

Vol. 29 NO 8

"The Old Guard"

3rd U.S. Regular Infantry
Co. K

The American
Civil War:

August 2021

1860 - 1865

Corporate Address: 3rd U.S. Infantry Reenactors, 4 Browns Lane, Fredericksburg, VA 22401 <http://www.3rdusreenactors.com>
Newsletter Editor: Mary E. Ritenour, 10012 Cotton Farm Road, Fairfax, VA 22032-1606 Mritenour1@verizon.net

Unit Event Schedule & Basic Facts

August Event
Cancelled

September Event (Secondary)
Fredericksburg Living History
Fredericksburg, VA

Final Registration with the Company NLT 1 September

Dates: Saturday, September 4.

Type of event: Living History and potential firing demonstrations.

Location: Fredericksburg Battlefield
1013 Lafayette Blvd, Fredericksburg, VA 22401

Registration Fee: Zero.

Schedule:

Saturday: Roll Call 7:30 AM, Living history and firing demonstrations throughout the day until 5 PM.

While we do not have anything planned for Friday or Sunday, you are welcome to come and camp on Friday and Saturday night.

Specifics –We will portray the men of the 3rd US, Co. K. We will be on Marye's Heights—an excellent place for meeting and talking to visitors and potential recruits.

Commissary: On your own; Haversack or Handbasket.

Uniform: Forage Cap (Full Hat Brass), Sack Coat (NO Corps Badges), Light Blue Trousers, Brogans, Full Leathers, Springfield Rifled Musket.

Ammunition: 20 rounds, plus caps. We will have ammunition for sale at the event.

September Event (Primary)
Antietam Reenactment
Daniel Lady Farm
Gettysburg, PA

Final Registration with the Company NLT 10 September

Dates: Friday-Sunday, September 17TH through 19TH

Type of event: Battle Reenactment

Location: 986 Hanover Rd, Gettysburg, PA 17325

<https://www.gbpa.org/event/battle-antietamsharpsburg>

Registration Fee: \$20 until August 10.

Link for registration is here:

<https://gbpa.networkforgood.com/events/24749-159th-antietam-sharpsburg-event>

Schedule: Friday evening: Arrive, set up camp

Saturday: Roll Call 6:59 AM, Drill and battle reenactment throughout the day.

Sunday: Roll Call 7:00 AM, Drill and battle reenactment until 2 PM.

Specifics –This is our first post-COVID battle reenactment. For our new recruits, this will be their chance to “see the elephant.”

This is our PRIMARY event for September. If you can only join us for one event in September, please make every effort for it to be this one.

Commissary: On your own for breakfast and dinner (lunch) with a company meal in the evening. We will provide cooking fire, hot water and coffee in the mornings.

Commissary fee: \$5

Uniform: Forage Cap (NO hat brass), Sack Coat (NO Corps Badges), Light Blue Trousers, Brogans, Full Leathers, Rifled Musket.

Ammunition: 80 rounds, plus caps. We will have ammunition for sale at the event.

October Event
Cedar Creek Reenactment
Cedar Creek Battlefield
Middletown, VA

Final Registration with the Company NLT October 8.

Dates: Friday-Sunday, October 15TH through 17TH

Type of event: Battle Reenactment

Location: This will be at the Cedar Creek Battlefield. I don't have a precise spot for where registration will be. For now, use this address if this is your first time going to Cedar Creek:

8437 Valley Pike
Middletown, VA 22645

Registration Fee: \$30 until August 31.

Link for registration is here:

https://www.ccbf.us/?page_id=3058

Schedule: Friday evening: Arrive, set up camp

Saturday: Roll Call 7:23 AM, Drill and battle reenactment throughout the day.

Sunday: Roll Call 7:24 AM, Drill and morning battle reenactment.

Specifics –This event needs our full support. They have been brave and resilient in the face of a lot of adversity, and have always provided reenactors a perennial battle reenactment that's always worth attending.

<https://www.ccbf.us/>

Commissary: On your own for breakfast and dinner (lunch) with a company meal in the evening. We will provide cooking fire, hot water and coffee in the mornings.

