



The Pritchard Press

The Newsletter of the General Benjamin Pritchard, Camp 20, Department of Michigan, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Vol. XXXVI, No. 2

April, 2020

Camp Officers 2020

- Commander: John Keith
- Sr. Vice Commander: Len Shaeffer
- Jr. Vice Commander: Doug Gilchrist
- Camp Secretary: Gary Gibson
- Camp Treasurer: David Conklin
- Guard: Charles Keith
- Guide: Vacant
- Patriotic Instructor: Vacant
- Eagle Scout Coordinator: J. Keith/G. Swain
- Memorials and Monuments: Gary Swain
- Graves Registration: Gary Swain
- Color Bearer: Glenn Hall
- Historian: Gary Gibson
- Chaplin: Bill Brennan
- Asst. Chaplin: Jeffry Baker
- Council: Bill Costello, Robert Townsend, Jeffry Baker
- Signals Officer: John Keith
- Pritchard Press Editor: Gary Swain

2020 Camp Schedule

- April 7, 2020 Camp Meeting-Portage Library, 7:00 PM
- April 24, 2020 Vicksburg Cemetery-Gravestone Cleaning 8:00 AM-12:00 PM with Vicksburg HS
- May 5, 2020 Camp Meeting-Portage Library, 7:00 PM
- May 9, 2020 Veteran Flags at Mtn. Home Cemetery
- May 16, 2020 Riverside-GAR Mnmt. Cleanup 9:30 AM
- Eagle Scout G-Stone cleaning 9:30 AM
- May 25, 2020 Federal Holiday-Memorial Day
- May 30, 2020 Memorial Day Ceremony at Riverside
- June 2, 2020 Camp Meeting-Portage Library, 7:00 PM
- June 6, 2020 135th Department Encampment-Okemos, MI**
- July 7, 2020 Camp Meeting-Portage Library, 7:00 PM
- July 11, 2020 Field Trip-Underground RR, Vandalia MI
- August 4, 2020 Camp Meeting-Portage Library, 7:00 PM
- Aug. 13-16, 2020 **National Encampment-Atlanta, GA**
- Sept. 1, 2020 Camp Meeting-Portage Library, 7:00 PM
- Oct. 6, 2020 Camp Meeting-Portage Library, 7:00 PM
- Nov. 3, 2020 Election Day-Don't Forget to Vote
- Camp Meeting-Portage Library, 7:00 PM
- December, 2020 No Camp Meeting

George Armstrong Custer

USTER BY THE NUMBERS

726

Total number of demerits Custer received while at West Point. This was one of the highest in the history of the Military Academy.

260

Number of 7th Cavalry soldiers who died at the Little Big Horn on June 25-26, 1876.

34th

Custer graduated last in his class at the Military Academy.

23

Custer was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General at the age of 23, making him one of the youngest generals ever in the U.S. Army.

11

Custer had 11 horses shot out from under him during the Civil War without suffering serious injury. Thus began the legend of “Custer’s Luck”.

4

Four members of Custer’s family also perished at the Little Big Horn. These included his two brothers: Thomas and Boston, Brother-in-law James Calhoun and nephew Henry Armstrong Reed.



Michigan’s own George Armstrong Custer continues to remain a controversial figure nearly 150 years after his ignominious death at the most famous battle of the Indian Wars, the Battle of the Little Big Horn. Many are unaware that he earned a justifiable reputation as a skilled leader of cavalry who exhibited bravery and audacity throughout the Civil War.

One of Custer’s most famous Civil War battles was at Gettysburg. As the new commander of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade, he faced off against the more famous Confederate General, JEB Stewart. While outnumbered more than 2 to 1, he shouted, “**Come on you Wolverines!**” and led his troops in a surprise charge that stopped Stewart from attacking the Union rear during Pickett’s Charge and potentially saved the day for the Union victory.

Custer was so highly regarded by Phil Sheridan that Sheridan gave the table that Lee’s surrender was signed upon at Appomattox to Custer’s wife Libby.

Where to Begin

Three million Americans served in the Civil War at a time when the population of the entire country was thirty-one million, five hundred thousand men, women and children. If your ancestors were in America during this extraordinary period in American history, then chances are that someone in your family served in the war or, most certainly, your family was affected by the war.

