

file copy

● Grand Reunion of the Civil War:

The article includes eyewitness accounts and lists a roster of soldiers who attended the Grand Reunion of the Civil War in 1889. Regiments included persons from the 115th, 116th, 117th, & 118th, Regiments. The soldiers were known as the "Persimmon Brigade."

Article published and copied as printed:

Greencastle Herald, Thursday, October 3, 1889

Persimmon Brigade

Grand Reunion of the 115th, 116th, 117th and 118th regiments.

A Large, Enthusiastic, Successful Gathering of the Members of this Famous Brigade—Full Proceeding of the Day—The Camp Fire—Speeches of Mayor Cowgill, Hon. Thomas Hanna, Robert W. Harrison, Robert Denny and J. B. DeMotte.

Yesterday witnessed a gathering of the boys in blue such as our city has not had before for years. The occasion was the reunion of the 115th, 116th, 117th and 118th, Regiments, Indiana Volunteers, composed of the famous "Persimmon Brigade."

Nearly 400 "persimmon eaters," were present, many of them having their wives and daughters with them. The total number of visitors exceeded 1000. They came from far and near and their short stay in the city was made as pleasant as possible by our hospitable citizens.

The regimental reunion for the elected officers, ets. Were held yesterday morning and afternoon.

The 115th Regiment met at 10 a.m. and heard report of the president, secretary and treasurer and other business of the Association. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year. Thomas Hanna, of Greencastle, President; Capt. W. D. Mull, of Rockville, Vice President; W. C. Edgeman, of New Albany, Secretary and Treasurer, Levi M. Hanna, Tarvin C. Groos and Wallace Ragan, Historians.

The following is a roster of the regiment; Thomas. Hanna, President of Brigade, Joseph S. McVay, Greencastle, Henry C. Reeves, Greencastle, James A. Brann, Greencastle, William Brewer, Worthington, Leander C. Walker, Worthington, Thomas H. Hollis, Worthington, **William McConat Sr. Cloverdale**, J. M. Wilson, Avon, William Mason, Terre Haute, James South, Gosport. James Buskirk, Gosport, James W. Davis Stinesville, Wm. N. Matthew's, Bedford, Nevel Brown, Reno. Thomas J. Bullock Coriana. Ill. **A. T. Layton, Coatsville, Indiana**. Joe Ragan, Terre Haute, W. N. Siner, Terre Haute, J. s. Snodgrass, Gosport, Wm. P. Foulke, Cora, **Sam Hazelett, Portland Mills**, J. W. Beadie, Rockville, Clark E. McDaniel, Marshall, E.R. Teague, Marshall, B.W. Dooliey, Marshall, Theadore F. Holston, Riley; H. T. Ball, Rockville; John M. Seybold, Rockville; T. W. Clark, Marshall, Ill.; John Dawson, Marville, IN.; D. W. Curry, Cora; Wm. Broadhurst, Maxville, Benjamin Alcorn, Maxville; James Dunlap, Maxville; D.C. Sebold, Rockville; **Barney McGee, Portland Mills**. W. D. Brown, Brazil; **Geo. W. Hill, Russellville**; Hartley Brill, Riley; M.H. Young, Cora; M. S. Rector, Riley; J. L. Boothe, Ashboregh; James M. Bohannan, Bowling Green; Thomas Robinson, Coal Bluff; W. B. Shaw, Brazil; **W.S. Cook, Clinton Falls**; Jam S. Dodds, Barnard, Ind.; W.S. Geiger, Bowling Green; Issas M. Lee, Riley; Sylvester Dick, Vermillian, IL.; **Alfred Woodrun, Greencastle, IN.**; Adsison Spear, Atkinsville, IN; **Mathias Evans, Reelsville**; **Wm Carrington, Putnamville**; **Jacob McGaughey,**

Russellville; W. L. Silvey, New Maysville; I. J. Bolton, Terre Haute; **Benj Staggs, Manifold; S.B. Leaton, Fincastle;** J. H. Conkling, Paris, IL.; Hugh Robertson, Cora, IN; Jacob Stagg, Rockville; John W. Harris, Colfax; **John W. Ragan, Fillmore, IN; John W. Hollingworth, Belle Union; Frank Larkin, Belle Union; H. L. Coffman, Greencastle; J.E. Mathews, Greencastle; Martion Kelly Bainbridge;** Capt. Mull, Rockville, **Dr. Levi M. Hanna, Greencastle;** S. K. Fletcher, Indianapolis; James T. Layman, Indianapolis, S.H. Denny Indianapolis; **A. J. Biddle, of Roachdale.**

The One Hundred and Sixteenth held two meetings yesterday at G.A.R. Hall.

The Following officers of the regimental association were elected for the ensuing year.

President—Capt. R. W. Harrison of Lebanon; Treasurer—F.M. Dice, of Crawfordsville; Secretary—J. M. Cassell, of Indianapolis.

The following members were present; **Dr. M. D. Bonnel, Lebanon;** A. J. Newgent, Geeder; Robert W. Harnsu Lebanon; E.B. Brown, Newport; Charles W. Lindley, Kingman; Wm G. Watson, Yeddo, A.W. King, Veedersburg; David Farwell, Cory, G.T. Baum, Paris, IL.; J. M Gwinn Rushville; John T. Moore, Tolono, IL; Steven L. Wilson , Farmers; Caleb Canady, New Ross; Thos Day, Maplewood; J. W. Roark, Max; Wm N. Henry, Lebanon; Jno M. Jones, Roston, Thompson Hedge, Ward; Wealey Lawrence and J.W. Jones, Lebanon; Ezra Cummings, New Brunswick; John m. C. Shulse and J. M. Cassell, Indianapolis; **Jos K. Cooper, Greencastle;** J. W. Lin, Whitesville; Cas Ships, Oxford; Geo W. Kersley W.W. Lane and Jas W. Campbell, Lebanon.

