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The Veteran

October - December 2008

The First Iron Brigade Reunion Ribbons

By Tom McCrory

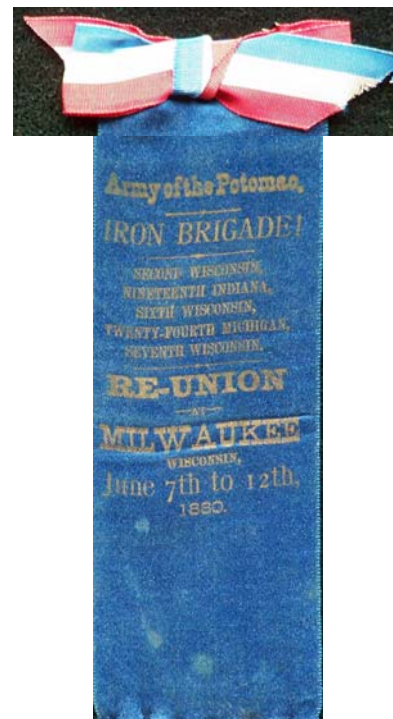
Only two regiments invited to the Great Soldiers and Sailors Reunion held at Milwaukee in 1880 were **not** from Wisconsin. They were part of the famed Iron Brigade. The 2nd, 6th, and 7th Wisconsin Infantry, along with the 24th Michigan and the 19th Indiana comprised this hard-fighting brigade. The Iron Brigade sustained more losses than any other regiment in the Union Army during the civil war. To be a surviving member of the Iron Brigade was not something to be taken lightly.

The Brigade's distinctive name was anointed at the battle of South Mountain in 1862 when General McClellan observed General Gibbons brigade fighting along the National Road and remarked, "They must be made of iron" for their fierce fighting style. "They fight equal to the best troops in the world." This distinctive name was to only last 294 days when losses at Gettysburg forced inclusion of eastern replacement troops.

Living in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, home of Company E, 2nd Wisconsin Infantry, I have always been interested in reunion items from this famous Civil War regiment. The Iron Brigade Reunion Association was born as a result of the "Great Falling Away", the low point of the GAR in the late 1870's. Members of Post 4, Berlin, Wisconsin, the only surviving Post of the Grand Army of the Republic in Wisconsin at that time, decided to revive soldiers sentiment by hosting a state-wide reunion of all Civil War veterans. This was not for political purposes, but as a reunion of the "Old Boys." Labeled the Wisconsin Soldiers and Sailors Reunion, no mention was made of the obvious association with the G.A.R. The idea would become more successful than they could have possibly imagined.

Regimental commanders were summoned to call upon their commands. General Bragg, the last commander of the Iron Brigade, called upon his troops to "fall in, without arms, but equipped for picnic duty." This gathering on a regimental level drew survivors from throughout the state as well as those invited from Michigan and Indiana. So enthusiastic were the surviving members of the Iron Brigade at this reunion that annual reunions were held until 1933.

Occasionally, reunion ribbons of the Iron Brigade Association are encountered. Until recently, no one knew for sure what that first Iron Brigade Reunion ribbon looked like at that initial 1880 Soldiers and Sailors Reunion.



(Continued on Page 3)

The President's Message

Happy Holidays to our members!

Let's all hope that 2009 will be more prosperous so that we can continue collecting Civil War veteran memorabilia. Perhaps you'll make some new discoveries and find incredible bargains. Think about sharing any discoveries with the membership. Send photos, scans and information to "The Veteran" for future issue articles.

Janet and I wish our members, good health, continued friendship, and happy hunting in 2009.

Dan M. Mitchell

President

CWVHA Officers

President	Dan M. Mitchell	dmitc874@aol.com
VP	John Mullan	jj318@aol.com
Secretary	Shane Bowles	badgesu2@bellsouth.net
Treasurer	Dave Aeberli	dla9372@verizon.net
Editor	George G. Kane	gkane217@live.com

Contributors

* Richard E. Troup * Tom McCrory * Chris Beisel
* * *

Union Veterans Union Re-unites!!!!

I found this short article just before publication of *The Veteran*, in the October 12, 1911 issue of the *Boston Journal*. Hopefully I can find some verification in another source before our next issue.

