



The Railsplitter

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



Summer 2021

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DC Hutchinson pens inaugural message...

Brothers -

By the time you read this, Memorial Day, remembrance of D-Day, and Father's Day will be behind us. Holidays are great times to get together, but we must not forget the reasons behind the holiday. I hope that everyone is able to get out and eventually attend ceremonies again. If you were not able to assemble your Camp, I hope that individual Brothers went out on their own to perform personal remembrances.

HISTORY, THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY

One main task that we are entrusted and we don't always do well is to educate the public. Many don't know about our order. There is also much misinformation about the Civil War. The history we were taught was rushed and incomplete at best. History books are often written leaving out portions of the story or glorifying the winner while glossing over their shortcomings. The history of our Nation is a long and complicated one. We are a Nation with flaws formed by individuals who were flawed. The Founding Fathers knew that compromises had to be made to make a loose confederation of individual states into the United States. Many of these compromises unfortunately led to the Civil War, and mistakes made during Reconstruction continue to cause problems in our society 150+ years later.

It is our task, no..., it is our DUTY to re-examine what we THOUGHT we knew about history and get to the FACTS. We need to look with fresh eyes at the underlying details and not just concentrate on the dates, battles and names of generals. However, we should not judge the people of 150 years ago by the standards of today. They were men of their times, just as we are men of our times. Someone will come along 100 years from now and judge US.

MONUMENTS: WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN AND MOST IMPORTANTLY--WHY

Too many people today are quick to tear down monuments and rename public edifices without studying what the monument represents. Monuments should cause reflection and questioning. We read in the news about Confederate monuments being taken down. Many monuments were originally erected to glorify a general and some reflect the "Lost Cause". Other monuments were erected to remember local soldiers lost to the war. Both types are considered the same in some people's eyes. The foot soldier from the home town did not cause the war. He/she should be remembered and not vilified. 'Silent Sam' in North Carolina is one that comes to mind. Google it.

This is not limited to Confederate monuments. There have been instances where Union monuments have been defaced and vandalized. There has been talk of removing Lincoln from public view in some cities. Some see ANY statue as needing to be removed if it doesn't fit their narrow view of history. The State of Illinois removed the bust of Stephen Douglas from the capitol because of the views that Douglas held. Without Stephen Douglas, there would have been no Abraham Lincoln running for President.

Many municipalities are renaming public building and schools. Here in Peoria, the school district is renaming 6 schools with ties to 'slavery' and 'racism'. The names may surprise you: Thomas Jefferson Primary School, Charles Lindbergh Middle School, Washington Gifted School, Harrison Learning Center, Roosevelt Magnet School and Calvin Coolidge Middle School. Remove George Washington's name because he was a slave owner? Thomas

Jefferson too? Without Washington's leadership, we would still be speaking "English" (!). Without Thomas Jefferson, we would not have the Declaration of Independence. **WHAT NEXT?**

As Br. Nick Kaup has said repeatedly, our 'Thin Blue Line' has been getting grayer. While our enrollment has been stable and growing slowly, the average age of the membership has been increasing. Why don't more join or participate when they do join? Lack of knowing we are out there is number one. Number two is lack of knowing history. Number three is too many distractions. While our forefathers found time to join the GAR and participate in parades and ceremonies, as well as join other fraternal organizations, while at the same time working 10-12 hours a day, six days a week. Today's individual is too 'busy' doing things of little consequence.

For those who are members, but don't participate in Camp life, I implore you to carve out a little time to attend a camp meeting. If your camp is working in a cemetery project, schedule a couple hours on a Saturday to help. Maybe you can help with some online research to get documentation to order a headstone for an unmarked grave.

"Meetings are boring." "It's too far away." "I don't have time." All excuses. Come up with something interesting to present yourself. You only get back what you put in. Many Camps have members that live far away. Set up Zoom meetings to go with your in-person meeting. Meet at a different location or a different time periodically to enable more to attend. Reach out. Many Brothers have children and grandchildren. Try to interest them in your passion. If the Comrades of the GAR had not brought their sons in and created the Sons of Union Veterans, WE wouldn't be here talking about the SUVCW. Get out of your comfort zone and talk to a Scout Troop. Adopt a school and give out miniature US flags with etiquette brochures along with the Sons brochure. Sign up to do a talk on your local public access TV channel. If we don't do it, WHO WILL?

In Fraternity Charity and Loyalty, Joe Hutchinson, Commander, Department of Illinois

THE DEPARTMENT'S ENCAMPMENT

The Department of Illinois held its annual Encampment at Petersburg, Illinois on Saturday May 22, 2021 with 34 Brothers present. Prior to the Encampment, a ceremony was held at Rose Hill Cemetery honoring Dr. Benjamin Stephenson, founder of the GAR. PDC. Steve Westlake was Master of Ceremonies. After the Posting of Colors, Department Patriotic Instructor Mike Zafran sang the National Anthem followed by Dept. Chaplain Jerry Kowalski performing the Invocation. A moment of silence was held to honor Brothers who passed away. Br. Zafran led the body assembled in singing Amazing Grace and later, the Battle Hymn of the Republic. Sister Carol Dyer was called forward to speak about her husband, the late PDC Terry Dyer. Guest speakers Rick Snyder, Mayor of Petersburg, Richard Moss, President of the Menard County Council on Tourism, Mike Carter, Menard County Honor Guard Coordinator and Steven Haight, Commander of Logan Camp 26 and Stephenson Memorial Chair were introduced by Department Commander Tom Oestreicher. Br. Bobby Welch came forward to present a check to the Stephenson Committee from the VFW. Presentation of memorial wreathes followed the speakers. A cannon salute was performed by SVR Battery "L", 1st Illinois Volunteer Artillery and the rifle salute was performed by the Menard County Honor Guard.



