



Volume 21, No. 3

The Veteran

January - March 2008

The London Branch of American Civil War Veterans

By George G. Kane

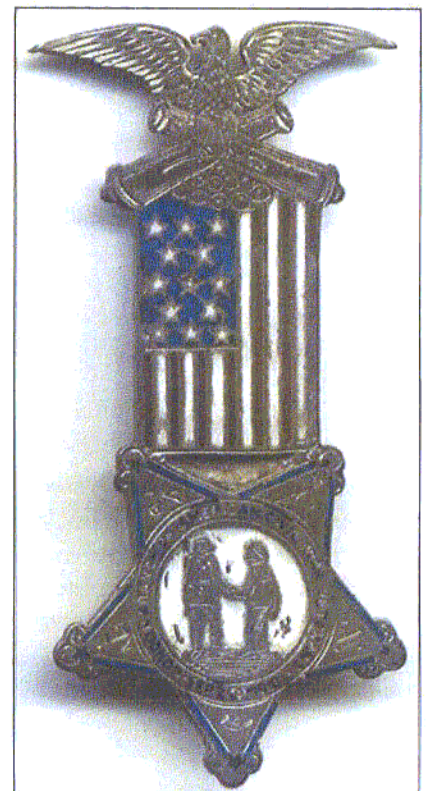
It's been estimated that during the civil war, one third of the combatants were born outside the continental United States. Approximately 150,000 Union soldiers came from Great Britain. Included in this total were men of English, Scottish, and Welsh ancestry. After the war, some of these men decided to return to their native land. Around 1890, the United States government ended the ban on sending pensions to veterans in foreign lands. After the lifting of the ban, the annual pension statistics began to list pensions being mailed to foreign countries. This data uncovers a small but hardy band of English veterans of the American civil war. On September 20th, 1910, a group of 28 veterans came together at London's Ragged School Mission to form a fraternal society that they called the London Branch, American Civil War Veterans. The genesis behind this organization begins with John Davis, a union sailor during the American civil war.

In 1861, a 14-year old John Davis traveled to New York from his home in Hampshire, England, and enlisted in the U. S. Navy in January of 1862. Davis, who was the youngest "acting-Ensign" in the Federal Navy, served in the Union mortar fleet, which saw duty at the capture of New Orleans and the battle of Vicksburg. In 1863 he transferred to the *USS Tulip*, a 101-foot steam-screw gunboat. While in route to the Washington Navy Yard on November 11, 1864, the *Tulip's* boiler exploded, killing most of the 57-man crew. Only Davis and two others survived the blast. He was later promoted to 2nd Lieutenant. Soon after the end of the war, Davis traveled to Australia to try his hand at gold mining. He failed miserably and returned to England in 1867. Around 1877 he had his "soul saved at a Moody meeting" and became a missionary "trying to win souls". Working for the London City Mission, John Davis was placed in charge of a small mission in Bermondsey, the poorest section of London.

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(right) **London Branch, American Civil War Veterans' Pin.**

On the reverse of the pin is stamped: "Sterling Silver / Toye, 57 Theobalds / Rd., London". The pin is 3 1/16 inches in height. Toye & Co. still exists, although at another location and after several mergers. Alas, 57 Theobalds Road in London is now a Starbucks. (Photo courtesy of Everitt Bowles)



The President's Message

Dear Members:

The Holiday season is over and once again, I'm beginning to think of our annual meeting coming up on May 3-4. It is always interesting for me because it seems that I begin to see some new and interesting items becoming available starting just after Christmas and increasing each week through April. These items are not only on E-bay, but at antique shows in my area of the country. I like items that are related to my area of the country. I recently purchased a picture of the veterans of an Indiana GAR Post, which was organized in the city my wife grew up in. Her great-grandfather was a member of that post so I had no choice but to buy it! I am sure you all have special interests very similar to mine. I would like to know what they are. I urge, as I do each year, you to stop by my table and let me know what they are. I really enjoy talking to all of you and I learn so much. I hope you are all having a successful year in every way and I very much look forward to seeing you at the annual meeting.

