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PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

FIRST ANNUAL REUNION

OF THE SOCIETY OF THE

TWELFTH REGIMENT, NEW JERSEY VOLUNTEERS,

HELD AT WOODBURY, FEBRUARY 22, 1875.

The Committee of Arrangements appointed at a preliminary meeting held at the Town Hall, Mullica Hill, N. J., Saturday, January 30, 1875, to take into consideration the propriety of holding a Reunion of the Twelfth Regiment New Jersey Volunteers, met the members of that Regiment at the dépôt at Woodbury on the arrival of the morning trains.

At half-past 9 o'clock the "Old Twelfth" formed in line,—having been mustered out nearly ten years,—with the old flags on the right, preceded by the Swedesboro Band, marched to the Court House, which in due time was well filled with the soldier-citizens and their friends.

The meeting was called to order by Sergeant David Borton.

Sergeant William S. Hinline was elected temporary President, and, in a brief address, tendered thanks for the compliment paid him, stating the object of the meeting to be the formation of an organization which should perpetuate the history of the Twelfth Regiment New Jersey Volunteers.

Sergeant John Tonkin was appointed Secretary, and the following call for the preliminary meeting, with the proceedings taken at the same, read:

NOTICE.

The members of the Twelfth Regiment New Jersey Volunteers are respectfully invited to meet at the Town Hall, at Mullica Hill, on Saturday afternoon, January 30, 1875, to take into consideration the propriety of holding a Reunion of said Regiment.

THE OLD TWELFTH REGIMENT NEW JERSEY VOLUNTEERS.

In response to a call made by a number of the members of the old Twelfth Regiment New

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Jersey Volunteers, desiring to hold a Reunion of the Regiment, a preliminary meeting was held in the Town Hall at Mullica Hill, January 30, 1875. Four companies were represented.

Colonel Edward L. Stratton occupied the chair.

The sentiment in favor of holding a Reunion was unanimous, every one manifesting a desire to see his old companions with whom he had borne arms against the foes of our nation, and in whose company he had experienced the hardships incident to a soldier's life.

The following preamble and resolutions were adopted:

WHEREAS, A call has been made for a meeting of the Twelfth Regiment New Jersey Volunteers at the Town Hall, Mullica Hill, January 30, 1875, to take into consideration the propriety of forming a Reunion of said Regiment; *and, whereas*, a considerable number of said Regiment having so met, and, after interchange of opinion expressed a strong desire to enter into such an association; *and, whereas*, an organization so formed will have a beneficial effect in keeping alive a feeling of patriotism, and be one of the means of preserving to our posterity a love of country, and also of recalling to mind the many episodes of our late struggle; therefore be it

Resolved, That we take initiatory steps looking to a Reunion of the Twelfth Regiment New Jersey Volunteers, at the City of Woodbury, N. J., on the 22d day of February, 1875, at 10 o'clock A. M.

Resolved, That to carry out this purpose a Committee of Ten be appointed to extend a general invitation to all survivors of the Twelfth Regiment to meet us at the time and place above named; to make arrangements for securing a building; to collect a roll of the several companies, and to send printed invitations to each member, with request to answer the same.

The following named persons compose the committee:

Sergeant David Borton, Mullica Hill; Colonel Edward L. Stratton, Mullica Hill; Captain James White, Mullica Hill; Private Joseph Moore, Mullica Hill; Corporal Samuel Iredell, Mullica Hill; First-Sergeant George C. Sithens, Harrisonville; Captain Charles D. Lippincott, Swedesboro; Captain Azariah Stratton, Swedesboro; Private Joseph C. Watson, Woodbury; First-Sergeant William S. Garwood, Woodbury.

It was ordered to have proceedings of the meeting published in the papers of this and the adjoining counties.

On motion, adjourned to meet at Woodbury, N. J., on the 22d day of February, 1875.

JOHN TONKIN, *Secretary*.

All members of the Twelfth Regiment New Jersey Volunteers are respectfully invited to attend a Reunion of said Regiment, at Woodbury, N. J., February 22, 1875, at 10 o'clock.

Any member failing to receive invitation by mail, and desiring to attend, will please notify either of the above Committee immediately.

A Committee on Permanent Organization, consisting of the following persons, was appointed: Captain Azariah Stratton, Captain Charles D. Lippincott, Colonel Edward M. DuBois, Colonel H. F. Chew, Sergeant Edwin M. Padgett, Captain Frank M. Riley, Sergeant George C. Sithens, Sergeant David Borton, Sergeant James S. Kiger, Captain George A. Cobb.

A Committee on Constitution and By-Laws was also appointed, consisting of Colonel William E. Potter, Captain George W. Swing, Captain Frank M. Acton.

