

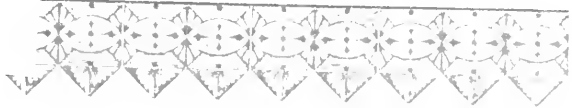
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Grand Army of the Republic

NATIONAL

MEMORIAL HALL

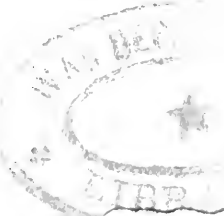
AT

DECATUR. ILLINOIS.

THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE G. A. R.

APRIL 6, 1866 APRIL 6, 1891.

SILVER ANNIVERSARY SOUVENIR.







GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC.

Its Birthplace and Christening

— AT —

DECATUR, MACON COUNTY, ILLINOIS,

APRIL 6, A. D. 1866.

CHARTER OF POST NO. 1.

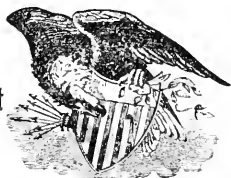
DECATUR, ILL.:
HAMSHER & MOSSER, PRINTERS.
1890.

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and
...

GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC,

Department of Illinois.



To all whom it may Concern—Greeting:

Know Ye, That the Commander of the Department of Illinois, reposing special trust and confidence in the patriotism and fidelity of Mr. F. Kauran, J. R. Stock, Sir. H. Dunning, J. C. Pugh, J. H. Crake, J. T. Bishop, C. Ribsamer, J. W. Roark, W. F. Sibley, J. N. Coltrin, Joseph Picaud & A. Toland does, by the authority in him vested, empower and constitute them as **CHARTER MEMBERS**, of an Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, to be known as Post Number One of Decatur District of Macomb Department of Illinois, and they are hereby constituted as said Post, and authorized to make By-Laws for the government of said Post, and to do and perform all acts necessary to conduct and carry on said organization in accordance with the Constitution of the Grand Army of the Republic.

Done at Springfield, Ill, this Sixth day of
April - 1866.

R. F. Stephenson

Commanding Department

Robert W. Woods

Adjutant General



A PROPOSITION TO ERECT A NATIONAL MEMO-
RIAL HALL, G. A. R., AT THE BIRTHPLACE
OF THE ORDER, DECATUR, ILL.

*To the Commander in Chief, Officers, Delegates and Com-
rades of the Twenty-fourth National Encampment Grand
Army of the Republic, assembled, Boston, Mass.:*

We present you herewith copies of the first charter of a Post of the Grand Army of the Republic, and some extracts from the minutes of the meetings of the Post, in order to call your attention to the necessities of the plan proposed by us for the perpetuation of the memory of an order which must soon become extinct.

There are now in the possession of the first Post Adjutant of the Grand Army a few sheets of paper loosely bound together containing the records of the first Post, four copies of the printed regulations of the organization, and two copies of the original ritual. On the sixth day of April, 1866, the organization commenced with twelve men. It now numbers over four hundred thousand. It is possible that for a few years its strength may increase, but the inexorable hand of death will soon be laid upon us all. We shall be summoned to that great encampment beyond the river. The bivouac of the dead will be our resting place,

and the Grand Army of the Republic will be a thing of the past—a half page in the history of these times; its aims and objects a legend; its purposes misrepresented by malignant foes of its influence upon posterity. There will be nothing erected by this greatest of organizations to teach the coming generations the objects of its existence, to inspire them with a patriotism fed by emulation of the heroism of the soldiers of the Union, as exemplified in monuments and memorial halls erected by them to perpetuate the achievements of their valor.

In twenty-five years the fifteen-year-old boy who enlisted in 1864 will be a gray-haired man, bent over with the weight of sixty-seven years. In thirty years he will have passed the allotted years of the life of man. In twenty-five years a meeting of one Grand Army Post will be held once in three months, or once a year, at some central place in each State, and a few enfeebled men will meet to consult for the good of an order of which nothing will remain but a recollection of its glories. Those old men will have come down from past generations.

In thirty years it will, indeed, be a grand and glorious sight, at a National Encampment, to see two or three old men from each State meet together to hear read only the lists of those who have been mustered out within one year.

Let it be remembered that the ranks of the Grand Army of the Republic can never be recruited. No one can enter this order who has not been a soldier of the Union. No one else ought ever to be allowed to enter it. If others do, the grandeur of the Grand Army is gone. When it ceases

to be the Grand Army it becomes simply as any other secret order.

