

= Basil W. Duke =

Basil Wilson Duke (May 28 , 1838 ? September 16 , 1916) was a Confederate general officer during the American Civil War . His most noted service in the war was as second @-@ in @-@ command for his brother @-@ in @-@ law John Hunt Morgan ; Duke would later write a popular account of Morgan 's most famous raid : 1863 's Morgan 's Raid . He took over Morgan 's command after Morgan was shot by Union soldiers in 1864 . At the end of the war , Duke was among Confederate President Jefferson Davis 's bodyguards after his flight from Richmond , Virginia , through the Carolinas .

Duke 's lasting impact was as a historian and communicator of the Confederate experience . As a historian he helped to found the Filson Club Historical Society and started the preserving of the Shiloh battlefield . He wrote numerous books and magazine articles , most notably in the Southern Bivouac . When he died , he was one of the few high @-@ ranking Confederate officers still alive . Historian James A. Ramage said of Duke , " No Southerner was more dedicated to the Confederacy than General Basil W. Duke " .

= = Early life and career = =

Basil Wilson Duke was born in Scott County , Kentucky , on May 28 , 1838 ; the only child of Nathaniel W. Duke and his wife , the former Mary Pickett Currie . He was 5 feet 10 inches (1 @.@ 78 m) , slightly @-@ built , with a resonant voice . A relative described him as " essentially a man of the 17th century , that century in half armor , torn between chivalry and realism " .

Duke 's parents died during his childhood : Mary , when Basil was eight , and Nathaniel when Basil was 11 ; save for an instance in his Reminiscences , he seldom mentioned them . He attended Georgetown College (1853 ? 1854) and Centre College (1854 ? 1855) , before studying law at Lexington , Kentucky 's Transylvania University . After graduating in 1858 , he went to St. Louis , Missouri in 1858 to practice law , as his older cousin , also named Basil Duke , was practicing law there , and there were already a multitude of lawyers in Lexington .

= = Civil War service = =

When the American Civil War started in 1861 , Duke was still in Missouri , where he helped in the initial forays for Missouri 's secession from the United States . (Missouri would have both Federal and Confederate governments during the War .) On January 7 , 1861 , he and four others created The Minute Men , a pro @-@ secession militia @-@ like organization , in response to many pro @-@ Northern politicians being recently elected in St. Louis . Duke quickly became the leader , despite being only 23 years old . He formed the organization into five companies and sought to acquire the federal arsenal in St. Louis for the secessionist movement . He made a habit of placing secessionist flags at prominent locations , looking to start fights with pro @-@ Union forces . He would eventually be indicted for arson and treason but managed to escape back into Kentucky .

Once back to Lexington , Kentucky , Duke married Henrietta Hunt Morgan , sister of John Hunt Morgan . Their wedding took place on June 19 , 1861 . Duke would return to Missouri to help Confederate forces in Missouri under the command of Brigadier General Thomas Hindman , but would eventually return to Kentucky at Brigadier General William J. Hardee 's insistence . By October 1861 , he had enlisted in his brother @-@ in @-@ law 's (Morgan 's) command and was subsequently elected Second Lieutenant .

Duke was twice wounded during the War . At the Battle of Shiloh , he was swinging his saber at a Union soldier when he was shot in the left shoulder by a Brown Bess musket . The bullet exited his right shoulder , barely missing the spine . After recuperating , he was promoted to lieutenant colonel and a few months later , to colonel . Duke 's second wound came at Elizabethtown , Kentucky 's Rolling Fork River during Morgan 's Christmas Raid of 1862 , when , on December 29 , he was hit by a shell fragment while leading the back guard as the rest of Morgan 's men crossed a stream ; his men initially assumed he was dead .

Duke was the principal trainer for mounted combat for Morgan 's Raiders and participated in Morgan 's audacious Ohio Raid , during which he was captured at the Battle of Buffington Island on July 19 , 1863 , while leading troops in a delaying tactic which allowed other Confederate forces either to escape across the Ohio River with Adam " Stovepipe " Johnson or to advance further into Ohio with Morgan , although shortly thereafter , he too was captured . Duke would remain in captivity until August 3 , 1864 , when he was exchanged . He could probably have escaped with Morgan and Thomas Hines but felt that to do so would hurt their chances , as Morgan was easily replaced in his cell by his brother , but no similar replacement as a temporary deception was there for Duke .

After Morgan was killed on September 4 , 1864 , Duke assumed command of Morgan 's forces and on September 15 , 1864 , was promoted to brigadier general and sent to Virginia . He was with Jefferson Davis shortly after the Confederate President fled Richmond . Duke was in the final Confederate war council at the Burt @-@ Stark Mansion in Abbeville , South Carolina , on May 2 , 1865 . Duke surrendered to Union officials on May 10 , 1865 , in Washington , Georgia .

As an officer , Duke 's way of " gently ordering " soldiers under his command allowed him to have friendly relations with his men . He loved fighting , was steadfast during difficult moments in conflicts , and was described as a " spit @-@ and @-@ polish " officer .

= = Postbellum = =

After the war , Duke moved to Louisville , Kentucky , in March 1868 , where he would live for most of his remaining life . He returned to practicing law later that year , with his primary client being the Louisville and Nashville Railroad . He served as their chief counsel and lobbyist , despite the L & N Railroad being a favorite victim of Morgan 's raiders during the war . He briefly served in the Kentucky General Assembly from 1869 to 1870 , resigning as he felt a conflict of interest being a lobbyist for the L & N. Duke also served as the Fifth Judicial District 's commonwealth attorney from 1875 to 1880 .

Duke became greatly involved in writing the history of the Civil War and related topics . He helped to found Louisville 's Filson Club (now The Filson Historical Society) in 1884 , writing many of their early papers . From 1885 to 1887 he edited the magazine Southern Bivouac . He also wrote three books : History of Morgan 's Cavalry (1867) , History of the Bank of Kentucky , 1792 @-@ 1895 (1895) , and Reminiscences of General Basil W. Duke (a collection of various magazine articles he wrote) (1911) . A prominent writer of the Southern experience , he neither advocated slavery , nor apologized for it ; although thinking it a good thing to have been abolished , he insisted that Northern claims of excessive abuse of slaves was exaggerated .

After 1900 , Duke began to withdraw from his public career . By 1903 he ceased doing work for the L & N. In 1904 he was appointed commissioner of Shiloh National Military Park by President Theodore Roosevelt , with whom he had become friendly after their having been introduced to each other at the Filson Club . Duke was devastated when , on October 20 , 1909 , his wife of fifty years , Henrietta , died of sudden heart failure . Afterward , he lived with his daughter Julia and her family in Louisville 's Cherokee Park . Prior to his death in 1916 , Duke had been one of the last surviving Confederate general officers . In his final years he spent much of his time handling requests made by those with questions about the Confederacy , even during the time that he was recovering from cataract surgery in 1914 . Two years later , during a visit to his daughter , Mary Currie , in Massachusetts , Duke underwent surgery in a New York City hospital , first , on September 1 , to have his right foot amputated and then , on September 11 , to have his right leg amputated at the knee . Five days later , on September 16 , 1916 , he died , one of the last surviving high @-@ ranking Confederate officers . Duke was buried beside his wife in front of the John Hunt Morgan grave in the Hunt family plot in Lexington Cemetery . In addition to his exploits as a Confederate commander , perhaps his lasting fame is as a master chronicler of Confederate military history .