

ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

Presidents Who Were Civil War Veterans

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From 1869 to 1901, five U.S. Presidents were Civil War veterans who served in the Union armies: U.S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, James A. Garfield, Benjamin Harrison, and William McKinley. All were born in Ohio. Three (Hays, Harrison, and McKinley) were lawyers. All were Republicans and four (all except Grant) served in Congress. Four were generals (McKinley was a major). Grant was the only West Point graduate. Only one (Hayes) was wounded in combat. Two (Garfield and McKinley) were assassinated in office. Two (Grant and McKinley) were re-elected but Harrison was defeated for re-election. Two are more associated militarily and politically with other states: Grant-Illinois and Harrison-Indiana. All benefitted from their Civil War experience as Union military heroes. The support of members of the Grand Army of the Republic who served for the Union was important in their political careers.

Ulysses Simpson Grant

For the profile of Grant, see his biography by Joan Waugh at:

<http://www.essentialcivilwarcurriculum.com/ulysses-simpson-grant.html>

Rutherford Birchard Hayes

Rutherford B. Hayes is remembered primarily for three reasons: first, he was the only president other than James Monroe to be wounded in war; second, his disputed election in 1876-1877 was one of the most controversial in American history; and third, his administration ended the Reconstruction period in the South, ushering in the era of Jim Crow racial segregation.

Hayes was born in Delaware, Ohio on October 4, 1822. His family moved to Ohio from New England. His father died before he was born and he and a sister were raised by his widowed mother. Hayes graduated from Kenyon College and Harvard Law School. He began his legal career in Lower Sandusky and later moved to Cincinnati. There he met and married his wife Lucy (a teetotaler and abolitionist). They married in 1852 and had three sons. In 1859, Hayes became city solicitor of Cincinnati.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, Hayes and friends from the Literary Society of Cincinnati volunteered and became members of the 23rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry (OVI), first commanded by William Rosecrans. With Hayes as an officer, the 23rd was sent to West Virginia to drive the Confederates out of what became a largely pro-Union area. Its first engagement was at Carnifex Ferry in the Kanawha Valley on September 10, 1861. That Winter Hayes became commander of the 23rd OVI. In a skirmish on May 10, 1862 in the Valley Hayes suffered his first war wound, an injury to his knee.

That August, as part of Jacob Cox's Kanawha Division, Hayes and his regiment were ordered east to join the Army of the Potomac. Now again under Major General George Brinton McClellan, it was headed toward confrontation with Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, invading Maryland after its victory over Brigadier General John Pope at Second Manassas. Hayes and others in Cox's command were assigned to Major General Jessie Lee Reno's IX Corps. En route to Frederick, Maryland Reno and Hayes engaged in a brief debate about Hayes' troops making campfires with local farmers' fence rails. On September 14, McClellan ordered Reno's Corps to force its way across South Mountain through Fox's Gap. Reno ordered the Kanawha Division to lead the attack. That morning Hayes led the 23rd up the mountain only to be wounded in his left arm and eventually retrieved for medical care. During the battle, Reno was killed. Soon, Lucy arrived to care for her wounded husband.

After his recovery, Hayes, promoted to Colonel, remained in command of the 23rd. In January, 1863, Hayes was promoted to command of the First Brigade of the Second Kanawha Division. In July, 1863, Hayes' command joined in the pursuit and capture of Brigadier General John Hunt Morgan toward the end of his raid in southern Ohio. In the Spring of 1864, Hayes and his brigade were part of Brigadier General George Crook's Kanawha Division and fought at the battle of Cloyd's Mountain on May 9, 1864 (facing Morgan, who had escaped from the Ohio state penitentiary in Columbus). It then joined Major General David Hunter's army in its unsuccessful attempt to capture Lynchburg. George Crook then took command but was surprised by Lieutenant General Jubal Anderson Early on July 24 at Kernstown, just south of Winchester. Hayes' force covered Crook's retreat into Maryland and Hayes was again wounded. This time his horse was shot down and he was wounded in the shoulder.

Crook's force became the VIII Corps of Major General Phillip Henry Sheridan's Army of the Shenandoah as he headed south to attack Early (who had earlier retreated from the outskirts of Washington City). On September 19, 1864, Sheridan launched his attack from Winchester which quickly stalled. As part of Crook's reserve, Hayes led a late charge that sent Early into retreat. Hayes took over command of Crook's Second (Kanawha) Division after its commander was seriously wounded. On September 22, Hayes' Division led Crook's flanking movement over Little North Mountain at Fisher's Hill that resulted in a rout of Early's army.

