

Subject:	A Michigan Civil War Sesquicentennial Update
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History Remembered, Inc.

A Civil War Sesquicentennial History Partner

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In This Issue

Greeting

Thanksgiving

Michigan Remembers Gettysburg

History Partners & Reenactor Conference

Upcoming Events

Interesting websites

Michigan Remembers the Civil War -

Thanksgiving has come and gone and the Christmas holiday is just around the corner. If you are like most people, you will spend time with family and friends and remember those no longer with us - some who you never met and some who were part of your everyday life. For those of you with family serving in the military, the holidays only add to the feelings of separation.

It was no different 150 years ago.

A week ago, nearly seventy-five people from Michigan gathered in Gettysburg to commemorate Michigan's role in the battle that took place there in 1863 as well as the

role Michigan played in the creation of the national cemetery, the monuments on the battlefield and the veterans reunions. Simple words cannot describe the event but those from Michigan and the other visitors that joined us all left with the feeling that we accomplished something honorable.

Later in this circular, you'll read of an opportunity for you to obtain a copy of the special commemorative program that will be printed as part of the Michigan Remembers Gettysburg event.

As I have done each November since 2010, I have changed the layout and color scheme of the circular. I just think we need something different every now and then. Another change that will begin with the December issue will be the service I use to distribute these circulars. The plan is to switch from Constant Contact to Robly. At this time, I'm not sure how the layout will look but the product will be delivered the same way - via email.

Thank you for your efforts to commemorate Michigan's role in the Civil War.

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

Thanksgiving

By now, the turkey leftovers should be gone and the shock of a Detroit Lions victory on Thanksgiving should be wearing off. So with that in mind, I'll not go into too much detail about Thanksgiving 1863.

I will share the proclamation made by President Lincoln because his words hold relevance today in that we should be thankful every day of the year and not just one special day.

From abrahamlincolnonline.org -

This is the proclamation which set the precedent for America's national day of Thanksgiving. During his administration, President Lincoln issued many orders similar to this. For example, on November 28, 1861, he ordered government departments closed for a local day of thanksgiving.

Sarah Josepha Hale, a 74-year-old magazine editor, wrote a letter to Lincoln on September 28, 1863, urging him to have the "day of our annual Thanksgiving made a National and fixed Union Festival." She explained, "You may have observed that, for some years past, there has been an increasing interest felt in our land to have the Thanksgiving held on the same day, in all the States; it now needs National recognition and authoritative fixation, only, to become permanently, an American custom and institution."

Prior to this, each state scheduled its own Thanksgiving holiday at different times, mainly in New England and other Northern states. President Lincoln responded to Mrs. Hale's request immediately, unlike several of his predecessors, who ignored her petitions altogether. In her letter to Lincoln she mentioned that she had been advocating a national thanksgiving date for 15 years as the editor of Godey's Lady's Book. George Washington was the first president to proclaim a day of thanksgiving, issuing his request on October 3, 1789, exactly 74 years before Lincoln's.

The document below sets apart the last Thursday of November "as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise." According to an April 1, 1864, letter from John Nicolay, one of President Lincoln's secretaries, this document was written by Secretary of State William Seward, and the original was in his handwriting. On October 3, 1863, fellow Cabinet member Gideon Welles recorded in his diary how he complimented Seward on his work. A year later the manuscript was sold to benefit Union troops.

By the President of the United States of America.

A Proclamation.

The year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God. In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign States to invite and to provoke their aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere except in the theatre of military conflict; while that theatre has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union. Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defence, have not arrested the plough, the shuttle or the ship; the axe has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased, notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege and the battle-field; and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom. No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American People. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who

have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquillity and Union.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this Third day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States the Eighty-eighth.

By the President: Abraham Lincoln

*William H. Seward,
Secretary of State*

The last Thursday designation was changed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1939 when he declared the fourth Thursday of that November to be Thanksgiving (there were five weeks that month) in an effort to help increase Christmas retail sales. In 1941, both Congress and the Senate voted to set aside the fourth Thursday of November as Thanksgiving.

Michigan Remembers Gettysburg

Annually, a group of citizens from Michigan attend **Remembrance Day** events in Gettysburg, PA in November. A typical begins with the placing of a small U.S. and State of Michigan flag on the graves of the Michigan men buried in the national cemetery. This is followed by a ceremony to honor the Grand Army of the Republic and Albert Woolson, the last member of the G.A.R., who passed away at 109 years old in 1956. After a large parade, the Michigan contingent visits one of the Michigan monuments and conducts a short rededication ceremony.

This year, rather than meet at a monument, we gathered in the Gettysburg National Cemetery to conduct a memorial service honoring the 175 men buried there. Because we included references to the creation of the cemetery, the monuments and reunions, we titled the event, **Michigan Remembers Gettysburg**. I can add that this was one of the coldest and windiest days we've experienced in Gettysburg in some time.

The highlight of the event was the sprinkling of soil, gathered from all across Michigan, at the graves of the 175 Michigan men buried there. It was a symbolic gesture of bringing some home to these men who never again stepped foot in Michigan. Each man had a special tin with his name on it. Volunteers, serving as a Honor Guard, distributed the soil as the names of each of these men war read off.

