

# THE OLD 129TH.

## The "Boys" Meet Once More and Visit and Tell Yarns and Enjoy Themselves.

Major C. J. Judd's History of the Regiment is Given.

The sixth yearly re-union of the old soldiers of the 129th Regiment, Illinois Volunteer Infantry, was held at Fairbury on the 4th inst. The delegation from Company B, or the Dwight Co., consisted of C. J. Judd, H. A. Kenyon, Northrop Riggs, Dwight, Ill., Wm. H. Bradbury, Topeka, Kansas, W. R. Snyder, Streator, Ill., Ira W. Hand, El Paso, Ill., and John McWilliams, Odell, Ill.

Co. A, recruited at Pontiac and Co. E, from Fairbury, were well represented. There were also a few from other companies, the total number of old soldiers of the Regiment present being 61.

President John C. George of Co. C, was in chair and Smith E. Olney of Co. E, secretary. The Fairbury double quartette club with a pianist furnished excellent music. The soldiers assembled in the opera house in the afternoon about 3 o'clock, many of the citizens of Fairbury being present, when the following program was carried out:

- Dram Call.....Comrade McDonald
- Prayer.....Rev. W. L. Riley
- Address of Welcome.....Major John W. Beers
- Response.....W. D. Wilson, formerly Drum Major of the Regt. and President of the Society
- Hymn "America".....Led by Chas. Neitz
- Address.....President John C. George
- Tramp! Tramp! Tramp!
- Quartette Club of Soldiers

Letters of regret on account of inability to attend were then read by the secretary from the following old soldiers: Chaplain Thos. Cotton, Purdy, McNarry Co., Tenn. L. H. Whitson, Co. C, Los Angeles, Cal., Ed. J. Sanford, Co. B, Kansas City, John Langston, Co. G, Eli Lower, Co. B, Lancaster, Carroll Co., Ill., Geo. H. Blakesley, Co. G, Lomax, Neb., Judge A. Sample, Paxton, Ill., Lafayette Arnold, Griggs-ville, Ill., and two or three others.

A chairman's gavel cut out of a laurel root from Lookout Mountain during the regiments stay at Wauhatchie in April 1864, was presented the society in an appropriate speech by Henry E. Snyder of Co. A, and received by the president with the assurance that it would be carefully preserved during the existence of the organization, and afterwards placed in the state depository at Springfield with a suitable inscription.

The officers for the ensuing year, 1895 selected by a committee appointed by the chair and approved by the meeting, were President H. A. Kenyon, Dwight; Vice-president S. H. Gaff, Pontiac; Sec. ary, Zeph Winters, Pontiac; Treasurer, C. J. Judd, Dwight; Executive Committee, W. D. Wilson, Delos Robinson, J. E. Fitzgerald, Indianapolis, John McWilliams, Odell, Alonzo Dill, Winchester; Historian, Geo. H. Blakesley, of Co. G, whose history of the regiment is expected to be good.

The place for the next meeting is Pontiac.

The veterans reassembled at 8 o'clock in the evening. The attendance of citizens was much greater than in the afternoon, the floor and gallery of the spacious hall being well filled with interested spectators. The long roll and other military calls were effectively given by W. D. Wilson, who had not forgotten how to handle the snare drum. After prayer by Rev. W. L. Riley, and the inevitable "Marching Through Georgia," led by Chas. Neitz and the elee club, the following accurate and concise history of the regiment and its movements was read by C. J. Judd, and attentively listened to and highly appreciated by the audience of citizens as well as by "the old boys":

The 129th Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry was organized at Pontiac, Ill., in August, 1862, by Col. George S. Smith. Mustered into service September 8 with 944 officers and enlisted men. The regiment was composed of five companies from Livingston, four from Scott and one from Rock Island county.

Field and Staff—Colonel, Geo. S. Smith; lieutenant-colonel, Henry Case; major, A. J. Crospey; adjutant, P. D. Plattenburg; quartermaster, W. C. Gwin; surgeon, H. C. Johns; assistant surgeon, W. H. Walters; chaplain, Thos. Cotton.