Mrs. Col.W. C. Kite, and Mrs. Dr. M. Bannull, of Lebanon, was also here.

The One Hundred and Seventeenth met at the mayor's office at 11 a.m., and after appropriate remarks by Comrades J. H. Harris, John A. Moorman, and Chaplain Charles Stewart, proceeded to elect officers for the ensuing year, which resulted as follows;

President—Col. Stephen D. Saylor of Salem; Vice President—Lieut. James H. Harris of Noblesville; Secretary and Treasurer—James K. Fisher, of Noblesville. Chaplain—Chas. Stewart of Danville; Historian—Lieut. G. P. Tinker of Rising Sun.

The number present and enrolled was fifty-nine, as follows:

J.H. Harris, J.R. Harris and J.K. Fisher, Noblesville; A.J. Moore, Hortonville; **Alvin Hamble, Clinton Falls**; Peter Fisher, Boscom; Warren O'Hayer, Indianapolis; Jas Harian, Hadley; E.D. Nichols, W.H. Nichols, A.J. Smith, C.W. Stewart, J. M. Jeffries, To Welshans and Geo W. Nave, Danville; M.L. Hungate, Hooker; Wm Shearer, Irvington; John W. wills, Coatsville; Jas S. Ellis, Belleville; J.W. Irvin, Lawrence; John F. Case, Farmer City, IL.; John A. Moorman, Farmland; Jas Gasper, Amo; JosC. Rhea, Emmons; Juno and A.D. Lewellyn, Monrovia; G.W. Seaton, Catersbury; Jas H. Smith, Little Point; Alfred Horton, Friendswood; John H. Andrews and Anderson Carpenter, Eminence; Thos Kilpatrick and J. R. Parnell, Bloominton; Smith King, Indianapolis; H. M. Pittenger, Advance; G.P. Tinker, Rising Sun; J. F. Phillips, Coatsville; W.H. Cheesman, Noblesville; C.E. Phillips, Lafayette; M.E. Mathews, Bloominton; **L. Stanley, Fincastle**; W.B. Hughes, Bloominton; **W.N. Lakin, Coatsville**; D.B. Kellehar and C. A. White, Danville; Jas O'Haaver, Rockville, J.C. Blalock, Sullivan; O.T. Kuhn, Indianapolis; J.H. Crawford, Mitchell; A.B. Phillips, Rantoul, IL; Wm Beeson Amo; E.H. Hall, Danville; S.B. Stout, Plainfield; Wm Hunt,

Hadley; T.S. Marshall, Rockville; Jno B. White, Rising Sun; Stephen D. Sayles, Salem; Caleb White, Monrovia, and **M. Risinger, Greencastle.**

The One-Hundred and Eighteenth elected H. B. Saylers, of Hantey, President, and N.T. Kasey, Secretary. This regiment had but three members in attendance... N.T. Kasey of Brazil; Joe H. Conkling of Paris, IL.; and **John B. DeMotte of Greencastle.**

The citizen provided dinner and supper for all at the Armory. The business meeting of the Brigade was held at the CourtHouse at 2 o'clock yesterday afternoon. The meeting was called to order by the President of the Association. Hon. Thos. Hanna, and prayer offered by the Chaplain. After the reports of the Prsident and Secretary had been read the following officers were elected for the snsuing year. **Thos. Hanna, of Greencastle**, President. Col. Sales of Salem, Vice President; **Tarvin C. Grooms of Greencastle**, Secretary and Treasurer; Rev. Chas. W. Stewart, of Danville, Chaplin.

The following resolution was passed; Resolved, That this brigade association tenders their heartfelt thanks to the ladies and citizens of Greencastle for the excellent manner in which we have been entertained. And that a copy of those resolutions be sent to the various papers of this city for publication.

Indianapolis was chosen as the place for the next reunion.

Adress by F. M. Dice, Crawfordsville.

Address by Col. Sales explaining why the brigade was called the Persimmon Brigade. The reason was that they had to eat persimmons to contract their stomachs to fit their rations.

On motion of J. H. Harris the 117th regiment tender their heartfelt thanks to the citizens of Greencastle and especially the ladies of Greencastle, for the elegant manner in which they were entertained. The motion was carried by a unanimous vote.

On motion of Lieut. Tinker, Janaschek Wirt, daughter of Captain Wirt. Of Co. K, 117th, Prg't, was unanimously elected as the daughter of the regiment.

The Camp Fire

The campfire at Meharry Hall at 7:30 was the climax of the reunion. The City Band furnished the music. The following was the program; Invocation by Rev. Chas W. Stewart, chaplain of brigade, of Danville; address of welcome by the Mayor Capt. E.P. Cowgill; response by Hon. Thos Hanna, president of the brigade; recitation "Captain Ray's Story," by **Miss Lizzie Earnest, of Greencastle**; music, "John Brown's Body." "One-hundred-and sixteenth Regiment," by Robt. W. Harrison, of Lebanon; recitation, "The Veteran and his Grandson," by Miss Sidelia Starr, of Greencastle, "One-hundred-and seventeenth, Regiment; The Six months Soldier of 1863-64 by Capt. Rob Denny of Indianapolis; recitation "Search for the Dead," by **Miss Gertrude Hanna of Greencastle**; music, violin, fantasia by Mr. Arthur O'Neil, of Boston. "One-hundred-and eighteenth Regiment, from Tazwell to Maynardville," by Dr. J. B. DeMotte of Greencastle.

