

# The Sentinel

## The Slightly Curious History of the 63rd Indiana

Local high school history teacher and MCCWR member Matt Hoagland brought to the roundtable a program about an Indiana unit in the war that simply did not fit the usual profile of most of its fellow state regiments. Officially formed on the very last day of 1861, the unit had, of course, a history of service and we will document that first. But it is, in the end, some other oddities that make it stand out among its peers as unique.

After organizing in Covington, IN, during early 1862, the regiment, boasting only four companies at this point, was sent to Lafayette to guard prisoners from Forts Henry and Donelson. In about a month, it was relocated to Camp Morton in Indianapolis, also to guard Confederate prisoners. In the summer of 1862, the unit was sent by train to Alexandria Virginia, to help defend the struggling nation's capitol and became engaged in the last day of the Battle of Second Manassas.

While in Virginia, our presenter's great-great grandfather, James McMannomy, had been busy recruiting back in Covington, Indiana, to get the unit to full strength, reaching that goal in September. While McMannomy was the motive force behind the regiment, political machinations placed lawyer John S. Williams in command and McMannomy became his adjutant. Oddly, after reaching full strength, the unit was then split up, sending six companies south of Louisville to guard the railroads and leaving four in Indiana to serve almost as a local police presence. It was while in Kentucky that the former group scrapped with John Hunt Morgan just before he crossed the Ohio River into Corydon and began his famous raid.

In January of 1864, the entire regiment reunited at Camp Nelson, south of Lexington, KY, and McMannomy, due to ill health, relinquished command to Israel Newton Stiles. The command then slogged cross country to the Knoxville area, eventually joining the 23rd Corps of the Army of the Ohio where it would remain until war's end. Here it became part of Sherman's army group that swept down north Georgia in the Atlanta campaign, remaining heavily engaged throughout, principally as flank forces probing for weaknesses in Johnson's defenses. In the end, the 63rd was one of the many units that banded together and eventually forced Johnson to retire from Atlanta.

Late 1864 saw the 63rd chasing Confederates around north Georgia and northern Alabama. But in the late fall, it was moved by rail to the Nashville area, where it was heavily involved in the Battle of Franklin (on the left flank), then participated in the effort that destroyed John Bell Hood's army in the Battle of Nashville. After this, they were sent by ship back to Alexandria where they had been two years before and where they arrived too late to assist in capturing Fort Fisher but fought their way across the state, fighting at Federal Point and eventually

reaching Raleigh, which is where they were when the war came to an end.

Overall the regiment lost, during the war, 58 killed or mortally wounded in battle. By far a larger number, 132, died of disease. Amazingly, estimates say they may covered as many as 9,000 miles on foot, aboard trains or on the water by the time they disbanded. This was a busy unit!

But what are those other things that make this unit stand out? A real oddity of the 63rd is the "area" it was recruited from. Most units came from a "block" of counties or perhaps a linear "run" like the 27th Indiana from Indianapolis to Louisville, and the 63rd was, indeed, mostly from the area around Fountain County, north of Terre Haute. But a large number of the men came from Gibson County in the far southwest corner of the state. No one knows why this came about, but it is the reason for the connection between Matt's ancestor, James McMannomy from Fountain County, and one of our previous "Legacy Profile" honorees, Cpl. John Shanner, who is from Gibson County and is the great grandfather of MCCWR Board member John Crosby.

Another oddity, and one that sort of parallels the county separation, is the fact that the 63rd went into service with only four companies, but when it was brought to full strength with ten companies, it was split and six of them were sent to Kentucky to guard the railroads south of Louisville while the other four were sent to Indianapolis to serve as provost guards. The two "battalions" were only reunited in January, 1864, when they began the trek to Knoxville.

So, while their service paralleled many other units, some aspects of the organization and dispersment of the 63rd remain a bit strange even today. But then, many things were not "normal" in the Civil War, were they?