Commissary fee: \$5

Uniform: Forage Cap (NO hat brass), Sack Coat (NO Corps Badges), Light Blue Trousers, Brogans, Full Leathers, Rifled Musket.

Ammunition: 80 rounds, plus caps. We will have ammunition for sale at the event.

Vice President Report

By: Vice President Peter Vaselopulos

Current and Potential Events for 2021

Listed below are **Confirmed Events** that the board has already approved. * represents events waiting on Board approval.

The *Pending Events* are still being considered based on COVID and other scheduling factors.

Confirmed Events:

August

NPS- Mary Jane Dogan House - Cancelled

Date: Saturday – August 21

CANCELLED

Type of event: Would have been a private Tour for the unit arranged by David Welker

Location: Manassas, VA

September

NPS - Fredericksburg

Dates: Saturday-Sunday, September 4-5

Type of event: Living History

Location: Fredericksburg, VA

Daniel Lady Farm – Battle of Antietam*

PRIMARY EVENT

Dates: Saturday-Sunday, September 18TH-19TH

Type of event: Battle Reenactment

Location: Gettysburg, PA

***the Board is going to promote both September events, but Antietam will be an all-hands effort since it is a USV event.**

October

Battle of Cedar Creek

Dates: October 16TH-17TH

Type of event: Battle Reenactment

Location: Cedar Creek, Middletown, VA (USV)

November

Belair Mansion Living History, Bowie MD

Date: Saturday November 6, 2021 12noon – 4pm.

Set up at 8am.

Type of event: Living History

Location: 12207 Tulip Grove Drive, Bowie, MD. 20715

<https://www.cityofbowie.org/288/Belair-Mansion>

Potential Event:

Christmas at Fort Ward

Date: December 11, 2021

Type of event: Living History

Location: Alexandria, VA

(waiting on formal confirmation)

President's Column

Buffsticks family,

I am taking a departure from my usual administrative role as President, which I will continue next month. However, this month, I would like to share a finding that I think everyone



Court Martial on Major-General Fitz-John Porter – December 1862

will enjoy and find interesting. It is the Court Martial of Lt. Alonzo A. Cole. His crime, failure to superintend the morning formation as requested by Col. Gustavus Loomis, despite several runners requesting Lt. Cole's presence. I did a little more research on the players involved in the Order. I've uncovered multiple infractions by Regulars, and none resulted in death or flogging. Mostly, it appears the Courts went after the soldiers' pay. I will share those accounts in the future.

Cole ran afoul of Col. Loomis, a West Pointer from the class of 1811. It is noted that Col. Gustavus Loomis, "A very religious man when inebriety rather than piety was not an infrequent attribute of some of the older officers, the white-haired and bearded Loomis conducted prayer meetings in the camp and expounded the scriptures in an edifying manner. His solicitude for others was demonstrated when he turned his spartan quarter over to a young lieutenant who had brought his wife to a remote and cheerless post in the west. But neither piety nor kindness was any indication of laxity in discipline, and many an errant enlisted man took his punishment, walking in a circle carrying a log on his shoulder under the vigilant eye of an armed sentry. From this came the Colonel's nickname-Old Ring". I am sure that the young Lt crossed the Colonel at the wrong time.

Col. Loomis was commissioned 2nd Lieut of Artillery in 1811. During the Civil War, he was superintendent of the general recruiting services at Fort Columbus. From June 1, 1863, to May 24, 1864, he was Superintendent of General Recruiting. On June 1, 1863, Loomis was retired from active service as a Colonel of Infantry.

On July 17, 1866, President Andrew Johnson nominated Loomis for appointment to the brevet grade of brigadier general in the Regular Army for long and faithful service, to rank from March 13, 1865, and the U.S. Senate confirmed the appointment on July 26, 1866. He would retire after a long career on June 1, 1863, and passed on March 5, 1872

Major Luther Bruen from Ohio was a Major in the 12th U.S. Infantry and was President of the courts-martial. Maj. Bruen was killed at the battle of Laurel Hill on May 13, 1864. Lt. Cole was promoted Captain in May of 1864 and later received the Brevet Major for gallant and meritorious at the battle of Gettysburg. Lt. Cole was mustered out of the service in 1871.

