



# The Regimental Bulletin

*Phil Kearny Civil War Round Table of Northern New Jersey*

\*\*\* NEXT MEETING \*\*\*

**Wed, May 17th @ - 7PM - Online Zoom Presentation**

See Details Below to Join In

## **Col. William B Sipes** **7th PA Cavalry**

**Speaker: Bob Lineburg**  
**Ancestor & PKCWRT Member**

Volume 19 Issue 5

**May 17, 2023**

Hasbrouck Heights  
Municipal Building  
320 Boulevard  
Hasbrouck Heights, NJ

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For this month's meeting we are in for a real treat, as PKCWRT member and descendant of our subject will speak on **Colonel William B. Sipes** of the 7th PA Cavalry, (80th Volunteers). Author Lt. Col. William F. Fox's lists this regiment in his *"300 Fighting Regiments in the Civil War"*.



Colonel William B. Sipes  
Commanding 7th Pa. Cavalry

Sipes, a prominent Philadelphia citizen and newspaper editor before the war, answered the initial call for Federal troops at the beginning of the Civil War by raising a company and was commissioned Captain in April 1861 of Co I, 2nd PA infantry, to serve 3 months. He then helped raise the 7th Pennsylvania Cavalry and commissioned Lieutenant Colonel. Sipes later was promoted to Colonel, leading his regiment in the Army of the Ohio and then Army of the Cumberland, seeing action in Western Theaters. Colonel Sipes resigned his commission in Nov 30, 1864.

After the war, Sipes was an author and published the regimental history: *"The Seventh Pennsylvania Veteran Volunteer Cavalry; Its Record, Reminiscences and Roster; with an Appendix"*.



**Bob Lineburg**

Our speaker, **Bob Lineburg** is the owner and CEO of Keystone Production Services LLC and has worked in the Textile industry for over 50 years. He has owned multiple textile companies located in New Jersey, Virginia and Pennsylvania; Keystone Production Services LLC being his most recent. He is recognized within the industry as the *"The Textiles Guru"* having received many honors and recognized for his patriotism and selflessness for donating textile materials to factories that were mass producing our American Flags after the 911 terrorist attacks hit the heart of America.

**You must register with this new link before the meeting**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tZMrdeGsrzIsGdxZ-WqgBKRZ43yVJDcqGGm1#/>

# Reserve Your Room Now for the Annual PKCWRT Gettysburg Trip

**Friday, Nov 3rd - Sunday, Nov 5th 2023**

**at the Best Western in Gettysburg**

[click here for the link to book at the discounted PKCWRT rate](#)

This special rate is only available **until Oct 3rd.**

A block of ten rooms have been reserved under PKCWRT. The rate is \$120-\$130 depending on the room bed size.

Our Saturday tour is with Jim Hessler, Gettysburg Licensed Battlefield Guide and author with the tour to be decided soon.

We are working on a Saturday night dinner and other add on details. We will let you know in the coming months, stay tuned.

Please reserve your hotel now.



**Jim Hessler**  
Gettysburg Licensed  
Battlefield Guide



**GENERAL WHEELER'S LEAP.**

*Harper's Weekly, v42 Jan-June 1898, pg 601*

Battle of Shelbyville, TN, June 27, 1863

PKCWRT will remain online  
Zoom Meetings until further notice

## **PKCWRT 2023 Schedule**

**Wed. June 21 - 7pm**

**Joe Truglio**

**"Chivington - Part 2"**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tZEtfrDkqG9SFlopKizklwp1PJPQHypVK>

## **Summer Break July & Aug**

For updates, and changes please visit  
[PhilKearnyCWRT.org](http://PhilKearnyCWRT.org)

**Wed, Sept 20th - 7pm**

**Pat Schuber**

**Holly Springs Raid**

**Wed, Oct 18th - 7pm**

**Jay Jorgensen**

**Gettysburg's Wheat Field**

## **Annual Gettysburg Trip**

**Nov 3rd - Nov 5th**

**with Jim Hessler**

**Wed, Nov 15th - 7pm**

**Lynn Herman**

**The New Mexico Campaign**

## **Dinner Holiday Dinner**

**Sat, Dec 2nd - 1pm**

**Robert Emil Crickenberger**

**Point Lookout**

**Prison Camp, MD**

**Phil Kearny CWRT**

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*One of the most dramatic and decisive cavalry clashes of the American Civil War occurred at Shelbyville, TN on Sunday, June 27, 1863. Colonel William B. Sipes and the 7th Pennsylvania Cavalry played a very important part in this decisive battle. As Lt. Joseph Vale of Colonel Robert H.G. Minty's staff noted, Shelbyville "was the first time in the history of the war, when strong lines of entrenchments, protected by an elaborate abatis, ditch and parapet, were stormed and taken by cavalry in a mounted saber charge." In short, a single brigade shattered and routed an entire corps of veteran Confederate cavalry and sent it flying into the cold, deep, rushing waters of the Duck River.*

