

The Banner

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No. 5



NOW THEY BELONG TO THE AGES



TAPS SOUND for Grand Army of the Republic

The obituary notice of the Grand Army of the Republic was written on August 2, 1956. It was born on April 6, 1866 at Decatur, Illinois, and died at Duluth, Minnesota with the passing of its last survivor, 109-year-old Albert Woolson. Comrade Woolson was the sole officially listed survivor of the more than 2,675,000 men of the Union armed forces. He also was the last survivor of the Grand Army of the Republic.

In 1865, at the Grand Review in Washington, D. C., soldiers going home from the war paraded on Pennsylvania Ave., 60 men abreast, for six hours one day and for seven the next. An organization was soon formed that was to make the former wearers of the blue the most potent force in their country's politics for the next twenty years. This organization was the Grand Army of the Republic, of which Comrade Woolson was a member in 1890, when it reached its peak membership of 408,489. After that, age and declining vigor took inevitable tolls of G. A. R. influence and activity.

The Grand Army wasn't intended to be a political unit. Dr B. F. Stephenson, former surgeon of Illinois infantry who is honored as the founder, envisioned a great brotherhood of former soldiers, bonded together by mutual affections and memories. The instituting of Memorial Day was one of the first Grand Army projects to win popular favor. There are a dozen versions of the idea's origin, but there is no doubt that General Logan's famous General Order No. 11 gave it national status under Grand Army auspices.

During the golden years, the Grand Army was a most potent force. It has been said with reason that it was a balance of power in national politics for more than a quarter of a century. In other fields, the Grand Army became the citadel of orthodox Americanism. It scrutinized school textbooks and scolded publishers who intimated there was virtue in the South or fault in the North. It supplied "patriotic lecturers" to lodges and schools.

The G.A.R. was always generous with its own funds in aiding needy and crippled veterans. As early as 1873, when the national treasury was operating on a deficit, individual posts reported \$48,000 spent in relief work.

The Grand Army had a tinge of the secret society popular in the day. There was an oath and a ritual, and the organization was ostensibly free from politics and dedicated to good works. In a few years, however, it became one of the principal instruments for keeping the Republican Party in power and for obtaining pensions and Government job preference for Union veterans. The G. A. R. as Comrade Woolson first knew it, was dominated by such figures as Maj. Gen. John A. Logan, who was a gallant and successful general as well as a thundering orator.

Comrade Woolson and his comrades wore the blue uniform coat and slouch hat of the G.A.R. and marched in the Memorial Day Parades as long as they could. Finally they became very old men sitting quietly in the sun. He was one of six Union veterans attending the last National Encampment of the G. A. R. at Indianapolis, in August, 1949. Here these last survivors of the organization voted to disband it.

The 1938 meeting at Gettysburg was the last time the veterans of both sides met publicly together. They had met previously in peace at Gettysburg in 1913,

the 50th anniversary of the battle. That reunion attracted 53,407 veterans. In 1938 only 1,845 were able to get there, although nearly every state was represented.

Albert Woolson's death left only three survivors of the great Civil War, all Confederates. They are John Salling, 110, of Slant, Va.; Walter W. Williams, 114, of Franklin, Texas; and William A. Lundy, 110, of Laurel Hill, Fla.

The spirit of the Grand Army of the Republic will never die. It lives in the minds and hearts of millions of vigorous young Americans. In that spirit, and by that spirit, the future of our Nation is forever secure.

Their ideals and traditions will be carried on by the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and their Auxiliary. This heritage is not just a blessing and privilege, but also an obligation and trust. Let us pledge to the memory of these men of the G. A. R. that we will in time of peace or war show our appreciation of this heritage they have handed down to us by preserving it for ourselves and for future generations.

We are grateful to them for charting a course through fields of good old-fashioned American stability where every mother's son stood independent and self-reliant on his own, subscribing to the theory that honest work in honor done, whether in halls of state or at the forge, was a duty paramount.