General Orders WAR DEPT,
ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE
No. 164
Washington, October 22, 1862

I - Before a General Court Martial which convened at Fort Columbus, New York harbor, the 15th day of September 1862, pursuant to "Special Orders," No. 232, dated War Department, Adjutant General's Office, Washington, September 10, 1862, and of which Major L. B. Bruen, 12th Infantry, was President, was arraigned and tried-

Second Lieutenant Alonzo A. Cole, 7th U.S. Infantry.

CHARGE-

"Neglect of Duty"

Specifications 1st—"In this; 2d Lieutenant Alonzo A. Cole, 7th Infantry, did fail to attend the morning drill of his Company, between the hours of 7 and 9 o'clock a.m. This at Fort Columbia, New York harbor, September 25, 1862.

Specification 2d—"In this, that 2d Lieutenant Alonzo A. Cole, 7th Infantry, having been sent for by his commanding officer, Colonel G. Loomis 5th Infantry, to ascertain the cause of his absence, did send back the answer he would be out, but did fail to make his appearance during the whole time of the drill—one hour. This at Fort Columbia, New York harbor, September 25, 1862.

To which charge and specifications, the accused pleaded "Guilty."

The Court confirms the plea of the accused, and does therefore sentenced him the said 2d Lieutenant Alonzo A. Cole, 7th Infantry, "To be reprimanded in General Orders."

II—Second Lieutenant Cole will be released from arrest and returned to duty. It is hoped this admonition will be sufficient to warn him against the recurrence of such offenses in the future.

By ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

I. THOMAS, Adjutant General

One of the current areas I am looking at promoting within the 3rd is the enlistment papers and the learning of the recruiting process, which differed significantly from the experience of the volunteer regiments. Unfortunately, most of the forms in the reenactor community are directed at the volunteer regiments rather than the Regular Army. I have recreated based on documents from the Archives the form used by the Army from 1841 and into the Civil War from the Government Printing Office. Suppose there is enough interest from our membership. In that case, I will work with our military leadership to conduct the instructional class and provide all members with enlistment, reenlistment, and discharge papers for your talks with the public. I hope to have most of my research completed next month, and Dave Welker has agreed to conduct a reality check for me on my draft.

I enjoy these little unknown administrative processes that help understand the process from the civilian to soldier, from enlistment, pay, uniform issue, substance, and ordnance issue. Knowing the process humanizes the men that served and the families they left behind and helps contact us to them. If you are interested, please let me know.

YOS,
Neil Carmichael,
President, 3rd U.S. Board of Directors



Commander's Field Desk

Buffsticks,

I have a bit of a longer report this month. I hope you will be patient and read everything, as I believe it is all important.

First,

From a Washington Post article today: *"Cooling down is hard work on the body. The efforts to fight the effects of heat puts pressure on your heart and kidneys. With extreme heat, people's organs can start to fail. If you have preexisting conditions, it's even more likely."*

The article makes no mention of reenactors wearing wool and doing demonstrations in the middle of the day with no shade out in the sun in the middle of July. All the more reason for us to pay very close attention to the above quote.

Now, there are things you can do to prime your body for reenacting in the summer. Two weeks before an event, begin drinking copious amounts of water. Get your body used to ingesting large amounts of fluids. That way it's not overwhelming at the event.

Exercise is essential. Just walking five minutes a day can help boost your metabolism.

All that said, **DO NOT TRY TO BE A HERO.** If you feel bad at an event, speak up. If you're unable to speak, raise your hand, or put your hand on the shoulder of your buddy. There is no event or scenario that is worth risking your health over.

Second,

We have some big events coming up in September and October. Registration is open for both, so please, if you have not already done so, register for these two events ASAP.

Third,

I was extremely pleased with how the unit performed at Bull Run earlier this month. We had a combined company with the New York Zouaves, and our comparative level of drill was outstanding. We continue to set the standard by which other units judge their level of drill. I was also pleased with how we all looked after each other on what was an extremely hot and humid day. It was quite a thing to sit on the porch watching the thunderstorms roll in, secure in the knowledge that everyone had done everything they could to secure the site. You all make being the military commander an easy and rewarding job.

