

Charles Germman Burton 1893

National GAR Commander-In-Chief 1908.

BURTON, Charles Germman, a Representative from Missouri; born in Cleveland, Ohio, April 4, 1846 to Leonard Burton and his wife, Laura, nee Wilson; moved to Warren, Ohio, and attended the public schools; enlisted as a private September 7, 1861, in Company C, Nineteenth Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry, and served with the regiment until discharged October 29, 1862; corporal in Company A, One Hundred and Seventy-first Regiment, Ohio National Guard, during the "one hundred days" campaign of 1864; studied law; was admitted to the bar in Warren, Ohio, in 1867; moved to Virgil City, Mo., in 1868, to Erie, Kans., in 1869, and Nevada, Vernon County, Mo., in 1871, where he practiced law; circuit attorney and judge of the twenty-fifth circuit; delegate to the Republican National Conventions in 1884 and 1904; elected as a Republican to the Fifty-fourth Congress (March 4, 1895-March 3, 1897); unsuccessful candidate for reelection



in 1896 to the Fifty-fifth Congress; resumed the practice of law; collector of internal revenue at Kansas City, Mo., 1907-1915; commander in chief of the Grand Army of the Republic in 1908; died in Kansas City, Mo., February 25, 1926; interment in Deepwood Cemetery, Nevada, Mo. [GAR memorial states date of death as March 26, 1926, but death certificate gives the February date]. On December 7, 1889, C.G. Burton was elected commander of the General Joseph Bailey, Post No. 26, Nevada, Mo., and on April 12, 1891, he was appointed on the staff of the department commander and held the position for three years. On April 12, 1893, at Joplin, he was elected department commander of the state. In 1908 he was elected to the highest office, that of commander of the G.A.R. of the United States. After his election, he appointed John A. Hariman, of this post, aide de camp.



CHARLES G. BURTON

Department Commander, 1890-94

Commander-in-Chief, 1907-08

Born April 4, 1844; Died March 26, 1926

For extended obituary see Pages 20, 21 and 22

From the 1926 Department Encampment Book:

In Memoriam
Past Commander-in-Chief
Charles German Burton
Died March 25, 1926

Charles German Burton, Past Commander-in-Chief, dropped from the ranks March 25, 1926. The passing of this Prince and Leader is an event of more than ordinary occurrence. He passed his active life in Missouri and has figured widely as a soldier and civilian, a lawyer and court official, civil officer and financier. In these several specialties he has demonstrated that he was a man of eminent ability.

He was well-born. His father, Leonard and his mother, Laura, were trained in the schools of their day and had attained to some eminence and station in business circles. Comrade Burton first saw the light in Cleveland, Ohio, April 4, 1846. He received his education in the schools of Warren, Ohio. He received a furlough from the army that he might return home to graduate with his class and deliver the honor oration. His parents were godly people, and their son was carefully trained in the principles of truth and righteousness, and that honor and integrity was no small part of the education they hoped to give him. He, as was expected, grew into manhood a quiet, dignified and rather retiring disposition. As a consequence of his maternal training, he sought to be known as truthful. He afterwards declared in a court case where the offender had proven himself an outrageous liar: "I hate a liar above all other offenders ; and if I had my way about it I would send all liars to jail" ; but remarked incidentally, "I fear the jails might not hold all of them."

The firing upon Fort Sumpter inspired the patriotic zeal of young Burton and he enlisted early in the war, in September, 1861, in the 19th Ohio Infantry, and was discharged one year afterward as an invalid. He re-enlisted in 1864 in the 100-day service, and served until the end of the war. At the close of the war he hastened to prepare for his profession of law. He entered a law office, as was the custom in those days, and grew up in practice. He located as a full-fledged lawyer at Virgil, Mo., and soon entered into co-partnership with E.E. Kimball. This active firm of young lawyers later removed to Nevada, a larger field for active law business. Soon after, young Burton was appointed Circuit Attorney and served two years. Ambitious for higher honors, he sought and was elected Judge of the 25th Judicial Circuit, and served seven years. In 1894 he was elected a member of the 54th Congress in the 15th Congressional District, and served two terms. Other honors fell thick and fast, and he was appointed Collector of Internal Revenue by President Roosevelt, and later he was reappointed by Presidents Taft and Wilson and served eight years. Besides these

honors, he had enjoyed all the honors the Missouri Department had to offer. There was one more honor he coveted, viz., the office of Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic. There was one other honor which the Department of Missouri wished Comrade Burton to receive; namely, National Commander-in-Chief. It would be readily admitted that no Comrade in the Grand Army of the Republic was better fitted and more efficient to administer the duties of this exalted office, none could represent the great body with more grace and acceptance. His name was presented at the National Encampment at Saratoga, and after an exciting contest he was elected and installed as Commander-in-Chief. Few members of the Grand Army have enjoyed such extended honors. Comrade Burton retained his membership in Missouri, after he had removed to Oregon, and rarely missed a meeting of the National or Missouri Departments. He was also honored by serving as a delegate to four National Republican Conventions. This is a remarkable record and through all his services his name remained untarnished and his reputation unblemished.

Comrade Burton spent his last days in Missouri. This year he came East earlier than usual and together with his wife spent a month with their niece in Kansas City. It is not known what the immediate cause of his death was, but his closest friends think his death was occasioned by the infirmities of old age. He had reached his 80th year. One friend wrote us that they believed Comrade Burton realized he had not long to live and simply desired to come back to Missouri, his long-time home, and be here when the "Taps" should be sounded. It was his plan to remain in the State till the Missouri department met in their annual encampment.

Charles G. Burton was not a university man, though he was well educated. His long association with men of culture and deep learning in the law was a full equivalent of a university training. If the true definition of culture is, "the doing of many things easily and well," then Mr. Burton was a cultured man. He seemed ready for any task. His chief delight was to ascend the platform as a speaker. His ready fund of information mingled with wit and forceful expression delighted his audience. As a conversationalist he was easily the center of company. His pleasing and magnetic personality will be missed in the Encampments. His keen mental grasp and his ability to retain many collated facts, and his skill in marshaling the facts logically and clearly, won him many a lawsuit. As an after-dinner speaker he was exceptional. His readiness and wit coupled with a fine soldierly physique, a piercing eye, a pleasing voice, rendered him a ready place among entertainers. The Commander-in-Chief made a wide use of him as a substitute in visiting State Departments which he was unable to reach. He was among the best known men of the Grand Army.

Comrade Burton wrote little for publication, and seemed to have no ambition to become an author. The only publication by him that is known is a short article on the

subject, “What Does the Grand Army Stand For?” I quote: “We stand for the school house, the church and the home. Every little school house that does the plain or nestles in the grove is a fort. Every academy of learning, college or university is a garrison. Every church or cathedral with its spires pointing heavenward and its clear ringing bell inviting men and women to sit at the feet of Him who taught as man never taught before is a fort, a garrison and citadel. Every God-fearing mother in all this land, who at her home and her hearthstone instills into the minds of her boys and girls the immutable principles of right and wrong ; who teaches her boys to be clean, manly men, and her girls to be pure and virtuous women ; who teaches them both to love their country and its flag, and to emulate the virtues of its heroes, living and dead – every such God-fearing mother is a recruiting officer for the Grand Army of the Republic.

LEO. RASSIRUR,
W.C. CALLAND,
Committee.

The Memorial was unanimously approved and adopted; the encampment stood at parade rest and the bugler sounded taps.