



In Fraternity,
Charity and
Loyalty

Lest We Forget

*A publication of the Col. Friedrich K. Hecker Camp, #443, and dedicated
to the memory of those who fought to preserve the Union, 1861-1865*

Volume 4, Issue 3
November 2024



Battle of Pilot Knob
160 years later



In this issue ...

- *From the Editor page 2
- *The Cornerpage 3
- *Around the Community.....page 4
- *News.....page 5
- *Benton Barracks: Helping defend the Gateway to the West.....
.....pages 6-8
- * Civil War nurses battle corruption, fight for wounded Union Veterans ..
.....pages 8-9
- *Battle of Pilot Knob recognizes 160th anniversarypage 9
- *Past Member Profile:
Meet Brother W.H. Powell
.....pages 10-11
- *A proclamation by the President of the United Statespage 12



From the Editor

As I wrapped up our latest issue of this newsletter, it was thundering outside. Kind of ominous as it was election day. Fortunately, our opportunity to elect our leaders continues by the blood and sweat of our men and women in uniform who we will honor Nov. 11 on Veterans Day.

Our ancestors, especially our Union ancestors insured our chance to vote for leaders of a unified nation. Though we may not be as unified in our ideas sometimes, I hope you took the opportunity to exercise your right as American citizens and voted for the candidate of your choice. I know I am personally grateful for that right.

For anyone who may be new to our camp and this newsletter, this camp was first chartered in 1884 as a camp of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). The Col. Friedrich K. Hecker Camp, #443 is one of 11 camps in the Department of Illinois. However, it is the only representation for the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) in southern Illinois. The camp was chartered as part of the SUVCW in 1996.

The SUVCW is a fraternal organization dedicated to preserving the history and legacy of heroes who fought and worked to save the Union. In 1881, the GAR formed the SUVCW as the Sons of Veterans of the United States of America (SV) to carry on its traditions and memory long after the GAR ceased to exist. It became the SUVCW in name in 1925 and is the legal successor to the GAR, first founded in 1866.

This newsletter is used to help educate readers, as well as continue the tradition of providing camp members, and others interested in maintaining our history, news about the SUVCW, our treasured American history, and what we can all do to help preserve and honor the memories of the Americans who sacrificed to preserve our Union so many years ago. Some of the history of Hecker Post #443 and the GAR is [here](#).

Please share this newsletter with anyone who may have an interest. It's free to subscribe and/or send submissions. Just email lestweforget1861@outlook.com. Thank you for your readership of this newsletter and/or your participation in Hecker Camp, and the SUVCW. If you are not a member and have an interest and/or a direct connection to the civil war, or know of someone else who may, please consider applying for membership and passing the word along to others. [Click here to learn more.](#)

As usual, I try to provide a variety of topics and stories in *Lest We Forget*, as well as highlight camp activities and members.



Lest We Forget is a publication of the Col. Friedrich K. Hecker Camp #443 of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW). It is the only SUVCW Camp south of Springfield, Illinois, covering the "Little Egypt" part of the state.

For more information about the camp and how to become a member, visit our Website: <http://www.heckercamp443.org/>



Our Facebook page is [here](#).

For more information or interest in joining, you may also send a message to info@heckercamp443.org.

More about the SUVCW is here: www.suvcw.org.

Camp Commander (CC): Brother Russel Schleicher

Sr. Vice Commander (SVC): Brother John Stanton

Jr. Vice Commander (JVC): Brother Donn Cooks

Secretary, Editor, Webmaster:

Brother Gerald Sonnenberg

Treasurer: Brother Richard Piper

Camp Guide: Brother Justin Ottolini

For submissions or to subscribe to the newsletter, email: lestweforget1861@outlook.com.

On the cover: An image from the 160th anniversary of the Battle of Pilot Knob. More information on page 9.
(Photo courtesy of Past Camp Commander Greg Zelinske)



The Corner

By Gerald Sonnenberg
Hecker Camp secretary, editor

Hello Brothers, Camp in Review

July—Camp meeting was held July 3. The subject of planning for the dedication of the Hecker informational sign and directional sign at the Summerfield, Illinois cemetery, as well as the sign in the Summerfield Park was briefly discussed. It will be set up in conjunction with the Hecker family and the dedication of the Benton Park monument in St. Louis.

The camp generated an agreement to donate funds from it's Summerfield project fund to the Summerfield Cemetery for upkeep of the new sign and brick pad.

Camp Patriotic Instructor and Treasurer Brother Richard Piper discussed the 4th of July holiday, and specifically talked about how the former rebel stronghold of Vicksburg, Mississippi didn't truly celebrate it until the 1976 Bicentennial. For many years before that, they celebrated the "Carnival of the Confederacy."

August—Camp meeting was held Aug. 7. Discussion regarding the dedication of the Hecker informational sign and directional sign at the Summerfield, Illinois cemetery, as well as the sign in the Summerfield Park continued.

Plans for the camp picnic before the September meeting were finalized.

A guest with an interest in researching their ancestor attended.

September—Camp meeting was held Sept. 4. Our camp picnic began at 6 p.m. with eleven camp members and



some spouses attending what's become an annual event.

Toward the end of the picnic, guest Bob Eversgerd, builder and owner of Eversgerd's civil war fort by Germantown, Illinois, played his guitar and sang.

The camp was also requested by the city of Shiloh to assist with their annual picnic. We had three volunteers, plus PCC Greg Zelinske volunteered to provide tours in the cemetery. (See page 4.)

Dedication discussions continued from the prior meetings. Camp Patriotic Instructor and Treasurer Brother Richard Piper talked about Abraham Lincoln in New Salem, Illinois; including the Blackhawk War and other topics.

