

Manning F. Force

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One of the delights of being the Literary Club historian is to browse through the archives to become better acquainted with some of our early members. We've had some real stars. In the past, I've written about Ainsworth Spofford, the man who did most to found the Club in 1849 and who went on to become Librarian of Congress; Lawrence Carr, who, along with a fascinating personal history, loved the Club so fondly that he bequeathed his life's savings to us when he died and asked to have his name kept permanently on the roster and Charles Wilby, Mr. Literary Club in his time, who wrote more than three hundred Club papers.

Tonight, with gleanings from recent archival browsing, I'd like to introduce another early member. He was a highly respected lawyer and judge. He served brilliantly during the Civil War. He was a scholar with broad interests, an author and a devoted, fondly esteemed member of the Club for almost fifty years.

Manning Ferguson Force sprang from solid early American stock. His grandfather fought in the American Revolution. His father, Peter Force, fought in the War of 1812. "Peter Force was not only a soldier but a man of letters. He was a printer in New York before moving to Washington where, as a staunch Whig, he published a paper advocating John Quincy Adams for the presidency. He went into politics and was elected mayor of Washington. He was engaged by the State Department to gather and publish the documents relating to our early history. He published four bulky volumes of them, now valuable works of reference. Short-sightedly the State Department halted the project, but Peter Force continued gathering the raw historical material. Congress eventually purchased his massive collection for \$100,000, a tidy sum in those days. It became an important segment of the then new Library of Congress."ⁱ

Manning was born to Peter and Hannah Force on December 17th 1824. He grew to manhood in Washington. He was described, by a fellow member who knew him well, as "tall, slender, graceful (and) courtly"ⁱⁱⁱ. He was graduated from Harvard College with the class of 1845 and from Harvard Law School in 1848. He read law in Washington for several months and then set out for a new life in the West. Years later, he wrote a charming budget paper describing that 1849 journey to Cincinnati and his first impressions of the city. A few paragraphs will provide a sample of his delightful, lucid style.

"I left Washington in January 1849, went by rail to Relay Station and waited there until a

some accretion, on Broadway between Third and Fourth, while his country seat, with its deer park, stood on the hill just at the head of Vine Street. Nicholas Longworth's homestead took up the whole of the east side of Pike Street north of Third. Only two houses then stood upon it, the Lars Anderson house and the mansion, the old name of which, "Baum's Folly," (now the Taft Museum) was not forgotten. Mr. and Mrs. Anderson had just moved into their new house. Joseph Longworth, who was then building his own house at Rookwood, still, with his family, lived in the mansion with his father. There were two other members of the family-John Stettinius, Nicholas Longworth's grandson, then a schoolboy, and Mrs. Longworth's mother. This venerable lady, 90 years old, was vigorous enough to walk alone to Shillito's, to select and purchase for herself." (I'm sure this spry old lady passed right by our front door many times.)

"The only railroad running out from Cincinnati was the Little Miami. – Cincinnati was then aggressively enterprising and was about to induce and aid in the building of railroads, east to Parkersburg and Marietta, south to Lexington and west to St. Louis

"The city was known for its interest in science and art. It was one of the few cities that had an observatory or an art union-it was, I believe, the only city in the country that had both. Mr. Schoenberger already had a picture gallery. Mr. Longworth, Mr. Probasco, Mr. Lawler, Mr. Stetson and Mr. Reuben Springer, who then lived on Fourth Street, were purchasers of pictures --

"There was a marked interest in music. The great pianists and violinists and singers always came to Cincinnati on their tours. There was more music at home entertainment than now. Calling at Mr. Stetson's one evening, I found Strakosch and Wallace, who, as they talked about composers and compositions, would turn to the piano and illustrate what they were saying by playing. Other evenings, I met there, Mr. Appy, a Belgian, who spent a year or two in Cincinnati, and who, though not ranking with Sivori, -- was one of the most charming violinists I ever heard. Mrs. Rufus King and Miss. Katie Greene, afterward Mrs. Roelker were the best pianists in society."ⁱⁱⁱ