"Hold Encampment Today. The Department of Massachusetts, Union Veterans Union, will hold its twenty-fifth annual encampment today in the John A. Andrew Hall, 1151 Washington Street. The two factions in the Union Veterans Union, of seven years' standing, were united at the National G.A.R. Encampment at Rochester, N.Y. in September."

This would explain my inability to find two Nationals Encampments for the two UVU factions after 1910.

Table of Contents

The First Iron Brigade Reunion Ribbons	13, 15
President's and Editor's Messages	14
Emory Fisher GAR Post 30, Johnstown, PA	16, 17
An Unusual UCV 1923 Reunion Speaker	18
Veteran Book Reproduction	19
Woman's Relief Corps Book	19
Ohio State Medal Certificate	20, 21
UCV Badge Design Patent	22
General Grant's Bricks	23
Three Posts, Three States, ... Equals One Badge	24

The Editor's Message

by George G. Kane

Happy Holidays!!!!

I'd like to thank Tom McCrory and Richard E. Troup for coming to my aid with multiple page articles for this issue of *The Veteran*. Congratulations to the Beisel's and the Dowler's for their acquisition of the Johnstown, PA GAR Post Building.

Word has been received from the family of Frances Melvina Woolson Campbell, (Mrs. Robert), that she passed away on October 3, 2008 at the age of 99 in Duluth, MN. Her father was Albert Woolson, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the GAR, the last Union veteran of the Civil War, last member of the Grand Army of the Republic, recipient of a Congressional Gold Medal, honorary Commander-in-Chief, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and other honors. If you would like the family's address to send a card, please contact me.

Jerry Orton, PDC, SUVCW, NY
Orton50@aol.com

The Veteran

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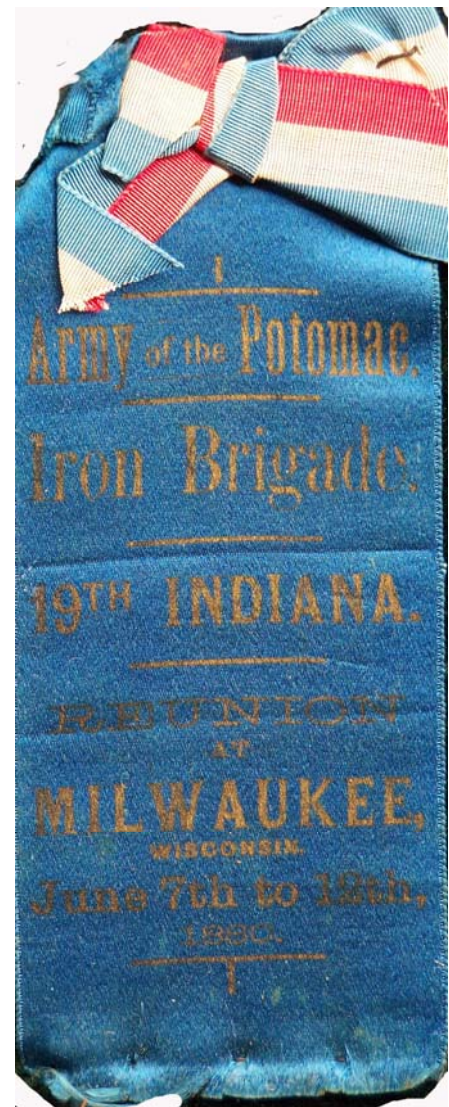
All materials will be returned. If you have questions, please call George Kane at (413) 592-2166. 123 Springfield St., Chicopee, MA 01013-2627.

An e-mail address is listed above.

A discovery in my hometown of reunion items from a member of Company E, 2nd Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry, who attended this reunion, were recently discovered and are now in my collection.

The first is a blue silk ribbon (See ribbon on front page), 2¼” X 7” with gold lettering that reads, “Army of the Potomac / IRON BRIGADE / SECOND WISCONSIN / NINETEENTH INDIANA / SIXTH WISCONSIN / TWENTY-FOURTH MICHIGAN / SEVENTH WISCONSIN / REUNION / AT / MILWAUKEE / WISCONSIN / JUNE 7TH TO 12TH, 1880. The second ribbon (Right), also blue with gold lettering, measures 2 ¼” x 5 ½” and reads, Army of the Potomac / IRON BRIGADE / 19th INDIANA / AT / MILWAUKEE / WISCONSIN / June 7th to 12th / 1880. These can be considered the “high water mark” of all Iron Brigade reunion ribbons. The ribbons are mounted to green velvet and the original owner added the red, white and blue bow-tie ribbons to the tops.

