



The Railsplitter

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



FALL 2020

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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.suvwil.org/>

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Chaplain's Corner
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And MORE!

Commander's Corner



Brothers,

Just some food for thought. As a retired history teacher of 33 years, 25 at the high school level and 8 at the university, I found it quite disturbing to have read the following in an article about today's teachers. In a survey concerning history teaching in our public institutions these are some of the questions and

responses:

1. Who did we (United States) gain our independence from? Answers varied from in order of answers: "The South" "China", "Europe", "The North", "England".
2. How much time did your teacher spend on the Revolutionary War? Answers again in order of responses: "2 days", "None", "One class period".
3. Did you study about the War of 1812? Answers again in order of response: "Just that it happened", "Never heard of it", "Someone burned the White House".
4. What can you tell me about the Civil War? Answers again in order of responses: "North won", "Ended slavery", "Lee, Grant, North, South", "Nothing".
5. How much time did your teacher spend on the Civil War? Answers in order of responses: "2 days", "3 days", "We watched a movie", "Too long".

Not to bore you Brothers, but other questions involved the Spanish American War, WWI, WWII, Vietnam, Twin Towers, Desert Storm, JFK Assassination, and Nixon's resignation. The responses weren't much different than the above. For me, and especially Brother Dennis Maher who is still

teaching, these kinds of answers are very disturbing. In a time like today where our history is being erased before our eyes, we must wonder, "What is being taught to our young people?" I certainly know that there are many, many fine history teachers out there. I have also seen where history is being taught by coaches and others who in many cases take it less seriously. As Shelby Foote said many times, "If we don't know where we've been, it's hard to know where we're going." I believe in our present times we can relate.

We need to learn our history and learn from it. Not just our history, but world history. Mistakes have been made that should not be repeated.

It becomes more difficult for Orders such as ours to promote patriotic instruction, love of country and honor those that preserved this nation when it appears that we are on the verge of destroying and attempting to rewrite our past. Let us do our very best to strive and educate others; to be faithful to our Founding Fathers' intentions and to truly honor our ancestors and others who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

It is very encouraging to me to hear of the number of new members that Camps are recruiting. We have all heard that ALL fraternal organizations are facing problems of growth.

Our Department is experiencing a surge, small in some eyes, but a surge of new members and new camps. I thank you all who have contributed to these efforts.

Finally, I would like to thank you Brothers for your support and encouragement. It was great to see so many Brothers participate in our Mid-Term Encampment. Maybe these Zoom meetings aren't so bad after all. I look forward to actually seeing you in a face-to-face meeting come next May. Let's hope this virus will subside by then.

In the meantime I ask that God bless each of you and your families.

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,
Department Commander Tom Oestreicher

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER:

The pandemic which our country is going through has taught me many lessons, and most of them were the result of my having to go to Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood,

Illinois.

No matter how sick I felt, no matter how the doctors and interns treated me, I saw with my own eyes patients who were in far worse shape than me. Diabetic

amputees, missing eyes, oxygen tanks, wheelchairs - and that does not include the whole floor that was dedicated to Covid - 19 people on ventilators.

Actually, the consensus of the teachers and students was that there was nothing wrong with me - except that I needed more exercise. Does that sound familiar?

THE CHOSEN

Maybe you have seen this series on YouTube. At first I did not care for it, because it set out to portray the New Testament in contemporary language, but

using the attire and locations of some 2000 years ago. There have been movies and television shows about the Life of Christ, but never anything with as much detail and precision as this series. My wife, Chaplain Jo Ellen and I are in a Bible study discussion group, and we have been watching this together. It gives an interesting view of Jesus and His followers. If you can't find it on YouTube, text me and I will send you the link.

In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty,

Chaplain Jerry

CAMP ORGANIZER REPORT (reprinted):

We have completed the second new camp in three years with the April charter of U.S. Grant Camp 1863, located in the near western Chicago suburbs. This latest camp is composed of new members, dual and transferred brothers and is made up of a core of seasoned brothers. We have plans this fall to work on the formation of an eleventh camp in the far south suburbs of greater Chicago.

Our long term growth goals may include downstate locations pending further research. We will be analyzing the demographics to determine how that may come about. So much depends on securing new members who will commit to playing active roles in the Order. So, the two crucial elements in the long range goal here in Illinois are active and younger members.

We recently reviewed membership profiles in selected northeastern Illinois camps. Here are some of our findings. We call it the 60/60 - that is: over 60% of the members are over the age of 60. Some might say well over that age.

We reviewed our latest group of new members and found all but two were well past retirement age. The positive side of the retired Brothers is more free time to become active in the Order. However, the ultimate down side is the future of our Order here in Illinois beyond the five, eight or ten year marks. We are a "Thin Blue Line" that continues to get grayer.

When we began the Department of Illinois reorganization in 1989 we had three life members with no chartered camps. Prior to 1986 the SUVCW in Illinois did not even chair the Lincoln Death Day program. That was thirty-five years ago. The decline and loss of our department charter took approximately

five years. We are not suggesting the department is at that stage currently, but we are again in a membership state of decline compounded by an aging roster. Much of the membership decline can be attributed to the drop in Civil War history awareness after the centennial period of the 1960's and the Ken Burns documentaries from the 1990s, coupled with a new membership challenge.

Today our general populations are not "joiners". It has become more difficult to find those that are. New members must become familiar with our core principles. Members must be dedicated to our four key areas. They are: Patriotism & Good Citizenship, Preservation, Education (History), and Honor (Memorial Day, ROTC, Military, & Eagle Scout Programs). The future of our SUVCW/IL is dependent upon younger, energetic members who must continue the work of the Order. Without them we may repeat the events that led up to the decline of our department in 1985.

Though we have added two new camps, our total department membership shows a net loss of four brothers. It illustrates the need to find innovative ways to secure new members. We have been successful in some areas and failed in others. We must resolve to find ways to add to our camp rosters. We recommend that our incoming department commander form a membership committee composed of selected Brothers from each of the ten camps and chaired by either the DC or a VC. If needed, I would recommend budgeting appropriate funds to add for marketing and advertising in securing new members.

