

Corporal Frank Mundt Gardener

Corporal Frank Mundt, florist and gardener, was born in Germany in 1829. He began his career in Germany under the instruction of his father, who was a florist as well as landscape and architectural gardener under the grand duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

On February 1, 1864, Mr. Mundt enlisted into the 28th Ohio Infantry Volunteer Army. June 5, he was injured by gunshot in his left shoulder, and on June 9, Frank was listed as a POW being held at a camp in Staunton, Virginia. He was discharged from the Army in Columbus Ohio on August 27, 1865 as a Corporal.

He was admitted to the National Home of Disabled Volunteer Soldiers in Dayton on March 16, 1868. As one of the early inmates of the Soldiers Home, he set to work with a zeal and energy truly commendable. He vigorously sought material from the surrounding country, and collecting together all the vines and wild flowers he could find, he planted them promiscuously in the crevices of rocks and upon the hill-sides. They took root quickly, imparting to the uncultivated grounds a delightfully romantic appearance. His almost magical transformation excited the wonder and admiration of every beholder, and thousands who were attracted to the spot expressed their gratification in enthusiastic terms. Col Mundt, who was appointed florist, assisted by the labor of the inmates, actively carried out the work under the eye of Colonel E. F. Brown. By 1900, these gardens became a major travel destination, averaging 600,000 visitors per year.

October 4, 1871, he was married to Miss Nellie C. Devine. By 1874, he was re-admitted to the Soldiers Home, where he died in June 1879 at the age of 47 and was buried at the National Cemetery in Dayton.



Mrs. Elizabeth Rohrer Gardener and Contributor

Elizabeth Albright (Schultz) Rohrer, of Germantown, Ohio, daughter of Conrad and Elizabeth Schultz, Baltimore, Md., was born there on January 25, 1806. She was the sixth child of a family of nine children. She descended from a line of military men, her grandfather being a Colonel in the Revolutionary war; and her father, participated in the war of 1812, as an artilleryman. Much of her early life was passed in Washington City, and during the administration of Monroe and Adams, she was a welcome guest in the families of these illustrious men. During the war of 1812, Mrs. Rohrer witnessed the light arising from the burning of Washington.



She came West with her parents in 1825 on a visit, and was present at Middletown when Gov. Clinton, of New York, raised the first shovelful of earth in the digging of the Miami Canal. Miss Schultz was united in marriage to Samuel Rohrer, March 30, 1826, and that year

moved to Dayton, Ohio, where he embarked in the mercantile business. Elizabeth and her husband Samuel in 1827, moved to Germantown, and there built a brewery and operated a distillery. To this couple were born six children. Samuel Rohrer served as Lieutenant in the war of 1812.

Mrs. Rohrer became involved at the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, Dayton Ohio in 1868. She was interested in the original Dayton Grotto Gardens and contributed large numbers of plants from her own gardens.

She died on November 1, 1890, in Germantown, Ohio, having lived a long life of 84 years, and was buried there.



Pioneers of the Soldiers Home Grotto and Gardens



1880s



2012

Located at the Dayton VA Medical Center
"A National Historic Landmark Site"

Attention all who enjoy gardens and working in them: The American Veterans Heritage Center along with the Dayton Veterans Affairs Medical Center are partnering in an exciting project. This is an opportunity for the citizens in our Community to join in the maintaining of the historical Grotto and Gardens located on grounds.

Your time and donations are welcome!
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13 Feb 2021

Charles Beck Landscape/Gardener

Charles Beck was born on January 2, 1827, in Frankfurt, Germany, to Louise Kroeber and Wilhelm Ludwig Beck.

When twenty years of age he arrived in America, locating at Rochester, N. Y. For two years he worked for a nursery firm. In 1849, he then went to Cincinnati and engaged in operating floral gardens and doing floral decorating.



Mr. Beck married Louisa M Schnike, in Cincinnati, Hamilton Co., Ohio, in 1856. Louisa M Schnike was a native of Saxony, where she was born in 1836.

In 1860 they moved to Dayton. He engaged in the same business in this city upon his own responsibility

until employed by the government in 1868 to take charge of the entire floral, landscape and vegetable gardens at the national soldiers' home (now the Dayton VAMC).

His son Otto Walter was born on March 11, 1864, in Dayton, Ohio. Walter was a teacher at the Art Museum in Cincinnati and became a well-known painter. Several of his paintings are in the Smithsonian Museum of American Art collection.

Charles Beck served with the 5th Regiment, Ohio Cavalry as a Private during the Civil War, and filed for his pension in 1883.

In 1868 - Charles Beck, a professional landscaper, supervised the 75 Civil War veterans who worked full time planning and laying out decorative areas on the grounds including floral mounds as well as a floral butterfly, an eagle with outspread wings.

Mr. Beck died March 18 1906 and was buried at Woodland Cemetery, Dayton Ohio

Colonel Edwin Franklin Brown

Edwin Franklin Brown was born on April 23, 1823, in Ridgeway, New York, to Abigail Norcross Davis, age 38, and Jeremiah Brown, age 36.

Edwin Franklin Brown married Elizabeth Britt in 1844. They lived in New York State and had four sons, Charles Lee, Willie J., Orrin Britt and Edwin Franklin(E.F.).

Edwin Franklin Brown, a lieutenant colonel from New York, fought for the Union during the Civil War beginning in 1861.

In the battle of Cedar Mountain, Virginia, August 9, 1863, the regiment's casualties were 60 percent of the number taken into battle, including the wounding of Lieutenant Colonel Brown, which resulted in the amputation of his left arm. While in the field hospital he was captured and taken to Libby Prison. He was exchanged in October, commissioned colonel of his regiment, and commanded until it mustered out.

At the opening of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, near Dayton, Ohio, Colonel Brown was appointed acting governor of the Central Branch. When the branches had increased so that inspections of their condition were required to be made and reported to the president of the board of managers, he was appointed inspector general, on September 23, 1890, which office he held until his death, performing the duties until October of 1902.



In his honor, the general, medical and surgical hospital, which was built in 1930 was named Brown Hospital.

C. B. Davis Architect

The designs and plans of the Dayton National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers Hospital building were made by Mr. C. B. Davies and the whole was erected and finished under his superintendency; and to him especially belongs whatever of credit the public deems due for the building. This elegant and well-arranged building, acknowledged to be the best constructed and best adapted hospital in America, cost \$185,000 and is designed to accommodate three hundred persons

C.B. Davis (Davies) was appointed to lay out the garden walks, promenades and flower beds. The natural feel of the gardens and the parks provided the veterans with an enjoyable place to spend their time since they could not return to work. The gardens and parks were so attractive that tourists made day trips out to the Central Branch to enjoy the natural beauty. As early as the mid-1870's approximately 100,000 people were visiting the Central Branch annually.

In today's Grotto Gardens, the garden was designed honoring C. B. Davies (Davis), for ease of maintenance and to showcase the original rocks.