A list of other Iron Brigade reunions can be found below.



1880	June 7-12	Milwaukee		
1881	No meeting			
1882	Sept. 20	Milwaukee		
1883	Sept. 13-14	La Crosse		
1884	Aug. 28	Lancaster		
1885	Sept. 16-17	Madison		
1886	Aug. 31-Sept. 2	Oshkosh		
1887	Sept. 13-14	Milwaukee		
1888				
1889	Aug. 27	Milwaukee	1921	Milwaukee
1890	Aug. 6-7	Detroit	1922	Sept. 25 Des Moines, IA
1891	April 14-16	Dubuque	1923	Sept. 5 Milwaukee
1892	Sept. 16-17	Muncie, IN	1924	June 17 Janesville
1893			1925	June 16 Sheboygan
1894			1925	Aug. 31 Grand Rapids, MI
1895			1926	Jun 14-17 Racine
1896	Sept. 16-17	Baraboo	1926	Sept. 21 Des Moines, IA
1897	Oct. 20-21	La Crosse	1927	June 14 Fond du Lac
1898	Aug. 30-31	Milwaukee	1928	Jun 12-15 Madison
1899	Sept. 14-15	Racine	1929	June 25 Beloit
1900	August 27	Chicago, IL	1930	Jun 6-10 Eau Claire
1901			1931	June 16 La Crosse
1902		Washington, DC	1932	Jun 13-16 Waukesha
1908	Aug. 31	La Crosse	1933	Jun 12-15 Sheboygan
1910	Sept. 17	Fond du Lac		

Emory Fisher Post No. 30, G.A.R., Johnstown, PA by George G. Kane

The first thing that pops into your head when you hear the name of the town of Johnstown, Pennsylvania is “Flood”. At 3pm, on May 31st in 1889, a devastating torrent of water rushed through the collapsed South Fork Dam at Lake Conemaugh, 14 miles from Johnstown. It took less than an hour for the 40-foot high, half-mile wide wall of water and debris to reach the town. The water had already cut through four smaller communities in the valley, carrying their debris into the town. The residents in town had taken to their rooftops to escape what was expected to be the usual overflowing of the two rivers that passed through town. None could imagine the devastation that was soon to be upon them.



The people standing on the rooftops in this striking image are likely sightseers who have come to see the flood destruction.

Over 2,200 people died when the flood swept through Johnstown that spring day. Many tales of rescue were repeated in the media of the day. Many residents were swept downstream and pulled from the river by people on the banks. Most of the buildings in town were either gone or beyond repair. One of these buildings was the home of the local post of the Grand Army of the Republic, Emory Fisher Post No. 30.

Soon after the waters had slacked, the first help arrived with GAR Department Commander Thomas J. Stewart and members from various posts throughout the Commonwealth. Stewart set up a command post on Adams Street and handed out food and supplies to the stricken populace from a large tent.



After most of the destruction had been cleared, the city began to rebuild. One of the first buildings was the G.A.R. Post building on 132 Park Place, which was completed in 1892. Five years later, the department held its annual encampment in Johnstown. Many delegates, who had viewed the total devastation of the town by the flood, were astonished at its recovery.

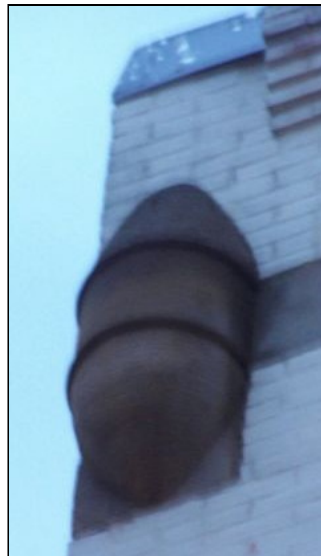
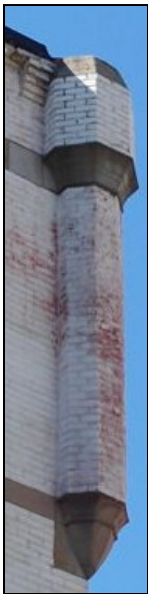
Two more devastating floods would hit Johnstown in 1936 and 1977. Neither of these floods were as destructive as the 1889 flood, but both damaged the fragile economy of the town. Many businesses never reopened. The population of the town would drop nearly 20% between 1970 and 1980.