October—Camp meeting was held Oct. 4. Camp elections were discussed and nominations made to be voted on during the November meeting. Nominations were made by acclamation that the same officers serve the upcoming year. Those nominations are for commander, CC Russell Schleicher; for senior vice commander, SVC John Stanton; for junior vice commander, JVC Donn Cooks; for treasurer, Brother Richard Piper; for secretary, Brother Gerald Sonnenberg; and for camp guide, Brother Justin Ottolini.

Nominations will remain open until our next meeting Nov. 6. Please contact Brother Sonnenberg if you have someone (including yourself) to nominate.

The camp received a thank you for their help with the Shiloh Picnic to include helping with parking attendees and PCC

Zelinske's cemetery tours.

Upcoming Events

If you have ideas for upcoming events that we, as a camp, or even as individual representatives of the camp can participate, please let us know.

November 11—Camp is signed up to march in the O'Fallon Veterans Day parade on Nov. 11. The photo above is from the 2023 parade.

The parade begins at 2 p.m. We plan to assemble on the east side of the O'Fallon city park on South Hilgard Street between 1 and 1:30 p.m. My vehicle will be available as a trailing vehicle with the magnetic signs attached for individuals who may not be able to march the ¾ mile route.

Camp Project Status

*Dedication of the sign and markers in Summerfield, Illinois, as well as the Benton Park monument is tentatively scheduled for the first weekend in May 2025.

*Highland Project — On hold.

*Walnut Hill Restoration — On hold.

Please keep the newsletter in mind if you have an article or idea to share and if you have attended or participated in any event as a living historian or representative of the Camp. Contact me at lestweforget1861@outlook.com.

We encourage our members that are not able to attend our meetings in person to join us on the Zoom call. We need six attendees for a quorum.

Trivia #1

On Feb. 28, 1861 North Carolina held an election on the question of whether to hold a state convention to debate secession. Union sympathizers defeated the call for a convention by how many votes?

- a. 2,000
- b. 700
- c. Less than 200
- d. 5,000

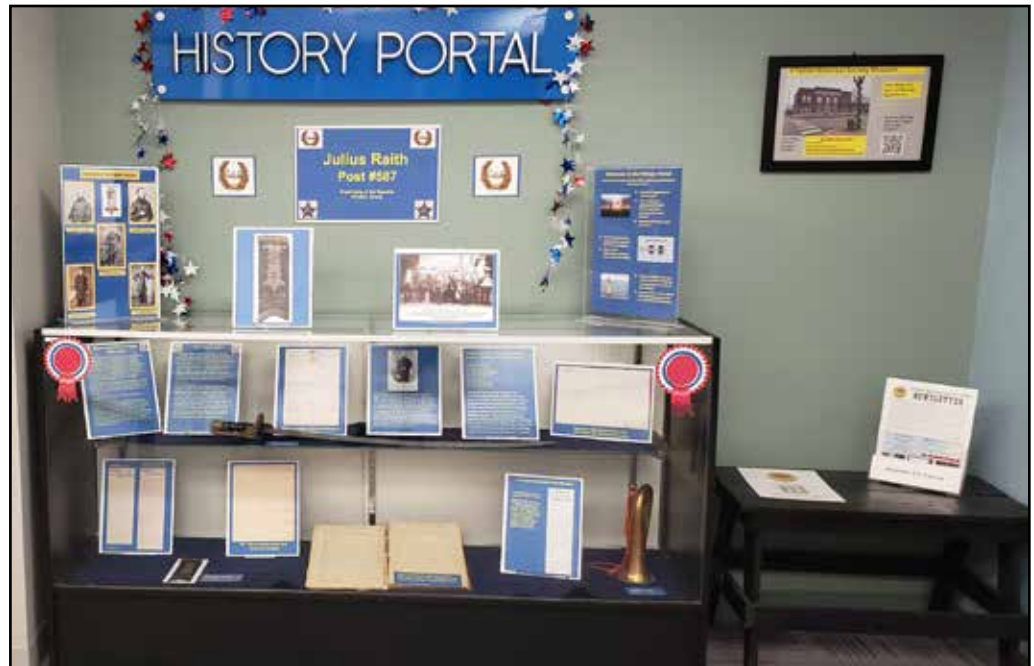
Want the answer? Find the second trivia question.



Around the Community

Raith history portal

Hecker Camp #443 Past Camp Commander (PCC) Greg Zelinske set up a display in honor of [Col. Julius Raith](#). Raith was born on March 29, 1819 in Goppingen, Wurttemberg in modern Germany. After emigrating to the United States as a young boy. He later married and settled with his family in Belleville, Illinois. Chosen to command the 43rd Illinois Infantry in 1861, Raith was wounded at the Battle of Shiloh on April, 6, 1862, lost a leg and died April 11. Somewhat ironically, he is now buried in the cemetery in Shiloh, Illinois. He was honored with the creation of the Raith Post #587 of the Grand Army of the Republic in O'Fallon, Illinois, which existed between 1886-1933. *(Photo by Greg Zelinske)*



Craft fair crew

(Left to right)

Hecker Camp #443 Senior Vice Commander John Stanton, Treasurer Richard Piper, and Secretary Gerald Sonnenberg helped with parking crafters and customers at the Shiloh, Illinois craft fair Oct. 19. *(Photo by Gerald Sonnenberg)*



Ready to be dedicated

The Hecker family has completed work in Benton Park in St. Louis with the installation of an informational sign that is identical to the sign installed in Summerfield, Illinois. Pictured right is the informational sign in the foreground, while the updated Hecker monument stands atop the hill. Dedications of both the Benton Park and Summerfield locations are tentatively scheduled for the first weekend of May 2025. *(Courtesy photo)*



Historic portrayal

Past Camp Commander Greg Zelinske portrayed Capt. Dave McFarland of Co. I, 117th Illinois during tours of the Shiloh Illinois Cemetery Sept. 7. The tours took place during the towns' annual picnic. In addition, PCC Zelinske, Senior Vice Commander John Stanton and Camp Treasurer Richard Piper assisted with parking attendees of the picnic, both Sept. 6 and 7. *(Photo by Diane Zelinske)*



News



Midterm Encampment

Brothers from the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War Department of Illinois, including Department Commander Bobby Welch (seated third from the left), gathered Oct. 5 in Springfield, Illinois for the department's 141st Annual Midterm Encampment.

