

Our coming meetings, including the monthly meeting on April 8, are up in the air because of the coronavirus crisis. Stay tuned.

All of us are soldiers in this war. Pray for your neighbors and for America.

C.K. PIER BADGER CAMP #1

SUVCW



C.K. PIER BADGER CAMP # 1

SERIES 2020

CAMP ORDERS

MARCH 2020

THREE-TIME RECIPIENT OF THE MARSHALL HOPE NEWSLETTER OF THE YEAR AWARD



Col. C.K. Pier died 125 years ago next month, but his many good works continue today through the efforts of our Camp. See the commander's column and a special two-page report by PCinC Steve Michaels.

Col. C.K. Pier in 1892, three years before his death in Milwaukee at age 53. This sketch first appeared in the commemorative roster of the E.B. Wolcott GAR Post in that year, and in Pier's obit in the Milwaukee Telegraph.

CRISIS BRINGS TIME TO READ AND REFLECT ON PIER

Well, here we are in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The world seems to be shutting down, and yet we know that life goes on. I hope everyone is safe as we all tend to our families and follow the government's guidelines on gatherings and "social distancing."

But the very idea of social distancing is one that leads me to wonder what the Civil War soldier in the field would have thought of such an idea. Granted, the medical profession and soldiers had much less knowledge than we do about viruses and the spread

of them. Many men on both sides died due to sickness in camps. And it would have been impossible for them to do social distancing.

With our advanced knowledge today, we all are huddled in our homes and told to keep distance from others. This isolation has given me time to go back through lots of issues of our Camp newsletter, and read all (well, most) of the articles remembering Col. C.K. Pier.

PCinC Steve Michaels has done a wonderful job of keeping the namesake of our camp alive in the articles he pub-

From the
Commander –
Brian Craig

Continued on page 2

PIER'S SERVICE IS RECOUNTED IN CAMP BYLAWS

Continued from page 1

lishes every month on page 2. He wrote a 10-year supply of monthly articles; 240 in all!!!

With the the 125th anniversary of Pier's death fast approaching, it moves me to make a few statements. Pier was a well-known veteran, from the Fond du Lac area, and a leading member of a leading family in that area.

After the war he was a leading member of the GAR and fierce advocate for the veterans. It is due to his tenacity as a supporter of the rights of veterans, and their families, that we are proud today to bear the name of C.K. Pier Badger Camp #1.

Our bylaws recap Pier's service very well. Here is a lightly edited version:

"Immediately after the fall of Fort Sumter, at the age of 19, Pier (pronounced "pyre") enlisted as a private in Company I, 1st Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment, the first man to enlist in Fond du Lac County. He fought in the Battle of Falling Waters in what is now West Virginia before being discharged from the three-month unit in August 1861.

"Back at home, in 1863 Pier organized an infantry company and was elected captain. Afterwards, he organized nine other companies into the 2nd Regiment State Militia and was commissioned a colonel by the governor.

"When the 36th, 37th and 38th Wisconsin Infantry Regiments were mustered into federal service in 1864, C.K. Pier accepted a commission as lieutenant colonel of the 38th. He distinguished himself at the Battle of Cold Harbor, Va., the capture of Weldon Railroad and the siege of Petersburg. He was wounded June 16, 17 and 18.

"On March 24, 1865, he was elevated to command the 109th New York and fought in the final battles at Petersburg.

"Returning to the 38th Wisconsin, on May 23, 1865, Pier led the regiment in the Army of the Potomac victory parade in Washington D.C. He served

as President of Generals of Court Martial in Washington before returning to Wisconsin.

"After his discharge, Pier became a lawyer, managed a bank and the family farm, owned a newspaper, ran a lumber business and was active in Republican politics and the Grand Army of the Republic. He moved to Milwaukee in 1888.

"Pier was instrumental in organizing the Great Reunion of 1880, which revitalized the Grand Army, and Milwaukee's National GAR Encampment in 1889. At the time of his death, he was a member and past commander of E.A. Brown Post #130, Fond du Lac.

