



The Railsplitter

The Newsletter of the Department of Illinois

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War



Summer 2024

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COMMANDER'S CORNER



Greetings Brothers!

By the time you read this the National Encampment will be behind us and the rest of the year before us! We have hit the ground running with two staff meetings already under our belt, and I couldn't be more pleased with the momentum the Appointed Officers and Committee Chairmen have taken. Camp Commanders and Secretaries, please be on the lookout for emails from these Brothers as they move forward with the missions they have been tasked with.

As was told to the officers on the staff call, our mission this year will be to move the Department of Illinois forward and in a direction that will make each and every Brother proud to say they are from the Department of Illinois. Some of the ways we will be

doing this is by making searchable online databases for our programs; a database of all "Last Union Veteran" burials in each county, an interactive map of all GAR Highway Markers on Route 6 within the borders of Illinois, and an online listing of all Civil War Memorials (definitely a multi-year project), just to name a few.

Brothers, I again thank you for the opportunity to serve and, most importantly to serve you and honor the men who fought to preserve the Union from 1861 to 1865.

Yours in Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty,
Brother Bobby Welch, PCC
Department Commander
Department of Illinois

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



Every day I get information that food stores, clothing businesses, and many chains are in bankruptcy. The thought that crosses my mind is - all of the people who worked in these places are now out of a job. How many of our brothers are in this horrible condition. No job, no money, but they still have food to buy, rent and bills to pay. Besides PRAYING for them, what can we do? I'm looking for answers. Let me know what you think.

In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty,
Chaplain Jerry

Fraternity
Charity
Loyalty

PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTION



As the newly appointed Patriotic Instructor (PI) for the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War Department of Illinois, I wanted to take a moment and introduce myself.

My name is Gerald Sonnenberg and, as in a lot of camps, I wear many hats. I currently serve as the secretary and historian of the Col. Friedrich K. Hecker Camp #443 based in Shiloh, Illinois. Shiloh is next to Belleville, Illinois. I also serve as editor of our camp newsletter [Lest We Forget](#), and I manage the social media on our [Facebook](#) and [website](#). I joined the SUVCW in 2020.

First, I would also like to get to know you. If you are a camp PI or you are a camp member who can supply contact information for your PI, please email me at gsonnenberg@hotmail.com. I have a second email you can use at lestweforget1861@outlook.com. I want to have a list of the camp PIs to better communicate with them directly. Please also send me a link if you have a camp website. I know we are also looking at ways to help make your PI jobs easier.

I'm still learning the job of Department PI. Other than reports, I see the job as primarily assisting the camp patriotic instructors in any way I can as we help educate our camps and communities about the Civil War and the sacrifices of our ancestors to preserve the Union. I want to provide resources to you, as well as help you come up with ideas for patriotic instruction if you need it. Sometimes, topics are just providing knowledge in general about the Civil War, life during that time period and the effects of the war upon American society.

Our Hecker Camp PI, Richard Piper, comes up with some interesting topics each month; several of which I've included in our newsletter as articles. The most recent had to do with [Civil War nursing and medical care](#), which is also an article on our website.

I have a tab on the [Hecker Camp website](#) called [Regimental Histories/Resources](#) where I'm posting general information about Illinois during the Civil War, as well as regimental histories as I come across them. Our past camp historian Jon Stacy, as well as others produced some well written articles that I'm utilizing. You'll also find information on the resources page such as a list of patriotic holidays and other special days that can be used as topics. I'm still working on it and adding more information, but the page is live, so check back often. If you have ideas that would be helpful for the page, please let me know.

As for me, I have a liberal arts degree in general history, though I did study to be a teacher. Instead, I served 31 years in the Air Force and Air Force Reserve (12 active, 19 reserve) before retiring from the service in 2017 as a master sergeant. I served as a security policeman my first four years, then in public affairs for 23 years, and finally as an Air Force Reserve historian for my final four.

I work for the Department of Veterans Affairs now in Public Affairs as a marketing and communication specialist. My varied skills as a public affairs officer (journalist, editor, graphic artist, media specialist) for more than 30 years in the DOD, Federal government and civilian organizations are helping me promote the SUVCW and Hecker Camp.

Please feel free to email me any time with any questions or ideas.

