



**Memorial Day**

**May 30, 1983**

**Decoration Day**

**CAMP GIDDINGS**

**29th Ohio Veteran Volunteers Infantry (1861 - 1865)**

**29th O.V.V.I.**

It was known as the Giddings' regiment, in honor of the Hon. Joshua R. Giddings, for twenty consecutive years a member of the lower house of Congress. Perhaps no man during his time did more than Mr. Giddings to create public opinion in favor of the freedom of the slave. The regiment was raised almost entirely within the bounds of his old district, and it was fitting that it should bear his name.



**Memorial to Camp Giddings Site**

While 1,500 members of the 29th O.V.I. departed from Camp Giddings on Christmas Day, 1861, to enter the Federal service and see much action in the Civil War, one group was not displeased at their leaving the Ashtabula County Fairgrounds.

These were members of the Fair Board. This is the report of conditions at the fairgrounds after the soldiers left as given by the Secretary and filed with the Ohio Department of Agriculture in Columbus, Ohio.

“Since August, the fairgrounds have been occupied as a camp for the Twenty-Ninth Regiment O.V.U.S.M. The ticket office was converted into a hospital, the exhibition hall, and some of the horse sheds used as camp kitchens. The horse and cattle sheds, not occupied as cook rooms, and the sheep and hog pens, were all demolished by the soldiers, and a greater part of the seats and the fence surrounding the grounds met a similar fate. The shelves and tables in the hall are in a sorry condition to hold and show off fineries, after being used so extensively as pantry shelves, by unexperienced, and not altogether tidy cooks.”

After his retirement from Congress in 1859 and with the outbreak of the Civil War, Giddings was commissioned by the War Department to recruit a regiment of soldiers from Northeast Ohio. The 29th Ohio O.V.I. was thus organized and trained at the fairgrounds until they left for Columbus and active duty.

The regiment participated in some of the heaviest fighting of the war including the Battle of Lookout Mountain, Gettysburg, Chancellorsville and Sherman's March to the Sea. The Regiment was mustered out at Louisville, Ky., July 13, 1865. Of the 1,532 men of the 29th, casualties number 540 killed, wounded or missing in action.

The Bronze Placque located Cr. of West Walnut and Elm Street in Jefferson is a Memorial to the Camp Gidding Site.

Memorial Day was called Decoration Day when it was originated on May 30, 1868, by Gen. John A. Logan, commander of the Grand Army of the Republic. Memorial Day now marks the tribute made in the United States to the dead of all its wars. It is a legal holiday in all the States but a number of those in the south. Observance of the day assumes the form of military and civic parades and memorial exercises, and includes decorating with flowers graves of American Soldiers in Arlington Cemetery, Virginia. Flags are at half mast until noon.

Memorial Day in Ashtabula - The Ashtabula News  
Wednesday Eve. June 3, 1885.

(appreciation is hereby extended to the anonymous person sending this old news clipping. We are most willing and anxious to say Thanks! who ever you are.) This historic material follows in its entirety and distributed during this 1983 Memorial Day/Decoration Day Remembrance.

## MEMORIAL DAY IN ASHTABULA.

### A GRAND SUCCESS— A LARGE ATTENDANCE— ELOQUENT SPEECH OF COL. LYNCH.

Memorial Day dawned bright and beautiful and at an early hour people began to come in from the adjoining country, but before 9 A.M. it became apparent that we were to have a day of alternate sunshine and showers.

At 9:30 the members of Paulus Post No. 4, headed by the Ashtabula Martial Band and officers of the day, started for Edgewood Cemetery accompanied by quite a number of people in carriages and on foot. At the cemetery a large number from the "East Side" were already in waiting. After music by the Martial Band and a song by the East Village choir and prayer by Rev. W.E. Freeman, the members of the Post went through the impressive ceremonies of strewing the graves of their fallen comrades with the beautiful flowers provided by the ladies of the "East Side."

It was about noon when the Post returned and at 2 P.M. the procession formed at North Park to visit Chestnut Grove cemetery. Owing to the frequent showers some slight changes were made in the programme as published and the line of march was about as follows:

Marshal of the Day, Col. Frank Viets. President of the Day, Mayor Wm. Clover and prominent officials in carriages.

K. of P. Band.

Protection Fire Company.

Alert Hook and Ladder Company.

I.O.O.F. Encampment and Western Reserve Lodge.

Martial Band.

