



The Regimental Bulletin

Phil Kearny Civil War Round Table of Northern New Jersey

***** NEXT MEETING *****

Wed, March 15th @ - 7PM - Online Zoom Presentation

See Details Below to Join In

Thirteen Months in Dixie,

Or, the Adventures of a Federal Prisoner in Texas: Including the Red River Campaign, Imprisonment at Camp Ford and Escape Overland to Liberated Shreveport, 1864-1865

Speaker: Steven A. Knowlton

Volume 19 Issue 3

March 15th, 2023

Hasbrouck Heights
Municipal Building
320 Boulevard
Hasbrouck Heights, NJ

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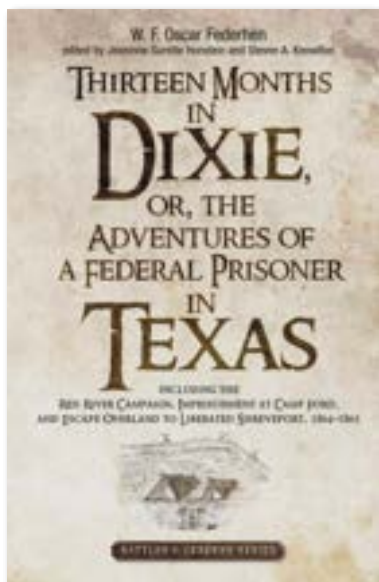
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Thirteen Months in Dixie tells a rollicking tale of adventure, captivity, hardship, and heroism during the last year of the Civil War—in the protagonist's own words. After being hidden away for decades as a family heirloom, the incredible manuscript is finally available, annotated and illustrated, for the first time. Oscar Federhen was a new recruit to the 13th Independent Battery, Massachusetts Light Artillery, when he shipped out to Louisiana in the spring of 1864 to participate in the Red River Campaign. Not long after his arrival at the front, a combination of ill-luck and bad timing led to his capture. Thirteen Months in Dixie recounts Federhen's always thrilling and occasionally horrifying ordeals as a starving prisoner. He wrote his recollections in lively

engaging style not long after the war, but they sat unpublished until Jeaninne Surette Honstein and Steven Knowlton carefully transcribed and annotated his incredible manuscript.

This book is available from the publisher **Savas Beatie** or Amazon, both in print and Kindle.

Steven A. Knowlton is Librarian for History and African American Studies at Princeton University. His historical research has been published in many peer-reviewed journals. He is the recipient of the William Driver Award from the North American Vexillological Association and the Marshall Wingfield Award from the West Tennessee Historical Society and has won the Justin Winsor Library History Essay Award twice. This is his first book.



Steven A. Knowlton

You must register with this new link before the meeting

https://us06web.zoom.us/join/register/tZwvdO2upzkrGtBcwc8kQ3_NL1U_hp_a1Zrv

Recently, the Phil Kearny Civil War Round Table was contacted by Jeff Irwin, a professional archaeologist with nearly 30 years of experience, mostly with the federal government, who shared the following article about Miller K. Reading with a New Jersey & Civil War Civil War connections.

Jeff writes: *"I discovered your organization after writing the attached brief article and thought that you might be interested in including this in your newsletter. Some years ago I developed an interest in a man named Miller Reading while I was researching a historic family and estate in Prince William County, Virginia. I found some information on Reading and summarized what I learned regarding his life in New Jersey, his Civil War experience, and his relocation to Virginia later in life. It is a short article with one image and a table.*

We thank Jeff for this month's contribution to the PKCWRT Bulletin.

Both Sides of the War: A Brief Reflection on the Life of Miller K. Reading

By Jeff Irwin

Prince William County in northern Virginia was valued territory during the Civil War, a theater of major battles and skirmishes. Confederate and Union armies clashed in the First and Second battles at Bull Run, and thereafter Confederate forces would challenge occupying Union troops. While the county was clearly a part of the Confederacy, its citizens rallying to the cause and providing troops for some nine units in the Confederate army, it was not exclusively the home of southerners (1). Years before the confederacy formed and hostilities erupted, Prince William County witnessed a southward migration of northern families who resettled hundreds of miles from their homeland in the state of New Jersey. These travelers would create their own unique rural Yankee colony in northern Virginia, an eventual war-time enclave of Union sympathizers. The local Virginia-Jersey connection they established would seem to persist well after the war, as evidenced by the story of a man named Miller Kline Reading, a Yankee soldier and Jersey son who ventured south twice, once for a war and once more for a new home.