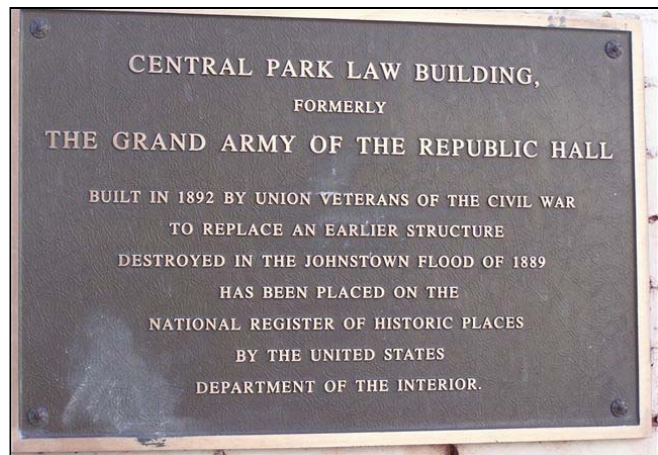
1897 GAR Dept. of Penn.
Delegate Badge-Johnstown

Fisher Post – Continued from previous page.

Two of our CWWHA member families have recently purchased the old GAR Hall in Johnstown, PA. Chris and Randy Beisel and Joyce and Bob Dowler recently acquired the property and have begun to refurbish the 3rd floor, the meeting hall of the old GAR Post. The first two floors, which had housed the post's memorabilia, have been converted to offices. The meeting hall, on the other hand, has changed little since the last GAR meeting there in January 1934. Gas light fixtures, a Victorian water closet, a standup piano, peeling wallpaper and raised platforms still remain. The Beisel's and Dowler's intend to open a museum after the restoration. Below are photos of the building.



Building Photos courtesy of
the Beisel's and Dowler's



**Tax deductible donations
may be sent to:**

**11th PVI Foundation
GAR Post 30
112 Sugarbush Dr.
Latrobe, Pa 15650-3721**

*The Veteran – Page 17
October – December 2008*

An Unusual UCV 1923 Reunion Speaker

By George Kane

On April 12, 1923, an unusual speaker stepped up to the podium at the 33rd National Reunion of the United Confederate Veterans at New Orleans, Louisiana. The elderly man, he would be 79 in June, was neatly dressed in a gray suit and tie. A convention ribbon was attached to his left breast and a lapel button was tucked into his left lapel. The ribbon was not for a delegate, but a guest. He had a society uniform in his suitcase, but thought twice about wearing it, and decided against it. A close look at his lapel button would give away one of his secrets. It was the “little bronze button” of the Grand Army of the Republic. For this was the representative from that Northern Civil War veteran organization. He was a national officer on the staff of G.A.R. Commander-in-Chief James W. Willett. As the Surgeon General, he was not here to speak of the health of the aging veterans, but to respectfully pay tribute to these Southern Civil War veterans.

In May of 1864 he left his new bride, Phoebe Elizabeth Dickerson and traveled to Camp Chase in Ohio to enlist in the Union Army. The 19 year old was mustered into Company I of the 136th Ohio Infantry, a National Guard unit. With less than a year left in this conflict, this unit did garrison duty at three forts (Ellsworth, Williams and Scott) near Washington, DC. The unit did help to repulse Confederate General Jubal Early's attack on Washington on July 11-12, 1864. The unit did not lose a man in combat, but 2 officers and 23 men were felled by disease. They were mustered out on August 30, 1864, barely 3 months after they were mustered in. Many members of the unit reenlisted in other Ohio units, but the young private returned home to his new bride. Sometime before he was mustered out, he visited the White House with a few of his buddies from Company I. While on leave in the capital, the boys wandered into the president's house and asked to meet the Commander-in-Chief. About an hour later, to their surprise, Lincoln came out and shook their hands and spoke to them.

