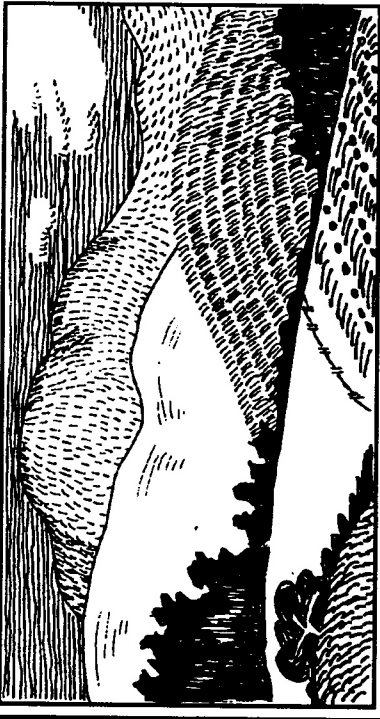


U.S. Postage
BULK RATE
Paid
Lyme NH 03768
Permit #13

Vol I, #8



May 1995

Lyme Gazette

A Public Newspaper for Lyme and Lyme Center, New Hampshire

Memorial Day in Lyme: "Honoring and Remembering..."

by Barbara E. Balch
and Mary vanRoden

Prior to about 1916, what we call Memorial Day was called Decoration Day, after the custom of decorating veterans' graves with flags and flowers.

In 1868, General John A. Logan, Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, designated May 30 as a day to honor the Union dead. Since then, the tradition of remembering the soldiers buried in Lyme's five cemeteries is unbroken, as each year on this day members of the James Young Post of the American Legion place between 250 and 300 flags on the graves of fallen soldiers, and townsfolk gather on the Common for the ceremonies.

The Town has appropriated funds since at least 1900 for these ceremonies, which were always well attended. P.H.A. Clafin's 1893 diary entry reported "Several hundred people gathered for a procession, flag-raising on the schoolhouse pole, speeches, music and a dance."

Lucy King wrote of the first Decora-

The procession, first led by McClure's Band from Woodsville and then by the Lyme Town Band, began the march down Market Street to Grant Brook where another wreath would be cast. On alternate years, the parade would proceed down Route 10 to the bridge crossing the brook near the Ed Jenks homestead.

Continuing to the Old or Highland Cemetery, the grave of one Lyme soldier was honored with the firing of three rifle volleys and the playing of *Taps*. From there, it was back to the Common where, from 1918 to 1968 (missing only two years), Lyme Center's Arthur E. Derby would open the ceremonies with a recitation of the Gettysburg Address. Someone else would deliver the famous war poem "In Flanders Fields", the Commander of Lyme's Post 80, school children and town officials would speak, and prayers would be offered.

Following the placement of a large wreath at the foot of the Civil War Monument, the band would lead all

Monuments on the Lyme Common