Left Pontiac Sept. 18 and arrived at Louisville, Ky., Sept. 22, and assigned as the 38th Brigade, 12th Division, Gen. Du-mont commanding. We left Louisville October 3 on the Brazz campaign, via Frankfort and Danville, arriving at Crab Orchard the 17th, the 38th here being transferred to the 10th division, Brigadier Gen. R. S. Granger commanding.

Left Crab Orchard the 20th, via Perryville, arriving at Bowling Green the 30th. On November 21 the regiment was assigned for garrison duty at Mitchellville, Tenn. Left Mitchellville December 10 and on June 1, 1863, the regiment was distributed along the Louisville and Nashville railroad on guard duty against the continuous depredations of the famous Morgan guerrillas.

From June 1 to Aug. 22 the regiment garrisoned at Ft. Thomas at Gallatin Tenn. Left Gallatin Aug. 23, and on arriving at Nashville took position at the head of Cherry street as support to Fort Negley, remaining until Feb. 24, 1864, when, after six months of monotonous camp, train and guard duty, we broke camp, abandoned our lines of Sibley tents, and after fifteen days climbing over and through the rocks and mountains of Tennessee we arrived at Wauhatchie (at foot of Lookout mountain)

just after the great battle "above the clouds."

On May 2 we were transferred to the first brigade, composed of the 70th Ind., 70th Ohio, 102d, 105th and 129th Ill., no. 3d division 20th army corps, which comprised a consolidation of the eleventh and twelfth corps from the Army of the Potomac.

We now seemed to be full-fledged soldiers, having a habitation and a name. Brigadier General Ward commanding 1st brigade, Maj. Gen. Butterfield 3d division and Maj. Gen. Hooker 20th corps.

Left Lookout Valley May 3 as a portion of Sherman's army for Atlanta. On May 15 occurred the first general engagement of the regiment, brigade and division at Resaca, where for three hours we were confronted by an entrenched army supported by a battery. The engagement was at close quarters and the victory ours, capturing the battery and defeating our opponents. Our loss in killed and wounded was 66. Brigadier General Ward wounded, Col. Benj. Harrison of the 70th Indiana took command of the brigade. The enemy had more than twice this number killed in our immediate front, as shown by the burial records.

Our march continued through Buzzards' Roost, Lost Mountain, Dallas, Kennesaw Mountain, with day and night attacks and engagements, until July 20th, when we reached Peach Tree Creek, where occurred the greatest battle of our army experience. From a dinner attack until midnight an incessant hail of lead was delivered from both sides, and when the battle ended each side was confident of victory. The 129th occupied the extreme left of the 20th corps, and rendered effective service in protecting a gap between the 20th and 14th corps, and by a flank movement capturing a large number of prisoners. The early morning, however, developed the fact that the earthworks of the enemy, so successfully protected with underbrush and timbers, had been abandoned, during the night.

The loss in our regiment was 179. We followed our victory by rapid marching to the Chattahoochee river. After crossing with supplies we destroyed the bridge of the L. & N. R., and during the time witnessed the passage of Hood's great army in its famous northern march for Nashville. As we were preparing to leave no chance of retreat for ourselves, they were fording the river within two miles of us, each army, however, seemed well satisfied with its own plan of action and of fered no opposition.

Our next engagement was a siege of two weeks in front of Atlanta, here every species of arms were employed, with our camp in a little valley, in a direct line of the batteries and sharpshooters from the fortifications of Atlanta, and our artillery massed on an elevation just in our rear. Every member of the old 129th will have no trouble in bringing to his memory many an incident of this Atlanta campaign.

After two weeks of constant skirmishing between pickets and sharpshooters the siege ended by substituting all the bands in the front line of earthworks, and pouring out a medley of music, opening with "Hail Columbia" and continuing throughout their catalogue until the rear guard had disappeared. This exert afforded much amusement to all except the musicians, who were compelled to blow and pound in self-protection, the enemy being under the impression that we were celebrating some victorious news, permitted the bands to escape without attack. From this date due respect and reverence followed the musicians of the 20th corps for their bravery in holding the front during the capture of Atlanta. The army passing to the south and rear gave us Atlanta without serious loss. The prominent buildings, spires and chimneys gave evidence of the accuracy of our rifled batteries, otherwise the damage to the city was slight.

