

Welcome Home!

[Daily Inter Ocean (Chicago, IL), **19 Aug 1865**, page 1, special dispatch to The Chicago Republican, available at GenealogyBank]

"From Wooster, Ohio. Festival to Returned Soldiers. Speech by General Cox.

Wooster, O., August 17

The festival here to-day, to welcome home returned soldiers, was a grand success. The weather was clear and beautiful. There were about 2,000 soldiers in procession, and 8,000 to 10,000 citizens were present. The streets were gaily decorated with flags, streamers, and appropriate mottoes, and many private residences on the line of march were fully dressed with evergreens, mottoes, &c.

General Cox addressed the immense assemblage for about an hour. He commenced by tendering thanks, in behalf of the soldiers, for their magnificent reception by the citizens of Wayne. He said the reunion was more pleasant because of the objects for which they had gone forth were accomplished. We were told, at the commencement, that we could not succeed; we were met by doubts and doubters in our midst. But, despite this, the boys have returned home, bringing success with them, and this occasion of joy was to note their coming.

He alluded to the sneers of foreigners at our crude military organizations, and their prophecies of failure; and went on to show that our volunteer system was really the strength of our country. We cannot now appreciate the greatness of the struggle; but those coming after us will recognize this as the greatest epoch in our history.

He retraced the history of the commencement of the rebellion, showing that it was not any grievance of southerners that led them into the conflict, but that it arose from a settled purpose of an aristocracy to overthrow a liberal government, and establish a monarchy upon its ruins, - to gratify the inordinate ambition of a self-assumed master-race. But the noble impulse born of freedom - such as animated the Swiss, and stood at Thermopylae - was in the hearts of our people, and led our young men into the field, willing to die, if need be, in defence of the government. And the struggle has been fought out. The Yankees were sneeringly spoken of as a servile race, of whom five were no match for one southerner; but that conceit had been knocked out of them in the first year of the war. In four years we had crushed the military power of the rebellion. Our mourners are many, but theirs is a land of mourning. Whatever we have suffered, they have suffered vastly more. We shall not forget, in our joy in the present, the sacrifices that have been made, and should remember those among us who have suffered.

The masses before him were loyal people, - were not of those who rejoiced at our defeats, and wore long faces at our successes. We have duties to perform as important as during the war. The rebellion is crushed, but much of its spirit still exists. Our work is not yet done. We have among us, those who rejoice over the defeat of Union Congressmen in the South. We had hoped that, when the war was over, they would come to us and surrender, and say they were in the wrong; but we find them as bitter as before, and it is sufficient evidence that what we said during the war was true: that they were traitors at heart. They rejoice over the defeat of the Constitutional amendment, and every means towards the complete and substantial pacification of the country. This demands our attention as soldiers, and we should not give over the strife till complete success is ours. The bayonet has done its part. Truth, enforced by ballots, must now take its place; and there must be no rest till victory is complete. Slavery was the cause of the war, and must be done away with. The dogma of state sovereignty was the source of our misery, - the seed whence sprang all this ruin and bloodshed and we must put it away from us. We have to determine what shall be done with the freedmen; and there are other questions which we must meet as becomes men.

Our opponents hoped that differences of opinion would exist between us; that the soldiers would return with prejudices which would separate them from their friends; but it was the determination of all to disregard questions of disorganizing nature, leaving them to the logic of events for solution, and march on to fresh victories over the foe at home, equal in importance to those achieved by Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan in the field.

The General was lustily cheered as he sat down.

Parson Collier made a few remarks eulogistic of General Cox, closing with calling for three cheers for the prospective Governor of Ohio; Three cheers for Ohio Generals, - Grant, Sherman, and

Sheridan, - a trio that never were beaten and never can be; three cheers for Ohio soldiers, who fought our battles in the field and support our Major Generals at home; and three cheers for the ladies who supplied bandages for soldiers and prayed for the success of the cause.

All were responded to with great enthusiasm.

The soldiers were then formed and marched to the tables, where the ladies had prepared a magnificent repast.

After dinner, the people reassembled at the stand, where toasts were read and responded to.

The day concluded with a balloon ascension in the evening, and a splendid display of fireworks.

It was a magnificent ovation, calling together the largest crowd ever assembled in Wooster."

