

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

SIXTH ANNUAL REUNION

OF THE SOCIETY OF THE

TWELFTH REGIMENT NEW JERSEY VOLUNTEERS

HELD AT WOODBURY, FEBRUARY 23, 1880.

The sixth annual reunion of the Society of the Twelfth Regiment New Jersey Volunteers was held at Woodbury Hall on the above date, and was participated in by one hundred and ten comrades.

The society was called to order by the President, Captain N. M. Brooks, and Captain Lippincott elected Corresponding Secretary, to fill vacancy caused by the death of Lieutenant Barnes.

Prayer was offered by Comrade Harris.

Captain Lippincott was elected Treasurer *pro tem*.

Minutes of the previous reunion read and approved.

Roll called and dues collected—one hundred and six responding.

The following communications were read:

PORT ELIZABETH, February 19, 1880.

DEAR COMRADE,—I had hoped to be with you on the 23d, but am afraid now I shall not be able. Much sickness, and no physician nearer than four miles, may render it impossible, and in view of that contingency I forward you my dues. I hope you will all have a good time. Should I not be present in body, I shall in spirit all day.

With many regards for all my old comrades-in-arms, I remain, as ever,

Theirs and yours,

J. H. WILLETS.

WILMINGTON, DEL., February 22, 1880.

Captain N. M. Brooks, President Twelfth New Jersey Society:—

Letter too late to take action. Accept regrets of First Delaware Association. Wishing you a pleasant reunion, I am,

JOHN M. DUNN,

Chairman Executive Committee First Delaware Association.

Speech making being in order, Comrade Harris spoke as follows :

Mr. President and Comrades,—I do not come before you to make a set speech, or to occupy much of your time, as I feel that my place could be better filled by those who took a more active part in the regiment than I did.

Although I will not acknowledge myself to be second in patriotism to any member of the regiment, yet the manifestation of it upon my part differed from that of most of the other members, consisting principally of *brass* and *wind*, as I was a member of the regimental band ; and, by the way, there is a great deal of such patriotism in our country even yet. Eighteen months of my military life was spent with the old Twelfth, after which I was transferred to the United States Signal Corps, and continued there until the close of the war.

I shall not attempt to recount the trying scenes through which we passed while together on the battle-field, the march, and the bivouac : these have been vividly brought before you on previous occasions like this, and are indelibly stamped upon the memory of every one.

We are here to-day to renew the associations formed amid scenes far different from these ; to clasp again the hands of comrades tried and true, and to exchange congratulations over the past and good wishes for the future. I meet with you to-day for the first time in a reunion, having been unavoidably hindered from attending before, and I cannot tell you how glad I am to meet with you, and look again into the faces of many whom I have never seen since the close of the war. None but those who have felt it can tell how strong is the tie that binds together the hearts of those who have suffered and rejoiced, fought and conquered together. We seem to feel again the elbow-touch as in the past, and can hardly realize that almost fifteen years have passed since the last battle was fought, and we laid aside the uniform and implements of the soldier for the more congenial pursuits of civil life.

What recollections come up before us ! We remember the dark days of '61, when the ominous mutterings of the storm which had so long been gathering in the Southern sky grew more and more distinct, until the storm burst upon us in all its fury ; how the men of the North rallied by thousands to the support of the old flag ; then the fluctuating tides of victory and defeat, until the seven days' battles and the failure of the Peninsula campaign ; then the call for three hundred thousand men went ringing throughout the land, and nobly was it responded to.

Among this number came the Twelfth New Jersey, and nobly did she bear her part of the burden that came with almost crushing weight upon the armies of the loyal and true.

The blush of shame need never mantle the cheek of a Jerseyman in connection with the record of Jersey soldiers. As in the Revolution the blue jackets of the Jersey troops were always found to cover brave and loyal hearts, so in the

late war we may use the language employed by one in speaking of the dead of New England,—

“ Each valley where the battle poured
Its red and awful tide,
Beheld the brave New Jersey sword
With slaughter deeply dyed.”

