

**Ben Harrison Camp No. 356
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War**

**Memorial Day Ceremony
Honoring Private John W. Gentry**

**Crown Hill Cemetery, Indianapolis, IN
Monday, May 25, 2009**

PROGRAM

POSTING OF COLORS

27th Indiana Volunteer Infantry, Co. D, Sons of Veterans Reserve

OPENING AND GREETINGS

Camp Commander

OPENING PRAYER

Camp Chaplain

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All in Attendance

READING OF GENERAL ORDER NUMBER 11

Camp Commander

PVT. JOHN W. GENTRY'S STORY, LAYING OF WREATH & FLAGS

Camp Commander and Camp Members

BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC

All in Attendance

"THE UNKNOWN DEAD"

Camp Chaplain and Camp Member

RIFLE SALUTE – THREE VOLLEYS

27th Indiana Volunteer Infantry, Co. D, Sons of Veterans Reserve

TAPS

Opening and Greetings

Camp Commander

Brothers of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, and Friends:

We assemble once more to pay to our ancestors our tribute of love and respect and within these sacred bonds to pledge anew our dedication to their memory and principles for which they fought!

With bowed head, solemn tread, and voices hushed, we meet to remind our people of their duty to the soldiers and sailors who wore the blue; to the Flag for which they fought; to the country for which they died; and that it is for use to keep green the memories of their heroic service and unselfish sacrifice.

May we fully realize the sanctity of the place and hour; may our conduct give assurance of the sincerity of our purpose and our earnest appreciation of duties and responsibilities resting upon us as Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.

The Camp Chaplain will invoke the Divine Blessing.

Opening Prayer

Camp Chaplain

Let Us Pray,

Supreme Ruler of the Universe! God of battles and of peace! We thank you for this day and hour; for this blessed privilege of meeting here as sons of soldiers and sailors to do homage to a Nation's dead.

We thank Thee that in the day of trouble and the hour of danger Thou in Thy infinite wisdom raised up men who were ready to do battle, and if need be, to die that this country might be preserved. Grant us we beseech Thee, a continuance of Thy watchful care.

Grant Thy blessing upon these sacred ceremonies, consecrated as they are to be the memory of brave and loyal hearts who dared stand for the right and did not fear to bare their breasts to a storm of steel in defense of human liberty, a united country and the brotherhood of man.

Bless our country. Preserve its integrity. Prosper our Order. Make it, we pray Thee, an instrument in Thy hands of great good to our country and to Thee, and at last gather us with Thee in the Great Camp of Eternity. Hear and answer, we beseech Thee. Amen.

Pledge of Allegiance

All in Attendance

General Order No. 11
Headquarters of the Grand Army of the Republic
Washington, D.C., May 5, 1868



General John A. Logan

Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division,
[LC-B8172- 6403 DLC (b&w film neg.)]

I. The 30th day of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village, and hamlet churchyard in the land. In this observance no form or ceremony is prescribed, but posts and comrades will in their own way arrange such fitting services and testimonials of respect as circumstances may permit.

We are organized, comrades, as our regulations tell us, for the purpose, among other things, "of preserving and strengthening those kind and fraternal feelings which have bound together the soldiers, sailors, and marines who united to suppress the late rebellion." What can aid more to assure this result than by cherishing tenderly the memory of our heroic dead, who made their breasts a barricade between our country and its foe? Their soldier lives were the reveille of freedom to a race in chains, and their death a tattoo of rebellious tyranny in arms. We should guard their graves with sacred vigilance. All that the consecrated wealth and taste of the Nation can add to their adornment and security is but a fitting tribute to the memory of her slain defenders. Let no wanton foot tread rudely on such hallowed grounds. Let pleasant paths invite the coming and going of reverent visitors and fond mourners. Let no vandalism of avarice or neglect, no ravages of time, testify to the present or to the coming generations that we have forgotten, as a people, the cost of free and undivided republic.

