



NEWS

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MEMBER PROFILE OF THE MONTH LARRY AND JANE KOENIGS

BY LANA BLUMHOEFER



Our featured members this month are the Koenigs. Larry and Jane have been members of the TCCWRT since 2010.

“We didn’t know about the CWRT until after the big trip we took in 2008. We happened on a web site about the TCCWRT and saw the name of Bob Paoli as one of the officers. We knew Bob and Mary as

they were neighbors in Richfield in the 60s and early 70s. When we found out the TCCWRT met at the Officers’ Club we decided to investigate it. When we learned this club focused on the Civil War we were committed and joined.

When we were first married Larry was a Lieutenant in the U. S. Army. He requested to be assigned to one of the military posts along our U.S. eastern coast. Our first assignment was at Ft. Lee, Virginia. This location was perfect for weekend excursions to places of historical significance. We both loved history, especially U.S. history.

Since our first home was at Ft. Lee, we were very close to the Petersburg National Battlefield Park, the location of the Siege of Petersburg. We could walk to this site



First Minnesota Monument at Gettysburg

from where we lived. This crater is still visible today. Richmond was another place we found fascinating. Learning about the Confederacy was as much of a part of our history as learning about the Union.

Later that fall, Larry was reassigned to Ft. Holabird, in Baltimore, Maryland. This was a great opportunity to visit more Civil War sites, including Harpers Ferry, Antietam, and Fredericksburg. We've been to Gettysburg a half dozen times. Each time we would learn more about that famous battlefield. The field where Pickett's Charge had taken place, when we visited, was full of billowing long grass, so quiet and peaceful. It was hard to visualize how devastating that battle was, 100 years later now so peaceful and serene.

Years later in 2008 we took an in-depth three-week trip to Shiloh, Stones River, Chattanooga, Fredericksburg, Manassas, Chickamauga, Antietam and Vicksburg. Franklin, Tennessee was especially interesting after having read a historical fictional novel, Widow of the South. That book described a burial place that was established on the Carnton plantation home of the widow. She, with help, went out into the battlefield to collect the bodies of dead Confederate soldiers. She brought them to her plantation's private cemetery for a proper burial. She used information she found from Bibles or letters she found on the soldiers' bodies to determine which state each soldier came from. She buried them with others from their home state so they could be with their comrades. She kept records so families would find and locate their sons' resting place. Larry and I walked through her cemetery. It was a holy place.

Several years ago, we met some people from Franklin when we were on a Rhodes Scholar trip. These people shared that Franklin had just celebrated 150 years of the Battle of Franklin. To memorialize that horrific battle the people of Franklin place nearly 10,000 luminaries at the battle site commemorating the 9,760 Union and Confederate soldiers who died in that battle. The towns people were stunned to think each burning luminary represented a dead man!

One of the most poignant stops on that trip was visiting Andersonville Prison, also known as Camp Sumter. We recommend the book, Andersonville, the Last Depot by William Marvel. It gives a detailed picture of the prison conditions and disease that consumed many at that prison.

We stopped at the Appomattox Court House. I couldn't believe we were standing in the very room where one of the most significant events of our American history took place, Lee's surrender to Grant. It felt like a most sacred space.

One thing most CWRT member do not know about us happened in Nov. 1963. After President Kennedy was assassinated, we went to Washington, D.C. to witness the solemn funeral cortege after it left the White House to the U.S. Capitol. We stood along the sidewalk as Mrs. Kennedy, Caroline and John Jr. exited their car. We saw that little boy salute his daddy. There wasn't a dry eye in the crowd.

Jane's interest in the involvement of the US Army in 1863 began when she was in high school. She grew up in Wabasso, a little town not too far from Fr. Ridgley. We often visited this state park and learned how the US army helped the early settlers during the Indian Uprising of 1862. In high school she wrote an in-depth research paper about that war and how devastating it was to both the early settlers and the Native Americans who lived in that area.

We enjoy being part of the TCCWRT. We have met some very nice and interesting people. We come away from each meeting with more information on the bloody war."

STEVEN SCHIER'S CIVIL WAR TRIVIA QUESTION OF THE MONTH:

What famous American poet was a nurse during the Civil War?

