

Special Civil War News

Attention Teachers

September 18, 1885

Monument Dedicated Yesterday!

Unique: First in nation to recognize woman's efforts and the only Civil War monument in Michigan with fountain!

The monument was dedicated yesterday, September 17, 1885 with a parade followed by a special ceremony. More than 3,000 veterans participated in a lengthy two-mile parade through downtown Grand Rapids along with dignitaries, politicians, bands and others. The entire city (over 30,000 spectators) turned out to witness the ceremony and to catch a glimpse of the famed General Philip Sheridan, who had led many of the Michigan cavalry troops on the field of battle. The monument was a tribute to the over 4,200 men from Kent County who had served in the Union army during the Civil War and was put in place to serve as a reminder to future generations. The triangular park was bounded on three sides with the city police and the militia to keep back the press of the crowd anxious to see the illustrious General.

Major C. W. Watkins of the Tenth Michigan Cavalry gives inspiring speech

Honoring those who went from Kent County

Preserving memories for future generations

"...This monument is erected in honor of the soldiers of Kent County, living, and dead who have gone on to their reward; but to those living it has double significance. It stands for a Union restored, a people prosperous, united, happy, slavery dead, the equity of all men before the law, a Government of the people, and a just appreciation of the service that made all these possible.

The soldier dies; this monument and this Government will go on for ages, new generations come, old generations pass away; the fruits of the Civil War are permanent and lasting; the victory of the sixties will be the crowning blessing of the twentieth century; it drenched the land in blood and cost us dearly in treasure. We have our reward in bequeathing to coming generations a union of States firmly established upon the undying principles of free homes, free schools, free speech,

and free ballots – the grandest and best Government under the sun."

Fast-forward 117 years- The year is now 2002.

The Civil War Monument stands alone in need of repair – 'tis cracked, corroded and the fountains no longer work.

The long forgotten soldiers of the Civil War sacrificed much to preserve the Union. Some gave their lives and many lost an arm or leg. All suffered the horrors of war and the afflictions or trauma that come from seeing such atrocities. They answered the president's call because they were loyal and patriotic citizens who wanted to keep this nation together.

Twenty years after they returned from the war, they erected the Civil War soldier monument and fountain to honor those who fought and remind future generations of those sacrifices—for us. As time passes, we mustn't forget the efforts of those who came before us - those who fought, and sometimes gave their lives, to guarantee that we would live in a United States and have the freedoms we cherish today. The songs and cheers that sounded so loudly during the dedication in 1885 have become as silent as the proud soldier on the monument. We want to restore the monument so he will continue to stand for new future generations -so future generations will not take our liberties for granted. They paid a high price!

We are those future generations that those men and women were thinking of so long ago. We need to preserve it for our future generations so our history isn't lost. It is part of our heritage, of who we are, our identity as a person, a county and a nation.

How you and your students CAN help!

1. Use this page for historical information and answers to questions students may have about the monument.
2. Distribute the flyer to your students. **(Please add date before making copies.)**
3. Use a canned good with a dollar bill taped to it as an example. **Please leave the labels on the cans!** (We will collect the cans and remove the dollars at a later time.)

Students will have the **pride and satisfaction** of knowing they helped with restoring the monument, as well as **helping the hungry** people in our community.

This can also be used in lessons on character virtues such as kindness, giving and sharing.



Sponsored by the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War
General John A. Logan Camp No. 1
Grand Rapids, Michigan