Gerald Sonnenberg, USAF retired
Col. Friedrich K. Hecker Camp #443 Secretary
Dept. of Illinois Patriotic Instructor



**PROMOTING
PATRIOTISM**

“To perpetuate the memory “

Courtesy Br Chuck Murphy

In the photo immediately below on the left, on the banks of the Fox River, is GAR Hall and Museum in downtown Aurora where the 141st Department of Illinois' SUVCW Annual Encampment was held May 18, 2024.

Courtesy Br Chuck Murphy



ON FILE IN THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM IN SPRINGFIELD, IL, GAR POST 20 QUARTERLY REPORTS FROM 1877 TO 1899 INDICATE THAT DURING THE SPAN OF TWENTY YEARS, THE POST REACHED A HIGH WATER MARK OF 291 MEMBERS IN 1891.



NESTLED IN THE STOLP ISLAND HISTORIC DISTRICT IN DOWNTOWN AURORA, GAR HALL AND MUSEUM WAS ADDED TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES IN 1984. INTERESTINGLY, IN A FEW GAR QUARTERLY REPORTS IN THE 1880S AND 1890S, SOME POST 20 RECORDS REVEAL THAT MEETINGS WERE HELD ON "ISLAND STREET", "RIVER STREET", "FOX ST. AT THE ISLAND" AND "ON THE ISLAND".

BUILT IN 1877-78, AT FIRST GLANCE THE GAR HALL AND MUSEUM IN AURORA HAS THE APPEARANCE OF A TINY CHURCH, BUT THE SILHOUETTE OF THE BRONZE SENTRY POSTED ATOP THE CUPOLA GIVES IT AWAY AS A PICTURESQUE, QUAIN, AND MOST INVITING SANCTUARY WHERE THE FORMER BLUEBOYS OF POST 20 SHARED THEIR WAR-TIME STORIES, TALKED ABOUT THEIR FAMILIES AND POLITICS (not necessarily in that order), AND CONVENED THEIR FORMAL MEETINGS. IT IS A MOST HISTORIC ENCLAVE. IN THE LATE 1880S POST 20 MET AT 7:30PM ON THE 2ND AND 4TH FRIDAYS.

DS DON SHERMAN REPORTED THAT TWENTY-FOUR BROTHERS ATTENDED THE ENCAMPMENT FROM EIGHT DIFFERENT CAMPS, INCLUDING CUSTER CAMP #1 WILMETTE, SHERIDAN CAMP #2 AURORA, MCCLERNAND CAMP #4 SPRINGFIELD, HARDENBERGH CAMP #39 TINLEY PARK, E.F.DUTTON CAMP #49 SYCAMORE, BRYNER CAMP #67 PEORIA, US GRANT CAMP #1863 SCHAUMBURG, AND OLD GLORY CAMP #6165 CHICAGO.

SNAPPED BY BR CHUCK MURPHY, PICTURED IN THE TOP CENTER PHOTO IS DC GARY GUNDERSON RECOGNIZING SHERIDAN CAMP #2 AS CAMP OF THE YEAR. ACCEPTING ON BEHALF OF CAMP 2 ARE LEFT TO RIGHT DT AND PCC LEE LASSEIGNE, AND DPI AND CC MICHAEL ZAFRAN. IMMEDIATELY BENEATH THAT PHOTO IS A PICTURE TAKEN BY DS DON SHERMAN OF DC GUNDERSON AWARDED BR CHUCK MURPHY THE BROTHER OF THE YEAR AWARD FOR EDITING THE DEPT NEWSLETTER, THE "RAILSPLITTER".

BR ERIC PRY, OF SHERIDAN CAMP #2, SERVES AS DIRECTOR OF THE GAR MILITARY MUSEUM LOCATED AT 23 E DOWNER PLACE IN AURORA. FOLLOWING THE ENCAMPMENT, I CONTACTED HIM ABOUT THE MUSEUM'S HISTORY - AND IS HE EVER KNOWLEDGABLE! THE NAME OF THE STREET THAT THE MUSEUM IS LOCATED ON HAS CHANGED DOWN THROUGH THE YEARS. THAT IS WHY IN THE GOLD BOX ABOVE RIGHT, IT'S LOCATED ON FOX ST BUT TODAY IT IS ON DOWNER. I WISH NOW I WOULD HAVE TAKEN SOME TIME TO LOOK AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD IN ORDER TO ACQUIRE A BETTER FEEL FOR THE ISLAND, AND THE HISTORIC BUILDINGS THEREUPON. **BR ERIC** IS A FOUNTAIN OF INFO AND HIS DESK PHONE NUMBER IS 630.256.3348.



