



A MONUMENT TO
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

ADDRESS.

Delivered in the Methodist Church,
Burlington, Vermont.

At the Memorial Service to the late President McKinley,
September 19th, 1901.

No. 7, Vol. 9.

SUBJECT.

The Military Life of William McKinley.

Gen. O. O. HOWARD,
Managing Director,
~~New York City, New York.~~
Col. HENRY H. ADAMS,
Treasurer,
No. 177 Broadway, New York.
E. P. FAIRCHILD,
Financial Secretary,
~~New York City, New York.~~

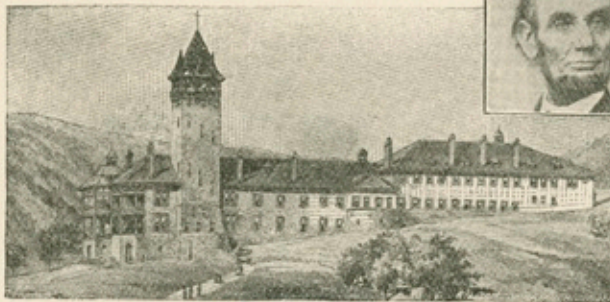
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Burlington, Vt., _____ 1900.

McKinley
~~Why President McKinley~~
~~was called~~
~~MAJOR~~
~~by~~

General O O Howard
U.S. Army

address in Burlington, Nt
Memorial Service to the late
President McKinley
Sept. 19. 1901.

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Inches



Mr. [illegible]
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1910

In a frame-house of two stories, with a store in a corner below, William McKinley was born. The village of Niles, Ohio, was a small one, and but for this incident would even yet have but little note. The house is not now standing, but parts of it may be found in many places as keep-sakes and mememtos of this boy. Good blood coursed in his veins - English, Scotch, German. As some of his ancestors came from the north of Ireland his blood was called "Scotch-Irish."

As a corner stone to his character and life, McKinley had a good mother. On my first visit to Canton in 1869 McKinley took me to that mother, then a widow, to be entertained. He was ^{then} the President of the Young Men's Christian Association and as such

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introduced me to the assembly where I was to speak. The remainder of the evening he and I spent together in that sweet home. I do not wonder that McKinley always insisted that if he had any good in him it came from his mother's love and training.

This mother chose Poland, Ohio, as a good place to raise her family. Her husband consenting, the move from Niles to Poland was made when William was two years old. They had now a better house and better surroundings; but though his father was an industrious man it was difficult for the family, a large one - to do more than to make both ends meet. There was a seminary close by, and the mother pieced out the small income by taking student boarders. She herself helped her daughters do the cooking and other work. As he grew, the young man showed himself not only a

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As he grew, the young man showed himself not only a

helpful and obedient son but an earnest student. The family was large; how could they educate the boy, except in the district school and in the Seminary ? But such a mother insisted on the college; so that when seventeen William, already two years ahead, passed his examination and entered the Junior class of Allegheny College, Meadville, Pa.

During his first year he was made ill by overwork and obliged to return home, and this sickness with the want of means prevented his immediate return. For relief he did what so many other of our great men have done, he became the teacher of a country school, and undoubtedly with this salary he would have returned and completed his college course but for the extraordinary event which overtook not only the McKinleys but the Nation.

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I think I see him now listening to a patriotic voice which said: "Our flag has been fired upon and Fort Sumter taken. Who will be the first to defend the flag and the country ?" The young men of Poland, still in their teens - only boys - hardly grown, came up promptly not waiting one for another, to give in their names. Among them, says one who was present, "was a slight, grey-eyed, boyish figure, too much impressed with the seriousness of the situation to put himself in evidence, who went up with the rest." It was young McKinley. He promptly enlisted in the 23rd Ohio and passed on to Columbus. That regiment has furnished not only Generals of high rank, but two Presidents of the United States, a Senator and a Justice of the

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Supreme Court and a Foreign minister of high reputation.