Where do we begin our quest in finding our Civil War ancestors? Start with what you know. The first clues to our past are with family memorabilia. These could include ancestor photos in uniform, diaries, weaponry (swords, guns, knives, etc.), medals, ribbons, family Bibles, saved letters or scrap books. Further, because of the immense interest and popularity of family genealogy today, you may find that someone in your family has already done some of the research and can help to fill in the branches on your family tree.

Cemeteries Hold Clues

A visit to family plots in the cemetery can also reveal a great deal of information about your ancestors. Generally, most Civil War soldiers were born between 1820 and 1845, so focus your search on male ancestors born during these dates. Look for military gravestones. The United States government has provided gravestones when requested for any deceased veteran who served or died in any branch of the service who was discharged under any condition other than dishonorable. Most Civil War era government gravestones were upright tablet style stones which usually included the veteran's name, branch of service, regiment and company. Further, many veteran gravestones, whether family stones or government stones, might also display a G.A.R. (Grand Army of the Republic) flag-holder or the G.A.R. symbol on the gravestone. Only honorably discharged Union veterans of the Civil War were qualified to join the G.A.R., so member-

ship provides a strong implication of service in Union forces.

What's In A Name

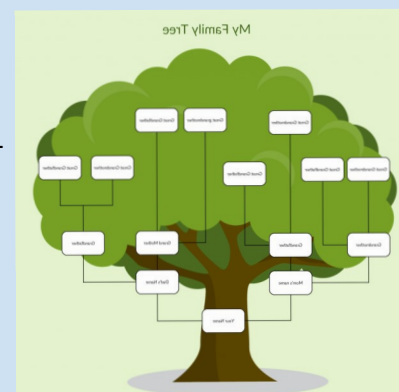
When conducting genealogical research, it is important to remember that misspelling of names was a common occurrence during the nineteenth century. Most original documents were hand written by people of varying levels of both literacy and hand writing skills, so search records using a variety of spelling options. Also remember that many soldiers had the same or very similar names. Thus, it is important to exercise caution when making assumptions based upon a single promising record. It's also helpful to recognize that most soldiers served in locally raised units. If your ancestor was counted in the 1860 census, it will identify his residence at the onset of the Civil War. You can then look for all the regiments that were raised in that area. This approach can help to eliminate many soldier records with common names but from other areas of the state or nation.

Genealogical Gold in Obituaries

Obituaries are also a frequently invaluable source of information on an ancestor's military background. They can list the regiment and company that he served in plus whether he died in the service and where he was buried. When the regiment or ship on which your ancestor served is identified, you can then consult unit histories to learn movements, battle summaries and other pertinent facts that will help build context around his life.

Next Issue-On Line Search Engines

In the next issue of the Pritchard Press we will discuss On-Line Search Engines that can simplify your genealogical research efforts by examining millions of relevant databases.



UPCOMING EVENTS

4 Things to Do

- Watch for the documentary series *Grant* on the History Channel- Dates and Time TBD
- March 28, 2020 George Armstrong Custer symposium at the National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg, PA
- Saturday, May 2, 2020 1:30 PM-Mark Hoffman of the Department of Natural Resources “Civil War Genealogy” Western Mich. Genealogical
- June 12-17, 2020 The Gettysburg Civil War Institute’s Summer Conference at Gettysburg College.

Grant

The History Channel has announced a multipart series titled ***Grant*** based upon Ron Chernow’s best selling book of the same name. As the History channel explained in their announcement: *“At the time of his death, Ulysses S. Grant was the most famous man in the world and stood alongside men like George Washington and Abraham Lincoln in the pantheon of American heroes. However, today Ulysses S. Grant is largely forgotten, his rightful legacy tarnished by a fog of myth, rumor and falsehood. “Grant” tells the remarkable and quintessentially American story of a humble man who overcomes incredible obstacles, rises to the highest ranks of power and saves the nation not once, but twice. With a seamless blend of dramatic scenes, expert commentary and beautifully enhanced archival imagery, this three-part series uncovers the true legacy of the unlikely hero who led the nation during its greatest test, the Civil War and Reconstruction”.*



Gettysburg Civil War Institute

Summer Conference June 12-17, 2020

The Gettysburg Civil War Institute at Gettysburg College has been holding a summer conference featuring many of the nation’s foremost Civil War historians and battlefield tours for over 35 years. If you enjoy learning about Civil War history and look forward to the comradery of people who share your interests, then consider participating in this excellent conference at Gettysburg College.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Kalamazoo Civil War Roundtable

