

Soldiers' Monument

Hillington Cemetery

Excerpts of articles entitled

MIRROR OF BYGONE DAYS In Butternut Valley

Morris Chronicle, 1950

By Gertrude C. Sanderson

The Grand Army of the Republic was organized in Decatur, Ill., April 6, 1866. Its chief objects were to strengthen the fraternal spirit among the veterans of the Union armies in the Civil War, to perpetuate the memory of those who have died and to assist needy members and their widows and orphans.

George Kidder Post

The local Post was organized as the George Kidder Post No. 6, of Morris, and received its charter, and was mustered into the department of New York, March 29, 1872, by R. L. Fox, commander of E. D. Farmer Post, Oneonta, as mustering officer, assisted by the officers of that Post. It was named for George T. Kidder, 2nd Lieutenant, who enlisted in Co. C, 152nd Regiment Aug. 1862, and was killed at the Battle of the Wilderness. The charter members, numbering 14, were Parley W. McIntier, Daniel C. Winton, Wm. Southern, Delos L. Flagg, Albert L. Parcellé, Thomas Quinby, Peter S. Perine, James Southern, Orville A. Edwards, George Sheff, Leroy A. Hall, Ed. Hargrave, Amenzo Goodrich, and George Edwards.

The first participation of the G. A. R. George Kidder Post in public affairs was in connection with the unveiling of the Soldiers' Monument on Memorial Day, May 30, 1872.

The Post gradually lost members through death until, after 45 years as an organization, it surrendered its charter in 1917 and was mustered out.

In the Chronicle in 1912 just before Memorial Day there appeared this interesting bit of information.

50 Years Ago

"Fifty years ago this summer the 121st and 152nd regiments of the New York State Volunteers were organized for the Civil War. Into those regiments fifty years ago this summer ninety-eight young men went from Morris. These men were from 17 to 40 years of age. Have those of this generation ever thought what it would mean to this town right now if ninety-eight of our strongest and most robust substantial citizens should leave their farms, their shops, their stores, their school work and disappear from our midst? Well that's what happened fifty years ago this summer. And then the same thing happened at the same time in our adjoining towns of Pittsfield, New Lisbon, Butternuts, Laurens and Otego, making no less than 400 stalwart men and boys taken right out of our vicinity almost in a day. A year before half as many more had gone, and during the next year one-fourth as many more—from 800 to 1,000 men from half-dozen towns, the workers and bread-winners of the community—all gone. Again, think what it would mean now. Thoughts like this may help us to appreciate the awfulness of those dark days of '61 to '65."

No town sent a braver set of men to the bloody field of war for the Union than Morris. On her long roll of heroes are names of "good and true men" who counted life not dear, if by its sacrifice, our country could be secured.

THE VETERANS' REUNION

From The Morris Chronicle

Wednesday, August 30, 1899

Held at Morris, Aug. 22 and 23 – 200

Veterans in Line – 2,000 People

in attendance – Weather

Perfect – The Affair

a Success

The annual reunion of the 121st and 152nd Regiments N. Y. State Volunteers was held at Morris last Tuesday and Wednesday. The occasion was one that will long be remembered by Morris. It was an object lesson to our youth that ought never to be forgotten. Morris never saw in its midst so many scarred and maimed men as on this occasion, and never did we try to do honor to a gathering more worthy. The weather was made perfect by the heavy rains of the previous day. The reception of the old veterans began early on Tuesday, and it was a joy to onlookers to see old comrades meet and grasp hands, in many instances for the first time in thirty-six or more years. They gathered about in small groups all day recounting the past and living over again the days of '61 to '65. "Don't you remember?" could be heard on every side. About 5 p.m. enthusiasm was evoked as the tally-ho from Oneonta came rolling up Broad Street, drawn by four horses, a loud stage horn announcing its approach, loaded with G. A. R. veterans in charge of Commander J. M. Denton, and its colors flying. Behind came the Oneonta *Star Fife*, Drum and Bugle Corps.

THE CAMP FIRE

The banquet and camp fire was held in Kenyon's hall Tuesday evening. The women of our community had prepared a magnificent spread for our visitors in the hall parlor and one hundred veterans sat down at a time. It was a jolly scene, and happiness and good fellowship reigned supreme. In the meantime the hall was fast filling up, and at 8 o'clock, when the public exercises connected with the camp fire began, there was no standing room to spare. Our guests occupied the front seats, and on the platform were: Hon. Nathan Bridges, toastmaster, who presided; Capt. Andrew Davidson of Cooperstown, Capt. Holden and Capt. Fuller of Sherburne, Maj. Quinby of Morris, Revs. Blair of Whitney's Point, Fox and Leonard of Morris, and others.

Mr. Bridges opened the camp fire proceedings with a few interesting and happy remarks, punctured with reminiscences humorously put.

Music by the Fife and Drum Corps.

Prayer was offered by Rev. Mr. Fox.

Singing by a chorus of voices: "My Country, 'tis of Thee."

Captain Stephen Holden was the first speaker called out by the presiding officer. Captain Holden's talk was most interesting indeed. He referred feelingly to the past, spoke of Col. Richard Franchot, who organized the 121st Regiment, and was then a resident of Morris; also of some of the boys he met in the service from our town, and how bravely two of them, at least, met death for their country.

