

August Willich, a seasoned and well-trained officer, was the most qualified to lead Cincinnati's Die Neuner. However, political expediency dictated another choice, Robert L. McCook.

Willich's Thirty-Second Indiana Volunteers

by James Barnett

The Thirty-second Indiana Volunteers, organized by August Willich of Cincinnati, a well-known nineteenth century German-American, was in essence an outgrowth of the 9th Ohio Volunteers, or *Die Neuner*, the German regiment from Cincinnati. In the first years of the Civil War, regiments were formed on a community basis and young volunteers found themselves among friends and neighbors. No impersonal draft board snatched a boy from his home and sent him to remote training camps, there to be bullied by regular officers and unsympathetic non-coms.¹

A period of intense nativism with outbursts of irrational chauvinism, which have characterized United States history from time to time, had preceded the Civil War. In the mid-1850's, the Know-Nothing riots spread to Cincinnati and on election days attempts were made to keep Germans and other naturalized citizens away from the polls. Now challenged by the War's outbreak, the Germans, who had lived in a hostile and alien environment, struggling for assimilation and bearing the burden of a language barrier, were eager to demonstrate their love of their adopted fatherland. As Willich phrased it, "We will show them what patriotic Germans can do."²

After the firing on Fort Sumter in April 1861, there was an outpouring of German volunteers into the assembly points in Cincinnati, and within twenty-four hours more than one thousand volunteers had offered their services, more than enough to form a German regiment from Cincinnati, the *Die Neuner*. Civil War regiments generally elected company officers, and then these men selected the staff officers. Whom to elect colonel of the *Die Neuner* presented a thorny problem for the company officers. There was of course Willich, who had served as an officer in the Prussian army for nineteen years and who had resigned to become one of the principal leaders of the German republican revolution of 1848-1849. During the three months' war waged in 1849 by the Baden provisional republican government, Willich had commanded a force known as "Willich's Free Corps," and had led this corps with considerable skill in numerous battles against Frederick William IV's Prussian army. A regular army officer, Willich was the antithesis of the stereotyped, spike-helmeted, goose-stepping Prussian officer. He believed that the leader of the regiment should be the boys' father away from home and the volunteers should be treated "like

CINCINNATI HIST. SOC. 49

Bull. 1979 37(1) 48-70

men not like dogs.³ Who was better qualified to lead the *Die Neuner* than Willich?

But political expediency dictated another choice. Judge J. B. Stallo, an eminent Cincinnati jurist, philosopher, and writer, was present at the meeting when the officers were elected. Stallo's law partner was Robert L. McCook, who had no military experience, but at the meeting Gustav Tafel pointed out that McCook "had connections in Columbus (Ohio) and Washington which would enable him to form a regiment in the shortest possible time that would be accepted by the state." Six votes were cast for McCook and four for Willich.⁴ The groundwork had been laid for Willich's future departure from *Die Neuner* and the eventual formation of the 32d Indiana.

"Papa Willich" drilled *Die Neuner* in "undefiled high Dutch" while McCook remained in his tent studying *Hardee's Tactics* and mastering the paper work required of a regimental colonel. With Willich the *de facto* colonel of the regiment, McCook made the wry remark that he was "just the clerk for a thousand Dutchmen."⁵

After the campaign in West Virginia with Willich in the lead and McCook in the background, the historian of *Die Neuner* wrote that on August 10, 1861, Willich "... during a halt in the middle of the march, surprised us by telling us that he had accepted a commission from the state of Indiana to form a German regiment similar to our own..."⁶ Willich then went to Indianapolis where he met with Governor Oliver P. Morton, who knew Willich, as can be seen from some of his remarks. In hyperbolic terms he called Willich "... the hero and patriot, one of the great historical characters of the age."⁷ Morton further said that there was "a great simplicity" in Willich's character "which had endeared him to the people on both continents," and that Willich would rank with such men as Lafayette, DeKalb, and Kosciusko as an historical figure.⁷ Governor Morton's remarks may seem exaggerated as they fall on twentieth-century ears, but they give us some indication of Willich's fame at that time.

Willich's magic name attracted volunteers to the 32d Indiana and the regiment was completely organized by August 24, 1861 even though Willich remained in West Virginia until August 10. Willich was elected colonel, Henry von Trebra, lieutenant-colonel; and Germans who had been turned down for *Die Neuner* now had a regiment they could join. From Cincinnati, for example, there came Max Sachs and Theodore Schmidt. The Indiana counties along the Ohio River produced more volunteers. Valentin Koehler, Henry Schoppmeyer, John Schwartz, Emanuel Eller, Louis Oether, Frank Knorr, John Henry Warneke, Chaplain P. H. W. Schmitz, Dr. Emil Fortsmeyer, and many others. From Arcola, Illinois, came the man who would succeed Willich as colonel of the regiment, Henry von Trebra. With him came his brother Louis von Trebra. When Kentucky's neutrality came to an end in September 1861, the 32d Indiana along with other Union regiments poured into the state. The regiment

paraded through the streets of Indianapolis on the way to the railroad station. The cheering spectators were surprised to see Willich marching on foot. Colonnels always rode horses but Willich was too impoverished to pay \$1.50 for a horse.

By November 1, 1861, nearly one-third of Kentucky was in the hands of the Confederates, whose tenuous defense line extended from Columbus, Kentucky, eastward through Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, Bowling Green, and Somerset to Cumberland Gap. Their advanced line of outposts ranged along the southern bank of Green River at Munfordsville, Kentucky. The southernmost span of the Louisville and Nashville railroad bridge at Munfordsville had been destroyed by the Confederates.

The 32d Indiana was given the assignment of building a pontoon bridge across Green River so that troops could stand guard on the other side to ward off any Confederate attacks while the railroad bridge was being repaired. On December 17, 1861, the Confederates attacked the 32d Indiana which was guarding the civilian work crew repairing the bridge. An hour-long battle followed near Rowlets Station, a stop on the L & N railroad.

This battle of Rowlets Station was a small affair when compared with later Civil War battles, but Union defeats in the east at Big Bethel, Bull Run, and Ball's Bluff, and in the west at Wilson's Creek and Belmont, Missouri, left Union partisans with little to boast about in the way of military success in late 1861. A victory of even small proportions was needed to rekindle enthusiasm for the war. So when news of the battle of Rowlets Station reached Louisville, an excited newspaper reporter sent out a story on the wires that 350 Union men had "routed 3,000 rebels." Indeed some 500 men of the 32d Indiana, without cavalry, or artillery, had managed to stand off a force of 1,300 Confederates, including cavalry and artillery. It was a noteworthy defense against great odds and needed no exaggeration.