The deserted business blocks were within twenty-four hours as permanently occupied by the quartermaster, commissary and official headquarters of all branches of the army, and every detail of business conducted with systematic regularity as though we were at West Point rather than on the march in an enemy's country.

Such was the capability of volunteers that no matter what the necessity or what feature of requirement suggested, the man and the occasion always traveled as companions. No department of business, mechanics or science, but a practical representative was ever present. Any requirement could safely be called upon to supply a detail from a theologian to a linker.

With railroad transportation completely cut off from the north by the destruction of the Chattahoochee River bridge, our army settled down for an adjustment of present stock of supplies and to discuss and demonstrate "where we were at," and what our destination. The course of Hood's army heading for the North without interruption indicated quite plainly that our march was in another direction; what, when or where was only to be interpreted through the ever satisfactory army "Grapevine."

Marching orders soon disposed of further uncertainty. On November 15 the entire available force, consisting of the fourteenth corps, Maj. Gen. Davis and the twentieth corps, Brigadier Gen. Williams, composed the left wing under command of Maj. Gen. Schoen. The fifteenth corps, Maj. Gen. Osterhaus, and the seventeenth corps, Maj. Gen. Blair, composed the right wing under command of Maj. Gen. Howard. Add to this the independent cavalry command under Brig. Gen. Kilpatrick with two thousand artillery and the strength of this "march to the sea" under command of Maj. Gen. W. T. Sherman, was 62,000.

The line of march for the left wing was along the Georgia railroad in the direction of Augusta, while the right wing took the direction of Macon, along the Tenn., Va. & Ga. R. R., the cavalry and artillery intersecting both wings as circumstances required.

We soon ascertained that the supply trains occupied a central course between the two army lines and that no particular interest in relation to the regular army rations was observed. A few wagons loaded with salt, coffee, hard tack and ammunition in our immediate vicinity were simply kept sight of in case of emergency. Cavalry foraging parties made regular morning excursions, joining the line of march during each day with their wagons loaded with corn fodder, luscious smoked meats and delicious yams. We were for the first time in our army experience aloft in the southern confederacy and actually drawing rations from the enemy.

Army life presented a practical business feature, devoid of all the cant and protestations of extremists which had followed us for two years. The birth of a new regime had appeared when the kid glove policy was to be superseded by transferring the fortunes of war into the homes of the enemy. It is not surprising that the tastes of the soldier boys were revived for fowls and luxuries, and the abandoned plantations offered tempting resorts. Outside of authorized foraging, however, there were very few depredations which came under the ban of military discipline.

The route covered by parallel commands in this forty-day "March to the Sea" was a space of from three to ten miles in width. Our front was daily obstructed by cavalry who devoted their nights to intercepting our roads with fallen trees and the destruction of all bridges. However, nothing occurred to check our advance until we camped on the Shell pike, three miles in the rear of Savannah. Our northern army line occupied the swamp front while the 15th corps and 17th corps joined us on the right and supported the naval forces in the attack on Ft. McAllister. During the preparations for this event the commissary department having exhausted all supply except salt and coffee, details were organized to occupy rice mills, from three to five miles up the Savannah River, and these were operated with such promptness that the amount of rice were increased from one-half pound the second day to the amount of all that the requisitions asked for. There was only one little unpalatable feature connected with this ten days' luxurious feast—it was rice, pure and simple, plain and adulterated, not even a pinch of salt. We boiled it, seasoned only by itself; and for a few meals the boys thought it was quite fair. It was certainly an improvement on the split peas experiment which was tried on Western troops with no success; but following a month of ham and sweet potatoes there came a time when simply boiled rice, without salt and coffee, plain and straight, made the boys think of Christmas dinners at home.

