

The Advance

THE BATTLE COMMEMORATION

We are sad to say that the commemoration/reenactment has been canceled. You can still visit the park and go through a great museum and take a guided tour. Park museum hours— Saturday October 3rd - 8:00 a.m. till 4 p.m. and Sunday 10:00 a.m. till 4:00 p.m. The park grounds open at 8:00 a.m. and close at 5:00 p.m.

THE OPEN KNOB

On October 8, 1862, the Union Army was in search of water. The temperature was 85 degrees and a serious drought plagued Kentucky. The Confederate Army moved into a position to attack what they perceived to be the Union left flank. Brigadier General Daniel Donelson's brigade quickly realized that the true Union left flank was about a third of a mile to his right. Artillery shells from Lieutenant Charles Parsons' battery enfiladed the Confederate advance. The Battle of Perryville had begun.

To compensate, Major General Benjamin Cheatham, the Southern division commander, quickly sent Brigadier General George Maney's brigade to attack the battery atop the Open Knob. As Maney's brigade approached, it was fired upon by skirmishers and eventually Parsons' battery. Their front line, from left to right, consisted of the 9th Tennessee Infantry, the 6th Tennessee Infantry, and the 41st Georgia. In reserve, also from left to



Christian Weinman
21 Wisconsin Infantry
Killed at Perryville

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The Cornfield - Colonel Benjamin Sweet mounted, 21 Wisconsin Infantry

THE OPEN KNOB



Albion Tourgee far left. With him are Lieutenants Wallace and Morgaridge. 105th Ohio Volunteer Infantry.

Dechard, TN. 1863

right, were the 1st Tennessee and the 27th Tennessee Infantry. The advancing force was taking casualties, and the 41st Georgia, the only inexperienced regiment in Maney's brigade, was fully exposed to the Union artillery. To steady the Georgians, the 1st TN was eventually sent to the far right of the Confederate line.

Eventually the Southern attack halted behind the rail fence at the bottom of the hill. Unfortunately for the North, the Union commanders were relatively ineffec-

tive in handling their green troops. Lieutenant Parson's gunners were all new infantrymen from the 105th Ohio. The Union division commander on the Open Knob, Brigadier General James Jackson, was rushing infantry support up the west side of the ridge as they arrived on the field. The first to appear was the 123rd Illinois Infantry from Brigadier General William Terrill's brigade. Forming two lines for battle, this inexperienced regiment actually marched up the hill in reverse order, with the tall men in the

"I did not go far however before a musket or rifle ball struck me in my left leg just below the calf, breaking it and passing clear through.

Josiah Ayres 105th OVI

"In such a region an Army of sixty thousand men shows like an innumerable multitude. On every road, winding through the brown fields and among the rounded hills, were long lines of blue. The flash of polished steel caught the eye in every direction. Long trains of white-topped wagons shone through clouds of dust upon the pikes. The troops marched, sometimes in column along the roads, sometimes in line through the fields. Flags waved in the mellow sunlight. Generals with their bodyguards, richly delight, rode here and there. Horsemen abounded, aides and orderlies, and messengers; cavalry in squads and squadrons, going everywhere without apparent purpose.

Albion Tourgee 105th OVI

front rank and the shorter soldiers in the back rank.

The Southern brigade was poised approximately 100 yards beneath the Union troops on the brow of the ridge. Meanwhile, the three companies of Col. Theophilus Garrard's Kentucky troops and six companies of the 80th Illinois advanced on the right of the 123rd's position. General James Jackson, riding his horse conspicuously atop the hill, was shot through the heart and died instantly. General Terrill was now the Union division commander.

The Confederates couldn't remain at the bottom of the hill and continue to receive Union fire. Some help had arrived in the person of Lt. William Turner's Mississippi battery, which was unlimbered on the Union left and front. The range was little more than 300 yards. They successfully enfiladed the Union position atop the Open Knob.