We thank them for not wasting this Nation's wealth, we thank them for preserving this Nation's economy; we are proud that their generation never need apologize to posterity for depleting its inheritance; for this and this alone they can answer their last roll call in resonant voice and salute Old Glory for the last time with unfaltering hands.

Your house is in order, your path is straight, your record is clean, and as long as that flag blazes in God's blue firmament the gallant lads who subscribed to the constitution of the Grand Army of the Republic and wore its badge of honor will be breveted in the hearts of all decent men and women who enjoy the protection of its folds, and generations yet unborn will see in every white and crimson bar where'er unfurled the steel-tipped, ordered lines of America's sons of '61 to '65.

We salute you gallant men of the Grand Army of the Republic; may the benediction of the Supreme Commander of us all rest upon you through eternal eons and may the hand that led you safely through your Gethsemane preserve this wondrous land your valor helped to save.

And now since the crucible of time has dissolved the bitterness born of conflicting thought, we like to believe that those silent hosts in gray (the only time Americans ever surrendered, and then, only to Americans) along with those in blue, look down from their battlements in heaven and salute with loving hands this proud Republic built of their fathers' blood, and sanctified by their mothers' tears.

The sounding of "taps" for the Grand Army of the Republic marks the close of a great era in American History. They have lived to see our country become a strong, unified Nation. They take their place in the ranks of the immortals who have gone before.

Albert Woolson, last man in G. A. R. dies at 109

The nation saw the end of an era on August 2nd when Albert Woolson, 109, sole surviving Union veteran of the Civil War, died. When Albert Woolson was born, the United States, counting from 1776, was in its 70th year. Living in our midst, he was a reminder of America's past. His own stout constitution and good sense placed upon his aged shoulders a unique responsibility. His city, his state and his nation looked to him as a symbol of the glorious past and of the spirit that made it glorious. Mr. Woolson carried that load ably and graciously. When his health permitted—for many happy years—he traveled, appeared at public functions, served as an honorary grandfather for a nation becoming fascinated with its own past.

Comrade Woolson had been hospitalized for nine weeks with a recurring lung congestion condition. He lapsed into a coma five days before his death and did not regain consciousness. Members of his family were at his bedside when he died in St. Luke's Hospital.

In Washington, President Eisenhower said, "The death of Mr. Woolson brings sorrow to the hearts of Americans—The American people have lost the last personal link with the Union Army."

Comrade Woolson was born in the New York farm hamlet of Antwerp, 22 miles northeast of Watertown, on Feb. 11, 1847, the same day that Thomas Alva Edison, the inventor was born. Willard Woolson, his father was a carpenter in Watertown and apprenticed his son to this trade. The senior Woolson had, however, a second vocation. He was a musician, and when President Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers in 1861, he and his fellow musicians enlisted in a body. When his family did not hear from him for more than a year they traced him through Army records to a hospital in Minnesota suffering from a leg wound received at the battle of Shiloh. Shortly after the family was reunited, his leg had to be amputated and he died.

Minnesota's manpower was stretched thin to furnish its quota for the Union forces and at the same time to hold back the Sioux Indians, who were off the reservation in 1863. The Union needed heavy artillery and Col. Wm. Colville organized a Minnesota heavy artillery regiment of 1,800 men. Albert Woolson got his mother's consent and was accepted into Company C, First Minnesota Volunteer Heavy Artillery. His military service dated from Oct. 10, 1864. Enlisted as a rifleman, he eventually was assigned as a drummer and bugler. Late in 1864, the regiment joined the Army of the Cumberland in Tennessee. It was commanded by Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas, known to history as "The Rock of Chickamauga", but more familiarly to his men as "Pap".

The First Minnesota sat out the spring and early summer of 1865 in the shadow of Lookout Mountain, near Chattanooga, and in August the regiment was ordered home. Comrade Woolson received his discharge on Sept. 7, 1865.

