



# **THE FUGELMAN**

## **THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SECOND WISCONSIN VOLUNTEER INFANTRY ASSOCIATION**

THE BLACK HAT BRIGADE---THE IRON BRIGADE

1861-1865

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**VOLUME XXIII**

**ISSUE 8 AUGUST, 2014**

**FU-GEL-MAN: A well-drilled soldier placed in front of a military company as a model or guide for others.**

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## **PASS IN REVIEW**

*From the quill of Lt. Colonel Pete Seielstad*



**The 2<sup>nd</sup> Wisconsin mustered out of service in July of 1864 and the citizen-soldiers continued with their lives that were interrupted by patriotism to preserve the Union. Many never returned. Many more returned maimed by the conflict, physically as well as emotionally. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of this month, Co. B of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wisconsin Association commemorated the homecoming of the men of the La Crosse Light Guard.**

**As I stood in the ranks with my brothers in arms, I listened to the honorable mayor of La Crosse, A. W. Pettibone welcome us back home to friends, family and hearth. Our lieutenant's speech was heartrending as to what a single company from a small town in Wisconsin had to sacrifice. It was perhaps the best presentation of the Roll of Honor of Co. B, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wisconsin that I have ever heard. *[Lt. John D's speech is contained in this publication of the Fugelman in the Company reports for Company B]***



Cornfield at 150th Antietam

**As I reminisced about the last 3 years commemorating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the great battles the 2nd Wisconsin and the Iron Brigade participated in, I thought about our own attempts to re-create these great battles. My after action reports can give a vivid description of our efforts but I must always**

**allude to the true heroes of those battles: THE BOYS OF '61. They are the ones we must portray, honestly and honorably.**

**Also, what captivated me at the moment, were the men in our ranks. The newest recruits, 'fresh fish' who have yet to see the 'elephant'; the younger men who have been in our ranks for the last few years; and men like me who have been in the hobby for 20 years or more.**

**In the lieutenant's speech, he writes: *"The Old 2<sup>nd</sup> is no more, but rest assured the glory of the Old 2<sup>nd</sup> and the Light Guard will live eternally in the grateful hearts of the citizens of La Crosse, and of the Nation.***

***With that gentlemen, I bid you a fond farewell."***

**I must admit that as an old warhorse, I should look forward to a time of peace and wage war only on the weeds in my garden. But...being eternally grateful is something we cannot put aside lightly. Rather we must continue and renew our efforts to keep the men and women of the American Civil War ever present in our memory and interpret accurately their sacrifices in preserving the Union in 1861-1865.**

**Your obedient servant,**

*Lt. Col. Pete Seielstad*

## **CAMPAIGN SCHEDULES OF THE COMPANIES AND ASSOCIATION**

## AUGUST

|                        |   |                       |
|------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| <b>1st-3rd</b>         | <b>1 USSS, 15th WI, 8th WI &amp; 2nd WI (Skirmish team)</b>         | <b>Boscobel, WI.</b>  |
| <b>2nd &amp; 3rd</b>   | <b>Muskets &amp; Memories Reenactment (Co.B, Co.K, Co.E, BtyB.)</b> | <b>Boscobel, WI.</b>  |
| <b>9th-10th</b>        | <b>Charity March (Co.E)</b>   | <b>Upper Michigan</b> |
| <b>23rd &amp; 24th</b> | <b>Old World Wisconsin Living History (Co.k, Co.B, Co.E)</b>        | <b>Eagle, WI.</b>     |
| <b>29th-31st</b>       | <b>8th &amp; 2nd WI Labor Day skirmish (skirmish teams)</b>         | <b>Rhineland, WI.</b> |

## REGIMENTAL DISPATCHES

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### A DISPATCH FROM OUR COMRADES IN THE 32<sup>ND</sup> IOWA

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*The following dispatch was communicated to The Fugelman by our Lt. Col. Seielstad. The communique refers to the efforts to revive the Black Hat Battallion. The members of our Association should take pride in the fact that these comrades from the 32<sup>nd</sup> Iowa experienced a great relationship with our people and the Black Hats.*

**I want to thank you again for presenting such a great newsletter for the 2nd Wisconsin, I really enjoy keeping informed as to what is happening with the group. I also want to let you know that myself, and other members of the 32nd Iowa, hope that you can keep the organization running as we have enjoyed our many times falling in with you (especially at the 150th Gettysburg) and hope to be able to do so again at some event in the future.**

**Keep up the outstanding work please.**

**Yours in arms.  
Bradley Williams Capt. 32nd Iowa**

## **INFORMATION ON POSSIBLE NATIONAL EVENTS AT SAYLER'S CREEK AND FORT HARRISON IN VIRGINIA**

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***In last month's newsletter the editor updated the members on two possible national events for 2015. Below is a request to consider an event in 2014 known as the Campaign Before Richmond. Obviously this comes too late for our members. We had already selected a national event that our folks attended in May, 2014. The information on the Fort Harrison reenactment in the event entitled Campaign Before Richmond is here for your review and consideration.***

***The second item here is a possible consideration as a national event for 2015. It is a reenactment held on the actual field where the battle took place. You will take notice of the early date of the event, the last weekend in March, 2015. The photo included in the e-mail below was taken from the park's website. It is a beautiful place in the editor's view! The editor returned to the park's website before publication and there wasn't any information up yet to include in the article.***

***The Battle of Sayler's Creek took place on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1865. After Lt. Gen. Grant broke the lines around Richmond and Petersburg Robert E. Lee tried to get his Army of Northern Virginia to move south to join Joseph Johnston in North Carolina. Phil Sheridan's fast moving cavalry prevented Lee from doing so. Lee would turn west moving towards Lynchburg where he was told he would find 80,000 rations. Unfortunately for Lee, Sheridan and elements of the II Corps and the VI Corps cut off about one fourth of the Army of Northern Virginia—two divisions under Lt. Gen. Richard Ewell. These two divisions tried to slow down the fast moving Union forces and lined up along Sayler's Creek to give battle. The rebel troops were forced to abandon their position. Rebel losses were 7,700 killed, wounded and captured. Three days later Robert E. Lee surrendered the ANV at Appomattox Court House.***

**Here is the BIG blast of info on some upcoming events.....**

**I will be short and sweet on each one, with more details to follow.....but here ya go!**

**1. Campaign Before Richmond- Mike Lavis and I spent Saturday using the original engineer drawings to stake out both Fort Harrison and the works on New Market Heights.**

**This event is going to be one for the books!**

**With over a 1,000 acres literally adjacent to Malvern Hill, and featuring real earthworks and a 3/4 scale Fort Harrison, Campaign Before Richmond promises you a true 1864 experience.**

**The County is bringing in heavy equipment to start digging in the next week or so, and once they are done we are going back done to start to layout the fine details.**

**Works at this event will have abatis, slashings and for once, the ditch on the RIGHT side of the works.**

**Registration is open and running at <http://civilwarhenrico.com/reenactors/>**

**If you attended Balls Bluff, Summer of '62, Lee Takes Command or Maryland my Maryland, you know the attention to detail and scenarios CBR will have.**

**All rules and regulations will be enforced, and you have a chance to attack, counter attack and defend real works to really understand what those boys faced in 1864.**

**There will be a campaign camp and a garrison camp at this event, as well as activities (period ones) for the civilians who attend.**

**Both sides will be able to spend the night in the works, working and improving them.**

**The event will also feature a dawn reenactor only counter attack on Fort Harrison...you do not want to miss this event!**

**This event will be artillery hell for infantry, and heaven for the queen of battle.....we have already began to assign guiding impressions and unit portrayals....more info on those will be out next week.....**

**So be sure to register TODAY at the above link!**

**If you did register for In Hooker's Rear, and did NOT get a refund, and have NOT already contacted me, please do so by August 1.**

**I have been getting emails, Facebook messages and phone calls, and have cleaned and am getting ready to register folks on Aug 1 who did not get a refund.**

**So register today if you have not done so already!**

**Next-**



**<http://www.der.virginia.gov/state-parks/sailors-creek.shtml>**

**SAYLORS CREEK- yup, the old Saylors is BACK!**

**Shortly the park will have a web site up, but we are set for the last weekend of March 2015, on the ACTUAL SITE, with a day long running fight**



**covering original ground!!!!**

**Many of us have fond memories of the old Saylor's, and Mike and I are dedicated to not only mirror those events, but improve upon them by the experience we have had putting on many premier events.**

**Force ratios will be enforced..... rules and regs will be enforced.....and on the actual ground experience the death throws of Lee's army in March of 2015!**

**This will be a campaigner event- come only with what you can 'hump'! just like the boys of 1865.**

**As more info is released I will let you know, but be sure to be at these two events, or plan on kicking your own rear for missing them!**

**Pards,**

**Chris Anders**

## **POSSIBLE BENTONVILLE EVENT BEING DISCUSSED**

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***Another entrant into the competition for a national event in 2015 is an event around the Battle of Bentonville in North Carolina. Things are not fixed for this event, but it is one of a number of events for consideration. In the past the members have determined the national event at the Wade House at the end of September. This is especially true when an event will take place early in the year. The Fugelman will try to get as much information as possible in the September newsletter to assist in the decision making process.***

**Guys:**

**This is all still in the works, and nothing is set yet. But I wanted to give you all a heads-up on it. As the new FFD commander, Bob Minton has been given command of all the western troops that might be going to Bentonville**

**next March. He still has to sort things out, but he hopes to be able to have two brigades, one under Lance Dawson, and one in command of yours truly.**

**I would basically get the northern units, and any others I can gather together. This includes the Army of the Ohio as well as any of your units that would like to come in. We can organize into regiments as numbers dictate, and as you guys want. As most of you know I have been on that field, as a battalion or brigade commander for the past 3 events, going back 15 years, and I know it as well or better than any other Federal field officer. I know that together we would make one heck of a brigade, and I would love to see you all again. Please consider this one, and discuss it with your rank and file. I'll be passing along any more information as I get it. Plus if you know any others that might be interested, feel free to pass their names along to me.**

**Personally, I have always believed that your groups, with the AotO, represent the best infantry in the country, and if we can get all of it together.....**

**I do want to repeat that this is not a done deal yet, but it is what Gen. Minton would like to see done. I have his permission to contact you guys so you can begin to think about it, and make some decisions.**

**On another personal note: Chris Anders will be running the Saylor's Creek event the following weekend, on the original battlefield. Having worked so long with him, I could not miss his last scheduled CW event, due as much to our friendship as anything else. So I will be doing both. It will be a campaign-style event, as dictated by the guy running that park. Each unit will have to make their own choices as to which original battlefield they will want to go to. I wanted to mention it, since it will come up in the near future.**

**My deepest respects  
Mike Lavis**

## **ATTENTION TO ORDERS**

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## **LET ME INTRODUCE THE RECIPIENT OF THE SECOND WISCONSIN SCHOLARSHIP**

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***Last month the name of the recipient of the 2014 Second Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Association Scholarship was announced. The winner of the sole scholarship this year was Mike Moran. His father is a long standing member of Company K. Mike Moran the elder is a judge in some faraway wilderness in this state. The following information was provided by the father. It appears the son wants to follow in his father's footsteps. Mike senior must be very proud. Again we extend our congratulations to this year's recipient of the scholarship, Mike Moran. Huzzah!!***





**Michael Moran is 19 years old and a Sophomore at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. He is originally from Wausau, Wisconsin and is the son of Michael and Suella Moran. His father has been a member of Company K since 1996. Michael is currently majoring in history and political science and plans to someday attend law school. He has grown up with the Second Wisconsin, attending many events with his family. His interest in the Civil War started when he first learned to read, studying every book there was about Abraham Lincoln. This has led to a lifelong interest in the Civil War era. He participated in the 145th Anniversary of Gettysburg with the Second Wisconsin in 2008 with his father. Michael is very thankful and honored that he was considered for this scholarship and will use it to further his studies in history at UW- Madison.**

## **BOSCOBEL REENACTMENT TRYING TO COLLECT ITEMS FOR AMERICAN MILITARY**

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**Greetings All,**

**When we sent out our original invite letters we made mention of taking up a collection of items for overseas troops again this year. Thanks! to all, last year we were able to send over 18 boxes. You can imagine they were well**

**received! Kind of like Christmas in August, only better because no one knew the packages were coming. Just like packages coming from home to you Civil War soldiers.**

