

A surprising feature of the camp was the ignorance of the regiments as regards each other's location. One of the Pennsylvania brigades was situated at quite a distance from the main camp and it seemed as though for a week no one could find it. If you asked the guard at the canal bridge where the 8th, 13th or 14th Penn'a were, he pointed with his bayonet over the hill and said "Follow this road." After following the road for what seemed an hour you gave up in disgust to turn into some regimental camp for guidance. "Do you see that clump of tents away over there by the woods?" your new mentor would say and then as you dimly made them out against the green background, "Well that's them Pennsylvania boys. I know because I was over there last night." Then when you had fallen into a dozen ditches, climbed all sorts of fences and hills you at last stumbled into your Mecca to be met with "Naw, this is the First Rhode Island." Then if you were wise and "knew your onion" you gave up in disgust and waited for chance to let you stumble on what you wanted.

The camp was at its best one day late in September. The stranger within the gate that day wondered at the neatness of the company streets and the spruce white-collaredness of the staff officers. Away off yonder some band was thundering Sousa's "Bride Elect," then there was a prolonged cheer. Soon in another quarter a band started up "Hail to the Chief" and as you stood wondering "what the dickens was going on over there" there was a rattle of swords at the hill top, a mounted soldier dashed up with the clover leafed corps badge in his hand, you saw with amazement the brilliantly uniformed staffs of the corps and division commanders grouped around an open carriage in which sat a sweetly smiling little lady in gray beside a black coated, white vested gentleman who nodded pleasantly to you as you stood huddled against the fence to make room for the escort. Then you comprehended the situation and, if you were a good Republican, you went home happy in the thought that you had looked into the eyes of the greatest American of his day—William McKinley, President of the United States.