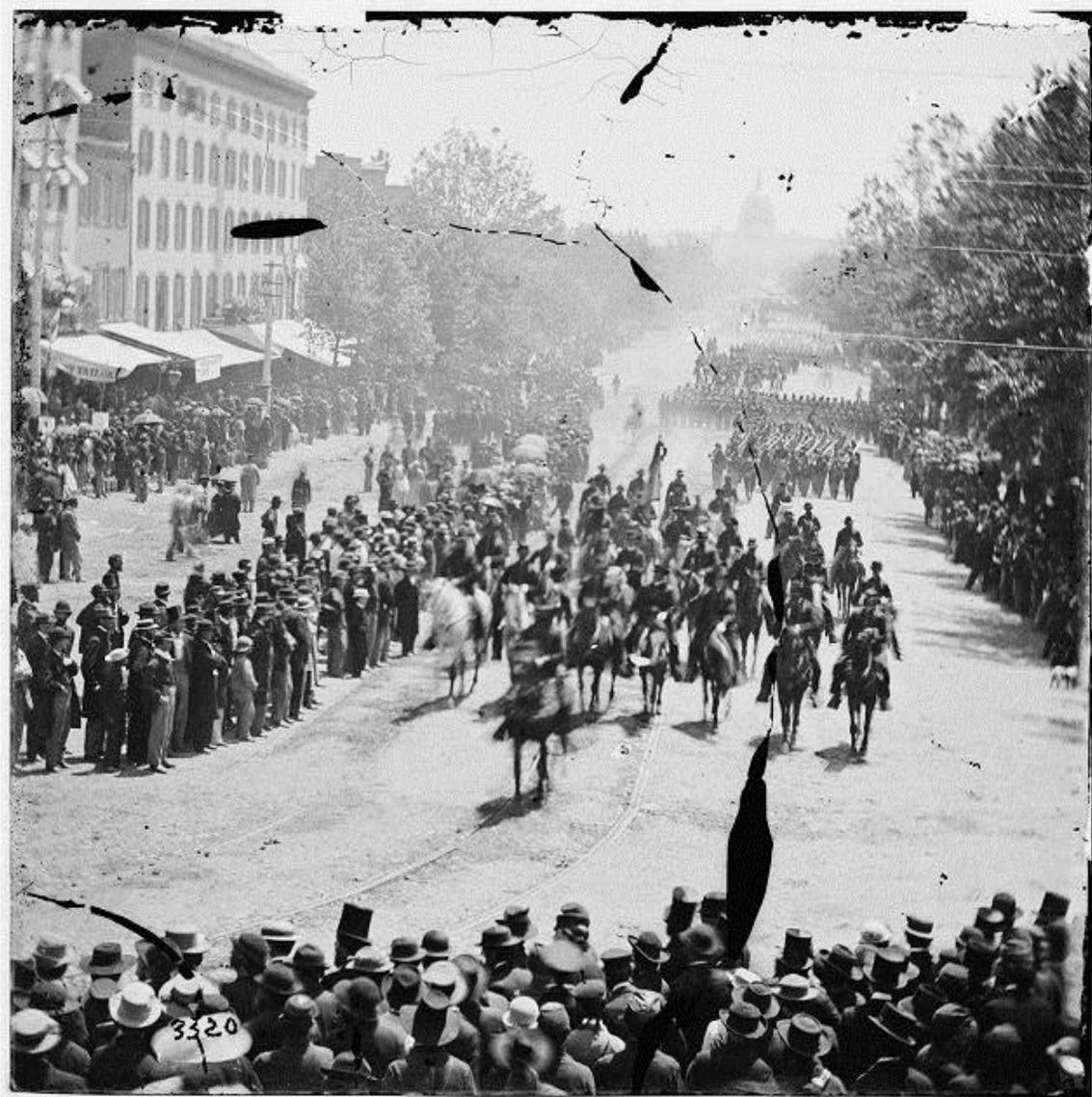


GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC

[Excerpted from *Greene County Civil War Soldiers, Volume II Faces of the Civil War,*
and *Volume III, Stories from the Civil War.*]

Books may be purchased from the Genealogical Society

Celebrating VICTORY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



**Victory Parade by the Union Army of the Tennessee
May 24, 1865
Washington D.C.
[Library of Congress]**

GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC

[Retrieved from

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Army_of_the_Republic#History]

After the end of American Civil War, organizations were formed for veterans to network and maintain connections with each other. Many of the veterans used their shared experiences as a basis for fellowship. Groups of men began joining together, first for camaraderie and later for political power. Emerging as most influential among the various organizations was the Grand Army of the Republic, founded on April 6, 1866, on the principles of "Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty," in Decatur, Illinois, by Benjamin F. Stephenson.

