

# COMPANY FRONT

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH NORTH CAROLINA

ISSUE 1, 2011



NORTH CAROLINA'S  
ORDINANCE OF SECESSION

THE MEAGHER GUARD  
CHARLESTON'S FIGHTING IRISH

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# 26<sup>TH</sup> NORTH CAROLINA R E G I M E N T.

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## **Front Cover**

NC State Capital Building at, or near the time of the Secession Convention, ca 1861

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# This High-Handed Act of **TYRANNICAL** OUR NORTH CAROLINA SE

By Greg Mast

**T**he chain of events that led to the secession of North Carolina on May 20, 1861, began with the election of Abraham Lincoln, but North Carolina's decision to join the Confederacy was not simply a reflexive response to the prospect of Republican rule. Secession fever, ignited by Lincoln's election, swept South Carolina and six other deep South states from the Union during the winter months of 1860-1861, but it had no such effect in North Carolina and the other slaveholding states of the upper South. All remained in the Union until well after Lincoln's March 1861 inauguration.

Pro-secession sentiment existed throughout North Carolina, and it was especially prevalent in the eastern counties stretching from the Cape Fear region to the Virginia border, as well as in the southern piedmont counties surrounding Mecklenburg.<sup>1</sup> Besides that geographic basis, secessionist feeling in the state depended largely upon party affiliation. Nearly all secessionists were Democrats, while the anti-secessionist bloc included the large Whig minority in the state and a substantial number of Unionist Democrats -- enough to make Unionism the majority opinion in North Carolina. Nevertheless, many prominent Democratic political leaders favored secession, among them Governor John Willis Ellis, and the Democrats held a majority in the General Assembly.<sup>2</sup>

Those North Carolinians who favored secession feared "black Republican" rule as much as any deep South secessionist. One Nash County meeting resolved that "[W]e must either be freemen or submit to have our honor made desolate by the snares of the No[r]thern Fanatic or what is worse be destroyed by the indolent race we now hold as Slaves."<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, while all North Carolinians were uneasy about actions the Lincoln administration might take, the majority of the population remained firmly committed to the Union.

Why that is so may be explained by the vigorous two-party system that had persisted in North Carolina since the 1830s. In contrast to the states of the deep South, in which elections were typically one-party affairs characterized by large Democratic majorities and a moribund Whig opposition, North Carolina electoral contests were often quite close, with the Whig and Democratic parties frequently alternating in power. As historian Mark



# TRAGEDY CEDES

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA.

## A PROCLAMATION, BY JOHN W. ELLIS, GOVERNOR OF NORTH CAROLINA

WHEREAS: By Proclamation of Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, followed by a requisition of Simon Cameron, Secretary of War, I am informed that the said Abraham Lincoln has made a call for 75,000 men to be employed for the invasion of the peaceful homes of the South, and for the violent subversion of the liberties of a free people, constituting a large part of the whole population of the late United States: And, whereas, this high-handed act of tyrannical outrage is not only in violation of all constitutional law, in utter disregard of every sentiment of humanity and Christian civilization, and conceived in a spirit of aggression unparalleled by any act of recorded history, but is a direct step towards the subjugation of the whole South, and the conversion of a free Republic, inherited from our fathers, into a military despotism, to be established by worse than foreign enemies on the ruins of our once glorious Constitution of Equal Rights.

Now, therefore, I, JOHN W. ELLIS, Governor of the State of North-Carolina, for these extraordinary causes, do hereby issue this, my Proclamation, notifying and requesting the Senators and Members of the House of Commons of the General Assembly of North-Carolina, to meet in Special Session at the Capitol, in the City of Raleigh, on Wednesday the first day of May next. And I furthermore exhort all good citizens throughout the State to be mindful that their first allegiance is due to the Sovereignty which protects their homes and dearest interests, as their first service is due for the sacred defence of their hearths, and of the soil which holds the graves of our glorious dead.

United action in defence of the sovereignty of North-Carolina, and of the rights of the South, becomes now the duty of all.

Given under my hand, and attested by the Great Seal of the State. Done at the City of Raleigh, the 17th day of April, A. D., 1861, and in the eighty-fifth year of our Independence,

JOHN. W. ELLIS.

By the Governor,  
GRAHAM DAVES, *Private Secretary.*

NC Governor John W. Ellis







NC Capitol Building

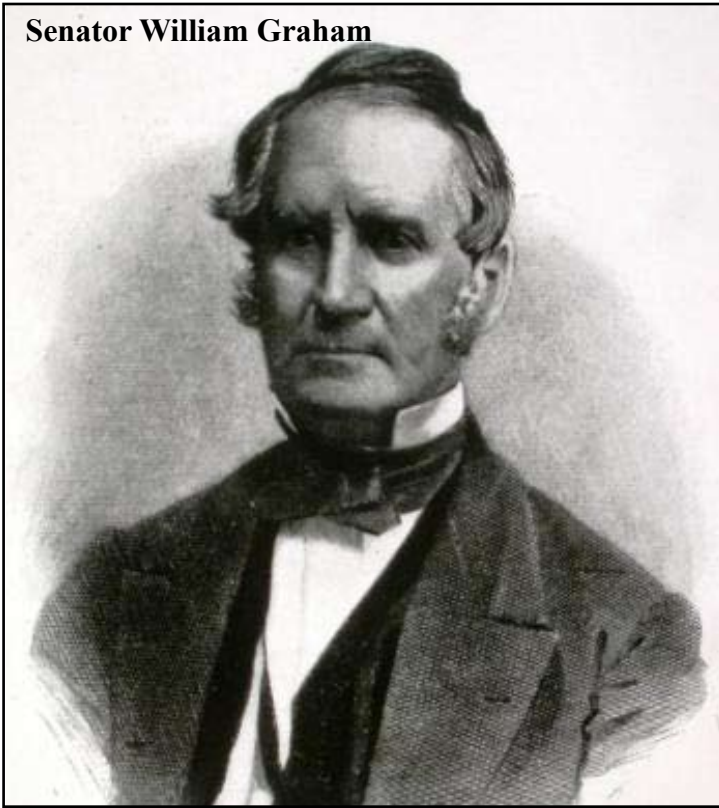
Kruman has observed,

*North Carolinians had learned that, although a party may be out of power, with effort it could regain power; so for them Lincoln's election was but a temporary setback, something that could be rectified four years hence. In states of the lower South without party systems, the people could see nothing but Republican victories in the foreseeable future. Nothing in their immediate experience suggested that the Republicans might be driven from power at some future date. But North Carolinians could see from their own experience that an opposition party might triumph.<sup>4</sup>*

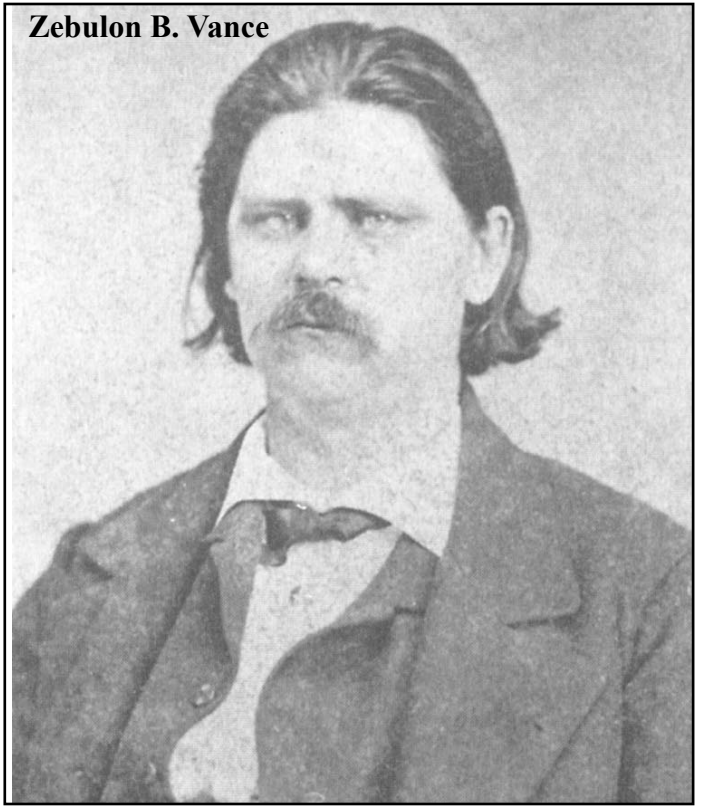
While preservation of the Union was the choice of most North Carolinians during the secession winter of 1860-1861, Unionism in the state was by no means monolithic. A minority of "unconditional" Unionists, as they are usually called, believed that no provocation by Lincoln or the Republican party could justify a severance of North Carolina from the United States. Although few prominent North Carolina political leaders could be characterized as unconditionalists, there were pockets of staunch support for unconditional Unionism throughout the state. The largest was in the central piedmont, the so-called "Quaker Belt," which centered on Randolph and adjacent counties. Unionist sentiment persisted there throughout the war, ultimately leading to a bloody "inner Civil War" of bushwhacking and guerrilla fighting. Unconditional Unionism was also present in several mountain counties and in the counties bordering Albemarle Sound.<sup>5</sup>

Most North Carolinians were "conditional" Unionists. They preferred to avoid secession but favored remaining in the Union only if certain circumstances prevailed. Those included concessions from the Federal government that would enhance constitutional protection for slavery. But the cornerstone of conditional unionism was that the United States must eschew a policy of coercion or military action against the states that had already seceded.<sup>6</sup> The importance of that position must be emphasized: conditional Unionists considered the secession of the deep South states to be an act of folly, but they did not doubt that the states had a right to secede.<sup>7</sup> Historians may debate whether Southern society had evolved along a path sufficiently different from the rest of the country to constitute a separate "nation" within a nation, but there can be no doubt that North Carolinians felt much closer to the seceded states than to the North. Use of military force against the nascent Confederacy by the Federal government would oblige North Carolinians who preferred to remain in the Union to take sides in a civil war, and, their love for the Union notwithstanding, most would find it impossible to take up arms against their Southern neighbors. As one North Carolinian observed, "There can be no Federal road across the soil of North Carolina for

**Senator William Graham**



**Zebulon B. Vance**



the coercion [sic] of a state.”<sup>8</sup>

Within North Carolina there was distinct momentum toward secession in the weeks following the 1860 presidential election, and many citizens feared the future. “[C]ivil war and its horrors,” one Lincoln County diarist recorded, “are the topics of daily fireside conversations and street talks.”<sup>9</sup> The General Assembly was in session, and secessionists were prominent among its Democratic majority. On November 20, 1860, Governor Ellis, in his biennial message to the legislature, proposed a strengthening of the militia, the purchase of arms and munitions, and the calling of a state convention to discuss the relationship between North Carolina and the rest of the nation. Such a convention would be a supra-legislative body, authorized by the state constitution of 1835 and empowered to sever North Carolina from the United States.<sup>10</sup>

The General Assembly authorized the expenditure of \$300,000 for the purchase of arms, but the convention proposal met stiff resistance as Unionist legislators, fearing a stampede toward secession, asserted themselves. A convention required a two-thirds majority in the legislature, and that obstacle enabled the Unionists -- mostly Whigs but including some Democrats -- to delay a vote on the issue. The legislators spent several weeks in negotiations over the convention bill, during which time South Carolina and several other states left the Union. While secession swept away the deep South, North Carolina’s legislators struggled to reach a consensus, thereby helping blunt momentum in the state toward secession.<sup>11</sup>

After reaching several compromises with secessionist Democrats, enough Unionists in the General Assembly voted for the convention bill on January 29, 1861, to permit it to pass, with the election to be held on February 28. The bill was less than secessionists had hoped for, however, because North Carolinians would be voting not just for delegates to a convention but would also decide whether or not a convention would meet at all. And, even if approved, the convention could not be called into session earlier than Lincoln’s inauguration, by which time, Unionists fervently hoped, the Republicans would demonstrate that they were no threat to Southern rights.<sup>12</sup>

The campaign to elect delegates to the proposed convention was the most intense in the state’s history to that time, and Unionists clearly dominated it. Democratic editor William W. Holden, probably North Carolina’s most outspoken anti-secessionist, used his influential newspaper, the *Raleigh Standard*, as a forum for pro-Unionist sentiment. The anti-convention bloc also benefited from the leadership of many of North Carolina’s most respected politicians, including Whig Congressman Zebulon B. Vance and former governor, United States



senator, and vice-presidential candidate, William A. Graham.

The election was very close, but the convention was rejected by 50.3 per cent of the electorate. Those figures do not represent a true reflection of Unionist strength, however. Some Unionists were in favor of a convention, although opposed to secession. A close analysis of the election results by historian Marc Kruman revealed that of the 120 elected delegates (who never met in convention), 81 were Unionists and 39 were secessionists. Thus, the true secessionist vote in North Carolina was something less than 40 percent.<sup>13</sup>

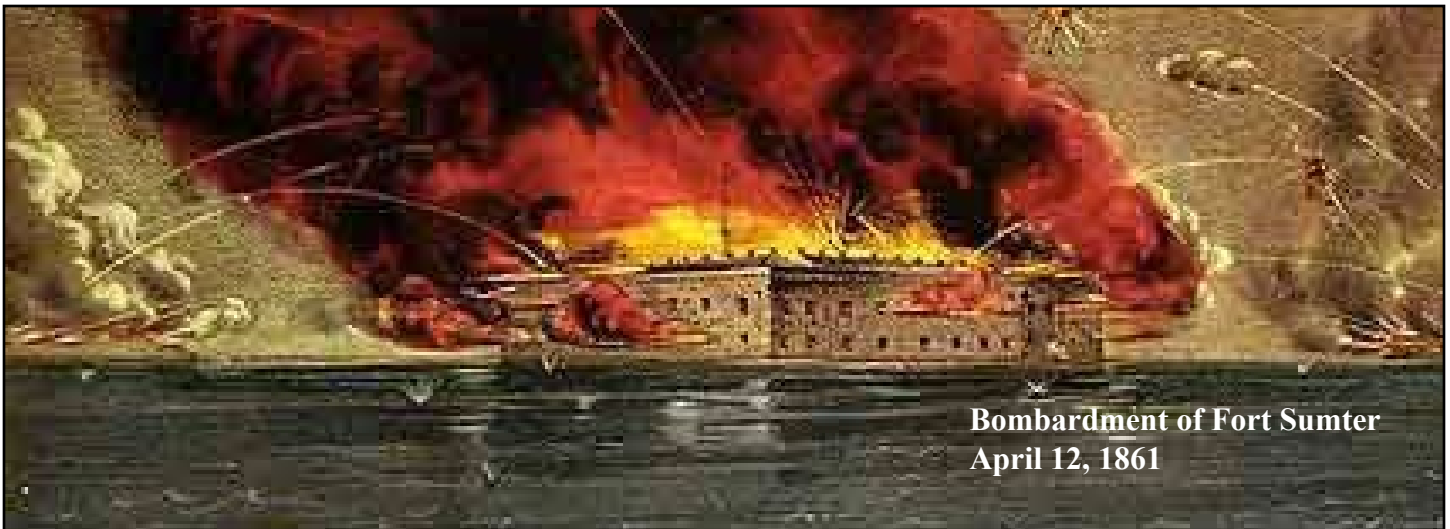
The results of the election encouraged and elated North Carolina Unionists. Anticipating the outcome, James Gudger of Buncombe County wrote to Zebulon Vance, "[T]he people, mind you, the people are in favor of the Union for a while yet. . . ."<sup>14</sup> Gudger and other Unionists probably thought that the question had been decisively decided, but in fact North Carolina's role in the secession crisis had passed beyond local control and was at the mercy of forces outside the state. The precise course of action the Lincoln administration would follow was unclear, and the failure of a peace conference of twenty-one states in Washington in February 1861, was ominous.<sup>15</sup>

Lincoln's inaugural address of March 4, 1861, was conciliatory but ambiguous. Although he disavowed coercion and any designs on the institution of slavery, Lincoln refused to recognize secession and expressed his intent to retain Federal property in the seceded states, implicitly by force. Lincoln's remarks either frightened or reassured North Carolinians, depending upon their previous opinions on the subject. In her diary secessionist Catherine Edmondston wrote of the speech: "I scarcely know which to dwell most on, its wickedness or its weakness! The cloven foot is there & an attempt made to draw a drapery around it -- an attempt which fails so signally as to excite ones contempt." Unionist Jonathan Worth, on the other hand, wrote that the speech "breathes peace to any candid mind."<sup>16</sup>

The crisis then focused on Fort Sumter, in Charleston Harbor. North Carolina Unionists hoped that Lincoln would order the withdrawal of the United States garrison there. By removing that provocation to Confederate sovereignty, valuable time could be gained. Unionists would be able to consolidate their recent political victories in North Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee, and, eventually, the people of the seceded states might perceive the folly into which their firebrand leadership had led them. The path would then be open for peaceful reconciliation of the two sections. One North Carolina Unionist recently returned from Georgia wrote in early April of his disgust with the "mobocracy" prevailing there and stated that "if Old Abe behaves himself" the Unionists would save North Carolina "from the damnation and misrule of the irresponsible mob. . . . If however Old Abe does make war on the south," then the state must realize that its "destiny must be with the south."<sup>17</sup>

Events were now beyond the control of anyone in North Carolina. On April 12, following an attempt by the United States Navy to resupply the fort, Confederate forces fired on Fort Sumter, which surrendered the following day. Although it may be doubted whether that incident alone would have forced North Carolina to secede, it was followed on April 15 by a proclamation by President Lincoln calling for 75,000 volunteers, including two regiments from North Carolina, to suppress the rebellion. North Carolina's Unionists saw this act as a blunder of the first magnitude. "Lincoln prostrated us," Jonathan Worth wrote, "He could have devised no scheme more effectual than the one he has pursued, to overthrow the friends of Union here." Unionists also felt betrayed: "Toward the Union men . . . this conduct is infamous. To the South as a whole it is a gross and intolerable wrong -- to the Union party, in particular, it is treachery and fraud."<sup>18</sup>

The immediate result was a massive shift in public opinion. Such Unionist feeling that persisted in North Carolina was confined to isolated pockets of "unconditionalism," and it is doubtful that even in those areas Unionism was the predominant sentiment. Whig and Unionist Congressman W. N. H. Smith of Murfreesboro wrote to Zebulon Vance: "The Union feeling was strong up to the recent proclamation. This War Manifesto Extinguishes it, and resistance is now on every mans lips and throbs in every bosom. We regard the government as over-thrown -- military usurpation in its place -- and a sense of common danger unites us in a common cause. . . . Union men are now such no longer."<sup>19</sup> Vance himself recalled that he was canvassing for the Union when word of Lincoln's proclamation arrived: "I was addressing a large and excited crowd . . . and literally had my arm extended upward in pleading for peace and the Union of our Fathers, when the telegraphic news was announced of the firing on Sumter and [the] President's call for seventy-five thousand volunteers. When my hand came down from that impassioned gesticulation, it fell slowly and sadly by the side of a Secessionist."<sup>20</sup>



**Bombardment of Fort Sumter  
April 12, 1861**

Governor Ellis immediately telegraphed the Lincoln administration that “the levy of troops made by the administration for the purpose of subjugating the states of the south is in violation of the Constitution and a gross usurpation of power. I can be no party to this wicked violation of the laws of the country, and to this war upon the liberties of a free people. You can get no troops from North Carolina.” Terming Lincoln’s proclamation a “high-handed act of tyrannical outrage,” Ellis then issued a proclamation himself on April 17, calling the General Assembly into special session to meet on May 1, 1861.<sup>21</sup> The legislature promptly authorized another election of delegates, to be held on May 13. The convention met in Raleigh on May 20 and by unanimous vote passed an ordinance of secession:

*AN ORDINANCE to dissolve the union between the State of North Carolina and the other States united with her, under the compact of government entitled “The Constitution of the United States.”*

*We, the people of the State of North Carolina in convention assembled, do declare and ordain, and it is hereby declared and ordained, That the ordinance adopted by the State of North Carolina in the convention of 1789, whereby the Constitution of the United States was ratified and adopted, and also all acts and parts of acts of the General Assembly ratifying and adopting amendments to the said Constitution, are hereby repealed, rescinded, and abrogated.*

*We do further declare and ordain, That the union now subsisting between the State of North Carolina and the other States, under the title of the United States of America, is hereby dissolved, and that the State of North Carolina is in full possession and exercise of all those rights of sovereignty which belong and appertain to a free and independent State.*

*Done in convention at the city of Raleigh, this the 20th day of May, in the year of our Lord 1861, and in the eighty-fifth year of the independence of said State.*<sup>22</sup>

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1 Daniel W. Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates: Upper South Unionists in the Secession Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 145, hereinafter cited as Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates*.

2 William C. Harris, *North Carolina and the Coming of the Civil War* (Raleigh: Office of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1988), 37, hereinafter cited as Harris, *North Carolina and the Coming of the Civil War*.

3 Nash County Southern Rights Meeting, January 17, 1861, *State Journal* (Raleigh), February 20, 1861. Quoted in Marc W. Kruman, *Parties and Politics in North Carolina, 1836-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), 209, hereinafter cited as Kruman, *Parties and Politics in North Carolina*.

4 Kruman, *Parties and Politics in North Carolina*, 181. It has been argued that Unionist sentiment in North Carolina can be attributed to a lesser commitment to the institution of slavery than that which existed in the deep South states. However, as Kruman notes, there were actually more slave owners in North Carolina than in any of the seceded states except Georgia, and the percentage of families that owned slaves was greater than in Texas and only 2 to 6 percent less than in Louisiana, Florida, and Alabama. North Carolina’s legislature had the highest proportion of slaveholders of any in the South. The Whig party senators in North Carolina, Unionist



to a man, owned a median of seventeen slaves each, a significant figure when compared with Alabama's senators, who owned a median of 19.5 slaves and were uniformly secessionist. Pp., 180, 203-204.

5 William T. Auman, "Neighbor against Neighbor: The Inner Civil War in the Randolph County Area of Confederate North Carolina," *North Carolina Historical Review*, LXI (January, 1984), 59-92, hereinafter cited as Auman, "Neighbor against Neighbor." Mountain Unionism was strongest in Madison, Buncombe, Yancey, and Mitchell counties. See Philip Paludan, *Victims: A True Story of the Civil War* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981), and Muriel E. Sheppard, *Cabins in the Laurel* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1934), 60-68. Unionism in Washington and Tyrrell counties is described in Wayne Durrill, *War of Another Kind: A Southern Community in the Great Rebellion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

Unconditional Unionism in North Carolina should not be construed as a southern version of Radical Republicanism or as necessarily abolitionist in tone. Bryan Tyson, the most prominent leader of the Randolph County Unionists, was a slaveholder who believed that remaining in the Union was the best way to prevent "Black Republican" rule. After fleeing North, Tyson supported Democrat George B. McClellan in the 1864 presidential election. Auman, "Neighbor against Neighbor," 66-67.

6 Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates*, 104-105.

7 The doctrine of secession was nothing new in American history. In early 1815 delegates from Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island met in convention at Hartford, Connecticut, to discuss secession from the United States. Notably, Vermont and New Hampshire did not attend, although some secessionist areas of those two states sent three delegates which were accepted by the Convention. In later years, many members of the abolitionist movement favored secession of their native states from the Union, so they would not have to live in a nation that supported the institution of slavery.

8 A. W. Venable to John W. Ellis, November 2, 1860, in Noble J. Tolbert (ed.), *The Papers of John Willis Ellis* (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 2 volumes, 1964), II, 479, hereinafter cited as Tolbert, *Ellis Papers*.

9 David Schenck Diary, November 5, 1860, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, quoted in Harris, *North Carolina and the Coming of the Civil War*, 33-34.

10 John W. Ellis, "Message to the General Assembly of North Carolina," in Tolbert, *Ellis Papers*, II, 514-515.

11 Kruman, *Parties and Politics in North Carolina*, 204-205.

12 Harris, *North Carolina and the Coming of the Civil War*, 37-39.

13 Kruman, *Parties and Politics in North Carolina*, 210-211. There was only a minor correlation in this election between the proportion of slaves in the population and support for secession. If a county voted for secession, it was likely to have a large slave population, but a slaveholding county was not necessarily secessionist. Pp. 210-211. The lack of a strong connection in North Carolina between the institution of slavery and secessionist sentiment (see also note 4 above) can be frustrating to those who prefer their history served up in simple and easy-to-understand portions.

14 James C. L. Gudger to Zebulon Vance, January 27, 1861. Frontis W. Johnston (ed.) *The Papers of Zebulon Baird Vance* (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, projected multivolume series, 1963 -), I, 91, hereinafter cited as Johnston, *Vance Papers*.

15 In response to a call from the Virginia legislature, delegates from twenty-one states assembled in Washington on February 4, 1861, and attempted to reach an acceptable sectional compromise. After several weeks of negotiation, the conference proposed to Congress several constitutional amendments that would permanently settle the slavery issue. The Senate, in a curious alliance of radical Republicans and southern fire-eaters, decisively defeated those proposals.

Optimism about the results of the Peace Convention probably contributed to the Unionist vote in the convention election of February 28. Robert G. Gunderson, "The Old Gentleman's Convention: The Peace Conference of 1861," *Civil War History* VII (March, 1961), 5-12; Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates*, 207-213

16 Beth G. Crabtree and James W. Patton (eds.), *"Journal of a Secesh Lady": The Diary of Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 1860-1866* (Raleigh: Office of Archives and History, Department of Cultural Resources, 1979), 41; J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton (ed.), *The Correspondence of Jonathan Worth* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton, 2 volumes, 1909), I, 132, hereinafter cited as Hamilton, *Worth Correspondence*.

17 Allen T. Davidson to Theo Davidson, April 7, 1861. Allen Turner Davidson Letters, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, quoted in Harris, *North Carolina and the Coming of the Civil War*, 50.

18 Jonathan Worth to Springs, Oak & Co., May 13, 1861, in Hamilton, *Worth Correspondence*, I, 143; *Carolina Watchman* (Salisbury), April 16, 1861, quoted in Croft, *Reluctant Confederates*, 336, 338.

19 Smith to Vance, April 26, 1861, Johnston, *Vance Papers*, I, 99. The massive shift in opinion within the North Carolina, and indeed much of the upper South, can be compared to that which occurred following later events in American history: the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, and the radical Islamic attacks on September 11, 2001.

20 Zebulon B. Vance, *The Political and Social South During the War*, a lecture delivered before the Andrew Post, No. 15, of the Grand Army of the Republic (Boston, Massachusetts), December 8, 1886. Quoted in Johnston, *Vance Papers*, xxxviii.

21 John W. Ellis to Simon Cameron, April 15, 1861. "A Proclamation," April 17, 1861. Tolbert, *Ellis Papers*, II, 612, 621-622.

22 Two myths persist about the secession of North Carolina: that it was the last state to secede, and that its late secession was because it was particularly reluctant to leave the Union. In the first case, Tennessee's legislature passed an ordinance of secession, but it did not take effect until it was ratified by a plebiscite, which occurred on June 8, 1861. Thus that state became the last to secede. Although North Carolina seceded more than five weeks after Virginia, both states required in their constitutions that such an action be done by a convention of the people rather than a legislature. Virginia's convention was in session on April 15, which enabled that state to secede immediately. In North Carolina the following procedure had to be followed: the governor convened the General Assembly; that body authorized a convention and an election for delegates to it; the election was held; the convention assembled and passed the ordinance of secession. However, North Carolina began raising troops and seizing Federal military installations immediately after April 15. Relations were established with the Confederate government and North Carolina troops were in Virginia well before secession. Lincoln's proclamation of April 15 was the act that compelled North Carolina to leave the Union, and the May 20, 1861, ordinance of secession was, in a sense, only a formality.



# THE meagher CHARLESTON'S FIGHTING IR

By Bill Bynum

America's cities just before the Civil War were home to numerous and colorful volunteer militia units. Unlike the poorly-armed, poorly-trained, and non-uniformed common militia, volunteer militia companies received arms from the state, drilled frequently, and designed and paid for their own uniforms and accoutrements. Volunteer companies often organized themselves by ethnic origin. Charleston, South Carolina, second largest city in the South, boasted German, Irish, Scottish, and French companies, among others, in its four regiments of volunteer militia; not surprising, since in 1860 forty-nine per cent of the city's adult white males were foreign-born.<sup>1</sup> (North Carolina, with its much smaller immigrant population, had only one "foreign" city militia company, the German Volunteers of Wilmington.<sup>2</sup>) One of Charleston's Irish companies was the Meagher (pronounced Mahr) Guard, which the 26th North Carolina Troops, Reactivated, will be portraying at the April 2011 sesquicentennial of the firing on Fort Sumter.

## The Company before the War

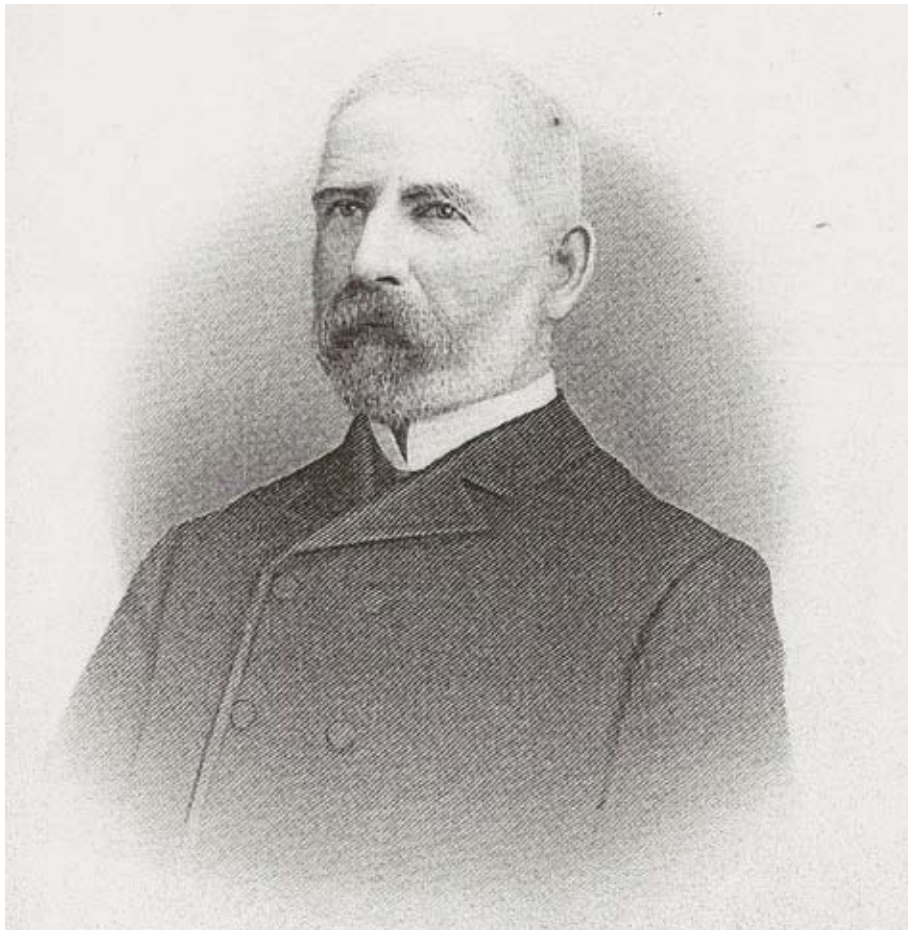
The Meagher Guard began in the spring of 1853 under the sponsorship of an Irish nationalist organization called the Society of United Irishmen.<sup>3</sup> In honor of the exiled Irish revolutionary Thomas Francis Meagher, who had just visited Charleston for the first time (see *The Namesake* pg 21), the new military company took the name Meagher Rifle Guard. By 30 April 1853 the company was meeting twice a week "at their Hall, 90 Meeting-street."<sup>4</sup> They elected their first set of officers and noncommissioned officers on 13 May 1853.<sup>5</sup> The Rifle Guard's first public appearance as a unit was on 23 June 1853, when they paraded with 40 privates and a full quota of officers and NCO's. They received arms from the state on 2 July and paraded again on 4 July.<sup>6</sup> A week later, the company had split into two: the Meagher Rifle Guard, commanded as before by Capt. Thomas Divine; and the Meagher Guard, commanded by George Sergent, the former first lieutenant of the Meagher Rifle Guard.<sup>7</sup> The cause of the split is unknown; it may have been a personality clash, political differences, or perhaps the company had exceeded the maximum strength of 100 members under South Carolina militia law. On 22 July the Meagher Guard was inspected and became an official part of the volunteer militia, and on the next day its officers received their commissions.<sup>8</sup> Captain Sergent, First Lieutenant Edward Daly, and all the other original officers and noncoms were born in Ireland, as were most of the privates. The company initially was attached to the 1st Artillery Regiment, S.C. Militia, but was intended from the first to be a rifle company.<sup>9</sup> On 3 August, Capt. Sergent and Lt. Daly attended a national Irish-American celebration in Boston on the occasion of Meagher's thirtieth birthday.<sup>10</sup> The presentation of a flag (see *The Flag* pg. 27) an important event for any volunteer militia unit, took place on 10 November at Military Hall on Wentworth Street, headquarters of the company and of the 4th Brigade South Carolina Militia. Capt. Sergent and Sgt. R. F. Farrell, the color bearer, made speeches recalling the valor of freedom-