Fourth,

We have been unable to make the schedule work for our planned August event. Given that we have two events in September, and that we've already had a scorching event this summer, **we are skipping August this year.**

Fifth,

There is a lot going on the reenacting world beyond just our unit events. To make it easier for you to find events beyond our own unit, but to also avoid confusion, we will begin publishing a web calendar where members can post and view events from all across the reenacting world. We will provide the link for this calendar once it's up. We will still focus on communicating only unit events via our newsletter and first-call emails and announcements. The online calendar will be there for anyone who wants to check on additional events. More will be announced as this develops. Until our September event(s),

I am YOS,
Geoff White

Membership report from Bull Run Living History, July 17

Friends, communal sweating by company, interested visitors, and the usual thoughtful, cited historic arguments on downtime. 1st Sgt Burke did a great job and offered me a legit reason why the *Dances With Wolves* surgical table might have an ob-gyn instrument among the saws and knives. The leadership was well executed and despite the weather we were able to stay on schedule.
Noah Briggs

Buff Stick's - What a great weekend to engage with and educate the public concerning 'Our' battlefield and what the original cast did on this *'patch of dirt and grass'*. Some of my takeaways that I was still thinking about as I was driving home on Sunday morning. In no particular order, the privilege to being trusted by the NPS to sleep overnight on this hallowed ground, for both Friday and Saturday night. Drill, both among ourselves and with the 11th NY Fire Zouaves; to include learning a new drill, *'marching and firing by either flank, as Skirmishers'*. Seeing old friends and meeting new ones over the course of the weekend. Singing Sea Shanties inside the Henry House while staying safe from the storm. Mail Call, with packages that had period correct stamps and cancellation marks. Enjoying the Saturday evening concerts by the Henry House that featured both the Fort McHenry Fife and Drum Corps, along with a brass detachment from the U.S. Marine Corps Band. Engaging with the public and seeing that excitement in their eye, where you could see that they were truly interested in what took place on these grounds 160 years ago. Finally, last but not least, handing out the units contact information to a spectator who has expressed interest in wanting to join this unique group of History Nerds, 😊 and then have them actually e-mail you on the following Monday, still wanting to learn more.

- YOS, *Private Paul Stier*

Opportunity to Shine

Buff Stick Family, starting in 2020, and continuing on into 2021, our current and previous membership have had the opportunity to give historical presentations to various Civil War Round Tables. The below is a recent presentation as given by current member, David Welker. To add to your reading enjoyment, you may also visit the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table YouTube channel to see the recorded version of his talk. It is our hope to post more of these articles in the coming months. Should you desire to engage with and educate the public in this manner then please feel free to reach out to me. YOS, Paul Stier

Commented [MR1]:

"The Cornfield: Antietam's Bloody Turning Point"

by David A. Welker

*** A Review of the September 2020 Virtual Program by Greg Mertz

"The final form of the program in its most polished and recommended version, can be found at:
https://youtu.be/SHGHp_uMzK4"