October brought Hayes news of the birth of a son and later that month he was elected to Congress. However, on October 19 Confederates led by Major General John Brown Gordon stormed out of a morning fog to rout the Kanawha Division camped along the Shenandoah. In rallying his troops, Hayes was injured when his horse was shot and he tumbled to the ground and then was hit in the head but was only shocked by the spent shell. He narrowly escaped capture by the advancing Confederates. The injured Hayes did not participate in Sheridan's inspired counterattack that routed Early for a third time. On December 9, Crook presented Hayes with this brigadier general's stars. In early April, 1865, Hayes was ordered to capture Lynchburg but while en route Lee surrendered and Hayes' war ended. He participated in the Grand Review and then awaited the meeting of Congress.

He served only until he was nominated in 1867 by the Republicans for the position of Governor of Ohio. Hayes won election narrowly but the Democrats took control of the legislature. Hayes served a second term with the Republicans having retaken control of the legislature, retiring in January, 1872. During his second administration, the predecessor of the Ohio State University was established. Running again for Congress in 1872 to support Grant's re-election campaign, Hayes lost. However, in 1875 Hayes was persuaded to again run for Governor of Ohio and was re-elected.

That made him a favorite son candidate for the Republican nomination for president when the Republicans met in Cincinnati in June, 1876. The Convention's favorite, former Speaker of the House James Gillespie Blaine, failed to secure the nomination, which instead went to Hayes on the seventh ballot. In the November election Democrat Samuel Jones Tilden, the reform Governor of New York, won more popular votes than Hayes. However, Republican Congressman Daniel Edgar Sickles (the Civil War major general who lost a leg at Gettysburg) did not give up hope. If the Republicans could win the electoral votes of Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina and a disputed vote in Oregon, Hayes could still win the election by a single electoral vote. Sickles telegraphed republican leaders in the four states telling them to hold their states for Hayes. Republicans claimed that Southern Democrats had prevented many blacks from voting while Democrats claimed that Republican Reconstruction governments had manipulated the vote results. The southern states sent dual competing election results to Congress, which eventually appointed a joint 15-member Congressional Electoral Commission to decide the result. Each party controlled one house of Congress. Each chose five representatives and an additional five members of the U.S. Supreme Court made up the membership of the Commission. The composition of the Commission resulted in the Republicans controlling it by 8-7. In voting on the contested results in the four states, the Commission voted 8-7 for Hayes in all four disputes, giving Hayes the twenty electoral votes that he needed to edge Tilden by a margin of 185-184. Tilden and the Democrats did not seriously dispute the outcome despite charges that the vote was rigged on condition that Hayes would end the federal military occupation of the former Confederacy. (although Grant has already begun the process). However, many Democrats called Hayes "Rutherfraud" and "His Fraudulency".

Hayes began his presidency by withdrawing the last of the remaining federal troops from the former Confederacy. Despite his best efforts, former slaves were oppressed in the South. In 1877, Hayes was pressured to send federal troops to restore order during a national railroad strike, which favored the railroad companies. During his single term in office, Hayes also dealt with currency issues and attempted to implement federal civil service reforms against the opposition of the Republican Stalwarts. The Stalwarts also opposed Hayes' efforts to seek conciliation with the South. His White House became famous when alcohol was banned at the White House at the insistence of his wife Lucy, who became known as "Lemonade Lucy". Keeping his election promise of serving only one term, Hayes returned to Ohio in 1881. In retirement, Hayes became an advocate of federal education subsidies for children and warned of the evils of great disparities of wealth in the Gilded Age. His wife Lucy died in 1889 and Hayes died on January 17, 1893.