The event was held at Northenders VFW Post 10302. The encampment began at 1 p.m. After the encampment, post flags of Columbia Post No. 706, G.A.R. (Chicago) were transferred to archival storage boxes in preparation to be turned over to a museum. Other items and records collected from this post were on display as well. (Photo by Brother Chuck Murphy)



Hecker Camp picnic

Our camp picnic began Sept. 4 at 6 p.m. with eleven camp members, their spouses and a few guests attending what's become an annual event.

(Right) Toward the end of the picnic, guest Bob Eversgerd, builder and owner of Eversgerd's civil war fort, played his guitar and sang.

(Below) The Hecker Camp meeting underway.



(Above) Brother Gerald Sonnenberg created a display of civil war memorabilia; some antique and some not. He also displayed a civil war battle diorama he created.



Trivia #2

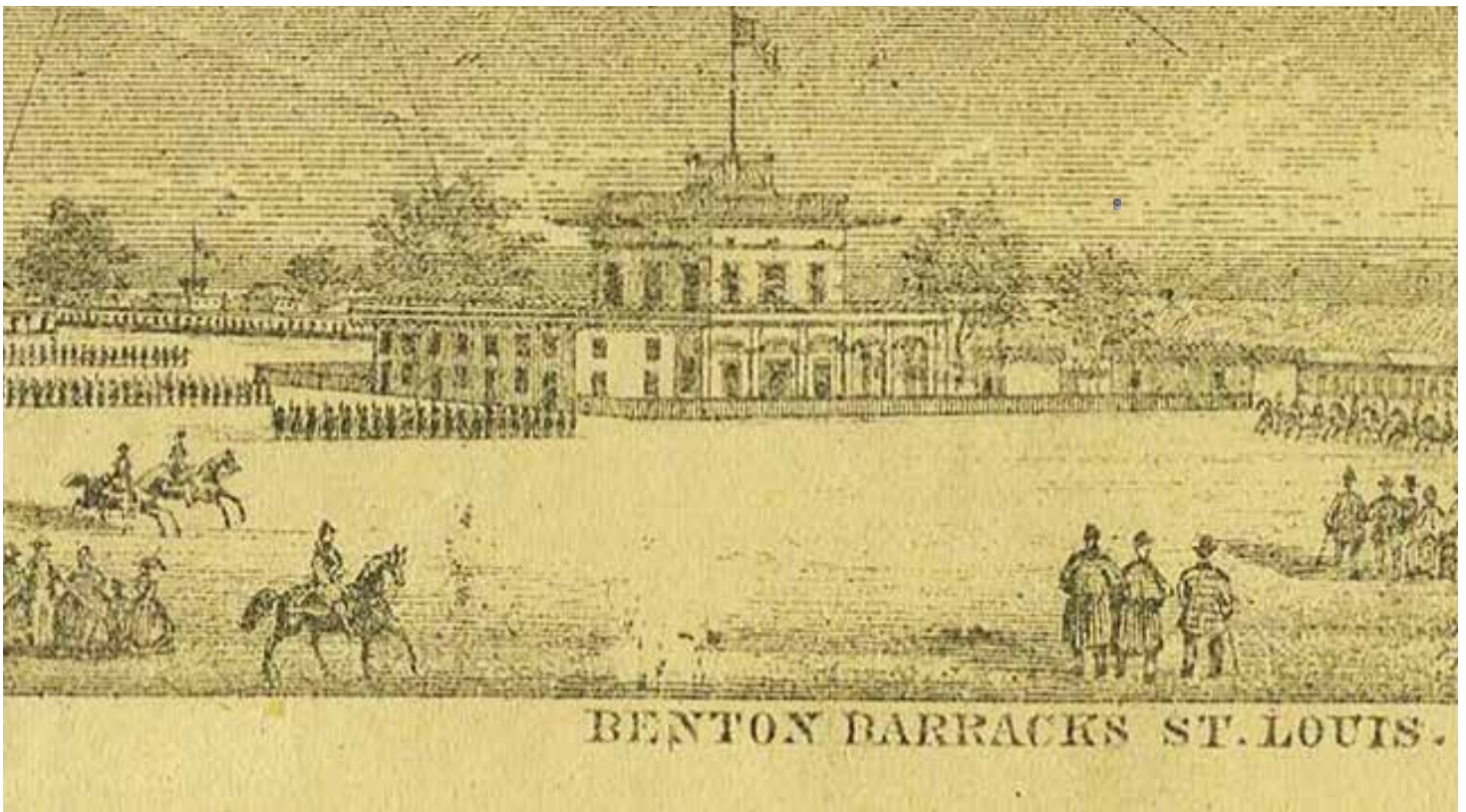
The answer to Trivia #1 is c, less than 200.

After refusing to accept Maj. Anderson's delay, how many hours did Confederate forces give him to evacuate Fort Sumter before an attack began?

a. 24 b. 6 c. 1 d. 48

Want the answer? Find the third trivia question.





Benton Barracks: Helping defend the Gateway to the West

By Gerald Sonnenberg
Hecker Camp secretary, editor

When the Civil War began, patriotic fervor was rampant in the North and South. However, neither side was ready for war, and the Union, with only 16,000 regulars, was not in a position to end a rebellion across the nation.

