

Quick Step News

Volume 7, Issue 7

March 2005

March Speaker

Monday March 7th

HSMC at 7:30 PM

Mr. Donald Ernsberger

Author: Paddy Owen's

Regulars: A History of the 69th
Pa "Irish Volunteers"

Thanks to members Pat
Bradley and Christine for their
presentation on women's
clothing of the Civil War
Period.

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The 69th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry was originally the Second Regiment (Irish Brigade), 2nd Division, Pennsylvania Militia. It was formed from several State Militia groups: The Irish Volunteers, Hibernian Greens, Emmett Guards, Jackson Guards, Meagher Guards, Shields Guards, Patterson Light Guards, and the United Guards. The vast majority of the Regiment were Irish Descendants and Immigrants from the city of Philadelphia, though some came from Schuylkill County. By the start of the war the Regiment would be assigned to the California Brigade and designated the 2nd California. The Commanding Officer of the Brigade was Col. (Senator) Edwin Baker of California, who felt that California would remain loyal to the union cause if it had some representation in the East. After Col. Baker's death at Balls Bluff the regiment was designated the 24th Pennsylvania, then a short time later the 68th Pennsylvania.

An effort was made by members of both the 68th Pennsylvania and the 69th NYNG to form an Irish Brigade out of New York. Governor Curtin of Pa. adamantly opposed the idea and threatened to withhold the pensions of anyone who defected to the Irish Brigade. The 68th reluctantly stayed in Pennsylvania. but requested to have their regimental designation changed to the 69th Pennsylvania in honor of the 69th NY, to which the Governor acceded. They were then assigned to the Philadelphia Brigade, the only brigade to be named after the city it came from. The other regiments of the brigade were the 71st, 72nd, and 106th Pennsylvania. The 69th Pennsylvania, though not the only Irish regiment from the state, would be the only Pennsylvania regiment to carry Green Regimental Colors. Their first set of colors would carry the State Seal on one side and the Maid of Erin Harp wreathed in Shamrocks on the other. The second regimental colors would have the same state seal on one side, but on the other side were the Round Tower, Wolfhound, Harp, and Fenian Sunburst.

Though fighting anti-Irish and Nativist sentiment both in Philadelphia and in the Army of The Potomac the Irish Volunteers from Philadelphia would distinguish themselves in battle throughout the war. They never lost their colors, nor did they ever leave the field of battle unless ordered to do so. They would earn 45 battle ribbons throughout the duration of the war, serving until Lee's Surrender. Brig. Gen. Smyth, in command of the 69th at Appomattox, would be the last General Officer killed in the war, and distinguished themselves in every engagement they were involved in.

The 69th was credited by Gen. Jos. Hooker as having executed the first successful bayonet charge of the war at Glendale during the Peninsula campaign when they singlehandedly charged uphill against a Confederate brigade, chasing them from the hill. They were heavily involved in the West Woods at Antietam, standing their ground though caught in a horseshoe by the Confederates (Including Stonewall's Brigade), taking extremely heavy losses until finally being ordered from the field.

At Gettysburg on the evening of July 2nd, they charged out against Wright's Brigade, who had taken the 2nd Rhode Island Artillery battery, and retook the guns. On the afternoon of the 3rd they were at the little stone wall in front of the copse of trees, the focal point for Pickett's Charge. Of the 250 men left in the 69th fit for duty not one man left his post. At one point they had become completely surrounded, and kept the fight going hand to hand until the charge was broken. They suffered 60 percent casualties in that charge, leaving only 100 men fit for duty.

From The California State Military Museum
<http://www.militarymuseum.org/69thPA.html>

Pennsylvania at Andersonville, Georgia 1905-2005

December 5th-9th, 2005
Reserve your seat NOW!

For single occupancy- \$425.00 per person. For double occupancy- \$275.00 per person. Half of payment is required to reserve your seat. Payment is due in full no later than August 1, 2005. All hotels include a continental breakfast.

Itinerary:

12/5/05- Depart Gettysburg, PA @ 6am. Lunch stop enroot.

