

John Delong

John Delong enlisted in the 67th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. The regiment left Columbus in June 1862 going into western Virginia. In March the regiment moved to Winchester where skirmishing was frequent with the Confederate cavalry. Until the next June the regiment endured the hardships of marches over the mountains and back again, from the Potomac to Harrisonburg, from Front Royal to Fredericksburg, from Fredericksburg to Manassas, from Manassas to Port Republic, and then on to Alexandria. By June 1862 there were only 300 men left from the 850 which made up the regiment at its start. In April 1863 the 67th joined in the Charleston expedition. For seven months the regiment heroically endured the privations and dangers of the siege, taking part in the attack on Fort Wagner, and sustaining heavy losses. The regiment re-enlisted in February 1864 and in May was detached to serve in the Petersburg campaign. During the spring, summer, and fall of 1864 the 67th was under fire 200 times, suffering heavy casualties. The regiment was present at the Confederate surrender at Appomatox Court House in April 1865. John Delong, along with his comrades in the 67th, was mustered out in December 1865 -- just six days shy of having served four years.

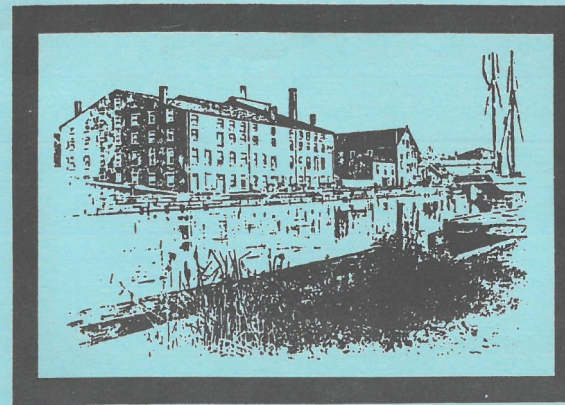
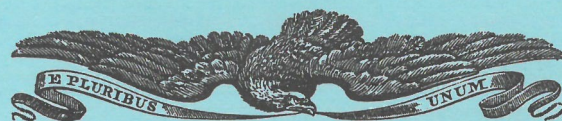
John Burke

John Burke enlisted in Company G of the 156th Ohio Volunteer Infantry in May 1864 at Cridersville. The regiment was organized at Camp Dennison near Cincinnati. When Confederate General Morgan's cavalry appeared in Kentucky, the regiment was sent to Falmouth, Kentucky. In July the regiment was ordered to Cumberland, Maryland to resist a Confederate invasion into Maryland. On August 1st the regiment moved double-quick through the town and met the enemy about three miles out. The 156th, though exposed to severe artillery and musket fire, maintained itself with light loss. By morning, the Confederates had retreated. The regiment returned to Ohio and was mustered out in

September 1864. John Burke had been promoted to corporal. In February 1865 Burke re-enlisted in Company E of the 192nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry. He was detached to a Pioneer Corp -- the troops with shovels and axes, who cleared the way and built entrenchments. In March Burke's new regiment left Camp Chase bound for Halltown near Harpers Ferry, Virginia. The 192nd proceeded through Charlestown, along the Shenandoah River, and in to Winchester. The regiment was to move on Lynchburg, when the capture of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia brought the war to an end. A portion of the regiment, including Burke's company, was assigned the duty to protect life and property in this region following the cease fire. The 192nd was discharged upon its return to Columbus in September 1865.

George Beeler, Israel Bowsher, George Mowery, & Levi Mowery

George Beeler and Israel Bowsher were brothers-in-law. Beeler's sister Susan was married to Bowsher. In March 1865 they, along with George and Levi Mowery, enlisted in Company C of the 192nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry. The regiment was trained at Camp Chase near Columbus. It was assigned to Hallstown, near Harpers Ferry, Virginia. They encountered several skirmishes with Confederate forces. They moved through Virginia along the Shenandoah River with Confederates on the opposite bank. As they moved on toward Lynchburg they discovered the Confederates had abandoned their position. Before the regiment marched into Lynchburg, the surrender of General Lee at Appomatox Court House brought the war to a close. The 192nd OVI was discharged in September 1865. Beeler, Bowsher, and the two Mowery brothers returned home to Cridersville.