Westwood Methodist Church
538 Nichols Rd., Kalamazoo

Schedule of Speakers

Check website for Next Meeting:



Grand Rapids Civil War Roundtable

Kuyper College-Room 213 (New Location)
3333 East Beltline Ave. NE, Grand Rapids

Schedule of Speakers

Thursday, April 30, 2020 7:00 PM Special Meeting with the G.R. Historical Society

Wednesday, May 20, 2020 7:00 PM-Steve Hawks "Battle of Cedar Creek"

Wednesday, June 10, 2020 7:00 PM To Be Announced



Civil War Roundtable of South West Michigan

First Congregational Church-Fellowship Hall (Lower Level)
2001 Niles Ave., St. Joe, Michigan

Schedule of Speakers

Tuesday, April 14, 2020 6:30 PM-John Cohassey-"The 22nd MI Infantry and the Road to Chickamauga"

Tuesday, May 12, 2020 6:30 PM-Millie Henley "Clever and Unusual Escapes from Slavery"

Tuesday, April 9, 2020 6:30 PM- Roundtable discussion on the battles of Chickamauga and Chattanooga



The National Civil War Museum announced a "**George Armstrong Custer, Civil War & Indian War**" symposium scheduled for March 28, 2020 at the museum headquarters in Harrisburg, PA. See their web site at www.nationalcivilwarmuseum.org for more information.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Michigan's GAR Memorial Hall & Museum

224 South Main Street, Eaton Rapids, Michigan

Schedule of Speakers

Tuesday, May 19, 2020 7:00 PM-Tom Berlucchi-Detroits Historic Fort Wayne

Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:00 PM-Kermut Drouse-"Emery Parady and the Capture of John Wilkes Booth"

Sunday, September 20, 2020 3:00PM-Jack Dempsey-"Major General Alpheus Williams"

Tuesday, November 17, 2020 7:00 PM-Dr. Jim Pula-"The Eleventh Corp at Gettysburg"



The Kalamazoo Valley Genealogical Society

Meets at the Portage Library

Schedule of Speakers

Monday, April 20, 2020 7:00 PM-Jill Arnold of the State of Michigan Archives

"The New Archives Website"

Monday, May 18, 2020 7:00 PM-Gary Swain PCC of the SUVCW Camp 20-"Carved in Stone-
Genealogy in the Cemetery"

Monday, June 15, 2020 7:00 PM- TBD

Western Michigan Genealogical Society

Meets At The Grand Rapids Public Library

111 Library Street NE, Grand Rapids, MI

Schedule of Speakers

Saturday, April 4, 2020 1:30 PM-Rozlyn Kelly- "Genealogical Research Starting with Oral
History"

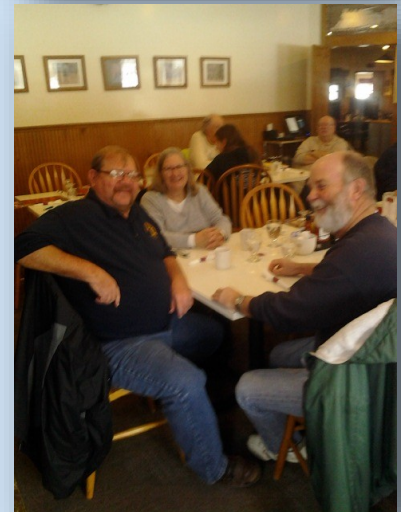
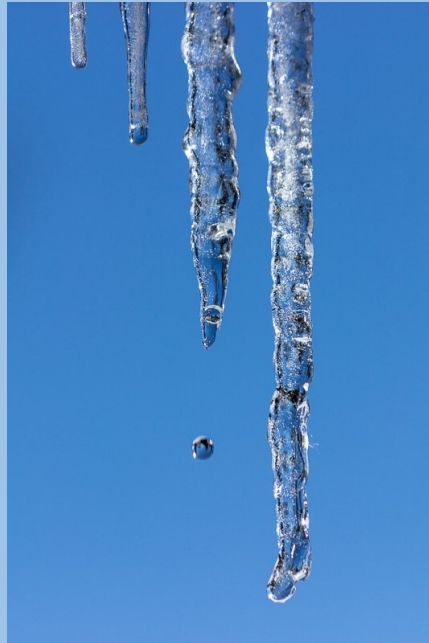
Saturday, May 2, 2020 1:30 PM-Mark Hoffman of the Department of Natural Resources
"Civil War Genealogy"



CAMP ACTIVITIES



WINTER THAW



Camp 20 held our annual Winter Thaw luncheon on Saturday, January 25, 2020.