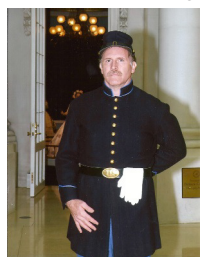
In Fraternity, Charity, & Loyalty,

Nick Kaup, PDC, Chairman,

SUVCW/IL Camp Organizer. May 18, 2020

KEYBOARD KLACKING

From DSVC Joe Hutchinson



In this contentious election season, it is our duty as Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War to not only remember the sacrifices of those who fought to maintain a Union they held so dear, but to ED-

UCATE our fellow citizens in a nonparti-

san way. Those who forget history.....

The words of President Lincoln's second inaugural ring as true today as they did 156 years ago:

"Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with or even before the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other."

"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

—Abraham Lincoln

Respectfully submitted,
Joe Hutchinson, DSVC

Younger Brothers: How can the Sons enroll and retain new members

Brothers,

In reference to the article by Br. Kaup from the previous page regarding the state of enrollment of younger members in the SUVCW, I thought it would be good to interview some of our younger Brothers to see what their thoughts were about membership, what attracted them to join and how we as an organization can move forward. I hope to have other camps interview some of their young members and make this a continuing column.

I asked of our younger members of Camp 67 the following questions: How did you find out about the Sons? What are your interests relating to the Sons? What attracted you to join? What do you hope to get out of membership? How can the Sons attract more young Brothers?

Brother Zach Watkins joined our camp right after high school and has been a member for a number of years now. Brother James Nelson is a new member, joining this summer. He is a recent college graduate working on going to law school.

Many organizations, from fraternal to military veterans to churches, have the same problems adding to their memberships and retaining the members they have. This has been going on for decades. Everyone is so busy with their everyday lives and there are many more distractions today. Without new members, our organization will have the same fate as the GAR. Below are two responses from brothers from Camp 67.

Submitted by Joe Hutchinson, PCC, DSVC

I first discovered the Sons while at another historical event. My family and I attended the Pettengill-Morrison House Christmas Candlelight Tour in the early 2000s where the local Sons chapter participated, and I picked up an informational sheet on my way out. I joined several years later once I became an adult.

My interests with the Sons stem from my interest in cementing and spreading a respect for history. The Sons are the modern descendant of the Grand Army of the Republic whose members' service and sacrifices crystalized a belief in the American Republic and the ideals that define it. What better organization to join when I wish to promote those same sentiments.

The intersection of my love for history and my desire to recognize my ancestors' contributions attracted me to join. I saw joining the Sons as an act of personal recognition for my four known Union veteran ancestors. On a broader level, as noted above, I see the Sons as an organization upholding a commitment to the Republic through a solemn remembrance of the costs incurred to enjoy that Republic.

I've already been a member for eleven years, so I can say that I've already gotten quite a bit. I served for several years as a Camp Patriotic Instructor where I tried to focus on broader - often international - perspectives of the American Civil War. In doing so my research led me to gain a greater appreciation for the social and geopolitical magnitude of that struggle. I hope membership in the Sons continues to provide a base for me to connect with our national epoch, both on a personal and societal level, and project that understanding into the future.

Younger generations are increasingly drifting away from fraternal organizations. So that's generally a struggle across the board. It does not help that students are often taught history in a disjointed, impersonal manner. I have learned that people love history when they can personally connect and grasp its totality. If the Sons could help facilitate that discovery, for example through helping students make connections with their veteran ancestors, it would generate interest and open the door to a greater understanding of what the Civil War meant.

In F.C.L.,
Zach Watkins

I had known the Sons existed as far back as high school, but I started to actively learn and research the organization after I started following the national account on the social media, as two of my favorite Civil War Instagram pages had followed the national account. I then became interested in joining when I realized that being a member of the legal successor to GAR would help me carry on the legacy of a Civil War ancestor.

My interests in being a part of the SUVCW stem from a desire to carry on the legacy of my 4th great-grandfather Sgt. William Amburn of the 13th Iowa Veteran Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G. Preserved by the Grace of God, he survived the Civil War against the odds (he was shot through the lung in the Atlanta Campaign) and returned home to Iowa as one of two surviving Amburn brothers of three that fought.

After the war, this brave and respected veteran became a hard working member of his local Iowa community, serving as town constable and a country mail carrier. He was orderly of his GAR hall and active in both official and unofficial postwar reunions of his comrades.

His faith, along with dedication to his comrades and country, has left a strong legacy worthy of continuing. I believe that being a Son of the Union Veterans of the Civil War allows me to continue his legacy of faith, comradeship, and love of country. This legacy isn't just continued by our quest to inspire coming generations and preserve the memory of those who fought. It is also continued by our brotherhood. We all have our differences, but like the 13th Iowa and the rest of the boys who wore the Union blue, we are united as comrades by our love of country and our ancestors who fought for the same cause. As a Son, I am continuing William Amburn's legacy, which is also the legacy of many of the Boys in Blue.

I believe that the Sons can attract more young brothers by being more active in their respective local communities on both an educational and volunteer level. A couple ways this could be done are to offer more volunteer hours that count for graduation to high schools for our cemetery projects along with interactive activities for classroom visits for multiple grade levels, and by holding more talks regarding the Civil War at local libraries, battlefields, and universities.

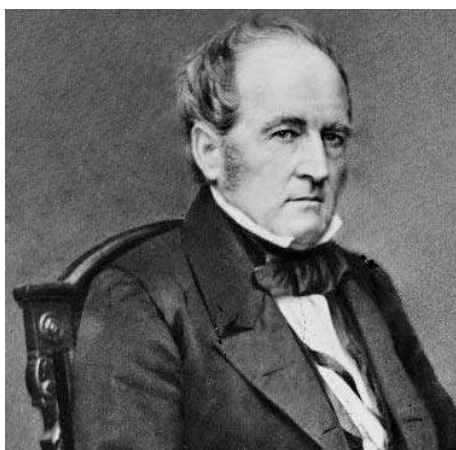
In F.C.L.,
Brother James Nelson

PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTION:

Since this is a Presidential election year, I thought an article about the election would be appropriate. Oh no, not this year's, but that of 1860.

