



Welcome back to all our members and friends as we begin our 51st year of existence!

* * * * *

The border state of Kentucky was strongly nationalistic but economically pro-South. For a generation prior to the Civil War, Kentucky had straddled the borderline of conflict with its statesmen working for compromise. With the coming of war, its governor, Beriah Magoffin, refused to honor President Lincoln's call for troops, and the state legislature, on May 20, 1861, resolved to remain neutral. At the war's beginning both Union and Confederacy seemed intent on honoring Kentucky's pledge of neutrality. However, the Blue Grass State's precarious neutrality could not last as troops from both sides infiltrated the state quickly.

Lincoln's difficulties with his own state persisted throughout the war. At one point Lincoln requested Maj. Gen. John Fremont to "*modify*" his proclamation which ordained freedom for slaves of rebellious owners, threatened the death penalty for certain secessionists and confiscated their property. Lincoln felt that the proclamation "*will alarm our Southern Union friends, and turn them against us-perhaps ruin our rather fair prospect for Kentucky.*" Later in the war when the Confederate cavalry of John Hunt Morgan was raiding the state with impunity, an exasperated Lincoln wired Henry Halleck, the ranking Federal commander in the department: "*They are having a stampede in Kentucky. Please look to it.*"

Kentucky soldiers in the Confederate army held a convention at Russellville in November of 1861, and adopted an ordinance of secession. With a pro-South governor and a largely pro-North legislature, the state reeled in confusion. Confederate forces enjoyed some early victories in the state, but the Union soon took control. Nearly 76,000 Kentuckians served with Union forces and about 23,000 with the Confederacy. Of all Kentuckians serving, approximately 30,000 died, 10,000 of battle wounds and 20,000 of disease and exposure. Of all the states where battles, engagements, and theaters of war took place, Kentucky ranks number nine with 453.

On MONDAY, JANUARY 31, the Michigan Regimental welcomes back Dave Ingall for his presentation, "Traveling Civil War Kentucky." (You will certainly remember Dave's impressive program on "Traveling Civil War Mississippi" back in March of 2009.) Dave will take us on a virtual tour of the Blue Grass State centering on Kentucky's personalities such as Henry Clay, Cassius Clay, Abraham Lincoln, Jefferson Davis, and prominent Civil War generals. Sites in Louisville, Frankfort, Lexington and Elizabethtown will be highlighted as well as Perryville, Munfordville, Richmond, Mill Springs, Camp Nelson, Wildcat Mountain, Tebbs Bend, Fort Duffield, Fort Boone, the Bardstown Civil War Museum, and many other notable locations. You'll absolutely know the state of Kentucky as you've never known it before.

Born in Monroe, Dave is the past assistant director of the Monroe County Historical Museums. His travels have taken him to just about every major Civil War battlefield. His interests focus on the War of 1812, Michigan in the Civil War, and George Armstrong Custer. You'll definitely want to be in attendance for this special presentation.

* * * * *

Our thanks are extended to November speaker Larry Hathcock for his excellent program, "Blockade Runners." Unfortunately, time ran out before Larry could answer questions from the audience.

YEARLY DUES: It's that time of year again. January 2011 begins our new fiscal year, and what easier way to pay up your obligations than to take the envelope, write a \$20 check to Carroll Tietz, put a stamp on it and simply drop it in the mail. That will take care of everything for the upcoming year. Carroll reports that we have 69 paid memberships already.

**QUIZ: All questions pertain to Kentucky.....**

1. Which two generals led the opposing forces at the Battle of Perryville?
2. Which Union general, born near Louisville, was Pierre Beauregard's artillery instructor at West Point in the 1830s? And which Confederate general had a bullet remove several teeth at the Battle of Richmond, Kentucky?
3. Which Kentucky-born Union general, who never fought in a Civil War battle, was nearly selected as Lincoln's first Vice President? And, who was his more famous political cousin?
4. Give any two (out of four names) for the Battle of Mill Springs, Kentucky.
5. Which Confederate general's extreme nearsightedness probably cost him his life at Mill Springs? And, which Kentucky-born Union general lost his life because of his vile temper in an argument with another Union general?
6. Which Kentucky senator was chairman of the Committee of Thirteen which was convened in December of 1860 with the responsibility of preventing a Civil War? And, why did President Lincoln oppose the proposed compromise?
7. Which Kentucky-born officer ably served General John Hunt Morgan and wrote *A History of Morgan's Cavalry* after the war? And, from which Columbus, Ohio prison did Morgan escape in November of 1863?
8. What was the nickname of the Union Fifth Kentucky? And, which officer, later a major general, led this group?
9. What was the nickname of the Confederate First Kentucky Brigade, and which two generals of this unit were killed in battle?
10. At which battle in Kentucky did a Union commander seek advice of his Confederate adversary on whether to surrender or not? And, who were the two commanders who settled the terms of the surrender?

