

# 7<sup>TH</sup> MICHIGAN CAVALRY MORNING REPORT

Headquarters: Bay City, Michigan

## ***Lansing Flag Trip***

For those who signed up for our trip to Lansing to see the original flags of Michigan Civil War regiments on Saturday, July 18<sup>th</sup>, the trip is still on.

But, you may want to send me an email to confirm your attendance and make sure I send you the details.

There is still room for a few more if anyone else is interested. Just send an email and tell me of your interest by return email.



Photo by Peter Glendinning

***One of the flags of the  
7<sup>th</sup> Michigan Cavalry***

## ***Memorial Day at Pine Ridge***

Did you attend the ceremonies at Pine Ridge Cemetery on Memorial Day?

It was nicely done. Thanks to all who helped prepare the site, organized it, and participated.

## ***2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Boat Trip Set***

Our annual boat trip, which we co-sponsor with the Bay County Historical Society, is scheduled for the evening of Saturday, August 18<sup>th</sup>.

Boarding begins at 5:30 PM for sailing at 6 PM up the river toward Saginaw and instead of out to the Bay as was last year's trip. A narration of the points of interest will be provided.

The Princess Wenonah will sail from Boatliner's Dock at the foot of 6<sup>th</sup> Street and the river. All passengers will receive a door prize as well as other prizes during the trip. A light dinner and cash bar will be available.

Tickets are \$30 per person and may be purchased in advance at the Historical Museum's store on Washington Ave.

## ***A Primer:***

### ***Political Parties of the 1850s***

The politics of the 1850s were some of the most volatile in U.S. history. Out of it sprang the American Civil War, our most violent conflict.

Thus, it is no surprise that the political parties that began the decade were not the ones that finished it. And, some that came into being after 1850 had already disappeared by 1860.

In 1850, there were three political parties of substance:

The ***Democratic Party*** was begun in 1790 by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison and was first called the Democratic-Republicans or sometimes the Jeffersonian Republicans. The name Democrats was adopted in the 1830s during the presidency of Andrew Jackson.

In response to Jackson's autocratic rule and his expansion of the powers of the federal executive branch of government, even before the start of his second term of office (and in 1833) the ***Whig Party*** became organized. It was named after the

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British "Antimonarchist Party" and favored programs of national development but not necessarily an increase in the power of the federal government.

The Whigs who were president were William Harrison, Zachary Taylor, and Millard Fillmore.

The **Free Soil Party** was organized in 1848 and was anti-slavery to the extent it did not want slavery expanded into the territories. But, it did not oppose it in those states where it already existed.

Its motives were strictly self-serving. Its members were either those who wished to settle in the new territories and didn't want them dominated by land-hogging, slave-using plantations that would crowd them out or farmers and merchants in then frontier states like Illinois who wanted to keep immigrants moving past them as they traveled west into their state instead of settling there as their competition.

The Free Soiler's motto was "Free soil, free speech, free labor, and free man". In the 1848 presidential election, their candidate, Martin Van Buren, garnered 10% of the vote.

Up until 1850, the political philosophies of at least the Democrats and the Whigs were not drawn along geographical lines. Both parties were populated by northerners and southerners alike.

But, the Compromise of 1850 began a change. It was not just one law passed by Congress but rather of series of five that were created to deal with a multitude of problems of which the issue of slavery was at the core.

Briefly, the laws declared the territorial areas covered approximated by the present states of New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Nevada could be slave or free as the populations of those areas petitioning to be states should themselves decide.

Second, slavery would be prohibited in California but although slave selling would be prohibited in Washington D. C., slave ownership there would be continued.

Lastly, The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 was passed requiring the citizens in all states, slave or free, to assist in returning escaped slaves to their

rightful owners. To fail to do so was a federal crime.

The citizens of every state, north and south, were outraged – but for different reasons.

The northerners were livid about being required to aid slavery by assisting arrogant slave-chasers who came into their communities while southerners disliked limitations on slavery anywhere.

**CAUTION!!**  
**COLORED PEOPLE**  
**OF BOSTON, ONE & ALL,**  
You are hereby respectfully **CAUTIONED** and  
advised, to avoid conversing with the  
**Watchmen and Police Officers**  
**of Boston,**  
For since the recent **ORDER OF THE MAYOR &**  
**ALDERMEN,** they are empowered to act as  
**KIDNAPPERS**  
**AND**  
**Slave Catchers,**  
And they have already been actually employed in  
**KIDNAPPING, CATCHING, AND KEEPING**  
**SLAVES.** Therefore, if you value your **LIBERTY,**  
and the *Welfare of the Fugitives* among you, *Shun*  
them in every possible manner, as so many **HOUNDS**  
on the track of the most unfortunate of your race.  
**Keep a Sharp Look Out for**  
**KIDNAPPERS, and have**  
**TOP EYE open.**  
**APRIL 24, 1851.**

## Broadside of support in Boston

So, southerners & northerners alike who thought like those in their own neighborhood left both the Whig and Democrat parties in droves to seek right-thinking company.