For a week northern newspapers wrote glowing accounts of the battle of Rowlets Station. The *Cincinnati Gazette* exulted, it "proves the most brilliant Federal victory yet achieved." For a time Willich and the 32d Indiana were national heroes. In his report on the battle Willich praised many men, giving special commendation to Dr. Jean Jeancon, regimental surgeon for his work in caring for the wounded, both Union and Confederate.⁸

Jubilant after a battle is always tempered with sadness when the casualties are counted. Among others, Lieutenant Max Sachs and Private Theodore Schmidt, both of Cincinnati, were killed in the battle.⁹ In one interesting sidelight of the events, the day after the battle Willich saw a "little yellow" Texas mustang "with a white mane," among the captured animals. He had the pony crated and sent to Cincinnati, as a gift to the young son of J. B. Stallo. The pony became the delight and playmate of Judge Stallo's son and the neighborhood children in Mt. Auburn.¹⁰

January 1862 was a miserable month for the troops camped along the north

bank of Green River while the bridge was being repaired. The soldiers sloshed around in snow, sleet, and mud, and had to contend with a measles epidemic. But morale remained high in the 32d Indiana. Willich had brick ovens built and his men had freshly baked bread every day. It would be more than a year before Union army higher-ups would discover the morale-building value of daily fresh bread.

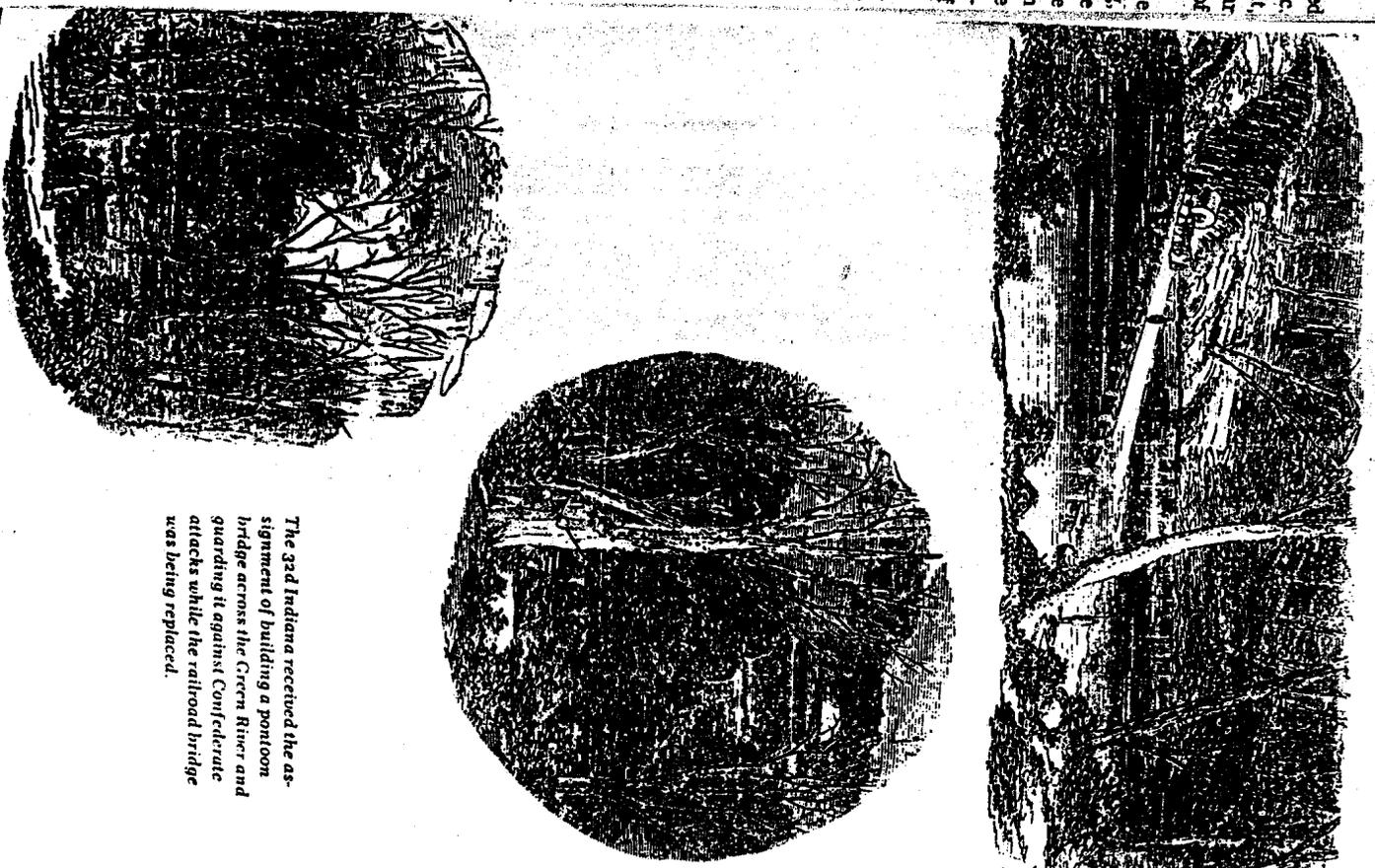
Willich also kept the 32d Indiana busy building special wagons for the regiment. The wagons carried planking, and when a river needed crossing, they removed the wheels and the wagon beds became boats over which the planking was laid to form a pontoon bridge. After the river was crossed, the planking was taken up and put back in the wagon beds ready to be used when another river needed crossing. But because of jurisdictional jealousy on the part of a Michigan engineer unit, Willich was ordered to discontinue his pioneering work. These innovative ideas earned for Willich the reputation of being an eccentric.

On February 10, 1862, repairs on the Green River bridge were completed. Six days later Grant captured Fort Donelson. The Confederate defense line had been penetrated, and the 32d Indiana, as part of Buell's army, began the march that would lead them through Kentucky and Tennessee to the battle of Shiloh, a fight that would make the battles of Rowlett's Station, Mill Springs, Fort Henry, and Fort Donelson seem small by comparison.