On his return, he settled near Marion, Ohio in a town now called Blooming Grove. He took up farming and began to raise a family. His first child was a boy he named Warren, born November 11, 1865. He would have seven more children with his first wife. In 1869 he bought a set of second-hand medical books and began doing rounds with a homeopathic physician. After a short time at the Cleveland Homeopathic College in 1873, he received a medical license from the State of Ohio. His wife, a midwife, began studying the medical books and making rounds with her husband. In 1896, she, too, was issued a medical license, opening a practice as an obstetrician. In 1897, she was sued for malpractice in the death of a baby, but her oldest son's friend, who

was also a homeopathic doctor, came to her defense. She was found innocent.

While farming and running a medical practice, he found the time to found a newspaper in Marion. Eventually, his oldest son would take over this business. He continued practicing homeopathic medicine until late in life. Although he had diabetes, he refused to take insulin, but championed a change in diet as an ultimate cure. His first wife, Phoebe, died suddenly, May 29, 1910 at the age of 66. Eleven years later, he would marry his second wife, Alice Stevens, 52, his nurse, stenographer, office assistant and twenty-five years his junior. His oldest son would die, August 3, 1923 at the age of 57. This was the fourth of his eight children to die before him. He would finally pass away on November 19, 1928 at the age of 84.

On that bright spring day in April of 1923, his speech rambled, paying tribute to the Alabama delegates and declaring his heart was with the South and Alabama. He spoke of his Southern ancestry, especially his grandfather, who was the brother of the mother of Confederate President Jefferson Davis. He also noted that his great grandmother was born and raised in Virginia. On completing his speech, he was invited by the Alabama delegation to visit Montgomery and Birmingham, Alabama on his way home, which he did.

Now there is one title the man carried which I have yet to reveal. You probably wonder why I mentioned his eldest son so many times in this article. You see, the speaker that day was Dr. George Tryon Harding, Sr., father of the current and 29th President of the United States, Warren Gamaliel Bancroft Winnipeg Harding. His mother called him “Winnie.”



The Doctor and his eldest son

Veteran Book Reproduction

By George G. Kane

In Berlin, Wisconsin on January 1, 1879, a group of civil war veterans met and formed "The Wisconsin Soldiers Reunion Association." On January 11, 1879, C. K. Pier, President of the association issued a press release to all leading and local newspapers throughout the United States:

Soldiers: At a meeting of old comrades held at Berlin, Jan. 1, there was organized the Wisconsin Reunion Association. Every surviving soldier or sailor who enlisted from Wisconsin and was honorably discharged from the United States military or naval service, is earnestly requested to write upon a postal card his name, occupation, PO address, letter of company or companies, number of regiment or regiments in which he served, and send it to Griff J. Thomas ... Berlin, Wis. ...

Comrades: Attend to this at once, or we shall not know whether you are dead, proud or gone to Texas.

The reunion was incredibly successful and a regimental reunion roster was published in 1880. The roster is 312 pages long and includes almost every soldier or sailor that fought in the civil war from Wisconsin. The list is in regimental order by company and alphabetical by soldier. Soldiers killed or wounded in battle are listed and if the man died, the date and location of his demise are given. The book has incredibly ornate full page advertisements on the even pages with the roster on odd pages.

A facsimile of the book was created in 2000 by CWVHA member Tom McCrory who is offering the book to our membership for \$35 postpaid. The book is 8 ½ by 11 inches printed on heavy acid free paper. The book is spiral bound. Tom's address is:

Thomas J. McCrory
5062 Malibu Cove
Oshkosh, WI 54904-9300

Woman's Relief Corp Book

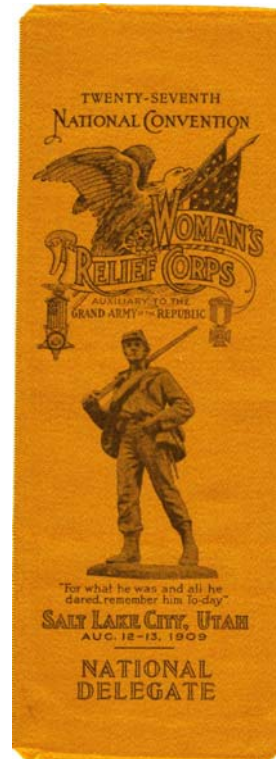
By George G. Kane

As you might remember from last month, one of our members is compiling a book of WRC National ribbons and badges. The member hopes to publish this book in the near future. Last month we issued a list of ribbons and badges needed to complete this project. Tom McCrory was able to supply scans of a number of these ribbons and badges. The current list is :

