

# The Newcomer

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Indiana's YOUNGEST County

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## Newton County's 51st Indiana Volunteer Regiment - Company B

By John Yost

Preserved in the collection at the Indiana War Memorial in Indianapolis is what remains of the regimental battle flag of the 51st Indiana Volunteer Regiment. Company B of the 51st Indiana was the Newton County home company. Tattered and torn by the twin enemies of shrapnel and time, the flag is much like many of the Union Army's regimental battle flags. Centered against a navy blue background is the America eagle, topped by a field of 34 stars, representing the number of these United States as they existed prior to succession, the flag lists beneath the eagle the major engagements in which the 51st Indiana took part.

The names represent both prominent American cities and obscure cites little known beyond the most enthusiastic of Civil War buffs. They also represent the flashpoints of war where many Americans of the North and South gave what President Lincoln described as "their last full measure of devotion."

Consider Shiloh. A peaceful name for a country religious meetinghouse not far from Memphis. Located near a boat landing know as Pittsburgh Landing on the Tennessee River it was here on a bright, sunny day on April 6, 1862 that a Confederate army under the

command one of the South's most revered leaders Gen. Albert Sydney Johnston pulled a surprise early morning attack on troops under Gen. U.S. Grant which were camped with the Tennessee River at their backs. Just arising from their tents, the Union forces under Gen. Sherman were under attack by the charging southern army. Trapped by the Tennessee at their back and smaller streams and marshes on the left and right flanks, could only dissolve in flight or push straight ahead. The only thing which prevented a total rout was a natural defensive spot, a sunken road before a small forest. The Union troops scrambled to the sunken road. The road became famous as "the Hornets' Nest" so dubbed for the fierce concentration of shot and shell exchanged there. Not only did the Yanks have to contend with charge after charge by the Rebels, but they also had to withstand one of the fiercest onslaughts of artillery fire yet seen in the War.

The 51st Indiana was not engaged in the first day of fighting. It had been stations several miles away under Gen. Buell's command. They arrived late in the afternoon and provided a support role in the removal of the dead and wounded from the field. It was on this occasion the 13 year old drummer boy Johnnie Higgins of

Kentland had one of his most memorable experiences during the war. Spotting in the dusky twilight what he believed to be another northern casualty, Higgins raced to the spot, tripping over the body which was covered by a poncho. When the body arose from under the poncho, it turned out to be none other that Gen. Grant getting some sleep in the rain under the protection of a tree. While the first day of Shiloh was a Confederate victory, a massive reenforcement of federal troops during that stormy night turned the tables the next day. After a second day of fierce fighting, the Confederates withdrew from the field in the late afternoon. It was basically a windless battle, but the toll extracted shocked the nation. The Rebel forces suffered the loss of 10,700 in killed, wounded, captured and missing while the Union loss was put at 13,000. All of this was symbolized by a small marsh not far from the Hornets' Nest. So many wounded soldiers of both sides crawled to that spot for water and died there bleeding into the water that the water turned red, and has ever after been known as "The Bloody Pond."

Stone River was the major battle in the campaign to rout the Rebels under Braxton Bragg from Murfreesboro, TN. The Union troops were 42,000 strong and under the leadership of Gen. William "Old Rosy" Rosecrans. Bragg's force was 8,000 fewer than the Yanks. This was a fourday battle fought from Dec. 31, 1862 to Jan. 3, 1863. In terms of the number of troops engaged, this was the bloodiest battle of the war. The Union casualties in terms of killed, wounded or captured ran to 31 per cent. The Confederate casualties amounted to more than a third, including 1,500 who fell in just one hour when they mounted a failed charge under the command of former U.S. Vice President John Breckinridge to drive the Bluecoats from a hill heavily defended with artillery.

The 51st Indiana was engaged in another bloody affair in the Battle of Franklin, TN. The battle fought on Nov.30, 1864 ended in a Union withdrawal back to Nashville, but the victory for the Rebels was an empty one for the South as its casualties amounted to 7,000, while the Union lost a third of that amount. Among the casualties were a dozen Southern generals and 54 regimental commanders, half of the commander they had in the battle.

The most unusual battle involving the 51st Indiana was Streight's Raid. Taking place in late April and early May of 1863. It is represented on the regimental flag as the battles of Cedar Bluff, Blount's Farm and Day's Gap. The plan called for five regiments under the command of Col. Abel Streight to mount a raid across northern Alabama to Rome, GA. Rome was a railroad center, and its capture would have dealt a blow to Confederate supply routes in the western theater. Due to a shortage of available horses, Streight's mounted infantry was issued mules for the ambitious raid. This, itself, lent a certain comic sense to this unfortunate affair. After initial successes in Alabama, Streight's force had the misfortune to be engaged by a cavalry under one of the South's most daring leaders, Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest. The result was an exhausting four day running battle along the Coosa River.



