

New York State Battle Flag Collection Resolution

WHEREAS, The New York State Battle Flag Collection, includes over eight hundred National, and Regimental Civil War Battle Flags. These Glorious Banners were carried by our New York ancestor. These men bravely fought and died defending them in the War of the Rebellion 1861-1865.

WHEREAS, The men who fought under these grand symbols looked upon them with loving admiration and great reverence, for they understood above all the blood that was shed fighting under the flags of their state and union.

WHEREAS, These simple cloths on a pole which were the one true item in each fighting unit that gave the unit its honor, devotion, identity, direction, and determination in battle.

WHEREAS, the State of New York recognized the importance of these patriotic symbols of sacrifice and devotion and in accordance with a circular dated January 21, 1863, wherein Adjutant General John Sprague expresses: *“That all regimental colors, worn out in service, and of consolidated regiments, be forwarded to General Headquarters so that they may be deposited in an appropriate manner as a record of the war and fortitude of her sons”*

WHEREAS, In the words, of Major General Daniel Butterfield and as history recorded on July 3, 1865 *“These standards are returned, battle-scarred, hallowed by the blood of your patriot sons - a precious treasure, a priceless legacy, for they shall tell your children's children of manhood and patriotism rising in their might to sustain the right. These are glorious insignia of the highest devotion and sacrifice of man for man, of man for country. I may ask you . . . that you cherish them . . . as proud mementoes of the triumph of right.”*

WHEREAS, To honor and display the flag in this vast collection, each was furled on its staff and placed in a glass case for storage and viewing at the State Capital. The flag collection would continue to grow, today there are over 2,000 military flags dating from the War of 1812 to present. Nearly a century and a half of poor storage has subjected these flags to the harmful effects of humidity, light, gravity and temperature variance. These glorious banners are in poor condition and will continue to deteriorate until they receive proper care and improved storage conditions.

WHEREAS, In 2000, the New York State Military Museum in conjunction with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation with funding from the State of New York began work on the New York State Battle Flag Preservation Project. The projects goals were to implement a preservation program and create a flag archive for the conservation, storage and study of the

Battle Flag Collection. The Flag Preservation project has conserved over five hundred flags. Despite these efforts, nearly 75-percent of the collection (including about half of the Civil War flags) still awaits preservation and proper storage.

WHEREAS, Since the year 2009 New York State funding for the Battle Flag Preservation Project has ceased. These sacred banners are now facing their most challenging battle, that of time. Without state funding, the future of these patriotic symbols of sacrifice and devotion are in jeopardy.

WHEREAS, The Sons of Union Veterans, established to perpetuate the memory of the Grand Army of the Republic and the men who saved the Union. and in accordance with the mission of this organization, as described in the words of Major Augustus P. Davis in December of 1881 : *“That through this organization the declining days of the Union Veteran will be made pleasant, his record of service to his country preserved, his memory honored, patriotism promoted”*.

WHEREAS, Reminiscent of our patriotic forefathers who rallied around the flag in defense of our state and nation, we the Sons of Union Veterans must *“Rally Round the Flags”* and come to the defense of these precious treasures, for they truly are the record of their service to this country.

WHEREAS, the Department of New York, and its camps has an obligation to its ancestral son’s to preserve these glorious banners and honor their memory and their record of service to the State of New York and the Union.

BE IT RESOLVED, That a special committee be created *“The Rally Round the Flags Committee”* to bring together jointly all the State Camps of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War for the purpose of initiating a writing and lobbying campaign to reinstate funding for the New York State Battle Flag Preservation Project. That State funding shall be allocated on an annual basis until the flag collection has completely been conserved and archived. Said committee shall be responsible for bring all the State Camps of the, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War to Albany for the purpose of lobbying in both the Senate and Assembly of the New York State Legislature. The goal of this committee shall be to see this endeavor of the preservation of the flag collection through to its fruition. In addition, a copy of this resolution shall appear on the New York Department, website.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the 131st Encampment of the Department of New York, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War hereby declares support for the afore stated effort. Furthermore the encampment authorized the funds needed to ensure that the *“The Rally Round the Flags Committee”* can provide the leadership in its effort to save these *“proud mementoes of the triumph of right.”*