# The Battle of Shelbyville

*by Sean Michael Chick*  
**From Emerging Civil War**

## The approach to Shelbyville

One of the most dramatic and decisive cavalry clashes of the American Civil War occurred at Shelbyville on Sunday, June 27, 1863. John A. Wyeth of 4<sup>th</sup> Alabama Cavalry, writing in 1898, recalled the Battle of Shelbyville as the most dramatic of his long military career. It was the turning point in the contest between Union and Confederate horsemen in the west.

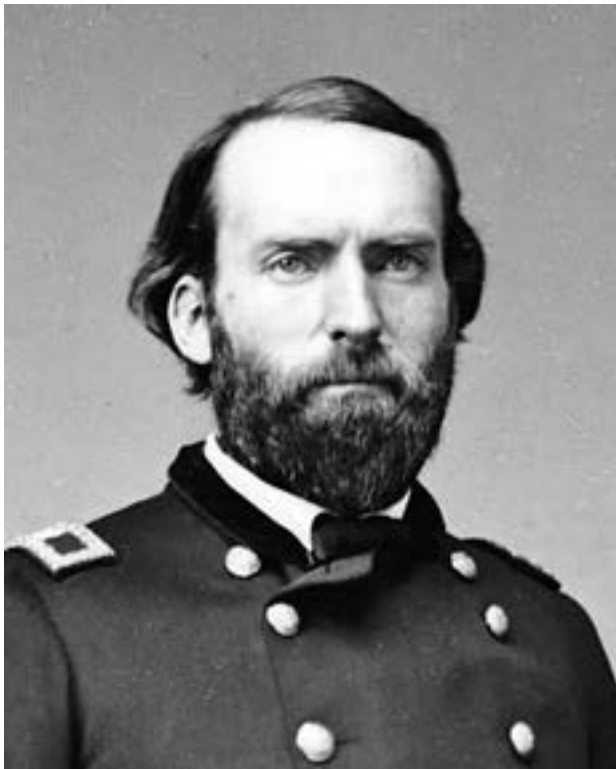
The battle was part of Major General William Rosecrans' Tullahoma offensive. Rosecrans needed to force his army through the fortified highland rim of middle Tennessee, held by General Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee. Beyond this point were fertile fields of Tennessee and then Chattanooga. Rosecrans paused his army for six months after his victory at Stones River, improving training and staffs. Mostly, he wanted a cavalry force that could compete with the Rebels. By June 1863, Rosecrans felt his force was ready.

The bulk of the Army of the Cumberland was sent through Hoover's Gap and Gilley's Gap in an attempt to turn Bragg's right flank. Rosecrans sent Alexander McCook's XX Corps to attack Liberty Gap in the center. To the west, Rosecrans sent two divisions to threaten Shelbyville, a town that Bragg had fortified over the winter. One was the cavalry division led by Brigadier General Robert Mitchell. The other was an infantry division commanded by Brigadier General Absalom Baird. Overall command of the feint was held by Major General Gordon Granger, although Major General David Stanley, the cavalry corps commander, was with Mitchell's division. Rosecrans' entire offensive was slowed down by a great rainstorm that began on June 24 and did not abate until July 4, Granger's feint began on June 23, striking Brigadier General William Martin's division of Major General Joseph Wheeler's cavalry corps. The Confederates were out of position. Brigadier General Nathan Bedford Forrest's corps was concentrated at Columbia, guarding the rich farmlands from Union raiders. Brigadier General John Hunt Morgan was planning a thrust into Kentucky. As such, Wheeler's two divisions were stretched thin, and he fell for Granger's feint. He did, however, ask Forrest to move his command to Shelbyville.



