

## **Five Paroled Union Prisoners from Ohio Who Died at Fort Delaware in 1862**

by Daniel H. Reigle©



### ***Union Monument Finn's Point National Cemetery***

*Editor's Notes: The names of ten Ohio Union soldiers who died while at Fort Delaware appear on the Union monument in Finn's Point National Cemetery. Five of these men were members of the 157th Ohio Infantry who served as guards at Fort Delaware in the summer of 1864. Society member Richard H. Cole, Jr. (Muncie, Indiana) contributed a brief regimental history of the 157th Ohio Infantry plus biographical information on these five soldiers to the Society archives in 1991. Dick's article entitled "100 Day Wonders at Fort Delaware: A History of the 157th Ohio" was published in **Fort Delaware Notes**, February 1992.*

*The remaining five men are from Ohio units not known to have been posted to Fort Delaware during the war.*

*Cargill, G. M. (Private, Company E, 29th Ohio Infantry)*

*Cookes, J. M. (Private, Company I, 66th Ohio Infantry)*

*Humes, D. H. (Private, Company A, 66th Ohio Infantry)*

*Moore, A. N. (Private, Company G, 4th Ohio Infantry)*

*Sterling, Darius (Private, Company F, 66th Ohio Infantry)*

*Dan Reigle (Cincinnati, Ohio), an avid student of Ohio's role in the Civil War, researched the story of these remaining five men and presented his findings in the Ohio Civil War Genealogy Journal (Volume 10, Issue #3, 2006). The following material was extracted from that article and is published here in an updated and condensed form with the permission of author Dan Reigle and of OCWGJ Editor, Susan Dunlap Lee (Columbia, South Carolina). The Ohio Civil War Genealogy Journal is a publication of the Ohio Genealogical Society based in Mansfield, Ohio.*



Our initial efforts to identify the men and the reasons for their presence at Fort Delaware proved to be quite confusing. All five were listed in the records of the Quartermaster General's Office when the National Cemetery system was established (published as the "Roll of Honor"), and all five were listed as buried at Finn's Point. They were not all from the same regiment. In the "Official Rosters of the Soldiers of the State of Ohio," James Cookes is listed as having been killed in the battle of Port Republic, Virginia on June 9, 1862 and buried in Staunton; if so, why would he also be listed as buried two hundred miles away at Finn's Point? Further, the "Rosters" confirmed that Cargill, Humes, Moore, and Sterling died at Fort Delaware, but listed various burial places for them (Cargill at Washington DC; Humes and Sterling at Fredericksburg Virginia; and no burial location listed for Moore).

OCWGJ obtained a Compiled Military Service Record from the National Archives for each of the five men, and a pension file for James Cookes' widow. We identified each of the five men in the 1860 census, studied their Ohio regimental histories (Thackery, Reid), and reviewed research materials suggested by the Fort Delaware Society (Wilson, Simmons, OR, Series II). Based on our study of these sources, we have

been able to outline what happened to these five men from Ohio and provide a basic biographical sketch of each.

All five men were captured during the final days of the 1862 Shenandoah Valley Campaign, near Port Republic. Four of them were directly engaged in the battle at Port Republic on June 9, 1862, in which Confederate General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson defeated a smaller brigade-sized Federal force from the division of General James Shields. The 66th Ohio Volunteer Infantry and 29th Ohio Volunteer Infantry were part of General Erastus B. Tyler's 3rd Brigade that engaged the Confederate forces that day. The 4th Ohio Volunteer Infantry had been part of Shield's 1st Brigade, maneuvering north of Port Republic in the days previous and subsequent to this engagement. Despite a forced march to reach Tyler's brigade in time to reinforce him, the 1st Brigade was in time only to cover the retreat of the portions of Shield's Division.

Shield's Division had been constantly on the march for several weeks as they contended with Jackson up and down the Shenandoah Valley. In addition, the 29th OVI and 66th OVI were part of a force that had made a grueling 120-mile march to Fredericksburg, only to turn around and go back to Front Royal, then up the valley to Port Republic, where they would experience the danger and brutality of intense combat for the first time.

All five were part of a large body of Federal prisoners held in an unprepared and overwhelmed prison facility in Lynchburg, Virginia until August 8th, and then moved to the POW camp on Belle Isle in the James River at Richmond, where conditions were even worse. Cookes and Humes were reported as wounded at Port Republic, so they may have received medical treatment at Lynchburg. As part of the prisoner exchange agreement [*Dix-Hill Cartel of July 22, 1862*], all five were released on parole on September 7, 1862 after nearly three months' confinement.

According to a published journal account attributed posthumously to David Humes, the prisoners paroled on September 7th were marched out of Richmond to Aiken's Landing, about seventeen miles east of Richmond on the north bank of the James River. Aiken's Landing was the location specified in the Dix-Hill Cartel as the flag-of-truce delivery point for prisoner exchanges. There they boarded the steamer *Eastern City* which was to transport them to Union lines. Their trip produced more suffering for them, however, as they did not reach Fort Delaware until September 17th. Arriving at Washington, DC on September 10th, they were held

aboard ship for nearly a week while Federal authorities decided where they should be sent. They were further delayed by bad weather and then by the grounding of the *Eastern City* on a sandbar. Confined on board and low on food and water during this entire week, the prisoners were transferred on September 16th to another ship, the *J. R. Spaulding*, and diverted to Fort Delaware the following day.