James Abram Garfield

James A. Garfield is known as the last president to be born in a log cabin. His parents emigrated from New England to Ohio and he was born on their farm in Orange Township east of Cleveland on November 19, 1831. Two years later his father died, leaving his widow with James and three other young children to raise. In 1848, Garfield left home for a short stint on a canal boat, before returning home ill. After recovering, he enrolled at the Geauga Seminary. He began teaching to support himself, as well as being a preacher for the Disciple of Christ faith. There he met fellow student Lucretia Rudolph, whom he married in 1858. In 1851, Garfield enrolled at the Western Reserve Eclectic Institute (later known as Hiram College). Lucretia (known as "Crete") followed him there. Garfield became a teacher at Hiram. He soon left for Williams College in Massachusetts. In 1857, he returned to the Western Reserve Eclectic Institute and became its President. In 1859, Garfield was elected to the Ohio State Senate. There, he became a friend and roommate of Jacob Dolson Cox, a fellow state senator from a neighboring district.

A strong abolitionist, Garfield expected to be named a leader of an Ohio volunteer regiment when the Confederate states seceded and the Civil War began. He was passed over initially. But, in 1862, he was first appointed lieutenant colonel of the 42nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry and then colonel, as he recruited its ranks. On December 16, 1861, Garfield met in Louisville with his new commander Brigadier General Don Carlos Buell. He was asked to immediately make a plan to drive Confederate Brigadier General Humphrey Marshall out of eastern Kentucky. His plan approved, Garfield was sent as head of a brigade to the Big Sandy River Valley near the borders with Virginia and West Virginia. Despite his inexperience and the inhospitable lay of the land, on January 10, 1862, Garfield's small force struck Marshall's Confederates at Middle Creek, with Marshall retreating south. For his success Garfield was promoted to Brigadier General.

Garfield was re-assigned to lead a new brigade in Buell's Army of the Ohio. Just as Garfield's brigade arrived on April 7, the bloody battle of Shiloh was ending with

Confederate General Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard's withdrawal and retreat to Corinth. Garfield's troops participated in Major General Henry Wager Halleck's painstakingly slow advance to capture Corinth. Feeling ill, Garfield was put on leave back in Ohio that fall. While recuperating, he was nominated for a seat in Congress and was elected. Garfield then went to Washington, as a Congressman-elect. While there, he was assigned to the politically charged court martial of Major General Fitz-John Porter, a McClellan favorite, for his insubordination at the battle of Second Manassas. Porter was convicted and dismissed from the army. The case was re-opened in 1879 and after Garfield's assassination his successor Chester Alan Arthur commuted the sentence and the verdict was overturned.

In early 1863, Garfield arrived at the Army of the Cumberland in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, headed by Ohioan Major General William Starke Rosecrans, following its bloody battle at Stones River that ended with Confederate General Braxton Bragg's retreat. Instead of receiving an expected field command, Garfield found himself appointed Rosecrans' new chief of staff, replacing his predecessor who was killed at Stones River. Garfield became instrumental in promoting and planning Rosecrans' Tullahoma campaign against Bragg in the summer of 1863. By early July, Rosecrans had outmaneuvered Bragg without sustaining significant Union casualties and forced him to retreat from central Tennessee. Late that July, frustrated with Rosecrans' slow pace of advance against Bragg, Garfield wrote a lengthy letter to fellow Ohioan Salmon Portland Chase, Lincoln's Treasury Secretary, criticizing Rosecrans for delays. This would later be seen as secretly undermining Rosecrans with the administration, especially with Secretary of War Edwin McMasters Stanton, another fellow Ohioan. Nevertheless, Garfield now played a key role in planning the next campaign of the Army of the Cumberland: the capture of the key Confederate rail center—Chattanooga.

The stage was now set for one of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War which made Garfield a Union hero. As Rosecrans prepared to advance, the Confederacy reinforced Bragg's Army of Tennessee with Lieutenant General James Longstreet's Corps from the Army of Northern Virginia, as well as troops under the command of Major Generals John Cabell Breckenridge and Simon Bolivar Buckner. With these additional forces, Bragg's army outnumbered Rosecrans' army. As Bragg abandoned Chattanooga, Rosecrans pursued him, scattering his corps. Realizing the danger of his isolated corps being attacked separately, Rosecrans concentrated his army along Chickamauga Creek in northwest Georgia south of Chattanooga. Here the two armies clashed on September 18, 1863 just as Longstreet's eastern reinforcements began to arrive on the field.