Around 4:00 pm on June 26 Bragg heard that the position at Hoover's Gap had collapsed. His right had been turned. He ordered Polk to give up Shelbyville. Wheeler and his cavalry would hold off Granger. In the early morning, on June 27, the Confederates abandoned Shelbyville. Granger approached with his Reserve Corps, spearheaded by Mitchell's cavalry. Stanley, reinforced by Colonel Robert Horatio George Minty's cavalry brigade, was eager for a fight. Early on June 27 he was told to "dislodge" the enemy from Guy's Gap, just north of Shelbyville. With Granger's permission, Stanley bolted ahead, leaving behind the wagons and cannons. Minty led the way with Colonel Archibald Campbell's brigade far behind him. Marshall Thatcher of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Michigan Cavalry was impressed: "The sun burst through the heavy clouds and shone full in the faces of 10,000 cavalry, in two lines, division fronts; banners flying, bands playing and the command marching in as perfect lines as if on a parade. Such a sight was rare in the history of the war."

Mitchell became ill and failed to get his division going on time. Stanley took direct command. He ordered Minty to attack even without Mitchell's division in direct support. Martin fell back from Spring Hill with two brigades. One was led by Colonel Alfred Russell, a competent Wheeler favorite known to nervously unbutton and



Union General David S Stanley

rebutton his coat in battle. The Other brigade was led by Colonel James Hagan. Wheeler was not yet present. Private John W. Dubose of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Alabama Cavalry recorded that the Rebels were "soaked to the skin, nine out of ten rifles too wet to shoot."

Guy's Gap was held by a few regiments of cavalry. Stanley brought up his artillery and while the cannons boomed regimental bands played "Yankee Doodle" and "Dixie." Minty's brigade attacked, cautiously at first, but then rushed headlong in a mounted charge. Some 200 of Martin's cavalry were captured and many hundreds more were now scattered, although his artillery escaped.

Martin's men rallied in the trenches that covered Shelbyville after a seven-mile retreat, followed closely by Stanley. Wheeler then arrived and sensing that affairs were desperate, took personal command. He had roughly 600-900 men. Shelbyville

was heavily fortified, but the lines needed a large body of men to be properly used. Wheeler later claimed a courier assured him that Forrest was on the way and he needed Wheeler to hold so he could cross the rain swollen Duck River. The messenger also indicated that Forrest hoped to strike Stanley's rear. Forrest, for his part, denied that any such promise was made. Regardless, Lieutenant General Leonidas Polk's wagons were not yet out of Shelbyville.

## The Shelbyville Defenses

Stanley wanted to avoid a possible bloodbath, and he did not attack right away. He sent the 3<sup>rd</sup> Indiana Cavalry on the left to probe. The 4th Michigan Cavalry moved along the lines on the right, through a wooded path until they reached a spot where the lines were undefended. They entered the defenses and then struck the refused end of the hastily assembled Confederate line. As the troopers engaged the left end of the line the **7th Pennsylvania** and 4th United States Cavalry assaulted the front.

Wheeler's men were overpowered by overwhelming numbers. Wheeler though led a charge by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Alabama and 8<sup>th</sup> Confederate Cavalry that threw back the **7th Pennsylvania** and 4<sup>th</sup> United States Cavalry for a time. In Shelbyville itself, Wheeler rallied his command for a desperate stand. The last of the supply trains had not yet cleared the town and the "War Child" was determined to protect them. Wheeler formed his men in the Shelbyville square, the courthouse on the left and the depot on the right. He faced one cannon from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Arkansas Artillery down the main road that Stanley would likely use to strike at the Rebels. The excited Wheeler rode about exhorting his men to hold out.

Wheeler's artillery fire had the desired effect. Minty's troopers fell back in surprise. Minty then moved out of range to regroup while the 18<sup>th</sup> Ohio Artillery shelled the Confederates. All winter and spring Minty had been training his men in mounted charges. He was about to show that such training had not been in vain. Minty ordered an attack. 150 men of the 7th Pennsylvania formed in a column in the streets of Shelbyville, just behind the guns of the 18th Ohio Battery and awaited the order to advance. Supporting them was the 5<sup>th</sup> Tennessee and 4<sup>th</sup> United States Cavalry. For the former unit it was a homecoming, as some in the ranks were residents of Shelbyville.



Confederate General Joseph Wheeler

Two cannons were placed hub to hub on the street. When they fired the column emerged out of the smoke at a full gallop with sabers drawn. The Rebel artillery overshot, and only two Federals went down; the rest pressed on. Adjutant George Steahlin wrote that the men made "right cuts, left cuts, front cuts, and rear cuts

making thrusts right, left and front – dealing death at every blow.” Major Charles Davis, who led the vanguard of the attack, was later awarded the Medal of Honor.