# ER GUARD

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**Edward McCrady, Jr., captain of the Meagher Guard, 1860-1861, as he looked in 1892. (Cyclopedia of Eminent and Representative Men of the Carolinas)**

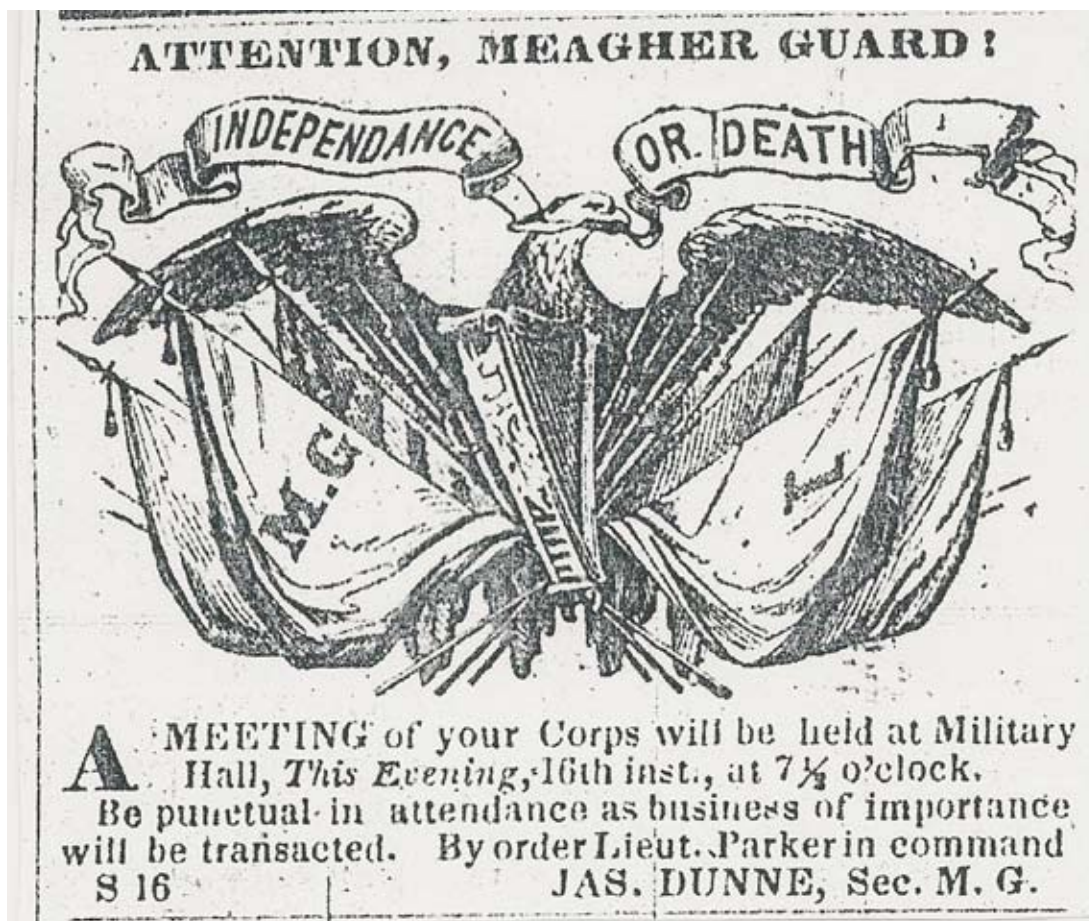
loving South Carolinians and Irishmen through the ages, and pledging the company's support for "the sacred cause of Ireland's independence and freedom."<sup>11</sup>

The company settled into a regular routine with monthly meetings and monthly drills. An additional drill was held before each parade, which included annually one battalion parade and one regimental parade, "four other parades of no fixed dates," and four company events: 13 January, the company's anniversary, which was the date of T. F. Meagher's 1852 escape from exile in Australia; St. Patrick's Day; May Day; and Independence Day.<sup>12</sup> Volunteer militia companies were social as well as military organizations; each of the Guards' four annual celebrations featured a catered dinner followed by speeches, numerous toasts accompanied by music, and plenty of "choice wine" and "Irish gruel" (whiskey punch).<sup>13</sup> The annual parade on the first of May was followed by an excursion across

Charleston Harbor to Mount Pleasant, where members and their ladies dined and danced, and, unique among the Charleston volunteer companies, the women had a target shoot with "parlor pistols."<sup>14</sup> The men had target shoots as well: company competitions on their anniversary and on St. Patrick's Day (before the banquet and its many toasts, of course) and a battalion contest later in the spring, firing at a range of 80 yards.<sup>15</sup> Prizes for the best shots included "a massive Silver Cup," "a magnificent Tankard," and "a Gold Patent Lever Watch" for the men, and "reticules, card cases, [and] fans" for the ladies.<sup>16</sup> Probably the most challenging activity was the brigade review held every year or two, at which the rifle companies had to show their mastery of battalion skirmish drill as well as close-order drill.<sup>17</sup> In short, volunteer militia duty was pleasant, although not entirely free from danger--three members of Charleston's German militia companies died of heatstroke following the Fourth of July parade in 1860!<sup>18</sup>

At the end of 1853 the Guards became part of a new volunteer Battalion of Rifles attached to Charleston's 16th Infantry Regiment, S.C. Militia. The only battalion of its kind in the state, it was armed entirely with rifled weapons and trained extensively as skirmishers. The original companies of the rifle battalion were, in order of seniority, the Washington Light Infantry, Moultrie Guard, German Riflemen, and Meagher Guard.<sup>19</sup> The battalion's first public appearance was at a brigade drill and review by the governor on 8 February 1854, where they demonstrated skirmish drill "most admirably" and showed their proficiency in "handling that peculiarly American and Southern weapon, the rifle."<sup>20</sup> Edward McCrady, Jr., who would lead the Meagher Guard as a captain in 1861, was the battalion's first adjutant, and was elected major commanding the battalion when the original major resigned in 1855.<sup>21</sup> Serious about improving the militia's effectiveness, McCrady drilled all officers and NCO's of the battalion twice a month, published articles on militia reform, and in 1859 would be appointed by the General Assembly to a commission for revising the state's militia law.<sup>22</sup> The major, a successful young attorney, was a fourth-generation Irish-American<sup>23</sup> with a pugnacious attitude, whether because of his Celtic roots or his touchy Southern sense of honor. In 1857 he was court-martialed and reprimanded for assembling his battalion at



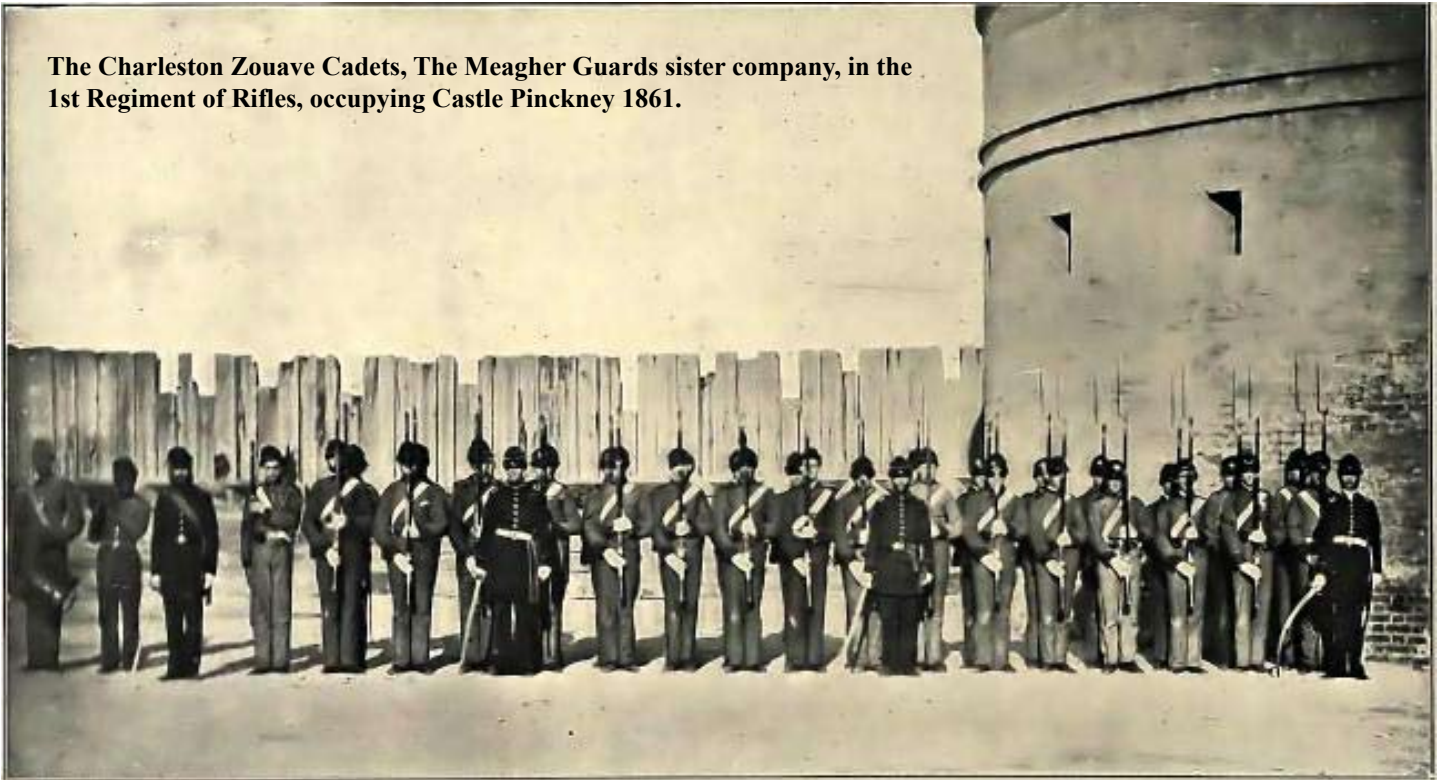


The company "device" used in newspaper announcements featured the American eagle and Irish harp. The "1" on the flag stood at first for 1st Artillery, then 1st Rifle Battalion, then 1st Rifle Regiment as the regimental assignment changed through the years. (*Charleston Daily Courier*, 16 Sept. 1853)

a different place than the one ordered by the colonel of the 16th Regiment.<sup>24</sup> This situation was alleviated later that year when the legislature made the rifle battalion independent of the 16th Regiment.<sup>25</sup> In December 1859 the General Assembly redesignated the Battalion of Rifles as the 1st Regiment of Rifles, although it had only six companies. (Besides the original four companies, the Palmetto Riflemen had been added in 1858 and the Carolina Light Infantry in 1859.) In the February 1860 election for colonel of the new regiment, McCrady lost by 13 votes, but protested that he really won because two companies had allowed honorary members to cast votes exceeding the legal limit of 100 men per company; if the excess votes were disqualified, he would have won by 13 votes. Even though the declared winner, Lewis M. Hatch, declined to accept the colonelcy because of the controversy, McCrady insisted that he must be vindicated in the courts as the real winner. He demanded that Brigadier General James Simons of the 4th Brigade S.C. Militia be court-martialed for refusing to declare McCrady the true winner. After Major General John Schnierle refused to call a court martial, McCrady appealed to Governor William H. Gist as commander-in-chief of the militia.<sup>26</sup> Gist ruled against McCrady and further stated that "by the act of the Legislature creating a Rifle Regiment, the offices of all the field officers were vacated." Therefore McCrady not only was not a colonel, he was no longer even a major!<sup>27</sup> After trying to plead his case in the civil courts, McCrady finally gave up and resigned as major on 2 October 1860. He admitted that it was unwise to delay further the organization of the rifle regiment as the election of Lincoln and secession of South Carolina looked increasingly likely.<sup>28</sup>

McCrady was not without a command for long. Edward Daly had resigned as captain of the Meagher Guard in September 1859,<sup>29</sup> and the company had been without a captain for over a year. Militia officers were not promoted automatically when there was a vacancy; elections were necessary, and there had been some problem with previous attempts to hold an election for captain. McCrady was unanimously elected to that office on 8 November 1860, two days after the presidential election made secession a foregone conclusion.<sup>30</sup> Like Captain Daly before him, McCrady took pride in demonstrating "the efficiency of his command ... in the various and difficult evolutions of HARDEE'S Tactics," and he made a point of showing off the company's drill in front of the *Charleston Courier* office the day he became captain. The newspaper complimented the company for "the

The Charleston Zouave Cadets, The Meagher Guards sister company, in the 1st Regiment of Rifles, occupying Castle Pinckney 1861.



zeal and spirit with which they have recently undertaken and performed special drills,” and proclaimed that the Meagher Guard would never run, “unless, perhaps, they run after an enemy on the favorite double-quick time.”<sup>31</sup> Extra drills were the order of the day for all of Charleston’s volunteer companies, as the thought began to sink in that they might soon have tougher duty than holiday parades.

### From Secession to Fort Sumter’s Fall

The 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of Rifles was at long last organized with the unanimous election of field officers on 5 December 1860: Colonel J. Johnston Pettigrew, formerly first lieutenant of the Carolina Light Infantry; Lieutenant Colonel John L. Branch, formerly an enlisted man in the Washington Light Infantry; and Major Ellison Capers, an instructor at the Citadel military academy.<sup>32</sup> Pettigrew, North Carolina born, was a brilliant scholar and a military enthusiast, educated at Chapel Hill, where he was first in his class, and at the University of Berlin, where he applied unsuccessfully for a commission in the Prussian army. Moving to Charleston to work in his cousin’s law firm, Pettigrew served briefly in the state legislature, was aide-de-camp to the governor in 1856-1858 with the rank of lieutenant colonel of militia, and was appointed senior military aide to the governor when Francis W. Pickens took that office on 16 December 1860.<sup>33</sup>

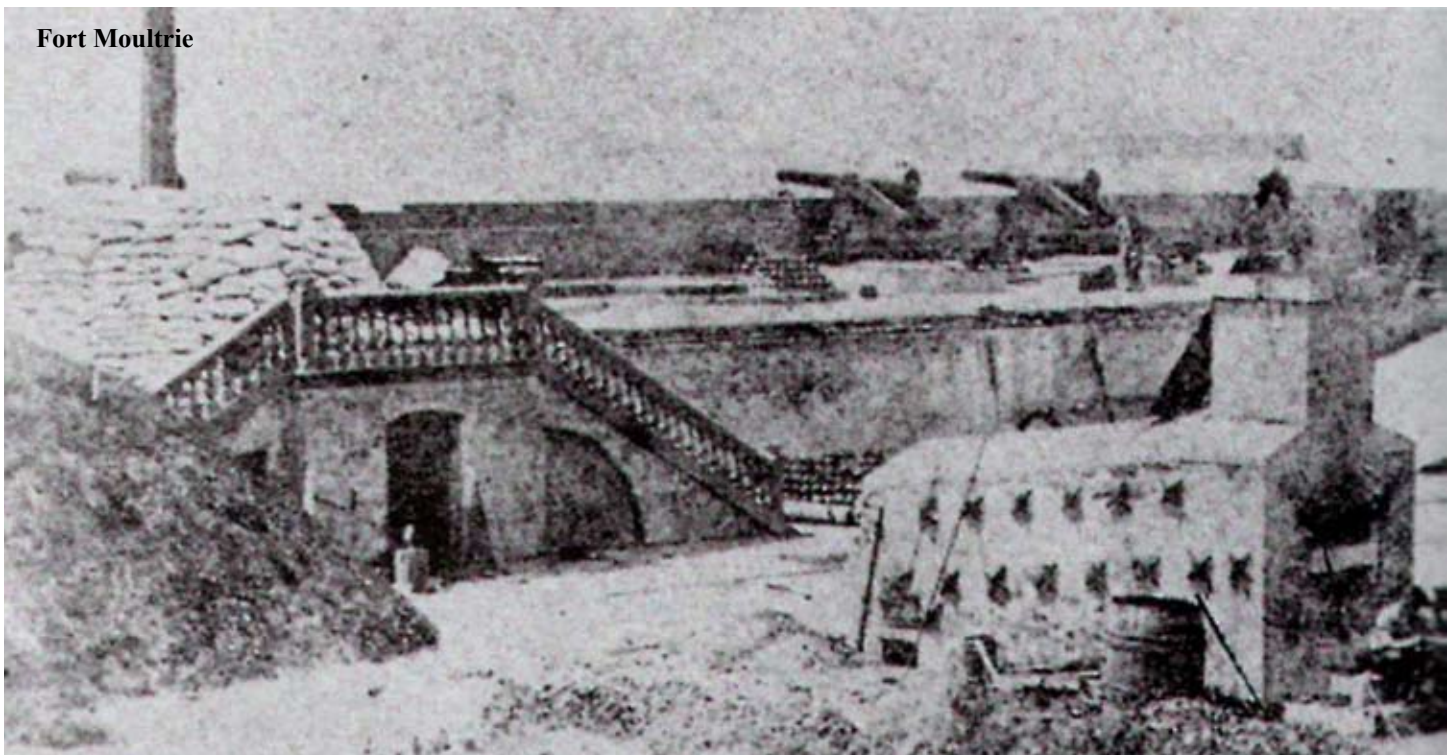
Col. Pettigrew scheduled the first regimental parade under his command for the fateful day of 20 December 1860, when South Carolina left the Union. The Meagher Guard turned out eighty strong. As the *Charleston Mercury* described it, “The Colonel then exercised his splendid command in a variety of battalion evolutions. The deployments, together with the passing from ‘battalion in line of battle’ into close column—by company and by division—were performed with a degree of promptness which reflected much credit upon the officers and companies.” After a break for lunch, the regiment formed square and Pettigrew read them the Ordinance of Secession which had just been passed, “which was received with tremendous cheering.” The regiment then passed in review before the governor, “first in quick time, and then in double-quick time,” and was dismissed.<sup>34</sup> Active service came only a week later. There was an uneasy peace between the new republic of South Carolina and the Federal forts in Charleston Harbor while the state attempted to negotiate a peaceful transfer of the forts to state control. One of the masons making repairs to Fort Moultrie, J. Kenny (or Kenney), was a member of the Meagher Guard and kept Pettigrew informed about happenings in the fort. On the night of 26 December, Major Robert Anderson, commander of the 86-man Federal garrison of the harbor forts, spiked Fort Moultrie’s cannon, burned the gun carriages, and stealthily moved his troops by boat to the more easily defended Fort Sumter. Kenny

