

RAMSEY COUNTY  
**History**  
*A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society*

*St. Paul's Biggest Party:  
The Grand Army of the Republic's  
1896 National Encampment*

*Moira F. Harris and Leo J. Harris*

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**Fall 2009**

Volume 44, Number 3

*The 1924 Junior World Series*

*The St. Paul Saints' Magnificent Comeback*

*Roger A. Godin*

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*Saint Paul Saints first baseman Johnny Neun, right, dives toward a Baltimore Orioles runner in an attempt to tag him during one of the 1924 Junior World Series games played at Lexington Park. St. Paul Daily News photo, courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society. St. Paul Saints insignia reproduced by permission of the St. Paul Saints Baseball Club.*



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# RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 44, Number 3

Fall 2009

THE MISSION STATEMENT OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON DECEMBER 20, 2007:

The Ramsey County Historical Society inspires current and future generations to learn from and value their history by engaging in a diverse program of presenting, publishing and preserving.

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### A Message from the Editorial Board

Last summer, St. Paul and Ramsey County hosted the Republican National Convention, which attracted national attention. Impressive as that event was, we may have forgotten other locally held, but nationally important gatherings held here. Our authors explore two of them in this issue. In 1924, the St. Paul Saints defeated a minor league rival, the Baltimore Orioles, to win the Junior World Series at Lexington Park at Lexington and University Avenues. Roger Godin guides us through the story of the series and the excitement it created. In 1896, St. Paul welcomed about 150,000 Civil War veterans and other visitors for the National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, an enormously popular group with considerable political influence. Moira and Leo Harris recount the festivities, which included the display of an enormous "living flag" outside the then under-construction Landmark Center. On a smaller scale, we share Nathalie Chase Bernstein's warm story of growing up in the 1930s Jewish community of St. Paul's West Side. P.S. Don't forget, a membership to RCHS (including, of course, this nationally award-winning magazine) is a great holiday gift idea!

*Anne Cowie, Chair, Editorial Board*



## St. Paul's Biggest Party

# The Grand Army of the Republic's 1896 National Encampment

*Moirra F. Harris and Leo J. Harris*

On September 3, 1883, and again on June 9, 1893, the city of St. Paul played host to thousands of visitors when it festively celebrated completion of two transcontinental railroads that made Minnesota's capital city their eastern terminus. The first of these railroads was Henry Villard's Northern Pacific. James J. Hill, the local railroad entrepreneur, was responsible for completing the Great Northern Railway ten years after the Northern Pacific reached Tacoma, Washington. Neither of these celebrations, however, matched the enthusiastic welcome and the vast number of visitors who came to St. Paul between August 31 and September 4, 1896, when the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) held its 30th National Convention in Minnesota's capital.<sup>1</sup>

Within a few years after Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered his army to General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House, Union veterans of the Civil War who desired to maintain the camaraderie of their wartime experience through active membership in a veterans' organization had several choices. One, the Grand Army of the Republic, became the preeminent veterans' organization. Another, the Military Order of the Loyal Legion (MOLLUS), was open only to former Union officers. Albert Scheffer (1844–1905), a St. Paul banker, for example, was active in both groups. The extent of his involvement is noted by the fact that over forty different medals and badges, many of which he obtained while at their conventions or meetings, were preserved by him and, later on, by his family.<sup>2</sup> These medals and badges are colorful and complex examples of the medallion art that was a part of the uniform associated with these national organizations.

The GAR and MOLLUS sponsored both local and national activities. The national meetings of the GAR were termed "Encampments," and they occurred in different cities, annually, between 1866 and 1949. Aptly enough, a then-national magazine noted at the time,

each recurring anniversary of that popular institution, the Grand Army of the Republic, is an occasion for reviewing a body which, though revered and cherished by the whole body of the people, is doomed to extinction in a comparatively few years by the inevitable law of death.<sup>3</sup>

While time would eventually remove all members of the GAR, interest in the Civil War, its battles and battlefields, memorials written by participants, and analysis of its importance in American life continues and grows through television programs, the activities of reenactment groups, and an ever increasing parade of books. A writer for the English periodical, *The Economist*, began a review of several recent titles with the insightful sentence, "The Civil War, not the [American] revolution, is now seen as the pivot on which the history of the United States turns."<sup>4</sup>

Likewise, in her magnificent study Drew Gilpin Faust explained how dealing with the dead of the Civil War established attitudes and procedures that would affect government and the people in all later conflicts.<sup>5</sup> And according to Minnesota historian Kenneth Carley,

for nearly two decades after Appomattox, there seemed to be little enthusiasm for public remembering of the war. Privately, of course, veterans and other survivors had



*Albert Scheffer, St. Paul banker who was a member of the GAR and of MOLLUS, wearing the badge for the 20th National Encampment of the GAR, which was held in San Francisco in 1886. Photograph from the Albert Scheffer family archives.*

tucked away souvenirs of battle, worn-out uniforms, keepsake photographs, letters and diaries. As the young soldiers of the 1860s began to enter middle age, many of them dug out those letters and diaries and produced memoirs of what had surely been the most powerful years of their lives. The time, it seemed, had come to share their memories with a wider public, to participate in the creation of a national collective memory. The period 1880–1915 was the high-water mark. . . .<sup>6</sup>

