

# Cornelia B. (Reno) Foulk and William L. Foulk

## Excerpts of Newspaper Article

From newspaper: The Pittsburgh Press, September 9, 1894 page 28  
Article Title: Grand Army Ladies  
Transcribed By: Jim Irving, November 2011

This transcript includes only the portion of the original article that pertains to Cornelia and William Foulk. The original article can be viewed via Internet at this link:  
<http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=YA0bAAAIBAJ&sjid=fEgEAAAIBAJ&pg=6994%2C3979852>

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Cornelia B. Foulk, president of the Ladies of the G. A. R. home, is the widow of the late Col. W. L. Foulk, who at the outbreak of the war was a member of the Duquesne Grays<sup>1</sup>, of Pittsburgh, and part owner and business manager of the daily "Commercial Journal," at that day the most prominent and influential newspaper in western Pennsylvania. Col. Foulk being a descendant of patriotic fighting stock, and always having taken an active interest in military matters as member of the Grays, was looked

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<sup>1</sup> The Duquesne Grays is the name of a Pennsylvania state militia, now National Guard unit based in Pittsburgh. The unit appears to have come and gone over time and had a number of designations. A 1931 newspaper article discusses the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the unit.

upon by his friends and citizens as one well calculated to take charge of and drill men who had not the advantage of a military training, and in consequence was almost unanimously and simultaneously elected second lieutenant of three different companies then being organized. Accepting that position in Company K, he was sworn in to the service at Harrisburg April 20, 1861, and commissioned by Gov. Curtin as second lieutenant for the three months' service, at the expiration of which he returned to Pittsburgh, immediately recruiting a company for the three years' service, being commissioned as captain, August 1861. Upon arrival with his company at Harrisburg he was assigned to the Forty-sixth Pennsylvania volunteers, which afterward became a part of Gen. Banks' division and was sent to Muddy Branch, 30 miles out from Washington city, to watch and report the movements of the enemy, then located on the other side of the river. During this time his command was perfected in the manual of arms and tactics, which afterward enabled them to acquit themselves with credit to themselves and commanders.

Capt. Foulk, with his company, participated in several of the battles in the Shenandoah Valley, and was, on August 9, 1862, badly wounded at the battle of Cedar Mountain and taken prisoner as one of Gen. Pope's "Hessians," Pope having ordered that his troops should subsist off the country in order to save carrying provisions with them. Jeff Davis, in retaliation, issued an order that all of Pope's officers, when captured, should be treated as felons and thieves and not as prisoners of war. In consequence of this when news reached Pittsburgh of the wounding and taking prisoner of Capt. Foulk his many friends were put upon the anxious seat as to his probable fate at the hands of the John rebels. Notwithstanding the great anxiety felt for his safety Mrs. Foulk, who had left her husband at Culpepper Courthouse only a short time previous, to return to Carlisle, Pa., where she was stopping with her husband's friends, kept up her courage, and with a brave heart returned with her four young children to the home of her father, Louis Reno, of Allegheny city, to patiently await the safe return of her husband, hoping against hope, as it seemed then, as no news could be heard, even by the most diligent inquiries made by the different newspaper men of the city as to her husband's whereabouts. More than three months had elapsed when word was sent to the different newspapers that Capt. Foulk, with several others, had been paroled and reached Fortress Monroe. When the captain reached home it was then learned for the first time that after being wounded and made a prisoner he was first confined in an old tobacco warehouse at Staunton, Va., and afterward taken to Libby prison, where the hardships he had to endure and the lack of proper food reduced him so that he was in a very bad condition. His wound not having had the proper attention he was compelled to go around on crutches, with a sling around his neck in which his foot that had almost been shot to pieces was carried. After several months treatment at the hands of his physicians and the careful nursing of his wife he was able, with the help of his crutches, to go to Washington city to report at the invalids' camp.

After several months' sojourn there he was sufficiently recovered from his wound to partially attend to military duties, and again was elected lieutenant colonel of his regiment, which position he filled with credit to himself and his regiment.

During the summer of 1864, when the threatened raid on the confederates from Canada was expected, Col. Foulk was ordered to take charge of the military post at Erie. After organizing the citizens into military companies and regiments, and with the assistance of two batteries of artillery and a lot of small arms ordered from Pittsburgh, he was enabled to place that city in a comparatively safe condition, and left to join his regiment, then on the march to join the forces of Gen. Sherman on his march to the sea. Upon his arrival at Nashville, Tenn., he reported to Gen. George A. Thomas, who immediately placed him in charge of Barracks No. 1, then known as the Zollicoffer building, a large unfinished hotel, now the Maxwell house.