General Terrill was very concerned that his battery might soon be overrun, so he ordered the 123rd Ill. to launch a bayonet attack down the hill and into the advancing veterans of Maney's brigade. The companies on the right were not even in position when the attack began. Also, they had no support on their left. After advancing about half way down the slope, they began a quick retreat. Many ran off the field, leaving a remnant, Garrard's command, and the 80th Illinois to defend the guns.

General Maney was uncertain as to what his next move should be. Despite his superior rank, he deferred to his adjutant for advice. Captain Thomas Malone stated that they had little choice, and must

THE OPEN KNOB

charge the battery. The order was given and the Confederates charged half way up the hill, then went to the ground. This may have been because the Union soldiers were preparing to fire a volley, but they did not quickly rise until the 27th Tennessee came up from their reserve position and renewed the charge.

As the 105th Ohio entered the field, climbing over a double rail fence, they went up the west slope of the hill and witnessed brutal hand to hand combat on the ridge. The three Confederate regiments were fighting the three Union units in a desperate melee. Men were bayoneted, clubbed, and shot at point blank range. As the 105th Ohio arrived, they were forced to refuse three of their companies to the north, as they spotted the 41st Georgia and the 1st Tennessee approaching their flank. Also, Colonel John Wharton's Confederate cavalry appeared behind them. The Union position was quickly becoming untenable.

General Terrill, rather than attempting to control his infantry, became obsessed with saving his guns. Lt. Parsons, known for his stubbornness, refused to retreat. It was said that his men dragged him off the Knob. As the Southern soldiers took the ridge, small remnants of the 105th Ohio and other units involved formed at the base of the Open Knob behind the rail fence. However, this position couldn't be held long as the Confederates were appearing behind their lines. Most of the Union soldiers who survived retreated to the right and rear.

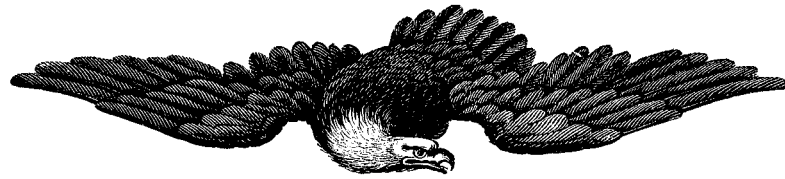
General Jackson's body was left behind by his men, but was later returned under a flag of truce by the Confederates. Seven of Lieutenant Parsons' cannons had been captured, but the 10 pound Parrott Rifle, which had never been unlimbered, was successfully removed to Starkweather's Hill. The Southerners had taken the Open Knob, but now they faced another ridge with even more cannons atop it.

Casualties on the Open Knob were appalling. Two thirds of the gunners of Parsons' seven guns were dead or wounded. While the number of casualties in the fight for the Open Knob can not be accurately determined, it was undoubtedly the bloodiest spot on the battlefield. Union and Confederate bodies were found stacked on top of one another. After the day ended, General Terrill's brigade, which had defended the hill, had lost 112 killed, 335 wounded, and 55 missing, or 22% of his command. General Maney's brigade lost 170 killed, 502 wounded, and 50 missing, or 37% of his command. The Open Knob had become a carnival of death for both armies.

After the war, a strange coincidence took place. Lieutenant Charles Parsons, Union battery commander, and Lieutenant William Turner, Confederate battery commander, met, quite by accident. Their batteries had pummeled one another, but the commanders both survived and each eventually became an Episcopalian priest. At a meeting of Episcopalian priests in Philadelphia, these two former enemies met each other formally for the first time, but this time, as friends.

By Doug Lippman

Thanks so much to our guest columnist Doug Lippman. Doug has been a reenactor, volunteer, tour guide, lecturer and constant presence at the battlefield for many years. He is certainly one of the "Best Friends" of Perryville Battlefield.



THE HOMEFRONT

October 8 is the 158 Anniversary of the Battle of Perryville. We hope that you and your family take the time to visit the battlefield; there is no better time than during the anniversary. We are all saddened by the cancelation of the annual living history, but given the health issues confronting everyone this year we certainly understand. However, be watching our Facebook page. We are bringing you living history via the internet. It's not perfect, but it helps us to remember those who fell at Perryville and continues the tradition of living history on the Battlefield. Many thanks to Alan Hoeweler for his generous use of the Bottom House and grounds.

