

THE CHARGER



The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

December 2022

Vol. 47, No. 4

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MEETING:
December
14, 2022

SPEAKER:
Eric Ebinger

PROGRAM: “Rutherford Hayes in the Civil War –The First James Bond”

ERIC EBINGER HAS
PUBLISHED A UNIQUE
BIOGRAPHY OF PRES.
RUTHERFORD HAYES.

LOCATION: The Holiday
Inn Independence at 6001
Rockside Road,
Independence, Ohio 44131, off US Interstate 77

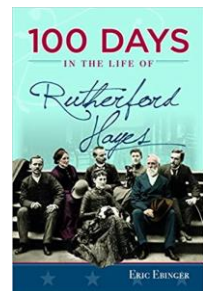
TIME: Social Hour at 6:00 PM and
Presentation at 7:00 PM

THE TALK WILL BE IN PERSON AND
STREAMED ONLINE SO MANY CIVIL
WAR ENTHUSIASTS CAN ENJOY OUR
PROGRAM.

For reservations email:
ccwrtreserve@gmail.com or call 440-449-
9311. To ensure a dinner is reserved for
you, the reservation must be made by
Wednesday, December 7, 2022, a week
before the meeting.

Website:
<http://www.clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com>

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President's Message

The weather outside is steadily getting colder, and the chill of winter is approaching, but a little cold can't stop the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable. (Snow might, or another new covid variant, but we'll cross that bridge when we come to it.) I hope everyone had a good Thanksgiving last month, and that any and all travels and holiday gatherings throughout the month of December proceed safely for everyone involved.

Last month's meeting was a lively one, with Dr. Fay A. Yarbrough joining us via Zoom from Rice University to discuss her research for the book *Choctaw Confederates: The American Civil War in Indian Country*, which provides insights into a different perspective on the Civil War. (November has been designated Native American Heritage Month in the United States, so this was an appropriate topic for our monthly meeting.) While the Choctaw might have seemed unlikely allies to the Confederate cause, Yarbrough showed that there were several different aspects which likely led many of them to make that particular alliance, ranging from a belief that the "states rights"-focused Confederate government might be more respectful of their tribal sovereignty than the United States had been, a desire to preserve the institution of slavery, which the tribe had adopted in a matter largely identical to that practiced by white southerners, to a desire to find a contemporary outlet for the tribe's men to serve as warriors and prove their

masculinity. Dr. Yarbrough described some of the sources and methods involved in her research, and charted the changing rates of enlistment of the Choctaw over the course of the war, as they became disillusioned with the Confederacy's broken promises to them. Stories of intra- and intertribal conflicts, abolitionist factions within Indian Territory, and testimony from those enslaved helped round out the story of this lesser-known aspect of the wider conflict.

December's meeting should prove an intriguing one for those interested in military exploits, as well as those interested in the roles of famous Ohioans in the Civil War. Our December speaker, Eric Ebinger, will take us through the many adventures of future president Rutherford B. Hayes' service during the Civil War. Please email ccwrtreserve@gmail.com to RSVP for the meeting at least a week in advance, and indicate whether you would like the vegetarian meal option or not. If you are unable to make it to the meeting in person, you may attend the Zoom meeting to view the presentation, typically starting sometime after 7pm. I do recommend trying to make it to at least some of the meetings in person, if possible, just because you are missing out on quite a bit if you only watch us on Zoom. From the socializing and camaraderie to the History Briefs, quiz, and raffle, there are some things that just can't be broadcast over the internet. (Speaking of the raffle, we've got a large collection of books that need to be disposed of, so if you buy a raffle ticket at any of the next several meetings, you are almost guaranteed to go home with a prize...)

One final request--as you all likely know, January is the month in which the Dick Crews Annual Debate is held, and we are still looking for a couple of debaters to fill out our roster! The question--"Who was the best political general of the Civil War?"--does not need to be answered according to strictly objective criteria. The most important thing is that you, the debater, are able to present the most convincing case. You do not need to be an expert, or have any experience in debates at all, and new members are more than welcome to participate. (New members have *won* debates in the past!) Please contact William Vodrey at wfbvodrey@aol.com if you would like to be one of our debaters.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at our final meeting of 2022!

- Lily Korte

Note from the Editor



This month, December 13, 2022, is the 160th anniversary of the Battle of Fredericksburg. The battle was a true watershed in the war. The Army of the

Potomac suffered extreme casualties as unsuccessful assault after assault was made that day on the Confederate positions on Mayre's Heights overlooking the city. The defeat sorely tested the will of the soldiers of the Army of the Potomac and the Northern civilians who read the long casualty lists printed in the local newspapers. President Lincoln, himself, was reported to have said, after being informed of the disaster, "What will the country think?" The Union's will to continue the fight, however, did not collapse. To the contrary, the war effort became more organized and, by the winter of 1863-1864 developed into a total war against the rebellion. The Spring campaign found U.S. Grant in command of all the armies of the North with a grand strategy pushing offensives on all fronts. As Grant told Lincoln, to his delight, "Those who can't skin can hold a leg!"

I first read about Fredericksburg decades ago in a book by Bruce Catton, *Glory Road*, the second volume of his trilogy on the Army of the Potomac. Since that time several other books have appeared. Three that I have found most interesting are Francis Augustin O'Reilly's *The Fredericksburg Campaign: Winter War on the Rappahannock*, Don Ernsberger's *Meade's Breakthrough at Fredericksburg*, and Bradley M. Gottfried's *The Maps of Fredericksburg: An Atlas of the Fredericksburg Campaign, Including All Cavalry Operations, September 18, 1862 – January 22, 1863*. All three books are well researched and provide much detail about how the battle was fought. Take time this month to read and reflect on this tragic struggle in central Virginia in December 1862.

The Dick Crews Annual Debate, January 11, 2023

Our topic this year is “Who was the best political general of the Civil War?” William Vodrey will again be our moderator. Debaters will be able to pick their own general (first come, first served); possible candidates include John A. Logan, Richard Taylor, Ben Butler and John C. Breckinridge, among many others. Debaters should expect to speak for five minutes, then take questions from the membership for another five, and finally to take part in a general discussion/rebuttal opportunity with the other debaters. It's a lot of fun, and expertise is neither required nor expected. Younger and newer members of the Roundtable are particularly encouraged to take part. The debate winner, chosen by vote of the membership, will, as always, receive fabulous prizes. If you'd like to be one of our debaters, please let William know (being sure to name the officer you'd like to speak about) by noon on Mon. Dec. 12 at wfbvodrey@aol.com.

