

# Camp Three Reveille

*A periodic publication of the Sons of the Union Veterans  
Camp Nelson-Garfield Memorial Camp#3  
([www.home.fuse.net/suvcw](http://www.home.fuse.net/suvcw))*

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## **THE CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION IN KENTUCKY: A SOUTHERN READJUSTMENT**

It has often been suggested by historians that Kentucky waited until after 1865 to secede from the Union. On the other side of the coin, few historians, using hindsight, question the loyalty and devotion of the "Bluegrass" State to the Union in 1861, when Kentucky failed to rally to the call of either of her native sons, Mr. Lincoln or Mr. Davis. If as some historians suggest, Kentucky did emerge from the Civil War with a stronger Southern tie than before, what caused the transformation? Why would Kentucky remain a thorn in the side of Radical Republicans during Reconstruction? Finally, why would ex-Confederates and pro-southern politicians dominate Kentucky politics for nearly three decades after the war. The answer to these questions rest with the failure of Union policy in Kentucky during the war.

For a short time in 1861 Governor Magoffin tried vainly to hold on to some form of neutrality in the hope that Kentucky might be spared the ravages of war. By 1862 the complexion of things had changed dramatically in the state. With the failure of the Confederate invasion of the state in that same year, Kentucky cast her lot once and for all with the Union.

Loyalty and devotion to the Union, however, was not greeted by the North like most

Kentuckians expected. Despite the fact that Kentucky would supply twice as many troops to the North as she would to the South, Kentucky was occupied by Union soldiers and treated like an occupied Confederate State. Union suspicion over the true loyalty of the state undoubtedly arose from Kentucky's strong cultural, economic, and social ties with the South, but Kentucky enjoyed growing economic ties with the North as well. Where then did the Northern policy breakdown in Kentucky?

From the very beginning, Kentucky's loyalty to the Union was based on President Lincoln's promise not to interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it currently existed. With the passage of a bill in Congress in 1862 which granted freedom to all rebel owned slaves and their families that enrolled in Union work battalions, many loyal Kentuckians became angry. Devotion to the Union cause did not go hand in hand with the idea of emancipation in the minds of most Kentuckians. President Lincoln's announcement of his Emancipation Proclamation in 1862 was met with a hail of protest from many Kentuckians who feared that it would soon be extended to the border slave states.

General Stephen G. Burbridge and then General John Marshall Palmer, both military commanders of Kentucky, each in turn enjoyed the wrath of outraged Kentuckians for their recruitment and use of Negroes as troops and laborers. *Palmer Passes*, which allowed unrestricted travel to Negroes, were seen as a threat to Kentucky's traditional control over her slave population.

In addition to their questionable handling of the slavery issue in Kentucky, Generals Burbridge and Palmer further angered Kentuckians by interfering with the judicial and electoral systems in the state. Governor Thomas Bramlette, himself a Union officer, finally protested the excesses of General Burbridge to President Lincoln and had him removed.

Many newspapers were closed by military authorities for reported Confederate bias or weren't allowed to criticize the war effort. Many men and some women were arrested as Confederate sympathizers and imprisoned without trial, some were even executed as guerrillas.

The material property loss to Kentuckians during the war due to requisition, confiscation, and outright theft amounted to millions. Kentucky would never regain the strong economic position she held prior to the war and as a result, many Kentuckians would remain bitter and angry for what they saw as their *punishment* for remaining loyal to the Union.

Kentucky did not take the Union occupation lying down. A law passed by the Kentucky Legislature on March 2, 1863 attempted to halt the flow of runaway slaves from the lower south. Under the provisions of the law, freed or runaway slaves were forbidden to enter the state. If they did enter, they risked being jailed and returned to their former masters under the terms of the Fugitive Slave Law. With the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law by Congress in 1864, Kentucky still attempted to stem the tide of Negroes entering the state.

Further evidence of Kentucky's dissatisfaction with occupation came in the Presidential Election of 1864. Despite the presence of Union troops at the polling places and the barring of the right to vote to Confederates and suspected Confederate sympathizers, the Democratic opponent of President Lincoln, General George B. McClellan, carried Kentucky by more than 36,000 votes. This act of defiance did little to improve the standing of the state in the

eyes of the Radical Republican controlled Congress.

