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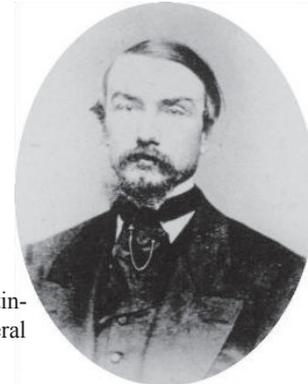
Here is a subject philatelists have been enthralled with for over 100 years.



## The Confederate Post

By Patricia A. Kaufmann

### Dr. General Collett Leventhorpe – England’s Fighting General



A post-Civil War era tin-type photograph of General Collett Leventhorpe.



The illustrated Confederate stampless cover is addressed to “Dr. \_\_\_ Leventhorpe, Rutherfordton, N.C.” and bears a handstamped PAID 5 from Norfolk, Virginia dated October 9, 1861. It is uncertain whether the sender did not know the first name of Leventhorpe, was unable to spell it or something else.

An estimated 50-55,000 British and Canadians fought during the American Civil War, the majority for the Union cause, but some for the Confederacy. Two Englishmen became Brigadier Generals, and three became colonels. The most famous of the British troops was Patrick Cleburne, an Irishman. Most of the soldiers from the British Isles came from Ireland (all of Ireland at the time was under British rule), the remainder from other peoples who lived in those islands, Scots, Welsh and English.

The most famous Englishman during the war was Collett Leventhorpe, but he is mostly forgotten by those who are interested in the Civil War, although he gallantly served the South.

Leventhorpe’s family was prominent from early times, having in the fourteenth century moved from Leventhorpe Hall, Yorkshire to Hertfordshire, during the reign of Richard II. A member of the family was an executor of Henry V’s estate. Another married Dorothy, sister of Jane Seymour, who was the third wife of Henry VIII. During the reign of James I, different members of the family were made barons and acquired prominent positions.

The future Confederate general was born on May 15, 1815. His Christian name was derived from his mother, Mary Collett. As the son of a prominent landowning family, he had an excellent education, studying at Winchester College until he reached the age of fourteen.

In 1832, Leventhorpe’s father purchased the rank of Ensign for him in the 14th Regiment of Foot (the Buckinghamshires), in the army of William IV. He was only seventeen. Leventhorpe was stationed in Ireland for the next three years and in November 1835, when he purchased a Lieutenancy, he was stationed in the British West Indies. Leventhorpe reached the rank of Captain of Grenadiers in 1842, but sold his captaincy at age 27. In 1843, while on an extended holiday in America, Leventhorpe traveled to Asheville, North Carolina, where he met his future wife, Louisa Bryan, second daughter of General Edmund Bryan of Rutherfordton, North Carolina.

With only a small income from England, Leventhorpe entered the Medical College of Charleston, South Carolina. After graduation at the top of his class, he married Louisa on April 1, 1849, and settled in Rutherfordton to live and practice medicine, where he became a prominent member of the community. He applied for citizenship in 1847, which was granted August 8, 1849.

When North Carolina seceded on May 20, 1861, he immediately offered his military services. He was 46 years old. The 34th North Carolina Regiment was raised on October 25, 1861, with men from the Rutherfordton area and Leventhorpe was commissioned its colonel. His experience as an officer in the British army aided him as he trained his inexperienced men. Under his command, the regiment soon became an efficient fighting force. In December, he was given command of two other regiments, the 33rd and the 37th. At Goldsboro, Leventhorpe relinquished command of the 34th and at Camp Mangum, he joined the 11th North Carolina, where he was elected colonel.

Fast forward to 1863. On the morning of the May 30th, Gen. Heth dispatched Pettigrew’s Brigade to Gettysburg in the belief that there was a supply of shoes there. Riding at the head of the Brigade was the 11th and at their head rode Leventhorpe. On July 1st, the Division advanced. On foot, Col. Leventhorpe led 617 men of the 11th into battle, crossing Willoughby Run and up the following slope where they engaged the Union forces on McPherson’s Ridge. The 11th North Carolina displayed conspicuous gallantry in the battle.

During the fighting, two lines were raining volleys onto each other at only twenty paces. During this attack, the imposing 6’6” Leventhorpe was a conspicuous figure and an easy mark. He was

hit by minie balls that shattered his arm and his hip. The 11th marched around him and took McPherson's Ridge. Leventhorpe was carried to the rear to an aid station and the battle was over for him. He would not be taking part in Pickett's Charge with the rest of the 11th.

During the Confederate retreat, Union cavalry captured part of the Confederate ambulance train. At the hospital, it was found that gangrene had set into Leventhorpe's arm and the surgeon wanted to amputate. Leventhorpe refused and had the surgeon cauterize his wound with nitric acid.

Leventhorpe began his imprisonment hospitalized at Fort McHenry near Baltimore, but by early 1864, he was transferred to Point Lookout, Maryland. During his imprisonment, friends and acquaintances in Britain made deposits in his name in a New York bank so that he was able to purchase needed supplies for himself and fellow prisoners. After nine months imprisonment at Point Lookout, Leventhorpe was exchanged. During this period, he was still listed as commander of the 11th. Due to his wounds, he was unable to return to his unit, so resigned the commission on returning to Rutherfordton.

When back in North Carolina, Governor Vance commissioned Leventhorpe Brigadier General of one of the two home guard brigades. Vance also wrote to Secretary of War James A. Seddon, recommending Leventhorpe be promoted to brigadier general and placed in command of regular Confederate troops in the eastern North Carolina district. "This gallant officer is now a brigadier general of home guards in the service of this state, and has the universal confidence of our people, civil and military. I am earnest in my opinion that he, more than any other man, could restore quiet and order in that county."

By early 1865, Leventhorpe commanded the State National Guard of at least eleven Home Guard units. He set up his headquarters at Asheboro and mounted a two-week campaign against deserters and Unionists; this resulted in several brief skirmishes, as well as the rounding up of many suspects.

From letters and reports, Leventhorpe was somewhat enthusiastic in his operations against deserters, etc. He rounded up wives, children, and grandparents into makeshift prisons and fed them nothing but bread and water until they disclosed information about Federal bushwhackers, called "Outliers." Whether one agreed or not, his tactics were more successful than any others and netted some three hundred deserters.

On January 20th, Gen. Robert E. Lee wrote "I also recommend that General Leventhorpe, in the state service, be commissioned in the Confederate service...He is the best officer in that district." Thus President Jefferson Davis commissioned him a Brigadier General in the Confederate army on February 18th, in effect from February 3rd. He was ordered to report to Gen. Braxton Bragg for assignment to the command of Clemming's Brigade, Hoke's Division.

For reasons unknown, most likely his health, on March 6th Leventhorpe declined the promotion and Bragg assigned him to command the defenses of Raleigh. With the capture of the city by Sherman's troops, he accompanied the retreating Confederate troops toward Greensboro and surrendered at Durham.

"He was most truly a knight; deferential, without being obsequious, to all, both high and low, he showed as the very pink of courtesy and mirror of knighthood in his association..." *The Lenoir Topic*, December 4, 1889, upon his death. ☐

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