Mrs. Foulk's loyalty and patriotism would not permit her to remain quietly at home while so many were away fighting for the preservation of "Old Glory," and while she could not take an active part in the fighting, she was ever near to cheer and help those who were. During the greater part of the war she was with, or at least near her husband and his command. During the time her husband's command was encamped at Chambersburg Mrs. Foulk and her family of small children were there, she visiting the camp daily ministering to the sick and wounded of the command. It was at this time that Mrs. Foulk was made aware that the soldiers would be permitted to wear havelocks<sup>2</sup> as a protection from the intense heat of the sun, and it was but a very short time until, with the assistance of other loyal ladies of Chambersburg, Mrs. Foulk had equipped every member of her husband's command with one, for which she had the hearty thanks of the entire command. When the regiment was ordered to Green Castle she shortly followed, being accommodated with rooms by that whole-souled and patriotic Joseph Snively, who had given up his elegant large house and beautiful lawn for the exclusive use of the troops. It was while there, assisting and looking after the wants and comforts of the soldiers that Mrs. Foulk was christened the "daughter of the regiment" by the commanding Maj. Frank Robins, a native of Pittsburgh. When the regiment was ordered from Green Castle to Williamsport, Mr. Snively would hitch up his team and drive Mrs. Foulk up to Williamsport at least every week, where she would spend the day with the regiment.

While the battle of Falling Waters was going on Mrs. Foulk was within hearing of the cannonading, and realizing the great danger of her husband, who was engaged in the battle, her anxiety of mind was so great, she says she is unable to describe the feelings. She returned to Pittsburgh a few days in advance of her husband at the close of his three months service and put her home in order for his coming. He, however, remained at home but a short time until he left for three year's service. Mrs. Foulk was near her husband during his three years' service and nursed him back to life during a severe attack of pneumonia at Nashville, Tenn., during the spring of '65. She had several little adventures during these times. One she often relates occurred at the close of the war. As she was returning with her husband from Nashville they had stopped at Cave City, Ky., for a few hours, and returning from the dining room they were taken across to a room which was used as a sitting room, also where the hotel register was kept on a table in the center of the room. The colonel had stepped out and Mrs. Foulk noticed quite a group around the table registering. She discovered by the remarks made by them they were a party of

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<sup>2</sup> A cap incorporating a cloth hanging down the sides and back, to protect the ears and neck; often created ad hoc by placing a kerchief on the head and holding it in place with a cap.

confederate officers and their wives and upon closer scrutiny found they were discussing the propriety of adding C. S. A. to their names. Some of the party decided to do so, and she heard some of the ladies say, "Yes, we have a right to that suffix, as we still belong to the confederate states of America." It was finally decided to add the proposed C. S. A. In a few minutes the party was called to their dinner. Mrs. Foulk examined the register and found they had really registered as confederate officers with their full titles. One, as she remembers as Maj. Clarence Prentice, C. S. A., she immediately erased the C. S. A. from the register, and upon the return of the party from the dining room was soon made aware by their action that some one had already conveyed the news to the dining room of what she had done. They all surrounded the table again to examine the register, at the same time muttering "they would just like to know who did it." Mrs. Foulk was still in the room and immediately announced she had erased the C. S. A., and as now the war had ended she could not or would not consent to there being any such country as the confederate states of America, as the disputed affix would indicate. About this time Col. Foulk entered the room, when a hot discussion took place, in which not only the confederate officers took part, but their ladies who were with them. The colonel was too much of a gentleman to reply to the ladies only as a true gentleman should, but to the officers he made such scathing replies that they glad to quite down, and it was well they did so, as by this time the word had been heralded to the union brigade on its way home and was just about alighting from a train at the depot near by.

Mrs. Foulk has been a member of the Ladies of the G. A. R. about seven years, and has always taken a great interest in the order, being a member of the Col. Elmer E. Ellsworth circle, No. 42. She has filled the office of president three successive years, also as secretary and treasurer, and it is to her untiring energy that her circle has succeeded, and is known to-day as being one of the hardest-working organizations of the state and entirely free from any jealousy of strife for office.

She and the members of her circle have worked for the home ever since the idea of a home was first mentioned, and it can be seen by the proceedings of the convention held at Harrisburg that Col. Ellsworth circle was organized to work specially for the carrying forward of this great and noble charity. As was expressed at the time: "The poor house is not the place for the wives, mothers, and widows of those brave men who had made such sacrifice for their country to end their days in." Mrs. Foulk has been a member of every board of managers of the home since its inception, last year filling the chair of senior vice president, and was elected president, the office she now holds at the ninth annual convention, held in Philadelphia in March last.

*Remainder of article omitted*