

IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



**Buckingham Lodge
1861**

SALUTE TO A CIVIL WAR SOLDIER

Just east of Indian Hill lies the community of Camp Dennison, which during the Civil War served as a training ground for over 50,000 Union soldiers. One of the post commanders was Brigadier General Jacob Ammen, who assumed command in the spring of 1861.

Born in Virginia in 1806, Ammen moved to Brown County, Ohio as a youth, where legend says that one of his boyhood acquaintances was Ulysses Grant of Point Pleasant. He was appointed to the Military Academy at West Point, graduating with honors in 1831. He served with the First U.S. Artillery and later had academic duty as a professor of Mathematics and Philosophy. Resigning his commission in 1837, he taught engineering at colleges in both Kentucky and Indiana.



With the start of the War Between the States, Jacob Ammen volunteered, was appointed Captain, and raised a company, the 12th O.V.I. (Ohio Volunteer Infantry). Transferred to the 24th O.V.I. at Camp Dennison, he equipped and instructed fresh recruits. The soldiers constructed their own pine barracks with dirt floors on the 500 acres of leased farmland, using materials delivered, as were most provisions, by the Little Miami Railroad. An especially wet spring caused swamp-like conditions, and Ammen wrote to his wife in May that “the camp is mud”. Despite leaking barracks, ankle deep mud, and not enough blankets, Ammen prepared his troops for battle that summer.

Dispatched to the Western Virginia Campaign in late July, Ammen and his regiment fought at Cheat Mountain and the Green Briar. His fellow officers presented him a sword engraved *Col J. Ammen, Cheat Mt. Sept, 12, 1861*, and his men gave him epaulettes, a sword belt, knot and sash. To reciprocate for this tribute, Ammen had his wife purchase two flags for the regiment at Shillito’s Store in Cincinnati. As a West Point alumnus, Ammen was a stern disciplinarian; disloyalty was met with punishment — “Hang ‘em up by the thumbs!” he often said. Yet he was respected by his men, who called him Uncle Jake.

Following this action in the East, Ammen’s regiment went to Kentucky, joining the Tennessee and Mississippi Campaign with the Army of the Ohio. During the two day carnage of the Battle of Shiloh, Union troops under Grant faced defeat the first day, but were reinforced by 25,000 fresh troops that evening, including Ammen’s men, and won the battle the next day. Ammen was officially praised for his command of the Tenth Brigade at Shiloh, and after this crucial Union victory, he pursued the Confederates to Corinth and northern Alabama. When his health prevented him from further field service, he was assigned an administrative command in the North.

After the Civil War, Ammen returned to Ohio and became the Surveyor and Engineer of Hamilton County. Later he was a member of the Board of Visitors for inspection of West Point, and a U.S. representative prior to the construction of the Panama Canal. Blind for the last few years of his life, he lived with his son in Lockland, where he died in 1894, praised as a “gallant soldier of the Republic”.



Jacob Ammen’s experiences bring to mind all volunteers who were stationed at Camp Dennison, members of 57 regiments of Ohio infantry, 9 regiments of cavalry, and 19 batteries of artillery. One of the largest Union Army training facilities of the Civil War, the Camp also housed a 2300 bed hospital. More than 150 years have passed since, and the accomplishments and sacrifices of those soldiers determined the course of our nation’s destiny.