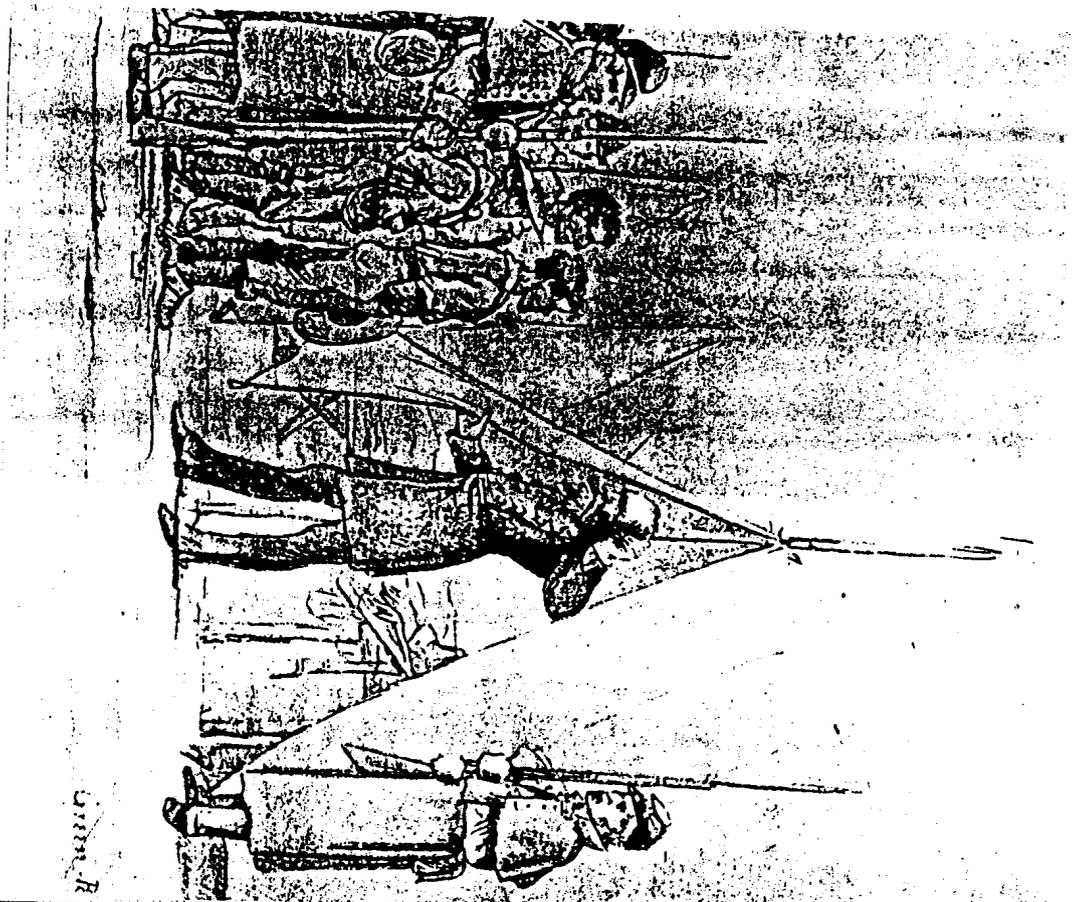
During the march toward the battlefield Willich and the 32d Indiana served as a model for all the other inexperienced regiments. As a self-appointed general superintendent of the army, Willich gave much needed advice in emergencies. When he saw a cavalry regiment swimming their horses across a river, he shouted out to them not to "break the fours." A stream should be swum by cavalry horses with four horses abreast "as in this manner the horses support each other." On another occasion he saw a band playing while a regiment kept step while crossing a bridge. The bridge started to sway and would have collapsed if Willich hadn't ordered the regiment to break step.¹¹

Another incident demonstrated that the 32d Indiana early in the war was one of the best-trained regiments in the armies. Willich came to a small stream, and while other troops were waiting for a pontoon bridge to be built he had his men gather up driftwood, and at a shallow place he crossed his regiment over the stream on a makeshift bridge built out of driftwood.

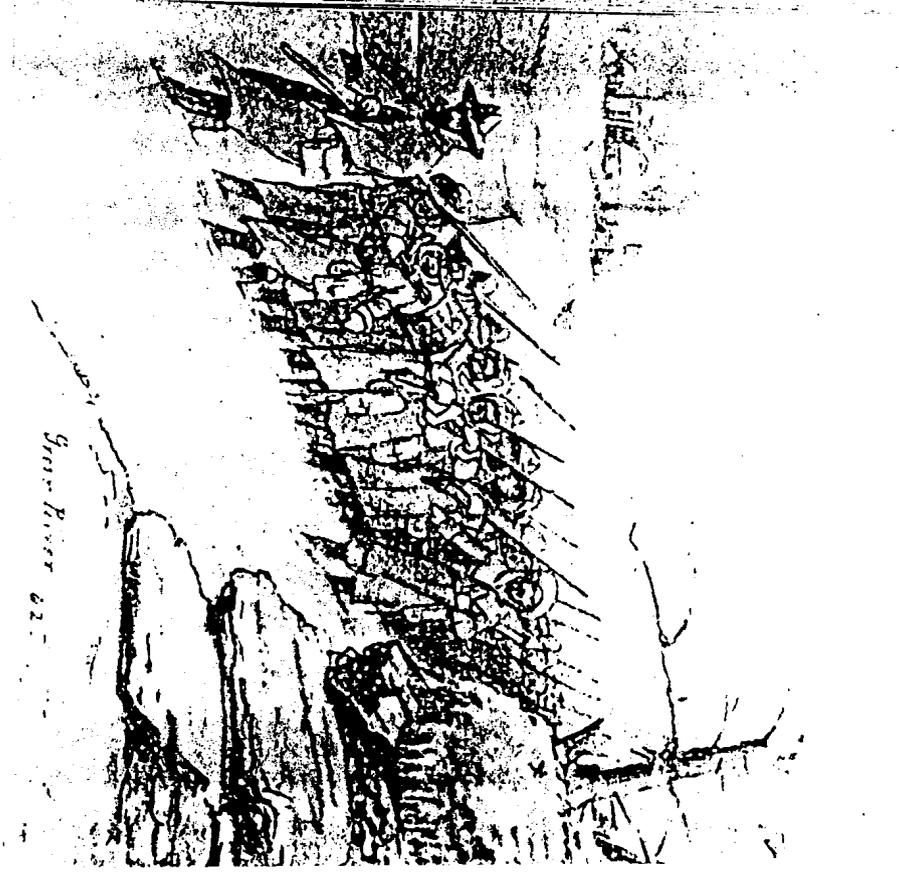
Meanwhile, stunned by the loss of Kentucky and Tennessee, the Confederate commander in the west, Albert Sidney Johnston, planned a counter blow. He would strike Grant's army camped at Pittsburg Landing on the Tennessee River before Buell's army got to the scene. Johnston struck Grant's unprepared army a massive blow on the morning of April 6, 1862, bringing on the bloody battle of Shiloh, in terms of carnage the greatest battle ever fought on the North American continent up to that point. By the end of the first day Grant had scarcely 7,000 effectives left out of an army of 39,000 men.



