



The Railsplitter

The Newsletter of the Department of Illinois,
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War



WINTER 2021

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UPCOMING ENCAMPMENTS:

May Encampment will be at Petersburg, IL on Saturday, May 22 with social activities on Friday evening, May 21. Details TBD.

Dept. Website: <https://www.suvcwil.org/>

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Commander's Corner



Brothers,

Patrick Henry said "These are the times that try men's souls." Eighty years later Lincoln said "We live in troubled times." Certainly we are living in trying times.

Imagine if you will that you are a citizen just a month or so after the

1860 election.

The country is in a state of unrest. The government is not functioning, concerns over slavery are at pitch peak, and threats are being made about disunion.

On December 20, 1860 the state of South Carolina votes to secede from the Union.

President Buchanan feels that he has no Constitutional authority to do anything. The situation becomes tense and disunion seems foreboding. Remember that Lincoln is not to be inaugurated until March 4th, five whole months after the election.

More southern states leave the Union. On February 4, 1861, one month before Lincoln's inaugural, the Confederate States of America organize its own government in Montgomery, Alabama. We are now a country truly divided.

Lincoln surely inherits a mess. What is he to do? His first priority is to reunite the nation. But, how?

South Carolina demands that Ft. Sumter in Charleston harbor be evacuated immediately. Lincoln is warned to not attempt to supply the fort. If an attempt is made, the batteries in Charleston will open

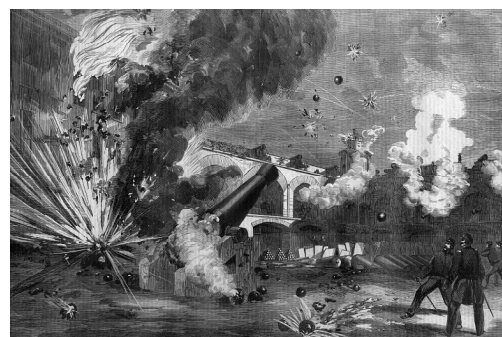
fire on the fort. On April 12 Lincoln called the bluff and sends The "Star of the West" supply ship towards Ft. Sumter. In addition he orders five other war ships to sit five to ten miles out at sea beyond Charleston harbor.

As we know, the Confederates fired on the fort and thus changed the situation from one of secession to one of armed rebellion. This act gave Lincoln tremendous war powers. Following the firing on Fort Sumter, Confederate leader Robert Toombs said "... this puts us in the wrong. It is fatal."

Our current times are certainly not as severe as what Lincoln faced. We have a political divide that is certainly causing much unrest. We've had them before over the years since the Civil War. We always seem to overcome such issues.

Brothers, I ask you to pray for our nation and for our leaders that they will do what is best to unite the country. This was the faith that the Boys in Blue fought for so many years ago. Let us follow in their footsteps and pray for peace and harmony.

In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty,
Tom Oestreicher, DC



(Photo from MarkJonesBooks.com)

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER:



Getting to church during the pandemic has not been easy, especially since the church where my wife and I sang in the choir for 20 years has discontinued that part of the service, and has told folks in my age group not to bother to come - lest we be-

come infected, or infect other people.

Zoom, video church, and the likes do not appeal to my wife or me. So we have come up with our own form of prayer and worship. During the course of each day we take 30 or 40 minutes to read Scripture, read explanations and books of religious devotion.

We pray for those who have asked us to pray for them, for those who are in the "Something For Jesus To Do" box, for those who have no one to pray for them, for those who are praying for us, for

an end to the pandemic, and for the members and families of the Allied Orders.

Since March we have missed 3 days where these prayer requests were not made. Chaplains Jo Ellen and Jerry encourage you to start praying more seriously. "Whatever you ask of the Father in Jesus' name will be granted to you."

In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty,

Chaplain Jerry

IN MEMORIAM:

Missouri woman believed to be last Civil War widow dies December 16, 2020 at age 101.

AP Associated Press Jim Salter/AP
January 07, 2021



O'FALLON, Mo. (AP) — Helen Viola Jackson's 1936 marriage to James Bolin was unusual to say the least: He was 93 and in declining health, and she was a 17-year-old schoolgirl.

Bolin was also a Civil War veteran who fought for the Union in the border state of Missouri. Jackson was almost certainly the last remaining widow of a Civil War soldier when she died Dec. 16 at a nursing home in Marshfield, Missouri. She was 101.

Several Civil War heritage organizations have recognized Jackson's quiet role in history, one that she hid for all but the final three years of her life, said Nicholas Inman, her pastor and longtime friend. Yet in those final years, Inman said, Jackson embraced the recognition that included a spot on the Missouri Walk of Fame and countless cards and letters from well-wishers.

"It was sort of a healing process for Helen: that something she thought would be kind of a scarlet letter would be celebrated in her later years," Inman said.

Jackson grew up one of 10 children in the tiny southwestern Missouri town of Niangua, near Marshfield. Bolin, a widower who had served as a private in the 14th Missouri Cavalry during the Civil War seven decades earlier, lived nearby.

Jackson's father volunteered his teenage daughter to stop by Bolin's home each day to provide care and help with chores. To pay back her kindness, Bolin offered to marry Jackson, which would allow her to receive his soldier's pension after his death, a compelling offer in the context of the Great Depression.

Jackson agreed in large part because "she felt her daily care was prolonging his life," Inman said.

They wed on Sept. 4, 1936, at his home. Throughout their three years of marriage there was no intimacy and she never

lived with him. She never told her parents, her siblings or anyone else about the wedding. She never remarried, spending decades "harboring this secret that had to be eating her alive," Inman said.

After Bolin's death in 1939, she did not seek his pension.

"I had great respect for Mr. Bolin, and I did not want him to be hurt by the scorn of wagging tongues," she said.

Inman and Jackson were longtime friends. She was a charter member of the Methodist church where he serves as pastor. One day in December 2017, she told Inman about her secret marriage to a much older man. She mentioned in passing that he fought in the Civil War.

"I said, 'What? Back up about that. What do you mean he was in the Civil War?'" Inman said.

Inman checked into her story and found that everything she told him was "spot on." Officials at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield sent him copies of Bolin's service information. She identified where he was buried, in Niangua.

She also kept a Bible that he gave her — in which he wrote about their marriage. Those written words were good enough for the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and other heritage organizations to recognize Jackson's place in history.

After a lifetime of avoiding her past, Jackson embraced it in her final years, Inman said. She spoke to schoolchildren and had a Facebook page dedicated to her. She enjoyed getting cards and letters.