SITTING IN THE TOP PHOTO JUST PRIOR TO THE START OF THE ENCAMPMENT MEETING IS DC GARY GUNDERSON. STANDING FROM LEFT TO RIGHT BEHIND HIM ARE 1ST COUNCILMAN WAYNE WEHRHEIM, DS DON SHERMAN, DT LEE LASSEIGNE, DSVC BOBBY WELCH, AND DPI MICHAEL ZAFRAN. FOLLOWING THE ELECTIONS THAT WERE HELD DURING THE ENCAMPMENT, BEING SWORN IN BY CHAPLAIN JERRY FROM LEFT TO RIGHT IN THE PHOTO BELOW ARE 1ST COUNCILMAN WAYNE WEHRHEIM, DSVC MICHAEL ZAFRAN, DT LEE LASSEIGNE, DEPT COMMANDER BOBBY WELCH, AND DS DON SHERMAN. IN THE LEFT HAND MARGIN ON THE COVER PAGE OF THE NEWSLETTER PLEASE FIND A LISTING OF ALL THE ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICERS OF THE DEPT OF ILLINOIS FOR 2024/2025. COURTESY BR CHUCK MURPHY.



EDITOR'S NOTE

IT IS A GOOD PROBLEM TO HAVE. SOMETIMES WE HAVE MORE ARTICLES AND PHOTOS SUBMITTED THAN SPACE PERMITS IN A SINGLE ISSUE OF THE NEWSLETTER. HOWEVER, WITH YOUR UNDERSTANDING AND PATIENCE, WE'RE ABLE TO PUBLISH SUCH ITEMS IN SUBSEQUENT NEWSLETTERS. WHAT FOLLOWS IS ONE SUCH ARTICLE. DEPARTMENT HISTORIAN RAYMOND LIMBACH, WAS ONE OF THE FEATURED SPEAKERS AT THIS YEAR'S PROCEEDINGS AT THE STEPHENSON MEMORIAL HELD APRIL 13, 2024 AT ROSE HILL CEMETERY, PETERSBURG, IL. HE WAS THOUGHTFUL ENOUGH TO SEND US NOT ONLY A PHOTO OF THE COVER OF BENJAMIN STEPHENSON'S MEMOIR, BUT THE COMPLETE TEXT OF HIS TALK FOUND IMMEDIATELY BELOW. BROTHERS MICHAEL ZAFRAN AND NICK KAUP SUBMITTED PHOTOS OF THE EVENT AND THEY CAN BE FOUND BELOW AS WELL. SPECIAL THANKS TO DH LIMBACH AND BROS ZAFRAN AND KAUP.

THE PHOTOS SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE BODY OF BR RAY'S REMARKS, TO INCLUDE A PICTURE OF THE STEPHENSON MEMORIAL SHOT GLASSES, COURTESY BR CHUCK MURPHY

Good afternoon, Brothers and Sisters. We are here today to honor Dr. Benjamin F. Stephenson, (1823-1871) the founder of the Grand Army of the Republic. While doing research, I narrowed my sources to the one who knew him the most, his daughter Mary Harriet Stephenson, who wrote a memoir dedicated to her father and his dedication to the Veteran Union Soldiers and their families, published in 1894. In her dedication she wrote – "Loyalty, Fraternity and Charity; that logo which had dried the tears of so many soldiers, widows and orphans of the War, which has enabled the scarred and aged

veterans to tread the last steps of his way to his reward surrounded by comforts and honored by his country...". "...Great quantities of my fathers' papers were destroyed soon after his death by my mother. She did not think them valuable. Had she known their importance she would not have destroyed them."



BROTHER KAUP SNAPPED THIS PHOTO OF PDC JIM LYON STANDING TO THE LEFT AND IN THE SHADOW OF THE STEPHENSON MEMORIAL, AS HE EMCEED PROCEEDINGS AT THE STEPHENSON MEMORIAL .

His father, James Stephenson was a man who was of high esteem and love, the ideal father, who was kind but firm. He had a philosopher's nature, calm and logical – he also had a strong religious conviction and believed that the religious code was for everyday use.... His mother, Margaret Stephenson, was one of those model housewives, energetic and capable, warm-hearted and hospitable, a woman of extraordinary spirit and determination.