Ribbons: 1917, 1934, 1947, 1948

Badges: 1886, 1921, 1927

The author has taken photos of the ribbons, mentioned above, at the WRC museum in Springfield, Illinois, but the quality is not very good. The ribbons sought are the large, usually gold colored ribbons with the large WRC eagle logo. A sample is shown below:



Please send scans or photos to the Editor. My contact information is on page 14. Thanks for your assistance.

Ohio Civil War Medal and Certificate By Richard Troup

One day, when I was a kid, many years ago, I was unable to go outside and play due to a heavy rainstorm. Instead, I decided to explore the attic in our house. It was there that I discovered a box that looked like it hadn't been opened in years. Inside were medals, certificates, photos and a diary. The box had belonged to my great-great-grandfather, James Madison McMeeken (1840-1915). James had fought in the civil war with Company G, 15th Ohio Veteran Volunteer Regiment. In his last days, James lived with my mother's parents. He died in 1915 when my mother was 5 years old. He died exactly 50 years to the day after he returned home from the civil war, Christmas Eve, 1865. My mother saved much of my great-great-grandfather's souvenirs and stored them in the attic. Reading his diary about his years in the civil war, viewing tintypes of my grandfather and other relatives, inspired me to read every civil war book in the Mansfield Public Library.

In American History class as a junior in High School, I asked so many questions that my teacher let me teach the class. I went on to matriculate at Ohio State University. My American History teacher from high school also went on to teach at the same University. He taught social studies and later became a school principal. My teacher was Earle Bruce, who became head football coach at OSU. Go Buckeyes!!!!

The artifacts I found so many years ago had a large effect on the path of my life. Among the artifacts was the medal pictured in the next column. This medal was struck by Tiffany & Co. of New York who provided 20,000 copies to the State of Ohio for distribution. The medals were awarded to veterans in Ohio State Regiments who reenlisted for three years during the war.



The medals were distributed in the summer of 1866 by mail. For returned medals and veterans for which the state didn't have an address, the medals had to be picked up in Columbus. On the next page is a copy of the certificate that accompanied the medal. This is the certificate I found with my grand-father's medal. You can download a .jpg file copy of this certificate at:

<http://www.lindapages.com/ohmedcert.jpg>

It makes a fine companion to your Ohio Veterans' Medal.

General Head Quarters, State of Ohio,
ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,

Columbus, June 1st, 1866.

SIR:

This medal is presented to you in accordance with the following Joint Resolution of the General Assembly of Ohio, as a slight testimonial of the high appreciation by the State of your devoted patriotism in entering upon a second term of enlistment without any hope or expectation of large bounties, and actuated only by the purest love of country.

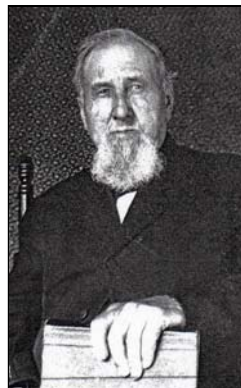
None are entitled to this medal excepting those who, being already in service in Ohio regiments, re-enlisted for an additional term of three years.

"Resolved, by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio, That the Governor procure, or cause to be procured, for each veteran volunteer who re-enlisted from this State under General Orders No. 191, of 1863, a bronze medal, one and one-half inches in diameter, containing upon one side in bold relief, the following or some similar design, to wit: Ohio personified, crowning one of her soldiers with laurel. Emblems—wheat sheaf; eagle perched on shield, bearing State arms. In the background, a steamer and tented field, springing from the wand which supports the liberty cap, a buckeye leaf. Clasp—a plain bar on which shall be raised the buckeye and laurel; the swivel of the clasp in form of a monogram U. S. Upon the reverse side to be engraved the name of the recipient, with his regiment, battalion or battery, surrounded with a laurel wreath. The medal to be suspended by a piece of tri-colored silk ribbon, and its artistic features to be equal to the 'crimean medal.'"

Very respectfully,

Robert

Adjutant General of Ohio.