From left to right above is SVR Battery "L", 1st Illinois Volunteer Artillery offering a canon a salute, Dept. Chaplain Jerry Kowalski giving the Invocation, and Terry's wife, Carol Dyer, speaking about her late husband at Rose Hill Cemetery.



In the above left photo is Brother Steven Westlake, Master of Ceremonies. Above right is the Menard County Honor Guard preparing to fire a volley. Left is a photo of Brother Zafran singing "Amazing Grace" and "Battle Hymn of the Republic", and on the right is a photo of the wreaths with PDC Nick Kaup in the foreground.



After lunch but prior to the opening of the Encampment, DC Tom Oestreicher called forward Mr. Richard Moss of Petersburg and presented him with a plaque for his dedication in working with the late PDC Dyer and his committee on the Dr. Stephenson Memorial Plaza. The Department then commenced with the agenda which included electing and installing officers for the 2021-22 term. Chaplain Jerry Kowalski was installing officer with Nat. Quartermaster, and PDC James Lyon, representing the C in C. Outgoing Secretary Steve Aarli and Treasurer Bill Johnson were awarded the honorary title of Past Department Commander with voting privileges for their ten years of continuous service in their offices.



In the above left photo DC Tom Oestreicher is presenting the plaque to Richard Moss. Below left is a photo of Chaplain Kowalski conducting installation ceremonies of the Department's officers for 2021-2022. From left to right in the photo immediately above is outgoing Dept. Secretary Steve Aarli, PDC James Lyon, 2020-2021 DC Tom Oestreicher, and outgoing Treasurer Bill Johnson.

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR TERRY DYER

On June 3, 2021 a Celebration of Life was held at Memorial Hall in Rockford for PDC Terry R. Dyer, who passed away on March 21 after a valiant battle with cancer. Chaplain Jerry Kowalski was master of ceremonies and performed the Invocation. The First Brigade band performed musical interludes. President Lincoln, portrayed by Max Daniels, read a passage from Ecclesiastes, Dept. Pl. Mike Zafran sang "Simple Gifts" and led the body assembled in "God Bless America". Jo Ellen Kowalski, Chaplain of Mary Ann Bickerdyke Auxiliary #2, and Donna Daniels read a poetry piece "In the Garden". Barbara Turner, Chaplain of Mary Logan Camp #20, read a memorial message followed by remembrances by Br. Dyer's daughter, Jennifer.



In the above left photo is Jennifer Dyer. Above right is a picture of the assembly standing for a group sing. In the photo to the left is Master of Ceremonies, Chaplain Jerry Kowalski. The photo immediately above is of the 1st Brigade Band, and the picture on the right is Max Daniels in the first person of Abraham Lincoln.



CHAPLAINS CORNER



My neighbor across the street uses a handyman to clean gutters and do odd jobs around the house. On the side of the handyman's white panel truck is printed in large black letters: BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST AND YOU WILL BE SAVED (Acts 16:21). As I was looking at his truck out of my front window, I thought to myself, "People have fought and died over this statement. Paul thought - Faith alone is sufficient." Then I googled the wisdom of the internet, because I remember James writing, "Faith without good works is dead". Suddenly, the arguments were not at all clear. I had always thought that the one way I could know for sure that I had faith - was if I was doing good works. Treating others with Fraternity and Charity. Now I have to reread Paul's letter to the Romans and rethink the whole thing.

In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty
Chaplain Jerry

PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTION

As I was listening to the news about June 19th becoming a federal holiday, I wondered who delivered General Order #3 of Freedom to the slaves in Galveston, Texas, and about his story.

Gordon Granger (11/6/1821- 1/10/1876) was a career U.S Army officer and a Union General in the Civil War, where he distinguished himself at the Battle of Chickamauga. He graduated from West Point Academy in 1845 and placed 35th in the class of 41 graduating cadets. He was commissioned a Brevet Second Lieutenant and assigned to the Second Infantry Regiment stationed in Detroit, Michigan. In 1846 he transferred to the newly constituted Regiment of Mounted Rifleman at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri.

Granger served under Winfield Scott during the Mexican American War in the battles of Veracruz, Cerro Gordo, Contreras, Churubusco, and Mexico City. He received two citations for gallantry, and in May 1847 received his regular commission as Second Lieutenant. After the war, he served on the western frontier in Oregon and then Texas. In 1853 he was promoted to First Lieutenant.

When the Civil War broke out Granger was on sick leave. He was temporarily assigned to the staff of General George B. McClellan in Ohio. Recovered from his illness, he returned to the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen and was promoted to Captain in May 1861 while serving in Missouri. As an adjunct of General Samuel D. Sturgis, he saw action at the battles of Dug Springs, and Wilson's Creek. Granger then served as staff officer to General Nathaniel Lyon, and was again cited for gallantry and became a Brevet Major in command of the St Louis Arsenal.