(See last page for the answer)

MINNESOTA ANNUAL CIVIL WAR SYMPOSIUM – SATURDAY APRIL 1, 2023

Feeding War with Mule, Ship, and Locomotive

- 8:30 a.m. Registration
- 9:00 a.m. Welcome, Introductions and Announcements, Brett Johnson
- 9:10 a.m. Naval Advances of the Civil War, Dave Page
- 10:00 a.m. Minnesota Civil War Round Tables Brief Introductions
- 10:15 a.m. Break (Browse tables of books and memorabilia for sale.)
- 10:30 a.m. The Effie Afton (Railroads) Trial of 1857, George Romano
- 11:15 a.m. Uncle Sam's Webbed Feet: Union Gunboats and Supply Transport on Western Waters, Dr David Gerleman
- Noon Lunch Break
- 1:00 p.m. Railroads in the Civil War, Leroy Harris
- 1:45 p.m. Engines of War: The Horsing of Civil War Armies, Dr David Gerleman
- 2:30 p.m. The Great Locomotive Chase (The General), George Romano
- 3:15 p.m. Closing Announcements

REMAINING 2023 ROUND TABLE SPEAKER SCHEDULE

May 16: “The Yankee Plague: Escaped Union Prisoners ...” – Lorien Foote

THIS MONTH IN CIVIL WAR HISTORY –APRIL

- 4th 1865 – President Lincoln visits Richmond, Virginia after the Confederate army and government evacuated their capital.
- 6th 1865 – Battle of Sayler's (Sailor's) Creek, Virginia.
- 6th 1891 – Battlefield artist/correspondent Alfred Waud dies at the age of 62.

- 8th 1862 – Battle of Fallen Timbers, Tennessee. Shortly after the Battle of Shiloh, Union forces under William T. Sherman clash with the Confederate rear guard under Nathan Bedford Forrest.
- 12th 1912 – Clara Barton dies at age 90 in Glen Echo, Maryland.
- 19th 1861 – Antiwar “Copperheads” and Confederate sympathizers clash with Massachusetts and Pennsylvania state militia in Baltimore, Maryland in what was later called the Pratt Street Riots.
- 21st 1861 – The U.S.S. Saratoga captures the slave ship “Nightengale”.

CIVIL WAR BIRTHDAYS – APRIL

- 12th 1805 – Commodore Theodorus Bailey U.S. Navy
- 13th 1808 – Rear Admiral Henry Haywood Bell U.S. Navy
- 15th 1822 – Major General Napoleon Jackson Tecumseh Dana U.S.
- 16th 1808 – Caleb B. Smith, Lincoln’s First Secretary of the Interior
- 20th 1827 – Major General John Gibbon U.S.
- 21st 1809 – Robert M. T. Hunter, Second Confederate States Secretary of State.
- 21st 1816 – Brig. General Louis T. Wigfall C.S.

TCCWRT MEMBERS WITH APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- 4/2 Steve Cook
- 4/10 Barb Rivers
- 4/10 Ron McDaniel
- 4/12 Bob Wicklem
- 4/16 Bruce Cooper

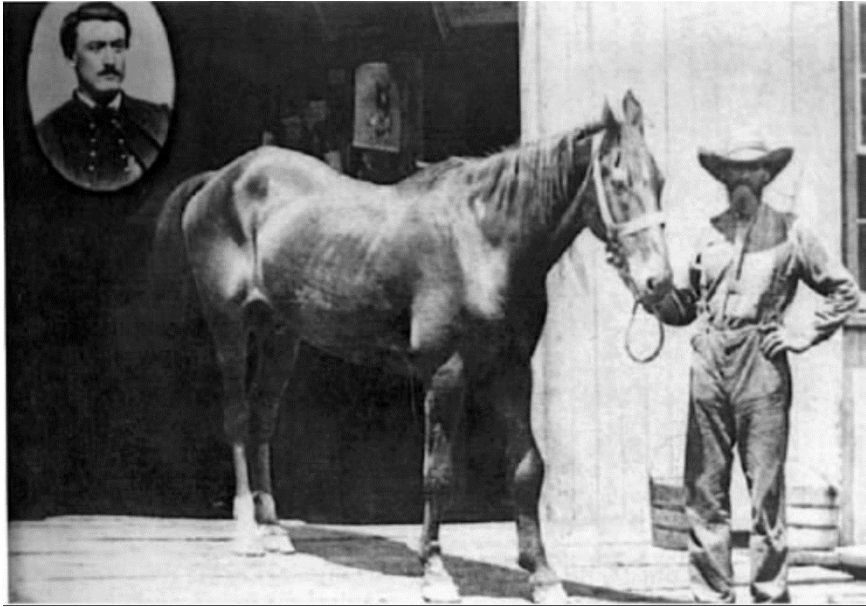
TCCWRT MERCHANDISE STORE TO REOPEN APRIL 1ST.

