



NOVEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

Meeting Date: Monday, November 17th, 2025 | **RSVP:** kycivilwarroundtable.org/rsvp

Social Time: 5:30 PM | **Dinner:** 6:00 PM | **Presentation:** 7:00 PM | **Address:** 1801 Newtown Pike



Laurance B. VanMeter, of Lexington, Kentucky, served on the Kentucky Supreme Court from 2017 to 2025 where he was just the third Justice to have served at all four levels of the Kentucky unified court system. His fellow justices elected him as Chief Justice of Kentucky beginning in January 2023. His term ended in January 2025 following his decision not to seek a second term on the Court.

Before his election to the Supreme Court, Chief Justice VanMeter served thirteen years as a Judge of the Kentucky Court of Appeals, having been first elected in November 2003. He also served as a Fayette Circuit Court judge and as a Fayette District Court judge.

Prior to his judicial service, he was a partner in the Kentucky firm of Stoll, Keenon & Park where his practice included business organization and planning, estate planning, real estate, and taxation, largely with the equine industry. Chief Justice VanMeter served on or chaired various committees within the Kentucky judicial branch: Evidence Rules Review Commission, Civil Rules Committee, Kentucky Bar Association's Continuing Legal Education Commission, Kentucky Office of Bar Admissions, Board of Trustees of the Kentucky Judicial Form Retirement Systems, Ethics Committee of the Kentucky Judiciary, and Judicial Conduct Commission. In addition, he served as the Court of Appeals' acting Chief Judge, and as its Chief Judge Pro Tempore.

He earned an undergraduate degree from Vanderbilt University with a major in history in 1980, and his J.D. from the University of Kentucky College of Law in 1983. More recently, he earned an LL.M. degree, May 2020, from Duke University School of Law and, in July 2020, was elected to The American Law Institute. In 2024, Chief Justice VanMeter received the Kentucky Bar Association's Distinguished Judge Award and his college fraternity's Award for Distinguished Public Service. He was appointed to the Uniform Law Commission in May 2025. ■



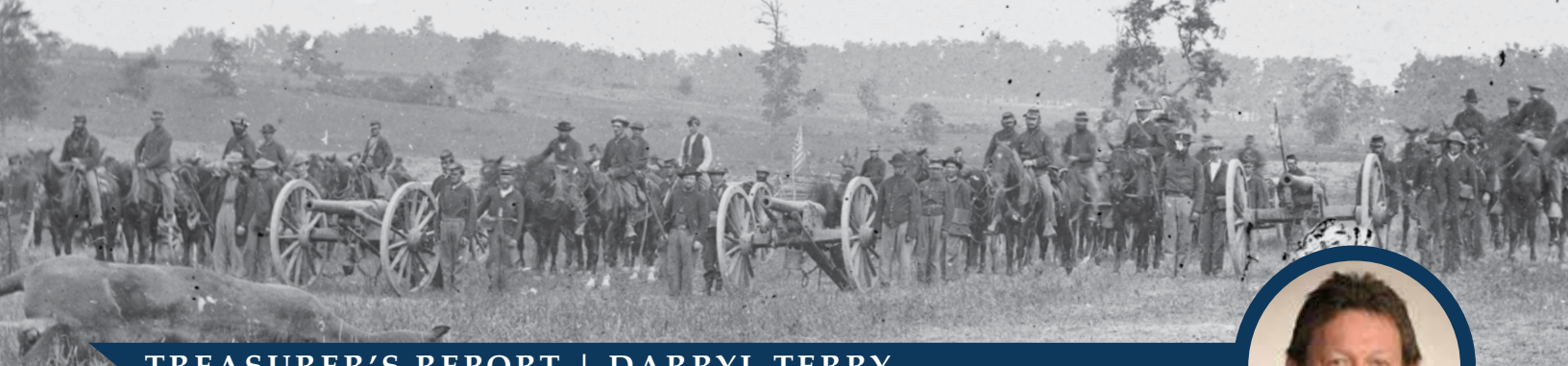
PRESIDENT'S REPORT | BILL FARMER, JR.