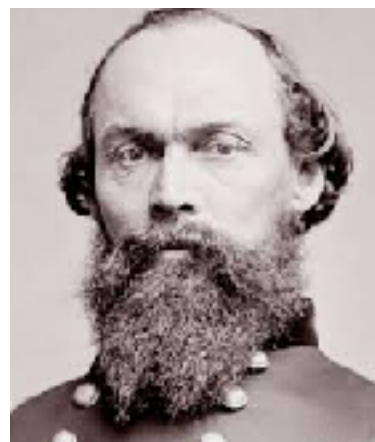
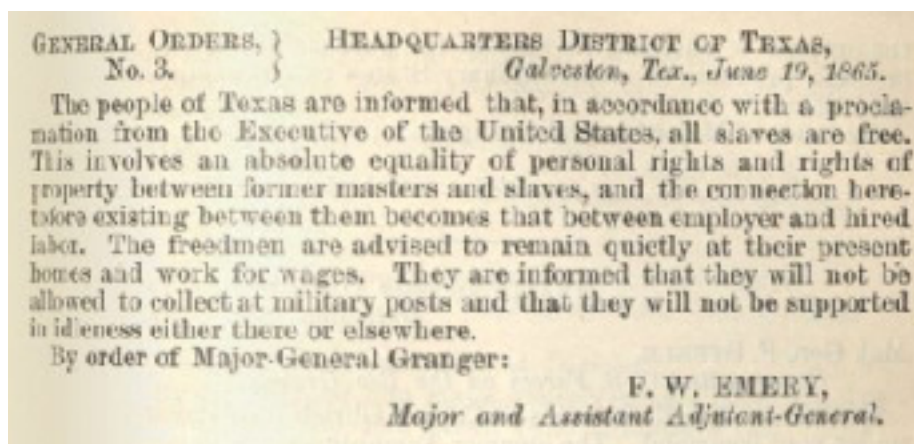
In November 1861, Granger assumed command of the 2nd Michigan Regiment at Benton Barracks in St. Louis, becoming a Colonel of Volunteers. One of his men called him a "military genius" in his diary. Due to his strict discipline, within three months Granger brought these volunteers up to full standard troops. In February 1862, he received orders from General John Pope to move the 2nd Michigan from St. Louis to Commerce Missouri, where Pope assembled nearly 20,000 Union troops for the advance on New Madrid, Missouri. Granger assumed command over the 3rd Cavalry, consisting of the 2nd and 3rd Michigan, ultimately becoming a full brigade with the addition of the 7th Illinois.

On March 26, 1862, Granger was promoted to Brigadier General of Volunteers and commanded the Cavalry Division, Army of the Mississippi, during the battles of New Madrid and Corinth. He was then promoted to Major General of Volunteers on September 17, 1862, and took command of the Army of Kentucky. He conducted cavalry operations in central Tennessee before his command was merged into the Army of the Cumberland, becoming a Reserve Corps.

Granger is famous for his actions commanding the Reserve Corps at the Battle of Chickamauga. On September 20, 1863, the second day of battle, he reinforced, without orders, Major General George H. Thomas' XIV Corps on Snodgrass Hill by ordering James B. Steedman to send two brigades to help Thomas. This action staved off the Confederate attackers until dark, permitting the Federal forces to retreat in good order and thus helping Thomas earned the sobriquet "Rock of Chickamauga". Granger's effective leadership at Chickamauga earned him command of the newly formed IV corps in the Army of the Cumberland, commanded by General Thomas, and he was promoted to Brevet Lieutenant Colonel of the U. S. Army. Under his command, the IV Corps distinguished itself at the third Battle of Chattanooga. Two of the IV Corps' divisions, those commanded by Thomas J. Wood and Phillip H. Sheridan, were among the units that assaulted the

reinforced center of the Confederate line on top of Missionary Ridge. There, the Union forces broke through and forced the Confederates, under General George Braxton Bragg, to retreat. Despite these successes, his outspokenness and bluntness with his superiors, including General Ulysses S. Grant, who hated Granger, prevented him from gaining more prominent commands in the Eastern Theater of the Civil War. He was sent to the Department of the Gulf under General E. R. S. Canby, where he commanded a division that provided land support to the naval operations conducted by Admiral David Farragut in the Gulf of Mexico.

When the war ended, Granger was given command of the District of Texas. He brought with him 2,000 troops to quell any uprising his order might create. On June 19, 1865 in the city of Galveston, one of the first orders of business was to read to the people of Texas Granger's General Order #3. *(Below left is the order and on the right is a photo of General Granger. Both images were acquired on line via Google.)*



Granger's proclamation formed for the basis for the annual "Juneteenth" festivities, which celebrate the end of slavery in Texas. Granger also declared that laws passed by the Confederate government were void, that Confederate soldiers were paroled, and that all persons having public property, including cotton, was to be turned in to the United States Army for compensation. He counseled Blacks against congregating around towns and military posts, remaining unemployed, or expecting welfare. Rather, he advised them to remain on the plantations and to sign labor agreements with their former owners, while awaiting further assistance from the Freedmen's Bureau, which had not yet been established in the state. For six weeks Granger took the message into the interior of the state. Recommending that the freed slaves sign labor contracts with their former owners, effectively became legalized slavery. But now with income, many slaves lifted themselves in a short time to be landowners and businessmen. Many were also given land by slave owners as compensation for their former enslavement, and for their continued labor on the plantations of their former owners.