With this strong family upbringing, Benjamin Stephenson, upon coming of age, left home for Chicago and became a graduate of Rush Medical College on February 7, 1850. He returned to Petersburg and opened his practice and came into contact with and received impressions concerning both the bitterness and sweetness of human nature. This was also the time when Dr. B. F. Stephenson immersed himself in and studied the works of William Shakespeare, the Great Bard.

"On 30 March 1855, the marriage of Dr. Stephenson to Miss Barbara B. Moore was celebrated at Springfield Illinois...and concerning the domestic relations of my father, I can truly say, that he was a most affectionate and exemplary husband and father...".

Soon after his marriage Dr. Stephenson was solicited by the trustees and faculty of the prospective Iowa Medical College for a professorship. He agreed and from 1855 through 1857 he lectured on General, Special and Surgical Anatomy.

"Dr. Stephenson was always interested in politics, but the beginning of the Taylor and Fillmore administration was the time from which may be dated the commencement of that enthusiastic, constant, and active interest which



WE APPRECIATE DH LIMBACH SUBMITTING THIS PHOTO OF HIMSELF.



BROTHER NICK TOOK THIS PHOTO OF NATIONAL SVC KEVIN ANDERSON OFFERING REMARKS.

characterized his later years. Minds both north and south of the Mason Dixon's Line were being agitated by the slavery question, and from the beginning of his administration to the civil war, slavery was the all-absorbing topic...He loathed, as such a nature as his must ever loath, slavery, that foul blot, that plague worse than leprosy, since it destroys souls, as well as bodies, wherever it exists.

With the election of Abraham Lincoln as President, the South seceded, and soon after the first shots of the Civil War came with the news from Fort Sumpter. President Lincoln's call for seventy-five thousand troops, was responded to by hundreds of thousands. Dr. Benjamin F. Stephenson was among the first to offer his services and enlisted at Jacksonville Illinois. He was appointed surgeon of the 14th Illinois Infantry Volunteers, Col. John M. Palmer commander. His regiment remained at Camp Duncan, Jacksonville until the 16th of June 1861, and left for Quincy. During the night of July 4th, a report came that Union men were being murdered at Canton, Missouri.

By mid-September, while guarding the North Missouri Railroad, Dr. Stephenson was relieved of his duties and replaced by Dr. G. T. Allen. It was not the result of his loyalty to the cause, or any dereliction in the performance of duty. The officers of his regiment signed the following testimonial:

"We the undersigned officers of the 14th Regiment, Illinois Volunteers, feeling it to be our duty in order to do justice to our former surgeon, Dr. B.F Stephenson, of Menard County Illinois, to state that his discharge from service to this regiment is not because of professional skill, or from any act of his in private relations, but, on the contrary, his conduct as a gentleman has been such as no man could take exception to, and that we believe he is excelled by few in profession, having had charge of our regiment for near four months, and not having lost a single man under his immediate treatment since his connection with the regiment, ... and some of us have good reason to know, that his discharge has been the result of a wicked combination, brought about by persons having a personal animosity against him outside the regiment."

The 14th Illinois regiment was at Fort Donelson when Dr. Stephenson rejoined it, having been reappointed in February 1862...just as the garrison surrendered. They were now a portion of the Army of Tennessee, under Grant, and having a definite object in view... Shiloh. Dr. Stephenson won for himself outstanding praise during the battle...In a document addressed to Gen. Beloit, and recommending Surgeon Stephenson for a position in the projected Ranger Services he wrote: "In the bloody conflicts of Shiloh and



BROTHER MICHAEL ZAFRAN TOOK THIS PICTURE OF MULLIGAN'S BATTERY JUST AS THE CANNON WAS BEING FIRED.



BROTHER KAUP TOOK THIS PHOTO OF CO. A 14TH MICHIGAN INF. REGT HONOR GUARD.

During the winters, Dr. Stephenson improved the time and varied the monotony of camp life by giving lectures and demonstrations in anatomy.... **Nearly all the recipients afterwards became practicing physicians.**

Courtesy DH Limbach
Text box courtesy Br Murphy

Hatchie, he faithfully and persistently prosecuted his duties, despite of shot, and shell and charging squadrons round him.”

