

Isaac C.B. Suman, Colonel, F&S, 9th IN Infantry, USA

- 1831 Jan 4: Isaac C.B. Suman was born in Middletown, MD to parents Albert and Mary Suman. Albert Suman served under General Francis Marion during the Revolutionary War and after the war, settled down in Maryland and became a successful and wealthy slaveholder and planter.¹
- 1846 May: At the age of fifteen, Suman volunteered with the First U.S. Artillery in Ringgold's Battery and went off to fight in the War with Mexico. He saw action at numerous battles and after the war was transferred to the Second U.S. Dragoons and served with them for several years.²
- 1850 Jul 31: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in Frederick County, MD showed nineteen year old Isaac Suman resided with his widowed mother, Mary, and siblings. Isaac and his older brother, Albert, were both listed as carpenters.
- 1860 Jun 6: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in Valparaiso, IN showed that Isaac Suman lived in a boarding house owned by a woman named Elizabeth Campbell. He was twenty nine.
- 1861 April 20: Isaac Suman married Catherine Margaret Goss in Porter County, IN.
- April 22: Enlisted as 1st Lieutenant in the 9th IN Infantry for a term of three months. This regiment was shipped east and participated in some of the earliest action of the American Civil War. They were engaged at Philippi, Rich Mountain, and numerous other small engagements before their three month enlistment was up.
- Many regiments like this were formed, North and South, in the late spring of 1861 because many thought the war would be a quick, relatively bloodless ordeal. The 9th IN mustered out at the end of their term of service in August 1861 but reorganized in September of 1861 and was sent West. Suman was promoted from 1st Lt to Captain, Co. H.
- 1862 April 7: 9th IN was engaged on the second day of the Battle of Shiloh under Gen. Buell.

¹ *History of Porter County, Indiana: A Narrative Account of its Historical Progress, its People and its Principal Interests.* Chicago, Illinois: Lewis Publishing Company, 1912. Pg. 382-391.

² *Ibid.*

Aug 20: Promoted to Lt. Colonel.

Dec 31-Jan 2, 1863: 9th IN involved at the Battle of Stones River in Murfreesboro, TN. They were part of William Hazen's Brigade and fought at what became known as, "Hell's Half Acre." They were part of the only Brigade to hold against a ferocious Confederate assault and ended up becoming crucial to staving off defeat for the Army of the Cumberland. According to Wikipedia, the 9th IN lost 113 men killed or wounded in this single battle, including Suman, who was wounded twice.

1863 After this battle, the U.S. Army of the Cumberland was based around Murfreesboro building Fortress Rosecrans, regrouping, and waiting for better weather to continue its campaign.

to erect a monument to honor the soldiers, who died at Stones River in Murfreesboro. Troops from Suman's regiment built the monument in six months and buried 45 soldiers of the brigade within a stone enclosure. This monument, Hazen's Brigade, was completed by May 1863 and is the oldest intact Civil War monument in the nation. The monument was named by Hazen's troops.

Colonel Hazen's detachment was the only brigade that held the Union line. Hazen was wounded during the en-

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Apr 17: Promoted to Colonel of 9th IN Infantry.

Nov 25: Wounded at the Battle of Missionary Ridge, TN.

³ *The Daily News-Journal*, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, Monday, 25 Nov 2019, pg. A3.

⁴ *Northwest Indiana Times*, Gary, Indiana, 10 Aug 2015, (accessed 21 Apr 2020), [Gallery: Civil War Battlefields of the "Bloody 9th" Indiana Infantry](#).

- 1864 Nov 30: Fought with 9th IN at Battle of Franklin. Suman and his regiment fought under Brig. Gen. William Grose and were placed on the western side of the defensive earthworks.
- 1865 Sep 28: Mustered out with 9th IN at Camp Stanley, Texas.
- 1867 Suman declined a commission as a second lieutenant in the Thirty Eighth Regiment, U.S. Army.