On August 6, 1865, after only six months of service, Granger was relieved of his command and replaced by General Horatio G. Wright. He remained in the Army after mustering out from volunteer service. His final rank was that of Colonel, effective December 20, 1870. After leaving Texas he married and was assigned to command the District of New Mexico (1871-1876), until his death while residing in Santa Fe. Granger was a true patriot. I can't help but think of comparing him to George Armstrong Custer, based on his actions of disobeying orders, and his attitude toward superiors.

Respectfully Submitted in F. C. L., Michael Zafran, P.I. Department of IL, and Commander of P. H. Sheridan Camp #2 Aurora



Just a reminder, submission dates for Railsplitter articles and photos will continue to be October 15, January 15, April 15, and July 15. Please email items for the newsletter to Brother Chuck Murphy at murphy2067@comcast.net. After working-up each issue, he'll forward to DSVG Gary Gunderson for editing.



MEMORIAL DAY 2021

Top left Old Glory CC Jeff Kaup delivers remarks at Union Ridge Cemetery. Top right Battery "L", 1st Vol. LGT. Art., SVR poses prior to the cannon salute. On the left above is Custer Camp #1 PCC Ted III of SVR Battery "L", standing at attention during the "Rock of Chickamauga" Ceremony at Rosehill Cemetery. Center right is SVC Larry Werline offering remarks at Camp #4s observance at Oak Ridge Cemetery, with the 114th's Colonel, Brother Richard Schachtsiek, looking on. In the lower middle is a photo of Camp #1 at the "Rock of Chickamauga" Memorial. On the right are musicians of the 114th Ill. Vol. Inf. Reg't, React., playing TAPS at the Camp #4 observance.

CAMP NEWS

Custer Camp #1 - Wilmette

In cooperation with Camp Col. Augustus van Horne Ellis #124 in New York state, Camp #1 recently completed a project of utmost interest, demonstrating how fruitful it can be to partner with Brothers from throughout the country to achieve mutually desirable goals. *Please see the email immediately below that was recently sent to CC Nick Kaup.*

SUVCW Camp #124 Col Augustus van Horne Ellis

June 29 at 12:58 PM

Camp #124 is happy to announce that after generous donations from its members and Department of Illinois SUVCW especially General George A Custer Camp #1 of Wilmette, the grave of Captain Albert Leo Aubin in Cavalry Catholic Cemetery in Evanston, Illinois has been marked 104 years after his death.

Camp #124 Junior Vice Commander William Stump came across Aubin's obituary while searching for Civil War veterans in local obituaries in the New Rochelle Pioneer. Albert Leo Aubin died at his daughter's house in New Rochelle, NY on October 16, 1917. Further investigation revealed an amazing story. Aubin was an immigrant from Nuremberg, Germany who at age 22 - while living in Peoria, Illinois - enlisted to fight for the US Army during the Civil War. He enlisted in Company H of the 10th Illinois Volunteers on April 17th 1861, and was promoted to the rank of sergeant three days later. He reenlisted 90 days later into Company L of the 8th Illinois Volunteers and was promoted to the rank of first sergeant on August 10, 1862. In his time with the 10th, he took part in a series of titanic struggles during the Vicksburg Campaign in Tennessee and Mississippi, including the Battles of Shiloh, Port Gibson, Raymond, Champion Hill and the Siege of Vicksburg.

After Vicksburg, and in recognition of his leadership, he was commissioned a first lieutenant in the 9th Louisiana Infantry (African Descent), a regiment raised from the liberated enslaved men in the area around Vicksburg. It was later reorganized as the 1st Mississippi Colored Heavy Artillery, and finally as the 5th United States Colored Heavy Artillery. Aubin was appointed Captain of Company B and served with the unit until its mustering out on May 20th 1866. His impact on early Reconstruction can be seen in the fact he was personally noted in the Semi-Annual Report on Schools for Freedmen published January 1, 1867: "Captain Albert L. Aubin has assisted me in the payment of bounties to soldiers throughout the state. He inspires confidence from having been an officer of colored troops and also from coming among the freedmen as a paymaster. He is everywhere counseling them to spend a portion of the money they receive for their own education and that of their children, and especially urging the establishment of night schools. Although not directly employed in school business, I look upon him as most efficient aid in this branch of my duties." Aubin worked for the rest of his life as a clerk in the city of Chicago. He is buried in Cavalry Cemetery in Evanston, Illinois in a family plot which formally had been marked only with a stone reading Aubin. Thank you to all who supported this endeavor to make sure this American hero is not forgotten.



Finally, Camp #1 recently received 15 new unknown soldier markers at Rosehill Cemetery in Chicago. They will have a special rededication ceremony on Saturday, August 14. A parade, rededication program and concert will take place featuring a Civil War period band. Thanks to Rosehill Cemetery for their constant support over the past thirty years. Photoed among the markers on the left is PCC Dr. Tom Hauff, Sr., and kneeling on the right is CC Nick Kaup.

In Fraternity, Charity, & Loyalty, Brother
Nick Kaup, PDC Dept. of Illinois
847.910.0164 - nickkaup@gmail.org



Hecker Camp #443 - Belleville

In the above left photo is CC David Wildermuth, in the foreground of the Gateway Arch and downtown St. Louis skyline, at the Malcolm W. Martin Memorial Park and Gateway Geyser in E. St. Louis on 4th of July weekend. In the picture above from left to right in the background are Treasurer Richard Piper and JVC John Stanton. And In the foreground is CC Wildermuth at their recruiting table and display at the Koerner House in Belleville on June 5. Gustav Koerner's military prowess and his political and personal association with the Lincolns is renown. The lower left photo is of the reenactment in Pittsfield, IL over the weekend of June 4 & 5. Attendees included PCC Russel Schliecher and PCC Greg Zelinski.