Address of Welcome by Mayor E. P. Cowgill.

General Mahan, and men of the Persimmon Brigade—I have been assigned the pleasing duty of speaking words of welcome to you on this occasion. We remember that your patriotism valor and endurance made this day a possibility. We remember that from Sumpter to Appomatox was a long and weary march and all the dreary way is strewn with heat

breaking tragedies , then memories make us feel that no welcome can be to warm, no gratitude to lively, no hospitality too generous to match your patriotic sacrifice to your country in her hour of need. We welcome you today because you have honestly earned and are justly entitles too all the praise and grateful people can bestow upon the protectors and presence of their liberty. When you men first heard your country's call to arms you were younger better looking perhaps than now, if not quite so wise, but this matter of knowledge and wisdom is comparative after all. You knew enough to front face, look treason squarely in the face and fight the life out of it, and more you knew enough to get the persimmons. I have known some fellows who have been after persimmons all their life, and didn't get any, their knowledge pole didn't seem to be long enough. You gentleman seemed to be better equipped. I shall leave to eloquent tongues to tell of weary marches of fasting, and famine and fighting , and of how.

The Bugle sane truce the night clouds had lowered. And the sentinel stars set their watch in the sky. And the thousand had sank to the ground overpowered. The weary to sleep.

Perchance to dreams of home and sunshine and the happy abundance of peace if such dreams do ever come to soldiers, all to soon the gray dawn of remorse endeavor to conquer traitors and make treason, odious, small dispel their illusion like mist in sunshine.

Gentleman, I and they who I represent, say to you welcome, thrice welcome. Come in, occupy and enjoy; this day is yours and fairly won, and when comrades clasp hands with thrilling hearts may the old patriotic fires be remember and this days retrospection be complete and full, and when you return to your homes may you continue to make treason odious. Not as in days of old when war clouds lowered on all the horizon, but rather in the pursuit of the achievements that are only

possible when white winged peace hovers like a blessed benediction over the united land. Our county, our flag and liberty and equality for all.

Men of the Persimmon Brigade, you have honored us in making this the place your reunion, may it be a day of unalloyed pleasure to you and the example of your lives make its lasting impression for good on all descending generation. For your patriotic valor in defense of the right may you be rewarded with length of days and honor. Gentlemen I salute you.

The following is the response by Hon. Thos. Hanna to the Mayor's address:

Mayor Cowgill, Ladies and Gentleman:

I have not, at my command fitting words with which to express the thankfulness of this remnant of the four thousand men, who constituted Manhan's Brigade, for your generous words and for the kind treatment and cheerful welcome your citizens have extended to them while they have sojourned for a day in your midst.

I cannot say that your expressed hospitality was unexpected for when the invitation was extended to us, to hold this reunion here, the patriotic character of the citizens of Greencastle was well known; your record as lovers of the Union and of the Union soldier has gone abroad in the land. History shows that company after company volunteered from these college halls and from your patriotic city to defend the old flag; that the life blood, the riches and the best, was given that we might have one county and one flag. Need I mention the names of Mayor Conkling, Capt. Jones and your Crogan, Lakin, Henry, Chapin, Evans and many, many others who died that this Republic might live. It was known that the citizens of your county were the first to erect fitting monument in memory of the Union soldiers. A monument who dumb figure will be its

solemn silence, ever proclaim your love and affection for the Union soldiers. I need not call the names of your soldier's dead or point out the statues of stone and marble in your cemeteries to be reminded of your unalloyed patriotism. Who have only to look around to see among your citizens many survivors of the war. As we go about your streets we meet the halting, the lame, and the wounded. Robt. M. Black, Capt. Owens, jChas. O. Wagner, Henry Geiske, young Wesley Rader, Maj. Birch. Capt. Donnohue, James Steele, Rev. Louis F. Cole, Harry William's, Wawley Steel, William herring, your Mayor Cowgill, and many others the victims of rebel bullets, the bloodhounds and the prison pen. It has been more than a quarter of a century since the members of these four regiments responded to the call of Abraham Lincoln. It was June 1863 that the call was made, just before Mead, with his great Union army, beat back and vanquished the advancing rebel borders at Gettysburg, and just before the surrender of the great rebel stronghold Vicksburg, to the silent, intrepid victor, Grant. The most of these men had not grown to the full stature of a soldier until after the war had commenced; in fact many of them were mere boys when they enlisted. Your own professor DeMontte was only fifteen years of age when , on a cold December day with his regiment, at the battle of Walkers' Ford, in the face of rebel shot and shell, clad in the accout-erments of war, he waded the swift flow Clinch river.

My friends, now after twenty-five years we come together at the home of our beloved and gallant commander Gen. John R. Mahan, to renew our friendship, to commune with each other, and to go over together again the scenes and trials of our soldier days.

The part we took in the war is written in the history of our country. Our service was not the longest nor the hardest; many thousands had served for two years before the most of these men passed from their boyhood days. During the war thousands were made prisoners; of our brigade more that forty were captured and only a few of them ever

returned. There were forty four thousand killed in battle and two-hundred and eighty thousand wounded; many of our men were killed and many wounded. There were one-hundred and eighty-six thousand who died from disease in the camps, and in the hospitals; more than two-hundred of our men died from the like cause. Out of the three companies that enlisted from this county in the 15th regiment the death roll was a long one. Shall I repeat some of the names? **John Beck, Phil Welker, Milton Harrison, Daniel Ray, James Bryon Wesley Ryner, William J. Chrisley, Samuel Cas, Joshua Craford and John Linden, Lewis Woodman, Wm. Taylor, Lewis Jones, Wm. P. Ellis, J. W. George, Joshua Darnall, J. H. Clark, Ed Cunningham, H. C. Carvin, Wm. Balk, J. H. Allison, J. H. Nosler, J. t. Sheets, Joseph Arnold,** The statistical estimates show that more than one-half of the survivors of our brigade have since died from disease engendered by that service and nearly all of the remainder are tottering down to their graves, their lives shortened, suffering from the hardships of war.

My friends, I know you will not find fault with us or think we are vain-glorious because we hold meeting like this and pledge ourselves anew for the cause for which we struggled and make more binding the friendship of that conflict, when I tell you that twenty-six years ago tomorrow we crossed the Cumberland Gap into the enemies country and that from that time until February 1864, we had not more than one-fourth rations from the government; we had to subsist mainly off of a country that had been raided and stripped of provision by friend and foe alike; that for days and days we lived on wild persimmons and corn in the ear gathered from the field; for three days at a time the only rations my regiment had was an ear of corn per man per day. We marched from Cumberland Gap across Clynch Mountain to Greenville, Tennessee. We crossed Clynch Mountain twice and Cumberland Mountain four times. In the cold winter days of 1863-64. We marched hundreds of miles in the mountainous regions of East Tennessee pursuing and being pursued by the enemy. We waded freezing rivers and swift flowing streams.. Our

brigade was in the battles of Blue Springs, Strawberry Plains, Walkers' Ford and a part of it was surrounded by the enemy on Clinch Mountain. Our stores and commissary supplies were cut off from the North by the impassable dirt roads over the mountains to the railroads in Kentucky, and from the West by the siege of Knoxville. At times we were without medical supplies; much of our clothing wore out, and our shoes gave way, with no chance to renew them; many of our men were compelled either to go barefoot or make themselves moccasins out of raw-hides or the skirts of their overcoats. On the march over the frozen ground covered with a crust of snow, I have seen some of these men here marching with naked, bleeding feet. The trail of this brigade could have been followed for miles from the blood left in its footsteps.

My comrades, have you forgotten the hardships of the march, of the hospital, of the camp and of the battlefield? Have you forgotten the sadness of the groans of our sick and dying comrades? I am caring back in my mind to those days and can again hear their last agonizing wail, while in the wild delirium preceding death. You can remember how loud and how strong the wail at first would be and by and by, it would grow weaker and weaker, until finally stilled in death. The next day we would have a funeral in camp; sometimes ~~two~~ a day, and sometimes more. A detail would be made of one or two from each company to bury the dead, a coffin would be constructed of rough boards, the soldier dressed in his suit of Union blue, with his blanket wrapped around him, He would be laid in his last resting place, buried with the honors of war. This same sad duty performed day after day. It is now said by some that we should forget the past and story of the war. How can we forget it. Who is able to teach us how to forget the sorrow, suffering, hardships, trials, the wounds, and the dead, made by this wicked, bloody war? Go ask the white-winged spirits of the twenty-six-thousand soldiers who died in rebel prisons, whose bones now bleach the southern sun if we should forget their Gethsamena and death. Go ask the two-hundred and eighty thousand who were wounded in the war if their agony and pain

should be forgotten. Would not their dumb wounds cry out for revenge if it should be attempted to remember them no more forever? Go ask the disembodied spirits of the forty and four thousand soldiers who went down to death on the field of battle, whose souls went forth to God and glory, if the giving of their lives for the old flag should no more be remembered. Go ask the widow, go ask the orphan if they can forget the sacrifices made? What would the father and mother say who gave their sons for our liberty?

My comrades, you should never let your campfires go out. Keep on teaching the lessons of the war as long as you may live and bequeath the story of the war to your children the their children's children forever, lest the fruits of our victory may be lost. Tell your children of the great numbers that were engaged in the suppression of the rebellion, of the mighty host that went down to death for the Union cause; more than half a million of men; almost every household all over the North, gave one life for the flag; that the seeds of sorrow and mourning were seen everywhere. Tell your children of the great number battles; don't pass one by from Phillipa to Appomattox. Tell them of the great general of the war;

Grant, Sherman, Sheridan and Thomas, Do not forget to tell them of the rank and the file. Take our little children by and lead them to the portraits of these heroes, where they hang on the wall of your homes and give them the history of each one. Tell them the story of the great volunteer soldier, John A. Logan. Show them again the portrait of our father, brother or son as it hangs above all the others on the wall. Tell them of his service of his battles how he stood in the forefront of the fight and shot and shell, in the jaws of death. Tell them how the sad news came of the battle and that his name was among the missing, that he now sleeps beneath the hemlock and the pine in the Southland. Tell your children of the many thousands of Union soldiers whose bones bleach beneath the southern sun; whose graves are unknown; whose homes of clay is saddened by the wild music of the wind as it chants a melancholy

requiem though the cedar and the pine, nothing to mark their last resting place, nothing to make bright their windowless homes, but the blades of grass and bunches of wild flowers as they creep up through the fallen leaves in the spring time with their petals and spires pointing to the stars. Tell them again and again of the march of the camp of the prison pen; of the roll call; of the missing; of the wounded and the dead. Tell them now the Union prisoners. Were treated now the Union prisoners were treated by the rebels; of the hundreds and thousands who died in prison, the places of famine and death. Do not forget to tell them that the blue and gray are not to be placed on an equality; that the blue was right and the grey was wrong. Teach your children to love patriotism and hate treason; to love patriots and rebels; to revere and honor the memory of the dead soldiers and to forever hold sacred the cause for which they gave their lives.