The question is, what shall the Grand Army of the Republic, now in the full meridian of its glory, do to perpetuate the history of its organization, to preserve the records of its Posts, Departments and Encampments, to collect its mementoes, and make sure that in all future time they shall be ready for the inspection of the historian, and exemplars to the youth of this Nation of the patriotism of generations gone by?

States, as such, can have no interest in these records and mementoes, for they are the property of an order of men, once heroes, it is true, but now merely citizens. The National Government cannot preserve them because it would arouse the hostilities of those who fear to perpetuate the memories of the war. Unfortunately, too, there are States to whose rulers such things would be unpleasant, while from their very boundaries came legions of heroes who offered their lives and shed their blood that a Republic might be maintained and universal liberty in the United States be accomplished.

There is nothing left, therefore, for the Grand Army of the Republic but to establish for itself a Temple of Patriotism, a storehouse of records and mementoes and curiosities, a monument to its patriotism, a museum or school of loyalty. To this the aged soldier may send his trophies, his arms, his records, with the certainty that they will be carefully preserved. To this may be committed the banners and flags that the State and Nation cannot obtain; to this the records

of the various posts, as they fall out of line by death of members, may be committed for the use of survivors and the instruction of mankind. Into it would be finally gathered all those precious relics of a great conflict, and all that valuable and historic property which in each present Post we hold so dear. To this place the aged veteran may make a pilgrimage and feast his eyes again upon the flag he followed, the canteen from which he drank, the musket, perchance, by which he dealt death to his country's foes. Or, if the fortune of war preserved none of these for him, he may yet gather his children about him, and, repairing to this place, made sacred by the memories of the dark days of the Republic, refresh his loyalty and teach his descendants the best lessons of patriotism.

To this place, when we are all gone, the generations to come may repair, and learn lessons of heroism, of fraternity, charity and loyalty from the treasures gathered there.

The necessity of such a place is now self-evident. What shall it be in fact?

As grand as the order which erected it; as large as the wisdom of living soldiers shall dictate; as enduring as the everlasting hills; and, by a wise system of finance, by a liberal system of endowment, made perpetually self-sustaining, in the care of loving hands. Its best description ought to be: It is in every respect worthy of the Soldiers of the Union whom it commemorates, and of the organization, the most powerful on earth, which erected it.

WHERE SHOULD IT BE?

In the center of the region from whence came the loyal soldiers, easy of access by rail, within the shortest possible distance of every Grand Army Post, and at the birthplace of the order.

HOW SHOULD IT BE ERECTED?

By contributions made by the soldiers of the Union. These funds should be placed in the hands of trustees appointed by the National Encampment, and expended by them as the wisdom of the order shall direct. There should be enough contributions within a few years, not only to erect the building, but to endow it so that there should be a fund forever hereafter for its maintenance. It should be under the control of a corporation, of which the directors should be members of the Grand Army as long as any may live who can serve. After that it should be controlled by the Sons of Veterans and successors whom they may select.

A contribution of twenty-five or fifty cents a year, for three or four years, from each member of the Grand Army, would be grandly sufficient. If the annual dues of each member were increased by that sum, by order of this Encampment, for three or four years, and this increase paid into the hands of the persons designated by the order, the building would be erected, the plan put in operation, the endowment made permanent, without any soldier being conscious of the burden imposed upon him. It could be done so quickly that every soldier of the Union could pay it a visit before his death, and deposit with its custodians the

relics of the war which he desired preserved, and thus it would always be a place where the loyal, loving souls of the soldier's friends could find objects of interest and reverence.

We have no plans to enforce, no pet theories to explain or maintain, no selfish interests to subserve, no real estate to boom; but we simply desire the best welfare of the order and are speaking for its good. We know, too, that in a feeble way these sentiments are but an echo of many a loyal heart all over this country, and that the general idea of a plan such as we propose has long been in the minds of many men who have the best interest of the order at heart.