Half a mile in front of our lines, wherever a shell road made transportation possible, huge siege guns from the coast defense had been brought and placed. These were of old smooth bore patterns, capable of using anything convenient, from spikes to sections of railroad iron, and the contents made music for us through the trees; but their accuracy was so uncertain that we were far more in danger from some gun on either side rather than those in front. Heavy skirmishing continued in our front from the capture of Ft. McAllister, which was accomplished through the assistance of the naval forces under Admiral Dahlgren, Dec. 13. The night of Dec. 20 the order for a general attack along the line was given, and at 3 a. m., Dec. 21, 1864, the advance was made; strong skirmishing was met, until the pressure of our lines reached within musket range of the earthworks, when the skirmish line of the enemy disappeared, and as rapidly as the daylight would permit we occupied the works and pushed into and occupied the city just as the Rebels were leaving the Carolina shore of the river. The twentieth corps having the honor of first entering Savannah, Maj. Gen. Geary was given command of the city.

Artillery practice was continued for a few hours, resulting in slight loss on our side, and the sinking of the Ram Tennessee, which was raised by the tide within range of our rifled parrots and sunk with her cargo of grain.

Stretching our pontoons the next few days found us well established in North Carolina, with our camps in the lines of old Fort Hardee. Continuing our march through Hampton, Fairfax and Blackville arrived at Congaree River, Feb. 16, just in time to find the bridge burned opposite Columbia, and to witness the burning by Hampton's command of hundreds of bales of cotton placed in the streets, and the wanton destruction of a large portion of the city from this action. The attempted charge that Gen. Sherman authorized the burning of Columbia had no foundation, as our army never entered the city until the pontoons were placed and the fires were well under way before there was any means of crossing the river. Upon our occupation of Columbia a large quantity of rebel ammunition, the state arsenal, several valu-

able foundries and factories for making confederate money, with vast quantities of money in every stage of manufacture was destroyed. Passing Catawba river we remained in camp near Hanging Rock for two or three days on account of high water from constant rains. March 3 we reached Cheraw and destroyed a large quantity of stores, including 3,600 barrels of gun-powder.

Thompson's creek, which had overflowed to a half a mile in width from destroyed dams, and in many places waist deep, was our next obstruction before reaching Fayetteville. March 15 we crossed Cape Fear River; in direction of Goldsboro. March 16 the twentieth corps met Hardee's army in a strong position near Averysboro. The afternoon engagement was a severe one but resulted in a victory for us with a loss in our regiment of sixty-six killed and wounded. Our brigade captured 208 prisoners, three guns, found 108 dead for burial, and 68 wounded. On the 19th the fourteenth corps, with two divisions of the twentieth, met Johnson's army at Bentonville, repulsed the attack and held their position against great odds until the next morning, when they were reinforced by the seventeenth corps. One thousand six hundred and twenty-five prisoners, 369 killed was the Confederate loss, while our loss in killed, wounded and missing was 1,581.

This virtually concluded the engagements in the Sherman campaign. On March 23 we made junction with Maj. Gen. Schofield's command, the twenty-third, and Maj. Gen. Terry's, the tenth corps, at Goldsboro, our division resting in front of Smithfield.

This was the conclusion of the most important campaign march of the war—455 miles in fifty days—Savannah to Goldsboro, and reaching our destination in superb condition. On April 11 we reached Smithfield to find it abandoned by Johnson's army. On April 12 we received Gen. Grant's official announcement of the surrender of Gen. Lee's army on the 9th at Appomattox Court House, Va. As we arrived in camp, near Raleigh, on April 13, the report of the assassination of President Lincoln reached us, and the troops were determined to redress the great wrong by destroying every vestige of Raleigh, but the calmer reasoning of Gen. Harrison, in whom the entire command had great confidence, any action was postponed for confirmation. April 17 further action was delayed under the excitement of reported surrender of Johnston's army to Gen. Sherman, near Durham station, twenty-six miles from Raleigh.

On April 26 the terms of surrender by Gen. Johnston to Gen. Sherman were soon completed at the Bennett farmhouse near Durham station. On April 28 the army, of which we were a part, commenced the march for Richmond, Va., reaching there May 11. We continued our homeward march, via Spotsylvania and Chancellorsville, reaching Alexandria May 20, and on the 23d crossed Long Bridge, at Washington and on the 24th participated in the Grand Review. In the language of Gen. Sherman, "this review was of the most magnificent army in existence—of sixty-five thousand men in splendid physique, who had just completed a march of two thousand miles in a hostile country."

