

## The Reunion at Fort Duffield

13 September 1895

When Louisville started to plan for the GAR convention, the committee in charge asked West Point to share in the activities. A local committee was formed and the officers selected J. Lewis Williams, and Frank R. Lord. These two gentlemen proceeded to plan a gigantic reunion here at West Point for the many men who had served at Fort Duffield. Securing rosters of the men who had served here with the 9th Michigan, 1st Wisconsin, the 16th and 28th Kentucky regiments, and 1st and 18th Ohio regiments, Mr. Lord, Secretary of the Muldraugh Hill Fort Association, sent a personal invitation to each and every man. The response was tremendous, thousands of now middle aged veterans accepted. Invitations were extended to the Michigan, Wisconsin, Kentucky and Ohio regiments, but the 37th Indiana, which served here and helped build Fort Duffield, was not invited. Today the reason is unknown. It could have been the ill-feeling toward former Governor Oliver P. Morton (which was widespread in Kentucky), it could have been the harshness of Colonel Hazzard, or it could have been incidents committed by the Indiana troops especially such as the one involving Mrs. Lewis Withers.

Frank R. Lord, in extending the invitation to the event.

On Muldraugh's Heights in Hardin County, 20 miles from Louisville, at the confluence of the Ohio and Salt Rivers, is a romantic spot memorable to veterans of the Ninth Michigan Regiment, First Regiment Wisconsin, and the Sixteenth and Twenty-eighth Kentucky Volunteers.

Here is old Muldraugh's Fort which has been carefully preserved so that the earthworks and trenchments are intact just as they were left 30 years ago at the close of the war.

Here entrenched behind earthworks thrown up towards the south, the gallant boys in blue guarded the passes of the Muldraugh Hill range protecting the Ohio River from the invasion of the enemy from the south, and guarding the turnpike toward Bowling Green and Nashville, and the pontoon bridge over Salt River. Here they sat by their camp fires many a long night, singing the inspiring tunes of "Old Columbia," talking of dear ones at home in old Michigan, here they slept an dreamt of wives and children and faithful sweethearts and the happy reunion with them when this cruel war was over; here they awoke to the tattoo of the drum and answered roll calls; here they watched and prayed by those who fell victims to the enemy, disease, and other sad misfortunes of war, and here at last they laid them away in that peace which the world cannot give, under the trees in the old soldiers burying ground which may still be pointed out.

The muffled drum's and roll has beat the soldier's last tattoo  
No more on life's parade shall meet the brave and daring few;  
On fame's eternal camping ground their silent tents are spread,  
And glory guards with solemn sound the bivouac of the dead."

To this beautiful spot you are cordially invited, together with your friends, who may accompany you to the GAR Encampment at Louisville, in September 1895, with the assurance that everything will be done by our citizens to make the few hours you spend with profitable and pleasant. Excursions to this point, also to the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln, with privilege to stop over at Muldraugh's Hill Fort will be given by the C.O. & S.W. Railway at special rates.

Leaving the care (railroad cars) at West Point, you will be met by an escort guide familiar with the scenes and incidents of the war, who will conduct you to and through the fort, which is within easy walking distance, pointing out, and explaining objects of interest, and giving an historical synopsis of the fort and the part it played in the great civil drama of 1861-65.

Several distinguished soldier speakers are invited and expected to be present each day of the encampment and will address their old comrades and many historical relics will be exhibited.

A good "old time" Kentucky dinner will be furnished to all desiring at the uniform price of twenty-five cents. Lodging will be at 25 cents a night.

No visitor to the encampment should return to their home without first seeing the best preserved earthworks in the south.

For further information address:

J. Lewis Williams, President

Frank R. Lord, Secretary

Room 84, Louisville Trust Building

West Point, Kentucky

Louisville, Ky.

When the date for the reunion finally arrived, West Point found itself in a festive mood. Banners and flags were displayed everywhere. On the hill itself, a dramatic change had taken place. The old trenches were intact and even some of the old log cabins that had been erected for shelter were still standing, although in badly deteriorating condition.

Heavy growth of woods, in the 30 year period, had engulfed the old fort. The old wagon road up the back of the hill had been reworked. The local committee had built a Chautauqua grounds on the site, with a welcome arch and an enclosed gazebo type speaker's stand. There was also a private club house built, which was used in the festivities. Many piles of old cannonballs were still piled around the abandoned gun emplacements.