The next day saw a disastrous mistake threaten the destruction of the Army of the Cumberland. Due to miscommunication between Rosecrans and Brigadier General Thomas John Wood commanding a division in the center of the Union line, a gap was opened just as Longstreet launched his assault at that location. This led to a rout of the center of Rosecrans' army. As federal troops retreated in the face of Longstreet's advance, Rosecrans believed that his army was badly beaten. As Rosecrans and Garfield discussed the situation, it was agreed that Rosecrans would head for Chattanooga to

reorganize the army. However, believing that Major General George Henry Thomas was still holding the left of the army in the face of Confederate attacks, Garfield rode to Thomas on Snodgrass Hill and Horseshoe Ridge under Confederate fire, with his horse being shot. Garfield made it safely to Thomas' outnumbered force, which was reinforced by the Reserve Corps under Major General Gordon Granger. For his defense and orderly retreat of his wing of the army, Thomas became known as "The Rock of Chickamauga". For his ride to Thomas, Garfield would also be praised as a hero, in contrast to the badly shaken Rosecrans.

With the Army of the Cumberland entrapped in Chattanooga and besieged by Bragg, the situation became increasingly difficult. In mid-October, Rosecrans sent Garfield to Washington City to seek help. But, before Garfield arrived, Rosecrans was replaced by U.S. Grant, who named George Thomas as the new commander of the Army of the Cumberland. This ended Garfield's military service during the Civil War, with a promotion to the rank of Major General. His military record would serve him well in his political career.

Grieving over the death of his first-born child, Garfield took his seat in Congress in January, 1864. He served in the House of Representatives through 1880. He played an important role in the election of Rutherford B. Hayes in the contested election of 1876. He was sent to Louisiana to support the Republican claim of Hayes' victory there, served on the Congressional Electoral Commission, and negotiated the Compromise of 1877 with the Democrats that sealed their acceptance of Hayes' election as president. In 1880, he went to the Republican presidential nominating convention in Chicago as a supporter of fellow Ohioan U.S. Senator John Sherman. Sherman and the other leading contenders former President U.S. Grant and U.S. Senator James G. Blaine could not achieve the majority required for nomination as the balloting continued. On the 36th ballot, the dark horse candidacy of a seemingly reluctant Garfield became his nomination for president. For his running mate, Garfield chose New Yorker Chester A. Arthur. Arthur was a favorite of New York Senator Roscoe Conkling, leader of the Republican Stalwarts who had supported Grant's candidacy for a third term. Arthur had been removed as the Collector of the Port of New York, an important patronage post, by President Rutherford B. Hayes in his reform effort.

The Democrats chose as their candidate Union Civil War hero Winfield Scott Hancock. Garfield waged his campaign from the front porch of his farm in Mentor, Ohio east of Cleveland. Garfield's campaign seemingly made a critical deal with Conkling for his support, which Conkling interpreted as giving him control over federal patronage in New York. Garfield's popular vote margin over Hancock was tiny but by winning New York's electoral vote, Garfield became the twentieth president of the United States.

Garfield soon found himself inundated with patronage requests. This in turn led to a confrontation with Conkling which resulted in Garfield naming a Conkling rival to the New York Customs post. Conkling then resigned his seat in the Senate, expecting to be

re-elected by the New York legislature. To his surprise, it did not reseat him in the Senate, which removed a major political rival for Garfield.

Meanwhile, Garfield was being badgered by an obscure Republican Stalwart named Charles Julius Guiteau, who was demanding his appointment as the American consul in Paris. Guiteau was an itinerant and unsuccessful lawyer. Guiteau was under the dangerous delusion that he had been the key to Garfield's victory and therefore was entitled to a major patronage award. James G. Blaine, who Garfield had selected as his Secretary of State, dismissed his persistent entreaties.

In the wake of Conkling's political fall from favor, Guiteau decided that the assassination of Garfield and succession by Vice-President Chester Arthur would restore the Stalwarts to power and save the Republic. He began to stalk Garfield. On July 2, 1881, Garfield headed for the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad Depot to join his family for a vacation. He was accompanied by Blaine and joined by his two young sons at the depot. There, Guiteau awaited his arrival. Guiteau shot Garfield twice, wounding him in the arm and back. Witness to this shocking event was also Robert Todd Lincoln, the assassinated president's son. Guiteau was quickly arrested as the wounded Garfield was taken back to the White House and his wife Crete who was awaiting him in New Jersey was notified. Guiteau announced: "I am a Stalwart and Arthur will be President".¹