CC David Wildermuth

McClerland Camp #4 - Springfield

After not holding an annual banquet for the last couple of years, due to COVID 19, a banquet and formal installation of officers is being planned in the fall, depending upon how the community is doing relative to the Delta variant. Planning is also underway for Camp 4 to advance a year-long celebration of General Ulysses S. Grant's 200th birthday (April 27, 1822) through 2022. about which more information will be forthcoming in future issues.

Officials in Elkhart, IL have revised their plans and recently made it known of their interest to offer up their small village as a meeting/ bivouac site in the Fall of 2022. Surprisingly, there are multiple meeting venues available, including the quaint old church where Oglesby's funeral was held. The village's Horsefeathers cafe would be available for either dine-in or catering service, and local officials would look to the Sons to lead formal ceremonies memorializing Civil War General/Governor/U.S. Senator Richard J. Oglesby, at his tomb in Elkhart Cemetery. Uncle Dick was a noted figure in many ways as he was one of of only two Illinoisans to achieve the rank of Major General, during the war, and go on to serve as Governor and U. S. Senator of Illinois. Further, in addition to him being one of the last to meet with Lincoln in the White House on the afternoon of April 14, 1865, he was in the room when Lincoln passed on April 15. In addition, he was the principal speaker at the dedication of Lincoln's Tomb at Oak Ridge Cemetery on October 15, 1874. And for good measure, he is the one who indirectly inspired the name of our newsletter, when he came up with the sobriquet "Railsplitter", for Lincoln's Presidential campaign of 1860. Village officials plan to submit a formal invitation.

Chuck Murphy, PI, Camp 4

Sheridan Camp #2 - Aurora

Camp #2 sponsored 2 Memorial Day Services, at the 14th Annual Jewell Grove Ceremony in Wheaton on May 29th and West Aurora's Memorial Observance was May 30th.

Fred Hall, great grandson of Fredrick L Thayer (member of the Aurora GAR Post) was in possession of his great grandfathers hand written diary from his service in the Civil War. Camp 2 Brother, Eric Pry, curator of the of the Aurora GAR, contacted. Mr. Hall but was unable to present the diary in person so he mailed it to Harry Reineke IV, past Illinois Dept. and Sheridan Camp Commander. Current relatives of Fredrick include Tom Thayer (Chicago Bears) and Tommy Thayer (lead guitarist for musical group KISS). The diary was presented to the Aurora GAR Hall and Museum in June by Michael Zafran, Commander of Camp #2. A very interesting account of his service and other life events are included in the diary.

A memorial service was given in Libertyville for Roger Knigge, a long time member of Camp #2. Roger played a major role in historical and on site cemetery work performed by the camp. He will be sorely missed.

On the right is a photo of several members of Sheridan Camp, who participated in the Hinsdale 4th of July Parade. It was a beautiful day and this is the 7th year the camp has marched in the parade.

Camp Historian and DSVC, Gary Gunderson



The BIVOUAC is Coming Into Focus

At the Annual Encampment held in Petersburg in May, the membership voted to transition the Mid-term Encampment into a Mid-term Bivouac. Though a short business meeting will be convened, the bivouac is intended to serve as more of a social event. And though optional, Brothers are encouraged to bring a guest. It is set to be held at the McLean County Historical Society Museum (Old Court House) in Bloomington on October 16, 2021.

Doors will open at 11, lunch will be served at noon, and the 33rd Illinois Regimental Band will play from 12:30 to 1:00pm. Those electing not to join us for lunch will have a \$5.00 cover charge at the door, but Jimmy John's is catering the event and we'll have a choice of sandwiches, with special diets being available upon request. Those partaking in the luncheon will pay a fee of \$15.00 and that will also cover admission. Following a brief business meeting, which will only address agenda items approved by the Department Commander, the historical society will make a brief presentation followed by self-guided tours of the museum.

Arrangements have been made at the Chateau Hotel (formerly Jumer's), 1601 Jumer Drive, for those wanting to spend Friday night, October 15 and/or Saturday night, October 16. A rate of \$89.00 has been set up, ten rooms have been reserved, and you must call the hotel to make your own reservation. The deadline for reserving rooms is October 1, and the number to call is 309.662.2020. When calling make sure to let them know that you are with the SUVCW Department of Illinois. Illinois State University's homecoming is that weekend and you may not find any other rooms available, so be sure to call by no later than October 1. It may even be a good idea to consider calling earlier if possible.

In the not-too-distant future, I'll be sending out registration forms to all the Camps. Among other items, the form will include information about ordering sandwiches, how special diets will be handled and, of course, my mailing address. Each Brother interested in attending and having lunch must return the completed form, and either a \$15 or \$30 check, depending upon whether you're bringing a guest who is also partaking in the luncheon, made out to the "Department of Illinois", by no later than October 1.

Since 2020 with COVID-19 restrictions causing us to meet via Zoom and canceling a lot of other events, our members have talked about finding central locations to gather. If this does not work we can go back to traveling to our Camps on rotation again. We need your participation and feedback to make our order of the SUVCW even better and stronger.



