District Volunteers in Spanish-American War Mustered Out 40 Years Ago

Officers, 3rd Battalion, 1st District of Columbia Infantry, United States Volunteers in the War with Spain. Left to right, sitting: Capt. R. D. Simms, Capt. H. B. Looker, First Lt. S. C. Cox, Maj. R. A. O'Brien, First Lt. C. Fred Cook, Capt. C. S. Domer, Capt. S. R. Jacobs. Standing, left to right: First Lt. F. V. Walker, Second Lt. R. B. Hayes, First Lt. C. L. Lanham, Second Lt. A. T. Smith, First Lt. W. E. Crist, Second Lt. S. C. Redmon, First Lt F. G. Stutz, Second Lt. E. N. Meekins.

All the officers of the 1st District of Columbia Infantry, United States Volunteers in the Spanish-American War.

Health of Soldiers Suffered From Horrible Conditions in Cuba, but Experience Led to Important Advances in Medical Science; Local Personnel and Deeds of Rough Riders

By John Clagett Proctor.

At the Harrington Hotel tomorrow evening a reunion and dinner will be held by a number of the District of Columbia boys who went forth in the summer of 1898 to battle, to maintain the prestige of the United States, and for humanity's sake, and they were as fine a contingent of soldiers as actively engaged in the Spanish-American War.

It was the first time since the Civil War that the North and the South had banded together in common cause against a common foreign enemy, and, unlike the misunderstanding of 1861, none refused to take the oath of allegiance, and many a son of a Union soldier, and many a Union soldier himself, served under such brilliant Southern leaders as Gen. Fitzhugh Lee and Gen. Joseph Wheeler, both graduates of West Point, who were once again proudly wearing the Nation's uniform and following the Nation's flag.

It is still a few months short of 41 years since the news reached Washington of the sinking of the battleship Maine in Havana Harbor on February 15, 1898, with a loss of 266 lives. For years our country had been harassed by the Spanish rule in Cuba, and the atrocious sinking of this vessel was all that was needed to arouse the Americans to resentment. William McKinley was then President, and he tried, in a diplomatic way, to settle the ill feeling that had been aroused, but without avail, and Congress on April 16 passed the following preamble and resolutions:

"Whereas, the abhorrent conditions which have existed for more than three years in the island of Cuba, so near our own borders, have shocked the moral sense of the people of the United States, have been a disgrace to Christian civilization, culminating, as they have, in the destruction of a United States battleship, with 266 of its officers and crew, while on a friendly visit in the harbor of Havana, and cannot longer be endured, as has been set forth by the President of the United States in his message to Congress of April 11, 1898, upon which the action of Congress was invited; therefore, be it

"Resolved, By the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled,

"First—That the people of the island of Cuba are, and of right, ought to be, free and independent, and that the Government of the United States hereby recognizes the republic of Cuba as the true and lawful government of that island.

"Second—That is is the duty of the United States to demand, and the Government of the United States does hereby demand, that the government of Spain at once relinquish its authority and government in the island of Cuba, and withdraw its land and naval forces from Cuba and Cuban waters.

"Third—That the President of the United States be, and he hereby is, directed and empowered to use the entire land and naval forces of the United States, and to call into the actual service of the United States the militia of the several States, to such extent as may be necessary to carry these resolutions into effect.

"Fourth—That the United States hereby disclaim any disposition or intention to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction, or control over said island, except for the pacification thereof; and assert their determination, when that is accomplished, to leave the government and control of the island to its people."

But Spain made no move to vacate as suggested, and so, on April 22, Cuba was blockaded by American warships, and three days later the President called out 125,000 volunteers, while a formal declaration of war against Spain was proclaimed on the same day.

Apparently, the District National Guard was waiting for the President's call and immediately responded with 1,800 strong, marching from the armory, over the old Center Market, where is now the National Archives Building, with hearts beating to the tune of "Yankee Doodle," "Dixie" and "The Girl I Left Behind Me."

