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Pilot Knob.

An Excursion to This Historic Iron Mountain -- A Party of Old Soldiers
Visit Their Camping Place of 1861.

Cor. to the Bloomington Daily Pantagraph.

Pilot Knob, Mo., Sept. 30. You have already been informed that the surviving members of the old 33rd Illinois volunteer infantry, to the number of about 100, met yesterday and the day before at the general reunion at St. Louis. Just twenty-six years ago yesterday our regiment landed at St. Louis, on what was then considered hostile soil. We proceeded at once to the Iron Mountain railroad, received our muskets as we halted at the armory, and journeyed by freight train to Pilot Knob, through a country swarming with guerrillas and bridge-burners. Our guns were in boxes, and, green as we were at soldiering, we were wise enough to know that we should present a sorry front to a sudden attack from the enemy.

A dozen of us went over the same line of railroad yesterday, on an excursion to the Pilot Knob, Ironton and Arcadia campgrounds to revisit the scenes of twenty-six years ago. Time had of course laid his heavy hand upon those who took this trip in 1861, but old father Time must have been a little shocked to see how he had failed to bow us down with our proper share of dignity, for we were

JUST AS GAY AND FROLICSOME

as when we were the "boys" which we persist in still calling each other. Missouri is the same old Missouri still as far as nature's aspect appears. There are the same rocky cliffs and caverns by the roadside, the same clear running streams, almost the same number of acres of cleared farms, the same beautiful wooded hills and mountains -- clad in exactly the same style of ripened green, brown and gold, and our "boys" declared they saw the same razorbacked hogs dodging among the brush to tempt the hunter to a shot or a chase.

As we journeyed along, familiar scenes were pointed out by some who had been detailed to guard railroad bridges. The exact spot where the late Gen. -- then Capt. Lippincott -- fought off the Rebel soldiers was shown -- and pretty soon we passed the bridge where Gen. -- then Capt. Elliott -- with almost the whole of "E" Company was captured on the same day. Truly did we "fight our battles o'er again," and fighting by rail in these pleasant times

of peace was found to be highly enjoyable -- so much so that we regretted our whole regiment could not be present to enjoy the same.

Dr. Edwin May, who was our assistant surgeon, now living at Annapolis, Iron county, Mo., twenty miles from Ironton, was with our party, and we are indebted to him, as well as to Judge T.P. Russell and others of our old Ironton and Arcadia friends, for carriages, which met us at the depot and conveyed us to our old camp grounds and other points of interest.

THE LADIES OF OUR PARTY

consisted of the wife and daughter of Comrade Dr. Plecker, of Chicago, and Mrs. Bardwell, of Greenfield, Massachusetts, who was formerly the wife of Capt. Kellogg. She had lived with her husband in Bloomington when he was teacher of the high school there, and had lived with him during most of the past winter at Ironton, or rather Arcadia, and she was as deeply interested as any of us. It will be remembered Capt. Kellogg was killed at Vicksburg in 1863.

Our first stop was at old Fort Hovey, as we call it, at Arcadia, where the 33d put in many a day's hard work. I well remember my first day's duty there when I reported with a detail of 100 men the day after our arrival, and the enthusiasm threw them into "log rolling." We felt we were doing our share at last towards the protection of the outposts of St. Louis, and our pride in our work was most intense. How few of those heavy logs would have been placed in position had we known what was told us to-day, that when the enemy approached Pilot Knob

IN 1864 THIS FORT WAS ABANDONED

without an effort and the defense centered in another fort built at a later date nearer Pilot Knob and even that was at last surrendered.

The outlines of our old fort are still plainly to be seen, and in one place a high ridge of earth is left standing, but most of the works have been leveled and a simple village church stands almost in the center of the old line of earthworks. A quarter of a century here has most assuredly changed the face of affairs, and this house is well calculated to make us feel much older than our actions to-day would indicate.