The 32d Indiana received the assignment of building a pontoon bridge across the Green River and guarding it against Confederate attacks while the railroad bridge was being replaced.



Colonel Willich received the first rebel prisoners, Texas Rangers at Green River. (Picture courtesy of E. Burns Apfeld.)



The Confederates attacked the 32d Indiana which was guarding the civilian repair crew. The battle of Rowlett's Station was fought for an hour, and though it was a victory of small proportions for the North, it occurred when Union spirits were low and helped rekindle enthusiasm for the war. (Picture courtesy E. Burns Apfeld.)

The 32d Indiana and the other regiments in Buell's army were twenty miles from Savannah, Tennessee, the morning the battle began. After marching for about two miles a rumor spread that the noise they heard in the distance was thunder. But one soldier wrote, "Colonel Willlich of the 32d Indiana was seen to dig a small hole in the ground with his sword and lie down with his ear over it."¹² After which Willlich informed everybody that they were hearing the sounds of a battle not thunder.

Buell's army began a forced march. The 32d Indiana, the 39th Indiana, and the 15th and 49th Ohio reached Savannah at 11:00 P. M., the night of April 6, 1862, and the men slept in the streets of the town that night in a pouring rain. Rain-soaked and cold by daybreak, they munched on bacon and hardtack and blew on their coffee to cool it. Willlich paced up and down the landing waiting for a boat to take them to the battlefield. Col. William H. Gibson, then in command of the brigade was told to let Willlich and his regiment act independently once they reached the battlefield, since Gibson was coming under fire for the first time, and Willlich was far more experienced. By 9:00 A. M. the steamer, *John J. Roe*, arrived. Pulses quickened as Willlich ordered a band on the river bank to strike up the soul-stirring strains of *Rouget de Lisle's Marseillaise*. One soldier wrote: "The boat being heavily loaded moved very slowly, which gave us plenty of time for reflection. There were a great many long faces, and more serious looks would spread over the countenances of the men which a boat passed loaded with the dead and wounded from the battlefield."¹³ The *John J. Roe* wallowed slowly down the Tennessee River and reached Pittsburg Landing at about 10:00 A. M.¹⁴

The battle had raged since 5:20 A. M. Despite reinforcements from Buell's army, the Confederates held on with stubborn valor. Beauregard, then in command of the Confederate forces, momentarily expected General Earl Van Don with 20,000 fresh troops to come on to the field from Corinth, Mississippi. The Corinth road ran past the Shiloh meeting house, and therefore it had to be kept open. The Confederates were heavily concentrated at this point. Their front was guarded by a thicket of water oaks, making their position even stronger. This point became the scene of the heaviest fighting on the second day.

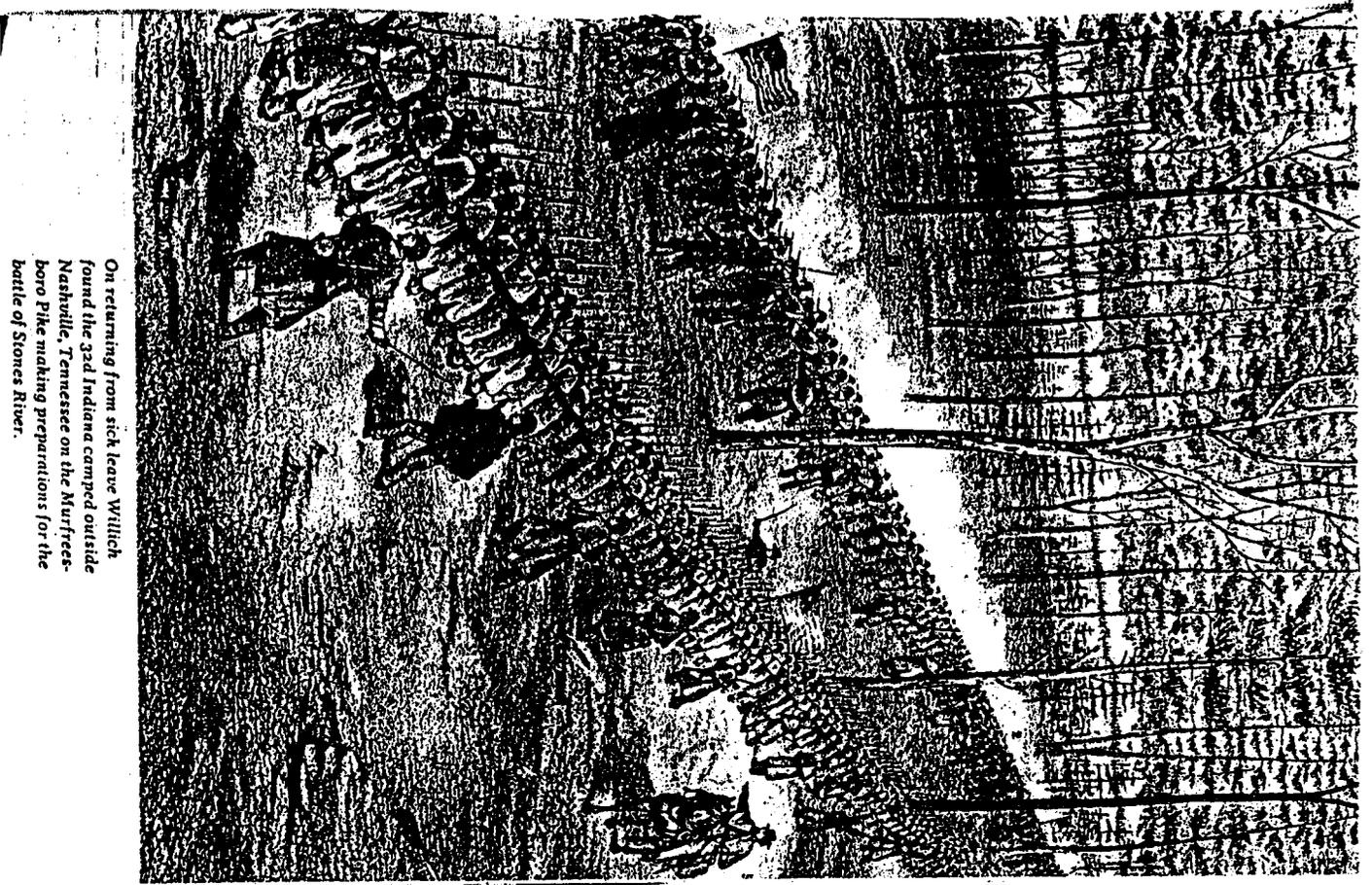
The Confederates attacked from behind the water oaks and drove back some of the regiments in the division commanded by Major General Lew Wallace, who later gained fame as the author of *Ben Hur*. Wallace described what happened and wrote that his retreating regiments reminded him