My friends and comrades, let us all here highly resolve and consecrate ourselves anew." Let us take increased devotion, all for the purpose and to the end, that this government of the people by the people, and for the people, might not perish from the earth."

The speech of Robert W. Harrison of the One-Hundredth and Sixteenth Regiment was as follows:

Ladies and Gentleman and Comrades: If I were competent to entertain this audience it would be the happiest moment of my life. It is more than 25 years since these four regiments went out. It is with the greatest satisfaction that I came to this reunion.

What ever may be our successes or failures of life the greatest thing we ever did was the camping we made in that regiment. And I wonder and thank God that we still live. I remember on one occasion that we ran for

requiem though the cedar and the pine, nothing to mark their last resting place, nothing to make bright their windowless homes, but the blades of grass and bunches of wild flowers as they creep up through the fallen leaves in the spring time with their petals and spires pointing to the stars. Tell them again and again of the march of the camp of the prison pen; of the roll call; of the missing; of the wounded and the dead. Tell them now the Union prisoners. Were treated now the Union prisoners were treated by the rebels; of the hundreds and thousands who died in prison, the places of famine and death. Do not forget to tell them that the blue and gray are not to be placed on an equality; that the blue was right and the grey was wrong. Teach your children to love patriotism and hate treason; to love patriots and rebels; to revere and honor the memory of the dead soldiers and to forever hold sacred the cause for which they gave their lives.

My friends and comrades, let us all here highly resolve and consecrate ourselves anew." Let us take increased devotion, all for the purpose and to the end, that this government of the people by the people, and for the people, might not perish from the earth."

The speech of Robert W. Harrison of the One-Hundredth and Sixteenth Regiment was as follows:

Ladies and Gentleman and Comrades: If I were competent to entertain this audience it would be the happiest moment of my life. It is more than 25 years since these four regiments went out. It is with the greatest satisfaction that I came to this reunion.

What ever may be our successes or failures of life the greatest thing we ever did was the camping we made in that regiment. And I wonder and thank God that we still live. I remember on one occasion that we ran for

five miles, plunged into a river, forded it's cold water and fought for two hours. I do thank heaven that we still live.

We I compare our soldiers with other soldiers I am proud of them. What are other soldiers worth as citizen? Look at Napoleon's after their service they were vagabonds. They filled the jails and criminal courts. Our comrades are in every and all-honorable walks of life. They are the railroad kings; the farmers, the mechanics, teachers, professors, and preachers. The story of Christ was written by our neighbor and comrade Gen. Lew Wallace. Every president but one since the was a soldier. Every governor but one of Indiana since the was a soldier.

This people has dealt magnificently with the soldiers. No other country ever paid such pension. No other country could. How have we succeeded? History fails to show any other war of the kind suppressed. Why did we succeed. Why did we succeed. It was because God had written the eternal decree that that slavery should end. Senator Benj. Wade of Ohio, in a speech in the senate gave the key. He said slavery had to go out and the war as the method. He did not believe this government was to be torn down by Jeff Davis.

I do not apologize for the 116th they need none. When I reflect I find that her colonel, lieutenant colonel and major are dead. That brigade in it's entire service did hard work. But I am not here to particularize. I think the country did not appreciate it because there were who many older regiments. The hardest service we ever saw was two days and night fighting and eight days without rations. It seems incredible, almost impossible to understand.

We have had a good time here. We are pleased and thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Capt. Robert Denny spoke as follows: Mr. President, Comrades, Ladies and Gentleman: For the few minutes during which I am permitted to claim your attention, I shall speak of the Six Months Soldiers 1863.

June 15th, 1863, President Lincoln, issued a proclamation calling for 100,000 volunteers to serve for a term of six months. Since the more than 26 years have become part of the eternal past.

A generation of men and women who were either unborn, or were but mere children, and now playing their part in the great drama of human events. They know little many of them nothing, of the services of the men who responded to that call. For their information, and as a matter of justice to those who participated in those services, I have undertaken to comment upon some of the features of the six months service.

In military circles it is too common among those who belong to the regular army to regard, with a specie of contempt, those who volunteered to serve for a specified term of less than five years, "or during the war", and some of the long term, or three years, volunteer have been heard to speak contemptuously of those who enlisted for the shorter terms of service.

Such sentiments are not born of the true spirit of patriotism. They indicate narrowness and selfish bigotry on the part of those who express or mention them.

The partings of six months men, with wives, children, parents, sisters, sweethearts and friends, as they took their leave for the front, were a serious and affecting as any that occurred during the terrible war.

No man knew or could know, he would ever again see his loved ones, or be seen by them, dead or alive. This statement will be more fully appreciated when I tell you that, (although I have not the complete

statistics I have sufficient positive information to warrant me in saying) each of the forty companies which constituted, the four regiments of the Indiana Brigade of six months men, lost by death, in that short term of service, from two to fourteen men. It is reasonable to presume an average of at least seven death to the company; or an aggregate of no fewer than 280 men of our brigade who died or who were killed, before the day of discharge; and most of whose bodies moldered to dust in Kentucky, Tennessee and Georgia. The face of the records show, with painful frequency, such remarks as the following;

Died at Camp Nelson, KY.