As the war gradually ground to its inevitable conclusion in April of 1865, Kentucky's growing loyalty to the Democratic Party was to play a major role in the way the state was treated by the Republican controlled Congress during Reconstruction.

Since Kentucky never officially withdrew from the Union she was not technically subject to the Reconstruction policy slated for the old Confederacy, yet, after the war, Kentucky was kept under military rule longer than any of the older border states. Except in Kentucky, the *writ of habeas corpus* was restored to persons accused of committing crimes in the border states by November of 1865. In addition, returning Kentuckians who had fought with the Confederacy were denied the right to vote by Federal officials operating in the state.

Feeling a sense of betrayal, Kentucky overwhelmingly rejected the 13th Amendment, which freed all the slaves, when it was introduced to the states in 1865. Kentucky would finally demand 100,000,000 dollars in compensation for her lost slave property, none of which was ever received. As Reconstruction dragged on, Kentucky also rejected the 14th Amendment, which gave citizenship to Negroes and the 15th Amendment, which granted suffrage rights to them by wide margins.

Many Kentuckians openly resisted the newly created Freedman's Bureau which officially began operations to aid the Negroes in Kentucky in December of 1865. Conditions were such in the state, that one Bureau official stated that in no southern state where he had visited did, "*such a fiendish spirit prevail*", as did in some portions of Kentucky. He went on to say. "*There are some of the meanest, unsubjected and unreconstructed, rascally rebellious revolutionist in Kentucky that curse the soil of the country.*"

Another glaring example of Kentucky's post-war rebelliousness was the Black testimony controversy. In 1860 all 15 Slave States and five Northern Free States denied the Negro the right to testify against Whites in courts of law. By 1866, all Northern States granted the Negro the right to testify against Whites in court and with the coming of Reconstruction, all 11 of the former Confederate States and three of the old Border States accepted the testimony rights of Negroes, only Kentucky held out. In spite of the gallant effort on the part of many Negro leaders to change the law, attempts at gaining Black testimony rights in Kentucky were defeated four times in the State Legislature before it was finally granted in 1872.

One of the tragic results of Reconstruction, or as it is often called in Kentucky, *Readjustment*, was the decline in the Negro population. Violence and the lack of economic opportunity caused many Negroes to move out of the State or concentrate in the growing urban centers.

With the repeal of all the old wartime measures, which deprived former Confederates, and their sympathizers of their political rights, many former Confederates actively entered state and local politics. Democratic Party leaders seized the opportunity presented by the popularity of these ex-Confederates and quickly incorporated them into the party. In a short period of time after the war, a conservative bloc of prosouthern politicians composed of many ex-Confederates who openly waved the bloody shirt dominated the Democratic Party in Kentucky.

So completely had the prosouthern wing of the Democratic Party gained control of the state, one outraged Union newspaper editor was forced to admit, "*Kentucky failed to secede in 1861. By a strange conjunction of circumstances, what the rebels failed to do that year, they freely realized in the year 1870*".

The excesses of Union occupation forces during the Civil War caused much of

Kentucky's prosouthern swing after the war. Many Kentuckians undoubtedly felt a strong kinship to their fellow southerners in light of the harsh Reconstruction program imposed upon the South by Congressional Reconstruction.

Although not considered a part of the officially Reconstructed South, Kentucky did suffer *Readjustment* from 1866 to 1876. A major aspect of this readjustment was the strengthening of the old cultural, social and economic ties of the ante-bellum period. The emergence of Henry Watterson, the outspoken ex-Confederate editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal, as one of the spokesmen for the *New South* following Reconstruction, demonstrated Kentucky's leadership role in postwar national politics. Kentucky played an instrumental part in the development of the Democratically controlled *Solid South* after the war. Watterson himself tried to make Democratic candidate Samuel Tilden President in 1876 in an attempt to end Radical Reconstruction.