The Merchandise store will reopen on April 1st. The store will be open from April 1-21, 2023, with merchandise available to pick up at the May meeting. Link under the “About” tab on the TCCWRT website.

From the Dusty Collection #28 *An Illinois Cavalryman's Diary*

Sorting through a late friend's collection for an upcoming estate sale, I found an old typescript of a Civil War diary. Of little commercial value, the manuscript went home with me¹. A quick read, some good laughs, a few hours of research and here is this month's article!

Silas D. Wesson, born in New York, lived most of his life in Victor, a small town in DeKalb County Illinois. At age 24 Wesson joined Company K of the 8th Illinois Volunteer Cavalry.



That unit would be the only Illinois cavalry outfit to serve entirely in the eastern theater as part of the Army of the Potomac. Private Wesson moved up through the ranks to sergeant, reenlisted as a veteran, and mustered out as Company K's first sergeant in July 1865. He lived until 1909 and is buried in Victor.

The diary is a gem, full of battle action and rarely mentioning the weather but instead sharing often

humorous glimpses of life in a hard fighting cavalry regiment. A few examples follow....

September 18, 1861 St. Charles, Illinois

Standing today in front of the "Burchard House" we raised our right hands and promised "To serve and defend the United States against all her enemies whatsoever for three years unless sooner discharged." So help you God, we are soldiers now, all ready for Dixie, the war will be ended before we get there if we do not move a little faster. We have been in camp nearly a month.



Located on the eastern banks of the Fox River, Camp Kane was the training ground for the 8th Illinois Cavalry.

October 29 Marched down Penn. Ave. by the White House, we halted gave 3 cheers, someone came to the door, swung his long arm at us, made a bow. It was old Abe, Oh dear, he is so homely.

¹ The original diary's present location is unknown and I have found nothing about the transcriber, a Russell Hageman. However, a partial typescript of the diary is in the collections of the US Army Military History Institute. It has apparently never been published.

Nov. 28 Capt. Jennings of Co. A has his wife here in camp, it is fun for us boys to hear them quarrel.² They fight like blazes almost every evening. Tis all right, they are Irish.

Feb. 9 [1862] Had a funny time in church, an episcopal minister named Steward would not pray for the President, Capt. Farnsworth took John Kinley and Wm. Willard and marched the old rebel off to the Guard house.³ The Rebel newspaper office caught fire and burned down, the boys did not try to stop it.

March 3 The Ladies of Alexandria presented our Regt. a silk Flag. Horace Greenwood went out last night foraging, he climbed up in the loft of a blacksmith shop after pigeons and fell straddle of a plow, he got a rupture, instead of a pigeon.⁴

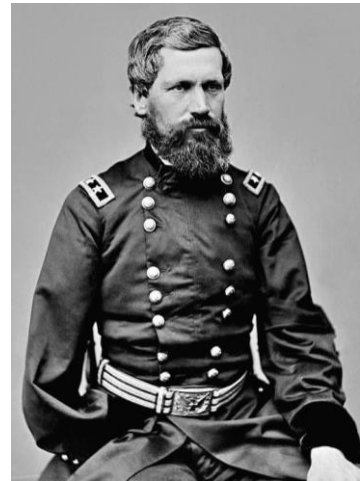
May 10 Battle at West Point, took an Irishman prisoner, Col. Farnsworth asked him what he was fighting for. He answered "For the man who pushed me into it."

May 31 I hear Gen. Howard has lost an arm. He was going to have me shot last Mar. at Manassas, because I crowed like a rooster one night in camp. Guess I can crow now if I want to.

June 3 The people will not take Greenbacks so we have got a lot of bogus Confederate money, and it goes. We don't care what they charge for their stuff we can pay it.⁵

July 1 No signs of rest, no letup in the fighting. I am so sleepy I cannot eat and so hungry I cannot sleep. My horse has worn his saddle for a week, he is tired and sleepy too.

July 24 A woman from the Christian Sanitary camp walked through our camp, she scared our horses almost to death.



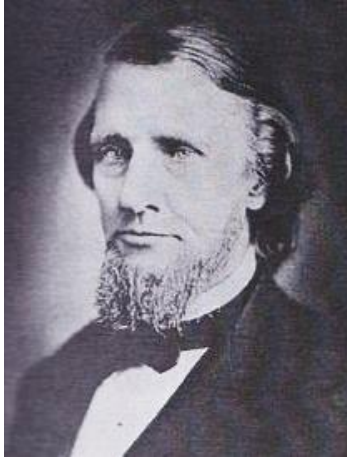
² Irish born Patrick G. Jennings of St. Charles, 46 and a shoemaker, left his 33 year old Scottish born wife Sarah and their 6 young children in September 1861 to command Company A. His sister's three orphaned younger brothers lived with them; two of the teenagers joined Jennings in Company A. Captain Jennings resigned January 10, 1862 at Sarah's insistence. She had gone to Washington with their infant son when the captain was reported seriously ill. Jennings had been a drillmaster in the British Army before he emigrated from Dublin in 1854.