**I am attaching the list of requested items. Please share this info with your unit and everyone and bring your donations to Boscobel. Please clearly mark who the stuff is from so you can receive thank you notes.**

**There will be a place at registration in Boscobel to drop of your contributions. If you can, please include a few dollars for postage - yes - the USPS charges for overseas packages albeit at a somewhat reduced rate.**

**The troops thank you and we thank you!**

**If you have any questions or comments you can contact me at [cirushwk@mwt.net](mailto:cirushwk@mwt.net)**

**Your Obedient Servant,**

**Marie Leifheit**

**Muskets & Memories**

**Boscobel, WI**

**Bandanas  
Jerky  
Slim Jims  
Pringles  
Cups of Soup  
Easy Mac  
Gum  
Hard Candy**

**Crackers... Goldfish, Peanut butter, cheese**  
**Tuna or chick kits**  
**Gran bars**  
**Cereal bars**  
**Peanut butter, jelly, Nutella**  
**Ground & instant coffee, creamer, sugar**  
**Drink mix for water bottles**  
**Sun flower seeds**  
**Trail mix**  
**Dried fruit**  
**Fruit packs**  
**Fruit cups**  
**Pudding cups**  
**Pre-packaged cookies - Oreos**

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#### **Personal Care**

**Hand sanitizer**  
**Body wash, bar soap**  
**Shampoo**  
**Razors & shave cream**  
**Tooth paste, tooth brushes, floss**  
**Nail clippers**  
**Towels & washcloths**  
**Fabric softener sheets**  
**Sunscreen..... Needed! (Consumer Reports Magazine says the WalMart brand is the most effective - and costs less)**  
**Chap Stick**

**INCLUDE YOUR NAME & ADDRESS; IF YOU CAN, ALSO DONATE A DOLLAR OR TWO FOR SHIPPING. THANK YOU! MARIE LEIFHEIT - 608-872-2274**

**NORSKEDALEN PRESENTS:**

***AN AMERICAN CIVIL WAR EXPERIENCE***

**OCTOBER 11<sup>TH</sup> & 12<sup>TH</sup>**



**This year Norskedalen will transform into rural Fort Scott Kansas in October 1864 as part of the last great confederate offensive in the Trans-Mississippi Theater of war by confederate Major General Sterling Price.**

**The scenario is drawn from a letter written by Maggie Davis Moffet to her cousin Robert Hawk serving in the 92<sup>nd</sup> Illinois Infantry. She writes: *“You know something of war and the horrors of the battlefield but yet you know nothing of a wife’s anxiety – and fear for a loved husband.”* She also saw the rebel prisoners as they were marching by and they were in her words: ... *“an awful rugged, lousy dirty - looking set of victims.”***



**Union soldiers will portray Company I of the 8<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin, the “Eagle Regiment”. The men of Company I, enlisted from the**

**La Crosse area. Follow four boys from the Coulee Region, Ed & David Cronon, Robert Rogers and James Mellor in their**

**American Civil War experience.**

## **SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

### **Saturday**

**9:00 - Farmhouse and surrounding homes open and demonstrations begin**

**9:00 - Union and confederate infantry seek out each other's strength as patrols are sent out**

**10:00 - Artillery demonstrations begin**

**11:00 - Presentation (To be announced) at amphitheater**

**12:00 - Soldiers' noon meal**

**1:00 - Town Hall meeting**

**2:00 - Skirmish**

**2:30 - Civilians respond to a battle's aftermath**

**5:00 - Event ends for the evening**

### **Sunday**

**9:00 - Farmhouse and surrounding homes open and demonstrations begin**

**9:00 - Truce & Church call**

**9:30 - Union and confederate infantry seek out each other's strength as patrols are sent out**

**10:00 - Artillery demonstrations begin**

**11:00 - Presentation (To be announced) at amphitheater**

**12:00 - Soldiers' noon meal**

**12:30 - Town Hall meeting**

**1:00 - Skirmish**

**1:30 - Civilians respond to a battle's aftermath**

**4:00 - Event ends**



# LETTER HOME TO HIS SISTER SALLY!

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*Early Summer in Heritage*

*Dearest Sally,*

*Alas, the gentler season has arrivd here at Ft Howard. The Fox River flows freely as the pelicans have again returnd. As if timekeepers, the women of Heritage are beatn rugs while the nearby fields are once more under the plow. Why even Pa and Doc, with a renewd zeal, have replenishd the laudanum cabinet, consuming all aged stock! Unlike the old Captn Maclaren, God rest his soul, who took an active role in managing the laudanum supply, the new Captn seems more mindful with matters of military significance - polishd brass and brogans! Oh yes Sally, even this feather bed solderin can be a hard road!!*

*Some of the lads who had volunteerd to serve out east for a spell have returnd to us. Many a tale worth the telln is shard around the campfire. Me favorit, of which folklore may be born, was the adventures of one Pvt Rickardo Meyer. He is a bonnie lad and not one for backn down from a fray. Sportn a manly crop of whiskers, he is lookn every bit the mountn man. His story of capturin a squad of rebs is a testimony to the power of Irish whiskey. Why if his acshuns were to ever reach the ears of ole Abe hisself, a flask of Jameson would be standard issue in the haversack of every union soldier!*

*Garrison duty can dull ones fytn instincts and patrols oft times lax into lovely walks in the park. Our lazy days of summer ended by mid June as a sizeable rebel force, qyt to our unawares, gaind the hyts above the town and fort. Oh my but ther was h... to pay, our new Captn fancys not*

*bein cawt with his knickers down! Soon the company's fytn ardor arose for the comin fray!*

*The rebs had bilt rifle pits betwixt the hill and the fort and when our skirmishers were sent forward into the open field they got hammerd! I was most lucky to have bin with the reserves. Pa was out leadn the skirmishers and was shown remarkable dancin skills for one of his years. Sendn skirmishers in the open to attack a well fortifyd enemy on the high ground is lambs for the slawter. Kind providence smiled however as one of the reb officers was felled which panikd ther lads. Once they began to flee for the hill we all were ryt soon advancn. Crestn the rise we seen the rebs makin tracks for ther defenses at the base of Cotton House Hill.*

*It was hot work attackn those rebs, but what to our wonderin eyes should appear but Captn R. Holbrook and his Company K/B, praise be! They hit the rebs ryt flank and thus began the great race for the*

*top and the reb skedaddle!! Like unleashd hounds we ascended those hyts with young Paddy O'Kroll carryn the colors. Upon attainin the summit one spiritd tall reb chose fyt over flyt and chargd me - he chose unwisely! The Johnnys were soon hyt tailn it for some lowland thicket when we haltd.*

*Bent on trophys, Captn Charles then sent in my platoon as skirmishers into that wilderness. It is a fine line between predator and prey when huntin rebs, they was dug in like ticks and fixn to stay a spell. It was again hot work, but we was first rate as we flushd em out. They fell back and rallyd behind an old rail fence in a nearby field. The Captn then calld up our reserves along with Co K/B and some artillery to deliver the kew-de-gra!!*

*Our spiritd advance was rudely handled, the rebs wouldn't leave! We reformed and tryd again finally breechn ther works with some of the lads grappln with a few stubborn Johnnys. The rebel remnant retreatd, we returnd to restful repose, all is ryt in the Republic!*

*Your Brother,*

*Stephan*

# **FROM THE CAMPS OF THE COMPANIES OF THE SECOND WISCONSIN**

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## **INFANTRY**



## **COMPANY B**

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### **COMMEMORATION OF THE MUSTERING OUT OF COMPANY B!**

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*The following document comes from the headquarters of Company B. In an event commemorating the return of Company B, the LaCrosse Light Guard, to Wisconsin after serving out their 3 year papers the following address was read at the event. The editor reviewed the document and approves of its quality and sentiments. This speech is a contemporary rendition and not a historical endeavor. It does catch the flavor of the 1860's, however. Many thanks to John Dudkiewicz for sharing this with our readers.*

**Address by the acting Lieutenant of the La Crosse Light Guard, at the Hixon House July 12, 2014 (1864) upon the return of the recently mustered out Company B 2<sup>nd</sup> Wisconsin.**

**Mayor Pettibone, Honored Guests, Citizens of La Crosse,**

**The Light Guard is happy to be home, invited here to the home of the Hixon's. Just over 3 years ago, you remember the Light Guard was among the first to answer President Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers. Off to Madison, 100 strong, to the State Fairgrounds, soon to become Governor's Camp Randall for mustering in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wisconsin.**

**It was quite a time. The Light Guard withstood our first hostile fire, being repelled by a Tavern owner as we laid siege to his establishment one evening! Tricking the sentries and escaping into town several times was our fun. Then on to Washington City by train, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wisconsin, 1000 strong, being met at every stop in Indiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania by the lovely local ladies, providing us with an abundance of Cakes, Pies, Flowers and Kisses!**

**Once in Alexandria, I recall some of the Ohio regiments taking exception to our target practice when we came off guard duty in the evenings!**

**But, the realities of war fell upon us. At Blackburn's Ford in July of that year, Myron Gardner of our Company became the first of us, and first in the 2<sup>nd</sup> to be killed in action. Just a few short days later General McDowell leading the army, we fought at Bull's Run near Manassas Junction Virginia, attacking the rebels at Henry House Hill, leaving behind us Poor Anton Knoblock and David Knox. War was less romantic for us now.**

**General McClellan took the army, and soon drilled and prepared us into a great and proud fighting army! We nearly took Richmond in the Peninsula campaign, but the president was unhappy with the progress. An unprepared General Pope took us back to Manassas, and the Black Hats in Brigade strength held off Jackson's entire division near a Farm owned by the Brawners. We left poor Ed Potter and Ed Brewster there that night, as we rejoined the army.**

**Thank goodness, General McClellan was given back to us! Soon we were at a place named South Mountain, chasing old General Lee who was invading Maryland, when our beloved Wilson Colwell, your predecessor as Mayor,**

**Mr. Pettibone, was cut down in his prime, leading our skirmish lines. Then on to the now well-known Antietam Creek. We marched through a cornfield, and met rebels from Texas. What a terrific and terrible fight. Ignatius Anders, Norman McHardy, Uriel Olin and Ferd Reibe consecrated the ground with their lives that day.**

**Even though we chased the rebel army from our soil, Mr. Lincoln considered it best to give General Burnside to lead us. Oh, how an unfortunate leader Burnside was. We left Klaus Rackama at Fredericksburg, and lost our winter camp in an ill-fated campaign in the sleet and mud. That was followed by that idiot General Hooker being completely outfoxed by Bobby Lee.**

**We were finally given some competence again when General Meade took charge. He started us northward, unknown to us where we were headed. We made our third annual pilgrimage through Manassas, when we marched by the bleached bones of those who had fallen, still in line, a year earlier. How angry that made us! Then to Gettysburg, Brigade, Regiment and the Light Guard to the Fore! Thirty two of your brave Company went into battle, and but seven could answer roll call the next morning. We suffered heavily, but none suffered more than Oscar Bradford, Mike Brennan, young Silas Coster, and George Fox who now rest forever in Pennsylvania.**

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> was used up, but not done. On to the wilderness, now still under General Meade but also the brilliant General Grant, where just a couple of months ago, we lost our Captain Robert Hughes at Laurel Hill, and George Hunter near Spotsylvania. Printer Charles Bushee was captured there, and we have heard he may be at Andersonville prison in Georgia by now. Others of our number have been lost to disease and disability which is so common, and while detached to other regiments, George Fisher, Marvin Lee, John Marsh, Bob McClintock and Bill Stace.**

**Now, what is left of the old 2<sup>nd</sup> but 174 of the 1000 that left for Washington City, only 17 of the original 100 from Light Guard have come home. All are not gone, 21 of our La Crosse number now rest in eternity. Many others wounded, discharged or disabled have already returned home. Some have been promoted to greater responsibilities in other regiments. Dennis Daily is a captain in the new Independent Battalion, James Wood is an officer, and Jim Webb is an Assistant Adjutant General in the Navy. Our 1862 recruits are largely in the Independent Battalion.**

**But we are now home. I have heard talk of the satisfaction of returning to old occupations, and of some ready to volunteer again into the new Wisconsin Regiments being formed to join General Thomas in the west.**

