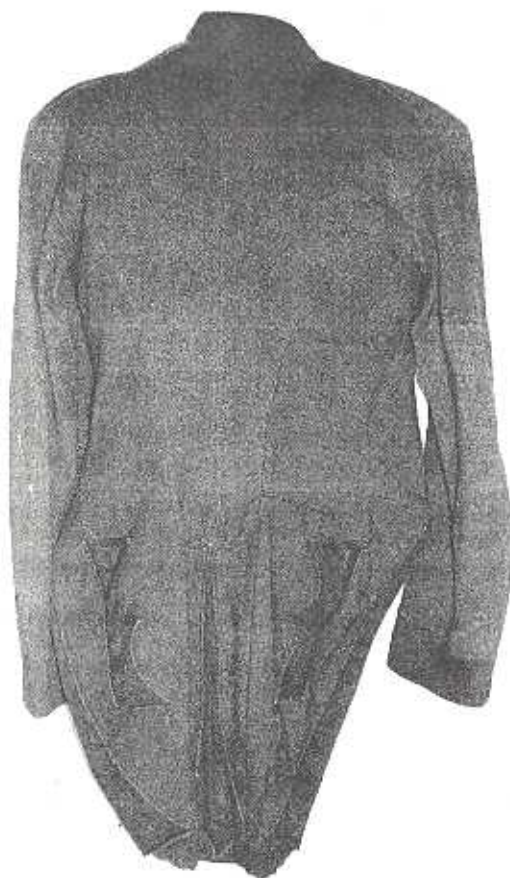


FIG 2. Rear view.

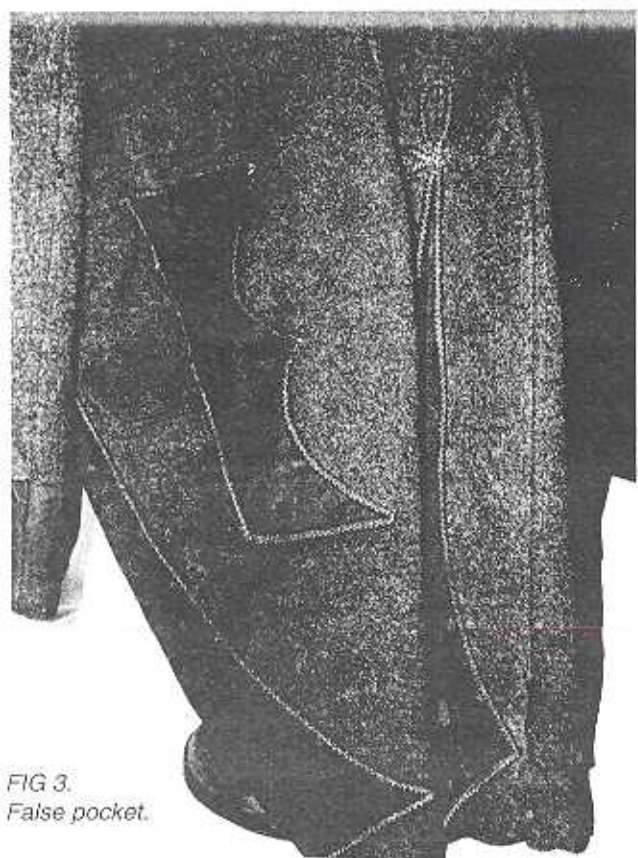


FIG 3.
False pocket.

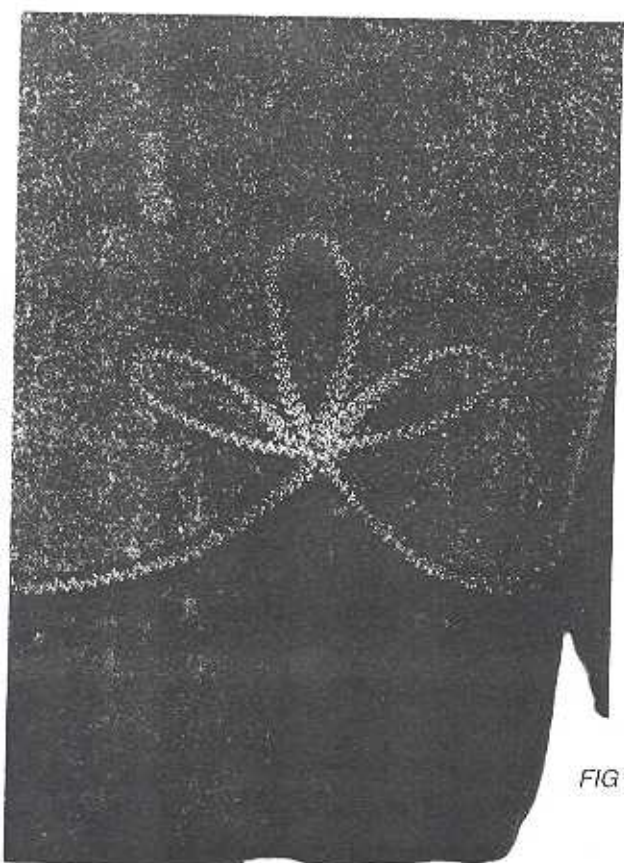


FIG 4. Sleeve cuff.

from the cuffs and the false pockets on the reverse. The collar has red facings with three-inch gilt cord braids. Similarly, the cuffs are decorated with red facings and six-inch high gilt braid quatrefoils. On the reverse, there are red facings on the turnbacks and false pockets with a gilt cord braid chevron on the tails. Modern stitching is found on the right tail and seam. The coatee's sleeves and two interior breast pockets are lined with tan cotton. The tails and body are lined with finished green cotton. With the exception of a large hole under the lower arm, the coatee has minor mothing. The lining is frayed throughout with repairs evident under the collar and stained at the bottom of the tails.

Nadenbousch's company heeded the call to arms after Virginia seceded from the Union on 18 April 1861. The Berkeley Border Guards and other militia units occupied the Harpers Ferry Armory after the U.S. troops retreated into Maryland. The armories in Harpers Ferry, Virginia, and Springfield, Massachusetts, were the only two Federal arms manufacturing facilities in the country. The capture of weapons and machinery at Harpers Ferry helped arm Virginia and, later, Confederate troops. The Virginia militia, however, was disorganized and needed supplies. On 29 April 1861, Col. Thomas Jonathan Jackson assumed command at Harpers Ferry and quickly instilled military discipline. Additionally, Jackson organized the diverse militia companies into regiments. The ten militia companies from the lower valley formed the 2d Virginia Volunteer Infantry under the command of Col. James Allen.³

The Berkeley Border Guards became Company D, 2d Virginia Infantry, on 3 May 1861, and formed part of the famed Stonewall Brigade. Nadenbousch served with distinction and rose to command the regiment until a battle wound forced his resignation in 1864.

Notes

1. Don C. Wood, "History of the Nadenbousch Family," *The Berkeley Journal*, 20 (1995): 67-69.
2. *Ibid.*, 19, 71-73; Dennis E. Frye, *2nd Virginia Infantry* (Lynchburg, VA: H.E. Howard, Inc., 1984), 121; Mabel Henshaw Gardiner and Ann Henshaw Gardiner, *Chronicles of Old Berkeley: A Narrative History of a Virginia County from its Beginnings to 1926* (Durham, NC: Seeman Press, 1938), 184.
3. Frye, *2nd Virginia Infantry*, 1-6; Gardiner, *Chronicles of Old Berkeley*, 152-58.



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