For six hours and a half the strong tread of Sherman's army resounded along Pennsylvania avenue. The tattered and bullet-riven flags, festooned with flowers, met graceful appreciation from the massed thousands of enthusiastic spectators. The splendid success of this grand review formed an appropriate conclusion to the campaign and the great Civil War.

A few days' rest in camp and the 129th was transferred to Chicago via the B. & O. R. R., the first railroad transportation of this regiment during nearly three years' service. Our muster out dates Washington, June 8, 1865 and the discharge was completed at Chicago, June 25, 1865.

We mustered in Sept. 8, 1862 944  
Recruited 21  
Total 965  
Mustered out June 8, 1865 493  
Loss during service 472

To-day we celebrate our sixth annual reunion—the thirty-first anniversary. The morning report shows present for duty, 61; total present and absent, 236. Our little line is gradually shortening. A few years more and the tattered emblems in the archives at Springfield will be the only tangible memorial of a country's devotion. We leave to the friends who follow us the memory of a work well done and an untarnished record.

Field and Staff living—Col. George P. Smith, Humbolt, Kan.; Lt. Col. A. J. Crospey, Ogden, Utah; Maj. John A. Hoskins, Brazil, Ind.; Surg. H. C. Johns, Decatur, Ill.; Q. M. John McWilliams, Odell, Ill.; Chaplain Thos. Cotton, Purdy, Tenn.

The silk banner exhibited on the stage was the one presented to the 129th at Pontiac, Ill., by the ladies of Dwight just before the regiment left for service. It was carried in charge of the color-guard until we reached Kennesaw Mountain, Ga., when it was returned for preservation. From that time only National colors were used in the field.

After a song by the Quartette Glee Club, W. H. Badbury, of Co. B, by request recited his poem, entitled "The Soldier's Grave," which has recently

appeared in our columns, and was originally given at Dwight on May 31, 1879, when the soldiers' monument was dedicated in the West Park. This monument, said W. Badbury, was designed by Col. James B. Parsons of Ill. Natl. Guards and built under his direction. It was a temporary structure of wood, of pyramidal form, about 15 or 18 feet high, covered with white cloth and containing in black letters the names of soldiers of Dwight and vicinity who had been killed or died during the war.

At the close of the recitation W. H. Badbury spoke as follows:—  
"Ladies and Gentlemen and Comrades: In ancient Rome it was the custom to amuse the people by spectacles of cruelty—sword combats to the death. The gladiators greeted the assembly with the words 'Morturi salutamini!' (Being about to die we salute you.) Our steps are growing feeble and our heads are whitening for the tomb. After a few more meetings like this we shall have passed away. We have, as it were, only 'one more river to cross'—the river of Death! We, therefore, can also say 'Morturi salutamini. About to die we salute you!' Our case, however, is different from that of the gladiators. Their terrible fighting had to come on—ours is past. They fought from compulsion and to make a Roman holiday—we fought voluntarily and in a patriotic and righteous cause. It is a great gratification and satisfaction to us to believe and trust that after death our memory will be held dear by a generous people, just as we have been always cordially received, appreciated and honored by the living. Let it be our constant endeavor not to stain our honorable record, nor to lose our place in the hearts of our countrymen."

Then followed "Camp fire," or promiscuous speaking, anecdotes, incidents, reminiscences, etc., led by W. D. Wilson, drummer boy who sang a pathetic song of his own composing,—"Our Comrades are dropping off one by one," with much effect. He also delighted the audience with the comic character song—"Little Brown Jug." H. H. McDowell—formerly of Co. E.—Commander of the G. A. R. Dept. of Illinois, made a fluent and impressive speech, giving a graphic account of the sacrifices and peril of a Union lady who just escaped being hung as a spy. Comrades Henry E. Snyder and Delos Robinson related amusing anecdotes and incidents of life in camp and on the march. The Quartet Glee Club gave the humorous song and chorus of "Corporal Schnapps," which was much appreciated, and concluded with the sad but sweet strains of "Tenting on the old camp ground." In the excellent singing of this club the rich and powerful voices of some of the ladies gave an agreeable fullness to the general harmony. The younger part of the "old boys" wanted to continue the Camp-fire to a later hour; but the gray-headed chaps between 60 and 70, who were "not so young as they used to be," showed a strong desire to go to roost, and after a vote of thanks to the Glee Club the meeting closed. It was one of the best reunions ever held by the Regiment.