Paulus Post No. 4 G.A.R.

Citizens in carriages and on foot.

Notwithstanding the showery weather the procession was a large one, probably the largest for three or four years. At the cemetery the services were very short consisting only of music by the bands, the regular G.A.R. ceremonies preceding and following the strewing of flowers and the benediction by the Chaplain of the Day, Rev. J.N. McGiffert. Returning in about the same order the procession moved to the City Hall and disbanded.

The Floral Committee had worked like beavers and it is really wonderful where all the flowers came from which

were used to form the beautiful wreaths, crosses, etc., which their deft and willing hands so skillfully fashioned. The stage in the assembly hall was beautifully decorated with plants, flowers and flags, and presented a very neat and tasteful appearance. In anticipation of bad weather the assembly room had been seated from the several churches and the large crowd soon filed in and filled every seat and all the standing room around the sides of the room and in the smaller rooms adjoining, while many went away unable to find even standing room.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Wm. Clover, President of the Day. After music by the band there was a song by the choir. This choir consisting of eighteen of Ashtabula's best singers under the direction of Mr. C.D. Bishop, deserve special praise. Considerable time and expense was found necessary to get appropriate music for the occasion, and their beautiful melodies added much to the interest of the meeting. After prayer by Rev. J.N. McGiffert, Chaplain of the Day, and another selection by the choir, Capt. Albert Henry, Commander of Paulus Post, made a few remarks, relating a thrilling incident that occurred in that whirlwind of death in the wheatfield at the battle of Gettysburg, and then introduced the speaker. Col. Chas. M. Lynch, of Erie, as the hero of that incident. As the Col. stepped to the front he was greeted with an enthusiastic round of applause. As many were unable to hear the address we give it in full.

### ADDRESS OF COL. LYNCH.

*Comrades and Fellow Citizens:—*

On this pleasant day in May, our nation has gathered together in the silent cities of the dead, where so many of her brave defenders are quietly resting, to pay a fitting tribute to their memory: a memorial ceremony highly appropriate in its character, and with an inspiring lesson to the people of the world. A lesson that strikes terror into the hearts of all tyrants, and teaches the young, that the noble defenders of our country "shall not have died in vain" and also inspires their hearts, to deeds of valor and patriotism, in defense of the old flag that has been so valiantly carried forward

through all our wars in the cause of liberty and humanity.

Our temple of Freedom, under the hand of that master-builder, George Washington, is the most wonderfully grand and sublime structure, ever erected by mortal man; an edifice built by our fathers, composed of all nationalities, who carefully prepared the ground and laid its foundations on the solid bed rock of Humanity, with the corner stone of Freedom cemented with their blood. The foundation being carefully laid, the pillars of Truth, Justice and Equality, were duly placed, sustaining the whole fabric, with its dome covered and surmounted with the light of Reason and the Experience of the world from the time of creation. Within her walls we find the altar adorned with that immortal paper The Declaration of Independence, before which the soul of our country bows down and worships.

Long afterwards in the course of events, would we wonder, if there had been no attempted change? There is always to be found a destroying element in the most saintly places. In Heaven, proud Lucifer, chief of the fallen angels, engaged in rebellion against God, and was cast out of Heaven and hurled into Hades. Would it be strange if poor mortals rebelled against our temple, built with but human agencies?

At the commencement the South was better prepared for the war and accustomed to the use of fire-arms; with resolution, bravery and great talents, the southern rebels warred us as only Americans can war. The war of the rebellion is and always will be a cause of pride, glory and grief to every American citizen.

Let me ask you, fellow citizens, from whence comes the strength of our government? I hear your reply, It comes from the unselfish devotion of the lovers of Freedom and Liberty. A devotion for which a man sacrifices money, property and his life if needs, be on the altar of Liberty! An unselfish, patriotic devotion that elevates man on a plane with Gods!

We are here to-day to commune in spirit with our comrades who have gone before us, and to decorate the turf that wraps their clay, with beautiful flowers, and with renewed pledges of love of country and devotion to the

causes for which we become soldiers of the republic.

When the enemies of Liberty struck their first blow against this National Union the news came trembling over the electric wires telling us the United States Fort Sumter had been assailed. That the government was in danger. The long roll was sounded across the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The beacon fires of liberty set burning. From the farms to the hamlet and city, from the shop to all departments of business; rich and poor alike, the farmer, artisan, merchant, banker and all professions, like magic sprung to arms and threw around our Goddess of Liberty a barrier of brawn and glittering bayonets, and swore before high Heaven the government of Washington should never be destroyed!

