

A Civil War memorial

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OVERLOOKED ORLEANS: Remembering the people who served

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ALBION — On May 26, the seventh grade class of students from Albion Middle School dedicated a beautiful granite urn, sugar maple tree, and bronze plaque affixed to a slab of pink Medina Sandstone. The task undertaken by Tim Archer should be applauded and imitated by teachers throughout the region as a heartfelt effort to educate students about the importance of becoming noble citizens.

More than 140 students stood on the very ground once selected by David Hardie and other area municipal supervisors for use as a lot for veteran burials. Just two years after the selection, the men of Curtis Post Grand Army of the Republic dedicated a flag pole and M1841 6-pounder bronze howitzer cannon to the memory of their fallen comrades. Those same men committed themselves to ensuring that all indigent soldiers who found themselves interred within potter's field be removed to the newly consecrated lot.

In conjunction with the ceremonies held on May 26 and Memorial Day, it may be fitting to share a few brief notes of interest pertaining to Civil War veterans from Orleans County. Thousands of men would enter into service with the Union Army, some would never return, yet many would return with permanent physical and mental scars from the horrors of battle.

They included:

■ **Pvt. Ross Brown, 18th U.S. Colored Troops** — Born a slave in North Carolina, Brown escaped as a stow-away aboard a ship traveling for New Orleans. Making his way inland, he enlisted with the Union Army in 1864 and moved to Albion in 1890. He was affectionately known locally as "Uncle Ross."

■ **Maj. Thomas Bell, 8th N.Y. Cavalry** — Developing a fondness early on in life for theater, Bell allegedly spent two years with Edwin Booth's company in Alabama be-



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The Soldiers & Sailors Monument, dedicated 140 years ago in the spring of 1876, contains the names of 466 soldiers and sailors etched on marble tablets. It includes those men who gave their lives for the preservation of the Union, buried both at home and on the battlefield. The monument stands as a testament to the beauty of Orleans County's native Medina Sandstone and the pride and community commitment to honoring its veterans.

fore engaging in the foundry business at Albion. After the war, he introduced an article into U.S. law giving veterans preference in civil service appointments.

■ **Dr. Arthur K. St. Clair, 5th Michigan Cavalry** — Graduating at the head of his class from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of New York City, Dr. St. Clair was regarded as an outstanding field surgeon having participated in at least 14 battles. When Gen. Wadsworth was killed at The Wilderness, St. Clair volunteered with a party of men to retrieve the body from the Confederate line.

■ **Pvt. Herbert Taylor, 140th N.Y. Infantry** — Clarendon native Herbert Taylor was with his regiment at Gettysburg on July 2, 1863 and repulsed the attack on Little Round Top. Making the ultimate sacrifice, he is believed to be the only Orleans County native to have died at Gettysburg.

■ **Pvt. Isaac Hawkins, 54th Massachusetts Infantry** — Medina resident Isaac Hawkins enlisted with the all African-American regiment once headed by Col. Robert Gould Shaw and made famous by the 1989 film "Glorry." Hawkins was captured at the Battle of Olustee in Florida, spending over a year

at Andersonville Prison Camp and on one such occasion allegedly received 250 lashes as punishment for an unknown reason.

■ **Col. Fazilo A. Harrington, 27th Illinois Infantry** — A native of Medina, Harrington entered West Point Military Academy in 1850 before resigning his position in favor of a career in civil engineering.

Answering the call of Gov. Yates of Illinois, he was placed in command of the 27th Illinois Infantry.

Harrington was struck in the face by an artillery shell at the Battle of Stones River, killing him instantly. A Confederate private attempting to steal the colonel's boots was given quite the scare when he looked up to see Harrington's eyes wide open, as if to stare at him.

■ **Maj. Angelo Paldi, 1st Michigan Cavalry** — A native of Italy, Paldi was a respected painter and soldier who allegedly served with the French Army in Algeria and Spain before immigrating to America. Serving under Gen. George Custer for a short period of time, it was Paldi's suggestion to form a regiment of Hussars, or heavy cavalry, modeled after the regiments of Europe. After the war he moved to Albion, his body is interred at St. Joseph's Cemetery in Albion.