First, we'll examine the four main candidates for the office: John Bell, John C. Breckinridge, Stephen A. Douglas, and Abraham Lincoln.

The first candidate, John Bell (February 18, 1796 - September 10, 1869) was a politician, attorney, and planter. He was one of Tennessee's most prominent antebellum politicians.

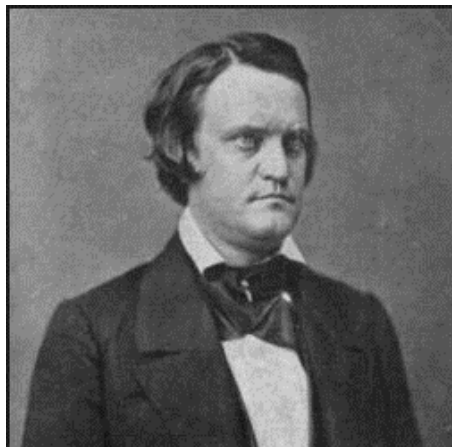


He was a member of the House of Representatives from 1827-1841 and the Senate from 1847-1859. He served as Speaker of the House (1834-1835) and Secretary of War during the administration of William Henry Harrison (1841). In 1860, Bell ran for president representing the Constitutional Union Party, a third party, which took a neutral stance on the issue of slavery.

Although a slaveholder, Bell was one of the few Southern politicians to oppose the expansion of slavery in the 1850's. He campaigned vigorously against secession in the years leading to the Civil War. He argued that secession was unnecessary since the Constitution protected slavery. On May 10th 1860, John Bell became the candidate of Constitutional Union Party, receiving enough votes to defeat Sam Houston at their convention. Edward Everett received the Vice-Presidential nomination.

Second candidate, John C. Breckinridge (January 16, 1821- May 17, 1875) was a lawyer, politician, and sol-

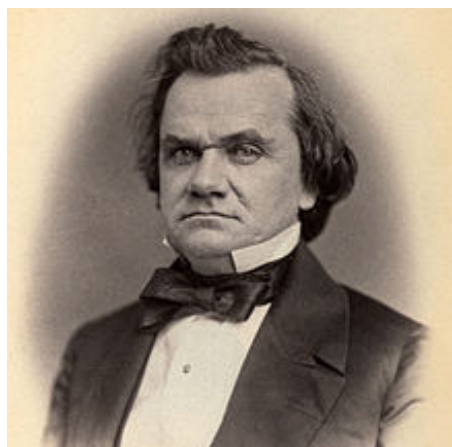
dier. Born in Lexington, he represented Kentucky in both houses of Congress and became the 14th Vice President serving from 1857 to 1861.



As a Democrat, he was nominated for Vice President at the 1856 Democratic Convention to balance a ticket headed by Buchanan. Breckinridge joined Buchanan in supporting the pro-slavery Lecompton Constitution for Kansas which led to a split in the Democratic Party.

After Southern Democrats walked out of the 1860 Democratic Convention, the party's northern and southern factions held rival conventions in Baltimore that nominated both Breckinridge and Stephen A. Douglas. Joseph Lane was nominated as Breckinridge's Vice-Presidential candidate.

The third candidate, Stephen A. Douglas (April 23, 1813 - June 3, 1861),

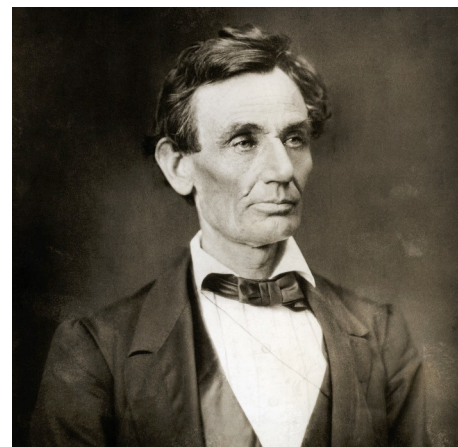


was a politician, leader of the Democratic Party, and orator who championed the cause of popular sovereignty in relation to the issue of slavery in the territories before the Civil War. Douglas was elected

in 1846 to the U. S. Senate representing Illinois, where ultimately, he served until his death.

It was during his time in the Senate that he became deeply involved in the nation's search for a solution to the slavery problem. As chairman of the Committee on Territories, he was particularly conspicuous in his support on the extension of slavery westward. In trying to remove the onus from Congress, he developed the theory of popular sovereignty (originally called squatter sovereignty), under which the people in the territory themselves would decide whether to permit slavery within their region's boundaries. Douglas was not a slaveholder, but his wife was. Douglas was influential in the passage of the Compromise of 1850, which tried to maintain a congressional balance between free and slave states. The organization of the Utah and New Mexico territories under popular sovereignty was a victory for his doctrine. Douglas was one of two candidates nominated by the split Democrat convention for President with Herschel V. Johnson as the Vice Presidential candidate.

The fourth candidate to be considered in 1860 was Abraham Lincoln (February 12, 1809 - April 15, 1865). Lincoln was a storekeeper, rail-splitter, postmaster, surveyor and volunteer in the Black Hawk War where he became a Captain. He was born in Kentucky, moved to Indiana in 1816, and then to Illinois in 1830. Lincoln was largely self-taught, and practiced law in Springfield.



He served in the state legislature (1834-1840) and was elected as a Whig to the U.S. House of Representatives (1847-1849).

Continued on Page 5

Patriotic Instruction cont. from page 4

As a circuit lawyer beginning in 1849, he became one of the state's most successful lawyers, noted for his shrewdness, common sense, and foremost for his honesty. This characterization is how he came to be known as "Honest Abe".

