

Captain Charles E. Henry, Class of 1861, could be described as a man of action, an Army officer, a cop, a campaign canvasser, a soldier of fortune, and a bounty hunter. None of these descriptions are completely accurate. His lifestyle was like a cross between Indiana Jones and Wyatt Earp. As I mull over Captain Henry's adventures, I feel like whistling the theme song of Steven Spielberg's movie, Raiders of the Lost Ark.

Born in Bainbridge, Ohio, Charles left school as a teenager to earn money for college. He plowed fields, worked as a cooper's assistant, and drove teams on road construction for a few years to save money. Charles managed to begin his studies at the Eclectic in Hiram during the fall of 1857. By that time, James Garfield was already the Principal of the Eclectic, and the two young men quickly became friends. Charles did well in school, and he started teaching in Auburn while he was still a student in Hiram. At six-foot tall and strong as an ox, none of the school bullies dared to fight while Charles taught the classes. Back in Hiram, Charles loved to challenge himself and took courses in algebra, chemistry and German. He joined the Delphic Literary Society, and he met a beautiful girl on campus from Shalersville named Sophia Williams. The two quickly fell in love.

By the spring of 1861, Charles was near graduation. He spent a lot of time doing military drills on the common. The attack on Fort Sumter had already taken place, prompting many of the Hiram boys to ready themselves for war. Some would drop out of school and enlist. Charles stayed the course and graduated on June 6, 1861. His commencement oration received high praise from Principal Garfield who lifted Charles off the ground and swung him around in admiration. During the following couple of months, Charles thought about a teaching job in Solon or studying medicine to become a doctor, but an unexpected knock on his door took his destiny into a different direction. Dressed in full uniform, Lt. Colonel Garfield asked Charles to join his new Infantry regiment, the 42nd Ohio, to fight in the Army of the Ohio. Charles agreed immediately, and he became the first volunteer for the regiment.

After recruiting the entire regiment from around Cleveland and then training in Columbus, the 42nd Ohio led Charles down to the front line in Kentucky. The Buckeyes under Garfield's command ran the Rebels out of the eastern Kentucky mountains with two decisive battles. Charles and Garfield then parted company because Garfield's new-found fame resulted in his transfer to command the 20th Brigade. Charles continued serving in the 42nd Ohio, and he eventually rose to the rank of First Lieutenant. The 42nd Ohio was placed under the command of General Grant who led them to Vicksburg. During the campaign, Charles led an infantry charge against Rebel fortifications and was shot in the foot. He managed to limp his way back behind the Union lines where he was treated and then given medical leave to heal.

Although Charles eventually healed and returned to the Army, fate took him in an unexpected direction. He received orders to report to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where he would be appointed Assistant Provost Marshall. His new boss would be Colonel Don Pardee, temporarily detached from the 42nd. Though not well acquainted, the two men became fast friends. The Provost Marshall's office had a wide variety of duties to perform including keeping the peace among the residents, trying military cases and making sure the occupying army did not get too out of control. Charles made a thorough study of the law, soon acting as representation for soldiers on trial. He was not a practicing attorney but learned how to prepare an adequate defense.

Charles became adept at identifying ladies of the community who were actively involved in smuggling. After signing an oath of loyalty to the Union these women went to the area druggists and bought illegal medical supplies for sick Confederates hiding out in the country. He would notice unusual bulges in their clothing and have them arrested. As an advocate for people brought to court on charges, Charles began collecting steady fees. He and a friend represented a druggist accused of smuggling. They got him a reduced sentence and received \$600 in payment. At one point a Union general ordered Charles to legally marry any freed slaves who wanted a license. Before Charles was relieved of duty he performed nearly 2,500 weddings.

Charles left for home where he was mustered out of the army and brevetted to the rank of Captain. A month later he married Sophia in Ravenna. After a honeymoon at Niagara Falls, Charles returned to Baton Rouge where he acted as an independent advocate for soldiers and civilians. In just a few months he earned \$3,000, enough to buy a one hundred-acre farm in Bainbridge.

When they returned to Ohio, Charles attempted to be a farmer, but he was a miserable failure. Nothing he did on the farm produced a profit, so he started working as a local post master. When that job was eliminated he reached out to Congressman Garfield and asked for help in becoming a postal clerk elsewhere. His old friend secured Charles a postal position for a local railroad.

While Charles worked for the railroad, he would sort mail and throw troublemakers off the train. He also noted the political conversations of the passengers and started writing about them to Garfield. The congressman appreciated the value of this sort of grass roots insight into his constituents, so he made Charles his political agent. In 1873 Charles received a promotion to special agent of the post office department. The job came a significant raise, free railroad transportation, a gun, and three dollars a day for meals. Charles's new job allowed him to settle disputes between postmasters, investigate people for mail fraud and stealing. His duties also allowed him time to stop at various points in Garfield's district and determine which way the political winds were blowing. He reported any areas where Garfield might be losing support and what to do about it. As special agent, Charles made about one arrest per month. He had a system for catching postal clerks who stole money out of envelopes. He would visit the post office suspected, usually wearing farm clothes so as not to arouse attention.

Captain Henry's work for Congressman Garfield did not go unappreciated. In the summer of 1874 he visited the Garfield family at their Washington home. Charles received a guided tour of all the sights including Mt. Vernon, Arlington and the Smithsonian. Later in the week Garfield took Charles to the White House for a visit with President Grant. His trips to Washington became more frequent and he met famous Army officers such as General Phil Sheridan and General George Custer.