But there is even a greater reason than nostalgia or admiration to look back upon the 1896 National Encampment of the GAR in St. Paul. That encampment attracted an estimated 150,000 visitors to the area and probably was the largest such event ever held in the Saintly City. In terms of numbers of visitors and its outpouring of support for reunification of a divided nation,



this gathering of the GAR overshadowed earlier civic extravaganzas in St. Paul, such as the ones celebrating the completion of the two transcontinental railroads and the first four Winter Carnivals. These other events have been often described; the 1896 Grand Encampment has not.

## Establishment of the GAR

Benjamin Franklin Stephenson of Illinois, who had served as a surgeon during the war, founded the GAR on April 6, 1866. The organization's founders upheld three ideals—fraternity, charity, and loyalty—as central to its mission. All Union Army veterans of the Civil War were eligible for membership. Its organization was based on military traditions, with a few additional elements from Freemasonry. It was divided into "Departments" at the state level and "Posts" at the community level. Military-style uniforms were worn by members.

The GAR encouraged regular, locally scheduled meetings of individual posts and joint gatherings with members from other posts. These popular, fraternal gatherings, called "camp fires" were occasions when the former soldiers could reminisce about their military service, sing familiar songs from their days in uniform, and remember former comrades who died during the bloody war to save the Union. The campfires were also times when GAR members could gather funds to help needy or disabled veterans, widows, and orphans of comrades who had died in the war and carry out other charitable work. State and national meetings, the encampments, expanded the idea of the local campfires to a larger scale. Although fraternity may have been the initial impetus for the establishment of the GAR, its work to aid needy comrades or their dependents was never far behind.

The GAR wielded considerable political clout, especially at times when the Congress was considering legislation that affected pensions for veterans or their dependents. By the late 1870s, any legislation that was intended to increase pension benefits was hotly debated and the GAR became a powerful, single-issue pressure advocate for these bills. Between 1868 and 1908 no Republican was nominated for the United States presidency without formal GAR endorsement and in 1888



*The statue of Albert Woolson, GAR member and last Union survivor, in Duluth. Photo courtesy of the authors.*

Democrat Grover Cleveland, the incumbent president, was defeated, largely because he had vetoed a Dependent Pension bill. Minnesotans elected Republicans who had seen Civil War service as governors from statehood until the 1905 election of John Albert Johnson, a Democrat. Many voters refused to support Johnson's Republican opponents, as they were "mostly younger men who had become tired of the domination of the 'old guard' of Civil War veterans with their GAR flags and buttons."<sup>7</sup>

"Decoration Day" on May 30 each year, began in the South, but was later renamed as "Memorial Day" and, with the assistance of the GAR, became a national holiday. Memorial Day parades would include stops at Civil War monuments on courthouse lawns or in the designated areas of local cemeteries. Minnesota has about two dozen monuments to its Civil War soldiers. Many are generic figures standing at parade rest. Others, however, are actual portrayals of individuals, such as the figure of Civil War hero Colonel William S. Colvill in the cemetery in Cannon Falls and The Soldiers and Sailors memorial (1903) opposite the Minnesota Historical Society in St. Paul. The Acker GAR Post of St. Paul sponsored that memorial. Union veteran Josias King posed for the figure at the top of the shaft, and John Karl Daniels was the sculptor.<sup>8</sup> GAR

promotion of Decoration Day, the installation of various memorial monuments, and the preservation of symbolic military relics, such as cannon, flags, and battle sites, were all part of upholding the GAR's third ideal, loyalty, by constantly reminding the public of the sacrifices that Union soldiers, and by implication members of the GAR, had made to preserve the Union.

The GAR also facilitated several national auxiliary organizations. They included the Woman's Relief Corps (organized in 1883), the Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic, the Daughters of Veterans, the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (organized in 1881), the Loyal Home Workers, the Naval Veterans, and the Army & Navy Chaplains. Some of these auxiliaries still exist and actively carry on the work of the GAR, especially in improving facilities that care for today's veterans.

The last surviving Civil War veteran was Albert H. Woolson of Duluth, Minnesota. A bronze statue of Woolson by sculptor Avarad T. Fairbanks is located at the St. Louis County Heritage Arts Center on Duluth's Michigan Street. This statue, with Woolson seated wearing his GAR uniform with its medal-covered jacket, was completed in 1955. Judging from all the publicity following Woolson's death in 1956, his devotion to the GAR may also have played a part in keeping alive recognition of the importance of the Civil War in public memory.<sup>10</sup>

The 18th GAR Encampment was held in Minneapolis in 1884 and the 40th in 1906. In addition to the 30th Encampment in St. Paul in 1896, the 67th GAR Encampment was also held in Minnesota's capital.

