

Quick Step News

Volume 7, Issue 5

Dec 2004

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays

December Speaker

Cornelia Hancock

Ladies of the War

Monday, December 6, 2004

HSMC 7:30 PM

Winners

Drawing for Paul Strain's "From the Line of Fire" .

1st Dick Stover

2nd Jackie Reese

3rd Charlie Williams

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Colonel Edwin Schall

The following account is reprinted in part from Moses Auge's *Lives of the eminent dead and biographical notices of prominent living citizens of Montgomery County, Pa.* Norristown, Pa.: 1879, pages 182-87. Bracket information is additional information supplied by the editor. Italicized wording is an editors note and not part of the original text.

Lieutenant Colonel Edwin Schall was the twin brother of Colonel Edward Schall, almost equally distinguished as a soldier, and now a practicing attorney at our bar. There are sons of General William and Caroline Trexler Schall. It is a military family, General Schall being for many years Brigade Inspector of the district. Consequently, on the breaking out of the rebellion, no less than five brothers, Rueben [a clerk], Edwin [a printer], Edward [a teacher], David [a coal merchant] and Calvin [a coal merchant], volunteered to fight for the Union. Most of them, however, had been members of the several volunteer companies of the town. Edwin was born at Schall's Iron Works (now called Green Lane), Marlborough township, Montgomery county, February 15th, 1835. General Schall removing to Norristown in 1848., Edwin, then a small boy, was placed in Elmwood Institute, at West Norristown, then under the charge of Rev. J. R. Kooken, [J.R. Kooken would enlist in Company C of the 110th Pennsylvania Volunteers as Captain and die during the fighting at Fredericksburg. His grave is one of the few marked in the National Cemetery at that place], where he gained the elementary branches of a good education. He remained here till near his majority, when he entered the military academy at Norwich, Vermont [originally known as the American Literary, Scientific and Military Academy now known as Norwich University], Pembroke [Gymnasium and Military Institute at Pembroke, New Hampshire, now known as Pembroke Academy], Brandywine Springs [National Scientific and Military Academy, Brandywine Springs, DE (closed)], finally Bristol [Pennsylvania Literary, Scientific and Military Academy, Bristol, PA (closed)], where he graduated. [Note: all these academies where founded by Alden Partridge, a professor of mathematics and engineering at West Point. Partridge used Norwich graduates to run his academies]. He then entered the law office of B. Markley Boyer, Esq., but, without continuing there, went to the law school at Poughkeepsie, New York, where, after a season, he was transferred to the Ohio Law School [may have been located in Poland, Ohio], at which he graduated and was admitted to practice. From

there he went to Iowa and opened an office, but not finding things to his taste returned home, and after a while was entered as an attorney at our bar. He had hardly got into practice when the disorganization of parties, consequent upon the pressure of the slavery question upon old platforms, and the rise of the American Party, to which he was attached, drew him into politics.

A short time previously the *National Defender* [owned by Edwin Schall February 21, 1859 until after his death in 1864 after the war the paper had more Democratic leanings.] had been established to promote the Native-American sentiment, and advocate the claims of Bell and Everett to the Presidency. This paper, started to arrest the drift of the Whigs towards the Republican party, was placed in the hands of the twin brothers Edwin and Edward Schall. Who conducted with fair ability till the conclusion of the political campaign and the breaking out of the rebellion. At this time, or shortly before, he was nominated and elected Burgess of Norristown two years in succession, a post which he filled acceptably to the people.

As known, the Bell and Everett campaign, to which the Defender was committed, resulted in nothing, and Lincoln was triumphantly elected through the division of the opposition. And yet when the news reached Norristown on the 12th of April that Fort Sumter had been bombarded, and on the 15th, when the President issued his proclamation calling for seventy-five thousand men to defend the Union, a meeting was hastily called at Odd Fellows' Hall, and thousands thronged there bearing effigies of Jeff Davis and other representative traitors with ropes about their necks. At this meeting Burgess Edwin Schall was called to preside, and a long array of Vice Presidents occupied the platform. The meeting was addressed by Judges Smyser [Daniel Smyser was President Judge of the Montgomery County Courts] and Krause [David Krause is buried in Montgomery Cemetery. His son David was a Major in the 11th US Infantry and died in South Dakota in 1885].