Regards,
Dan Mitchell, President

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Edson Turner Strobridge, Jr.

1/11/1927 – 10/19/2007

It is with great sorrow that I announce the passing of one of our members. Edson Strobridge died after a long battle with cancer. Ed was a Naval Veteran of World War II, a supervisor for Southern California Gas Co., a pilot, and a historian. His interests were in researching and writing about local and early western history with an emphasis on Civil War and Railroad history. He'll be missed.

2008-2009 Dues: This is just a little reminder that the Mansfield Ohio Show is rapidly approaching (May 3-4). The show is the ending and the beginning of our year. 2008-9 dues will rise by \$5 to \$20 per year. Please contact Dave Aeberli if you have any questions.

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The Editor's Message

by George G. Kane

The guest speaker at the banquet of the 21st National Encampment will be Roger Heiple. Roger's topic this year will be "Voices of the Veterans". Roger will present various recorded interviews of civil war veterans in their latter years. Among the recordings will be Centenarian Commander-in-Chief Theodore A. Penland breaking into song during an interview. Knowing Roger, this will be an interesting, entertaining and enjoyable learning experience.

Information on the banquet will be included in the next *Veteran*.

I really enjoyed doing the article on the London Branch of American Civil War Veterans. If anyone has any more memorabilia of this group, I would appreciate you sending me a scan or a photo so we can share it with the rest of the membership in a future issue of the *Veteran*.

See you in Mansfield the first weekend in May.

George G. Kane

The Veteran

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Articles may be submitted either in typewritten form or electronically (e-mail or disk) MSWord, or Excel is the preferred software choices.

All materials will be returned. If you have questions, please call George Kane at 413-592-2166. 123 Springfield St., Chicopee, MA 01013-2627.

An e-mail address is listed above.

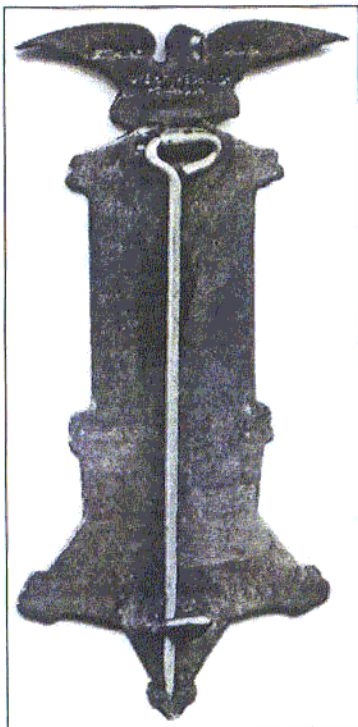
The London Branch ... (continued from front page)

While saving souls, John began to meet a number of destitute veterans of the American civil war. In 1910 he organized and became the first honorable secretary of the London Branch, American Civil War Veterans. Among the twenty-eight charter members were eight who were not native to England. These men were more likely from other parts of the Empire rather than expatriate Americans. At least one of these eight men was from Nova Scotia. Also elected at this time were Col. Herrick, president, R. K. Bevington, treasurer, William Bell, assistant honorable secretary and J. Girard and J. Westwood, members of the board of management. The group agreed to meet on the first Tuesday of January, April, July and October. The oldest member was Edward Munroe, 101 years old in 1910. He was a sailor in the US Navy from 1835 to 1868.

The goal of the LBACWV was not only comradeship and charity, but to acquire pensions from the US government for civil war veterans living in England.



John Davis (circa 1895)
Courtesy of Mike Hammerson



(above) Reverse of the London Branch Pin. The Pin has an unusual vertical hinged attaching pin with a "C" clasp. Photo courtesy of Everitt Bowles

. In 1899 the US pension office listed 314 pensioners in England. In 1910 only 60 veterans received pensions in the London area. Col. Herrick, a major in the 2nd Maryland Infantry, stated, "there is no comparison between the American and English ways of treating veterans." He also said that "The United States honors its soldiers to the end and does all it can to care for them, while in England, the old soldiers suffer on account of the excessive consideration that is shown the officers."