Born in the winter of 1840 in the small town of Flemington, New Jersey, Miller K. Reading was raised in rural Hunterdon County, some fifty miles southwest of Manhattan Island (2). He was one of at least three children with an older brother and a younger sister. In 1850 the Reading family was one of modest means, his father, Francis Reading, supporting his family as a laborer. Nonetheless, Miller's formative years included a good education, and he ultimately graduated from Flemington High School. While Miller was raised in a community of farmers, laborers, and tradesmen, he developed and pursued his own interest in education. Soon after graduation from high school, he accepted a position teaching at a public school at Unionville (3).

Reading's professional development would have to wait however, as the ongoing Civil War would demand his service. Not long after beginning his teaching career, Reading left his position temporarily, and volunteered for enlistment in the Union army. He signed up three days before Christmas in 1863, a year that would be momentous for Reading and for the nation (4). Miller had lost his father that spring, after losing his mother two years prior (5). Meanwhile the country had suffered through two years of war. The Union had made strides, including the repulsion that summer of General Lee's advance at Gettysburg, sealing off the north to confederate invasion. And the capture of Vicksburg had severed a major supply route, isolating a large part of the confederacy. Still the Union struggled to maintain adequate forces, and Congress passed a military conscription law in March, a move that met with violent, deadly riots in New York City. Miller Reading's home state of New Jersey answered the call for more soldiers through a new recruitment effort with an objective of supplying over 10,000 men for service (6). Reading volunteered for the newly formed 3rd New Jersey Cavalry Regiment, which mustered in on January 26, 1864 (7).



*The Flag of the 3rd NJ Cavalry,
known as the Butterflies.*

The 3rd New Jersey was an easy unit to identify. Their uniforms stood out from the majority of those worn by union troops, which were largely standardized by the time the 3rd New Jersey mustered. As a recruiting ploy, the uniforms were patterned after a 14th century Hungarian tradition established by the hussars, legendary light cavalry warriors known for their elaborate dress. The 19th century New Jersey version featured yellow striped, sky-blue pantaloons, dark blue jackets with extra rows of burnished bell buttons, gold frogging across the chest, and gold cord on back seams and sleeves. The outfit was completed with a sideways,

visorless cap and a blue hooded cloak with orange lining (8). They became known as the “Butterfly Hussars” and even adopted a battle flag boldly adorned with a colorful butterfly specimen.

The delicate nature of their namesake would eventually contrast with grit displayed in combat. After training in Trenton, the regiment headed south to join the Ninth Army Corps in Annapolis, thereafter moving into Virginia where they would remain for the war’s duration. They moved throughout northern Virginia and as far south as Petersburg, often serving sometimes dangerous picket duty (9). By August, the 3rd New Jersey had joined the Shenandoah Valley Campaign and they engaged in their first real battle at Winchester. Skirmishes and the Battle at Cedar Creek followed that fall. After a winter at Winchester, in March of 1865, the cavalry returned to the Shenandoah valley, pursuing rebels southward, fighting in several battles (e.g., Ashland, Five Forks, Sailor’s Creek) before arriving at Appomattox where General Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia.

After this intense experience in combat, covering hundreds of miles throughout the state of Virginia, Reading would return home to New Jersey with his unit. After recovering from apparent injury and being discharged from the Army’s Ward hospital in Newark (10), Reading started a family with Mary Hannah Young, also from Hunterdon County. Married in 1865, Miller and Mary had two boys soon thereafter and Miller returned to his career in education. He renewed his job as a teacher, accepting a position in 1867 on the Hunterdon County school board, a role he served for four years (11). By 1870, Reading added “Book Agent” to his resume (12). He taught at the Unionville District school (No. 102), a schoolhouse that originated during the Revolutionary War (13). He also became involved in civil service (14).