³ According to the regimental history, "another of the principal actors in this scene was William Willard, of Company K., who, by Sergeant Kinley's order laid hands on the reverend man in the pulpit, and assisted him to rise in such a manner as to assure him he was in earnest." Company K's Captain Farnsworth became General Farnsworth, killed in a needless charge against Longstreet's lines just after Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg and ordered by General Kilpatrick. The 8th Illinois understandably hated Kilpatrick after this.

⁴ Horace Greenwood received an invalid pension on April 17, 1863, likely based on this injury. His pension file probably contains some interesting justification for his disability.

⁵ A huge quantity of counterfeit Confederate currency was printed in the north and distributed to soldiers.

Aug. 31 Kitsmiller had his head cut off by a saber at Dispatch Station, but he came back from Richmond with his head stuck on again, mistakes will happen. Fred Scovill saw him fall and Fred was scared.⁶



Sept. 27 We have a new Chaplain now, Rev. Philo Judson, he can't preach for sour apples, but he seems to be a good man.⁷ [left]

Sept. 29 Got [stole] a chicken tonight, put it under my saddle to keep it for breakfast, in the morning it was gone. I do hate a thief.

Oct. 3 Review and dress parade today. Old Abe, was reviewing officer. I wonder how he liked the looks of his Illinois troops, he made faces at us as he rode by, but maybe he was only smiling, poor man! He looks tired and worn out and he is as homely as a mud fence.

Oct. 10 McMullen put a shell in the fire, it blew Pomeroy's coffee cup so high up he will never see it again. Pomeroy was angry and McMullen was frightened.

Oct. 30 Jack Vinson⁸ was on picket, his shirt was so lousy, Jack took it off; hung it on a tree, and was throwing stones at it when Col Gamble came along; he gave Jack a devil of a scolding.

Nov. 27 Chaplain Judson preaches and prays to us, and his son gets drunk and swears at us, and one does as much good as the other.⁹

Nov. 29 The Rebs took Dr. Crawford prisoner with some of our wounded. They robbed him of all his clothes. An Irish woman living near the camp gave the Dr. some clothing. She gave him a pair of her own drawers.

[June 9, 1863 Syllas Wesson, wounded in the thigh at Brandy Station, is sent home for a month. He misses Gettysburg where the 8th Illinois Cavalry fired the first shot and suffered severely.]

Aug. 31 Gen. Kilpatrick sent a letter to a lady living on our picket line. Simon and I carried her the letter, she was very polite to us, she wrote to Gen. Kilpatrick and gave us the letter. "Old Kill" will never get that letter.¹⁰ [right]



⁶ From the regimental history, "Our only loss was the capture of Kitsmiller, of Company K, whose horse fell with him when he was struck by a sabre, stunned and made prisoner." Henry Keitzmiller of Plainfield re-enlisted as a veteran and died in Ohio in 1893.

⁷ Reverend Philo Judson of Evanston was an "old time, circuit riding" preacher.

⁸ Sergeant Richard C. Vinson was mortally wounded at Williamsport in pursuit of the rebel army after Gettysburg. "Vinson was calm and composed and met his fate in a soldier-like manner" per the regimental history.

⁹ Philo Judson, Jr. was the regiment's commissary sergeant.

¹⁰ Kilpatrick had quite a reputation as a ladies' man, to put it mildly. He was known as "Kill Cavalry" by troopers.

Sep. 3 Co. I had captured a Rebel who had come home to see his sweetheart. The girl cried and cursed the Yankees but we took her “Jack” any how. While she bade him good-bye, “Golly” how she kissed him.

Sept. 30 The girl who kissed her lover Jack good-bye and cried and hugged him is still here and her house is full of Officers of the 11th and 12th Corps. She seems happy with her Yankee lovers, wonder if all girls are the same.

Dec. 25 A dull cold Christmas, Simon Suydam¹¹ and I went on a scout, we stopped at a house where there was a young lady, there was a gold watch on the table, Simon took it, the woman squealed and begged for the watch. He gave it back to her and said “Keep it”. Simon is a good boy, and the young lady seemed very happy, and they smiled at each other so nicely.