While a nation was again shocked by an attack on its president, presidential doctor Willard Bliss took control of Garfield's treatment. At his trial Guiteau denied that he killed Garfield. Instead, he blamed Garfield's doctors. Indeed, the case has been made that their probing of his back wound was a major cause of his death in the absence of proper medical hygiene. An attempt to locate the bullet in Garfield's body by a new metal detector invented by Alexander Graham Bell failed. Nevertheless, Garfield seemed to be improving and on September 5 he and Crete left Washington by train for the seaside resort of Eberon, New Jersey. However, with his wife at his bedside, Garfield died on September 19, 1881, the eighteenth anniversary of the second day of the battle at Chickamauga. Ironically, it would be the new president Chester Arthur of the New York political patronage machine who signed the Pendleton Act reforming the federal civil service. Guiteau was tried, found guilty, and hung on June 30, 1882.

On September 26, 1881, Arthur had proclaimed a national day of mourning for Garfield's burial in Cleveland, where 150,000 had passed by his funeral bier. On Memorial Day, 1890, the Garfield Memorial at Cleveland's Lakeview Cemetery was dedicated. In attendance were President Benjamin Harrison, former President Rutherford B. Hayes, future president and Congressman William McKinley, William Tecumseh Sherman, and 115 surviving veterans of the 42nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry which Garfield had commanded in West Virginia.

¹ Kenneth D. Ackerman, *Political Dark Horse: The Surprise Election and Murder of President James A. Garfield* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2003), 379.

Benjamin Harrison

Benjamin Harrison was one of ten children and the second son of John Scott Harrison and his second wife Elizabeth Irwin. Four died as infants. Ben was born on August 20, 1833 at the Harrison farm in North Bend, Ohio. His father was one of ten children of William Henry Harrison, the ninth President of the United (who died after only a month in office). Among his Harrison ancestors Benjamin also counted Benjamin Harrison V, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and a three-term Governor of Virginia.

In 1852 Ben graduated from Miami University, where he met his future wife Caroline Lavinia Scott. Ben became a lawyer in Cincinnati. After his marriage, he and Caroline moved to Indianapolis in 1854 and Ben joined William Wallace as a law partner. His father became a two-term Whig Congressman but in 1856 Ben became a member of the new Republican Party and in 1857 he became the city attorney of Indianapolis, elected as a Republican. In 1860, Harrison was elected as the reporter for the State Supreme Court of Indiana.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, Harrison initially stayed home to be with his pregnant wife (whose baby daughter died at birth). Ben and his wife both had brothers serving in the Union Army in an Indiana regiment commanded by Colonel Lewis “Lew” Wallace, brother of Harrison’s law partner William Wallace. However, in August, 1862, Harrison became Colonel of the 70th Indiana Volunteers, which he and his former law partner William Wallace recruited. Harrison led his regiment in more than thirty Civil war battles.

Many of those came as they participated in Major General William Tecumseh Sherman’s Atlanta campaign in 1864. Harrison (now a brigade commander in the XX Corps) and his Indiana regiment were cited for their performance on May 15 at Resaca in capturing Confederate cannon from General Joseph Eggleston Johnston’s Army of Tennessee and then against Major General John Bell Hood’s Confederates at the July 20, 1864 battle of Peach Tree Creek outside Atlanta. Known to his men as “Little Ben”, Harrison became a distinguished combat leader. After Atlanta’s capture, Harrison returned to Indiana to campaign for the Republican party. He was re-elected as the State Supreme Court reporter.

However, returning to the army, he was prevented from joining Sherman on his March to the Sea. Instead, Harrison became commander of a brigade of recovering wounded and raw recruits at Chattanooga. His training command was then sent to help defend Nashville against Hood’s invasion of Tennessee. His brigade participated in George Thomas’ defense of the city and rout of Hood’s decimated Army of Tennessee on December 15-16, 1864. After that, he went to Hilton Head, North Carolina in March, 1865, where he was again assigned training duty. He joined Sherman in April at Goldsboro, North Carolina following the fight against Johnston at Bentonville. Following Johnston’s surrender, Harrison and his troops marched to Washington City where they

participated in the Grand Review of the Western armies on May 24, 1865. Harrison was discharged with the rank of Brevet Brigadier General.