She also found new peace. A stoic nature that kept her from shedding tears at her own siblings' funerals seemed to evaporate.

After Bolin's relatives found out about Jackson's role in his life, they went to the nursing home and presented her with a framed photo of him.

"She broke down and cried," Inman recalled. "She kept touching the frame and said, 'This is the only man who ever loved me.'"

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See C in C Brian Pierson's General Order 9, January 2, 2021.

KEYBOARD KLACKING*From DSVC Joe Hutchinson*

2020 has been quite a year. It is one I'm sure that nobody wishes to repeat. What with the pandemic, which we will be dealing with for many more months this year, and all the turmoil in our society, it would be good to look back in history to see what our forefathers (and mothers) had to deal with.

Epidemics are nothing new in human history. Bubonic Plague, was the deadliest pandemic in human history with deaths of up to 75–200 million people peaking from 1347 to 1351. The plague created religious, social, and economic upheavals, with profound effects on the course of European history. It was believed to have originated in Crimea around 1347 and was transmitted by infected fleas on rats. This spread rapidly through shipping and trade. There was great fear as people saw the neighboring communities infected and they tried to prevent it from arriving in their locality.

There were many smaller epidemics of various diseases from smallpox, to measles, to yellow fever, etc. through the years. These outbreaks could decimate a family or a community. Even common childhood diseases that we now have vaccines to prevent infection ran rampant causing high childhood mortality. Some of these could affect adults, and often did. My Great-grandfather contracted measles while on the march to Memphis, TN with the 77th IL INF in 1862. At the same time he got dysentery. He almost died, but recovered to re-enlist a year or so later.

Jump forward to 1918 to the influenza pandemic that occurred at the end of WW I, commonly called the Spanish Flu. According to Wikipedia, this was an unusually deadly influenza pandemic. Lasting from February 1918 to April 1920, it infected 500 million people – about a third of the world's population at the time – in four successive waves. The death toll is estimated to have been somewhere between 20-50 million, although estimates range from a conservative 17 million to a possible high of 100 million, making it one of the deadliest pandemics in human history. It is thought to have been spread by troops returning home.

There were many of the same issues regarding proper behavior, quarantines, and medical care as today. The difference being that today we have the ability through science to work faster toward better treatments and vaccines. There was resistance to the countermeasures to prevent spread then, just as today. Quarantine today is mostly voluntary. My father told the story of how his brother contracted whooping cough or one of the other highly contagious diseases. The family had to quarantine at home. It was not voluntary. A sign was posted on the front door. Neighbors had to bring over food. Fortunately my uncle survived.

The virus we are dealing with today will also pass. How quickly it passes is totally up to us. It is our patriotic duty to do our part to prevent the spread. It is hard on us. It is hard on small businesses as well as large. Do what you can to help.

Moving from the medical pandemic to a social-political pandemic, we have a second disease infecting not only our country, but the world in general. This pandemic is nothing new either. Men have fought each other since before history was recorded. Without going into a political discussion (or argument), most conflicts, whether they turn violent or not, result from not respecting the other person's thoughts, not stepping into their shoes and walking a mile in them and vilifying the "other side".

All society has flaws. Our country was formed by individuals who had flaws. Some of these structural flaws led to the Civil War because people became set in their ways and refused to reconsider their positions. If we allow division to take root and grow, then we waste the potential that our country was founded on.

The Constitution was the culmination of many minds working together to form the basis for a union that could adapt to the situations at hand and grow. It was not a perfect document and the framers knew that. They did not want to happen to this country what had happened in Europe: chaos and war any time a regime changed. They provided a means for an orderly transition of power that has worked for 200+ years.

It would be good at this time to revisit the oath we took when we were initiated into the Sons of Union Veterans. Following are excerpts from the long version:

Chaplain: You are now at the Altar of the Order of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War for obligation, and I assure you that in taking this obligation it will not conflict with any duty you may owe your God, your country, or yourself. If you are willing to proceed, place your left hand upon the Bible, say "I", pronounce your name and repeat after me: I, _____, in the presence of the Great Creator | and the witnessing members | of this Camp, | hereby voluntarily and solemnly | pledge myself | to support and defend | the Government of the United States of America, | to offer my life | if need be | to preserve the Flag | from being lowered in defeat; | to always observe the day | set aside | by the Grand Army of the Republic | as Memorial Day, | sacred to the memory | of the Union Soldiers, Sailors and Marines | of 1861 to 1865 | and to do all in my power | to persuade others | to do the same; | to be faithful | in all the duties of citizenship, | to be obedient | to the law of the land, | to obey the Constitution and Regulations of this Order, | and to promote actively | its objectives and interests | always and everywhere, | So help me God.

Commander: Brother(s), with the obligation you have taken upon yourself comes your full membership in our honored Order. If deep in your heart there lives the love of freedom, and of patriotic devotion to the principles and institutions for which your forefather fought, then no personal danger, no selfish consideration, can quench that love and make you prove ungrateful or disloyal to the Flag of the United States of America.

And what of this Flag you have borne through our ceremonies? This glorious banner has been the beacon of liberty and of material and spiritual progress, not to our land alone, but to the oppressed and unfortunate of every race and ethnic background.

No flag that floats today, on earth, holds out so brave a hope for all mankind, or sheds such radiant light upon the path of human life. Let us then entwine each thread of the glorious fabric of our Country's Flag around our hearts, and catching the spirit that breathes upon us from the battles and victories of American's sons, let us resolve that now and forever, we will stand for that Flag and the principles and institutions it symbolizes. It has waved over our cradles: — let us make the high resolve that, unchanged and unstained as it came from the hands of our fathers, it shall wave over our graves.

Submitted by Joe Hutchinson, DSVC

PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTION:

Chicago in the Civil War

The city of Chicago, played an important role in the Civil War, and conversely, the war also had an immeasurable impact on the city's development.