A 1928 newspaper article stated that 137 former members of the London Branch had passed on, while 11 members survived. The end finally came in 1933 when Charles E. Wright died at 86 in September. He had outlived 90-year-old William Hynes by four months.

In the twenty-three year history of the London Branch, American Civil War Veterans, they had met religiously four times a year. They also celebrated Lincoln's birthday and Memorial Day. They occasionally celebrated the anniversary of the battle of Gettysburg. In 1917 they paraded in support of American troops arriving for World War I. In 1927 they celebrated Memorial Day with Charles Lindberg, who stopped in England on his way home from his trans-Atlantic flight.

(Continued on page 28)

The London Branch ... (continued from Page 27)

The parade photo below was from the London Times of May 31, 1924. It's a Memorial Day parade. A woman in the crowd (to the left of the "U.S." in the banner) holds up a paper with a large photo, possibly President Lincoln. A slogan is printed at the bottom of the banner, "Not for ourselves but for our country." The question is, What Country, UK or US?



Photos courtesy of Everett Bowles

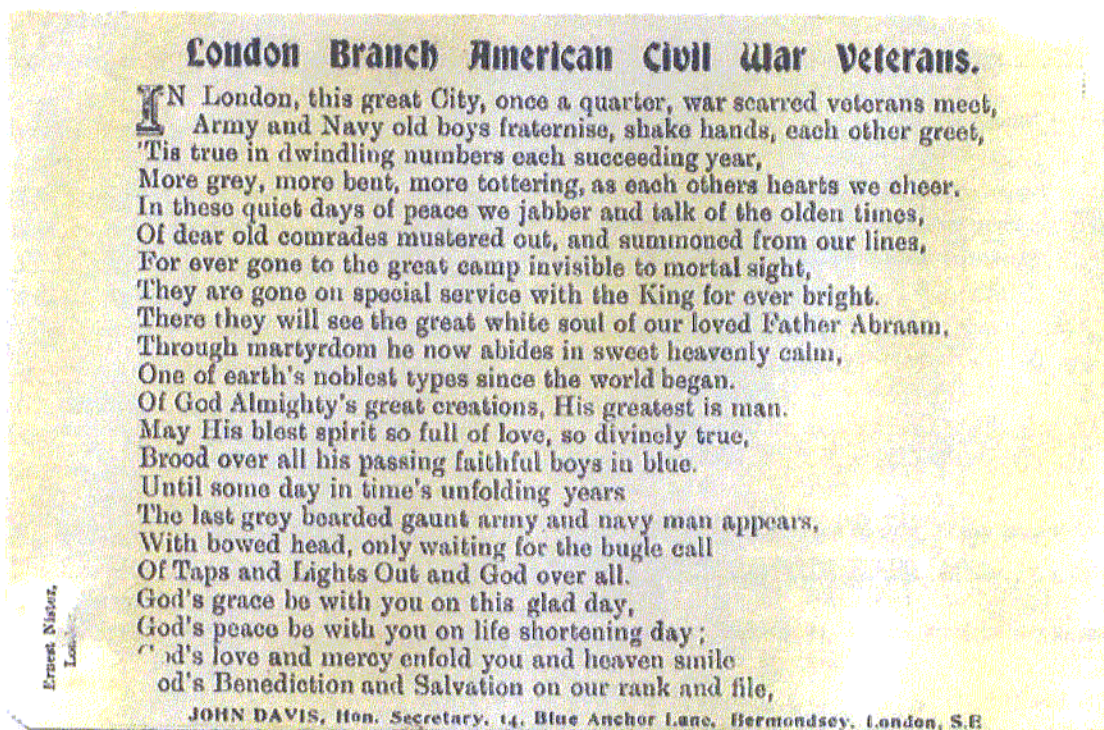
The photo at right, a blowup of the membership pin on the front cover, clearly shows the differences between this star and a GAR star. The print around the central seal says: "London Branch of American Civil War Veterans - Sep 20th 1910" in blue enamel. The center scene is quite crude. What purports to be a soldier and a sailor shaking hands, looks more like two astronauts on the moon. The stars in the trefoils are painted on and are not raised or incused.



