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A HERO OF CHICKAMAUGA
Sudden Death of Gen. Emerson Opdycke

Brevet Major-General Emerson Opdycke died at his residence at Seventh-avenue and Fifty-fifth-street, in this city, yesterday, of traumatic peritonitis. On Tuesday evening, while Gen Opdycke was cleaning a pistol, it was accidentally discharged, the ball penetrating the abdomen. He sank rapidly during Wednesday and Thursday, and died yesterday afternoon.

With the death of Gen. Opdycke there passes away one of the most gallant and distinguished soldiers which Ohio sent into the civil war. He was born in Trumbull County, in that State, Jan. 7, 1830 and was therefore in his thirty-second year when the war broke out. He enlisted as a private in the Forty-first Ohio Infantry July 26, 1861, and was made First Lieutenant in the following month. He developed a remarkable capacity for acquiring a knowledge of military tactics, and so well informed did he become during the Fall and early Winter of 1861 that he was detailed to instruct the officers of Hascall's brigade. His quick comprehension of the science of war attracted the notice of his superiors, and he was promoted to a Captaincy. When the battle of Pittsburg Landing was fought he acted as Major of his regiment, and had for the first time an opportunity to display the bravery which characterized him in every engagement in which he participated. The color-bearer of the Forty-first was shot down and the colors went to the ground. Seizing them, the acting Major dashed to the head of the line, and shouting, "Forty-first Ohio, follow your colors!" led the charge. Though wounded in two places that day he remained on duty with his regiment.

He served with Nelson's command during the Corinth campaign, only leaving it when ordered by Gov. Todd to organize the One Hundred and twenty-fifth Ohio Infantry. While he was at home on this duty Kirby Smith threatened Cincinnati, and at the earnest solicitation of his friends Capt. Opdycke took command of the 1,200 "Squirrel Hunters" and proceeded with them to Covington. He left the State at the head of a first-class regiment, well drilled and well disciplined, in the earlier part of January, 1863, and moved South through Nashville and Franklin. Just previous to the opening of Rosencrans's campaign of 1863 Capt. Opdycke was assigned to Harker's brigade, Wood's division, Twenty-first corps. The 9th of the following September he entered Chattanooga and sustained a brilliant part in the battle of Chickamauga. "This point must be held," said Gen. Thomas to Col. Opdycke at one time during the battle, referring to the ground occupied by the former. "We'll hold it or go to heaven from it," replied the gallant officer. He was wounded once during the engagement, but not seriously injured. At the battle of Mission Ridge, where he commanded five

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regiments, Col. Opdycke had two horses shot from under him. His command captured 300 prisoners, 7 pieces of artillery, and a large number of small arms. In the East Tennessee campaign he served under Gen. Sheridan with distinction. On May 8, 1864, he succeeded in making a lodgment on Rocky Face Mountain by an ingenious feint. Six days later he was severely wounded at Resaca, and was taken to the rear. After his wounds were dressed he insisted, however, on returning to the front, and only retired when his regiment left the field. Although suffering severely from his injuries, he remained with his troops during the Summer, and with the five regiments then under him took part in the engagements at New-Hope Church, Muddy Creek, Kenesaw Mountain, Peachtree Creek, and Atlanta. [On] Aug. 6 he was given the command of the First Brigade, Second Division, Fourth Corps, which was engaged at Jonesboro and Lovejoy's, and afterward returned to Chattanooga. Minor operations around Bridgeport, Resaca, Alpine, and Pulaski engaged the attention of Col. Opdycke's brigade till Nov. 30, when it became the rear guard of Gen. Schofield's army.

In the battle of Franklin the First Brigade was posted across the Columbian turnpike, near the house of a rebel officer—Gen. Carter. Col. Opdycke's orders were to fight when and where he deemed it advisable. The rebels were massed in front of Carter's Hill, and during the afternoon captured the fortifications. As soon as Col. Opdycke saw that the works had fallen into the hands of the enemy he ordered a charge. The brigade responded to the commander, and, animated with his spirit, swept down upon the rebels. Col. Opdycke fought with his men, and when his pistol was emptied he used it as a club until he broke it. The rebels fell back, the fortifications were retaken, and eight guns recovered. Four hundred rebels were made prisoners, and 10 battle-flags captured. Gen. Patrick Cleburne fell dead with his horse, resting on the Union breast-works, and Gen. Carter was mortally wounded within 100 yards of the house where he was born. At the battle of Nashville Opdycke's brigade was again engaged, capturing three pieces of artillery, one battle-flag, and 300 prisoners.

