

## Decoration Day

On May 22, 1868, the Lewisburg Chronicle published General Orders No. 11, issued by General John A. Logan, Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, the organization for Northern Civil War veterans:

"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 church-yard in the land. In this observance no form of ceremony is prescribed, but posts and comrades will in their own way arrange such fitting services and testimonials of respect as circumstances may permit."

The Chronicle also listed "our Country's heroes" buried in the Lewisburg Cemetery at the time: Col. James Cameron, 76th NY Vol.; Capt. Roland Stoughton, 150th PA Vol.; Capt. Chas. R. Evans, Lieut. Andrew Tucker and George Tucker of the 142nd PA Vol.; John Derr, 4th PA Vol.; Henry Leonard, Chas. M'Gregor, Jackson Cornelius, James. M'Bride and Charles Penny of the 52nd PA Vol.; Wm Kennedy, 208th PA Vol.; Milton Arey, 24th USCT; Franklin Cox, 2nd PA Heavy Artillery; Conrad Wetzel, US Marine Service; Joseph Schaffle, Gosline Zouaves; Zach Chappell and Noall Wilkes, 5th PA Res. Corps, and Wm Zimmerman, 8th PA Cavalry.

Records compiled by the UCHS, give more of the story. Col James Cameron died at age 61 while gallantly leading his men at the Battle of Bull Run on July 21, 1861. Zachary Taylor Chappell, aged 17, son of Martin & Eliza Chappell, died while a prisoner at Salisbury, NC., April 6, 1865. William M. Kennedy died in a Field Hospital at City Point, VA, April 15, 1865, from wounds received while charging rebel works in front of Petersburg on Sunday, April 2nd. George Stapleton, was wounded at Gettysburg July 1, and died July 26, 1863, aged 21. Roland Stoughton, Capt. of Co. D, 150 Regt., died at Fredericksburg, VA, May 23, 1864, aged 21, from wounds received at the Battle of the Wilderness on May 5, 1864.

The first Decoration Day ceremonies were held May 30, 1868 at Arlington National Cemetery, across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant presided at the veranda of the Arlington mansion, once the home of Gen. Robt. E. Lee. Children from the Soldiers' and Sailors' Orphan Home and GAR members put flowers on Union and Confederate soldiers' graves.

In Lewisburg, on May 30, 1868, about 50 local GAR members marched before a thousand spectators. Events were held in 183 cemeteries in the US in 1868. By 1870, almost 300,000 Union soldiers had been buried in 73 national cemeteries. By 1890 all northern states held Decoration Day observances.

After WWI, Decoration Day, renamed Memorial Day, became a time to honor all soldiers who died in wars. Typically, graves are decorated with flowers and flags.

On May 2, 2000, President Clinton issued a memorandum for a National Moment of Remembrance. "As Memorial Day approaches, it is time to pause and consider the true meaning of this holiday. Memorial Day represents one day of national awareness

and reverence, honoring those Americans who died while defending our Nation and its values. While we should honor these heroes every day for the profound contribution they have made to securing our Nation's freedom, we should honor them especially on Memorial Day." Accordingly, Americans everywhere, are asked to pause for one minute at 3:00 p.m. (local time) on Memorial Day, to remember and reflect on the sacrifices made by so many to provide freedom for all.



In 1914, the Wm. R. Foster Post, No. 247, GAR, decorated the soldiers' graves at Mifflinburg (shown), Forest Hill, and Ray's Church cemeteries. Many citizens, and old soldiers from the area, participated in ceremonies that included speeches, prayers, singing, and a recitation of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.