Fellow Civil War Roundtable Members: With our Roundtable season well underway our November meeting will have a homegrown feel as we will hear from Judge Larry VanMeter. With roots in the engagement, he will bring us detail on the Cumberland Maryland raid in 1865. Cumberland is easy to see when traveling on Interstate 68 when heading to Hagerstown. It is where the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal begin and then as now is a strategic railroad hub. Remember to bring a guest be that

a spouse, friend or student. All are welcome. I look forward to seeing you all on November 17th. The Embassy Suites has proved a worthy venue and an easy drive for those outside of Lexington.

My best,

Bill Farmer, Jr. PRESIDENT



TREASURER'S REPORT | DARRYL TERRY

Great news as no changes in the dues structure from the previous year. Currently we have collected 62% of our projected budget as we have received seventy-nine paid invoices. We still have forty-seven members that need to decide on their new membership status. Dues are what allows your Civil War Roundtable to present its outstanding listing of speakers and meetings. As a reminder, we have the Basic, Supporting and Sustaining membership available for the new fiscal year. Please review and think about moving up in the tiered membership roster. Any additional fees collected helps maintain this

outstanding organization. Our annual budget needs \$30,450 to break even and we currently have collected \$19,081. With required minimum distributions coming up, there may be an additional opportunity to contribute to your Roundtable. Please feel free to inquire with any of your board members as to any questions on budgeted items. We are all here to support your efforts for the Roundtable. Thank you for making this a premier organization! ■

SECRETARY'S REPORT | BILL SWINFORD, JR.

At our next meeting, Judge Larry VanMeter will speak on one of the most daring raids of the Civil War that was carried out by McNeill's Rangers under the leadership of Lieutenant Jessie McNeill. Fifty-Four Confederates rode into the town of Cumberland

Maryland on February 21, 1865, and kidnapped Union Major General George Crook and Brigadier General Benjamin Kelley. Larry VanMeter is a descendant of Lieutenant Jessie McNeill. ■

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT | SUSIE MORTON

Hello Members! Well, that certainly was a wonderful Presentation that our very own Charles Bogart presented for our September meeting. If you weren't able to attend the meeting, feel free to watch it on our YouTube channel.

Here's the news you need to know for the upcoming November 17 th meeting:

RSVP to me via text, email, phone call or website before Wednesday, November 12 th at 4 PM. You will find my contact information in this Newsletter. I have already had several RSVPs for this meeting so, if you plan on coming, I suggest RSVP quickly.

When you RSVP via email or text, let me know how you want to pay for your meal. Dinner is still \$33/meal. As of this printing, I don't know what the menu will be, but I will let you know ASAP. Remember a vegetarian option is available as well. Just let me know your preference when you RSVP.

For those members who might have trouble with stairs, please note that you can park around the back of the building and enter through that entrance and not have to tackle the stairs. It's actually a shorter distance to the check in table coming that way.

Looking forward to seeing you at the next meeting. ■

UPCOMING EVENTS



Richmond Battlefield Tour

for members of the Frankfort, Kentucky, Louisville, and Madison County Civil War Round Tables

**NOV 1**

**9AM-3PM**

**Battle of Richmond Visitor's Center***

**\$20** for members of any Civil War Round Table

**\$25** for non-members and guests

Our tour will visit various sites across Madison County that were critical to the 2nd-Largest Civil War Battle in Kentucky

*101 Battlefield Memorial Highway, Richmond, KY 40475 (off I-75 Exit 83, the Buc-ee's Exit)



-  **WHEN:** Saturday, November 1st, 2025
-  **WHERE:** Battle of Richmond Visitor's Center, 101 Battlefield Memorial Highway, Richmond, KY 40475
-  **COST:** \$20.00 cash for members of any CWRT or \$25 cash for guests and non-members

Join us on Saturday, November 1, for a Special Battlefield Tour to see the ground and witness buildings and preservation story at all Three Stages of Kentucky's Second-Largest Civil War battle.