Having just reached agreement on the Dix-Hill Cartel's process for exchanging prisoners, the Federal government was not fully prepared to handle its own returning POWs after their release on parole. The paroled prisoners on the *Eastern City* were delayed and ultimately diverted because the designated receiving station, Camp Parole at Annapolis Maryland, was too full to accommodate them.

Private Andrew J. Hamilton, a Pennsylvania artilleryman who had been at Fort Delaware for about a month, noted in his journal on September 17th: *"The steamer J. R. Spaulding landed at No.3 Wharf and delivered about a thousand poor fellows who had been captured by Rebs and confined on Belle Island until they were naked. No one man was possessed of both a coat and a shirt. They were lousy, filthy, and starved, then paroled and sent here, many of them were both sick and wounded. I never saw men in such wretched condition before. I shall never forget my own feelings."*

Private David M. Hume noted in his prison journal which ended on September 17th: *"Fort Delaware. Arrived here after a tedious trip of eleven days on the water. We are glad to once more put our feet on loyal soil. And we thank God that he has thus spared our lives, and has so mercifully watched over and protected us, through all our trials of privations and suffering. Tis to him we owe a debt of gratitude profound."*

The paroled prisoners, now supposedly "free" from their imprisonment, were confined at Fort Delaware to await a formal exchange declaration under the terms of the Dix-Hill Cartel. Paroled prisoners were not allowed to return to their unit until the exchange process was complete. In the meantime, the Federal government was concerned that if paroled Union prisoners were allowed to return home to await exchange before returning to their units, the actual return of the troops to duty would be delayed due to extensive travel, and even worse, some might not return at all. So, paroled prisoners were held at "parole camps", and these men were ordered to Fort Delaware for that purpose.

While in parole camp, the parolees were not allowed by the Cartel to perform any normal military duties. In addition to not being able to take up arms, they could not serve as *"military police or constabulary force in any fort, garrison, or field work held by either of the respective parties, nor as guards of prisons, depots, or stores, nor to discharge any duty usually performed by soldiers."* This system produced morale problems among the parolees, especially as living conditions deteriorated. Private Hamilton, in his journal, described having to go after *"escaped"* parolees, capture them, and return them to *"the cells"* on December 2, 1862. The surviving paroled prisoners were embarked for Annapolis on December 20th and were transferred under guard according to Hamilton.

Some of the Federal paroled prisoners were ill when they arrived at Fort Delaware, and others became ill over the next few weeks. James Cookes died on September 18th, the day after his arrival at Fort Delaware. George Cargill died on October 3rd. David Humes, whose prison journal was later published, died on October 24th, and Andrew Moore died on October 29th. These four died of typhoid fever. Darius Sterling died on December 6th from brain fever (perhaps encephalitis or meningitis).

The Compiled Military Service Records for each of these five men include a Memorandum from their Prisoner of War Records that identify their date of capture at Port Republic, their confinement at Richmond, their parole date of September 7, 1862, their arrival at Fort Delaware on September 17th, and their date and cause of death at Fort Delaware. Our conclusion, based on that information and on its consistency with the other sources cited in this article, is that the Union monument at Finn's Point that memorializes their death and burial there is, in fact, correct. We cannot account for the other burial locations listed in the Official Rosters of the Soldiers of the State of Ohio. However, we are pleased that the five Ohioans who gave up their lives are remembered and memorialized at Finn's Point National Cemetery.

### Biographical Sketches

**George M. Cargill** was 23 years old when he enlisted in the 29th Ohio Volunteer Infantry in September 1861 at Conneaut in Ashtabula County, Ohio. Born in Wyoming County, New York, Cargill was a farmhand on the large farm of his parents, Preston and Electa Cargill, in Ashtabula County in 1860. He was 5' 8 ½" tall, with black eyes and black hair. The 29th OVI was actively engaged at Port Republic, and was

credited with fighting well, losing 17 killed, 41 wounded, and 114 captured. Cargill's name is misspelled several times throughout his service records, perhaps resulting in his listing in the Ohio Official Rosters as "Craight." Part of the reason for this may be found in the regiment's Record of Events (a section of the standard muster roll) for March 1862: "*There has never been a monthly return of this regiment made out before this and as some of the companies have lost their company records, it is impossible to furnish a correct list of those absent from the regiment during this month.*" (OR Supplement, 29th OVI) He died of typhoid fever on October 3, 1862.

