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MONDAY SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER, GRAND ARMY EDITION. MONDAY 7

DEPARTMENT of CALIFORNIA AND NEVADA.

THE CALIFORNIA G. A. R.

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Charles Ireland, Chairman Committee of the Spanish War Veterans.

How the Grand Army Was Organized on the Pacific Coast

THE Grand Army of the Republic was organized in California early in 1867, but prior to that time the San Francisco veterans had associated themselves together in the "Veteran Corps," with a membership of 1,500. This organization, established a few months after the close of the war, rapidly declined when the Grand Army was introduced, nearly all of its members becoming connected with the national organization. Major T. J. Blakeney, returning from a trip East, brought the authority to institute the G. A. R. on this Coast.

Soon after his arrival in San Francisco, Major Blakeney explained the objects of the society, which was destined to play so important a part in the welfare of the Union veterans, and he convinced his comrades that such an organization could accomplish great work. On April 31, 1867, a meeting was held at the Cliff House. After a dinner had been served the veterans assembled on the beach by moonlight and there the Grand Army obligations were assumed.

The second meeting was at the City Hall on April 15th, when others were obligated by their comrades, and on April 22d Lincoln Post, No. 1, was organized with thirty-two charter members. Applicants came in so rapidly that the district commander issued a general order directing that all comrades residing south of Market street should take transfers and organize a new post.

Then the comrades of post No. 1, reluctant to leave the original post they had helped to organize, but desirous only of aiding in the good work of recruiting comrades in the Grand Army, met on May 20, 1867, and took steps to form post No. 2. Comrades were admitted, the organization perfected, and a charter was issued with fifteen names.

The movement for a Grand Army burial plot originated in Lincoln Post, and the outcome is the beautiful spot in the Odd Fellows' Cemetery, now filled with the graves of Union veterans who have been mustered out.

Afterward, the plan of establishing a soldiers' home was taken up, and that resulted in the establishment at Yountville.

Youngest Soldiers Of the Civil War Are Californians.

SAN FRANCISCO claims the youngest two soldiers of the civil war.

William J. Ruddick, connected with Bullock, Griffith & Co., has heretofore been recognized as the youngest, but a rival claim to the distinction is now made for John McDonald, who enlisted at the age of ten years.

John McDonald.

Mr. Ruddick was born at New York in 1851. In 1861 he enlisted as a bugler in Company I, Second Colorado infantry, but was not mustered in until some months later and then by a special order from the War Department. He served in the army of the frontier under General Blunt and in many of the noted Western battles, remaining in active service until 1866, when he was mustered out at the age of fourteen years.

Mr. McDonald, who is by profession a decorator, was born in Baltimore, Md., and at Victory, near Washington Territory. When ten years old he was enrolled, with parental consent, as a bugler in Battery D, Third United States Artillery, by Captain W. F. Winder, at Alcatraz Island. This was on March 16, 1861. He was subsequently transferred to Battery H, and at the termination of his enlistment honorably discharged March 16, 1866, at Fort Winfield Scott. The following day he was re-enlisted in the same battery by Captain Joseph Stretch, who was the friend and former commander of Mr. McDonald's father. Later the young bugler was transferred to Battery B, Second Artillery, and still later to Battery K, commanded by Captain Bissels. Again he was transferred—this time to Battery E, Second Artillery, from which he was discharged at Fort Stellacom, Washington Territory, March 21, 1868.

Mr. Ruddick admits that if this report be authentic, McDonald stands first in the record, but he still claims to be the youngest soldier that actually served in battle.

Gilbert Van Zandt of Kansas City has also laid claim to the honor of youngest volunteer, but both the Californians are ahead of him. He was born in Ohio on December 25, 1851. On August 6, 1861, he was enrolled as a drummer boy in Company D, Seventy-ninth Ohio Volunteer Infantry.