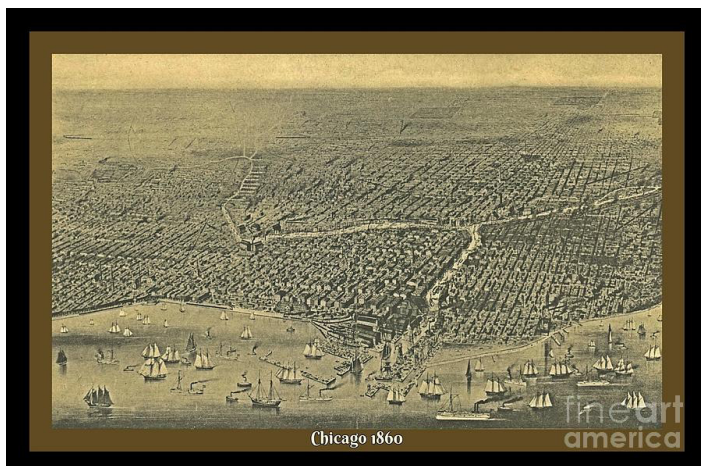
More than 22,000 men from Cook County (two-thirds from Chicago) served in the Union Army during the Civil War. The State of Illinois is known for the large number of soldiers it supplied to the Union army. Enthusiasm for the war ran so high, that the draft was seldom used. Enlistment rallies and large bounties further encouraged men to volunteer. However, Chicago would also pay a high price for its overwhelming support for the war, with more than four thousand of the city's men killed.



Among those from Chicago that served was one of the first Union officers killed during the war. Colonel Elmer Ellsworth of the 11th New York Volunteers, also known as the First Fire Zouaves, had the tragic distinction as one of the first Union officers killed in the war. (Left: photo from *ArmyHistory.org*) Ellsworth had worked as a lawyer under Abraham Lincoln in Chicago. After Lincoln was elected to the presidency, Ellsworth followed

him to Washington. He then went to New York to raise the 11th New York Volunteers, which consisted mostly of firemen. On May 21, 1861, Ellsworth and his men entered Alexandria, Virginia. There, he and four men saw the Marshall House Inn, which was displaying a large Confederate flag. As Ellsworth took down the flag, the innkeeper James Jackson killed Ellsworth instantly with a single shot gun blast. Ellsworth's body laid in state at the White House. He became a martyr for the cause. "Remember Ellsworth!" was a frequently used slogan of the 44th Volunteers. Their regiment even called themselves the "Ellsworth Avengers."

The Civil War helped Chicago to become a center of industry and commerce. In the first two years of the war, Chicago's urban rivals of St. Louis, Missouri, and Cincinnati, Ohio, were located too close to the front lines and were hurt by the blocking of trade on the Mississippi and Ohio rivers as a result.



Thus, Chicago, with its central location and rail and road transportation links, emerged as the center of meatpacking, wheat distribution, lumber, coal, and other industries. It sent a large supply of arms and foodstuffs to the Union Army, becoming the second largest supplier only behind New York City, just another example of Chicago as the second city.

The war also helped Chicago to become a center of banking. Stable banking was first brought to Chicago for the first time during the Civil War. The First National Bank of Chicago was founded in July of 1863. By 1865, the city had more than twelve national banks, which was more than any other city in America. The huge amount of capital shared by these banks made the city's further industrialization in the latter half of the 19th century possible.

Union sentiment ran high throughout Chicago, bolstered by a small but vocal abolitionist population. Chicago abolitionists ranged from former slaves to evangelicals from the Northeast. African American abolitionists were threatened with reprisal for their actions, but still played an active part in the city's Underground Railroad. Before his 1859 raid on Harpers Ferry, John Brown and his followers stopped at the "General Intelligence Office" at 88 Dearborn Street, the home of John Jones, a wealthy free black tailor and abolitionist. Organizations such as the Chicago Anti-Slavery Society and the Chicago Female Anti-Slavery Society worked alongside religious abolitionist groups to oppose slavery. Several Chicago churches even sent a delegation to meet with Lincoln in 1862 to demand an emancipation policy. Many considered Chicago a key for Lincoln's political career. Some blamed the city itself for causing the war. The *Chicago Tribune* was an abolitionist newspaper that rose to prominence prior to the war and became one of the leading Republican papers of the day.

Despite strong Union support, Chicago experienced significant tensions during the war. The *Democratic Chicago Times* newspaper was perhaps the most vocal critic of the war. In June 1863, the paper was forcibly shut down by the Union Army. However, this didn't last long, when Democratic supporters threatened to attack the *Chicago Tribune*. President Lincoln ordered the Union Army to cease suppressing the newspaper. Tensions didn't subside and only grew. During the 1864 election, Republicans accused Democrats of conspiring with Confederacy spies to free southern prisoners from the prison war camp at Camp Douglas to disrupt the election. Additionally, in 1862, a race riot rocked the city after white teamsters prevented African Americans from using the omnibus system, resulting in the City Council voting to segregate public schools.

The well-known Union song "Battle Cry of Freedom" originated in Chicago. George F. Root, composer and lyricist of perhaps the most popular Northern Civil War-era song, was born in Massachusetts but moved to Chicago in 1859, where he and his brother-in-law founded the publishing firm Root and Cady. Composed in a single day in response to Lincoln's second call for troops in July 1862, "Battle Cry of Freedom" was first performed on July 24th at a huge rally in the city. The Northern public's response to the song was overwhelming. Sheet music was so in demand the printing presses couldn't keep up. The popularity of the song led to multiple imitations, including a Confederate version of the lyrics to the same melody as well as a version that was used in Lincoln and Johnson's 1864 campaign.

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Patriotic Instruction continued from page 4

Many formerly enslaved refugees fled to Chicago throughout the war. As a result of its prominent and vocal abolitionist community, Chicago gained the reputation of being a Republican, pro-Lincoln stronghold. During the war, the city saw about twenty African American refugees of slavery arriving per day. From 1860 to 1870, the city's Black population grew by more than 600%. Despite opposition, such as the aforementioned race riots and impoverished conditions, Black Chicagoans had an approved status during and after the war, and a Black professional class emerged with men like John Jones as leaders. A vibrant African American community took shape, especially with churches growing during the war.

Women in Chicago played a large role in improving the sanity conditions of Union soldiers at the front. The United States Sanitary Commission, established to improve the conditions of the sick and wounded Federal soldiers, had its Northwestern branch headquarters in Chicago, and prominent women such as Mary Livermore and Jane Hoge organized huge fairs in 1863 and 1865 to garner support for the Commission. At the elaborately decorated fairs, citizens donated items that were then sold to buy medical supplies and other items for Union troops at the front. The 1863 fair was so successful, raising nearly \$100,000, that it was replicated throughout the North. Livermore and Hoge, through their relief efforts, were able to raise \$1,000,000 of food and supplies to the neediest battlefields and hospitals.

