

# THE PRITCHARD PRESS

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

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GEN. BENJ. D. PRITCHARD

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## Announcements

### Our Purpose

As Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW), we are the legal heirs to the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). Our goal and purpose is to perpetuate the memory of the GAR; what they did in the Civil War and to preserve the Union, and to continue the work they started following the War. Teaching others about our flag, patriotism and citizenship were important to them and should be important to us all. Learning about the other cultures and histories that live among us today is important, but the basic history of the United States cannot take second place to that of others.

We are a National organization divided into Departments (States) and then Camps (local chapters). While perpetuating the memory of the GAR, we also work actively to locate and record the final resting place of all Civil War soldiers as well as work to restore and or preserve Civil War memorials. We also seek to honor the veterans of all wars. We participate in Memorial Day services as well as those on Veterans' Day.

On **Tuesday, April 26, 7:00pm**, Camp 20 Historian Gary Gibson will present a program at the Kalamazoo Public Library about the GAR lot and share some of the stories of the veterans buried there. Below is the link to the Library's web page about it. Just copy and past the address to your browser to access the site.

<http://www.kpl.gov/local-history/forgotten-valor/>



## Camp Calendar

### ❖ May 2011

**3<sup>rd</sup>, 7 pm:** Camp Meeting-Portage Library

**Date & Time TBD** Civil War Monument clean up-Riverside Cemetery

**21<sup>st</sup>:** Department of Michigan Encampment, Lansing Michigan

**30<sup>th</sup>, Time TBD:** Memorial Ceremony-Civil War Monument, Riverside Cemetery  
**30<sup>th</sup>:** Memorial Day (Original and Observed)

❖ **June 2011**

**7<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm:** Camp Meeting-Portage Library

**14<sup>th</sup>:** Flag Day: Fly your flag



❖ **July 2011**

No Camp Meeting scheduled for July



## Graves and Memorials



## Quote of the Month



**“Fort Sumpter is ours, and nobody is hurt, with motar, paixham and petard we tender “OLD ABE” our Beau-regards.”**

*Jefferson Davis as reported in the N.Y. Times, April 16, 1861*



## Our Heritage

### Discovering Your Civil War Union Ancestors

By Gary Swain

Searching for your Civil War ancestors who fought to preserve the Union is a fascinating and ultimately a very satisfying experience. Establishing your ancestors and your direct family line as not simply observers but also as participants in one of the most important events in American history is extremely rewarding.

A successful search assumes that the researcher has thoroughly traced each branch of the family tree. Most Civil War participants were born between 1820 and 1848. If today's researcher is over the age of 55, the search will probably extend back four generations to great-great-grandfathers. If we narrow that search, initially, to only direct ancestors that results in eight great-great-grandfathers. On the other hand, if the researcher is between the approximate ages of 30 to 55, the search will in all probability extend back five

generations and focus on a great-great-great-grandfathers which thus doubles that number to sixteen. Each generation doubles the number of direct ancestors from the preceding generation. If the search is then expanded to indirect ancestors as well (great-great-uncles, for example) then the number more than doubles because brothers of great-great-grandmothers as well as great-great-grandfathers are added. And remember, families were much larger in the 19<sup>th</sup> century than they are today. While the number of potential Civil War ancestors may seem daunting at first, it is important to note that it also significantly increases the potential for success. Of course, the number of potential Union ancestors will also be reduced as some family branches will not extend back to the Civil War era because of post Civil War era immigration to the U.S.A., lack of genealogical data, or the simple fact that some branches of the family extend into Confederate states.

The first step in your Civil War Union ancestral research is to prepare a list of all potential male ancestors born between the dates of 1820 and 1848. It will be most helpful in your later research if you also note the location of their residence at the beginning of the Civil War. The 1860 Federal Census will undoubtedly be the best resource in fixing residence. This information is easily available on some fee based sites such as *Ancestry.com* or at *Footnote.com*. It is up to the researcher as to how wide in the family tree to extend the research (uncles or cousins, for instance) or

to limit it to just direct ancestors. The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War recognize both direct ancestors and brothers of direct ancestors for membership, so it is strongly recommended that your research extend to at least this level. Also, be sure to include ancestors residing in border states (Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland and Missouri) as well as West Virginia and Tennessee as many Union regiments were recruited in these states. Finally, be sure to include multiple spellings and initials of your ancestor's given and surname as it is common in to find spelling variations due to clerical errors in Civil War military records.