[Note: General Jacob Cox became governor of Ohio in 1866 and served two years.]

[Cleveland Leader, 19 Aug 1865, page 2, available at GenealogyBank] [At that time the fairground was on [Quinby Avenue](#) just north of where the high school, now Cornerstone elementary, used to be,.]

"Wooster, August 17, 1865. The Wayne County Soldier's Reception at this place to-day was a most brilliant success. The day was all the could have been desired, the weather being clear and mild. At an early hour in the morning the people, prominent among whom were the 'brave boys in blue,' commenced pouring into the town, and before nine o'clock the streets were literally packed with human beings. They came by rail, in buggies, carriages and wagons, on horseback and on foot, until it seemed as though the surrounding country must be depopulated; but still they came in an unceasing stream until the middle of the day. It is estimated that at least twenty thousand people were assembled, including two thousand returned soldiers.

Mottoes and Decorations. The town of Wooster was decked in its holiday attire, flags, banners, mottoes, streamers and evergreen wreaths adorning almost every building. The citizens seemed to vie with each other in patriotic demonstrations, and every means was adopted to give the returned veterans assurance of hearty welcome. The following are some of the mottoes suspended across the streets surrounding the public Square, which were decorated with flags, streamers, stars and wreaths of flowers and evergreen:

'Our Distinguished Guest, Major General J. D. Cox.' 'A Grateful Country will ever remember her Maimed Soldiers, her Widows and her Orphans' 'With malice toward none, with charity for all, let us press forward to do the right, as God gives us to see the right.' 'Gettysburgh - Vicksburgh'(with the battle-rent flag of an Ohio regiment suspended in the centre) 'Brave men: the strong right arm of the nation we welcome, thrice welcome, you home.' "Our Volunteers, the Pride of the Nation, the Pride of the People, and the terror of Traitors.'

A cluster of stars were suspended across Main street, in the centre the words 'Ohio's Galaxy of Stars.' The exhibited the names: 'Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Cox, McPherson, Rosecrans, Harker, Weitzel, Gillmore, Leggett, Hazen, Stanley, Schenck, Steadman, Crook, McCook, Pope, Woods, Reilly, Beaty.'

A very pretty compliment was paid General Cox by the suspension across Main street of a beautiful red, white and blue shield, the badge of the General's old corps - the 23d - with the figures ' '76-'65 ' on either side.

Delegations form a distance. There were several delegations from adjoining towns, all of which made a fine display, some of them presenting a really imposing appearance. They came in tastefully ornamented wagons, whilst fair hands held aloft flags and banners covered with patriotic inscriptions. It was a grand gay day in Wooster. Literally, 'fair women and brave men' met and mingled, whilst joy beamed from every eye.

Arrival of Gen. Cox - procession. At half-past ten o'clock a grand procession was formed on the Public Square, under direction of Captain Drake, of the 23d regiment, Chief Marshal of the day. Soon after Major General Cox arrived by the Seville road, and was escorted to the Public Square by a delegation of citizens and soldiers. The Procession then moved in the following order: 102d Ohio Silver Cornet Band. Cavalry Escort. Major General Cox and other invited guests. Officers of the Day. A Martial Band. Soldiers from Adjoining Counties. Wayne County Soldiers. Wooster Union Silver Cornet Band. A Martial Band. Citizens.

The procession moved, with music, from the Public Square to the south end of Market street, then countermarched directly to the Fair Ground, north of the town. - The procession was regarded

as the grandest ever witnessed in Wooster, even eclipsing the enthusiastic days of log cabins and hard cider.

The Meeting. Arrived at the fair Ground, the blessing of the God of nations was invoked in a fervent and beautiful prayer, by the Rev. Mr. McElrea, of Wooster.

Speech of Gen. Cox. Major General J. D. Cox was then introduced by Doctor Robinson, President of the Day, in an appropriate and eloquent speech of five minutes.

Gen. Cox addressed the vast audience for an hour and a half, in a most forcible and logical manner, being listened to with marked attention, and eliciting frequent rounds of applause.

.....