Join us on Saturday, November 1, for a Special Battlefield Tour to see the ground and witness buildings and preservation story at all Three Phases of Kentucky's Second-Largest Civil War battle.

You can either drive yourself to arrive before our 9 am start time at the Battle of Richmond Visitor's Center, 101 Battlefield Memorial Highway, Richmond, KY 40475 (off I-75 Exit 83, the Buc-ee's Exit) OR meet at 7:45 am to leave by 8 am in Lexington at Embassy Suites, 1801 Newtown Pike (our meeting place) if you would like to caravan and ride with other Members.

Cost is \$20 per person, with proceeds being split between KYCWRT and the Battle of Richmond Association.

Park Curator Phillip Seyfrit will lead our tour and start with orientation and overview and then we will travel to the other key locations of the battle and conclude by 3 pm. Our event will happen rain or shine and will adjust activities accordingly. We will have a lunch stop at Sonny's BBQ in Richmond (not included in the \$20 Tour cost), which is on the route of march used by both armies on August 30, 1862.

Contact Board Member and Newsletter Editor George Ridings at (859) 661-3289 or at gridings@bellsouth.net for any additional questions and let him know you plan to come so we have adequate Resource Materials for everyone.



KENTUCKIANS AT CHATTANOOGA

THE FLAG-RAISERS OF LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN

On the morning of November 25, 1863, six Kentuckians in Blue “were the lions of the day in the Union army” because “fortune favored us, and before sun-up I, in front, reached the summit and planted the flag on top of Lookout Mountain.” - Captain John Wilson, 8th Kentucky Volunteer Infantry Regiment (TL-VOTCW).

These Kentuckians were in the right time and at the right place to carry out an act of bravery that was noted by many in their reports and seems to have inspired the entire Union Army in the valley below them. This was a unique parallel to what happened 82 years later on Iwo Jima when Marines raised two different flags (a fascinating story but beyond scope of this article).

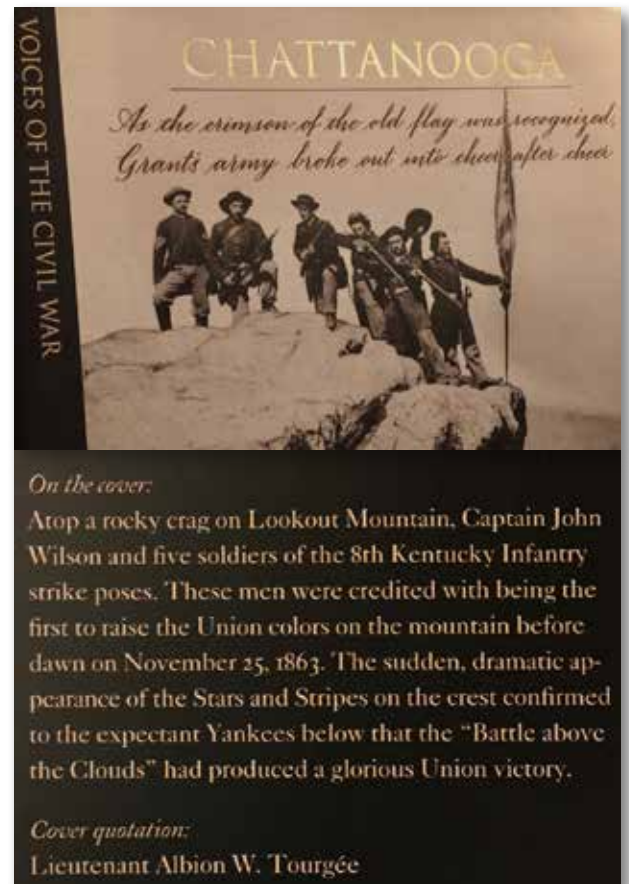
Let's examine how these Kentuckians were immortalized and became the subject of one of the most famous images taken during the Civil War.