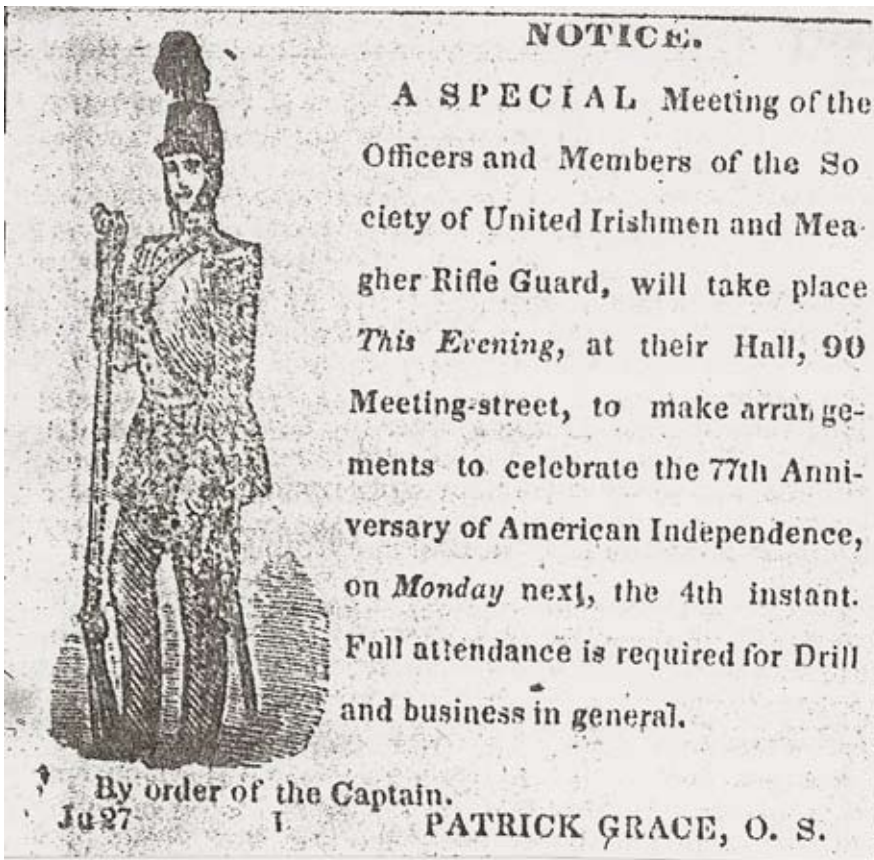


brought the news to Capt. McCrady as soon as he could reach Charleston on the morning of 27 December, and the two rushed to inform Pettigrew and Governor Pickens.<sup>35</sup> In South Carolina's eyes, Anderson had committed an act of war; Pickens believed that President Buchanan had promised the state that the garrison would not be moved or reinforced. However, Anderson had secretly been given permission to occupy another position if he thought an attack was imminent.<sup>36</sup> The governor sent Pettigrew and Maj. Capers to Fort Sumter to protest Anderson's move and demand that he return to Fort Moultrie, a demand that he courteously refused.

The next step was for South Carolina troops to occupy the other harbor forts. Pettigrew received immediate orders to take Castle Pinckney, an old fort on an island in the inner harbor. As Pickens described it, he told Pettigrew, "I want two hundred picked men for a perilous undertaking.... Are you ready?" He was off before I could hardly give another direction, to do his work." The fort was believed to be mined, but Pettigrew did not hesitate.<sup>37</sup> He summoned from their workplaces the men of three companies: the Meagher Guard, Washington Light Infantry, and Carolina Light Infantry. They donned uniforms and grabbed weapons, mustered on the Citadel Green surrounded by "anxious men and crying women," and marched silently to the docks. At 4:30 P.M. on 27 December they boarded the patrol boat *Nina* for the short ride to Castle Pinckney. Finding the fort's gate locked, Pettigrew and some of his men used ladders to scale the wall while the rest of the detachment scanned the parapet for any sign of defenders. Members of the Meagher Guard were, in McCrady's words, "the first to tread the forbidden ground of United States territory." Inside the fort were 34 unarmed civilian workmen, an elderly ordnance sergeant and his family, and Richard K. Meade, Jr., a lieutenant of engineers from Virginia (no relation to George G. Meade, future Union commander at Gettysburg). As Pettigrew read aloud his orders from the governor, Lt. Meade at first ignored him, then refused to acknowledge South Carolina's right to occupy the fort, and refused to accept parole on the grounds that the state was not an enemy power. Pettigrew then allowed Meade and the workmen to go to Fort Sumter. The colonel reported in his typically chivalrous way, "I have sent to town Ordnance Sergeant Skilling and his family.... I have treated him as kindly as was in my power, because I thought it unworthy of the cause to war upon isolated individuals."<sup>38</sup> Later that evening, elements of the First Artillery, S.C. Militia, occupied the empty Fort Moultrie.

Thirty-five men of the Meagher Guard remained at Castle Pinckney as part of the state garrison. Pettigrew insisted that the troops take their duty at the fort seriously, issuing orders that boats would not be allowed to land without "express permission"; sightseers risked being shot.<sup>39</sup> Duty soon turned deadly serious; on 8 January 1861, a 15-year-old member of the Meagher Guard on night sentry duty accidentally shot and killed a private of the Carolina Light Infantry who was approaching his post. The first blood of the conflict had been spilled, and Pettigrew





Meeting notice of the Meagher Rifle Guard, Charleston Daily Courier, 27 June 1863

himself “slept between the two companies to prevent a fight.”<sup>40</sup> On 9 January came a less bloody but more significant event, which many call the first shot of the war. A state battery on Morris Island at the south side of the harbor entrance fired on the *Star of the West*, a merchant ship attempting to bring reinforcements and supplies to Fort Sumter. The steamer suffered no casualties, but turned back to sea.

Sometime between 14 and 18 January, the Meagher Guard, including members who had garrisoned Castle Pinckney and those who had remained in the city, moved to Cummings Point at the north end of Morris Island. There they patrolled the beach and helped build earthwork batteries. McCrady recalled this period as the company’s “first hard service, a service in some respects as hard as any during the war.”<sup>41</sup> A reporter wrote that the troops on Morris Island lived on “salt pork, hominy, bacon, rice and coffee. The reveille beats at 6 o’clock, and they are kept hard at work all day, building sand

forts.... Many of them, I understand, are suffering from diseases incident to exposure, although the ladies of Charleston are profuse in their donations to husbands, brothers and lovers.”<sup>42</sup> Since the Meagher Guard was largely made up of construction workers, it was probably not the hard work and outdoor living that made service on the island difficult for them, but the unaccustomed stress of being in a potential combat situation for weeks at a time. Another possible stress for the Irishmen of the Meagher Guard was the knowledge that half of the enlisted men of the Federal garrison were Irish-born; ten of these Irishmen had first enlisted at Fort Moultrie,<sup>43</sup> and the rest, before secession, had doubtless been familiar sights in the taverns and shops of Charleston’s Irish neighborhoods. Rumors ran wild: one week the newspapers were confident that Anderson was about to evacuate Fort Sumter, the next week they announced that a giant raft was being built to carry troops to storm the fort. Private Anthony Riecke, a member of another company of the First Rifles, later described guard duty at Cummings Point as his scariest experience of the entire war:

*the post there was over a mile from the company and fifty yards from the nearest sentinel, with the nights rainy and dark as pitch ... the enemy within three quarters of a mile from us and a watch of four hours on a stretch, almost enough to bring a feeling of fear over a brave man, how much more so than over a novice as I was then, to whom every billow seemed a boat.* <sup>44</sup>

Indeed, in late January and early February there were several reports that boats from Fort Sumter were reconnoitering Morris Island, and sentries fired at a boat (probably an imaginary one) on at least one occasion. The winter was not a mild one, and false alarms sometimes made the troops “turn out and remain perhaps 3 or 4 hours mid sleet and rain at the battery.”<sup>45</sup> On 14 February the Guards, 55 strong, were relieved from duty on Morris Island and returned to the city. After McCrady “thanked them for their exemplary behavior and for their willingness to endure hardship in the cause of the State,” they were dismissed for a brief return to civilian life, although they continued to drill three evenings a week at Military Hall.<sup>46</sup>



All seven companies of the Rifle Regiment (including the newest company, the Charleston Zouave Cadets) gathered on 25 February at Military Hall, crowded with spectators, for the presentation of a regimental flag provided by “the daughters of Charleston.” The banner, “made of the finest white ribbed Parisian silk, with gilt fringe,” bore the state seal on one side and the name of the regiment on the other. Col. Pettigrew spoke to the regiment about the flag: “No sacrilegious hands must touch its sacred folds. Pure and spotless we have received it, and pure and spotless we must maintain it.... With the blessing of Providence we will plant it on the walls of Fort Sumter.” Pettigrew entrusted the flag to Sgt. John Graham of the Meagher Guard as regimental color bearer, and Governor Pickens made a speech praising the regiment and its colonel.<sup>47</sup> The regiment resumed active duty the next morning and was posted in the village of Secessionville on the south side of James Island, guarding against a possible back-door attack on Morris Island or Charleston. Private Riecke remembered this as “a very pleasant time,” with the companies quartered in houses, good weather, and just enough drill to break the monotony.<sup>48</sup>

On 6 March the regiment took a steamer to the summer resort community of Moultrieville on Sullivan’s Island. There the troops were quartered in beach houses near Fort Moultrie and in the Moultrie House hotel, which served as regimental headquarters. The weather was not ideal for beachgoers; two inches of snow fell on 19 March. Drill and guard duty occupied most of the soldiers’ day, but they found ways to entertain themselves off duty. Members of the Moultrie Guard covered a donkey with a white sheet and sent it running through the camp of Col. Gregg’s 1st South Carolina Volunteers, who supposedly thought it was a ghost. The prank resulted in a regimental court martial.<sup>49</sup> Other off-duty activities were less humorous. Members of the Charleston Light Dragoons broke through a wall in a house where they were quartered, and members of the 1st South Carolina Regular Infantry broke into and robbed two houses. Disgruntled members of the Rifle Regiment complained in a letter to the *Charleston Courier* that the unit “is kept in the field as though there were none others to do the duty,” even though there were new volunteer regiments ready and eager for active service. The island was under martial law and unauthorized distribution of alcohol was prohibited; according to orders, “any liquor brought in the steamer in violation of this order will be seized and poured into the salt water on the spot.” Col. Pettigrew complained to the state adjutant general that a Mrs. McKewn, “a notorious character” who had been banished “for selling liquor to the troops,” had been allowed to return to the island. He concluded his letter: “it is not altogether fair to the troops themselves to be held subject to the severe penalties of military rule, while no effort is made to save them from temptation.” With or without temptation from whiskey, the Meagher Guard held a St. Patrick’s Day celebration, full of “song and sentiment,” on 17 March, inviting the regiment’s field and staff officers and members of other companies.<sup>50</sup>

At least food was plentiful. The Meagher Guard may not have dined as royally as their comrades of the Washington Light Infantry, who ordered “Champagne, madeira, and sherry [authorized, or smuggled in contrary to orders?], pate de foie gras, and French green peas, sardines and Spanish olives, Spanish cigars, and other luxuries” from a Charleston grocer.<sup>51</sup> Still, troops on the islands were well supplied, not only with the inevitable salt pork and hardtack (“non-crackable crackers,” one South Carolina soldier called them), but also with fresh spring vegetables donated from the city market.<sup>52</sup>

On 30 March the Sullivan’s Island garrison welcomed visiting dignitaries. Brigadier General P. G. T. Beauregard, who had taken command of the troops around Charleston in the name of the Confederate States government; and members of the State Convention, which had acted as the legislature since secession, toured the island fortifications. “Cheer after cheer went up from the troops quartered in the Moultrie House,” the batteries “in charge of the Vigilant Rifles and the Rifle Regiment” fired a salute, and later “the Rifle Regiment was drawn up in line on the beach and presented a brilliant and imposing spectacle.”<sup>53</sup>

Soon it was evident that the long-rumored Federal relief expedition was on its way to Fort Sumter. On 8 April the Rifle Regiment, along with the Charleston Light Dragoons and a company of the German Artillery of Charleston, pitched tents at the northeast end of Sullivan’s Island, where a battery was constructed at Breach Inlet to prevent the enemy from attacking Fort Moultrie and the other island batteries from the rear. Pettigrew doubled the number of sentries and established a picket guard across the inlet on Long Island (now Isle of Palms). The tension finally broke at 4 A.M. on 12 April. After Anderson refused an ultimatum from Beauregard, the Confederate batteries around the harbor opened fire. Fort Sumter, with much fewer cannon and men, replied at daylight with a slow and deliberate fire. Some of the Union relief ships had arrived offshore, and their “top

masts could be distinctly seen from our camp,” Riecke recalled. “We have hopes that they will land and give us a brush,” wrote Private Samuel Burges of the Moultrie Guard. Much to the Confederates’ puzzlement, the Federal ships did not attempt to enter the harbor or to land the reinforcements they had brought. The Rifle Regiment would be spectators of the battle, not active participants. Orders confined them to camp, but many ignored the orders by climbing trees or walking up the beach for a better view. “We could see the shot strike the beach and ricochet along the sand,” wrote A. Toomer Porter of the Washington Light Infantry. Some members of that company went into the tower of the Moultrie House, which soon drew Federal fire, causing a quick evacuation of the building. Twenty-four of the most enthusiastic members of the regiment got all the way to the west end of the island and took a boat under fire (fortunately without casualties) to the Floating Battery, a four-gun armored barge bombarding Sumter.<sup>54</sup>

The Rifle Regiment’s greatest suffering during the two-day bombardment, according to Riecke, was that they were ordered to sleep on their arms, “that is: we had to lie down for the night in our uniform, with the cartridge box and 40 rounds of ammunition on our belt around our waist, and the rifle in our arms, the uncomfortableness of which it will not be hard to convince any one of.” On 13 April, the second day of the bombardment, the barracks of Fort Sumter caught fire. Despite having to fight the blaze, the garrison still courageously fired their cannon, bringing spontaneous cheers from their Confederate opponents.<sup>55</sup> Later that day Anderson surrendered. Before leaving the fort, he ordered an artillery salute fired. One charge went off prematurely, killing one and mortally wounding one of the garrison—the only deaths in the two days of fighting.