The boys got a great send-off from the large crowd that had assembled at the Pennsylvania avenue entrance to the armory, and the main body was soon on its way to the Soldiers' Home grounds, where it was planned to pitch its temporary camp, while a smaller detachment was marching up the Conduit road to guard the Washington Aqueduct.

However, like the King of France, who marched up the hill and then marched down again, so did our soldier boys upon this occasion, for a mistake in orders had been made and the boys were ordered back to their armory by Adjt. Gen. Henry C. Corbin, U. S. A.

Gen. Harries blamed Secretary Alger for the change of plans, claiming that he had received written authority from the Secretary to use his (Harries') own discretion in ordering the Guard into camp. It was the Secretary's original intention to have called out the Guard on Sunday, April 24, but later, according to Gen. Harries' version, changed this to Monday, the 25th, his idea being to preserve the sanctity of the Sabbath as much as possible.

After this the War Department officials selected the various National Guard officers to serve with the 1st District of Columbia Infantry, U. S. Volunteers, their designations being made on or about May 10, 1898. From May 11 to May 17 intensive recruiting was conducted, and companies were sworn in as soon as they were recruited to full strength and ordered into camp.

On May 13, the 1st Battalion, District of Columbia Volunteers, left Washington by rail for Woodburn Manor, near Falls Church, in historic Virginia, on a tract of land selected as an army site by the engineers of the War Department, sufficient for the concentration of 30,000 to 40,000 troops of the volunteer army. It was situated about 2 miles southwest of Falls Church, consisted of about 1,500 acres and had an altitude of about 450 feet. At the time it was said there were 600 acres in the tract under cultivation, that a considerable part of the site was being used as pasture land, and that there was a stream of water flowing through the center of the property, fed by 30 springs, giving an ample supply of water for drinking and sanitary purposes, and besides this, there was much timber land. The property was owned by Mrs. Emma F. Campbell.

By May 17 the entire regiment was in camp, and assembled for the first time in what soon became known as Camp Alger. Its officers at this time were:

Colonel, George H. Harries; lieutenant colonel, Theodore Mosher (accepted appointment at a later date); regimental adjutant, First Lt. William E. Horton; major, M. Emmet Urell; major, Charles DeL. Hine; major, Richard A. O'Brien; major and surgeon, R. A. Pyles; chaplain, George F. Dudley; first lieutenant and battalion adjutant, James L. Mock; first lieutenant and battalion adjutant, Charles B. Hudson; first lieutenant and battalion adjutant, C. Fred Cook; first lieutenant and quartermaster, John M. Field; first lieutenant and assistant surgeon, C. A. Weaver; first lieutenant and assistant surgeon, S. Clifford Cox.

Company A—Captain, Harry Walsh; first lieutenant, Richard J. Harden; second lieutenant, Charles H. Harlow.

Company B—Captain, William T. H. King; first lieutenant, Thomas S. King; second lieutenant, Horace M. Bell.

Company C—Captain, Charles S. Domer; first lieutenant, W. E. Crist; second lieutenant, C. S. Redman.

Company D—Captain, W. S. Hodges; first lieutenant, R. J. Donnelly; second lieutenant, Louis F. Boiseau.

Company E—Captain, F. L. Graham; first lieutenant, J. H. Criffith; second lieutenant, F. E. Skinner.

Company F—Captain, Otto S. Simonson; first lieutenant, C. V. Sayer; second lieutenant, W. H. Harrison.

Company G—Captain, F. S. Hodgson; first lieutenant, D. N. Chisholm; second lieutenant, Le Roy W. Herron.

Company H—Captain, H. B. Lookes; first lieutenant, C. S. Lanham; second lieutenant, A. A. Smith.

Company I—Captain, R. D. Sims; first lieutenant, T. B. Walker; second lieutenant, R. B. Hayes.

Company K—Captain, G. B. Young; first lieutenant, C. B. Hudson; second lieutenant, W. E. Sorrels.

Company L—Captain, G. W. England; first lieutenant, C. A. Meyer; second lieutenant, F. B. Wheaton.