Though the Illinois State Capitol is not widely known as a Civil War Memorial, there are three rooms off the beaten path - not on the regular tour - that mirror images of the Civil War. The likeness above could easily pass as that of a bivouac.

Along with my Brothers, to include PDC and CC Nick Kaup, CC Joe Kessler and, of course, Commander Hutchinson, it is my honor to serve on the site committee and we're working very hard to make our Department's first Bivouac both a meaningful and pleasant experience.

Let me close with just a few key reminders. Remember, please make your own reservations at the Chateau by October 1. Camps will be receiving the registration form in the not-too-distant future and, among other items, it will include luncheon options and details. It will also include my mailing address. Just as you are urged to make your motel reservation by October 1, we're requesting that likewise, you send your completed registration form and check to me by no later than October 1st. With questions please email me at dwildermuth59@yahoo.com.

Submitted by Br. David Wildermuth, CC



On the left is the McClean County Historical Society Museum and on the right is a photo of the 33rd Illinois Regimental Band



Chattanooga by Chuck Murphy, Camp 4

The lifespan of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) was 83 years, from 1866 to 1949. During its lifetime it convened 83 annual encampments in 23 different states and Washington DC. A quick survey indicates that the GAR met in Ohio more than any other state, and in Indianapolis more than any other city. It is somewhat surprising that the old boys even met one time each in two different border states, Maryland and Missouri. But most noticeable is that on one occasion, they actually Encamped in the Volunteer State of Tennessee - deep in the heart of Dixie. Exploring some of the highlights of the two border state Encampments, and why or how the Chattanooga event ever came about, not only makes for interesting reading, but serves a fitting instructional purpose as well.

Baltimore

The GAR convened its 16th National Encampment in Baltimore, Maryland on June 21-23, 1882. They were very pleased. They had acquired 33,000 new members in the preceding year and total membership was up to 100,000. President Arthur and General Sherman were both in attendance and 40,000 gathered to observe a huge fireworks display. The business of the day was most interesting. Three new Posts were founded in Nashville, Memphis and Chattanooga. They paid respects to three leaders that had recently passed, Steven Hurlbut, Ambrose Burnside, and James A. Garfield. And a committee reported meeting with the U.S. President to advocate for veterans preference for government jobs.

But the most pressing business of the day was addressing the extreme delay in processing Pensions. The GAR was officially on record as supporting the hiring of 167 additional clerks in the Adjutant General's office, and 169 more for the Surgeon General. They were lobbying hard to increase disability payments for arms, hands, and legs up to \$40 a month, and urged the hiring of more eye and ear doctors, and many, many more doctors who practice in the specialty of nerves. And they couldn't help but praise Colonel Scott for his untiring commitment for checking facts and completing the contents of the war's official record. The project would end up taking a generation to complete. Literally hundreds were involved in checking, rechecking, and organizing such a thorough, complete, and accurate record.

St. Louis

Politics and a downpour of rain like never before blanketed the only Encampment to be held in St. Louis. An article in the July 8, 1887 Hoosier State Chronicle, indicted that President Grover Cleveland has accepted an invitation to speak at the 21st GAR encampment in St. Louis on Sept 28 - 30. Unfortunately, he later declined the invitation as he did not want

to be a divisive figure at the reunion. He had apparently received many notes from a number of GAR Posts swearing that if he spoke at the gathering, they would decline to attend. According to an article in the September 30, 1887 Chicago Tribune, he had angered many in the GAR for attempting to return captured Confederate flags, selecting Confederates for jobs over those who wore the Blue, his general stance on Pensions and in particular, his veto of the Dependent Pension bill.

Page 1 headlines in the September 28, 1887 edition of the Chicago Tribune report "A Row in the Grand Army. "Pension Agitators Abuse The Democratic Administration - Cleveland's Partisans Reply in Kind and Withdraw From a Meeting - Rain Compels a Postponement of the Parade - Veterans Desert Their Tents for the Hotels - The Warriors Determined that No Democrat Shall Be Elected as Commander - The Union Veterans' Union."

A 30 hour rain drenched St. Louis and the boys were on edge as many had to vacate their tents for a dry spot on corridor floors in downtown hotels. No one even dared to mention that such was not a good idea. Nerves were frayed and an impromptu meeting was called to discuss the Pension problem, and 1500 showed up. You can imagine the discussion. Many who attended where found to hold "extreme" views on the Pension question. "A half-dozen speeches denouncing the Administration were made, two brave Democrats made warm replies and then called upon their political friends to follow", and precipitously chose to vacate the hall at the double-quick.

Governors from several states were in attendance, including Illinois' very own Governor Oglesby. And as always, General Sherman was there. Selecting the next Commander-in-Chief proved to be a flat out fight. The New York contingent was for General Slocum all the way and his badges and lithographs were ever-present, but his candidacy fell through. The Rebel flag episode didn't help matters and between that, how wet and cold everyone was, and the Pension fight, everyone was high spirited, you might say. Sherman declined the post of Commander-in-Chief, but they swore to vote him in anyway so he would have to accept the post. It took every bit of his considerable influence, but "Uncle Billy" was finally able to talk them down from such high stakes arm-twisting. "The Grand Army wants nothing to do with politics, but at the same time the great bulk of its members are extremely anxious to rebuke the Cleveland Administration in any way that presents itself." Selecting a "red-hot" Republican from the eastern seaboard was to be avoided at all costs too, so Judge John Patterson Rea, a strong but more moderate Republican of Minnesota, finally won out and accepted the mantle of leadership as the CinC for the 1887-1888 term.