There are some restrictions for visiting the park so please check the park website at www.perryvillebattlefield.org or call 859-332-8631.

We are turning our attention to next year and are continuing to work with the Commonwealth to bring about some important projects. We are all saddened to see the Dye House and the Crawford House deteriorating. We need our memberships support and advocacy to move these projects forward.

Grant monies are available for habitat work and improvement. We very much seek to continue our fruitful partnership with the Kentucky Department of Parks in assisting the habitat installation and management. Our efforts to continue our work this summer has been complicated by new and additional state regulations. We need our membership to advocate for these projects as well!

Please support all historic sites! Covid has negatively impacted so many sites and they need your support and dollars! Hope to see you at Perryville soon!

Chad Greene
Friends of Perryville Battlefield

Birds on the Battlefield

Late fall and early winter you might just see some unexpected visitors. Perryville Battlefield host Northern Short Ear Owls and they are easy to spot. They generally hunt the fields on either side of Hayes-Mayes Rd. and are active in the late afternoon and early evening. Northern Harrier Hawks also visit during the winter months. Great Horned and Barn Owls are also frequently spotted! These raptors call Perryville Battlefield home because of the



intense attention paid to developing and conserving their habitat over the last five years. We need your help for these efforts to expand and continue!

A MYSTERIOUS PIECE OF PAPER

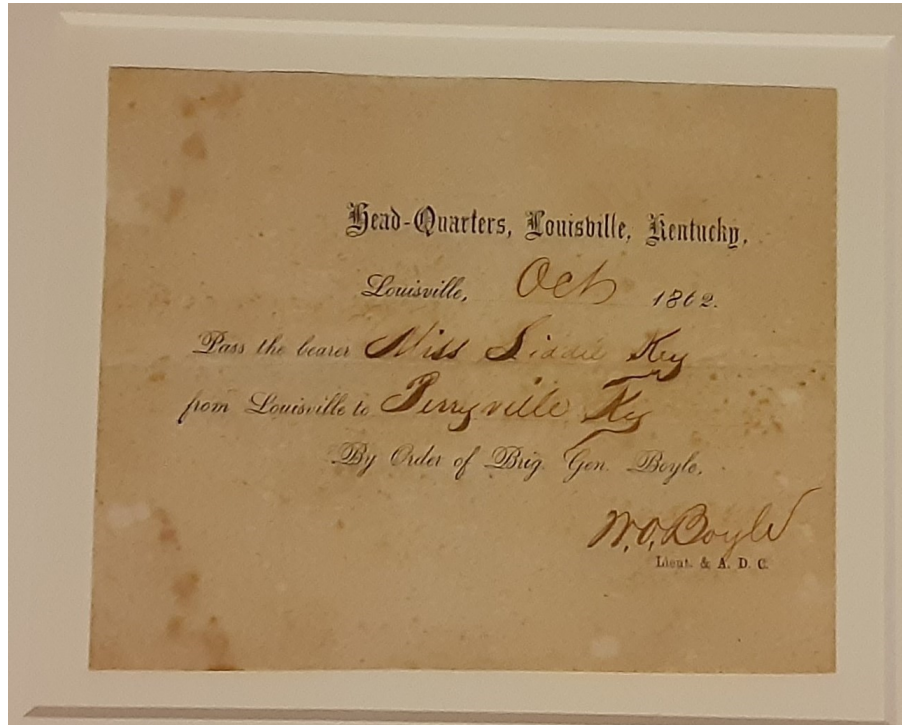
When this small piece of paper came to us, we were unsure if we would be able to discover its story. We had 2 pieces of evidence. The pass was issued in Louisville which was under Union control and the last name of the pass holder was “Key.” Those two pieces of information ultimately led us to the tragic story of this small piece of history.