Chicago was the site of one of the largest prisoner-of-war camps in the North. In 1861, Camp Douglas was founded as

a training camp for Union forces and named for Illinois Senator Stephen A. Douglas, on whose property the site was located. In 1862, the site quickly was adapted to become a prison for the many Confederate soldiers captured by Grant at Fort Donelson. For a time, Camp Douglas was the largest Union prison. Throughout the war, more than 26,000 men were incarcerated at Camp Douglas. Not unlike other Civil War prisoner-of-war camps, Camp Douglas had a high mortality rate, where one in



seven prisoners perished. Its poor sanitation, poorly constructed buildings, and severe weather were to blame.

(Photo from NPR_WBEZ)

While it is likely that Chicago would have continued to develop as the major city in the Midwest, the Civil War hastened its growth.

Respectfully submitted in F. C. L.,
Michael Zafran CC Camp 2 and PI Department of IL



December is a very busy time and it is easy to forget our deceased veterans of not just the Civil War, but all veterans who went before us, both war and peacetime.

There is an organization that some may have not heard of that has been remedying the problem of remembering our veterans at Christmas. Wreaths Across America is an organization founded by the Worcester Wreath Company of Harrington Maine back in 1992, whose mission is to memorialize a veteran's grave with a wreath ahead of Christmas.

Worcester had found themselves with a surplus of wreaths at the end of the holiday season and decided to donate them to Arlington National Cemetery. The project grew until thousands of wreaths were being sponsored and placed. The annual

tribute went on quietly for several years, until 2005, when a photo of the stones at Arlington, adorned with wreaths and covered in snow, circulated around the Internet. Requests were being made to expand the program to all parts of the country.

Unable to donate thousands of wreaths to each state, Worcester began sending seven wreaths to cemeteries in every state, one wreath for each branch of the military, and for POW/MIAs.

In 2006, with the help of the Civil Air Patrol and other civic organizations, simultaneous wreath-laying ceremonies were held at over 150 locations around the country. The Patriot Guard Riders volunteered as escort for the wreaths going to Arlington. This began the annual "Veterans Honor Parade" that travels the

east coast in early December.

For the complete story, please go to <https://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/>. It is never too early or late to sponsor a wreath for \$15.

There are locations throughout the State of Illinois and the country. To find a participating location near you, go to <https://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/pages/search?searchType=location>

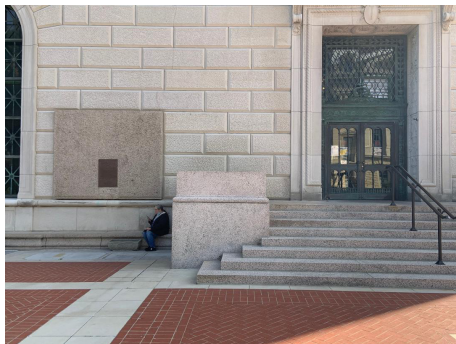
The National Wreaths Across America Day is December 19 and the ceremonies across the country start at the same time, 12 Noon EST, 11 am CST. Please check your local area for details. Over 2 million wreaths are placed nationwide and over 250,000 at Arlington.

See photos of Camp participation elsewhere in this issue.

80 Septembers Ago

By Chuck Murphy, Camp 4

Apologies for amateurishly conflating the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) with the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) in the last edition and, just to clarify, the plaque on the north side of the Michael J. Howlett State Government Office Building is a Sons tablet. What started out as a simple



attempt to check out the history of a lone, seemingly isolated plaque evolved unexpectedly into rediscovering the proceedings and pageantry of the 74th National GAR Encampment.

The fall of 1940 was memorable for several reasons. Laura Ingalls Wilder's seventh book, *The Long Winter*, had just been published in June leading up to the nation celebrating its 58th Labor Day. Talk of war in Europe abounded, Congress was wrestling with draft ages and President Franklin D. Roosevelt was running for an unprecedented third term. The American League pennant race was heating up between Detroit and Cleveland, Empirical Japan was considering signing a Tripartite Pact with Italy and Germany and in Atlantic City, Frances Marie Burke, of Philadelphia, was crowned Miss America. And the tune that had taken the whole country by storm that September was Tommy Dorsey's "I'll Never Smile Again", featuring "the Voice", Frank Sinatra.

Closer to home, the city's population of 75,000 plus was all abuzz about Eleanor Roosevelt's upcoming visit and speech on Wednesday, November 13. On Thursday, September 5th President Roosevelt's running mate, Vice Presidential candidate, Henry Wallace, spoke at a luncheon at the Leland Hotel. On Friday, September 6, Louis Armstrong was live at the Orpheum Theatre and on that Sunday, Adolph Hitler's vaunted Luftwaffe

launched an aerial Blitzkrieg of London that would continue for 57 consecutive nights. That was the same day as the movie, "Boom Town", starring Spencer Tracy, Hedy Lamar, Clark Gable, and Claudette Colbert opened at the Orpheum and events got underway associated with the city's hosting of the GAR's 74th, and the 59th SUVCW National Encampments.

(Ribbon courtesy of Bob Wotz, National Historian, SUVCW)

Only four of the GAR's 83 national encampments were convened in Illinois. Two were held in Chicago in 1875 and 1900, and two were hosted downstate in Springfield in 1932, and again in 1940. The state capitol's citizenry came out big for both encampments but this one would be of particular interest. It was widely known that the GAR was fading as an active organization and those former Boys in Blue couldn't help but give way to father time. Patriots all, they served to save the Union and the country and for that they undeniably deserved to be celebrated. Businesses and residential neighborhoods alike were encouraged by city and state officials to show support for the old boys by flying U. S. flags wherever possible.

For nearly that entire week, Hitler and the devastation in London shared front page headlines with the showcase that was the encampment. In addition to the convention, which is what the folks in the Springfield Convention and Tourism office called it, the newspaper published numerous photos of attendees and no ink was spared covering side stories and human interest articles that came to town with all the hoopla.

Ranging in age from 85 to 103, one-hundred-and-fifty former Boys in Blue were expected to attend and people were not only interested in seeing them,

but hearing about their experiences on many of the Civil War's most renowned battlefields. Too young or too small to fight, clearly a majority of them served as drummer boys. Nationally, 30 of the GAR's finest were passing on a daily basis and the public was aware that the opportunity to witness their historic testimony may not come around again. A case in point, Springfield's Stephenson Post No. 30 once boasted of having over 800 members but, by 1932, at the last GAR national encampment to be held in Springfield, the number was down to 17. By 1940, the post was down to four members and the youngest, 91 year old, Hiram Shumante, a resident of nearby Riverton, IL, served not only as the post commander but he also commanded the state's GAR department.

