

Local organizations continue tribute initiated by GAR members

By Eula Smith

The Grand Army of the Republic began over one hundred years ago, Apr. 6, 1866, in Springfield, Illinois. These Civil War veterans worked to establish Memorial Day, promote patriotism and encourage soldier's homes. The last encampment of the GAR was in Indianapolis August, 1949.

Eighty years ago the William Raber Post of the GAR was in charge of Memorial Day services in Mentone. The exercises at the M.E. Church included music by the band and choir, prayer and speeches. After the march to the cemetery, they decorated the graves of eight soldiers: Moses Herron, Joseph Nelson, Horace Wharton, Zimari Finch, Wm. Raber, Samuel Dille, Wm. Dale and Benj. F. Smith.

Members of the GAR post included Mc N. Forst, C. E. Doeane, G. W. Kime, Austin Milbern, Wm. Fifer, Asa Silsby, W. H. Cattell, W. C. Thomaspon, J. W. Sellers, Lyman Borton, Geo.

H. Mott, W. T. Baker and Isaiah Katherman.

People in the Atwood community were invited by the post there to bring their baskets and spent the day at Stony Point cemetery remembering the men who fought for our country.

As the years passed, the list of veterans to honor became longer and the number able to march decreased. The last time the old veterans participated was around 1924 and Bill Cattell was one of the group.

Through the years, the youth of our community have participated in Memorial Day, too. School pupils helped in 1886. Later, Sunday School scholars marched in the parade and put bouquets of cut flowers on the graves. In 1923, the Girl Scouts decorated 50 graves. Recently, Boy Scouts have helped with flags.

Now the American Legion works with other organizations to honor 61 Civil War veterans plus veterans of six other wars.