A recess was then taken, and the members present availed themselves of the opportunity to record their names with the Secretary. Eighty-three names were enrolled.

Several visitors being present who had served with other regiments, on motion of Colonel Ed. M. DuBois, they were invited to sit with the Society as corresponding members.

The Committee on Permanent Organization reported the following list of officers for the Society, who were unanimously elected:

President, Colonel Henry F. Chew.

Vice-Presidents, Sergeant David Borton, Captain George A. Bowen, Lieutenant Henry W. Gaskill, Hospital-Steward Charles A. Weideman.

Secretary, Sergeant John Tonkin.

Treasurer, Captain Charles D. Lippincott.

Executive Committee, Sergeant James S. Kiger, Colonel William E. Potter, Sergeant William S. Hinehine, Private Joseph D. Bassett, Lieutenant George A. Cobb, Colonel Edward L. Stratton, Private Florence Bleyler, Sergeant George C. Sithens, Captain Frank M. Acton, Colonel Edward M. DuBois.

The President, Colonel Henry F. Chew, was escorted to the chair by Sergeant William S. Hinehine. The Colonel spoke briefly of the objects which prompted the gathering, thanked his comrades for the honor conferred, and trusted that future Reunions would be even more pleasant than the present.

The Committee on Constitution and By-Laws submitted the following—

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS.

CONSTITUTION.

This Association shall be known by the name and title of the REUNION SOCIETY OF THE TWELFTH REGIMENT NEW JERSEY VOLUNTEERS.

ARTICLE I. The objects of the Society shall be to keep alive a spirit of patriotism; to imbue our posterity with a love of country, which shall at all times rise paramount to the ties of party; to revive and strengthen the ties of fraternal fellowship formed by the companionship in the Regiment; to recall to mind the many trials of our late struggle; to perpetuate the names and fame of those who have fallen in battle, or in the line of duty, and to collect and preserve for our children a record of the many well-contested battles, marches, campaigns and skirmishes which the Regiment passed through so honorably.

ART. II. The officers of the Society shall be a President, four Vice-Presidents, a Recording Secretary, a Corresponding Secretary, a Treasurer, and an Executive Committee of six, who shall be elected at each annual meeting of the Society, and hold their respective offices one year, or until their successors are elected.

ART. III. Any surviving member of the Twelfth Regiment New Jersey Volunteers, who has been honorably discharged therefrom, shall be eligible to membership upon giving his assent to the Constitution, signing the roll of the Society, and the payment of one dollar to the Treasurer.

ART. IV. The annual meetings of the Society shall be held on the 22d day of February of each year, except when the 22d of February fall upon Sunday, in which event the annual meeting shall be held on the 23d of February.

ART. V. Twenty members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

ART. VI. This Constitution may be altered or amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any annual meeting; *Provided*, due notice of the contemplated change shall have been given at the previous meeting.

BY-LAWS.

ARTICLE I. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Society, sign all drafts on the Treasurer for the payment of money, when so ordered by the Society, or the Executive Committee, and appoint all committees not otherwise provided for by the Society. In the absence of the President, his duties shall be performed by one of the Vice-Presidents; and in the absence of the President and Vice-Presidents, a President *pro tempore*, with like powers, may be chosen.

ART. II. The Corresponding Secretary shall, at the expense of the Society, notify the members of the Society of the time and place of holding the annual meeting, by public notice. He shall also correspond with the members of kindred associations whenever directed by the Society or Executive Committee. He shall attend all meetings of the Society or Executive Committee.

ART. III. The Recording Secretary shall attend all the meetings of the Society or Executive Committee, and record all their proceedings in a book or books provided for that purpose, and preserve the books and papers belonging to the same. He shall draw upon the Treasurer for such sums of money as may be ordered by the Society or Executive Committee, and perform such other duties as may be required of him; and at the expiration of his term of office deliver all books and papers belonging to the Society in his possession to his successor in office.

ART. IV. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive all monies due the Society, and pay the same out upon the order of the Recording Secretary, countersigned by the President, and at each annual meeting make a detailed report to the Society of his receipts and expenditures; and at the expiration of his term of office deliver all monies, books, and papers in his possession belonging to the Society to his successor in office.

ART. V. It shall be the duty of the Executive Committee to make all necessary arrangements for the annual meetings of the Society. They shall annually, or oftener, audit the accounts of the Secretaries and Treasurer, and perform such other duties as the Society may require of them. The President, Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer, shall be, *ex-officio*, members of the Executive Committee. Five members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum.