Others may sneer at New Jersey and call her “outside of the Union,” but no State has more fully vindicated her right to an honored place in the great sisterhood of States by her efforts both in establishing and saving the Union.

But although we have laid aside our arms our duties are not yet done. There are other battles to be fought, and our country needs loyal and fearless men still. The ship of state has weathered many storms, and passed through many lines of foaming breakers, but the smooth, open sea has not been reached yet. We cannot look at the affairs of our country without feeling that grave dangers still threaten us. Corruption, fraud, the claims of personal and party greed, seem too often to drown the voice of patriotism and to completely bury all considerations of the real welfare of the nation. I do not stand before you as a partisan, nor do I appeal to party feelings. I know that there are honest differences of opinion among us upon many points, while every heart beats true to the old flag. God grant that the day may never come when party spirit shall quench, or even dim, the flame of brotherhood that binds heart to heart to-day. I simply speak from a broad, patriotic standpoint. We no longer fight with bullets, but we each of us have placed in our hands a weapon no less powerful for good or evil—the ballot of the freeman; and it is our duty as soldiers and citizens to still present an unbroken front against corruption and fraud, whether that fraud be in Maine or Louisiana, in high places or low. Let us be true to our trust, and fulfil our mission at home as the old regiment fulfilled hers in the field.

May God bless every member of the old Twelfth New Jersey Regiment and give us many happy reunions. May His special blessing rest upon the widows and orphans of those who gave their lives in the defense of the flag, and who to-day are sleeping in graves unknown, but not unhonored; and may we all at last meet in that great reunion above, and hear the welcome “well done” of the great Commander of all.

Colonel Potter criticised the argument of corruption advanced by Comrade Harris, and claimed that the people were growing better and more enlightened. He called attention to the fact that the State of New Jersey had sent eighty-one thousand men into the field during the Rebellion, all fully armed and equipped, a greater number than the allied armies commanded by Wellington at Waterloo, or by Napoleon at Austerlitz.

Lieutenant Brown, Captain Brooks, Sergeant Borton, Lieutenant Griscom,

and others responded to calls, and delivered short addresses appropriate to the occasion.

The President announced in fitting terms the death of the Corresponding Secretary, Lieutenant J. Morgan Barnes, who died on Sunday morning, the 22d instant,—the sixth anniversary of the organization of the society.

On motion of Sergeant Borton, a Committee on Resolutions, consisting of three members, was ordered appointed, to draft resolutions of respect and condolence, to be entered on the minutes and a copy sent to the family.

The Chair appointed as said committee Comrades Borton, Willetts, and E. L. Stratton.

Colonel Stratton read an extract from the Philadelphia *Inquirer* of August 29, 1864, in reference to the battle of Reams' Station, describing the part taken by the Second Corps, and especially by General Miles' Division, and giving honorable mention to the Twelfth New Jersey Volunteers.

Colonel Chew denied that portion of the article which gave credit to General Miles' Division for capturing the works and retaking three pieces of artillery lost in the morning, claiming the honor for the Twelfth New Jersey Volunteers; also stating he led the charge in person, and that the works were held until the retreat.

Captain Lippincott called attention to the fact that the regiment was never driven from its position by a direct attack; also, that at Gettysburg was the only place where the regiment had the opportunity of shooting at rebels from behind breastworks. He also drew attention to the difference between the number of killed in both armies, that of the Union army being greatly in excess of the rebels. Referring to the article read by Colonel Stratton, he claimed there was no necessity for bringing on a battle at Reams' Station, and causing such a useless sacrifice of men and material, General Hancock having greatly exceeded his instructions, which were to tear up and destroy the railroad track, and return.

The President appointed a Nominating Committee, consisting of Captain Acton, Sergeant Danenhower, Comrade Bassett, Sergeant Tonkin, and Captain Bowen.