Company M—Captain, R. S. Jacobs; first lieutenant, F. G. Stutz; second lieutenant, E. N. Meekins.

(While in the service, some changes were made, including the placing of the regimental adjutant, Lt. Horton, on Gen. Hawkins' staff, and First Lt. R. D. Mayer was detailed to the position thus vacated. Capt. Simonson resigned and sickness caused other changes.)

C. FRED COOK, First lieutenant, D. C. Volunteers in Spanish-American War and overseas World War veteran.

First District of Columbia Infantry, United States Volunteers in the War With Spain, taken at Tampa, Fla., in 1898. Left to right: George F. Dudley, chaplain; John M. Field, quartermaster; George H. Harries, regimental commander; William E. Horton, regimental adjutant; Richard A. Pyles, surgeon; Clarence A. Weaver, assistant surgeon, and S. Clifford Cox, assistant surgeon.

COL. THEODORE ROOSEVELT. Rough rider in Spanish-American War.

The Regimental Band included Charles Hazenmeyer, drum major; William R. Phillips, chief musician; George H. Phillips, Benjamin J. Madert, Emil Brown, Loudon N. Campbell, William C. Cunningham, Floyd B. Daugherty, David B. Gottwals, Clarence D. Heider, Benjamin L. Watson, Augustine A. Hoffman, Lawrence M. Hurdle, William H. Lockwood, Henry M. Madert, Neil C. M'Donald, Frank C. Schutt, jr.; John A. Swedberg, Eugene F. Smith and Noble E. Dawson, jr.

On May 21, 1898, the regiment took train to Washington and marched in review before President McKinley. After the review the regiment left via B. & O. Railroad at 8 p.m. for Chickamauga Park, Ga. Preceding the review the regiment stood at rest in the Monument Grounds giving the boys an opportunity to take leave of their friends and beloved ones. And many were the affectionate farewells, some, alas, for the last time!

On May 23, 1898, the regiment arrived at Chattanooga, Tenn., and from there it was sent to Rossville, Ga., and then to Chickamauga Park, a distance of 9 miles. On June 4, it arrived at Tampa, Fla., and after several other moves, it finally arrived at Siboney, Cuba, July 10, 1898, aboard the steamer Catania, a vessel which had once been sunk and after being raised was used for transporting passengers to the Klondike. The Catania—unfit for the service, though used in an emergency—arrived at Siboney the same day it set sail, and the following day the troops were marched to the trenches, or just in time to get in on the fighting, for it was this same day that negotiations for the armistice were completed, the final surrender taking place on July 17, when, according to the diary of Capt. William S. Hodges:

"The regiment was found at 9:30 a.m., and marched to the trenches and at 12 o'clock noon the American Flag was hoisted over the Governor's Palace at Santiago. At the same time Capron's battery fired the national salute of 21 guns, the troops presented arms and the band played the national anthem.

After this ceremony was completed, the troops were allowed to cheer themselves hoarse. Just before the cheering, Col. Harries faced the regiment and as he beat time with his sword, the entire regiment joined in the singing of "My Country 'Tis of Thee." Thus, the fall of Santiago was consummated. The Spanish troops were seen marching out of town. Orders from the President congratulating the troops were read at retreat and companies were dismissed immediately after."

Fortunately for the District contingent in Cuba, the 1st Regiment was not called upon for much fighting, because of the agreement to an armistice, but they had a much deadlier enemy there in yellow fever and typhoid fever, and in other diseases, and had they remained there much longer, the insanitary conditions would have killed more men than the Spanish could possibly have done.

But, somehow, out of every war some great benefit is derived, and it was during this time that Walter Reed, the Army surgeon, for whom Walter Reed General Hospital is named, was studying the causes of typhus and other tropical fevers, and it was he who proved that the yellow fever parasite was carried only by mosquitoes, and that its bite caused the disease only under certain conditions. Possessed of this knowledge, American sanitary engineers have eradicated the yellow fever from Cuba, and it has since been largely eliminated from civilized portions of the world. Prior to Dr. Reed's discoveries, and while our District troops were still in Cuba, the number of cases of fever was considerable, some of which proved fatal at the time, while other patients seemed to recover, but died later.

