

Camp Crane History

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Mayor regrets Passing Out Of Ambulance Camp

4/12/19
Would Have Liked To Have
Seen it Remain Permanent
Institution.

That Mayor Reichenbach would have liked to see Camp Crane remain as a permanent fixture of Allentown is shown in the answer to the letter of Lt. Col. Slee, who wrote him, telling about the official closing of the camp. Mayor Reichenbach's reply follows:

April 12, 1919.

Richard Slee,
Lt. Col. Medical Corps,
U. S. Army,
Commanding Camp Crane,
Allentown, Pa.

Dear Col. Slee:—
Your communication under date of April 9th, advising of the formal closing of Camp Crane and the turning of the grounds back to the owners, the Lehigh County Agricultural Society, and that final settlement had been made by the Government for the rental, etc., is hereby acknowledged.

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

You refer very kindly to the pleasant relations between camp and city. Words feebly express this. I can recall it only as having been glorious and that it existed from the opening to the closing of the camp, and included officers and privates, and every citizen of Allentown great and small.

I doubt whether the record of Camp Crane for efficiency, discipline and morale is excelled 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 homes of our people were constantly open to your thousands of men and the greatest confidences extended, 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 prayers that were added to those of the anxious parents for the boys' welfare.

The question naturally follows, to what do you attribute all this? I credit it to the hospitality and confidence offered by our people, the good home training and principles of the boys themselves, and to the intelligence and heart of the Camp Commanders and the immediate associate officers, who to all appearances and results always tempered discipline with a liberal mixture of thoughts of the folks at home and reminiscences of their own boyhood days.

The soldier, like everything else, quickly and keenly feels a kindness or confidence and in my experience with the camp on behalf of our people, I failed to find the one who would even hurt the feelings, much less abuse the kindness and confidence of men like, I presume to call him "daddy," for that's what he was to everyone, including us.—Col. Elbert E. Parsons, the first Commander, and that of his successors, Col. Howard McC. Snyder, and yourself.

While the camp has passed into history, reminiscences and friendships will ever live; and since the U. S. Ambulance Service Association has complimented our city by selecting it for the first re-union (June, 1920), accept the assurance in closing, that further proof of our feelings and admiration will be forthcoming.

Respectfully,
(Signed)
A. L. REICHENBACH.