He married Sarah Jane Sloper in 1868. She died in 1901. Three years later he married Anna Haugen who died in 1949. Survivors include six daughters, Mrs. John Kobus, Mrs. Arthur Johnson and Mrs. Robert Campbell, all of Duluth; Mrs. Adelaide Wellcome, Mrs. F. W. Rye and Mrs. J. C. Barrett, all of Seattle; and two sons, Dr. A. H. Woolson of Spokane, Wash., and R. C. Woolson of Dayton, Wash.

On August 6, 1956, Comrade Woolson, the Union army veteran who outlived all his comrades, was laid to rest in the family plot in Park Hill Cemetery, Duluth, Minn. as thousands paid final tribute.

Secretary of the Army, Wilber Brucker headed a delegation of political and military dignitaries including Asst. Secy. Hugh M. Milton, Senators Hubert H. Humphrey and Edw. J. Thye, as well as Repr. John A. Blatnick. Other dignitaries included Lt. Gen. Wm. H. Arnold, Chicago, Fifth Army Commander; Governor Orville Freeman and Maj. Gen. Jos. E. Nelson, state adjutant general.

More than 1,500 persons attended the 2 P. M. funeral in the Duluth armory, hundreds more lined the route to the cemetery, and about 2,000 watched as the bronze casket was set down with full military honors.

At 1:45 P. M. an army drum and bugle corps, stationed outside the armory with an army marching unit of 109 men (one for each Comrade Woolson's years), blew retreat. A military guard of honor, lining the walk to the armory door, snapped to attention. Military men saluted and the Fifth army band played a funeral procession.

Six army sergeants, acting as pall bearers, carried the casket into the armory, following Lt. Col. Augustine P. Donnelly, a Presbyterian chaplain attached to Fifth army headquarters, Chicago. As the procession entered the armory, the Carillon Chorus club sang "The Battle Hymn of the Republic". Col. Donnelly, who conducted the services, started the ceremony at 2:03 P. M. with, "I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord." The service ended with a short prayer at 2:45 P. M.

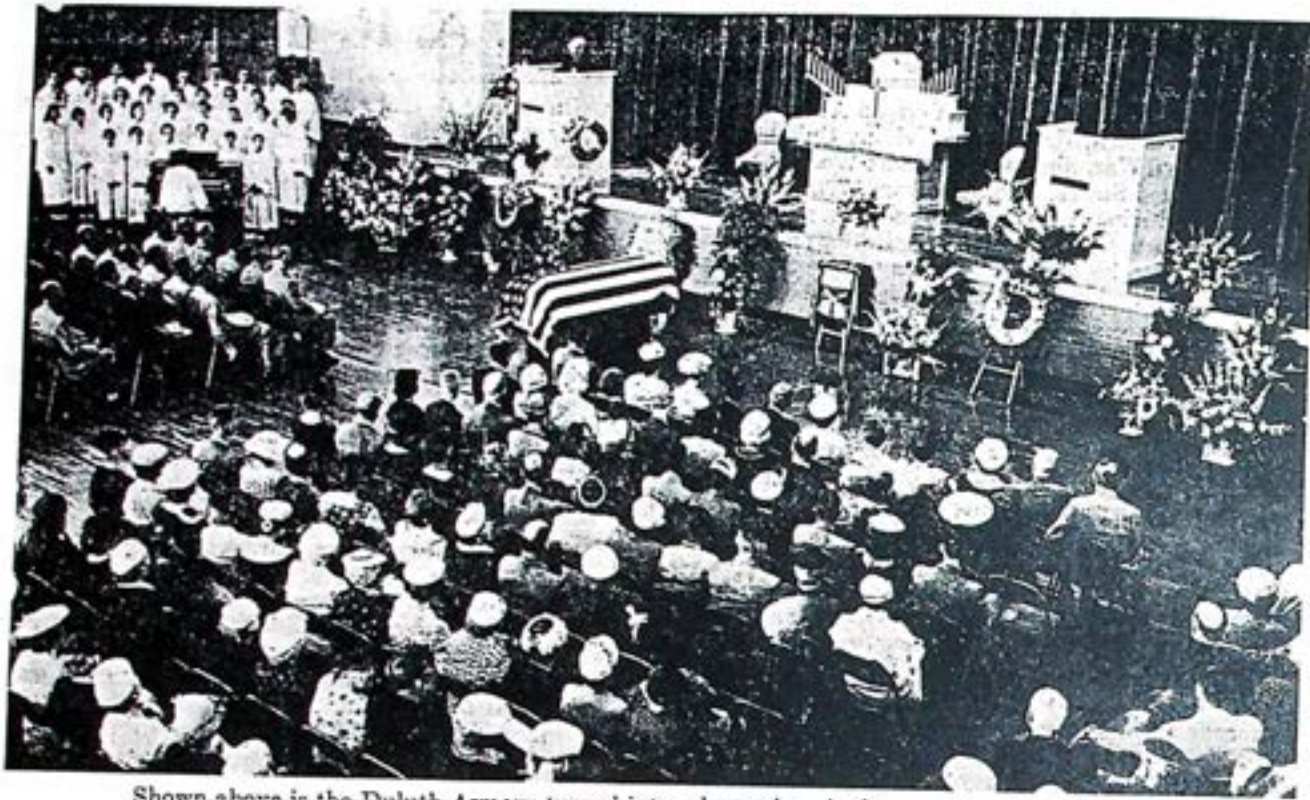
The procession left the armory with the band—the drums were decked in black—playing Chopin's funeral dirge. Behind the band came the army marching unit plodding in slow cadence in the 85 degree heat. At 4 P. M. the band's drums could be heard at the cemetery.