Christmas in the Field

1861 and 1862

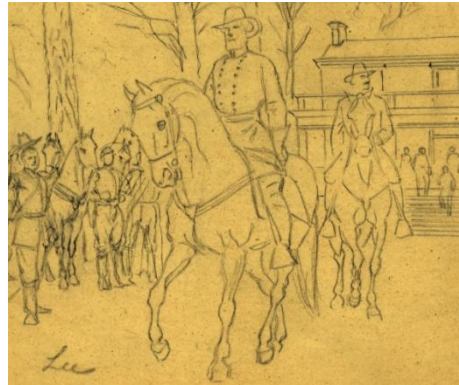
Awelcome break from army routine, depending on the circumstances, often occurred at holidays like Christmas. Henry Solomon White, from White's Creek, Monongalia County, (West) Virginia, enlisted in Company N, 6th (West) Virginia Infantry in the summer of 1861. The 6th (West) Virginia was recruited and stationed as railroad guards at various points for the vital B&O Railroad. In his diary, White described the first Christmas he spent

in the army while stationed at Littleton, (West) Virginia:

December 25, 1861. Christmas evening we began to prepare for Christmas spree at Armstrong Hostutler's. Fine a lot of turkeys were furnished by Lt. Parkerson and the messes furnished such rations as were necessary for the dinner. Misses Hostutler and Misses Owen being the cooks furnished such vegetables as were needed and at half past three the dinner was ready. About 40 ate dinner and then prepared for a dance. A row was raised in the evening which came very near spoiling the party. Finally all passed off and the gentlemen brought in the ladies for a dance – a fine looking lot of ladies were present. Dance kept up till late hour. A number of the Burton boys came down to participate in dance. Everything moved off with perfect tranquility this evening, it being the first Christmas evening spent in camp by any of us.

War weariness can be read, however, in Henry Solomon White's description of Christmas in 1862:

This is Christmas day. We are trying to enjoy ourselves as best we can. This is the second Christmas we have spent in camp. Our only hope is that by next year the war may be over and that those who are now absent from their homes and families may return to their family and homes of felicity and untold happiness.



A Bit of Robert E. Lee in That State Up North

Part I

By David A. Carrino

On display at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio are a number of outfits that were worn by iconic figures of rock and roll. Among these are the yellow military-style outfit that John Lennon wore on the album cover for *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, matching frilly-bottomed shapely dresses worn by the Supremes, a sleeveless jumpsuit with a plunging neckline that was worn on tour by Mick Jagger, Elvis Presley's suit from his 1968 television special, a loose-fitting and suitably neon-colored outfit worn by Jimi Hendrix, Michael Jackson's Thriller jacket, a bright red outfit with broad pointed shoulders and a flashy blue and white lightning bolt that was worn by David Bowie, and, more recently, some outfits that were worn by Beyonce. It is a mark of prestige that Cleveland is the home of clothing that was worn by so many iconic figures of rock and roll. But a city in Michigan (or "that state up north" as it is known to Ohioans) is the location of an article of clothing that is the Civil War equivalent of the rock and roll outfits in Cleveland's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. This is because this article of clothing once belonged to the person who is unquestionably the most prominent military figure of the Confederacy.

The city is Grand Rapids, and the article of clothing is the sash of Robert E. Lee. Grand Rapids has this distinction because the person who came into possession of Lee's sash, a man named Byron Root Pierce, was from Grand Rapids. Coming into possession of the sash of Robert E. Lee is, on its own, sufficient to make someone's Civil War experience exceptionally noteworthy. But Byron Root Pierce, who was Civil War, had a number of other some of which are the sort of moviemaker would be pleased to fictional book or movie. these were not creative and These were actual episodes in his

I learned about Lee's sash a few and I were visiting our daughter,



wounded five times during the remarkable wartime experiences, things that an author or concoct as sequences in a However, for Byron Root Pierce, spectacular pieces of fiction. life.

years ago when my wife, Karen, her husband, and their two sons,

who live in Holland, Michigan, which is near Grand Rapids. At that time the Grand Rapids Public Museum was featuring a display of toys from multiple generations. Because that display appealed to all of us, we visited the museum. The toys from my generation, many of which I had as a child, included Tinkertoys, Erector Sets, Mr. Potato Head, and (perhaps an omen of my later interest in the Civil War) Lincoln Logs. Among the oldest of the toys in the display was a set of playing cards from the Civil War, and this may have been a foretaste of what I was to discover after we had our fill of looking at toys and went into the rest of the museum. One area of the museum has displays of various military items such as uniforms from different periods of U.S. history. This area also has a display case in which there are several items from the Civil War, including a couple of swords and hats as well as a gold sash. Inside the display case is a plaque that describes the sash as follows:



"Sword sash of General Robert E. Lee, ca. 1865
Gift of Mrs. Byron R. Pierce"

The plaque also gives a brief description of how the sash was captured. That description reads, "Union troops under General Byron Root Pierce overtook and captured a large train of Confederate baggage wagons in the closing days of the War, at the Battle of Sailor's Creek. Among the booty captured were personal effects of the great rebel leader Robert E. Lee. General Pierce mailed the sword sash back home to Grand Rapids where his wife donated it to the Kent Scientific Institute, forerunner of the Public Museum." A web page on the museum's website is not as definitive in identifying the sash as belonging to Robert E. Lee. The description on that web page, which accompanies a photograph of the sash, reads, "This is a gold-colored Confederate cavalry sash with fringe. It was obtained from a Confederate wagon train captured by Union soldiers under the command of General Byron Root Pierce. The sash may have belonged to General Robert E. Lee, his nephew Fitzhugh Lee, or another Confederate officer." However, a postwar report about the capture of the baggage train indicates that after the train was captured, "The members of Gen. Pierce's staff divided the spoils, and to him fell a rich silk sash, the personal property of Gen. Robert E. Lee." This report lends credence to the identification of the sash as belonging to Robert E. Lee.

Byron Root Pierce, the Union Confederate baggage train, is not a certainly not remotely as famous as came to possess. Nevertheless, War career, not simply because of because of a number of incredible Moreover, Pierce's life prior to and interesting. Pierce was the kind of only minimal pre-Civil War military to go to war in defense of the Union strong leadership skills and his heroism under fire. He exemplifies the type of front-line volunteer soldier on whom the outcome of the war rested, because it was these men who carried

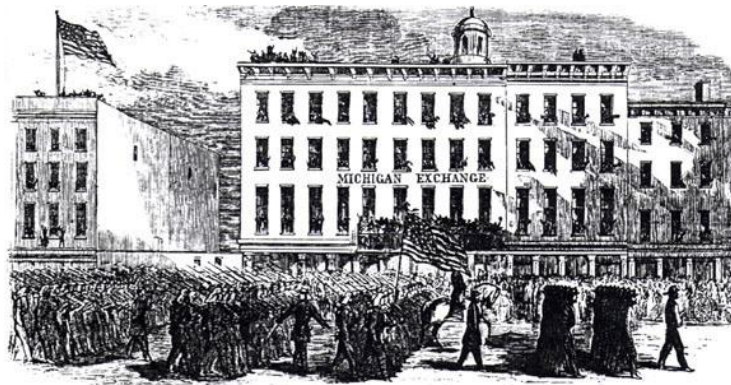


general whose troops captured the well-known Civil War figure, the person whose sash Pierce Pierce had a distinguished Civil the capture of Lee's sash, but also episodes during the war. after the war was also quite patriotic, devoted person who had experience, but who volunteered and rose to a high rank due to his

out the strategic and tactical plans that were devised by the upper echelon officers. The valor and accomplishments of these front-line soldiers are not nearly as well-known as those of the Civil War military celebrities whose names repeatedly populate history books. But without the front-line soldiers, there would have been no brilliant campaigns and no successfully executed battle plans. History has focused much more on the prominent figures of the Civil War and not paid as much attention to Pierce and the people like him who deserve much more acclaim than has been directed to them. Although Pierce is a relatively obscure Civil War figure, his contributions to the war and to the country deserve much more of history's, and our, attention than they have received.