“Valparaiso, Indiana Feb 11th 1867

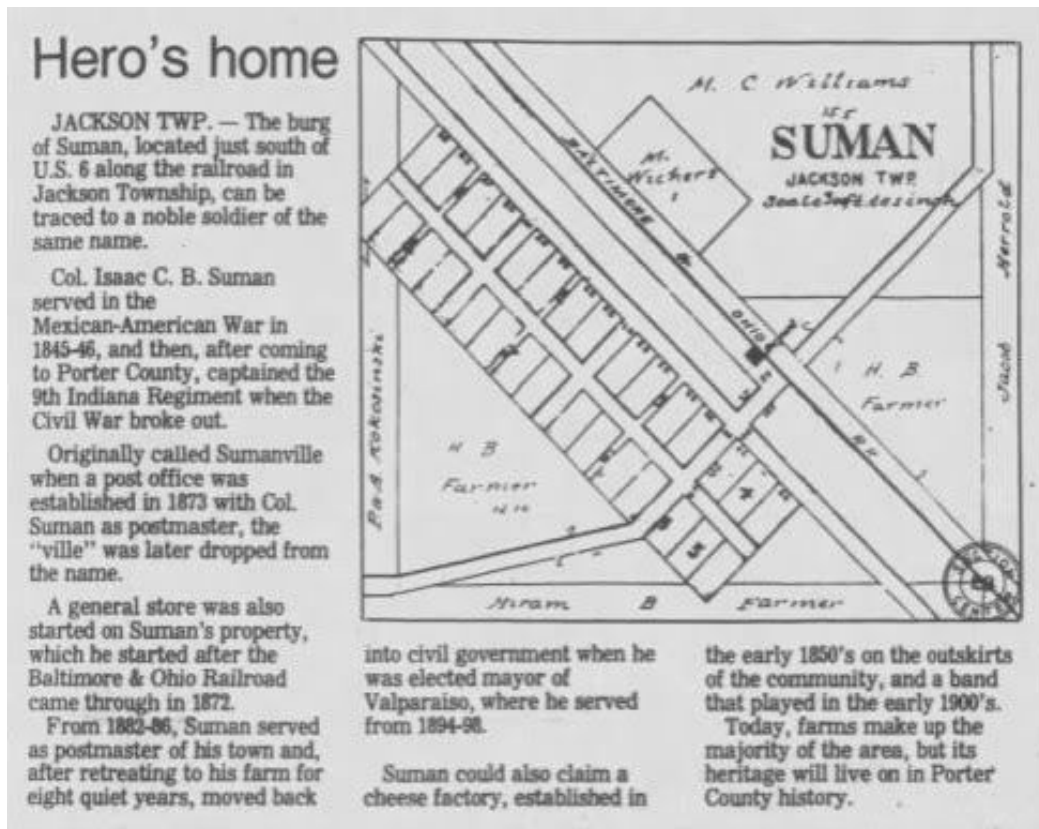
*John C. Melton
Asst Adjt for USA*

Sir the appointment as second lieutenant in the Thirty Eighth Regiment of Infantry United States Army have reached me. I will say in reply that I cannot accept the rank of second lieutenant. I believe I have earned more.

*I am so very respectfully
Your obdt servant*

*Isaac C.B. Suman
Late col. 9th Regt Ind Vol Infantry”*

- 1868 Aug 21: Suman was a member of the Eleventh Congressional District of the Committee of Arrangements in Indiana.⁵
- 1870 Aug 2: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in Porter County, IN listed that Isaac C.B. Suman lived with his wife, Kate, and worked as a lumber manufacturer. They had three daughters that lived with them as well.
- 1873 Suman appointed postmaster of newly formed, “Sumanville, IN.”



- 1880 Jun 1: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in Porter County, IN showed fifty year old Suman lived with his wife and four children. They had three daughters and one son named Frank. Isaac's occupation is listed as “farmer.” His wife is listed as “housekeeper” and all their children are listed as “at school.”
- 1881 Appointed Postmaster of Valparaiso, IN. A position Suman would hold for the next four years.

⁵ Fort Wayne Daily Gazette, Fort Wayne, Indiana, Friday, 21 Aug 1868, pg. 3.

⁶ Vidette-Messenger of Porter County, Valparaiso, Indiana, Tuesday 26 Mar 1991, pg. 79.

- 1894 Elected Mayor of Valparaiso, IN. Another position Suman would hold for four years.
- 1900 Jun 1: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in Valparaiso, IN listed Isaac employed as a “captalis.” He lived with his wife, two children, and two grandchildren.
- 1908 Jan 2: Suman’s wife, Kate, died in Valparaiso, IN.
- 1910 April 28: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in Porter County, IN showed seventy nine year old Isaac lived with a daughter and two grandkids.
- 1911 Aug 7: Isaac C.B. Suman passed away in Valparaiso, IN. He was buried at Maplewood Cemetery.