Despite being a readily recognized prominent landmark by people familiar with the Battle of Antietam, the fighting in the famous "*cornfield*" is one of the least understood aspects of America's bloodiest day. The struggle that took place among those rows of grain is sometimes very simply depicted as "*back and forth fighting*" and that the position of the cornfield frequently "*traded hands*." Our speaker, David Welker, who recently published a book examining this phase of the battle indicated that these basic interpretations of the action are unfortunate, because understanding the cornfield is critical to understanding the battle. The strategic reason why the Battle of Antietam was fought at Sharpsburg, Maryland was tied to the prospect of foreign intervention on behalf of the Confederacy. Support of England, France or both was deemed to be essential for Confederate independence to succeed. And before either of those countries could back the Confederacy, they needed to see that it could do more than simply protect their homes. The Confederacy had to prove that they were capable of taking the war into the North. While Robert E. Lee also desired for his Confederate army to live off of the land in pro-Union territory, the prospect of foreign assistance loomed large. The offensive part of the campaign for the Confederacy, was in reaching Maryland. Lee planned to allow Union army commander George B. McClellan to attack him and wear down his army before the Confederates went after the Union forces. Both Lee and McClellan were aware that Washington officials would not permit the Union army to fight a defensive battle. Welker stated that the leadership styles of the army commanders would make a difference. Lee considered multiple ways to accomplish his objectives. When Lee encountered an obstacle, he sought an alternative. McClellan was a linear thinker. After weighing options, McClellan developed what he considered to be the best plan, and he dealt with obstacles through the force of his will. Welker concluded that a good commander must be able to come up with different means of accomplishing the mission when hurdles appear. McClellan developed a good plan for the Battle of Antietam. The challenge, Welker contended, was how well that plan would be implemented. The Union right would attack first, and part of its objective was to draw reserves from the Confederate center to that sector of the battlefield. The second part of the plan was an attack by the Union left, which would also hopefully force the Confederates to shift some troops from away from their center. Then the Union center would attack the weakened Confederate center for the third step of the plan. Regarding the implementation of the plan, McClellan would decide when each phase of the

battle would proceed and launch the respective attacks when he felt the timing was right. In the gathering darkness of the evening of September 16, 1862, Gen. Joseph Hooker, commanding a pair of corps on the Union right, examined the ground where he would initiate the battle the following morning. Hooker saw what he thought to be the Confederate left flank. Though he was mistaken, given his objective to draw troops to the Confederate left away from the Confederate center, it was not particularly important that Hooker was unsure about the true position of the troops in that locale. Hooker's examination included the Miller cornfield, bounded by woods on three sides, called the North Woods, East Woods and West Woods. The Miller farmhouse, orchard and fenced in garden were significant obstacles to attacking Union troops heading for the Confederate left. Hooker's plan for attack for his Union I Corps was for the division of Abner Doubleday to attack on the extreme right in column, the division of James Ricketts to attack on the left, with George G. Meade's division in reserve. The objective of all of the assault troops was the easily recognized, white Dunker Church at the south end of the cornfield. The plan was good, but it fell apart almost from the start. John Gibbon, leading Doubleday's column, received fire from an unexpected place, due to Hooker's cursory reconnaissance which did not locate the true Confederate left flank. Then Gibbon tried to go through the Miller farm buildings, but could not tear down the stout Maryland fences. Half of the attack force was thus stalled. Among Ricketts's three brigades, George Hartsuff soon fell wounded and his second in command had not been informed of their orders. William Christian ran away from his brigade as it came under fire, and like Hartsuff's brigade halted and waited. So, of the two divisions that were to attack, only the brigade of Abram Duryee engaged the Confederates on their front, and became the first troops to occupy the cornfield. Col. Marcellus Douglass led a brigade of Confederates into the cornfield and the fight turned into a slugfest. Although Duryee tried to hold on until promised reinforcements arrived, he had to give way and Douglass's men became the second troops to hold the 24-acre cornfield. Gibbon was able to make some progress entering into the West Woods and the western part of the cornfield while Hartsuff's troops got back underway, arriving just as Duryee departed. Hartsuff, wrestled the field from Douglass to become the third troops to occupy the famous field. One of Hartsuff's regiments, the 12th Massachusetts, suffered 64% casualties – the greatest Union regimental loss on the bloodiest day in American history. John B. Hood's troops would have the honor to be the fourth to hold the ground, and 1st Texas would gain the distinction of suffering the greatest percentage loss of any regiment -- not just at Antietam -- but during the entire war; they lost a staggering 82.6%. Evander Laws's brigade advanced deeper into the corn than any other Confederate advance, reaching all the way to the north end of the field. But the progress of Hood's troops came to a halt when the brigade under William T. Wofford had to deal with fire into their left flank coming from Union troops in the West Woods and when the officers on the right of the division lost control of their troops and the enlisted men instinctively gravitated to the East Woods. The fifth troops to occupy the field occurred when Hooker committed his reserve