Byron Root Pierce was not a native Michigander. He was born on October 1, 1829 in East Bloomfield, New York, which is in the Finger Lakes region of the state, and which is still a small town, as indicated by the fact that it had a population of under 4,000 as of 2020. By 1850 Pierce worked for his father in a wool manufactory. After being educated in Rochester, he left his father's industry and became a dentist. In 1856 Pierce moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan, which is where his younger brother, Edwin, was living. Except for a brief time residing in Joliet, Illinois, Pierce lived in Grand Rapids for the rest of the time prior to the Civil War. After his move to Grand Rapids, Pierce joined with a Dr. K.R.E. Carpenter in a dental practice. A local newspaper, in a clever play on words, reported about this dental practice that "the two gentlemen propose to do the best of work, at the most reasonable rates, so that their praises may be in the mouths of all."

In addition to establishing himself as a dentist in his new city of residence, Pierce also became involved in a local militia company known as the Valley City Guards. Many of the members of this militia company enlisted to serve in the Civil War. Pierce was elected first lieutenant of the Valley City Guards in 1858 and then captain in 1859 after the company's captain resigned. One of Pierce's first actions after taking command was to establish greater discipline in the company by implementing meticulous drill and target practice. This strict discipline was a preview of Pierce's command style in the Civil War, and after several months of rigorous training under Pierce's tight discipline, the Valley City Guards were rated one of the best militia companies in Michigan.



Third Michigan Parading Through Detroit

Unfortunately, the Valley City Guards suffered a serious setback late in 1859 when all of their arms were stolen by thieves who broke into the militia's armory. Then in the winter, the armory was severely damaged in a fire that destroyed all of the equipment and supplies. Because the Valley City Guards did not have funds to replace the arms that were stolen and the equipment and supplies that were lost in the fire, the militia unit met to decide on disbanding. Due to local fundraising efforts and funds pledged by the state, the members of the Valley City Guards voted unanimously to remain in operation. When the Civil War began and men were needed to fill the ranks of the Union army, many members of the Valley City Guards enlisted. These enlistees were incorporated into the 3rd Michigan Volunteer Infantry Regiment with Pierce elected captain of one of the unit's companies. Byron Pierce's brother, Edwin, also enlisted and became a member of the 3rd Michigan. On June 13, 1861 the 3rd Michigan departed Grand Rapids for Washington. After a train trip to Detroit, the regiment went by boat to Cleveland. The following day the 3rd Michigan left Cleveland and traveled by train to Washington, which it reached on June 16, 1861 and where it remained until it was sent to Bull Run.



Camp of the 3rd Michigan on the Potomac River Prior to 1st Bull Run

During the time that the 3rd Michigan was in Washington, an unfortunate incident occurred that involved Byron Pierce. In the first week of July 1861 a topographical survey was being done along the Potomac River for military purposes. As part of this survey, a signal flag was placed on a high and prominent location overlooking the 3rd Michigan's camp. The men in the regiment mistook the signal flag for a secession flag and decided to send a detachment, led by Byron Pierce, to remove the presumed secession flag. Frank Siverd, a member of the regiment, wrote afterward that Pierce's detachment was emulating Elmer Ellsworth, a Union officer who was killed by a staunch secessionist on May 24, 1861 after Ellsworth took down a secession flag in Alexandria, Virginia. Siverd further wrote that after Pierce removed the supposed secession flag, he then, "amid the cheers of his compatriots, carried it into camp and presented it to the Colonel." However, the next day a member of the survey party that had placed the signal flags "came along in no very pleasant mood I assure you. He stated that after placing those signals, they climbed some six miles over rocks and hills in order to make their observations, but when

they got to the position were nonplussed at not finding their signals. He requested the officer of the day to protect his flags from the assaults of over-anxious seekers after secession bunting."

Subsequent to this embarrassing if not amusing incident, the 3rd Michigan took part in the First Battle of Bull Run. The regiment marched into Virginia, camped for the night, and on July 18, 1861 participated in the action at Blackburn's Ford, which was a prelude to the actual battle. The 3rd Michigan took position in preparation for a charge against the enemy, which would have been the unit's baptism by fire, but this assault never happened. As the 3rd Michigan was about to charge, the Union lines broke, and the Union troops were in full retreat. Three days later, on the day of the battle, itself, the brigade that included the 3rd Michigan was positioned to protect the Union army's flank and was not greatly engaged. As the Union army fell back, the 3rd Michigan and its brigade covered the retreat until the entire Union army was in Washington. Pierce depicted the inglorious situation of the retreat when he wrote that "everything was in confusion" and "the main army had been defeated and were retreating in broken order."

The 3rd Michigan's colonel resigned in October 1861 for medical reasons and was replaced, which led to Byron Pierce being promoted to major. The following spring, the regiment took part in the Peninsula Campaign and the Second Battle of Bull Run, but it did not participate in the Battle of Antietam because it was on duty in the defenses in Washington due to the fact that the corps in which the 3rd Michigan was assigned (the III corps) was greatly understrength and was left in Washington to refit. During this time, the 3rd Michigan's lieutenant colonel was promoted to command of the 21st Michigan Infantry, and Byron Pierce was promoted to lieutenant colonel in the 3rd Michigan. The III corps, including the 3rd Michigan, rejoined the Army of the Potomac in time for the Battle of Fredericksburg, but the corps was not heavily engaged. Shortly after the Battle of Fredericksburg, the 3rd Michigan's colonel was promoted to brigadier general and resigned as the regiment's commander. He was replaced by Byron Pierce, who was promoted to colonel, and Byron's brother, Edwin, replaced Byron as lieutenant colonel of the 3rd Michigan.

Upon his promotion to command of the 3rd Michigan, Byron Pierce had progressed from his inauspicious Civil War debut of leading a detachment that removed a topographical survey signal flag to leading an infantry regiment. After the embarrassing incident involving the signal flag, it is not hard to imagine soldiers, particularly officers, predicting a bleak and disastrous wartime future for Pierce. But with his promotion to command of the 3rd Michigan Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Pierce was positioned to show his prowess as a military leader, and this is just what he did throughout the remainder of the war. His considerable bravery, notable military skill, and personal sacrifice culminated in his most memorable wartime deed at the Battle of Sailor's Creek. In so doing, Pierce went from 'capturing' a Union army topographical survey signal flag to capturing Robert E. Lee's sash. **Part 2** of this article describes Pierce's highly effective Civil War service as the commander of various units, including the unit that Pierce led in an action at Sailor's Creek that made Pierce unique among Union army officers.