Captain Davidson was the next speaker. Morris people have a warm place for Captain Davidson, and he is a favorite with the old veterans, too.

Mr. Bridges then introduced Captain Fuller of Sherburne, as a man who left part of himself on a southern battlefield. As the gallant captain limped out and entered his address, it was very evident that whatever he had left down south he had brought his patriotism back with him, his love for the old flag and his loyalty to Uncle Sam, and still retained it.

Singing: "Marching Through Georgia."

Mr. Fox was introduced as "The small boy of the war days." He claimed not to be a son of a veteran but had married a girl whose father was. He spoke for a few minutes on what a small boy contributed to the war of the rebellion, and said he would have contributed much more had he been old enough.

John K. Tyler of Worcester spoke for the gallant 121st regiment, and he did it ably, for he had a promising subject. The 121st was in fifteen terrific battles during its service and lost a total of 226 men killed and died of wounds. More than one-half of all its members were killed, died of wounds or disease, or were wounded. It is believed that but one other regiment suffered such a percent of losses. It was the fighting regiment of the 6th corps. It lost 97 killed at Salem Heights alone.

James Roberts of Oneonta, a Third N. Y. cavalry man, was introduced by the toastmaster and responded in a humorous poem which much pleased the "old boys."

Rev. Mr. Leonard spoke on the great principles which called for the great sacrifices made in the Civil War. He spoke eloquently.

Edward Mansfield was introduced as a visiting veteran from the 27th Connecticut of the 2nd Army Corps (same as the 152nd) and a member of Admiral Foote Post of New Haven, Conn.

Solo by R. R. Ripley, "On, Comrades."

Mr. Blair was then introduced. He was given an ovation by the audience and spoke in his usual eloquent manner for about thirty minutes on "True Americanism," from the view-point of the son of a man who fell in battle as he was gallantly leading his company in a charge upon the enemy's works. It was near 11 o'clock when Mr. Blair finished speaking, and the president of the camp fire reluctantly announced adjournment, after the chorus sang, "The Star Spangled Banner."

WEDNESDAY'S PROCEEDINGS

Early in the morning our village presented a gala appearance, bunting and flags in profusion everywhere. New Berlin's excellent new band arrived about 9:30 and gave us a splendid quality of music the remainder of the day, alternating the time with the Oneonta Fife and Drum Corps, whose music stirred the martial spirit within all who heard it. By 11 o'clock as many as 2,000 people were about the corners of Main and Broad Streets, when Mr. Bridges, as president of the day, called the cast assemblage to order from the second balcony of the Kenyon House, in front of which the veterans and the crowd quickly gathered, to listen to the farther exercises of the reunion. Rev. Dr. Littlewood offered prayer, and Mr. Bridges delivered the address of welcome.

The address of welcome was responded to for the 152nd Regiment by Capt. Holden of Sherburne, who said in the course of his remarks that the attendance of the surviving members of the 152nd was the largest it had been at any reunion of recent

years. This being accounted for by the fact that several companies of this regiment were raised in this part of the county, and that several of its officers came from the Butternut valley. The captain spoke very pleasingly, as did the other speakers, of Morris and the splendid reception given to the old soldiers.

Captain Davidson in his usual vigorous, manly way responded for the 121st veterans, and spoke proudly of the great record made by his regiment and its gallant Col. Upton during its hard and continuous service in the field for three years.

At this point the president of the day announced the receipt of a telegram containing the news of the death of Comrade Lloyd Shaw at his home in Gilbertsville, and giving the hour of the funeral. Comrade Shaw was a member of the 121st.

Rev. N. B. Ripley was then introduced, the son of Sergeant Alden Ripley who died in Andersonville. Mr. Ripley's address was a thrilling and eloquent one, touching the heart because it came from the heart.

Rev. W. T. Blair, a great favorite with the old veterans, was received with applause and for thirty minutes held the vast throng spellbound by his eloquence.

The last speaker of the day was Clarence Davidson of Cooperstown, who spoke as a representative and officer of the Order of the Sons of Veterans.

THE PARADE

Immediately at the close of these exercises a line of march was formed for the parade, under the supervision of Lieut. E. C. Mather acting as marshall. The column was headed by two of the local committee, some of the officers of the village and town, and clergy and speakers in carriages. The New Berlin band came next at the head of the long line of blue coated veterans numbering about 200, and the Fife and Drum Corps heading the Morris Fire Co. Those veterans unable to walk occupied the tally-ho. The line of march was up Broad to Maple, to Church, to High, to Liberty and Grove, to Broad, to Lake, to Hargrave, to Main and down Main Street to the Town Hall, where dinner tickets were passed out to the veterans and they marched to the hotels to dinner. The like of this parade was never seen in Morris before, and down the cheeks of more than one person rolled unbidden tears as the line of blue passed by. It was a sight to stir the noblest impulses of every nature, and quicken the fires of patriotism in every heart.

After dinner came the breaking up of this pleasant reunion, the shaking of the hand of separation again, and a return home with hearts made happy by the associations of the two days' meetings, to look forward with anticipation to the return of a like occasion another year.