

**7TH MICHIGAN CAVALRY
MORNING REPORT
Headquarters: Bay City, Michigan**

John Wilkes Booth Finally Laid to Rest

John Kokkonen gave his usual enthusiastic and well received performance when he spoke about John Wilkes Booth impostors at our October meeting at the Stein Haus.



John concluded that the evidence showed that none were really Booth so we can all rest easy knowing that the villain is really dead.

Our thanks to John for his fine presentation.

November's Speaker is:

TIM YOUNKMAN

The topic will be:

“Civil War Prisons – North and South”

7:00 PM, Wednesday, November 12th at the Stein Haus

See you there.

Roundtable Projects

We are beginning some projects of interest to the Roundtable in addition to those of others.

At Pine Ridge Cemetery, members and others have taken it upon themselves to reset tombstones upset by vandals over the years and are working on replacements for military tombstones that have deteriorated.

These self-motivated people have done so on their own inspiration and without any expectation or even desire for publicity in many cases. They are to be commended for these fine efforts and where requested, their privacy preserved.

The Roundtable itself is making efforts to have a military headstone placed over the presently unmarked grave of Captain James G. Birney IV at Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn, N.Y.

His wife and infant child are also buried beside him in unmarked graves. If the cost is not too great, we hope to change that circumstance too.

We are also desirous of improving the foundation of the obelisk at the center of the Soldier's Rest section at Pine Ridge Cemetery. While seeming to remain solidly placed and perpendicular, it has lost material under its foundation stone that in the least needs aesthetic correction.

We need someone with expertise (or that of a contractor friend) to look at the foundation and advise us of the best way to deal with it. Anyone interested should feel free to look into this and advise us about how it might be best to proceed.

As we complete these projects, we may want to try to improve the condition of Civil War related monuments at Oak Ridge Cemetery on the west side of Bay City.

However, members are advised to use caution if they attempt to do so there as it is unlike Pine Ridge, which is abandoned and thus without anyone to complain about their actions.

Oak Ridge Cemetery is owned by the City of Bay City, whose permission must be obtained before making any changes even though such

7TH MICHIGAN CAVALRY MORNING REPORT

Headquarters: Bay City, Michigan

changes would be considered by us all to be an improvement.

- Editor-

“Them Damn Black Hats”

No action by a Michigan regiment is more remembered than the fight of the 24th Michigan Infantry on the first day at Gettysburg.

On that day, July 1, 1863, the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia under General Robert E. Lee marched easterly toward the town along the Chambersburg Pike.

Waiting just to the west of town along a gentle slope called McPherson's Ridge, which ran north and south across the Pike, were two brigades of Union cavalry commanded by General John Buford.

Buford had determined to deny the Confederates the high ridges just southeast of Gettysburg until Union infantry units could arrive from the south to occupy them.

The couriers he sent to find help located the Union 1st Corps about 3 miles to the south. Its commander, Major General John Reynolds, immediately ordered his corps forward at the “double-quick”.

With the lead division of the 1st Corps that day was what was acknowledged as the Army of the Potomac's best fighters - the mighty “Iron Brigade”.

They were always recognizable because it was the only unit that wore a unique black cylinder shaped hat with a broad rim turned upward on the left side. Its junior member was the oversized 24th Michigan Infantry of about 500 men.

As the Iron Brigade of five regiments approached Gettysburg, it abandoned the road to double time across the fields to McPherson's Ridge. It spread out along it to support the already heavily engaged Union cavalry.

The 24th deployed on the ridge facing west and on the left flank of the Iron Brigade. It, along with the 19th Indiana, then splashed across Willoughby Run and struck a surprised Confederate (Archer's) brigade in the right flank.

Not expecting the Army of the Potomac so far north, one southerner shouted, “It ain't no milishy (militia). There's them damn black hats again!”

The Confederates were routed and General Archer, its commander, was captured. General Reynolds was killed during this fight.