* * * * *

Thomas Benton Smith, Confederate general of the 20th Tennessee Infantry, suffered perhaps the saddest and most unusual wound of the entire Civil War. Born on February 24, 1838, in the little Rutherford County, Tennessee, hamlet of Mechanicsville, Smith grew into a handsome and bright young man. He received a patent for a locomotive pilot at the age of 15 and entered Western Military Institute in Nashville a year later.

When the Civil War broke out, Tom Smith at merely the age of twenty-three became the lieutenant of Company B in the 20th Tennessee. After the Battle of Shiloh where his regiment suffered nearly fifty percent casualties, the unit was reorganized with Smith selected as the new colonel. At Murfreesboro Smith was shot through the breast and left arm and later wounded again at Missionary Ridge. In July of 1864 Thomas Benton Smith became the youngest brigadier general in the Army of Tennessee. He had been described as the "*physical embodiment of a magnificent soldier. ... Splendidly built....a little over six feet tall, muscular, erect of a somewhat dark complexion, deep gray eyes, quiet and courteous in demeanor, cool, calm, and collected on all occasions commanding the respect and esteem of those superior to him in military rank, he was the beau ideal of a soldier.*"

At the Battle of Nashville, fought on December 16, 1864, all of that would change, horribly-forever. During the fighting along Shy's Hill, Smith's brigade, including remnants of the 20th Tennessee, stood its ground in the misting rain. Finally, a few minutes after four o'clock, the Federal infantry attacked, sweeping the outnumbered defenders over and then off of the hill. Many of the Rebels were captured including Smith, who had fought on until he realized the hopelessness of the situation and finally pulled a small white handkerchief, which he waved for his men to cease firing. Smith was marched only a few yards down Shy's Hill when he was approached by Ohio Colonel William Linn McMillan. An alcoholic who had nearly been cashiered from the service for misconduct, McMillan approached Smith. Whether McMillan was drunk at the time, he began to curse and berate Smith, whose only response according to witnesses was to state that "*I am a disarmed prisoner.*"



This reply seemed to further enrage McMillan, who drew his saber and struck Smith three times over the head, each blow cutting through Smith's hat and crashing into his skull. Nearby Federals intervened and carried Smith to a field hospital, where an attending surgeon examined the wounds and remarked, "*Well, you are near the end of your battles, for I can see the brain oozing through the gap in your skull.*" The doctor was both right and wrong. Although Smith had indeed fought his last battle, the Boy General surprised his captors by recovering sufficiently enough to be sent on to the prison at Fort Warren, Massachusetts, where he remained until paroled after the war ended. At that point, only 27 years of age, Thomas Benton Smith's fifty-eight-year battle to escape a prison of a different kind began.

Although Smith returned to Nashville and resumed his employment with the railroad, his physical and mental condition proved to be in decline. In 1876, he was admitted to the Tennessee state asylum. From that point the days and years passed slowly for Smith. A few attempts to resume independent living failed. However, he did appear at a number of reunions for the 20th Tennessee. Although disabled, Smith seemed to enjoy the festivities. One eyewitness stated that "*General Smith has times of deep depression, and is sad over his long imprisonment he is always happy at Confederate gathering*"

In the early part of the Twentieth Century, a young Stanley F. Horn, the future author of the 1941 classic **The Army of Tennessee**, was out hunting when he came upon a stranger. The mysterious man asked Horn if he could take a look at his rifle. Horn obliged. The stranger then told Horn matter-of-factly not to ever hand over his gun to anyone, especially one he did not know. When Horn asked the man where he lived, the stranger smiled and said at the Tennessee asylum for the insane. Thomas Benton Smith died at age eighty-five on May 21, 1923, and was buried in Nashville's Mount Olivet Cemetery.

QUIZ ANSWERS:

1. Don Carlos Buell (Federal) and Braxton Bragg (Confederate)
2. Robert Anderson and Patrick Cleburne
3. Cassius Marcellus Clay and Henry Clay
4. Beech Grove, Fishing Creek, Logan's Cross Roads, Somerset
5. Felix Zollicoffer and William "Bull" Nelson
6. John J. Crittenden and Lincoln refused to bend on the issue of containing slavery
7. Basil Duke and Ohio State Penitentiary
8. "Louisville Legion" and Lovell H. Rousseau
9. "Orphan Brigade" and Roger W. Hanson/Ben Hardin Helm
10. Munfordville and John T. Wilder surrendered to Simon Bolivar Buckner

Make certain you circle your calendar now for the **MONDAY, JANUARY 31** get together at the Farmington Public Library (Grand River and Farmington Road) for **Dave Ingall's** program, "*Traveling Civil War Kentucky.*" The meeting will begin at 6:30 P.M. See you there!

Also try our website: <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt/>

Old Sarge