Camp Crane History

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Mayor regrets passing-out of Ambulance Camp

Would have liked to have seen it remain permanent

Institution:

That Mayor Rehardes, would have liked to see Camp Crane remain as a permanent fixture of Altoona, is shown in the answer to the letter of Ed Col. Ellis, who wrote him, telling him about the official closing of the camp. Mayor Rehardes's reply follows: April 27, 1912

Richard Ellis

Li Col. Medical Corps

U. S. Army

Obstructing Camp Crane

Altoona, Pa.

Dear Col. Ellis:

Your communication under date of April 9th, advertises the formal closing of Camp Crane and the turning of the grounds back to the owner, the Lehigh County Agricultural Society, and that final settlement had been made by the Government and the rental, etc., is hereby acknowledged.

I cannot help again expressing my regret that our citizens did not see the wisdom of making greater efforts to induce the Government to select this as a permanent camp site. The site was ideal for all your demands and it surely would have been proper to consider it wonderful factor for good and the general progress of our city.

I refer very kindly to the warm relations between camp and city. Words freely express that I was able at any time as having been gratifying that I felt from the opening to the closing of the camp, and included officers and privates, and every citizen of Altoona great and small.

I doubt whether the record of Camp Crane for efficiency, discipline and morale is matched by any other camp in the country. I base this opinion upon observations in my daily visits to the camp and as chief executive of the city in the management of its public affairs.

The lasting impression left was permanently made on thousands of men and the greatest confidence extending, and without a single instance of abuse. My dear Col., the conduct of your men was truly wonderful and constantly called forth additional courtesies from our citizens, and many were the presents that were added to those of the soldiers parents for the boys welfare.

The question naturally follows, in what do you attribute all this? I would attribute it to the hospitality and confidence offered to our people, the good housekeeping and prudence of the boys themselves, and to the instruction and zeal of the Camp Commanders and the immediate subordinate officers, who in all appearance and really always tempered discipline with a liberal mixture of thoughtfulness of the boys at home and the remembrance of their own boyhood days.

The adding of everything else, kindly and laboriously, a kindness of confidence that the men, and to our experience, and to our experience, with the camp on behalf of our people, I failed to find the men, who would ever hurt the feelings, much less abuse the kindness and confidence of men. I premise, to call him "dear Col.

Rev. H. P. Bessey, the Chaplin, and that of his successors, Col. Howard McC., Baylor, and yourself:

While the camp has passed into history, reminiscences and friendships will grow ever and since the L. S. Ambulance Service Association has accomplished our city for selecting it for the first reunion (June 30, 1866) accept the assurance in closing the failure of our feelings and expressions will be forthcoming.

Respectfully,

A. W. REHARDES

(Signed)

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(Signed)