



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **PRESERVING THE LEGACY OF JOHN A. LOGAN, FOUNDER OF MEMORIAL DAY**

*Story by Adriana Schroeder, Illinois National Guard Historian*

**SPRINGFIELD** - Civil War veteran and Illinois National Guard Soldier, Gen. John A. Logan once said he was concerned the American people would forget their history and the sacrifices of preceding generations in both war and peace.

Logan was a member of the Illinois militia, today's Illinois National Guard.

The list of accomplishments by Logan is long: he founded Memorial Day as a national holiday; numerous actions in the western theatre; commander of the 15th Corps; commander-in-chief and original co-founder of the Grand Army of the Republic, U.S. Senator, U. S. representative and candidate for vice president of the United States.

As this year marks the 150th Civil War anniversary and as Memorial Day draws near it is only fitting to honor John A. Logan by paying tribute to the many Soldiers who have sacrificed for freedom.

Many artifacts from Logan's legacy and from the Civil War can be seen at the General John A. Logan Museum and the Illinois State Military museum, said Lt. Col. Mark Whitlock of Springfield, director of the Illinois State Military Museum.

"Gen. Logan was admired by the veterans of the Civil War, many of whom sent him war trophies and correspondence, which we now have in the Illinois State Military Museum or on loan to the General John A. Logan Museum," said Whitlock.

Too many times history is a collection of names and dates, said Michael Jones, the executive director of the General John A. Logan Museum

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“The sword used by General John A. Logan at Vicksburg, on loan from the (Illinois State Military Museum), adds reality to the picture of the epic Battle of Champion Hill where he would have used it,” said Jones.

“It seems abstract. The fact that we have so many objects that Logan used adds a sense of reality to the exhibits at the Logan Museum,” said Jones. “There is a feeling of wonder in our visitors when they realize that ‘Logan actually touched this.’ The fact that the (Illinois State Military Museum) has worked with us for over two decades makes this sense of wonder possible.”

Jones said the support from the Illinois Military State Museum has helped the two museums have a mutually cooperative relationship for many years.

“Working with the (Illinois State Military Museum) and Lt. Col. Mark Whitlock over the last two decades has helped us become a more professional museum,” said Jones. “He has not only helped us with the loan of artifacts but with any questions we have about their proper care.”

Illinois celebrated its first Logan Day in Chicago in July 1897. This event featured a parade, in which more than 16,000 people marched, and the dedication of the Gen. John A. Logan statue in Grant Park.

Illinois' second Logan Day took place almost two decades later in 1914, in Murphysboro, Logan's birthplace. Murphysboro celebrated a second Logan Day in 1930 to dedicate a large monument to Logan on the grounds of what is now Murphysboro Middle School and a plaque honoring Logan as the founder of Memorial Day as a national holiday.

“Dollie” Logan Tucker returned to Murphysboro for the last time to attend this celebration of her father. Logan's statue also honored his wife Mary S.C. Logan. It may be the only statue of a Civil War general to also honor his wife. Mary continued to be very active in politics and worked tirelessly to gain recognition for military veterans and their families.

The Jackson County, Illinois Historical Society resurrected Logan Day in 1983, in the form of annual speakers. The General John A. Logan Museum took over the celebration in 1987, and has continued celebrating it annually since that time.

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Over the last 24 years, Logan Days have changed. Today it consists of a four day event in May for area fourth through sixth grade students. These students learn about Logan and Illinois history during the frontier period, the Civil War era and at the turn of the 20th century. This year's Logan Days at the museum was celebrated May 18 to 20 and 27.

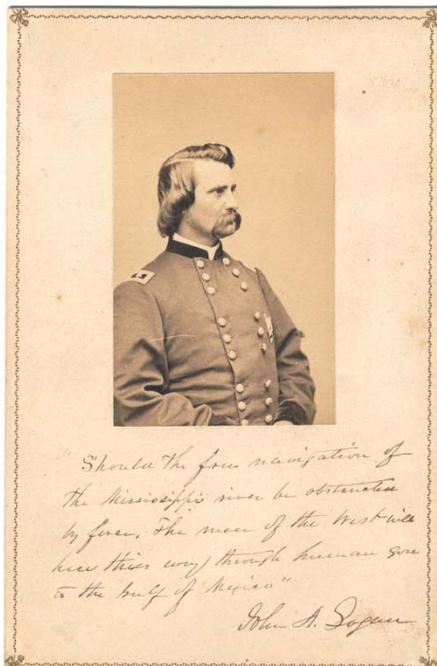
On Memorial Day the museum board will attend services at Woodlawn Cemetery in Carbondale in the morning. This was the site of Illinois first Memorial Day. That same day they will also place a wreath at Logan's statue in Murphysboro.

In 2014, the General John A. Logan Museum will plan a "Logan Day Centennial Celebration" in addition to "Logan Days at the Museum." This event will occur during Memorial Day weekend and include the dedication of six Illinois State Historical Society markers, a parade designed to replicate each unit of the 1914 parade, well known political personalities, an evening "campfire" reflecting on Logan and the Civil War, a Logan family reunion including many of Logan's descendants from across the nation and more.



**Submitted photo/** Only museum in the United States exclusively dedicated to the life and times of General John A. Logan is located at 1613 Edith Street in Murphysboro, Illinois. Hours of operation are: Sept.1 to May 31, Tuesday to Sunday 1 to 4 p.m. and June 1 to Aug 31, Tues to Sat 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday 1 to 4 p.m. Admission is free.

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For high resolution photos, please contact the Illinois National Guard Public Affairs Office at [ngilstaffpao@ng.army.mil](mailto:ngilstaffpao@ng.army.mil)