ART. VI. Every officer and soldier of the Twelfth Regiment New Jersey Volunteers, who was honorably discharged therefrom, desiring to become a member of the Society, shall, upon giving his assent to the Constitution and By-Laws, pay to the Treasurer the sum of one dollar, and each year thereafter the sum of one dollar, as annual dues, and shall thereupon be entitled to a copy of the proceedings of the Society, when published, free of charge, and to all the other privileges of members. No member in arrears for annual dues shall be entitled to vote for officers.

ART. VII. The order of business at the annual meetings shall be as follows:

1. Meeting called to order.
2. Prayer.
3. Reading of the Minutes.
4. Collection of Dues.
5. Reading Communications.
6. Address.
7. Reports of Committees.
8. Unfinished Business.
9. New Business.

ART. VIII. These By-Laws may be altered, or amended, or repealed, by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any annual meeting.

Discussion ensued on Article IV. of the Constitution, in regard to the day on which the annual Reunion shall be held, but it was, with the entire code, adopted as recommended by the Committee.

It was resolved that the future Reunions of the Society be held at Woodbury.

The Executive Committee was directed to have two hundred copies of the Constitution and By-Laws printed.

Colonel Edward L. Stratton then read the following letters from former members of the Regiment, which were received with applause:

WASHINGTON, D. C., February 19, 1875.

Committee on Reunion, Twelfth Regiment New Jersey Vols.:—

COMRADES,—I have received your invitation to attend a Reunion of the Twelfth Regiment New Jersey Volunteers, to be held at Woodbury, on the 22d inst., and regret very much that circumstances place it beyond my power to be present. It has long been my desire to meet again my former comrades in arms, and I have looked forward to the day when there should be just such a gathering as is now contemplated. And while we mourn for the many who gallantly laid down their lives in the hour of their nation's need, the recollections of those days and years of trial bring to the mind many incidents pleasant to contemplate.

Be pleased to communicate to our Comrades when assembled my profound regrets at not being able to meet with them, and my hearty wishes for their welfare.

Yours, truly,

JOS. BURROUGHS,

Late of Co. A, Twelfth New Jersey Vols.

WASHINGTON, D. C., February 20, 1875.

COMRADES,—The receipt of an invitation to the Reunion of the gallant old Twelfth New Jersey Volunteers, at Woodbury, on the 22d inst., a few days since, brought up so many pleasant recollections and associations, and filled the air with so many familiar faces, some of whom we shall never again recognize this side of the "Eternal Camping-ground," that it was some time before I could realize that nearly eleven years have passed since I was an active member of this same noble Old Twelfth. But such is the fact. The bloody affair at Spottsylvania, on the 12th of May, 1864, was the last time that I had the honor to command Company C,—the *C-Horses*, as distinguished from our neighbors, the *D-Studs*: and now, after thirteen years have run their course since we left Woodbury, with the promise to preserve the credit of the State in the face of armed rebels and traitors, it would give me the keenest pleasure to return there, the pledge having been so well and faithfully kept, as is testified by our well-worn and bullet-riddled colors in the State Capitol. The Old Twelfth never lost her colors, but in addition to bringing them safely back to those who entrusted them to our care, we should be credited with the eleven rebel standards that our old Regiment captured at Gettysburg.

It is with deep regret that I am compelled to decline the invitation. No ordinary circumstance would keep me away, but just at this season my presence is imperatively demanded. And so wishing you all the pleasure possible, let me hope that you will remember those who cannot be present; and if a suggestion is in order, I would hope that when the adjournment takes place, it will not be *sine die*, but to a stated time, so that none need be absent on account of limited time of notice. With the kindest regard for every member of the Old Twelfth, and the assurance that my connection therewith forms one of my fondest memories,

I subscribe myself your comrade-in-arms,

N. M. BROOKS,

Late Captain Co. C, Twelfth New Jersey Vols.

Sergeant David Borton, Captain Charles D. Lippincott, and others.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, February 19, 1875.

Sergeant Borton, Colonel Stratton, and others:—

COMRADES,—Your kind invitation to a Reunion of the members of the Twelfth Regiment New Jersey Volunteers, on the 22d inst., at Woodbury, N. J., reached me in due course of mails, and while nothing could give me more gratification and greater pleasure than to grasp once more