In 1856, Lincoln joined the newly formed Republican Party, which nominated him as their candidate for U. S. Senate in 1858. He lost that election to Stephen A. Douglas after the seven famous Lincoln-Douglas debates. In these debates he argued against the extension of slavery into the territories, though not against slavery itself. Although morally opposed to slavery, he was not an abolitionist. Douglas tried to label Lincoln as a dangerous radical who favored political equality for African Americans. The series of debates led to Lincoln being nominated for President in 1860 with Hannibal Hamlin as Vice President.

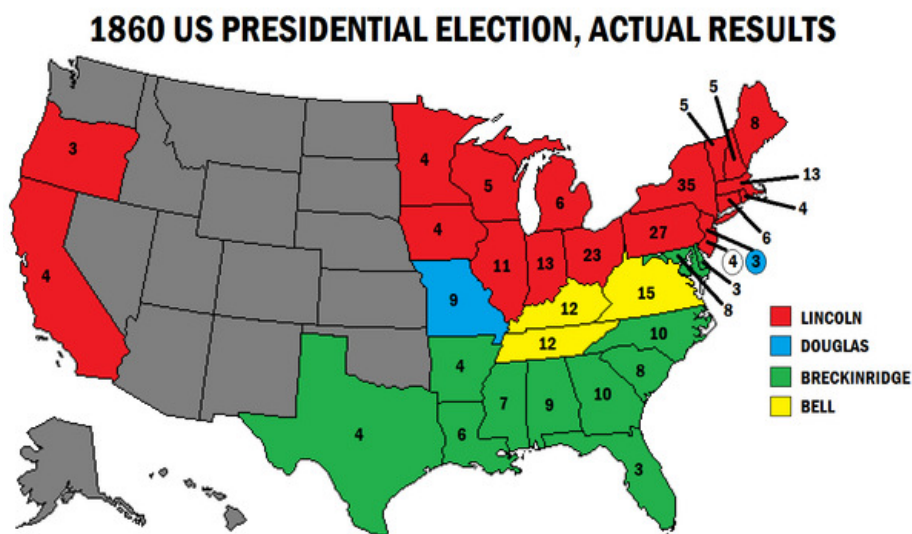
During the campaign, Bell had supporters throughout the North and border states. Most of his northern allies divided their support behind Lincoln or Douglas. Bell had little support south of the border states where Southern Democratic candidate Breckinridge was the clear frontrunner. Southern Democratic newspapers slammed Bell as a friend of abolitionists and Republicans. He was derided as "nobody's man" who "stands on nobody's platform". Since he thought he had little chance of winning, Bell was hoping that the other three candidates would not get enough electoral votes and the House of Representatives would decide the election, where he would be chosen as the only non-sectional candidate.

Breckinridge knew he was being accused of being in favor of the right of secession and the breakup of the Union. He denied this in a speech in Frankfort, Kentucky in which he said, "I am an American citizen, a Kentuckian who never did an act nor cherished a thought that was not full of devotion to the Constitution and the Union." Breckinridge, like Bell, knew his only chance to win was for the decision to go to the House of Representatives.

Douglas persisted in speaking on the points he made against Lincoln during the debates for Senate. He articulated the Freeport Doctrine holding that people

in Federal territories had the lawful means to introduce slavery or exclude it as they please, for the reason that slavery cannot exist a day or an hour anywhere, unless it is supported by local police regulations. Douglas opined that police regulations can be established by a local legislature. If

ridge, and Douglas would all withdraw in favor of a compromise candidate. Bell and Breckinridge agreed, but Douglas hated Breckinridge and would have no part in it. Lincoln, for his part, was not on the ballot of ten southern states.



(Graphic above from Reddit.com)

Election Statistics

Lincoln won, as we know, with 180 electoral votes carrying 18 states, receiving 39.8% of the popular vote totaling 1,865,908.

Breckinridge was second with 72 electoral votes carrying 11 states, with 18.1% of the popular vote totaling 848,019.

Bell finished third with 39 electoral votes carrying 3 states, gaining 12.6% of the popular vote totaling 590,901.

Douglas was last with 12 electoral votes carrying only 1 state, although he captured 29.5% of the popular vote totaling 1,380,202.

As you see, the vote total for the losing candidates combined was more than Lincoln received.

My final thought is, what if Bell, Breckinridge, and Douglas agreed to withdraw for another candidate and Lincoln, who became in my opinion the greatest President of the United States, who saved the Union which makes up our great country today, lost?

Respectfully submitted in F.C. L.,
 Michael Zafran P.I., Dept of IL.

the people are opposed to slavery, they will elect representatives to their local legislative bodies who will propose unfriendly legislation that would effectively prevent the introduction of slavery. Thus, Douglas argues that territories could exclude slavery despite the Dred Scott decision. Douglas reiterated his belief that the Declaration of Independence was not meant to apply to non-whites. He said, "This government was made by our Father on the white basis....made by white men for the benefit of white men and their posterity forever."

In the nineteenth century, it was considered that political campaigns were beneath the dignity of men who were suited to governance. It was considered that these men had more important tasks to achieve than to speak about partisan or policy-oriented topics. Douglas broke this precedent for presidential candidates and went on the campaign trail because he felt his eloquent oration would influence voters. For his part, Lincoln did not campaign as he followed previous precedent. He stood on his honesty and being morally against slavery. He was driven by the belief that, "All men are created equal".

In August, Mississippi Senator Jefferson Davis attempted to broker a compromise under which Bell, Breckin-

Submitted by PDC John Bigwood



*The Bulletin;
Class Notes,
Sept. 10, 2019*

The Father of Battlefield Medicine



Left: Class of 1849 Graduate Jonathan Letterman, MD, Is Celebrated for His Medical Innovations during the Civil War.

Jonathan Letterman, MD, lies beneath a gravestone that reads: "Medical Director of the Army of the Potomac ... who brought order and efficiency into the Medical Service and who was the originator of modern methods of medical organization in armies."