Origins of the 8th Kentucky Volunteer Infantry Regiment

The 8th Kentucky Volunteer Infantry Regiment began forming in 1861 under the leadership of Sidney M. Barnes. Several of the six soldiers in these images enrolled on September 23, 1861, in Irvine, Kentucky. Four of the six were mustered into service on January 15, 1862, in Lebanon, Kentucky. On November 27, 1861, ladies from Irvine in Estill County presented the Eighth with a flag and reportedly the presenter told them to “Carry that flag to victory; never let it be deserted or dishonored by brave Kentuckians!” In 1862 they were near but did not fight at Shiloh and Perryville, but they suffered over 70 casualties at Stones River later in the year, and their flag was damaged in the fight (Lindow and Trowbridge.)

On March 2, 1863, a ceremony was held in Frankfort during a Joint Assembly of the Kentucky House and Senate where the worn flags of the 6th, 8th, 9th, 15th, 17th, and 21st Kentucky Volunteer Infantry Regiments were presented. Secretary of State Daniel C. Wickliffe's comments during the ceremony included these words:

“...under these riddled colors many cherished sons of Kentucky have met death in this cruel and unnatural war. We are pleased to have been the bearer to this body of these flags, that were borne amid the storm of battle by our gallant sons... these standards, around which cluster so many glorious memories, it is hoped, will be placed in the archives of the State, while others will be furnished to take their places in the field” (Lindow and Trowbridge.).



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KENTUCKIANS AT CHATTANOOGA CONTINUED

They endured more casualties and over 20 men were captured in the fight at Chickamauga on September 20, 1863, and they retreated with the rest of the beaten Federal army to Chattanooga (Lindow and Trowbridge).