"of blackbirds in their migratory fall flight. I looked at them, then behind us in which my supporting force had been lost. Then at the last moment, it seemed, from a corner of the field in the south a body . . . began to file out of the forest. Who was it? Friend or foe?"

Shortly the strangers gave me a sight of their flag, at which my heart gave a great leap; for through the glasses I could see the stars in the dark-



Morale in Willlich's regiment remained high in spite of adverse conditions because Col. Willlich had brick ovens built and his men enjoyed freshly baked bread every day.



On returning from sick leave Willlich found the 32d Indiana camped outside Nashville, Tennessee on the Murfreesboro Pike making preparations for the battle of Stones River.

blue union . . . and I confess to having forgotten everything else so intent was I watching the upcoming strangers.

They were but a regiment; yet at sight of them the enemy halted, about-faced and returned to his position in the woods. Then he struck out with a fire so lively that the newcomers halted and showed signs of distress. Then an officer rode swiftly around their left flank and stopped when in front of them, his back to the enemy. What he said I could not hear, but from the motions of the men he was putting them through the manual of arms— notwithstanding some of them were dropping in the ranks. Taken all in all, that I think was the most audacious thing that came under my observation during the war. The effect was magical. The colonel returned to his post . . . and the regiment steadied as if on parade and actually entered the woods . . . I dispatched an orderly to the colonel of the unknown regiment, with my compliments, and asking his name, 'August Willlich, of the Thirty-Second Indiana volunteers.' was the reply brought me."¹⁵

Millions of readers, television-viewers, and movie-goers have been exposed to Lew Wallace's *Ben Hur* but few, if any, of them know that Willlich and the 32d Indiana charging the water oaks at Shiloh furnished the model for a scene from *Ben Hur*. Willlich is disguised as Valerius Gratus, the imperial governor of Judea. The story is familiar: a young Jew, Ben Hur, a prince of Jerusalem, rich, happy, ambitious was standing by the parapet of his palace, watching the procession of Valerius Gratus, imperial governor of Judea. As the Romans passed beneath the wall amid the jeers and insults of the Jews, the young prince leaned out to see the new governor, a loose tile was displaced, and, as bitter fate would have it, fell full upon the governor. The accident was not fatal, but it was an opportunity for exemplary justice . . . and so on. Thus, *Ben Hur* was sent to the galleys as a rower, where the life expectancy was one year.¹⁶ Wallace describes the procession of Valerius Gratus: "The brawny limbs of the men: the cadenced motion . . . the bold, confident step, exactly timed and measured . . . the machine-like unity of the whole moving mass . . . made an impression . . . The officer riding alone in the midst of the column was the other attraction . . . A trumpet sounded when the cavalcade drew near the village, had a magical effect upon the inhabitants."¹⁷

Actually, Wallace was describing the 32d Indiana filing out of the forest preparing to charge the water oaks at Shiloh. The majestic figure of Valerius Gratus is Willlich. The hisses and insults are the Confederate bullets pouring into the 32d Indiana. The sight of Willlich and his men had a "magical effect" on the inhabitants of the village who were the Confederates behind the water oaks. The genesis of this scene: from *Ben Hur* is clear.

In his report on the battle, Willlich mentioned that charges had been preferred earlier against Lieutenant Peter Cappel of Cincinnati and Lieutenant William Bork of Lawrenceburg, Indiana, for some unknown infraction of

discipline. He wrote: "Lieutenants Cappell and Bork, against whom I had to prefer charges some time ago, behaved so gallantly that the whole regiment would feel gratified if these charges could be dropped."¹⁸ No record exists that Cappell and Bork were ever court-martialed, so whatever it was they had done was forgotten in the light of their bravery at Shiloh.¹⁹

Major General Henry W. Halleck, in overall command in the west, took command of the army after Shiloh and moved at a snail's pace toward the railroad junction at Corinth, Mississippi. After his occupation of Corinth, Halleck was given higher command at Washington, and Buell was ordered to repair the Memphis & Charleston Railroad that ran from Corinth to Chattanooga and beyond. General Braxton Bragg, commander of the Confederate forces in the west, marched his army into Tennessee, which forced Buell to give up ground and race him toward Louisville.

In the meantime, Willlich's conduct at Shiloh earned him promotion to the rank of brigadier general, but the 32d Indiana remained as part of his brigade. Henry von Trebra was promoted to colonel. Karl Friedrich Heinrich von Trebra, like Willlich, was a former officer in the Prussian army.²⁰ The 32d Indiana took part in the long, weary march through Tennessee and Kentucky. They marched through Rowlett's Station, Kentucky, where they had fought nearly a year before, and slaked their parched throats with water from Green River.