Jan. 3 [1864] Went out to a farm house to get dinner, paid a dollar for rye coffee and corn pone, had just as soon had dinner on “hard Tack” and good coffee, one of the young ladies was nervous, she screamed and kicked at Simon Suydam while we were eating our dinner, guess that is what the Old Lady charged us a dollar apiece for.

June 23 Anson Kean found a small red keg full of something at Brigade Headquarters, he thought it was beer, so he stole it and carried it into camp, called the boys to come and take a drink. He tapped the keg and it was vinegar, the boys were mad, they took a cup put in some vinegar and salt and made Anson drink it. We call Anson Kean “Red Keg” now.¹²



Sep. 1 Thomas J. Austin cut the telegraph wires when Early invaded Maryland. We got him today; he won't cut wires any more.

Sep. 19 I have got Old Charley back. I rode him a short time in the spring of 62. I will keep him now as long as he lives. [See post-war photo at top of Wesson with Old Charley.]

Oct. 10 In camp at White Plains, I tried to get some potatoes out of a garden but the woman living there would pick up the potatoes as fast as I dug them. I had to give up.

Nov. 23 I said damn it this morning to the Chaplain, he took me down and punched me with his fists. He is a good Methodist, and won't let the boys swear.¹³ [Future Chaplain Spencer's 1862 photo on left shows him as a no nonsense cavalryman.]

¹¹ Simeon Suydam, born in 1839, survived the war and lived until 1918. His brother Cornelius in the same company died of disease at Alexandria, Va. in 1862.

¹² Anson Culver Keene was only 18 when he stole the keg. Perhaps the vinegar helped him live until 1934.

¹³ Chaplain William A. Spencer of Evanston Illinois, 1861 graduate of Northwestern University, served two years in the ranks before being named chaplain. He eventually earned a doctorate in divinity and became a well know Central Illinois Methodist minister.

Jan. 5 [1865] There was a big ball and sleigh ride at Headquarters, the horses ran away and upset the sleigh and the boys stole the officer's gloves and overcoats when they were gone to supper.

Feb. 25 Bill Willard has got a sweet heart.¹⁴ She came in camp to see him, she is twice as big as he. I wonder how he made love to her.

May 1 The time is long, nothing to do, nobody to shoot at, I would like to go home, Rebel soldiers are coming home in squads. They don't look very happy.

July 25 Paid off in "Gold Option" Bonds¹⁵, am going home tomorrow and "Old Charley" is going with me. We have fought it out together and we go home together.

¹⁴ Louisiana born William Willard was 26 and 5 feet 5 ½ inches tall when he re-enlisted in 1863. He drew a pension by 1879. He left his 1865 plus sized southern girlfriend behind and married a Canadian born lady 7 years his junior.

¹⁵ Wesson might have been paid in older U.S. government bonds that would have traded at a premium, in greenback denominated prices, in 1865.

SAVE THE DATE: 3RD ANNUAL TCCWRT PICNIC - JULY 18, 2023



Tuesday, July 18, 2023, from 4:00 to 7:00

Wabun B picnic area, Minnehaha Park

Food! Fun! Maybe a Trivia Contest!

GRANDPARENTS NIGHT WITH CLARA BARTON AT OUR MARCH MEETING



Clara Barton, played by Leslie Goddard with the grandchildren guest.



Members enjoying themselves at the March meeting.

NEW MEMBER



New member David Johnston with President Brett Johnson.

STATE CAPITAL TOUR

Tuesday, April 18th at 6:15 p.m. we will have a guided tour of the Capitol Building. The tour will start promptly at 6:15, so get there early. Assemble at the visitor center inside the capitol. There

are parking ramps around, but street parking is free after 6 p.m. Handicap accessible drop-off spots are available near the main entrance, and there are elevators in the building.

Brian Pease, leader of the state historian group, will advise us a few weeks ahead as to the availability of the Civil War paintings room in the governor's reception room. If it is not available, the tour will be postponed until the following Tuesday, April 25, at 6:15 p.m. The tour will include many areas of the capitol building.

To register, email at info@tccwrt.com or call or text Carol at 952-380-6066. Reservations are limited to 30. Carol will keep a wait list. And if we get another 30, we'll schedule again at a later date.

STEVEN SCHIER'S TRIVIA QUESTION ANSWER:

Walt Whitman.

CONTACT US:

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<https://tccwrt.com/>

Can you contribute to a future newsletter? Writers are wanted to submit Civil War related articles to this newsletter.

Please submit your drafts to Bruce Cooper: earlofbuce@hotmail.com