

TATTERED GLORY

TWIN TIERS CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 10

OCTOBER 1993

DOWN THE ROAD...

November 16, 1993:

7:00 pm Club Meeting at Doyle Hall, St. Bonaventure University. Tentative Topic: President Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg National Cemetery...November 19, 1863.

December 21, 1993:

7:00pm Club Meeting at Doyle Hall, St. Bonaventure University. Joint Meeting with Olean Historical Society.

January 18, 1994:

7:00pm Club Meeting at Doyle Hall, St. Bonaventure University. Meeting topic to be announced at a later date.

ANOTHER LOCAL YANK...



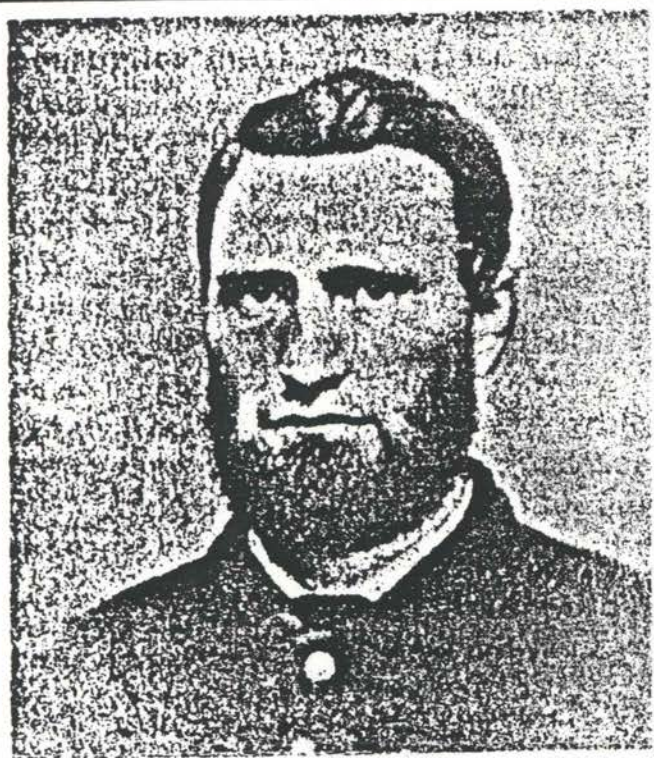
REGIMENTAL STAFF...

Commanding Officer...
MICHAEL WINICKI
Executive Officer...
TIM BARTON
Program Officer...
KEN HELLER
Adjutant...
CRAIG SENFIELD
Paymaster...
CRAIG BRAACK

Name: Ransom Terry
Regiment: 154th New York Vols.
Company: C
Rank: Private

Service Record: Ransom Terry was the son of Elisha and Amy Hawley Terry of Franklinville, NY. He was born April 14, 1838. He mustered into service with the 154th NY Vols. on September 4, 1862. Wounded on July 1, 1863 at Gettysburg he was captured but paroled because of his wounds...he carried the minie ball in his body for the rest of his life...48 years! Pvt. Terry was discharged at Baltimore, Md on September 7, 1864. After the Civil War he studied medicine with his Uncle, M. Terry of Painted Post, NY. In 1874 he graduated from the Medical Department of the University of Buffalo. On January 24, 1877 he married Ellen G. Morris of Franklinville. Their only son Marcy Terry was born in 1878. Dr. Terry practiced rural medicine in the Ischua area for 32 years retiring in 1906 and moving to Hinsdale. He was Supervisor of Ischua three times, County Health Officer several years and member of the Olean Board of Pension Examiners. He was a member of the GAR, an Odd Fellow and a Mason. Ransom Terry died June 8, 1911 and is buried at Maplehurst Cemetery.

LOCAL CIVIL WAR HERO...



SGT. AMOS HUMISTON
Co. C, 154th New York Vol. Infantry
Killed In Action, July 1, 1863, Gettysburg, Pa.