The Mt. Vernon, Ohio, Fife and Drum corps of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War took over the procession's lead at the cemetery gate and played "Onward Christian Soldiers". The color guard followed the fife and drum corps. Behind them marched Col. Donnelly. Then came the hearse and numerous automobiles.

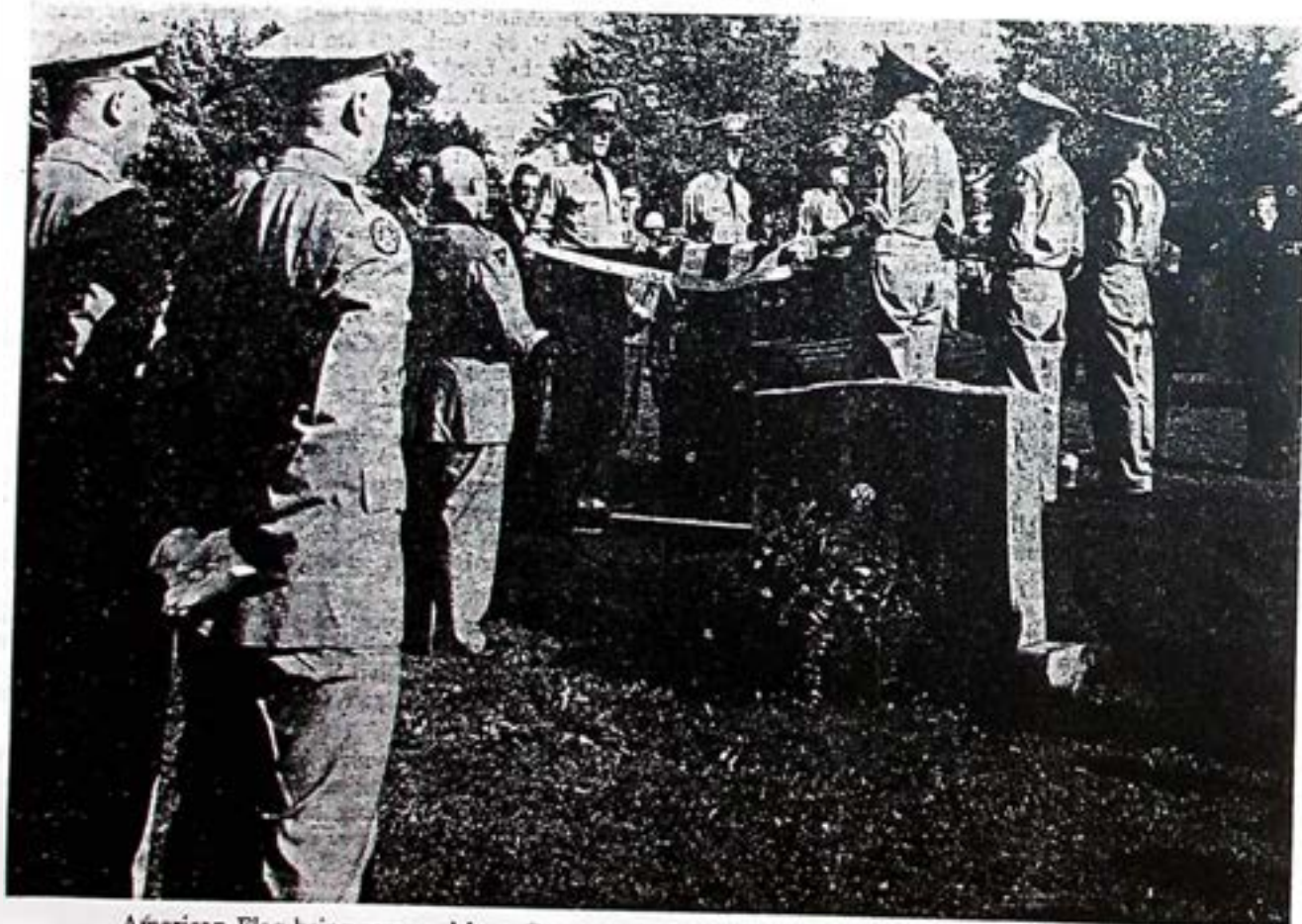
At 4:17 P. M. pall bearers brought the casket and Col. Donnelly presented a short funeral oration. The pall bearers, who had been holding the casket flag two feet above the casket, folded it and gave it to Secy. of the Army Brucker, who in turn presented it to Mrs. Kobus.

