

Across My Desk

By Brian Butko
Editor

My current expenses are not increased; now this would do well enough were it not for the unusual practice of trying to kill one another in the business. I suppose however this is one reason why the wages are good, upon the principle that a man can afford to be shot at that price.

— Gen. Conrad Feger Jackson, from a letter dated August 4, 1862

Among those buried at Allegheny Cemetery are numerous Civil War soldiers and two generals who fell in battle. Best known is Alexander Hays (whose tomb was pictured in the Spring 2003 issue); lesser known is Conrad Jackson, who was killed December 12, 1862, at the battle of Fredericksburg.

Jackson was elected captain of A Company, the Pittsburgh Rifles, shortly after the firing on Fort Sumter in 1861. The company was one of 10 to form the Ninth Pennsylvania Reserves regiment. That July, Jackson became their colonel, and a year later, was promoted to brigadier general. He was leading an attack at Fredericksburg when he was shot in the head.

Tim and Anne Elise Morris have copies of 13 of the general's letters. Tim is Jackson's great-great grandson. The letters are insightful and show a better grasp of grammar than most correspondence from that conflict. Jackson also wrote with a wry sense of humor.

The fair sex excel the men in the exhibition of their hatred toward us poor innocent Yankees as they sneeringly term us. It is quite common for them to turn up their noses when an officer passes – distorting that beautiful feature in the most ridiculous style, and often not satisfied with this evidence of their contempt, will suddenly turn their backs and with a dexterous motion of their latter ends throw their garments somewhat above the point of decorum, however exposing enough of their lower extremities too convince a soldier at least that their conformation is not unlike those of the North whom they so heartily despise.

— May 5, 1862

In recent years, Jackson's headstone had fallen and wore down until the epitaph was illegible. The Ninth Pennsylvania Reserves, now a volunteer group that promotes Civil War research through discussions and reenacting, raised funds for a replacement. The new marker was dedicated May 30, 1994.



The new headstone in Allegheny Cemetery.

Photo by Lora Hershhey

Didja know?

A *panachida* is a Greek Catholic funeral service. The service was sung in the home of the deceased on the three consecutive evenings the body was laid out. The *panachida* service is still used today. It is now conducted at the funeral home the night before burial services.

The Pittsburgh shipbuilding firm of Mason and Snowden built iron-clad ships for the Union Navy during the Civil War. Another local firm, Lyon, Shurb & Co., manufactured the iron plating to armor the Navy's fleet.

By 1943, the need for wartime workers led to more than 30,000 women finding employment in regional plants. Nearly 1/4 of all employees at Westinghouse Electrical and Manufacturing Company were women.



Inspection tour of Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation, McKeesport Works.

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