The event was held at the newly reopened Club Car Grill on D Avenue in Cooper, MI. About twenty brothers and friends of the camp attended and shared comradery, good conversation and a pleasant lunch.



CAMP ACTIVITIES



Camp Commander John Keith and Camp Junior Vice Commander Doug Gilchrist visit with Junior Camp Member James Davis

Join the Sons of Union Veterans



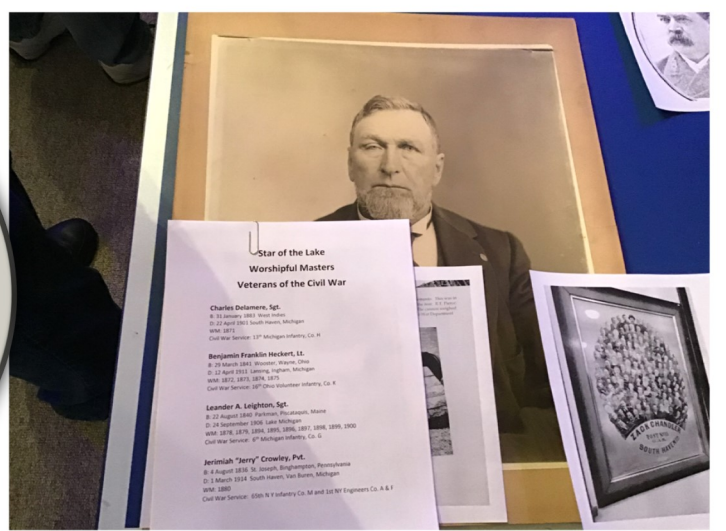
If you had an ancestor who fought to preserve the Union during the Civil War 1861-1865 and would like to join with other like-minded decedents in the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, please call Camp 20 Commander John Keith at 269- 720-5251 or join us at our monthly camp meetings held at the Portage, MI Library at 7:00 PM on the first Tuesday of the month, March to November (April Meeting has been canceled due to the library closure).