## The GAR in Minnesota

The GAR's Department of Minnesota was organized August 14, 1867, and on paper it eventually had 191 posts. Difficulties were encountered even in the larger cities over time in maintaining permanent local posts, primarily because many members often failed to pay their dues. It was generally agreed, however, that the posts filled a social need in smaller communities.<sup>11</sup>

St. Paul's Acker Post had about 600 members and was one of the more active





A stereoscopic scene of GAR members and their tent housing at Camp Mason at the 30th Encampment. Photo by Truman Ward Ingersoll, courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

posts in Minnesota, successfully retaining the interest and support of its members. The Acker Post counted among its members five governors of Minnesota, a U.S. senator, three members of the House of Representatives, two mayors of St. Paul, and the Archbishop of St. Paul, John Ireland.<sup>12</sup> Josiah Chaney, a librarian at the Minnesota Historical Society, preserved its records and wrote a history of the post. Another faithful member was David Kingsbury, who directed that he should be buried in his GAR uniform, which had meant so much in his life.<sup>13</sup> The Acker Post was one of several in the area who played a major role in hosting the 1896 Encampment.

Beginning in 1870, the Department of Minnesota GAR was active in civic affairs, solemnly decorating the graves of Union veterans in local cemeteries. Its members also marched in many parades. For example, Friday, February 12, 1886, was designated "Grand Army Day" at the newly established St. Paul Winter Carnival. In addition to several St. Paul Posts (Acker, Garfield, Winthrop, and the Ord), seven other posts as well as drum and bugle corps attended. Josiah B. Chaney attended that Carnival. His diary noted:

Taken all together, there was a very good turn out of the old "Vets." Carnival Hall was our Headquarters for the day and evening. The procession in the afternoon, composed of the G.A.R., and the numerous uniformed clubs, was a very large and fine one. The torch-light procession in the evening by

the "G.A.R." was also very fine. Each man carrying a torch. He also had six rounds of ammunition—Roman Candles—for the assault upon the Ice Palace. The assault was successful. The Ice King lowered his flag, after a gallant defense, the Stars and Stripes were run up and 3 rousing cheers given it. We then returned to headquarters and had a good "Camp Fire."<sup>14</sup>

Chaney's words convey just how much he valued the GAR's ideals of fraternity and loyalty nearly twenty years after the war had ended, even when they served the less bellicose purpose of celebrating the defeat of winter at the carnival. Similarly, when the Minnesota State Capitol was dedicated in 1905, GAR veterans paraded, carrying the Civil War battle flags to be displayed in the new building. Sadly, Colonel Colvill, who was to have led the march, became ill and died just before the big day.

### The Events of August 31–September 4, 1896

In the fall of 1893 St. Paul civic leaders tried to convince national GAR officials to hold the 1894 Encampment in their city. That effort failed. Success resulted, however, at the Louisville Encampment in 1895, when the GAR selected St. Paul as the next host city over rival candidates Buffalo, Denver, and Nashville. When the GAR held its national encampment in St. Paul, it numbered about 340,610 members; MOLLUS, which was much smaller, had about 20,000 members. Over 25,000

veterans of the Union army attended the reunion and the railroads that provided service to Minnesota's capital city sold a total of 143,000 excursion tickets to St. Paul during the week of the encampment. By way of comparison, approximately 30,000 persons attended the Republican National Convention in Minneapolis, on June 7, 1892.<sup>15</sup>

Various railroads offered special services and fares for attendees. The so-called "Big Route" (Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis) Railroad offered "Elegant Through Trains. Wagner Sleeping Cars. Buffet Parlor Cars. . . ." <sup>16</sup> The Baltimore & Ohio



The headquarters of the Fire Department on the northwest corner of Eighth and Minnesota streets was elaborately decorated to welcome the GAR to St. Paul in August 1896. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

Railroad provided a single fare from all points east of the Ohio River, good for all trains, and valid for return passage for ten days following the end of the encampment.<sup>17</sup> The Chicago Great Western Railway, whose president was A.B. Stickney, a St. Paul entrepreneur, offered a special fare rate of one cent per mile over its entire system. Other railroads followed suit.<sup>18</sup> The railroads were eager to capture these summertime excursion fares, increase their passenger traffic, and to advertise in a tangible way their support for the GAR and its substantial number of members. Similarly,



St. Paul hotels, boarding and lodging houses, and private homes that offered housing for attendees at the encampment quoted prices ranging from one to six dollars a day.

