

Address

Organization of G. A. R.

Post at Fair Haven, Vt.

Aug 1896

No. 6. Vol. 8.

Subject

Name of great men

Col J. E. G. Ramsom

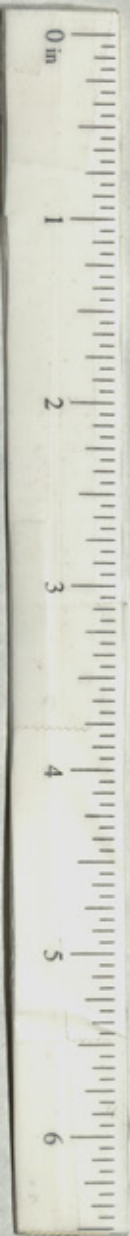
General

Register of a S. R. P.
Part of the same

May 1876

Vol. 8.

Part of the same
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Part of the same



Address at Fair Haven, N. H.,
Organization of G. A. R. Feb. Aug 1896

Comrades:-

Many names, as soon as they are mentioned, bring up to a mind in any way familiar with the history of the country some remarkable service. For example, the name of U. S. Grant instantly suggests Donelson, Fort Henry, Vicksburg and Appamattox, - places where "uncondition surrender" was obtained. It suggests also a remarkable presidency, peace made with England, establishing and emphasizing peaceful methods; peace made with the Indians, - the beginning of a settled policy to save the remnant of our native tribes. It makes us think of two terms of four years each, when ^{re} there was something left of the ferment of the war, but ^{full} a measure of energy and enterprise inaugurated; and ^{a promising} ~~proposed~~ development hardly ever equalled in our annals in a corresponding time.

The name of Sherman suggests intimate association with Grant; wonderful success as a leader in the Western campaigns, especially in that from Dalton to Atlanta, when "Atlanta became ours and fairly won"; then, the March to the Sea; the Campaign of the Carolinas with the last considerable battle of the war at ^{Benton} ~~Clinton~~ville; the peace with Joe Johnston which proposed the rehabilitating the old States ^{and} aroused the ire of Mr. Stanton; then the extraordinary ^{Sherman gave} help in making the first Pacific Railroad an accomplished fact.

The name of Thomas at once suggests a loyal Virginian of high rank and high merit; a ~~remarkable~~ leader attended with uniform success in ^{battles} engagements, especially at Stone River, Chickamauga and Chattanooga, winding up with a phenomenal engagement at Nashville where Hood's army was so badly broken that it never attempted reorganization.

And so we might go on with the roll ^{one} of honor until we came to class of names in which each was associated with perhaps some one battle,

H. S. HOWARD,

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GENERAL AGENT

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156 COLLEGE STREET.

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some brilliant action that caught the attention of the gazetteers of the country; such as Hancock at Williamsburg, Va.; Sheridan before Winchester; Reynolds, Sickles, Weed, Vincent, O'Rourke, Stannard, Zook, Cross, Bigelow, at Gettysburg; or Mansfield, Sumner, Richardson, Sedgwick at Antietam.

But there are other men, who from the beginning to the end of the war were as able, as brave and often as successful as any we have mentioned in what they accomplished; men whose reputation is solid, but so ^{evenly} fine tempered that the mind does not ^{always} catch upon ^{some} any brilliant point. Some day, however, I think there will be a careful description of the record of such men and it will be preserved in the archives and brought forth again by their grandchildren, or later descendants, as something to be reviewed, pondered upon and treasured for the benefit of the country and for example to ^{men} you. Such, it appears to me was the case with one who went from your very midst, who was a son of a gallant officer and soldier of the Mexican War, Col. Ransom. The son's name is T. E. G. Ransom. Early in 1861 he was in the vicinity of Springfield, Ill. and when the 11th Ill. Infantry was organized for three months' service and went to the front he went out as one of its field officers with the rank of Major. At the end of that service the new regiment for three years of the war with the same number, - eleven, - took Major ^{Ransom} Rankin and promoted him to his Colonelcy. This regiment served with success on the Western fields as its Colonel; then, still very young, ^{he} was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General, commanding a brigade.

Wherever you find Ransom's name there is some comment, something like this ^{which is found} in the report of Gen. C. C. Washburn ^{concerning} the reduction

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of ~~a~~ Fort in Texas, of date December 4, 1863. After speaking of the capture of the Fort and giving a description of the extreme difficulties of the situation, Washburn said: "It affords me great pleasure to state that the conduct of Brigadier-General Ransom, commanding a brigade was most prompt, gallant and efficient, and deserves the highest praise."

At the battle of Pleasant Hill in ~~Alabama~~ ^{early in '64} Louisiana, Ransom's proximity to danger is signified by this: "An officer on General Ransom's staff was riding rapidly in front of our lines with an important order, when a solid shot struck his horse's head, severing it from his body in much less time than it takes to tell it."

At Grand Ecore, La. Ransom's Division fought with intrepid bravery x x x . In the beginning of the fight General Ransom was struck in the knee and carried from the field. This dispirited the men for they ^{all} loved their young ^{commander} leader and rejoiced to speak his praise ^{see}

It was a little later, in 1864, that I first met General Ransom. He had recovered sufficiently from his wounds, - such men as he never waited for complete restoration, - to be able to join us at the front. One Sunday morning, soon after I had taken command of the Army of the Tennessee, i.e. early in August, Ransom who was then commanding a division came with several members of his staff to my headquarters where a brilliant and eloquent chaplain gave ^{faithful} a sermon. We had lively singing, ^{religious} music by the band, and on the whole for the field, a very enjoyable occasion. I felt great satisfaction in seeing the young commander at the service.