"C.K. Pier Badger Camp #1 is the result of merging two earlier units of the Sons: Badger Camp #1 and C.K. Pier Camp #35.

"Camp #1, originally chartered in Waukesha in 1883, surrendered its charter four years later. It eventually was reorganized in Milwaukee and re-chartered on March 31, 1892, with 26 members.

"Camp #35 was formed primarily to entertain those who were visiting the 1889 National GAR Encampment and was chartered on March 21 of that year with 16 members. Two months later Pier visited his namesake, encouraging its members and reinforcing their enthusiasm.

"The two camps cooperated and participated with each other in most observances and social activities. By 1900, disinterest in the military and a membership decline in the GAR and Sons helped force the issue of pursuing a merger. And so the two became one and were granted a charter on Dec. 3, 1901."

After reading that, and Michaels' monthly pieces plus his two-page piece in this month's newsletter, I say: Let us all strive to leave this world better than the one we found, and strive always to keep the memory of the GAR alive and well, as did Col Pier in his time.

And let us not forget to thank Michaels for his efforts in keeping alive the memory of Pier.

Stay safe, everyone.

REMEMBERING COL. PIER: A PLEDGE FOR THE COLORS

These monthly articles about our Camp namesake are written by PCinC Steve Michaels. This item first was published in the March 2000 Camp orders.

Pvt. Colwert K. Pier of "the Badger Boys," Co. I, 1st Wisconsin Infantry, had been training at Milwaukee's Camp Scott for about a week. For the first four days, it rained and the wind blew hard.

Then weather cleared and on May 8, 1861, the ladies of Milwaukee presented a splendid flag to the regiment. Gov. Alexander Randall made an address and the soldiers all knelt and "swore the colors should never be dishonored, and be protected by our life's blood."

From Fond du Lac Saturday Reporter, May 11, 1861; Trewloc Letter #1, dated May 9, 1861



THE LAST STAND OF THE CIVIL WAR



Chaplain Dean Collins presented this article at the March meeting of the Camp. It is by Texas author Richard Parker and ran in the New York Times on May 12, 2015. Do a Google search to see the entire article.

As early as February 1865, Texas Gov. Pendleton Murrah pleaded with the Confederacy to return the troops of the Texas Brigade, then deployed in the East, to quell growing unrest at home. Murrah's begging largely fell upon deaf ears. President Jefferson Davis wrote in a brief letter that he wished he could fulfill the governor's request, but his real answer was in the letter he forwarded from Robert E. Lee:

"I should be much gratified to comply with the request of Governor Murrah could I do so consistently with the interest of the service. But small as the Texas Brigade is, it cannot be spared now. It contains some of the best troops in the army and its loss would be severely felt ... The only way I can see to allow them to go home is to send some other troops from Texas to take their place."

Defeatism set upon the leaders of Texas. The Legislature already had debated the possibility of rejoining the Union in the face of defeat, and even declaring independence and a republic again.

John H. Reagan, a Texan and the postmaster general of the Confederacy, said: "If our people continue the contest with the spirit which animated them during the first years of the war, our independence might be within our reach. But I see no reason for that now."

Much of the Confederate Army in Texas had simply deserted. Chaos reigned in the streets. In Austin, Galveston, Houston and San Antonio, what Confederate troops there were rioted for their back pay. The soldiers attacked and looted government warehouses and even commandeered a train.

It was not long before civilians joined in the pillaging, attacking a blockade-running ship, the Lark, in port and stripping it clean of anything of value. About 20 children were injured after playing with apparently looted ammunition. In Austin, some \$17,000 worth of gold was stolen out of the state treasury. Looting took place from Brownsville to Tyler and points in between.

Down on the Rio Grande, near the coast, Union Maj. Gen. Lew Wallace sought and received permission from Gen. Ulysses S. Grant to negotiate surrender terms for Confederates there. Wallace accurately feared that they might slip across the border into Mexico and use it as a staging ground with which to continue the war, guerrilla style. While the negotia-

tion yielded terms for a rebel surrender, they were vetoed in Austin.