Buell reached Louisville before Bragg and a sigh of relief went up all over the Northwest. There was little left of the shoes of the soldiers when they arrived at Louisville. Conscious of their ragged, dirty uniforms as they marched through the streets, one soldier wrote: "As we marched square after square amid enthusiastic cheering . . . we began to feel proud of our ragged blouses and shirts and worn shoes and a contempt for the soldiers in new uniforms and white collars which we saw in great numbers along the sidewalk . . ."²¹ Bragg concentrated his army south of Louisville and Buell moved out to give him battle. The Confederates were preparing to install Richard Hawes as Confederate governor of Kentucky and Buell sent a diversionary force toward Frankfort to interrupt the proceedings. The 32d Indiana was part of this force. But Willlich was not in command of the brigade. While drilling his men with his back toward the enemy at Shiloh, "Col. Willlich received several bullet holes in his clothes, and had a broken rib . . ."²² He was forced to go to a hospital in Louisville until his broken rib was healed. Willlich returned from sick leave on November 27, 1862, and found the 32d Indiana and his other regiments camped outside of Nashville, Tennessee on the Murfreesboro pike. In the meantime Colonel Henry von Trebra had contracted typhoid fever and returned to his home at Arcola, Illinois. Francis (Frank) Erdelmeyer of Indianapolis, was promoted to the rank of colonel and took command of the regiment.

On December 20, Willlich put his regiments through a number of drills as Major General William S. Rosecrans of Cincinnati, who had succeeded Buell as commanding general of the Army of the Cumberland, edged his way toward

Murfreesboro. The battle of Stones River was taking form. Describing Willlich one soldier wrote, "He wore a rubber cap, rubber overcoat and rubber boots. He seemed changed in manner, for he was quiet and cool where before he had been intensely active . . . this was his battle manner."²³ Somewhere between 5:30 and 6:00 A.M. Willlich's brigade and other adjoining brigades were attacked and driven back three or four miles before they checked the Confederate assault. The battle of Stones River raged for three days. The Army of the Cumberland suffered 10,000 casualties, but the Confederates lost just as many and withdrew from the field.

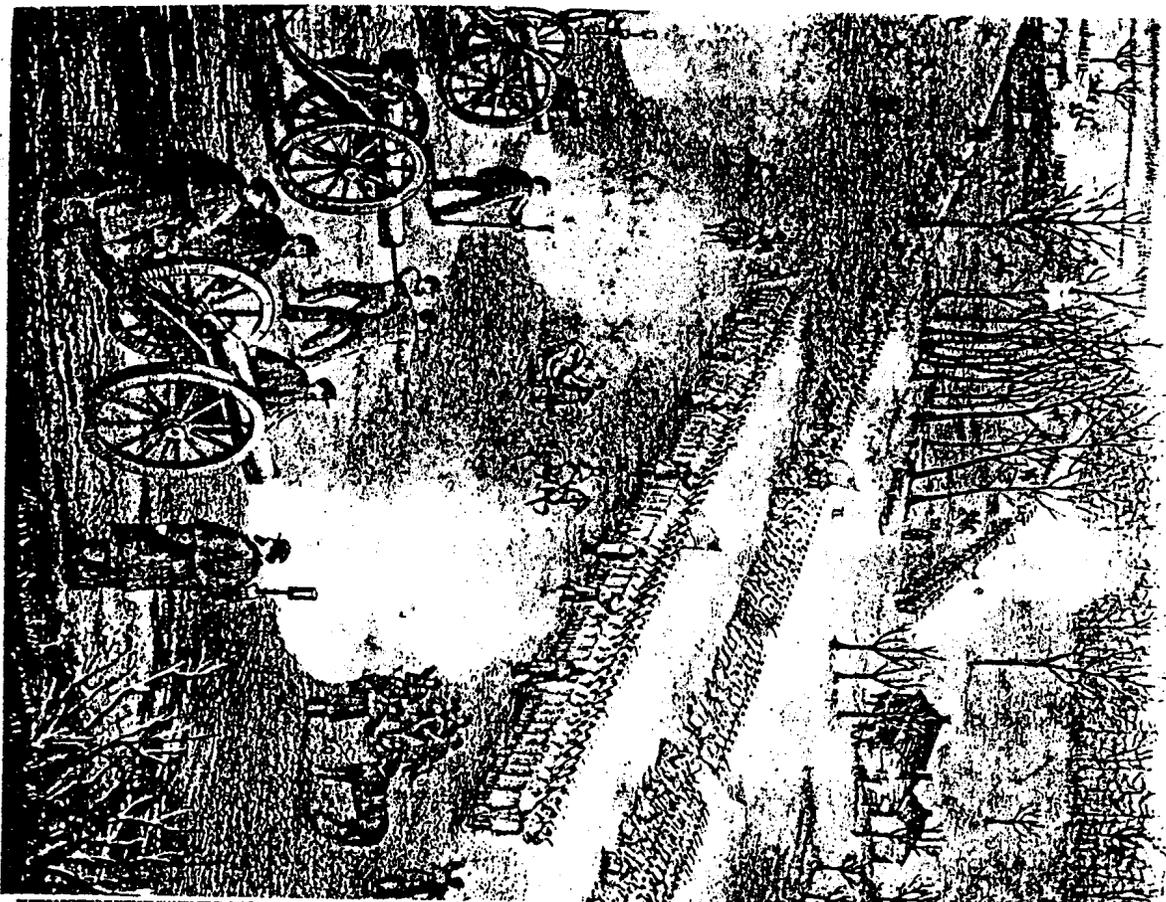
After the battle the 32d Indiana did reconnaissance duty in middle Tennessee from February to May 1863. But Willlich was not with them. He had been captured during the battle, later exchanged, and eventually rejoined his brigade. Two captains from the 32d Indiana, Captains Carl Schmitt and William G. Frank, and Willlich's orderly Private Joseph Brown formed an escort to accompany Willlich back to camp. South of Nashville Confederate cavalry intercepted and temporarily captured them. They were stripped of their arms but approaching Union cavalry drove off the Confederates and Willlich and his escort returned to camp safely.

During his brief stay in Libby Prison, Willlich had been conjuring up new ideas. He told his men that enough wagons should be constructed so that they could be hauled to their position during the approach march, positioning them sooner than the enemy would enable his men to be more rested and thus better able to fight. However, higher-ups rejected the idea. Willlich's innovative mind had thought of something new, a vision of modern motorized infantry movements, but he had struck the traditional snag of military conservatism.