Died at Cumberland Gap.

Died at Tazewell, Tenn.

Died at Knoxville, Tenn.

And worst of all, Died at Andersonville Prison.

No stronger evidence is required to prove the terrible nature of the experiences through which we passed in that brief term of service.

Other calls for volunteers were accompanied with promises of bounty. No bounty was offered to aid in inducing men to enlist for the six months service, nor was any premium offered or paid for recruits. That call was a naked appeal to the patriotic valor of men who loved the union of the American States, and were ready and willing to do and die, if need be, in defense of the stars and stripes which floated in the free air of heaven, all around the earth, as the emblem of Liberty, and of the union. The only pecuniary inducements held out by the government in connection with that call were, sixteen dollars per month of currency which the unpatriotic skylarks, by having an exception, in their favor put upon its paying power, and their vicious manipulators of the money market, had depreciated until it was not worth it's face value in gold and a possible pension payable in the same kind of currency in case of death

or disabling wounds, or disease incurred in the service and in the line of duty.

Excuse me, rations of hard-tack, etc., were implied, promised, but only a small percentage of the quantity prescribed by Army Regulation were ever seen in that six months campaign. The failure to supply us with "grub" is not charged to bad faith on the part of the Government. It was due to the fact that the exigencies of the occasion called us beyond, and out of reach of any sufficient base of supplies.

Again, that call was made at a critical juncture in one of the darkest periods of the entire war. Gen. Lee, with an army estimated about 100,000 strong, had started on the famous Rebel raid into Pennsylvania, and was sweeping everything before him.

Pemberton was stoutly resisting Grant's advance on Vicksburg and the result of the war was in doubt. In Virginia Ewell was carrying things with a high and successful hand. Everywhere the rebels were active and aggressive, and the final result of the mighty conflict seemed to be doubtfully suspended in the balance.

For two weeks after men began to enlist for the six months service, the clouds of war seemed to grow darker, and not until the rout of the enemy at Gettysburg, July 3rd, and the surrender of Vicksburg the next day, was there a rift in those clouds sufficient to let in the sunlight that gave promise of final triumph of the union forces. But the triumph of the union forces. But the Gettysburg and Vicksburg victories did not break the spirit of the rebellion, nor dissipate it's strength, as the many sanguinary battles which followed abundantly, the history of which is open to all. Nor did those victories prevent Morgan from immediately following them by his memorable raid through Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio.

It is worth while now to consider whom the men were that made up the Indiana six months brigade. Were they cowards who had, from April 1861 to June, '63, listened with faint hearts to the nation's repeated calls for volunteers? Nay, verily they were not. Very many of them were men who had promptly enlisted in the earlier stages of the war, and had either served out their terms and received honorable discharges, or had been honorably discharged on account of wounds or other disability incurred in the service and in the line of duty.

A large proportion of the brigade consisted of young men, yet in their teens, and who were not old enough to have enlisted under former calls. Indeed, many were mustered into the service as being 18 years of age, who in fact were but 15, 16, and 17 years old; and one of the hardiest boys of the 117th, William W. Dale, of Capt. Braxton's Company H, was said to have been but 14; and John P. Leonard drummer boy of Capt. Writ's Company, (K) was not 14 years old. I knew one patriotic women, every one of whose four sons had entered the union army early in the war, each leaving a wife and little children at home, and yet, in the dark hour of danger she consented..that her husband the only man of the five families who had remained at home, should take life in hand and enter the six months service. Such was he spirit of patriotism that responded to the President's proclamation of June 5th 1863.

We served through the full term of our enlistment with out a dollar of pay until after discharge. In view of the want of means with which to purchase food when it could have been bought, which was not much of the time and taking into consideration the weakness of human nature,(sometimes called depavity,) and the strength of a starving man's appetite, non need be shocked when told that we did not always inquire as to who owned the unfortunate sheep, goat or other food animal that can in our way, nor as to who's bees gathered the honey we sometimes found richly stored in the hives along our path; nor need any one be

surprised when I tell you that after we foraged through a neighborhood persimmons were much scarcer than they were previous to our visit.

Once more, I claim for the six months men of 1863 an equal right with all other men who rendered faithful service in that war, to be heard in the just demand that the government shall discharge its equitable obligation to the soldiers by paying them the difference made between the value of the paper currency in which they were paid and the price of gold at dates or payment, with interest on the amount of such difference. The bondholders were then receiving their pay in gold, and have since been paid in gold. I assert that the men who at peril of their lives made it possible for the government to pay it's money obligations, and entitled to be treated with as much consideration as those who were in peril and never rendered an hour's service to save the Union.

I further claim that those who performed faithful service in the war for the preservation of the union, are justly entitles to a service pension, without regard to disability. But I am opposed to adding another name to the civil pension list, whether it be a widow of a President, or of some other official. On behalf of my comrades who survive and of the widows and children of dead comrades, I appeal to all patriotic citizen to join us in our demands for justice. Those who come upon the stage of action since that war, may be called upon to render military service in defense of their rights, and may be called upon to render military service in defense of their rights, and may need to precedent we ask the government to establish by doing ample justice to those who saved the union in the war of the great rebellion.

