



G.A.R. Cemetery

Grand Army of the Republic
Miami, Oklahoma



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MEMORIAL DAY



As we all know, Memorial Day is more than a 3-Day weekend and a BBQ. Here are a few facts found in an article at www.CNN.com, written by David Holzel that helps bring out the true meaning and purpose of one of our favorite holidays.

It started with the Civil War

Memorial Day was a response to the unprecedented carnage of the Civil War, in which some 620,000 soldiers on both side died. The loss of life and its effect on communities throughout the North and South, led to spontaneous commemorations of the dead:

- In 1864, women from Boalsburg, Pennsylvania, put flowers on the graves of their dead from the just-fought Battle of Gettysburg. The next year, a group of women decorated the graves of soldiers buried in a Vicksburg, Mississippi Cemetery.
- In April 1866, women from Columbus, Mississippi, laid flowers on the graves of both Union and Confederate soldiers. It was recognized at the time as an act of healing regional wounds. In the same month, in Carbondale, Illinois, 219 Civil War veterans marched through town in memory of the fallen, to Woodlawn Cemetery, where Union hero Maj. Gen. John A. Logan delivered the principal address. The ceremony gave Carbondale its claim to the first organized, community-wide Memorial Day observance.

General Logan made it official

Gen. Logan, the speaker at the Carbondale gathering, also was commander of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.), an organization of Union veterans. On May 5, 1868, he issued General Order No. 11, which set aside May 30, 1868, "for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion". The order expressed hope that the observance would be "kept up from year to year while a survivor of the war remains to honor the memory of his departed comrades".

It was first known as Decoration Day

From the practice of decorating graves with flowers, wreaths, and flags, the holiday was long known as Decoration Day. The name Memorial Day goes back to 1882, but the older name didn't disappear until after World War II. Federal law declared "Memorial Day" the official name in 1967.



*Please Join Us
As We Honor Our Fallen Soldiers*

**G.A.R. Cemetery
Memorial Day Ceremony
Monday, May 25, 2015**

Check Out the New Time!

@ 9:00 a.m.

Coffee, Juice & Pastries will be served in the
Gazebo Immediately Following the Ceremony





"It was my dad (Guy E. Gibson, Jr.) that got his Royal Air Force wings training in the Spitfires in Miami, OK. He also had his Army-Air Corp wings and prior to coming to Miami, OK he had flown cargo planes in the "Hump" of Burma/China. Gasoline, mules, and Chinese soldiers were the cargo in those days. By the time he got the opportunity to train on the Spitfires he was a first lieutenant with a lot of flying experience.



Both of my parents passed away some time ago and even though I knew what he had done during the war it really didn't interest me until recently when our 17 year old Grandson got his private pilot license and began to ask about his Great Grandfather and his flying experience.

As best I can piece together from what documents/pictures I inherited, he graduated in class number 19 on June 27, 1944. He never went to combat in the fighters as the war was winding down.

The airfield picture; the class picture (my dad is the 7th from the left in the back row). In the picture of the four standing he was on the right and then a picture of him in his flight suit with I am giving to his Great Grandson."

~ Richard Gibson



"This is a picture of my grandson, Grant and myself. It was taken when my grandson, at age 17 got his private pilot license. I was the first passenger he took up and I was very proud of his dedication to flying and his accomplishments at such an early age.

He reminds me more and more of my dad (His great grandfather). Here we are 70 years ago almost to the month my Dad graduates with Class No. 19 in Miami, OK and Grant gets his pilot license and starts flying. The boy is tall like his great grandfather, good looking, has a passion for flying and reminds me in many ways of my dad.

He would be very proud of Grant too." ~ Richard Gibson





Chad Masterson
G.A.R. Cemetery
Manager

FVI...

Spring has Sprung at G.A.R.

Ole' Man Winter finally gave way to the coming of spring. With the rising temps and more than adequate rainfall, the trees are starting to leaf out here in the cemetery, and also the grass is starting to grow. The new sod in the British lot is also greening up and by the time summer gets here, it should be fully established.

Last winter saw most of the dead trees removed, which really opened up the view to the new trees that were planted last spring and fall and are leafing out rather nicely. Just last week a new coat of paint on the baby circle fence was applied along with a coat of stain on the sign posts! "Lest We Forget" the G.A.R. Monument had new paint across the base to spruce it up some also. Yes I would say... "Spring Has Sprung at G.A.R.!"

A Day at G.A.R.



Nancy Bro
G.A.R. Cemetery
Office Manager

Every day I get to visit with some amazing people from all over the world! Just recently I corresponded with people in Arizona, Alabama, the UK, and even a gentleman from Tromso, Norway, who was looking for an ancestor who was an emigrant from Norway in 1901! Last year he did a search for Oliver on the internet, and found three articles in the "Joplin Globe" that mentioned him. They stated that he was found dead in a mine in Picher, and he was buried in Miami, Oklahoma. I was able to confirm that he is here, unfortunately, he lies in an unmarked grave so I was unable to send a picture of his marker.

Whomever I have the privilege of corresponding with, I always give my utmost attention and I am driven to help them in any way possible. If I feel that I have left some questions unanswered, I will put them in contact with other resources to assist them with their search. I do this unconditionally, without the thought of any type of recognition at all. I do get "Thank You's" with great sincerity, and that makes me feel that I have done my job the very best that I can... and for this **"I Thank All of You!"**

"I have gone back again and again to my family tree—looking at all the new, completed leaves on it. And your gravestone photos look great there! I must tell you that you are the very first cemetery staff person I have encountered in all my years of research, who went so far as to trundle out in what is probably not the best of weather to take gravestone photos—and I didn't even ask, but they are just great to have! And I called Barbara at the library, and she is going to look up Twila's brother for me so we can see where he is buried. I thank you for that number. Barbara could not have been nicer!" ~ M.J. Pickett

"G.A.R. History Hunt" RESULTS!!!