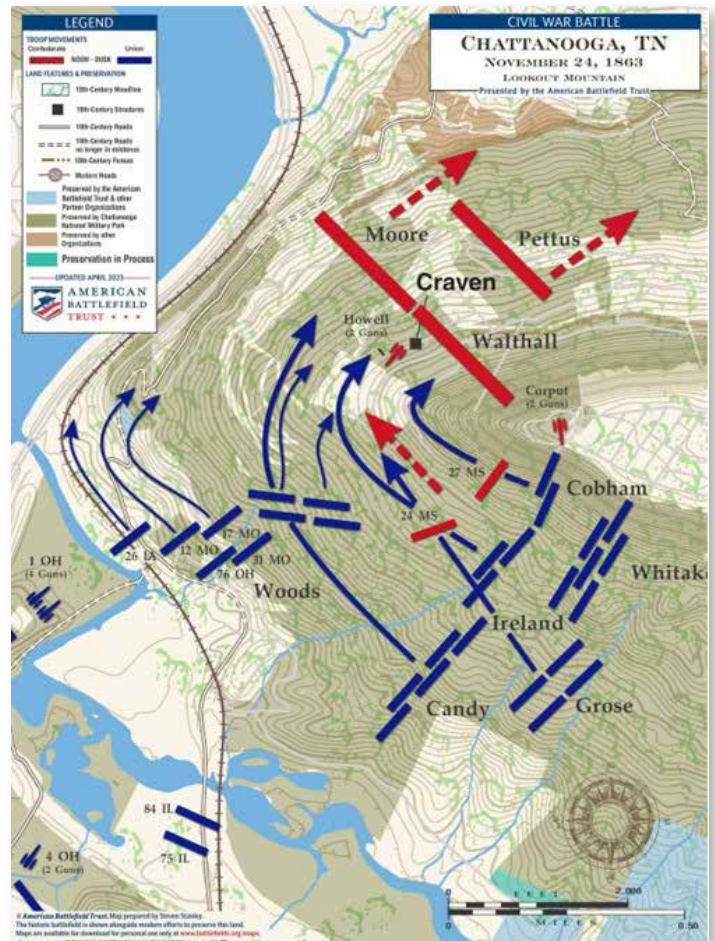
The Union Prepares to Strike

The Victor of Vicksburg, Ulysses S. Grant, was in Louisville in October when he learned that he had been named commander of Federal forces in the Western Theater, and he replaced William S. Rosecrans with George Henry Thomas as commander of the Army of the Cumberland. Grant arrived in besieged Chattanooga on October 23rd and began improving the supply line for his troops and preparing to break out of their position under the Confederate guns on Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge. With the earlier arrival of two Corps from the Army of the Potomac under Joseph T. Hooker and the subsequent arrival of William T. Sherman's Army of the Tennessee, Grant was ready for action.

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Confederate Artillery position on Lookout Mountain taken by author in 2017



Approaching Lookout Mountain

On November 23, twenty-thousand Federals marched out from Chattanooga and took over the high ground on Orchard Knob, and Hooker's forces were ordered to attack the Confederates on the crest and steep slopes of Lookout Mountain on November 24th, to support Sherman's move against the northern tip of Missionary Ridge.

Private Elisha C. Lucas, a native of Louisville, joined the Eighth Kentucky in March 1862, and described their actions in this excerpted portion of his larger account published in TL-VOTCW:

"Early on the morning of the 24th of November, our brigade moved up Lookout Valley into a dense forest where the enemy lost sight of us for a few hours....we piled our knapsacks, blankets and part of our rations, and left them under guard. We filed off to the left, crossed Lookout Creek on an old mill-dam, and commenced the difficult task of ascending the mountain through a thicket of cedars.

Up, still up, meeting with no opposition except inanimate nature, pulling up by shrubs and projecting rocks. At last we reached the inaccessible walls of limestone, a perfect palisade several hundred feet high... We faced north, the 8th Kentucky forming the extreme right wing of the line...

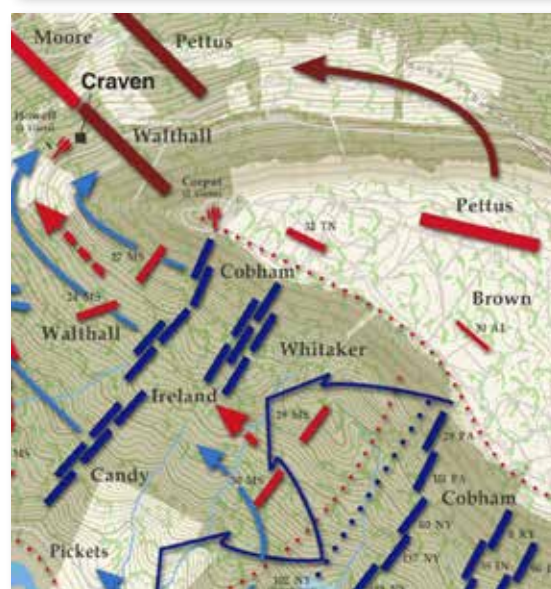
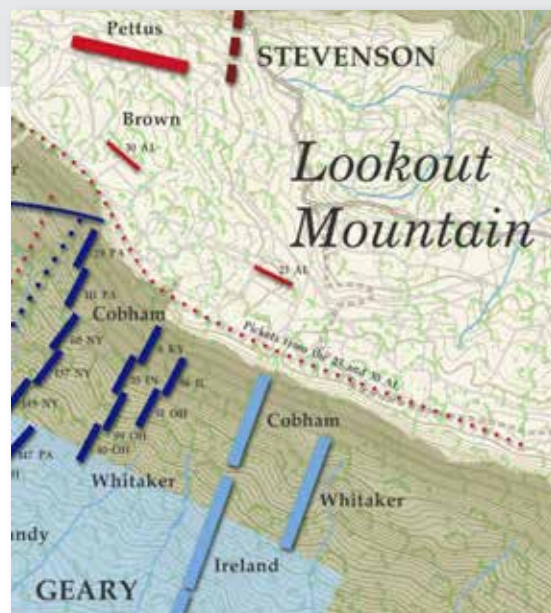
A heavy fog that hovered over the mountain enabled us to attack the enemy by surprise in the flank and rear of their works...those of the enemy that were not captured fled around the nose of the mountain and took a strong position on the southeastern slope, just under a towering cliff.

