

North Bay Civil War Round Table  
President's Message

April 2009

I thought you might be interested in this article. While I was researching Illinois' part in the American Civil War, I ran across this blurb in the Chicago Tribune. It was on microfiche and difficult to read; however, I managed to get the gist of the subject.

Apparently the Tribune had written a piece on the "Irish and Iron Brigades" as part of the 100th. anniversary of the war.

Shortly after it ran, the editor received a package in the mail which contained the diary of Stanislaw Wokowski a civil war veteran.

Mr. Wokowski claimed to be a member of the hereto unknown "Chicago Brigade". They initially were formed as a South Side militia and volunteered to fight for the Union after President Lincoln's call to arms. They patterned their uniform after the Zouaves but with the addition of an embroidered falcon on the fez.

Secretary of War Stanton, although impressed with their request, ordered them to instead guard the new stock yards established by Gordon S. Hubbard in 1860. The secretary's reasoning was that a regular supply of fresh meat to the army was vital to the Union's success and must be protected. Although disappointed, the brigade accepted the orders without complaint.

It was during this time of duty that several members of the brigade, with an abundance of time on their hands, began to formulate ideas that to this day still remain.

The editorial in the Tribune recounting the "Chicago Brigade" ended with this paragraph.

"When you go to a ball game, baseball fans everywhere will now know the impact that the "Chicago Brigade" and its distinguished members had on the game. The game would not be the same without the foresight of Charles Comiskey to design the first modern ball park in 1910. When you sit back and enjoy a hot dog (first sold in 1883) you can thank brigade member Oscar Mayer for developing the famous ball park treat. And finally, standing for the 7th.inning stretch and listening to that great organ produced by Rudolph Wurlitzer (1910), we can all share in the glow of the true American pastime."

Regards,

Tom Lubas