The GAR initially grew and prospered as a de facto political arm of the Republican Party during the heated political contests of the Reconstruction era. The commemoration of Union veterans, black and white, immediately became entwined with partisan politics. The GAR promoted voting rights for black veterans, as many veterans recognized their demonstrated patriotism. Black veterans, who enthusiastically embraced the message of equality, shunned black veterans' organizations in preference for racially inclusive groups. But when the Republican Party's commitment to reform in the South gradually decreased, the GAR's mission became ill-defined and the organization floundered. The GAR almost disappeared in the early 1870s, and many divisions ceased to exist.

In the 1880s, the organization revived under new leadership that provided a platform for renewed growth, by advocating federal pensions for veterans. As the organization revived, black veterans joined in significant numbers and organized local posts. The national organization, however, failed to press the case for pensions for black soldiers. Most black troops never received any pension or remuneration for wounds incurred during their service.

The GAR was organized into "Departments" at the state level and "Posts" at the community level, and military-style uniforms were worn by its members. There were posts in every state in the U.S., and several posts overseas. The pattern of establishing departments and local posts was later used by other veterans' organizations, such as the American Legion (WWI) and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (WWII).

In 1868, Commander-in-Chief General John A. Logan established May 30 as Decoration Day, later known as Memorial Day. (Numerous people and places claim this credit.) In its first celebrations, people used this day to commemorate the dead of the Civil War by decorating their graves with flowers and flags.

The GAR's political power grew during the latter part of the 19th century, and it helped elect several Republican United States presidents, beginning with Ulysses S. Grant and ending with William McKinley. Five members were elected president of the United States. For a time, candidates could not get nominated to the Republican ticket without the endorsement of the GAR voting bloc.

With membership strictly limited to "veterans of the late unpleasantness," the GAR encouraged the formation of Allied Orders to aid them in various works. Numerous male organizations jostled for the backing of the GAR, and the political battles became quite severe until the GAR finally endorsed the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War as its heir.

Although a male organization, the GAR admitted its sole woman member in 1897. Sarah Emma Edmonds served in the 2nd Michigan Infantry as a disguised man named Franklin Thompson from May 1861 until April 1863. In 1882, she collected affidavits from former comrades in an effort to petition for a veteran's pension which she received in July 1884. Edmonds was only a member for a brief period as she died September 5, 1898, however she was given a funeral with military honors when she was reburied in Houston in 1901.

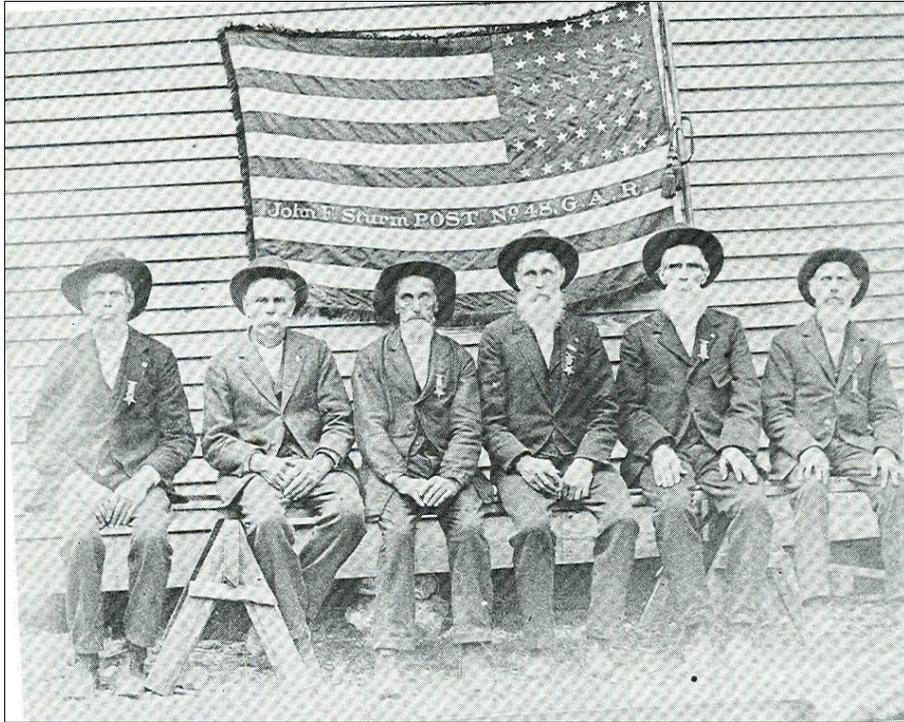
The GAR reached its largest enrollment in 1890, with 490,000 members. It held an annual "National Encampment" every year from 1866 to 1949. At that final encampment in Indianapolis, Indiana, the few surviving members voted to retain the existing officers in place until the organization's dissolution; Theodore Penland of Oregon, the GAR's Commander at the time, was therefore its last. In 1956, after the death of the last member, Albert Woolson, the GAR was formally dissolved.