CAMP ACTIVITIES

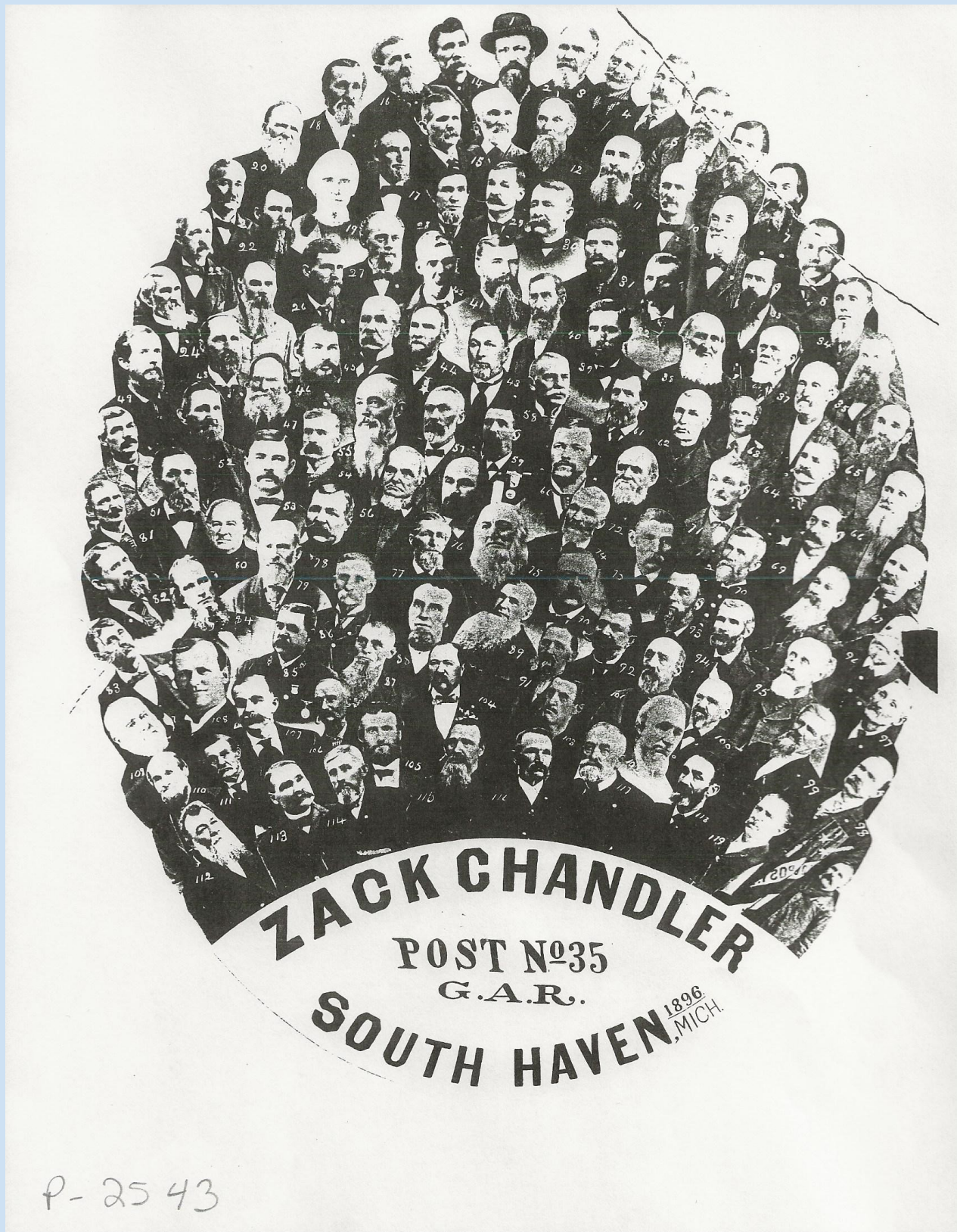
Camp 20 Brothers Bill Brennan, Robert Townsend and Doug Gilchrist met in January, 2020 with Tim Steggman who is the Worshipful Master of the Star of the Lake Masonic Lodge in South Haven,



Van Buren County, Michigan. Mr. Steggman has undertaken an in depth genealogical study of the masonic members who were also Civil War veterans and/or members of the GAR Zach Chandler Post 35 of South Haven. Our organizations are sharing research and are planning a Civil War veteran gravestone preservation project for the summer of 2020.



Zack Chandler Post 35, GAR, South Haven, MI



P-2543

1898 composite portrait photos of all 120 members of the Zack Chandler Post 35, South Haven, Michigan. The name of each member was printed on the reverse side of the photo. It originally was displayed in the GAR Hall and now is on display at the South Haven Historical Society

Zack Chandler Post 35, GAR, South Haven, MI

IMAGES OF THE PAST 1984 SOUTH HAVEN
FROM THE COLLECTION OF RICHARD APPELYARD.



Civil War Veterans of South Haven vicinity, photo of the late 1880s. The group is in front of the Pomeroy Store on the southeast corner of Broadway and Phoenix. This is one of the 22 buildings that burned in the fire of 1891. When the new Carnegie Library was built on that site, the Zack Chandler Post No. 35 of the GAR had its hall on the first floor.

210

Michigan's famous Cavalry Regiment, the 106th, had its beginning in South Haven in 1905. A restaurant owner in South Haven, Paul Lino, who had served in the Italian Cavalry, persuaded fellow townsmen to form a mounted unit. He taught the use of the saber, riding tricks, and cavalry practices. Within a short time the group won recognition with the National Guard and was organized into Troop A. In a short time another group, Troop K, was organized in Detroit. In 1913 the troop was ordered to Calumet to maintain law and order during the copper strike. The two units, Troop A and Troop K, served on the Mexican Border Campaign in 1916. Following that campaign, the War Department ordered the completion of the cavalry squadron of four troops in Michigan. One troop in Alma, two in Detroit, and South Haven's Troop A formed the 106th Cavalry. In 1917 the regiment served in World War I, when converted to a Battalion of Field Artillery attached to the 119th Regiment of the 32nd Division. In the mid 1930s, the troop was sent to Flint to maintain law and order during an auto strike. Troop A and their mounts had been a feature of all Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Peach Festival parades in South Haven for many years. However, in August of 1940, under the command of Major Frank D. Warner, the mounted troop made its last appearance when participating in the second army maneuvers at Camp Sparta, Wisconsin. Following that appearance, the troop became a battery of 177th Field Artillery. The battery left for duty in World War II on April 18, 1941, and was then redesignated as Anti-Tank Company A of the 772nd Battalion. South Haven's unit is now a company of engineers, Bailey bridge builders, attached to the 507th Engineers Battalion of the National Guard.