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The London Branch ... (Continued from page 28)

Below is the front and back of postcard produced by the London Branch of American Civil War Veterans. The card has John Davis' name at the bottom and as expected from a missionary, is decidedly religious in tone. The card is not dated, but was probably manufactured between the branches founding in 1910 and the death of John Davis in 1917. The photos of the postcard are courtesy of Everitt Bowles.



I would like to thank Everitt Bowles and Mike Hammerson (of London, England, UK) for their help with this article.

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An Incident in the Civil War By George Finlayson

Below, Isma Troth (1839-1917) recounts a brief Civil War encounter that transpired at a Camp in Campbell, Kentucky on September 8th, 1862. Isma was mustered into military service as a Private on August 26th, 1862 at camp Denison, Ohio in Co. A, 89th Ohio Volunteer Infantry for three years. He was captured at the battle of Chickamauga, September 20th, 1863. Pvt. Troth was paroled and discharged at hospital, Annapolis, Maryland on July 10, 1865, by reason of *hemiphegia* of 1½ years standing. *Hemiphegia* is a paralysis of the muscles, which move cartilages in the larynx. This was the result of exposure while at a POW camp in Danville, VA, where he was without clothes or fire.

On September 9th, 1862 Private Troth wrote a letter to his parents about an incident that had occurred the day before.

*"During a march (Sept. 8, 1862) several of my company took the ague [a fever with chills and sweating]. The following day the company Captain detailed 3 men to attend to the sick who were not able to march. Then the Colonel came around and ordered every man in the ranks. Those detailed told him the men were ordered to take care of the sick. The Colonel told them to fall in or he would shoot them down and the sick might take care of themselves and go to hell for all he cared. He called them G** damned SOB's and to fall in or he would send them to hell in a minute. While on the march that night some 5 or 6 of the boys from Co. A fell out to get a drink at a spring. It was 11 O'clock at night and the boys had had no water for four hours. The Colonel ordered them back in the ranks and some of them not hurrying fast enough to suit him; he rode all through them at a gallop, slashing about with his sword. The boys kept out of his way and he then drew his revolver and snapped it at them. I don't know whether it was loaded or not, but it was a fine thing for him that he did not shoot, for he would have been shot in less than one minute afterward."*

Isma survived the Civil War, POW camps and thoughts of "fragging" his regimental colonel to settle in Lynchburg, Highland County, Ohio. Despite some slight paralysis on his left side, he became a lawyer and a bank president. He was also a member and post officer of T. J. Morrow GAR Post No. 457 of Lynchburg. He died at the age of 79, outliving two wives and at least one child.

Hobby Protection Act Amendment By George Kane

On November 8, 2007, US Representative James P. Moran (D-VA-8th District) introduced a very important piece of legislation for our hobby. Moran, who was first elected to the House in 1990, is attempting to amend the Hobby Protection Act of 1973. The bill, HR 4125, is titled, "To amend the Hobby Protection Act to require that imitation Civil War items be clearly marked as copies." The actual wording of the amended subsection states:

(c) *Imitation Civil War Items- The manufacture in the United States, or the importation into the United States, for introduction into or distribution in commerce of any imitation Civil War item which is not plainly and permanently marked 'copy' or 'facsimile' is unlawful and is an unfair and deceptive act or practice in commerce under the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 41 et seq)*

The amendment goes on to state that the rules relating to civil war items should be "substantially similar" to rules prescribed by the Federal Trade Commission for imitation numismatic items.

The amendment would also define an "imitation civil war item" as any piece that "purports to be, but in fact is not, an original Civil War item, or which is a reproduction, copy, facsimile, or counterfeit of an original Civil War item."