You well remember on this Western Reserve of the "Buckeye State" that responded so grandly, the hasty determination of your fathers, sons and brothers; the hurried musterings into companies and regiments, and when they left you and went forth to save or die, how you clung to their forms; how hard it was to part with your loved ones, many whose forms you beheld for the last time; how they kissed you good bye and with your blessing proudly went to battle for freedom and country! You remember the long and wearisome waiting and patient suffering hours of anxiety, longing for the end and hoping for the news of the success of right against wrong, liberty against slavery. You remember many forms of heroes who were sent home before the close of the war mangled and dead by the hand of treason. You remember when the doom of the enemies of the nation was recorded and they were allowed to depart in peace, with the solemn promise to sin no more, the return of your husbands, sons and brothers who had lived through the saturnalia of hell inaugurated by the enemies of freedom. How they returned, not like the soldiers of the wars of the crowned heads of Europe, who fight for spoils, plunder and rapine, but like soldiers of freedom who had risked their lives in the cause of liberty and good government; without spoil from the enemy, without boot, spur or side-arm but with something more precious than the most valuable loot of India, or the plunder

of a Napoleon; with the ark of liberty once more secure and safe for the nation and unborn millions to come after us.

In 1864, Ulysses S. Grant, that modest General, who by force of genius and merit gained so uniformly where others had failed, receiving and holding the confidence of the people, was made Lieutenant General of the United States Armies. No man in the republic ever held so high a rank in the army before, excepting General Washington, (Gen. Scott being Lt. General, only by brevet.) Under this "silent" man there were 1,000,000 soldiers in the field at one time, all equipped for battle and every man had his rations; the complicated machinery in the management of so vast an army, under the orders of his superior mind, moved like the revolving wheels of the clock, whose unerring fingers point to the seconds, minutes, hours, days and years.

The war department tells us that there were 2,688,523 enlistments in the army of the Union during the war; many of these no doubt were reenlistments. It has been computed, however, that the number of men enlisting in the Army of the Union will number 1,500,000; 75% being native born, 9 per cent being natives of Germany, 7 per cent being natives of Ireland, and of mixed nationalities about 9 per cent. Of this number over 56,000 were killed outright on the field of battle; 219,000 died in army hospitals of wounds received in battle and from disease during the war. Many since the war have died from wounds and disease and thousands of others ruined in health for life, are scattered through the land.

From the original colonies that struggled in the first war for freedom, we find in the galaxy of great generals, such names as Washington, Lee, Arnold, Marion, Stark, Schulyer, Wayne, Putman, Allen and many others. In the second war for freedom, the state of Ohio to-day feels justly proud of her contribution springing from her bosom to that constellation of greatness, in such bright stars as Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Garfield, McCook, Custer and shining hosts of others from generals to privates whose histories are as familiar as household words.

The American citizen-soldier and

sailer is unlike the hirelings of princes and kings. Unlike them he is only incited and stimulated for the combat, through his love of that freedom intrusted to him by his fathers to defend. He is guided in the great ends to be attained by his thorough knowledge and love of the principles of his government. He carefully contemplates the history of the dark ages of the past, and keenly realizes that defeat means an eclipse of the light of liberty and a plunge into the midnight of tyranny and oppression. He calmly determines that there shall be no such thing as defeat while there is life. With the obedience of discipline and patience only equalled by his endurance on the wearisome advance and retreat, each soldier bears with him his own commission and title of citizenship, whose eligibility is to the highest offices in the land. With a fortitude and prudence in the face of danger and death rarely equalled and never excelled; with the impetuosity in attack, that sweeps all before it like a western cyclone, the American soldier stands higher than any other in either ancient or modern history; brave, chivalrous and gallant, without rage or frenzy, whose sword is only unsheathed in the cause of liberty and humanity; generous victor, who only conquers to forgive.

The South was conquered and the sword of the North has been returned to its sheath, the banners of the blue and gray have been furled. Our departed friends have sacred graves, flowers are blooming and to-day are scattered over their remains as they sleep side by side in their quiet resting places. With a reconstruction and rehabilitation of the South, accepting the situation, we once more become brothers without disturbing causes to separate us and with a unity of interest. Leaders on both sides sit in the same senate and house, as our lawmakers to-day. We find leaders on both sides in the cabinet as advisers to our chief magistrate, with the entire union once more united and free. The snowy dove of peace has spread her wings over the fields of desolation and war. The sweets of liberty are saved for all classes and conditions of our nation. The loss of life and property, although frightful to contemplate, is the price of freedom and nationality.

