

WHO WAS PHILIP SHERIDAN?

General Philip Henry Sheridan was born on March 6, 1831, the 3rd of six children born to parents John Sheridan and Mary Meenagh Sheridan. The Sheridans were from the parish Kilinkere in County Cavan, Ireland.

"The Biographical Registry of Officers from United States Military Academy" lists Phil Sheridan's birthplace as Albany, New York where the family first settled. Soon after the family moved to Somerset, Ohio, where some claim he was born.

Truth is no birth records can be found. His descendants claim "he was born on the Ocean" of immigrant Irish parents on their way to America. The base commander of Fort Sheridan contacted the family in 1979 and confirmed their story; it is also stated that way in the book "History of Lake County. Illinois".

Phil Sheridan stood five foot five inches tall which got him the nickname "Little Phil." Abraham Lincoln described him as "a brown, chunky little chap, with a long body, short legs, not enough neck to hang him, and such long arms that if his ankles itch he can scratch them without stooping."

In 1848 Sheridan entered West Point but was kicked out for threatening an upper classman, a cadet sergeant William R. Terrill who made a remark to him. Sheridan's response was "I'll run him through with a bayonet." He was allowed to return the following year and graduated in 1853.

Philip Sheridan married Irene Rucker. He was forty-four and she was twenty-two. They had four children, Mary, twins Irene and Louise, and Philip Jr. Upon Sheridan's death his wife said. "I'd rather be the widow of Phil Sheridan than the wife of any man living." She was only thirty-five at the time.

President Andrew Johnson called Sheridan "an absolute tyrant in War." During the Civil War "Fighting Phil" was a favorite of his commanding officers. He was in charge of the destruction of the Shenandoah Valley by burning the plantations, fought against Stonewall Jackson, Jeb Stuart and blocked Robert E. Lee's retreat thus forcing Lee to surrender at the town of Appomattox Court House.

After the war he was assigned to the U.S. Army Division of the Missouri, headquartered in Chicago as a Lieutenant General in 1869.

In 1870 he found himself a guest of Prussian Chancellor Otto Von Bismarck and witnessed the surrender of Napoleon III in the Franco-Prussian War.

In 1871 Sheridan came to the aid of homeless, hungry people of Chicago after the Great Chicago Fire providing them with army tents, blankets, and food, consequently gaining their love and admiration. Sheridan campaigned to establish Yellowstone as a National Park which became a reality on March 1, 1872. (This year celebrating its 150th anniversary.)

He advocated that a military post be established in the Chicago area and fought in the wars against the Great Plains Indians, primarily against the Sioux.

In 1883 Phil Sheridan was transferred to Washington D. C. gaining the title "General-In-Chief of the Army" and in 1888 was promoted to the highest rank of "General of the Army".

Three months after the first troops arrived at the Camp at Highwood, the fort was renamed Fort Sheridan on February 27, 1888. The general only visited the fort named after him once on May 5, 1888. Three months later on August 5th, 1888, Phil Sheridan died of a heart attack at Nonquitt, Massachusetts.

Sheridan was the only strictly military person featured on the \$5 and \$10 bills. Many towns are named after him, as well as Mt. Sheridan in Yellowstone and the M551 Sheridan tank. He was featured on a postage stamp along with Grant and Sherman, was first President of Washington Park Racetrack in 1883, and was the 9th President of the NRA in 1885. There are numerous other honors as well.

A year after moving to Chicago in 1870 he became one of the original investors of a baseball team called the White Stockings (not the White Sox). Through the years the team was referred to in the press as the Orphans, Infants, Remnants, and the Colts. The Chicago Daily News had a particular nickname for them because of the many young players. The nickname stuck and the White Stockings were renamed. The team Phil Sheridan invested in back in 1870 today we call the Chicago Cubs.

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