Leaving the army, McDonald studied decorative art in stucco and plaster and became proficient in his trade. But he stood for the real thing and the society of the boys in blue again. Although successful in private life, he felt the soldier blood coursing through his veins in a manner not to be withstood. So on the 1st day of October, 1898, found him for the third time enlisted man in Troop G, First United States Cavalry, under the command of Captain R. F. Bernard, then stationed at San Francisco. He served the five-year term of service and again received his honorable discharge at Wilcox station, A. T., at once returning to San Francisco.

The military fever again seized him, and for the fourth time he offered himself as a recruit, and was accepted for service in the Philippines. He was in the old Troop G of the First cavalry, in which he served until April 12, 1903, when he was discharged on account of defective vision.

During his term of more than twelve years McDonald saw much active service, he during three eventful years the San Pedro, Bannocks sheep eaters and the thrilling Geronimo campaigns were fought and won.

General Shafter's Message on Behalf Of the Department

By Major-General William R. Shafter, Department Commander of California and Nevada.

AGAIN to have within our gates, as honored guests, the Grand Army of the Republic is an honor of which we may justly feel proud. The veterans, the savers and preservers of the Union, have chosen for their national reunion, twice in the preseventeen years, the city which lies farthest from the center of population; it is an honor that these old and brave warriors should desire to return to the very end of the longest lineage of the carriers of Republican principles. Their choice clinched upon them seventeen years ago. They have evidently not forgotten California's generous hospitality, typical of the true Western host.

While these veterans come to us of their own choice they have been invited to visit us and share with us, with their wives, their children and their friends, for a time, at least, the delightful climate of our portion. We sent a delegation to bid them welcome, empowered with authority from the people by the Governor of California, the Mayor of San Francisco and of all the large communities of the State, asking the veterans to come to us, promising them a more cordial welcome, more generous hospitality, than any other city in the land, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. They accepted our invitations, turned their backs upon all competitors and chose San Francisco, thousands of miles from their homes, in preference.

While it is true that those of them who were our guests seventeen years ago did not need urging to come again, they should be accorded as cordial a reception upon their second visit, when they return to us with locks whitened and made venerable with years. They have sung the praises of California abroad in the land during all these years, and chanted the gospel of its hospitality among their comrades at every encampment.

The host of others, those who came among us for the first time, lured by the tales of our generosity, by the promise made through our delegation—they shall not, must not, be disappointed. These brave hearts must be accorded a welcome by the whole people of California befitting the occasion. The men who, nearly forty years ago, answered the nation's call to arms, who for the time forsook hearth and home, family and all else and rallied around their country's flag, to save and preserve this glorious Union, will come among us as our guests. They have journeyed thousands of miles across the continent to again be united within our borders. They have recently, beside their tattered emblems of the hitherto freedom known to all nations of the earth, their path lighted by a halo of glory unequaled in history.

San Francisco has planned a reception to the veterans worthy of the visitors. Its place have been heralded all over the East. No event that has taken place in San Francisco has had such publicity throughout the country as has the approaching encampment. No event since 1906 has been looked forward to by the Grand Army of the Republic with so much pleasurable anticipation.

The committee has worked faithfully for months to carry out the plans outlined to make this the most brilliant encampment in the annals of the Grand Army of the Republic. The veterans residing in California have given of their time, means and best energy to enhance the success of the encampment; the people of the interior are ready to receive the visitors with the most hearty greeting and pay them every possible attention.

San Francisco will certainly on this occasion make every effort to sustain the fair fame of California and San Francisco for hospitality, which has become world-famous. It will surely not lag in patriotism on this occasion, nor will its people be less generous in showing appreciation of the honor bestowed upon city and State by this visit of the veterans. There can be no doubt that our people will open their hands and hearts, sustain the work of the committee and give the veterans and their families such a rousing welcome that it shall linger in the memory of these brave and noble defenders of the nation's honor for all time—for this will be the last national encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic by the Golden Gate.

William J. Ruddick.

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