In contrast to much of the unraveling rebel army, Col. Rip Ford, the Confederate commander in far South Texas and a former Texas Ranger, kept his men together (despite their fair share of desertions and drunkenness). The Confederate troops most likely knew that the war was over.

On May 11, more than a month after Lee's surrender, a Union force of 250 Colored Infantry troops and 50 members of the Texas 2nd U.S. Cavalry headed for the town of Brownsville and became a target to one of the last intact units of Confederates, the Texas Cavalry Battalion under George H. Giddings ambushed the Union detachment.

The federal troops fell back to a farm called White's Ranch for cover and to rest for the night – that is, until 3 a.m. on May 13, when the rebels attacked again. By 5 a.m., 200 troops from the 34th Indiana Infantry had reinforced the Union ranks, bringing their total strength to about 500, versus fewer than 200 rebels.

The two forces clashed in a dense thicket of mesquite trees. That afternoon, 300 more Confederates joined the fray, and Ford brought to bear artillery and cavalry, too. The rebels attacked left, center and right on the Union line. "Having no artillery to oppose the enemy's six 12-pounder field pieces, our position became untenable," wrote Union Col. Theodore H. Barrett. "We therefore fell back fighting."

Relying upon African-American troops to provide a screen, the Union line finally broke and its soldiers bolted in a run for the coast. The Confederates chased them for the better part of seven miles.

When it was over, there were a few dozen wounded among the Confederates; over 100 Union officers and men were captured and some 30 lay dead or wounded.

"Boys, we have done finely," Ford said. "We will let well enough alone, and retire."

But Ford's victory was short-lived. As fate would have it, at the same time that the battle raged on the Texas coastal plain, the governors of Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana and Missouri were busy authorizing the Confederate commander of the Trans-Mississippi, Lt. Gen. Edmund Kirby Smith, to disband his armies and conclude the war.

Within days, Ford negotiated a truce. Union troops landed in Galveston on June 19 and began to enforce the rights of newly freed slaves. On June 25, the Stars and Stripes flew once more over Austin.



GRO Tom Ludka reports that this eroded stone at Forest Home Cemetery is being replaced so that its heartfelt story will not be lost. The drawing of the new stone, under the cemetery's Adopt a Soldier program, is shown here. Capt. Timothy Maynard of the 63rd Pennsylvania Infantry, Co. B., was wounded on Nov. 7, 1863, "while in the act of giving a drink of water to a wounded rebel," the inscription says. Maynard died the next day.

Time for honors

Brother Jeff Lesar (left) receives his 10-year pin from CC Brian Craig. PCC David Howard again represented us at ROTC presentations at Marquette University.



CIVIL WAR TRIVIA

Q:
What was the job of hospital steward?

A: The steward essentially was a pharmacist, a title that the Army adopted 40 years after the war. Stewards were chemists rather than those who simply filled prescriptions from larger bottles of manufactured pills – they compounded prescriptions and even made drugs from raw materials using the mortar and pestle. Stewards often were recruited from druggists in civilian apothecary shops. Regulations called for one steward per general hospital. A second was assigned if there were more than 150 beds, and a third if there were more than 400. More at <https://militaryimages.atavist.com/hospital-stewards-in-the-civil-war-autumn-2018>

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- 2 – Dennis Slater
- 9 – Mikko Lagunero
- 13 – Dave Howard



Camp Commander – Brian Craig
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<https://www.facebook.com/CKPierBadger>
and <http://www.suvcw-wi.org>

Report address changes to editor Tom Mueller, PCC, at thewisconsin3800@gmail.com
Your Banner is not forwarded by the Postal Service, so you need to report a new address to us.

CAMP CALENDAR

9 May: Flag-placing at Calvary Cemetery, so graves are properly decorated for Memorial Day. Time will be in the afternoon.

25 May: Memorial Day at Calvary Cemetery. Our speaker will be Dan Buttery, the new chief executive officer of the Milwaukee County War Memorial Center.

