

THE INDIANA LEGION

ORLANDO A SOMERS CAMP #1 KOKOMO
JOHN AUTEN CAMP # 8 SOUTH BEND
WILLIAM P BENTON CAMP#28 CENTERVILLE
JOHN B ANDERSON CAMP #223 COLUMBUS

JOHN W. FOSTER CAMP #2 EVANSVILLE
CHAMPION HILL CAMP #17 HUNTINGTON
DAVID D PORTER CAMP #116 VALPARAISO
BEN HARRISON CAMP #356 INDIANAPOLIS

Newsletter of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Department of Indiana
Timothy J. Beckman – Commander
Issue 1-20



“All for the Union!! Indiana will answer the call!!”



From the Desk of the Department of Indiana Commander - Timothy J. Beckman



Brothers, I hope all are staying healthy in these most unique times. Wow, how are lives have changed in only about a month's time due to the COVID-19 outbreak. I know that many of our camps in the department have not met since early March. I would encourage all of our members to stay safe and follow the guidelines from our public health officials. As of this writing, it now appears that Indiana will be in a "Staged" opening, according to Governor Holcomb's Executive Order, 20-26, until early July. With that said, it appears very likely that our Annual Encampment, scheduled for June 6, 2020 in Kokomo, will have to be held "virtually" via remote means. General Orders, Series 2019-2020, 17 and 22 allow the use of remote audio, video, or both conferencing until August 15th, 2020. Please watch your e-mail for an important Department Order concerning our Annual Encampment, by the middle of May. Since this will be my last post as your department commander, I would like to thank all of you for your support of me and the department over the last 2 years. It has been my most sincere honor and privilege to have served as your department commander. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to send me an email at the following address: timbeckman@gmail.com

Mid-Winter Encampment – Department of Indiana S.U.V.C.W. , at Eden, Indiana, Hancock County, January 25, 2020

Department Commander Tim Beckman called the encampment to order at the Eden Methodist Church. There were 22 brothers in attendance. Our special guest was Harry W. Reineke IV, PDC, from the Department of Illinois and National Council of Administration member who represented Commander-in-Chief Ed Norris. The Department had a very productive business meeting and a very enjoyable lunch and a great 3-D Civil War presentation after lunch. A special Thank

*Remembering the sacrifices made by the soldiers and sailors of the Civil War who fought to preserve the Union
we are dedicated to continuing the patriotic work begun by our parent organization,
The Grand Army of the Republic*

You to the Ben Harrison Camp No. 356 for all of their hard work in hosting the encampment. A very enjoyable time was had by all who attended.

Per the norm, reports from camps and department officers were given to those assembled. (Finding out about the activities of the department officers and other camps is an excellent reason for brothers to attend the encampments.)

Under ‘Old Business’ reports were given; on the status of the Wells County ‘Gettysburg’ cannon, on the status of the ‘Last Soldier Project’, on the Evansville GAR Hall Records update, the 30th Indiana Battle Flag Restoration update, and other concerns and activities. (All these are very good reasons for the attendance by the brothers in the Department.)

Under ‘New Business’ the encampment heard about the need for a Treasurer/Signatory backup on the Department Bank Account. We also covered the request for the following; for donations to save and preserve the Howe Military School cannon, the status of the Col. Sion Bass monument in Ft. Wayne, and about camp websites and contact information, and other items of interest for the Department. (All these are very good reasons for brothers to attend the Department Encampments.)

(You may have noticed there is a theme here. **“There are good reasons for your attendance at the encampments!!!”** Besides being brought up to date on activities and actions and status reports that everyone of us, as ‘Sons’ dedicated to preserving the heritage and memory of the men who wore the blue you just ‘may be’ the person who has a solution to some of the problems and questions that have a bearing on what we do and what affect it has on the order. **“Your attendance is important. We are a brotherhood of patriots.”**)



2020 Midwinter Encampment Photos

During the lunch break at the 2020 Midwinter Encampment, Department Commander Beckman presented the Dr. Mary Edwards Walker award to Jennifer Kay Thompson for her many years of service to the Ben Harrison Camp, No. 356. In addition, in 2013, Jenny organized the Eliza E. George Auxiliary to the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War Benjamin Harrison Camp No. 356 and also became one of its charter members which, up to that time, was the first Auxiliary that had been in Indiana for many years. Unfortunately the Eliza E. George Auxiliary had to surrender their charter at the end of 2019, due to too few members. Jenny transferred her membership and is now a member of the Jennie Wade Auxiliary No. 27, Department of Pennsylvania. Jenny is also a member of the Catharine Merrill Tent No. 9 (Indianapolis) Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War.