GENERAL ISAAC C. B. SUMAN. A gentle and noble spirit had indwelling in the mortal tenement of the late General Isaac C. B. Suman, who was one of the most honored and distinguished citizens of Porter county and whose hold upon popular affection and esteem clearly indicated the character of the man, even as did the fine repose of a face whose lineaments were remarkably classical and whose expression denoted both strength and kindness. General Suman well exemplified the truth of the statement that "The bravest are the tenderest; the loving are the daring," and the record of his life offers much of inspiration and incentive. He served with marked distinction and gallantry as a soldier in the Mexican war and later as a Union officer in the Civil war, and in the "piping times of peace" the same loyalty and insistent subjective integrity and fidelity characterized his thoughts and actions. He ordered his course upon the highest plane, was mindful of his stewardship in all things, and he strove not only to maintain fine ideals in his personal or individual life but also to promote the same attitude in others. There was a distinct fineness and purity in the mental and spiritual makeup of General Suman, and yet he was practical, broadly tolerant and with no obliquity of vision as touching the true values to be placed upon men and measures. A man of power, in the better sense of the term he accounted well to himself and to the world, and the world was better for his having lived. He was summoned to the life eternal on the 7th of August, 1911, at his beautiful home in Valparaiso, and an entire community mourned his loss with a deep sense of personal bereavement. This history of Porter county would stultify the consistency of its biographical department were their failure to enter within its pages an appreciative tribute to the memory of this sterling citizen and noble gentleman.

General Isaac C. B. Suman was a scion of old and honored families early founded in the southern part of our great national domain, and his lineage was of English and German origin. He was born in Frederick county, Maryland, on the 4th of January, 1831, and was the next to the youngest of the seven children born to Albert and Mary Suman, who continued residents of that state until their death. Albert Suman served under General Francis Marion in the War of the Revolution and thereafter became a prosperous planter and slaveholder in Frederick county, Maryland, where he eventually met with serious financial reverses, in connection with which he was compelled to sacrifice most of his estate. General Suman was reared to adult age in his native state and there received a common-school education, which he effectively supplemented in later years by careful self-discipline in the way of extensive and well ordered reading and study and through active association with men and affairs.

In May, 1846, when but fifteen years of age, General Suman manifested his youthful patriotism by tendering his services as a soldier in the war with Mexico. He enlisted in Ringgold's Battery, First United States Artillery, and, in the command of General Zachary Taylor, he participated in the engagements of Palo Alto, Monterey and Buena Vista, as well as all movements and battles of Taylor's army leading up to the capture of the City of Mexico. After two years in the artillery he was transferred to the Second United States Dragoons, and with the same he continued in service in the United States army for a period of five years. Concerning the incidents of his career thereafter it is deemed but consistent to quote freely and with but slight paraphrase from an appreciative memoir which appeared in the proceedings of the twenty-fifth annual reunion of the Ninth Indiana Veteran Volunteer Infantry Association, held in October, 1911, and by reason of the modification made in transcription formal marks of quotation will be omitted:

After the completion of his military service young Suman returned to his father's home in Maryland, and, finding that his father, who had owned a number of slaves, had failed in business, he made up his mind to seek his fortune in the great west. In the autumn of 1852, with but a few dollars in his pocket, he made his way on foot to Wooster, Ohio, where he learned the trade of carpenter and whence he soon came to northwestern Indiana and made his first visit to Valparaiso, the city which was destined to be his home for many years. Here he engaged in the work of his trade, and during the construction of the Illinois Central Railroad he was identified with bridge-building on its line, from Chicago to the Kankakee river. He finally returned to Valparaiso, where he continued in the work of his trade until the urge of fine patriotism and loyalty impelled him to subordinate all other interests and tender his services in defense of the nation's integrity. Young Suman was the second man to sign the muster roll of a volunteer company raised at Valparaiso under the first call of President Lincoln for seventy-five thousand men to suppress the rebellion. A few days later the company was mustered in as Company H of the Ninth Regiment of Indiana Volunteer Infantry, Colonel Robert H. Milroy commanding, and young Suman was commissioned first lieutenant of his company. In the brief West Virginia campaign, in the engagements at Philippi, Laurel Hill and Carrick's Ford, his regiment participated with credit and the first lieutenant of Company H showed such bravery and soldierly ability as to win not only the commendation of his own company but likewise that of the colonel commanding and other officers. On the reorganization of the regiment Lieutenant Suman was commissioned captain of Company H. The Ninth Indiana Regiment was mustered in "for three years or during the war," and in its case it was literally "for and during the war," as the major part of its members re-enlisted as veterans. On Shiloh's bloody field Suman, as a company commander, displayed that soldierly ability and conspicuous courage which won for him a lieutenant colonel's commission, dating from August 20, 1862.

