



Civil War George's Mint Plant

This is an attempt to provide a historical understanding of one of the wonderful outcomes of the tragic American events of 1861 – 1865.

R David Kryder

Leave that whar you dug it, Soldier, may have been the words Pvt. George Kryder of the 3rd Ohio Cavalry heard his sergeant call to him as he was putting a secreted container into his saddle bag. *Uncle Billy's a wantin' you up at his tent ...an' rat now! Get goin!*

Nestled with beef jerky and pemmican, Kryder looked at and watered his living treasure each time his horse stopped to drink. He had taken a spadeful of mint from one of the many plantation houses the army had burned-out as Major General William Tecumseh "Uncle Billy" Sherman of the Union Army had travelled from Atlanta to Savannah in late 1864. Sherman's *March from Atlanta to the Sea* was a war against a civilian population, pure and simple. It was not fought against the military. Most of the South's male population had gone to War. Few remained to protect their homes. Sherman's design was to terrorize and demoralize the South – and that is just what his army did! Sherman's activities likely shortened the American Civil War by many months, but at great cost.

Pvt. George Kryder (the author's great grandfather who is known in the author's family as "Civil War George") had wrapped his bit of mint in what had once been a white linen handkerchief sent to him by his wife Elizabeth Sweetland Kryder. The handkerchief was her memento to him; the mint was George's treasured memento in return for his beloved wife Elizabeth. Within months after Sherman's *scorched earth* march of December 1864, the American Civil War ended. Kryder was soon mustered out. He brought his precious mint back home. Elizabeth had maintained their farm in Damascus (originally Harrison)



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Civil War George and Elizabeth Sweetland Kryder

To his left is his son George Elmer Kryder with two sons Ted and Julian (the author's father).

To the right of Elizabeth is Gertrude Hartman Kryder, wife of George Elmer Kryder

Florence (later Bowers, the mother of Norman Bowers) is to Gertrude's immediate right.

In front (L to R) are Gertrude and George's daughters Emma (later Hoffman) and Annabelle (later Cook).

The new house in the background is on the family farm near McClure, Ohio.

Township, Henry County, Ohio, since the day George had set off with one of Elizabeth's brothers, Henry Sweetland (Doug Sweetland's great uncle), to join the Third Ohio Cavalry. He and Henry had been separated, but George never lost possession of his precious mint plants and rhizomes.

Before the April, 1861 firing on Ft. Sumter that began the Civil War, the Kryders had erected a 3 room house on one corner of their 80 acres of native hardwood trees in Northwest Ohio's Black Swamp. The Black Swamp was being drained. Farming was Kryder's future and here he and Elizabeth raised their five children. On their homestead the carefully preserved mint was planted. A shallow-well pump had found a sand vein in the deep virgin soil. Its water brought the mint rhizomes to a new life in the North. There on Kryder's farm, far away from the pain of the Reconstruction South, the mint plants reproduced and offered their pleasant aroma and distinctive flavor to a busy pioneer kitchen.

Following receipt of an 1887 Union Army Veterans Pension grant, the Kryders built on the opposite end of their farm, a stately post-bellum brick house in the mode of the American South. Although modest by pre-War Southern standards the house was reminiscent of the many plantation houses that Sherman's armies had destroyed on their *March to the Sea*.

From the *Old House* a spadeful of mint was transferred to the *New House*. There it was placed under the newly-erected windmill near the drilled well that supplied water for the Kryder household and their livestock. Additional mint rhizomes were strategically placed along the road across from the brick house. Soon this transplanted Georgian plant dominated Kryder's NW Ohio roadside for nearly 80 rods (A *rod* is a land metric that equals 16.5 feet. 80 rods equal a quarter mile).

The author remembers during his youth when, using a bull-wheel driven McCormick-Deering hay mowing machine pulled by an Oliver 60 tractor, the ditches were mowed several times a year. Then the whole world smelled like the taste of a fresh stick of *Wrigley's Spearmint* gum. The author thought that everyone had a *mint ditch*. Surely they must!

Only as an adult did the author come to realize and appreciate the wonderful treasure his great grandfather had brought home from the War.

As an adult, the author moved around and later from NW Ohio. Like his great grandfather, he carried a spadeful of mint to various new residences. Sometimes friends also asked for a spadeful of mint and they, too, passed mint on to their friends.

Now Civil War George's mint grows around Ohio plus it is found in Alabama, Arizona, California, Florida, Iowa, New Mexico, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Unlike today's cool, urbanized, desecration of the word *mint* in America's ghettos, Civil War George's purloined mint plants are *the real deal*. Readers desiring a start of Civil War George's mint can contact the author.