A word more and I am done. The soldiers of the war of 1861-5 did not exhaust their patriotism in their military service. At the end of the war they returned to the peaceful pursuits of life, and became exemplary and law abiding citizens, as a rule. I may say that the true and faithful soldier

has shown his qualities since war, by cheerfully and faithfully playing his part in civil life.

Comrades, let it be our highest ambition to deserve as much praise from our fellow citizens in peace, as in war.

And when our last farewells are spoken: the pitchers at life's fountain broken: Oh! Then may comrades once again strike hand. And share the peaceful rest of Leal's Land.

"From Tazewell to Maynardvill," by Dr. J. B. DeMontte, was the last speech and was as follows:

Mr. Chairman, Comrades, Ladies & Gentleman: It is too late for an address. My subject has a serious side but you have already had food enough for reflection; I shall not tax your patience nor your thought at this late hour.

In response to the President's requisition in Jun, 1863, to the Governor of Indiana for a number of Regiments of Six-Month Troops, a call was made for one Regiment from each Congressional District. The Adjutant General says in his report, by way of apology because only four Regiments were formed that "a harvest was near at hand, and a great deficiency of labor was likely to be experienced in the agricultural districts, causing delay and an abatement in enlistment."

His explanation may have been correct so far as you men were concerned, but I assure you that we boys did not hesitate because of any special fondness for the harvest field or the plowing of corn under a July sun. there were more serious reason. The peach crop would soon be ripe. The swimming hole was already so. Several patches of watermelons had been reconnoitered, and from time to time were reported promising. And then, while we knew that we were necessary to the salvation of the nation, in going to the front we were quiet likely to lose our best girls.

Your wives would encounter you while gone and welcome your return, but we would be wholly at the mercy of some other fellow, who with his pockets full of butter scotch and a pound of jujube paste, might, in a single evening, rob us of the idols of our hearts. These Mr. Chairman, are I apprehend some of the serious consideration which caused hesitation on our part, and which the Adjutant General omitted to mention.

But we boys were amply compensated for all these sacrifices the moment we doffed that mighty suit of blue. I was an average sized fifteen-year old boy and there were several others in the Regiment not much older, nor taller. Wearing a number three boot, I drew number eight brogans. They might readily have been exchanged for sixes. But I was too proud of the eight's to think of a trade. I used to slip out by myself and make big tracks in the dust and then measure them. If a Reb. Had seen those tracks-without seeing me he would have felt discouraged.

That hat! --high crown, broad brim, cord like a clothes' line and tassel like a corn silk. It was four sizes too large and sat on my ears as jantily as an old-fashioned lamp extinguisher. If a Reb had smashed that hat down over my ears it would have put me out.

Then those trousers! You remember they were cavalry pants, with an extra thickness of cloth shingles on to protect them from the saddle. I suppose we drew them to climb persimmon trees. Mine had to be rolled up a foot at the bottom, and drawn up almost to my chin—if I could have buttoned the waistband around my hat-brim I would have had a first-class combination suit.

Our officers did not appreciate our real value in those suits. If they had sent us to the front alone the Rebs would have taken us for cornfield

scare crows in which spooks had built their nests, and stampeded for fear the "goblins would get'em for sure."

Now I have four minutes left to get from Tazewell to Maynardvill. If I had to go byway of Clinch Mountain I could mat make it.

Our camp at Tazewell was on the hill in the graveyard. My bunkmate and I stretched our dog tent so that the edges would reach over the sides of two parallel graves to run the water away. One night we found some straw down by the big in an old house that had been used by the Rebs. We carried the straw up to our tent. We might have made "shewed" it along just as well. It was alive. That was a sad night for us. You may not care a straw, we resolved we never would again. Our new boarders took to us kindly. They seemed to think, in the language of our Adjutant General that "the harvest was at hand" and the reapers were few, but they missed it awfully as to the numbers of reapers. We stopped cracking jokes. On the memorable morning of Dec 2nd we were roused by long roll at three o'clock , and ordered to prepare for march and battle. We started at once in the cold dark at double, quick and kept it up pretty steadily until we reached Walker's Ford at eleven o'clock. We were almost boiling hot and the was deep and cold and swift. To quote from the Adjutant Generals' Report (Vol. III p. 208). "The stream was waded and the regiment sent forward and formed in line of battle on both sides of the road and then advance in relief of the cavalry, 5th Indiana) which was found as reported almost destitute of ammunition. This moment enabled the cavalry to fall back and cross the river. The retreat of the cavalry was covered by the 118th which gradually fell back, through strongly pressed by a full brigade of the enemy moving in heavy force on both flanks of the regiment. At one time the enemy made a charge on the right, which was met and repelled with coolness and soon after the regiment crossed the river in safety."

Sixty-five of our company started from Tazewell; when we were formed in the line of battle after wadding Clinch river only sixteen of us were left.

That night, without food, we picketed the river in our wet clothing expecting to meet the enemy again at daylight. But we never saw him afterward.

We returned to Tazewell in a few days, but soon came back over the same road to Maynardville where we camped for some time, including the cold New Year of 1864, on which day we drew two ears of corn each, as a two days ration. Enough has been said of our scanty care. Many a time have I sat on a log thinking what a fool I was at home and had plenty. And while we do not regret the privation and exposure of those months, I for one, cannot help hoping that we have reached a civilization today which will make it unnecessary for our sons ever to feel the cruel hand of war.

The soldiers of the Union army certainly have a right to feel that they leave our fair land better than they found it.