Hotels were sold out and private citizens with sleeping rooms to spare were encouraged to contact the pre-encampment headquarters to let them know of the available accommodation. 5,000 members of the GAR and Allied Orders, to include the Woman's Relief Corps (WRC), the Ladies of the GAR (LGAR), the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War (DUVCW), the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW), and the Auxiliary to the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (Auxiliary), swarmed the precious community that housed and maintained the tomb of their beloved Abraham Lincoln. Since 1910, the Allied Orders held their annual encampments in conjunction with the GAR and it became big business for small and mid-sized cities to host such large, enthusiastic, and well attended patriotic forums.

The lobby was forever full as the old boys sat around nursing their stogies and talking amongst themselves while groups of women scurried about as both the GAR and the WRC headquartered at the Hotel Abraham Lincoln (the Abe), at 5th and Capitol. The Sons and the Auxiliary headquarters were at the St. Nicholas (Nick) and the LGAR and the Daughters were at the Leland. The GAR conducted its meetings at the Abe and the WRC met at the Elks Club.

The LGAR met at the Leland and the Daughters took care of business at the Knights of Columbus Hall. The Sons met at the Orpheum and the Auxiliary convened its sessions at the St. Nick.

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80 Septembers Ago cont. from page 6

Daily room rates for the Sons at the St. Nicholas ranged from \$1.50 for a single occupancy with no bath, to \$8.00 for double occupancy and a bath.

The three plenary sessions were held in the State Armory - Sunday night's Memorial Service, Monday evening's Semi-official Meeting, and Wednesday night's Camp Fire with 4,000 attending, including 94 GAR members. But then each order also had its own agenda with meetings, socials, receptions, dinners, luncheons, programs, breakfasts, awards, memorial dedications and etc.

In a bold move, the WRC announced that it would designate the city of Springfield as its national headquarters and plans were underway to find a suitable location. In 1941 the WRC bought a large two story house on the northwest corner of 7th and Cook streets for \$9,193.93.



(Photo courtesy of Chuck Hill, curator of the GAR Memorial Museum)

In due course, it was torn down and replaced in 1963 with a smaller but more modern and efficient building. To this day, the GAR memorial museum and the WRC national headquarters reside at 629 S. 7th Street.

The main parade stepped off from the corner of 4th and Capitol at 10:00 on Wednesday, September 11. By order of the GAR Commander-in-Chief, Alexander T. Anderson, there would be no floats. Public and Catholic schools released the children so they could attend and witness a once in a lifetime event. There was hardly space for the parade marchers as so many people jammed together on either side of the parade route

to witness the old boys step it off. Paraders from 45 departments marched or rode in cars with the Illinois contingent in the van leading the way. They marched east to 5th, north to Washington, east to 6th, and south on 6th past the reviewing stand on the east side of what was Courthouse square - the Old State Capitol - back down to Capitol Street. The reviewing stand was huge, large enough to accommodate 2,500 people.

Of the GAR's total nationwide membership of 1,039, one hundred and six actually attended the encampment and 80 of them participated in the parade. The 19 that feebly marched the six blocks to the reviewing stand were celebrated and sought out for autographs. Ready for any development, arranged in each block along the parade route were two benches, a Red Cross nurse, a fireman, and a policeman should anyone need assistance. Everything downtown came to a standstill. All eyes were on the ghostly remnants of Mr. Lincoln's army. The parade lasted an hour-and-a-half and not one of the 19 dropped out.

Some of the old boys danced an occasional jig to entertain the excited throng of roaring onlookers. As they marched by the crowd gave them a huge applause and people from every office building gathered in the windows to take in the sight. Following those old timers were cars transporting the old boys who weren't physical able to walk the route, and then came a colorful line of military and patriotic organizations and bands, including the U. S. Marine Band, the Springfield Municipal Band, the Springfield Colored Municipal Band, numerous fife and drum corps, and a bugle corps. It was a glorious occasion and a wondrous sight to behold. It was a different day back then and given the times, it is not totally surprising that women, even those of the allied orders, were not allowed to participate in the parade. The only exception was for those who were musicians in the fife and drum corps.

The GAR and all the Allied Orders held elections on Thursday and that evening, 10,000 people squeezed into the standing room only crowd at the State Armory for the U. S. Marine Band's concert. On Friday, the day in which the staggering bombing campaigns of London and Berlin finally knocked the encampment off the front pages of even the local daily, the GAR and the others made

their way to historic New Salem, a pilgrimage that is almost required when in the land of Lincoln no matter how tired at the end of an exhausting week.

Finances are always tricky and members and their leaders who were institutionally, emotionally and politically involved in planning the encampment projected more spending than less inspired bookkeepers thought necessary. That is a familiar drumbeat even to this day. The Illinois governor wrote a letter indicating that the state was proud to support the encampment and the legislature appropriated \$12,000 for the weeklong event. That amount was \$3,000 less than what was appropriated back in 1932 but, in today's market place, it still equaled the tidy sum of just over \$223,000. The amount that was actually expended was \$11,402.52. (For a better perspective, Google equates that \$1.00 in 1940 is roughly equivalent to about \$18.60 in today's economy.)

The chairman of the Citizens Committee who handled the affairs of the encampment wrote that such an amount could and should be cut in half in the future. It wasn't so much that the fees were exaggerated as it was thought that the expenditures were unnecessary. Headquarters rooms and meals for the GAR Commander in Chief and his staff, and for presidents and secretaries of the Allied Orders for the week - numbering 60 in all - carried a price tag of nearly \$2,000. The parade's reviewing stand cost \$2,225.00 to erect and make seating available, but it was never over half full. Those two expenditures had the highest price tags but rentals for halls and meeting sites ran \$1,375.86, and 3,400 badges cost another \$1,056.62. Other expenses included \$1,199.52 for a variety of items needed by the allied orders, including complimentary meals at some of their business meetings, and another \$615.38 was spent on printing and postage. And \$350 was spent on housing and feeding the 127 Civil War musicians who traversed from across the country to add their selections to the week's musicality. A purely objective, steely-eyed accountant might easily conclude that the respective organizations and individuals should pay for many such items themselves, and spare the taxpayers.

For 83 years, annual GAR encampments spanned from city to city.