Left to right are photos of James M. McMeeken during the civil war, midlife and just before his death.

A UCV Badge Design Patent by George G. Kane

Most fraternal organizations have a membership badge, pin or button. The G.A.R. placed their membership badge on almost all their memorabilia. The badge was portrayed on mugs, trivets, swords, canes, advertisement, ephemera, etc. The badge was even engraved on casket plaques. So why is it we never see a membership badge for the United Confederate Veterans. Some have mistakenly identified the membership badge of the Grand Camp Confederate Veterans of Virginia as a UCV membership badge.

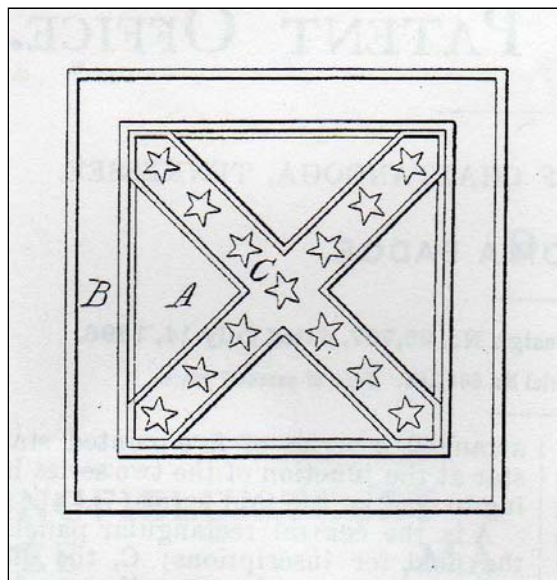


GCCVV Membership badge

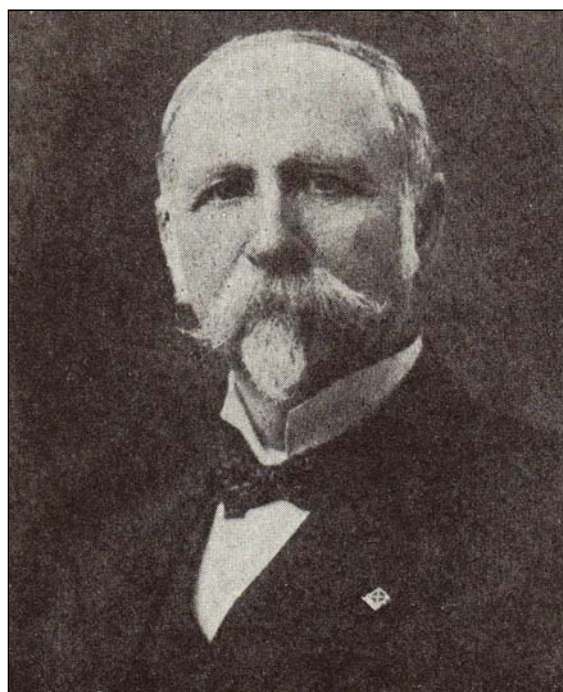
In fact, a membership “badge” was adopted at the first UCV Convention and patented in 1896 to serve as such for the UCV. On October 25, 1895, Joseph Franklin Shipp of Chattanooga, Tennessee filed an application for a design patent with the US Patent Office. On July 14, 1896, patent Design No. 25,767 was issued to Mr. Shipp. Shipp was the Quartermaster General of the United Confederate Veterans. He describes his “Button or Badge” in his application:

“The leading or characteristic feature of my design consists of a central rectangular panel surrounded by a narrow field upon which may be placed suitable inscriptions, the said central panel being provided with diagonal crossing bars, upon the surface of which bars arranged a series of five-pointed stars, the star at the junction of the two series belonging to each of the said series.”

“ A is the central rectangular panel. B is the field for inscriptions; C, the diagonal crossing bars, carrying up their surface the series of five-pointed stars.”



The badge was produced but did not become popular with the membership of the UCV. The field for inscriptions read U.C.V. A picture of the badge did appear on the lapel of Mr. Shipp’s obituary photo in the society magazine “Confederate Veteran,” vol.33, page 405, October 1925. Capt. Shipp (1844-1925) was a private in Co. G, 4 Georgia Infantry and a captain in the cavalry under General Wheeler’s command. During the Span-Am. War, he was a civilian quartermaster for the US Government at Fort Thomas, Georgia.