the hands of the survivors of that noble Regiment, official duties preclude the possibility of so doing. I cannot, however, allow this opportunity to pass, without extending to you an earnest God-speed in your noble endeavor of keeping alive those fellowships engendered at the front, in camp, bivouac, and action. That invitation magically rolled away the mists that the fleeting years have gathered, and once more I see the hot, arid field at Woodbury; once more appear before me the staunch and true sons of New Jersey, as they flock forward to offer their lives in the service of their beloved State; the dress parade; the awkward squad; the nucleus from which sprang the invincible Twelfth. Once more appear before me the scenes and incidents of that memorable Sunday, when the roll of the drum proclaimed that we were to depart from our native State, and be identified with the army at the front (that imaginary line that separated good government from anarchy); then the hurried departure; the crowded cars and boats as we crossed the Delaware (our Rubicon); the meal, hearty, though hurried, at the Cooper-Shop; the march up Washington Street, in Philadelphia, a full regiment; the rough, long, and tedious ride to Baltimore; the silent midnight march through that city; our camp at Ellicott's Mills; the impatient desire to get to the front; the march through Maryland to Liverpool Point; the cold bivouac at Acquia Creek; the toilsome tramp to Falmouth, with the bloody débris of Fredericksburg's storm surging against us at every step. But other and sterner duties awaited the untried Twelfth. Chancellorsville swept down upon us with its hurricane of leaden hail. Our baptism of fire occurred, and how nobly the Old Twelfth sustained itself! It leaped from a band of raw recruits into the position of war-tried veterans. Gettysburg followed closely, and again the Twelfth snatched undying laurels from the hand of Fame; and from that day, the 3d of July, 1863, until April, 1865, the Twelfth was in the seething cauldron of action. Severe Bristow; desperate Mine Run, Morton's Ford; hellish Wilderness; bloody Spottsylvania, North Anna; horrible Cold Harbor; in the trenches at Petersburg; Reams' Station; Hatcher's Run; High Bridge, and glorious Appomattox, the Twelfth was manufacturing page after page of history, and adding to the laurels already crowning its brow. New Jersey may well be proud of her Twelfth Regiment. No stain besmirches our escutcheon. It did its duty as God gave it to see the duty, and it did it nobly, but at what a sacrifice! Where are Davis, Peirson, Lowe, McCoomb, Cheesman, Rich, Stratton, Fogg, and hosts of others, though privates in rank, with heart and soul to do and dare? Heroes all! their names are enshrined in every loyal heart, and

On Fame's eternal camping-ground
Their silent tents are spread,
And Glory guards with solemn round
The bivouac of *our* dead.

Your comrade,

CHAS. E. TROUTMAN,

Late of Twelfth New Jersey Vols.

The President, in a few remarks, introduced to his comrades Colonel William E. Potter, the Orator of the Day, who with admirable tone and manner delivered the first annual oration before the Society, as follows:

Mr. Chairman, Comrades of the Twelfth New Jersey, and Gentlemen: I think that I speak the common sentiment of all who are here, when I say that to be present at this reunion of the Twelfth Regiment New Jersey Volunteers is one of the most pleasing events of my life. It is now near thirteen years since that gallant regiment, with full ranks of men in the first bloom of vigorous manhood, marched forth from this quiet village to active service in the field. It is especially fitting that this, our first reunion, should be held here, where our regiment was formed and encamped; in the county which, more than others, has always seemed

most truly to recognize and remember the services of her citizen soldiers. The county of Gloucester was the first in this part of the State, and so far as I know, the first county anywhere in the State, to build a noble monument to the memory of her dead soldiery. It stands, as it should stand, facing the entrance to your city; and I never walk up yonder street and gaze upon it but the curtain of the past is unrolled, and I see again the brave men who once marched with me through these streets and upon that bright Sabbath morn, already so long ago, here bade a last farewell to their friends, their families, and their homes.

I read upon it the names of Howell, Harker, and Stratton, and a hundred others, and I see again the green slopes of Gettysburg, the rugged crags of Kene-saw Mountain, the tangled and fatal swamps of Virginia. What are the paltry dollars which it cost to build, in comparison with the unchanging lessons of patriotism and devotion which that monument shall teach to the generations that grow up around it? No fabled oracle of ancient learning, no orator or poet, however eloquent, ever spake with such wisdom and moving force, as may be heard to-day by the people of Gloucester from yonder silent stone. Do you ask for bravery? Go read the record there. For devotion to duty? You will find it there. Do you seek examples of a patriotism which knew no dangers too great, no sacrifices too lofty; which stayed not for the snows of winter, or the suns of summer, for hunger, fatigue, for pestilence, for battle-fields, for chains and dungeons, until the last full measure of devotion had been given? They are there—all there. There let your monument stand until the solid globe shall melt beneath it, a witness alike to the heroic lives and the heroic deaths of the sons of the county of Gloucester, and to the unfading gratitude of the people who reared it, for the rich sacrifice which those whose names it bears laid upon the altar of their country.