Sister Jennifer Thompson and Department Commander Beckman



Treasurer’s report – (Nothing funny this time. No jokes or cartoons. Just the straight skinny as we sailors used to say.)
As of -April, 28, 2020 -- \$ 10,688.50

Lincoln Day Ceremonies at the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial in Lincoln City, IN

Eighteen members of the department attended the annual Lincoln Day ceremonies at the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial in Lincoln City, IN, on February 9, 2020. Members of the 27th Indiana, Co. D, S.V.R. posted and retired the colors for the ceremony. In addition, the department and the John W. Foster Camp No. 2 (Evansville) presented wreaths in honor of President Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, at her gravesite.



Brothers of Dept. of Indiana – SUVCW



About to Start the Ceremony in the Chapel



Cemetery – Lincoln's Boyhood Home



Dept. of Indiana – SUVCW Cemetery That Holds the Remains of Lincoln's Mother



Outer Hall of Chapel at Lincoln's Boyhood Home – Spencer Co. Indiana

A Step Back In Time
Submitted by J. Alan Teller, PDC



(Yes, Brother Teller has been around for a long time but it is not true that Matthew Brady took this photo)

The photo above is of, left to right, Charles “Charlie” Hughes, David Waterman Wiley and myself taken November 9, 2002. It was taken near City Cemetery in Connersville, Ind. (This is the town I was born and raised in.) Charlie had arranged a gravestone dedication ceremony for a previously unmarked Civil War Soldier. The soldier was Pvt. Oscar G. Wetherald He served in Co. K 40th Indiana Volunteer Infantry, IVI. He enlisted March 25, 1864 and died Dec. 14, 1864 at Nashville, TN. The records say he was discharged Dec. 6, 1864.

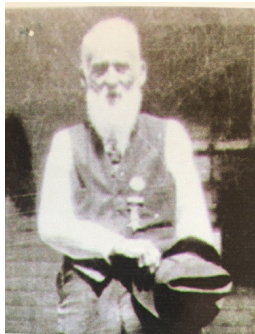
The rest of the story is he was 13 years old. He is buried beside his brother who served in Co. K 40th IVI and died June 18, 1864 from wounds suffered at Kennesaw Mountain. The older brother, Corp. Henry L. Wertherhald, enlisted Dec, 30, 1861. Now unbeknown then was a Pvt. Oscar Weatherold Co. K 40th IVI has a headstone at the Nashville National Cemetery. The stones are for the same person with different spellings. So where is our soldier buried?

Now the other two men in the photo, both were members of Harrison Camp #356 until their deaths. Both also severed as Sergeants in the armed forces. First Charlie Hughes was born May 29, 1923 in Connersville and died Oct. 13, 2018 at the age of 95. His Civil War ancestor was Pvt. Thomas B. Garrison Co. F 146th IVI. Charlie served in the U. S. Army Air Corp in WW II as a gunnery SGT. on a B25 Mitchell Bomber. There were normally two gunners operating three 50 caliber machine guns. Charlie spent his life in Connersville; most of it across the street from City Cemetery. On Memorial Day he placed flags on the graves of all veterans in the cemetery by himself for years. Eventually the American Legion aided in the chore.

In 2002 David Wiley was Jr. Vice Commander of the Department of Indiana. His ancestor was Captain Ephraim W. Wiley, Co H 8th Marine Regiment. In 1997 he retired to Bloomington, IN. David Waterman Wiley was an American actor, theatre director, and professor associated with several theatre groups and colleges.” He was also the editor of our newsletter The Legion. He served as a Sergeant in the U. S. Army during the Korean War. He had taught at Indiana University, University of Hawaii at Hilo and University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. He was very proud of his grandfathers service in the Civil War and wrote a historical account of his service called “The Paper Trail”. It is on file at the 8th Maine Memorial Building at 13 Eighth Maine Avenue, on Peaks Island, Maine 04108.