**James McMannomy's military pension records (above) and his grave monument in Fountain County, IN. (left)**

## Membership Sets a Record!

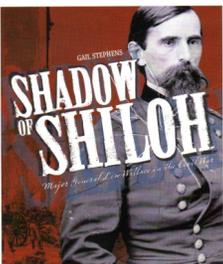
Our recent membership drive has established a new record for the roundtable! The small annual membership fee is used for such things as refreshments, office supplies, postage, program presenters' gifts and occasional honoraria for our speakers or their causes. We want to thank all who contributed on this drive and invite anyone else who has not yet done so to consider contributing the small annual dues amounts of \$15 individual, \$20 family and \$5 student. These can be brought to any meeting, dropped off at the Monroe County History Center any time it is open [10-4, Tues-Sat], or mailed there at 202 E. 6th St., Bloomington, 47408.

## 5th Annual Holiday Dinner



As has been our practice in recent years, there will not be a formal program in December. Instead, we will gather for a holiday dinner in State Room West of the Indiana Memorial Union on the IU campus on Tuesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 pm for a buffet dinner and fellowship. Bring a story, an artifact, a travel review or any personal connection to the war to share. The cost of the dinner will be \$15 per person (which actually works out to be less, on average, than we spent at the Uptown last year, by the way). Parking details and directions to the room will be sent out at a later date to those confirming. What we need from everyone now is to know who will be joining us so we can give a number to the folks at the Union Building. You can respond with your confirmation to the secretary, Steve Rolfe, [srolfe@indiana.edu](mailto:srolfe@indiana.edu), or to any board member (see the list at the end of this newsletter). We sincerely hope you can join in this festive occasion!

## New Book on Lew Wallace



The Indiana Historical Society has just released a new book on General Lew Wallace, the Hoosier who was vilified by Grant at Shiloh but later redeemed in the eyes of many by saving Washington D.C. at Monocacy. Wallace never attained the glory and prestige he sought in the war, but later won a different kind of fame as the author of one of the epic novels of all time, *Ben Hur*.

Author Gail Stephens is a volunteer and guide at Monocacy National Battlefield in Virginia and has spent a great deal of time in Indiana researching this complex man. We hope to get Ms. Stephens to journey to Indiana and our roundtable next year to tell us about Wallace. For information on her upcoming speaking schedule in Indiana and to buy the book, *Shadow of Shiloh: Major General Lew Wallace in the Civil War*, see the IHS website:

[www.indianahistory.org](http://www.indianahistory.org)

## The Confederacy: America's Worst Idea?

Here's a link to an article in American History Magazine that ought to be a good one to open a Blue-Gray Convention...and perhaps close it pretty quickly too! We tend to idealize the war and perhaps overlook the fact that it really was a rebellion and, in most countries, would have had any vestiges rapidly erased from as much of the collective memory as possible. See what you think. If you can't access the complete article, check with Secretary Steve Rolfe for reprints.

<http://www.historynet.com/the-confederacy-americas-worst-idea.htm>

## Mint to Release \$1 Lincoln Coin

The United States Mint will release the 16th in its series of presidential one dollar coins on November 19th in a ceremony at the Lincoln Cottage on the grounds of the Armed Forces Retirement Home in suburban Washington, D.C. This negotiable-yet-collectible coin has a likeness of Lincoln on one side and the Statue of Liberty on the other. For more information go to <http://www.usmint.gov/>. For more information on the Lincoln Cottage, go to <http://www.lincolncottage.org>.

## Interesting Websites

If you have been to Gettysburg or Antietam (and who among us has not?), check out their two new interactive websites that really get you "on the battlefield". They include panoramic "tours", walking and driving instructions, a searchable monument database and more.

Virtual Antietam

[www.virtualantietam.com](http://www.virtualantietam.com)

Virtual Gettysburg

[www.virtualgettysburg.com](http://www.virtualgettysburg.com)

## Why Do We Still Care?

What is it about the Civil War that continues to enthrall us all, make us buy books and read about it incessantly, spend money on "battlefield travel", and generally let it dominate our lives? That question will be asked a lot with the 150th anniversary of the war just around the corner.

For a jump start on the answer, you can check out this short but thought provoking New York Times article by Tony Horwitz, author of *Confederates in the Attic*, one of the most popular genre books of all, and of a soon-to-be-released book *Midnight Rising: John Brown's Raid and the Start of the Civil War*. Horwitz deftly explains why this war, above all others in our history, so captivates us today.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/31/opinion/31Horwitz.html?pagewanted=1&\\_r=1&nl&emc=a212](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/31/opinion/31Horwitz.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1&nl&emc=a212)

And while we are talking about the New York Times, note that this flagship newspaper is introducing a new on-line series, to be published every Monday, in which historians and writers will use contemporary accounts, diaries, images and scholarly assessments to follow the war in a sort of "present tense" fashion as the war unfolds from week to week.