At Santiago, First Lt. R. I. Harden, Socrates Maupin of Company G, and William F. Poore of Company K, died of fever. It was on July 21 that Pvt. Poore and Lt. Cook were sent to the hospital suffering with typhoid fever. Proper nourishing food was very scarce at the time, and the day before the camps of 30 regiments had been appealed to for one can of condensed milk, for which $20 was offered for these two men, but the milk was not found. Pvt. Poore succumbed, but Col. Cook, we are glad to say, lived to render his country distinguished service in the World War. He still resides here in his native city.

Other members of the District regiment who died in the Spanish-American War, according to The Star of that period, were:

John Riley, Company M, at Chickamauga; Corpl. Ausburn F. Towner, Company D, Key West; Howard G. Owens, Company D, Key West; William A. MacDonald, Company K, on the steamship Hudson; Alphonsus J. Bahlman, Company B, transport Minnewaska; Charles Waldman, Company C, steamer Olivette; Sergt. Newton Feree, Company K; George Gaskill, Company I; Thomas P. G. Maddox, Company B; George Schultz, Company M, and Frank B. Griffith, Company I, at Montauk.

September 9, 1898, saw a different set of men marching up the Avenue from those who passed in review on May 21. What they suffered and endured during their few months in the Army, only one who saw them on their return to Washington can possibly have an idea. That they could even be the same robust men again is doubtful and, if nearly all were even drawing pensions up until recently, as has been said, it is quite probable they were justly entitled to all they received. At any rate, no doubt, they are still interested in all that goes on in Cuba.

Of course, the District boys did not do all the fighting that was done in Cuba in 1898, for if memory serves us well, there was Gen. Shafter, who reported a bombardment by the Spanish as having killed one mule; Gen. Lawton, Gen. Wheeler, Gen. Fitzhugh Lee and many others who did yeoman service on land, while exploits on the water of Hobson, Worth Bagley and others must be taken into serious consideration. Sampson's 4th of July present will ever be remembered, as will the valuable services of Admiral Winfield Scott Schley, who, when the question arose as to whom credit was due for the sinking of the Spanish fleet, made the modest, charitable and liberal reply, "There is glory enough for all."

After the 1st D. C. Infantry had arrived at Camp Wikoff, Montauk, N. Y., and the people of Washington were preparing to give them a rousing welcome of September 9, Col. Harries indicated what the men of his regiment had been through in the few months they had been away, when he wired Maj. Sylvester, stating that when the "1st District of Columbia Regiment reaches Washington, 75 of the men will be without homes, 40 will need to be taken at once to hospitals and 40 others will require carriages to take them to their homes.

"The 40 men who should go to hospitals are all in the greatest need of the best attention it will be possible to bestow upon them. This number is likely to be increased rather than to be diminished.

"It is expected 600 men of the District regiment will be in the parade on Pennsylvania avenue. This is about two-thirds of the strength of the regiment when it left Washington."

The intrepid Theodore Roosevelt, as lieutenant colonel of the Rough Riders, with the late Gen. Leonard Wood as colonel, beat the District troops and many other contingents to Cuba and was soon in the thickest of the fight. Sometimes critics try to take away from distinguished men some of the glory which is rightfully theirs, but evidence of the valor shown by the late President at San Juan Hill and elsewhere in Cuba, fortunately, is recorded, and so, in The Star of June 25, 1898, we find the following war item:

"Roosevelt's Rough Riders were the principal sufferers in an engagement yesterday that took place about 8 miles from Santiago. The troops marched over the foothills from Baiquiri and dismounted. The Spaniards were heard felling trees a short distance away and the Rough Riders were ordered to advance.

"The country about is covered with high grass and chaparral, and in this a strong force of the Spaniards was hidden. As the Americans moved forward they were met by a withering fire.