After searching Perryville’s killed and wounded database, two men with the last name Key were found. Only one was a Union soldier. Captain Joseph R. Key was serving as the Second Lieutenant in the 50th Ohio Infantry. During the battle Key’s Captain was killed, and Joseph received a battlefield promotion. He led his regiment until he was gravely wounded in the knee. Military records show that Captain Key died in Springfield, Kentucky on November 11, 1862. However, this information was not conclusive, and we dug a little further.

Genealogical resources revealed that Joseph’s mother was Hester Ann “Hettie” Key, born in Springfield, Kentucky. Hettie was married to Lt. Colonel John James Key, 60th Indiana Infantry, also of Washington County, Kentucky. It would have been easy for Mrs. Key to obtain a pass and move through Union lines.

It appears that a desperate mother applied for and received this pass to come to

Perryville to care for her wounded son. It is conceivable that Hettie took her son home



to Springfield to care for him. It is not hard to imagine Hettie’s grief when Joseph died nearly a month after the battle in Springfield, KY. He was 19 years old.

Hettie’s name is spelled incorrectly on the pass, with the hundreds of pass seekers clamoring Union General Jeremiah Boyle’s Headquarters, scribbled and incorrectly spelled names would be common.

We graciously recognize George Preston for his donation.

The Friends of Perryville worked with Old World Restorations in Cincinnati, Ohio to preserve and mount the pass. The paper was put through a de-acidification process and then mounted in an archival frame to preserve the delicate artifact.

FRIENDS OF PERRYVILLE BATTLEFIELD

Mission Statement:

The purpose of The Friends of Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site shall be to sustain, foster, promote and further the interests of the historic site which will be encompassed by the boundaries of the park. The Friends Group shall conduct fund raising and friend raising activities in connection with these purposes. The activities of the group shall be charitable in nature within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Friends of Perryville Battlefield

PO Box 302
Perryville KY 40468

www.friendsofperryville.org
info@friendsofperryville.org

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GENERAL THOMAS INTERVENES

"September 29th the Division was paid off excepting our regiment and the 10th Kentucky. This caused a rumpus and the boys fixed bayonets, reversed arms and stuck the bayonets in the ground-butts up. They refused to budge an inch until they were paid. We were out of money and needed it, but the order to march came before the paymaster reached the two regiments. Colonel Kise tried to reason with them, General Fry came over, but they were obstinate. By some hocus pocus which passes the comprehension of everyone, a 'feller' by the name of Gilbert had been placed in command of our Corps (formerly commanded by General Thomas), had heard about the two regiments refusing to march until paid. He rode up and began a tirade of profanity and abuse, and finally ordered Battery C to unlimber and throw a few charges of canister into the two regiments and 'blow them to hell.' The battery refused to do it. Gilbert was boiling over, ripping, raring mad. Finally General Thomas came over and said, 'Boys, I am sorry marching orders came before you were paid off, we are on a very important march and in all probability will get Bragg before he gets many miles away. Now if you will fall in I will promise you the next stop we make, long enough, I will have the paymaster there and you shall be paid before you move again.' This had the desired effect, the boys cheered him and said, 'All right, 'Pap,' we will go.' In a few minutes they joined the brigade which was some distance ahead on the march."

James Shaw, 10th Indiana Volunteer Infantry, U.S. Army

Letter from Thomas Allen to Catherine Wright concerning the death of Christian Weinman

Springfield, KY. November 12, 1862

Catherine Wright,

It is with great sorrow I write to inform you of the death of Christian Weinman. He died at Hospital No. 1 in Springfield, Washington County, Kentucky on the 9th of November. He was shot through the side at the Battle of Perryville and we all thought he was getting better, but he began to be worse and he was out of his mind, but before that, we sent for a priest of the [church] and he came and the members of the church got him a good coffin and he was buried in the church yard and they got him a good cross made and lettered and he was buried with all the honors of the church so that will be one consolation to know that he is buried as he ought to . . .

From your friend and well wisher,

Thomas Allen
21st Regiment, Wisconsin



Next Issue

*The Annual
Report*