A career in education ultimately failed to suit Reading, however, as he began to pursue a major career change. From Flemington, New Jersey he headed to Syracuse, New York in 1876, entering the College of Physicians and Surgeons. He completed a standard two-year program and graduated as valedictorian of his class. He delivered an “acute, precise, and effective” graduation ceremony speech (15). Reading entered a growing professional class of physicians, a group that increased steadily in the late 19th century, particularly as urban elite specialists grew in numbers. Yet Reading joined the field as a country practitioner, continuing his commitment to public service in a rural community.

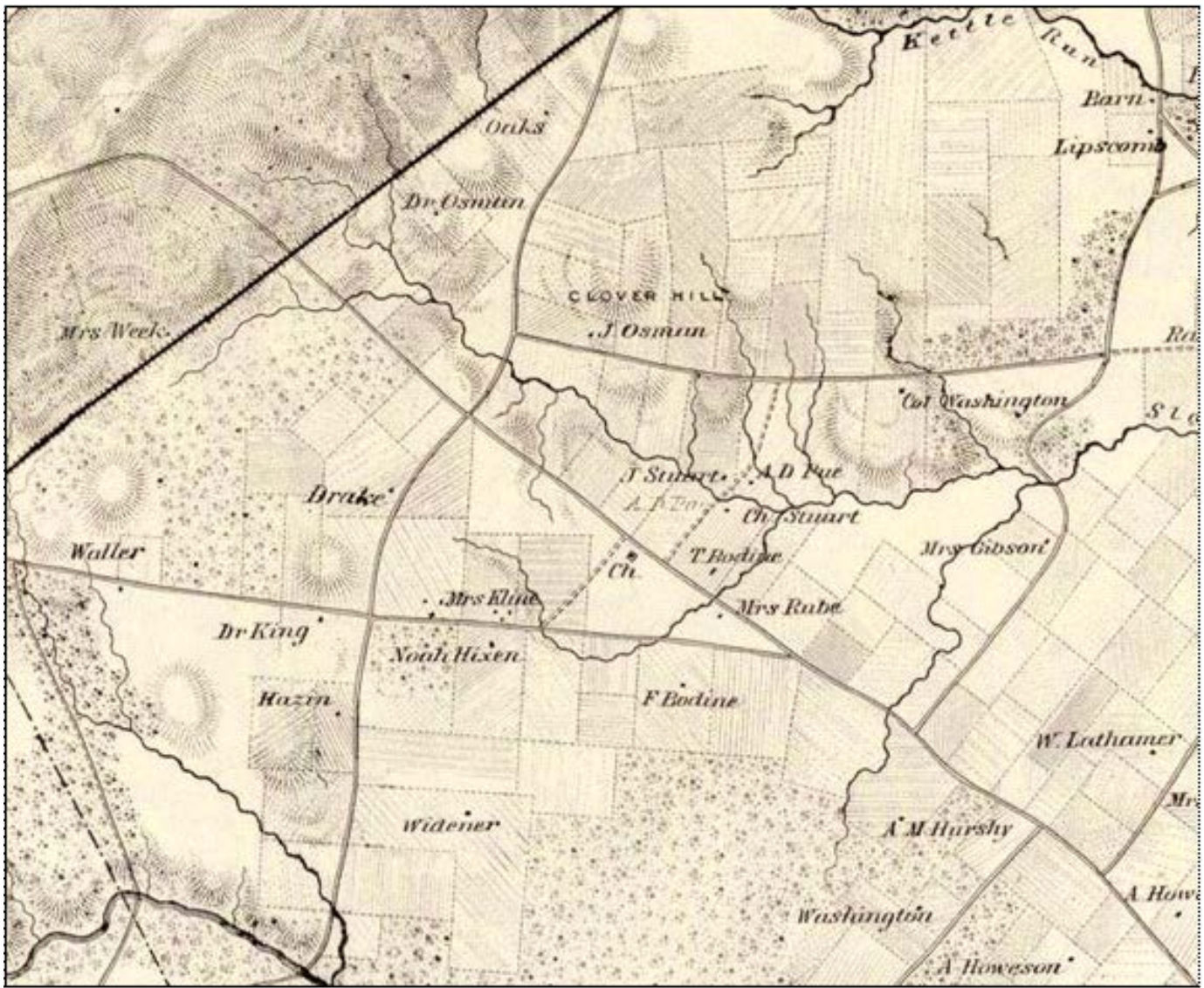
Despite his success during the post-war years in his home state, Miller would not choose to remain in New Jersey. After five years of operating a medical practice, in 1881 he and his wife Mary made a seemingly dramatic decision. They would leave their home state and relocate their family from their childhood home. Their destination would be distant but familiar terrain for Miller.