Most troops were deployed along the western frontier, and not all of them could be counted on to defend the Union as some would defect to the new Confederacy. To win the war, the Union needed trained soldiers. To help accomplish this, hundreds of training camps, large and small, sprang up across the Union.

Border state

In the St. Louis area, small training camps would pop up across the Mississippi in Belleville, Caseyville and Alton, Illinois. But Missouri was a border state, and tensions were high. Between its arsenal of weapons and location, St. Louis, as the largest city in Missouri, was of strategic importance. As the "Gateway to the West," it was imperative to secure it for the Union.

To help do this, Captain Nathaniel Lyon, temporary commander of the Department

of the West, arrived in St. Louis in March in command of Company B of the U.S. 2nd Infantry Regiment. The newly elected Missouri Governor Claiborne Fox Jackson was a strong Southern sympathizer, and incidents between Lyon's troops, Missouri militiamen and civilians soon occurred. The Camp Jackson Affair in May, alone, saw 28 citizens, 3 militia members and 2 Federal troops killed, along with another 100 wounded.

Army training

Then on July 25, 1861, newly appointed commander of the combined Western Department Maj. Gen. John C. Fremont arrived. He ordered the construction of Benton Barracks to train Union soldiers. His mission was to organize, equip and lead the Union Army down the Mississippi River, reopen commerce and split the Western part of the Confederacy.

With only 23,000 men, whose 3-month volunteer enlistments were about to expire, this would be a tall task. He would need the men, and whether this was

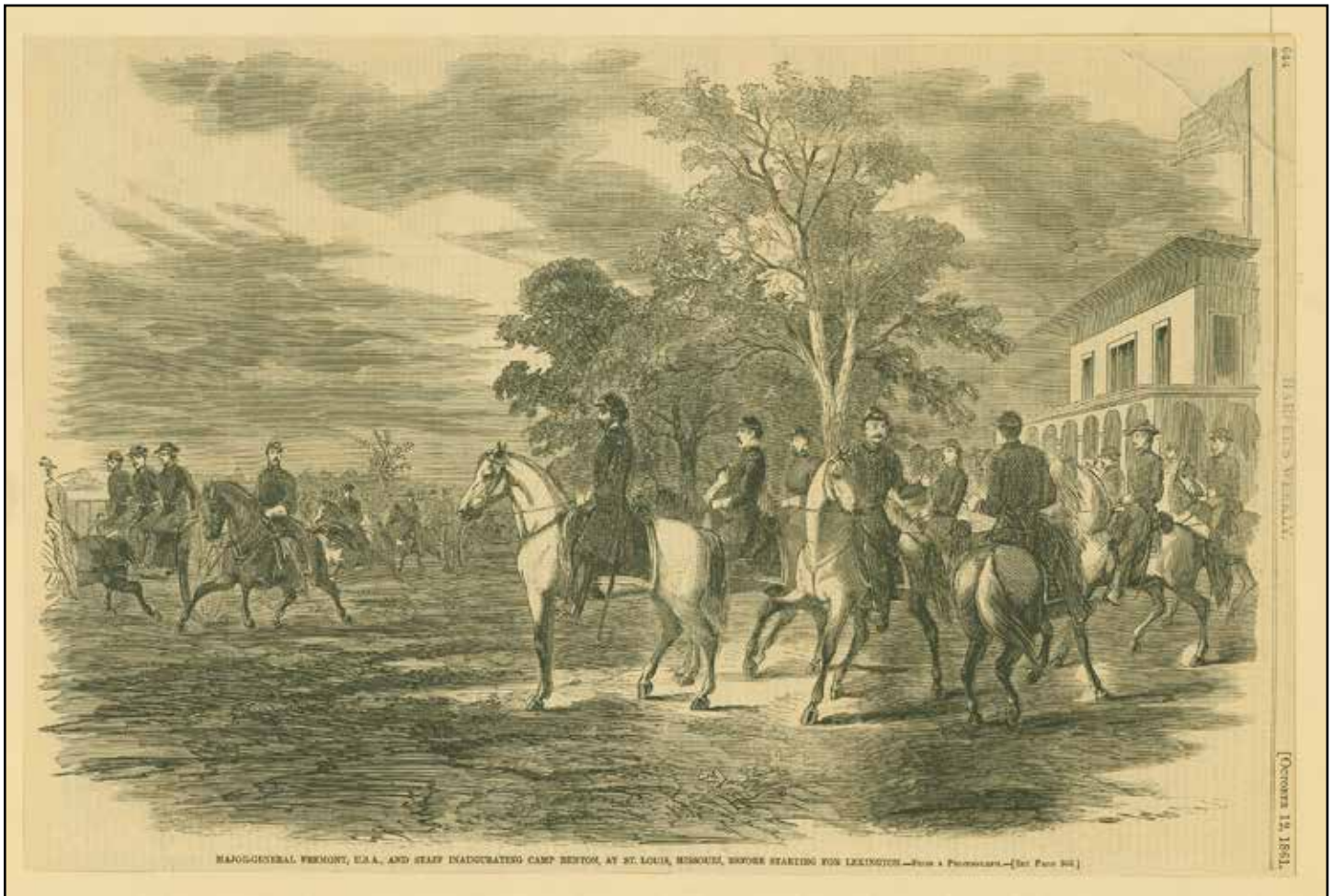


considered or not at the time, having an active training facility with thousands of Union volunteers nearby might help secure the city and the state for the Union. After all, rumors were rampant that Union troops may have to invade Missouri from Illinois if things went badly.

Training camps were typically established near major population centers and strategic locations to facilitate troop mobilization. Many of these camps were set up for short periods as needed, especially during surges in recruitment, and then disbanded or relocated. Benton Barracks

See BENTON BARRACKS, next page..