Letterman, an 1849 graduate of Jefferson Medical College (now Sidney Kimmel Medical College), is known as the "father of battlefield medicine" for creating the procedures for efficient medical management of wartime casualties. Today, his system remains the basis for much of battlefield, emergency, and disaster medicine around the world.

On October 25–26, 2019, during the SKMC Alumni Weekend, Letterman's life and accomplishments will be celebrated as he is named the recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award. The award was established in 2017 to honor alumni posthumously for a lifetime of achievement, for contributions to their profession or field, and for service to the community and to humanity at large.

"Jonathan Letterman changed the course of the Civil War—and American medicine. He is the epitome of a Jeffersonian, using outstanding clinical skills and an innovative mind to improve the fate of soldiers then and now, and to propel battlefield and disaster medicine into the modern era," says M. Dean Kinsey, MD '69, chair of the Alumni Awards Committee, SKMC Alumni Board. "We are so proud to celebrate his life, his accomplishments, and his contributions to humanity."

Letterman was born in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, in 1824, the son of a prominent surgeon. Upon graduating from Jefferson Medical College in 1849, he assumed the position of assistant surgeon in the Army Medical Department.

At the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, Letterman was assigned to the Army of the Potomac. A year later he was promoted to the rank of major and named medical director of the Army.

Dismayed that it took more than a week to remove the wounded from the battlefield at Battle of Second Manassas, Letterman was given permission by General George McClellan to overhaul the process of providing medical services to the wounded. Instead of leaving the injured to fend for themselves in the

field, Letterman instituted what would become the first ambulance corps, training men to act as stretcher-bearers and operate wagons to pick up the wounded and bring them to field medical stations.

Letterman also invented the triage for treatment of casualties, and developed a medical response system that consisted of field stations located on or next to the battlefield where medical personnel would tend to initial wounds; moveable field hospitals, usually in nearby homes or barns, where emergency surgery could be performed; and a base hospital located away from the battlefield, providing facilities for the long-term treatment of patients.

In March of 1864, Letterman's system was officially adopted for the U.S. Army by an act of Congress.

Letterman resigned from the Army in December 1864, moved to San Francisco where he served as coroner from 1867 to 1872, and published his memoirs, *Medical Recollections of the Army of the Potomac*. He died in 1872 and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

On November 13, 1911, the Army hospital at the Presidio in San Francisco was named Letterman Army Hospital in his honor.



Above: Jonathan Letterman, MD, standing between President Abraham Lincoln and Gen. George B. McClellan after the Battle of Antietam. McClellan was son of George McClellan, who founded Jefferson.



Left: Illustration of battlefield wounds from a 1517 "Field Manual for the Treatment of Wounds"

From: Military Medic.com

“MEMORIAL DAY 1895 WILL LONG BE REMEMBERED IN SPRINGFIELD”

The first sentence in an article entitled “Sleeping Soldiers” on page 3 of the May 31, 1895 edition of The Illinois State Journal states “Memorial Day of 1895 will long be remembered in Springfield”.

The wind was brisk on the Friday morning of Memorial Day 1895. As was always the case back then - not wanting to miss out on any of the formal proceedings - the crowd began gathering early in the vicinity of the GAR Hall on 5th Street. As usual, the hall was beautifully decorated and the former boys in blue promptly departed at 8:30 for Oak Ridge. The line of marchers was initially modest but, at nearly every intersection, they picked up “reinforcements” and by the time they arrived at the cemetery, the column was nearly a “mile in length”.

“The little children presented an inspiring spectacle as they came in at the south gate, waving their flags and entering fully into the spirit of the occasion. There felt keenly the honor which had been bestowed upon them at the head of the column and acquitted themselves with decorum. They marched steadily to the inspiring strains of the fife and drum and their sprightliness brought back to the memory of many an old veteran who saw them, thoughts of the time when they were young.”

The march came to a halt at the new monument erected by “Stephenson post #30”. Here the marchers, joined by others who came to watch, “gathered around the monument” and the “first exercises of the day began at 9:15”. “The children occupied the inner circle and the veterans were grouped about them within hearing distance.” The monument was located on “GAR mound on the southwest part of the cemetery, near the fountain”. “It stands six feet in height and consists of a stone base surmounted by a pyramid of cannon balls. About the pile are places for seventy-five graves which will be occupied by the remains of departed comrades. On the east side of the stone base is inscribed ‘G. A. R., 1861-1865,’ and on the west side ‘Erected A. D. 1895’.”

“The quartet, composed of “Messers. Henry Abeis, F. C. Dodds, Phil G. Matheny, and L. J. Coe sang, ‘Heroes Calmly Sleep.” Following the song Post Chaplain Stevenson offered a “fervent prayer”. “The most active man in the establishment of the monument was Past Camp Commander D. C. Brinkerhoff and to him was given the honor of formally presenting it to the post.” Following remarks by Commander Brinkerhoff was president of “the Woman’s Relief corps No. 17, Mrs. Andrew Steelman, who presented the veterans with an urn of beautiful flowers. Her address was short but full of the patriotic love which inspired the corps during the war”. The Stephenson Post commander, John G. Springer, then “accepted the monument and the urn” and then he dedicated the monument “to the purpose for which it was designed”.

“Senator John M. Palmer was present and made a short and appropriate address. He paid a stirring tribute to the memory of those who had fallen on the field or had since departed to their reward. The quartet sang ‘Illinois’ and Colonel R. V. Mallory of the J. L. Crane camp, S. Of V., closed the service with a brief talk.”

Rededicating the “GAR Mound”

Camp 4 Senior Vice Commander, Larry Werline, has been highly involved with coordinating the event and networking with others to help bring it to fruition. In addition to the restorative work, updates and improvements were added to the memorial site which will not only strikingly augment its presence, but enhance its interpretive value and make it much more informative, not only for our successors but for the legions of cemetery visitors to come.