14 June: Centennial observance for the E.B. Wolcott horse statue in Lake Park.

Col. Pier Remembered 125 Years Later

By PCinC Steve Michaels

On April 14th, 1895, Col. Colwert K. Pier died suddenly. While walking through Milwaukee's Court House Park that morning, he was stricken with apoplexy and fell to the ground. Two friends who saw him fall, went to him and conveyed him to his home at 577 Van Buren Street. Drs. O.W. Carlson (Wolcott GAR Post SVC) and Corwin J. Steele were summoned and stayed with him until 1 o'clock. When they left, Pier was resting easily and it was thought there was no immediate danger. A few moments later, he relapsed and passed away.



Colwert K. Pier and his twin Carrie S., were born in a log cabin about two miles from the center of Fond du Lac on June 7, 1841, to Edward and Harriet Pier, among the first white settlers of that place. His oldest sister, Anna, taught him his letters. Some organizational ability and dedication came from middle sister Ruth.

He worked on the farm during the spring, summer and autumn, and attended district school winters. He excelled in mathematics, composition and elocution. He was often accorded a leadership role by his older associates. He was attracted to speaking schools and debating clubs and he seldom attended one in which he did not participate. His first experience as a financier was at age 12, when he sold apples and popcorn on Election Day, terms of court, circus occasions, and the Fourth of July.

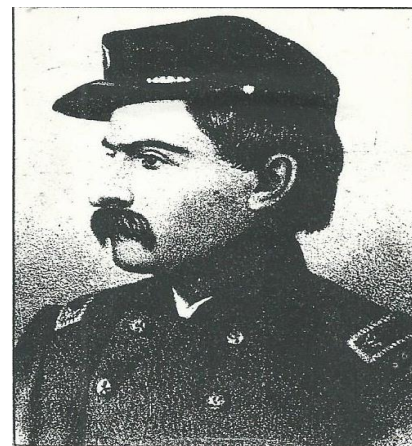
At age 16, he entered Lombard University at Galesburg, Ill., and afterwards, studied law with Judge Robert Flint of Fond du Lac. When the Civil War broke out, 20-year old Pier enlisted as a private in Co. I, 1st Wisconsin Infantry (3 mos.), being the first man to enlist from Fond du Lac County. While serving his first enlistment, he corresponded with the Fond du Lac Saturday Reporter as "Trewloc" (Colwert spelled backwards).

At the expiration of his term, he entered law school at Albany, New York, completed his studies and returned to Fond du Lac. There he worked in the law office of J.M Gillett and W.D. Conklin as a clerk. The war continued and Pier organized a company and was made captain. A new call was soon made and Capt. Pier's company was ordered into camp at Madison and assigned to the 38th regiment, the second of two organizations then in process of forming for three years' service. Pier was commissioned a lieutenant colonel and in April 1864, with four companies of the regiment filled, was ordered to the front with six companies of the 37th Wisconsin Infantry. The two regimental colonels stayed behind to fill up their commands, rejoining their units about three months later.

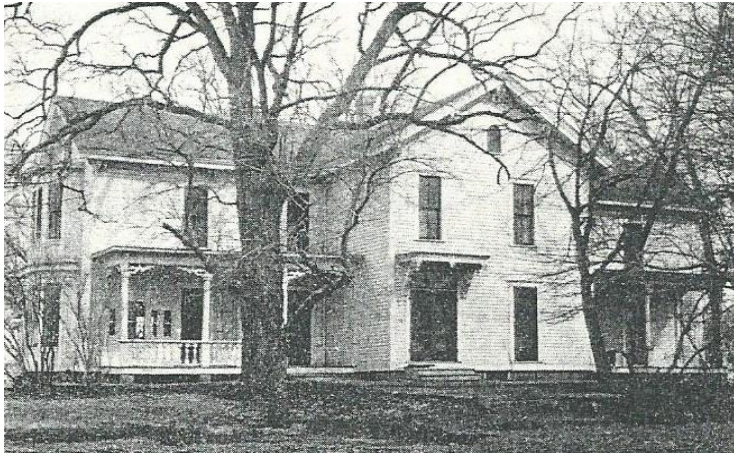
Col. Pier was then detached and placed in command of the 109th New York Infantry, which had lost all of its field officers. He was in the campaign of Gen. Grant before Richmond.