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80 Septembers Ago cont. from page 7

The Allied Orders left a trail of approximately 20,000 historical tablets inscribed with either General Orders No. 11, or, the Gettysburg Address. While newspapers, documents, programs, records, annual reports, notes and correspondence of the encampment linger in the Presidential library, the DUVCW national headquarters and museum at 503 S. Walnut, and the WRC's national headquarters and GAR memorial museum on 7th Street, some of the larger and heavier souvenirs, like tablets or plaques are not, unfortunately, as readily accessible.

The oldest and most renown military and ceremonial band in America, the U. S. Marine Band, "The Presidents Own", easily the most prestigious participant in the encampment, was booked for 13 engagements during the week. They were put up at the 4-H barracks at the state fairgrounds. Other than the parade and the band's concert, included on their list of performances were six dedications. Each of the allied orders dedicated at least one memorial during the course of the week.

With musical accompaniment of the Marine Band, the WRC dedicated four trees on the Courthouse (Old State Capitol) grounds in honor of four previous GAR C'sinC, and two plaques at the State Armory, one memorializing John E. Andrew, of Quincy, IL, the GAR CinC who had, sadly, just recently passed away on June 30, 1940. Interestingly, according to the Journals of the 57th and 58th National Conventions of the National Woman's Relief Corps, in 1939 and 1940 the organization had 10 tablets made at the Wandkey Pattern and Foundry Company in Anderson, Indiana. Eight were categorized as "bronze tablets", two were classified as "Lincoln tablets", and their average cost was \$46.91. Where the two tablets are that were dedicated at the State Armory is unknown at this writing and with COVID-19 raging out of control and staff working from home, now may not be the time to go searching through basements and storage areas, should they even still exist.

Away from the spotlight of the band, the WRC also dedicated two Gettysburg Address plaques, one at the old Armory up in the 400 block of N. 5th Street, and the other at Lamphier High School. Where these tablets are now rest-

ing is uncertain. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is in possession of two Gettysburg Address plaques, however, neither one includes a date or the name of a dedicating organization. The Marine Band also offered up military airs as the LGAR dedicated a bronze tablet of Logan's General Orders No. 11 at New Salem, and it struck up again at the State Capitol for the Auxiliary's dedication of a bench, that is also sometimes referred to as a Chair. Thus far, the location of these items also remains a mystery.

Though we wish there were more, two of the memorials that were dedicated that week remain at their dedicated sites on the grounds of the Illinois State Capitol, and for that we're grateful. The Marine Band played several songs before a crowd of around 500 during the Daughters dedication of a bronze sundial, also known as a meridian, just off the north door of the State Capitol building.



(Photo courtesy of Bob Wotz, National Historian, SUVCW. National Patriotic Instructor of the DUVCW, Faye Epley, addresses GAR PC's in C with CinC Anderson sitting during the dedication of the bronze Meridian at 3:30pm on Sunday, September 8, 1940 near the north door at the Illinois State Capitol Building).



Over the years the Daughters dedicated any number of sundials across the country as they symbolize, more than anything else, the founding of the GAR.

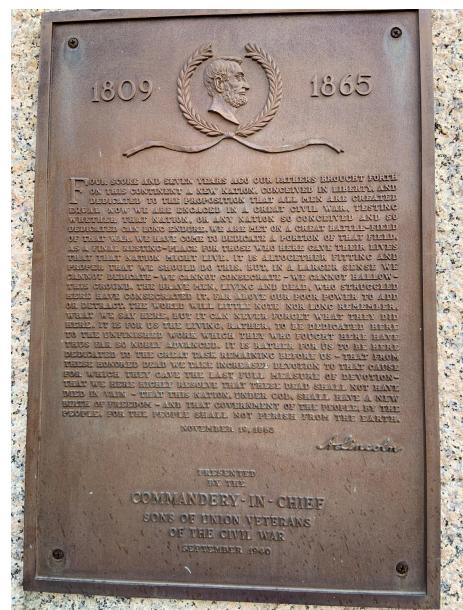
Notes of the 1940 encampment in the Daughters National Headquarters

and Museum indicate that during the dedicatory ceremony at 3:30 on that Sunday, September 8, National Patriotic Instructor, Faye Epley, "reminded everyone that it was here in Springfield IL that the idea conceived on the road to Meridian came to fruition in March, 1866. The Grand Army of the Republic and a ritual written by Major B. F. Stevenson and Captain W. J. Rutledge, with the first post organized in Decatur, IL on April 6, 1866. A sundial is also known as a meridian."

A quick check of the record indicates that it was in Mississippi during General Sherman's Meridian campaign in February 1864 that Dr. Benjamin Franklin Stephenson and Chaplain Reverend William J. Rutledge tented together and discussed forming an organization for Union soldiers after the war. "Forever bonded by fellowship and suffering", the organization would encourage them to continue their association and afford the opportunity "to preserve friendships and their common memories, trials, and dangers".

As legislators, policy makers, administrative assistants, office workers, business executives, tour guides, tourists, custodians, groundskeepers, and security staff promenade to and fro about the State House and its lovely campus, in pristine condition the dutiful Meridian stands its post to this day as a reminder, "lest we forget" the GAR.

The plaque attached to the Howlett Office Building was dedicated by the Sons at 3:00pm on Monday, September 9.



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80 Septembers Ago cont. from page 8

The Marine Band was on hand for patriotic interludes during the formal proceedings.

Looking at it today, it is a lot to take in. People may very well wonder why, in 1940, did the commandery of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War dedicate a Gettysburg Address tablet in memorial to Abraham Lincoln at the Michael J. Howlett Building. What today's tourists may not realize and, admittedly, what slipped my mind is that in 1940, the Howlett Building was called the Centennial Memorial Building and when it was built in 1918-1923, the vestibule, positioned between the two main north side entrances, was designed to be Memorial Hall.

The hall was to house the state's inventory of Civil War flags and other implements of war. These artifacts had been maintained in an area known as Memorial Hall in the State Capitol building since 1878, which is where they were moved to from their original home in the old armory after the war. After the finishing touches were made on the brand new Centennial Building, the move finally occurred in 1923 and into 1924.

On page 144 of the 1919-1920 Illinois Bluebook is a photo of John B. Inman. He was a Civil War drummer boy and he Captained General Nelson A. Miles' Signal Corps in Puerto Rico during the Spanish American War. In 1899-1900 he was the Illinois Department Commander of the GAR and in 1925-1926, he served as the National Commander in Chief. He was not without influence and for 25 years he was the custodian of Memorial Hall. For sure, he was actively involved in planning the move of Memorial Hall from the State Capitol to the Centennial Building and during a planning meeting on February 21, 1918 he advised that "...it should be located on the first floor in consideration of the advanced age of old soldiers who are fre-

quent visitors".