Memorial Day crowds at Oak Ridge are no more and except for a few of our Brothers, hardly anyone will join us as we form up next year at the GAR mound for the nation’s 152nd annual formalities. Despite declining numbers, the words Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty makes me hold my chin up a little higher each year, thinking about my great-great grandfather’s service in the Civil War, and what my grandchildren may conclude about my dutiful exercise of patriotism 50 years hence.

This rededication, is different. As opposed to an annual event, this was a once in a lifetime opportunity. As I read the newspaper article described above, I wondered if Commanders Springer or Brinkerhoff thought about whom, down the road, would remember or even care, let alone see to making repairs to the monument and upgrade the site as needed. They had to be extremely proud of what they had accomplished and all they could do is have faith that, as needed, those to whom they passed the baton would follow through and mirror their dedication and commitment to our namesake Comrades.

The baton having been duly passed, our duty is clear. It is incumbent upon us to set a righteous example for those to whom we will one day pass the baton. Once the date for the official rededication was set, the pleasure of your company was for sure appreciated but even more meaningful, your duty as an esteemed Comrade and the essence of our Brotherhood made me extremely proud to form up beside you for such a hallmark event.

In our lifetime was our opportunity to rededicate the Stephenson Post No. 30 monument and in the process, salute needed site upgrades. Let us remember the likes of Brinkerhoff and Springer. Let us think deeply about the Camp’s heritage and legacy. Let us proudly maintain the baton while temporarily in

our possession. Those to whom we’ll pass the baton may not even be born yet but let us have faith that just as we did, they will do their duty. Let us leave them a shining example to emulate for when it comes their turn at the baton and the very best practice of Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty.

Left: A pre-restoration photo of the GAR monument on the GAR mound in Oak Ridge.



Continued on Page 8

GAR Mound continued from page 7



At our July 2020 meeting, SVC Larry Werline inspects damage to the Stephen-son GAR Post #30 monument atop the GAR mound at Oak Ridge Cemetery.



Consistent with safeguards associated with the coronavirus, CC Joseph Kessler convened the Camp's July and August meetings outdoors at the mound. Pictured left to right in the foreground at our August meeting are Richard Schachtsiek, Larry Werline, and Joe Kessler.



Upon closer inspection, instead of just on the outer surface, cannon balls extend into the core of the pyramid.

Grand Army of the Republic Monument Re-Dedication

Sunday, September 13, 2020.

Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield, Illinois

Hoist the Colors:

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Pledge of Allegiance: All

Invocation:

Reverend Thomas B. Christell, Jr. (ret.)

Welcome: Katie Spindell

Introductions: Mike Lelys

G.A.R. History: Larry Werline, Sr. Vice-Commander, Camp 4, Illinois SUVCW

Plaque Unveiling: Joe Kessler, Commander; Larry Werline, Sr. Vice-Commander, Camp 4, Illinois SUVCW

Rifle Volley Salute: 114th Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry (Reactivated)

Benediction: Reverend Thomas B. Christell Jr. (Ret.)

Taps: Mark Thomas, Tom Pasko

Our profound thanks to those who so graciously supported this project:

Carol Morton

Oak Ridge Cemetery

Sangamon County Historical Society

Staab Family Funeral Home

VFW LaFore Lock Post 755



The monument is now as good as new.



With the restored monument in the background, CC Joseph Kessler and SVC Larry Werline stands with the new plaque listing the names of the 98 Civil War vet-

erans buried on the mound, along with a brief description of the mound's history.

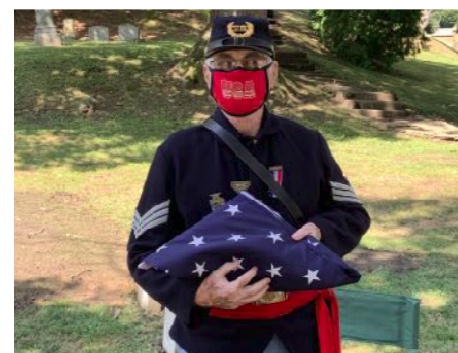


In action: The 114th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Reactivated, firing three volleys during the proceedings at the GAR Monument rededication. Standing behind the rifle squad is Shawn McLane and then from left to right is Brother Richard Schachtsiek, Mike Vizral, Duane Carrell, Brother and PDC Stan Buckles, and Thomas Pasko.



At the conclusion of the program a group photo was taken on the GAR mound.

(L-R) Shawn McLane, Thomas Pasko, Stan Buckles, Duane Carrell, Mike Vizral, and Richard Schachtsiek. On the right side of the monument is Joseph Kessler, Larry Werline, Don Ferricks, Sean McConnell, Patrick McConnell, Gene Walker, Darl Young, and Chuck Murphy.



Gene Walker was responsible for bearing Old Glory, the first to be hoisted and flown over the renovated GAR Mound.

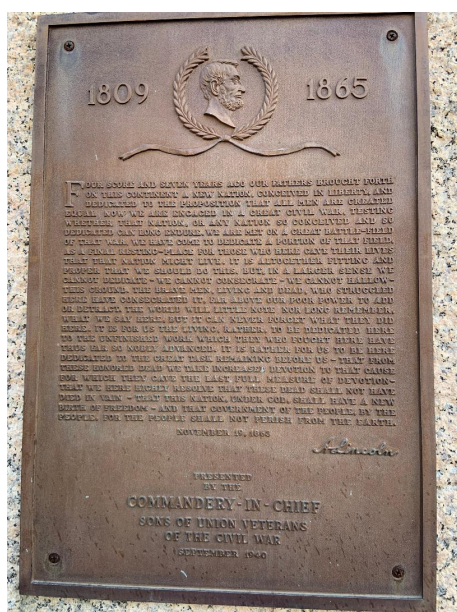
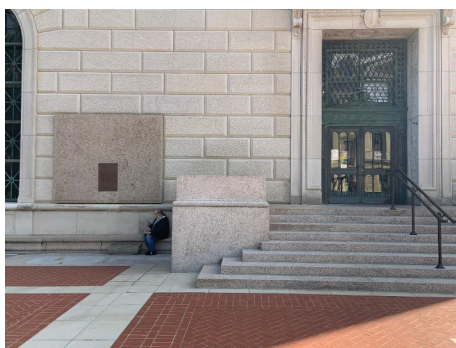
Gen. McLernand Camp 4

Brothers,

I've mentioned to Larry Werline a couple of times that repairs to the GAR monument were right under our noses going on years now and none of us ever noticed it, or if so, never mentioned it.