If other eyes grow dull and other hands slack, and other hearts cold in the solemn trust, ours shall keep it well as long as the light and warmth of life remain in us.

Let us, then, at the time appointed, gather around their sacred remains and garland the passionless mounds above them with choicest flowers of springtime; let us raise above them the dear old flag they saved from dishonor; let us in this solemn presence renew our pledges to aid and assist those whom they have left among us as sacred charges upon the Nation's gratitude,—the soldier's and sailor's widow and orphan.

II. It is the purpose of the Commander-in-Chief to inaugurate this observance with the hope it will be kept up from year to year, while a survivor of the war remains to honor the memory of his departed comrades. He earnestly desires the public press to call attention to this Order, and lend its friendly aid in bringing it to the notice of comrades in all parts of the country in time for simultaneous compliance therewith.

III. Department commanders will use every effort to make this order effective.

By command of:
JOHN A. LOGAN, Commander-in-Chief.

N. P. CHIPMAN, Adjutant-General.

Private John W. Gentry's Story

John W. Gentry was born in Marion County Indiana in 1847, the son of Thomas P. and Paulina J. Gentry. His Civil War service is as follows:

- Enlisted March 30, 1864 under Lt. Wheatley in Co. I, 26th Indiana Regiment for 3 years.
- Mustered in April 6, 1864 by Lt. E.R. Craft with a rank of private. At the time of enlistment his service record indicated that he was 18 years old, had black eyes, black hair, a dark complexion, and was 5'10" tall. His occupation was listed as "farmer."
- During his service he served as a company cook, mounted patrol for the Provost in Macon, Mississippi, and fought in the siege of Spanish Fort in Alabama.
- Mustered out of service at Vicksburg, Mississippi on January 15, 1866.

John Gentry died on May 7, 1866 at the age of 19yrs, 7 mo, and 63 days. He was laid to rest in the White-Whitsell-Gentry Cemetery located on the Wright family farm in the then rural northeast part of Marion County. Both his father and mother preceded him in death and are also buried here in the Pioneer Section of Crown Hill.

Established in 1841, the Wright-Gentry-Whitesell Cemetery was located in the 8000 block of Castleton Drive near the I-69 and I-465 interchange. Because of the planned expansion of I-69, all 33 graves, including John W. Gentry's, were moved and reinterred here in the Pioneer Section of Crown Hill in 2008. Their graves and marble markers were positioned in the exact same configuration as in the original cemetery. These graves were rededicated, with appropriate ceremony, on June 11, 2008.



(Left) John Gentry's stone and grave at the original Wright-Gentry-Whitesell Cemetery
(Right) Bob Alloway places flag at John Gentry's new grave during June 11, 2008 rededication

Sources:

1. Civil War Enrollment Cards – Indiana State Archives, Division of Public Records
2. Marion County Indiana WPA Graves Registration Cards
3. *Indianapolis Star*, June 12, 2008
4. <http://crownhillhf.org/docs/ThePioneerCemeteryatCrownHill.pdf> (accessed 4/9/09)

As we remember Private John W. Gentry, let us cherish his example as a patriot and defender of those principles he believed to be right. Let us forget his failings, for he was human, remembering only his virtues. Let us so live that when that time shall come those we may leave behind may say above our graves, 'Here lies the body of a true hearted, brave and earnest defender of the Republic!

On behalf of the Grand Republic for whose integrity and unity our late Comrade John Gentry offered his services during the War of the Rebellion, we deposit this wreath and these flags. May Comrade Gentry finally find eternal rest.

BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC

(First 2 Verses Only)

Music by William Steffe

Lyrics by Julia Ward Howe

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword;
His truth is marching on.

(Chorus)

Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch fires of a hundred circling camps
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps;
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps;
His day is marching on.

(Chorus)

Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! His day is marching on.

This hymn was born during the American civil war, when Julia W. Howe visited a Union Army camp on the Potomac River near Washington, D. C. She heard the soldiers singing the song "John Brown's Body," and was taken with the strong marching beat.