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Photo contributed by John Yost.

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# Company B's Contribution to the Civil War

*Continued From Page One*

Streight had no way to know that his force heavily outnumbered his pursuers. The result was a surrender just outside of Rome. When he met with Forrest to discuss the terms of surrender, Forrest had Streight seated in a position in which he could view a rise across the river on which Streight observed the continual passing of Southern troops and cannon. What he couldn't know was that the cagey Confederate had his smaller force marching in a circle on the rise. The pulled to only two cannon they had along this circular march. At one point Streight exclaimed, "My God, man how many field pieces do you have? I've counted 15 so far!" To which the wily General responded, "Reckon that's all that could keep up."

Following Streight's surrender the enlisted men were briefly imprisoned and then paroled back to their

home states. The officers were confined in Libby Prison in Richmond, VA. In a daring move Streight and 100 of his fellow officers tunneled out of the prison, half escaped, and half were either killed or recaptured. Streight was among the successful escapees, due in large part to the fact that some slaves on a nearby plantation hid him under the floor boards of their slave cabin which the Rebel soldiers sought to recapture the heroic Hoosier.

After the war Streight was awarded four farms in Grant Township of Newton County for his services to the Union. The grateful commander went back to Virginia and brought a number of the then freed men to Newton County and hired them as farmhands. He built a general store and community center for them on his property. Many remained there until Streight died and his estate was dispersed in the 1890s.

## ***Fifty-First Indiana Volunteers***

*From John Ades' History of Newton County, 1853-1911, and The Brook Reporter, October 15, 1915*

The 51st Regiment was organized at Indianapolis on the 11th of October, 1861, and mustered in on the 14th of December, 1861 with A.D. Streight as colonel, Benjamin J. Spooner, lieutenant-colonel; William H. Colescott major, and Erasmus B. Collins, surgeon. *Editors's Note: Several of the names in the Brook Reporter Article were not mentioned in John Ade's list, and several names in John Ade's story were not included in the article. This is a combined list as it was reported by both. Also please note that George W. Hershman was killed at the battle of Shiloh, and was buried there, however, there is a stone for him at Riverside Cemetery in Brook.*

David A. McHolland	Samuel Lyons	Ephraim G. Ham	Henry Meredith	Evans, Thomas
Albert Light	Jira Skinner	James Kenoyer	Ira Yeoman	Freeley, John
Aldophus H. Wonder	John D. Morgan	James Kerhan	James Corn	Greer, John
William A. Lewis	Charles Mallett	Abel Lyons	Charles W. Clifton	Hatfield, James
Edwin R. Arnold	Jonathan Staton	Cyrus Lowtrain	Jesse Dodson	Johnson, Isaac
Jeremiah Sailor	John Sherman	Dennis Morris	John A. Gwinn	Jackson, Eli
Aaron Kenoyer	Bardon B. West	Alexander A. Myers	Ephraim Haney	Karnes, John
J.S. Hurst	Henry Bishop	Stark Olmstead	Charles W. Lynch	Lyons, John B
Alvin Arnold	J.F. Shaffer	George W. Smith	Warren Maist	Love, Robert
Samuel Yoeman	G.E. Tiffany	Jonathon Pruet	W.E. Roney	McKee, John
Robert Barr	William DeWese	David G. Smith	John Bridgeman	McIntosh, Wm. J.
Samuel Clark	Daniel Doty	Edward Sherman	James Nottingham	McIntosh, Perry C.
John Coshow	John Bramble	Harry Troup	Burk, John	Morris, Dennis
Reese Denney	Isaac N. Bush	J. S. Christopher	Barkhurst, Robert	Manly, Martin V.
Patrick Griffin	William Collins	Isaac C. Denny	Betchel, Samuel	Perigo, William
William Haney	Thomas Crown	John J. Horn	Bigger, John	Reeves, William H.
George W. Heshman	Alexander Ekey	Charles B. Davis	Branson, Jonathan	Smytherman, Alfred
J. H. Harrington	George Haney	Levi Haney	Board, William	Scott, Thomas
James Helms	Walter Hawkins	Hiram H. McClain	Cornelius, Abraham	Thomas, Harvey
John T. Harris	Jacob Hosier	Albert Myers	Dawson, Simley	Wilcox, William E.
Lemuel Johnson	Esray G. Handley	W.W. Thoroughman	Darroch, Daniel C.	John Higgins
Leroy Kelley	Henry Howery	John Lowe	Ennis, James	Kin Ferguson

# IN MEMORIAM

PRESENTED TO THE BROOK PUBLIC LIBRARY BY JOHN BENNETT LYONS, BROOK, INDIANA,  
THIS EIGHTEENTH DAY OF SEPT., 1916.