The ceremonies of this day, my comrades, are at once a requiem and a triumph. We have come together sorrowfully and tenderly, remembering our dead who cannot meet with us again. We have come thrilled with the thought that the country and the cause for which they died, in their deaths, and by their deaths, will live forevermore. It is sad to think they should have died, and with them the vast army of their comrades whose dust has enriched all our Northern cemeteries, and made the soil of the South more precious to us than the golden shores of India or California. They were so young, so brave, so true. They were our friends, brothers, fathers, sons. Their lives were so interlocked and intertwined with our own by the sweet tendrils of intimate association and affection—ties soft as silken threads, but, ah! stronger “than strong links of iron,” that when they died it sometimes seemed as if we, too, could no longer live. Ah, the uncounted loss, that can never now be numbered, which the country suffered in the death of these young men. What a draft upon the treasury of the Nation, more exhausting than offerings of silver and gold, was it to pour out the rich current of their veins in the fearful struggle that is past. It was hard

enough to spare them even as they were. It filled the cup of our sorrow full to overflowing as we saw them stricken down by our side, or read the long bulletins of death, to know that one and another had gone from us forever. It was a deep, universal, far-reaching sorrow. It stretched beyond the bounds of any one family, of any one regiment, of any one county, of any one State. It was the sorrow of a Nation, weeping for its children, and refusing to be comforted because they were not. It penetrated to every condition and rank in society. There was no stately mansion, so hedged about and guarded by the appliances of luxury and ease, that the stern summons to duty was not heard within its walls; there was no little cottage, so hidden among its clustering vines, that the bugle call to arms did not reach the listening ear of some one, whose feet shall press its hearth-stone never again, never again.

Yet, when we have thought of all that was beautiful and lovely in those who died, and what they were to us, we have not told over half our loss. Take the sum of love, of beauty, of manliness, of intellectual and moral worth in all the lives that were given to the country; add to this, if you can, all that would have been gained by each of them in a full life-time of exertion and development; reckon up the wealth which would have accrued to the country from these four hundred thousand citizens, were they still alive; add to this the countless tears which have been shed for them; the anguish too deep for expression which has wrung so many hearts; the widows left with no supporting arm; the friendless orphans; the lives cut short by their deaths; the other lives blighted; picture all this in your minds, and you may have some faint conception of the loss and suffering of the country which we this day mourn. In this view, therefore, our ceremonies to-day are *funereal*, and the music we have heard is a requiem for the dead.

The soldiers whom we mourn were no band of mercenaries struggling for plunder, no hired cut-throats killed in a senseless quarrel as to boundary lines, or a point of national etiquette. They were the citizens of a free Republic, sternly fighting for the cause of human freedom. They died for that cause. No longer must we turn back to past ages to find names of illustrious heroism upon which to dwell with fond pride. The coat of faded army blue sacredly laid aside in many a farm-house throughout this county, once covered a heart as true and brave as that which Warren bore into the fight at Bunker Hill; and its wearer, a smooth-checked boy, it may be, died just as gallantly as those who fell with Warren there. The men stricken down in our regiment, their comrades elsewhere—such is the potent touch of death—seem already transformed and removed from us, so that we unconsciously mingle their memories with those of the long list of martyrs who, in other times, have died for the cause of civil liberty. In this view, therefore, and for these reasons, the ceremonies of to-day are *triumphal*, and the tones of our music should be such as Miriam sang when the hosts of Israel trod the farther shore of the Red Sea, or like those which rang upon the air of Judea to the strains of David's wondrous harp.

These men, by their heroic deaths, their comrades, by their devoted lives, may be said in very truth to have recreated the Republic. It is almost impossible, in the current of the resistless energy and momentum of present affairs, to pause long enough to reflect upon the condition of our country before the war, and to contrast it with its situation now, but it may well be that we cannot better employ this hour than briefly to review the causes which lead us thus to meet and to honor the memories of our dead comrades.

Our fathers bequeathed us a virgin soil of almost unlimited extent, and a constitution of government which was a political experiment. The few years of the existence of the confederation which grew out of the Revolutionary war had fully demonstrated the organic weakness of that form of government, and its want of capacity to guide and control the expanding necessities of a growing and intelligent nation of freemen. Happily for us and the world, the great men formed in the stormy era of the war with England lived long enough to frame and adopt as of binding force the Constitution of 1789, called the Constitution of the United States. This instrument, it is well known, was the result of a compromise of conflicting political views and interests, and contained within itself provisions looking to a peaceful solution of the only disturbing element which seemed likely to enter into our future political history. The situation of our country, separated by three thousand miles of ocean from all other great powers, was so happy, its resources of climate and wealth were so varied and inexhaustible, its civil and religious freedom were so entirely secure, that for a generation after the adoption of the Constitution it did seem that, whatever storms and disasters might fall upon other nations, our Republic was indeed founded upon a rock which could not be shaken. The war with England in 1812-15 was chiefly upon the sea, and the war with Mexico was entirely aggressive upon our part, and engaged but a small number of our people, so that for the first seventy years from the adoption of the Constitution nothing had seriously tested its capacity and strength. The excitement upon the admission of Missouri in 1820, the threatenings of South Carolina in 1830, and the yet more ominous discussions arising out of the admission of Texas in 1850, had convinced all thoughtful men that the crucial test of the strength of our form of government was yet to come, and that when it did come it would shake the very foundations of our national existence.