In the mid-19th century, Amos Humiston and his family lived in Portville, New York. According to the 1860 U.S. Census, Amos was 30 years old and his wife Philinda was 29. The Humiston's had two sons and a daughter. The oldest child, Franklin was five, Alice was three and Frederick was one. Amos Humiston was a harness maker by trade and he rented a house on Main Street in Portville next to Luman Rice's Hotel and the Methodist Church. George Lillie was a hired hand and apprentice harness maker and he lived with the Humistons.

When the words of war began to escalate and regiments were being formed, it was very common for young men to sign up with or without bounty because the pay was good for many and it didn't look as though the war would last long from the Union perspective! Amos Humiston enlisted as a Sergeant of Company C of the 154th New York Volunteer Infantry in the summer of 1862. The 154th was attached to the 1st Brigade, 2nd Division, 11th Corps in Virginia for seven months without any action. The 11th Corps had numerous problems with discipline and *esprit de corps* and during the Battle of Chancellorsville was completely routed...the 154th lost 50% of its men!

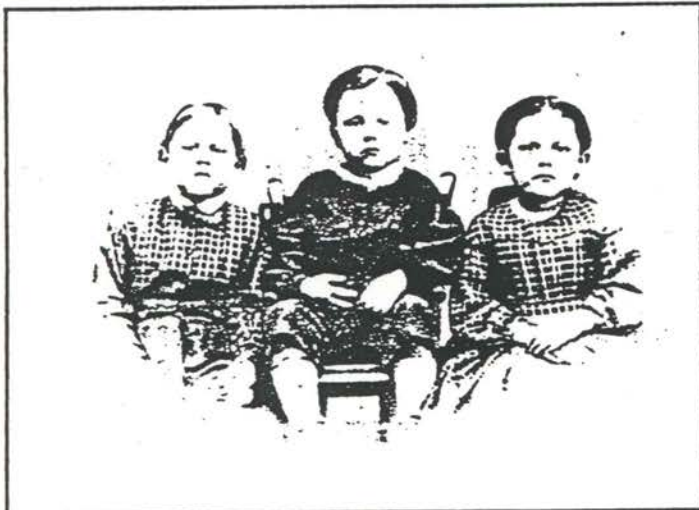
During the Battle of Gettysburg, 224 men of the 274 total strength of the 154th New York was attached to Colonel Charles Coster's Brigade on the afternoon of July 1, 1863. About 3:30pm this brigade of the 154th, the 27th PA and the 134th NY was ordered to double-quick through the town to cover the retreat of the First & Third Divisions of the 11th Corps. This was the same role they played just two months before at Chancellorsville when they lost 281 of 590 men in a bloody attempt to cover the rout of the same 11th Corps. As they hurriedly marched into town, the roar of war started to snowball and soon they were in the thick of musketry and artillery fire. Scarcely in position when the Confederate attack came...3,000 rebels in two brigades of General Jubal A. Early's Division...the Coster Brigade...only 936...took up their position along a fence marking the northern boundary of what was then the the brickyard; the 154th was in front of the kilns in the center of the line, the 134th was angled to the southeast along Kuhn's fenceline on the right and the 27th Pennsylvania was positioned on the left from a fence line up the slope to Stratton St.

The attack of Early's two brigades came very quickly and soon the Federal position was outflanked. The Coster Brigade was able to fire 6 to 9 shots apiece and were holding the center of the line when the Confederates swung around the Union right flank and opened a fierce enfilading fire on the Union line decimating the 134th and raking the line of the 154th. The 134th soon began to retreat leaving the 154th without any protection...Colonel Allen of the 154th ordered his men to fall back to their left. Most of the boys jumped up and began to run but 1st Lt. John Mitchell Cmdg. Co. C, thought his men were holding their own and he said "Boys, let's stay right here." After attempting to hold their position for a brief spell, Lt. Mitchell ordered his company to "Get out of here!" Past the brick kilns C Company ran, to the gateway on Stratton Street where they realized they were completely engulfed by Confederate troops and taken prisoner. Some managed to cut their way through the lines and escape but most were taken prisoner.