The surprise and shock value of the attack broke the Confederate defense almost immediately, with Wheeler’s right fleeing before Minty even came to grips with the Rebels. Wheeler retreated to the railroad depot where he made a brief stand before retreating. In the chaos two cannons were captured and their crews were cut down. Major Frank Mix’s 4<sup>th</sup> Michigan Cavalry forced 250 fleeing Rebels into an enclosed garden compound where they surrendered. Martin’s division was dissolving.

The 3rd Indiana Cavalry appeared out of one of the side streets after taking the Rowesville Bridge. Until now it had been unengaged. A close fought battle ensued, with sabers being freely used. The men also reverted to using their carbines as clubs. The Rebels fled across the Duck River. One cannon’s wheels broke on the Skull Camp Bridge, partially



CHARLES C. DAVIS,  
MAJOR SEVENTH PENNSYLVANIA CAVALRY.

blocking the way and creating more panic. Nine men were trampled to death in the stampede for the bridge.

At some point Wheeler, wearing his full dress uniform with a plume, was shot at but survived when some of his men rushed in front him to form a human shield. Cut off from the Skull Camp Bridge, they had to brave the swollen Duck River. Wheeler with sixty men charged the Union cavalry. According to Private John A. Wyeth of 4<sup>th</sup> Alabama Cavalry, Wheeler charged with his sword out and his hat in hand. The Rebels broke through and were pursued. Martin was saved when Sergeant Phil Duncan of the 8<sup>th</sup> Confederate Cavalry drove off a Union horseman. Wheeler plunged into the river from a fifteen-foot height. Martin led his horse in less dramatically. Of the sixty men Wheeler had led in his escape, only thirteen had survived.

## **Wheeler’s leap across the Duck River**

In many postwar accounts, it was claimed that Wheeler, after crossing the Duck River, was informed by Major Rambaut from Forrest’s staff that Forrest was approaching with his command from Columbia. Forrest wanted to know if he could cross using the Skull Camp Bridge, which had just then fallen into Union hands. Wheeler decided to attack again with 400 volunteers. It is possible that Wheeler did try to use last minute heroics,





WHEELER'S FAMOUS LEAP, NEAR SHELBYVILLE, TENN.

but it seems unlikely. The bridge was clogged with dead horses and men and an abandoned cannon. Martin's division had been routed. Since none of the Confederate cavalry commanders filed reports after the battle, it remains a point of debate. Wheeler's losses were at least 500 men and three cannon, although it is possible he lost as many as 900 men. Stanley's losses were likely around fifty.

The Battle of Shelbyville was a turning point. Rebel cavalry in the west would have other fine showings in its future; they were, even as late as December 1864, a force to be reckoned with. However, Shelbyville was the resounding signal that their days of dominance would never return. The Union had achieved parity, if not superiority, in the western theater. After the victory and in honor of their charge, Minty's outfit became known as the "Saber Brigade." Never again would the Union cavalry be the laughingstock of either army.

***Please click on the links below for more reading:***

***The Seventh Pennsylvania Veteran Volunteer Cavalry : Its Record, Reminiscences and Roster : with an Appendix by Colonel William B. Sipes, Pottsville, Pa. : Miners' Journal Print, 1905***

***Tullahoma: The Forgotten Campaign that Changed the Course of the Civil War, June 23 – July 4, 1863 by David A. Powell and Eric J. Wittenberg. Savas Beatie, 2020***

***Minty and the Cavalry. A History of Cavalry Campaigns in the Western Armies by Joseph Vale, Harrisburg, Pa., E.K. Meyers, Printers 1886***

***The Tullahoma Campaign via Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tullahoma\\_Campaign](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tullahoma_Campaign)***



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# Battle of Shelbyville, June 27, 1863







*Tennessee's Civil War Trails  
Historical Marker about the Battle  
of Shelbyville, TN, June 23, 1863.*

*The marker is on the southern  
ground of the Bedford County  
Courthouse.*

*(click photos to link to page)*



## Fighting in Shelbyville, Rain, Muddy Roads, and Swollen Rivers, Tullahoma Campaign

### Inscription:

After the Battle of Stones River ended on January 2, 1863, Union Gen. William S. Rosecrans occupied Murfreesboro. Confederate Gen. Braxton Bragg withdrew south to the Highland Rim to protect the rail junction at Tullahoma, Bragg's headquarters, and the roads to Chattanooga. Bragg fortified Shelbyville and Wartrace behind lightly defended mountain gaps. After months of delay, Rosecrans feinted toward Shelbyville on June 23 and then captured Hoovers and Liberty Gaps the next day. A mounted infantry brigade captured Manchester on June 27. The Confederates concentrated at Tullahoma. Rosecrans planned to attack on July 1, but Bragg retreated. By July 7, the Confederates were in Chattanooga.