The next step is to research Civil War military rosters to determine if your ancestor appears. If your ancestor was from Michigan the free site *Michigan in the War* is an excellent source and can be found at <http://michiganinthewar.org> . A similar site for Illinois can be found at <http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/archives/dacivil.html> . Rosters from most states can be found on line and generally can be found by typing in the state name and the term "civil war rosters" into your favorite search engine like Google or Yahoo. The state rosters may provide very useful additional information including: date of birth, age and enlistment date which are all very helpful in determining your relationship. Also, the National Park Service provides a free site called the *Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System* which gives brief National Archive records on 4.2 million Union Civil War soldiers and sailors as well

as similar Confederate information and is located at <http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/soldiers.cfm> . This information is also available on line at *Ancestry.com* or *Civilwardata.com* as well. In addition, your local library's genealogical research section may contain a number of printed Civil War rosters. One of the most useful is "*Rosters of Union Soldiers, 1861 to 1865 (33 vols.)*" published by Barefoot Books. Don't forget to note regiment, rank and any other information provided by these sites.

Once your relationship is reasonably established, the next step is potentially the most important. You will want to obtain written copies of your Civil War ancestors' *Compiled Military Service Record (CMSR)* from the National Archives in Washington DC. These files contain muster rolls, pension records, service records and personal papers pertaining exclusively to that soldier. As an example, the author's Civil War ancestor *CMSR* contains a letter from his company captain explaining the circumstances of his death and a listing of all of his personal possessions including each article of clothing, money in his possession and an IOU to a sutler. Some of the *CMSR* files are fairly thin while others are bursting with information. Officers' files tend to be more extensive. This type of information can really add a human dimension to your ancestor.

You can obtain a copy of your ancestors *CMSR* from the National Archives for a fee of \$25.00, by visiting them at 700

Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington DC 20408-0001 or at a branch office. These can also be ordered through the mail or on line. You can research the national Archives' "*Research in Military Records: Civil War*" at <http://www.archives.gov/research/civil-war/index.html> . You can find instructions for ordering the *CMSL* on line at <https://eservices.archives.gov/orderonline/start.swe?SWECmd=Start&SWEHo=eservices.archives.gov> .

Researching a Civil War ancestor can be challenging and difficult, but once the process begins many more sources of information will become evident. You may ultimately find that your Civil War ancestors are the best documented ancestors in your family tree. Most importantly, at some point in the process, the subjects of the research will become much more than ancestors on a family tree. They will become a source of immense pride and respect for your personal family heritage.



## History

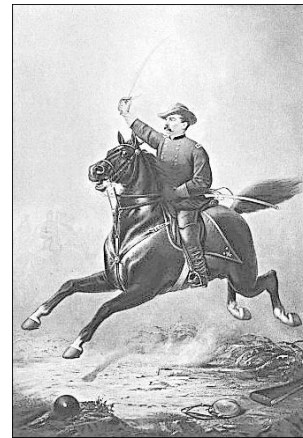
### Sheridan at Cedar Creek

By Gary Swain

General Grant sent one of his two most trusted subordinates, General Phil Sheridan to the Shenandoah Valley in the fall of 1864 to put a final end to the Confederacy's ability to invade the North and threaten Washington through the valley. Sheridan was successfully destroying the economic base of the valley and thus depriving Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia of their most critical base of supply. In October Sheridan had been called away to Washington DC for a high level conference. He had just returned to Winchester, Virginia the night before when Confederate General Jubal Early launched a surprise attack on Sheridan's larger army camped 20 miles from Winchester at Cedar Creek. The attack was enormously successful and Early drove Sheridan's army in a headlong route. However, Early's starving troops stopped long enough to pillage the Union camps.