This image is from Harper's Weekly, Oct. 12, 1861. The image is of Maj. Gen. John C. Fremont and staff inaugurating Camp Benton at St. Louis, Missouri before starting for Lexington, Missouri.

BENTON BARRACKS, continued...

would be different.

About Benton Barracks

It was common to utilize local fairgrounds for these training camps with their mixture of open space and some usable buildings. In St. Louis, the 131-acre Fairgrounds Park would fit the bill. The site was owned and used by the St. Louis Agricultural and Mechanical Association for the St. Louis Exposition annual agricultural and technical fairs, located on the northern outskirts of the city.

Named for the late Missouri Senator Thomas Hart Benton, the barracks would be used primarily as a training facility for Union soldiers attached to the Western Division of the Union Army. They built five buildings that were 740 ft. in length and 40 ft. in width, as well as a two-story building erected that would serve as the headquarters for the barracks commander.

The post kept growing as post and

convalescent hospitals were built to assist in treating hundreds of incoming wounded troops after the Battle of Lexington in northwest Missouri in September following the Union defeat at Wilson's Creek in August.

At Lexington, the 23rd Illinois Infantry Regiment of 3,500 men surrendered after an eight-day siege to a force of Missouri Guard five times their size.

Union troops continued to flow through the camp, and Corporal Leander Stillwell, Company D, 61st Illinois Volunteer Infantry, later wrote about his arrival at Benton Barracks in February 1862 on page 26 in his book, *The Story of a Common Soldier of Army Life in the Civil War 1861-1865*. His regiment marched from Carrollton to Alton, Illinois and then crossed over to St. Louis, Missouri by riverboat:

"We soon debarked and marched out to Benton Barracks, which were clear out of town and beyond the suburbs. The shape of Benton Barracks, as I now remember, was a big oblong square. The barracks themselves consisted of a

continuous connected row of low frame buildings, the quarters of each company being separated from the others by frame partitions, and provided with two rows of bunks around the sides and ends.

"At the rear of the quarters of each company was the company kitchen. It was a detached, separate frame structure, and amply provided with accommodations for cooking, including a brick furnace with openings for camp kettles, pots, boilers and the like. Both barracks and kitchen were comfortable and convenient and greatly superior to our home-made shacks at Carrollton. The barracks inclosed [sic] a good-sized tract of land, but its extent I do not now remember. This space was used for drilling and parades and was almost entirely destitute of trees."

Later in 1862, the 35th Regiment, Missouri Infantry was organized at Benton Barracks on Dec. 3. In 1865, the same unit would be mustered out at the same place having lost 246 men; all but 10 to disease.

See BENTON BARRACKS, next page..

Civil War nurses battle corruption, fight for wounded Union Veterans

By Brother Richard Piper
Hecker Camp #443 Treasurer

Nurse Mary Phinney Von Olnhauser fought a constant battle at Mansion House Hospital in Alexandria, Virginia against pilfering in the commissariat.

Nurses at other locations exposed surgeons and quartermasters who served soldiers substandard food and sold official provisions for their own profit.

Camp Misery

Camp Convalescent was established in August 1862 just outside Arlington, Virginia and about a mile from Mansion House Hospital. It was better known to its 1,500 patients as Camp Misery.

Camp Misery was for those not yet well enough to rejoin their regiments, but too well to continue to take up a hospital bed. It was located at the foot of a long slope that drained into the camp. It was damp, even in dry weather.

Rain turned it into a quagmire, and men were housed in torn and dirty tents without floors or fires. They were given the standard army rations of salt pork, beans or hardtack, which they cooked themselves over scavenged wood. Little or no medical attention was provided to track the course of their convalescence.

The strongest recovered without aid and went back to their units, while the weakest began to die off as the temperatures dropped. Several men froze to death. Others fell ill to exposure and filth, and were on the sick list again.

Sanitary Commission agents began kidnapping the worst cases and took them back to the hospitals. At Camp Misery, men were lying on the ground in tents. Few had blankets, and none had more than one while eating the worst food and getting sicker each day. When it rained, some lay in pools of mud.

Nurse Bradley

Amy Morris Bradley was a nurse and an official Sanitary Commission relief worker. On Sept. 23, 1862, she made her first visit to Camp Misery where she saw much suffering. She visited on a regular basis to distribute warm clothing, food and blankets, and she began a campaign to improve conditions at the camp. This led to approval to move the camp to higher ground.

Although the new camp was on higher ground, there were no barracks. Men were back in tents sleeping on the half-frozen ground. Many had only a

See CORRUPTION, next page...

BENTON BARRACKS, continued...

At its height, the post could accommodate up to 30,000 soldiers, and by 1863, Benton Barracks grew to include over a mile of barracks, as well as warehouses, cavalry stables, parade grounds and a large military hospital.

The hospital could accommodate 2,000 to 3,000 soldiers at a time and was built from the converted amphitheater. In 1863 it came under the leadership of a Massachusetts nurse named Emily Elizabeth Parsons and was the largest hospital in the West. Parsons recorded many of her experiences at Benton Barracks in her memoir.

United States Colored Troops

As the war went on, the hospital served both black and white troops, though they were segregated. In March 1864, the 62nd, 65th, 67th and 68th United States Colored Troops (USCT) regiments were organized at Benton Barracks and received basic training there. The 67th Regiment moved to Port Hudson, Louisiana in March 1864.

After the war ended, the barracks were dismantled and the fairgrounds returned to their original use. Unfortunately, nothing of the original barracks remains at this site today.

In the end, Benton Barracks, like the hundreds of camps across the Union served their purpose of contributing to the war effort by providing men and material. However, Missouri was a slave state that had a large population sympathetic to the South. The



Unidentified African American Union soldier with a rifle and revolver in front of painted backdrop showing weapons and American flag at Benton Barracks, St. Louis, Missouri. (Photo courtesy of National Archives)

role of the Barracks' importance in helping secure St. Louis and the state of Missouri is likely under appreciated. Had efforts failed to keep the state in Union hands, the Gateway to the West would have been closed and possibly prolonged the war or worse.