Twenty years have elapsed since

the close of the war and the general prosperity of the country has made it richer than before. A generation of people is now in the land that knows but little of the late war, excepting what may have been seen in print or in living relics, in the shape of its survivors, many of them maimed, wounded and sick, and but the faint image of their former manhood. There are fresh made graves in our cemeteries to-day. How many of our comrades who responded to roll call one year ago to attend these ceremonies, are not with us to-day, but have gone before us and are resting in the silent dust of the past?

Who of us will be called upon during the next year to cross the river of death and join our comrades in the camp of eternity? One generation has passed since the war and when another has gone by, how many of us will be here to decorate the graves? And when the end nears, who of us all will be the last worn and feeble relic, found tottering and trembling over the graves of his comrades, on Decoration Day, of the once "Grand Army of the Republic."

Here to-day in the presence of each other and of the ever living God, we once more resolve to discountenance whatever tends to weaken loyalty to our nation or incite to insurrection, treason or rebellion, or in any manner impair the efficiency and permanency of our free institutions. Then scatter flowers on the graves and rejoice while you feel sad, that they gave their lives for the noblest cause known to man.

"The snowy dove of peace  
The olive branch doth bring,  
The sword is turned to ploughshare,  
And holy angels sing.  
Of earth redeemed from bloodshed;  
In every land and clime,  
Thy name shall be a wonder  
And a glory for all time."

The address was listened to through-out by the audience with an attention that showed their interest in the subject and at the conclusion he was greeted with renewed and long continued applause. After another selection by the choir and music by the K. Of P. Band the audience dispersed. Taken altogether the exercises were a grand success, and with

the exception of slight inconvenience from the rain, everything passed off very nicely. The spirit with which the citizens have taken hold of the matter shows that they are far from losing their interest in the observance of the day. The following editorial from the *Cincinnati Post* so clearly expresses our thoughts upon this subject that we cannot resist the temptation to copy it:

More than even the Fourth of July does the setting apart of this day to its sacred uses signify something to the men and women of to-day, for its meaning goes back only a short time, and almost every family in the land knows by bitter, yet tender, memories, why it is kept. To the survivors of the war it is the most sacred of days, for it recalls those comrades whose deaths made glorious history, and through whose dying only could the Nation have lived.

Their ranks are thinning out. More certain than the shot and shell, the saber and bayonet of the enemy, is the scythe of Death. For them the recruiting office is forever closed, and though the lines will be "dressed" and the gaps made by the grim reaper filled up, no more reinforcements are possible. Soon the time will come when the last survivor shall stand alone before the conqueror of all. Yet even when he is gone the memory of that for which he fought will still live. It should, it must live in the hearts as well as in the histories of generations yet to come.

The war was cruel, because it was war, and war means killing. It was noble, because it was right. It was brave, because it was brother against brother. It was bloody, because it was needed to wipe out long years of cruel oppression. Above all, it was holy, because it was for Liberty, and had the sacrifice of noble souls. The Revolution gave us birth, but the war for the Union gave us life. The patriotism of those latter days is the richest store in American history. The lessons it gave us are the most precious our youth can learn.

Then let us pile high the flowers upon the graves of our citizen-soldiers, and teach our children why it should be done. Let the day be known as the sacred day of the year, and the memory of those soldiers, like their graves, be kept forever green.



Photo of THE FLAG- A 29th Regiment Flag O.V.V.I.

### “The Story Behind The Flag”

Ripped from the wall of a Confederate prison where it had been hung as a trophy of the war, a 29th United Regimental flag was brought back to the federal lines by an escaped Union soldier, who stuffed the silk standard under his clothes and slipped away through the enemy lines to safety. Later the flag was mounted on a staff and carried back into battle of the Civil War.

Now, stained, bullet-torn and tattered, this flag rests in a glass case in the Citizens' Library in Jefferson, Ohio.

Chauncey Coon, E.R. Moses, and J.W. Lee, the three remaining members of the 29th regiment in 1921, request that it be kept in the Jefferson Citizens' Library.

The Ashtabula County Historical Society      formed      **17 July 1838**  
Incorporated 1893

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