On June 27, 1863, Confederate Gen. Braxton Bragg's army was withdrawing from the vicinity of fortified Shelbyville and concentrating at Tullahoma in the face of Union Gen. William S. Rosecrans's advance. Rain, muddy roads, and swollen rivers hampered both armies. Union Gen. David S. Stanley's cavalry clashed outside town with Confederate Gen. Joseph Wheeler's troops, who were screening the infantry's retreat.

Wheeler's men temporarily occupied part of the defensive works on the outskirts of Shelbyville. Because the works were so extensive, Stanley's cavalrymen found a portion that was undefended, entered it, and moved along it until they struck the Confederate flank.

Part of Wheeler's command fled through Shelbyville, where street fighting included both cavalry charges and artillery duels. Heavy fighting took place around the railroad depot, where the Confederates made a brief stand before continuing the retreat. They attempted to capture the bridge over the Duck River after Wheeler was informed that Gen. Nathan B. Forrest was en route to support him, but the Union cavalry overwhelmed Wheeler's men. Some men and horses were trampled near the bridge or drowned in the river. For lack of infantry support, Stanley discontinued the pursuit of Wheeler. Over the next several days, Bragg's army made successive withdrawals to Tullahoma, Decherd, and Cowan, before the final retreat through the rugged mountains to Chattanooga on July 3.

### (sidebar)

During the Civil War, Bedford County was divided in its loyalties and supplied nearly equal numbers of troops to the Confederate and Union armies. Although the pro-Union stance of Shelbyville earned that city the title of "Little Boston," one of the Confederacy's best-known generals, Nathan Bedford Forrest, was born in Bedford County in 1821. His middle name was for his county of birth.

Five courthouses have stood on this square. The third courthouse, an imposing brick building constructed in 1830, burned in 1863 during the Confederate occupation. The current courthouse (1935) almost replicates the fourth courthouse, which burned in 1934.



**Presentation Sword of  
Colonel William B. Sipes  
was up for auction back in Oct 2016.**

An important piece of Civil War Pennsylvania militaria, this presentation sword was given to Colonel William B. Sipes of the 7th Pennsylvania Cavalry in 1864.

Housed in its original case, this sword features a carved handle bound by a gilt bronze cross guard and highlighted by a large faceted amethyst on the hilt. The silvered scabbard displays fine gilt accents, a diamond studded "S" and an inscription that reads:

***"Presented to / Col W.B.  
Sipes / 7th Regiment Penn  
Veteran Cavalry / By the  
Friends of the Regiment /  
1864."***

With good provenance. Sipes' officer sword was offered by M.S. Rau Antiques for \$250,000. Courtesy of M.S. Rau Antiques in New Orleans, [www.rauantiques.com](http://www.rauantiques.com).





# Early recruiting poster for the 7th Pennsylvania Cavalry

*Note Lt Col William B. Sipes' name at the bottom left corner of the poster.*

## COL. G. C. WYNKOOP'S LIGHT CAVALRY.



### WANTED,

A FEW MORE MEN TO FILL UP

### CAPT. ADDRESS' COMPANY.

The Company is now in Camp at Harrisburg. Pay commences upon signing the roll. Rendezvous at

### MANSION HOUSE,

WEST CHESTER.

CAPT. JAMES F. ADDRESS,  
1ST LIEUT. HUGH B. MOONEY.

Col. G. C. WYNKOOP,  
Lieut. Col. W. B. SIPES,  
Major JAMES GIVEN.

James Stearns-Power Book, Card, and Job Printer, West Chester, Pa.





# Phil Kearny Civil War Round Table

## Membership Form

**Dues are \$25 a year**

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**% Norm Dykstra**

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Favorite Civil War Battlefield: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Civil War Book/Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Civil War General: \_\_\_\_\_