By this time, 3 p.m., a dense cloud enveloped the mountain. The enemy made a determined stand, as they were strongly reinforced in their fortified position...we were left in reserve at the nose of the mountain. Being near the wall or palisade, the enemy not only shot at us whenever the cloud would lift, so as to enable them to see, but resorted to an awful mode of warfare—rolling down loose stones at us...a few of our sharpshooters, concealed behind trees and large stones, soon picked off every Johnny that dared show his head on the top of the cliff. Though their ordnance made a terrific noise, their heavy missiles passed harmlessly over our heads as their pieces could not be depressed to a sufficient angle to reach us."

Kentuckians Become "The Lions Of The Day In The Union Army"

Captain John Wilson's words continue the story. Here they are as presented in TL-VOTCW:

"We were placed in one of the columns on the extreme right that marched around the palisades of Lookout Mountain on the 24th of November. We marched around the nose or point of the mountain and lay that night above the Craven House. Just before daylight on the



Taken by author in November, 2013, during Official Hike and Tours commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the Battles for Chattanooga

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KENTUCKIANS AT CHATTANOOGA CONTINUED

25th, Gen. Whitaker came to our regiment and said: "Col. Barnes, have you an officer that will volunteer to carry your flag and place it on the top of the mountain?"

I said, "General, I will go."

Turning to the regiment, he said: "How many of you will go with Capt. Wilson? I could order you up there, but will not, for it is a hazardous undertaking; but for the flag that gets there first it will be an honor."

Five men went with me. I handed my sword to my Color-Sergeant to bring up, and I took the flag and started, accompanied by Sergeant James Wood, Company H; Private William Witt, Company A; Sergeant Harris H. Davis, Company E; Sergeant Joseph Wagers, Company B; and Private Joseph Bradley, Company I.

Those who have seen the awe-inspiring precipice at the top of the great mountain can realize what a serious undertaking was before us, not to mention our lack of knowledge concerning the Confederates, who the day before had held Hooker at bay. Dim daylight was dawning. We crept cautiously upward, clutching at rocks and bushes, supporting each other, using sticks and poles and such other aids as we could gather. At every step we expected to be greeted with deadly missiles of some sort from the enemy.

But fortune favored us, and before sun-up I, in front, reached the summit and planted the flag on top of Lookout Mountain. It was the highest flag that was planted during the war. Soon other detachments came up and congratulated me and my party, and we were the lions of the day in the Union army."