References:

- Wikipedia. (2021) Benton Barracks.
https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benton_Barracks
- National Park Service. (2021 Oct. 27) Civil War Facts: 1861-1865.
<https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/facts.htm>
- Wikipedia. (2024 Oct. 15) First Battle of Lexington.
[First Battle of Lexington - Wikipedia](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Battle_of_Lexington)

- The Civil War Muse. (2022) Benton Barracks
<http://www.thecivilwarmuse.com/index.hp?page=benton-barracks>
- Wikipedia. (2024 Oct. 20) John C. Fremont.
[John C. Frémont - Wikipedia](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_C._Frémont)
- Stillwell, Leander (1920). *The Story of a Common Soldier of Army Life in the Civil War 1861-1865*, Franklin Hudson Publishing Company, p. 26.



CORRUPTION, continued...



The Mansion House Hospital in Alexandria Virginia. (Photo courtesy of National Archives)

single suit of ragged, soiled clothes and one army blanket. There was no laundry in camp. Items were used until soiled and thrown on the ground and left to rot by the thousands.

On her first visit, nurse Bradley found 75 men with nothing warmer than their thin cotton shirts. She got them woolen shirts. She then requested hospital tents with floors and stoves for the sick.



She then installed a wash house so clothing and linens could be cleaned, and she purchased a bath tub. To amuse the men who were idle, she brought playing cards, backgammon boards, checkers, chess, dominoes and Chinese checker sets.

For men whose paperwork was delayed, and for those too sick or feeble to stand in line, she brought them to her hospital tents where they were warmed, fed and clothed. Her compassion for the dying was boundless, as she even applied for their papers, arranged their transportation orders, sent them to Washington D.C. in her ambulance where they could take the proper train, go home and die among friends.

Between May 1, 1863 and the end of the year, she travelled to Washington D.C. with almost every discharged soldier,

settled him in the commission home and walked him through the process of obtaining a prompt and satisfactory settlement of his account with the government; almost 2,000 soldiers in total.

She also helped reinstate some 150 soldiers on the army's records so they could get their back pay. The funds she obtained for these soldiers was between \$7,000 to \$8,000. That's equal to between \$136,000 and \$156,000 today.

On Jan. 14, 1864, some 13 months after she arrived, Special Order #20 was issued, and Camp Convalescent was disbanded. The remaining convalescents were transferred to hospitals or their homes.

Many soldiers gave thanks to their nurses for their caring, kindness and comfort during their time of suffering. Before it was disbanded, the camp's soldiers and officers presented Bradley with a gold watch in appreciation for her services and acknowledgement of her extraordinary accomplishments.



References:

Faust, Drew Gilpin, (2008). *The Republic of Suffering-Death and the American Civil War*. Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

Toler, Pamela D. PhD., (2016). *Heroines of Mercy Street- The Real Nurses of the Civil War*. Back Bay Books, Little, Brown and Company, New York, Boston, London.

Battle of Pilot Knob recognizes 160th anniversary

By Gerald Sonnenberg
Hecker Camp secretary, editor

In September, more than 200 living historians assembled for the 160th anniversary of the Battle of Pilot Knob.

The Battle of Fort Davidson, also known as the Battle of Pilot Knob, was a battle of Price's Missouri Expedition fought on Sept. 27, 1864, near Pilot Knob, Missouri.

Confederate troops under the command of Major-General Sterling Price had entered Missouri in September 1864 with hopes of challenging Union control of the state. On Sept. 24, Price learned that Union troops held Pilot Knob. Two days later, he sent about 9,000 soldiers from his command north to disrupt and then moved towards Pilot Knob with the rest of his army.

The Confederate divisions of Maj. Gen. James Fagan and Brig. Gen. John Marmaduke drove Union troops under Brig. Gen. Thomas Ewing and Maj. James Wilson from the lower Arcadia Valley into Fort Davidson on Sept. 26. Union troops only numbered about 1,500 men.

On the morning of Sept. 27, Price attempted to attack the fort from multiple sides simultaneously. However, they happened haphazardly and none were able to enter the fort.

That night, Ewing decided to abandon the fort. His men blew up the fort's magazine and slipped undetected past Confederate troops guarding the escape routes. Some of Price's men temporarily pursued Ewing beginning the next day, but eventually broke off the pursuit to rejoin Price's main body. With his troops dispirited by the unsuccessful attacks at Fort Davidson, Price decided against attacking St. Louis.

This Union victory saw up to 1,000 Confederate casualties and 213 Union casualties.



Monument at the Pilot Knob Battlefield.

Meet Brother W.H. Powell

By Gerald Sonnenberg
Hecker Camp secretary, editor

In this issue, we highlight one of the first members of the Col. Friedrich K. Hecker Camp #443, Brother W.H. Powell.

William Henry Powell, was born in Monmouthshire, South Wales, on May 10, 1825, and immigrated to the United States in 1830 with his parents. He lived briefly in New York City, before moving to Nashville, Tennessee in 1833. His family then moved to Wheeling, Virginia in 1843.

At an early age, he had an interest in the iron and nail industries and received an education that was fitting for him. He became a mechanical engineer and involved himself in the iron industry.

On Christmas Eve 1847, he married Sarah Gilchrist in Wheeling, Virginia, and they eventually had six children. Two children died in infancy, and one died at age 20.

By 1852 or 53, he supervised the construction of a nail mill known as Point Mill, in Benwood, Virginia near Wheeling. By 1853, he worked as a manager and, later, general manager of the Lawrence Iron Works in Ironton, Ohio.