### Through the War

On 20 April 1861 the Meagher Guard left Sullivan’s Island, paraded through cheering crowds in Charleston, and was discharged from duty, though the company unanimously voted to continue serving under Col. Pettigrew if allowed to do so.<sup>56</sup> Pettigrew planned to organize a new regiment of “select” volunteers for service in Virginia, which had seceded on 17 April. The new unit was intended to be “a Rifle Regiment, in which the men are to combine the accuracy of American sharp-shooters with the gymnastic vigor and skill of the Zouaves,” and would accept companies from Charleston and elsewhere in the state. Recruits were assured that the war would likely be over before their one-year enlistment was up.<sup>57</sup> However, the Confederate government in Montgomery refused at the time to accept regiments, preferring to enroll individual companies and then appoint field officers. This was unacceptable to Pettigrew, so the volunteer regiment never came to fruition. Pettigrew went to Virginia as a private in the Washington Light Infantry Volunteers of Hampton’s Legion. In July he would be elected colonel of the 12<sup>th</sup> North Carolina Volunteers (22<sup>nd</sup> N.C. Troops), and would serve with North Carolina troops until his death soon after Gettysburg.<sup>58</sup>

While plans to organize the new regiment were faltering, the Meagher Guards were shocked to learn that their namesake, Thomas Meagher, was recruiting Irishmen in New York “to help Lincoln in the subjugation of the South.” The Charleston company condemned Meagher for “taking arms against us in this most unholy war in support of usurpation and oppression,” struck his name off their roll of honorary members, and on 9 May changed the unit’s name to Emerald Light Infantry, named for the Emerald Isle of their ancestors.<sup>59</sup>

A more successful attempt to organize a volunteer unit began soon after. On 7 June the “Irish Volunteers for the War” elected McCrady as captain, Michael P. Parker as first lieutenant, Thomas P. Ryan as second lieutenant, and James Armstrong as junior second lieutenant.<sup>60</sup> Except for Ryan, who was from the older Irish Volunteers militia company,<sup>61</sup> all these officers came from the Emerald Light Infantry (former Meagher Guard). Although the new company may have included members from all three of the city’s Irish militia units (Emerald Light Infantry, Irish Volunteers, and Montgomery Guard), the *Charleston Mercury* stated that it was “formed” from the Emerald Light Infantry.<sup>62</sup> The Irish Volunteers for the War mustered into Confederate service on 1 July (according to McCrady, they were the first company to enlist for the duration of the war) and left on 22 July for Richmond, where they joined Col. Maxcy Gregg’s 1<sup>st</sup> South Carolina Volunteers as Company K.<sup>63</sup> They served with that regiment in Gregg’s /McGowan’s Brigade of the Army of Northern Virginia from the Seven Days to Appomattox.<sup>64</sup>

Another new company, the Sarsfield Light Infantry (named for a 17<sup>th</sup>-century Irish general), organized as part of the 1st Rifles, S.C. Militia, on 14 August 1861; at least three officers, including Captain William N.



Heyward, and two NCO's of this company were from the Emerald Light Infantry, so it is likely that many of the privates also came from that company.<sup>65</sup> The remainder of the Emerald Light Infantry elected new officers and NCO's on 23 August. Michael Rooney, a former sergeant in the Meagher Guard, became captain, but was replaced in January 1862 by William A. Courtenay, former ensign in the Washington Light Infantry and son of an Irish immigrant.<sup>66</sup> In October 1861 the Emerald Light Infantry returned to Castle Pinckney to convert it back to a fort after it had been used to house prisoners taken at First Manassas.<sup>67</sup>

The 1st Rifles were called back to active duty on 9 November 1861; Federals had captured Port Royal and Beaufort, S.C., and it was feared they would soon attack Charleston from the south. The regiment camped near the city for a few days and then occupied posts on Johns Island and Wadmalaw Island, from which they beat a hasty retreat on 17 December, fearing that Federal troops were landing behind them. Even though the regiment, with just over 300 men, had nine wagons and carts to transport their baggage, they still left much of their personal gear behind. The regiment returned to its posts and was called out a couple of times on rumors of approaching Union forces, but fired hardly a shot in anger. Following this inglorious campaign, the regiment returned to Charleston and was relieved from duty on 6 February 1862.<sup>68</sup>

With a Federal army on its doorstep, the state legislature voted to scrap the old militia system. Members of the Charleston militia regiments would be required to enlist for twelve months as "Local Defense Troops" or face conscription beginning in March. The volunteer militia companies scrambled to reorganize. Many had to merge to attain the minimum strength to be accepted as a twelve-month company. The five Charleston Irish companies hoped to form an Irish Battalion. On 24 February the Emerald Light Infantry consolidated with the newest Irish company, the Jasper Greens (named for Sergeant William Jasper, Irish-American hero of the Battle of Fort Moultrie in 1776), to form Company No. 6, Local Defense Troops. The consolidated company elected W. A. Courtenay as captain and Patrick Walsh as second lieutenant, both from the Emerald Light Infantry. The other elected officers declined to accept commissions.<sup>69</sup> Neither Company No. 6 nor Company No. 7, formed from the Sarsfield Light Infantry and the Montgomery Guard (named for Richard Montgomery, Irish-American general in the Revolutionary War) was able to recruit to minimum strength, so the two companies merged at the end of March under Courtenay's command. Even the twice-merged company failed to complete its organization. By 29 April, Courtenay was applying for a commission as quartermaster of a camp of instruction, with a letter of recommendation from fellow officers saying that "owing to circumstances entirely beyond the control of Capt. Courtenay he has been unable to form his company."<sup>70</sup>

The only remaining Irish militia company in Charleston was the oldest, the Irish Volunteers, which became Company C of the Charleston Battalion (1<sup>st</sup> Battalion S.C. Volunteers) after the Irish Battalion failed to organize. Some members of the former Meagher Guard/Emerald Light Infantry may have joined this company; some members joined other companies of the Charleston Battalion as it organized in March 1862, or other units organizing that spring; while still other members took their chances with the draft. The Charleston Battalion enlisted for the war in April-May 1862, serving around Charleston at the battles of Secessionville in June 1862, Battery Wagner on Morris Island in July 1863, and the defense of Fort Sumter. In September 1863 the battalion merged with the 1st Battalion South Carolina Sharpshooters to become the 27<sup>th</sup> Regiment S.C. Volunteers, with the Irish Volunteers as Company H. The regiment went to Virginia with Hagood's Brigade in 1864, fighting at Drewry's Bluff, Cold Harbor, Deep Bottom, and Weldon Railroad. They moved to the Wilmington area at the end of 1864, fought at Fort Anderson and Bentonville, and surrendered with Johnston's army.<sup>71</sup>

### **The Namesake: Thomas Francis Meagher**

Why was a Confederate military unit named for a future Union general? Thomas F. Meagher (1823-1867) was a hero to Irish nationalists worldwide in the 1850s.<sup>1</sup> The son of an Irish Catholic member of the British Parliament, he was one of the leaders of a movement in the 1840s known as "Young Ireland" or, ironically, "the Confederates." In fiery speeches, the young lawyer advocated armed struggle for Ireland's independence from Britain. In 1848, while hundreds of thousands of Irish were dying in the Great Famine, and revolution swept many European capitals, Meagher and his colleagues called for rebellion. As one Irish historian described it, "never in all history was an insurrection conducted so ineptly."<sup>2</sup> There was little planning, and the only "battle" involved a mob of rebels who surrounded a party of policemen in a farmhouse but eventually dispersed after suffering a couple of

casualties. Meagher, who was far from the fighting, and several fellow conspirators were soon arrested. They were found guilty of treason and sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. Queen Victoria commuted the sentences to banishment for life to Tasmania, Australia.

Meagher escaped from Tasmania on a fishing boat in January 1852 and made his way to New York. Welcomed as a hero by Irishmen and non-Irishmen alike, he used his celebrity status as a lecturer traveling throughout the United States, in an era when speeches were a popular form of entertainment. His first St. Patrick's Day in America, 1853, was spent in Charleston addressing the Hibernian Society and the United Irishmen.<sup>3</sup> He returned to Charleston at least four times in the next five years, including a fundraiser for the Calhoun Monument Association in 1855, where, at the request of the Meagher Guard, he spoke to "one of the largest audiences ever assembled in Charleston."<sup>4</sup> On his final visit to Charleston in 1859, he participated in the Meagher Guard anniversary celebration. His speech to the company was printed in full, complete with audience reactions, in a local newspaper. An excerpt gives an idea of his speaking style and the Charleston Irishmen's enthusiasm for him:

*The occasion, too, which brings us together, is especially gratifying to me. [Hear, hear.] Not, indeed, that it chronicles my abrupt departure, precisely this day seven years ago, from the immaculate and aromatic island of Tasmania [considerable laughter and cheers], to which, with half a dozen other invalids I had been sent for the benefit of my health, [renewed laughter and cheering,] but that it commemorates the organization of a military company, the members of which did me the honor to write my name in letters of gold upon their shield and ensign. [Loud and continued cheering]<sup>5</sup>*

In 1855 Meagher was admitted to practice law in New York, and in 1859 he served on the defense team in the celebrated trial of future Union general Dan Sickles, who was acquitted in the killing of his wife's lover. In 1856 Meagher founded the *New York Irish News*, a weekly paper providing news from the old country, reports from Irish-American organizations including the Meagher Guard, and editorials by Meagher with a Democratic and pro-Southern slant. He declared, for example, that "the peculiar institution of negro servitude is not a jot worse than that of white labor."<sup>6</sup> Even in early April 1861 he told friends, "In this controversy, my sympathies are entirely with the South!" But after the North was enraged by the firing on Fort Sumter, Meagher decided he had to fight for the Union. On 23 April 1861 he announced that he was raising "a company of Irish Zouaves" for the 69th Regiment New York State Militia. His subsequent career is well known; after First Manassas he was commissioned a brigadier general, raised the Irish Brigade, and led them until his resignation just after the Battle of Chancellorsville. He returned to duty at the end of 1863, serving without distinction in the western theater. After the war he was appointed governor of Montana Territory, led militia in an unsuccessful campaign against the Sioux, and drowned after falling, jumping, or being pushed off a riverboat, depending on whose version you believe.

### **The Men of the Meagher Guard**

No roster of the Meagher Guard has been located, but some biographical information is available about the commissioned officers and some of the enlisted men. The captain and first lieutenant were from wealthy families as one might expect for a volunteer militia company, but some other officers as well as most enlisted men were from a distinctly working-class background. As historian David T. Gleeson says of Irishmen in the antebellum South, "Most of them came as refugees of famine in Ireland to reside in the most unsanitary sections of southern towns and perform.... some of the roughest work, tasks too dangerous for slaves." Apart from the captain, first lieutenant, and first sergeant, it is unlikely that any of the Meagher Guard came from slaveholding families; most of the members identified in the census did not even own their own homes. However, some of these Irish Southerners were skilled artisans or owners of small businesses.<sup>1</sup>

**Captain Edward McCrady, Jr.**, as noted earlier in this issue, was a lawyer from an Irish-American family that had been in Charleston since before the Revolution. He was born in 1833, graduated from the College of Charleston, and joined his father's law practice. After serving as major of the Rifle Battalion and then as captain of the Meagher Guard, in June 1861 he raised the "Irish Volunteers for the War," which became Company K, 1<sup>st</sup>



South Carolina Volunteers (hereafter referred to as Company K). He was promoted to major of that regiment in December 1861 and to lieutenant colonel about the time of the Seven Days' Battles. Though bedridden with typhoid fever, he insisted on returning to duty during the Battle of Gaines' Mill and was hospitalized again for several weeks afterward. Suffering a severe head wound at Second Manassas and injury from a falling tree in camp near Fredericksburg in January 1863, he was on sick leave for most of that year, rejoining his regiment for the Mine Run campaign but leaving again due to disability. He commanded the camp of instruction at Madison, Florida, for the last year of the war. After the war he returned to his law firm, served in the state House of Representatives and as major general of militia, was instrumental in preserving the state's Confederate records, and wrote four notable books on the colonial and Revolutionary history of South Carolina. He died in 1903.<sup>2</sup>

**First Lieutenant William N. Heyward** was probably William Nathaniel Heyward, born 1841, who had no apparent Irish connections at all, coming from a planter family of English descent that had been in South Carolina since 1672.<sup>3</sup> Lieutenant Heyward was elected to that office in June 1860.<sup>4</sup> He commanded the company as a lieutenant in the summer of 1861, following Capt. McCrady's resignation to take command of the "Irish Volunteers for the War."<sup>5</sup> In August 1861, Heyward was elected captain of the new Sarsfield Light Infantry, and retained that rank when that company consolidated with the Montgomery Guard in February 1862 to form "Company No. 7."<sup>6</sup>

**Second Lieutenant Michael P. Parker** was a carpenter born in Dublin, Ireland, single, and age 28 in the 1860 census. Capt. McCrady wrote that Parker "had acquired an education beyond his circumstances. He was an able mathematician, and an excellent writer. I recollect that these qualities, his strict attention to duties, and his exact reports attracted the attention of Col. Pettigrew, who greatly relied upon him as an officer. In the camp he was a strict disciplinarian, and in the field there were none braver."<sup>7</sup> Parker had been elected third lieutenant of the Meagher Rifle Guard in 1853, and second lieutenant of the Meagher Guard when they split off from the original company later that year.<sup>8</sup> He was the only one of the company's original commissioned officers still serving in 1861, and was elected first lieutenant of Company K when it organized in June of that year.<sup>9</sup> He became captain of the company in January 1862 after McCrady was promoted to major. McCrady wrote that Parker "was wounded at [Second] Manassas, but did not leave the field. But at Sharpsburg, again he was wounded this time dreadfully. From this second wound he never recovered, but was retired, and for the last year or two of the war was provost marshal of Augusta, the duties of which he was just able to perform." Muster rolls show that after service as provost marshal, he was retired to the Invalid Corps in June 1864. He died shortly after the war from the effects of his wounds.<sup>10</sup>

**John McCarthy** was the third lieutenant or ensign (junior second lieutenant). The only man listed in the 1860 Charleston census with this name was a 40-year-old Irish-born laborer with a wife and five children. The birthplaces listed for the children indicate that the family moved from Ireland to South Carolina between 1843 and 1846.<sup>11</sup> McCarthy was elected ensign of the Meagher Guard in late 1858 or early 1859, and also held the position of paymaster of the 1<sup>st</sup> Rifles, effective June 1860.<sup>12</sup> He was elected second lieutenant of the Sarsfield Light Infantry in August 1861, and kept that rank in "Company No. 7" in February 1862.<sup>13</sup>

**James Armstrong, Jr.** was orderly sergeant (first sergeant) of the Meagher Guard. He was born in Philadelphia in 1842 to Irish immigrant parents who moved to Charleston a few years later.<sup>14</sup> Following his mother's death about 1851, he spent several years with relatives in Ireland. The 1860 Charleston census lists him as a clerk for his father, who was a "commission merchant" and owned three slaves. James was second sergeant when the company occupied Castle Pinckney, and was promoted to orderly sergeant by 18 January 1861.<sup>15</sup> He was elected junior second lieutenant of Company K at its organization in June 1861,<sup>16</sup> rising to first lieutenant in January 1862, commanding the company after Sharpsburg, and finally being promoted to captain in June 1864.<sup>17</sup> He survived wounds at Sharpsburg, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, Spotsylvania, and at Sutherland Station on 2 April 1865. With his right leg shattered, he was captured and hospitalized until March 1866 and was "the last Confederate soldier discharged from the Federal hospital in Washington." The leg troubled him for decades and had to be

amputated in 1920. Because of his service from the capture of Castle Pinckney until almost a year after Lee's surrender, he claimed to have been "the *first in*, and the *last out* of the war." His speaking talents made him a star of veterans' reunions and monument dedications. Armstrong was appointed harbor master of Charleston after the war. In 1877 Governor Wade Hampton commissioned him as colonel on his staff. He died in 1930.<sup>18</sup>

**Sergeant John Graham**, appointed as color sergeant of the First S.C. Rifles in February 1861,<sup>19</sup> appears in the 1860 census as owner of a tavern and boarding house, age 32, born in Ireland. He was married and had an 11-year-old son born in New York, indicating that the family immigrated from Ireland to New York before moving to Charleston.<sup>20</sup> He became third sergeant of the Sarsfield Light Infantry in August 1861.<sup>21</sup>

**Sergeant Bartholomew O'Connor** was one of the original members of the company. Born in Dublin, Ireland, he was elected in 1853 as fourth sergeant of the Meagher Rifle Guard and then, after the original company split, as second sergeant of the Meagher Guard. By 1856 he was orderly sergeant,<sup>22</sup> serving in that rank until he was replaced by James Armstrong around the beginning of 1861. It is not certain whether he continued to serve as a junior sergeant, as a private, or temporarily resigned from the company. He was reelected as first sergeant on 23 August 1861. One of the company's best marksmen, he won the battalion target competition in 1859.<sup>23</sup> The 1860 census lists him as a 30-year-old painter with a wife and two young girls who were probably stepchildren. Lt. Michael Parker lived in his household.<sup>24</sup>

**Sergeant Michael E. Rooney** is listed in the 1860 census as a single 25-year-old, born in Ireland, with the occupation of "Gas Maker"-- he worked at the plant that supplied the city with gas light.<sup>25</sup> He was elected captain when the Emerald Light Infantry reorganized in August 1861, but no longer held that office by the end of January 1862.<sup>26</sup>