THIS TABLE IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF THE ORIGINAL MEMBERS OF GOLDEN INDIANA  
VOLUNTEER BATTALION, BEING THE FIRST VOLUNTARY ENLISTED IN BRITAIN COUNTY FOR THE  
WAR OF THE REBELLION FROM 1861 TO 1865.

THE ORIGINAL MEMBERS OF THIS COMPANY MET AT BROOK, INDIANA, ON THE TWELFTH DAY OF OCTOBER, 1861,  
THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED SIXTY ONE, AND ORGANIZED THE COMPANY BY ELECTING THEIR COMPANY OFFICERS.  
THE SCHOOL HOUSE WHERE THEY MET STOOD ON THE PLOT OF GROUND WHERE THIS LIBRARY  
BUILDING NOW STANDS. THIS SCHOOL HOUSE WAS BUILT DURING THE SUMMER OF ONE THOUSAND EIGHT  
HUNDRED FIFTY FOUR, BEING THE FIRST SCHOOL HOUSE BUILT IN IROQUOIS TOWNSHIP WITH PUBLIC  
FUNDS. IROQUOIS TOWNSHIP AT THAT TIME EMBRACED THE TERRITORY THAT IS NOW INCLUDED IN  
WASHINGTON, JEFFERSON, GRANT AND IROQUOIS TOWNSHIPS.

L. E. COLLIER, REC'D. SURGEON

## ROSTER OF COMPANY OFFICERS:

DAVID A. M'COLLARD, CAPT.  
ALBERT LIGHT, 1ST LT.  
DODDGE B. WOODRIF, 2ND LT.  
WILLIAM BAKER, ORDNCE SERG.  
WILLIAM R. LEWIS, SERG.  
JIRA BROWN,

ROBERT BARR, SERG.  
L. R. ARKOLD, " "  
J. F. BEAVER, CORP.  
AARON K. ROYER, " "  
J. D. BOGGER, " "  
G. A. M'FARLY, " "

W. B. WATSON, CORP.  
AMER ARKOLD, " "  
DANIEL BOYD, " "  
J. C. ARKOLD, " "  
GABRIEL LYCOMAN, 1ST LT.  
JOHN HIGGINS, PRIVATE  
W. H. BROOK, PLAZETER

## ROSTER OF PRIVATES:

BORG, JOHN  
BRIDGEMAN, JOHN  
BARKER, GEORGE  
BUSH, ISAAC W.  
BIGHTON, SAMUEL  
BIGGER, JOHN  
BRADDER, JOSEPH  
BOARD, WILLIAM  
COOKLAND, ABRAHAM  
CLARK, SAMUEL  
COLLIER, WILLIAM  
CASHOW, JOHN  
CRAWF, THOMAS  
DEWY, REUBEN

DAVISON, SHELLEY  
DARRON, DANIEL C.  
DAVIS, BARTHOLOMEW  
LEWIS, JAMES  
EVANS, THOMAS  
ELLY, ALEXANDER  
ELLY, JOHN  
GRIFFIN, PATRICK  
GRIFFIN, JOHN  
HARVEY, GEORGE W.  
HARVEY, WILLIAM  
HAYNES, WILLIAM  
HIGGINS, GEORGE W.  
ROSE, JACOB  
BARRINGTON, JAMES H.

MARDIN, LYMAN C.  
MONTGOMERY, HENRY  
MILES, JAMES  
MATHIAS, SAMUEL  
MARRIS, JOHN T.  
MAM, FERRIS C.  
JOHNSON, THOMAS J.  
JOHNSON, ISAAC  
JACKSON, THOMAS  
REYNOLDS, JAMES  
KELLY, HENRY G. W.  
KARRIS, JOHN  
LYON, SAMUEL  
LYON, ABEL  
LYON, JOHN BERRY

LOWMEAN, CYRUS  
LOVELL, JOHN  
LOVELL, ROBERT  
LOVELL, JOHN  
MORTON, W. J.  
MORTON, FERRY C.  
MORSE, BERRIE  
MURPHY, HENRY W.  
MYERS, ALEXANDER L.  
MULLIN, CHARLES  
MANN, MARTIN  
MONTGOMERY, JAMES A.  
OLEY, STARR  
PRYDE, JOSEPH  
PERIGO, WILLIAM

REYNE, WILLIAM H.  
REYNOLDS, ALFRED  
REYNE, GEORGE W.  
REYNE, DAVID G.  
REYNE, BERT J.  
REYNOLDS, JOSEPH  
REYNE, THOMAS  
REYNOLDS, EDWARD  
REYNOLDS, JOHN  
REYNOLDS, HENRY  
REYNOLDS, HENRY J.  
REYNOLDS, WILLIAM L.  
REYNOLDS, BERT  
REYNOLDS, ISAAC