**James M. Cookes**, the oldest of this group, was 31 when he enlisted in the 66th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, Company I, in December 1861 at Marion in Marion County, Ohio. The only married man in the group, he had lost his first wife when she died in 1855, and had remarried 16-year old Olive Bell in 1860. Olive apparently made two attempts to earn a widow's pension, first in 1863 and again in 1890, presumably after the death of her second husband. The Pension Office's review lasted at least three years, and there is no evidence that she was ever awarded a pension, despite the fact that the file also does not contain any indication of the reasons for denial. Cookes was also a farmer, 5' 6" with blue eyes and light hair, born in Fayette County, Ohio before his father, Lewis Cookes, became an early settler in Green Camp Township of Marion County. Company and regimental records showed Cookes as "*killed at Port Republic*", and the Ohio Official Roster lists him accordingly, causing the confusion over his place and circumstances of death. Some of the confusion may be explained by the regiment's entry in their Record of Events for June 9, 1862: "*Regimental desk, books, and records lost in battle near Port Republic, Virginia.*" (OR Supplement, 66th OVI) Cookes actually died of typhoid fever on September 18, 1862, the day after the paroled prisoners arrived at Fort Delaware.

**David Merrill Humes**, also in the 66th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, but in Company A, was 26 when he enlisted at Urbana in Champaign County, Ohio in October 1861. He was 5'10" tall, grey eyes, light hair. His parents, Samuel and Mary Humes, were early settlers and large-scale farmers in Union Township in Champaign County, having come from Virginia where David was born. David and his brothers, Samuel and William, were working on their father's farm in 1860. General Tyler's casualty report

from the battle at Port Republic lists Humes as wounded and missing. Humes is responsible for most of the information we have about the Port Republic prisoners, because he kept a journal that was later published serially in the *Urbana Citizen and Gazette*. The articles formed the basis for David Thackery's chapter on the POWs in his regimental history of the 66<sup>th</sup> OVI, "A Light and Uncertain Hold". Humes died on October 24, 1862 of typhoid fever at Fort Delaware.

**Andrew N. Moore** was age 21 when he enlisted in the 4th Ohio Volunteer Infantry at Kenton in Hardin County, Ohio in June 1861. Described as 5' 5 1/2" tall, with blue eyes and light hair, he was an apprentice blacksmith working with master blacksmith John Underwood. Moore's 4th OVI, part of Shield's 1st Brigade, had been moving constantly during Jackson's campaign, and reported that it had marched 168 miles in March and April. According to Reid's history, "*On the 12th of May (1862) the Fourth Ohio infantry marched via Luray, Front Royal, Chester Gap, Warrenton, and Catlett's Station for Fredericksburg, Virginia, to join McDowell's Corps, arriving there on the 22d of May. The next day the regiment was ordered back to the Valley via Manassas Junction. It reached Front Royal on the 30th, drove the enemy from that place and captured a large quantity of ammunition, supplies and a number of prisoners. On the 3rd of June it moved toward Luray, and reached that place on the 7th. From Luray a forced march was made by the brigade for Port Republic, reaching there in time to cover the retreat of the National forces*" (Reid, II, 37). Moore was captured June 12, 1862, in the aftermath of the Port Republic battle. He died at Fort Delaware on October 29, 1862 of typhoid fever.

**Darius Sterling** is named as Darius Sterlin on the Finn's Point monument, and is given both ways in his service records. In the census records, the family name is invariably Sterling and with both usages in the service records, we believe Sterling is his correct name and have used it in this article. Darius enlisted in the 66th OVI, Company F, at age 20 in June 1861 at Marysville in Union County, Ohio. Born in Knox County, Ohio, he was 5'11" tall with blue eyes and brown hair, working on his father's farm in 1860. He was captured at Port Republic, and was at Fort Delaware awaiting exchange when he died of brain fever on December 6, 1862.



*Editor's Notes:*

*Dan Reigle, on behalf of the OCWGJ, has sent the Fort Delaware Society photocopies of the CMSR for all five of these Ohio soldiers, a copy of the pension application file for the widow of James Cookes, and a photocopy of the 13 issues of the Citizen and Gazette published in Urbana, Ohio in which the prison journal of David Merrill Humes was published soon after his death. These were found in the Ohio Historical Society archives.*

*In the previous issue of OCWGJ (Volume 10, Issue #2, 2006), Rena Glover Goss presented "The Civil War Letters of the Glover Brothers of Jefferson County, Ohio". The letters' authors, George and Jefferson Glover, served in the 157th Ohio Volunteer Infantry at Fort Delaware during the summer of 1864. In the same issue, OCWGJ Editor Susan Lee profiled the fort and its wartime functions in "Fort Delaware: From Proud Citadel to POW Camp, and the 157th and 196th Ohio Infantries". Copies of these two issues of the OCWGJ have been placed in the Fort Delaware Society Library & Archives, courtesy of Editor Susan Lee.*

*Questions about this article and the sources consulted, or questions about other Ohio soldiers, military units, or any other aspect of Ohio's role in the Civil War, can be directed to Dan Reigle, or Susan Lee, via the Ohio Genealogy Society via e-mail: [ocwgi-experts@ogs.org](mailto:ocwgi-experts@ogs.org); or by regular mail sent to OCWGI ATE, 713 South Main Street, Mansfield, Ohio 44907.*

Sources

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