**Whatever is next for you men, you have done your duty. You stood in close battle line, your breasts the shield of Freedom and Liberty, and you repelled the foe.**

**The old 2<sup>nd</sup> is no more, but rest assured, the glory of the old 2<sup>nd</sup>, and the Light Guard, will live eternally in the grateful hearts of the citizens of La Crosse, and of the Nation.**

**With that Gentlemen, I bid you a fond farewell.**

## **COMPANY E**

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### **SOLDIERS' CHARITY MARCH**

**AUGUST 8—10, 2014**

**“BAY DE-NOC ROAD”**

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**The historical Bay De-Noc trail winds through ancient woodlands once trod by the Menominee tribes and 18th century French trappers. A concern any new marcher may have is whether this trail will test ones tenacity? Though there are sections of uphill ascents, the pathway is generally level and shady. One's biggest challenge maybe keeping pace with Mugwah (Doug Rasmussen), just be thankful he isn't clad in only a loin cloth! Fear not, all will return home, dead or alive**

**we shall leave no one behind!!**

**There are two health related concerns I would share which both equate to one's ability to lay tracks; your feet and groin! Blisters may be your biggest hurdle, and believe you me; blistered feet are not pleasant to deal with. I would suggest a thin pair of sweat-whisking socks before you pull on the woolies. Gold bond powder is of the utmost importance because dry feet are the key to it all. The other function for the powder is to keep your groin region happy, happy, happy! To all you brave virile lads of Co E heed this advice; recovery from the gelding knife may be swifter than an angry inflamed groin!!**

**Each of our previous marches in the U.P have started late Friday afternoon or early evening. We march however many leagues Mugwah has planned before setting up camp for the evening. We arise Saturday morn and step off early with hopes of finishing our 20 mile trek. We generally return Saturday evening to the Rasmussen Redoubt for rest and revelry. Sabbath morn we arise and head for home.**

**If you wish to be a part of Co E's 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Charity March please contact me via email or see me at one of our upcoming events. Further detailed times and logistics will be discussed the closer we get to the march.**

**Steve Peterson**

# **CIVIL WAR REENACTING HISTORY MADE AT WISCONSIN EVENT**

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**HERITAGE HILL HISTORICAL PARK**

**GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN**

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**On the eve of their 5th  
Annual Civil War weekend,  
June 21-22, 2014, reenacting history was made. Circumventing  
the Friday evening campfire a number of comrades from Co.'s  
B, E and K of the 2nd  
Wisconsin Regiment were enjoying their  
traditional social gathering. It was early, so the customary  
imbibement had yet to attain the revelry stage.**

**At this very precipice of historic achievement sat the  
likes of Lieut. "Pa" Kostka and Private Angus Maclaren. The  
ceremonial opening of the "Black Bottle" Jameson had just  
been initiated and each had presented their tin cups to be so  
graced with the "water of life"!**



**The first-hand account of what soon transpired may be recorded as a new entry in the Guinness Book of World Records.**

**“Pa targeted a typical folding canvas camp stool upon which to rest his posterior antiqua. He had no more than planted his cheeks when the apparatus collapsed sending Pa sodward! The old wan, however, had the innate ability to maintain proper ‘angle of cup’, preventing any undue spillage of the precious libation.**

**“Angus Maclaren, upon hoisting Pa from his prostrated position, likewise directed his derriere upon another like camp stool. Before the proverbial dust had settled from Pa’s mishap, history was quickly repeated as Angus was sent plummeting earth bound, shattering his stool as well.”**

**This witness did observe that “poor Angus had not maintained the recommended ‘angle of cup’ during his descent.” It was later reported that all present were “extremely thankful that the highlander was not sporting his wee kilt.”**

**An after action report was filed by Lieut. Kostka in which he stated, “in all my years of reenacting, which traverses**

**antiquity, I have never seen the spontaneous and utter  
destruction of two camp stools in such rapid succession or in  
such close proximity before!”**

**Steve Peterson**

**Witness to Lincoln’s death**

## **COMPANY K**

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### **CHURCH SERVICE HONORS THE MEN OF THE SECOND WISCONSIN**

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**On June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014, Jim Dumke and Frank Medina from Company K conducted a Civil War era church service at Trinity Free Lutheran Church. Frank Medina provided the fiddle music for hymns such as “The Battle Hymn of the Republic”, “The Minstrel Boy”, and “Amazing Grace” and Jim Dumke conducted the service using the order of service used by the chaplain of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Pennsylvania. The theme of the sermon was a commemoration of the return of the men of the Second Wisconsin after their honorable service in the Army of the Potomac. It also remembered the sacrifice of so many of these men who never returned to Wisconsin, but lie buried in far away places. The service also recognized the men of Company D, the Janesville Greys, local men from Janesville and neighboring communities who served in the Second Wisconsin. Between June 29<sup>th</sup> and July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1864, the men of the Second Wisconsin were mustered out of the Army.**

### **A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS FOR DEDICATION OF A HEADSTONE FOR AN ORIGINAL MEMBER OF THE 6<sup>TH</sup> WISCONSIN**

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***Gentlemen:***

***Bill Raftery of Company K and the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War has issued a call for volunteers to take part in a special ceremony dedicating a headstone for a member of the original 6<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin, part of our beloved Iron Brigade. The editor would suggest that anyone who would like to fall in for the ceremony would be most welcomed!***

***Company K secretary, John Thielmann has sent a circular to the troops setting guidelines for this event. The uniform of the day is the Iron Brigade uniform of frock coat, light blue trousers, rifle, at least 3 rounds of ammunition, cartridge box, cap pouch, bayonet (if available), Hadee hat, gaiters (if you have them) and white gloves. A generic Federal uniform is approved if members do not have the full Iron Brigade uniform.***

***The details for the event can be found in the following dispatch from Bill Raftery:***

**The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War will conduct a ceremony to dedicate the headstone of Charles Sewall Hill. Hill answered the call of President Lincoln and enlisted in the 6th Wisconsin Voluntary Infantry on July 7, 1861. He served with his regiment until captured in August at the beginning of Second Bull Run. Released from captivity he was mustered out of service in October, 1862. He served in the office of the Adjutant General until his death in August, 1863.**

**All Black Hats are invited to participate in the ceremony at 11 am, August 9, 2014 at Fassett Cemetery, Edgerton, Wisconsin. A musket salute by those who value the service of those who served the Union cause will be very appropriate.**

**The short agenda of the event will be:**

**Call to Order**

**Introduction of descendants and participants**

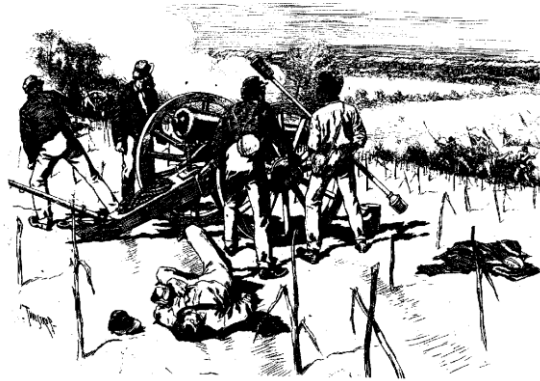
**SUVCW Ceremony of Dedication**

**Prayer**

## **Musket Salute**

**Those interested in joining us in this ceremony please advise Bill Raftery at 608-831-7769 or [braftery@chorus.net](mailto:braftery@chorus.net)**

# **ARTILLERY**



## **MENOMINEE FALLS REENACTMENT**

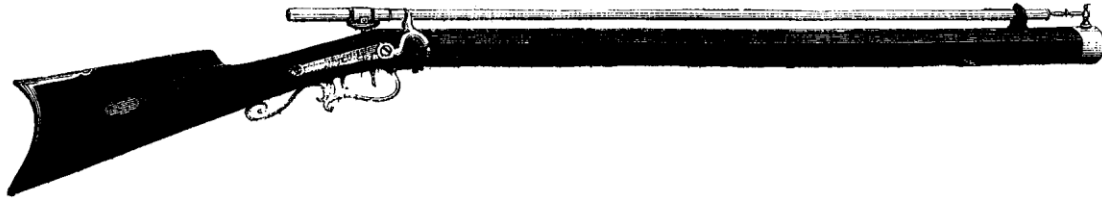
**PHOTOS FROM LYLE LAUFENBERG**





## **THE SKIRMISH TEAM**





## A VERY WELL DONE VIDEO TOUR OF THE FIGHT ON MCPHERSON'S RIDGE AT GETTYSBURG

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**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**First Shots at Gettysburg video on YouTube. Good Iron Brigade stuff in the middle:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=9JfVC3sqwEM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=9JfVC3sqwEM)

**[ED.NOTE: This video is excellent and for the first time for me it was possible to see the inside of McPherson's barn where a Union hospital was set up during the fighting.]**

**1 There have been some changes to the Boscobel skirmish flier. Musket and Carbine teams will now be 5 persons each. The musket team commanders meeting will now be at 8:30 Sunday morning, with opening ceremonies at 8:45 and the competition starting at 9.**

**2. Reminder: The ACWSA is now a 501(c)(3) organization.**

**See:** <http://www.acwsa.org/Documents/TaxDeductions-CampChase.pdf> **for how this impacts you.**

**3. WI/IL Regional Commander reminded everyone that an ACWSA National Skirmish was being discussed for 2015. No date has been chosen yet, and ranges in northern Indiana are being considered.**

**Yr. Obt. Srvt.,**

## **CIVIL WAR MILESTONES**

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### **AUGUST**

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>Aug. 5, 1864</b>  | <b>Battle of Mobile Bay</b>   |
| <b>Aug. 9, 1862</b>  | <b>Battle of Cedar Mountain</b>   |
| <b>Aug. 10, 1861</b> | <b>Battle of Wilson's Creek</b>   |
| <b>Aug. 17, 1862</b> | <b>Uprising of Sioux Indians in Minnesota</b>   |
| <b>Aug. 21, 1821</b> | <b>Gen. William Barksdale, CSA, born</b>  |
| <b>Aug. 28, 1861</b> | <b>Fort Hatteras falls</b>  |
| <b>Aug. 28, 1862</b> | <b>BATTLE OF BRAWNERS FARM. . . the men forming the Black Hat Brigade and Battery B engage in their first engagement as a unit. Col. Edgar O'Connor mortally wounded.</b> |
| <b>Aug. 29, 1833</b> | <b>Col. Edgar O'Connor, USA, born</b>   |



**Aug. 29, 1862**

**The Battle of Second Bull Run begins**

**Aug. 30, 1862**

**Maj. Gen. John Pope is defeated as the Battle of Second Bull Run concludes**

## HUMANITY AND HOPE IN A SOUTHERN PRISON

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By [PETER COZZENS](#)

April 24, 2014, 5:58 pm

**For more than the obvious reasons, Civil War soldiers in both armies despised military prisons. Not only were the inmates held against their will, but the hunger, filth, vermin, rampant disease, overcrowding, brutal treatment and soul-crushing ennui made prison camps slaughterhouses of slow death. Andersonville, the infamous Georgia prison, was the ultimate abattoir; during the summer of 1864 nearly one in three Union inmates died. In other Confederate prisons, the average mortality rate was 15.5 percent; in Union prisons, 12 percent.**

**There was one remarkable exception: the virtually unknown Cahaba Federal Prison, 15 miles southwest of Selma, Ala. At Cahaba, the mortality rate was just 3 percent, a lower death rate than that among American prisoners in German stalags during World War II. According to federal figures, only 147 of the 5,000 prisoners interred at Cahaba died there.**

**What made Cahaba unique among Civil War prisons? Simple humanity. The prison commandant, Col. Henry A. M. Henderson of Kentucky, understood Northerners. He had graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University and the Cincinnati Law School. Shortly after graduation and finding his true calling in the church, Henderson became a Methodist minister. When he assumed command of Cahaba in July 1863, a month after it opened, he pledged to run the prison with as much compassion as discipline and good order permitted.**

**Henderson didn't have a lot to work with. The prison was built around a partly completed, 15,000-square-foot cotton warehouse in the town of Cahaba on the west bank of the Alabama River. Within its brick walls, 250 rough-timber bunks, capable of sleeping two men each, were built one atop of the other. An unfinished roof left 1,600 square feet in the center exposed to the elements. Confederate prison authorities built a 12-foot-high wooden stockade around the warehouse, with allowance made for a small outdoor cooking yard. The prison's official capacity was 500; by the time Henderson arrived, it already had climbed to 660, with latecomers compelled to sleep on the dirt floor of the warehouse.**