General John M. Palmer's daughter, Mrs. Jessie Palmer Weber, had a most distinguished career and she served as Secretary of the Illinois Centennial Commission. On page 27 of "The Illinois Centennial Celebration - A hundred Years of Progress", she wrote in reference to the Centennial Building's Memorial Hall that "The soldiers of the Civil War who gave so much to this generation will be honored guests of the State".

Changes have occurred over time and Memorial Hall came to be known as the Hall of Flags for a while and then, though the old flag encasements remain, the room was completely emptied when the last of the flags were relocated for preservation purposes to the Illinois State Military Museum in 2004. No longer is it a smoke filled room but, if one looks up, just as our namesakes used to do, there etched in the frieze are the last names of 26 celebrated Illinoisans who distinguished themselves as gallant leaders of men on the war's bloodiest battlefields. There's Wallace, Wilson, Merritt, Grierson, Schofield, Prentiss, McClelland, Grant, Pope, Carlin, Hurlbut, and Logan, to name just a few. There were only two and the names of those who became Illinois governors, Oglesby and Palmer, and are prominently engraved above the hall's two entrances.

In 1923 and easily extending until 1940, no plaque on the Centennial Building was really necessary as everyone knew why the building was built and what was in it. Our predecessors used great foresight, however, as with the passing generations the room now sits empty and due to the name change of the Centennial giving way to the Howlett Building in 1992 - that may no longer be the case.

From the perspective of the Sons of Union Veterans, the memorial was not fixed in isolation as was erroneously mused in the October edition of *The Rail-*

splitter. It was placed where it is 80 Septembers ago, during the hallmark event that was the GAR's 74th and the Sons 59th National Encampments, to spot and memorialize the sacred place that was Memorial Hall and for those who continue to march in Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty, its station is particularly relevant, indeed, and softly but doggedly, the tablet forever beckons patriotism.

In no particular order, appreciation is extended to those who contributed large and small to this effort, including:

Chuck Hill,
Curator, Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Museum;

Mary Sivak,
Administrative Assistant, DUVCW National Headquarters & Museum;

David Joens,
Director, Illinois State Archives;

Meghan Harmon,
ALPLM Reference Librarian;

Teri Barnett,
ALPLM Newspaper Librarian;

Dr. Christopher Schnell,
ALPLM Manuscripts Manager;

Michelle Miller, A
LPLM Manuscript Librarian;

Jim Pahl,
SUVCW PCinC and editor of the "Banner";

Bob Wotz,
National Historian, SUVCW;

Dr. Carole Morton,
Chair, Board of Trustees, Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War;

Curtis Mann,
City Historian and Manager, Sangamon Valley Collection; and

Stephanie Martin,
Sangamon Valley Collection Librarian and President, Sangamon County Historical Society.

IN MEMORIAM:

CHICAGO—Roger Knigge was born March 12 1944 in Elgin, Illinois. He died January 7, 2021 after a battle with cancer. He joined the Camp #2 in February 2017. He did great work in our cemetery projects doing research, cleaning and setting of new and raised markers. He was a complete brother in all aspects. He is survived by his wife Linda and they resided in Orland Park, IL.

JVC Roger is pictured receiving the brother of the year award that was presented in January 2020 by PCC Tedd Ill.

Rest in Peace



IN MEMORIAM:



SPRINGFIELD – Jon Nicholas Austin, age 61, of Jacksonville, IL died on Tuesday, November 24, 2020 at 8:18 P.M. at Memorial Medical Center of Springfield, IL from a heart ailment. Jon was born to Harold H. and Marjorie E. (Johnson) Austin on August 12, 1959. His parents preceded him in death, as well as his brother, Steven Lee Austin.

He graduated from Bradley University in Peoria with a B.A. cum laude in History, and a Master's Degree in Museum Science from New York University.

He spent almost his entire working career in the history field with tasks ranging from college internships at historic sites, archivist for libraries and historical societies up to director of local and state historical societies and other civic organizations.

He also set up a museum dedicated to funeral customs for the Illinois Funeral Directors Association that was at the entrance to Oak Ridge Cemetery in Springfield. The museum unfortunately closed in late 2009.

He also was manager of Springdale Cemetery in Peoria for almost four years.

The list of organizations he worked for or assisted by volunteering over the years is long:

Project Specialist for CCPRS a subcontractor for FEMA, Natural and Cultural Resources Sector

Executive Director of the Springfield Area Arts Council, Springfield

Field Representative, US Census Bureau, Peoria IL Office

General Manager, Springdale Cemetery & Mausoleum, Peoria, IL

Executive Director at Jacksonville, IL Symphony Society

Executive Director, Museum of Funeral Customs, Springfield, IL

Executive Director, Illinois State Historical Society

Gen. George A. Custer Camp #1

Our latest project is to replace fifteen broken and weathered markers of two unknown officers and thirteen enlisted men who were stationed at Camp Douglas in Chicago.



New markers to be installed this spring. Ceremony schedule looked for April.



Front row of stones are dilapidated. Inscriptions illegible.

Submitted by Brother Nick Kaup, Camp Commander.

Gen. Philip Sheridan Camp #2

Remembrance Day 2020

Brothers Bobby and Grant Welch of Philip H Sheridan Camp 2 met in Gettysburg to catch up with each other and pay their respects to the Boys in Blue. Grant, the camps newest member who resides in

Executive Director, Rome NY Historical Society
Archivist, Town & Village of Canton, NY
Director and County Historian.

St. Lawrence County NY Historical Association
Intern, Monticello, Charlottesville, VA

Assistant to the Director and Reference Librarian,

Peoria Public Library, Peoria, IL

Collections Management Clerk,

New York University Bobst Library, NY

Intern, Statue of Liberty - Ellis Island, New York, NY

Special Collections Assistant,

Bradley University Cullom-Davis Library, Peoria, IL

Cataloger & Registrar, Peoria Historical Society, Peoria, IL



He was a kind and intelligent man who loved his family and had a passion for history and genealogy. Jon was involved the General Society of Mayflower Descendants, portrayed Dr. Benjamin Franklin Lyford, a Civil War embalmer in Civil War Reenactments and Living History presentations and a member of the 10th IL CAV. He was a member of Colonel Bryner Camp 67, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War holding the offices of Historian and Camp Council and was past JVC and SVC. He was also a member of the Sons of the American Revolution. He volunteered for many other organizations.