Rosemont

A Visit to the boyhood home of Jefferson Davis

By Paul Siedel

During a recent visit to New Orleans I decided to take a drive up the Mississippi River toward the town of Natchez and take in some of the historic sites that line the River and the vast forests that make up that part of Louisiana and Mississippi. Several plantations, such as Ashland and Oak Alley, are open to the public. St. Francisville, Port Hudson, Baton Rouge and the historic towns of Woodville and Natchez are well worth a visit for the historic minded traveler. I decided however to visit one of the least known historic landmarks in the area, the boyhood home of Jefferson Davis, an estate called Rosemont. The plantation lies not far from Woodville, Mississippi, and is the center of a vast three hundred acre cattle farm. We left the road and drove back through the forest to the office located not far from the main house. The owners were more than welcoming and operate a small museum on the property. We took a tour of the home conducted by residents of the estate and were shown the family cemetery where the parents of Davis were buried.

The house was built in 1810 and was the home of the Davis family well into the 1890s. Davis and his older brother Joseph both lived not far from Rosemont, just south of Vicksburg, Mississippi. It was while he was living at his home Briarfield that he received the news that he had been chosen to be the president of the new Confederate States of America. Many of the Davis Family are buried in the family cemetery that is on the



Rosemont property and may be visited. The house is furnished in period pieces, but only a few are from the Davis family. All in all it was a visit well worth the drive up the Mississippi and back into the huge tracts of forest that surround the estate.

The next stop on our trip along the Mississippi was the Civil War battlefield of Port Hudson. The State of Louisiana owns and maintains a sizable tract of the Port Hudson site. It is well marked and there are walking trails throughout the battlefield along with a sizable museum. The siege of Port Hudson lasted from February to July 1863 and, along with Vicksburg, Port Hudson held the Confederate nation together along the River. When Vicksburg surrendered on July 4, 1863, Port Hudson had no reason to continue the struggle and surrendered on July 9, 1863, thus breaking the Confederacy's hold on the Mississippi River. As Lincoln said, "Now the father of waters rolls unveiled to the sea."



Both of these sites are well worth the effort to the historic minded traveler. Natchez, Mississippi, is just a short drive north of Woodville and has a number of antebellum homes open to the public and many B&Bs, along with a spring pilgrimage that lets one into many private homes and tells their history.

St. Francisville, Louisiana is also a stop worth the drive up from New Orleans. This small town features many antebellum homes and the Audubon museum, which features many of the artifacts from the life of the famous artist, John James Audubon.

All in all, a drive up the Mississippi River from New Orleans is a wonderful day trip, and I found it very enjoyable.

"I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day!"

The lyrics to this famous Christmas song were written by American poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow on Christmas morning, 1863. Longfellow's son, Charles Appleton Wadsworth, had enlisted without his approval and was severely wounded during General Meade's Mine Run Campaign. The fourth and fifth stanzas (on page 23), rarely sung now, refer directly to the American Civil War. The two stanzas refer to cannon thunder in the South and an "earthquake" shaking the hearth stones of a continent.

Captured During Meade's Assault at Fredericksburg

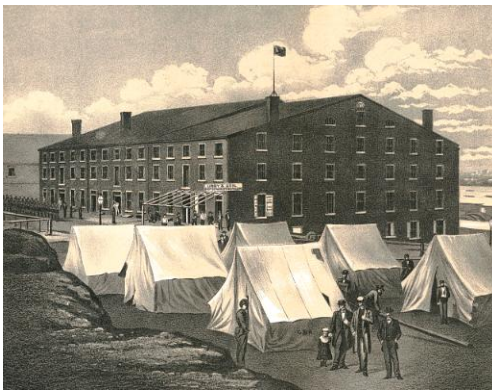
*[At Fredericksburg, Virginia, on December 13, 1862, Major General George G. Meade's division of Pennsylvania Reserve Corps regiments, as part of Major General John Reynold's 1st Corps, Major General William B. Franklin's Left Grand Division of the Army of the Potomac, successfully assaulted Stonewall Jackson's lines at Hamilton Crossing and Prospect Hill. The assault penetrated through a tangled point of woods across the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad at the base of the hill and drove a wedge in the front line of A.P. Hill's Division between James H. Lane's North Carolina Brigade and James J. Archer's Brigade of Georgians and Tennesseans, forcing its way up the hill to a military road guarded by a third brigade, Maxcy Gregg's South Carolina Brigade, which disintegrated under the pressure. Meade desperately called for support to exploit his breakthrough, but no support was forthcoming. A Confederate overwhelming counterattack blunted Meade's assault and drove the Pennsylvania Reserves back through the woods into the valley below Prospect Hill. Among the soldiers who made that assault was a young man from Greene County, Pennsylvania, **William T. Minor**, Company I, 8th Regt. Pennsylvania Reserves Corps. Company I suffered heavy casualties that day, and during the retreat, Minor was captured and sent to Libby Prison in Richmond. A letter he wrote home after being paroled was published in the "Waynesburg Messenger" (Waynesburg, PA) on January 22, 1863.]*



Cpl. Andrew Jackson Bissett, Co. I, Carried the 8th Penna Reserves
Regimental Colors During Meade's Assault

ANNAPOLIS, MD., Jan. 12, '63

Dear Father :—I at last have an opportunity of letting you know I still live. I have gone through enough in the last month to make me feel a considerably older, if not a wiser man. I will give you a brief account of my capture and life in Libby Prison. Our Brigade (the 2nd) was in the rear of the 3rd as a reserve, and were lying directly behind them, under as heavy a fire as we were ever exposed to, and unable to fire in return for fear of killing our own men, but you have heard all the particulars from the boys. I will tell you my part of the affair. I soon discovered our men giving away directly on our right, pouring out of the woods a great deal faster than they went in. It was not long until our own brigade began to fall back also. They did not go out in regular order. Sometimes a squad, ten, twelve, then a company, or part of a Regiment— Some would remain, give a shot or two, and then break back for the rear. I looked round for company "I;" found they were all gone but "Funk," who was lying on the ground to my left. He looked at me and asked if I was going back? I told him "No, I was too late." The balls were flying around us like hail—terribly thick. I thought it was death sure to remain, and could not be more to try to get back, so I made a dash and got back thirty or forty yards to a ditch. I jumped in and started to the left, thinking to get out in that direction. I had not gone far until I came across Sylveus, one of our recruits. I told him we would be prisoners or killed before five minutes, and had hardly got the words out until the rebels made their appearance on the bank and ordered us out— Of course we had to obey. They started several of us to the rear, and here we had to go through another terrible storm of grape and canister from our own batteries. They commenced shelling the woods. We passed back of their lines, and were put under guard about a mile in their rear, and here passed the first night. The next day we went some four or five miles farther back—stayed another night in the woods. Here we drew our first rations from the Gray Backs, which consisted of about a tin full of flour to each man, with no salt or anything to mix or cook it in— We contrived to make a slap-jack or two, which I soon finished. We started for the railroad next morning, for the purpose of being shipped on the cars for Richmond. We marched to a station and were unable to get cars, as they were all busy carrying their wounded to the rear. Here we passed another night, in a cold, disagreeable rain. The next morning we started for Hanover Junction 22 miles—here we got cars, and landed in Richmond about dark. We were treated well by the guard—not a harsh, insulting word to a man of us. We passed one house where there were several young ladies, who commenced clapping their hands and shouting, "On to Richmond." We laughed at them and told them "Burnside would be along in a few days—we