Hon. Owen Jones [a member of Congress who would become the Colonel of the First Pennsylvania Cavalry], B.M. Moyer, Charles Hunsicker [his office was at 509 Swede St. his home was on DeKalb St., buried in Montgomery Cemetery], E. A. Banks [Enoch Alfred Banks is buried in Montgomery Cemetery. He died in 1867 at the age of 34] and George N. Corson [a member of the abolitionist Corson family and only one of two members of the Fourth Pennsylvania Volunteers who publicly defended its refusal to remain and participate in the Battle of Bull Run], Esqs, James Boyd [Served as a Commissioner for the Draft and buried in Montgomery Cemetery] and Harvey Shaw [member of the Society of Friends], Esqs. Respectively, offered their checks for \$200 and \$100 to assist the organization of the military for defense. At once Colonel Hartranft, as commander of the previously existing Fourth Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers, with the following companies, offered themselves for the nation defense. [The author asserts that the Fourth Pennsylvania had already been in existence, which was not the case. The designation of the Fourth Pennsylvania was not assigned until Hartranft and the Norristown companies had reached

Camp Curtin on April 20, 1865 and were joined by companies from Delaware Center and Union Counties.]

The Seven companies with Colonel Hartranft left Norristown and Pottstown on April 19th for Harrisburg. On April 21st the regiment left for Havre-de-Grace, its first rendezvous. After remaining a few days it was ordered to Annapolis, and thence to Washington and Alexandria. After many delays, General Scott, on Thursday, the 18th of July, ordered McDowell to advance from Centerville upon Mannassas Junction, where the rebels were entrenched. The enlistment of the Fourth Regiment, of which Edwin Schall was Major, expiring the next day, Friday, the 19th, it was not ordered forward, but to the rear to be mustered out, and General McDowell, in dismissing them, signed an order dated July 20th, complimenting them by saying: "The services of this regiment have been so important, its good conduct so general, its patience under privations so constant, its state of efficiency so good, that the departure of the regiment at this time can only be considered an important loss to the army." [McDowell's report written on August 4, 1861 indicates he did more that compliment the 4th Pennsylvania "On the eve of the battle the Fourth Pennsylvania Regiment of Volunteers and the battery of Volunteer Artillery of the Eighth New York Militia, whose term of service expired, insisted on their discharge. I wrote to the regiment as pressing a request as I could pen, and the honorable Secretary of War, who was at the time on the ground, tried to induce the battery to remain at least five days, but in vain. They insisted on their discharge that night. It was granted; and the next morning, when the Army moved forward into battle, these troops moved to the rear to the sound of the enemy's cannon.]

Members of the Fourth returned home and some of them enlisted into the 51st Pennsylvania Volunteers under Hartranft with Edwin Schall serving as Major. The regiment was mustered into service on the 28th of September and left for Baltimore and Annapolis on the 16th of November, preparatory to going upon the Roanoke Island expedition under Burnside. This was intended as a midwinter invasion to draw attention from Washington and break up facilities for blockade running. After much hardship and endurance the expedition was entirely successful and returned, not without considerable losses, however, to help McClennan in his ill-starred retreat from Richmond. It only arrived in time to join Pope at the second Bull Run, and to suffer afterwards from McClennan's stupid strategy at Antietam and Burnside's disaster at Fredericksburg. Thus after commencing their term of service gloriously in North Carolina, the regiment, with the loss of two of its bravest officers (Lieutenant Colonel Bell and Captain Bolton, one dead and the other desperately wounded), took up its weary march westward. The circumstances of the corps were such as to test the metal of young Edwin Schall, who had now almost become its commander in the absence of Colonel Hartranft, or rather from the latter's accession to the

command of the brigade.

Thus the Fifty-first, from the bleak mountains of the Blue Ridge in winter, were transferred to the arid plains of Mississippi in midsummer, where, after enduring incredible hardships, they were permitted to assist in the taking of Vicksburg and hear the glorious news of Gettysburg, all within a week. It is needless to follow that brave regiment and its officers to East Tennessee, where hardships and sieges still more laborious and self-denying were endured for another year, or recount its share in the final triumph at Petersburg and the end of the war in 1865. Through all this glorious tour of duty, up to the time of his death, Colonel Schall bore his part and did his duty. It is only necessary to transcribe a little of the testimony of comrades to his kindness, bravery, fidelity and ability in command, till he laid down his life for his country at Cold Harbor, June 3d, 1864.