Soon after his arrival in Cincinnati, Force took up residence on the north side of Third Street between Elm and Plum.^{iv} He read law in the office of Timothy Walker, another early Club member. After admission to the Ohio Bar, he became a partner in the firm of Walker, Kebler and Force until Timothy Walker's death in 1855 when the firm became Kebler and Force; In the Fall of 1866 he was elected Judge in the Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas and was reelected in 1871. He was elected Judge of the Superior Court of Cincinnati in 1877. In 1882 he received the endorsement of both political parties and was reelected unanimously. In 1887, because of ill health, he declined re-nomination. "As a lawyer he was faithful, just and diligent. As a judge, he was laborious, impartial and clear-minded."^v

Manning Force was elected to the Literary Club on October 5th 1850. "He at once became one of its foremost loyal members. He was active in every duty: attended almost every

important movements of the battle of Pittsburg Landing on the Tennessee River. "Soon after this battle, the Colonel of the 20th resigned and Lieut. Col. Force was promoted to fill the vacancy. Col. Force continued through Grant's central Mississippi campaign and then moved to Memphis. From this point he sailed, with his regiment, down the Mississippi on the Vicksburg campaign. The 20th was actively engaged in the rear of Vicksburg, exhibiting special bravery in the battles of Raymond and Champion Hills. It also bore its full share in the siege operations around Vicksburg"

Force earned an outstanding record in the training, discipline and care of the men who served under him. In his memoirs, written after the war, he said. "While lying there in the trenches outside Vicksburg, it sometimes occurred to me, what a transformation it was for these men, accustomed always to act upon their own will, to so completely subordinate their wills to the wills of other men. Their practical sense had told them an army differs from a mob only in discipline, and discipline was necessary for self preservation."^{viii} One of his junior officers, Lieut. Dwight, said of Col. Force: "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 I had learned to love him like a father."^{ix}

In June 1863, Col. Force was placed in command of the 2nd Brigade, 3rd Division of the 17th Corps. In August he was appointed Brigadier General for gallant service during the siege of Vicksburg. In November, General Force was placed in command of the post at Big Black Bridge, then considered the most important outpost around Vicksburg. In March 1864, the 17th Corps joined General Sherman on the Atlanta campaign. From that time General Force shared all the hardships and dangers of the campaign until the 22nd of July."^x

"On that day, Confederate General Hood's army made a sweeping attack on the 17th Corps's left rear. As the entire left flank of the Army of the I Tennessee crumbled, General Force led his brigade in a desperate defense of i his critical position on Leggett's Hill. While standing on the front line at the top of the hill, a bullet struck him in the face. One gruesomely specific report claims it hit below the left eye, shattered his palate, passed behind his right eye and exited from the upper right side of his skull. His wound was first believed to be mortal. He was sent home to die."^{xi}

Force apparently received better than the usual Civil-War-time medical care. Without solid documentation, it's only conjecture, but it's very possible that his critical wound reached the attention of Dr. William. H. Mussey In his anniversary paper of October 29th 1892, Harlan Lloyd said that Mussey "held the highest rank possible in the volunteer medical service, one of a small board of medical inspectors who stood next to the Surgeon General of the Army-the ranking officers of the entire medical service. - Those who knew him will not need to be told of the great ability which he exhibited in every department of medical service -and of his surgical

I'll digress a moment for a brief extraneous footnote about Horton: Our delightful former member of fond memory, Murray Seasingood was in the same class with Horton at Harvard. Murray said that Horton was not only a top-notch scholar but also an aggressive athlete and earned the rather ludicrous nick-name, Brute Force. After serving as a Major in World War I, Horton left Cincinnati and went on to a distinguished legal career in Seattle.^{xiii}

Back from the war, Manning Force resumed his broad eclectic interests in civic affairs, history, aboriginal American archaeology, literature and writing. He had a long close association with the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio, now the Cincinnati Historical Society, and was its president for 18 years from 1870 to 1888. He was one of the original sponsors of the Cincinnati Zoo, a trustee of the Medical College of Ohio, one of the original members of the Cincinnati Music Festival and a founding member of the Cincinnati Music Hall Association and the College of Music. He was also a member of the Archaeological Institute of America, and the American Academy of Arts and Science.

