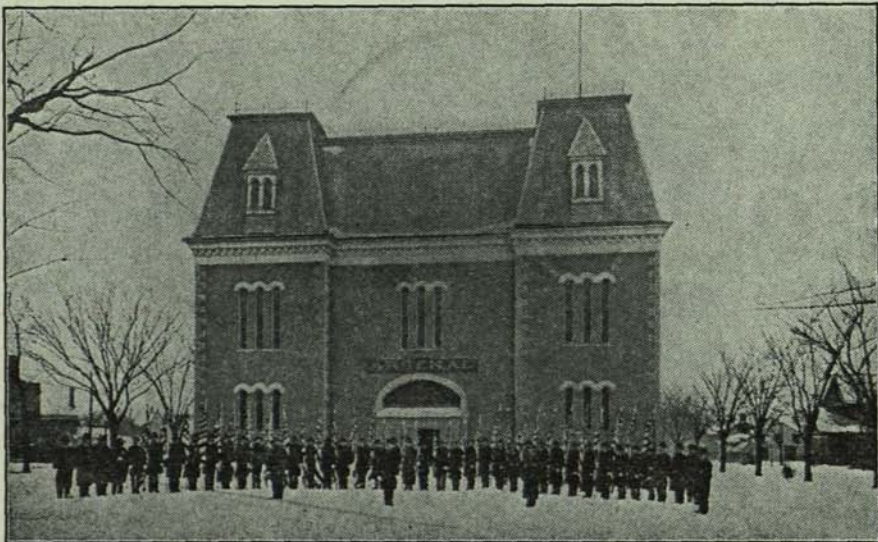


A BRIEF HISTORY  
OF THE  
WASHINGTON BIRTHDAY EXERCISES  
THE WASHINGTON CONVENTION  
AND THE  
TRANSFER OF FLAGS



The Arsenal Feb. 22, 1889



THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

1889

1939

## THE PRESENTATION OF FLAGS

On the morning of February 22, 1889, the forty-four members of George H. Thomas Post, G. A. R., assembled at the Arsenal (now Convention Hall). Thirty-two of them carried new flags. They marched to City Hall where they presented these beautiful flags to Rochester's thirty-two public schools. This presentation was made in each case to an honor boy known as a standard bearer. Each year since then during fifty years each flag has been passed down from standard bearer to standard bearer, in most cases in an unbroken line. As some schools were discontinued and new ones added, flags were presented, either old ones from discontinued schools or new ones purchased by the veterans.

Standard bearers were chosen for excellence in scholarship and "deportment," but for years "deportment" has been considered as "school citizenship" involving much more than good conduct and including such qualities as leadership, service to the school, and good character and personality.

## THE TRADITIONAL PROGRAM OF EXERCISES

From the first, the Washington Birthday Exercises have consisted of two rather distinct parts: The Convention of delegates, and the Transfer of flags.

### The Convention of Delegates

Delegates like standard bearers, have been chosen from the highest grade in the school. Some schools organize them as guards of honor with certain ceremonial duties in assemblies.

### The Transfer of Flags

The Transfer of Flags has followed a definite pattern during all these years:

- a. Transfer of the flags from the old standard bearers to the new.
- b. The charge to the standard bearers.
- c. The Pledge of Allegiance.
- d. The Star Spangled Banner.

These features may be considered as Part II of the program.

Likewise, Part I of the program has carried certain common features each year: Invocation, Music, and an address by a distinguished citizen. In recent years, the program has been greatly shortened and has included a brief but elaborate dramatic presentation.

## THREE MORE DATES

In 1914, twenty-fifth anniversary exercises were held in Convention Hall which, by a strange coincidence, is the same building (The Arsenal) in which the veterans assembled in 1889. Thomas Post in spite of added members had decreased from forty-four to twenty-eight members.



In 1921, the seventeen members of Thomas Post formally asked that the Principals of Rochester Schools take over the Exercises at such time as the Post should cease to exist. This request was written by hand by Comrade John G. Allen. Copies were lithographed and one furnished to each school.

In 1931, on January 12, Colonel Samuel C. Pierce, commander and last surviving member of Thomas Post made written request that the Transfer of Flags be conducted by Captain Henry Lomb Camp, Sons of Union Veterans. This arrangement has been in effect since that time. Colonel Pierce died May 13, 1931.

Credit for this whole plan is given to Comrade William Carey Morey of Thomas Post. As a member of the committee he worked through the details, giving credit for certain features to LaFayette Post. He was for many years a distinguished professor of History in the University of Rochester, author of many books, and greatly beloved by generations of students to whom he was affectionately known as "Uncle Bill."

### THE STANDARD BEARERS ASSOCIATION

In 1914, The Standard Bearers Association was organized by Mr. Theodore C. Cazeau. He continued as its President until his death in 1934. Since then, others have continued the Association which has a luncheon each year following the exercises. This year (1939), however, elaborate plans have been made for an evening banquet on February 21, celebrating the fiftieth anniversary. Invitations have been sent to more than three thousand standard bearers. For many years, a feature of this luncheon has been the presentation of handsome bronze badges to the new standard bearers. These have been generously donated first by Captain Henry Lomb, then by his sons Adolf and Carl F. Lomb, and are now being presented by Mr. Carl S. Hallauer. Since 1889, nearly four thousand standard bearers have been chosen. An official list is maintained by the Board of Education at its office.

The future of this organization has great and unique possibilities.

### COOPERATION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Appreciation is due the Board of Education of the City of Rochester for its recognition of the value of these exercises. It has each year appointed a Committee of Principals and Teachers to arrange the exercises and has financed them, with the exception of the purchase of new flags and the activities of the Standard Bearers Association.

### THIS ROCHESTER CEREMONIAL UNIQUE

This Washington Convention and Transfer of Flags is unique to Rochester. In recent years, some smaller cities have adopted certain features of the plan, but it is Rochester's distinction that it has builded this beautiful tradition over fifty years during which its value has become firmly established in the hearts of its citizens.

*Written by Nathaniel G. West-*

RVF2 Schools - Public - Rochester - Assemblies, Events + Programs  
- Transfer of the Flags - 1911-1969