The one thing dear to the heart of General Cox is the integrity of the National Union - the wiping out of the last vestige of treason. He believes that while the war has exhausted the physical resources of the insurgents, it has not changed their spirit; that they will seek, with the aid of their Northern allies, to regain their lost power by political intrigue; that they would use such power to degrade the black man and reduce him to a condition of semi-slavery; that they would seek to make the assumption of the rebel debt a condition in sustaining the national credit. The General is equally emphatic in declaring the duty of the nation toward the freedmen. He believes it to be incumbent upon the American people to secure to the negro race in this country, beyond all possible contingencies, that full measure of freedom which the Emancipation Proclamation foreshadowed. The first step toward the accomplishment of this should be the ratification of the Constitutional Amendment prohibiting involuntary servitude. He prefers to wait a little season before we decide in favor of this or that theory in regard to the position ultimately to be assigned to the colored race in America, believing that the practical experiments now being made by the Administration of President Johnson, and the 'logic of events,' will enable us to see the truth more clearly in the future.

.....

[A series of Cheers were directed by Chaplain Collier.]

Dinner to the Soldiers. The ladies of Wayne county had provided a magnificent dinner for the soldiers 2,000 of whom marched to the well filled tables and received their rations from fair hands. No part of the programme was more thoroughly and successfully carried out than that assigned to the loyal ladies, and they deserve much praise.

[There were toasts and speeches by President of the Day [Dr. Robinson], and by Col. Carr of the 16th Ohio, James McCoy, Esq., Rev. McElrea, Capt. A. S. McClure of the 16th Ohio]

Speech of Chaplain Collier. Chaplain Collier was introduced and made a short, stirring speech, arousing the enthusiasm of his labors to the highest key. Among other good things, he paid his tribute to the loyalty of the black race at the South, the only people who had extended him aid and sympathy during an imprisonment of four months in a Southern prison.

The meeting then adjourned, to be followed by fireworks in the evening.

Evening - The fireworks are now being witnessed by the citizens of the city and hundreds of country people who remained to see them.

Nothing has occurred to mar the pleasure of he day, one of the proudest in the history of Wayne county.
D."

[Cleveland Leader, 21 Aug 1865, page 2, available at GenealogyBank]"Special Correspondence of the Cleveland Leader"

"Ashland, O., August 18th 1865. In despite of the active opposition of the copperheads of Ashland county, than whom there are no meaner in the land, the soldier's reception to-day was a magnificent ovation to the returning braves. The **so-called Democracy** had attempted to embarrass the action of the loyal people engaged in this noble enterprise. Feeling that they had no place in an assembly convened to welcome home the defenders of the nation, since **their influence had uniformly been cast with the enemy**, they sought, at an hour which they knew to be too late to admit of a change of programme, to create discord by proposing to join in the movement, provided they should be allowed to invite 'a Democratic speaker.' In what manner could they have made more emphatic the fact that they were not the proper parties to welcome home the defenders of the Union? The patriotic ladies of Ashland county, who originated, arranged and consummated this generous festival, **very properly declined the insolent proposal**, feeling

that all patriots could accept the very broad invitation given without dictating conditions.

I was yesterday astonished by the stupendous exhibition of loyalty at Wooster, and was disposed to regard that as an exceptional case. I did not anticipate its repetition at Ashland to-day. If there were not as many people assembled here to-day as at Wooster yesterday, the reason is found in the fact that Ashland does not contain as large a population as Wayne. From every nook and corner of the county come up the old men and the young, the mothers, wives and maidens of this loyal community. Jackson, Sullivan, Clear Creek and Tuggles came up with delegations of enormous size, and Troy, Orange, Vermillion, Greene, Mohican, Perry, Mifflin, Milton, Hanover and Lake followed in grand array, forming miles of procession. Besides, there was a constant stream of humanity pouring in from early morn until the sun had reached its meridian, coming by every road and avenue of travel. Parties accustomed to estimate large bodies of people place the number present at from fifteen to twenty thousand. I am sure the former figure is not too high: - the latter may not be. Such enthusiasm I have not witnessed since the days immediately following the fall of Sumter. Twelve hundred soldiers marched under their bullet-scarred flags, cheering, and cheering and cheering again for the union of the States, and the Union party of Ohio. The 16th, 120th, 102d, 42d 23d, 64th, 65th, 66th and 76th regiments, and Standart's [[Battery B, 1st Ohio Light Artillery](#); Captain William E. Standart], the 4th and 12th batteries, were represented. **The tattered banner of the 120th was proudly born aloft**, bearing the names of the thirteen battles in which the regiment had taken an honorable part, - among them Chickasaw Bluff, Grand Gulf, Vicksburg, Jackson and Mobile.