<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/10/30/will-lincoln-prevail/?ref=opinion>



# MCCWR Roster of Honor



[A suggestion that in the last newsletter was for the members of the roundtable to send in the names, ranks, units and perhaps a short recap of their forebear's service record so that we can compile a permanent roster of "our" troops. The "unit" that results could be very interesting because, chances are, it will be both blue and gray! Below is the first "installment". If you want to have your family member's information included, send it to our Secretary, Steve Rolfe, at [srolfe@indiana.edu](mailto:srolfe@indiana.edu), or just bring the information with you to the next meeting.]

**Capt. Ephraim Waterman Wiley, Co. H, 8th Maine Inf.**

Grandfather of former MCCWR President David Wiley. Present or active at Port Royal, Fort Pulaski, Drewery's Bluff, Cold Harbor, Chaffin's Farm, Deep Bottom, Spring Hill, White Oak Road, Fort Gregg, Fort Baldwin, Petersburg and Appomattox.

**Sgt. Charles Thomas Shanner, Co. A, 63rd Indiana Volunteer Inf.**

Great-grandfather to MCCWR board member John Crosby. Chattanooga-Atlanta Campaign, Clay Springs, Battle of Atlanta.

**Col. James McMannomy, Commander, 63rd Indiana Volunteer Inf.**

Ancestor of MCCWR member Matt Hoagland. Second Manassas, fought Morgan's Raiders at Shepherdsville, Kentucky.

**Pvt. William Nicholas Shiflet, Co. I, 10th Alabama Infantry**

2nd Great Grand Uncle to Kevin Shiflet, MCCWR Treasurer. Engaged, to some degree, at Dranesville, Yorktown, Williamsburg, Seven Pines, Gaines Mill, Frazier's Farm, Second Manassas, Harpers Ferry, Sharpsburg, Hazel River, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Second Cold Harbor, Petersburg, High Bridge, Farmville and Appomattox. Pvt. Shiflet is only one of a total of seventeen of Kevin's ancestors who served the Confederacy, including thirteen cousins, two third great granduncles and two second great granduncles.

**Jacob Mann, Co. A, 16th Iowa Inf.**

Ancestor of Allan Sather, Hospitality Chair for the MCCWR. Fought at Resaca, Adairsville, New Hope Church, Kennesaw Mountain, Peachtree Creek, and Bald Hill (Atlanta) where he was captured and sent to Andersonville Prison.

## 150th in Trouble Already?

As communities across the nation gear up to commemorate the 150 Anniversary of the Civil War, many are already suffering from a lack of funding, and a bill to help is stuck in Congress and could be doomed. Political infighting also threatens the event, especially on the point of inclusion of the African-American, a part almost totally overlooked in the 100th anniversary in 1961. For a complete report, look at this story in the Friday, November 12 USA Today.

[http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2010-11-12-civilwar12\\_ST\\_N.htm?POE=click-refer](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2010-11-12-civilwar12_ST_N.htm?POE=click-refer)

## 2010-2011 Programs

- Dec. 14-** Annual Holiday Dinner (see article elsewhere in newsletter)
- Jan. 11-** Rick Watson: *The Committee On the Conduct of the War*
- Feb. 8-** Steve Rolfe: *Montgomery Meigs: The Man Who Won the Civil War*
- March 8-** John Crosby: *Brother vs. Brother* (Repeat Program)
- April 12-** Justin Smith *First Irish* [also annual election of officers]
- May 10-** Mark Acres- *Camp Followers*
- June 14-** Donna Schmink : *The 27<sup>th</sup> Indiana Battle Flag and the Flag Preservation Work of the Indiana War Memorial.*

## Had Enough Lincoln? Here's More!

Alfred Stern (1881-1960) of Chicago presented his outstanding collection of Lincolniana to the Library of Congress in 1953. The collection documents the life of Lincoln both through writings by and about him, as well as a large body of publications concerning the issues of the times including slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and related topics. This online release presents more than 1,300 of the 11,000+ items, including original era newspapers, Lincoln's law papers, sheet music prints, etc. For more, go to:

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/stern-lincoln/>

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