**The Kentuckian's first order of business was to improve sanitary conditions. Drinking water came from an artesian well that emptied into an open gutter, which in turn flowed 200 yards through town before entering the northwest corner of the stockade. In his effort to depollute the water supply, Henderson had a willing ally in the prison surgeon R. H. Whitfield. Making his case to the Medical Department, Whitfield said the water, in its course from the well to the stockade, "has been subjected to the washings of the hands, feet, faces, and heads of soldiers, citizens, and negroes, buckets, tubs, and spittoons, of groceries, offices, and hospital, hogs, dogs, cows, and filth of all kinds from the streets and other sources." Whitfield's graphic plea did the trick; quartermasters installed pipes to replace the open ditch, and clean water flowed into the prison.**

**To ensure it remained that way, the latrines – closed outhouses, not open filth holes in the center of camp, as at Andersonville – were built at the southeastern corner of the prison, where the water exited. Consequently, dysentery was almost unknown at Cahaba; the majority of prisoners who died there seem to have entered the prison already in a weakened state.**

**Those who fell ill were well cared for at the prison hospital, located in a rambling, two-story hotel called Bell Tavern that the Confederacy had commandeered to serve both the guards and the prisoners. Whitfield treated Northerners and Southerners with equal consideration. Men died in the Bell Tavern hospital, but not for want of care.**

**Neither did they die for want of effort by Henderson, who in the autumn of 1864 found himself commandant of the most overcrowded of all Civil War**

**prisons. That summer the Union's commanding general, Ulysses S. Grant, halted prisoner-of-war exchanges. As a result, Cahaba's population surged to 2,151 in October, a number 600 percent above the prison's capacity (Andersonville ran 330 percent above capacity at its peak). Each man had only 7.5 square feet to call his own; those at Andersonville had 35 square feet of space, albeit squalid, per man.**

**Despite the ban on exchanges, Henderson bypassed his own chain of command and proposed to the Union district commander, Maj. Gen. Cadwallader C. Washburn, a special exchange of 350 of Cahaba's most debilitated inmates. Cadwallader forwarded the request, along with a letter praising Henderson's management, but General Grant denied the appeal.**

**Henderson persevered. With winter drawing near and the prisoners poorly clad, he suggested to Washburn that the federals send a truce ship up the Alabama River to Cahaba with supplies. Henderson and Washburn overcame the reservations of their superiors, and in December a Union steamboat offloaded 2,000 uniforms, 4,000 pairs of socks, 1,500 blankets, medicine and mess tins.**

**Henderson had done his best. But with overcrowding came a drop in rations, an inevitable course in a South scarcely able to feed its own troops by then. Prisoners wanted food more than supplies. Most of them bartered their new clothing to guards in exchange for victuals, and, reported Henderson sadly, the prisoners "were left with the same scanty clothing and ragged blankets in a climate particularly severe in winter."**

**Homesickness and ennui could kill men as effectively as disease, so Henderson and his subordinates did what they could to keep the men's minds occupied. "Every day on the arrival of the mail, one of them would bring in a late paper, stand up on a box and read the news," recalled Sgt. Melvin Grigsby of Wisconsin. "In many other ways, such as procuring writing material and forwarding letters for us, they manifested such kindly feeling as one honorable soldier will always manifest toward brother soldier, enemy though he may be, in misfortune."**

**Prisoners at Cahaba also were blessed with their own angel of mercy: Amanda Gardner, whose well-appointed home stood just outside the prison compound. There was no doubting her pro-Confederate convictions; Ms. Gardner had lost one of her two sons to Yankee bullets at the First Battle of Bull Run. But she had a reputation, a prison guard told Sergeant Grigsby, “of being one of the kindest-hearted and most intelligent women in town.” Soon after Cahaba opened, she began sending gifts of food that her young daughter slipped through cracks in the stockade walls with the connivance of friendly guards. When winter came, she cut every carpet in her home into blankets to “relieve the suffering of those poor prisoners.”**

**Most beneficial to prisoner morale was the generous use she made of a superb book collection her uncle had bequeathed her. Prisoners had only to send a note by a guard to Gardner or her daughter to borrow a book from her library. At Andersonville prisoners scuffled over dog-eared back issues of Harper’s Weekly to alleviate the tedium. At Cahaba inmates enjoyed finely bound copies of the classics and a wide assortment of recent novels, as well as works of history, philosophy, science and poetry. Word of Gardner’s kindness spread beyond the prison walls to the Union lines; when a federal cavalry detachment realized they had captured her remaining son, they paroled him through the lines to her care.**

**Despite the best intentions of Henderson and Gardner, life at Cahaba was not easy. By late 1864 the average daily issue of rations fell to 12 ounces of cornmeal, 8 ounces of often-rancid beef and occasionally some bug-infested peas. Prisoners were not starved, but they were hungry enough that thoughts of food permeated their dreams. “The same experience was often repeated,” remembered an Illinois cavalryman, Jesse Hawes. “Go to the bed of sand at 9:00 p.m., dream of food till 1:00 or 2:00 a.m., awake, go to the water barrel, drink, and return to sleep again if the rats would permit sleep.”**

**The rat population grew apace with that of the prisoners until they became a plague. They burrowed through the warehouse and swarmed over the cooking yard. “At first they made me nervous, lest they should do me serious injury before I should awake,” said Hawes. “But after several nights’ experience that feeling was supplanted by one of irritation that they should keep waking me up so many times that at length became nearly unbearable.”**

**Harder yet to bear were lice, from which no prisoner was free. An Illinois private said that after his first night at Cahaba his uniform was so infested that it “looked more like pepper and salt than blue.” Hawes agreed. Lice “crawled upon our clothing by day, crawled over our bodies, into the ears, even into the nostrils and mouths by night.”**

**To compound the prisoners’ misery, in early March 1865 the inmates of Cahaba faced a natural disaster of the first order. For several days rain had pounded the prison and inundated the surrounding countryside. On March 1 the Cahaba River, north of town, overflowed its banks. Water raced through Cahaba and swept into the stockade. Latrines backed up, and by nightfall prisoners found themselves waist-deep in ice-cold, fetid water.**

**Unfortunately for them, Colonel Henderson was no longer at Cahaba. With the war winding down, General Grant had relented on prisoner exchanges. Confederate authorities detailed Henderson to organize exchanges at a neutral site in Vicksburg, leaving the prison under the command of Lt. Col. Samuel Jones, a mean-spirited martinet who once threatened to run Ms. Gardner out of town because of her “sympathy for the damned Yankees.” Refusing an appeal from his own guards to permit the prisoners to seek refuge on high ground outside the stockade until the waters receded, Jones left the federals shivering in the water for three days. Then, as the water finally drained from the stockade, he told the incredulous inmates that they were to be paroled immediately. The war was all but over.**

**For four weeks steamboats plied the Alabama River with prisoners. Most were taken to Vicksburg, where they mingled with the skeletons in blue from Andersonville. Some 4,700 Union prisoners awaited transportation home. Some 1,100 were sick, nearly all of whom were from Andersonville. The Cahaba men, reported Union department commander Napoleon T. Dana, were in “excellent health.”**

**But not for long. On April 24, the long months of humane work by Henderson ended in unspeakable tragedy. The Union paddle steamer Sultana left Vicksburg crammed with 2,000 Union prisoners, more than half of them Cahaba men. The Sultana had faulty boilers and a legal capacity of 376 passengers. Three days after setting off up the Mississippi three of the**

**four boilers exploded, and the Sultana sank. Three-quarters of the men onboard died.**

**General Dana took care to see that no harm came to Henderson while he was at Vicksburg, assigning a detachment of Indiana cavalry to act as the colonel's personal bodyguard. After the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, not even a well-meaning Confederate like Henderson was safe within Union lines. So Dana spirited him across the Mississippi River into a camp of Texas Rangers.**

**Henderson went on to live a long and productive life. He served two terms as superintendent of public schools in Kentucky before returning to the clergy. The Reverend Doctor Henderson was pastor of the Jersey City, N.J., Methodist Church when on May 11, 1883 its most prominent member, Mrs. Hannah Simpson Grant, passed away. Her son, Ulysses S. Grant, entrusted funeral arrangements to Henderson and asked him to prepare an appropriate eulogy. It was a high tribute to Henderson's character indeed that the former commanding general of the Union army would place such trust in the one-time commandant of a Confederate prisoner-of-war camp.**

**Henderson died in Cincinnati in 1912. Obituaries incorrectly said he had been a Confederate general, omitting any reference to his duty at Cahaba. Not that it mattered. After the 1865 flood the county seat moved from Cahaba to Selma, and by the turn of the century Cahaba was a ghost town; the warehouse prison demolished for the bricks. The horrors of Andersonville and notoriety of its commandant Henry Wirz would forever remain etched in American memory; memories of Col. Henry A. M. Henderson's humanity were buried with the good reverend.**



***Peter Cozzens is the author of 16 books on the American Civil War and the Indian Wars of the American West, including “[The Shipwreck of Their Hopes: The Battles for Chattanooga.](#)”***

[http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/04/24/humanity-and-hope-in-a-southern-prison/?\\_php=true&\\_type=blogs&ref=opinion&r=0](http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/04/24/humanity-and-hope-in-a-southern-prison/?_php=true&_type=blogs&ref=opinion&r=0)

# **THE PURCHASE AND RESTORATION OF LEE'S HEADQUARTERS**

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AMY WORDEN INQUIRER STAFF WRITER JULY 01, 2014 3:01 AM



**GETTYSBURG - For almost a century, the small, historic stone house on Chambersburg Road has been obscured by the commercial buildings surrounding it.**

**But in 1863, it occupied a prominent position at the epicenter of fighting on Day One of the nation's best-known Civil War battle. That night, it would be seized and used as the headquarters of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee.**

**On Tuesday - exactly 151 years after the start of the Battle of Gettysburg - the Civil War Trust will announce the purchase of the four-acre parcel and the restoration of the site to the way it looked in 1863.**

**"As far as preserving a historically significant structure and part of the battlefield, this is biggest deal we've ever done," said Jim Lighthizer, president of the Civil War Trust, a Washington-based nonprofit group that has preserved 40,000 acres of land in 20 states. "Lee's headquarters is one of the most important unprotected historic structures in America."**

**Lighthizer said the trust would purchase the property, which includes a Quality Inn and a brew pub, from Belmar Partnership for \$5.5 million and spend an additional \$400,000 to \$500,000 to demolish the modern structures and restore the historic building.**

**On July 1, 1863, the property was the scene of violent hand-to-hand combat between advancing Confederate troops and Union troops attempting to protect the western entrance to the town and the railroad line, which still runs behind the parcel.**

**By day's end, Union troops had retreated to Seminary Ridge, and Lee, the Confederate commander, established his headquarters at the house.**

**"It was the nerve center," historian and licensed Gettysburg battlefield guide Tim Smith said in a video produced for Tuesday's announcement at the Lee headquarters.**

**The house, believed to have been built in 1833, was occupied by a widow named Mary Thompson at the time of the war and was co-owned by U.S. Rep. Thaddeus Stevens - a force behind the passage of the 13th Amendment ending slavery.**

**The headquarters building was opened as a museum in the early 1920s in connection with the motel on the site.**

**Lighthizer said the artifacts, which were to be donated to the trust by the owners, would be sold and the building restored to the way it looked when Lee and his officers plotted strategy under its roof.**

**Lee would go on to defeat July 3 and retreat south after losing thousands of men in what is considered the turning point of the war.**

**"This spot is where some of most important decisions were made by an American general in the Civil War," said Lighthizer. "It had direct impact on the future of the country."**

**He said that there was no timetable for the restoration project or reopening the house after demolition of the modern buildings, but that the whole parcel would be donated to the National Park Service for inclusion in the Gettysburg National Military Park.**

**"To the preservation community, this land was long considered lost," Deputy Secretary of the Interior Mike Connor said in a statement. "Thus, the journey we embark upon today is especially meaningful: We are not just**