"Col. Leonard Wood and Lt. Col. Roosevelt led the charge with great bravery, and ultimately they drove the enemy back toward Santiago, inflicting heavy losses upon them. The Rough Riders were supported by the 2d Massachusetts Volunteers and the 10th Regular Cavalry.

"The Americans numbered less than a thousand, while the Spanish soldiers, who had every advantage of position, numbered more 'than twice that.'"

Those reported killed in this fight included Capt. Allyn K. Capron of Troop L, Sergt. Hamilton Fish, jr.; Pvts. Tilman, Dawson, Dougherty and W. T. Erwin.

The 1st Regiment, District of Columbia Volunteer Infantry, was mustered out on November 20, 1898, 40 years ago today, and two days later its first banquet was held at the old Ebbitt House, where now stands the National Press Building. Col. George H. Harries was the guest of honor and First Lt. (now Lt. Col.) C. Fred Cook was toastmaster.

Tomorrow night, instead of Col. Cook being the toastmaster, Capt. William S. Hodges will probably perform these duties, and many faces present at the first banquet will be absent, for of all those who went to Cuba, with the 1st D. C. Volunteers in 1898, only about 200 survive today.

THANKSGIVING IS OUTGROWTH OF ANCIENT HARVEST RITES

Early Jewish Feast Had Influence in Its Creation

By Ethel M. Walsh.

There have been many times in the history of the United States when there were special reasons for thanksgiving and certainly this year is one of them. On this Thanksgiving Day Americans everywhere should stop long enough in their mad search for money and the tinsel of success to be thankful that this country has not been imperiled by the disasters which follow in the wake of war.

Although many believe that Thanksgiving Day is primarily an American institution, harvest festivals have been known since time immemorial. "Wherever throughout the world there was such a thing as a formal harvest there also appeared a festival celebration to mark it."

From the folk of the world down through the ages have come rites, ceremonials and thanksgivings for the harvest. Sometimes this harvest was a vintage of grapes, as it was in the land of Canaan, when "they went forth into the fields and gathered their vineyards and trod the grapes and held festivals; and went into the house of their God and did eat and drink."

At "summer end," the ancient Celts burned fires from every hilltop. In Rome and Greece, in Scotland, Holland and France, and in many other countries, days were set aside for rejoicing after the harvest of fruits and grains that were gathered for the winter supply of food.

In times of peril it was customary in England to hold days of "prayer and fasting" and equally to celebrate with feasting and with thanksgiving nature's annual bounty and other signal marks of God's favor. It has been said that the thanksgiving festival was suggested to the Pilgrims by the early Jewish "Feast of Ingathering," and others have found in that ceremony the motive for the development of their New England Thanksgiving.

Many claim that if it has kinship to anything of the past, it is to the Harvest Home of England. This celebration can be traced back to the Saxons about the 9th century in the time of Egbert. When the last of the harvest had been cut and tied into bundles, the festival began. It was a merry, festive time, and it always ended with a feast of thanksgiving.

In Northumberland and in many places in England it was customary to escort the last load of grain from the fields. This grain was loaded in a wagon known as the hock-cart. Players with pipe and tabor went merrily along in front, providing music, while the reapers joined hands and followed after, dancing and singing: "Comt forth, my Lord, and see the cart dressed up with all the country's art."

In Cambridge a clown was dressed in women's clothes, and his head was decorated with ears of corn. With great pomp and shouting he was drawn in a wagon through the streets. This was called "drawing the harvest queen." It was also the occasion for singing songs, playing the games of merry old England and folk dancing.

The American Indians, too, expressed thanks to the "Great Spirit" for their harvest of corn with ceremonials and dances of rejoicing. In a report of the Smithsonian Institution it is said that for centuries before the Pilgrims landed in America, the Iroquois Indians had practiced an elaborate thanksgiving ritual. It was known as "the great feather dance." This ceremony was conducted every year by the Indians at harvest time, and was always accompanied by a thanksgiving prayer to the "Master of Life." In this prayer the Indians gave thanks for just being alive, for the sun and moon, for springs of water, for rain, corn, herbs, fruits, game in the forest, maple sugar and flowers.