Patriotic sentiments were inscribed upon banners borne by the ladies of the various Soldiers' Aid societies. Among them were the following:

'We welcome Jackson's Veterans home.' 'In God and our soldiers we trust.' 'God and our country.' 'God has been with us.' 'The Glorious Old Union.' 'Peace and good will towards men.' 'We honor the brave.' 'Welcome home to our soldiers.'

The procession, so ponderous that it could not be formed at once, got into line gradually, delegation succeeding delegation as the head of the column moved forward. In this way the advance reached its destination long before the rear began to move. The soldiers assembled at the Court House, and, under the direction of Captain Frownfilter [Fraunfelter], of the 20th [120th] Ohio, took their place in the procession, which was formed by Col. W. Slocum, of the 120th Ohio, Chief Marshal of the day, in the following order: Hayesville Band, Officers of the Day and Orators, Soldiers' Aid Societies, Soldiers of the war of 1812, First Brigade (old 23d Ohio) Band, Returned Soldiers, National Guard, A Martial Band, Citizens.

Marching to Sampsel's Grove, a mile east of the town, the warm hearted, loyal women of Ashland county invited the soldiers to a most magnificent dinner. The boys in blue showed their appreciation by gathering, twelve hundred strong, around the groaning tables, and devoting themselves to a vain endeavor to reduce the bulk of good things set before them. But they found works they could not storm. Not only were the soldiers fed, but their wives and widows and little ones were remembered, whilst there was enough and to spare for all who chose to partake.

After dinner, some sixty little girls, pupils of the Ohio Normal Academy of Music, sang, in sweetest tones, 'The Star Spangled Banner' and 'Our Flag is Still There.'

The Rev. Mr. Scott, of Savannah, supplicated Divine favor in an appropriate prayer.

Captain S. M. Barber, of the 42d Ohio, President of the day, then introduced Major General Cox, who occupied an hour in the delivery of a most happy and effective speech. As the General persists in advocating the same principles before each and every audience, I will only say that he was greeted at the opening, throughout and at the close, with such cheers and such hearty evidences of approval as I have not heard and seen these many years. Had the traitorous Democracy possessed the courage to come up to this patriotic carnival. they would have realized the impotence of their schemes to seduce the veteran soldiers of Ohio from the cause of the Union.

The following toasts were then read by Captain Barber, who, by the way, bears a certificate of manly service in the field, in the form of a wooden foot....

The Hon. Martin Walker, of Wooster, member of Congress from this District, responded in an able and patriotic speech of ten minutes. He recognized in that flag the emblem of National sovereignty and freedom. The first act of the rebellion was to tear down that flag, because it represented

freedom. With the success of the flag slavery was wiped out of existence, and it was not until slavery had been destroyed that we were enabled to restore the flag all over our land. He was proud of that flag because it guaranteed freedom to all who dwelt under its folds.

Our Honored Dead - their memories are embalmed in tears, and their noble deeds recorded in blood upon the pages of history.

Response by Captain C. T. Bushnell, of Ashland.

American Soldiers - The admiration of the whole world, and a terror to evil doers. They have *fire-arms* for their foes and loving ones for the girls.

Responded to in a felicitous speech by W. T. Coggeswell, Esq., of the *Ohio State Journal*.

Abraham Lincoln - Our noble President; the best of men. He lived long enough to proclaim the liberty of the captive and lay the corner-stone in the reconstruction of the Union, that it might become in truth, as well as in name, the home of the free.

Response by John Dougherty, Esq., of Mohican.

The meeting then adjourned."

D.



My drawing from the 120th OVI flag with the words Always Remember added.

The flag is housed at the [Ohio History Center](#) in Columbus, OH.

Research by Susie Holderfield, 2001-2018

120researcher@gmail.com

[Index to History of the 120th OVI](#)

[Link to Main page for the 120th Ohio Volunteer Infantry](#)