Libby Prison - Richmond, Virginia

At the outset of the Civil War detention of prisoners of war became an issue for both the North and South. The Confederates established a prison at Richmond in a converted tobacco warehouse. It was called Libby Prison. Although not as well known as the prison at Andersonville, it too was notorious for its conditions. Because of its location, prisoners were not permitted to go outside. They were confined to the interior of the building with no sunlight or ventilation. Three men from Cridersville were detained at Libby Prison. Lewis Spyker spent three months, Albert Shaw 36 days, and Reuben Crider one month. All three survived their time at Libby.

Early in the war both governments participated in a system of paroles wherein prisoners would be exchanged -- sometimes within hours of capture, others within months. Cridersville's John Reichelderfer was paroled only 15 hours after his capture at Pulaski, Tennessee. The Union discovered this was an advantage to the Confederates. With far less men to serve in their armies, the South needed to exchange prisoners. The Lincoln Administration determined it was in the Union's best interest to discontinue the practice.

A project of the Cridersville Historical Society

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Cridersville Boys in Blue

1861 - 1865



Israel Bowsher & George Beeler

The Civil War was America's greatest challenge. For four years the bloody struggle touched nearly every community, North and South. More than 600,000 men died in the war, either from battle wounds or disease. In terms of casualties, it was the costliest war the United States ever fought. Ohio sent more than 340,000 men to preserve the Union. Ohio provided the third largest number of troops, exceeded only by New York and Pennsylvania. Of these 11,237 died of battle wounds and 23,354 of disease. Another 30,000 Ohio veterans bore severe wounds for the remainder of their lives. A dozen young men from Cridersville volunteered to serve. With the grace of God, each of them returned home safely. Included in this pamphlet are a few details about their experiences in the war.

Our Cridersville Boys in Blue



Lewis Spyker

Lewis Spyker enlisted in April 1861 at Lima in Company I of the 20th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. He signed up for a 90 day enlistment. At the beginning of the war both sides thought it would be over in a matter of months. They soon realized this would not be true. Spyker was discharged in July 1861. In September 1862 he re-enlisted in Company I of the 34th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. He was captured in August 1863 at Wytheville, Virginia. He spent three months in Libby Prison in Richmond before being paroled. He was then hospitalized for several months in Annapolis, Maryland. In February 1865 he was transferred to Company I of the 36th Ohio "Veteran" Volunteer Infantry. Often the veteran units were given behind the lines duty. The Army may have thought they had seen enough of the front. Lewis Spyker was mustered out in June 1865.

Reuben Crider & Albert Shaw

Reuben Crider and Albert Shaw enlisted in the 34th Ohio Volunteer Infantry at Cridersville in August 1861. Reuben was the son of Ephraim and Polly Crider, the founders of Cridersville. Both Crider and Shaw were promoted to corporal, and Shaw later to sergeant. The 34th OVI left Camp Dennison in September 1861 for western Virginia. The regiment's first battle was near Chapmanville, Virginia where it inflicted considerable loss to the Confederates. In August 1862 the regiment joined General McClellan's army in guarding the Kanawha Valley. The 34th was attacked at Fayetteville by a Confederate force of 10,000 strong. With the help of good defensive earthworks and artillery the position was held until midnight

when it was evacuated. Part of the regiment fought in the open field, repeatedly charging the enemy. Losses were heavy. The entire Union army was forced to fall back allowing the Confederates to take the valley. Reuben Crider was captured at Fayetteville. He spent one month in Libby Prison in Richmond before being paroled and returned to his regiment. In October another successful advance was made and the Union regained control of the Kanawha Valley.

In May 1863 the 34th OVI marched more than 650 miles in eleven days traversing some of the highest mountains in western Virginia. The regiment encountered the enemy in skirmishes at Wytheville and Lynchburg and successfully destroyed track and bridges of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad.

