

**Manning Ferguson Force**  
**(1824-1899): A Tribute.**  
**Delivered at Spring Grove Cemetery,**  
**Cincinnati, Ohio, June 23, 2001.**

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“A spare grave man with an eye that penetrated to the spine of a culprit, [who] was in the habit of appearing on the drill ground and caused no small discomfort to both drill-master and men by so doing, for he was always critical, and when he spoke he made every one feel that his day of reckoning had come. He took the deepest interest in our welfare, and so was very strict with our follies. We all respected him for his justice and manliness, and before long we had learned to love him like a father.” Henry Otis Dwight, a soldier of the 20<sup>th</sup> Ohio Veteran Volunteer Infantry, wrote these words about his former regimental commander, Manning Ferguson Force. (1)

Manning Force was born to Peter and Hannah Force on Dec. 17, 1824, in Washington, D.C. Manning developed a childhood interest in history and law which was satisfied by his father’s extensive library. Peter Force later sold his collection to the government, and those books became part of the foundation of the Library of Congress. Manning pursued his interest in law by attending Harvard University. He graduated from Harvard Law School in 1848 and received an offer to join a law firm in Cincinnati. In 1849 he moved to Ohio, where he would reside for the rest of his life. He was admitted to the Ohio bar in 1850 and formed the law partnership of Walker, Kebler & Force in Cincinnati. (2)

That same year, Manning joined the Literary Club of Cincinnati. This prestigious club of scholarship included as members Salmon P. Chase, John Pope, Thomas Ewing, Jr., Edward F. Noyes, and Rutherford B. Hayes. It was at this time that Manning Force and Rutherford B. Hayes formed a deep, life-long friendship. Both were lawyers in Cincinnati before the war, and both loved going to the Literary Club meetings together. Hayes called it “the society with which so much of my life is associated.” Hayes and Force formed such a strong bond that several times in his life, when writing to his family, Hayes referred to Force as one of his best and closest friends. “[Force is] an excellent gentleman, soldier, and scholar who wants nothing for himself nor for anybody else,” Hayes wrote in 1891. When the Civil War separated these men, they continued to write each other from the field. After the war, Hayes would name one of his sons after Manning. (3)

It was through membership in the Literary Club’s Burnet Rifles that Manning Force was appointed to the rank of major of the 20<sup>th</sup> Ohio Volunteer Infantry on August 26, 1861. When the regiment’s commander, Colonel Charles Whittlesey, was assigned to oversee the construction of the defenses of Cincinnati in September 1861, Manning was promoted to lieutenant colonel. He was given the responsibility of training the raw recruits of the 20<sup>th</sup> Ohio, but despite having no military background, Force’s strict discipline and

diligent care for his soldiers made this contingent one of the hardest-fighting regiments in the Army of the Tennessee. (4)

Force and the 20<sup>th</sup> Ohio saw their first combat at Fort Donelson in February 1862, where the regiment performed very well under heavy fire. At Shiloh, Force took command of the regiment during the fighting on the second day of the battle. Soon after, Whittlesey resigned from the army due to health problems, and Manning Force was promoted to colonel of the 20<sup>th</sup> Ohio Infantry on May 1, 1862. Force and his regiment received national attention from their gallant defense of Bolivar, Tennessee, against Armstrong's and Forrest's cavalry on August 30, 1862. The 20<sup>th</sup> Ohio participated in the advance on Corinth, Grant's Central Mississippi Campaign, and the Vicksburg Campaign. Force earned special recognition for bravery at the Battle of Raymond, and during the siege of Vicksburg, Force became the acting commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade of Mortimer Leggett's Division, 17<sup>th</sup> Corps. On August 11, 1863, he was promoted to brigadier general of U.S. Volunteers, and in November, he was transferred to the command of the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade of Leggett's Division stationed at Vicksburg. (5)

Following the Meridian Campaign, Leggett's Division was marched overland to Acworth, Georgia, where it arrived on June 8, 1864, in the midst of Major-General William T. Sherman's Atlanta Campaign. With his brigade spearheading the 17<sup>th</sup> Corps advance east of Atlanta, Force captured an eminence known as Bald Hill on July 21, 1864. In the afternoon of the next day, July 22, Hood's army made a sweeping attack on the 17<sup>th</sup> Corps's left rear. As the entire left flank of the Army of the Tennessee crumbled, Manning Force led his brigade in a desperate defense of his critical position on Bald Hill (soon to be renamed Leggett's Hill). While standing on the front line at the top of the hill, a minie bullet smashed into his face below the left eye, shattered his palate, passed behind his right eye, and exited from the upper right side of his skull. His wound at first was believed to be mortal, and so Manning was sent home to die. However, Force miraculously survived his wound, though he was scarred for life. He returned to active duty on October 22, 1864, and Sherman promoted Force to Brevet Major General for his bravery at Atlanta. In 1892, he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his successful defense of Leggett's Hill. Manning Force is the only one of the 40 generals buried at Spring Grove to have been awarded the Medal of Honor. Only one other Ohio general earned the medal during the Civil War -- David S. Stanley. (6)

