

## Today in Columbus History:

On October 28, 1865, an ad appeared in *Daily Columbus Enquirer* for "Nelligan and Von Zinken, Cotton Factors and General Commission Merchants" of New Orleans, Louisiana. What makes this ad interesting is that one of the partners was Colonel Leon Von Zinken, the former Commandant of the Post at Columbus, Georgia. He was mentioned in the September 30 "Today in Columbus History" on city fortifications.

Prior to the War, Von Zinken appears to be enumerated as a carpenter at Charity Hospital in to the 1860 census in New Orleans. He joined the 20<sup>th</sup> Louisiana Infantry Regiment in February 1861 as an Orderly Sergeant and rose through the ranks to Colonel by July 1863. He was assigned to the post at Columbus in September 1864.

Several of his communications survived the War, including a message to his former commander, John C. Breckenridge, then Confederate Secretary of War, requesting permission to raise a brigade of African Americans on April 3, 1865. Jefferson Davis apparently endorsed the recommendation. Von Zinken's best known communication in Columbus is his letter to the newspapers on the eve of the last major military engagement of the Civil War, the Battle of Columbus preserved in archives of Columbus State University. Here's the rest of his story.

Von Zinken escaped injury and the clutches of Major General James Harrison Wilson's Cavalry Corps of the Military Division of the Mississippi, returning after Wilson's brief occupation of Columbus. He then rode to Macon to meet with of his commander, Major General Howell Cobb, who had left Columbus before the battle had ended. It was in Macon that Wilson, Cobb and Von Zinken all learned that the War was over.

Von Zinken returned to New Orleans where he and a partner, James Nelligan, began advertising in the New Orleans Times-Picayune on June 23, 1865. They placed their first ad in the Enquirer on August 29, 1865. A few months later, thirty-eight-year-old Von Zinken married twenty-year-old Elizabeth Miller on December 6.

The partnership between Nelligan and Von Zinken dissolved in 1866 with Von Zinken retaining a portion of their auction and commission merchant business. By March of 1866 he had partnered with T. O. Sully in a similar business. Von Zinken and his wife had at least two children, Mary in 1866 and Margaret in 1868. Von Zinken was active in both German and Republican organizations and was recommended for a number of political appointments. By the 1870 census, he was appointed the inspector of weights and measures for Orleans Parish.

In a dramatic flourish near the end of his life, Von Zinken apprehended a fleeing murderer who had stabbed a man on the street in front of his sister-in-law in April 1871. He died of Bright's disease (nephritis) in August of that year and is buried in Lafayette Cemetery No. 1. His wife joined him there in 1894.

Compiled by Daniel A. Bellware, Muscogee Genealogical Society

Clipping from Georgia Historic Newspapers (GALILEO).

*Our weekly snippets of Columbus history are usually based on a few days-worth of searching through the most popular sources for Muscogee County history. Meant to inspire readers to*

explore more about Columbus history, they are not exhaustive dissertations on the topic and may contain mistakes. If you have corrections or additional information, feel free to share them with the group.

JAMES NELLIGAN,                      LEON VON ZINKEN,  
**NELLIGAN & VON ZINKEN,**  
**COTTON FACTORS,**  
—AND—  
**General Commission Merchants,**  
46, CARONDELET ST.,  
NEW ORLEANS, LA.  
August 29, 1865—3m

Ad from the *Daily Columbus Enquirer* October 28, 1865, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>

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**COLUMBUS, April 3, 1865.**

**Hon. J. O. BRECKINRIDGE,**  
*Secretary of War :*

**Many negroes offered daily to volunteer. Could raise a brigade in a short time. Have telegraphed twice on the subject. Please answer.**

**L. VON ZINKEN,**  
*Colonel, Commanding.*

[Indorsement.]

**APRIL 8, 1865.**

**ADJUTANT-GENERAL :**

**Please answer and confer authority as decided on at Richmond to raise companies. Officers to be appointed hereafter.**

**J. D.**

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From the Official Records of the War of the Rebellion Vol. 49 Pt. 2 Pg. 1193, at:  
<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015020496926&view=1up&seq=1231>

*Notice*  
*To the Citizens of Columbus*  
*Head-Quarters 3rd Regiment,*  
COLUMBUS, GA.,  
April 15, 1865.

The public is hereby notified of the rapid approach of the enemy but assured that the City of Columbus will be defended to the last. Judging from experience it is believed that the city will be shelled, notice is therefore given to all non-combatants to move away immediately. All who wish to remain are called to make preparations for their safety. It is again urged upon all able-bodied men of this city to report to their Head-Quarters with whatever arms they have to assist the commanding officer in making a resolute defense of their homes.

*Leon Von Esch*  
*Col. Comd.*

*Printed*  
*3 Times*

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Courtesy of Columbus State University Archives, as it appeared in *The Battle Period. Really.*, by Daniel A. Bellware, *Civil War Times Illustrated*, April 2003. I was given credit in the magazine for this picture, but I didn't provide it. I'm not sure who actually did.

**Notice.**  
**To the Citizens of Columbus.**

HEADQUARTERS FORCES,  
Columbus, Ga., April 15, 1865. }

The public is hereby notified of the rapid approach of the enemy, but assured that the city of Columbus will be defended to the last. Judging from experience it is believed that the city will be shelled, notice is therefore given to all non-combatants to move away immediately. All who wish to remain are counselled to make preparation for their safety. It is again urged upon all able-bodied men of this city to report to these headquarters with whatever arms they have, to assist the commanding officer in making a resolute defense of their homes.

LEON VON ZINKEN,  
Col. Comd'g.

ap 16—3t

Notice from the *Columbus Times* April 16, 1865, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>



Leon Von Zinken, <http://civilwartalk.com>