Dr. Stephenson was appointed Brigade Surgeon, and for before the battle and for meritorious service during the battle at Shiloh, Governor Yates conferred upon him the rank of Major. After the siege of Corinth and engagement in the vicinity, they arrived at Memphis sometime after the capture.... While stationed at Bolivar, Tennessee, a young surgeon was assigned to Dr. Stephenson. He gave the new assistant his hospital book and told him to go to the hospital tent and see what the men needed....

The first patient he encountered demanded “What are you doing with that book?” The budding army surgeon opened the book, took out his pen and put the question “What do you want?” The reply he got was “I want my breakfast.” The young budding army surgeon wrote in the book and went to the next patient. One desired a wife, another a discharge. Some wanted their mother, others to go to Europe or China. The majority, however, wanted a furlough home. Dr. Stephenson upon reading the notes found humor with the requests....

On the day after the principal engagement of Corinth the 14th was on their way to reinforce General Rosecrans and engaged the enemy at the Big Hatches River. It

was a hard-fought battle which the Union forces won but at a high price. In his report of this battle, Brig. Gen. James C. Veatch wrote: “Major Stephenson, Senior Surgeon of the Brigade, devoted himself to the relief of the wounded, and his skill, energy, and devotion to duty were seen and felt by my whole command.”



PDC KAUP TOOK THIS PHOTO OF BR ZAFRAN AS HE SANG THE NATIONAL ANTHEM.



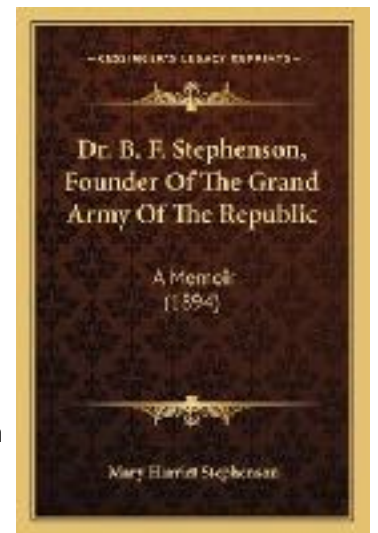
BR NICK SUBMITTED THIS PICTURE OF DC GUNDERSON SPEAKING AT THIS YEAR'S COMMEMORATION.

Their next objective was Vicksburg, from the rear.... During the siege of Vicksburg, Dr. Stephenson occupied the house of Col. Durden for a hospital. Col. Durden was now destitute from the war, and the good Dr. saw that they were supplied with food and protected from abuse. Major Nolte supplied the following narrative to his daughter Mary: “Your father’s goodness of heart was not alone confined to his friends but took in all suffering humanity. When Vicksburg surrendered, your father could not dispose of his sick and wounded in time to accompany the regiment on to Jackson...

“On July 5th, I found your father and we started on horseback to overtake the regiment. Before we started, we took every liquor bottle in the

absence of medical stores. The rebel prisoners, paroled, had started home were on the same road. Exhausted, and sick, they lined the road from Vicksburg to Baker’s Creek. We traveled the same road. The doctor would stop at every group of rebels, checked them medically and then handed out a bottle of whisky; and so, it went. When we arrived at Baker’s Creek, where our roads diverged, the sick, exhausted rebels had all our whiskey and many a ‘God bless you’ did the doctor receive....”

... “No surgeon could, in the 14th, fill the place of ‘Old Butch’” as was Dr Stephenson’s nickname. “Often, I heard the inquiry, ‘Where is Old Butch? Is Old Butch present?’ When the regiment was preparing for battle If your father was with us, we went into battle with lighter hearts, because his care and skill would fix us up all right again, if wounded... Whether on the skirmish line, or in the stubborn conflict in line of battle, where shot and



shell plowed their deepest furrows there was glorious “Old Butch,” and there he stayed until forced to the amputating tent.”

After the Meridian Raid in Mississippi (February 3 to March 6, 1864) led by Maj. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman, the 14th returned to Vicksburg, then to Cairo, Illinois. They took cattle designated for Sherman’s army all the way to Athens, Alabama...On 25 May 1864, Dr. Stephenson’s term expired, and he returned home, and was mustered out on 24 June 1864.

After leaving the army he moved to Springfield, Illinois and commenced the practice of medicine. At Camp Butler, Dr. Stephenson was made a member of the examining board of surgeons, and took charge of the hospital from 12 December 1865 to January 31, 1866. He was now a physician of a large practice with considerable reputation. His kind heart saw many veterans and their families who could never pay him a cent... “Greater love hath no man than this, that he should lay down his life for his friend.” The soldier had done this for his country, and that country had promised to care for his helpless family. But the country, though well meaning was slow and in the meantime widows and orphans were starving. He gave employment to soldiers, their widows whenever he could, and induced others to employ them. He treated them free of charge.