Force and his 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade participated in the March to the Sea, and on January 15, 1865, Force was placed in command of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division upon Leggett's retirement. He skillfully led the division in Sherman's March through the Carolinas. On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, Force begrudgingly took command of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division, 17<sup>th</sup> Corps, a position he held until Joe Johnston's surrender at Bennett Place, North Carolina. Force became the military commander of the District of Mississippi, and after refusing a commission as colonel of the 32<sup>nd</sup> US Infantry, he mustered out the army on January 15, 1866. (7)

Manning Force returned to his law practice in Cincinnati. As a Republican candidate in 1866, Force was elected judge of the Hamilton County Common Pleas court, a position he held until 1875. On May 13, 1874, Force married Frances Dabney Horton of Pomeroy,

Ohio. Frances Horton was the sister-in-law of Major-General John Pope, former commander of the Army of Virginia and a close friend of Manning's from the Literary Club. Manning and Frances went to live at 89 West 8<sup>th</sup> Street in Cincinnati. They had one child named Horton Caumont Force, born December 20, 1878. (8)

Manning Force ran on the 1876 Republican ticket for Representative to Congress, but lost by 700 votes to Milton Slayer. Force's old friend, President Rutherford B. Hayes, offered Force the position as Personal Secretary to the President, but Manning refused, saying that it was "incompatible with his distinction and dignity." Manning Force became a professor at Cincinnati Law School in 1877, and that same year, he was elected judge to the Superior Court of Cincinnati. He continued in this post until 1887, when overwork and stress caused him to suffer a mental breakdown and resign his position. Hayes took Force and his family into his home in Fremont, Ohio, and after a month's vacation in Europe, Force started on the road to recovery. With the assistance of Hayes, Force was appointed Commandant of the Ohio Soldiers Home in Sandusky in 1888. Since Force was a regular attendee of 20<sup>th</sup> Ohio reunions and Loyal Legion meetings, the new position at the Soldiers Home was much to his liking. The care he had shown for his soldiers during the Civil War was evident again during his tenure as commandant. He held this post until his death at Sandusky, Ohio, on May 8, 1899. (9)

Force was laid to rest at Spring Grove Cemetery on May 11, 1899. In his memory, the Hamilton County courts were closed for the day. In attendance at the burial were Brigadier-General Joshua Bates and Brevet Brigadier-General Andrew Hickenlooper, both of whom are also buried at Spring Grove. Horton Force attended the funeral, but Manning's wife, Frances, was too sick to come. She died in September of the following year and was buried next to her husband. (10)