Major Schall, as he first ranked, was the synonym of fidelity and kindness to those under his command. His courage was not of the animal but strictly of the moral sort. This was the secret of his gentleness and reliability. He always held his life a waiting sacrifice for his country. Of his forbearance toward the men Captain Parker, the historian of the Fifty-first, writing of the terrible march after the taking of Jackson, Mississippi says: "After marching five or six miles they (the men) began to give out. Lieutenant Colonel Schall saw that each man tried to outvie his companions by endurance, and as there was no object to straggle for, the men sinking from actual exhaustion, he dismounted from his 'Bobby', placed the most wearied ones on the horse, and allowed them to ride until they became a little rested, when a couple more invalids would take their places on the saddle and behind it."

Again, on embarking the troops from Mississippi campaign, Colonel Schall used extraordinary efforts to get his men sheltered from the burning sun, but failed on account of the brutality of the captain commanding the boat.

During the terrible siege of Vicksburg, when every inch of ground of the advance of Johnston's army had to be contested. Schall's regiment lay three days in rifle pits on the picket line. On the third day of the attack the enemy arose to their feet from their entrenchments and advanced with fixed bayonets for a charge upon the works, when Schall immediately warned his command that "the charge must be repelled let the sacrifice be what it may," and it was not driven from its position (History of the Fifty-first, page 358). And finally, in the Wilderness, when he gave up his young life for his country, he was leading a charge upon the enemy's works where every one, as he advanced, seemed to court death, and where space gained on either side was purchased only by precious lives. Here he fell, aged 29 years, 3 months, and 18 days. His body was brought to Norristown, and lies entombed in Montgomery Cemetery,

where a handsome monument commemorates his deeds. It is a marble obelisk, standing fifteen above the pedestal, and contains one of its faces the following inscription:

"Edwin Schall—A dutiful son—An affectionate brother—A faithful friend—A brave soldier—An efficient officer—A sincere Christian."

In person Colonel Edwin Schall was under the common stature, but well formed, of comely, pleasant features, very amiable, courteous, and universally beloved. He probably had not a private enemy in the world. He was never married.

Of Schall's death, Major William J. Bolton Schall's successor in command wrote that the 51st was in the third line of the assault on the morning of June 3rd. Unlike the 1st 2 lines this line held and made it into the enemy works. Schall, Bolton reports was shot while at his side at 5:30 AM. His body lay on the field until dark before it could be safely recovered.

Parker reports in his History of the Fifty-first that Schall was shot in the neck. One theory was that a bullet that had struck and killed Lieutenant Fizone in the head had also struck and killed Schall.

For more information on Edwin Schall and the 4th and 51st Regiments consult the following

Thomas H. Parker's *History of the 51st Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers*, Printed in 1869 and reprinted in 1998 by Butternut and Blue, Baltimore, Maryland.

The Civil War Journal of Colonel Bolton 51st Pennsylvania April 20, 1861-August 2, 1865, Edited by Richard A Sauers, Published by Combined Publishing Conshohocken, Pa.

Memorials in Stone by Vivian Taylor published and available at the Historical Society of Montgomery County, Norristown, Pa.

Major-General John Frederick Hartranft-Citizen Soldier and Pennsylvania Statesman, Al Gambone Published by Butternut and Blue, Baltimore, Maryland.

Of the Schall brothers:

Rueben served as Captain of Company D of the 4th PA, Calvin served as a Private in Company D 4th PA and David served as a Lieutenant in Company D of the 4th PA None of them enlisted in another regiment.

Edward served as Lieutenant Colonel of the 4th Pa and Captain of Company D of the 51st Pa.

All of the Schall brothers are buried in Montgomery Cemetery

HAPPY NEW YEAR

DON'T FORGET NO ONE WILL BE WAITING TO LET YOU INTO THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ON JANUARY 3, 2005.

THE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 10, 2005

WATCH THE BULLETIN

WE EXPECT TO BE THE 2007 AMART SYMPOSIUM SPONSOR

SEVERAL MEMBERS HAVE VOLUNTEERED TO SERVE ON OUR NEWLY CREATED BOARD. A MEETING IS PLANNED FOR THE NEAR FUTURE

11 NEW GOVERNMENT GRAVE MARKERS HAVE BEEN INSTALLED IN MONTGOMERY CEMETERY

Thanks to the hard work and effort of Mike Brumbaugh and Charlie Willams with Charlie Kelly Watching

Did you know that the Union League in Philadelphia once had a Hancock portrait hanging on its walls. It came down and was never replaced. See next month's issue for more info.

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