A copy of the program used that day is below.

[Program front and back](#)

[Program inside](#)

Couldn't Be There?

As stated inside the program (above) you still have an opportunity to obtain a copy of the commemorative program that is to be printed by December 31 of this year.

Sections of the book will contain 1) Michigan in the Civil War, 2) Michigan at Gettysburg, 3) Annie Etheridge, Civil War nurse, 4) The Honored Dead - bios of the men buried there), 5) The Soldiers' Cemetery, 6) Michigan Monuments, 7) Michigan Remembers Gettysburg - 1888, 1913, 1938, 1965, and 2013, 8) the stories of the soil and 9) photos.

Although the price has not yet been established, you can reserve a copy by contacting me.

[Bruce B. Butgereit](#)

Ph: 616-827-3369



Michigan uniform buttons/belt buckle at Gettysburg Visitor Center



Michigan graves with flags and soil tins



Reading the names of the Michigan Honored Dead
Paul Davis, Commander, Department of Michigan, Sons of Union Veterans
Marcia Butgereit, Past National President, Woman's Relief Corps
James Pahl, Past Commander-in-Chief, SUVCW



President Abraham Lincoln, as portrayed by Fred Priebe, delivers a "few appropriate remarks" at our ceremony.



Keith Harrison, Past Commander-in-Chief MOLLUS & SUVCW places wreath of dried Michigan flowers.



Rylan Vazquez, Jr. member of Gen. John A. Logan Camp No. 1, SUVCW & Cecilia Jennett, Jr. member of Champlin Corps No. 41, WRC place bouquet of Michigan grains in tribute to the farmers turned soldier.



Tributes including Michigan evergreen (with patriotic ribbon) from the Michigan Historical Commission and Michigan evergreen (black ribbon) from the Department of Michigan, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.

Reenactor Conference

The Fourth Annual Michigan Civil War Sesquicentennial History Partners and Reenactor Conference was a success. Thanks goes out to Ms. Sandra Clark, Director of the Michigan Historical Center for providing the space to conduct our meeting. We also wish to recognize the Friends of Michigan History for the great-tasting donuts and cider they provided.

Of course meetings such as this are only successful when organizations and host communities/groups attend and share news of their events. We thank each of you that participated - I could insert some comment about Indiana here but you really needed to be there to enjoy the friendly banter that took place.

The events shared at the conference are already online. Don't forget to check back often for updates.

Upcoming Events

Remember, we list your events for free on the History Partners website and on this circular. You just need to contact Keith Harrison at pcinc@prodigy.net or Bruce B.

Butgereit at civil-war@comcast.net

In 2011, we listed **169 events**. In 2012, there were **180 events**. This year has **174 events** with several yet to be added. Following the reenactor conference, we already have **66 events** scheduled for 2014.

OUR WEBSITE:

www.micw150.us

Grand Rapids

December 7. Homecoming 1863 - A Civil War Christmas

(Lowell Area Historical Museum, 325 West Main St., Lowell, Michigan). 2:00 - 5:00 PM. The event commemorates an almost unbelievable event that took place in the winter of 1863 when the Third Michigan Infantry returned home to West Michigan on a 30-day veteran furlough. Meet interpreters portraying the men and women of the area and learn more about this remarkable event. Taste holiday treats from the 1860s and play with toys and games of the period. The museum will be decorated for the holidays and youngsters will have an opportunity to create a Victorian Christmas card for a resident of the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans. Admission is free. The museum will have a float decorated with a Civil War theme and living historians in the parade that starts at 6 PM in downtown Lowell. Website: <http://www.lowellmuseum.org/>.

Contact: Bruce B. Butgereit at civil-war@comcast.net or by Telephone at 616-827-3369.

Eaton Rapids

December 7. Eaton Rapids Home Town Christmas (The Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Hall and Museum, 224 South Main, Eaton Rapids, MI) Community events begin at 10 AM and will continue into the evening with the electric parade. Stop by a visit the museum.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GARBrainerdPost111MemorialHallAndMuseum>

Contact: Keith G. Harrison at pcinc@prodigy.net

Detroit

December 7. A Civil War Christmas (Historic Fort Wayne, 6325 West Jefferson Ave., Detroit, MI). Tours begin 3 - 6:15 PM and are for 1.5 hours each. Come learn about the Christmas traditions during the American Civil War. The special walking tour will give a special view of the holiday as celebrated 150 years ago. Meet Union soldiers stuck in garrison at Fort Wayne rather than with their families. Meet civilians from the City of Detroit. Come across the path of Confederate troops and the families they left home.

Guided tours are the only way to experience this. Tours start at 3pm and the last one starts at 6:15. Visit our website to reserve your slot. Group rates are available: <http://www.historicfortwaynecoalition.com/christmas.html>

Interesting websites

Ghosts of DC:

[A Thanksgiving Sermon About Race \(1895\)](#)

Business Insider:

[Epic Beards and Mustaches](#)

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