Civil War Veterans Resting At Old Village Cemetery

As today's American Legion, formed in 1918, is composed of American veterans, the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) was an organization of Union veterans of the Civil War. By 1888, Gen. John A. Logan, Chief of the GAR, designated May 30 as Decoration Day (now known as Memorial Day).

After the rebel southern states fired on Fort Sumter (opening the Civil War) on April 12th, 1861, President Lincoln called for troops from the northern states to preserve the Union.

On January 1st, 1861, John Gilly, a teacher of Brighton schools, an attorney at law in Brighton, and member of the 20th Michigan State Legislature which convened January 5, 1859, was commissioned a Captain in the U.S. Army.

Answering the national call, he immediately began recruiting men to form what became known as the "Livingston Volunteers", Company I, the 5th Michigan Infantry Regiment. Among them and interred in the Old Village Cemetery were William H. Bigham, *Charles H. Domencic, John Gilbert, John J. Jones, Aaron L. Newman, *George W. Rose and *DelWitt Clinton Russell.

Records compiled by William Pless (a history of Co. I, 5th Michi-
gan) reveal during the first year of battles. "The Regiment ar-
ived in Washington in September 1861 and was greeted by Senator Kinsley S. Bingham of Green Oak Township and by President Lincoln. In April 1862, they were engaged in battles at Yorktown and Williamsburg, VA, and following that at Fair Oaks, Seven Days' Battle, Charles City, Malvern Hill, 2nd Manas-
as, Chantilly, and in the battle at Fredericksburg, VA. Here, Lt.

Col. John Gililly was killed in action while leading troops in his command, December 13, 1862, at 38 years of age.

Another 30 Civil War veterans are interred, or memorialized, in the Old Village Cemetery. They are Nathaniel Allison, George A. Bidwell, James Warden Bingham, Peter Butler, Wallace H. Case, B.T.O. Clark, Ernest M. and Millard Fillmore Crippen,


These men served in various companies, throughout many infan-
tary and cavalry regiments. As original companies were de-
pLETED, the remaining members were reassigned to other com-
panies. A majority of these young men were descendants of early area settlers.

The families of all these veterans also served. Their support
gave the men the courage to fulfill their enlistment promise.

The widows and fatherless children determined they would continue in a manner the husband and father would wish. Wid-

ows who were teachers went back to teaching. Farmers’ and
shopkeepers’ widows depended on their families to keep the various enterprises flourishing. These, along with the veterans, are examples of sacrifice to be emulated today.

* killed in battle

Records compiled by Marianne Boll from records assembled by George Allen, John and Janice Field, William Pless, 1889 History of Liv-
ington County. Corrections requested. 810/229-6402.

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In Memoriam

The BASHS would like to extend sympathies to the families of:

Merrill Herbst

and

Joe Mike

Merrill Herbst was a Brighton native and Joe Mike was a long time area resident. Both were loyal supporters of the BASHS.