The rededication program on September 13 was a very successful affair and Larry did a marvelous job in more ways than one. It makes me wonder though, what else are we missing that needs restoration that may also be right under our noses.

While researching the Centennial building in Springfield a year or so ago I just so happened to notice a GAR marker that was right under my nose. It stands out very loudly because there are only two memorials on the entire north face of the building.



One is devoted to when the name of the building was changed to the Howlett Building in the early 1990s, and the other is a modest GAR marker.

I wonder how many different organizations down through the years

have attempted but failed to get approval to mount memorials on such a sacred, historical, and conspicuous site? Who approved it? How did it get approved?

One of my first thoughts was that someone had to have connections. But lots of people down thru the years have had both wealth and connections but still, there remain two, and only two memorials on the north face. When you stop and consider it is the site where Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd were married, it is even more impressive. That lone GAR memorial is quite small but looms large and the story behind it has to be fascinating.

The other day I stopped by and took several pictures. It is near the west door. A quick google check, reveals that coinciding with the GAR National Encampment in Springfield on September 3-8 in 1940, the DUVCW were also in town for their 50th anniversary. I regret not pursuing this matter sooner as this represents the 80th anniversary of the tablet being dedicated - an ideal time to have planned an event.

This is to request that we take a moment, stop by and check it out. When you think about more than 200 years of Illinois history, its conspicuousness is just mesmerizing. It is very near brazen in its sheer audacity, and I'm proud as hell!

GAR Meeting places in Springfield

Thanks to City Historian and Sangamon Valley Library Manager Curtis Mann for sharing the 1890-91 City Directory. It states that the GAR Hall was located at 226 S. 5th, on the east side of the street south, to the right of the alley. The site is now home to the Lincoln Square Apartment complex. The Stephenson Post GAR No. 30 met on the first and third Wednesday of the month. The Mendell Post GAR No. 450 met on the second and fourth Wednesday.



In 1890-91 some familiar names served in

leadership positions in Stephenson Post 30. Brinkerhoff was the Commander, Springer served as Adjutant, and O. H. Oroid was the Quartermaster. R. Wolcott was the Commander of post 450, C. W. Day the Adjutant, and E. A. Hall was the Quartermaster.



John A. Bross Post GAR 578 (colored) met on the second and fourth Friday at 219 S. 6th, two doors south of the alley between Adams and Monroe, on the west side of the street. This address is currently home to a Jimmie John's restaurant. Wyatt Johnson was the Captain and William Burns served as Adjutant.



Note the building on the right with the 226 S. 5th Street typed on its white/light colored awning. That was where the Stephenson Post met back in 1895. Imagine the hall being fully decorated and envision the boys trickling out on the morning of May 31, 1895, forming up in the street for the march to the cemetery, and dedicating the post's brand spanking new monument atop Oak Ridge's GAR mound.

Take care;
Chuck Murphy, Camp 4

Colonel Hecker Camp 443



PCC Greg Zelinske, Hecker Camp #443, led an Honor Guard at for the U. S. Grant Death Day Remembrance held at White Haven in St. Louis. This event is hosted by Grant Camp #67 of St. Louis. PCC Zelinske is also Commander of the 17th Missouri reenactment Infantry Group.



DUVCW Monument in Granite City Illinois next to City Hall. Sarah Jane McEvers Tent #90 Daughters of Union Veterans Civil War dedicated 5-30-1935.



GAR Memorial at Mount Hope Cemetery in Belleville Illinois. McDowell Women's Relief Corp. #82 dedicated 9-3-1925.



(Below last column) GAR Memorial at Woodlawn Cemetery in Edwardsville. GAR Post #461 erected by DUVCW Tent 96, no date found.



Old GAR Monument in Highland Illinois. The cannon was missing since the 1980's. This site was vandalized in the past, so the cannon was removed to prevent more damage. At this time it is unknown when it was dedicated. Research is in the works to find out.



Highland GAR Monument Cannon Found! The cannon was removed by an individual to be restored back in the 80's. It was unknown to Hecker Camp, but in 2018 an Eagle Scout project relocated and restored the old cannon to a new location near old the site as it was previously in a secluded area. I am working on moving the cannonballs still at old site to the new site and placing a proper marker. The property is owned by the Highland Sharpshooters Organization at the Madison County Fairgrounds. Dedicated 12-13-2018.

General Sheridan Camp 2

It is unusual for Camp #2 to welcome three new members at the same time, but that was the case on September 17, 2020. Left is Bret Nila whose 2nd great-grandfather, John Pepple served in Co F, 53rd Il Inf. Center is Richard Shea whose 3rd great-grandfather served in Co C, 55th OH Inf. On the right is Todd Lat-

ham whose 4th great-grandfather, Israel Clark, served in Co. H, 105th Il Inf. These new members are anxious to get involved with our activities.



Photo by Robert Rogers



This was the first of many work days at Bluff City Cemetery in Elgin, Illinois, where over 500 CW Vets are buried. The first eight new headstones, which should grow to 20 plus, were set by this group of Camp #2 brothers.

The team was (L/R) Lee Lasseigne Leigh Franklin, Robert Welsh, Don Seyller, Barry Roberts and Jim Zingales.

They had another work day planned for October 19 to set another ten new headstones and continue to straighten and clean as many as they can.

Lee Lasseigne, Barry Roberts and Jim Zingales have headed up this project which will probably take most of 2021 to complete.

Colonel Bryner Camp 67

Lost and Found:

Many of our Department of Illinois Brothers are working on Civil War Veteran graves in the larger municipal and private cemeteries. However, there are literally thousands of smaller cemeteries within the State of Illinois which Dept. GRO Steve Aarli can attest to.