and Meade's men fought among the cornstalks, devastating the center of Hood's command. With the Confederates able to retain possession of the East Woods, the brigade of Roswell S. Ripley next entered that side of the cornfield, striking Meade in the left flank and taking possession of the cornfield for the sixth time. Next change of control of the field resulted in the Confederates still holding the rows of corn, as Alfred H. Colquitt's brigade moved up, allowing Ripley to withdraw. Joseph Mansfield was mortally wounded leading his XII corps into action, but he had accomplished the all-important role of properly positioning his troops. The advance of the corps through the East Woods coincided with confusion on the part of Col. Duncan McRae's Confederate brigade sent to the East Woods without realizing that it was already occupied by fellow Confederates. Colquitt was nearly surrounded in the cornfield and the Confederates broke. George S. Greene's Union troops took the Bloody Cornfield for the eighth time in two hours of fighting, and the Union army held the famous landmark for the remainder of the battle. Hooker was on the verge of success when he grew faint from a wound in the foot, as blood was poured out of his boot. The first phase of McClellan's battle plan had ended. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson had held on at the Confederate left – but just barely. Hooker's troops had taken the Dunker Church, even though they did not need to take that objective to be successful – the goal was to draw Confederates away from the center and weaken that sector for the main attack to come later in the fight. The most horrific two hours of American's bloodiest day was over, and the outcome of the battle depended upon McClellan's handling of the other two phases of his plan



US model 1855 spring vise

The tumbler and wire punch has two functions, to remove band springs from the musket stock and to remove the tumbler from the hammer when disassembling the lock. Look carefully at the photo. The smaller punch is used to tap out the band springs from the left side. The larger punch is used to drive the square shouldered tumbler from the hole in the hammer.



Tumbler and Wire Punch

It is interesting to note that the army expected a soldier to be able to keep his musket clean and serviceable with no disassembly at all, not even removal of the cone. The model 1855 rifle musket handbook states "Put a piece of rag or soft leather on the top of the cone, and let the hammer down upon it; pour a gill of water into the muzzle carefully, so that it does not run down the outside; put a plug of wood into the muzzle, and shake the up and down, changing the water repeatedly until it comes out clear. When clear, withdraw the leather, and stand the musket on the muzzle for a few moments; then wipe out the barrel, and also wipe the exterior of the lock and outside of the barrel around the done and cone seat, first with a damp rag, and then with a dry one, and lastly with a rag that has been slightly oiled. In this way, all the dirt due to the firing may be removed without taking out a screw."

Another excerpt from the model 1855 rifle musket handbook states "The soldier should never dismount the band springs, guard, side screw washers, butt-plate, rear sight, cone and

Musket Tools – Part 2: Non-Commissioned Officer's Tools

By: Corporal Steve Blancard

[Editors Note – This is a continuation of the weapons maintenance article that was first posted within the June edition of our monthly newsletter]

In the last newsletter we discussed implements issued to privates in order to maintain their muskets. This included the screwdriver (musket tool) and the wiper. Today we will look at the tools issued to some non-commissioned officers that allowed for detailed disassembly; the spring vise, the tumbler and wire punch, and the Enfield sergeant's tool.

The spring vise is used to hold the lock's mainspring in a compressed state to allow the lock to be disassembled. A common misconception is that it is used to compress the spring, which it is not. To use the tool properly with the lock removed from the stock, the hammer is brought to full cock which compresses the spring. The spring vise is then installed on the compressed spring to keep it in that state, which allows the lock to be disassembled (In a future article, I'll show how to completely disassemble a lock for maintenance).

cone seat screw, except when an officer considers it necessary.”

Lastly, let's look at the Enfield sergeant's tool. The ingenious British came up with a true multifunction tool to maintain their muskets. This thing is equivalent to the modern Swiss Army knife.



Enfield Sergeant's tool front and back view

This tool has all these functions:

- Nipple pick, which swivels for use and storage
- Large screwdriver
- Small screwdriver, the worm mounts over it
- Forged worm for mounting on the ramrod of the musket
- Ball puller which screws into the base of the tool for storage
- Nipple wrench, for square shank nipples. This is concealed by the ball puller.
- Oil Bottle with dropper is hidden between the arms of the Y.
- Mainspring clamp on the body of the tool

You may have seen reference to both an Enfield sergeant's tool and an Enfield private's tool. The only difference between the two is that private's tool does not have the mainspring clamp. Just like in the US and CS armies, British privates were not trusted to disassemble their musket's lock either.