In July the 34th was moved by rail to the Shenandoah Valley where it engaged the Confederates at Winchester. After four battles Union forces were forced to retreat. In September 1864 the regiment marched back to Winchester with General Sheridan's army, this being the third time the 34th had fought over nearly the same ground. By October the Union forces had pushed the Confederates back to Harrisonburg. In the meantime Sheridan's cavalry was engaged in rendering the Shenandoah Valley useless as a base of supplies for the Confederates -- literally fulfilling General Grant's orders to "render it so desolate that a crow, in passing over it, would be compelled to carry his rations with him." In January 1865 the regiment was garrisoned at Beverly, West Virginia. On the morning of January 11 the Confederates launched a surprise attack and captured a large number of men, including Albert Shaw. Shaw was also held at Libby Prison for 36 days before being released. Both Shaw and Crider were mustered out at Wheeling, West Virginia in July 1865.



David Edmiston

David Edmiston enlisted at Wapakoneta in October 1861 in Company C of the 57th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. The regiment was partially organized at Camp Vance in Findlay. It later moved to Camp Chase near Columbus. It numbered 956 men and 38 officers. Company C was made up of men from Auglaize, Mercer, and Sandusky Counties. The regiment left Camp Chase in February 1862. It was assigned to the Third Brigade, Fifth Division of the Army of the Tennessee. As it marched through Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alabama, the regiment suffered much sickness. By April there were only 450 men fit for duty. The regiment engaged Confederates on numerous occasions. Sickness remained a very serious problem. Ohio men were not accustomed to the southern climate. Edmiston was among those transported back to the hospital in Columbus. He spent two weeks in the hospital preceding his discharge in September 1862 for disability.

John Reichelderfer

John Reichelderfer enlisted in Company G of the 81st Ohio Volunteer Infantry in October 1862. Mustering in as a private, he was soon promoted to corporal and later to sergeant. He joined his regiment at Corinth, Mississippi and for six months guarded railroads in that vicinity. He then went to Pochahantas, Tennessee where he was assigned similar duty until the fall of 1863. He was captured in January 1864 at Senn's Mill, Tennessee. He was paroled 15 hours after his capture and returned to his company. The following spring he participated in the Atlanta Campaign, joining General Sherman's army at Chattanooga. He was involved in battles at Snake Gap, Georgia, then at Resaca, and skirmishes until the capture of Atlanta. His company then went to Rome, Georgia and soon thereafter to Savannah. They then marched to Goldsboro, North Carolina and witnessed the surrender of Confederate General Johnson to General Sherman. Reichelderfer participated in the Grand Review Parade in Washington, DC and was discharged in July 1865.

Anthony Bowsher

Anthony Bowsher enlisted in the 118th Ohio Volunteer Infantry at Lima in August 1862. In September the new regiment was sent to Cincinnati, then threatened by Confederate General Kirby Smith. Later in September it moved toward Lexington, Kentucky and was detached to guard the railroad and prevent Confederate recruiting in the region. In August 1863 the regiment began a march to eastern Tennessee. This march over the mountains took 17 days and was very severe, the men suffering greatly from heat and dust. In December the 118th engaged Confederate cavalry near Panther Creek. When the enemy approached with 100 yards the regiment opened a rapid fire, which it kept up for about two hours, and then charged, driving the Confederates back. While in eastern Tennessee, the regiment endured great privation, subsisting on quarter and half rations. In May 1864 the 118th marched to Charleston, a distance of 100 miles -- in five days -- and then on to Dalton and Resaca. On May 14 the regiment participated in a charge of the Confederate earthworks. Of the 300 men engaged, 116 were killed in ten minutes. The 118th went on to participate in battles at Kenesaw Mountain, Chatahoochie, and the fall of Atlanta. In November 1864 the regiment returned to Tennessee in pursuit of Confederate General Hood's army at the battle of Franklin, and later in February 1865 was involved in the capture of Fort Anderson. In March it joined General Sherman's army and participated in the final movements against Confederate General Johnston. In July 1865 the regiment was discharged after joining in a grand Fourth of July celebration in Cleveland.