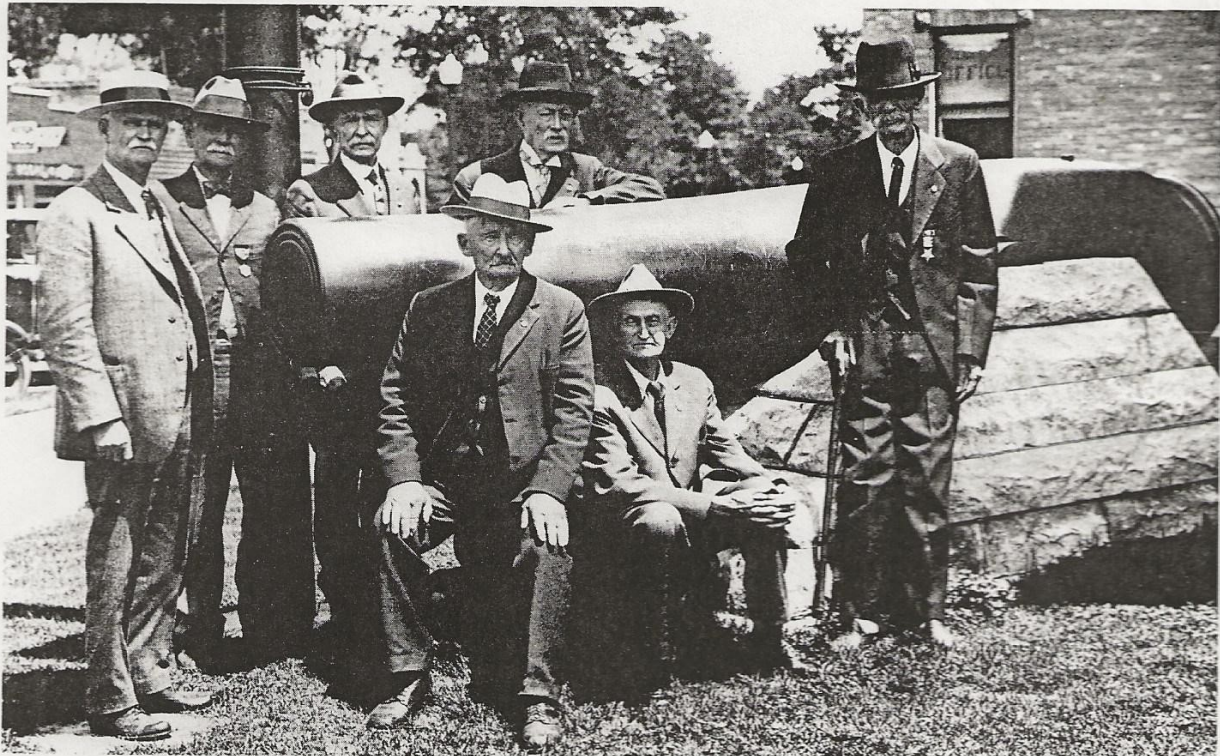
Zack Chandler Post 35, GAR, South Haven, MI