Chairman Hanna announced that comrade Chambers had telegraphed his inability to be present, and also that "Gen. Mahan was unable to speak, and that he would call on S.K. Fletcher adjutant of the 115th Regt. To make some remarks on the history of that Regiment.

Comrades & Friends: I am not in the habit of speaking in public, it is not my trade,; I have been called upon at a moment's notice therefore have no preparations, but will endeavor to give a brief history of the 115th Regiment and its doings.

Gen. Mahan was taken quiet will after coming into the hall and I have just assisted him to the foot of the stairs as he was obliged to return

home he wished me present his kindest regards to the comrades and hoped they would excuse him under the circumstances.

My first acquaintance with Gen. Mahan was 31 years ago her in Greencastle, where I cam as a boy in 1858 and served as a clerk in the hardware store of Dorsey & Jones on the East side of the square until December 1860. At that time I thought I knew about every man woman and child in this county, and my recollection of that period are very pleasant.

In 1861 I entered the army enlisting as private in the 33rd Indiana Regiment. In Aug. 1863 when in camp down below Murfreesboro, Tenn. I received notice of an appointment as adjutant of some new Regiment organizing at home and was ordered to Indianapolis. Immediately on my return I reported to Camp Carrington where I found Gen. Mahan in command. As I had not been home for two years, I asked permission to remain at my home about four squares from the camp is possible, and Gen. Mahan very kindly granted y request, but I was obliged to report every morning, but in the course of a week was ordered on duty, but still enjoyed the privilege of home sleeping and home eating; but this was to good to last, and in a few days Gen. Mahan sent Lieut. Grooms with a suggestion that I had better move my quarters into camp as the privilege was tended to create discontent in others, so I was obliged once more to come down to army rations.

One the 16th of Sept. I think it was about 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning we received marching orders; then all was hustle and hurry, and at eight o'clock in the morning we marched out, were loaded on both passenger and freight cars and started for Cincinnati over the old I.C. & L road. We did not reach Lawrenceburg until after dark, and by this time about all the rations were gone, as we had expected to be fed in Cincinnati. We laid at Lawrenceburg about an hour and I think when we started from there was not a thing eatable left in the town that

could be got at. We reached Cincinnati about 10 o'clock, and found that by some mistake no arrangements had been made for our reception, and we were obliged to camp right on the street, sleeping on the sidewalk or wherever the boys could find a place to lay their heads; Col. Hanna and Major Woodsmall went immediately to report and get instruction, leaving the Regt. in my charge. And we had a sweet time trying to keep the men together, and prevent disturbance in that neighborhood.

In the morning we were marched to the market house and fed, then to train in Covington, thence to Nicholasville, KY. And went into camp called Camp Park; here the 4 Reg. Organized into a Brigade with Col. John Mahan of the 115th Regt. in Command. From here we marched through crab orchard, over Wild Cat Mountains, through Cumberland Gap, to Morristown and Greenville away up in East Tenn., when we went into camp and our real hardships commenced; here we formed the barrier between the Confederate armies of the East in Virginia and those around Knoxville, and Chattanooga. The last of our rations furnished by the Government were gone; and fall rains set in, the roads became muddy and communication north cut off to line must be done by foraging and, and trains were out in every direction at all times after corn cattle and whatever could be found; we had five old over shot mills running trying to grind corn enough for our Brigade to furnish about half rations; cold weather set in, the water wheels froze up and grinding stopped. Corn was then issued from the rail pens, and parched; the cattle were so poor the boys declared they had to hold them up to shoot them; the meat was cut into thin strips and smoked dried over Black Jack oak fires and the living then was parched corn and jerked beef only. Whenever I see my friend Go. Hanna here walking the streets of Indianapolis, I can see him again away back at Greenville coming from the corn pen with his detail of men, each carrying an arm full of corn squalling along behind like pigs, which showed all their hardship that they were in good spirits and determined to make the best of the situation.

About the first of Dec. we were ordered in the night on a forced march back to Bull's Gap, and such a night's march I never witnessed in all my three years service. Our horses were kept in a trot and the men in the trot until exhausted. They fell in the road and not last came into camp towards morning. After various experience, we moved back to Cumberland Gap, and over the mountains to the Kentucky side, and how the men sang as we marched down the mountain with joyful hearts, singing. "We are Going-Home" But the next day all such hopes vanished. We were ordered back to Tennessee, down Clinch River, where we guarded the fords up and down for miles with Longstreet's men doing the same on the other side.

It has been asked many times why we were called the Persimmon Brigade. It was because we lived largely on persimmons.. We were something like the old darkey, whose master after asking him if he had fed the horses, cows, and pigs, & ets., said. "Then go to the persimmon tree and get your breakfast."

Here on Clinch river we had some stuff issued called flour, but such stuff would not be cooked by you to feed a dog; the corn-cob meal ground to feed cattle would be as the finest flour compared with it. It was a little wheat and oats, much straw and chaff, and more dirt and was a black as your hat. One of the comrades has a piece here tonight which he brought home as curiosity and has since preserved. The government owes every man in this brigade at least three months rations with it never furnished and never paid for. By this time that cold winter of January 1864, had sent in. Shoes were about gone clothing not much better; men were marching with their toes out on the ground and feet bleeding. This life was kept up until about February, when our time expiring we were ordered home..

There were many sweet things along with the bitter; some that were sweet but the bees didn't know it, and we didn't let them pass. Time will not permit of relating the many funny and personal experience with

would take all night. My time to talk was limited to five minutes by the chairman. Thanking you for our kind attention. I will give was to others that are to follow.