Charles's most effective work came during Garfield's bid for a seat in the Senate. Charles canvassed the entire state to determine how much support the candidate had. Soon Charles opened a campaign office in Columbus, handing out literature and cigars to members of the state legislature. By November Charles was able to report sixty-four of the ninety members were solidly behind Garfield. The actual election was unanimous, a complete victory. When Garfield came to Columbus for his acceptance speech he grabbed his campaign manager in a bear hug and swung Charles around several times.

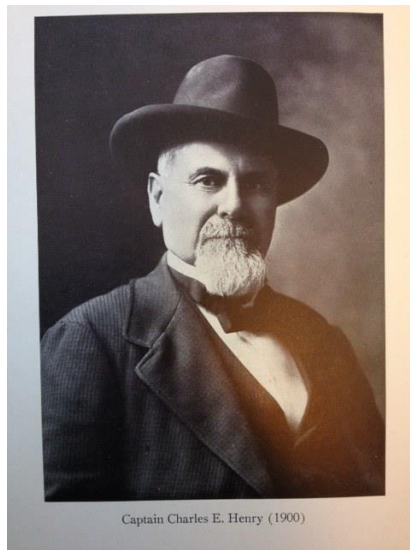
Fate would propel Garfield to become the unexpected Republican nominee for the Presidency, and Charles supported the campaign effort just as he had for the Senate race. Once Garfield was in the White House, he did not hesitate to appoint Captain Henry as United States Marshal to the District of Columbia. Charles officially took office in May, ready to rid the streets of Washington of all criminals. He had no inkling his first major assignment would be protecting Charles Guiteau, the assassin of President Garfield. Charles did his best to put aside his hatred of Guiteau and make sure his prisoner stayed alive during his confinement. There were two attempts to kill Guiteau along with several unsigned letters all swearing that the prisoner would be murdered at any moment. The experience must have been personally agonizing for Charles.

After Garfield's death, Charles continued working in Washington for a little over a year before President Arthur replaced him. Back in Ohio, Charles tried his hand at producing maple syrup on his farm, but he could not make the venture lucrative. His former commander in Baton Rouge, Don Pardee, had become a judge and he hired Captain Henry to investigate a railroad labor strike down in Texas. The job took some time and Captain Henry earned a lot of money from the experience.

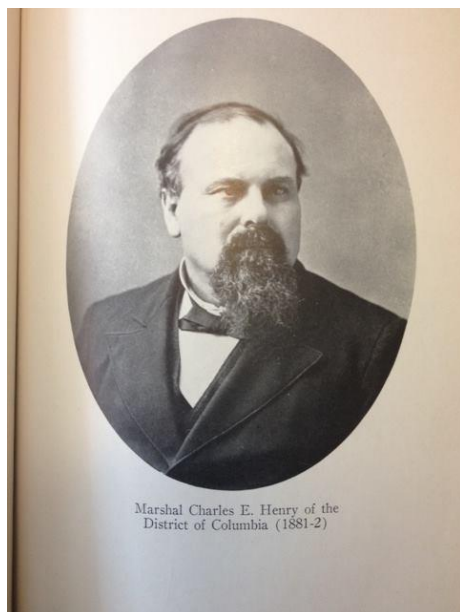
Charles never wavered in his loyalty to the Garfield family, and his enduring connection to President's children ultimately led to his greatest adventure. In 1893, Harry and Jim Garfield were running a law firm together and they hired Captain Henry to track down a lumber company agent who had embezzled \$20,000.00

from the company and then fled to Brazil. The Garfield brothers gave Captain Henry a photo of the suspect, a sample of the man's handwriting, and then sent him down to South America. Charles began his detective work and tracked the criminal down to San Paolo where he was supposedly buying a coffee plantation. The search eventually led Charles deep into the tropical forest riding a mule to an area called Jacutinga. Charles pulled out his six shooters, arrested the embezzler, and brought him back to the United States where he received a bounty of \$2000.00 and a lot of press coverage. The experience motivated the American Surety Company to hire Charles as an inspector who could hunt down embezzlers for them.

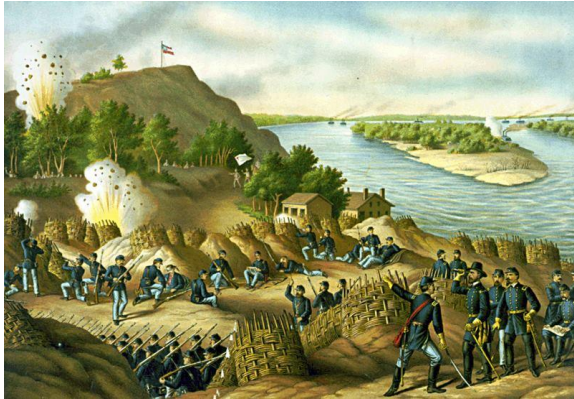
Charles led a remarkable life of travel and adventure, but he always returned to the quiet life on his Bainbridge farm. He died at the age of 70 in 1906, and Sophia survived him for 21 years. I truly wish I could go back in a time machine to sit on Charles's front porch, sip some Bourbon with him, and listen to his stories.



A striking character.



This is Captain Henry's appearance during the time of the Garfield Administration.



Battle of Vicksburg where Captain Henry led an infantry charge against the Rebel fortifications.



The region in Brazil where Captain Henry tracked down and arrested an embezzler for the client of the Garfield & Garfield Law Firm.