The Grand Army of the Republic funeral service was then performed by members of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, as they placed a wreath, a rose, and a miniature United States flag atop the casket.

An army firing squad fired three volleys. The bugler sounded "Taps" while military men saluted. The group was silent. The firing squad marched away. The fife and drum corps faded into the distance with the fifes whistling the "Battle Hymn of the Republic".



Shown above is the Duluth Armory turned into a huge chapel. Commander-in-Chief Bauer and National President of the Auxiliary, Sister Lenore Glass along with many members from both organizations were present.



American Flag being removed from Comrade Woolson's casket. Included in picture is C. in C. Bauer (in blue uniform) as well as members taking part in G. A. R. burial service.



AS Union army drummer boy (1864-5). AS active octogenarian.



GRACE—At family gatherings, a word of prayer.



The smiling dreamer and still his best
The soldier's last name;
He wears an old's parade still meet
The laurels and laurel wreath,
On France's eternal common ground
Their about name are earned,
And glory guards, with solemn guard
The laurels of the dead!

ALBERT WOOLSON presented a century of Americans.



WRITING condolences at death of last comrade.



RECEIVING Duluth Hall of Fame award in '32.



TALKS over old days with Nathan Colburn at GAR Convention in 1947.

Albert Woolson, last of the Civil War's Union vets, has rejoined the Boys in Blue. With him passes into the bivouac of time a century of Americans which—if not always marked by greatness—epitomizes the vitality of a nation graced with greatness.

Not only for Duluthians, in whose midst he lived since 1905, but for all who came to know him, Albert Woolson personified the wending link between present and past. Proud yet humble, dignified yet earthy, too, he was a symbol of patriotism—the kindly, slightly stooped centenarian who had served his country in war and rendered it service in peace.

Through Woolson, the Civil War drummer boy and spinner of wondrous tales, the passing parade of history seemed ever near and real. He had shared his birthday with Thomas Edison on Feb. 11, 1847.