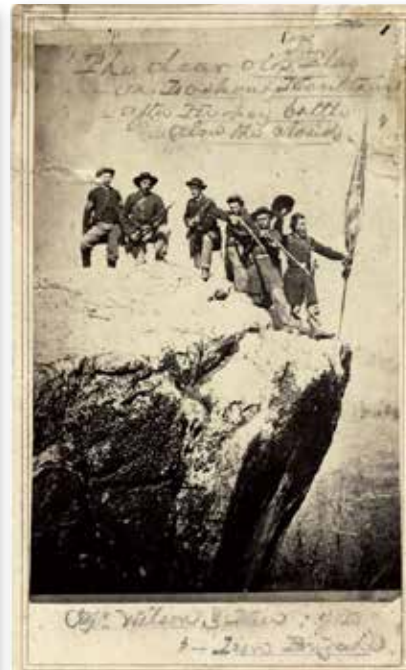
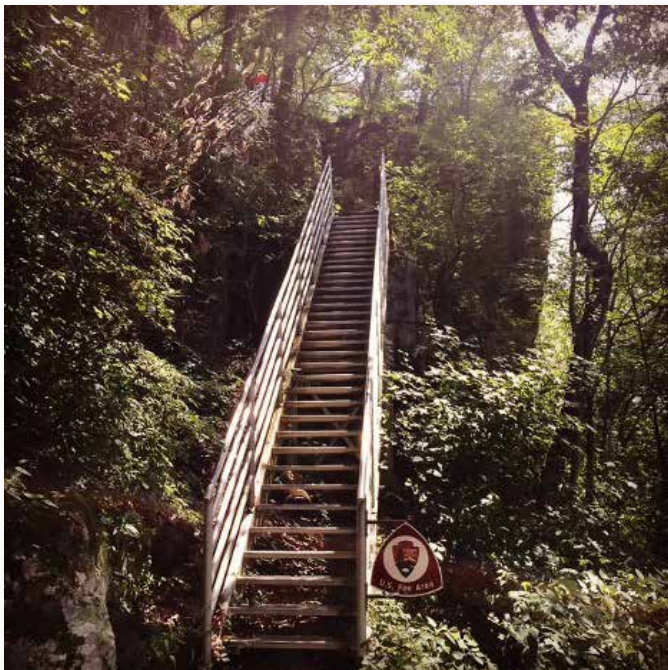


Captain John Wilson of Co. C, 8th Kentucky Infantry Regiment (Union), in uniform with sword; revolver and book rest on table-H. King, Richmond, Ky., photographer, between 1862-1864, from Library of Congress



A post battle photograph of Federal troops examining the battlefield and the ruins of the Cravens house halfway up Lookout Mtn. (the Western Reserve Historical Society)

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A Symbol Seen for Miles

General Charles Cruft, one of the commanders at the Federal defeat at Richmond Kentucky, later wrote:

“As the morning sun rose it discovered the national banner floating out in the mountain air from Lookout Point, and the soldiery below caught up a shout from the regiment on the summit which rang through the crags and valleys and was borne to their comrades below, who were standing to arms behind the defenses of Chattanooga” (Lindow and Trowbridge).

Sometime after the fighting, the images of Wilson and his men posing on the point and recreating their climb were taken by Royan M. Linn.

Today, the Kentucky Historical Society has a flag identified as the 8th Kentucky’s...but it seems unclear as to whether it is the one presented by the Estill County ladies and damaged at Stones River, or the replacement flag raised above Lookout Mountain. It seems most likely that the flag preserved in Frankfort is their first and that the later Lookout Mountain flag has been perhaps lost among descendants.

A future issue will feature more on these six Kentuckians and the flag preserved in Frankfort and about other Kentuckians at Chattanooga.

Harper’s Weekly of December 26, 1863 featured several images of Lookout Mountain and the “Battle Above The Clouds” and these Kentuckians and their achievement. ■

(Editor’s Note: The excellent Time-Life multi-volume series Voices Of The Civil War (TL-VOTCW) features almost exclusively the words of the soldiers and commanders and civilians who took part in the battles and campaigns selected for inclusion, and the author highly recommends them to you. Historian Garry Adelman was the first person who told me of this 18-volume set years ago, and I pass this suggestion on to you. It was one of four primary sources for this article.

John Trowbridge, *The Eighth Kentucky and the Battle Above the Clouds*, 2021:

<https://ky.ng.mil/News/Article/2854151/the-eighth-kentucky-and-the-battle-above-the-clouds/>

Future KYCWRT Speaker Derrick Lindow wrote this article in 2018 on the 8th and their actions during the war and at Chattanooga:

<https://www.kentuckycivilwarauthor.com/post/the-colors-above-the-clouds>

Another final source is this NPS article:

https://npshistory.com/publications/civil_war_series/9/sec5.htm

Enjoy these for further information on the Battles of Chattanooga and the 8th Kentucky.)



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