The Grand Army of the Republic Badge
authorized by Congress to be worn on
the uniforms of Union veterans



Reverse of the Grand Army of the
Republic Badge



**Pictured are the Civil War veterans of St. James Lutheran Church, Greeneville, TN
 Left to right are Isaac Rader, Andrew Neas, Adam Neas, Robert Browning, Calvin
 Ottinger, and Adam Ottinger.**

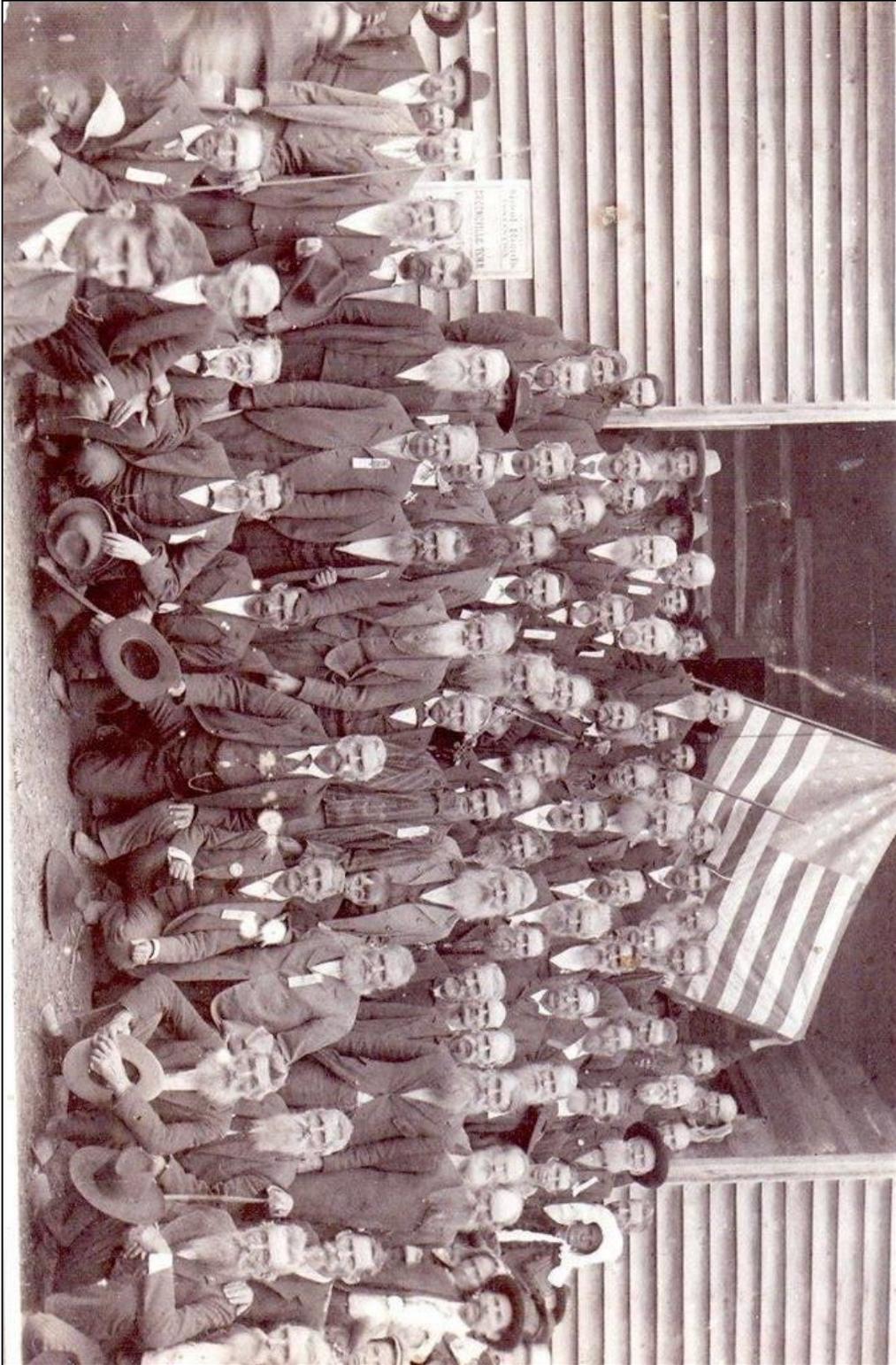
**These gentlemen were members of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) Post
 where dues were 50 cents. Adam Ottinger was Quartermaster.**

Dues are payable quarterly, in advance. Under Sections 3 and 4, Art. IV, Chap. 5, Rules and Regulations, members 6 mos. in arrears for dues will be suspended, and dropped when 12 mos. in arrears.