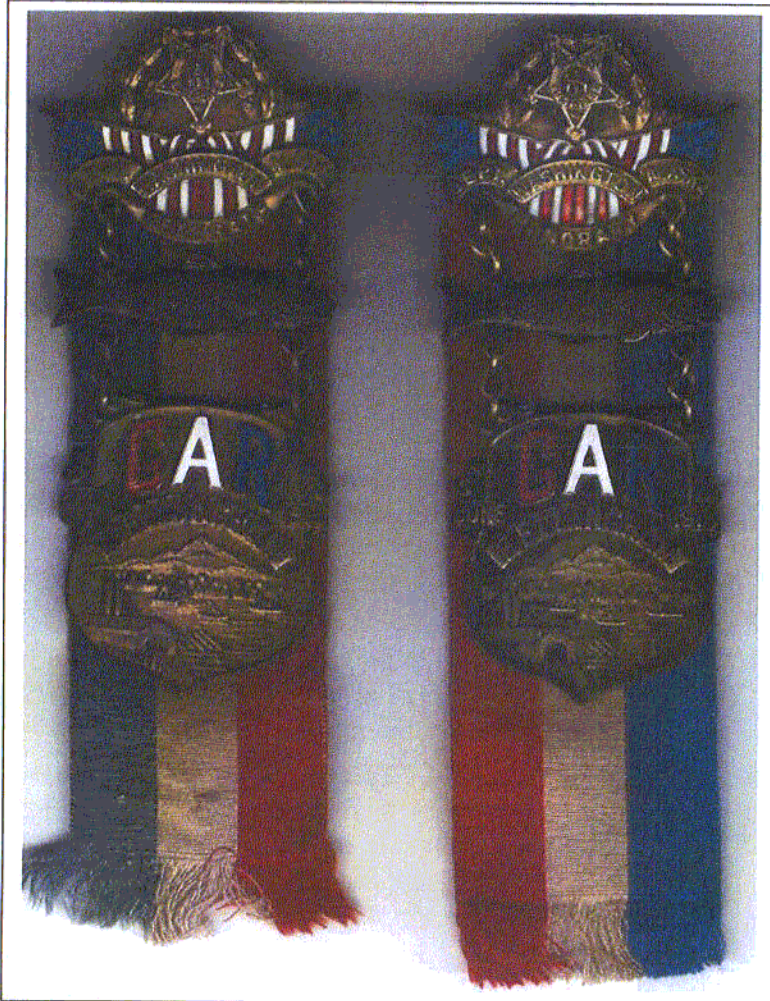
This law would also define an "original civil war item" as "any firearm, knife, sword, or other weapon, or any uniform or portion thereof, or any accoutrement used during the period of the American Civil War, or any such item in existence during and related to the American Civil War."

As the law now reads, no Civil War Veterans memorabilia would come under this laws' umbrella. Even without protection for veterans' memorabilia this law demands our support. Members should write or e-mail his US Representative or US Senator and seek their support for this important legislation. Contact information for congressmen and senators is available at: <http://clerk.house.gov> and <http://www.senate.gov>, respectively. Be sure to mention that this bill is HR 4125 and that this bill will amend the Hobby Protection Act of 1973.

There's Something Fishy Here!!!!!!

By George Kane

The two badges below would appear to be identical. They are not. They are only slightly different, but that difference makes one of these badges unique in the encampment history of the Grand Army of the Republic.



The difference in these two badges is found in the bottom banderole of the hanger, just above the fish drop. The first badge has "Delegate" in that banderole and the second badge has "Honorary" in that same position. Other than these words, the badges are identical. According to the Grand Army by-laws, there is no such thing as an Honorary Member.



The introduction of the "Associate Member" into Grand Army society began in the early 1890's. Posts in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania claim the distinction of creating this class of membership. The GAR rules and regulations strictly prohibit any member who did not meet the requirements for membership. Most associates were not old enough to participate in the Civil War. These members were welcomed into the GAR post for one reason ... Money! In the 1890's most members were entering the last phases of their working lives. In order to keep up the level of charity that the GAR had disbursed in earlier years, they had to raise funds outside their membership. In 1905, CIC Blackmar planned to enter a resolution legalizing this class of membership. He died en route to the National Encampment in Denver. The rules against associate members was widely ignored.