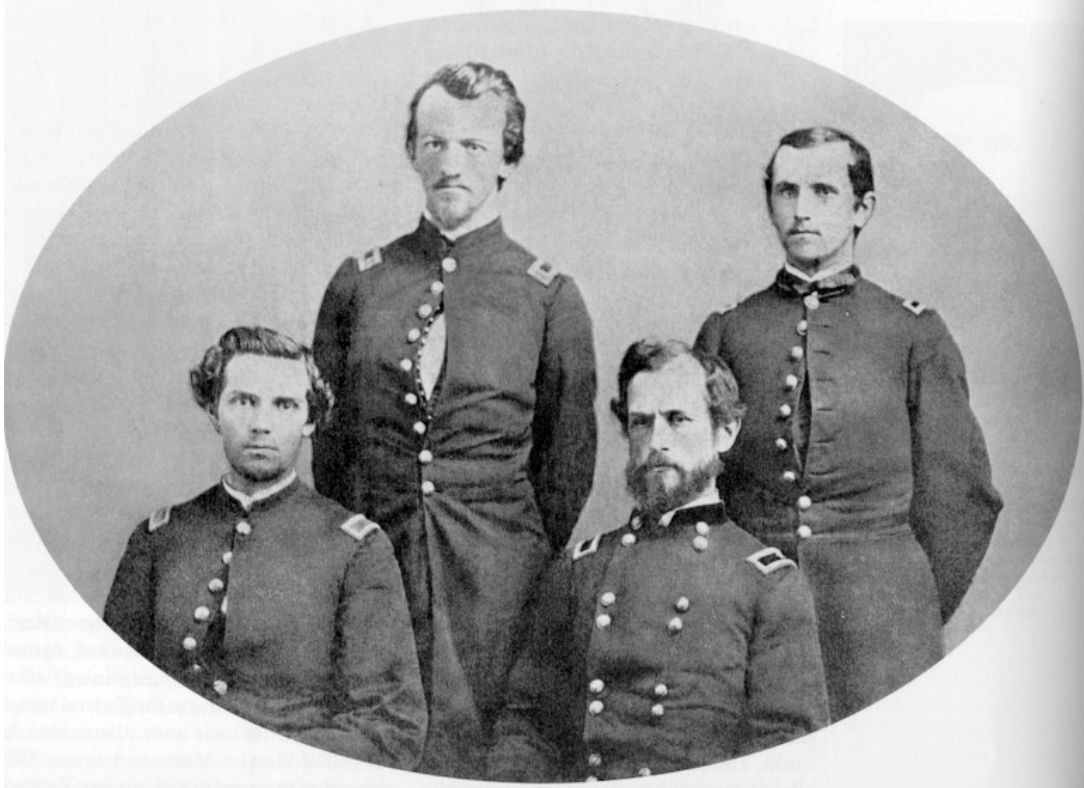
Manning Force's life left a significant mark on Cincinnati's history. Not only was Force a Cincinnati war hero and long-time judge, but also he left a legacy with regards to his fondest interests – that of history, law, and archaeology. His achievements included: (11)

- The publishing of 5 books and numerous papers on his war experiences, Darwinism, American Criminal Law, Amerigo Vespucci's voyages, and early Ohio Indian cultures.
- President of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio (renamed the Cincinnati Historical Society) from 1870-1888.
- Member of the Cincinnati Literary Club from 1850-1899.
- Member of the Historical Societies of Massachusetts, Virginia, and Wisconsin
- Member of the Archaeological Institute of America, the Natural History Society, the American Academy of Arts and Science
- Trustee of the Medical College of Ohio
- One of the original sponsors of the Cincinnati Zoo
- One of the original members of the Cincinnati Musical Festival Association
- A founder of the Cincinnati Music Hall Association, the Cincinnati Museum Association, and the Cincinnati College of Music

Relatives buried in Manning F. Force's plot (Section 46, Lot 99) at Spring Grove Cemetery, Ohio, are:

(12)

- Frances Horton Force, wife of Brevet Major-General Manning F. Force and sister-in-law of Major-General John Pope. Died at age 63 from gastric hemorrhage at Elk Ridge, Maryland, on September 4, 1900.
- Infant of Manning and Frances Force. Died of premature birth at the Force home on 89 W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Cincinnati, Ohio, on May 3, 1877.



Brigadier-General Manning F. Force (seated at right) poses for a photograph with members of his staff. Date unknown. [from Ronald H. Bailey and Editors of Time-Life Books, *Battles for Atlanta: Sherman Moves East* (Alexandria, Virginia, 1985)]



A photo of Brigadier-General Manning Force taken in October 1864, only days before returning to duty. Notice the scars of his Atlanta wound below his eye on the left and on his temple on the right. [from National Archives]