During the War

In 1861, he answered the first call for troops by President Lincoln and recruited a company of men that was intended for Ohio service, but was transferred to Virginia under the Loyalist Government set up by F.H. Pierpoint. The regiment became the 2nd Regiment "Loyal" Virginia Cavalry. He was elected captain of Company B.

The 2nd Loyal Virginia Cavalry Volunteers would remain in Western Virginia fighting rebel forces that threatened to force their way into the Pro-Union part of the state. By October 1861, shortly after they were mustered into service in Petersburg, Ohio, the 2nd Loyal Virginia Cavalry served in Northern

Kentucky and all over the Appalachian Mountains. By early 1862, Powell received a promotion to the rank of Major.

In October 1862, the 2nd was ordered into winter quarters, but the war continued to rage on. On Nov. 24, the 2nd was ordered to break up an encampment of the 14th "Rebel" Virginia Cavalry, who were in winter quarters and recruiting locals.

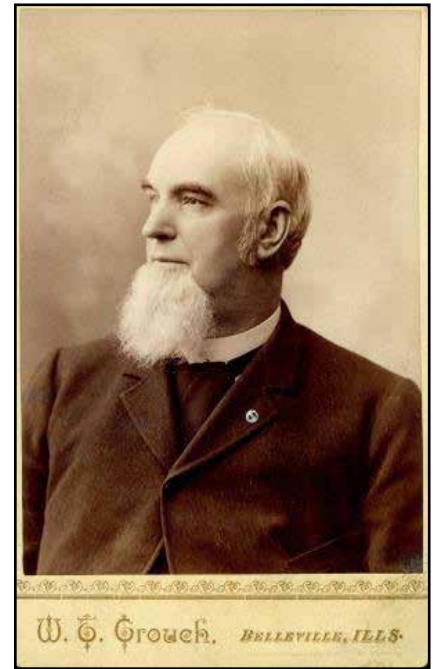
A storm system moved in Nov. 25, and they found themselves in a blizzard that deposited heavy amounts of snow in the Appalachian hills, which was followed by bitterly cold temperatures.

The 11th Ohio Infantry, which was to support the 2nd Cavalry, had to retreat due to the heavy, foot-deep snow. The 2nd Cavalry was also forced to hold up in their mission. However, Major Powell led a volunteer group to see if they could complete their mission.

Sinking Creek Raid

On the morning of Nov. 26, standing on a hill top, they observed the encampment of Rebel Cavalry, and Powell had a bold idea. He and twenty of his men, charged down the hill, in heavy snow, and after a brief hand-to-hand fight, he asked the Confederate forces to lay down their weapons and return to their base camp as prisoners. Surprisingly, the Confederate Virginian's immediately agreed. Most were later paroled and released.

Historians in West Virginia call this the Sinking Creek Raid, it was a bloodless, daring, brilliant and one of the most successful expeditions of the entire war. They captured many weapons, half the regiment's numbers of men, officers, horses, equipment and a "beautiful silk flag made for, and but recently presented by the lady friends of the



regiment in Staunton, Virginia." Major Powell kept for himself, a war prize, a double-barreled London twist shot-gun, containing 18 large buckshot in each barrel. Powell and his men were on the move for over 74 hours. He would soon see another promotion to lieutenant colonel for his gallantry.

On May 18, 1863, he became the third colonel to take command of the 2nd Loyal Virginia Cavalry, and he would find great success. Then, on July 4, 1863, when West Virginia became its own state, Ohio transferred the Loyal Virginia Regiments to the new state, and the unit became the 2nd West Virginia Cavalry.

On July 18th, 1863, Col. Powell led the 2nd West Virginia into the town of Wytheville, Virginia, which is nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Powell and the 2nd West Virginia Cavalry were riding under the command of Col. John T. Toland, who had nearly 1,000 soldiers under his command and was given three objectives; one of which was to destroy

See POWELL, next page...



The answer to trivia question #2 is c. 1 hour.

Last question. In 1860, how many of the nation's firearms were manufactured in Northern states that would join the Union Cause?

- a. More than 80%
- b. More than 90%
- c. Close to 100%

The answer to trivia question #3 is c. The figure is put at 97%. This was one reason why many believed the South could not possibly decide to enter into armed conflict.



POWELL, continued...

the railroad line of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad in Wytheville. The Virginia Home Guard was tipped off that the Union Cavalry was nearby and readied their defense, the day before. When the "Yanks" rode into town, the assault was quickly stamped out by the local militia, comprised of about fifty old men and boys known as the "Wythe Greys." Here, Col. Toland was shot and killed, while Col. Powell was shot through the shoulder and left on the battlefield for dead.

Captured

He was taken capture by the Confederate Army, treated for his wound and incarcerated in Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia. The Confederates soon learned that Col. Powell was a dangerous man after he assaulted a prison guard. Afterwards the Confederates made his stay quite uncomfortable. He was confined to the prison dungeon as punishment for his reprisals upon Confederate forces.

The Confederates offered Powell for Col. Richard Henry Lee as an even trade. Powell was released from Libby Prison in March 1864, having spent a total of seven months in Libby Prison. He returned to Washington D.C. where he met with President Abraham Lincoln, his cabinet and both houses of Congress. Upon his return, he was given a heroes welcome in Ironton, Ohio as the residents presented him with a gold watch, a horse and equipment, a sword and two revolvers.

He was quick to return to his unit, and led them during Sheridan's Valley Campaign when they were basically fighting on their home territory. They helped cut the Shenandoah Valley off from Confederate Forces.

During the Battle of Opequon on Sept. 19, 1864, he commanded the 2nd Brigade of the 2nd Division, under the direct command of Brevet Maj. Gen. William W. Averell. Col. Powell led his Brigade and his Regiment in combat during the Battle of Fisher's Hill Sept. 21-22, and at the Battle of Tom's Brook on Oct. 9.