### Comrades.

A copy of the Dwight STAR containing above report will be sent to all members of the 129th Regt. who were present at the late reunion at Fairbury. In a later edition of the STAR will be printed a complete roster of the Regiment, including the name of every soldier who was at any time connected with the command, giving also under separate heads classified by companies the names and residence of surviving members. A request will also be made for the photograph of survivors to the end that the remainder of our little band may be gathered in remembrance if not as individuals at all future meetings of the organization. Comrades who cannot meet with us regularly should never omit to send a report by letter to be read before the meeting, and all are earnestly requested to send in to Headquarters at Dwight, Ill., the names and present address of every living comrade of the regiment whose name does not appear in the above report, not failing to note deaths and particulars necessary to make our record show the completed history until the last brother shall have been mustered out of existence. Be active in this effort brethren. Go back thirty years in your lives, round up the old incidents and relations of earnest day, put yourselves in touch with our organization by sending your names for membership enrollment. Begin your plans now for being present at the next reunion at Pontiac. We wish to send copies of the complete report to every survivor as well as the families of those who can no longer respond to our roll call. Perhaps you will wish extra copies of the complete historical report. If so you would better send in your order at once, as it will be published as soon as the matter can be fully compiled. Yours in affectionate remembrance,  
H. A. KENYON, PRES.,  
Late 1st Sergt., Co. B,  
Dwight, Ill.  
ZEPH WINTERS, SECRETARY,  
Pontiac, Ill.

### KEELEY LEAGUE NEWS.

Chas. Staffol, secretary Keeley League No. 43, Blue Island, Ill., class of May '92, arrived Wednesday with a brother whom he had induced to take the cure.  
The great and only Wm. P. Grinnick Secretary of Keeley League No. 4 Springfield, Ill., class of Dec. '91, brought in a friend for treatment Thursday.  
Edgar S. Bronson, city editor Morning Tribune, Trenton, Mo., who graduated at Dwight Christmas '91, arrived Sunday with a friend whom he placed in line for treatment.

Monday and Tuesday Secretary Brown enrolled the names of twenty new members on his books and at the club election Tuesday seventy seven votes polled. The majority of the patients arriving here during the past few months have joined the club.  
The following old graduates have visited Dwight during the past week: J. O. Gruehich and J. J. Schaeff, Metamora, Ill.; M. Fan, Benson, Ill.; Alonzo Todd, Louisiana, Mo.; J. E. Freed, Unionville, Mo.; Edgar S. Bronson, Trenton, Mo.; Chas. Staffol, Blue Island, Ill.

Col. W. E. Buchanan, of Bentonville, Ark., was appointed post laureate of the Dwight club by President Hayden at the meeting Tuesday. He was instructed, however, by the President that it would not be advisable for him to spring any poetry on the club at its regular meetings, or on entertainment nights.

The office of Secretary Brown, together with all the club furniture and property is to be removed to the treatment hall just as soon as the room can be gotten in readiness. The changes are now being made. The new location being in close proximity to the hotels it is thought the removal will meet with the approval of all the members.

Owing to the number of candidates for the different offices and their great popularity, the club election Tuesday was closely contested. The following officers were elected: President, Sidney Hayden, Holton, Kansas; 1st vice-president, Frank Sweny, Atlantic, Iowa; 2nd vice president, A. Lager, St. Louis, Mo. These three gentlemen are the heaviest weights that ever occupied the chairs at the same time.

August 20, 21 and 22, 1895.

The above dates have been practically decided upon for the next national Keeley League convention in Harrisburg, Pa. This early action was made necessary on account of there being so many annual meetings in Harrisburg in 1895 that it was necessary to engage halls to be sure of them. The national committee on transportation are already at work, and the Harrisburg people are laying plans for the entertainment of the visitors, which is sure to run away up into the thousands next year.

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