Author's note: The Author cannot historically document all parts of this oral history

**Kirbys and Kryders Meet
(L to R Anne Kirby, David and Patti Kryder)**

In June of 2014, David Kryder, SFA Scholarship Chairman and his wife Patti of Arizona met Dale and Anne Kirby, Lore Editor, for the first time at the Kirby's house in Oregon. Later, David sent the Kirbys some mint rhizomes with the following message: "I hope you enjoy the mint and will soon certify that Oregon can be added to the list of new residences for this aromatic and delightful Civil War Survivor."



Swetland Relative Posthumously Receives Medal of Honor



Lore Reader Helen Stevens wrote in August, "Recently it was announced that Alonzo H. Cushing would receive the Medal of Honor. My husband is his relative. Horace Monroe Swetland's daughter Velma Idella married Frederic Cushing Stevens Sr. who is the first cousin once removed of Alonzo. My husband is Fred IV. I just thought this might be interesting to other Swetlands."

An article in Gazettenet.NET reported that Barack Obama did indeed award the Medal of Honor posthumously to Army First Lt. Alonzo H. Cushing for conspicuous gallantry on Thursday, Nov. 6, 2014, during a ceremony in the Roosevelt Room of the White House in Washington. Obama acknowledged the work of Margaret Zerwekh, a 94-year-old amateur historian from Cushing's hometown who painstakingly researched his story and lobbied Wisconsin's congressional delegation for decades .

As he issued the nation's highest military honor, President Obama noted the delay in recognizing Cushing's heroism atop the hill that was a target of Pickett's Charge — the last-ditch, all-in attack ordered by Gen. Robert E. Lee that could have delivered a Confederate victory there and for the entire war.

But the assault failed, in part because Cushing, having been hit in the shoulder and abdomen, refused a sergeant's plea that he withdraw, reportedly saying, "No, I'll fight it out or die in the attempt."

"Faithful Unto Death" are the words on Cushing's Westpoint tombstone.

Happy is the man who fondly thinks of his forebears,
Who likes to tell the willing listener the tale
Of their achievements and greatness, and is glad
To see himself a link in the beautiful chain. —Goethe

FamilySearch is Gradually Adding a Huge Searchable Collection of U.S. Obituaries as it Becomes Indexed

FamilySearch has recently partnered with GenealogyBank.com to add their massive **U.S. Obituary Collection** to FamilySearch.

The collection currently consists of 506,812 searchable images. The FamilySearch Wiki notes that the collection is an "index to obituaries from thousands of newspapers throughout the United States."

Given the breadth of the digitized newspapers held by NewsBank from across the U.S. and through time, it is easy to project that the total collection may possibly consist of hundreds of millions of obituaries if all of it is eventually published on FamilySearch.

As all genealogists know, obituaries are genealogy gold. They typically contain a wealth of family history information. The NewsBank collection is extremely valuable to researchers, not only due to the sheer probable volume of records in the collection but also because of the record extract design they've used. Obituaries are presented complete with their full sources and a full extract of the obituary.



Obituaries

Irwin E. Messick



Longtime SFA member Irwin E. Messick, 91, of Tunkhannock and formerly of Dallas, PA, died July 18, 2014 in Dallas. Along with his brothers, he attended all the reunions for years. He put together the reunion in Wilkes-Barre for the 150th anniversary of the Swetland homestead in Forty Fort. In addition, he wrote historical booklets that Roger Swetland read from at the 2014 reunion.

Born in Wyoming, PA, he was a son of the late Thomas and Martha Parish Messick and resided in Dallas for most of his life.

Mr. Messick had worked for the federal government with the U.S. Air Force in the petroleum industry. He retired after 22 years of service. Irwin served his country in the U.S. Air Force during World War II.

Irwin was preceded in death by a daughter, Martha Bachman; and brothers, Jim and Bill Messick. Surviving are his wife, the former Helen Cole; a daughter, Sue (Keith) Harvey, Tunkhannock; grandchildren, Keith Jr. (Kathy) Harvey, Annette (Raymond) Kuzma, Ken (Sue) Harvey, Vicki (Steve) Tupper, Jennifer (Andy) Knox, Jeff Bachman, Jodie Bachman; brother, Harold Messick.

Brian Sweetland



Known for his gorgeous Vermont landscape paintings and sketches as well as his eloquent writing and generosity, this well-known artist died from a fall.

Brian Sweetland's life was celebrated November 3, 2013 as scores of friends and admirers gathered at the Pawlet, Vermont Library for a

slideshow of his paintings and family photographs.



Do you have interesting Sweetland/Swetland family information to share and would like to be included in the next Lore? For example an interesting story, a photo of an ancestor's home, people, a family heirloom, tools, etc., or comments on a previous story. Please feel free send these to our editor, Anne Kirby (see contact information at right) along with your written permission to publish the information.

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