The "Honorary" badge shown above is probably the only Associate member encampment badge issued for a department encampment. Nonetheless, this is probably the best-designed badge in the history of the Department of Washington and Alaska.

Researching online with Historical Newspapers

By George G. Kane

Over the past year, I have triumphed the use of online historical newspapers for civil war veteran's research. I did articles on the free Winona (MN) Newspaper Project and the subscription (\$95/yr) database www.newspaperarchives.com. Over the last year I have discovered numerous other newspaper databases. Before you dive into these databases, you might want to check out your state library website. All state library web sites are listed at <http://www.libraryspot.com/libraries/statelibraries.htm>. Many of these states have a number of digital resources. Many offer genealogical sites such as *Heritage Quest*, *Ancestry* and *EBSCO*. Many also have the *Proquest* newspaper archives for a major newspaper(s) in that state. Connecticut has the *Hartford Courant* for 1870-1922. For some of these databases, you might have to travel to your local library, especially *Ancestry* that has a special library edition that can only be used at local or state libraries. Major city libraries such as the Boston Public Library allow access to New York Times and other historical newspapers over the Internet. If you are a Massachusetts resident you can apply for a six month BPL library card right over the Internet.

Other historical newspapers that are researchable free of charge on the Internet:

The **Library of Congress** has an historical newspaper site for the years 1900-1910. It offers a number of newspapers from 7 locations (CA, DC, FL, KY, NY, UT, VA). A number of prominent newspapers are provided including *New York Herald*, *San Francisco Call*, and thirteen different DC papers. The site has a google type search engine and is easy to use. The site is:

<http://www.libraryspot.com/libraries/statelibraries.htm>

The **Brooklyn Daily Eagle** (1841-1902) is the website of the Brooklyn Public Library. The paper is broken down into articles and any search will give you any number of articles, but not a complete page, which sometimes is better than having the entire page thrust in front of you. It also gives you the option of viewing the full page after you've selected an article. The site is:

<http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/eagle/>

Colorado's Historic Newspaper Collection, 1859-1923 is slow and hard to use, but once you master searching the site, you'll find a wealth of information. Try to be as specific as you can be. Searching all papers at once may get you a window with machine language imbedded, which is the sites way of telling you that you've overloaded the search engine. The site is:

<http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

Utah Digital Newspapers is a collection of 46 local Utah newspapers from 1871-1954. Use the advanced search option to search all papers at once. The results are article based with the option to view the entire page. The site is: <http://udn.lib.utah.edu/cdm4/search.php>.

Washington State Newspapers can be found through the Secretary of States web site:

www.secstate.wa.gov/history/newspapers.aspx

This is a small site with only 16 newspapers from 7 cities / towns.

Northern New York Historical Newspapers is a collection of 27 local upper state New York newspapers published between 1811 and 2006. Unfortunately you can only search one newspaper at a time.

<http://news.nnyln.net/>

Pages of Record was founded in Toronto in 1999 and is attempting to place historical newspapers from all over the globe on the Internet. A large number of the newspapers are Canadian and from the United Kingdom and its former colonies, but American newspapers are also available including an 1888 to 2003 run of *The Sporting News*. <http://www.paperofrecord.com/search.asp>

Union Veteran's Shoebox

By George G. Kane

Just when you think you've seen everything that could ever display a Grand Army membership badge, something comes along. Recently the shoebox shown below was offered on e-Bay. The shoe manufacturer was from Worcester, Massachusetts and the line of shoes is called the "Sarah J." This is a strange name for a line of shoes with military insignia all over the cover. Besides the GAR badge, a US flag with the inscription, "15th Reg. / Mass. Vols." is unfolded at the top of the cover. Under the flag is printed "61 to 66" with a clover corps insignia. A row of badges follows: Commander's badge for the Ancient Honorable Artillery Co.; Commander's badge for the Worcester Continentals; and badge for the 13th MVM Light Artillery. In the lower right is inscribed, "A Veteran's Guarantee stands behind every pair of shoes bearing this label, H. E. Smith." Henry E. Smith served in Co. F. 15th Mass Infantry.