Chattanooga

It never happened before or since, but in 1913, both the United Confederate Veterans (UCV) and GAR held their reunions in Chattanooga. The 23rd UCV Reunion gathered on May 27-29, and the 47th GAR Encampment assembled on September 18-19. Despite the city's incomparable feat of hosting 50 year reunions for both sides in the same year, generally The Great Reunion in Gettysburg on July 1 - 4, 1913, has received greater notoriety. A survey of the numbers indicates that many more former Confederates, than participated in the Gettysburg event (8,750), attended the reunion in Chattanooga (15,000), but over three times the number of Union boys that attended the Chattanooga encampment (14,000), took part in the Gettysburg gathering (44,713).

It wasn't unusual for the UCV to meet in Chattanooga. The UCV met in many of the larger more well known cities throughout the South, but the list of cities they returned to the most included Richmond, Dallas, Birmingham, and Chattanooga. As a transportation and post war industrial hub, Chattanooga had bounced back from the war in pretty good shape and by 1913, its population had exploded from single digit thousands during the war, up to 60,000 people. The economic boon of hosting two such large and well-attended events, in the same year, more than demonstrates how well organized and coordinated the public and private sectors were in pulling together for the economic, sentimental, and historic good of the community. Chattanooga was a commercial and industrial juggernaut by 1913, and was proud of what it had to offer. For both the Confederate Reunion and the GAR Encampment, the town



This 1913 GAR Badge was recently photoed in the GAR museum in Springfield. On the medallion portion it reads "Historical, Industrial, Commercial - Chattanooga Tenn. - The Dynamo of Dixie". Appreciation is extended to archivist Chuck Hill for allowing me to snap this picture, making GAR and WRC journals so readily available, and pointing me to other sources as well.

swelled to 100,000 people and easily filled the city's two dozen hotels, multiple boarding houses, spare bedrooms in many, many family dwellings, and the tent cities that had been erected for the occasion.

The community of Chattanooga was truly unique. Union leaning and former Confederate sympathizers lived in harmony and peace. They even formed the Chattanooga Encampment Association, on which both Union and Confederate veterans served. Samuel Barak McGuire (identified later in this article) conveys in his dissertation that there were Southern states having larger and more GAR Posts, especially in the border states, but none were more active than posts in Chattanooga and eastern Tennessee. Unlike most Southern cities, it was not only materially capable of hosting large, separate events for veterans from the South, and then the North, it had the rare temperament and heart to go all out for soldiers of both sides, absent prejudicial sentiments.

UCV Reunion

"Minutes of the Twenty-Third Annual Meeting and Reunion of the United Confederate Veterans, Chattanooga, Tennessee, May 27, 28, and 29, 1913" proved to be an invaluable resource. The city ponied up \$40,000 for Camp Steward, and another \$40,000 for the entertainment of the men. As usual, the government set up tents and cots for the old boys, and they were fed ample and different meals three times a day. A huge tent was erected and they could feed very nearly 5,000 at a time. Five hours were set aside for the evening meal and a staff of 250 Negroes helped out in the kitchen, in the dining hall, and everywhere in between.

Never before had the U.S. Government been so generous. Close by was Fort Oglethorpe, the designated home of the 11th U.S. Cavalry. For the first time, 500 horses were made available for many of the countless parades. 200 of Bedford Forrest's boys rode at the tail end of one parade, and the crowd went crazy. Any number of times the 12 bands and the Confederate Choir (founded in 1907) unabashedly played or sang Dixie and after each rendition, a most spirited Rebel Yell was sure to follow.

Flags were everywhere. Interspersed were Confederate flags of every kind, including flags from each of the former Confederate States and, surprisingly, "Old Glory" was as pervasive as any. Although it is unknown how many of the Confederate veterans from other former Confederate states agreed, during the proceedings Chattanoogans and east Tennesseans openly discussed that the war, the rebellion...; that secession was wrong and a dreadful, painful mistake. It was boasted that everyone in attendance was proud to be an American and fully embraced citizenship. Though they expressed an undying love for all their former commanders, Davis, Lee, Stuart, Jackson, and all the rest, they were upfront about admitting that instead of celebrating the Confederacy, they were celebrating the South.

Pretty girls and ladies of the South wearing lovely gowns, fashionable hats, and toting beautiful, eye-catching parasols were present at each and every event but, not to worry, they were carefully chaperoned. They were even front and center at the monument ceremonies. 2,000 people were on hand when the U.S. Government, represented by the Chickamauga and Chattanooga Battlefield Commission, accepted the Alabama monument. The State of Alabama allocated \$25,000 for the memorial and Alabamians boasted that in the late fall of 1863, they had more soldiers on the battlefield than did any other Confederate state, other than the Volunteer state, and they had more units deployed than did any Northern state, with the exception of Ohio.

The Chattanooga Reunion was declared to be the most successful to date. Injuries were kept to a minimum and three companies of National Guardsmen kept the picpocketers at bay, for the most part. The gray haired and uniformed boys were proud to host guests at their soiree, and included among them were the Ladies of the GAR, the Sons of Union Veterans, and the Woman's Relief Corps. The ten downtown hotels had not one thing to complain about. In addition to the 15,000 former soldiers, 35,000 others flocked to Chattanooga and a grand time was had by all.