Following the end of his Civil War military service, Benjamin resumed the practice of law in Indianapolis. In 1871, Harrison gained national recognition defending the United States against Lambdin Purdy Milligan's claim for damages for his wartime imprisonment. In 1866, the U.S. Supreme Court overruled Milligan's conviction in Indianapolis by a military court for treasonable activities, which sentenced him to be hanged. It ruled that trial by the military commission was illegal and Milligan was released. Harrison successfully limited Milligan's damage award to a nominal sum.

Harrison failed to win the Republican nomination for Indiana Governor in 1872. In 1875, Harrison was drafted as the Indiana Republicans' candidate for Governor but lost narrowly to the Democratic candidate. During the presidency of Rutherford Hayes, Harrison served on the Mississippi River Commission, formed to improve navigation on the river.

In 1880, Harrison was a supporter of James Garfield at the Republican nominating convention. Harrison then announced his candidacy for the U.S. Senate and was appointed to that position by the Indiana legislature. After Garfield's wounding by Charles Guiteau, Harrison spent time at his bedside and attended Garfield's funeral. In 1884, Harrison supported James Gillespie Blaine as the Republican presidential candidate. In 1887, Harrison was defeated for re-election to the Senate by a single vote on the sixteenth ballot.

However, a year later Harrison won the Republican presidential nomination on the eighth ballot defeating Ohio U.S. Senator John Sherman (brother of William Tecumseh Sherman, who famously refused to consider the presidency). While he narrowly lost the popular vote, Harrison easily defeated incumbent President Grover Cleveland in the Electoral College to become the twenty-third President of the United States. However, in a repeat of this contest in 1892, Cleveland easily defeated Harrison in his attempt at re-election.

During his presidency, Harrison laid two important cornerstones related to the Civil War. On August 22, 1889, Harrison spoke at its laying for the Indiana State Soldiers and Sailors Monument in Indianapolis. In May, 1892, Harrison spoke at the laying of the cornerstone of Grant's tomb in New York City.

Later that year, Harrison decided to run for re-election against an effort to replace him with his Secretary of State James G. Blaine, the unsuccessful Republican presidential candidate in 1884. Blaine withdrew his candidacy just before the Republican convention. In the campaign, he faced Democratic candidate former President Grover Cleveland. Harrison's campaign was hampered by his worry about his wife Caroline and her sickness from tuberculosis. She died on October 26, 1892. After his defeat by Cleveland, Harrison's last major act was an attempt to have the United States annex the Hawaiian

Islands. Americans had overthrown its native queen and gained an American protectorate. However, the Senate did not approve annexation. It did so five years later in the presidency of William McKinley.

Harrison resumed the practice of law. He remarried and had a daughter by his second wife. Harrison died on March 13, 1901. His body was escorted by the 70th Indiana, his former Civil War regiment, to the Indiana capitol to lie in state. His funeral procession was accompanied by President William McKinley.

William McKinley

William McKinley was born on January 29, 1843 of Irish-Scottish heritage in Niles, Ohio. The family moved to nearby Poland, Ohio a decade later. He briefly attended Allegheny College but returned home in 1860 and was teaching school when the Civil War broke out. McKinley and a friend enlisted as privates. McKinley was sworn in by John C. Frémont at the Union training camp in Columbus, Ohio. He joined the Poland Guards, which became Company E of the 23rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry. He joined fellow future U.S. President Rutherford Hayes, who would become commander of the 23rd.

In April, 1862, with the 23rd campaigning in West Virginia, McKinley was promoted to commissary sergeant. It was in this capacity that he had his most memorable experience in the Civil War. On September 17, 1861 at the battle of Antietam, the 23rd was serving in Major General Ambrose Everett Burnside's IX Corps. When he saw his comrades pinned down without having any food that day, McKinley loaded a mule-driven wagon with food supplies and headed for the front in the face of Confederate fire. His battlefield bravery was recognized by his promotion to second lieutenant following this bloody conflict. In March, 1863, McKinley was promoted to first lieutenant.

1864 saw the 23rd in the Shenandoah Valley. It was attacked by Jubal Early's force at Kernstown, south of Winchester on July 24, 1864. Dispatched by Colonel Rutherford Birchard Hayes to an isolated battalion threatened with capture, McKinley brought them back to safety, to his mentor Hayes' gratitude. McKinley also led the saving of some of the command's artillery. McKinley was promoted to captain, serving on the staff of George Crook. For his service in Phil Sheridan's victorious campaign in the Shenandoah Valley, McKinley was promoted to major, a title by which he enjoyed being addressed in later life. After participating in the Grand Review in Washington City, McKinley headed home at the age of twenty-two.