**Corporal Michael Dunne** was fourth corporal of the Meagher Guard in 1856, and appears in the 1860 census as a 22-year-old single, Irish-born carpenter.<sup>27</sup> He enlisted as first corporal of Company K on 1 July 1861, was reduced to private sometime between the end of February and the end of October 1862, was wounded at an unspecified date, and survived the war.<sup>28</sup>

**Corporal John J. Furlong** held that rank in 1859 and 1860, and appears in the 1860 census as a 23-year-old plasterer, single and Irish-born.<sup>29</sup> He was first sergeant of the company in July 1861, after Sgt. Armstrong was commissioned in Company K.<sup>30</sup> In August 1861 he was elected third lieutenant of the Sarsfield Light Infantry, and retained that rank in "Company No. 7" when it was organized in February 1862.<sup>31</sup>

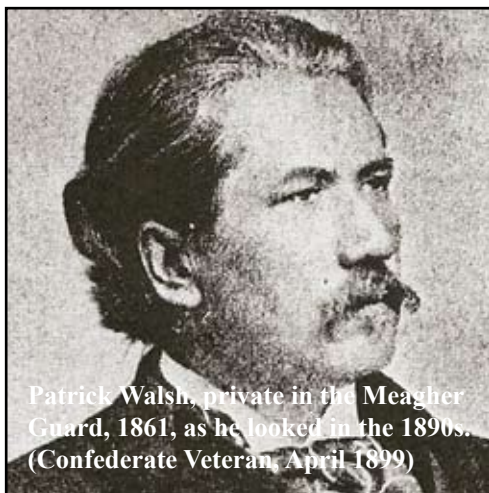
**Corporal J. E. Kenney** was probably the James Kenney listed in the 1860 census as a 34-year-old "moulder" (maker of bricks or architectural moldings), single and born in England (apparently of Irish ancestry).<sup>32</sup> This may be the same man as "John Kenny," remembered years later by Capt. McCrady as a mason and spy in Fort Moultrie before its evacuation by the Federals.<sup>33</sup>

**Corporal Thomas Sheridan** was an Irish-born carpenter, single and age 21 in the 1860 census. He was probably the "T. Sheridan" elected as third corporal of the Sarsfield Light Infantry in August 1861.<sup>34</sup> Private *John Birmingham*, age 20 in the 1860 census, was a plasterer's apprentice born in Ireland. He had been a member of the company since at least 1857.<sup>35</sup>

**Private Michael Kennedy** had a common Irish name; there were three Michael Kennedys in the 1860 Charleston census, all Irish-born. One was a porter, age 30; one was a laborer, age 30; and one was a laborer, age 45. "M. Kennedy" was elected second sergeant of the Emerald Light Infantry in August 1861.<sup>36</sup>

**Private James Malone** was listed in the 1860 census as a carpenter, age 22, born in Ireland.<sup>37</sup>





Patrick Walsh, private in the Meagher Guard, 1861, as he looked in the 1890s. (Confederate Veteran, April 1899)

**Private John O'Rourke** was a member of the company by 1859. His name does not appear in the 1860 Charleston census, although there is a listing for James O'Rourke, a bricklayer, age 25, born in Ireland, with a wife and two children. John O'Rourke enlisted in Company K on 25 June 1861 and was killed 27 June 1862 at Gaines' Mill.<sup>38</sup>

**Private George T. Prior** was listed in the 1860 census as a 16-year-old clerk born in New York, living in Charleston with his Irish-born father and his five New York-born siblings.<sup>39</sup>

**Private Patrick Walsh** was born in 1840 in Ballingary, County Limerick, Ireland, and came to Charleston with his family in 1852. He was a member of the company as early as 1859. Previously a printer's apprentice at the

*Charleston Courier*, in the fall of 1860 he was a student at Georgetown College in the District of Columbia, returning to South Carolina in time to join the company on Sullivan's Island before the bombardment of Ft. Sumter. By June 1861 he was serving as company secretary.<sup>40</sup> In August he was elected as third lieutenant, and in February 1862 as second lieutenant of the consolidated "Company No. 6." After the militia regiments disbanded in 1862, Walsh moved to Augusta, Georgia, and reentered the newspaper business, rising from printer to owner. He served as city councilman and mayor of Augusta, member of the state General Assembly, and briefly as U.S. Senator. He died in 1899.<sup>41</sup>

Other members of the Meagher Guard referred to in newspapers in 1860-1861, but not located in the 1860 census, include:

Private *John P. Daly*, who served as secretary of the company shortly after the fall of Fort Sumter.<sup>42</sup>

Private *T. J. Parker*, who served as company secretary in the autumn of 1860.<sup>43</sup>

Private *William Reynolds*.<sup>44</sup>

Other possible members of the Meagher Guard were the following soldiers of Company K, 1<sup>st</sup> S.C. Volunteers (Irish Volunteers for the War):

William Alexander  
Robert Anderson  
John Bateman  
Daniel Brereton  
James Brown  
James Burns  
Robert Burns  
Michael Byrd  
Daniel Callaghan  
Owen Callaghan  
John Carroll  
John J. Carroll  
Charles J. Carten  
John Casey  
Daniel Coffee  
William Colyer  
Michael Conway  
Patrick Cronan  
Patrick Cummins  
Michael Cunningham  
John Curran  
Thomas Daley  
John Delaney

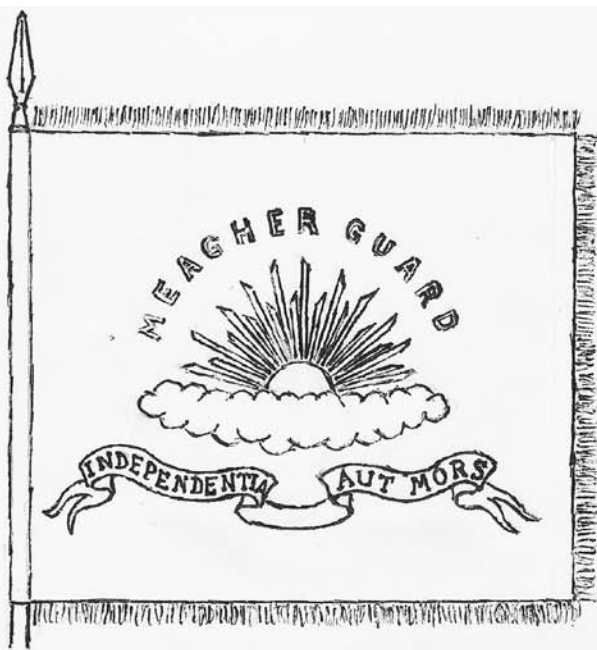
Edmund Dillon  
Joseph Dougherty  
Joseph Donnelly  
Henry Donohue  
Martin Doogan  
Michael Duffy  
James M. Dunne  
Michael William Ellis  
Michael Farrell  
Michael Feeney  
John FitzPatrick  
John Fleming  
William Fox  
Thomas Gaskins  
John Gorman  
Michael Gully  
Thomas Hagerty  
Richard Hartley  
Daniel Hickey  
Michael Hynes  
David Jones  
Nicholas J. Kane  
James Kelly  
John Kelly  
Patrick Kelly  
John Kenefick  
Edward Kennedy  
Thomas Kenney  
John Kiley  
John Kilroy  
Michael Lally  
Bernard Leddy  
Michael Mahoney  
Francis Manion  
Richard Mathews  
Michael May  
Michael McDermott  
James McDonald  
James McGill  
James McGuire  
Michael McGuire  
Thomas McGuire  
Peter McKeon  
John McNabb  
Joseph McNabb  
Daniel Miller  
Michael Mitchell  
Patrick Morris  
August Myer (a German in the company?)  
James Nolan



Michael Nowles  
Michael O'Brien  
Stephen O'Connell  
Alexander V. O'Donnell  
Michael O'Neill  
James Reilly  
Jeremiah Reilly  
Michael Reilly  
Benjamin J. Rivett  
Patrick Roach  
Arthur Sennett  
Peter Smith  
Dominick Spellman  
Daniel Sullivan  
Dennis Sullivan  
Michael Sullivan  
Thomas Sullivan  
James Sweeney  
John Sweeney  
William Tobin  
William Tracy  
Maurice C. Welch  
Michael Welch  
John Wilson  
James Wright<sup>45</sup>

The rank and file of the Meagher Guard appear to have been mostly common laborers and skilled workmen, many of them in the building trades. James Armstrong, the former first sergeant, recalled later that some of the members were past middle age, with "whitened locks," when the war began.<sup>46</sup> Others were very young, like the 15-year-old sentry who accidentally shot a fellow soldier at Castle Pinckney.<sup>47</sup> Many were no doubt tough characters, living in tenement conditions like those dramatized in the movie *Gangs of New York*. A Northern traveler in the 1850s described white working-class neighborhoods of Charleston as having "as much close packing, filth, and squalor ... as I have witnessed in any Northern town of its size; and greater evidence of brutality and ruffianly character, than I have ever happened to see, among an equal population of this class, before."<sup>48</sup> These Irishmen preferred the South to the North. Many, like the families of Sergeants Armstrong and Graham and Private Prior mentioned above, had first immigrated to Northern cities but moved south to find better employment opportunities and a population more tolerant of Irish Catholics.<sup>49</sup> They knew that the North had seen anti-Catholic riots and a strong showing for the anti-immigrant Know-Nothing party (whose members mostly became Republicans by 1860), and reminded each other that "No man was ever persecuted in the South on account of his religious belief."<sup>50</sup> Some of these men would make the supreme sacrifice for their adopted Southland. In Armstrong's eloquent words:

*Among these slain heroes are some who were not born in Carolina; the broad Atlantic separates the Green Isle of their birth from the spot beneath which they rest in dreamless sleep. Though foreigners by birth, they became citizens from choice. The perils they so proudly encountered, the privations they so patiently endured, the dauntless manner in which they rushed to death proved that their love for Motherland did not detract from their devotion to the country in which they lived and for which they died.<sup>51</sup>*



The two sides of the Meagher Guard flag presented in 1853, reconstructed from newspaper descriptions. Green with gold fringe and silver spearhead



## The Flag of the Meagher Guard

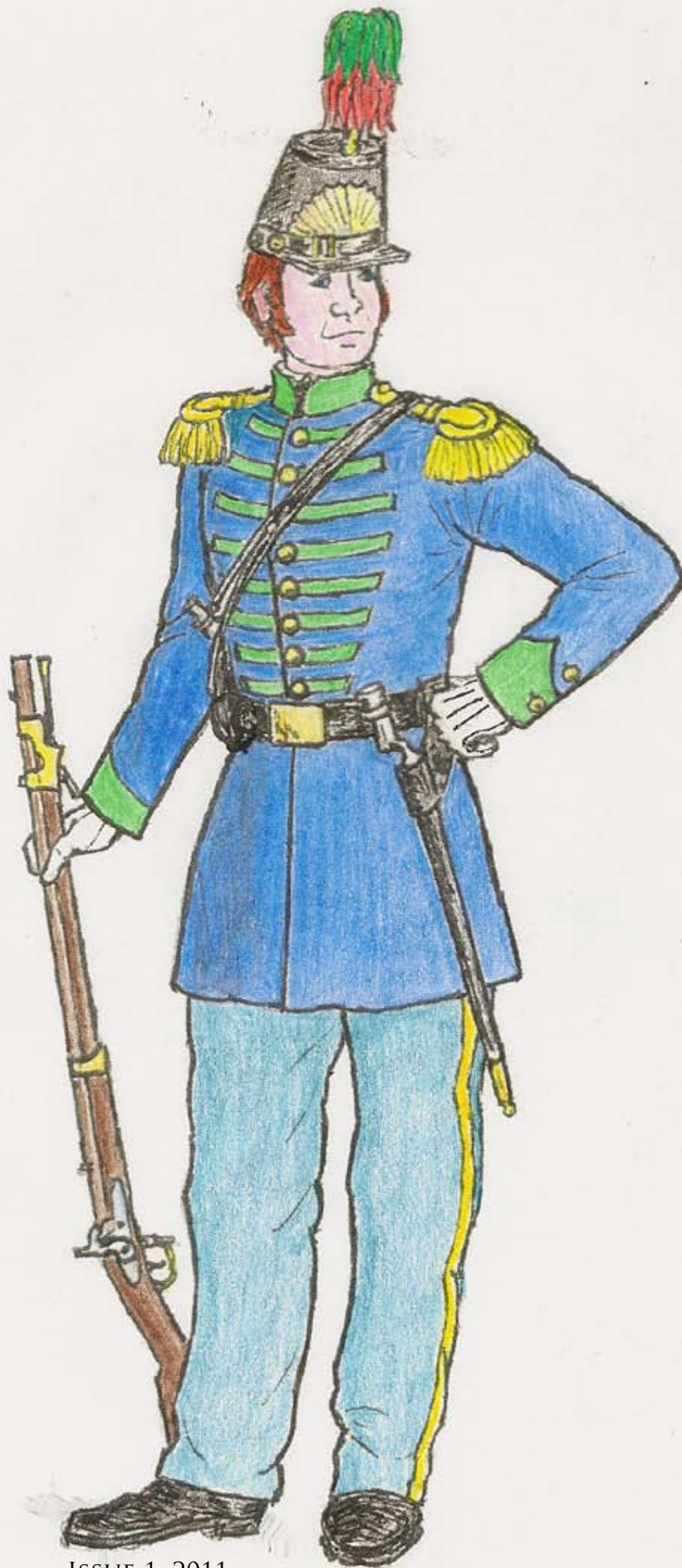
The company flag presented to the Meagher Guard in November 1853 was made of “green silk ... trimmed with deep gold bullion fringe. On the one side is emblazoned the *Sunburst*.” The sunburst was a popular Irish nationalist symbol; according to ancient legend, it was on the flag of the *Fianna*, the warriors led by the hero Finn McCool, for whom the nationalist Fenian Brotherhood was named in the 1850s. Below the sunburst was the Latin motto “*Independentia aut Mors*” (“Independence or Death”), and “encircling the sun’s rays [was] the name of the company in gilt letters.” The motto in combination with the sunburst undoubtedly referred to the hope of Irish independence from Britain. On the reverse of the flag were American symbols: “the State arms of South Carolina” supported by figures representing “the Goddess of Freedom” and the Revolutionary War hero Francis Marion, above which was the name of the company. At the top of the flagstaff was “the old Irish pike, made of steel finely burnished and silvered.” Pikes were the weapons

used by most of the Irish rebels in the famed uprising of 1798. The flag, designed by Capt. Sergeant and Lt. Daly, was made by “ACKERMAN & MILLER, of New-York.”<sup>1</sup> There is no evidence that the company received any other flag before the fall of Fort Sumter.

## Uniforms of the Meagher Guard

Although few members of the Meagher Guard were wealthy, all members showed their dedication to military service by purchasing expensive full-dress uniforms. An engraving used in some of the Meagher Rifle Guard’s early newspaper announcements shows a uniform matching in most respects the Meagher Guard uniform as described in 1856: “A blue frock coat, green facings, slashed across the breast with green braiding. Commissioned officers wear plume—green cock feathers. Privates [plume], red, with green above .... epaulettes, gold bullion; pantaloons, sky-blue, with gold stripe.”<sup>1</sup> The cap, not described in the 1856 article, appears in the engraving to be a shako slightly shorter than the Model 1851 cap of the regular infantry, and matches in size and shape the dress cap made of felt reinforced with leather which was worn by the regular light artillery and Marines as well as many militia units. The green-over-red plume, also worn by the most famous Irish-American militia regiment, the 69<sup>th</sup> New York, symbolized the hoped-for victory of Ireland over England.<sup>2</sup> The shako also would have had some kind of brass badge: an eagle, palmetto, sunburst, or the Irish harp worn by one of the Guards’ fellow militia companies, the Irish Volunteers of Charleston. In bad weather, the feather plume could be replaced by a “pompoon” of wool





yarn in the same colors.<sup>3</sup> By 1860 the company also had an “Undress Cap,” undoubtedly a kepi, to be used for drills and summer parades.<sup>4</sup> Besides their sky-blue trousers, the Meagher Guard had “summer pants” which would have been of white linen or cotton as worn by other Charleston companies. The gold epaulettes and gold stripe on the pants were probably for officers only, being replaced by yellow wool for enlisted men as was the case in the 69<sup>th</sup> New York.<sup>5</sup>

In the fall of 1860, with active service becoming more likely, Charleston’s volunteer militia began to supplement their expensive dress suits with fatigue uniforms. As a local hat company put it in an advertisement for forage caps, “There is no use of being killed in a ten dollar hat.”<sup>6</sup> The Meagher Guard acquired their service uniform just in time to wear it in the parade on Secession Day, 20 December 1860. The newspaper described the new uniform as “tasteful and becoming” but gave no further description. Since local tailor Henry Koppel “turned out these eighty suits in the short space of four days,” they most likely included shell jackets rather than the more complicated frock coat.<sup>7</sup> The colors of this uniform are shown by Capt. McCrady’s kepi in the United Daughters of the Confederacy Museum in Charleston. The cap is cadet gray with an emerald green band edged with one row of gold cord at top and bottom. The Old English letters “MG” for Meagher Guard, surrounded with a wreath, are embroidered in gold thread on the front. According to the museum label, McCrady was still wearing this cap at Second Manassas.

