

THE OPINION

Heaven Is A Lot Like Kentucky

Sept. 2, 1916, near Olympia Springs, seven miles southeast of Owingville, in Bath County...



Heaven Is A Lot Like Kentucky by Charles Bytner

The crowd of approximately 1,500 men, women and children, were having a grand time with nearly 100 elderly Kentucky Confederate veterans and their family members mingling easily together, as old friends and companions do, and as this group had done for many, many years.

All of them were enjoying the annual reunion of General John Hunt Morgan's Cavalry Unit, and the few survivors of the Orphan Brigade, always joined them for their annual picnic.

Morgan's Cavalry unit, "The Lexington Mounted Rifles" had formed in Lexington before the American Civil War. They initially fought as a supporting unit to the Kentucky First Infantry Brigade of the Confederate States of America, known passionately by all who fought with, or against it.

The Orphans were always in attendance and had been since the 1961 meeting of which was a special reunion at Pikes Hill, near Carlisle, at present-day Meyers Station.

LT. Lester Young, former executive officer with Company H, 4th Kentucky Infantry Battalion, 1st Kentucky Infantry Brigade, was having a splendid time. Young was a Nicholas County native with many veteran friends across the state, but particu-

larly in northeastern Kentucky. Men who were gray and blue during the Civil War sought his wise counsel on a variety of business, political and personal matters.

Young was the featured speaker, and his soon-to-be published book, "Reminiscences of a Soldier of the Orphan Brigade" was becoming increasingly popular among the Confederate veterans he'd shared rough drafts with.

The reunion was a lively event, and there was plenty to eat, plenty to drink, games for the children and of course, music. Kentucky had suffered greatly during the Civil War, and suffered greatly during the reconstruction period, following the war.

Kentucky never officially left the Union before or during the war, but many present, and thousands across the state believed they might

be as well off now to leave the Union, as they had once before. Kentucky it seemed was different from the other states.

Not better. Not worse, yet somehow, different. The Confederate veterans of Kentucky were among the last to surrender during the war, and many never did "swallow the dog" or swear their allegiance back to the Union following the war.

A Confederate officer wrote the song after the war was on the song swept across the south it was altered here and there to suit the performer, and the audience at hand.

LT. Young passed among old friends as he listened while the band played their local favorite. The song was entitled simply "I'm a Good Old Rebel."

And as Young mingled among old battlefield companions, various verses of the song mingled, likewise along with the bands and the state believed they might

I hate the Declaration of Independence, I hate the "Glorious Union", I fought it all I could. I hate their striped banner, it's dripping with our blood.

I followed my old orphan for four years, near about. Got wounded in three battles, and starved while out on scout.

I caught the "romatism" while asleep in the snow. But I killed a bunch of Yankees, and I'd like to kill some more.

Three hundred thousand Yankees is still in Southern dust! We got three hundred thousand before they conquered us.

They died of Southern fever and Southern steel and shot. I wish we'd got three million instead of what we got.

I can't take up my musket and fight on no more no more. But I ain't a gonna live 'em, now that is certain sure.

The Bourbon bowed in great quantities among many of the old veterans, as easily as the sincere words of Young as he later addressed the crowd and said the following.

You ask sir, that I shall relate some of my observations and experiences of the great battle of Shiloh. Well fifty-two years and more

See HEAVEN Page 16

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She is survived by her children, Linda (Randy) Blake, Edward "Butch" (Gloria) Goodpaster, Brenda (Tony) Sosby, Matthew (Donna Jo) Goodpaster and Dale Goodpaster, all of Paris; two brothers, Leslie E. (Geraldine) Parrish of Harrodsburg and James B. (Kaye) Parrish of Paris; 10 grandchildren, 20 Great-Grandchildren and two Great-Great-Grandchildren; several nieces and nephews also survive.

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OBITUARIES



Mary June Thompson Small 1921-2008

Mary June Thompson Small, 87, widow of Herbert William "Bill" Small, died Tuesday, June 10, 2008 at Johnson-Mathers Nursing Home.

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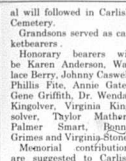
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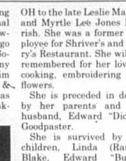
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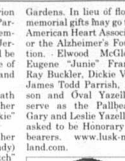
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