GAR Encampment

A distinct novelty, it was totally unexpected. What on earth led the GAR to hold an encampment in a Southern state or, put more adroitly, in a former Confederate state? Tennessee was the last state to secede and though it is generally known that Union sympathies were high in eastern Tennessee, Chattanooga was always considered to be of Dixieland stock and breeding. The answer to how and why the GAR came to encamp in Dixie proved to be far more elusive than initially anticipated. At the outset it was expected that the answer would surely be found in either of the GAR Journals of the 46th (Los Angeles 1912) or the 47th National Encampments (Chattanooga 1913). Then the Confederate Veteran magazine was checked as was the "Souvenir Program", 47th National Encampment, Grand Army of the Republic,

Chattanooga, Sept. 15-20, 1913 but, astonishingly, they were of little help. Fortunately, however, a scorched earth search policy paid dividends. A July 11, 1913 article in the *Moline (IL) Dispatch* entitled "Boys In Blue Meet in the Deep South", and another in the July 29, 1913 *Chattanooga News* entitled "How Chattanooga Was Selected", proved to be excellent primary sources. And more recently, a dissertation written in 2015 by Samuel Barak McGuire, entitled "East Tennessee's Grand Army: Union Veterans Confront Race, Reconciliation, and Civil War Memory 1884-1913", proved to be an excellent find.

The planning committee for the Great Reunion in Gettysburg from July 1-4 in 1913 was organized two years prior, in 1911. The GAR and the UCV were both invited to help with the planning and there were conversations going on all over the country about the upcoming 50th anniversary. All the talk about the 50 year reunion in Gettysburg, sparked similar discussions about a 50 year reunion in Chattanooga. Throughout the war, eastern Tennessee remained loyal to the Union and once it was over, GAR Posts thrived in the area. Some GAR members finally put pen to paper and sent an invitation to the GAR, during its 46th encampment in Los Angeles, to hold next year's encampment in Chattanooga. Discussion of next year's encampment at the Los Angeles gathering proved inconclusive, though some were strongly endorsing Denver for the 1913 encampment. There was some push back, however, as many of the old boys were in their 70s and lived east of the Mississippi River. The sole income for many were their Pensions and they were indeed leery of both the physical and financial exhaustion associated with trekking out west, especially two years in a row.

Obviously, the invitation intrigued the new GAR commander. Along with his adjutant general, In June 1913, GAR CinC Judge Albert B. Beers, made a trip to Chattanooga to confer with local officials about hosting the GAR's Encampment in the fall, on the 50th anniversary of the battle of Chickamauga. The Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce balked at the idea, especially since it already had its hands full cleaning up from the UCV reunion that had just culminated on Memorial Day eve. But Beers was obviously very eloquent and talked about how much confidence he had in the city, and how symbolic it would be for the Boys in Blue to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Chickamauga and Chattanooga battles, on site. He also impressed upon them the sheer numbers of people he could guarantee would attend, emphasizing the economic and patriotic boon for the city. He was very persuasive.

According to the Monday, September 15, 1913 issue of the *The Tampa Daily Times*, 14,000 Union veterans and GAR and Allied Orders would gather in Chattanooga for its 47th National Encampment. Of course, it noted further that this is the first time that the organization has assembled in a southern city. According to the "Official Souvenir Program", joining the GAR in Chattanooga were the Sons of Veterans, the Sons of Veterans Auxiliary, the National Association of Naval Veterans U.S.A. 1861-1865, the National Association of Ex-Prisoners of War, the National Association of Civil War Musicians, the Society of the Cumberland, the Loyal Legion, the U.S. Signal Corps Association, the Woman's Relief Corps, the Daughters of the GAR, the National Association of Army Nurses of the Civil War, and the Daughters of Veterans. As you might imagine, the number of meetings was through the roof.

Monday, September 15 was Lookout Mountain Day. Tuesday was Chickamauga and the 11th Cavalry Parade Day, and Missionary Ridge Day was on Wednesday. Guided tours were offered and the boys were free to roam around and trace their 50 year old footsteps, as best they could. Emotions ran high on tour days and commiserations were heartfelt and meaningful. Far from it, the GAR Encampment was anything but a celebration of the South, but for the citizens of Chattanooga, the GAR had high praise, high praise indeed.

In his paper mentioned above, McGuire indicated that the GAR in Tennessee had been dwindling since 1890, and the GAR Encampment in 1913 was its zenith, its "swan song". He added that from there, it was all downhill and by 1936, Tennessee forfeited its GAR charter. But in terms of reconciliation, it left a huge and ever lasting footprint by hosting the only GAR Encampment to be held in a former Confederate state. In the Journal of the Forty-Seventh National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, Chattanooga Tennessee, September 18 and 19, is the following: "No more generous or wholesouled reception could be given by the people of any community to a visiting organization than was given by the people of Chattanooga to the Forty-Seventh Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic. The remembrance of the hospitality and the geniality of the people, the magnificence of the scenery, the absorbing interest of the battlefields, the spectacular reproduction of the assault on Lookout Mountain, the storming at Missionary Ridge by the 17th U. S. Infantry, and its defense by the Tennessee National Guards, illustrative of the actual engagement, will ever remain fragrant and lasting in the memories of those who were privileged to be present at this Encampment."