

Charles Frederick Henningsen

(1815 – 14 Jun 1877)

The Evening Star, Thursday, August 15, 1867

Convalescing -- Gen. C.F. Henningsen, late of the Confederate service, who has been seriously ill for some weeks at his lodgings on Twelfth street, near Pennsylvania avenue, has passed the crisis of his disease, and is rapidly convalescing. He has been attended during his illness by his amiable wife.

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Death of Gen. C.F. Henningsen

A Participant in Many Wars Conquered at Last

Gen. Charles Frederick Henningsen, who for some months past had been in a feeble state of health, died this morning at his rooms No. 28 north B street, Capitol Hill, in the 62d year of his age. There are probably but few living who have had a more adventurous life than the deceased. As the name indicates, Gen. H. was of Scandinavian extraction. Born in England in 1815, at the age of nineteen he went to Spain to espouse the cause of Don Carlos, (the grandfather of the present pretender to the Spanish throne.) His first service was as a captain in the body guard of Zumalacarregui. He was subsequently made a colonel, and in that capacity led a column against Madrid capturing the outer fortifications of the city and held them for several hours, until notified that Don Carlos could send him no reinforcements. He was once captured and would have been shot but for a lucky circumstance. After being liberated he fought against Russia in the Caucasus. Returning to England he wrote "Revelations of Russia," three volumes, which was translated into French. He afterwards took part on the national side, in the Hungarian war of 1848-9. Subsequently he came to the United State with Kossuth. In 1856 he commanded a filibustering expedition to Nicaragua, where he joined Walker, who was afterwards shot. Gen. Henningsen, however, managed to make his escape after having served with great gallantry. During the late civil war in this country he served in the confederate army as colonel, and frequently had command of the defenses of Richmond. After the war he took up his residence in Washington, and became interested in the cause of Cuba. His principal writings are "Twelve Months Campaign with Zumalacarregue;" "The Past and Future of Hungary;" "The White Slave," a novel; "Eastern Europe;" "Sixty Years Hence," a novel of Russian life, and "Analogies and Contrasts." The deceased was a man of striking appearance, being tall, erect and soldier-like in his bearing. He was gentleman of scholarly attainments, and spoke the French, Spanish, Russian, German and Italian languages with the fluency of a native. During his last days he was greatly reduced in circumstances, but had many kind friends, among them Colonel Albert Pike, who looked after his welfare.

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The Funeral of Gen. Charles Frederick Henningsen, whose remarkable career was filled with romantic incident and illustrated by bravery and intellectual achievement as a soldier and a writer, is in progress as we go to press. Gen. Albert Pike and Col. John T. Pickett, who were warm personal friends of the deceased, have the funeral in charge. The remains will be interred in the Congressional Cemetery.

Stewart Sifakis, Who Was Who in the Civil War, Facts on File Publications, New York, 1988

Henningsen, Charles Frederick (1815-1877)

A military adventurer of some note, Charles F. Henningsen had only a brief career in the Confederate army. The native of Brussels, Belgium, had served the Carlists in Spain and fought with Kossuth in Hungary before immigrating to the United States in the early 1850s. He became a noted author, recounting his adventures, and was involved in the expansionist plots of William Walker in Central America. Offering his services to the South, he was commissioned colonel, 59th Virginia, on August 1, 1861. Serving under General Wise, he took part in the campaigns in western Virginia, North Carolina, and on the Peninsula. Much of the time he directed the artillery of Wise's Legion. When the regiment was reorganized under the Conscrip Act in November 1862 he was relieved of his command. He subsequently lived in Washington, D.C.