Arrive @ 5pm in Greenville, SC/ check-in to LaQuinta Hotel

12/6/05- Depart Greenville, SC @ 7am. Arrive @ 1pm in Americus, GA/ check-in to Windsor Hotel. Lunch is on your own.

12/7/05- TBA

12/8/05- Depart Americus, GA @ 7am. Lunch stop enroot. Arrive @ 5pm in Hillsville, VA/ check-in to Fairfield Inn.

12/9/05- Depart Hillsville, VA @ 7am. Lunch stop enroot. Arrive @ 3pm in Gettysburg, PA.

For more information please contact:

Bob Dorsey 11050 Ft. Loudon Rd. Mercersburg, PA 17236
(717) 328-9474
eng128@comcast.net

Also see www.paatandersonville.com

Zook Post's Burial Record Book

Mr. William J Wells of Zook Post No. 11, G.A.R., is arranging a book which will be of great help to those having the Decoration Day services in charge. It is a burial record of the soldiers of the Republic interred in the different cemeteries of Montgomery county and includes those of the Revolutionary war, the War of 1812 and the late war. A space is allowed for each cemetery and opposite each name is the rank, company or ship, regiment or services, headstone and part of cemetery. The different cemeteries so far arranged are Montgomery, Norris City, Treemont, Swedesburg, St. John's, First Presbyterian, Catholic (new), Union, Bohem's, Mount Pleasant, Centennial, Methacton Mennonite, Lower Providences, Friends Meeting, near Centerville Chester county, Great Valley Baptist, St. John's, Evansburg, Lutheran, Worcester township, Bethel Methodist, Wentz, Reformed. He will communicate with all other points in the county, and with their help make a complete record. The record is as yet incomplete as it has only been started a short time. Mr. Wells would like all persons having and information in regard to the matter to communicate with him. This is a work of love on his part and no doubt will be valuable in after years as a reference book.

Published in the *Norristown Weekly Herald*

January 6, 1887

William Wells was born in Wales. He served in Company F of the 48th PA Vols. And held the rank of Sergeant. After the war he was employed as a schoolteacher and lived in Norristown. He died in 1916.

Joseph Kirby Corson

was the second son of Dr. Hiram Corson of Plymouth Meeting (Whitemarsh Township), PA. The Corson family was noted for their strong abolitionist sentiments and as members of the local Friends Meeting House. Joseph was born on November 22, 1836 at Maple Hill the Corson family home. The beginnings of his education began at that home where he was tutored before moving on to the Treemount Seminary in Norristown under the direction Rev. Samuel Aarons. At the age of 22 he received a Pharmacy degree. He then moved to St. Paul Minnesota where he stayed a short period of time before returning home and engaging in the lime business with his cousin Laurence at Norristown. With the outbreak of the Civil War, Corson who had enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania put his studies aside and mustered into the 4th Pennsylvania Volunteers for three months service. After being honorably discharged he served as a medical cadet in the US Army Hospital in Philadelphia. In 1863 he completed his studies at the university receiving his MD. He immediately accepted a commission as an Assistant Surgeon in the 6th Pennsylvania Reserves (35th Pennsylvania Volunteers). Following the war he practiced medicine with his father but returned to the Army in 1867 with the rank of Major. He saw active service on the Indian frontiers in Wyoming Idaho and Arizona. In 1884, he was commissioned Surgeon with the rank of Major. During his time of service he married Ada Carter whose family had traveled west from Virginia. After 30 years of active service he retired in 1897 and returned to Maple Hill. On May 13, 1899 Corson was awarded the Medal of Honor for removing a severely wounded soldier near Bristoe Station VA on October 14, 1863. Corson died on July 24, 1913 in the house where he was born. The house with his father's office still stands and is occupied by a member of the Corson Family. For additional information see *The Norristown Daily Herald* July 25, 1913

DR. SAMUEL B. SWAVELY, residing at the corner of Chestnut and Washington streets, Pottstown, is a native of Pottsgrove township, Montgomery county, where he was born April 13, 1847. He is the son of Aaron and Mary (Burdan) Swavely, the father being a native of Berks county and the mother of Montgomery county. They had five children: four sons and one daughter, of whom Dr. Samuel B., Levi and John survive.