### **Arms and Accoutrements of the Meagher Guard**

The Meagher Guard was armed at the start with rifles, but it is not certain what kind. South Carolina had contracted in the 1820s for a unique type of flintlock rifle that, unlike other American rifles of the day, had a bayonet. As late as December 1860, many members of the Moultrie Guard, another company of the 1st Rifle Regiment, S.C. Militia, still had “an old flint and steel rifle,” probably of this pattern<sup>1</sup> About the end of 1852 the Palmetto Armory in Columbia began producing 1,000 copies of the U.S. Model 1841 “Mississippi” rifle for the state. Unlike the original version of this model, the Palmetto version was fitted for a bayonet.<sup>2</sup> An 1856 article noted that the Guards were armed with “rifle and bayonet,” indicating that they had one of these two state pattern rifles (the Model 1855 was not yet being issued to militia). Accoutrements in 1856 included “black belt, bayonet scabbard, powder horn and pouch.”<sup>3</sup> In 1859 Capt. Daly obtained 75 Sharps rifles with “sabre bayonets” from the state arsenal in Columbia. According to Governor W. H. Gist, Daly had written to the arsenal claiming falsely that “the Gov. had given him his choice” of any arms available. In fact, Daly had been instructed to requisition arms from the state arsenal at the Citadel in Charleston, but was dissatisfied that none with sword bayonets were available there. After other companies complained to the governor for “giving Daly that kind of gun & refusing all the other companies,” Daly was ordered to return the new rifles.<sup>4</sup> Presumably they were replaced with arms from the Citadel, either the U.S. Model 1841 or the Palmetto Armory copy of the same rifle.

When the Guards were called to duty for the capture of Castle Pinckney on 27 December 1860, Capt. McCrady recalled later, “our holiday arms [were] exchanged for the old smooth bore musket and bayonet,” apparently from the Citadel arsenal. This may have been because M1841 rifles without bayonets were considered inadequate for assaulting a fort, or because the company’s rifles were in bad repair; the Moultrie Guard complained two days later that their company had “not more than twenty rifles fit for service, out of about seventy men.”<sup>5</sup> The muskets that replaced the rifles were hardly better. Col. Pettigrew complained to his superior around 1 February 1861: “The muskets with which we are armed have proved defective, the nipples burst every now and then, and a great many of the locks are out of order.”<sup>6</sup> Perhaps as a result of this complaint, 60 Model 1842 smoothbore muskets from the captured U.S. Arsenal in Charleston, presumably in better shape than those from the Citadel, were issued to the Meagher Guard on an unknown date. On 25 February 1861 the state furnished the company with 25 new sets of accoutrements for smoothbore muskets, each set consisting of cartridge box, bayonet scabbard, cap pouch, and waist belt with a plate, which was not described.<sup>7</sup>

### **Battalion Drill, 1859**

*The following maneuvers were performed by the five-company First Battalion of Rifles, S.C. Militia, at the review of the Fourth Brigade, S.C.M., in Charleston on 9 February 1859. The review and drill included the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>*

regiments of “heavy” infantry, the 1<sup>st</sup> Artillery Regiment, and the troop of Charleston Light Dragoons. Major McCrady published the list in the newspaper the day before to familiarize the officers and men with their task. The Roman numerals were keyed to maneuvers of the infantry regiments performed at the same time. If they carried out this program well, they must have been quite accomplished in drill—and they must have known the bugle signals!

Manoeuvres of the Battalion of Rifles, deployed as skirmishers, to cover the movements of the lines.

No. I.—1. Break to the right to march to the left. 2. Form on right into line, and if necessary, advance in line of battle. 3. Deploy as skirmishers, 1<sup>st</sup> platoons on right file of 5<sup>th</sup> company, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2d companies reserve, and commence firing.

Nos. II and III.—1. Bugle signal, advance firing. 2. Bugle signal, march by right flank file-right, continuing firing. 3. Bugle signal, assemble skirmishers. Battalion form column and retreat. Unmask line and halt upon left of line faced to the front.

Nos. IV, V and VI—1. Deploy as skirmishers (from column), 1<sup>st</sup> platoons on right file of 3d company, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> companies in reserve, and commence firing. 2.. Bugle signal, cease firing and rally by platoons. 3. Bugle signal, deploy again upon the line and commence firing. 4. Bugle signal, retreat, firing. 5. Bugle signal, rally on the battalion. 6. Bugle signal, form column (idem)<sup>1</sup> and march upon battalion reserve. 7. If necessary, form battalion square.

Nos. VII, VIII and IX—1. (Being in column upon left of the line.) On 1<sup>st</sup> company deploy column. Deploy as skirmishers, 2d platoon by right flank on left file of 5<sup>th</sup> company, 3d and 4<sup>th</sup> companies in reserve, and commence firing. 2. Bugle signal, retreat, firing. 3. Bugle signal, skirmishers march by the right by the right flank. 4. Bugle signal, march by file left. 5. Bugle signal, assemble.

On the approach of cavalry, rally by 4’s.

--from “The Review,” *Charleston Mercury*, 8 Feb. 1859, p. 1.

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## NOTES

My thanks go to Noah Raper for searching the papers of militia general Robert G. M. Dunovant at Duke, and to Dave Grabarek of the Library of Virginia for arranging interlibrary loans.

## The Meagher Gurards

1 Frederick P. Todd, “Notes on the Organization and Uniforms of South Carolina Military Forces, 1860-1861,” *Military Collector and Historian*, 3 (Sept. 1951): 53-60; Randall M. Miller, “The Enemy Within: Some Effects of Foreign Immigration on Antebellum Southern Cities,” in *The Making of Urban America*, ed. Raymond A. Mohl (2<sup>d</sup> ed., Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 68.

2 Information from John Durham, park historian at Guilford Courthouse National Military Park, authority on North Carolina’s antebellum militia.

3 The United Irishmen and Meagher Rifle Guard were both headquartered at 90 Meeting Street; see “United Irish Society,” *Charleston Daily Courier*, 28 June 1853, p. 2, and untitled article, *Daily Courier*, 14 May 1853, p. 2. An article, “Society of United Irishmen,” *Daily Courier*, 21 Mar. 1853, p. 1, notes that the United Irishmen of Charleston included former participants in Meagher’s abortive 1848 rebellion in Ireland. Secondary sources, including the Todd article cited in note 1, state incorrectly that the Meagher Guard was organized in 1860.

4 Meeting notice, *Daily Courier*, 30 April 1853, p. 7.

5 Untitled article, *Daily Courier*, 14 May 1853, p. 2.



- 6 "Military Memoirs: Meagher Guard, Charleston, S.C.," *Irish News* (New York), 3 May 1856, p. 57; and "Notice," *Daily Courier*, 22 May 1853, p. 2.
- 7 Meeting notices of Meagher Guard, *Daily Courier*, 11 July 1853, p. 3; and Meagher Rifle Guard, *Daily Courier*, 12 July 1853, p. 3.
- 8 *Daily Courier*, 14 May 1853, p. 2, and "Meagher Guard," *Daily Courier*, 25 July 1853, p. 2. The Meagher Rifle Guard, Capt. Divine, was accepted into the 17th Regiment S.C. Militia in November 1853; see *Daily Courier*, 26 Nov. 1853, p. 2. It did not last long under that name, but apparently was renamed Emmet Guard. That company, commanded by Capt. Divine, took part in Charleston's 1854 St. Patrick's Day festivities (see "St. Patrick's Day," *Charleston Mercury*, 18 Mar. 1854, p. 2) but appears to have disbanded by 1855.
- 9 "Military Memoirs," *Irish News*, 3 May 1856, p. 57; "Meagher Guard," *Charleston Mercury*, 25 July 1853, p. 2. T. F. Meagher, addressing the company in 1859, described them as "Irishmen, for the most part"; see "Sixth Anniversary Celebration of the Meagher Guard," *Daily Courier*, 15 Jan. 1859, p. 1.
- 10 "The Meagher Banquet at Faneuil Hall," *Boston Herald*, 4 August 1853, p. 2.
- 11 "Presentation of Flag," *Daily Courier*, 11 Nov. 1853, p. 2.
- 12 "Military Memoirs," *Irish News*, 3 May 1856, p. 57.
- 13 "Meagher Guard -- Celebration of St. Patrick's Day," *Mercury* 18 Mar. 1856, p. 2; "Sixth Anniversary Celebration of the Meagher Guard," *Daily Courier*, 15 Jan. 1859, p. 1.
- 14 "Meagher Guards," *Daily Courier*, 3 May 1859, p. 2.
- 15 "Military News," *Irish News*, 7 Feb. 1857, p. 284; "St. Patrick's Day," *Daily Courier*, 18 Mar. 1859, p. 1; "Battalion Parade," *Mercury*, 6 Apr. 1858, p. 2; "The Rifle Battalion," *Mercury*, 17 May 1859, p. 2.
- 16 "Military Celebration. First Anniversary of the Meagher Guard," *Charleston Tri-Weekly Courier*, 17 Jan. 1854, p. 3; "Meagher Guards," *Daily Courier*, 3 May 1859, p. 2.
- 17 "The Review," *Mercury*, 8 Feb. 1859, p. 1.
- 18 "Deaths from Sun Strokes," *Daily Courier*, 6 July 1860, p. 1.
- 19 *Mercury*, 26 Jan. 1854, p. 2.
- 20 "The Military," *Daily Courier*, 9 Feb. 1854, p. 2.
- 21 "The Rifle Regiment," *Daily Courier*, 27 June 1860, p. 1.
- 22 "Military Memoirs," *Irish News*, 3 May 1856, p. 57; "Necrology: Edward McCrady," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 5 (Jan. 1904): 62-67.
- 23 "The McCrady Family," *Cyclopedia of Eminent and Representative Men of the Carolinas of the Nineteenth Century* (Madison, Wis.: Brant & Fuller, 1892), 1:150-62.
- 24 "The Late Court Martial," *Mercury*, 20 Mar. 1857, p. 2.
- 25 "The Rifle Regiment," *Daily Courier*, 27 June 1860, p. 1.
- 26 "Correspondence," *Mercury*, 12 Mar. 1860, p. 1; and 8 June 1860, p. 4.
- 27 W. H. Gist to Gen. Simons, 29 June 1860, William Henry Gist Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.
- 28 "Resignation of Major McCrady," *Mercury*, 2 Oct. 1860, p. 2.
- 29 *Mercury*, 26 Sept. 1859, p. 2.
- 30 Regimental orders, *Daily Courier*, 8 Nov. 1860, p. 2; "Meagher Guards," *Daily Courier*, 9 Nov. 1860, p. 1.
- 31 "Sixth Anniversary Celebration of the Meagher Guard," *Daily Courier*, 15 Jan. 1859, p. 1; "Meagher Guards," *Daily Courier*, 9 Nov. 1860, p. 1.
- 32 Notice, "Regiment of Rifles," *Mercury*, 5 Dec. 1860; "City Intelligence -- Military Election," *Daily Courier*, 6 Dec. 1860, p. 1.
- 33 Clyde N. Wilson, *Carolina Cavalier: The Life and Mind of James Johnston Pettigrew* (Athens: University of Ga. Press, 1990), 41, 117-18, 135.
- 34 "The Military," *Mercury*, 21 Dec. 1860, p. 2; "Commendable Enterprise," *Daily Courier*, 21 Dec. 1860, p. 1.
- 35 "Speech of Col. Edward McCrady, Jr.," in *The Irish Volunteers Memorial Meeting* (Charleston: News and Courier Book and Job Presses, 1878), 12. McCrady refers to a mason named John Kenny. The closest match to this name and occupation in the 1860 census is James Kenney, a 34-year-old "moulder," although he could conceivably be J. Kenny, a 55-year-old listed as a carpenter. 1860 Census, Charleston District, S.C. (hereafter "1860 Census"), pp. 471 and 231, accessed at [www.heritagequestonline.com](http://www.heritagequestonline.com) subscription database.
- 36 *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies...* (hereafter *O.R.*) Series 1, Vol. 1 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880): 89-90. My account of the events of 27 December is based mostly on Wilson, *Carolina Cavalier*, 137-39; and David Detzer, *Allegiance: Fort Sumter, Charleston, and the Beginning of the Civil War* (New York: Harcourt, 2001), 123-35.
- 37 "Presentation of the Standard to the Rifle Regiment," *Daily Courier*, 26 Feb. 1861, p. 1.
- 38 *O.R.*, 1:1:3; Pettigrew to Gen. Simons, 2 Jan. 1861, quoted in online catalog entry for James Simons Military Papers, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, [www.southcarolinahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.southcarolinahistoricalsociety.org)
- 39 "The Military Movements," *Mercury*, 29 Dec. 1860, p. 2; letter from Pettigrew, *Daily Courier*, 3 Jan. 1861, p. 1.
- 40 "Accident," *Daily Courier*, 9 Jan. 1861, p. 1; Wilson, *Carolina Cavalier*, 139.
- 41 Company notices, *Daily Courier*, 14 Jan. 1861, p. 2, and 18 Jan. 1861, p. 2; *Irish Volunteers Memorial Meeting*, 13.