In late 1863 the 32d Indiana along with the 39th Indiana led the advance of the Army of the Cumberland as Rosecrans forced Bragg out of middle Tennessee. The 32d Indiana helped break through Liberty Gap, Tennessee. With no modern communication wire or wireless, verbal orders were sometimes misunderstood or a courier got lost carrying written messages. To circumvent these difficulties Willlich directed his brigade with bugle calls. "The precision of (his) movements was equal to a parade." Praise was showered on Willlich for his conduct at Liberty Gap, but he shrugged off the accolades and praised his men instead. He commended two of his regiments, the 32d Indiana and the 89th Illinois, stating that they fought "the whole of Cleburne's division . . . hours."²⁴

After the battle of Liberty Gap Willlich marched his brigade to Bellefonte, Tennessee, and camped there on August 20, 1863. There he learned that Colonel Henry von Trebra had died at his home at Arcola, Illinois. He named the camping place "Camp von Trebra" to honor the memory of the second colonel of the 32d Indiana.

The pursuit of the Confederates continued into Georgia and Rosecrans had visions of capturing Atlanta, but unknown to him Bragg had been heavily re-



The battle of Stones River raged for three days. The Army of the Cumberland suffered 10,000 casualties, but the Confederates lost just as many and withdrew from the field.



Indiana and the 6th Ohio from Cincinnati were the first to reach the top of the ridge.²⁸ Chaplain F. H. W. Schmitz of the 32d Indiana addressed a letter to the mother of Lieutenant Louis von Trebra, referring to himself in the third person: "The Reverend F. H. W. Schmitz, Chaplain 32d Regt. Ind. Vols. having been on the battlefield of Missionary Ridge—where we gained a great victory over General Bragg—and having seen his friend Lieut. Louis von Trebra has much pleasure in informing Mrs. Louise von Trebra that her son is perfectly well and not hurt in the least although he was foremost in the battle and one of the first who entered the enemy's entrenchments on the top of the mountain—Our victory is complete and the enemy put to flight. . . . Our Regt. behaved gloriously."²⁹

After the victory of Missionary Ridge the 32d Indiana joined the force that went to east Tennessee to keep the Confederates away from Knoxville. The men marched from Chattanooga along the south bank of the Tennessee River. One hundred and twenty miles had to be covered with forced marches. Bodies heated during the day's march cooled as the men slept on the icy ground, and in the morning their clothing was frozen to the ground. They waded waist-deep in icy streams, but the hardships were softened when Willrich stopped every three hours for rest. Meals were seldom more than hardtack and coffee. More adventurous soldiers hung on the flanks and disappeared. At the end of the day they would return with loot taken from barns and farm houses, and the evening meal would be garnished with ham and sorghum molasses.

The 32d Indiana passed through Marysville, the county seat of Blount County, Tennessee. The streets were deserted and the scars of a cavalry fight could be seen. Broken windows and pitted places from rifle and cannon shots dotted the court house walls and other buildings. It was in Marysville that the 32d Indiana learned that the Confederates had been driven from Knoxville and that the city was no longer threatened.

The 32d Indiana and other regiments built a bridge over the Holston River near Strawberry Plains and repaired a railroad. They struggled for subsistence, procuring fuel for camp fires, and in the absence of tents tried to find shelter. They worked by day in downpours of rain, sleet, and snow and were lacerated by howling winds. By night they huddled around camp fires, their eyes stinging from the smoke from flames stoked by wet and green wood. If they attempted to write letters home, the ink froze in ink wells. Cattle driven up to be slaughtered were so weak from hunger that they had to be held up so they could be knocked in the head by army butchers. The 32d Indiana and other troops suffered more during this winter in east Tennessee than did Washington and his men during the Valley Forge winter.

By late 1863 it was clear that the war would not be won by mid-1864 when the three year enlistments of most of the Union regiments would expire. If all the veterans went home at once, the war might be lost. Thus the government offered a thirty days' furlough and a cash bounty of four hundred dollars or

higher if the veterans re-enlisted for "three years or during the war." The volunteer regiments, raised by the different states, could retain their regimental designations, colors, and organization, if more than three-fourths of the men re-enlisted. Also, they could wear a sleeve chevron which designated them as "veteran volunteer." Ironically the government was asking the troops in east Tennessee to re-enlist while ignoring them and failing to send adequate supplies during a pointless winter campaign.

The 32d Indiana did not re-enlist as veteran volunteers and the reason deserves an explanation. Know-Nothing attitudes died hard, and pre-war nativism had carried over into the Civil War. At the battle of Chancellorville, Virginia, in June, 1862, General Joseph Hooker had loudly blamed the 11th Army Corps for his defeat. Newspapers picked up the story and spread it throughout the country. The *New York Times* called the 11th Corps soldiers "Dutch cowards." No one bothered to get the facts, that out of the 12,000 men in the 11th Corps, 7,000 were Americans with the remaining 5,000 foreign-born, and that less than one-third were Germans. Not until years after the war was it accepted that the only real resistance at Chancellorville was supplied by German regiments.³⁰ Few German regiments re-enlisted as veteran volunteers, because no one in high position in the administration denounced this recurrence of nativism. This was the situation faced by the 32d Indiana as decision-making time came. In addition to being offended by a lack of appreciation for their sacrifices, the regiment had only 200 men left out of the original 1,000 which had left Indianapolis three years before. Of course, the regiment had been augmented by some recruits.

The 32d Indiana did not re-enlist but served with distinction in Sherman's campaign against Atlanta. The regiment took part in a number of battles and skirmishes—Rocky Face Ridge, Buzzard's Roost Gap, Resaca, Adairsville, Cassville, Dallas, Pickett's Mills, Lost Mountain, Kennesaw Mountain, Ruff's Station, operations on the line of the Chatahoochee River, and the siege of Atlanta.

Led by Colonel Frank Erdelmeier the remnants of the regiment were taken out of the lines in front of Atlanta and sent to Chattanooga. From there they went to Indianapolis and were waiting to be mustered out on August 24, 1864, believing that their war-days were over, but such was not the case. A Confederate guerrilla force was assembling near Morganfield, Kentucky, planning to conduct raids across the Ohio River in the neighborhood of Henderson, Kentucky. Major General Alvin P. Hovey, on leave at Mt. Vernon, Indiana, a town near the spot where the Wabash River flows into the Ohio, ordered the 32d Indiana, the 41st Illinois, and some militiamen to advance. The 32d Indiana went to Mt. Vernon, crossed the Ohio River, and fought skirmishes in Kentucky on August 17, 18, and 19, at White Oak Springs, Geiger's Lake, and Smith's Mill, suffering no casualties.