Aaron Stearns Davis (1839-1929)

Article Submitted by Julian Smith, John B. Anderson Camp #223

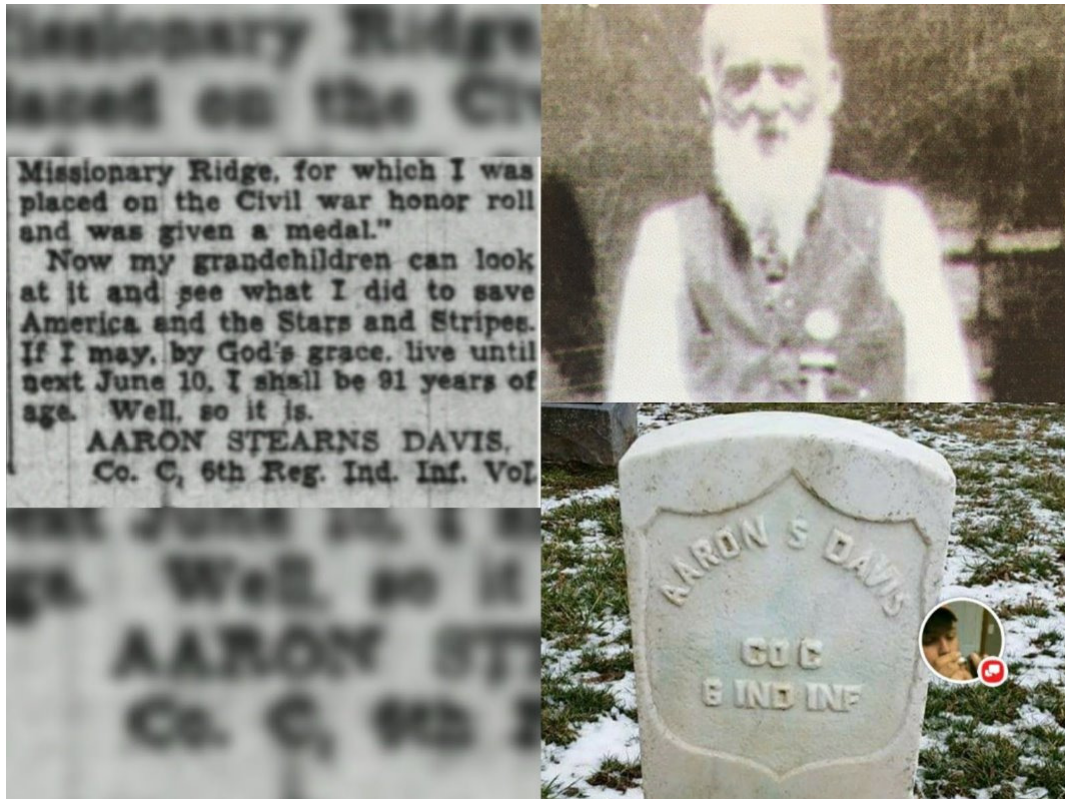


Aaron Stearns Davis was born June 10, 1839 in Newbern, Indiana. He was the seventh of twelve children born to Reverend Aaron and Sally Henderson Davis. Eleven of the 12 children were boys. He and 5 brothers wore blue and fought to preserve the Union. Aaron's only sister, Sarah, married Samuel Jasper Beck. He too chose to enlist in Lincoln's Army when the call for 75,000 volunteers went out. In August 1861, Aaron mustered into the 6th Indiana Volunteer regiment Co. C (three months), with his eventual father in law Alfred Vickery, and his brother in law Samuel Beck, as a private.

It was originally thought the affair would be shortly settled, and when that quickly was seen not to be so, they promptly re-enlisted for a three year term. The 6th Indiana, was the first Indiana Regiment enlisted in the Civil War, (Regiments 1-5 mustered during the War with Mexico). At Madison, Indiana, after being treated to a hearty banquet and being presented a Regimental flag

hand stitched by the local Ladies Auxiliary, (which was carried throughout the war), the 6th boarded a steamboat and sailed downriver to Louisville, Kentucky. Sometime after arriving at Louisville and marching south toward Munfordville, Aaron, as was quite common, contracted pneumonia. It was feared for several days that he would perish, as several did. Soldiers had not

been issued winter clothing and had very little protection from the elements. The novelty and patriotic fervor soon subsided even though Aaron and the 6th had not yet "seen the Elephant". Though several boys from the 6th never made it out of Kentucky, Aaron did fully recover, except for one lingering handicap. He could not speak a word above a whisper, and was never able to speak again until after the war and returning home to Indiana.