- 42 "From South Carolina; Our Charleston Correspondence," *New York Times*, 30 Jan. 1861.
- 43 "Fort Sumter's Garrison, April 12-14, 1861, by Nationality" and "Fort Sumter's U.S. Garrison, April 12-13, 1861," online at <http://claudesinclair.com/Fort-Sumter/Fort-Sumter-Federals.pdf>, accessed 8 Jan. 2011 (citing Registers of Enlistments in the U.S. Army, National Archives).
- 44 Anthony W. Riecke, "Recollections of a Confederate Soldier" (1879), online at <http://freepages.history.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~townsend/Recollections/>, accessed 7 Jan. 2011. Riecke was a member of the Charleston Zouave Cadets, the newest company of the Rifle Regiment. For the occupations of the Meagher Guard members, see "The Men of the Meagher Guard" in this issue.
- 45 "From Charleston," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, 26 Jan. and 12 Feb. 1861; Riecke, "Recollections."
- 46 "The Meagher Guard," *Mercury*, 15 Feb. 1861, p. 2; Company notice, *Daily Courier*, 20 Feb. 1861, p. 2.
- 47 "Presentation of the Standard to the Rifle Regiment," *Daily Courier*, 26 Feb. 1861, p. 1; correction of color sergeant's name in "The Color Bearer," *Daily Courier*, 27 Feb. 1861, p. 1.
- 48 "Presentation of the Standard," *Daily Courier*, 26 Feb. 1861; Riecke, "Recollections."
- 49 Riecke, "Recollections"; *Daily Courier*, 20 Mar. 1861, p. 2. Riecke refers only to "country soldiers" as targets of the prank; this most likely refers to Gregg's Regiment from upstate South Carolina.
- 50 Pettigrew to N. G. Evans, 27 Mar. 1861, and Order No. 54, 10 Feb. 1861, both in Richard G. M. Dunovant Papers, Duke University Library Special Collections; "The First Regiment Rifles," *Daily Courier*, 12 Mar. 1861, p. 2; "St. Patrick's Day on Sullivan's Island," *Daily Courier*, 21 Mar. 1861, p. 1.
- 51 A. Toomer Porter, *Led On! Step by Step: An Autobiography* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898), 123.
- 52 "A Soldier's Tribute," *Daily Courier*, 2 May 1861, p. 2; "Family Market," *Daily Courier*, 11 May 1861, p. 1.
- 53 "The Visit to the Fortifications," *Daily Courier*, 1 Apr. 1861, p. 1.
- 54 *O.R.*, 1:1:35-36; Riecke, "Recollections"; "Diary of Samuel Edward Burges, 1860-1862," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 48 (July 1947): 155; Porter, *Led On*, 123-24.
- 55 Riecke, "Recollections"; Porter, *Led On*, 124.
- 56 "The Rifle Regiment," *Daily Courier*, 22 Apr. 1861, p. 2; *Irish Volunteers Memorial Meeting*, 13-14.
- 57 "A Select Regiment," *Daily Courier*, 22 Apr. 1861, p. 2; "A Crack Regiment," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, 14 May 1861 (quoting *Daily Courier*); "The Volunteer Regiment of Rifles," *Daily Courier*, 26 Apr. 1861, p. 1.
- 58 Wilson, *Carolina Cavalier*, 147-52.
- 59 "The Position of Thomas Francis Meagher," *Mercury*, 6 May 1861, p. 2; "The Meagher Guards," *Daily Courier*, 7 May 1861, p. 2; untitled article, *Daily Courier*, 10 May 1861, p. 2.
- 60 "Irish Volunteer Corps," *Daily Courier*, 10 June 1861, p. 1.
- 61 Rolls of the Irish Volunteers (1860) and Irish Volunteers for the War (1861), *Irish Volunteers Memorial Meeting*, 36-37.
- 62 "Personal," *Mercury*, 29 Jan. 1862, p. 2.
- 63 "The Irish Volunteers for the War," *Daily Courier*, 2 July 1861, p. 1; *Irish Volunteers Memorial Meeting*, 14-15 (McCrary recalled in this 1877 speech that the company mustered in on 27 June, while the 1861 newspaper says it was on 1 July); "Capt. McCrary's Company of Irish Volunteers," *Daily Courier*, 22 July 1861, p. 1.
- 64 For the campaigns of Gregg's Regiment, see J. F. J. Caldwell, *The History of a Brigade of South Carolinians, Known First as "Gregg's" and subsequently as "McGowan's Brigade"* (1866; reprint, Dayton: Morningside Bookshop, 1974).
- 65 "Sarsfield Light Infantry," *Mercury*, 16 Aug. 1861, p. 2; see also "The Men of the Meagher Guard" elsewhere in this issue.
- 66 "The Emerald Light Infantry," *Mercury*, 24 Aug. 1861, p. 2; "Personal," *Mercury*, 29 Jan. 1862, p. 2; "Washington Light Infantry," *Daily Courier*, 20 June 1861, p. 1; E. R. R. Green, "He Built a Village and Named it Newry" (with biog. info. on W. A. Courtenay), *Belfast Telegraph*, 24 Nov. 1958, online at <http://192.220.96.192/wac.htm>, accessed 19 Jan. 2011. (This web page sometimes confuses William A. Courtenay of the Emerald Light Infantry, from Charleston, with William A. Courtney, 8th South Carolina Volunteers, from Chesterfield County, but the Green article appears to be accurate.)
- 67 Riecke, "Recollections."
- 68 "Diary of Samuel Edward Burges," (July 1947): 161-63; (Oct. 1947): 207-210, 216-17; *O.R.*, Ser. 1, vol. 6 (pub. 1882): 39-41.
- 69 W. Chris Phelps, *Charlestonians in War: The Charleston Battalion* (Gretna, La.: Pelican Publishing, 2004), 46-47; State of South Carolina Special Orders, *Mercury*, 24 Feb. 1862, p. 2; "The Military Quota," *Mercury*, 25 Feb. 1862, p. 2.
- 70 Company Orders, Camp Gist, *Daily Courier*, 1 Apr. 1862, p. 2; letter, Courtenay to G. W. Randolph, Sec. of War, 29 Apr. 1862, and letter from officers of the Charleston Battalion, 30 Apr. 1862, both in W. A. Courtenay file, Compiled Service Records of Confederate General and Staff Officers, National Archives Microcopy 331, Roll 63.
- 71 For the history of the Charleston Battalion / 27<sup>th</sup> S.C., see Phelps, *Charlestonians in War*.

## The Namesake: Thomas Francis Meagher

- 1 The sketch of Meagher given here is based primarily on Robert G. Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher: An Irish Revolutionary in America* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 1949).
- 2 P. S. O'Hegerty, *A History of Ireland under the Union, 1801 to 1922* (London: Methuen & Co., 1952), 374.
- 3 "The Hibernian Society," *Mercury*, 21 Mar. 1853, p. 2; "Society of United Irishmen," *Daily Courier*, 21 Mar. 1853, p. 1.
- 4 "Thomas Francis Meagher," *Mercury*, 13 May 1854, p. 2; "Mr. Meagher," *Mercury*, 4 Jan. 1855, p. 2; "Glimpses of the South," *Irish News*, 18 Oct. 1856, p. 27; advertisement, *Mercury*, 9 Jan. 1858, p. 2; "Military Memoirs," *Irish News*, 3 May 1856, p. 57.

- 5 "Sixth Anniversary Celebration of the Meagher Guard," *Daily Courier*, 15 Jan. 1859, p. 1.  
 6 "Black and White," *Irish News*, 6 Sept. 1856, p. 345.

## The Men of the Meagher Gurard

- 1 David T. Gleeson, *The Irish in the South, 1815-1877* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2001), 187-88.  
 2 "Necrology: Edward McCrady," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 5 (Jan. 1904), 62-67; A. S. Salley, Jr., *South Carolina Troops in Confederate Service*, 1 (Columbia: R. L. Bryan, 1913): 215-16.  
 3 James B. Heyward, "The Heyward Family of South Carolina," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 59 (July 1958): 144; (Oct. 1958): 211, 218.  
 4 "City Intelligence – Meagher Guard," *Daily Courier*, 26 June 1860, p. 2. Newspaper notices list Heyward usually as W. N. Heyward, but sometimes as W. H. Heyward, W. A. Heyward, and even G. W. Heyward.  
 5 "Military," *Daily Courier*, 9 July 1861, p. 1.  
 6 "Sarsfield Light Infantry," *Mercury*, 16 Aug. 1861, p. 2; "The Military Quota," *Mercury*, 25 Feb. 1862, p. 2.  
 7 "Military Memoirs," *Irish News*, 3 May 1856, p. 57; 1860 Census, p. 393; *Irish Volunteers Memorial Meeting*, 16.  
 8 *Daily Courier*, 14 May 1853, p. 2, and 25 July 1853, p. 2.  
 9 "Irish Volunteers for the Seat of War," *Mercury*, 22 July 1861, p. 2.  
 10 Salley, *S.C. Troops*, 1:370-71; *Irish Volunteers Memorial Meeting*, 16.  
 11 "Correspondence," *Mercury*, 12 March 1860, p. 1; 1860 Census, p. 359.  
 12 "Sixth Anniversary Celebration of the Meagher Guard," *Daily Courier*, 15 Jan. 1859, p. 1; "First Regiment of Rifles" order, *Mercury*, 28 June 1860, p. 2.  
 13 "Sarsfield Light Infantry," *Mercury*, 16 Aug. 1861, p. 2; "The Military Quota," *Mercury*, 25 Feb. 1862, p. 2.  
 14 Biography in Yates Snowden, ed., *History of South Carolina* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing, 1920), 5:178.  
 15 "Capt. James Armstrong—Beloved Citizen," *Confederate Veteran* 30 (Nov. 1930): 415; 1860 Census, p. 257; 1860 Census, Slave Schedule, Charleston District, p. 430; company notice, *Daily Courier*, 18 Jan. 1861, p. 2.  
 16 "Irish Volunteers for the Seat of War," *Mercury*, 22 July 1861, p. 2.  
 17 Salley, *S.C. Troops*, 1:370-71; Ellison Capers, ed., *Confederate Military History, Extended Edition, Vol. VI: South Carolina* (1899; reprint Wilmington, N.C.: Broadfoot Publishing, 1987), 434.  
 18 Capers, *Confederate Military History*, 433-34; *Irish Volunteers Memorial Meeting*, 16; Snowden, *History of S.C.*, 5: 178; "Capt. James Armstrong," 415.  
 19 "The Color Bearer," *Daily Courier*, 27 Feb. 1861, p. 1 (listing him as Sergeant J. GRAHAM).  
 20 1860 Census, p. 254.  
 21 "Sarsfield Light Infantry," *Mercury*, 16 Aug. 1861, p. 2.  
 22 Untitled articles, *Daily Courier*, 14 May 1853, p. 2; and 25 July 1853, p. 2 (both list him as "B. O'Connor"; Bartholomew was the only B. O'Connor/O'Connor listed in the 1860 Census); "Military Memoirs," *Irish News*, 3 May 1856, p. 57.  
 23 "The Emerald Light Infantry," *Mercury*, 24 Aug. 1861, p. 2; "The Rifle Battalion," *Mercury*, 17 May 1859, p. 1.  
 24 1860 Census, p. 393.  
 25 Company notice, *Daily Courier*, 1 May 1860, p. 2, listed as "Sergent [sic] M. E. ROONEY"); 1860 Census, p. 260, listed as Michael Rooney. He was the only Rooney listed in Charleston that year.  
 26 "The Emerald Light Infantry," *Mercury*, 24 Aug. 1861, p. 2; "Personal," *Mercury*, 29 Jan. 1862, p. 2.  
 27 "Military Memoirs," *Irish News*, 3 May 1856, p. 57; 1860 Census, p. 290 (listed as Mike Dunn).  
 28 Salley, *S.C. Troops*, 1:375, 384 (listed as Michael M. Dunne); *Irish Volunteers Memorial Meeting*, 37.  
 29 "Sixth Anniversary Celebration of the Meagher Guard," *Daily Courier*, 15 Jan. 1859, p. 1.(listing him as "Corporal J. FURLONG"); Order, 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment Rifles, *Daily Courier*, 8 Nov. 1860, p. 2 (misprinting his name as "Corporal FARLONY"); 1860 Census, p. 384. No one named "Farlony" appears in the census.  
 30 Notice, "Attention! Emerald Light Infantry," *Daily Courier*, 22 July 1861, p. 2.  
 31 "Sarsfield Light Infantry," *Mercury*, 16 Aug. 1861, p. 2; "The Military Quota," *Mercury*, 25 Feb. 1862, p. 2.  
 32 Notice, "Meagher Guard," *Daily Courier*, 1 May 1860, p. 2; 1860 Census, p. 471.  
 33 *Irish Volunteers Memorial Meeting*, 12.  
 34 "Military," *Mercury*, 14 Jan. 1860, p. 2 (listed as T. Sheridan); 1860 Census, p. 370; "Sarsfield Light Infantry," *Mercury*, 16 Aug. 1861, p. 2. No other T. Sheridan appears in the 1860 Census.  
 35 1860 Census, p. 408; *Daily Courier*, 1 May 1860, p. 2; "Military News," *Irish News*, 7 Feb. 1857, p. 284.  
 36 Company notice, *Daily Courier*, 1 May 1860, p. 2; 1860 Census, pp. 391, 395, 422; "The Emerald Light Infantry," *Mercury*, 24 Aug. 1861, p. 2.  
 37 "Military," *Mercury*, 14 Jan. 1860, p. 2 (listed as J. Malone); 1860 Census, p. 488 (the only J. Malone of military age listed in the Charleston census).  
 38 Company notice, *Daily Courier*, 29 Apr. 1859, p. 3; 1860 Census, p. 391; Salley, *S.C. Troops*, 1:393 (listing battle as "Cold Harbor," a common Confederate term for the battle usually called Gaines' Mill).  
 39 Company notice, *Daily Courier*, 1 May 1860, p. 2 (listed as G. T. Prior); 1860 Census, p. 334 (listed as George Prior, the only G. Prior listed in Charleston).



- 40 "The Late Hon. Patrick Walsh," *Confederate Veteran* 7 (Apr. 1899): 177; Notice, "Meagher Guard," *Daily Courier*, 29 Apr. 1859, p. 3; Notice, "Emerald Light Infantry," *Daily Courier*, 4 June 1861, p. 1.
- 41 "The Emerald Light Infantry," *Mercury*, 24 Aug. 1861, p. 2; "The Military Quota," *Mercury*, 25 Feb. 1862, p. 2; "The Late Hon. Patrick Walsh," p. 177.
- 42 Company notice, *Daily Courier*, 29 Apr. 1861, p. 2.
- 43 Company notice, *Daily Courier*, 13 Nov. 1860, p. 2.
- 44 "Military," *Mercury*, 14 Jan. 1860, p. 2;
- 45 Salley, *S.C. Troops*, 1:372-97. I have omitted those (mostly conscripts) who joined the company after it left Charleston.
- 46 "Speech of Col. James Armstrong," *Irish Volunteers Memorial Meeting*, 19.
- 47 Wilson, *Carolina Cavalier*, 139.
- 48 Frederick Law Olmstead, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States* (New York: Dix and Edwards, 1856), 404.
- 49 Gleeson, *Irish in the South*, 24-25, 192-93;
- 50 "To the Irishmen of Virginia" (letter signed by "Many Irishmen" of Charleston), *Daily Courier*, 15 May 1861, p. 1.
- 51 James Armstrong, "McGowan's Brigade at Spotsylvania," *Confederate Veteran* 33 (Oct. 1925), 378.

### The Flag of the Meagher Guard

- 1 "Military Memoirs," *Irish News*, 3 May 1856, p. 57; untitled article, *Daily Courier*, 10 Nov. 1853, p. 2; "Presentation of Flag," *Daily Courier*, 11 Nov. 1853, p. 2. For background on the Irish sunburst design, see Flags of the World website, <http://flagspot.net/flags/ie-sun.html>

### The Uniforms of the Meagher Guard

- 1 Meagher Rifle Guard meeting notices, *Daily Courier*, 22 May 1853, p. 2, and 27 June 1853, p. 3; "Military Memoirs," *Irish News*, 3 May 1856, p. 57.
- 2 "69<sup>th</sup> Regiment, New York State Militia, 1853-1854," *Military Collector & Historian* 62 (Summer 2010): front cover and p. 136.
- 3 "Military Memoirs -- Irish Volunteers of Charleston, S.C.," *Irish News*, 19 Apr. 1853, p. 30; Meagher Guard notice, *Daily Courier*, 17 Mar. 1860, p. 2.
- 4 Company notice, *Daily Courier*, 15 Nov. 1860, p. 2; see also advertisement for "French Fatigue" caps sold by Williams and Brown, *Daily Courier*, 25 June 1860, p. 2.
- 5 Company notice, *Daily Courier*, 29 Apr. 1859, p. 3; "69<sup>th</sup> Regiment," 136.
- 6 Steele & Co. advertisement, *Daily Courier*, 6 Nov. 1860, p. 2.
- 7 "Commendable Enterprise," *Daily Courier*, 21 Dec. 1860, p. 1.

### Arms and Accoutrements of the Meagher Guard

- 1 Norm Flayderman, *Flayderman's Guide to Antique American Firearms*, 2d ed. (Chicago: Follett Publishing, 1980), 487; Capt. Barnwell M. Palmer to Edward Manigault, 29 Dec. 1860, Ordnance Dept. Vouchers, Reports, etc, Records of the Confederate Historian, South Carolina State Archives.
- 2 Jack Allen Meyer, *William Glaze and the Palmetto Armory*, 2d ed. (Columbia: South Carolina State Museum, 1994), 19, 38.
- 3 "Military Memoirs," *Irish News*, 3 May 1856, p. 57.
- 4 "Sixth Anniversary Celebration of the Meagher Guard," *Daily Courier*, 15 Jan. 1859, p. 1; Gist to "My dear Col.," 18 June 1859, William Henry Gist Papers. These rifles would have been the very rare Sharps Model 1853 military rifle; see Flayderman, *Flayderman's Guide to Antique American Firearms*, 170.
- 5 *Irish Volunteers Memorial Meeting*, 13; Palmer to Manigault, 29 Dec. 1860, Ordnance Dept. Vouchers, S.C. State Archives.
- 6 Pettigrew to Brig. Gen. Dunovant, [1 Feb. 1861?], Pettigrew Family Papers, Vol. 14, p. 14, North Carolina State Archives.
- 7 "Small Arms Captured in the late U.S. Arsenal ... and the disposition of the same," 1 Aug. 1861 (covering all issues from Dec. 1860 to that date), and receipt signed by Lt. Heyward, 25 Feb. 1861, both in Ordnance Dept. Records, S.C. State Archives.

### Battalion Drill, 1859

- 1 Idem= "the same" (Latin).

# CHARLESTON MERCURY

## EXTRA:

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*Passed unanimously at 1.15 o'clock, P. M., December  
20th, 1860.*

### AN ORDINANCE

*To dissolve the Union between the State of South Carolina and  
other States united with her under the compact entitled "The  
Constitution of the United States of America."*

*We, the People of the State of South Carolina, in Convention assembled, do declare and ordain, and  
it is hereby declared and ordained,*

*That the Ordinance adopted by said Convention, on the twenty-third day of May, in the  
year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-eight, whereby the Constitution of the  
United States of America was ratified, and also all Acts and parts of Acts of the General  
Assembly of this State, ratifying amendments of the said Constitution are hereby repealed;  
and that the union now subsisting between South Carolina and other States, under the name of  
"The United States of America," is hereby dissolved.*

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THE

# UNION

IS

# DISSOLVED!