The final accounting of the regimental casualties of the 154th New York at Gettysburg was 6 enlisted men killed in action, 5 mortally wounded, 26 wounded and 161 taken prisoner. 3 officers were wounded and 11 were taken prisoner for a total of 212 of the 224 who went into battle on the afternoon of Wednesday July 1, 1863. Of the 172 members of the 154th New York who were taken prisoner at Gettysburg, 60 (35%) died in Confederate prisons: 39 at Belle Isle, 1 (officer) at Libby Prison in Richmond and 20 at Andersonville, Georgia.

After the Battle of Gettysburg concluded on the 3rd of July 1863, the horrifying task of burying the record numbers of dead began. It would takes weeks to get this job accomplished. On Stratton Street the

Sergeant Amos Humiston... continued...



The Photo Found in a Dead Soldier's Hand at Gettysburg

body of a dead Union soldier was found near York Street. Tightly grasped in the dead soldier's hand was an ambrotype likeness of three young children, and on them his last gaze was fixed as his soul had departed to its God. The soldier was buried on a lot of Judge Russell's near where he was found but the ambrotype was kept with the hope of identifying the soldier so that his family could be notified of his death and burial. The incident awoke the sympathies of Dr. J. Francis Bournes of Philadelphia, who borrowed the picture and had had thousands of copies (cartes de visites) made and widely circulated in hopes of finding the family. The story overwhelmed an already sad and tired northern nation. The war had seen hundreds of thousands of casualties already and there was no end in sight...both sides still possessed the will and the strength to fight and there would be much more killing before the fire of the Great Rebellion would be quenched.

A CDV of the "Children of the Battlefield" and a newspaper story reached Cattaraugus County in southwestern New York State. Legend has it that a man named Wing in Allegany recognized the photo as the children of his friend Amos Humiston and he was the one who notified Mrs. Philinda Humiston. The photo was an exact likeness of the very same ambrotype that she had sent to to her husband. The Amos Humiston incident resulted in a great landswell of public sentiment and fundraising with the sale of CDV's, copies of verse and sheet music about the "Children of the Battlefield"...the result of which was the establishment of the Soldier's Orphans Home in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania-home for a while after the Civil War, to the family of Orderly Sergeant Amos Humiston of Co. C, 154th New York Volunteer Infantry.

A short distance from the Orphanage, rested the remains of Amos Humiston, Grave No. 14, Row B of the New York Section of Graves of the National Cemetery in Gettysburg, and ten of his comrades of the 154th.

The Philadelphia Branch of the Sanitary Commission offered a prize for the best poem written about this touching Gettysburg incident. The award was made to James G. Clark of Dansville, NY for the following thrilling stanzas:

THE CHILDREN OF THE BATTLEFIELD

Upon the field of Gettysburg
The summer sun was high,
When freedom met her traitorous foe
Beneath a Northern Sky;
Among the heroes of the North,
Who swelled her grand array-
Who rushed, like mountain eagles
forth

From happy homes away,
There stood a man of humble fame,
A sire of children three,
And gazed, within a little frame,
their pictured forms to see;
And blame him not if, in the strife,
He breathed a soldier's prayer-
"Oh! Father, guard the soldiers wife,
And for his children care."