## Endnotes:

- (1) Henry Otis Dwight Papers, p. 9.
- (2) Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Blue: Lives of the Union Commanders* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1992), p. 155; “Memorial of Manning F. Force,” *Literary Club of Cincinnati Papers* (1899); Spring Grove Cemetery Office, *Records of Burials in Spring Grove Cemetery, Cincinnati, Ohio* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 2001); *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, May 9, 1899.
- (3) *Cincinnati Enquirer*, May 29, 1966; Rutherford B. Hayes Papers, “October 29, 1861”; *Ibid.*, “July 8, 1877”; *Ibid.*, “December 19, 1891”; R.B. Hayes-Manning Ferguson Force Correspondence (GA-75).
- (4) “Memorial of Manning F. Force,” *Literary Club of Cincinnati Papers* (1899); Stewart Sifakis, *Who Was Who in the Civil War* (New York, 1988), p. 223; D.W. Wood, *History of the 20th O.V.V.I. Regiment, and Proceedings of the First Reunion at Mt. Vernon, Ohio, April 6th, 1876* (Columbus, Ohio, 1876), pp. 5, 15, 40; Charles Whittlesey, *War Memoranda: Cheat River to the Tennessee, 1861-1862* (Cleveland, Ohio, 1884), pp. 1-4; Henry Otis Dwight Papers, pp. 9, 17; Osborn H. Oldroyd, *A Soldier’s Story of the Siege of Vicksburg* (Springfield, Illinois, 1885), pp. 22, 46; *Sidney (Ohio) Weekly Journal*, March 13, 1863.
- (5) D.W. Wood, *History of the 20th O.V.V.I. Regiment, and Proceedings of the First Reunion at Mt. Vernon, Ohio, April 6th, 1876* (Columbus, Ohio, 1876), p. 42; United States War Department, *War of the Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (OR), I, 10, pt. 1, p. 169; Stewart Sifakis, *Who Was Who in the Civil War* (New York, 1988), p. 223; OR, I, 16, pt. 1, pp. 44-52; Henry Otis Dwight Papers, p. 23; OR, I, 51, Supplement, p. 515-520; *Ibid.*, I, 24, pt. 1, pp. 704-705, 714-715, 747-748; Roster Commission of Ohio, *Official Roster of the Soldiers of the State of Ohio in the War of the Rebellion -- 1861-1866*, vol. 2 (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1888), p. 685.
- (6) OR, I, 38, pt. 3, pp. 572-573; Henry Otis Dwight Papers, p. 3; Ronald H. Bailey and Editors of Time-Life Books, *The Civil War: Battles for Atlanta – Sherman Moves East* (Alexandria, Virginia, 1985), pp. 91-96; Stephen Davis, “The General’s Tour: Atlanta Campaign: Hood Fights Desperately, the Battles for Atlanta -- Actions From July 10 to September 2, 1864.” *Blue & Gray* 6 (August 1989); *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, May 9, 1899; “Memorial of Manning F. Force,” *Literary Club of Cincinnati Papers* (1899); James Barnett, *Forty For the Union: Civil War Generals Buried in Spring Grove Cemetery* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1981); Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, U.S. Senate, *Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, U.S. Senate: Medal of Honor Recipients – 1863-1973* (Washington, D.C., 1973); United States Army Center of Military History, *Full-Text Listings of Medal of Honor* (Washington, D.C., 1997).
- (7) Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Blue: Lives of the Union Commanders* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1992), p. 155; OR, I, 47, pt. 1, pp. 197-199, 375-379, 406-407, 1133; Manning F. Force Papers; Stewart Sifakis, *Who Was Who in the Civil War* (New York, 1988), p. 223; R.B. Hayes-Manning Ferguson Force Correspondence (GA-75); “Memorial of Manning F. Force,” *Literary Club of Cincinnati Papers* (1899).

- (8) *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, May 9, 1899; “Memorial of Manning F. Force,” *Literary Club of Cincinnati Papers* (1899); Arden Gremmert and Eva Doherty, *The Family History Collection of Arden Gremmert and Eva Doherty* (Carnation, Washington, 2001); Peter Cozzens, *General John Pope: A Life for the Nation* (Urbana, Illinois, 2000), pp. 27-28, 311; C. S. Williams, *Williams’ Cincinnati Directory, City Guide & Business Mirror* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1882-1887).
- (9) “Memorial of Manning F. Force,” *Literary Club of Cincinnati Papers* (1899); Rutherford B. Hayes Papers; R.B. Hayes-Manning Ferguson Force Correspondence (GA-75); *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, May 9, 1899; Rutherford B. Hayes Papers, “July 24, 1887”; *Ibid.*, “August 21, 1887”; D.W. Wood, *History of the 20th O.V.V.I. Regiment, and Proceedings of the First Reunion at Mt. Vernon, Ohio, April 6th, 1876* (Columbus, Ohio, 1876), pp. 3-5, 51-52; Spring Grove Cemetery Office, *Records of Burials in Spring Grove Cemetery, Cincinnati, Ohio* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 2001).
- (10) *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, May 12, 1899; *Ibid.*, May 11, 1899; Spring Grove Cemetery Office, *Records of Burials in Spring Grove Cemetery, Cincinnati, Ohio* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 2001).
- (11) *Cincinnati Enquirer*, May 29, 1966; *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, May 9, 1899.
- (12) Spring Grove Cemetery Office, *Records of Burials in Spring Grove Cemetery, Cincinnati, Ohio* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 2001).

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