**protecting a piece of American heritage, we are reclaiming it for future generations."**

Read more at

[http://www.philly.com/philly/news/20140701\\_Civil\\_War\\_Trust\\_to\\_buy\\_Gen\\_Lee\\_s\\_HQ\\_at\\_Gettysburg.html#lyk2BvZUQOCab6K9.99](http://www.philly.com/philly/news/20140701_Civil_War_Trust_to_buy_Gen_Lee_s_HQ_at_Gettysburg.html#lyk2BvZUQOCab6K9.99)

# THE BATTLE OVER RECONSTRUCTION

*BY [LOUIS P. MASUR](#)*

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**On the morning of July 4, 1864, as Congress was preparing to adjourn for the summer, Abraham Lincoln was busy in an office at the Capitol signing bills. Senator Charles Sumner hovered nearby "in a state of intense anxiety." George Boutwell, a representative from Massachusetts, paced nervously. Senator Zachariah Chandler of Michigan kept asking anyone who would listen if one particular bill had been signed. Told no, he spoke with Lincoln who, according to the president's secretary John Hay, said, "this bill was placed before me a few minutes before Congress adjourns. It is a matter of too much importance to be swallowed in that way."**

**The bill in question was the Wade-Davis bill, co-sponsored by Senator Benjamin Wade of Ohio and Representative Henry Winter Davis of Maryland and passed on July 2, in the closing hours of the session. After months of discussion, Congress had settled on a plan of reconstruction that, in some ways, differed starkly from the plan set forth by the president in his Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction issued on Dec. 8, 1863 – and that would set the tone for federal policy toward the defeated South for more than a decade.**

**The final bill called for the appointment by the president, with the Senate's consent, of a provisional governor for each state in rebellion. Once military resistance had been suppressed, all white male citizens would be enrolled and asked to swear an oath to support the Constitution; if 50 percent of them took the oath (as opposed to 10 percent under Lincoln's plan), the provisional governor would call a constitutional convention.**

**Only those who could take the Ironclad Oath adopted by Congress on July 2, 1862, could vote for or serve as convention delegates. This disqualified**

**people who had held “any office, civil or military office, state or Confederate,” during the war or “voluntarily borne arms against the United States.” The bill further mandated that the new state constitution must declare that slavery “is forever prohibited,” repudiate the Confederate debt, and bar from voting for or serving as governor or a state legislator anyone who held civil or military positions, except those that were ministerial or a rank lower than colonel.**

**In certain ways, the plan was a moderate one. It did not enfranchise blacks and it did not adopt the radical Republican theories of state suicide or territorialization, whereby the states had lost their place in the Union. Nevertheless, the bill threatened the progress on reconstruction already being made under Lincoln’s plan. It encapsulated Representative Davis’s belief that “it is the exclusive prerogative of Congress — of Congress, and not the President — to determine what is and what is not the established government of the State.”**

**Furthermore, the bill would delay reconstruction until after the rebellion had ended. “It is not safe,” Davis warned, “to confide the vast authority of State governments to the doubtful loyalty of the rebel States until armed rebellion shall have been trampled in the dust.” If Lincoln signed the measure, the result would be the abandonment of progress toward reconstruction already made in Louisiana and Arkansas, and a repudiation of his belief that re-establishing loyal state governments would hasten the end of the rebellion.**

**Because the bill was delivered to Lincoln only two days before Congress adjourned, he could kill it simply by not acting on it – a move called a pocket veto. Few expected him to do that. So when Jesse Old Norton, an Illinois Congressman, heard the news of Lincoln’s intention to let it die, he said, “it was impossible & would be fatal.” The pocket veto was rarely used, and through weeks of debate on the bill Lincoln had not expressed any reservations about it.**

**Chandler, watching as the president signed various measures, said failure to sign the Wade-Davis bill would hurt Lincoln in the upcoming presidential election. Besides, he argued, it prohibited slavery in the reconstructed areas; that was all that should matter.**

**Lincoln responded, “that is the point on which I doubt the authority of Congress to act.”**

**But “it is no more than you have done yourself,” Chandler exclaimed.**

**“I conceive that I may in an emergency do things on military grounds,” Lincoln said, “which cannot be done constitutionally by Congress.”**

**Chandler stormed out. Lincoln then explained to the room that, as he read the bill, it asserted that the states in rebellion were no longer states; it made “the fatal admission ... that states whenever they please may of their own motion dissolve their connection with the Union.”**

**Lincoln’s misreading of this aspect of the bill reflected his disdain for theoretical issues. He had “laboriously endeavored” to avoid “a merely metaphysical question,” he said, apparently so much so that he saw it even when it was not present. He would not worry about the political consequences of his action, and he would not abandon the efforts at reconstruction begun under his December proclamation. He told Hay, “I must keep some standard of principle fixed within myself.”**

**Given the consternation his actions caused many Republicans, and perhaps hoping to unify the party as it approached the November election, Lincoln decided a few days later to issue a proclamation explaining why he did not sign the bill.**

**Emphasizing that his purpose was to restore the rebellious states to their “proper practical relation” to the Union, Lincoln said he was “unprepared, by a formal approval of the Bill, to be inflexibly committed to any single plan of restoration.” He also was “unprepared” to set aside the free-state constitutions in Louisiana and Arkansas. Furthermore, he did not believe Congress had “a constitutional competency ... to abolish slavery in States,” but was hoping for a constitutional amendment to abolish slavery throughout the nation. And yet, he declared, “I am fully satisfied with the**

**system for restoration contained in the Bill, as one very proper plan for the loyal people of any State choosing to adopt it.”**

**With that sentence, Lincoln sounded generous and accommodating, but he knew, of course, that the concession had no meaning: What state would choose sterner measures (an ironclad oath and majority requirement, for example) offered by Congress when the president’s plan held out less demanding terms? The Daily National Intelligencer newspaper marveled at the preposterous logic: “So we have the anomaly presented to the world of a ‘very proper plan’ involving an unconstitutional feature — a plan which has no legal validity, (because lacking the President’s official approval in the only way prescribed by the Constitution,) and yet one under which the people of certain States are invited to act.”**

**Congressman Thaddeus Stevens expressed the thoughts of many radicals in his reaction to Lincoln’s explanation of his actions. Seeing electoral politics at work, he said, “What an infamous proclamation! The Pres is determined to have the electoral votes of the seceded states — at least of Tenn Ark — Lou & Flor — Perhaps also of S. Car — The idea of pocketing a bill and then issuing a proclamation as to how far he will conform to it, is matched only by signing a bill and then sending in a veto — How little of the right of war and the law of nations our Prest. Knows.” Stevens concluded his rant, “But what are we to do? Condemn privately and applaud publicly.”**

**Henry Winter Davis did not feel the same way and on Aug. 5, through a manifesto in The New York Tribune, he and Wade condemned Lincoln’s pocket veto and proclamation of explanation as “a defeat of the will of the people by an Executive perversion of the constitution.” They denounced the new governments in Louisiana and Arkansas as shadow governments that exist as “mere creatures of his will.” By killing the bill, Lincoln “holds the electoral vote of the rebel States at the dictation of his personal ambition.” His claim that Congress could not act against slavery was “unintelligible.” And his final concession that the plan was proper as a “system of restoration” was a “studied outrage on the legislative authority of the people.”**

**The only group thrilled by the manifesto was the Peace Democrats, who virulently opposed Lincoln and could not get over their good fortune of having two radical Republicans attack him on nearly the same grounds as they did. The New York Herald observed that nothing Democrats “have uttered in derogation of Mr. Lincoln has approached in bitterness and force the denunciations which Messrs Wade and Davis, shining lights of the Republican party, have piled up in this manifesto.”**

**Most of the Republican press denounced their manifesto as of “questionable” taste, the “result of soreheadedness,” a “treacherous and malignant attempt to stab a President whom they profess to support.” “The result of the Manifesto,” thought The Albany Journal, “is simply to make still more clear the wisdom of the President’s course.” Even most of their fellow radicals felt Wade and Davis had gone too far.**

**Lincoln, for his part, professed that “he had not, and probably should not read” the manifesto and had no desire to take part in the controversy. But Secretary of State William Seward read it to him, and Lincoln remarked, “I would like to know whether these men intend openly to oppose my election — the document looks that way.” He was more agitated than he let on. The former treasury agent Benjamin Rush Plumly reported that Lincoln’s “blood is up on the Wade & Winter Davis protest.”**

**If Wade and Davis believed their actions would give Lincoln pause on reconstruction in Louisiana, they were mistaken. Four days after they issued their manifesto, Lincoln wrote to Gen. Nathaniel Banks to congratulate him on the adoption of the new Louisiana constitution and to pledge support for its ratification. Reconstruction in Louisiana would remain a battleground between the president and Congress through 1864 and the first months of 1865. Indeed, Lincoln would devote what turned out to be his final speech on April 11, 1865, to the subject of restoring Louisiana to the Union.**

**The brouhaha over the pocket veto of the Wade-Davis bill did not, however, lead to an irreconcilable breach between the president and Congress. Of more immediate concern than reconstruction in July and August 1864 was Lincoln’s re-election. Wade and Davis would come back into the fold and endorse the president (prompted in part by Lincoln’s purge of conservative Montgomery Blair from the cabinet in September). Lincoln would also survive an attempt by some Republicans to dump him for another candidate.**

**But the moderate Thurlow Weed declared, at the end of August, “As things stand now, Mr. Lincoln’s re-election is an impossibility.” Henry J. Raymond, the editor of The New York Times and chair of the National Union Executive Committee, warned Lincoln: “The tide is against us.” Added the New York diarist George Templeton Strong, “Lincoln manifestly loses ground every day. The most zealous Republican partisans talk doubtfully of his chances.”**

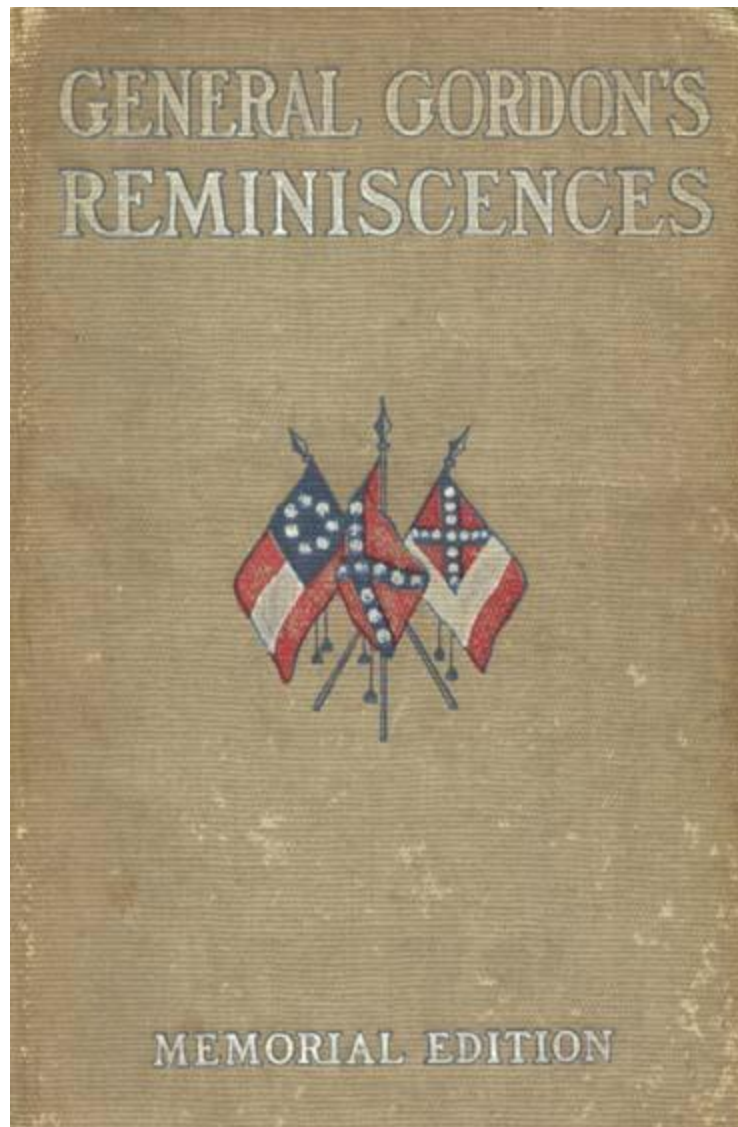
**Lincoln knew the score. “You think I don’t know I am going to be beaten,” he was overheard as saying, “but I do and unless some great change takes place badly beaten.” Any further plans for wartime reconstruction would have to await the outcome of the presidential election and the return of Congress in December.**