Local citizens placed their homes at the disposal of visitors, and a large tent encampment for 4,000 persons was established at "Camp Mason," a prairie west of Dale Street, which was then the terminus of the Selby Avenue cable line. The temporary camp had a dining hall (with meals costing 25¢ each) and the city council arranged to supply the grounds with water and line the "streets" of tents with gasoline torches.<sup>19</sup> The encampment in St. Paul was remembered "... not only on account of the large attendance and the remarkably fine sanitary camps furnished those visitors who desired to indulge in the delights of semi-military life, but also from the fact that there was in constant attendance at those camps medical staffs made up of representative men from both the allopathic and homeopathic schools of practice."<sup>20</sup>

Although many Union veterans and their families undoubtedly took advantage of the greater comforts available at the city's many hotels and boarding houses, one of the attractions of the encampment was the free housing offered at the campsite and at fourteen public schools that provided quarters for 7,000 veterans. Cots were also placed in parochial school buildings, the St. Paul Seminary, St. Thomas College, as well as at Macalester and Hamline colleges. Even though neither of the Mannheimer brothers was a member of the GAR, these local boosters provided office space to the organizers of the encampment and other official GAR personnel at their department store building on East Third Street.

The possibility that shady characters would be among the visitors concerned St. Paul's mayor, Frank B. Doran. He had newly appointed Chief Michael N. Goss marshal his forces to effectively plan ahead to meet all possible emergencies. The substations were drawn upon for half of their regular patrolmen, who were put on beats in the city's Central District. Those substation patrolmen were replaced by 100 "specials." The Detective Division was strongly reinforced. The most serious



*The city of St. Paul festively decorated Sixth Street, seen here looking from Jackson, as part of hosting the GAR. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.*

criminal event that occurred during the encampment was a holdup in Smith Park (today Mears Park), located between Fifth and Sixth and Sibley and Wacouta streets. An old soldier from Brookings, S.D., who was supposed to have been "pretty well fixed," was beaten and robbed of \$125 in cash, but the police quickly captured both suspects in that incident.<sup>21</sup>

Because 1896 was also a presidential election year that pitted William Jennings Bryan, the Democrat, against William McKinley, a Union veteran and the Republican nominee, great numbers of McKinley campaign workers came to the encampment. McKinley badges were said to be as much in evidence as Grand Army badges.<sup>22</sup> Bryan was a powerful speaker who advocated the free coinage of silver. Bryan's free silver stance greatly appealed to farmers and workers in the South and West where money was tight and credit was hard to obtain. McKinley, in contrast, supported a protective tariff and sound money that was based on the gold standard. The active support many GAR members offered to the Republican Party in this campaign later proved to be crucial to McKinley's electoral victory that fall.

It was a happy coincidence that St.

Paul was also the corporate headquarters of James J. Hill's Great Northern Railroad. Hill played a central role in a famous episode of the 1896 presidential campaign. Although Hill had not served in the war, he nevertheless arranged at the encampment for a group of important Union generals, who were of course GAR members, to have all the courtesies of his railroad free of charge, including free fares, so that they could campaign for McKinley.<sup>23</sup> The following year Hill gave free passage on four sleeping coaches to Union veterans and Minnesota state officials when they traveled to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, to dedicate the monument to the First Minnesota regiment.<sup>24</sup>

Attending groups, such as the GAR-affiliated Woman's Relief Corps, hosted related national patriotic societies. One such society, the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), invited all attending women's patriotic groups to a reception, and warmly praised the resulting "strong bond that the love of patriotism has cemented" between the two women's groups.<sup>25</sup> The local DAR affiliate, the Nathan Hale Chapter, published a special newspaper, the *Daily Bulletin*, for each day of the encampment.



## Encampment Events

Weather conditions were perfect for the entire week. Low temperatures in St. Paul ranged from the high forties to the low fifties and highs locally were in the mid sixties to the mid seventies. Skies were clear with only a trace of rain on the last day of the encampment. Such favorable weather undoubtedly contributed to a greater enjoyment of the many outdoor events that were part of the encampment's festivities and made life pleasanter for those who were sheltered under canvas at Camp Madison.

One hundred and seventy-seven military associations, aggregating about 25,000 former Union soldiers and sailors, held reunions during the 30th Encampment. These gatherings were listed in the *Souvenir and Official Program*, which was made available to all attendees. While many of these associations engaged in camp fires, they tended to be primarily social occasions and not business or political gatherings.

The Citizens' Reception for the GAR's Commander-in-Chief, Ivan N. Walker, and specially invited guests, was the initial event of the encampment's festive week. Held downtown at the Ryan Hotel, located at Sixth and Robert streets, the reception began at 8:30 p.m. on August 31st. The Ryan was St. Paul's finest hotel at that time and had been the site of a number of earlier local celebrations such as the banquet honoring the James J. Hill and the completion of the Great Northern in 1893. Earlier that day, at 3:00 p.m., the Executive Committee of the GAR had convened at the Ryan to review last-minute plans for the encampment. Local banker, Albert Scheffer, was a member of this committee.<sup>26</sup>

At 10:00 p.m. on September 2, the Military Order of the Loyal Legion, Minnesota Commandery, held a reception at the Ryan Hotel annex to honor the GAR commander-in-chief and his staff. The Loyal Legion of Union officers had been established shortly after the assassination of President Lincoln and was patterned after the Society of the Cincinnati, which had been organized in 1783 for officers of the Continental Army or Navy. The goals of the Society of the Cincinnati were to pre-

serve the ideals and fellowship of the war and to pressure the government to honor the pledges it had made to officers who fought for American independence. The Minnesota Commandery of the Loyal Legion was relatively youthful in comparison to some other state units. It had been organized on May 7, 1885.