During the terrific and repeated assaults made by the Confederates on the Union army left at Stone's River, confronting the Round Forest, in the second day's sanguinary struggle, Lieutenant Colonel Suman received a serious wound in the shoulder. After the same had been dressed by the surgeon Suman, realizing the desperate character of the fighting and the necessity for every man in the gallant band of blue-coated men holding the ground, -- later marked by the monument erected by Hazen's brigade, -- holding his place in line to the uttermost, resumed his place in line with his regiment and held it until he received a more serious, in fact a nearly vital, wound. He was then borne back from the fighting line, with a wound that would have proved mortal to a man having a less rugged vitality. As it was, the wound invalidated him from his command for months.

Upon the resignation of the gallant Colonel William H. Blake, Lieutenant Colonel Suman was commissioned, on the 30th of April, 1863, colonel of the Ninth Indiana, and he continued in command until the mustering out of the regiment, at Camp Stanley, Texas, September 28, 1865. During the campaign in Texas, under the command of General Philip H. Sheridan, Colonel Suman commanded the Second Brigade, First Division of the Fourth Army Corps, said corps having been under command of Major General Davis S. Stanley. On March 13, 1865, President Lincoln appointed Colonel Suman a brigadier general, for gallant and meritorious service, but he declined the commission on the ground that the war was virtually terminated and that he did not seek honors but wished only to serve his country. Such was the characteristic modesty of a man and such his high sense of duty. Such was the attitude that he maintained throughout the course of his long and signally useful life, and while it may, in a sense, have militated against his advancement in ways that are more or less superficial, it can not be doubted that it greatly

inured to the hold which he ever retained upon the confidence and love of his fellow men. In closing this epitome of the military career of General Suman in the Civil war it may be noted that the more important engagements in which he participated were those here named: Greenbrier, Buffalo Mountain, Shiloh, Perryville, Stone's River, Chickamauga, Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge (where he was again wounded), Ringgold, Dalton, Resaca, Culp's Farm, Pine Top Mountain, Rough and Ready Station, Peach Tree Creek, the siege of Atlanta, Lovejoy's Station, Franklin, Nashville and Gettysburg.

After the close of the war General Suman returned to Valparaiso and joined his wife, whom he had wedded on the day preceding his departure for the front and who, with her infant daughter, May, had visited him while his regiment was encamped at Camp Harker, near Nashville, Tennessee, in the early summer of 1865. Very soon after his return to Porter county General Suman purchased a tract of land in Jackson township, at a point a few miles north of Valparaiso, and this he developed into one of the fine farms of the county, the same having been devoted principally to the raising of high-grade live stock. Under scenes of such rural peace and prosperity the General continued the even tenor of his way until 1881, when he was appointed postmaster of Valparaiso, to which city he removed. He purchased a beautiful home in the east suburbs of the city, and there he passed the residue of his life. Thence his battle-scarred body was taken by his comrades of the war and laid to its final rest and concerning this closing phase in his life record the following tender sentiments have been written: "It was fitting that in the waning sunlight of a perfect autumn day, with the bugle 'sound taps', with arching skies bending over a land he loved so well, that soldier hands laid their commander and comrade to rest."