The reasons for the Reading family move may be lost to history, but the destination that Miller Reading chose seems to hold obvious connections to his own personal war experience and to the state of New Jersey. The Readings selected that pocket of rural northern Virginia where an enclave of northern transplants had existed since the 1840s, when several New Jersey families made a pilgrimage south. These families had formed a dispersed rural community in Prince William County around the hamlet of Nokesville and not far from the county seat of Brentsville. They even established their own country church (First Presbyterian Church of Prince William) (16). In the 1850 federal census, numerous New Jersey-born immigrants were recorded in this area (**Table 1**). By 1881, when the Reading family packed up and moved, this Jersey colony was likely still recognizable. Indeed, only five years prior, a newspaper advertisement for a farm sale notes its proximity to “the ‘New Jersey settlement’ throughout which a Union sentiment is, and was during the late rebellion, predominant” (17).

It is not known if Reading was related to any of the southern New Jerseyans, but it is certainly likely that he encountered them during his time as a soldier. When the war started, this group of a few dozen families found themselves behind enemy lines, but they eventually welcomed the friendly presence of Union troops controlling northern Virginia. The colony is mentioned in Union Army scouting reports from Bristow Station and Catlett’s Station. Daily scouting trips by the 13th Pennsylvania Cavalry in March of 1864 covered several miles and their encounter with the “Jersey settlement”. In one case a soldier makes reference to a local Jersey-



**Unidentified corporal
3rd New Jersey Cavalry
Volunteers known as *The
Butterflies* for their ornate
uniforms (LOC).**



Jersey folks in the countryside of Virginia.

Figure 1. Section of 1862 map showing the general location of the Jersey Settlement, as indicated by several household surnames (see Table 1). (20)

born guide (18). In late April and early May of 1864, Reading likely rode directly into the Jersey settlement. On April 29th, the 3rd New Jersey camped three miles south of Bristow Station, in the heart of the Jersey colony. They spent several days in the area, eventually mobilizing out on May 5th (19). The regiment's early days in the war were characterized by picket duty and we may surmise that Reading had similar experiences as the Pennsylvania regiment, finding fellow New Jersey folks in the countryside of Virginia.

Seventeen years after he rode through and camped near that Jersey colony, Miller Reading purchased a piece of land there to call home. His lot was carved from an old colonial period plantation called Green Level (21). Once 1,000 acres in size, Green Level was divided into smaller parcels in the 1830s following the death of its patriarch. A portion of the plantation separate from Reading's was actually acquired by an earlier Jersey settler named Elisha Osmon. In 1881, Reading acquired a few hundred acres and created his own dairy farm that he named Boxwood. He and his son, Cornelius, bred prized Jersey cattle (22). For a short time, Miller continued to practice medicine. However, by 1883 he stopped his practice due to failing health. He maintained his interest in and service to education, becoming a local school trustee (23).