Steve Blancard is a retired US Navy weapons specialist who has been building, repairing and shooting antique and reproduction firearms for over 40 years. He has been a

reenactor and living historian for 12 years and served as the 3rd Regiment, ANV Ordnance Sergeant for 5 years where he conducted weapons training, safety oversight and field repairs. While he only works on his own weapons now, he gladly shares his advice and experience.

Order of articles on this topic for the remainder of 2021:

[AUGUST – Musket Tools – Part 2: Non-Commissioned Officer's Tools](#)

[SEPTEMBER – How Tight is Tight Enough?](#)

[OCTOBER – Musket Lock Maintenance – Part 1:](#)

[Disassembly](#)

[NOVEMBER – Musket Lock Maintenance – Part 2:](#)

[Cleaning and Inspection](#)

[DECEMBER – Musket Lock Maintenance – Part 3:](#)

[Lubrication and Assembly](#)

Civilian Corner

What Mule?

One benefit of being raised by reenactors is that I have an unusual familiarity with the music of the 1860s. A lot of it went over my head, of course- I was in my teens before I realized exactly *what* the “*Maid of Amsterdam*” does for a living, for example. But mostly, as I read books and visited historic sites, and paid attention in my history classes, I found that I made lots of connections between things I learned and events and people mentioned in the popular music of the 1860s.

But one song always eluded me. “*Mister, Where's Your Mule?*” didn't seem to be anything more than a goofy story about some soldiers pranking a farmer. The song isn't clear on who the soldiers are, just that they've stolen the farmer's mule and are leading him around camp by pretending to tell him where it is. It's... funny enough, I guess. But why bother singing about it? So I hopped on the internet to do some research.

As you can imagine, the phrase “*Mister, where's your mule?*” doesn't get a lot of results on google. But it does, it turns out, have its own Wikipedia page, which quotes from *The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events* by Frank Moore (which is in the public domain and can be read online or purchased in print form). He says, “*The cry of 'Here's your mule,' and 'Where's my mule?' have become national and are generally heard when, on the one hand no mule is about, and, on the other, when no one is hunting a mule. It seems not to be understood by any one, though it is a peculiar confederate phrase, and is as popular as Dixie from the Potomac to the Rio Grande.*”

That's when it hit me: “*Mister, where's your mule?*” is a **meme**.

Not that the Americans of the 1860s knew the word meme, of course (it was coined by Richard Dawkins in 1976) but they would have been familiar with the phenomenon anyway, in jokes and references everyone knew about. Today's meme humor might be found primarily on the

internet, but the existence of memetic ideas has been around pretty much forever.

Like any meme, you can try to look up the joke's origins, but in this case you won't have much luck. It seems to have originated in the Confederacy and been most popular in the south, but there's no agreement on which camp was home to the soldiers who allegedly stole the mule. Was this a true story? Was there some farmer whose mule was stolen by soldiers who then led him through the Confederacy's most tedious game of hide and seek? Maybe.

But it's equally likely that there isn't one real incident that the joke was based off on. Memes, as the internet makes quite clear, sometimes just... seem to happen. Someone makes a dumb joke and it develops a life of its own. In this case, "**Mister, where's your mule?**" and its variant- "**Here's your mule!**" spread like wildfire across the Confederacy and cracked up soldiers "from the Potomac to the Rio Grande."

In his book *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederates*, Edward Pollard describes one soldier's reaction to the outcome of the Battle of Missionary Ridge: "*The day was shamefully lost. Gen. Bragg attempted to rally the broken troops; he advanced into the fire, and exclaimed, 'Here is your commander,' and was answered with the derisive shouts of an absurd catch-phrase in the army, 'Here's your mule'.*"

Without access to Facebook (which was probably for the best), the soldiers passed this meme around not only by yelling it at disappointing generals, but also by turning it into songs. If you've heard the 97th Regimental String Band's version, you were listening to the likely original song. It was written by C. D. Benson in 1862 and published initially in Nashville and Cincinnati, although obviously it gained popularity in other places as well.