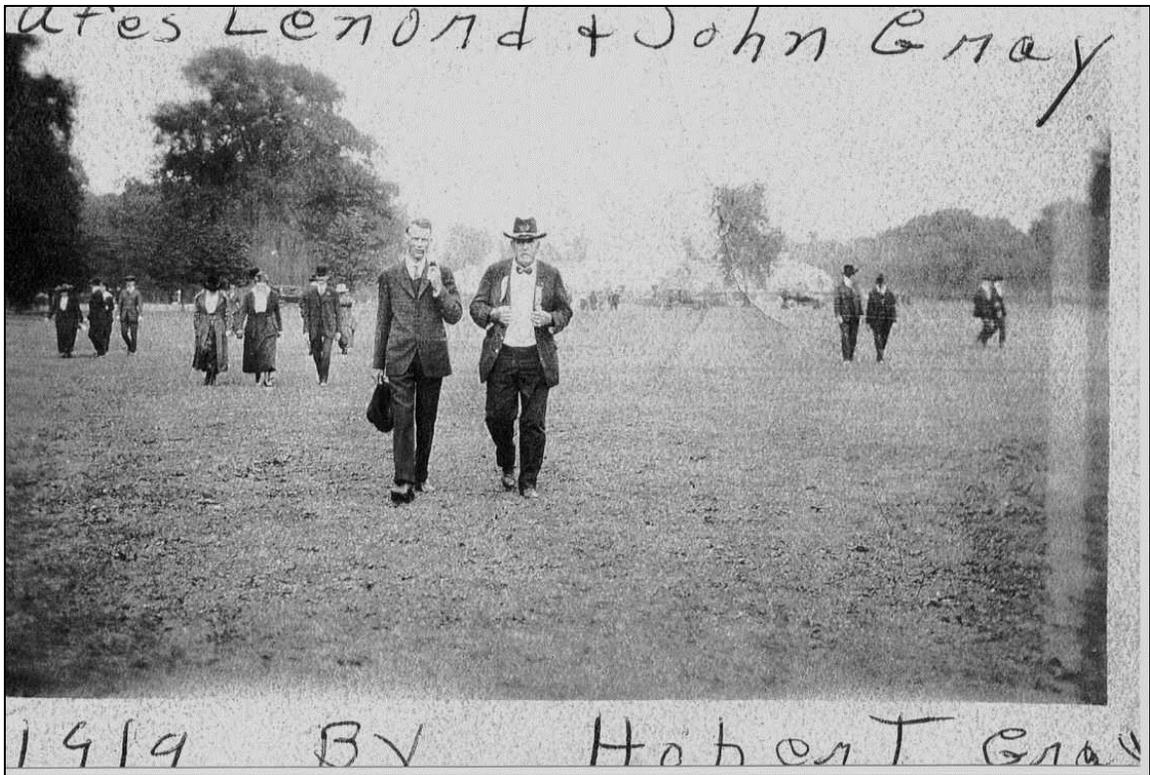
No. 5 *John F. Sturm* Post No. *48* G. A. R.
 \$ *.50* *June 9* 189*7*

Received of Comrade *Adam Neas*
 Dollars and *50* Cents,
 Payment of dues from Dec 31 1893
 to June 30 1894
Adam Ottinger Q. M.
 Q. M. S.

[Photos and information from *Stories from the South in Greene County* by Carolyn Gregg
 provided by her mother-in-law, Suiva Gregg]



**Union Soldiers Reunion in Greeneville, Tennessee [Note sign on building]
IF YOU RECOGNIZE ANY OF THESE MEN, PLEASE CONTACT THE
GREENE COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY**



Possibly a Memorial Day Gathering at Mt. Pisgah UM Church Cemetery
[Note Cemetery in background]
John Gray (1848-1932), Company H, 13th TN Cavalry in front wearing Uniform



Cross Anchor men, 1885. Many of these men would be Civil War Veterans.
IF YOU RECOGNIZE THESE MEN PLEASE CONTACT THE GEN. SOCIETY