Libby Prison in Richmond, VA, and the U.S. Steamboat "New York"
Which Transported Paroled Union POWs from City Point, VA, to Camp Parole, MD near Annapolis

were but the advance guard." When we arrived at the Prison we were halted, and taken two at a time, each man had to give up his canteen and money, give his name, regiment and company. We were then passed into another room and paroled. It was a very cold and windy night, and some had to stand in the street all night. They would rush up to the door to get in, each one trying to get ahead of another. The guard would fight them back with their muskets, and as soon as they would get them back, and the door opened to admit two more there would be another struggle of the guards to keep them back, and so it continued until morning—there being about five hundred of us. I contrived to get in about 11 o'clock, and was taken to a large room, with about 200 others. I laid down on the floor and slept until morning. About 10 o'clock they brought our breakfast, which was a tin of rice soup and the half of a small loaf of baker's bread. At dark we received the same for supper. Every other day we got a small piece of fresh beef. I have gone through a great many hardships during the war, but nothing can compare with the three weeks I spent in prison. All sorts of characters, yelling, swearing and singing, from daylight until late in the night—with the floor alive with lice, and many of the men very sick —amongst them poor Sylveus. He was confined in a different room from me. I did not get to see him for several days after he was taken sick; he was then delirious, but knew me. He was forced to lay on the hard floor without blanket or covering of any kind. He was taken with a violent cold which settled on his lungs, and he had a very bad cough. It would have made you feel very sorry to have seen the poor wan, trembling all over, his mind wandering, covered with vermin, talking to Mary (his wife's name I believe), the men yelling and swearing like fiends, and smoking strong pipes under his very nose. Milton Johns, another member of our company, who was taken prisoner, was in the same room with him, and did all he could for him.

At last we received the welcome news that we were to go North. We were started for the cars about daylight, crossed the James River and down to City Point where a boat was waiting to receive us. We were soon aboard and on our way to this place. We crossed the Bay in the night. There came on a violent storm which made our boat shake and rock like a cradle. Some were very sick; we arrived, however, all safe. I went up in the cabin to see Sylveus; he was very low, and unable to talk so I could understand him.

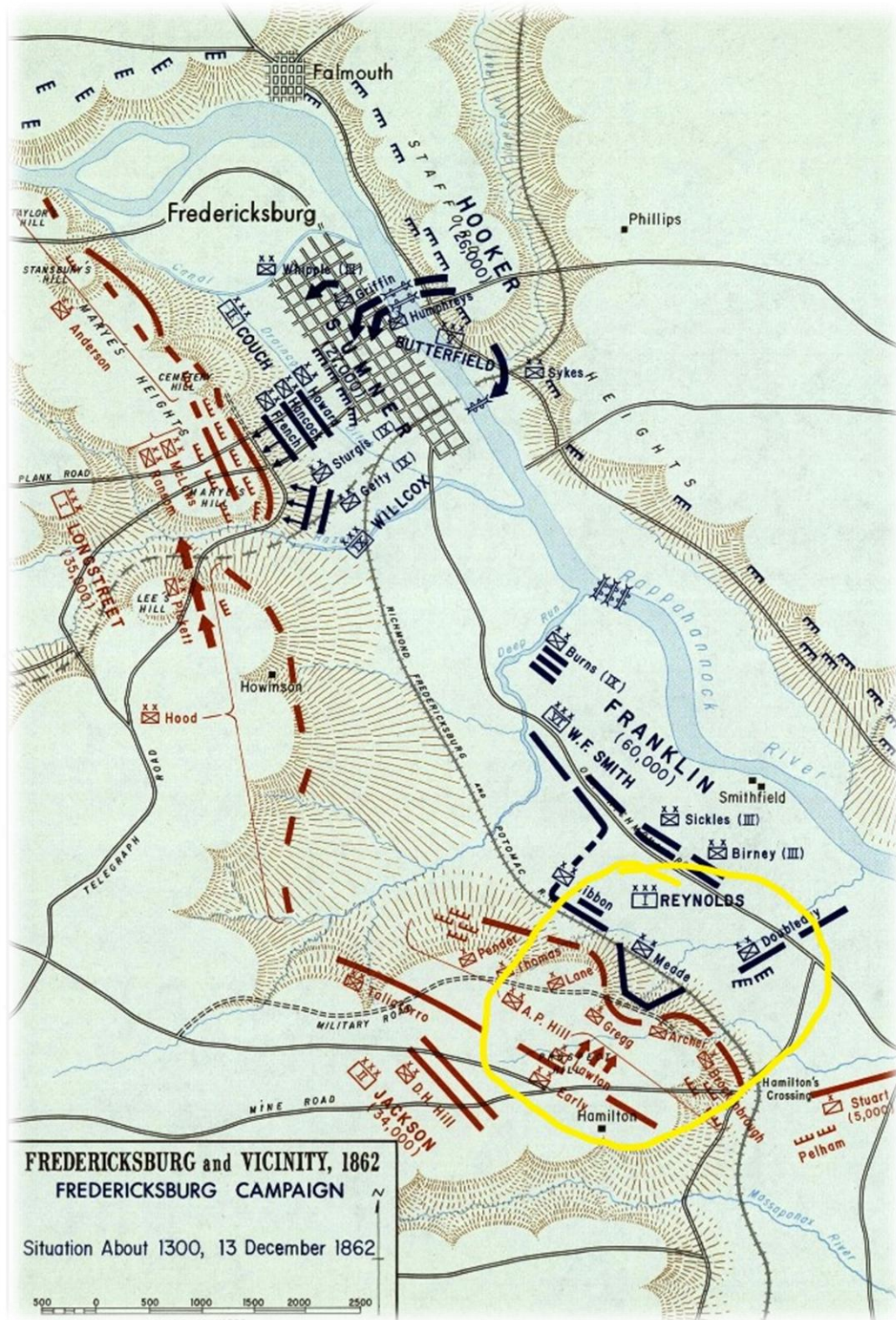
I have no money, no clothes, blanket or Overcoat, and am *lousy as thunder*. Do try and get me a furlough. I want some rest. If it is impossible to get a furlough, try and get me detailed on some special service until exchanged. There is no discipline or order here, and it will be a horrible place to stay two or three months. I see the prisoners are -exchanged up to the first of this month; we are not included, I believe.

Can write no more for want of paper.

