


**Michigan Civil War Sesquicentennial Circular**

Sunday, May 15, 2011 10:30 PM

**From:** "History Remembered, Inc." <civil-war@comcast.net>

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## History Remembered, Inc.

A Civil War History Partner

# Michigan Civil War Sesquicentennial Circular

May 2011

Volume 2, Issue No. 5

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The months of April and May in 1861 found thousands of men enlisting in several cities across the State of Michigan in answer to President Abraham Lincoln's call for troops. Much of their time was spent in training camps learning to be soldiers. Few would comprehend what lay ahead.

Today, 150 years later, many of us are probably like those soldiers in that we have answered the call to commemorate the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War but we are unsure of just how given our limited budgets and resources.

As a Civil War History Partner of the Michigan Historical Commission Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee, we exist to encourage local communities and historical organizations to get involved with programs of all types as Michigan remembers the Civil War. We also encourage partnerships with other like-minded groups.

Most importantly, our role is to facilitate communication and we highly encourage you to promote your upcoming events on the several free websites that exist.

Should you have any questions about these circulars or other events, please feel free to send an email to [civil-war@comcast.net](mailto:civil-war@comcast.net).

Thank you for your interest and support.

Bruce B. Butgereit, Executive Director  
History Remembered, Inc.  
Grand Rapids, MI

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### *Civil War Sesquicentennial Opening Ceremony*

A resounding thank you to all who participated in or attended the opening ceremony of the Civil War Sesquicentennial. The estimated visitor count was around 1,200 making it one of the best attended events in some time at the Michigan Historical Center.

(Your continued support for the various non-Civil War programs and exhibits at the MHC is highly encouraged.)

The groups that had table displays set up reported great interest from the visitors and as I walked around, there were many good questions asked about each group and upcoming events.

True Son Harold Becker shook a lot of hands, especially of young people, interested in meeting the son of a soldier from the Civil War.

Although a little wet, the outside living history encampment had a steady stream of visitors as well. I saw coverage in several newspapers the following day.

We owe the staff of the Michigan Historical Center much appreciation for the countless hours of work they put into helping coordinate the event as well as for creating a fantastic exhibit titled, "Plowshares into Swords," a look at Michigan at the beginning of the Civil War and how things quickly changed in 1861.

Sandra Clark, Director of the Michigan Historical Center and Mark Harvey, Archivist of Michigan have both expressed interest in conducting events like this in the

future...the commemoration of the 150th will run until 2015.

*Civil War History Partner: SUVCW*

The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) -



State and federal leaders from President Lincoln down had promised to care for "those who have borne the burden, his widows, and orphans," but they had little knowledge of how to accomplish the task. There was little political pressure to see that the promises were kept.

With that as background, groups of men began joining together - first for the camaraderie and then for political power.

Emerging the most powerful among the various organizations would be the **Grand Army of the Republic (GAR)**, which by 1890 would number 409,489 veterans of the Civil War.

Founded in Decatur, Illinois on April 6, 1866 by Benjamin F. Stephenson, membership was limited to honorably discharged veterans of the Union Army, Navy, Marine Corps, or the Revenue Cutter Service who had served between April 12, 1861 and April 9, 1865.

The GAR founded soldier's homes, was active in relief work and in pension legislation. Five members were elected President of the United States, and for a time, it was impossible to be nominated on the Republican ticket without the support of the GAR.

The final Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic was held in Indianapolis, Indiana in 1949. The last member, Albert Woolson, died in 1956 at the age of 109 years.

The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War -

Many GAR Posts sponsored Cadet Corps, composed of

their sons, and from this, the Sons of Veterans of the United States of America (SV) was organized on November 12, 1881. In 1923, the SV name was changed to **Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW)**, under which its federal charter was issued by the 83rd Congress with Public Law 605 in 1954. The SUVCW is legally recognized as the heir to and representative of the GAR.



#### Our Purpose & Objects -

To perpetuate the memory of the Grand Army of the Republic and of the men who saved the Union 1861 to 1865; to assist in every practicable way in the preservation and making available for research of documents and records pertaining to the Grand Army of the Republic and its members; to cooperate in doing honor to all who have patriotically served our country in any war; to teach patriotism, and the duties of citizenship, the true history of our country, and the love and honor of our Flag; to oppose every tendency or movement that would weaken loyalty to, or make for the destruction or impairment of our constitutional Union; and to inculcate and broadly sustain the American principles of representative government, of equal rights, and of impartial justice for all.

#### The Department of Michigan -

The Department of Michigan was chartered on June 24, 1884. Today, there are 24 Camps and over 500 members throughout both of Michigan's peninsulas representing the interests of the Grand Army of the Republic and honoring the memory of those who "wore the blue" in defense of our nation.

The [Department of Michigan](#) website

Of interest to all historical and genealogical societies in

Michigan - our [Grave Registration and Civil War Memorials](#) programs. Let's work together!

*Civil War History Partners Website:*

Over 130 events and growing. Share your program!



Click on Logo

[State Civil War Sesquicentennial Website](#)

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Have a Civil War presentation or character you portray? You can have your contact information listed in our Speakers Bureau. This Sesquicentennial commemoration provides us a great opportunity to reach a whole new generation of people (youth) who may not know much about the Civil War and Michigan's role in that war.

Please be sure to [post your event](#) on the Seeking Michigan site as well.



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