While staying at the Willard Hotel in Washington on the night of November 18, 1861, Howe awoke with the words of the song in her mind and in near darkness wrote the verses to the "Battle Hymn of the Republic." Of the writing of the lyrics, Howe remembers, "I went to bed that night as usual, and slept, according to my wont, quite soundly. I awoke in the gray of the morning twilight; and as I lay waiting for the dawn, the long lines of the desired poem began to twine themselves in my mind. Having thought out all the stanzas, I said to myself, 'I must get up and write these verses down, lest I fall asleep again and forget them.' So, with a sudden effort, I sprang out of bed, and found in the dimness an old stump of a pen which I remembered to have used the day before. I scrawled the verses almost without looking at the paper."

The hymn first appeared on the front page of the Atlantic Monthly in February 1862. The song was also published as a broadside in 1863 by the Supervisory Committee for Recruiting Colored Regiments in Philadelphia.

Sources:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_Hymn_of_the_Republic (accessed 4/2/09)

<http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/b/h/bhymnotr.htm> (accessed 4/2/09)

“The Unknown Dead”

Camp Chaplain:

It seems well we should leave Comrade Gentry to rest in honor where over him will bend the arching sky, as it did in great love when he pitched his tent, or lay down, weary and footsore, by the way or on the battlefield for an hour's sleep. As he was then so he is still – in the hands of the Heavenly Father. Let us also then remember those honored dead who did not return to hearth and home, but lie in resting places known but to God:

The Unknown Dead By Elizabeth Robbins Berry

Above their rest there is no sound of weeping,
Only the voice of song-birds thrills the air;
Unknown their graves, yet they are in God's keeping,
There are none 'missing' from His tender care.

He knows each hallowed mound, and at His pleasure
Marshalls the sentinels of earth and sky;
O'er their repose kind Nature heaps her treasure,
Fanned by soft winds which 'round them gently sigh.

Bravely they laid their all upon the altar,
Counting as naught the sacrifice and pain,
Theirs but to do and die without a falter ---
Ours to enjoy the victory and the gain.

They are not lost; that only which was mortal
Lies 'neath the turf o'erarched by Southern skies;
Deathless they wait beyond the heavenly portal,
In that fair land where valor never dies.

In the great heart of coming generations
Their fame shall live, their glory never cease;
Even when comes to all earth's troubled nations
God's perfect gift of universal peace.

Rifle Salute – Three Volleys

27th Indiana Volunteer Infantry, Co. D, Sons of Veterans Reserve

Taps

Camp Commander:

Our Memorial Day service and dedication is ended. In the name of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War I thank you, for your courtesy in permitting us, who are bound by special ties to them, to honor our dead.

“Taps are sounded – Lights are out – the Soldier sleeps.”

Ben Harrison Camp No. 356, Dept. of Indiana Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War 2009 Camp Officers

Camp Commander	Tim Beckman
Camp Senior Vice Commander	Garry Walls
Camp Junior Vice Commander	Mike Tomey
Camp Secretary	Jerry Thompson
Camp Treasurer	Graham Morey
Camp Chaplain	Mike Tomey
Camp Patriotic Instructor	Roger Lester
Camp Color Bearer	John Copeland
Camp Guide	John Bowyer
Camp Council Member No. 1	Mike Beck, PCC
Camp Council Member No. 2	David Wiley
Camp Council Member No. 3	Bruce Kolb, PCC and PDC
Camp Eagle Scout Coordinator	Mike Beck, PCC
Camp Signals Officer	Tim Beckman
Camp Historian	Mike Simpson
Camp Civil War Memorials Officer	Mike Beck, PCC
Camp Graves Registration Officer	Tim Beckman

To find out more about the Ben Harrison Camp and the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War please visit our camp web site at the following address:

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~inbhsuv/>

A copy of this Memorial Day program may be downloaded from our camp web site at the following address: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~inbhsuv/mday09.pdf>