ALONG WITH HIS SPEECH, DH LIMBACH SUBMITTED THIS PHOTO OF BENJAMIN STEPHENSON.



BR KAUP ALSO TOOK THIS PHOTO OF LARRY WERLINE OFFERING REMARKS IN THE PERSON OF PRESIDENT GRANT.

In January 1866 he conceived the idea of a National Soldiers’ Mutual Benefit Society, whose motto should be Loyalty, Fraternity, and Charity, and was called the Grand Army of the Republic. With only some encouragement, the majority thought it visionary but impracticable. He hand-wrote all the rules and regulations without the help of anyone else. Then submitted the manuscript to Governor Oglesby, who approved the work, but thought the plan of organization would not succeed. Dr. Stephenson, with his energetic enthusiasm, now pushed on the organization rapidly. He hired men and sent them out, at his own expense, to organize Posts in his own state of Illinois, and then branch out to others. He succeeded in organizing forty Posts which grew into a National Organization.

On 30 August 1871 Dr. Benjamin F. Stephenson died at 10 A.M. He had just turned 48 years old, and in the prime of his manhood. Interned in the country cemetery at Rock Creek, but later reinterred by the G.A.R Post 71 on the 29th of August 1882, and now lies in Rose Hill Cemetery, Petersburg Illinois.



In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty
DH Raymond Limbach

BRYNER CAMP #67 PEORIA NEWS

Five years ago the camp, along with donations from the Department and National, helped to raise funds to partially restore and relocate what is believed to be one of the first public Civil War monuments in Illinois. The monument, originally dedicated in October 1866, stood on the courthouse square in downtown Peoria, until it was removed in 1964 to make way for a new courthouse. It was deemed to be too weathered to be placed back on the courthouse square and was instead, relocated on park district property and later removed to the Springdale Cemetery in Peoria.

The money raised for the project was not enough to restore the 600+ names that were formerly in raised relief around the lower portion of the marker, and It was decided to leave as is. The cemetery authority has affixed lighting for the project.

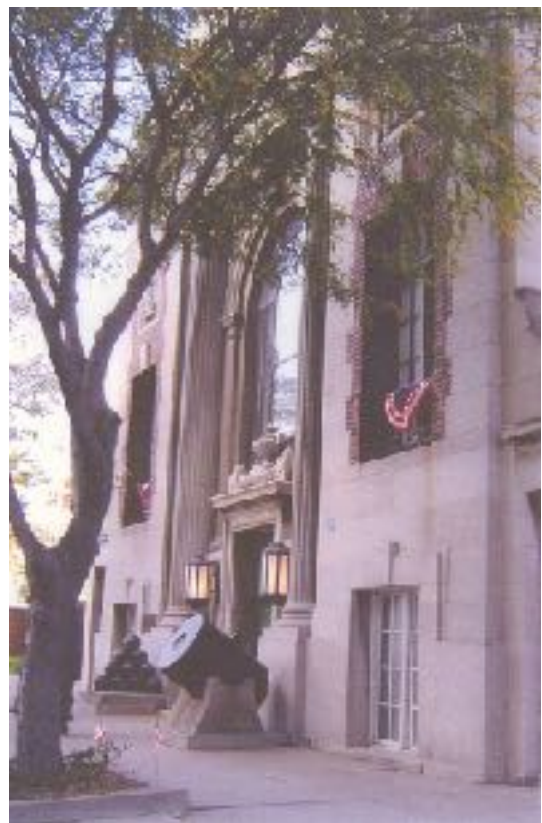
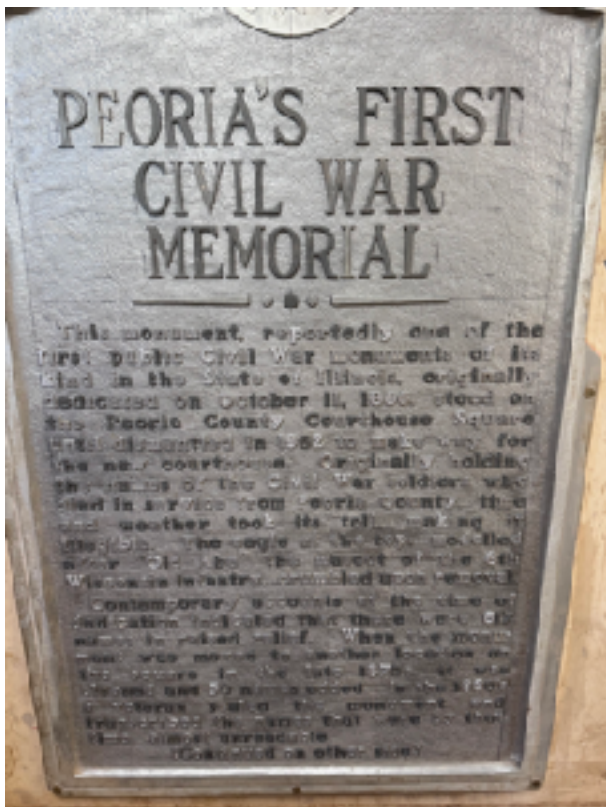
This past fall, Br Joe Hutchinson, along with project chair Bob Hoffer, decided that it was past time for a plaque to describe the monument and its significance. They appeared before the board with a proposal that Bryner Camp would acquire a plaque from the same company that the SAR had purchased its plaque, which is already positioned at Soldier's Hill. For aesthetic purposes, there was consensus that the two plaques should appear to be as much of a matched set as possible. Funds were raised by the camp and graciously matched by the Dept of Illinois and the National Order. It would be approximately 6 months lead time according to the foundry. Br Joe received a photo of the pattern for the plaque, as exhibited in the photo below on the left. It is expected to be cast by the time this issue of the Railsplitter is published. Springdale Cemetery will install the mounting pole. The camp is hoping to hold a ceremony in October near the time of the original dedication date.

