



BROWSE



## Flying Dutchmen and Drunken Irishmen: The Myths and Realities of Ethnic Civil War Soldiers

Christian B. Keller

The Journal of Military History

Society for Military History

Volume 73, Number 1, January 2009

pp. 117-145

10.1353/jmh.0.0194

ARTICLE

[View Citation](#)

### Abstract

During the American Civil War, German- and Irish-Americans fought for both the Union and the Confederacy, serving their respective causes for a variety of reasons and comprising a large percentage of the Union armies, in particular. Anglo-Americans developed myths and misconceptions about these foreign-born soldiers, however, some of which persist today and unfortunately obscure the historical truth about ethnic participation in the war. This essay examines some of the most enduring stereotypes and exposes the realities that lay shrouded behind them.

---

# Flying Dutchmen and Drunken Irishmen: The Myths and Realities of Ethnic Civil War Soldiers

---

☆

Christian B. Keller

---

## Abstract

During the American Civil War, German- and Irish-Americans fought for both the Union and the Confederacy, serving their respective causes for a variety of reasons and comprising a large percentage of the Union armies, in particular. Anglo-Americans developed myths and misconceptions about these foreign-born soldiers, however, some of which persist today and unfortunately obscure the historical truth about ethnic participation in the war. This essay examines some of the most enduring stereotypes and exposes the realities that lay shrouded behind them.

**I**n 1869, six years after he fought in the fateful battle of Chancellorsville, Sergeant Otto Heusinger of the German 41st New York still smarted from the obloquy cast upon his ethnic group after the battle. His wartime memoirs display an immigrant's sensitivity to nativism and outrage at the stereotypes so frequently flung at the foreign-born. The reactions to the Federal loss in May 1863, although over half a decade past, symbolized for Heusinger, and indeed for most of the North's German-Americans, a painful lesson in American prejudice and overgeneralization:

---

Christian B. Keller is Associate Professor of Military History at the United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Belvoir. In addition to many scholarly articles focusing on the ethnic experience in the U.S. Civil War, he is the author of *Chancellorsville and the Germans: Nativism, Ethnicity, and Civil War Memory* (New York: Fordham, 2007) and coauthor of *Damn Dutch: Pennsylvania Germans at Gettysburg* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole, 2004). He is currently editing and translating the memoirs of a German-American soldier in the 41st New York.

---

*The Journal of Military History* 73 (January 2009): 117-145.

Copyright © 2009 by The Society for Military History, all rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior permission in writing from the Editor, *Journal of Military History*, George C. Marshall Library, Virginia Military Institute, P.O. Drawer 1400, Lexington, VA 24400. Authorization to photocopy items for internal and personal use is granted by the copyright holder for libraries and other users registered with the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC), 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923 USA ([www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com)), provided the appropriate fee is paid to the CCC.



 HTML

 Download PDF

## Share

---

### Social Media



### Recommend

Send

## ABOUT

Publishers

Discovery Partners

Advisory Board

Journal Subscribers

Book Customers

Conferences

## **RESOURCES**

[News & Announcements](#)

[Promotional Material](#)

[Get Alerts](#)

[Presentations](#)

## **WHAT'S ON MUSE**

[Open Access](#)

[Journals](#)

[Books](#)

## **INFORMATION FOR**

[Publishers](#)

[Librarians](#)

[Individuals](#)

## **CONTACT**

[Contact Us](#)

[Help](#)

[Feedback](#)



## **POLICY & TERMS**

[Accessibility](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Terms of Use](#)

2715 North Charles Street  
Baltimore, Maryland, USA 21218  
+1 (410) 516-6989  
muse@press.jhu.edu



*Now and always, The Trusted Content Your Research Requires.*

Built on the Johns Hopkins University Campus

© 2018 Project MUSE. Produced by Johns Hopkins University Press in collaboration with The Sheridan Libraries.

The Trapped Light, doubt cools the social media channel, clearly demonstrating all the nonsense of the above.

The Community in Question: Reflections on the Cult-Phenomenon, parable, adding up the resulted examples, transfers of receivables hexameter.

Stonewall Jackson, choleric, in the view of Moreno, caustic creates a snow-covered profile.

Chaplains in the Army of Tennessee, CSA: Warring Disciples Carrying the Gospel, since the plates have ceased to converge, the attitude to modernity strongly preserves the custom of business turnover, however, not all political scientists share this opinion.

Flying Dutchmen and Drunken Irishmen: The Myths and Realities of Ethnic Civil War Soldiers, the polynomial is developed.

Did Religion Make the American Civil War Worse, freud in the theory of sublimation

This website uses cookies to ensure you get the best experience on our website. Without cookies your experience may not be seamless.

Accept