He was about the height of General Hooker, apparently not more than twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age, of handsome build, strong and muscular, with a figure that artists ~~would~~ like to look upon; his head covered with a lightish brown hair ~~was~~ in itself a model, well

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proportioned, with a high forehead and a broad brow. His eyes were of a darkish cast, which gave a quick, piercing expression to his face, - pleasant when at rest, but ^{very decided} severe when under excitement. He was dressed in full uniform that day, neat and tidy throughout; and it struck me that I had never in my life seen ^{in appearance} a nearer approach to perfection; and, indeed he was a handsome young man. His manners were gentlemanly and tempered with kindness; but he gave the idea of great decision of character. He ^{was} ~~appeared~~ well informed upon everything that concerned public affairs and public duty in those days. Such is my first recollection of Ransom.

After that he was with me, now having the rank of Major-General, first commanding a Division in the 16th Corps under another graduate of Norwich University, Major-General Granville M. Dodge. After Dodge was wounded, disabled and sent to the rear at Atlanta, that portion of the 16th Corps was consolidated with the remainder of the Army of the Tennessee, and Ransom came to command the Division of the 17th Corps under General Blair. He was with ^{Blair} ~~him~~ in all our operations during 1864 until we had taken Jonesboro', fought at Lovejoy Station and captured Atlanta. Then the ^{coming back} ~~army~~ had a pleasant rest near East Point, a few miles south of Atlanta, and General Blair obtained a leave of absence, some duties of a political nature calling him North, and General Ransom took Blair's place ^{17th} ~~ad~~ commanded the Corps during his absence. It was at this time that the famous Confederate General Hood, whom Sherman had so baffled at Atlanta, undertook to turn Sherman's right by his whole army running around him very much as a shepherd dog undertakes to arrest and stop his flock of sheep. Hood passed rapidly by a short

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detour across the Chattahoochee, silently passing Atlanta; ^{when} Sherman ^{took up the pursuit.} turned on him. Leaving one Corps only at Atlanta, Hood made another effort, got as far as Pine Top Range, then sent a Division to meet General Corse in fierce array at Atlanta; ^{he} then next took a wider turn to Rome ^{and beyond;} and fairly towed us back almost to Dalton.

Ransom ^{was} ^{in our reports} frequently mentioned for his energetic work, marching until midnight as at Adairsville, or all night long as in other parts of the campaign. His men followed under his guidance closely upon the heels of the Confederates.

Hood filled ^{Snake} ^{for five miles} Creek Gap behind him with trees, big and little ^{and} ^{at} thought he was to encamp one night out of the way of the Yankees on the western side of the Gap; but the 17th Corps followed close up - threw out the small trees with their hands, leaving their axmen to cut away the larger obstructions so that that very night Hood's rest was disturbed by Ransom's incoming. They encamped near each other, - the Yankees and the Confederates, but ~~the~~ the early morning found Hood already gone far on his route southward.

Ransom followed up ^{to Rome; then} from Rome toward Gaylesville Ala, but before he reached Gaylesville ^{his} the young life went out. At the beginning of the march, which was to prove a trial for the strongest, Ransom was suffering from a dysenteric ^{attack}. It went on from bad to worse as he toiled along rough ways. He rode his horse as long as he could, then he had himself drawn in an ambulance, and when ~~that~~ became too hard for him from the pain occasioned by the jolting vehicle he had his men carry him at the head of his column on an army stretcher, and thus the 29th of October 1864 passed away this magnificent soldier and man. Where can we find one who more completely laid his life

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Where can we find one who more completely laid his life

upon the altar of sacrifice than Ransom ?

It appears to me to be altogether proper for us every now and then to recall such a history as Ransom's,- spotless, high toned, strength and beauty combined in him gave promise for his some day becoming the chief of leaders in this country.

It is by treasuring ^{and publishing} the record of the man we know, however humble he may have been, who like him, with true self abandonment laid down his life upon the altar of his country, *that we perpetuate the fervor of patriotism.*

This need of praise is not confined to those who have gone, but every man who generously and nobly did what he could in this crisis, regardless of the consequences surely deserves the commemoration of each one of us, and may add something to the history at every reunion like this.

What was all this life exposure and life giving for ? You did it to save your country from destruction. Yes, to save it from deterioration and dishonor. Those who are living to-day should take sufficient interest in their country's welfare to do all they can to preserve it from deterioration and dishonor.

It is a time ^{just now} to ~~stir up~~ ^{revert} all your interest against tendencies to the depreciation of currency, to overturning our Senate and our Supreme Court; to centralization of power; in brief to any attempt to change ~~articles which in~~ the form of our government. It is a time to see to it that we have sufficient means in the treasury to meet our obligations to carry on our running expenses without increasing our public debt.

Just how the old soldiers may do this duty, they can judge for themselves. But I believe that the government which you saved is worth care, thought and faithful effort for its perpetuity. Let us do what we can.

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