Sheridan awoke in the morning to the sounds of distant cannons and went outside to find retreating troops flooding north and away from the battle. Sheridan dressed, gathered his staff and a 300-man mounted escort. He warned his staff that only the well mounted would be able to keep up with him. *He then mounted Rienzi, a big black stallion from the Black Hawk stock of Michigan. Rienzi had been presented to*

*Sheridan by the officers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Michigan Cavalry when he had served as their colonel in 1862.* He then began one of the most celebrated rides in the North. He was instantly recognizable mounted on Rienzi and rallied the troops for 20 miles all the way to Cedar Creek where he decisively beat Early and put an end to resistance in the Shenandoah Valley. "Sheridan's Ride" was retold in a poem by Thomas Read which was recited at every Republican political event during the remaining months of the Civil War and by school children for the next century.



### Sheridan's Ride

By Thomas Buchanan Read

Up from the South, at break of day,  
Bringing to Winchester fresh dismay,  
The affrighted air with a shudder bore,  
Like a herald in haste to the chieftain's door,  
The terrible grumble, and rumble, and roar,  
Telling the battle was on once more,  
And Sheridan twenty miles away.

And wider still those billows of war  
Thundered along the horizon's bar;  
And louder yet into Winchester rolled  
The roar of that red sea uncontrolled,  
Making the blood of the listener cold,  
As he thought of the stake in that fiery fray,  
With Sheridan twenty miles away.

But there is a road from Winchester town,

A good, broad highway leading down:  
 And there, through the flush of the morning light,  
 A steed as black as the steeds of night  
 Was seen to pass, as with eagle flight;  
 As if he knew the terrible need,  
 He stretched away with his utmost speed.  
 Hills rose and fell, but his heart was gay,  
 With Sheridan fifteen miles away.

Still sprang from those swift hoofs, thundering south,  
 The dust like smoke from the cannon's mouth,  
 Or the trail of a comet, sweeping faster and faster,  
 Foreboding to traitors the doom of disaster.  
 The heart of the steed and the heart of the master  
 Were beating like prisoners assaulting their walls,  
 Impatient to be where the battle-field calls;  
 Every nerve of the charger was strained to full play,  
 With Sheridan only ten miles away.

Under his spurning feet, the road  
 Like an arrow Alpine river flowed,  
 And the landscape sped away behind  
 Like an ocean flying before the wind;  
 And the steed, like a barque fed with furnace ire,  
 Swept on, with his wild eye full of fire;  
 But, lo! he is nearing his heart's desire;  
 He is snuffing the smoke of the roaring fray,  
 With Sheridan only five miles away.

The first that the general saw were the groups  
 Of stragglers, and then the retreating troops;  
 What was to be done? what to do?--a glance told him  
 both.

Then striking his spurs with a terrible oath,  
 He dashed down the line, 'mid a storm of huzzas,  
 And the wave of retreat checked its course there,  
 because

The sight of the master compelled it to pause.  
 With foam and with dust the black charger was gray;  
 By the flash of his eye, and his red nostril's play,  
 He seemed to the whole great army to say:  
 "I have brought you Sheridan all the way  
 From Winchester down to save the day."

Hurrah! hurrah for Sheridan!  
 Hurrah! hurrah for horse and man!  
 And when their statues are placed on high  
 Under the dome of the Union sky,  
 The American soldier's Temple of Fame,  
 There, with the glorious general's name,  
 Be it said, in letters both bold and bright:  
 "Here is the steed that saved the day  
 By carrying Sheridan into the fight,  
 From Winchester--twenty miles away!"

For a virtual battlefield tour of the Cedar  
 Creek battlefield just copy and paste the  
 excellent site below into your browser.

<http://www.johnsmilitaryhistory.com/cedarcreek.html>



## 150 Years Ago in May 1861

**May 6, 1861**-The Arkansas state government votes to join the Confederacy and organize a volunteer army.

**May 9, 1861**- Britain declares itself neutral in the American War thus, hoping, to avoid conflict.

**May 18-19, 1861**-The Battle of Sewell's Point in Norfolk Bay. Two Union gunboats fire on Rebel shore positions as part of the new blockade. There are only 10 casualties.