In the charges and counter charges before Petersburg, Col. Pier was grazed by a bullet on the forehead, was shot in the fleshy part of his leg, and was hit by a shell fragment in his instep. The loss of blood weakened him, but he was not driven from the field.

After the war's close and leaving the 109th New York, Pier served as President of a General Court Martial in Washington, DC. This was during the same time and at the same place as the trial of the eight Lincoln assassination conspirators was taking place. Pier was commissioned a colonel in July and was mustered out in August 1865 with the remainder of his regiment, returning to Fond du Lac. He married Kate Hamilton, a young school teacher, whose life would parallel her husband's. She soon became a business woman and the two became a force in the community, steering it through the financial panic of 1873. Col. Pier was admitted to the bar and joined the firm of Gillett,



Conklin & Pier, then Gillett & Pier, and later, Gillett, Pier & Bass. Col. Pier practiced law alone beginning in 1872 and accepted management of a savings bank. He was a member of the board of trustees of the State Soldiers Orphans' Home in Madison, serving as secretary and vice president.



The Pier home in Fond du Lac, built around the log cabin.

He was an earnest Republican, and in 1870, bought a third interest in the *Fond du Lac Commonwealth*, contributing to its editorial columns until 1874. In 1880, his father died and he took charge of the lumber business left to him. In 1881, he started a window blind and farm implement manufacturing company in Merrill, Wisconsin. He came to Milwaukee in 1888, and was a trustee of E.B. Wolcott GAR Post #1. In February, he was elected a member of the Old Settlers Club.

Shortly before Sons of Veterans Camp #35 was chartered in March 1889, the members decided to name the camp for Col. Pier. In May 1889, Col. Pier visited Camp #35, encouraging its members and reinforcing their enthusiasm. The Camp was indebted to Col. Pier for his financial and material assistance. He promoted the Sons and Camp throughout the GAR, whose members turned out in large numbers at the Camp's social events. He was called "the Father of the Camp" by all its members. When the Camp's membership reached 50, a beautiful silk flag was presented by Col. Pier's daughters. Part of the Camp's acceptance reply included a pledge never to change the name of the Camp.

Col. Pier left a widow and three daughters. Mrs. Pier and daughters Kate, Harriet, and Caroline were practicing attorneys. Mrs. Pier was the first woman attorney to be appointed a court commissioner.

The funeral took place from the colonel's home on Van Buren Street, the Reverend Judson Titsworth officiating. On April 18th, the colonel's remains were then taken to Fond du Lac on the Wisconsin Central train.



An escort of E.B. Wolcott Post members accompanied the body there. They were Charter member Henry G. Rogers, L.W. Birdenwerper (a POW), Post adjutant Samuel H. Tallmadge (Chicago LA & Merch Batt), Chas. D. Skinner (Pvt, Co A, 39th WI), Edward Q. Nye (Pvt, 72nd & 33rd IL), William C. Swain (Pvt to Capt, 93rd NY, Capt 24th USCT), Charlie Hubbard (Pvt, Co. I, 39th WI), Erastus P. Winter (Pvt, Co. H, 35th WI), and J.A. Watrous (Pvt to Capt, 6th WI, Col, BG WNG).

The pallbearers were G.I. ____, Charles H. Anson (private to Brvt Major), John W. Laflin (Pvt, Co E, 29th WI), Jerome H. Johnson (wounded & POW & 1Lt, Co. E, 6th WI), Post charter members Henry A. Valentine and J. P. Rundle.

C.K. Pier was described as happy, hopeful and cheerful at all times. He was one to be loved and respected by all. It is little wonder then, that the greatest number of soldiers that ever turned out to a funeral in Milwaukee was present at his home. In Fond du Lac, his casket was met by nearly every member of his old post and escorted to the family burial place. There, with impressive ceremonies and in the presence of a multitude of sorrowing people, they consigned him to a grave within a stone's throw of where the little log cabin stood, in which nearly 54 years earlier, he first saw the light of day. He was the last Pier to be buried in the cemetery.