According to the official report on the encampment in St. Paul, on Thursday evening, September 3,

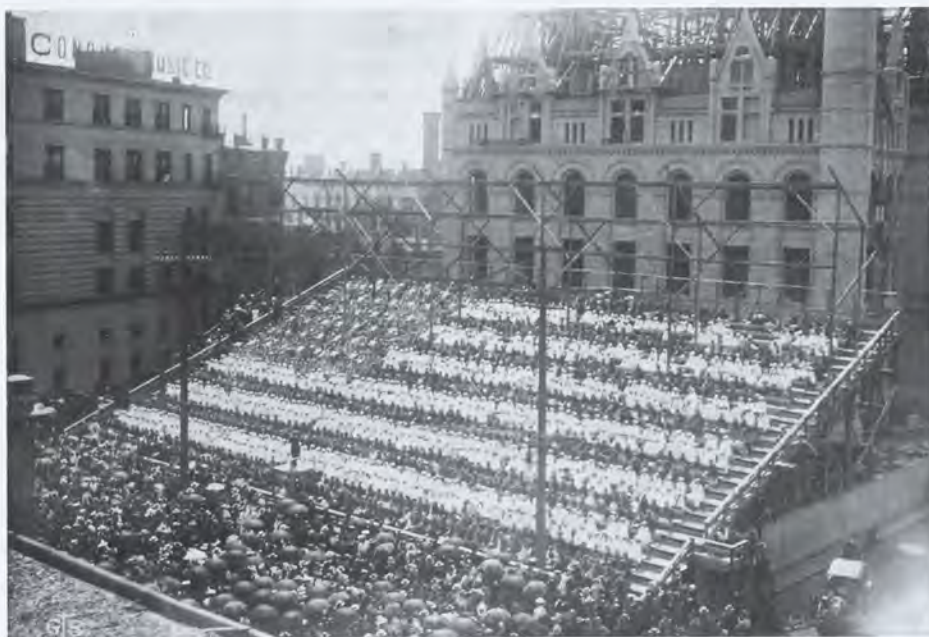
... the most important function of the week occurred, being a reception tendered by the Ladies' Committee so all the members of the Grand Army of the Republic were in attendance. Our beautiful Summit Avenue was brilliantly illuminated from Summit Park to Western Avenue, a distance of half a mile. Four exquisitely decorated pavilions were erected at convenient intervals, and groups of ladies received the veterans at each, as they promenaded the avenue with their friends. This occasion was intended to be the *chef-d'oeuvre* of the series of entertainments given in honor of the Grand Army. . . . Another interesting feature in homage of the old "boys in blue" was the strewing of flowers in their pathway on the day of the grand parade by 200 young girls dressed in white and singing a song composed for the occasion by a member of our committee.<sup>27</sup>

Four parades followed on the succeeding days. First was the parade of Union naval veterans and ex-prisoners of war, escorted by members of the Third U.S. Infantry Regiment.

The second was the formal parade of the Grand Army of the Republic commencing at Western and Dayton Avenues, reviewed by the commander-in-chief. Some 24,000 veterans, who had been marshaled by their home departments and posts, participated along with numerous bands and drum corps and with flags fluttering. This vast array then marched through three miles of St. Paul streets. Cheering men, women, and children, lined up six to eight deep at the curbs, watched the parade. "It is estimated," said one account, "that fully 200,000 visitors witnessed the great procession. The sidewalks were densely packed, the steps, doors and stairways and windows were over-crowded and numerous temporary platforms were filled to overflowing."<sup>28</sup>

Another witness, Josiah B. Chaney, described the "living flag," which was made up of singing school children dressed in red, white, or blue clothing, and was another celebrated part of this grand spectacle:

I had a fine view of the "Living Flag" from the [Central] Hall's front windows, as the



Photographer G. T. Brown took this shot of the Living Flag display that was part of the formal parade that was one of the highlights of the GAR's 30th National Encampment in St. Paul. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.



National Guard marched past it. The flag was formed of about 2,000 school children, arranged on elevated seats put up at the rear end of the new Post Office Building and fronting on Sixth st. The children were trained and handled by Prof. C. H. Congdon, of our School System. It was magnificent.<sup>29</sup>

This inspiring sight,

... seemed to hold Commander-in-Chief Walker and his staff under the strongest enchantment. Every department staff halted and saluted formally, with smiles of surprised gratification at this charming novelty. It struck the old soldier dumb with astonishment, the first effect being silence; then every hat came off, amid cheers. Some danced with joy, while others shed big round tears which coursed down their war-scarred faces.<sup>30</sup>

The St. Paul Fire Department carried out the third parade and display and the Minnesota National Guard constituted the final parade, which Governor David M. Clough reviewed along with many other dignitaries. The crowds in St. Paul for these festivities were enormous, with the streets being well-nigh impassable most of the time, particularly during the great parades.<sup>31</sup>

The official opening of the 30th Encampment took place at 10:00 A.M., Thursday, September 3rd, at the St. Paul Auditorium at Minnesota and Cedar streets. The following day, the officers and delegates of the encampment, and their ladies, were invited to an excursion to the Park Hotel at Lake Minnetonka via the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railroad. This excursion included a trip around Lake Minnetonka by side-wheel steamer, followed by dinner, music, and dancing at the hotel's pavilion.