Your affectionate son,

W. T. MINOR

[Editor's Note: *William Silveus died of typhoid fever on January 12, 1863. For Silveus' letters on the aftermath of Antietam, see the November 2022 issue of "The Charger."*]

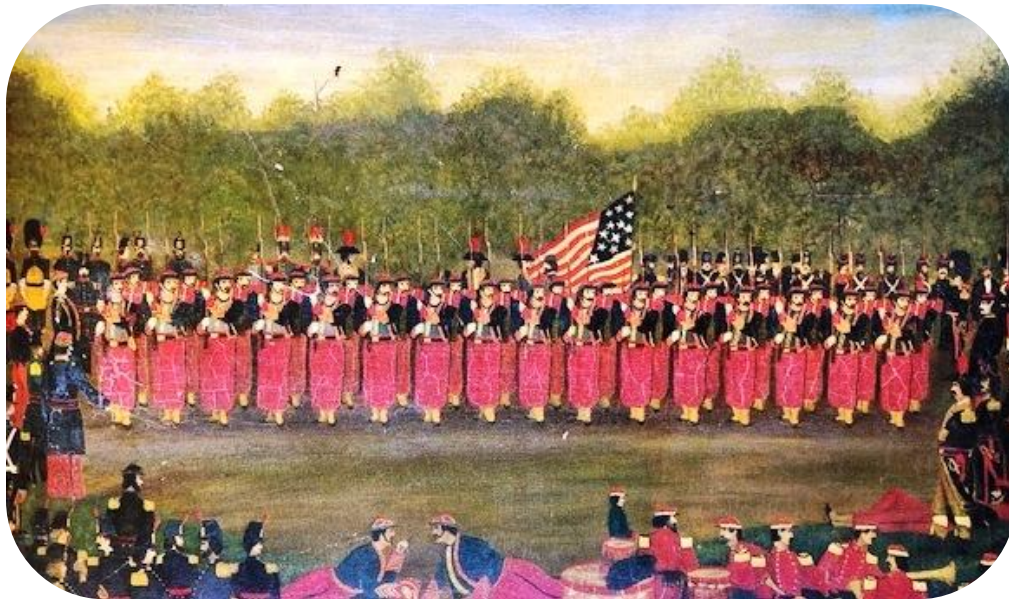


Area of Meade's Assault Circled in Yellow

A Zouave Summer in Cleveland

By © Brian D. Kowell

“They have paraded and drilled and in so doing have astonished and delighted beyond measure thousands of spectators”.ⁱ And now they were coming to Cleveland, Ohio.



Zouave Cadets from Chicago Commanded by Col. Elmer Ellsworth

In 1860, Cleveland had a population of 43,417, making it the nineteenth largest city in the United States. It was a bustling commercial city. With its Port of Cleveland on Lake Erie and goods transported via the Cuyahoga River and the Ohio & Erie Canal, in addition to its train connections with New York, Chicago, and the South, commerce was booming. It became an important city not only in Ohio, but in the nation.ⁱ

Now the renowned United States Zouave Cadets from Chicago, led by twenty-three year old Colonel Elmer E. Ellsworth, was coming to Cleveland. They arrived on Friday afternoon, July 6, 1860. They had traveled eight hours by train from Detroit, Michigan. Cleveland was their third stop on a twenty city tour through Illinois, Michigan, Ohio and New York.ⁱⁱ

The train, bedecked with patriotic decorations, pulled into Cleveland's Water Street station at 3:05 p.m. They were greeted by a booming salute from the cannon of the Cleveland Light Guards (Cleveland Grays). Lining the platform at attention were the rest of the Light Guards under the command of Captain Alfred S. Sanford. Behind them throngs of citizens lined the streets and cheered their arrival.ⁱⁱⁱ

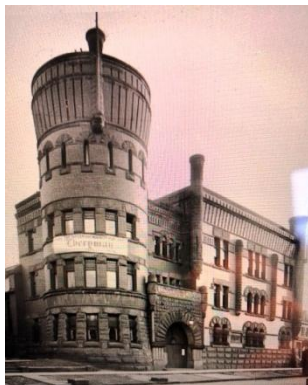
“How an entire town could be so excited about a military drill team,” historian Meg Groeling wondered, “is challenging to understand in the twenty-first century.” But back then, like the announcement of a traveling circus or a famous evangelist’s revival meeting, the novelty was almost magical and the anticipation caused much excitement in Cleveland. “No important public occasion in the nineteenth century was complete without a glorious exhibition drill from the local militia, coupled with rousing patriotic music from an accompanying military band.”^{iv}

The United States Zouave Cadets of Chicago were supposed to be the best drill team in the country. After all, they had been awarded that title at the Seventh Annual United States Agricultural Fair. Other militia units and drill teams, however, took exception. Only two teams had competed at the Fair. The naysayers claimed they did not represent the whole country and challenged the legitimacy of their title. Young Colonel Ellsworth took the challenge personally and set out to prove their right to the claim. He took the Zouaves on a barnstorming trip to demonstrate their skill and to take on all challengers.

“The Chicago Zouaves,” proclaimed the *Cleveland Morning Leader*, “whose fame has gone throughout our country accompanied with terms of the highest commendation for soldierly bearing and personal integrity, have at length arrived in our city....and today they will appear in our streets and afford the opportunity for our citizens to witness their astonishing perfection of drill.”^v

Eighty men of the Zouave Cadets detrained at the station and came to attention on the platform. They were all tall and muscular and seemingly athletic. They wore their colorful exotic dress uniforms of blue pants and blue sack coat with buff trimmings and red kepi inspired by the French colonial forces from Algeria. The Cleveland paper called it “the gayest and most picturesque.”^{vi} They boasted the highest standards of behavior. Each of the eighty had taken a pledge – the “Golden Resolution” – that they would not drink, gamble, play billiards or frequent houses of ill repute.

Captain Sanford welcomed Colonel Ellsworth and the two units and battery, proceeded by the Zouave Cadet marching band, marched through the Cleveland’s streets to the Gray’s Armory



(pictured here). They were accompanied by the cheers from the citizens lining the streets. Outside the armory they formed. Captain Sanford formally welcomed Ellsworth and the Zouaves. “Ellsworth delivered a brief speech of thanks followed by the distinctive Zouave cheer – doffing their kepis and jerking them up and down in unison...as they counted in unison from one to seven and ended with a shouted ‘Tiger! Zouaves!’” to the delight of the throng.^{vii}

Once inside the armory, they stacked their muskets, doffed their knapsacks, and changed into their fatigue uniforms. As a unit, they marched to the Weddell House for dinner. Following dinner the Zouave Cadet Band played from the Waddell House balcony to the crowd below before they all marched back to the armory where they rolled their blankets on the floor to sleep.^{viii}

On Saturday morning the Zouaves awoke and donned their colorful drill uniforms. By 10 a.m. they formed with the Grays in front of the armory to march to the city fairgrounds for their drill exhibition. Along with them formed the local Hecker band, the batteries, and the other Cleveland militia unit, the Hiberian Guards. The Cleveland band and units would lead the parade, followed by Ellsworth, the Cadet band, and the Zouaves. The procession marched along streets lined with cheering spectators. They marched from the armory towards Public Square only to circle around coming through the Square from a different direction. After taking Euclid Avenue and turning south on Erie Street (E. 9th St.), they marched to Prospect Avenue where they then proceeded east. Great crowds lined the sidewalks. They peered out open windows of houses and from rooftops of buildings. Some even perched in trees as they passed by. The Zouaves then marched to Perry Street (E. 22nd St.) turned south to Woodline Avenue. Turning east onto Woodland Avenue, the column turned north on Hudson Street then east to Scoville Avenue where the entrance to the city fair grounds stood.^{ix}

“The Fairgrounds afforded an excellent space for the drill, the ring inside the trotting course being kept entirely clear for use of the military....there was an immense throng in carriages and on foot. The spacious seats upon the west side of the track were crowded with ladies, their variegated robes giving that portion of the grounds a very brilliant appearance. There were at the least calculation seven thousand people upon the grounds,” as the tickets were free. “A space in the center of the stands was reserved for the Cadet Band, invited guests and their ladies and the representatives of the press. Detachments of the two Cleveland militia units along with the local police were posted about the track to prevent intrusions by the throng.”^x