The non-veterans were finally mustered out of service at Indianapolis on September 7, 1864. The 200 recruits who had not served three years formed

a battalion under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Hans Blum, a former Prussian army officer. This battalion served in Texas and was mustered out of the service on December 4, 1865.

After the war Captain William Dooke of the 24th Illinois wrote: "It may be safely said that of the great host of subordinate commanders and troops of the German part of our armies that they were true as steel . . . both the 9th Ohio and the 32d Indiana . . . could not be more perfect . . . (and the) . . . excellent conduct of these two regiments alone shows sufficiently that like the noble Steuben and heroic Muhlenberg of revolutionary fame, one can be just as brave an American soldier in Luther's German as in the best King's English."³¹ For centuries the German States had been the central marching, camping, and battleground during the interminable wars between the monarchs of Europe. Young German men from one German state had been forced to fight against Germans in another German state. During the Stein era (1806-1815) the Prussian army had been humanized, and it was demonstrated when Napoleon was overthrown that an army of inspired volunteers could defeat an army of professional soldiers. At the outbreak of the Civil War, the German soldiers of the 32d Indiana and other German regiments were aware that they were acting out the role of their ancestors in the old country, fighting as an ethnic unit in a cause that they believed was just.

Years later realizing that no history of the 32d Indiana had ever been written, Frank Erdelmeyer, the last colonel of the regiment wrote in 1908 to his friend and fellow-soldier Captain Louis von Trebra³² at Chetopa, Kansas: "My dear comrade: I enclose you herewith a copy of notes the purport of which to get proper and current history of all prominent German-American soldiers and officers of our glorious old (Union) army . . . I have written several others . . . Now Dear Louie how are you getting along, we are all getting old and the most of us are already gone to the happy hunting ground. We lost Captain (Isadore) Esslinger, who died last month in Evansville . . . Hope this finds you and yours in good health and prosperous. My best wishes and I hope that I may see you once more. Yours truly, Frank Erdelmeyer."³³

Colonel Erdelmeyer's notes on the history of the 32d Indiana remain undiscovered. Although he never saw von Trebra again, he lived until 1926 and experienced another outburst of nativism directed against German-Americans during the 1914-1918 period. Perhaps he abandoned his project realizing that it would not be a popular subject. But now a brief history of the 32d Indiana has been written and if Colonel Erdelmeyer were still with us, we hope that he would be pleased.

JAMES BARNETT, past president of the Hamilton and Cincinnati Civil War Round Tables, has lectured extensively and written numerous articles for different publications.

(11) As an ex-corporal in the U. S. Marine Corps, this writer will make an exception of himself and many other non-coms he knew.

(12) Die Neuner, Eine Schilderung der Kriegsjahre des 9ten Regiments Ohio Vol. Infanterie, (Cincinnati: 1897), 48, hereafter *Die Neuner*.

(13) Maj. Gen. T. August Willich, *The Army, Standing Army or National Army?* (Cincinnati: 1866), 21.

(14) *Die Neuner*, op. cit., 15.

(15) *Ibid.*

(16) *Ibid.*

(17) *Indianapolis Herald*, August 1, 1866.

(18) *The War of the Rebellion a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 130 serials comprising 70 vols. (Washington, D. C. 1881-1901), S1, VII, 18, hereafter O. R.

Not many German regiments were exclusively German. Dr. Jean A. Jeanpon, regiment surgeon of the 32d Indiana, was born in France April 8, 1832. He came to the United States some time before the Civil War. He married Mathilda Lemcke, of Indianapolis, on July 8, 1855 at Posey County, Indiana. After the war he practiced medicine in Newport, Kentucky. He died January 13, 1903 at 724 Monmouth Street, Newport. His body was cremated at the Cincinnati Crematory. Mrs. Jeanpon died at Topeka, Kansas April 4, 1909.

(19) After the war the bodies of the 32d Indiana soldiers killed at the battle of Rowlett Station were removed and re-buried in Cave Hill Cemetery, Louisville, on June 6, 1867. On the stone marking the re-interment site, the names of Max Sachs and Theodore Schmidt appear there erroneously. Sachs was buried in K. K. Adach Cemetery and Schmidt in Spring Grove, both in Cincinnati.

(20) M. J. Becker, "The Germans of 1849

in America," (Mt. Vernon, O., 1887), 38.

(11) Curry, W. L. *First Ohio Cavalry*, 30-32.

(12) Cope, Alexis, *The Fifteenth Ohio Volunteers*, 108.

(13) *Ibid.*, 123.

(14) Mark Twain had this to say about the John J. Roe: "There is a great difference in boats, of course. For a long time I was on a boat that was so slow we used to forget what year it was when we left port . . . the John J. Roe, was so slow that when she finally sank in Madrid Bend, it was five years before the owners heard of it."

(15) Lew Wallace, *Autobiography*, Vol. III, 561-562.

(16) The condensation of this episode from Ben Hur is, in substance, the one supplied by Professor William Fenwick Harris in *Pict. Outlines of 101 Best Novels*, (New York: 1962), 36.

(17) Wallace, Lew, *Ben Hur, A Tale of the Christ*, (New York: 1880), 128.

(18) O. R. I, Pt. 1, X, 318.

(19) Peter Cappell was born in 1828 in the Prussian Rhineland Province. He married Margaretha Zundorff at Cologne May 15, 1852. Some time before the Civil War they came to Cincinnati. He served with distinction during the war and rose to the rank of captain. He spent the remainder of his life in Cincinnati and was employed as a letter carrier. Their children and birth dates: Nance Cappell, 1853; Charles Cappell, 1855; Mrs. Anna Steffens nee Cappell, 1859; Mrs. Olga Gheve nee Cappell, 1861; and Albert Cappell, 1865. Captain Cappell died January 1, 1903 and Mrs. Cappell February 27, 1907. Both are buried in Spring Grove Cemetery. This material is from the National Archives and Records Service, hereafter NARS.

(20) Henry von Trebra was born at Lübben, Prussia October 28, 1830, the son of Carl