Napoleon III was crowned emperor of France when Woolson was a lad of five. Daniel Webster, Henry Clay and John Howard Payne—those pillars of young America—were still alive in Woolson's youth. Queen Victoria exchanged greetings with President Buchanan over the first Atlantic cable in 1858 when Woolson was 11.

Lincoln's election, Beauregard's attack on Ft. Sumter and the years of the Civil War were as much in Woolson's memory and spirit as the blue uniform among his souvenirs. Woolson wore his uniform with

pride, and later, as a leader among veterans, championed the cause of peace. "We were fighting our brothers," the venerable veteran used to say. "In that there was no glory."

Woolson's life span encompassed, too, the U. S. purchase of Alaska (at two cents an acre); the opening of the first commercial telephone exchange; construction of the Panama Canal; opening of the Brooklyn bridge; unveiling of the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor in the presence of 1,000,000 spectators; Carry Nation's anti-saloon raids; the invention of radio, the Wright brothers' first successful flight—countless events and milestones which now stand the past.

There were other wars in Woolson's century of history—each conflict fiercer, each peace more deary won. Yet Woolson measured history by the increased freedom each period brought to man, for freedom, he felt, is the mission of America and the destiny of man.

Duluth at the turn of the century was growing by leaps and bounds. Here Woolson felt at home, and made his home. The Aerial bridge was being completed the year he settled here. The Alworth building then was still an architect's dream and Superior street was devoid of its present-day glitter and lights.

Woolson's passing marks the end of a fascinating era. And this then is farewell to a revered and beloved symbol of the past who through his presence helped usher in a future of promise.



CHILDREN honored him with parade in '32.



SHOWING 'EM how at last G.A.R. encampment (1948).



DRUMMING for granddaughter Frances Ann.



FAVORITE PASTIME—Shoveling snow, at 104.



SMILING Duluth Bazaar Mad day observance.

Series 1955-1956

GENERAL ORDER No. 4

Headquarters, Commander-in-Chief
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War
123 Heights Road Ridgewood, N. J.

August 10, 1956

1. Through an error in the composing department, Gen. Order No. 3 was issued without the concluding portion and authentication thereof. Said Order is hereby authenticated and made official.

2. It is my sad duty to announce the death on 2 Aug. 1956 of Comrade Albert Woolson, the last surviving member of the Grand Army of the Republic, and so far as is known, the last surviving Union Veteran of the Civil War. Funeral services, arranged by Minnesota Military District, United States Army, with the concurrence of the family, were held at the State Armory, Duluth, Minn. on Monday 6 August. By request of Mrs. Kobus, daughter of Comrade Woolson, the Commander-in-Chief was one of the honorary pall bearers. The Grand Army of the Republic burial service was conducted at the grave by five members of our own Order: P. C. in C. Roy J. Bennett of Iowa acting as Comdr.; P.D.C. Dewey B. Mead of Minn. as Chaplain; and P.D.C.'s Homer L. Young of Iowa (member Nat'l Council of Administration), Theodore Froot of Minn., and Edward Biering of Wis. as the three comrades. The profound sympathy of our Order is extended to all Comrade Woolson's surviving relatives

Where Camp Charters are framed and displayed in the meeting place of the Camp, they will be draped in mourning until after the next installation of officers.

Each Dep't and Camp at its next meeting after receipt of this Order, be it regular or special, will stand in respect to Comrade Woolson's memory, and the Chaplain will offer the prayer from our Ritual for the burial of a deceased veteran, or other suitable prayer.

3. The 75th Nat'l Encampment is hereby summoned to meet in the City of Harrisburg, Penna., on the 9th to the 13th days of Sept. 1956, inclusive. Headquarters will be in the Penn-Harris Hotel, and the time and place of the various sessions and functions will be then and there announced. A tentative program is printed below this order.

Dep'ts in arrears for per capita tax and reports will not be entitled to seats in the Encampment. Each member entitled to a seat in the Encampment must show a life membership certificate or a receipt showing payment of dues.