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***Sources: Roy P. Basler, ed., “The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln,” Vol. VII; Michael Burlingame and John R. Turner Ettlinger, eds., “Inside Lincoln’s White House: The Complete Civil War Diary of John Hay”; Beverly Wilson Palmer and Holly Byers Ochoa, eds., “The Selected Papers of Thaddeus Stevens. Volume 1: January 1814-March 1865”; Daily National Intelligencer, July 21, 1864; New York Tribune, August 9, 1864; Henry J. Raymond to Abraham Lincoln, Aug. 22, 1864, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress; Allan Nevins, ed., “Diary of the Civil War, 1860-1865; George Templeton Strong.”***



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## **ATTACK ON FORT STEADMAN**

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**The following note was received by the editor from Al Nofi. It raises an interesting question and provides food for thought!**

***Folks***

***Ran across an interesting item.***

***Writing about the attack on Ft. Stedman, John Brown Gordon, in his Reminiscences of the Civil War, says***

***The purpose of the movement was not simply the capture of Fort Stedman and the breastworks flanking it. The prisoners and guns we might thus capture would not justify the peril of the undertaking. The tremendous possibility was the disintegration of the whole left wing of the Federal army, or at least the dealing of such a staggering blow upon it as would disable it temporarily, enabling us to withdraw from Petersburg in safety and join Johnston in North Carolina.***

***It's on page 403 of the electronic edition, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/gordon/gordon.html>.***

***I hadn't noticed that before, and I can't recall any other suggestions that Lee was thinking along those lines. So was Gordon just misremembering things in his old age, or was he on to something?***

***The following excerpt from Gordon's book covers the material leading up to the printed remark about the purpose, or strategic goal, of the attack so that one can get the context of the quote.***

***As soon as he was notified that I was ready to report, he summoned me to his quarters. After such a lapse of time I cannot give General Lee's exact words in so prolonged a conference, but the following questions and answers faithfully represent the substance of the interview.***

***"What can you do?" he asked.***

***"I can take Fort Stedman, sir."***

***"How, and from what point?"***

***"By a night assault from Colquitt's Salient, and a sudden, quick rush across ditches, where the enemy's pickets are on watch, running over the pickets and capturing them, or, if they resist, using the bayonet."***

***"But the chevaux-de-frise protecting your front is, I believe, fastened together at Colquitt's Salient with chains and spikes. This obstruction will have to be removed before your column of attack can pass out of our works.***



**Do you think you can remove these obstructions without attracting the attention of Union pickets which are only a few rods away? You are aware that they are especially vigilant at night, and that any unusual noise on your lines would cause them to give the alarm, arousing their men in the fort, who would quickly turn loose upon you their heavy guns loaded with grape and canister."**

**"This is a serious difficulty; but I feel confident that it can be overcome. I propose to intrust the delicate task of getting our obstructions removed to a few select men, who will begin the work after dark, and, with the least possible noise, make a passageway for my troops by 4 A.M., at which hour the sally is to be made."**

**"But suppose you succeed in removing the obstructions in front of your own lines without attracting the attention of General Grant's pickets and get your column under full headway and succeed in capturing or killing the pickets before they can give the alarm; you will have**

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**a still more serious difficulty to overcome when you reach the strong and closely built obstructions in front of Fort Stedman and along the enemy's works. Have you ascertained how these obstructions are made and thought of any way to get over them or through them? You know that a delay of even a few minutes would, insure a consuming fire upon your men, who, while halting, would be immediately in front of the heavy guns in the fort."**

**"I recognize fully, general, the force of all you say; but let me explain. Through prisoners and deserters I have learned during the past week all about the obstructions in front of General Grant's lines. They are exceedingly formidable. They are made of rails, with the lower ends deeply buried in the ground. The upper ends are sharpened and rest upon poles, to which they are fastened by strong wires. These sharp points are about breast-high, and my men could not possibly get over them. They are about six or eight inches apart; and we could not get through them. They are so securely fastened together and to the horizontal poles by the telegraph wires that we could not possibly shove them apart so as to pass them. There is but one thing to do. They must be chopped to pieces by heavy, quick blows with sharp axes. I propose to select fifty brave and especially robust and active men, who will be armed only with axes. These axemen will rush across, closely followed by my troops, and will slash down a passage for my men almost at a single blow. This stalwart force will rush into the fort with the head of my column, and, if necessary, use their axes instead of bayonets in any hand-to-hand conflict inside the fort. I think I can promise you, general,**

**that we will go into that fort; but what we are going to do when we get in is the most serious problem of all."**

**At this point General Lee discussed and carefully**

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**considered every phase of the hazardous programme. He expressed neither approval nor disapproval; but he directed me to explain fully the further details of the plan on the supposition that by possibility we could take Fort Stedman and the lines on each side of it.**

**The purpose of the movement was not simply the capture of Fort Stedman and the breastworks flanking it. The prisoners and guns we might thus capture would not justify the peril of the undertaking. The tremendous possibility was the disintegration of the whole left wing of the Federal army, or at least the dealing of such a staggering blow upon it as would disable it temporarily, enabling us to withdraw from Petersburg in safety and join Johnston in North Carolina. The capture of the fort was only the breasting of the first wave in the ocean of difficulties to be encountered. It was simply the opening of a road through the wilderness of hostile works nearest to us in order that my corps and the additional forces to be sent me could pass toward the rear of Grant's lines and then turn upon his flanks.**

**General Lee resumed his questions, saying in substance:**

**"Well, suppose you capture the fort, what are you going to do with the strong line of infantry in the ravine behind the fort and the three other forts in the rear which command Fort Stedman? Do you think you can carry those three forts by assault after General Grant's army has been aroused by your movement?"**

**"Those forts, general, cannot be taken by direct assault when fully manned, except at great sacrifice to our troops. In front of them is a network of abatis which makes a direct advance upon them extremely difficult. There is, however, an open space in the rear of them, and if I can reach that space in the darkness with a sufficient number of men to overpower the guards, I can take those three forts also, without heavy loss. I suggest that we attempt their capture by a legitimate**

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**stratagem; if that fails, then at dawn to rush with all the troops available toward Grant's left, meeting emergencies as best we can. To accomplish**

**much by such a movement, you would have to send me nearly or quite one half of your army. I greatly prefer to try the stratagem, the success of which depends on a number of contingencies."**

**He asked me to state fully each step in the programme, and I continued:**

**"During the week of investigation I have learned the name of every officer of rank in my front. I propose to select three officers from my corps, who are to command each a body of 100 men. These officers are to assume the names of three Union officers who are in and near Fort Stedman. When I have carried Fort Stedman, each of these selected officers is to rush in the darkness to the rear with his 100 men, shouting: 'The Rebels have carried Fort Stedman and our front lines!' They are to maintain no regular order, but each body of 100 is to keep close to its leader. As these three officers strike the line of infantry in rear of the fort and at different points, they will be halted; but each of them will at once represent himself as the Union officer whose name he bears, and is to repeat: 'The Rebels have captured our works, and I am ordered by General McLaughlin to rush back to the fort in rear and hold it at all hazards.'**

**"Each body of 100 men will thus pass the supporting line of Union infantry and go to the rear of the fort to which I will direct the leader. They are to enter, overpower the Union guards, and take possession of the fort. Thus the three forts will be captured."**

**General Lee asked if I thought my officers would each be able in the darkness to find the fort which he was seeking. I replied:**

**"That depends general upon my ability to get proper**

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**guides. The trees have been cut down, the houses have been burned, and the whole topography of that portion of the field so changed that it will require men who are thoroughly familiar with the locality to act as guides. I have no such men in my corps; and without proper guides my three detachments will be sacrificed after taking Fort Stedman and passing the rear line of infantry."**

**Again there was a long discussion of the chances and the serious difficulties in this desperate adventure. These were fully recognized by General Lee, as they had been by myself when the successive steps in the undertaking were formulated in my own mind. He said in substance: "If you think, after careful consideration, that you can probably carry Fort**

**Stedman, and then get your three companies of 100 through the line of supporting infantry, I will endeavor to find among the Virginia volunteers three men whose homes were on that part of the field where the rear forts stand, to act as, guides to your three officers. I do not know of such men now, but will at once make search for them."**

**He directed me to proceed with the selection of my men for the different parts of the programme, but not to notify them until he had made search for the guides and had thought the whole plan over. Twenty-four hours later occurred the final conference before the attack. With the exception of the last council of war on the night before the surrender, I believe this conference on the night of March 23, 1865, was the most serious and impressive in my experience. General Lee had thought of all the chances: he had found three men, whom he did not know in person, but who were recommended for the three guides; he had selected different troops to send me from other corps, making, with mine, nearly one half of his army, and had decided that we should make one supreme effort to break the cordon tightening around us. These troops were to come from Longstreet's and**

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**A. P. Hill's corps. A body of cavalry was to be sent me, which, in case we succeeded in getting into the three rear forts, was to ride across the broken gap at Fort Stedman, and then gallop to the rear, destroy Grant's railroad and telegraph lines, and cut away his pontoons across the river, while the infantry swept down the rear of the Union intrenchments.**

**With full recognition by both the commander and myself of the hopelessness of our cause if we waited longer on General Grant's advance, and also of the great hazard in moving against him, the tremendous undertaking was ordered.**

**All night my troops were moving and concentrating behind Colquitt's Salient. For hours Mrs. Gordon sat in her room in Petersburg, tearing strips of white cloth to tie across the breasts of the leading detachments, that they might recognize each other in the darkness and in the hand-to-hand battle expected at the Federal breastworks and inside the fort.**

**The fifty heavy keen-edged axes were placed in the hands of the fifty brave and stalwart fellows who were to lead the column and hew down Grant's obstructions. The strips of white cloth were tied upon them, and they were ready for the desperate plunge.**

**The chosen 300, in three companies, under the three officers bearing names of Union officers, were also bedecked with the white cotton Confederate scarfs. To each of these companies was assigned one of the three selected guides. I explained to the 300 men the nature of their duties, and told them that, in addition to the joy it would give them to aid in giving victory to the army, I would see to it, if the three forts were captured, that each of them should have a thirty days' furlough and a silver medal. Although the rear forts were not captured, the failure was not the fault of the 300; and even to this day, nearly forty years afterward, I occasionally receive**

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**applications for the medal, accompanied by the statement that I need not trouble myself to get the furlough, as they received that some days later at Appomatox.**

**The hour for the assault (4 A.M.) arrived. The column of attack was arranged in the following order: the 50 axemen in front, and immediately behind and close to them the selected 300. Next came the different commands of infantry who were to move in close behind the 300, the cavalry being held in reserve until the way for them was cleared.**

**While my preparations were progressing I received from General Lee the following note, which is here given because it was written with his own hand, and because it expresses the earnest prayer for our success which came from his burdened heart, and which he could not suppress even in this short semi-official communication:**

**4.30 P.M. Hd Qr (24) March '65.**

**Genl: I have received yours of 2:30 P.M. and telegraphed for Pickett's Division, but I do not think it will reach here in time. Still we will try. If you need more troops one or both of Heth's brigades can be called to Colquitt's Salient and Wilcox's to the Baxter road. Dispose of the troops as needed. I pray that a merciful God may grant us success and deliver us from our enemies.**

**Yours truly,**

**R. E. LEE, Genl.**

**Genl. J. B. GORDON, etc.P. S. The Cavalry is ordered to report to you at Halifax road and Norfolk R.R. Iron Bridge at 3 A.M. tomorrow. W. F. Lee**

**to be in vicinity of Monk's corner Road at 6 A.M.**

**All things ready, at 4 A.M. I stood on the top of the breastworks, with no one at my side except a single private soldier with rifle in hand, who was to fire the signal shot for the headlong rush. This night charge on the fort was to be across the intervening space**

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**covered with ditches, in one of which stood the watchful Federal pickets. There still remained near my works some of the debris of our obstructions, which had not been completely removed and which I feared might, retard the rapid exit of my men; and I ordered it cleared away. The noise made by this removal, though slight, attracted the attention of a Union picket who stood on guard only a few rods from me, and he called out:**