From central Kentucky, the 6th made its way to the Tennessee River where they once again, and perhaps for the last time in the war, were carried by some propulsion other than their own feet to disembark at Pittsburg Landing at the close of the first day of action at the Battle of Shiloh Church. The Union Army, being pushed as far as possible during the first day and with their backs against the river, and after General Beauregard prematurely notified President Davis of a glorious victory, the 6th along with other sorely needed reinforcements, lately arrived, stormed up over the bank from the landing and drove the Confederates from the field and all the way to Corinth, Mississippi.



Monument at Shiloh



Monument at Stone's River

Aaron and the 6th then marched to north eastern Alabama where they spent several weeks on light duty and were quite astonished at the bounty of the land to forage and the support and spirit of fraternity exhibited by the local population. After becoming battle veterans, and losing their Colonel Baldwin to a Shiloh battlefield wound, the 6th then marched east through northern Alabama, north back to Kentucky (and skirmished with Confederates east of the Battle of Perryville near Danville). They then marched south to the area just south and west of Murfreesboro TN. Here, they met with a surprise as the Confederates struck hard and fast on the Union right flank nearly rolling up the entire union Army on first day of the Battle of Stones River.

Resulting indirectly from the battle was the loss of Aaron's Brother in Law Samuel Jasper Beck from disease. As a direct result was the loss of his 55 year old Uncle serving with the 39th Indiana, Pvt. Benjamin Davis who lies buried in the National Cemetery at Stones River.

From Murfreesboro, the 6th marched along what is now Interstate 24. (The men were amazed at the number and size of rattlesnakes as they found in crossing the mountains). They reached Chattanooga, Tennessee and went just a bit farther into Georgia in an attempt to surprise and crush Confederate General Braxton Bragg at Chickamauga Creek. Aaron and the 6th were heavily engaged on both days at Chickamauga, once again losing their beloved Colonel Baldwin who was mortally wounded.

From Chickamauga the 6th fell back north to Chattanooga allowing Confederates to occupy the high ground on Look Out Mountain and Missionary Ridge as they laid siege to the city. General U.S. Grant, recently appointed to command following Rosecrans, determined the Army would break out of Chattanooga and end the Confederate siege of the city by first taking the heights of Lookout Mountain (this was a formidable task in the best of circumstances). In order to do so, Grant planned to first create a diversion and avert Confederate attention from Lookout Mountain by making it appear the main focus of the assault was to be Missionary Ridge. As the intended ruse began, Aaron and the boys of the 6th found themselves at the base of the nearly three hundred foot vertical incline of Missionary Ridge with no covering fire for protection. The Confederates were jubilantly firing from atop the ridge as if they were shooting fish in a barrel.

The rest of the story is best told by Private Davis in his own words...

"After we had gone about one-third the way up, Grant called for us to halt. It was horrible. The shot and shell were flying thick and boys were dropping all around me. I told Charley, the Lieutenant commander, 'I can't stay here', and I went over the top. After I went over the top, I was by myself. In front of me was a pond and on the edge of the pond were two cannon, one of which had a horse down, but they were trying to get him up. I saw a tree that hung out over the lake and I made for it. I saw what they were doing and I shot at them. Three of them ran down the road. There were three left, and one had a gun and shot at me several times and barked the tree I was under. I shot a few times at them and two left in a hurry leaving the one with the gun. I didn't see him though, I thought he was behind a horse, so I walked around behind the cannon and saw something that looked like him, so I shot at him, but I could not hit him, one of the horses being in the way. He ran, and while reloading I lost sight of him. Then he ran out about 20 feet from me and shot at me. Turning, he started to run, but I shot at him. I didn't go to see about my shot, for his took the top button off my trousers. The bullet went on and cut a tent rope I carried in my blouse into several pieces. When the bullet went between my trousers and body it burned like fire."