Did You Know?



Frank Smith, alias Louis Austin, alias Hart Austin, alias Herman Smith. Age 28, in 1920; weight, 145 lbs.; medium build; medium chestnut hair; sallow complexion; lower border left ear off, very noticeable; height, 5 feet 6½ inches. Occupation, Engineer.

Finger Print Classification:
10 U 00
16 — 10



➤ ... Who Louis Hart Austin was?

- ✓ According to Texas Convict Records from 1913, Herman Franklin Smith was born in 1891 in Indian Territory, which is in contradiction with his grave marker. Herman was listed with his alias as having part of his ear missing from a gunshot wound which is said he had received in a shoot out in New Orleans with the police. This is visible in the photo to the left.

➤ ... He was also known as the "Alibi King"

- ✓ On 12 Feb 1927, Austin's indictments are ordered "nolle prossed" (To drop charges against) and he is released immediately with two verdicts of not guilty when he produces his signature on a Miami, Florida hotel register.

➤ ... Who he was known to be associated with?

- ✓ Austin had been known to have connections with notorious gangsters such as... George "Machine Gun" Kelly, "Connie" Ritter, Jack Dillon, The Nolan Gang and many others.

➤ ... You can get more information?

- ✓ Michele Jackson has researched Louis H Austin and has an extensive list of convictions, escapes, news articles and more! For more info you can email her at: agenealogylady@att.net



Michele Jackson
Researcher/Historian

"Not a great deal is known about Louis H Austin after his arrest and association with George "Machine Gun" Kelly In 1933. It is noted in one article written at the time about the crime ring that "they scattered" across the country because of the heat brought on them by the police. If records exist for him after this time, it is back in Miami, Oklahoma where he lists his address on his 1942 WWII Draft registration. He lists no occupation and his mother Minerva as a contact. Maybe he lived the remainder of his life quietly there in his hometown with his mother and family. Research still continues to fill in the gaps, but this man has lead my life on a whirlwind of journeys into the prohibition era criminal underworld. Austin is just one part of the story I'm working on... there were at least 6 other men whom I have the same if not more info on. I hope to compile it all in an eBook based on my research that began with a small town bank robbery. They were real men with real families and normal everyday lives who held secrets that sometimes even their closest family members didn't know." ~ Michele



2015 EVENT SCHEDULE

❖ **Memorial Day Ceremony**
Monday, May 25, 2015
Check Out the New Time!

@ 9:00 a.m.

Coffee, Juice & Pastries will be served
In the Gazebo Immediately
Following the Ceremony

❖ **British Flyers**
Remembrance Ceremony
Saturday, October 24th, 2015
@ 2:00



G.A.R. Cemetery Decoration Removal Schedule

****All Decorations Must Be Removed From Graves By 8:00 a.m.
On The Dates Listed****

| <u>DECORATION REMOVAL</u> | <u>DATE</u> |
|--|-------------------|
| First Monday in February | 02/02/2015 |
| Second Monday Following Easter | 04/13/2015 |
| First Monday Following Memorial Day | 06/01/2015 |
| First Monday in October | 10/05/2015 |

- Wrought iron basket hangers are not permitted except for the time period of December 15th through January 15th and one week prior to Memorial Day until the first Monday following Memorial Day.
- Notices for our decoration removal schedule will be posted on signs at cemetery entrances the week preceding decoration removals.
- All decorations not collected by date and time listed will be disposed of with no exceptions.
- For more information about the G.A.R. Cemetery decoration removal schedule, please call the cemetery at 918-542-6685.

Interested In Genealogy?

Visit the City of Miami Public Library!

Miami Public Library

200 N Main
Miami, OK 74354
www.miamipl.okpls.org

Barbara Becker

Genealogy Department
geniedept@miami.lib.ok.us
918-541-2292

Staff Hours

Mon, Wed, Thu. 10:00 a.m. - noon, 1:00-5:00 p.m.
Tues 9:00 a.m. - noon, 1:00-4:00 p.m.



Every year there are hundreds of graves that go undecorated. We at G.A.R., feel that everyone deserves to be recognized, even if it's for just a few days a year. So we are initiating a new program that will allow individuals and companies to **Adopt-A-Grave** and decorate it every Memorial Day, and any other day they wish throughout the year.

For more information

Call (918) 541-2288 or email nbro@miamiokla.net

Adopt~A~Flag Today!

Purchase an American flag for \$50.00 that will be displayed proudly at G.A.R. Cemetery on Memorial Day, 4th of July, and Veterans Day.

If you wish, the name of a person to be honored will be inscribed onto a plaque that will be displayed with the flag. This program is a great way to show appreciation for a loved one and your country.

Don't Delay!

**Order by MAY 8th, 2015 to be
Displayed this Memorial Day!!!**

For more information visit us at www.miamiokla.net
Or call 918-541-2288

REMEMBER THOSE WHO SERVED

A Friendly Reminder

*All Decorations Must Be Removed
From The Graves by **8:00 a.m.***

*On The First Monday
Following Memorial Day*

June 1st, 2015

ALL GAVE SOME, SOME GAVE ALL

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.miamiokla.net



G.A.R. History Hunt

Do you have family at G.A.R. Cemetery? Do they have an interesting history? We are always looking for additions to our Living History Tour. Please send your interesting historical documentation and photographs to nbro@miamiokla.net and you never know... you *could* see your family member featured in our next newsletter!

We've Got News

Our goal is to supply updated news and event schedules to everyone who has an interest in G.A.R. Cemetery. If you know anyone who would like to be on our mailing list,

Send your request to: nbro@miamiokla.net

Or Call: (918) 541-2288