Other changes might be noted. Our old camping ground below the fort, which we left a fine grove of trees, is now wholly cleared. Ironton, from being a straggling village has grown into quite a thrifty young city, fully four times as populous as in 1861. It has even spread out and taken in our camp, several houses and gardens being where our morning "roll calls" and evening "taps" regulated our daily lives. In place of the foot log over the creek, which only sober men, and not all of them, could cross, is a handsome iron bridge. Between Ironton and Pilot Knob is the Ironton depot

-- and just back of the old Harris hotel at Arcadia, is the depot for this village, and the

IRON HORSE GOES WHISTLING DOWN
THE SOUTHERN VALLEY,

where our pickets kept close watch of all entering loads of sweet potatoes. What jolly good times those pickets must have had? Every soldier was anxious for picket duty in those days, but it was quite another thing when Marmaduke (now governor of poor old Missouri) was believed to be close at hand on our march towards Arkansas, a hundred miles from here.

We are lingering a long time on the site of old Fort Hovey -- a flood of recollections come unbidden to our minds, and the grand scenery of the valley almost effaces them. We wrote that while in Arcadia at our feet to the south -- has changed but little in general appearance -- Ironton has grown much larger, and the timber land in our immediate vicinity has been cleared to such an extent that at first sight we scarcely recognize the familiar scenes we expected, but extending our view to the distance, we are at home at once. Shepherd mountain and Pilot Knob look down on us as they looked of old. Pilot Knob's face is a little scarred and seamed by the new way they have of mining iron by tunnels into its very bowels, but its general aspect is as bold and forbidding as before. The little mountain to the south

WHERE THE RISING EVENING STAR

was once mistaken for a rebel signal light, causing the "long roll" to sound and call us suddenly into battle array, is as mild, gentle and peaceful as any Arcadia could possibly be, while the ridges of the beautiful hills surrounding us on all sides, enclosing the most charming valley of Arcadia, look as natural as they did to our almost boyish eyes a quarter of a century ago. Many a gallant Sucker soldier boy had his first view of mountain scenery here, and no wonder as some of us return, the charms of the scenery enchant and entrance us almost beyond expression. Miss Plecker, the artist of our party, assures us that the view is one that would gratify a painter, and we take one more long-drawn outlook before we leave this historic ground.

We find the old seminary where nearly one-third of the regiment passed the winter of 1861, almost unchanged, but a large new building has been constructed in front and the grounds in general are very much improved. It is occupied at present as a Catholic seminary and our visit

MUST HAVE GREATLY SURPRISED THE
YOUNG LADIES.

The mother superior courteously showed us around, and appeared deeply interested in our inspection of the premises.

Our old parade ground is but little changed, and brought to mind many a thought of the gallant men who there took lessons in showing themselves off to the best advantage. The road which runs south past the old seminary made me think of the best speech ever delivered to our regiment. Maj. Roe was our speech-maker, and had promised us a speech when we were ordered to march south in the spring of 1862. We were ready to move, and halted in line in this road to hear the address. It came from the lips of Roe in these words: "Forward, to Dixie, march!" The effect was electrical, and it lasted longer than any speech we ever heard before or since.

But we must hurry along. We find our deceased comrades, who died by the score at this point, making the comment on our rolls, "died at Ironton, Mo.," the saddest in our history, have been removed to the National cemetery at St. Louis, and this made our proposed visit to our old burial ground useless, but did not banish from our minds the tributes we were mentally giving to the memory of the heroes of the hospital. The old church which we used as a hospital at Ironton is but little changed, and to its pastor we were indebted for attentions during the afternoon and evening.

Darkness and rain prevented an ascent of Pilot Knob, although four of our number were brave enough to go to the top in spite of a good wetting. The ladies of our party were greatly disappointed at this, but in spite of this our day's excursion was one of the most enjoyable possible, and it was voted by the whole party as the very best spent day of the week of the great St. Louis encampment.

J.H. Burnham.