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Dedication of the Humiston Memorial at Gettysburg

One hundred and thirty years after the Battle of Gettysburg, the death of Sgt. Amos Humiston brought a Scotsman to the battlefield. Steve Rady made the journey from Dumfries, Scotland to the town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania because of a story he had read in a Civil War book. The story told of a sergeant in the 154th New York (the same unit to which Milton Bush belonged, see Pg. 36). The sergeant was killed at Gettysburg on July 1, 1863 and was found with a picture of his three children clutched in his hands. There was no identification on his body except the New York buttons on his uniform. An etching of the photograph was published in newspapers across the North. One of those papers reached Cattaraugus County where Mrs. Humiston saw the etching and faced the realization that her husband had died in the great battle.

This story deeply moved Rady who wrote a poem to honor the fallen sergeant and all like him. When Rady learned that a monument to Humiston was being erected at Gettysburg he contacted town officials and asked if they would read his poem at the dedication. Dr. Walter Powell, an avid preservationist in charge of the dedication ceremony, wrote back asking Rady to come and personally read his poem. Rady indicated that finances prohibited such a visit, but circumstances changed when his fiancée gave him money she had saved to put a new heating system in her home.

Steve Rady, a Scotsman without links to America or her Civil War, made his first trip to the United States and delivered his poem at the July 1993 ceremony. His work honors a man he did not know. Sergeant Humiston gave all he had in order that his country might live. His tomorrows with his wife and three children he willingly sacrificed. Humiston's side won the battle, eventually. But the battle in which he gave his life, fighting with the Eleventh Corps north of Gettysburg on July 1, was a losing effort for the Union. That is what Rady writes of in his poem and reminds us of that sacrifice.

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER by Steve Rady

A soldier lies in battle, face buried in the mud; / A picture of his children there painted in his blood.
Fighting for their Freedom he fought until his death; / He kissed his children's picture as he took his dying breath.
His side lost the battle, but no side ever wins; / For when the war is over another war begins.

Submitted by Warren E. Motts,
B&G Special Events Photographer.
Photo by Wayne Motts.

Warren Motts and Steve Rady at the Humiston Memorial.