But, the Confederates greatly outnumbered the Federals on the field at the time. As they reorganized to attack, the Iron Brigade re-crossed Willoughby Run

and set up a defensive position. The 24th Michigan was in its middle and facing the stream to the west while in McPherson's woods - on the ridge just south of the Chambersburg Pike

Massed into a considerably larger force, the Confederates burst across Willoughby Run into the

sights of the waiting rifles of the Iron Brigade. The 24th's

principal opponent was the 800 man 26th North Carolina Infantry, the largest Confederate regiment on the field in the 3-day battle.

A salvo from the 24th staggered the North Carolinians but did not stop them. It, in turn, fired and reduced the Michigan regiment considerably. Close-quarter fighting ensued.

The Southern battle line overlapped the Iron Brigade by about a quarter of a mile to the south and when the 19th Indiana, on the 24th's left, was forced back, the 24th became flanked. It was forced to fall back about 50 yards to the east edge of the woods where it took up a second position.

It was again flanked, this time on the right and fell back the same distance again. After being forced back 4 more times to new positions, the regiment was just to the west of the Lutheran Seminary that still stands today. Each withdrawal seriously thinned its ranks.

Four color bearers had been killed* and three wounded carrying the flag for the Wolverines. 13 were reported as having died carrying the colors for the 26th North Carolina. When the 24th's colonel, Henry Morrow, took up the flag, he was knocked down by a spent bullet to the head and was captured by the enemy before he could recover himself.

7TH MICHIGAN CAVALRY MORNING REPORT

Headquarters: Bay City, Michigan



The 24th's Flag after Gettysburg

(Continued on page 3)

Then, help arrived in the form of 12 Union Napoleon cannons firing from Seminary Ridge to the northeast. The cannonade drove the Confederates back and saved the remnants of the Iron Brigade from complete destruction.

The 24th's tattered flag was feared lost to the enemy but was found propped upright in the arms of an unconscious and unknown soldier of the 24th, who was thought to have died soon afterward.

In the 26th North Carolina, of the 800 men who had entered the fight, 549 were reported lost - the highest casualties of any regiment of the South in the Battle of Gettysburg.

Of the 1,883 men of the Iron Brigade that day, 1,212 were killed, wounded, or missing. For the 24th Michigan, only 99 of 496 men rallied to the colors at the day's end. 396 were later reported as casualties. (Colonel Morrow escaped his captors on the 3rd day of the battle.)

The fight of the Iron Brigade was a success as it delayed the Confederates long enough for other Federal troops to arrive and to occupy the best defensive positions southeast of Gettysburg.

But, the mighty Iron Brigade was mighty no more.

* Note - Some publications have claimed as many as 9 color bearers of the 24th were killed. Colonel Morrow's official report is followed here.

To read Colonel Morrow's more detailed actual after-action report of the battle, see

<http://www.michiganinthewar.org/infantry/morrow.htm>

Bay County's Only Participant

In 1991, a young man named Robert Schindehette wrote and delivered some materials to me. He said he was a great-grandson of Henry Schindehette, a member of the 24th Michigan who was wounded in the left hip at Gettysburg. (This is verified by a book about the 24th that I possess that lists his name as one of the wounded in the battle.)

Henry Schindehette is the only veteran of this fight buried in Bay County.

Henry was born in Germany and originally came to Bay City in 1859. In 1862, he left Bay City to become a member of the 24th Michigan when it first mustered in Detroit in the summer of that year.

After spending 8 months in a military hospital recovering from his Gettysburg wound, he was mustered out of the service due to disability. Henry returned to Bay City in April of 1865 with his bride Samantha, whom he had just married in Howell, Michigan.

For a time, he was a deputy United States marshal here and then settled into the proprietorship of the National Hotel (later called the Republic Hotel) located at Fourth & Saginaw Streets.

When he died in 1907, the local newspapers claimed it was due to the wound he had suffered at Gettysburg on July 1, 1863. His death certificate reports he died of tetanus.

[Note – It was common for widows of veterans who died after the war to claim their husband died of injuries or illness contracted during the war. Successfully doing so resulted in an enhanced pension being awarded to the widow. Local doctors were happy to sign an affidavit to that effect as it created good will. A small business existed for lawyers helping process such claims.]

**7TH MICHIGAN CAVALRY
MORNING REPORT**
Headquarters: Bay City, Michigan



At Pine Ridge Cemetery