IMAGES OF THE PAST 1984 SOUTH HAVEN MICH.
FROM THE COLLECTION OF RICHARD APPEYARD



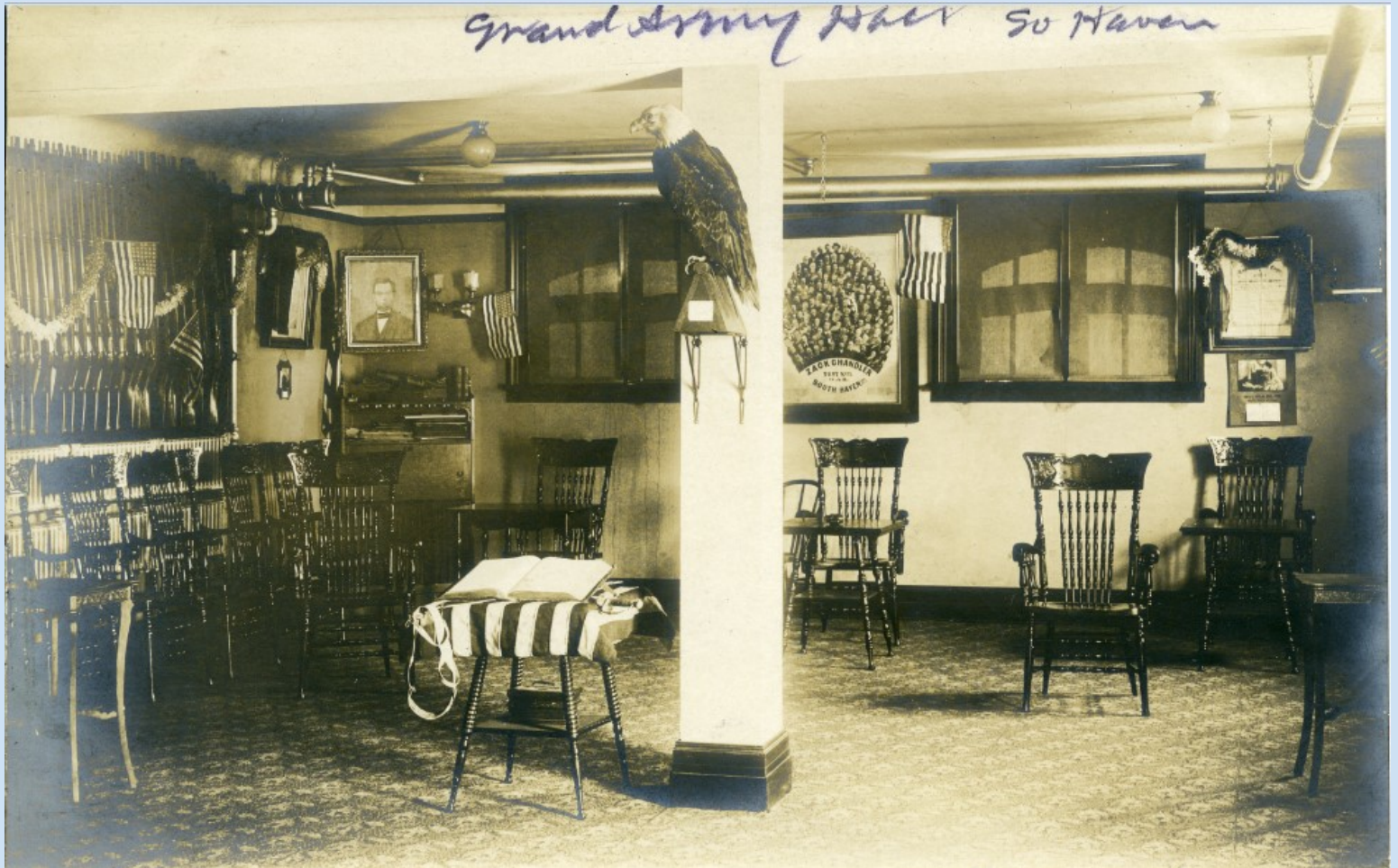
The Carnegie Library which was built in 1906. The photo is about 1915 and shows the old Confederate cannon which had been released by the War Department to South Haven. The cannon was turned into wartime scrap in 1942.

209



South Haven Civil War Veterans. Front row, left to right, John Eitel, E. A. Van Pelt, and Thomas Biddle. Back row, R. T. Pierce, E. S. McGuire, James Martin, and Albert Nealy.

Zack Chandler Post 35, GAR, South Haven, MI



The above photo was of the Grand Army Hall when they were located in the ground floor of the Carnegie Library building in South Haven. Note the composite photo of their 120 members hanging on the far wall. There is also a photograph of President Abraham Lincoln displayed diagonally in the corner. Also, note the gun rack on the wall on the left replete with rifles. They obviously took their role as defenders of the Union very seriously over 40 years after the end of the Civil War. A stuffed version of the Bald Eagle, the national symbol, sitting on a perch attached to the center column, was unfortunately stolen by teen agers in the early 20th century and used for target practice rendering it unusable thereafter. Finally, in this photo covering one and a half walls, there are at least six American flags visible, testifying to their steadfast patriotism.