Miller Reading's life ended in the spring of 1918 at the age of 79. He lived roughly half of his life in the north and half in the south. He saw bloody conflict and spent over a year of service in the war, then returned home to raise a family and eventually turn to medical practice as his profession. He became an integral member of his native New Jersey and likewise his adopted southern home, preceded decades earlier in that effort by

fellow New Jersey natives. Ultimately, it seems he and many others tried to reconcile the legacy of war. While we don't know for certain that Miller participated, for decades after the war, the veterans of his unit held a reunion on the date of their first real combat (Battle of Winchester) in New Jersey (24). Like many other Civil War veterans, Miller embraced his wartime experience and military heritage. In Virginia, he joined the Manassas Picket Post of Union Veterans and participated in events such as the Jubilee of 1911 reunion (25). When Reading died in 1918, his memorial service reflected his life on both sides of the war, as both Union and Confederate veterans attended. At the funeral held near his Aden home, two of Reading's pallbearers were former Union soldiers, including the locally prominent George Round, and four were his one-time enemy, veterans of the Confederacy (26). Reading is buried, alongside his wife Mary, in the Valley View Cemetery in Nokesville, not far from his adopted Virginia home.



Photo of Reading Family of Nokeville, VA. **Dr Miller K Reading**, much later in life, is seated with the long white beard and medal on lapel with his wife Mary seated to his right with his children and grand children.

Source. *Ancestry.com DavidReedy1 Family tree*

https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/collection/1030/tree/40753800/person/29104107800/media/fbcc9b25-ea48-4c46-b06f-e6a611963449?_phsrc=caf2&usePUBJs=true&galleryindex=1&sort=-created

Grave markers of Dr Miller K. Reading (1840-1918) and his wife Mary H Young Reading (1846-1924) at the Valleyview Cemetery in Nokesville, VA. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/22234101/miller-kline-reading>



Table 1. List of individuals born in New Jersey and residing in Prince William County, Virginia in 1850.

1850 Census	Surname	Name	Age
273	Bodine	Theodore	32
281	Bodine	Francis	30
258	Bolsby	John	24
431	Bradfield	Hubbard	19
280	Burk	William	23
258	Cummings	Wesley	23
257	Curl	Joseph	26
259	Deats	Robert	38
609	Force	Henry	70
431	Good	Elias	unknown
283	Hayes	John C.	48
271	Hazen	Levi H.	59
274	Hazen	Abram N.	26
272	Hixon	Noah	36
431	Hornbaker	John	55
431	Mitchel	George	25
256	Osmun	C. Little	40
258	Osmun	Jonah	31
275	Osmun	Daniel	25
520	Osmund	Rebecca	20
257	Petty	Joseph	30
116	Roseberry	Joseph	56
280	Rube	Ann	48
275	Slack	Cornelius	50
279	Stuart	William	50
520	Stuart	James	28
280	Thatcher	Charles	30
184	VanPelt	Abram	60
263	Warner	Gideon	29
433	Wolverton	Samuel	30

Jeff Irving is a professional archaeologist who has worked for several federal agencies, including the Army and Navy, the Forest Service, and currently, the National Park Service. Very recently he started a new position as the Cultural Resource Program Manager at Gettysburg National Military Park, where his responsibilities include archaeology and historic preservation (buildings and landscapes). Irving was raised in Roanoke, Virginia and has family lineages in Virginia and Pennsylvania. His archaeological and historical research interests are broad, ranging from the Civil War to prehistoric Native American cultures.

Footnotes:

1. Jan Townsend, *The Civil War in Prince William County*, edited and expanded by James Burgess (*Prince William County Historical Commission*, 2011).
2. Miller K. Reading, "William Bowne, And His Descendants in America", in *The Jerseyman*, A Quarterly Magazine of Local History and Genealogy, Principally of Hunterdon County, New Jersey (Volume 8, No. 4, 25-33, 1902), edited by Hiram Edmund Deats.
3. Reading, 27.
4. William S Stryker, Adjutant General, *Record of Officers and Men of New Jersey in the Civil War, 1861-1865. Volume 1*. Compiled in the Office of the Adjutant General, Trenton, New Jersey. John L. Murphy, Steam Book and Job Printer, 1876), N.J. Civil War Record, 1324. Available online at <https://www.nj.gov/state/archives>.
5. Reading, 17.
6. Peter T. Lubrecht, *New Jersey Butterfly Boys in the Civil War: The Hussars of the Union Army* (The History Press, 2011).
7. Stryker, 1324.
8. Lubrecht, 2011. <http://3rdnjcavalry.com/ArticleGuttman1.html>
9. Ibid.; Stryker, 1321.
10. Stryker, 1324.
11. Reading, 27.
12. 1870 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com)
13. James P. Snell, ed., *History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, New Jersey, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of its Prominent Men and Pioneers* (Everts and Peck, Philadelphia, 1881), p. 357.
14. Ibid, 262. Dr. Reading was appointed Commissioner of Deeds for Hunterdon County in 1868.
15. Reading, 27.
16. J. E. Nourse, John Chester, D. D., B. F. Bittinger, D. D., Committee, *The Presbytery of Washington City and its Churches*, Prepared for the Centennial of the General Assembly (Gibson Brothers, Washington D.C., 1888).
17. *Alexandria Gazette* (Alexandria, Virginia) · 17 Jan 1867, Thu, 4.
18. U.S. Army records of activities at and around Brentsville during the Civil War include references to the Jersey Settlement. Report of Cpt. Andrew H. McHenry, 13th Pennsylvania Cavalry, U.S. War Dept., *The War of the Rebellion*, Series 1, Vol. 51, Chap. LXIII, 216, <http://ehistory.osu.edu>. Report of Lt. George Maguire, 13th Pennsylvania Cavalry, U.S. War Dept., *The War of the Rebellion*, Series 1, Vol. 51, Chap. LXIII, 216, and Vol. 46, Chap. LVIII, 457-8, <http://ehistory.osu.edu>.
19. Lubrecht, 2011, 48-49; also see *Diary of Alexander A. Yard*, Major, Third New Jersey Cavalry Division, <http://3rdnjcavalry.com/DiaryYard1.html>
20. United States Corps of Topographical Engineers, Irvin McDowell, and J Schedler. *Map of n. eastern Virginia and vicinity of Washington*. [Washington, D.C., 1862], <https://www.loc.gov/item/91685687>



**PKCWRT will remain online
Zoom Meetings until further notice**

PKCWRT 2023

Schedule

Wed. March 15 - 7pm

Steven Knowlton

"13 Months in Dixie"

https://us06web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tZwvdO2upzk_rGtBcwc8kQ3_NL1U_hp_a1Zrv

Wed. April 19 - 7pm

Jim Rosebrock

"South Mountain"

https://us06web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tZwvdu2srT4u_HtZmv_TxK6YjbBW3VZynnvjS

Wed. May 17 - 7pm

Bob Lineburg

TBD

https://us06web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tZMrdeGsrzls_GdxZ-WqgBKRZ43yVJDcqGGm1

Wed. June 21 - 7pm

Joe Truglio

"Chivington - Part 2"

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tZEtf--rrDkqG9SFlopKizklwp1PJPQHypVK>

Summer Break

July & Aug

**For updates and changes please visit
PhilKearnyCWRT.org**

The Muster-In.

An unusually interesting portion of the proceedings was the musttr-in of a recruit to Manassas Picket Post, of Phil Kearny Post of Richmond. The recruit, Comrade Miller K. Reading, who served in a New Jersey regiment, has been living so far out in the country that he has not had an opportunity to join the Grand Army as he much desired. Col. George C. Round, of Manassas, who is Sergeant of Manassas Picket Post, arranged to have him mustered in at Bally McElroy, and a request was obtained from the Commander of Phil Kearny Post, Richmond, to Commander Johnson, of the Department of Potomac, to conduct the ceremonies in conjunction with Comrade Round. Commander Johnson organized a provisional Post in the house in the octagon room, with himself in the chair, S. V. C. George Ross as Senior Vice Commander, Col. E. J. Sweet as Junior Vice Commander, Maj. H. C. McArthur as Chaplain, A. A. G. Oldroyd as Adjutant, and E. C. Gregg as Officer of the Guard. Never was the beautiful ritual of the G. A. R. more impressively illustrated, and all present were deeply touched by it. Commander Johnson conducted the ceremonies and Serg't Round administered the charge and pinned on the Ladge. Comrade Reading was as deeply impressed as any of the others by the beauty and solemnity of the ceremonies, and expressed himself so very feelingly.