McKinley constantly affirmed that he was glad that he had entered the service as a private and served fourteen months in the ranks. It gave him confidence in himself and faith in his commander and in his Government. Colonel Hayes, who very soon was advanced to command that regiment, shows why McKinley became a commissary-sergeant. "We soon found that in business and executive ability he was of rare capacity, of unusual and surpassing capacity, for a boy of his age." The incident which caused his promotion occurred in the bloody battle of Antietam. His regiment with the rest of us had been fighting all day, with much loss and more worry and fatigue. As darkness came on General Scammon, the brigade commander, heard loud cheering along the front of

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brigade commander, heard loud cheering along the front of

the 23rd Ohio. He sent his aide at once to learn the cause. His report was "they are cheering McKinley and his coffee." McKinley had gathered up the stragglers to help him prepare some hot meats and plenty of coffee, enough, with hard-bread, to fill two wagons, and had gone on with them toward the regiment while the air was still filled with exploding shells and other hostile missiles. The terror was so great that the mules hauling one of the wagons were frightened and disabled, but McKinley managed, with his energy and control over men, to get the other wagon past all obstacles, on to the regiment, which was holding a portion of the front line. Every soldier will understand what rest and refreshment that well supplied wagon brought to the weary soldiers. As soon as the Governor of Ohio heard

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of this incident he sent McKinley his first commission. President Hayes remarked on one occasion " Every man in the regiment was served with hot coffee and warm meats... McKinley passed under fire and delivered with his own hands these things so essential for the men for whom he was laboring."

It is pleasant to follow him step by step as he now began to command his company in campaign and battle. He was in nine severe engagements, mostly in the valleys and mountains of West Virginia. He was promoted from Second Lieutenant to First, and before the war closed from First Lieutenant to Captain. ~~Afterward he received the honorary rank of Major.~~ The Shenandoah Valley, it will be remembered, was full of skirmishing and fighting for the entire war, and only ceased to be of consequence when Sheridan had left it

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In an engagement near Winchester Sept. 19th, 1864, *prior to the day he was laid to rest,* just 37 years ~~ago to-day~~, "McKinley " says his Comrade, Capt. Howe, who was there, "greatly distinguished himself."

A single incident will bring out the conduct of McKinley as a staff Lieutenant, when inspired by a sense of duty. He was ordered to bring back a loyal regiment, the 13th of West Virginia, which had in the confusion of the retreat failed to retire from the battlefield of Kernstown. General Hayes, commanding the right brigade, feared that this regiment, left under a dreadful fire, had been destroyed or captured.

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He sent McKinley to endeavor to find it and bring it back. The young man set out without the slightest hesitation at a tremendous gallop, spurring his horse straight into the teeth of the Confederates' advance. The Major of the 23rd relates this incident:

" Hayes loved McKinley... and only imagine what must have been his feelings when the necessities of the moment demanded that he should order this boy to do this dangerous work ! None of us expected to see him again as we watched him push his horse through the open field, over fences and across ditches while the fire from the enemy poured upon him with shells exploding around and over him. Once he was completely enveloped in the smoke of an exploding shell, and we thought he had gone down; but no, out of this smoke

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emerged his wiry little brown horse, McKinley still firmly seated and erect as a hussar..... McKinley gave the Colonel the orders and said to him that he thought he, Col. Brown, would have retired without orders.

"Oh, said the sturdy old Colonel, "I was about concluding I would retire; but Lieutenant, I p'intedly believe I will give them fellows a volley or two before I go."

McKinley replied "then up and at them as quickly as possible!" The regiment gave a crushing volley and followed it up with a rattling fire, while it took up the proper movement to the rear.

On his approach McKinley was greeted by a cheer, " says the Major, "for all of us felt and knew that one of the most gallant acts of the War

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had been performed. General Hayes said to McKinley as he led Brown's regiment into place: "Lieutenant, I feared I would never see you alive again!"

Here is something of the record of this young man in the War: "Never absent from his command on sick leave; he had only one short furlough in his four years' of service; he never asked or sought promotion; he was present and active in every engagement in which his regiment participated; and he performed bravely and well every duty assigned him. His career as a soldier was in the highest degree creditable, and gained for him the life-long respect, confidence and good-will both of his superior officers and of his comrades in the ranks." Thus we easily see why he received the brevet rank of Major, at the close of this war.

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In this sketch I have sought only to present a slight reference to the beginnings of the life of William McKinley. To his mother's delight and satisfaction he early identified himself with the Methodist Church, and lived up to the simple teachings of our Lord as set forth in the New Testament, according to his understanding and belief. We have then William McKinley for an example for every young man in the Nation. If one would attain unto real success let him make a right beginning and be faithful to the last degree in every matter committed to his charge.

He that is faithful in a few things shall become ruler over many.

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