It was a little after 11 a.m. and the July heat was already beginning to rise as Colonel Ellsworth (pictured here in civilian dress) had his Zouaves form ranks at attention facing the stands. As the crowd quieted, Ellsworth began the drill. The paper described the Colonel as “a mere boy in size but if ever there was a man who was every bit a soldier, he is one....He has a voice that rings out the word of command like a report of a pistol.”^{xi}



Under Ellsworth’s shouted commands, and with the Cadet Band accompanying their movements with patriotic tunes, the Zouaves marched and formed different shapes and maneuverers – crosses, parallelograms, circles, squares – without a man out of step and “all springing back to their respective places with the agility of a deer.” They moved in slow time and quick time carrying their muskets and knapsacks. They moved with a “precision that made the action of the whole company seem as one man.”^{xii}

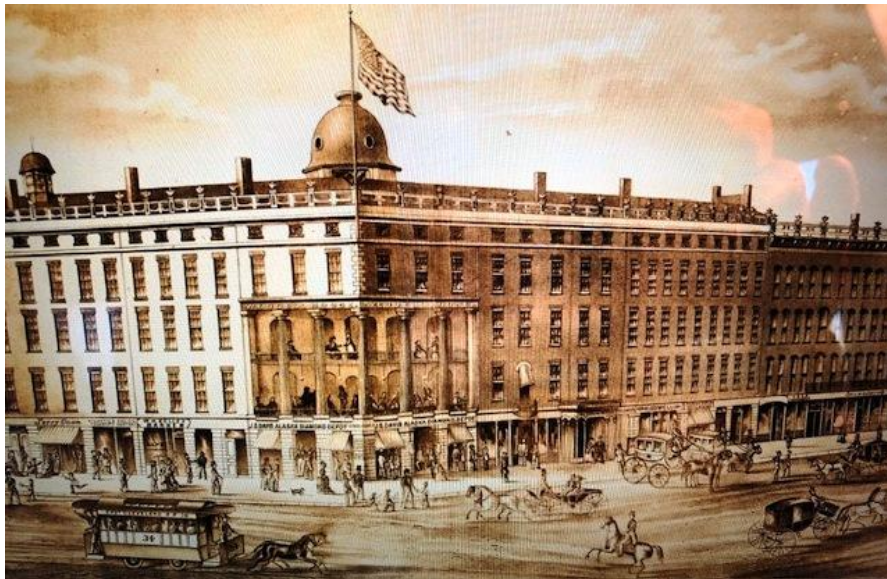
At a command, the 80 Zouaves took the full length of the parade ground in skirmish order. They went through the motions of loading and firing their weapons from standing, kneeling and prone positions. They displayed expertise in the bayonet drills and at a command formed a square in the middle of the field with “bristling bayonets pointing to every side.”^{xiii}

They drilled in the heat for about an hour and a half. “During the drill Captain Sanford, overcome by the heat and his exertion, was obliged to be carried from the field.”^{xiv}

For their finale, the Zouaves formed for a “grand charge of bayonets” and on command “came rushing down toward the grandstand like a whirlwind” screaming at the top of their lungs. When they rushed to within a few feet of the spectators with their pointed bayonets, Ellsworth barked a command and they “stopped as suddenly as if struck by lightning....Cheers and applause from all sides exploded.”^{xv}

The militia units formed and marched back to Gray’s Armory. Captain Sanford had recovered and took his place at the head of the Grays. At 4 o’clock the Zouaves and Grays sat down to dinner at the Weddell House along “with members of the city council and other invited guests.” There were speeches and toasts and best wishes to Ellsworth and his men. The young Colonel stood and said that, “this hearty hospitality by the Grays and the City of Cleveland was beyond anything that they could have looked for.” That “They would remember their visit with pleasure and invited the Light Guards [Grays] to be their guests in Chicago.” With that the Zouaves stood as a whole and gave their Zouave cheer, “One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, Tiger! Zouaves!”^{xvi}

After dinner two omnibuses appeared at the front door to which the cadets piled in and were taken on a brief tour of the city before they were returned to the hotel. At 8 o’clock that evening, with the sun already set, Ellsworth and his Zouaves readied to depart. They formed one last time in front of the Weddell House. Again they were again cheered by crowds this time bearing torches to light the way. As “the Cadet Band played, Ellsworth put the company through a bayonet exercise in the street in front of the hotel” as a final salute to the citizens of Cleveland.
^{xvii}



Weddell House

Word was given and the Cleveland Grays escorted the Zouaves to the train station. The procession was led by horsemen carrying torches. They marched down Bank Street to Ontario and through Public Square to Water Street. The whole route was illuminated by a file of torch bearers on each side of the street. As the column passed, Roman candles were set off. Ellsworth

would later write to his fiancée', "We left on Saturday Evening escorted by an escort of horsemen bearing torches and loaded with fireworks with which they kept the street blazing along the line of march. By the time we reached the Depot, at least half our men had boquets.[sic]."^{xviii}

At the Depot after shaking hands and to the cheers of the crowd, the Zouave Cadets climbed aboard the train to Buffalo. Once on board, with a whistle and a clang of the bell, the train moved slowly off into the darkness.

The *Cleveland Morning Leader's* review of the Zouave visit in the July 9, 1860 edition ended as follows:

"We heartily bid the Zouaves good-speed ...and if these two columns do not convince our readers that we go for the Zouaves...then let them call on us and ask us what we think of the United States Zouave Cadets of Chicago. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, Tiger! Zouave!"^{xix}

ⁱ Keating, Dennis W., *Cleveland and the Civil War*, Charleston, South Carolina, The History Press, 2022. p19. In population it was the 19th largest city in the United States in 1860. ohiohistorycentral.org.

ⁱⁱ Groeling, Meg, *First Fallen: The Life of Colonel Elmer Ellsworth, the North's First Civil War Hero*, Californis, Savas Beatie, LLC, 2021. Pp76-85.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Cleveland Morning Leader*, July 7 1860. *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, <https://case.edu/ech/articles/c/clevelandgrays>. Alfred S. Sanford (or Sandford) was the 55 year old antebellum captain of the Cleveland Grays and the city's one time fire chief. The Cleveland Light Guards was an earlier name for the unit but due to their distinctive gray coats soon were renamed the Cleveland Grays. They were also known earlier as the Cleveland Civil Guards. *Vokurlojiiianis/Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*. The Gray's artillery unit, Cleveland Light Artillery was organized 6 July, 1839 and was commanded by Captain Louis Heckman. It would later become Battery A, 1st Regiment of Light Artillery,

^{iv} Groeling, *First Fallen*, p.82

^v *Cleveland Morning Leader*, July 7, 1860

^{vi} Ibid. The Zouaves travelled with and wore three distinct uniforms: a dress uniforms of a short, dark blue coat, blue pantaloons with buff trimmings and red kepi, the drill uniform short scarlet trousers, high gaiters with leggings, a short blue jacket and red kepi, and fatigue or "chasseur" uniform of trimmed red pants and a blue sack coat with the red kepi. Groeling, *First Fallen*, p. 84.