Lunch was served at 11 o'clock under the shadow of the marquise canvas resting between giant cherry and locust trees on the top of the hill at the side of the bungalow. The bungalow itself had been handsomely decorated with flags. The marquise was draped with them and flags hung above the arches at the approach of the long flight of stone steps leading up the hill to the scene of the festivities. From the 70-foot flag pole Old Glory was flying, and there were also flags here and there thruout the woods. All these arrangements had been in the hands of Capt. O. H. Oldroyd, Assistant Adjutant-General of the Department of the Potomac. While many of the guests spread their lunch under the trees by the several springs on the place, or down by the little lake, or on the banks of the Occoquan, nearly 200 of the guests spread theirs on the long tables under the marquise, where coffee and lemonade were served to all, and were on tap, in fact, all day.

Miller K. Reading's mustering in of the Manassas Picket Post of the Phil Kearny GAR Post of Richmond

National Tribune, Washington DC. July 14, 1910



Phil Kearny CWRT

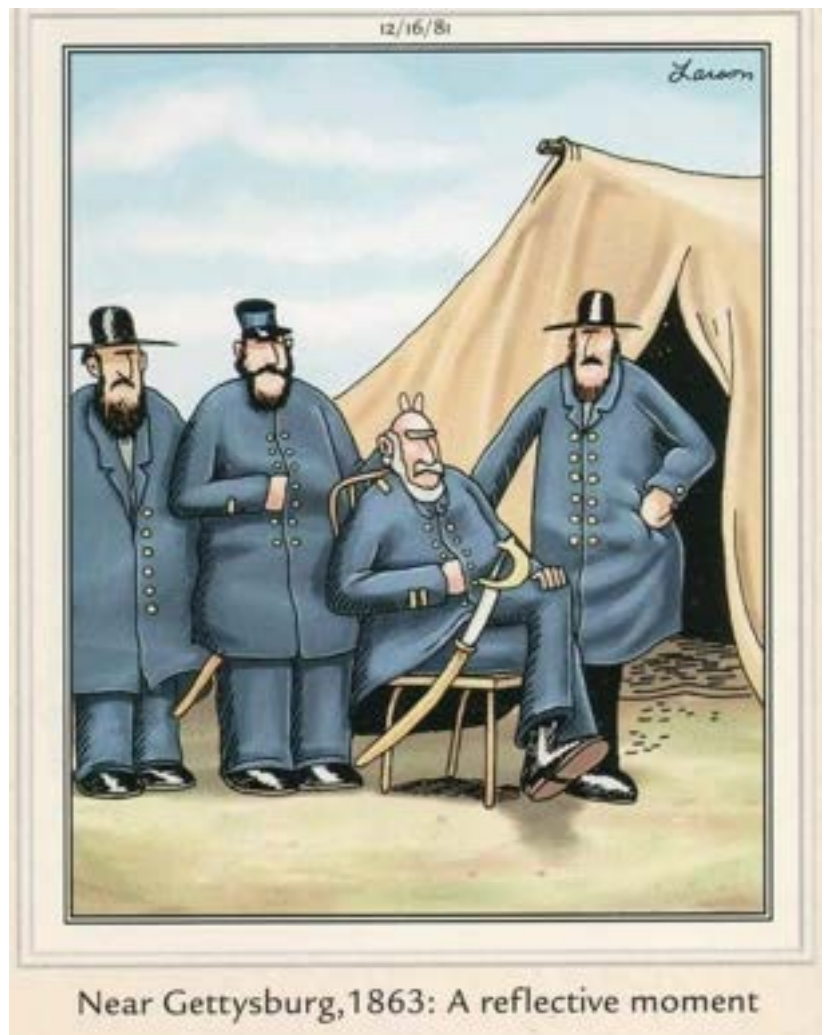
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Phil Kearny Civil War Round Table

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Favorite Civil War Book/Author: _____

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