

The Great Lakes Civil War Forum

Where the Fight Was the Thickest: The Campaigns of the Iron Brigade of the West

Saturday, October 15

Check In Opens at 8:30am * Program Begins at 9:30am

\$55 (\$70 for non-members) includes lunch

Boys, We Must Hold Our Colors on This Line or Lie Here Under Them

Presenter: Phil Spaugy

The 19th Indiana is probably the least known of the Iron Brigade regiments. The veterans of the 19th had no authors such as Mickey Sullivan, Rufus Dawes, Jerome Watrous, or George Otis to write their regimental history. But the other men who wore the Black Hats remembered them well. Jerome Watrous of the 6th Wisconsin Volunteers recalled, "The 19th Indiana regiment became known as "Old Posey County" or "Swamp Hogs No. 19" and "every man of them did not care a goll darn how he was dressed, but was all hell for a fight."

The 19th Indiana brought 339 men to Gettysburg and by the end of July 1 had lost 27 killed, 133 wounded and 50 missing. Phil Spaugy's program will detail their vicious fighting along Willoughby Run and during the retreat to Seminary Ridge, where the 19th Indiana served on the exposed left flank of the brigade.

Camp-Fire Memories of the Iron Brigade

Presenter: Lance Herdegen

The four years of Civil War cast a long shadow over the surviving veterans of the Iron Brigade. At first, they were too busy getting on with their lives and did not give much thought of their days in uniform. But the years passed and soon they were caught up in an overwhelming need to think of soldier days, seek out the old comrades, and reflect on what had been accomplished. They called their reunions "Camp-Fires" and the written accounts comprised much of what is known today of the Iron Brigade. Writers and researchers delight in finding those accounts, but often use only small segments after making decisions on their historical value. The accounts themselves were often softened to spare readers, yet they hint at the truth of the war experience and provide an important glimpse of how the war and its memory affected the veterans and their families.