Decatur is entitled to be the location of such an institution. Lincoln did not live here, but here he split the rails which gave him the homely name we all love. Grant's regiment was formed and mustered here. Here the first Grand Army Post was formed; here its ritual was written; here its appropriate name was bestowed, and here the idea of this Memorial Hall originated. From this community went as many brave soldiers as from any other, and here to-day as many reside as elsewhere. The city has increased more than five hundred per cent. in population since the close of the war. It has to-day almost twenty thousand population. Its streets are paved. Electric street railways hasten the travel of its citizens. It has every convenience and comfort of modern life, and it is noted, not only for being abreast, but far ahead of the times. Trunk line railways lead from it in twelve different directions. It is in the heart of the best country on earth. Its people are loyal and liberty-

loving and must ever so remain. There is nothing lacking to make this the Mecca of the soldiers of the Republic except the good will of the Grand Army of the Republic and its approval and control of the plan proposed. This we hereby invoke.

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HISTORY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE G. A. R.
AND POST NO. 1.

In this age of history-making and history-writing it is fitting that the data relating to the organization of the GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC should be in hand, properly authenticated, while we have the living witnesses. Events, as they are being evolved, impress not their importance as historic facts on the actors. Hence valuable data, at the time, are cast aside as waste or rubbish, to be delved for by after generations in the, it may be vain, effort to secure treasured lore or to solve problems that time has rendered important. The old soldier, mustered out at the close of the war, cast aside his trappings and was soon merged in the general citizenship of a great country. He thought but little of the years of service, and scarcely dreamed that he was a hero. It is only when the rising generations, yearning for information, called for the oft-repeated story of camp life, the march and battle, and compilers and periodicals ask from the surviving actors the real facts, that the old soldier seeks to recall the facts and proofs so long slumbering.

So the men who founded the G. A. R. knew not how they builded. Little did they realize theirs was an inspiration and they the agents in divine hands to establish the grandest brotherhood and school of patriotism the world ever knew.

In viewing its grandeur there arises the query: "Who were its founders and where its birthplace and christening?" It is conceded and officially recognized that at

DECATUR, ILLINOIS,

THE G. A. R. HAD ITS BIRTH AND CHRISTENING,

APRIL 6TH, 1866.

Cast aside as of seeming little value, the old records were but in part recovered after protracted search, and from them and survivors of the charter members of old Post No. 1 we gather the facts that will pass into history.

To Major B. F. Stephenson, then resident at Springfield, Illinois, is justly conceded the honor of conceiving the organization. From his fertile brain sprung many of the details in the work of the order. While others approved, it was only at Decatur, Illinois, he could find congenial spirits willing to formulate and put in practical shape the grand undertaking.

Early in the spring of 1866, at the request of comrades J. W. Routh and M. F. Kanan, Maj. Stephenson visited Decatur with his manuscript plans of organization, briefs for ritual, &c., all in crude form, and placed them in the hands of Dr. J. W. Routh, Capt. J. T. Bishop, Capt. M. F.

Kanan, Maj. Geo. R. Steele and Capt. George H. Dunning, who formulated the original constitution, regulations and ritual of the order. I. N. Coltrin and Joseph Prior, soldiers and skilled printers, were duly obligated, and to them was intrusted the printing of the several documents.

To this committee is due the honor of christening the order as the "Grand Army of the Republic."

On April 6th, 1866, the first encampment of the G. A. R. was formed at Decatur, Ills., the charter members of the encampment being Capt. M. F. Kanan, Maj. Geo. R. Steele, Capt. George H. Dunning, Gen. I. C. Pugh, Col. J. H. Nale, Capt. J. T. Bishop, Capt. C. Reibsame, Dr. J. W. Routh, Dr. B. F. Sibley, Lieut. I. N. Coltrin, Lieut. Joseph Prior and Capt. A. Toland. They were mustered in and to them were the obligations prescribed in the ritual administered by Maj. B. F. Stephenson, commanding Department of Illinois.

Here was the first muster; here the first work under the ritual; here the first fruition of an inspiration that now voices its principles of patriotism and fraternity through near 7,000 posts and over 400,000 comrades.

We present herewith copies of the charter, minutes of the first encampment, with copies of General Orders Nos. 1 and 2, issued by comrade Commander B. F. Stephenson, the Senior Department Commander of the United States.

Of this galaxy of noble comrades, Stephenson, Pugh, Routh, Prior, Nale, Dunning and Toland have passed from the Post below to the eternal encampment above.