**"What are you doing over there, Johnny? What is that noise? Answer quick or I 'll shoot."**

**The pickets of the two armies were so close together at this point that there was an understanding between them, either expressed or implied, that they would not shoot each other down except when necessary. The call of this Union picket filled me with apprehension. I expected him to fire and start the entire picket-line to firing, thus giving the alarm to the fort, the capture of which depended largely upon the secrecy of my movement. The quick mother-wit of the private soldier at my side came to my relief. In an instant he replied:**

**"Never mind, Yank. Lie down and go to sleep. We are just gathering a little corn. You know rations are mighty short over here."**

**There was a narrow strip of corn which the bullets had not shot away still standing between the lines. The Union picket promptly answered: "All right, Johnny; go ahead and get your corn. I 'll not shoot at you while you are drawing your rations."**

**Such soldierly courtesy was constantly illustrated between these generous foes, who stood so close to one another in the hostile lines. The Rev. J. William Jones, D.D., now chaplain-general of the United Confederate Veterans, when standing near this same point had his hat carried away by a gust of wind, and it fell near the**

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**Union lines. The loss of a hat meant the loss to the chaplain of nearly a month's pay. He turned away sorrowfully, not knowing how he could get another. A heroic young private, George Haner of Virginia, said to him: "Chaplain, I will get your hat." Taking a pole in his hand, he crawled along the ditch which led to our picket-line, and began to drag the hat in with his pole. At this moment a Yankee bullet went through the sleeve of his jacket. He at once shouted to the Union picket: "Hello, Yank; quit your foolishness. I am doing no harm. I am just trying to get the chaplain's hat." Immediately the reply came: "All right, Johnny; I'll not shoot at you any more. But you'd better hurry up and get it before the next relief comes."**

**My troops stood in close column, ready for the hazardous rush upon Fort Stedman. While the fraternal dialogue in reference to drawing rations from the cornfield was progressing between the Union picket and the resourceful private at my side, the last of the obstructions in my front were removed, and I ordered the private to fire the signal for the assault. He pointed his rifle upward, with his finger on the trigger, but hesitated. His conscience seemed to get hold of him. He was going into the fearful charge, and he evidently did not feel disposed to go into eternity with the lie on his lips, although it might be a permissible war lie, by which he had thrown the Union picket off his guard. He evidently felt that it was hardly fair to take advantage of the generosity and soldierly sympathy of his foe, who had so magnanimously assured him that he would not be shot while drawing his rations from the little field of corn. His hesitation surprised me, and I again ordered: "Fire your gun, sir." He at once called to his kindhearted foe and said: "Hello, Yank! Wake up; we are going to shell the woods. Look out; we are coming."**

**And with this effort to satisfy his conscience and even**

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**up accounts with the Yankee picket, he fired the shot and rushed forward in the darkness.**

**As the solitary signal shot rang out in the stillness, my alert pickets, who had crept close to the Union sentinels, sprang like sinewy Ajaxes upon them and prevented the discharge of a single alarm shot. Had these faithful Union sentinels been permitted to fire alarm guns, my dense columns, while rushing upon the fort, would have been torn into fragments by the heavy guns. Simultaneously with the seizing and silencing of the Federal sentinels, my stalwart axemen leaped over our breastworks, closely followed by the selected 300 and the packed column of infantry. Although it required but a few minutes to reach the Union works, those minutes were to me like hours of suspense and breathless anxiety; but soon was heard the thud of the heavy**

**axes as my brave fellows slashed down the Federal obstructions. The next moment the infantry sprang upon the Union breastworks and into the fort, overpowering the gunners before their destructive charges could be emptied into the mass of Confederates. They turned this captured artillery upon the flanking lines on each side of the fort, clearing the Union breastworks of their defenders for some distance in both directions. Up to this point, the success had exceeded my most sanguine expectations. We had taken Fort Stedman and a long line of breastworks on either side. We had captured nine heavy cannon, eleven mortars, nearly 1000 prisoners, including General McLaughlin, with the loss of less than half a dozen men. One of these fell upon the works, pierced through the body by a Federal bayonet, one of the few men thus killed in the four years of war. I was in the fort myself, and relieved General McLaughlin by assuming command of Fort Stedman.**

**From the fort I sent word to General Lee, who was on a hill in the rear, that we were in the works and that**

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**the 300 were on their way to the lines in the rear. Soon I received a message from one of these three officers, I believe General Lewis of North Carolina, that he had passed the line of Federal infantry without trouble by representing himself as Colonel - - - - of the Hundredth Pennsylvania, but that he could not find his fort, as the guide had been lost in the rush upon Stedman. I soon received a similar message from the other two, and so notified General Lee.**

**Daylight was coming. Through the failure of the three guides, we had failed to occupy the three forts in the rear, and they were now filled with Federals. Our wretched railroad trains had broken down, and the troops who were coming to my aid did not reach me. The full light of the morning revealed the gathering forces of Grant and the great preponderance of his numbers. It was impossible for me to make further headway with my isolated corps, and General Lee directed me to withdraw. This was not easily accomplished. Foiled by the failure of the guides, deprived of the great bodies of infantry which Lee ordered to my support, I had necessarily stretched out my corps to occupy the intrenchments which we had captured. The other troops were expected to arrive and join in the general advance. The breaking down of the trains and the non-arrival of these heavy supports left me to battle alone with Grant's gathering and overwhelming forces, and at the same time to draw in my own lines toward Fort Stedman. A consuming fire on both flanks and front during this withdrawal caused a heavy loss to my command. I myself was wounded, but not seriously, in recrossing the space over which we had charged in the darkness. Among the**



**disabled was the gallant Brigadier-General Philip Cook of Georgia, who after the war represented his people in the United States Congress.**

**When the retreat to our own works had ended, a**

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**report reached me that an entire Confederate regiment had not received the order to withdraw, and was still standing in the Union breastworks, bravely fighting. It was necessary to send them orders or leave them to their fate. I called my staff around me, and explained the situation and the extreme danger the officer would encounter in carrying that order. I stated to them that the pain I experienced in sending one of them on so perilous a mission was greater than I could express. Every one of them quickly volunteered to go; but Thomas G. Jones of Alabama insisted that as he was the youngest and had no special responsibilities, it should fall to his lot to incur the danger. I bade him good-by with earnest prayers that God would protect him, and without an apparent tremor he rode away. A portion of the trip was through a literal furnace of fire, but he passed through it, both going and returning, without a scratch.**

**This last supreme effort to break the hold of General Grant upon Petersburg and Richmond was the expiring struggle of the Confederate giant, whose strength was nearly exhausted and whose limbs were heavily shackled by the most onerous conditions. Lee knew, as we all did, that the chances against us were as a hundred is to one; but we remembered how George Washington, with his band of ragged rebels, had won American independence through trials and sufferings and difficulties, and although they were far less discouraging and insurmountable than those around us, they were nevertheless many and great. It seemed better, therefore, to take the one chance, though it might be one in a thousand, rather than to stand still while the little army was being depleted, its vitality lessening with each setting sun, and its life gradually ebbing, while the great army in its front was growing and strengthening day by day. To wait was certain destruction: it could not be worse if we tried and failed. The accidents and mishaps which checked the**

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**brilliant assault made by my brave men, and which rendered their further advance impossible, could not have been anticipated. But for those adverse happenings, it would seem that we might have won on that single chance.**

**Slavery was undoubtedly the immediate fomenting cause of the woful American conflict. It was the great political factor around which the passions of the sections had long been gathered--the tallest pine in the political forest around whose top the fiercest lightnings were to blaze and whose trunk was destined to be shivered in the earthquake shocks of war. But slavery was far from being the sole cause of the prolonged conflict. Neither its destruction on the one hand, nor its defence on the other, was the energizing force that held the contending armies to four years of bloody work. I apprehend that if all living Union soldiers were summoned to the witness-stand, every one of them would testify that it was the preservation of the American Union and not the destruction of Southern slavery that induced him to volunteer at the call of his country. As for the South, it is enough to say that perhaps eighty per cent. of her armies were neither slave-holders, nor had the remotest interest in the institution. No other proof, however, is needed than the undeniable fact that at any period of the war from its beginning to near its close the South could have saved slavery by simply laying down its arms and returning to the Union.**

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*The editor thought that he would include this explanation of secession and the Gen. Gordon's view of his side of the argument over the cause of the late unpleasantness and the validity of secession.*

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**We must, therefore, look beyond the institution of slavery for the fundamental issues which dominated and inspired all classes of the contending sections. It is not difficult to find them. The "Old Man Eloquent," William E. Gladstone, who was perhaps England's foremost statesman of the century, believed that the Government formed by our fathers was the noblest political fabric ever devised by the brain of man. This undoubtedly is true; and yet before these inspired builders were dead, controversy arose as to the nature and powers of their free constitutional government. Indeed, in the very convention that framed the Constitution the clashing theories and bristling arguments of 1787 presaged the glistening bayonets of 1861. In the cabinet of the first President, the contests between Hamilton and Jefferson, representatives of conflicting constitutional constructions, were so persistent and fierce as to disturb the harmony of executive councils and tax the patience of Washington. The disciples of each of these political prophets numbered in their respective ranks the greatest statesmen and purest patriots. The followers of each continuously battled for these conflicting theories with a power and earnestness worthy of the founders of the**

**Republic. Generation after generation, in Congress, on the hustings, and through the press, these irreconcilable doctrines were urged by constitutional expounders, until their arguments became ingrained into the very fibre of the brain and conscience of the sections. The long war of words between the leaders waxed at last into a war of guns between their followers.**

**During the entire life of the Republic the respective rights and powers of the States and general government had furnished a question for endless controversy. In process of time this controversy assumed a somewhat sectional phase. The dominating thought of the North and of the South may be summarized in a few sentences.**

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**The South maintained with the depth of religious conviction that the Union formed under the Constitution was a Union of consent and not of force; that the original States were not the creatures but the creators of the Union; that these States had gained their independence, their freedom, and their sovereignty from the mother country, and had not surrendered these on entering the Union; that by the express terms of the Constitution all rights and powers not delegated were reserved to the States; and the South challenged the North to find one trace of authority in that Constitution for invading and coercing a sovereign State.**

**The North, on the other hand, maintained with the utmost confidence in the correctness of her position that the Union formed under the Constitution was intended to be perpetual; that sovereignty was a unit and could not be divided; that whether or not there was any express power granted in the Constitution for invading a State, the right of self-preservation was inherent in all governments; that the life of the Union was essential to the life of liberty; or, in the words of Webster, "liberty and union are one and inseparable."**

**To the charge of the North that secession was rebellion and treason, the South replied that the epithets of rebel and traitor did not deter her from the assertion of her independence, since these same epithets had been familiar to the ears of Washington and Hancock and Adams and Light Horse Harry Lee. In vindication of her right to secede, she appealed to the essential doctrine, "the right to govern rests on the consent of the governed," and to the right of independent action as among those reserved by the States. The South appealed to the acts and opinions of the Fathers and to the report of the Hartford Convention of New England States asserting the power of each State to decide as to the remedy for infraction of its rights; to the petitions**

**presented and positions assumed by ex-President John Quincy Adams; to the contemporaneous declaration of the 8th of January assemblage in Ohio indicating that 200,000 Democrats in that State alone were ready to stand guard on the banks of the border river and resist invasion of Southern territory; and to the repeated declarations of Horace Greeley and the admission of President Lincoln himself that there was difficulty on the question of force, since ours ought to be a fraternal Government.**

**In answer to all these points, the North also cited the acts and opinions of the same Fathers, and urged that the purpose of those Fathers was to make a more perfect Union and a stronger government. The North offset the opinions of Greeley and others by the emphatic declaration of Stephen A. Douglas, the foremost of Western Democrats, and by the official opinion as to the power of the Government to collect revenues and enforce laws, given to President Buchanan by Jere Black, the able Democratic Attorney-General.**

## **WERE LIKE CROWDS AT A CIRCUS.**

**BY ALEXANDER KELLY**

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**All the meetings of the joint debate were attended by immense crowds of people. They came in all sorts of vehicles, on horseback, and many walked weary miles on foot to hear these two great leaders discuss the issues of the campaign. There had never been political meetings held under such unusual conditions as these, and there probably never will be again. At every place the speakers were met by great crowds of their friends and escorted to the platforms in the open air where the debates were held. The processions that escorted the speakers were most unique. They carried flags and banners and were preceded by bands of music. The people discharged cannons when they had them, and, when they did not, blacksmiths' anvils were made to take their places.**

