A Sesquicentennial Moment

February 9 – 15, 1862

A Brutal Murder in Wirt County--Arrest of the Murderer.

Camp Peirpoint,
Wirt Court House, Feb. 12, '62.

A Union private once accused of being a secessionist murdered a Wetzel County soldier at Camp Peirpoint in Wirt County on Feb. 11, 1862.

A Feb. 15 account published in the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* said Pvt. William F. Clayton sneaked up on fellow company member Samuel Geho and shot the sleeping soldier with a musket.

"The ball passed clear through the body, and lodged just beneath the head of another man, who was asleep on the floor," according to the published account. "The villain fired with the intention of killing both of the men, as he had a grudge against both of them."

Geho, a husband and father of two from Wetzel County, was among a party of men who had arrested Clayton the previous summer on a charge of being a secessionist.

The published account said, "So deadly was the aim that not the quivering of a muscle could be detected, only a gasping sigh and he was dead."

After the shooting, Clayton ran from camp, but he was captured the following night.

The newspaper reported that Clayton was jailed in Elizabeth after he confessed.

This sesquicentennial moment is brought to you by the West Virginia Sesquicentennial Commission and the West Virginia Division of Culture and History, Archives and History Section.