Of the surviving charter members, Capt. M. F. Kanan, Senior Post Commander, is serving his third term as mayor of the city of Decatur; Major George R. Steele, Senior Post Adjutant, is treasurer of Macon County, Illinois; Capt. J. T. Bishop, Senior O. G., is comptroller of the city of Bradford, Penn.; Capt. C. Reibsame, Senior O. D., is a wholesale liquor dealer in Bloomington, Ills.; Dr. B. F. Sibley is a practicing physician, and Lieut. I. N. Coltrin an expert printer at Decatur, Ills.

On April 23d, 1866, comrades J. T. Bishop, G. H. Dunning, W. J. Usrey, B. F. Sibley and C. C. Glass were appointed by Post No. 1 a committee to revise the Ritual and Regulations. On May 1st, 1866, the committee on revision submitted to the Post their work and were ordered to send same to Headquarters Department of Illinois, at Springfield, for approval.

On May 9th, 1866, the committee on revision reported the acceptance by Headquarters of the Revised Ritual and Regulations submitted.

The Revised Ritual, entitled "Proceedings of Enlistment and Muster, Grand Army of the Republic," was printed at Springfield, Ills., in May, 1866.

Eighty comrades were mustered into Post No. 1 during 1866. Owing to loss of records a complete roster subsequent to 1866 cannot now be had.

To the surviving comrades of Post No. 1 it is gratifying that the work inaugurated April 6th, 1866, has become

national, its principles the inspiration of the living present, and which will linger as a benediction when the closing ceremonies of the last earthly encampment shall have been said.

To Decatur it is cause for pride that the Grand Army of the Republic had here its birth and christening.

To aid the National Encampment and comrades to intelligently decide on the location of the proposed Memorial Hall, we submit a map showing Decatur's railroad facilities, with mileage to various leading cities.

Of the 6,778 G. A. R. Posts in the United States, over 4,200 are within five hundred miles of Decatur, with a membership of over 200,000.

One-half of the population of the United States reside within 500 miles of this, the birthplace of our order.

On April 6th, 1891, the State Encampment of Illinois will convene at Decatur to celebrate the silver anniversary of the birth of the G. A. R., at which time we hope to lay the corner stone of our National Memorial Hall. Let it be a national event, and the comrades of the Union are bidden to the feast.

To this sacred shrine let the Commander in Chief bid the comrades assemble, where we may pledge ourselves anew to that fraternity of feeling which binds us together as comrades, that charity which prompts us to the noblest sacrifices for the needy and destitute wards of our grand army,

and that loyalty which binds us to a faithful performance of our duties as citizens, and to an undying vigilance which is the price of liberty.

Submitted in Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty.

JOHN A. BARNES, Chairman.
GEORGE R. STEELE, Secretary.
M. F. KANAN,
K. HARWOOD,
J. M. CLOKEY,
W. C. JOHNS,
N. PRINGLE,
H. F. MAY,
GOV. R. J. OGLESBY,
W. F. CALHOUN,
C. M. IMBOBEN,
F. L. HAYS,
F. M. YOUNG,
R. P. LYTLE,
R. J. ROBERTS,
C. H. FULLER,

National Memorial Hall Committee.

MINUTES OF FIRST ENCAMPMENT POST NO. 1.

ASSEMBLY 1.

At an informal meeting held April 6th, 1866, for the purpose of organizing an encampment of the G. A. R., the following named persons were mustered by Major B. F. Stephenson, and constituted charter members:

I. C. Pugh,	J. H. Nale,	M. F. Kanan,
G. R. Steele,	J. T. Bishop,	C. Reibsame,
J. W. Routh,	G. H. Dunning,	I. N. Coltrin,
Jo. Prior,	B. F. Sibley,	Aquilla Toland.

When, upon motion, the encampment entered into an election of officers, with the following result:

OFFICERS FOR THE DISTRICT.

Brig. Gen. I. C. Pugh, Commandant of District.
Lieut. Col. J. H. Nale, Dist. Q. M.
Doct. J. W. Routh, Dist. Adjt.

OFFICERS FOR THE POST.

M. F. Kanan, P. C.	Chris. Reibsame, O. D.
G. R. Steele, P. A.	J. T. Bishop, O. G.
G. H. Dunning, P. Q. M.	J. W. Routh, P. Surg.

All of whom were duly mustered by Maj. Stephenson, who then declared the encampment duly organized and ready for the transaction of any and all business which

might come before it, and assigned it the post of honor as
DECATUR ENCAMPMENT No. 1.

On motion, a committee of two was appointed to procure a suitable room for the Encampment and report at next regular meeting. Capts. Kanan and Dunning, committee.