At the same time these GAR events were taking place in downtown St. Paul, the Minnesota State Fair, which by then was permanently located north of Hamline, offered "A Wonderful Profusion of Miscellaneous Exhibits of products and resources of the Northwest, lavishly displayed," along with "The Greatest Showing of Live Stock Ever Seen at a State Fair." The management of the Fair enthusiastically welcomed the great influx of GAR visitors and expected that



*This impressive arch over Summit Avenue was another part of St. Paul's celebration of the GAR's national encampment in 1896. The arch honored the military valor of African Americans who fought in the Union army in the Civil War. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.*

their presence would greatly increase fair attendance.<sup>32</sup>

Not to be outdone by the State Fair, Wildwood Amusement Park, which was then owned by the St. Paul & White Bear Railroad, offered excursions on White Bear Lake for the Daughters of Veterans, Loyal Home Workers, and Naval Veterans. Guests, conveyed there on electric streetcars, were treated to three daily shows of a "First-Class Vaudeville Performance," an elegant casino, fine restaurant and dancing hall, as well as roller skating, rides on swings and merry-go-rounds, a bowling alley, and a roller coaster.

Campfires were held at the St. Paul Auditorium; at Market Hall (West Seventh & Wabasha Streets); and at Paul Martin's Opera House (South Wabasha Street).<sup>33</sup> In addition the local organizers scheduled steamboat excursions with regular trips to Minnehaha Falls and the Soldier's Home, via Fort Snelling, at the rate of 20¢ for a round trip. According to accounts of the encamp-

ment, thousands of spectators witnessed a rowing regatta on the Mississippi River, which was sponsored by the Minnesota Boat Club.

The Great Northern Railroad also supported the festivities. It offered special round-trip excursions for veterans "to see the fertile farming regions of the Northwest" and sample "fine fishing and pleasure resorts in the Minnesota Park Region." These trips to western Minnesota and the Dakotas took place on September 4th and 5th.<sup>34</sup>

Several St. Paul department stores advertised extensively in the local press during the encampment. One ad for the Golden Rule Department Store proclaimed that "... Strangers and visitors will find a royal welcome here. ... Goods sold here at Retail for Less Than Wholesale Prices! A chance for Encampment and State Fair visitors to save their traveling expenses. ..."<sup>35</sup> Many ads promoted the sale of special memorabilia that were tied to the GAR gathering. Mannheimer Bros. Department Store, for example, of-



ferred "Sterling Silver G. A. R. Spoons," at 50¢, 75¢, and \$1.00 each.<sup>36</sup>

### **Pomp and Circumstance and Paraphernalia**

In the 1880s and 1890s, the city of St. Paul often built temporary arches over parade-route streets for its major festivals. The city did this when it celebrated the building of the transcontinental railroads in 1883 and 1893. It did so again in 1896. One triumphal arch, built on Summit Avenue, honored the participation of African American soldiers in the Civil War. The *Minneapolis Journal* noted that the arch honored "the colored troops who fell in the battles of the rebellion," such as Antietam and Port Hudson, where these soldiers played an important role.<sup>37</sup>

Elsewhere there were "... huge Corinthian columns of staff, beautiful in design, fifty feet high, at the street corners, each surmounted by the national colors and dotted with thousands of electric lights. Then there were numerous triumphal arches, and a sea of bunting floated everywhere, in many instances the buildings being entirely obscured. Such decorations, expensive and artistic, have never before been seen in any American city. St. Paul is said to have spent \$50,000 on her adornment."<sup>38</sup>

During the encampment, there was scarcely a front yard which did not display some sort of GAR planting, either in flower beds, lettering or monograms, to honor the Union cause. One observer's rough estimate claimed that almost 800,000 plants were involved in this public display of support for the festival. In addition, the city's Board of Park Commissioners planted GAR-themed designs in eighteen city parks in the form of army corps badges, flags and shields, cannons, stacks of weapons, and even a floral fort forty-two feet in diameter, totaling 280,840 plants in all.

Similarly, the Committee on Badges for the encampment noted in its final report that "we determined that the chief delegate badge should be as handsome and as elaborate as any that had been furnished previously, and to combine with this something of local interest in the selection of Minnesota mate-

rial, native copper, of which the badges were made."<sup>39</sup> Indeed, the badges from previous encampments set a very high standard of design and manufacture for the committee to match in 1896. Those earlier badges had been fashioned from metal gathered from melted-down Confederate cannons, but that source was no longer available. Consequently the committee selected a metal native to Minnesota and put its emphasis on the design and workmanship of its badges.