He wrote two books on his war experience, *From Fort Henry to Corinth*, and *Personal Recollections of the Vicksburg Campaign*. His third Civil- War book, *General Sherman*, was finished just before his death and published by Appleton in 1899. His avid interest in American Indians and Mound Builders resulted in books and pamphlets in that area of scholarship; *Some Early Notices of the Indians of Ohio* is one of several of them. John Wilson told me that in his research on Henry Farny he found that it was Manning Force who inspired Farny's interest in Indians and the West.^{xiv}

Force lectured frequently on his wide, eclectic interests in a number of places throughout the country. He read papers at scholarly associations even in Europe: In France, about prehistoric Native-Americans and in Brussels, a paper entitled *Some Observations on the letters of Amerigo Vespucci*.

He also, of course, resumed his active interest in the Literary Club with unflagging enthusiasm. Harlan Lloyd wrote that in 1867, when he was elected, General Force was the most active member of the Club. He proposed a number of new members to restore its war-depleted roster. He attended regularly always ready with a paper or recitation when called upon. Evidence of his unflagging devotion to the Club is the long list of nineteen papers written by Force from June 1866 through April 1888. They have a wide range of titles. Titles were less cryptic in those days. I'll name a few: *Enlisted Men in the War*, *Primitive Inhabitants of Western Europe*, *A Trip to Colorado Territory*, *Darwinism and Deity*, *The Chances of the Indians*, *Piskaret the Adirondack Chief*, *The Club Geologically Considered*, *The Origin of Languages and the Antiquity of Speaking Man*. It's a fascinating list. I'd love to have heard him read them.

Force, at least once, tried his hand at droll verse. "On the 4th of July 1857, our young Mr. Force wrote a poem for Ladies' Day. The Club then occasionally indulged itself in such folly"

We frolicked there alone,
Woman was unknown;

What gain to have a rib bone,
Into a banquet thrown?
Brimming was our jollity,
Yet a better time was coming boys,
A better time was coming.

But, greater pleasure was in store,
As life surpasses dreams,
As broadest daylight seems
To quench a tapers beams,
So happiness has streams
Far richer than those days of yore,
And a better time was coming, boys,
A better time was coming.

This hall tonight is glorious;
No more are we alone
Ladies here are known,
We hear their witching tone,
Their flashing eyes have shown!
"Our joy is now victorious
That better time has come, boys,
That better time has come.

The boys seemed to like these four stanzas. They were read again at another Ladies Night on May 27th 1899 and again on December 12th 1912.^{xv}

Force was an avid and perceptive reader of good literature. At the anniversary meeting on October 30th 1909, Herbert Jenny, elected in 1864, read a paper recalling some of his memories of his forty-five years in the Club. He told of a spoof concocted by John Newton, another 1864 member. Jenny wrote: "John Newton said to me one day that he had decided, in the next Budget, to play a joke on the Club. He proposed to contribute a paper with the title, 'What Constitutes a Gentleman?' and would take it bodily from Ruskin to see if any member would recognize it. He further said that he would tell this to two other members so that he could show that he was only

There we have a thumb-nail sketch of one of our illustrious former members -a man we should be proud to have on our roster. He was one of the continuing solid core of devoted members who have nurtured the robust health and remarkable longevity of the Literary Club for the past 156 years. Fortunately we still have that solid, devoted core today. In years to come a future historian of the Club will be writing about some of you.

Notes

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