"I couldn't speak a word," (Remember he lost his voice in Kentucky. Ed.) "So I set my gun down by the wheel of the back cannon, then I climbed astride it and beat my hat out upon it trying to attract attention. I looked up and saw the army looking at me. Hundreds came down and took the cannon. Some of the boys said I had to go down and bury that dead man down there, but I did not go. I was the first man to cross Missionary Ridge, for which I was placed on the Civil War Honor Roll, and was given a medal. Now my grandchildren can look at it and see what I did to save America and the Stars and Stripes. If I may, by God's grace live until next June 10th, I shall be 91 years of age. Well, so it is."

Following the action at Missionary Ridge, Aaron and the 6th marched on toward Atlanta taking part in battles at Dalton, Resaca, and Kennesaw Mt., Georgia. Finally, those fortunate to survive the past three years were mustered out and allowed to return home to Indiana just before Sherman burned Atlanta and commenced his march to the sea. Private Aaron Stearns Davis was one of the fortunate. He survived to return to Indiana and surprisingly regained his voice (was it some weird form of PTSD?).

He settled in Hope, Indiana on the southeast corner of Seminary and Market Street and worked as a plasterer. He married twice. After his first wife Samaria, daughter of his messmate Alfred Vickery died childless and of Consumption, he, at 46 years of age married Lulu Shafer and fathered four children. He had three daughters and one son, Harry, who was the father of my Grandmother Madeline Marie Davis Smith. By God's grace Aaron did not live to see his 91st birthday as he mentioned above. Within a month of sharing his recollection with a reporter for The Evening Republican (Columbus, IN) in September of 1929, he ate a substantial lunch, sat down in his easy chair and peacefully passed on to his eternal rest, October 21, 1929. And his grandchildren, now knowing his story, still proudly remember his sacrifice and contribution today.

Aaron S. Davis Brothers, Uncles, Cousins, & Family in the War Between the States

Brother William Davis, 26th Indiana Volunteer Infantry, buried Southport, Indiana

Brother John Madison Davis, Surgeon unit? Buried Kansas

Brother Lewis J. Davis, Surgeon Medical Dept. U.S. Volunteers, Buried Chicago

Brother David Banner Davis, Surgeon 154th Indiana Volunteers, Buried Thorntown, Indiana

Aaron Stearns Davis, Co. C. 6th Indiana Volunteer Infantry, Buried Newbern, Indiana
Brother Samuel Davis, 10th Indiana Cavalry, Buried Hartsville College Cemetery, Hartsville, Indiana
Brother in law Samuel Jasper Beck, 6th Ind, died of pneumonia following battle of Stones River 1863, Buried Newbern, Ind.
Alfred Vickery, 6th Indiana Volunteer Infantry (father in law of Aaron), Buried Newbern, Indiana
Cousin Haley D Davis (Son of Jesse Davis), 33rd Ind. Vol., killed Battle of New Hope Church, Geo. 1864, Buried Marietta Nat. Cem.
Uncle Jesse Davis (Father of Haley's D. Davis), 10th Indiana Cavalry, Buried Hope Moravian Cemetery
Uncle Benjamin F. Davis, 39th Indiana Infantry, killed Battle of Stones River 1862, Buried Stones River Battlefield National Cemetery (Teamster) (Father of Lorenzo Dow Davis)
Cousin Lorenzo Dow Davis (Son of Benjamin Davis), 120th Indiana Volunteer Infantry, died of disease/buried Knoxville, TN 1864
Cousin Harrison Davis, 67th Indiana Volunteer Infantry, Buried Newbern, Indiana
Cousin Shabannah "Banner" Davis, 6th Indiana Volunteer Infantry, Buried Newbern, Indiana
Uncle Ephriam Davis, 18th REGIMENT GEORGIA VOLUNTEER INFANTRY ARMY NORTHERN VIRGINIA; C. S. A.
Cousin John L. Davis COMPANY C, 18th REGIMENT GEORGIA VOLUNTEER INFANTRY ARMY NORTHERN VIRGINIA; C.S.A.
Cousin Walton Ciecero Davis, Co C, 18th GA; C.S.A.
Cousin Merodith T. Davis, Company A, 16th Georgia Infantry; C.S.A.



Wreaths Across America Ceremony - Crown Hill National Cemetery, Indianapolis, IN

Seven members of the department attended the Wreaths Across America ceremony at Crown Hill National Cemetery in Indianapolis, on December 14, 2019. In addition, members of the 27th Indiana, Co. D, S.V.R participated in firing of three volleys near the close of the ceremony.