Still the nation glided on in one unvarying career of prosperity and development, constantly growing in wealth and material greatness, constantly extending its area, constantly receiving new members into its political brotherhood. We were like those people of whom history tells us, who were born and reared upon the slopes of a volcano that for centuries had given no signs of active life. They saw rising above their heads the lofty peak whose summit was seamed and blackened by the fires that once burned so fiercely; but their eyes rested now only upon the verdure that clothed its sides; upon the laughing streams which trickled

downward to the sea; upon the towers and temples standing out clear and firm against the summer skies; upon the happy towns and villages which, for many generations had grown and clustered upon and around it. In the security of the present the smothered fires beneath their feet were forgotten.

Thus it was with the American people in 1861, when, without a note of warning, the volcano burst forth and threatened to engulf our homes, our liberties, and our lives in the flaming, devastating torrent of a civil war. When these men marched all was doubt and gloom, disaster and dismay. There was treason—secret, open, wide-spread and growing. Around the South was drawn a broad line of demarcation, and behind it was gathering a mighty army to destroy the Republic; while in both the South and the North, slavery, like a black, overhanging cloud, cast its sombre and baleful influence upon the Bench, the Forum, the Pulpit, and the Social circle. When they marched our flag had been pulled down, insulted, trampled upon, fired upon. When they marched the Union seemed to be broken forever, so that foreign nations sneeringly said that "the bubble had burst;" the Southern horizon was lurid with the flames of war; our ports were sealed; the great highway of the Mississippi was closed to our commerce, and from the head-waters of the Ohio, clear down to the Gulf, the air was filled with the sounds of battle. When they marched we presented the strange anomaly of a free Republic holding four millions of human beings in the most abject slavery; the still stranger spectacle of a free nation whose flag and authority for many years had given no protection to free speech and a free press over a large portion of its domain. All feared the present, all dreaded the future, when with rolling drums and streaming flags and gleaming arms the young men of the North, in massive columns, came to the front and formed a bulwark of defense around your homes.

It was in the midst of such a crisis as I have thus briefly sketched that the Twelfth Regiment New Jersey Volunteers was formed and organized for the field. This was the only regiment, if I mistake not, which was raised entirely within the southern counties of the State, and for this reason should be peculiarly dear to their people. Time will not permit me on this occasion to review in detail the history of our regiment, nor is it necessary in your presence; and I shall therefore confine myself to a brief summary of its origin and career. It is just to say that I am indebted to Sergeant James S. Kiger, of Co. A, for many of the data herein contained, which are taken from the official roster and history of our regiment, prepared under the direction of the Adjutant-General of the State.

The Twelfth Regiment New Jersey Volunteers was organized under the provision of an Act of Congress approved July 22d, 1861, and under a call issued by the President of the United States, dated July 7th, 1862, for three hundred thousand additional volunteers, to serve for three years, or during the war. This regiment was one of the five required from this State under the call named. The organization of the regiment was begun in July, and was fully completed, and

the regiment was officered and equipped by the 4th day of September, 1862, at which time it was mustered into the service of the United States for three years by Captain William B. Royall, Fifth Cavalry, U. S. A. The several companies of the regiment were raised in the following-named counties, respectively: Co. A in the county of Salem; Co. B in the counties of Camden and Burlington; Co. C in the county of Camden; Co. D at large, but chiefly, I think, in Camden; Co. E in the county of Camden; Co. F in the county of Gloucester; Co. G in the counties of Camden and Cumberland; Co. H in the county of Salem; Co. I in the county of Salem; Co. K in the county of Cumberland.

The regiment left Woodbury, where it had been encamped, and the State, September 7th, 1862, under orders for Washington; but on its arrival at Baltimore was diverted from its route by General Wool, and ordered to Ellicott's Mills, on the line of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, then threatened by the advance of the Rebel army into Maryland. The strength of the regiment when it left the State was: Officers, 39; non-commissioned officers and privates, 953; total, 992. As a proof of the severity of its service, it may be here mentioned that its strength present for duty at Cold Harbor, Va., June 4th, 1864, less than two years afterward, was: Officers, 3; non-commissioned officers and privates, 90; total, 93. The regiment joined the Army of the Potomac, and was put in position on the Rappahannock, about three miles above the towns of Falmouth and Fredericksburg, on the 19th of December, 1862, and from that time until the close of the war, wherever and whenever hard service was done by that army, our regiment had its full share.