General Suman served as postmaster of Valparaiso from 1881 to 1885. In 1894 further evidence of the high esteem in which he was held was given, for he was then elected mayor of Valparaiso, an office in which he served four years and in which he gave a most admirable administration. Though he was confined to his home and under the care of physicians for only a comparatively short interval before his death, the health of General Suman had been gradually breaking down from the effects of the wounds he had received and the hardships endured during his long and valiant service in the Civil war, and when the gentle spirit was wafted to the eternal realm the community mourned the loss of one who had been a man among men. At the time of his demise the following estimate appeared as a part or an appreciative article in a Valparaiso paper "A loyal citizen; dashing, brilliant soldier; faithful, conscientious official, -- General Suman was beloved by all. Generous to a fault, he endeared himself to the community at large, and his bright, sunshiny nature spread happiness in the homes where he appeared as a guest or helpful adviser. Courageous and indomitable, he "was a relentless foe, and many are the tails told of his daring deeds in the execution of which his worshipping soldiers followed him unquestioning. The big, nobleheart is stilled forever, and the spirit has winged its way to the mansions of eternal rest, to enjoy the reward of a well spent life." One of his old and valued comrades of the Ninth Indiana Infantry, Judge Andrew Anderson, of Valparaiso, stated that "the name and fame of General Suman would be revered and cherished by all classes of his fellow citizens, and more particularly by those who knew him best."

At the twenty-fifth annual reunion of the veteran association with which General Suman had been so closely identified the following resolutions were adopted:

"Resolved, That this Veteran Association of the Ninth Regiment, Indiana Infantry, in the death, recently, of Colonel Isaac C. B. Suman, our last and longest regimental commander and for many years the presiding officer of this association, we sustain a loss that words can not adequately express. To his surviving daughter and grandchildren, with saddened hearts, we tender our soldierly sympathy. And be it further

"Resolved, That our corresponding secretary transmit to the bereaved family these resolutions and that he prepare and publish in our forthcoming reunion report a suitable memorial of our beloved commander and comrade."

Hubert M. Skinner, a noted poet, wrote in honor of General I. C. B. Suman, a poem entitled "General Suman's Ride," in the year 1862, when the dark days of the Rebellion existed. This poem is similar in construction to the popular composition, "Sheridan's Ride," and has been published in many of the school magazines and admirably adopted as a recitation.

On the 21st of April, 1861, the day preceding his departure for the scene of military activities incidental to the initiation of the Civil war, was solemnized the marriage of General Suman to Miss Kate M. Goss, who preceded him to the life eternal by about three years, her death having occurred on the 2d of January, 1908. The domestic chapter in the life history of the honored subject of this memoir was one of ideal order, and there can be no wish to lift the gracious veil and reveal its more intimate relations, which were those of common love, consideration and sympathy. Of the union were born four children. The two surviving children are May, the first born, who is now the wife of John E. Ellsmore, of Seattle, Washington, and Miss Bessie, who remains at the beautiful old homestead in Valparaiso, -- a gracious and loved factor in the best social life of the community which has ever been her home. Mrs. Ellsmore was an infant in arms when her mother took her to the front for the purpose of visiting the soldier husband and father, and they were with him and his regiment in Tennessee, Kentucky and Texas. The title of "Baby of the Regiment" was conferred upon the winsome little daughter of its commander, and she has ever remained popular with its comrades, the ranks of which are now growing pitifully small. Frank, the only son of General Suman, died in 1902, at the age of twenty-nine years; and the other of the four children, Alice Belle, became the wife of Asa Swartout, of Valparaiso, where she died in 1896. Three grandchildren survive General Suman, -- Mrs. Kate M. Wilson and Miss Alice Swartout, of Valparaiso, and Miss Gertrude Lawry, of Seattle, Washington. The only surviving member of the immediate family of General Suman is his venerable sister, who resides at Hagerstown, Maryland.

In politics General Suman was a staunch and effective exponent of the principles and policies of the Republican party and he was a leader in its councils in Porter county for many years. He was, as may naturally be inferred, one of the most influential and valued members of Chaplain Brown Post, No. 106, Grand Army of the Republic, of which he served as commander, and he took a lively and helpful interest in his old comrades in arms. His wife was a zealous member of the Christian church, and the memories of both will ever be revered by those who knew them in life. The General was also affiliated with the Masonic fraternity.⁷

⁷ *History of Porter County, Indiana: A Narrative Account of its Historical Progress, its People and its Principal Interests.* Chicago, Illinois: Lewis Publishing Company, 1912. Pg. 382-391.