Aaron Swavely (father) was a blacksmith all his life in Potts Grove township, Boyertown and Pottstown. He went to Pottstown about 1868, and was engaged in his trade there to the time of his death in 1896, dying on his seventy-third birthday. His wife died in 1900, aged seventy-four years. The parents of Dr. Swavely were both Lutherans. The father was a soldier in the war of the Rebellion, belonging to the One Hundred and Seventy-sixth Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers, serving nine months in all. He was for one term tax collector of the borough of Pottstown.

Dr. Samuel Swavely lived in Boyertown until he was ten years of age and then went to Pike township, residing in that vicinity until he was twelve or thirteen years of age. He attended the common school and on February 29, 1864, when he was only sixteen years old, enlisted in Company B, Fiftieth Pennsylvania Volunteers, Army of the Potomac, and served until the close of the war. He was in the following actions; battle of the Wilderness, Ny River, Spottsylvania Court House, Cold Harbor, City Point, and in front of Petersburg, and assisted in undermining Fort Stedman. He was present at the time of Lee's surrender at Appomattox, and then went to Washington, D. C., and thence to Gettysburg, where the regiment took part in the dedicatory services of the monument on that famous battlefield, and was mustered out July 30, 1865. At Spottsylvania his trousers were pierced by a bullet, and his cap while he was on picket duty in front of Petersburg. Again, in front of Petersburg, the tin cup from which he was drinking was shot away. He then entered as a student at Kallyenan Academy, and, on leaving that institution, taught five years in Montgomery county and two years in Berks county, after which he took up the study of medicine at Jefferson Medical College, graduating in 1877. He began practicing at Blue Rock, Chester county, now called Elverson. He remained there until the spring of 1882, when he went to Pottstown and has practiced there since.

On February 11, 1869, he married Miss Mary D. Buck, daughter of Henry and Annie (Dunn) Buck. They had two children, Cora Alice and one who died in infancy. Cora Alice married James M. Reigner, of Pottstown. They have one child, Charles. Mrs. Mary D. Swavely died November 17, 1880 aged thirty years. She was a member of the Lutheran church.

On July 11, 1895, Dr. Swavely married Miss Annie Elizabeth Smith, of Phoenixville, daughter of Adam and Elizabeth (Swavely) Smith. Dr. Swavely was confirmed in the Lutheran church. Mrs. Swavely was raised in the Methodist faith. Dr. Swavely belongs to Madison Lodge, No. 466, Independent Order of Odd Fellows, and to Graham Post, No. 196, G. A. R. Politically he is a Democrat and has been an active and influential worker in the ranks of that party since 1868. He is a councilman from the fifth ward of Pottstown, serving his second term. He was president of the school board in West Nantmeal township, Chester county. In 1902 he made



the canvass for county commissioner on the Democratic ticket, receiving the highest vote polled in the convention, but was defeated at the election by a small vote.

The parents of Mrs. Annie Elizabeth Swavely were natives of Germany and came to America about 1852. Mrs. Swavely was born in Phoenixville, where her parents still reside.

Reprinted from Ellwood Roberts' Biographical Annals, 1904: Montgomery Co, PA Vol. I - pp. 412-3.

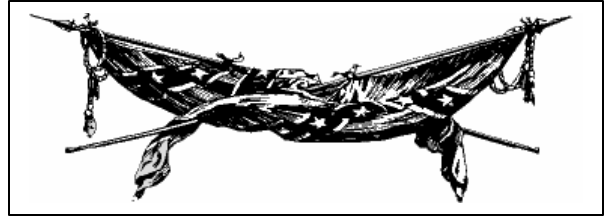
History of the 50th Pennsylvania Veteran Volunteer Infantry