I might well pause to tell how it held its ground at Chancellorsville until its right was turned by Jackson's Corps, and its Colonel and one hundred and seventy-eight of its officers and men were stricken down; how sternly at Gettysburg it stood upon the right of the left centre of the army, the key of the position, and with the rolling fire of its smooth-bore muskets smote as with the blast of death Pettigrew's Brigade of North Carolina troops, which formed the left of Longstreet's charging columns; of its suffering in the severe winter campaign of Mine Run; of how it plunged through the icy waters of the Rapidan at Morton's Ford; of the wonderful campaign of the Wilderness, where in a short space of thirty days our devoted regiment lost more than three hundred killed and wounded out of a total of four hundred and twenty-five muskets; of its service, its losses, its sufferings by night and by day during the summer of 1864, and until the Rebel army surrendered, and the war was ended—but to you it is a familiar story, and I forbear.

During the period of its service the regiment was present and under fire in more than thirty general engagements, besides a large number of combats and skirmishes, viz: Chancellorsville, Va., May 3 and 4, 1863; Gettysburg, Pa., July 2 and 3, 1863; Falling Waters, Md., July 13, 1863; Auburn Mills, Va., October 14, 1863; Bristow Station, Va., October 14, 1863; Blackburn's Ford, Va.,

October 16, 1863; Robinson's Tavern, Va., November 27, 1863; Mine Run, Va., November 28, 29 and 30, 1863; Morton's Ford, Va., February 6, 1864; Wilderness, Va., May 5 and 6, 1864; Spottsylvania, Va.,^a May 8 to 11, 1864; Spottsylvania Court House, Va., May 12 to 18, 1864; North and South Anna Rivers, Va., May 24 to 26, 1864; Talopotomy, Va., May 30 and 31, 1864; Cold Harbor, Va., June 2 to 12, 1864; Before Petersburg, Va., June 16 to 23, 1864; Deep Bottom, Va., July 25 to 29, 1864; Mine Explosion, Va., July 30, 1864; North bank of James River, Va., August 14 to 18, 1864; Reams' Station, Va., August 25, 1864; Fort Sedgwick, Va., September 10, 1864; Hatcher's Run, Va., October 27, 1864; Boydton Plank Road, Va., October 27, 1864; Hatcher's Run, Va., February 6 to 8, 1865; Dabney's Mills, Va., February 28, 1865; Hatcher's Run, Va., March 25, 1865; Boydton Plank Road, Va., April 1, 1865; Capture of Petersburg, Va., April 2, 1865; Sailor's Creek, Va., April 6, 1865; High Bridge, Va., April 7, 1865; Farmville, Va., April 7, 1865; Lee's Surrender, Appomattox Court House, Va., April 9, 1865.

The total strength of the regiment during its term of service was 1899; at muster in, 992; gain from all sources, 907. In order to ascertain, however, its total strength during its period of active service, there should be deducted from the aggregate stated 300, being the number of recruits who joined it at Burkesville after the surrender of Lee, which will show its total strength before the close of the war to have been 1599. There died in the service, of its officers, 9; of its non-commissioned officers and privates, 252; making its total loss by deaths, 261, being a loss by death of little more than one-fourth of the original number of its rank and file, and of its officers, exclusive of the Medical Staff and the Quartermaster. Its other losses were: of officers discharged, 12; resigned, 14; total, 26; of enlisted men discharged, 159; total resigned and discharged, 185; add losses by death, 261; total losses from all causes, 446, being almost one-half of its original number.

It is proper to state that the resignations and discharges were chiefly on account of disability caused by wounds or disease contracted in the service. Considering the deaths in the service by the respective companies, there died of Co. A, 1 officer and 24 men; Co. B, 26 men; Co. C, 1 officer and 22 men; Co. D, 1 officer and 21 men; Co. E, 1 officer and 31 men; Co. F, 1 officer and 36 men; Co. G, 1 officer and 26 men; Co. H, 1 officer and 18 men; Co. I, 29 men; Co. K, 1 officer and 23 men; unattached substitute, 1; total, 252.

Of the Field and Staff, Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas H. Davis was killed. Of the total number of officers originally commissioned in the regiment, exclusive of the Medical Staff and Quartermaster, and of those who were killed or died of their wounds, 12 were wounded in action with greater or less severity, 17 were mustered out before the expiration of their term of service, and but three who served the full term escaped unhurt; and of the enlisted men, a very large number who were mustered out with the regiment bear the scars of honorable wounds.