Shoebbox Cover (left) and Longview (above)
15th Reg't. Flag (lower left) and Guarantee
(below)



A South Carolina 1913 Gettysburg Ribbon By Doug Redding

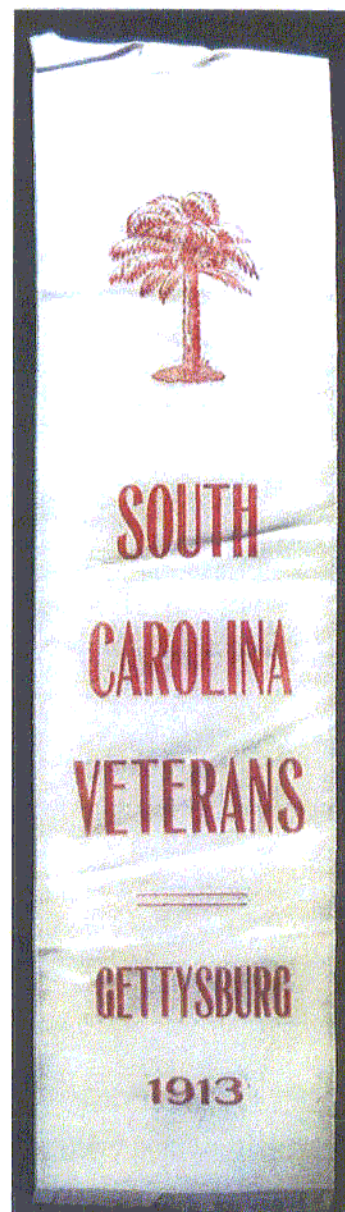
You asked in the latest issue of *The Veteran* if any members had "unusual" Rebel items to share. Here's some information about an item in my collection - the ribbon worn by South Carolina veterans at the Gettysburg reunion in 1913 (photo below). I'm not sure if this ribbon qualifies as unusual, but it's certainly rare. It's the only one I've come across in 25 years of collecting Gettysburg medals, badges, and ribbons. I didn't realize how rare it was until both Everett Bowles and Vann Martin told me last year that they had never seen one before.

The reunion at Gettysburg was the largest combined reunion of veterans after the war. Pennsylvania was the host and sent invitations to every surviving honorably discharged member of the GAR and UCV. According to the Pennsylvania Commission report issued after the reunion, a total of 53,407 Union and Confederate veterans attended. Of that total, 369 were from South Carolina. Most of us would assume those South Carolina veterans were all Confederates, but that wasn't the case. The Commission report stated that 68 were Union veterans. So, given the wording, the ribbon could've been worn by the Union veterans as well. (A list of the number of attendees by state is on pages 36 and 37 of the report.)

Another South Carolina connection to the reunion concerns when I was a licensed guide at Gettysburg in the 1980s. When giving tours, I carried a number of period quotes to illustrate certain points. One of the most chilling quotes was from an editorial about the reunion in the July 1, 1913 issue of the *Charleston News and Courier*. After first making the point that the reunion was not to celebrate the battle but the heroism of Union and Confederate veterans, it went on to say "*Do not let it come to pass that this Great Reunion on the bloodiest field of the great war shall tend to glorify and exalt war itself ... At Gettysburg men butchered one another. At Gettysburg thousands died in utmost agony. At Gettysburg good and gentle women were widowed and the happiness of homes was destroyed. Let us try to see the thing as it was - to see it in all its crimson horror and all its ghastly cruelty.*"

I always read that quote to tour attendees who didn't seem to realize that war was not all glory and heroism. It was pain and suffering, not only for the soldiers but for their families and friends as well.

The sentiment expressed in the editorial could of course apply to any war. (The entire text of the editorial appears on page 196 of the PA Commission report.)