Sanford, NC drove up for the weekend.



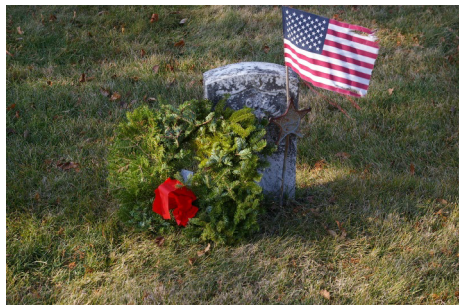
This was the first Remembrance Day for the brothers, sadly the main events were cancelled but that did not deter them from taking in the sights and representing Camp 2 at the "unofficial" wreath laying ceremony at the Woolson Monument that was sponsored by the Department of PA.

Col. John Bryner Camp #67

Camp Commander Ron Kirchgessner represented the Camp and the Scottish Rite Masons in the Peoria Veterans Day parade. The parade was shortened due to COVID restrictions.



PCC Joe Hutchinson laid wreaths at the annual Wreaths Across America ceremony held locally at 11 am on December 19 at Glendale Cemetery in Washington, IL. It was well attended by the public and socially distanced.



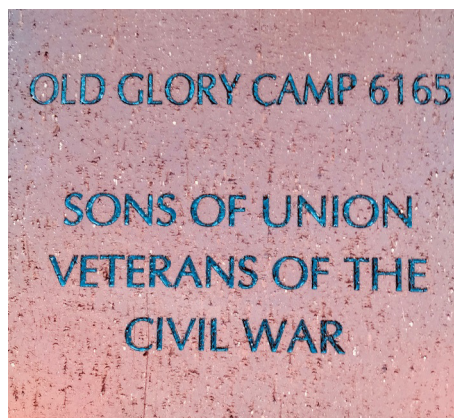
Old Glory Camp #6165

Old Glory Camp 6165, Department of Illinois conducted its Veteran's Day Ceremony honoring all U.S. soldiers, sailors and Marines who served and sacrificed for our country on Saturday, November 7th. The program included a presentation by

Camp Commander Jeff Kaup to Brothers Dave Totsch and CT Dennis Bradley for their efforts researching and marking all veterans graves at historic Union Ridge Cemetery in Chicago.



Members receiving their awards. (Left to right) CC Jeff Kaup, Brothers Dave Totsch, Dennis Bradley, and Color Bearer David Marshall.



The cemetery has recently installed a new flag pole and began a commemorative brick plaza. Our brick contribution to the new plaza.

(Right) Old Glory Camp 6165 assisted in

the placement of wreaths on Saturday, December 19th at Union Ridge Cemetery, Chicago. Local organizations included Wreaths Across America, veteran's groups, Knights of Columbus, and scout units.



Camp member and Cemetery Manager David Totsch addresses the community volunteers.



Brothers David Marshall and Dennis Bradley place wreaths at the Benjamin Butler monument and grave site.

Respectfully submitted,
Nick Kaup, PDC



The Department of Illinois Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War Invites you to the 138th Annual Encampment



Plans dependent on COVID restrictions and are subject to change.

Saturday May 22, 2021 at 1 pm. at the Riverbank Lodge in Petersburg, IL.
Lunch will not be available in the meeting room this year, but is available nearby
For those staying over the night before, a tentative dinner with speaker is being planned for Friday, May 21. More details later when available.

A block of rooms will be set aside at a reduced rate of \$89.00 at the lodge.
Book reservations by phone (217) 632-0202. Mention "Sons of Union Veterans".
To check out their beautiful facility, go online to riverbanklodge.com.
More details or plan changes will be sent out as they are available.

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and Auxiliary

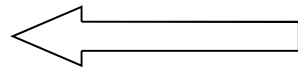
Invites You to the Memorial Service of
Doctor Benjamin F. Stephenson,
Founder, Grand Army of the Republic
Rose Hill Cemetery, Petersburg, IL.
Saturday April 17, 2021 at 3:30 pm.
The cemetery is located off Ill. Rt. 123.

Don't forget the ceremony at
Lincoln's Tomb at 10 am!

Plans dependent on COVID restrictions
and may be changed or cancelled.
Watch your E-mails for details.

Monuments

An Argument for Keeping Them



Who was this guy?



This monument is on the grounds of the Statehouse in Columbia, SC. I visited the site in February, 2018, and discovered this statue among the many monuments on these beautiful historic grounds. The statue is that of Benjamin Tillman.

I had never heard of Tillman. I took the photo anyway. Later, in doing follow-up research I discovered that he was a significant person in the history of South Carolina. For one thing, he founded Clemson University. He served as Governor from 1890-1894 and as U. S. Senator from 1895 until 1918. Evidently an effective politician, the first federal campaign finance law, the Tillman Act, is still referenced today. He was considered a possible nominee for president by the Democrat Party in 1896.

Tillman was a racist. During the last years of Reconstruction he was a leader of the “Red Shirts”, a well-organized white supremacist vigilante group that used intimidation to restore Democrats to power. Tillman was involved and indicted in the Hamburg massacre near Aiken, SC, in July, 1876. Casualties in the battle included six Blacks, one White.

The point I am making here is this: If that statue had not been there, I would not have learned some major details of the Southern history of post-War years. The intent here is not to glorify Tillman or to endorse his racial policies, but rather to provide an example of how one could gain an enhanced perspective of the nature of life in South Carolina during those awful years.

Interestingly, the State of Illinois in its infinite wisdom recently has removed a similar statue from the Illinois Statehouse grounds, that of U.S. Sen.. Stephen A. Douglas. As you may recall, Douglas was indeed an influential Senator, an opponent of Abraham Lincoln, and a person who appears in many history books. Sadly, a visitor to Springfield, IL, will no longer have the opportunity to ask, “*Who was this guy?*”

Submitted by Darrell Clevidence, Patriotic Instructor, Bryner Camp 67, SUVCW

The opinions herein are strictly my own and are not necessarily those of SUVCW.

RAILSPITTER SUBMISSION DEADLINES:

Fall: October 15 * Winter: January 15 * Spring: April 15 * Summer: July 15

From the Editor: I encourage you to submit ANYTIME, but for time sensitive items like upcoming events, be sure to get them in early. New issues should come out about two weeks after the deadline. Send to “bryner_camp67@yahoo.com”.

Remember, this is YOUR newsletter.