*Readjustment* in the end for Kentucky was a returning to the fold. It was the re-establishment of old cultural, social and economic ties that had been interrupted by the Civil War. And as some historians feel, Kentucky was more southern in outlook than ever before.

*A special thanks to Tim Moore for permission to reprint this paper in the Reveille.*

## Camp Meetings

The September meeting of Camp Three was nicely attended by eight camp brothers. Tim Moore, local school teacher and Civil War re-enactor, gave a very informative talk about the activities of one rebel soldier from the Orphan Brigade. Although the soldier re-enacted did not fight there, the Orphan Brigade gained its fame at the Battle of Murpheesboro in January 1863.

The October Meeting at the Golden Corral was not so well attended. A night of terrible thunderstorms probably kept most brothers indoors. Steve Clifford and JC Morgan voted to approve all motions unanimously...then ate and left.

The November Meeting went very well. Dave Schroeder, Local History Librarian at the Covington branch of the Kenton County Public Library, talked about genealogical resources for researching Civil War ancestry. Dave covered many internet sites that yield valuable information as well as some of the problems and dangers of internet research.

## Upcoming Events

**8 Jan (Tue) 7p** *Camp Three meeting at Clover Nook School for the Blind on Hamilton Avenue in Cincinnati. This is a joint meeting with the Cincinnati Camp to talk about plans for the National Meeting. Contact Steve Clifford (363-7495) for carpooling or directional information.*

**18 Jan (Sat)** *Steve Clifford will be talking to the American Legion Post in Latonia (near Lee's Chicken) about the activities of our camp and the SUVCW in general*

**Feb (Tue) 7p** *Camp Three meeting at Independence Branch Library. Greg Rhodes, published baseball historian, will talk about Civil War Era baseball in Cincinnati.*

**20 Mar (Wed) 7p** *Camp Three meeting at Golden Corral in Fort Wright.*

## New Members Amongst US

The Camp is very proud to welcome its newest member, Larry Walston, from Hopkinsville. Brother Walston is a college professor in that area of the state.

Brother Walston traces his lineage back to Corporal Edmund Taylor Frizzel, Company G, 20<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Infantry.

And one other new member: Mark A. Black. Mark's 2nd Great grandfather is Samuel G. Black, mustered into service 13 Sep 1864 as a Private in Company B 53rd Kentucky Mounted Infantry. Honorably discharged 15 Sep 1865 expiration of enlistment.

## Did you know?

Jefferson Davis was a graduate of West Point. Elected to the US Senate in 1847, he found himself among a new set of peers. Ten percent of the Senators were graduates of Transylvania College in Lexington, KY.

*Taken from Civil War Curiosities: Strange Stories, Oddities, Events, and Coincidences (Webb Garrison)*

## Camp Leaders

- Martin Greene, *Camp Commander/Treasurer*
- Bryan Greene, *Senior Vice Commander/Signals Officer*
- Ross J. Amos, *Junior Vice Commander*
- Bernie O'Bryan, *Chaplain/State Secretary*
- Steve Clifford, *Secretary/Camp Council/State Council/State Graves Registration Officer/State Monument Registration Officer*
- Earl Nichols, *Graves Registration Officer/Historian*
- Jim Kiger, *Camp Council/State Junior Vice Commander*
- Luke Clifford, *Camp Guard*
- JC Morgan, *Newsletter Editor*

## Want to Join?

Membership in the Sons of the Union Veterans is very affordable and entitles you to attend all state and national meetings. Regular Camp meetings are held every month except during the summer. Plus you get a complimentary subscription (US postage mostly paid) to the *Camp Three Reveille*.

To join, simply fill out this short application:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

And send \$30 (first year membership and enrollment fee) to:

SUVCW Membership  
C/O Martin Greene  
PO Box 6721  
Florence, KY 41022-6721

If you're already a member, feel free to pass this along to a friend.

## Want to Get Published?

The *Reveille* is always looking for information about events or articles of interest to Camp members. If you have something you think would be good and fitting to print, contact JC Morgan at (859) 431-5415 or email-wise at [jc\\_morgan@yahoo.com](mailto:jc_morgan@yahoo.com)

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