The following is a list of the badges this committee provided to the various GAR constituent organizations and the numbers of each badge that were prepared:

- Delegate badges 1,300
- Woman's Relief Corps badges 500
- Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic badges 300
- Naval Veterans badges 200
- Ex-Prisoner of War badges 100
- War Musicians badges 100

Based on a participant's wartime service, a GAR member could qualify to wear more than a single badge. Thus a delegate who had also been a prisoner of war would be eligible for two badges.

In addition to these badges of honor, the committee ordered 3,000 smaller souvenir badges of differing designs prepared for sale. These designs included a canteen, a knapsack, Fort Snelling, and Minnehaha Falls, each with pins. Finally, the Committee on Badges provided 1,000 special identifying pins to the Citizens' Committee and to the Ladies' Committee. These pins might also have been used in part to single out and reward the countless number of St. Paul men and women who volunteered their time and talents to make the 30th Encampment a success. In its final report, the committee stated that it had spent a total of \$4,167.50 with Messrs Heeren Bros. & Co. of Pittsburgh for the manufacture of all of the badges ordered for the encampment and had made \$1,421.26 on the sale of souvenir badges to the public.

### **Some Encampment Conclusions**

Shortly after the 30th Encampment ended and all the GAR delegates and visitors

had departed St. Paul, *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly* commented that

... the GAR Encampment in St. Paul and the "Festival of Ceres" with the grand Knights of Pythias conclave at Minneapolis during the same week, together with the successful, record-breaking State Fair at Hamline, midway between the two cities, have brought these great commercial and manufacturing marts into still greater prominence. By actual account among the railroads, some 150,000 strangers witnessed the week's really gorgeous festivities, and it was a period of more elaborate entertainment and enjoyment than usually comes to the average American citizen.<sup>40</sup>

This newspaper's recognition of and favorable comment on the GAR encampment in St. Paul reached a national audience and cast a most favorable light on the festivities.

Josiah Chaney, that astute local observer, agreed. In his diary he noted that "... the great G.A.R. Encampment is now a thing of the past. It was a magnificent success, in every way, and praise is heard on every hand from our guests. It has been a big advertisement for St. Paul."<sup>41</sup> If residents of Minnesota's capital city were worried that in the wake of the completion of the Northern Pacific and Great Northern railroads, the nation had somehow overlooked St. Paul as a booming metropolis and gateway to the Northwest that teemed with pride in and support for the Union, then reports of the 30th Encampment in *Leslie's Popular Monthly* surely gave ample evidence that St. Paul's biggest party had erased that nagging possibility.