On motion, it was ordered, that after adjournment the society reassemble at 1.30 p.m.

On reassembling, the Committee on Resolutions presented the following:

WHEREAS, It has pleased the Almighty to remove from our number our esteemed comrade, J. Morgan Barnes, who died Feb. 22, 1880, the sixth anniversary of our organization; therefore

Resolved, That while we mourn his loss as a member and officer of this society, we rejoice in the fact that he was fully prepared for his transfer from the ranks of active life here to the grand army of the hereafter.

Resolved, That we deeply sympathize with the bereaved relatives of our departed comrade, and commend them to the protection of Him who is the God of the widow and fatherless.

Resolved, That these resolutions be entered upon the minutes of the society, and published in the Woodbury papers and Swedesboro *Times*, and a copy furnished the family.

On motion, the resolutions were adopted and committee discharged.

The Committee on Nominations reported the following for election as officers of the society, which report, after numerous motions, was adopted, the officers elected, and the committee discharged :

President, Comrade Daniel B. Harris.

Vice-Presidents, Captain Charles P. Brown, Sergeant Matthew Coombs, Sergeant Joseph Burroughs, and Comrade Samuel F. Haines.

Recording Secretary, Comrade F. Bleyler.

Corresponding Secretary, Sergeant Arthur Stanley.

Treasurer, Hospital Steward Charles A. Weidemann.

Executive Committee, Colonel H. F. Chew, Sergeant David Borton, Lieutenant Charles F. Sickler, Captain Frank M. Riley, Sergeant Henry M. Avis, and Colonel E. L. Stratton.

The Executive Committee reported having ordered the payment of bills to the amount of \$106.40.

The Treasurer's report for 1879 was read :

<i>Dr.</i>			
To dues received at annual meeting, February 22, 1879 . . .	\$87	00	
To sale of one dinner ticket	50		
To sale of proceedings	13	50	\$101 00

<i>Cr.</i>			
By cash paid M. W. Newton, ninety-six dinners	\$48	00	
By cash paid West Jersey Band	25	00	
By cash paid balance of note	20	94	
By cash paid J. Morgan Barnes, printing, postage	4	90	
By cash paid janitor of hall	1	00	\$99 84

Balance on hand,	\$1	16
Vouchers accompany report.		

CHAS. A. WEIDEMANN.

The President elect was escorted to the chair by Comrades Acton and Danenhower, and the other officers took position on the platform.

The Treasurer was instructed to pay the janitor of the hall two dollars for services rendered.

On motion of Colonel Stratton, two hundred and fifty copies of the proceedings of the fourth, fifth, and sixth annual reunions were ordered printed.

Captain Brown offered the following resolution, which was adopted :

Resolved, That the Secretary be directed to have published a suitable number of slips containing the name and address of each member of the society, for distribution among the members.

A vote of thanks was extended to the stockholders of Woodbury Hall, for their kindness in allowing the society the gratuitous use of the hall to hold its reunion in.

Sergeant Sithens moved that a stand of colors be procured for the use of the society, and color-bearers selected to carry them.

This motion caused considerable discussion, participated in by Comrades Sithens, Dall, Burroughs, Gaskill, Brown, Borton, Harris, Chew, and others, Lieutenant Brown calling attention to the disgraceful manner in which the old colors carried by New Jersey soldiers through the war are kept in the State House at Trenton, in a small inclosure, with glass covered with dust and cobwebs; and characterizing it as an insult to all soldiers.

The motion was lost.

Captain Brown moved that a committee be appointed to prepare a memorial for presentation to the Legislature of the State of New Jersey, to be signed by the members of the society, requesting that the regimental colors, now in the State House at Trenton, be placed in charge of this society.

The motion was carried, and the President appointed as said committee Comrades Brown, Peterson, Acton, Potter, and Stratton.

Adjourned.

F. BLEYLER, *Secretary.*