On motion, Tuesday was decided upon as the night for regular meetings.

On motion, adjourned to meet April 10th, 1866.

M. F. KANAN, P. C.

G. R. STEELE, P. A.

GENERAL ORDERS.

GENERAL ORDER No. 1.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS,
GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC.

ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE, /
Springfield, Ills., April 1st, 1866. \

The following named officers are hereby announced on
duty at these headquarters:

Col. Jules C. Webber, A. D. C. and Chief of Staff.

Col. Jno. M. Snyder, Q. M. General.

Maj. Robert M. Woods, Adj. Gen'l, (P. O. Box 84).

Capt. Jno. A. Lightfoot, A. A. G.

Lieut. J. S. Phelps, A. D. C.

By order of B. F. STEPHENSON,
Commanding Department.

Official:

ROBERT M. WOODS, Adj. Gen'l.

GENERAL ORDER No. 2.

HEADQ'RS DEPT. ILLS., G. A. R.

ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE, /
Springfield, Ills., May 1st, 1866. \

I. For the purpose of the further organization of this
army the following officers will be appointed under Section

9 of Article 3 of the Constitution, and their names reported to these headquarters, viz.: Assistant Post Commander, Post Surgeon, Post Chaplain, Officer of the Day, Officer of the Guard.

II. The duties of Assistant Post Commander are those of a Vice President.

III. It will be the duty of the Post Surgeon to examine and report on all cases presented for charity and assistance from the Post.

IV. The Post Chaplain will be present at all assemblies of the command and officiate in the proper duties of his office.

	By order of	B. F. STEPHENSON,
Official:		Commanding Department.
	ROBERT M. WOODS,	
	Adjutant General	

ENDORSEMENT BY OFFICERS AND COUNCIL OF
ADMINISTRATION, DEPT. OF ILLINOIS.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS,
GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC.

OFFICE OF DEPARTMENT COMMANDER,
Quincy, Ill., July 23, 1890.

*Capt. John A. Barnes, Chairman National Memorial Hall
Committee, Decatur, Ill.:*

DEAR SIR AND COMRADE:—Having reviewed and carefully considered your manuscript presenting the project of a National Memorial Hall at Decatur, Ill., in honor of the Grand Army of the Republic, I take pleasure in extending my hearty endorsement of the project, plans and methods suggested. The desirability of such a temple of patriotism and its influence in perpetuating the memory and teachings of this, the grandest of all fraternal and patriotic organizations, grows on me. Such a temple would stand as an inspiration to succeeding generations and should receive the cordial endorsement of the 24th National Encampment and every comrade of the G. A. R.

Yours fraternally,

WM. L. DISTIN,

Dep't Commander.

To the Delegates Assembled of the 24th National Encampment of the G. A. R.:

We cordially favor, approve of and endorse the proposed plan for the erection of a National Memorial Hall in Decatur, Ill., to be dedicated and secured to the use and occupancy of the members of the Grand Army of the Republic throughout the Union.

We invoke your careful consideration and hope for your generous approval and support.

J. F. HARRALL, S. V. D. C.

N. B. THISTLEWOOD, J. V. D. C.

JOSIAH MOORE, Chaplain.

P. L. MCKINNIE, M. D.

O. F. AVERY, C. of A.

WM. CLENDENIN, C. of A.

WM. VENABLE, C. of A.

W. W. BEAN, C. of A.

A. D. READE, A. A. G.

THOS. W. SCOTT, A. Q. G.

FRED W. SPINK, Inspector.

S. G. BURDICK, C. M. O.

JAS. J. HEALY, A. D. C. & C. of S.



DISTANCES FROM DECATUR.

Chicago,	-	-	174	St. Louis,	-	-	108
Detroit,	-	-	370	Kansas City,	-	-	339
Toledo,	-	-	323	Hannibal,	-	-	140
Indianapolis,	-	-	153	Quincy,	-	-	151
Columbus,	-	-	327	Keokuk,	-	-	151
Cincinnati,	-	-	262	Burlington,	-	-	173
Louisville,	-	-	263	Dubuque,	-	-	252
Evansville,	-	-	170	St. Paul,	-	-	551
Nashville,	-	-	325	Omaha,	-	-	470
Cairo,	-	-	201	Council Bluffs,	-	-	470
New Orleans,	-	-	755	Minneapolis,	-	-	558



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1866



1891