He relinquished command of the 2nd West Virginia Cavalry on Oct. 19, 1864 after promotion to brigadier general. He then commanded the 2nd Division of Cavalry Corps under Maj. Gen. Alfred T.A. Torbert. His promotion took place on the same day as the Battle of Cedar Creek.

Afterwards, General Powell was

ordered by General Sheridan to, "Drive him, and don't stop until you have pushed him through Port Royal (Virginia)." Powell followed his orders to the letter, and pushed the Confederate Army out of Northern Virginia. Afterwards, General Sheridan ordered Powell to, "...follow them up and give them hell, damn them."

General Powell later resigned due to severe illness in his family. After the War, he returned to Ohio and was Brevetted to major general in 1866. During the Civil War, he established many friends throughout the country, including future President William McKinley. During the war, Powell was involved in 61 battles and engagements, and rose from captain to brigadier general.

After the war

Powell returned to business in Ironton, Ohio, as the manager of the Ironton Rolling Mill Company. By 1868, he was employed as a manager of the Clifton Nail Works, in Clifton, West Virginia.

In 1868, he was the Republican elector from the Third West Virginia district, was offered and declined the nomination to Congress from his home district (in 1866 he refused a similar honor in Ohio).

Powell moved to Belleville, Illinois in 1876 to assume the position of General Manager of the Belleville Nail Company, where he remained employed until 1882. Two years after Powell's move to Belleville, his wife Sara died. She had been diagnosed with cancer, and died seven months later while only 54 years old.

On April 29, 1879, General Powell married his second wife Mrs. E.P. Weaver. In 1882, he became the President and General Manager of the Western Nail Company in the small community of Pittsburgh, Illinois (located near the current site of the Shrine of Our lady of the Snows, in Belleville). Powell remained in this capacity until the Western Nail Company was reorganized in 1888, leaving him in a diminished position. He sold his shares in the company in 1889.

General Powell is listed on the 1883 St. Clair County Civil War Pension listing as receiving \$7.50 for a wound to his shoulder, to which he never fully recovered. W.H. Powell, was extremely well liked and respected in Belleville as he was in many respects a, "Pillar of the Community."

His Civil War accomplishments were acknowledged on July 22, 1890 when he

was recognized by the U.S. Congress with the Medal of Honor, for his actions at Sinking Creek Valley, Virginia, the citation reads:

"Distinguished service in the raid where twenty men and he charged and captured the enemy's camp, five hundred strong, without loss of man or gun."

The Medal of Honor was sent to him via registered mail.

Involvement in the SUVCW

Powell was one of the original 22 signers of the Charter that established the Hecker Post No. 443, Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), on May 6, 1884. He was installed as the Post's first senior vice commander.

On June 1, 1895, he began serving one year as the Illinois Department Commander of the GAR. He quickly made it a point to travel the State and visit all of the GAR posts. He traveled tirelessly to meet as many comrades of the Grand Army as possible, to include those at the Quincy Soldiers & Sailors Home. He worked to improve the Grand Army and their causes, like the Orphan's Home.

Later life

He had deep respect for those he served under and with, and spoke very highly of General's Grant and Sheridan after their passing.

In 1897, President McKinley appointed his old friend to Internal Revenue Collector for the district, that included Belleville. His last known public appearance was that of the return of General P. Joseph Osterhaus' to Belleville, in May 1904.

Brevet Major General William H. Powell passed away at his home at the age of 79 Dec. 26, 1904. His funeral took place at his home Dec. 28. His comrades of the Hecker Post performed funeral services, for his friends and family in Belleville. At his families' request, his remains were placed on a train bound for Chicago, on Dec. 29, 1904, where he was later interred in Graceland Cemetery, in Chicago, Illinois. He was survived by his second wife and two daughters, one son, four grandchildren, his brother and sister.

He was active not only with the GAR, but also with the Society of the Army of West Virginia, and the National Association of Union Ex-Prisoners of War. He was a consistent Christian and a church going man.

Day of National Thanksgiving.

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:
A PROCLAMATION.

It has pleased Almighty God to hearken to the supplications and prayers of an afflicted people, and to vouchsafe to the Army and the Navy of the United States, victories on land and on the sea, so signal and so effective as to furnish reasonable grounds for augmented confidence that the union of these States will be maintained, their Constitution preserved, and their peace and prosperity permanently restored. But these victories have been accorded, not without sacrifices of life, limb, health, and liberty, incurred by brave, loyal, and patriotic citizens. Domestic affliction in every part of the country follows in the train of these fearful bereavements. It is meet and right to recognize and confess the presence of the Almighty Father, and the power of His hand, equally in these triumphs and in these sorrows.

Now, therefore, be it known that I do set apart Thursday, the 6th day of August next, to be observed as a day for National thanksgiving, praise, and prayer, and I invite the people of the United States to assemble on that occasion in their customary places of worship, and, in the forms approved by their own consciences, render the homage due to the Divine Majesty for the wonderful things He has done in the nation's behalf, and invoke the influence of His Holy Spirit to subdue the anger which has produced and so long sustained a needless and cruel rebellion, to change the hearts of the insurgents, to guide the counsels of the Government with wisdom, adequate to so great a national emergency, and to visit with tender care and consolation, throughout the length and breadth of our land, all those who, through the vicissitudes of marches, voyages, battles, and sieges, have been brought to suffer in mind, body, or estate, and finally to lead the whole nation, through the paths of repentance and submission to the Divine will, back to the enjoyment of union and fraternal peace.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this fifteenth day of July,
in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and
[L. S.] sixty-three, and of the independence of the United States
the eighty-eighth.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

By the President:

WILLIAM H. SEWARD,
Secretary of State.