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## Endnotes

1. For accounts of the celebration of the completion of the Northern Pacific, see Alexandra Villard de Borchgrave and John Cullen, *Villard: The Life and times of an American Titan* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 330–34, and Jocelyn Wills, *Boosters, Hustlers, and Speculators: Entrepreneurial Culture and the Rise of Minneapolis and St. Paul, 1849–1883* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2005), 203–06. Albro Martin describes St. Paul's celebration for the Great Northern in his *James J. Hill and the Opening of the Northwest* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976; with a new introduction by W. Thomas White, St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1991), 396–98.
2. The life and career of Albert Scheffer will be examined by the authors in a future issue of *Ramsey County History*.
3. *Public Opinion* 21, no. 12 (September 17, 1896): 364.
4. *The Economist*, May 4, 1991, p. 89.
5. Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008).
6. Kenneth Carley, Richard Moe, and Brian Horrigan, *Minnesota in the Civil War* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2000), 190.
7. William Watts Folwell, *A History of Minnesota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1926), 3:273.
8. Moira F. Harris, *Monumental Minnesota: A Guide to Outdoor Sculpture* (St. Paul: Pogo Press, 1992), 25–32. For an account of how the GAR post in White Bear Lake, Minn., observed Memorial Day in 1896, see the entries in the Minute book for GAR Post 76 on May 21 and 30, 1896, in the Gibbs Family Collection, Ramsey County Historical Society, St. Paul, Minn. Later entries during the summer of 1896 document the preparations this post made for the 30th National Encampment and how to “arrange details for the proper entertainment of visitors” (August 28, 1896).
9. Id., 31.
10. The same attention to the Civil War in American culture occurred following the publication of Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind* in 1936 and the film based on the book in 1939.
11. Frank H. Heck, “The Grand Army of the Republic in Minnesota, 1866–80,” *Minnesota History* 16, no. 4 (December 1935): 428, 444. An expanded analysis of the GAR in Minnesota is in Frank H. Heck, *The Civil War Veteran in Minnesota Life and Politics* (Oxford, Ohio: The Mississippi Valley Press, 1941).
12. Henry Anson Castle, *History of St. Paul and Vicinity* (Chicago & New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1912), 560.
13. Id., 1175, 1176.
14. Josiah B. Chaney and Family Papers (P1331), vols. 1–34, boxes 5 and 6, Minnesota Historical Society, Minnesota History Center, St. Paul, Minn. In later Winter Carnivals, Vulcan Krewes would take over the assault on the Ice Palace.
15. Barry Casselman, *North Star Rising: Minnesota Politicians on the National Stage* (Lakeville, Minn.: Pogo Press, 2008), 32.
16. *School and Home Education*, 16 (1896): xiii.
17. *The American Hebrew*, August 28, 1896, p. 427.
18. Grand Army of the Republic, *Journal of the Twenty-ninth National Encampment* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1895), 262, 264.
19. Daughters of the American Revolution, Nathan Hale Chapter (St. Paul), *Daily Bulletin* no. 3 (September 2, 1896): n.p. To organize, plan, and pay for the cost of hosting the GAR, the St. Paul Citizen's Committee, Thirtieth National Encampment, whose treasurer was Albert Scheffer, was incorporated in November 1895. The corporation's directors and many committee chairs subsequently solicited subscriptions from the community to an initial offering of 1,000 shares of common stock in the corporation at \$10 per share to pay for many of the expenses related to the encampment.
20. *Minneapolis Homeopathic Magazine* 6 (1896): 269.
21. St. Paul Police Historical Society, “History of the Saint Paul Police Department” (1899), St. Paul Police Historical Society, [http://www.spphs.com/history/1899/chapter\\_4.php](http://www.spphs.com/history/1899/chapter_4.php) (accessed September 22, 2009).
22. Mary Rulkotter Dearing, *Veterans in Politics: The Story of the G.A.R.* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952), 463. For a more sociologically focused study of the GAR, see Stuart C. McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865–1900* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).
23. Patrick J. Kelly, “The Election of 1896 and the Restructuring of Civil War Memory,” *Civil War History* 49, no. 3 (September 2003): 254, 275.
24. Thomas Rice, “Samuel Smith and the First Minnesota Monument at Gettysburg,” *Minnesota History* 60, No. 1 (Spring 2006): 22.
25. Daughters of the American Revolution, *The American Monthly Magazine* (1896): 471.
26. Grand Army of the Republic, Department of the Potomac, *Journal of the National Encampment* (1896), 90.
27. Grand Army of the Republic, *Report of the Officers and Chairmen of Committees of the Thirtieth National Encampment of the G.A.R. Held in St. Paul, Minnesota, August 31 to September 5, 1896* (St. Paul: Pioneer Press Company, 1897), 64. Except where noted, all descriptions of the 30th Encampment come from this source.
28. Unidentified Civil War veteran's 1896 handwritten manuscript diary, *Reminiscences of the National Encampment G.A.R. at Saint Paul, Minnesota, Sept., 1896*, M. Benjamin Katz Fine Books/Rare Manuscripts, <http://www.mbenjaminatzfinebooksraremanuscripts.com/?page=shop.com> (accessed September 22, 2009).
29. Josiah B. Chaney and Family Papers (P1331), vols. 1–34, boxes 5 and 6, Minnesota Historical Society. In his book *Glorious Contentment*, historian Stuart McConnell states that by the 1890s this type of “flag ritualism” had become widespread and was “a universal symbol of American nationality” (page 230). He documents the influence the GAR had in the establishment of Flag Day (a national holiday beginning in 1916) and patriotic exercises such as the reciting of the Pledge of Alliance (originally composed in 1892) and the singing of the “Star Spangled Banner.”
30. *Report of the Officers and Chairmen of Committees of the Thirtieth National Encampment of the G.A.R. Held in Saint Paul, Minn., August 31 to September 5, 1896*, 41.
31. *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, (1896), p. 554.
32. Minnesota State Horticultural Society, *The Minnesota Horticulturalist* 24 (1896), in the *Annual Report of the Minnesota State Horticultural Society* (St. Paul: Minnesota State Horticultural Society, 1896), 260.
33. Heck, 428, 441.
34. Advertisement in *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, September 1, 1896, p. 8.
35. Advertisement in *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, September 2, 1896, p. 11.
36. Grand Army of the Republic, *Souvenir and Official Program, 30th National Encampment, Grand Army of the Republic: Saint Paul, Minnesota, September 3, 1896* (St. Paul: Pioneer Press, 1896), 31.
37. *Minneapolis Journal*, July 18, 1896.
38. *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, (1896): 553.
39. *Report of the Officers and Chairmen of Committees of the Thirtieth National Encampment of the G.A.R. Held in Saint Paul, Minn., August 31 to September 5, 1896*, 24–26.
40. *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, (1896): 553.
41. Josiah B. Chaney and Family Papers (P1331), vols. 1–34, boxes 5 and 6, Minnesota Historical Society.



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The cover of the Official Program for the 30th National Encampment of the GAR in St. Paul in 1896, left, and a Delegate Badge from that convention. The five-pointed star and the "Delegate" bar above the eagle were made of Minnesota copper. The program image is courtesy of the Ramsey County Historical Society. The badge is from the Albert Scheffer family archives, photo courtesy of Moira F. Harris and Leo J. Harris. For more on the GAR encampment in St. Paul, see the article on page 13.