In 1865 Col. Opdycke was commissioned Brevet Brigadier-General, to date from Feb. 7 of that year. Some months later he was brevetted Major-General, to date from Nov. 4, 1864. This unusual promotion, antedating, as it did, the brevet of Brigadier, was given for "important and gallant service at the battle of Franklin." It was understood to have been mainly due to the strong official indorsement [sic] given by Major-Gen. George H. Thomas to a recommendation from Col. Opdycke's immediate commander, Major-Gen. Wood, for his appointment as Colonel in the regular service. "I consider him (Col. Opdycke) one of the most intelligent and competent officers in the

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service," wrote Gen. Thomas. "He is brave and gallant and has distinguished himself on many of the battle-fields of the West, and has, by his zeal both in the organization and discipline of his troops, as well as by his heroism on the field, contributed much to secure the success which as so signally rewarded he obstinate and persistent battlings of this army. Knowing Gen. Opdycke personally, and being fully informed and convinced of his abilities, I do most earnestly request that this appointment may be conferred upon him for his meritorious and gallant conduct in the past, and that his services may not be lost to the army in the future.***I ask for Gen. Opdycke's appointment in the Army of the United States, feeling sure that he will do nothing but that which shall reflect credit both on himself and the army."

Since he was mustered out of the service Gen. Opdycke has resided in this city and engaged in mercantile and literary pursuits. He contributed a number of able articles on some of the most noted battles of the West to THE TIMES and has also written for military publications. In October last he delivered before the Society of the Army of the Cumberland in Cincinnati an oration on the services of Gen. Thomas and last month he addressed the Harvard Historical Society on the campaigns and battles of Chickmauga and Chattanooga. Gen. Opdycke's ancestors went to Ohio from Hunterdon County N.Y. He was a descendant of New-Amsterdam and a near relative of the late ex-Mayor Opdycke, of this city. Gen. Opdycke leaves a wife [Lucy] and one son [Leonard Emerson Opdycke]. His body will be taken to Warren, Ohio for interment.

The New York Times, New York NY, 26 Apr 1884

GEN. OPDYCKE'S FUNERAL

Simple but Solemn Services Over the Body of a Hero

The funeral services of the late Gen. Emerson Opdycke, held in the Rev. C. H. Eaton's Universalist Church, at fifth-avenue and Forty-fifth-street, yesterday afternoon, were very simple and very touching. The plain oak coffin, ornamented with nothing but a silver plate and silver handles, rested on a black pall in front of the altar. The solemnity of the scene was not relieved by even a flower. After an anthem by the church choir the Pastor offered a beautiful prayer for the bereaved and read a passage of Scripture. The choir afterward sang very effectively the hymn "Nearer, my God, to

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Thee," which was always a favorite with the deceased. Mr. Eaton said: "An opportunity will now be given those who wish to take a last look at a friend to his country, a loving husband and father, and a true and sympathetic man in all the affairs of life." When the people had passed down the centre aisle into the street the body was taken to the Erie Railroad station, and a few hours later the widow and son left with it for Warren, Ohio, where the interment will take place.

Gen. Opdycke attended the church where the services were held for many years, and a large number of the congregation were present to pay the last sad respects to his memory. Gen. H. A. Barnum represented the Society of the Army of the Cumberland, of which the deceased was a conspicuous member. It was intended to have the command rendezvous and march to the church in a body, but there was not time to make the necessary arrangements. Among the personal friends of Gen Opdycke present were ex-secretary B. F. Bristow, Cornelius N. Bliss, H. B. Brandreth, Edmund Stephenson, Commission of Emigration; Seymour J. Strong, D.D., T. Marshall, B. F. Romaine, Washington L. Cooper, Stephen H. Walker, President of the Board of Education; Frank B. Carpenter, and George F. Baker. Messrs. Charles W., George F., H. B., and W. S. Opendycke, sons of the late Mayor Opendycke and distantly related to the deceased, were present with the mourners. Mrs. Opdycke was unable to go to the church.

The New York Times, New York NY, 28 Apr 1884

Transcribed on 26 Jun 2009 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY