

Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin's First Flight



WAR STUDENTS OF TWO CONTINENTS

What an excellent example of open-air group portraiture—the work of Gardner's camera! But photography can add nothing to the fame of these men, gathered together in an idle hour to chat about the strategy of the war. Seated in the center is Count Zeppelin, of the Prussian Army, later the winner of honors with his airship and then on a visit to America to observe the Civil War. To his left is Lieutenant Rosencranz, a Swedish officer, on leave of absence, observing the war at close range as General McClellan's personal aide-de-camp. He successively served Burnside, Hooker and Meade in the same capacity. His brave and genial disposition made him a universal favorite. The other men are Americans, conspicuous actors as well as students in the struggle. On the ground, to the left, sits Major Ludlow, who commanded the colored brigade which, and under his direction, in the face of a continual bombardment, dug Dutch Gap Canal on the James. The man in the straw hat is Lieut. Colonel Dickinson, Assistant Adjutant General to Hooker, a position in which he served until the Battle of Gettysburg, where he was wounded. Standing is Captain Ulric Dahlgren, serving at the time on Meade's staff. Even the loss of a leg could not quell his indomitable spirit, and he subsequently sacrificed his life in an effort to release the Federal prisoners at Libby and Belle Isle.

Source: *sonofthesouth.net*

During 1863, Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin travelled to the United States. With an authorization signed by President Abraham Lincoln which enabled him to travel with the northern armies, he became an observer of the American Civil War.



Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin ca.1865

Professor Thaddeus S. C. Lowe was an aeronaut, scientist and inventor, mostly self-educated in the fields of chemistry, meteorology, and aeronautics, and the father of military aerial reconnaissance in the United States.



Professor Thaddeus Lowe, ca. 1865

Professor Lowe met Zeppelin while he was inspecting Lowe's army balloon camp. General McClellan had put all balloon ride-alongs off limits, so Lowe sent von Zeppelin to his German assistant aeronaut John Steiner in Poolesville. It was here that Count Zeppelin experienced his first flight on August 19, 1863.



Prof. Lowe ascending in the Intrepid to observe the Battle of Fair Oaks