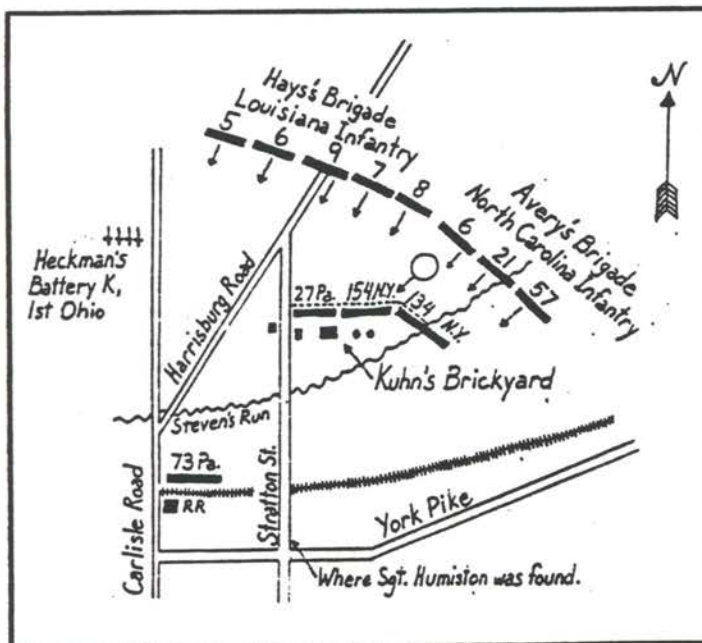
Upon the field of Gettysburg
When morning shone again,
The crimson cloud of battle burst
In streams of fiery rain;
Our legions quelled the awful flood
Of shot, and steel, and shell,
While banners mark'd with ball and
blood,
Around them rose and fell;
And none more nobly won the name
Of Champion of the Free,
Then he who pressed the little frame

Children of the Battlefield Poem Continued...

That held his children three;
And none were braver in the strife
Then he who breathed the prayer:
"Oh! Father, guard the soldier's wife
And for his children care."

Upon the field of Gettysburg
The full moon slowly rose,
She looked, and saw ten thousand
brows

All pale in death's repose;
And down beside a silver stream,
From other forms away.
Calm as a warrior in a dream,
Our fallen comrade lay;
His limbs were cold, his sightless eyes
Were fixed upon the three,
Sweet stars that rose in memory's skies
To light him o'er death's sea.
Then honored be the soldier's life,
And hallowed be his prayer;
"Oh! Father, guard the soldier's wife,
And for his orphans care."



Sergeant Amos Humiston Continued...

The 154th New York Volunteer Infantry has been remembered at Gettysburg on three separate dedication ceremonies over the past 130+ years. The first ceremony, a monument dedication, was held on July 1, 1890. Veterans, families and friends gathered to dedicate a 21 foot granite obelisk marking the sight of the Brickyard fight on the first day's battle. The Coster Avenue monument and small stones marking the left and right flank was the sight of speeches by Lt. Col. Allen and a formal address by Henry F. Whipple, whose father was captured at the brickyard and died at Andersonville Prison. The women sang "America" to open the ceremonies and "Rock of Ages" to close the solemn occasion.

On July 1, 1988 the Coster Avenue Mural was dedicated to the men of the Coster Brigade on the 125th anniversary of the battle. Mark Dunkleman, author of the "Hardtack Regiment" a regimental history of the 154th New York was the inspiration and driving force behind the creation of this massive work of art which portrays the climactic moment when the Confederates broke the line of the Coster Brigade at the Brickyard. The mural is painted on the back wall of a roofing company's adjacent warehouse, is 80 feet long, and was painted by Dunkleman and Rhode Island artist John Bjurman.

On July 3, 1993 yet another monument was dedicated...this one to the memory of Sergeant Amos Humiston. The dedication was held at 11am at the Gettysburg Fire Hall on Stratton Street, not far from Coster Avenue and near the spot where Humiston lay dead clutching the ambrotype of his three young children. The story that once touched the lives of thousands of Northern families will now again touch the hearts of those who visit the Gettysburg National Military Park. The monument to Humiston is a bronze plaque affixed to a boulder. The plaque bears a likeness of Humiston's children and facts about their father. The plaque was unveiled by Humiston descendants. This project was sponsored by the Amos Humiston Memorial Fund...a group of Gettysburg citizens moved by the tale of a dead soldier and father of three young orphans, and supported by the descendants of the 154th NY Vols and citizens of Portville, New York...the Humiston's home town. The Portville Central School Marching Band and reenactors of the 154th NYS Vols. performed a musical version of "The Children of the Battlefield". The Twin Tiers Civil War Roundtable made a financial donation to the Portville Marching Band to help in their fundraising efforts to underwrite the trip to Gettysburg so they could perform during the dedication of the Amos Humiston Monument.