Organized at Harrisburg October 1, 1861. Left State for Washington, D.C., October 2, 1861, thence moved to Annapolis, Md., October 9. Attached to Stevens' Brigade, W. T. Sherman's South Carolina Expedition, to April, 1862. District of Beaufort, S.C., Dept. South, to July, 1862. 1st Brigade, 1st Division, 9th Army Corps, Army Potomac, to September, 1862. 2nd Brigade, 1st Division, 9th Army Corps, Army of the Potomac, to April, 1863, and Army of the Ohio to June, 1863. 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division, 9th Army Corps, Army of the Tennessee, to August, 1863. 2nd Brigade, 1st Division, 9th Army Corps, Army Ohio, to April, 1864. 2nd Brigade, 3rd Division, 9th Army Corps, Army Potomac, to September, 1864. 2nd Brigade, 1st

Division, Army Potomac, to July, 1865. SERVICE. --Sherman's Expedition to Port Royal, S. C, October 21-November 7, 1861. Sailed on Steamer "Winfield Scott" and shipwrecked off coast of North Carolina. Occupation of Beaufort, S.C., December 6. Port Royal Ferry, Coosaw River, January 1, 1862. Duty at Port Royal Island, S.C., until July, 1862. Barnwell's Island, S.C., February 10 (Co. "D"). Pocotaligo May 29. Camp Stevens June 7. Moved to Hilton Head, S.C., thence to Newport News, VA, July 14-18, thence to Aquia Creek and Fredericksburg, VA, August 3-6. Operations in support of Pope August 6-16. Pope's Campaign in Northern Virginia August 16-September 2. Sulphur Springs August 24. Battles of Groveton August 29; Bull Run August 30; Chantilly September 1. Maryland Campaign September 6-24. Battles of South Mountain, MD, September 14; Antietam September 16-17. March to Pleasant Valley September 19-October 2, and duty there until October 25. Movement to Falmouth, VA, October 25-November 19. Battle of Fredericksburg December 12-15. Burnside's 2nd Campaign January 20-24, 1863. At Falmouth until February 12. Moved to Newport News February 12-14, thence to Kentucky March 21-26. Duty at Paris, KY, until April 27. Moved to Nicholasville, Lancaster and Stanford April 27-29, thence to Somerset May 6-8, thence through Kentucky to Cairo, Ill., June 4-10, and to Vicksburg, Miss., June 14-17. Siege of Vicksburg, Miss., June 17-July 4. Advance on Jackson, Miss., July 5-10. Siege of Jackson July 10-17. At Milldale until August 12. Moved to Covington, KY, August 12-23. Burnside's Campaign in East Tennessee August to October. Action at Blue Springs, Tenn., October 10. Clinch Mountain October 27. Knoxville Campaign November 4-December 23. Campbell's Station November 16. Siege of Knoxville November 17-December 5. Pursuit of Longstreet's army to Blain's Cross Roads December 5-26. Reenlisted at Blain's Cross Roads January 1, 1864. Moved to Annapolis, MD, April, 1864. Rapidan Campaign May 4-June 12. Battles of the Wilderness May 5-7; Spottsylvania May 8-12; Ny River May 9; Spottsylvania C. H. May 12-21. Assault on the Salient May 12. North Anna River May

23-26. Ox Ford May 24. Line of the Pamunkey May 26-28. Totopotomoy May 28-31. Cold Harbor June 1-12. Bethesda Church June 1-3. Before Petersburg June 16-18. Siege of Petersburg June 16, 1864, to April 2, 1865. Mine Explosion, Petersburg, July 30, 1864. Weldon Railroad August 18-21. Poplar Springs Church or Peeble's Farm September 29-October 2. Reconnaissance on Vaughan or Squirrel Level Road October 8. Boydton Plank Road, Hatcher's Run, October 27-28. Fort Stedman March 25, 1865. Appomattox Campaign March 28-April 9. Assault on and fall of Petersburg April 2. Pursuit of Lee to Burkesville April 3-9. Moved to City Point, thence to Washington, D.C., April 21-28. Grand Review May 23. Present at the laying of corner stone at Gettysburg July 4. Mustered out July 30, 1865.

During service, the regiment lost 8 Officers and 156 Enlisted men either killed and mortally wounded and 4 Officers and 180 Enlisted men due to disease. Total lost 348.



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