UVU Lapel Button Varieties #2
By Rance Hulshart

After reading George Kane's article on UVU lapel buttons in the last issue of *The Veteran*, I checked my collection in search of other varieties. I've discovered three varieties that differ from George's. The button pictured at right is significantly different from almost all UVU memorabilia. This is the first time I've ever seen a UVU piece with a six-pointed star. All other UVU materials have a five-pointed star. Besides the extra empty yellow section, the color of the "V" and the second "U" of the UVU initials are reversed from the common UVU lapel button.



The 5-starred variety pictured to the left is similar to many common UVU lapel buttons except for the background color for the "V" and the second "U". Similar to the 6-sided button above, the background colors are again reversed from the common UVU lapel button. In the three varieties shown in the last issue, the "V" had a blue background and the second "U" had a yellow background. In this variety, those background colors are reversed.

The UVU lapel button shown to the right is noticeably different from the common UVU button. This button was for an "Honorary Member" of this organization. A red margin encircles the obverse of the pin. All the background colors behind the star are blue. The top two quadrants have the initials "H" and "M" for "Honorary Member". The bottom three quadrants have the initials "UVU" for Union Veteran Union. This is a rare variety and I have never seen another copy.



The Gettysburg Pilgrim Club

By Edward Norris

On a cool fall evening in 1888, 150 ladies and gentlemen waited to board a train at the Boston & Providence railroad station for an excursion to the Gettysburg battlefield. All of these travelers were members of the Gettysburg Pilgrim Club. All club members wore a blue ribbon with a shepherd's crook at the top and the inscription "GETTYSBURG / PILGRIM CLUB / PILGRIMAGE OF / 1888." At 6:30 pm, the train left the station for Providence where 20 more pilgrims and 200 members of the Association of the Seventeenth Maine Regiment would board the train and accompany the club to Gettysburg. The train would make one more stop at Jersey City, where 20 more pilgrims would also join the pilgrimage. Together, the two organizations would assist in the dedication of the Seventeenth Maine Regimental Monument in the "wheat field" of the Gettysburg battlefield.

The Gettysburg Pilgrim Club was the result of an 1886 merger of two Boston area clubs that had previously journeyed separately to Gettysburg. The Gettysburg Club was formed in 1883 by civil war veterans and friends who joined together to acquire favorable rates from railroads, hotels and restaurants. In 1885 there was an attempt to change the name of the club to the Gettysburg Veteran Association, but it was voted down. A similar organization that chose the name Gettysburg Pilgrims was formed for an 1885 trip to Gettysburg.

In January 1886, Colonel Charles H. Hovey, President of the Gettysburg Club, was a guest speaker at the Gettysburg Pilgrims annual dinner. His speech urged that the two clubs merge. Sometime in 1886 or 1887 the two clubs united to form the Gettysburg Pilgrim Club. The club would continue through at least 1938, when the last newspaper account of their trip was printed. Although a pilgrimage was not held every year, the annual dinner was. The event was held originally at the *Quincy House* but later at *The Thorndike*, two prominent Boston hotels known for their restaurants. The pilgrimages were almost always completed by train. At least one year, part of the voyage was completed by ship.

From the time of the merger until his death in 1906, the club would be led by James H. Cruff, a veteran of the 11th Massachusetts Infantry. He had enlisted in June 1861 and was captured at the first battle of Bull Run. After he was exchanged, he returned to his regiment, fighting in most of the

major battles in the East, including Gettysburg. He was discharged in 1864, returning to Boston. The Connecticut native would become a successful real estate agent in Roxbury. He was also appointed a constable with the duties of a process server. He was a member of the Stevenson GAR Post No. 25 of Roxbury. After his death in 1906, there is little mention of the club until the 1938 pilgrimage. No other mention of the club would be found in local papers, except for "This date in History" columns in 1963 and 1988. For at least 55 years, the club had traveled to worship at the altar of the greatest battlefield in American history, an enviable record of devotion. It also lobbied the Massachusetts legislature and the US Congress for funds to erect and maintain civil war monuments and battlefields.