In 1852, the anti-slavery Whigs, having dumped pro-slavery sitting president Millard Fillmore, nominated General Winfield Scott, who lost miserably. The Whigs then suffered so many desertions from the party that it simply ceased to exist after the election.

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The Democrats fared better by gaining the support of the pro-slavery southern Whigs. They then elected Franklin Pierce as president in 1852.

But the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, which repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and required those two territories to decide the future existence of slavery in their states by the doctrine of popular sovereignty, caused the northern Democrats to jump ship.

Northern Democrats and Whigs that opposed the spread of slavery, which included Abraham Lincoln, needed to find a new party.

Their choices were the Free Soilers or the **American Party**, which had sprung up in 1849 in New York City on a platform of opposition to immigrants, naturalized citizenship, and temperance. Its power base was the larger cities in the northeast but had factions as far west as California where it elected the mayor of San Francisco, who opposed the large numbers of Chinese entering the state.

The American Party traveled under several names including the American Republican Party, the Nativist Party, and the United Americans Party. While it regularly nominated candidates for office, few would admit to being part of it as it had evolved from numerous secret societies such as the "Secret Order of the Star Spangled Banner".

Its members seemed to be "upwardly mobile" young second generation Americans such as business clerks, artisans, skilled tradesmen, and rural clergymen. They felt the Irish immigrants in the big cities were threats and often engaged in riots against them. Since the Irish were Catholics, the Catholics were also on their list of undesirables.

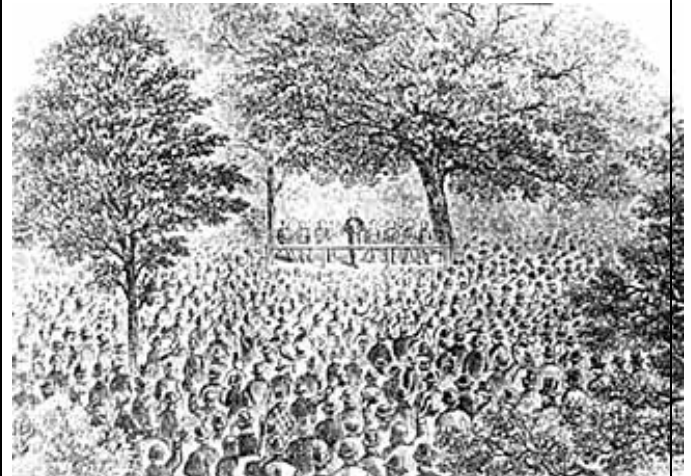
Because of their secretive nature, when asked what they knew of the goings on of the groups they belonged to, they invariably simply stated that they "knew nothing" (about it). That caused the various factions to be all known as the "**Know Nothings**".

While sporting a rather comical nick-name, they ran Millard Fillmore for president in 1856 and still collected 21% of the popular vote.

Finding the platform of the Free Soilers too narrow and the politics of the Know Nothings not to their liking, the dispossessed northern Whigs and Democrats decided simultaneously in different places in 1854 to form a new party.

These factions quickly joined together and the **Republican Party** was born. Michigan's claim to be the birth place is that its first meeting was held "under the oaks" in Jackson, Michigan on July 6, 1854.

Its first candidate for the presidency was John Fremont in 1856. He lost but the Free Soilers and Know Nothings soon swelled the Republican ranks.



## Under the Oaks in Jackson

The stage was set for a new Republican candidate for President in 1860. He was Abraham Lincoln.

## Civil War Terms:

**Baby-waker:** The first shot of a cannonade. ("Give 'em the baby-waker!")

**Embalmed Beef:** The Civil War was the first that saw soldiers issued canned rations. "Embalmed beef" was the Union soldier's term for canned beef.

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Fire-eater - A political speaker that became so rabid about his topic that it was said he could eat fire. ("He was a real fire-eater.")

Flying Battery - Two or more horse-drawn caissons and cannons whipping along the battlefield, unlimbering, firing, limbering up, and riding off to fire from another position were loosely referred to as a "flying battery".

Shoddy - Cloth so cheap used in making of uniforms that it would actually melt when touched by rain. The material was often made from sweepings from the floor of a cloth factory that were rolled or pounded together with cheap glue and then smoothed to look like regular cloth. ("They were shoddy goods.")