But like any good meme, the joke didn't stop there. John Hunt Morgan inspired at least two variations on the song. After Morgan's Raid in 1863, one set of sheet music for Confederate audiences added this final verse:

*Come on, come on, come on, old man,
And don't be made a fool;
I'll tell you the truth as best I can:
"John Morgan's got your Mule!"*

After Morgan escaped from the Ohio Penitentiary in 1863, C. D. Benson went back to songwriting in honor of the occasion and produced these verses:

*Then raise the shout, the glorious shout,
John Morgan's caught at last,
Proclaim it loud, the land throughout,
He's in to prison fast.*

*Upon his Mule, He's gone they say
To Dixie's Promised Land,
And at no very distant day
To lead a new command.*

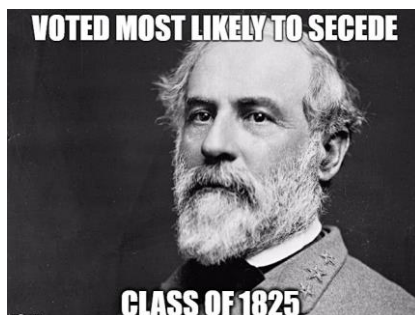
And in case the original tune wasn't your favorite, there were at least two other versions, to the tune of O Tannenbaum (or Maryland, My Maryland, depending on your 1860s political views.)

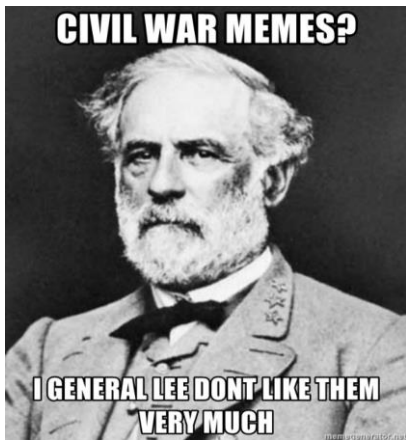
The first one goes:
*Hark! Morgan's boys are on a raid,
Here's your Mule, O here's your mule!
To meet the foe they're not afraid,
Here's your Mule, O here's your mule!
And when bluecoats, see them come,
They stop and fire and break and run,
And then begins John Morgan's fun,
Here's your Mule, O here's your mule!*

Nashville's *Daily Union* published another in 1863, which began:

*Come Soldiers, listen to my lay
Here's your mule, your long eared mule
I'll sing the warriors of the day,
Here's your mule, &c.
Old General Bragg, he leads the way,
And moves his army twice a day,
And once at night, I've heard them say
Here's your mule, your long eared mule.*

I can't say I think this meme has aged all that well, but then again, I'm not exactly the intended audience. These Civil War memes are more my style...





Happy Birthday
Bill Goumas Glenn Dieter
Peter Vaselopulos

Military Chain of Command

1st Lt., Geoff White Company Commander
1st Sgt. Neil Burke
Corporal – Joseph Gillespie
Corporal – Craig Ross
Corporal – Peter Vaselopulos
Commissary Sergeant - Glenn Dieter
Quartermasters - 1st Sgt. Neil Burke,
Corporal Peter Vaselopulos
Recruiting Coordinator - Corporal Peter Vaselopulos

If you have any questions regarding the policies or schedule of the 3rd U.S Regulars Infantry, Co. K please contact one of the elected Leadership:

President: Neil Carmichael
Phone 202-892-6344.
E-mail: buddy324th@gmail.com

Vice President: Peter Vaselopulos
Cell:
E-mail: pvaselop@gmail.com

Treasurer: Kelly Cochran
Phone (202) 316-0422
E-mail: kellytcochran@gmail.com

Secretary: Neil Burke
Phone 703-973-1672
E-mail neil_burke2013@gmail.com

Member at Large: TJ Bradley
Phone
E-mail: bradley.thomasj@gmail.com

Civilian Coordinator: Rebecca Welker
Phone: 703 973 7367
E-mail: r.welker64@gmail.com