The prayer was translated by Dr. J. B. Hewitt and ends: "He willed that just and righteous acts shall be the means of making us true men and women. So let us be thankful that his words are being carried out on the earth."

The harvest festival at Plymouth in 1621 was an inspiration. The Pilgrims had experienced a terrible winter, and many of the company died of the cold and privation. In the spring those who were left took courage and decided to plan for the coming winter. They planted corn after the manner of the Redskins, and there was a bountiful crop. After the crop was gathered Gov. Bradford set aside a day for general thanksgiving. It has been claimed that the day was in October, some say it was in December.

A quaint old account described the occasion: "Our harvest being gotten in, our Gouvenour sent foure men on fowling, so that we might after a more special manner rejoyce together after we had gathered the fruit of our labours. They foure in one day killed as much fowle as, with a little helpe beside, served the company almost a weeke."

Great preparations for the feast day had been made. The celebration opened at dawn with the firing of a cannon and then a procession marched three abreast to the meeting house for prayer and psalm-singing. After the religious service came the dinner. The women had spent days in boiling, baking and roasting. Men and children busied themselves turning the roasts on spits before open fires. Chief Massasoit and many of his men were there as guests and they brought their share for the feast, venison and wild turkeys shot in the forest. History tells: "The tables were set out of doors. There were prayers and services and the singing of hymns of praise and general thanksgiving."

During the course of the Revolutionary War the Continental Congress appointed December 18,1777, as a day of thanksgiving in consequence of the surrender of Gen. Burgoyne, and May 7, 1778, for the victory at Valley Forge. In 1789 President George Washington issued a proclamation recommending that November 26 be named Thanksgiving Day for "the establishment of a form of government that made for safety and happiness." It was thus that our first president set the precedent for the observance of Thanksgiving Day on the last Thursday of November.

For 50 years the festival was almost exclusively a New England observance, celebrated by religious services in the churches, the sermon being often a political address, and by the gathering at the old home of the scattered members of the family. Then, gradually, the day became a custom throughout the Southern and the Western States, each section appointing its own day.

Philadelphia's lack of interest in the observance of Thanksgiving Day greatly distressed the stanch New Englander. Mrs. Sarah Jesepha Hale, who had come from Boston to live in the "city of brotherly love" a decade or so before the Civil War. Mrs. Hale became the famous editor of the women's journal known as Godey's Lady's Book. For years she wrote to the governor of her own and nearby States, urging them to set aside the last Thursday in November as Thanksgiving Day.

It was in 1859 that she succeeded in having all but two governors proclaim a day of general thanksgiving on the last Thursday in November. Thereafter, the majority of the States continued the custom.

At the end of the Civil War, Mrs. Hale wrote to President Lincoln, enclosed a copy of Gen. Washington's Thanksgiving edict, and suggested that the President set aside a day of national thanksgiving. Whether or not it was because of her zealous efforts, following Gen. Washington's precedent, President Lincoln announced "the observance of the fourth Thursday in November as a day of national thanksgiving, praise and prayer, for the defence against unfriendly designs without and signal victories over the enemy who is of our own household." This day was on November 26, 1863.

Since Lincoln's time down a long stretch of years each President of the United States has annually set aside the last Thursday of November for a like festival. The proclamation of the President is usually followed by one issued by the Governor of each State of the Union.

Thanksgiving Day stands as a symbol of our appreciation of life today in America. In three centuries customs have changed to keep step with the march of time. Yet there are many who will attend church services and others who will pass the day at football stadiums, at golf links, at horse races or by attending the theater or by playing bridge. America is joyful this year. But joy is never so rich a theme as sorrow, and the giver of all good things awaits our gratitude and our thanks—not just the turkey-feasting, holiday-making kind, but heartfelt thanksgiving as the day comes and goes.

Hundreds of pounds of white and dark Thanksgiving meat on the hoof at a turkey farm near Manassas, Va.

Pilgrims and Indians Co-operated in First Days