The official register in the Adjutant-General's office shows that no regiment of this State, up to and including the Fourteenth, suffered as heavy a loss in deaths as the Twelfth, except the Eighth and Tenth; and one of these had a total aggregate of 2600, and the other of 2800, officers and men, their loss exceeding our own but very little. The Fifteenth suffered a total loss by death of 9 officers and 352 men in a total aggregate of 1871; and I believe this to be the heaviest loss suffered by any of our regiments.

The regiment was first attached to the Second Brigade, Third Division, Second Army Corps, then to the Third Brigade, Second Division, Second Army Corps, and at the close of the war was attached to a Provisional Corps—all in the Army of the Potomac. A part of the regiment was mustered out near Munson's Hill, Va., June 4, 1865, the remainder near Washington, July 15, 1865. The names of the officers who were killed, or died of wounds received in action, are: Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas H. Davis, killed in action at Spottsylvania Court House, Va., May 12, 1864; Captain Charles K. Horsfall, Co. E, killed in action at Gettysburg, Pa., July 2, 1863; Captain James McComb, Co. D, died July 2, 1864, of wounds received in action at Cold Harbor, Va.; First-Lieutenant John M. Fogg, Co. H, killed in action at the Wilderness, Va., May 5, 1864; First-Lieutenant John R. Rich, Co. E, died September 2, 1864, of wounds received in action at Reams' Station, Va.; First-Lieutenant James T. Lowe, Co. G, died October 20, 1863, of wounds received at Bristow Station, Va.; First-Lieutenant James S. Stratton, Co. F, killed in action at Reams' Station, Va., August 25, 1864; First-Lieutenant Joseph Pierson, Co. F, killed in action at Chancellorsville, Va., May 3, 1863; Second-Lieutenant Richard H. Townsend, Co. C, killed in action at Gettysburg, Pa., July 3, 1863.

Such, comrades, is in brief the history of our regiment; and though there may be others which can show as good a record, considering the numbers and term of service, none, I think, can show a better one. The Twelfth had the advantage of being a peculiarly homogeneous regiment. Composed largely of freeholders and sons of freeholders, raised in adjoining counties, and closely allied both by friendship and by blood, its companies stood shoulder to shoulder in more than a score of stricken fields, with a gallantry which the armies of Marlborough or Napoleon never surpassed, and under fiercer musketry fire than the soldiers of those great leaders ever met.

The men of the Twelfth are proud of the history of their regiment and jealous of its fame. We went forth—and on this our first Reunion, the anniversary of the birth of him who led the country through another great struggle, we may be pardoned for recalling it—we went forth when the country was rocking as with the throes of an earthquake, and your government and its flag were now rising, now falling, with the varying fortunes of the day, like a feather tossed upon an angry ocean. We marked our course from the Rappahannock to Gettysburg, and from Gettysburg to Richmond and Appomattox Court House, by the graves

of our comrades, and sometimes with our own blood, and came back under the sunlight of a peace so profound that no martial sound broke the stillness save the tramp of our returning feet, bearing with us your flag and ours, torn by the winds of heaven, blackened by the dust of the march and the smoke of battle, dyed through and through with the blood of its defenders, but with no stain of weakness or dishonor upon all its streaming folds. With the recollections, the experience, the habits of years of military service clinging about us, we glided into the current of civil affairs, as the snow-flake falls upon the river, asking nothing, expecting nothing, desiring nothing, save the grateful remembrance of our country and her people. Not as soldiers, but as *soldier citizens*, we meet here to-day, once more to renew the old memories, tenderly to mourn over our dead comrades, once again to gaze upon and swear allegiance to the dear old flag whose very threads are interwoven with our heart-strings; once again as a regiment to join in the fervent prayer that the Great God who brought us safely home from the war will guard, guide, protect, ennoble and elevate the country which we love so well.

During the delivery of the foregoing address Colonel Potter was frequently interrupted by outbursts of heartfelt applause, and on concluding, was voted the thanks of the Society.

Sergeant William S. Hineline was appointed Orator of the Day for the next Reunion, and Colonel Edward M. DuBois as alternate.

No further business being presented the Society adjourned.

After adjournment, the members of the Society assembled at the Soldiers' Monument, when a dirge was played by the Band, and thence proceeded to the hotel, when ample justice was done the dinner prepared by Joseph Paul.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee, held subsequently, bills to meet the expenses of the occasion were presented, and paid by the Treasurer, sufficient funds being in his hands to pay all that had been incurred.

JOHN TONKIN, *Secretary*.