General Grant's Bricks By George G. Kane

After U.S. Grant died on July 23, 1885, the Grant family selected Riverside Park, one of the highest elevations in Manhattan, overlooking the Hudson River, as the site of his tomb. Grant's funeral parade had 60,000 marchers, stretched out for 7 miles and took 5 hours to pass. A temporary vault, designed by architect Jacob Lirey Mould, had been built for the body until a larger tomb could be constructed. The temporary tomb (photos-next column) was finished 10 days after Grant's death and included 11,000 white bricks. After Grant's body was placed in the vault, spectators striped the surrounding area of leftover bricks, pieces of mortar and small pebbles. One man set up a table and sold little boxes of sand allegedly from the excavation for the foundation of the temporary vault. In fact the boxes were filled with beach sand.

Grant's final resting place was finally completed in 1897. Soon after his removal from the temporary vault to the new Monument, the contractor demolished the temporary resting place. Soon after the destruction of the temporary tomb, the Mayor of New York City, William L. Strong, began to receive requests from various GAR posts around the country for a souvenir brick from the temporary tomb. Mayor Strong requested and received 1,000 bricks from the contractor, a Mr. Brady. Soon after, the mayor's office was inundated with requests for the bricks. Although a number of officials were purported to have received a brick, the George G. Mead GAR Post No. 1 of Philadelphia was the first GAR post to receive a brick. General Grant had been a member of the Mead Post and members of that post had held the obsequies at the temporary tomb on the day of the funeral. For some time after the funeral, a silk banner was seen at the head of the sarcophagus, which detailed the General's membership in the Mead Post.

It took ten days to clean the bricks of mortar. During that time, many bricks were

broken. A special box was ordered for transporting the bricks. In order to stop the selling of spurious copies of the bricks, the mayor had the following statement stamped on each brick:

"This brick formed part of the lining of General Grants tomb. It is sent to you as a souvenir of the great general, whose remains it protected for twelve years.

W. L. Strong, Mayor of New York City."

Mayor Strong made it very clear that his bricks were for GAR Posts only. He later said that Libraries and Colleges could also order the bricks. There was some talk of selling the bricks and the funds being made available for improvements on the monument. The final distribution of the bricks was not made public. The fate of the 10,000 bricks in the contractor's hands was never noted. A number of these bricks are found in libraries, museums and colleges. Very few have been sited on the collector market place. *A scan or photo of an original brick and / or box with the mayor's stamp affixed would be appreciated. The Editor.*



Three Posts, Three States, One Cannon, One Encampment Equals One Badge By George G. Kane

At the 33rd National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, three Posts, each from a different state, got together and created a unique souvenir badge that was forged from a captured Confederate cannon. The three GAR Posts were Lafayette Post 140 from New York City, General George G. Meade Post No. 1 of Philadelphia and the Edward W. Kinsley Post No. 113 of Boston.

The badge consisted of a hanger, a red-white-blue ribbon and a pendant in the shape of 3-leaf clover. The hanger has an ornate top with the following words within a rectangle: 33rd National Encampment 1899. A typical pin for attachment was on the reverse. Hanging from a ribbon bar, the ribbon had a link at the bottom, which connected with an eyehole at the top of



the pendant. Each leaf of the clover has within it the last name of one of the Posts, LaFayette, Meade, and Kinsley. A GAR monogram is in the intersection of the three leaves. A banderole with “Philadelphia” is at the bottom. The reverse of the pendant has “Made of / Cannon / Captured / by / New York, Penna. And Mass. / Regiments / at / Fort Fisher.”

The guns in the fort protected Wilmington, SC from a Naval attack. This port was the last functioning Southern port on the Atlantic. In December, General Butler’s assault on the fort was decisively repulsed. Butler was replaced with General Terry. On January 15th, 1865 the General’s forces attacked with the aid of 60 ships and regiments from Pennsylvania, NY and Paine’s Division of US Colored Troops. The fort was overwhelmed and surrendered to Union forces. For their actions in this attack three officers and an enlisted man received the Medal of Honor.

Unless there were Bay State men on the ships in this attack, then there were no Massachusetts regiments involved in either attack. Why would the Boston post agree to help fund this badge?