There is also important news regarding the G.A.R. Hall in Peoria (Pictured below right). The Central Illinois Landmarks Foundation (CILF), who has owned the hall for the past 50 years, has been struggling the last several years and has been unable to raise funds to repair, maintain and operate the hall. This spring the roof in the front portion has begun to leak, and last summer one of the auditorium air conditioning units stopped working. Br Hutchinson had service come inspect the unit and it was determined that the 20+ year old unit needed complete replacement. This along with the need for tens of thousands of dollars for other work has caused the organization to reassess what to do.

Due to the lack of funds and danger of running out of money to pay the utilities, the CILF decided to put the building up for sale and realtor, Zach Oyler, was tasked to privately market it. Local preservationist and the owner/redeveloper of many downtown buildings, Kurt Huber, expressed interest and a letter of understanding was drawn up. The CILF would transfer the hall to Mr. Huber for the amount remaining on the bank note that the foundation had taken out in 2008 for remodeling the restrooms, kitchen, and complete the lower level dining room. While it seems like a small sum, the building requires thousands of dollars of work but Mr. Huber has pledged to keep the building and restore it for further use. It remains to be seen if the Bryner Camp will continue to meet there. Negotiations will be needed as the camp cannot afford rent. Closing on the building is expected in the coming weeks as Mr. Huber wants to get started on roof repairs ASAP.

The camp has had a flurry of applications the past month with two approved and one in process of completion. The camp thanks PDC Nick Kaup and Bryner Camp Brother Mike Snedeker for forwarding two of the applications.

Submitted by Joe Hutchinson, Col Bryner Camp 67



SHERIDAN CAMP #2 AURORA NEWS



June 23, 2024

James Cleggett Memorial Dedication

Lincoln Cemetery, Blue Island, IL



PICTURED ABOVE ARE BROTHERS WHO ATTENDED THE CLEGGETT MEMORIAL DEDICATION. STANDING FROM LEFT TO RIGHT ARE TIMOTHY MARCUS, CC OF HARDENBERG CAMP #39 TINLEY PARK, DSVC AND CC OF SHERIDAN CAMP #2 AUORORA, MICHAEL ZAFRAN, PDC AND SVR DEPT OF IL, STUART STEFANY, SVC CAMP #2, BRIAN CONROY, BROTHER BOB KUREK, CHAPLAIN JERRY KOWALSKI, PDC GARY GUNDERSON, PDC STEVEN WESTLAKE, PCC AND DT, LEE LASSEIGNE, AND BTOHTER RICH STANCZAK. APPRECIATION IS EXTENDED TO BR ZAFAN FOR SUBMITTING THE ABOVE PHOTO AND IDENTIFYING THOSE PICTURED. COUTESY BR CHUCK MURPHY.



