

# HEADQUARTERS OF THE DEPARTMENT COMMANDER



DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK



## SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR

Honoring the memory of the Grand Army of the Republic &  
The Men from New York who saved the Union from 1861 to 1865

[www.nysuvcw.org](http://www.nysuvcw.org)

May 27, 2024

### Memorial Day Message

As we prepare to mark the day our ancestors set aside to keep green the memory of the heroes of our republic, I would share with you an anecdote of one veteran's stand for justice 100 years ago. Sherlock Foster Black was born in Castle Creek, NY on October 24, 1843 and saw hard fighting with the 27<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry and the 14<sup>th</sup> New York Heavy Artillery. On June 17, 1864, he was captured as his regiment was devastated during an assault on the rebel works at Petersburg. Black was sent to the hell of Andersonville Prison and survived a long imprisonment there before being exchanged in April 1865.

After the war, Black returned to Broome County and served in the County Sheriff's Department as a lawman for 50 years including several terms as Sheriff. On May 30, 1924, he found himself in Binghamton confronted with a horrible sight: the Klu Klux Klan (whose New York headquarters were in that city) were attempting to lay a wreath at the Broome County Civil War monument. The 1920s were the period of the Second Klan, as the organization founded by Confederate veterans had metastasized into the north. The First Klan had been defeated by President Grant and the Reconstruction Era US Army, but their ideology had festered and grown. Grasping his cane, which was made from the stockade of Andersonville Prison, the 80-year-old Black strode towards the klansmen in a rage.

On that day in Binghamton, S. Foster Black swung for the fences. With his cane, the octogenarian scattered the gaggle of a dozen or so white sheet clad goons with a righteous fury before they could desecrate the monument further with their presence. Black was hailed in the local paper for his actions and the story of his stand against the Klan was reported nationally. Black, former commander of the Joseph J Bartlet Post #108 of the GAR, passed away on January 10, 1928 and is buried in Floral Park Cemetery in Johnson City, New York.

One man with courage makes a majority. Among the toasts on this Memorial Day remember the relentless S. Foster Black and his shout of the battle cry of freedom on and off the battlefield.

William P Stump  
NY Department Commander