



SAMUEL HARRISON SOCIETY

PITTSFIELD MASSACHUSETTS

"NO WARMER FRIENDS HAVE I HAD
ANYWHERE THAN IN PITTSFIELD"



September 8, 1863

On this day 157 years ago, the Rev. Samuel Harrison was commissioned as Chaplain of the Massachusetts 54th Volunteer Regiment (depicted below). Rev. Harrison first learned of this honor during his trip in August to South Carolina. While on Morris Island visiting with the Regiment after the Assault on Battery Wagner, he learned that he was elected chaplain of the regiment. Although this would eventually be expected, Rev. Harrison was still surprised when it became official.

Here is Rev. Harrison's recollection; "While sitting in [a brother minister's] home I picked up the afternoon paper and, running over the columns, I found that there was a commission waiting for me in the adjutant's office. I was so surprised at this that I called the attention of my friend to it, for I suppose the adjutant would have notified me. I asked my friend to go with me to the State House to make some investigation. We went to the office and asked for the adjutant. I told what I saw in the paper that afternoon. He said that a commission was issued and had been waiting for some weeks for me. He gave it to me. Then I asked how soon I was to get ready. He replied by saying that when I got ready for duty he would issue orders for me to report to the chief officer of the regiment."

HIS EXCELLENCY
JOHN A. ANDREW
GOVERNOR AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
OF THE
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

To:

Samuel Harrison of Pittsfield in the County of Berkshire and Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Greetings:

Whereas, on the Eight day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty three, you were duly elected Chaplain of the 54th Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers in the service of the United States: by virtue of the power vested in me, I do by these Presents, reposing trust and confidence in you learning and ability, commission you accordingly.

You are, therefore, carefully and diligently to discharge the duties of said office with fidelity and intelligence, according to the laws of the United States, observing such orders and instructions as you shall, from time to time, receive from your superior officers.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Commonwealth, the Eighth day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty three, and in the eighty eighth year of the Independence of the United States of America.

By His Excellency the Governor. (Signed) Oliver Warner, Secretary of the Commonwealth

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