**Oftentimes a part of the escort would be mounted, and in most of the processions were chariots containing young ladies representing the different states of the Union designated by banners they carried. Besides the bands, there was usually vocal music. Patriotic songs were the order of the day, the "Star-Spangled Banner" and "Hail Columbia" being great favorites.**

**So far as the crowds were concerned, these joint debates took on the appearance of a circus day, and this comparison was strengthened by the sale of lemonade, fruit, melons and confectionery on the outskirts of the gatherings.**

**At Ottawa, after his speech, Mr. Lincoln was carried around on the shoulders of his enthusiastic supporters, who did not put him down until they reached the place where he was to spend the night.**

**In the joint debates, each of the candidates asked the other a series of questions. Judge Douglas' replies to Mr. Lincoln's shrewd questions helped Douglas to win the Senatorial election, but they lost him the support of the South in the campaign for President two years thereafter. Mr. Lincoln was told when he framed his questions that if Douglas answered them in the way it was believed he would that the answers would make him Senator.**

**"That may be," said Mr. Lincoln, "but if he takes that shoot he never can be President."**

**The prophecy was correct. Mr. Douglas was elected Senator, but two years later only carried one state--Missouri--for President.**

## **"THE COUP DE GRÂCE"**

**By Ambrose Bierce**

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**The fighting had been hard and continuous; that was attested by all the senses. The very taste of battle was in the air. All was now over; it remained only to succor the wounded and bury the dead—to "tidy up a bit," as the humorist of a burial squad put it. A good deal of "tidying up" was required. As far as one could see through the forests, among the splintered trees, lay wrecks of men and horses. Among them moved the stretcher-bearers, gathering and carrying away the few who showed signs of life. Most of the wounded had died of neglect while the right to minister to their wants was in dispute. It is an army regulation that the wounded must wait; the best way to care for them is to win the battle. It must be confessed that victory is**

**a distinct advantage to a man requiring attention, but many do not live to avail themselves of it.**

**The dead were collected in groups of a dozen or a score and laid side by side in rows while the trenches were dug to receive them. Some, found at too great a distance from these rallying points, were buried where they lay. There was little attempt at identification, though in most cases, the burial parties being detailed to glean the same ground which they had assisted to reap, the names of the victorious dead were known and listed. The enemy's fallen had to be content with counting. But of that they got enough: many of them were counted several times, and the total, as given afterward in the official report of the victorious commander, denoted rather a hope than a result.**

**At some little distance from the spot where one of the burial parties had established its "bivouac of the dead," a man in the uniform of a Federal officer stood leaning against a tree. From his feet upward to his neck his attitude was that of weariness reposing; but he turned his head uneasily from side to side; his mind was apparently not at rest. He was perhaps uncertain in which direction to go; he was not likely to remain long where he was, for already the level rays of the setting sun straggled redly through the open spaces of the wood and the weary soldiers were quitting their task for the day. He would hardly make a night of it alone there among the dead. Nine men in ten whom you meet after a battle inquire the way to some fraction of the army—as if any one could know. Doubtless this officer was lost. After resting himself a moment he would presumably follow one of the retiring burial squads.**

**When all were gone he walked straight away into the forest toward the red west, its light staining his face like blood. The air of confidence with which he now strode along showed that he was on familiar ground; he had recovered his bearings. The dead on his right and on his left were unregarded as he passed. An occasional low moan from some sorely-stricken wretch whom the relief-parties had not reached, and who would have to pass a comfortless night beneath the stars with his thirst to keep him company, was equally unheeded. What, indeed, could the officer have done, being no surgeon and having no water?**

**At the head of a shallow ravine, a mere depression of the ground, lay a small group of bodies. He saw, and swerving suddenly from his course walked rapidly toward them. Scanning each one sharply as he passed, he stopped at last above one which lay at a slight remove from the others, near a clump of small trees. He looked at it narrowly. It seemed to stir. He stooped and laid his hand upon its face. It screamed.**

**The officer was Captain Downing Madwell, of a Massachusetts regiment of infantry, a daring and intelligent soldier, an honorable man.**

**In the regiment were two brothers named Halcrow—Caffal and Creede Halcrow. Caffal Halcrow was a sergeant in Captain Madwell's company, and these two men, the sergeant and the captain, were devoted friends. In so far as disparity of rank, difference in duties and considerations of military discipline would permit they were commonly together. They had, indeed, grown up together from childhood. A habit of the heart is not easily broken off. Caffal Halcrow had nothing military in his taste nor disposition, but the thought of separation from his friend was disagreeable; he enlisted in the company in which Madwell was second-lieutenant. Each had taken two steps upward in rank, but between the highest non-commissioned and the lowest commissioned officer the gulf is deep and wide and the old relation was maintained with difficulty and a difference.**

**Creede Halcrow, the brother of Caffal, was the major of the regiment—a cynical, saturnine man, between whom and Captain Madwell there was a natural antipathy which circumstances had nourished and strengthened to an active animosity. But for the restraining influence of their mutual relation to Caffal these two patriots would doubtless have endeavored to deprive their country of each other's services.**

**At the opening of the battle that morning the regiment was performing outpost duty a mile away from the main army. It was attacked and nearly surrounded in the forest, but stubbornly held its ground. During a lull in the fighting, Major Halcrow came to Captain Madwell. The two exchanged formal salutes, and the major said: "Captain, the colonel directs that you push your company to the head of this ravine and hold your place there until recalled. I need hardly apprise you of the dangerous character of the movement, but if you wish, you can, I suppose, turn over the command to your first-lieutenant. I was not, however, directed to authorize the substitution; it is merely a suggestion of my own, unofficially made."**

**To this deadly insult Captain Madwell coolly replied:**

**"Sir, I invite you to accompany the movement. A mounted officer would be a conspicuous mark, and I have long held the opinion that it would be better if you were dead."**

**The art of repartee was cultivated in military circles as early as 1862.**

**A half-hour later Captain Madwell's company was driven from its position at the head of the ravine, with a loss of one-third its number. Among the fallen was Sergeant Halcrow. The regiment was soon afterward forced back to the**

main line, and at the close of the battle was miles away. The captain was now standing at the side of his subordinate and friend.

Sergeant Halerow was mortally hurt. His clothing was deranged; it seemed to have been violently torn apart, exposing the abdomen. Some of the buttons of his jacket had been pulled off and lay on the ground beside him and fragments of his other garments were strewn about. His leather belt was parted and had apparently been dragged from beneath him as he lay. There had been no great effusion of blood. The only visible wound was a wide, ragged opening in the abdomen. It was defiled with earth and dead leaves. Protruding from it was a loop of small intestine. In all his experience Captain Madwell had not seen a wound like this. He could neither conjecture how it was made nor explain the attendant circumstances—the strangely torn clothing, the parted belt, the besmirching of the white skin. He knelt and made a closer examination. When he rose to his feet, he turned his eyes in different directions as if looking for an enemy. Fifty yards away, on the crest of a low, thinly wooded hill, he saw several dark objects moving about among the fallen men—a herd of swine. One stood with its back to him, its shoulders sharply elevated. Its forefeet were upon a human body, its head was depressed and invisible. The bristly ridge of its chine showed black against the red west. Captain Madwell drew away his eyes and fixed them again upon the thing which had been his friend.

The man who had suffered these monstrous mutilations was alive. At intervals he moved his limbs; he moaned at every breath. He stared blankly into the face of his friend and if touched screamed. In his giant agony he had torn up the ground on which he lay; his clenched hands were full of leaves and twigs and earth. Articulate speech was beyond his power; it was impossible to know if he were sensible to anything but pain. The expression of his face was an appeal; his eyes were full of prayer. For what?

There was no misreading that look; the captain had too frequently seen it in eyes of those whose lips had still the power to formulate it by an entreaty for death. Consciously or unconsciously, this writhing fragment of humanity, this type and example of acute sensation, this handiwork of man and beast, this humble, unheroic Prometheus, was imploring everything, all, the whole non-ego, for the boon of oblivion. To the earth and the sky alike, to the trees, to the man, to whatever took form in sense or consciousness, this incarnate suffering addressed that silent plea.

For what, indeed? For that which we accord to even the meanest creature without sense to demand it, denying it only to the wretched of our own race: for the blessed release, the rite of uttermost compassion, the *coup de grâce* .



**Captain Madwell spoke the name of his friend. He repeated it over and over without effect until emotion choked his utterance. His tears splashed upon the livid face beneath his own and blinded himself. He saw nothing but a blurred and moving object, but the moans were more distinct than ever, interrupted at briefer intervals by sharper shrieks. He turned away, struck his hand upon his forehead, and strode from the spot. The swine, catching sight of him, threw up their crimson muzzles, regarding him suspiciously a second, and then with a gruff, concerted grunt, raced away out of sight. A horse, its foreleg splintered by a cannon-shot, lifted its head sidewise from the ground and neighed piteously. Madwell stepped forward, drew his revolver and shot the poor beast between the eyes, narrowly observing its death-struggle, which, contrary to his expectation, was violent and long; but at last it lay still. The tense muscles of its lips, which had uncovered the teeth in a horrible grin, relaxed; the sharp, clean-cut profile took on a look of profound peace and rest.**

**Along the distant, thinly wooded crest to westward the fringe of sunset fire had now nearly burned itself out. The light upon the trunks of the trees had faded to a tender gray; shadows were in their tops, like great dark birds a perch. Night was coming and there were miles of haunted forest between Captain Madwell and camp. Yet he stood there at the side of the dead animal, apparently lost to all sense of his surroundings. His eyes were bent upon the earth at his feet; his left hand hung loosely at his side, his right still held the pistol. Presently he lifted his face, turned it toward his dying friend and walked rapidly back to his side. He knelt upon one knee, cocked the weapon, placed the muzzle against the man's forehead, and turning away his eyes pulled the trigger. There was no report. He had used his last cartridge for the horse.**

**The sufferer moaned and his lips moved convulsively. The froth that ran from them had a tinge of blood.**

**Captain Madwell rose to his feet and drew his sword from the scabbard. He passed the fingers of his left hand along the edge from hilt to point. He held it out straight before him, as if to test his nerves. There was no visible tremor of the blade; the ray of bleak skylight that it reflected was steady and true. He stooped and with his left hand tore away the dying man's shirt, rose and placed the point of the sword just over the heart. This time he did not withdraw his eyes. Grasping the hilt with both hands, he thrust downward with all his strength and weight. The blade sank into the man's body—through his body into the earth; Captain Madwell came near falling forward upon his work. The dying man drew up his knees and at the same time threw his right arm across his breast and grasped the steel so tightly that the knuckles of the hand visibly whitened. By a violent but vain effort to withdraw the blade the wound was enlarged; a rill of blood escaped, running sinuously down into the deranged clothing. At that moment three men**

stepped silently forward from behind the clump of young trees which had concealed their approach. Two were hospital attendants and carried a stretcher.

The third was Major Creede Halcrow. ■

## **ROAD TRIP DESTINATION AND CIVIL WAR MONUMENT**

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### **Nifty Civil War Memorial in Lancaster, WI**

**I stumbled on this nifty memorial on a recent day trip with my grandkids in Lancaster, WI. Lancaster is the county seat of Grant County – where Boscobel is located. It claims to be the first monument in the State for Civil War soldiers and the pillars around the main obelisk lists by regiment the soldiers from Grant County who died in the conflict. This is Grant Counties version of the Vietnam wall.**



**I'm showing the picture of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wisconsin names, but apparently the 7<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin drew heavily from the area as there were many more names listed under that regiment.**

**There's also another statue of a Union soldier nearby, and don't miss the cool copper-topped dome of the building. With all the renovation work going on and the grandkids in the car, I didn't go inside, which was a mistake because I later found out there were GAR and Civil War artifacts on display inside.**

**Lancaster is 23 miles south of Boscobel. If you're in the area, consider making a side trip.**

**For additional pictures**

**see: <http://wisconsinhistoricalmarkers.blogspot.com/2013/09/grant-county-civil-war-monument.html>**