**May 20, 1861**-North Carolina votes to become the last state to secede from the Union.

**May 29-June 1, 1861**-The battle of Aquia Creek, Virginia. Three Union gunboats fire upon Rebel shore positions for three days. There were only 10 casualties.



### Civil War Casualties

Civil War Casualties **April 1861**

	Month	War to Date
North	3	13
South	2	6

\*Casualties include disease, capture, disfigurement and death



## Calendar of Civil War Commemorative Events in May 2011

**May** -- Events commemorating Virginia's decision to go to war, Fredericksburg, Va.

**May** -- Lectures on Richmond as capital of the Confederacy, Richmond National Battlefield Park, Richmond, Va.

**May 7** -- Beacon of Peace walk, Dunker Church,



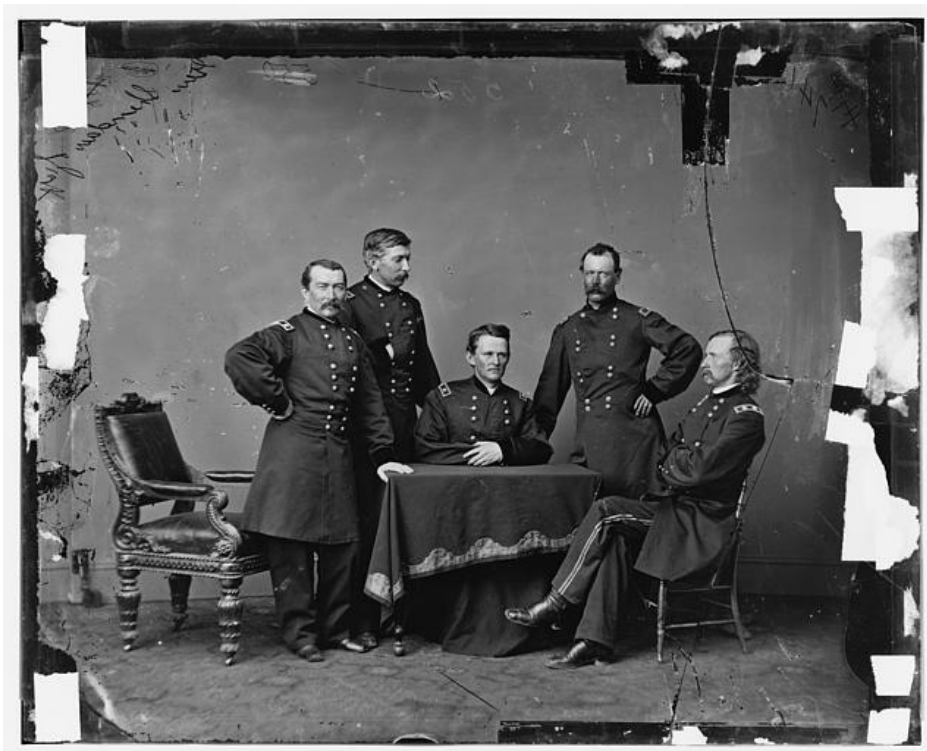
Antietam National Battlefield, Sharpsburg, Md.

**May 28-29** -- Yorktown Civil War weekend, Yorktown, Va.

**May 28-30** -- Memorial Day programs, Antietam National Battlefield, Sharpsburg, Md.  
From AOL News. For more information on national events click on the link below:

[Click here: Calendar of Major Civil War Commemoration Events in 2011](#)

## Photo of the Month



**Gen. Phil Sheridan and Staff**

L to R - Maj. Gen. Sheridan, Col. Jos. Forsythe, Chief of Staff Merritt, Brig. Gen. Thos. C. Devins, Maj. Gen. Geo. A. Custer.



Note: Merritt and Custer were roommates at West Point and remained close friends until Custer's death.