IN THE PHOTO ON THE LEFT ARE GINA DENHAM OF LONDON, ENGLAND AND DC BOBBIE WELCH. PICTURED ON THE RIGHT ARE PDC STUART STEFANY AND GINA.





PCC and DT Lee Lasseigne writes below a condensed version of the dedication of the Cleggett memorial and how it came to pass. “GINA DENHAM IS A DESCENDENT OF ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF THE LONDON BRANCH OF AMERICAN CIVIL WAR VETERANS AND SHE IS CURRENTLY SERVING AS HONORABLE SECRETARY. SHE HAS DONE A LOT OF RESEARCH AND HAS WRITTEN A COUPLE OF BOOKS ABOUT THESE BOYS IN BLUE. ONE OF THE OTHER FOUNDERS OF THE ORDER IS JAMES HENRY CLEGGETT, WHO IS FEATURED ALONG WITH JAMES TAPLIN IN ‘THE LANDSMAN & THE LIEUTENANT’. GINA’S RESEARCH BROUGHT HER TO LINCOLN CEMETERY IN BLUE ISLAND WHERE CLEGGETT WAS BURIED IN AN UNMARKED GRAVE. SHE REACHED OUT TO BR STUART STEFANY AND HE CONTACTED ME AS OUR CAMP HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN OBTAINING HUNDREDS OF MARKERS OF CIVIL WAR VETERANS. I HELPED OBTAIN THE HEADSTONE AND THE CEMETERY DIRECTOR GRACIOUSLY INSTALLED IT. OUR CAMP PUT TOGETHER THE DEDICATION CEREMONY AND GINA CAME TO BE PART OF IT.” PARAPHRASING THE PROGRAM THAT BR LEE SUBMITTED, AMONG OTHERS, SPEAKERS INCLUDED HIMSELF, LUTHER JOHNSON, 29TH USCT, DSVC MICHAEL ZAFRAN, CHAPLAIN JERRY KOWALSKI, GINA DENHAM, DC BOBBIE WELCH, AND PCINC STEVE MICHAELS.



SPEAKING ABOVE IN THE FAR LEFT PHOTO OS PCINC MICHAELS. PLEASE NOTICE AT THE FOOT OF THE PODIUM IS THE PLAQUE THAT PDC STUART STEFANY MADE IN HONOR OF THE AMERICANS AND THE MEN AND WOMEN OF ENGLAND WHO SERVED IN THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR, AND THEN RETURNED OR MOVED TO ENGLAND FOLLOWING THE WAR. IN THE MIDDLE PICTURE IS COMMANDER LUTHER JOHNSON, 29TH USCT, AND ON THE FAR RIGHT IS CHAPLAIN JERRY. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE CAMP’S FACEBOOK PAGE.

Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC)

THE PHOTO ON THE RIGHT IS OF NJROTC CADET LINCOLN CULP, OF WHEELING IL HIGH SCHOOL, WITH PDC NICK KAUP, DEPT ROTC COORDINATOR. COURTESY PDC NICK KAUP



THE PHOTO OF PDC GARY GUNDERSON ON THE LEFT, WEARING HIS PDC BADGE, WAS TAKEN AS THE MAY ENCAMPMENT CAME TO A CLOSE. COURTESY BR CHUCK MURPHY

Three PDCs attended the annual encampment: including Bros **Stuart Stefany**, **Steven Westlake**, and **Jim Lyon**. Courtesy Br Chuck Murphy.

DPI Gerald Sonnenberg submitted this link to the the National Patriotic Instructor website. Br Gerald recommends it as a valuable resource for camps and especially, patriotic instructors as it offers a broad range of topics and ideas for your consideration: [Patriotic Education | Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War \(suvcw.org\)](https://www.suvcw.org).

Appreciation is extended to all who submitted items for the newsletter. Due to a shortage of space, look for your submissions related to Memorial Day, Flag Day, and 4th of July to be included in the fall newsletter. Your understanding and support are very much appreciated. Courtesy Br Chuck



THE BEAUTIFUL PHOTO ON THE RIGHT IS A PRELUDE OF OUR UPCOMING FALL NEWSLETTER.