After studying law, McKinley opened his law practice in 1867 in Canton, Ohio where his sister was teaching school. In 1869, he was elected to the position of prosecuting attorney of Stark County but was defeated in 1871. 1871 saw McKinley marry Ida Saxton, daughter of a prominent Canton family. With the deaths of their two young daughters in 1873 and 1875, Ida became a sickly companion to McKinley for most of the rest of their marriage.

In the Spring of 1876, Ohio miners fought the mine owners amidst an economic downturn, requiring Governor Rutherford B. Hayes to send troops to restore order. While a political supporter of Hayes, McKinley decided to represent miners charged with disorderly conduct and won the acquittal of all but one miner. This won McKinley the respect of labor in both political parties. It also led to his meeting Mark Hanna, one of the mine owners, leading to a friendship that would later help propel him to the presidency. In 1876, while campaigning for Hayes for president, McKinley won a seat in Congress. Early in his Congressional career, McKinley embraced protectionist tariffs. In his contested election in 1882, his bare victory was overturned in Congress on a party line vote. McKinley returned to Canton. In 1884, he re-won a seat in Congress.

1890 saw McKinley leading the fight for a strong tariff bill. After fierce Congressional battles with the free traders, the McKinley tariff act of 1890 passed. But then McKinley once again lost a close Congressional election. This time, McKinley rebounded politically quickly by winning the 1891 Ohio gubernatorial race. He was re-elected in 1893 but Ohio like the nation suffered severely during the 1893 Depression and the economic and labor troubles that it brought. McKinley also survived a personal financial crisis, aided by Mark Hanna and his industrialist circle.

McKinley stepped down as Ohio governor in 1895. With Mark Hanna's help, McKinley began the effort that would culminate in his 1896 Republican nomination for the presidency. McKinley was nominated on the first ballot with Hanna as his campaign manager. His surprise Democratic opponent was the free-silver candidate from Nebraska: William Jennings Bryan, who had electrified the Democratic convention with his Cross of Gold speech. Siding with the sound money Republican platform, which adhered to the gold standard backing the U.S. currency. McKinley conducted a front porch campaign (as had his predecessors) in Canton. McKinley won a decisive victory over Bryan, becoming the twenty-fifth President of the United States. In his first term. McKinley had to deal with the bimetallism issue. His administration also won the annexation of Hawaii.

However, this was overshadowed by the drumbeat for war to liberate Cuba from the repression of the Spanish Empire. William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer and their yellow press newspapers pushed public opinion for war to support Cuban rebels, which McKinley resisted. His hand was forced on February 15, 1898, when the visiting battleship USS *Maine* blew up and sank in Havana's harbor. Despite uncertainty over the cause of the explosion and Spain's denial of responsibility, a reluctant McKinley sent a declaration of war to Congress in April. With Congressional approval, McKinley became the first of the Civil War veteran presidents to conduct a war while in office. Despite the weakness of the U.S. armed forces at the outset, they quickly subdued Spanish forces not only in Cuba but also in the Philippines and Puerto Rico. What Secretary of State John Hay termed "a splendid little war" made heroes of former Assistant Secretary of the Navy and head of the Rough Riders Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt and Admiral George Dewey. While the annexation of Cuba did not occur, the United States became embroiled in a protracted and vicious conflict in the Philippines when the anti-Spanish rebels were not awarded independence as they had expected. Despite opposition to America's emergence

as a world military power, President McKinley's administration presided over the expansion of American influence beyond the Americas.²

In the 1900 election with Roosevelt on the ticket as Vice-President, McKinley easily won re-election over William Jennings Bryan. In 1901, after a lengthy national tour, McKinley visited Buffalo, New York for the Pan-American Exposition. While greeting the public on September 6, McKinley was shot by anarchist Leon Frank Czolgosz. McKinley died eight days later and Teddy Roosevelt became President. McKinley's daily wearing of a carnation led to its becoming the official state flower of Ohio.

Thus tragically ended the era of the Civil War veteran presidents.

² Secretary of State John Hay to Theodore Roosevelt, July 27, 1898 in Walter Millis, *The Martial Spirit* (Lower Stratford, NH: Ayer Publishing, 1979), 340.