Committees will be announced at the opening session. It is requested that all resolutions to be offered by members, Camps, or Dep'ts be filed with the National Secretary at least five days before the opening of the Encampment.

Every member of the Order, whether a delegate or not is privileged to attend the social functions of the Encampment, and may attend the business sessions, but without a vote.

4. Hiram R. Gale Camp No. 1, Dep't of Ore. and Wash. was instituted by Commander-in-Chief Bauer on Tuesday evening, 24 July in the Veterans Building at Seattle, where the Camp will meet. The hall was filled with members of the new Camp and of the Auxiliary, some of whom have worked most faithfully to bring about the formation of the new Camp. Some 25 new

members were mustered on that occasion, and many more are completing their papers.

The Camp is named for Hiram R. Gale, C. in C. of the G.A.R., 1945-46, and the last Dep't Comdr. of Washington and Alaska, serving in 1914 and 1943-48, whose son, also a prominent citizen of Seattle, is the first commander of the Camp. Meetings for the present will be held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. The personnel of the Camp is of a high character, including many members of the Disabled American Veterans, and it will doubtless occupy a prominent place in the patriotic life of Seattle.

5. Word has just been received of the death, on Aug. 9, of Bro. R. J. Williams who for many years has been Dep't Secy-Treas. of the Ohio Dep't. To his beloved wife, Mrs. Sadie Williams, and to the Ohio Dep't we extend deep sympathy. We shall long remember him for his devotion and loyalty to our Order.

Bro. Wm. A. Selz, 16 Buckeye St., Dayton, Ohio has been designated by the Dep't Council to fill the office of Secy-Treas.

By order of
Attest: Frederic Gilbert Bauer
Albert C Lambert Commander-in-Chief
Nat'l Secy-Treas.

TENTATIVE ENCAMPMENT PROGRAM

Sunday, Sept. 9

- 9 A. M. General Registration-Penn-Harris Hotel Lobby
- 11 A. M. Church Services-Camp Curtin Memorial Meth. Church
- 1-3 P. M. Credential Committee will receive credentials in lobby
- 1:30 P. M. Council of Administration will convene in the Commander-in-Chief's Headquarters Room
- 1:30 P. M. Dep't Commanders meet with Nat'l Chaplain-Ballroom
- 4 P. M. Joint Sons and Aux. Memorial Services in Ballroom
- 7:30 P. M. Concert-28th Division Band-to be followed at 8 P. M. by a Camp-Fire in the Forum of State Educational Building, Capitol grounds

Monday, Sept. 10

- 9 A. M. Credential Committee will receive credentials
- 9:30 A. M. Opening business session
- 1:30 P. M. Business session. Greetings committees received at 3 P.M.
- 6 P. M. Banquet, P.C. in C.'s and P.N.P.'s in Governors Room
- 8 P. M. Auxiliary exemplification of Ritual-Aux. 7 of Harrisburg

Tuesday, Sept. 11

- 9 A. M. Business session
- 1:30 P. M. Business session
- 6:30 P. M. Ladies of the C.A.R. Banquet-Plantation Room
- 8 P. M. Auxiliary Courtesy Hour-Ballroom
- 9 P. M. G.A.R. Family informal get-together and dance-Ballroom

Wednesday, Sept. 12

- 8 A. M. Buses will load for trip to Gettysburg, leaving hotel as soon as loaded-Registration fee for trip \$2.50 will include lunch and tour of Battlefield
- 2 P. M. Dedication of Memorial to Grand Army of the Republic (Monument of Comrade Woolson) at Gettysburg
- 6:30 P. M. Banquet honoring Commander-in-Chief and National President-Plantation Room
- 9 P. M. Reception and Dance honoring Commander-in-Chief and National President-Ballroom

Thursday, Sept. 13

- 9 A. M. Business session
- 1:30 P. M. Business session. Installation of Officers

The Council of Administration will meet immediately following the close of the Encampment at call of incoming Commander-in-Chief