^{vii} *Cleveland Morning Leader*, July 9, 1860. Groeling, *First Fallen*, p.85

^{viii} <https://case.edu/ech/articles/w/weddell-house>. The Weddell House was a five story brick and sandstone building was located on Superior Avenue and Bank Street (W.6th St.). It had two large dining rooms, 200 rooms with indoor plumbing in common areas, offices and stores and was opened in 1847 by Paul M. Waddell. It was enlarged in 1853 and was the premier hotel in Cleveland at the time. It was raised in 1904 and replaced by the Rockefeller Building.

^{ix} *Cleveland Morning Leader*, July 9, 1860. https://case.edu/ech/article/h/hiberian_guards. The exact order of the procession was the Hecker Band, followed by the Light Guards (Grays), the artillery batteries of the city, Co. A, Captain Simmons, Co. B, Captain Pelton and Co. E. Captain Heckman, followed by the Hiberian Guards, the Zouave Cadet Band and finally Ellsworth and his Zouaves. The Hiberian Guards were led by Captain William Kinney. They were an independent company of Irish-American volunteers. Their armory was located on Oregon Street which is modern Rockwell Avenue. There is no record that there would be a drill competition between the units. There is some confusion on the writer's part where the fairgrounds and trotting track was located. The *Cleveland Morning Leader* states that it had entrances at Hudson Street where another source said that the track was on Woodland Avenue between E. 14th St. and Perry Street (E. 22nd St.)

<https://pressbooks.ulib.csuohio.edu/cleveland/chapter/xiii-euclid-avenue>.

^x *Cleveland Morning Leader*, July 9, 1860.

^{xi} *Ibid.* July 7, 1860.

^{xii} *Ibid.* July 9, 1860. To see a modern Zouave drill go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcZeGulync American Legion Zouaves, Jackson, Michigan as seen on the Ed Sullivan TV show.

^{xiii} *Ibid.*

^{xiv} *Ibid.*,

^{xv} *Ibid.*

^{xvi} *Ibid.* Mr. Russell spoke that they were always welcomed and complimented their drill and the enjoyment of the Cleveland citizens. Mr. H. S. Stevens toasted; "The health of Col. Ellsworth, a pleasant journey and prosperous return to him and his corps."

^{xvii} *Ibid.* July 9, 1860.

^{xviii} *Ibid.* Elmer Ellsworth to Carrie Spafford, July 8, 1860, Kenosha Civil War Museum/ Lake Forest Academy Collection.

^{xix} Groeling, First Fallen. p.86. Editorial, *Cleveland Morning Leader*, July 9, 1860, online version:

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83035143/1860-07-09/ed-1/seq-1/#date1=1860&index=0&rows=20&words-1860+9+JULY+july&searchType=basic&sequences=0&state=Ohio&date2=1860&protext=July+9%2C+1860&y=6&x=15&dateFilterType=yearRanger&page=1>.

U.S. Federal Coinage During the Civil War

By Patty Zinn

It is interesting to note that both the Federal Government and the Confederate States minted coins during the Civil War. Most know more about Civil War Tokens than actual coinage produced by the Confederate States. Over the course of the next few months, I would like to talk about some of the unique, short-lived United States coin issues, as well as Civil War Tokens. This month, I would like to present an overview of the Federal Government coin issues, with a focus on the smallest of United States silver coins, called the Trime.

U.S. coins being minted during the Civil War were:

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Indian Head Penny (Varieties 2 & 3) | 1860 – 1864 |
| Silver Three-Cent Pieces (Trime, Variety 3) | 1851-1873 |
| Liberty Seated Half Dimes | 1860-1873 |
| Liberty Seated Dimes (Variety 4) | 1860-1873 |
| Liberty Seated Quarters (Variety 1) | 1856-1865 |
| Liberty Seated Half Dollars (Variety 1) | 1856-1866 |
| Liberty Seated Dollars (no motto) | 1840-1865' |
| 6 Different Denominations of Gold Dollars | 1838-1907 |

The Smallest of the United States Silver Coins: The Trime, specifically the Silver Trime, was authorized by Congress March 3, 1851, and throughout its minted years of 1851-1873, saw three Varieties –1, 2, and 3. Only Variety 3 was minted during Civil War years, 1859-1873. Roughly

the size of our current-day Roosevelt Dime (picture below is enlarged), nearly the entire production of non-Proof coins from 1863-1872 was melted in 1873.* The Obverse shows a 6-point star encircled with United States of America and the year minted appears at the bottom of the Star. The Reverse has the Roman Numeral III, with an olive sprig over the III and a bundle of three arrows beneath. Coin design is credited to James B. Longacre and the coin was minted at Philadelphia and New Orleans mints.

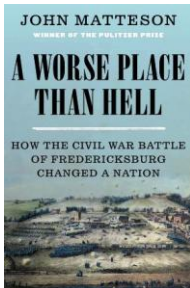


It became short lived as the public hoarded gold and silver, being replaced in 1865 by the Nickel Three-Cent Piece. I am privileged to have one purchased from The Horse Soldier in Gettysburg, PA – I can't help wondering what story it could tell!

*Source *The Official Red Book, A Guide Book of United States Coins*

BOOK NOTE

John Matteson, *A Worse Place than Hell: How the Civil War Battle of Fredericksburg Changed a Nation*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.: New York, N.Y., 2021.



In addition to the books on Fredericksburg listed in the editor's note, I also recommend this work by John Matteson. Going beyond a description of military strategy and tactics, Matteson demonstrates the cultural impact of the battle on the United States by focusing on the lives of five ordinary Americans who became extraordinary men and women as a result of their experience of Fredericksburg and its aftermath. These persons include two soldiers, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., of Massachusetts, and "the Gallant" John Pelham of Alabama; an abolitionist preacher and army chaplain, Arthur Fuller; and two minor literary figures at the time, Louisa May Alcott and Walt Whitman, who left the comforts of their homes and familiar haunts to serve as nurses in the hellish post-battle hospitals of Virginia and Washington, D.C. While Fredericksburg can be viewed as simply another military disaster for the Union, in a long line of disasters dating back to the war's beginning, the battle also represented a cultural watershed for the country in which these five lives underwent changes that led to profound repercussions to the country's law, literature, politics, and popular mythology. Pelham became a central figure of Southern "lost cause" mythology. Holmes' thought on law and jurisprudence was deeply affected by his military experience. Fuller, a religious intellectual,

pitted his frail body against the evils of slavery. Whitman owes some of his best-known poetic work to his Civil War experiences, and without her life as a nurse, Alcott may never have written *Little Women* and impacted the lives of generations of American girls who learned the lessons of self-reliance and self-worth from her writings. Just as importantly, a sixth individual is discussed in the book, Abraham Lincoln, who, when faced with the battlefield disaster, and the possibility of changing course on the slavery issue, made the decision to execute the final Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, forever changing the ultimate stakes of the Union war effort.

--Kent Fonner



*Then from each black, accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South,
And with the sound
The carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!*

*It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearth-stones of a continent
And made forlorn
The households born
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!*

--Henry Wadsworth Longfellow