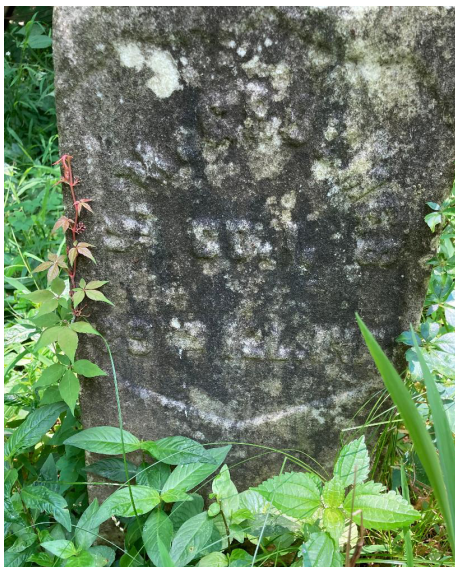
Some are well maintained by small cemetery associations, others are family cemeteries on farms while still others lay neglected and forgotten.

New Bryner Camp member James Nelson was working this summer with PDC/Area (Peoria Disposal Company), and was in the vicinity of Le Roy, IL near the Howard Virgin Timber Park.

While on break, Brother James and his crew walked one of the trails and found what appeared to be a small family graveyard. It is somewhat mowed but a few of the graves are in a hard condition.

Sitting in a half-mowed corner is the grave of Private Grooms of Company I, 39th Illinois Volunteer Infantry. It is not in great condition but nonetheless it marks the resting spot of one of our forefathers who fought for freedom. It could be a good minor project to restore that grave, says Brother Nelson.

The soldier he found on his hike is Martin V. Grooms (Grooms) according to a post on Find-a-Grave. The cemetery is Howard Cemetery. The photo of the stone online matches the photo he took. (Below)



PVT Grooms was a native of

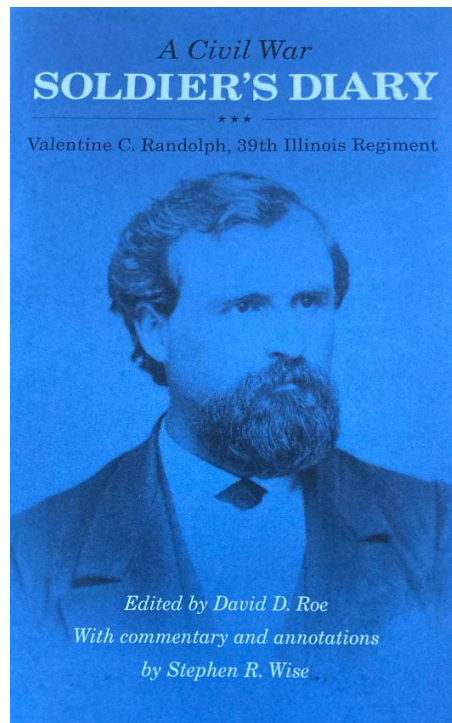
Franklin Co, OH; born abt. 1837, died 1875. He was one of four brothers who served: Ervin (AKA: Irwin) Minor Grooms, Isaac Grooms, and John Wesley Grooms. All were in the 39th IL INF.

Ervin was born 1832, died 1903 and is buried in Ingram Cemetery @ White Heath, IL. Isaac was born 1840 and died in service in 1862 is buried in Stones River Nat. Cem. John, also shown born 1840, died 1900 and is buried in Mansfield Cemetery @ Mansfield, IL.

All of this information was found on Find-A-Grave by looking up Ervin. It is an interesting story.

E-mailing the City of LeRoy, IL resulted in no answer back. The McLean Co. Gen Soc. will be contacted next to see who is in charge of the cemetery. That is necessary to get a replacement stone as someone affiliated with the cemetery must sign the form. That is one of the difficulties encountered with old cemeteries that may or may not have an active association caring for it.

Brother James coincidentally has a book that is written from the diary of a member of the very same company of Private Grooms.



You just never know what you will find when you take a walk.

Kudos:

Bryner Camp JVC and Eagle Scout/ ROTC Coordinator Ron Kirchgessner

recently received the Meritorious Service Award from the Scottish Rite. The award is given for service to Scottish Rite, Free Masonry and to the community.



Officially it was to have been awarded on June 22, but because of Covid-19, it was given October 6, 2020 at the Lariat Steakhouse. The hat and jewel signifies the MSA.

General Custer Camp 1

George A. Custer Camp #1 has continued their headstone cleaning project to include over 230 headstones and the replacement of 15 Unknown Union soldiers markers at Rosehill Cemetery. Our work party has completed two of its three cleaning phases and has targeted a November 15th date for the end of the marker cleaning project. The new headstone installation is set for Spring .



(More photos on page 12)

*In Fraternity. Charity.
And Loyalty*

(Camp 1 continued from page 11)



Respectfully submitted,
Nick Kaup,
Camp Commander

Old Glory Camp 6165

Old Glory Camp 6165 has been continuing their Union Ridge Cemetery restoration project. The cemetery has allied themselves with two local Boy Scout troops who are working on two Eagle Scout projects. Their programs include

resetting, cleaning, categorizing and marking veteran's graves. These headstones represent veterans from all wars. The total project will culminate in a Veterans Day ceremony on Saturday, November 7th, beginning at 11:00am.



Scouts & parents cleaning markers.



Union veteran's headstone reset.



Scouts & parents marking graves.



Camp Secretary Brother Dennis Bradley placing a GAR marker.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeff Kaup, Camp Commander
Old Glory Camp 6165, Chicago, IL

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RAILSPLITTER DEADLINES:

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

Please submit articles by the above deadlines. Articles may be edited for length and corrected for grammar and spelling. Not all photos may be used.

Send to "bryner_camp67@yahoo.com". Text should be attached as MS-Word docs or contained in the body of the E-mail. Photos should be JPG attachments.

Remember, this is **YOUR** newsletter.