

**I'm Now In Rebeldom**



**New Paltz Soldiers in the Civil War**

*Presented by the Huguenot Historical Society  
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**“To Arms! To Arms! The life of the best government the world ever saw hangs trembling in the balance of war. The Crisis is now approaching when it is to be determined whether we shall have a united Country or a political ruin of dissevered States. To save the Nation from destruction and make the contest short and decisive, the President has called for three hundred thousand more volunteers.” (New Paltz Times, Aug 1, 1862)**

## **New Paltz in the Civil War**

During the Civil War, the towns of New Paltz, Lloyd, Gardiner, and Plattekill, contributed over 550 soldiers to the Northern Army. At least 100 never returned. These men, who fought and died to preserve the Union and to end slavery, experienced both the horrors and the glories of war. They served in battles such as Gettysburg, Fredericksburg, Cedar Creek, and Port Hudson and endured long marches, inclement weather, hunger, and illness. They also traversed wondrous southern landscapes and forged friendships that would last a lifetime. Those that returned home were revered as heroes.

The majority of the area's residents supported the war effort. Town governments raised taxes to provide new recruits with money. Newspapers urged men to enlist and scolded those who paid to exempt themselves from service. However, some were critical of President Lincoln's leadership, and others despaired over what they believed was unnecessary carnage and loss of life.

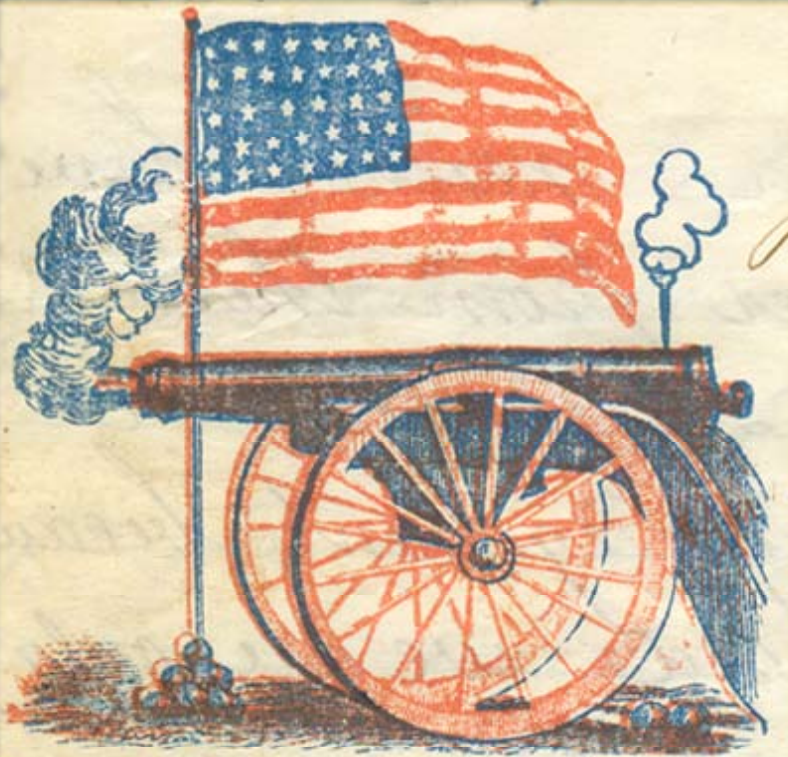
In addition to fighting men, the New Paltz area also contributed a small number of surgeons to the Union cause. Local physicians such as Solomon Hasbrouck, Abraham Eltinge Crispell, and John N. Miller treated wounds, amputated limbs, administered medicines, and closed eyelids. Operating in makeshift hospitals in captured Southern houses or in the open air, they often complained about unhealthy camp conditions which led to many unnecessary deaths and illnesses.



Desperate Bayonet Charge at Battle of Winchester, March 23, led by Gen Tyler.

Battle of Winchester Letterhead, James H. Ayres, September 23, 1862 *Ayres Family Letters* (1839-1900) MSS Collection. Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, NY

No.	Name	Age 1st July 1863	White or Colored	Profession or Occupation or Trade	Married OK Unmarried
1	Lewis Coak	24	White	Laborer	Single
2	Able Dayton Junr	30	"	Farmer	Married
3	Jacob Seperer	31	"	"	Single
4	Simon Terpenmyer	28	"	Laborer	Married
5	Patrick Browley	34	"	"	"
6	Ernis Lurois	25	"	"	Single
7	Peter D. Elting	23	"	"	"
8	Josiah Elting	21	"	"	"
9	Levi H. Freer	25	"	"	"
10	John Welch	24	Parson to Dutch Co	"	Married
11	Thomas Hartning	23	Quaker town	"	Single
12	Mathew McEntee	24	"	"	"



Your hands then, dear comrades, round liberty's altar  
United we swear by the souls of the brave  
Not one from the strong resolution shall falter  
To live independent or sink in the grave.

Cannon image from Union Army Letterhead, *Meeker G. Griffin Civil War Letters 1861-1862*. MSS Collection. Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, NY.

“You speak about you wish I could stay here all winter but I don’t for I want to get down to N. Orleans to spend the winter with the rebel gentry a Broadway life is not half grand enough for me I would not spend the winter among these shivering Yorkers.” Alexander Ayres, Dec. 31, 1862. MSS Collection. *Ayres Family Letters (1847-1871)*. MSS Collection. Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, NY.

“As long as I live I shall remember the lion courage displayed by the officers & men of our Regt. at this moment” Johannes LeFevre, Harrisburg, VA, to father Josiah P. LeFevre, New Paltz, Sept. 26, 1864. *Peter and Josiah P. LeFevre Family Papers (1703-1905)*. MSS Collection. Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, NY.

“i am in Baton Rouge...We have our quarters in a schoolhouse and they have got a 20 pounder standing in front of our quarters...we are the Boyes that feers no wons....” Henry Hess, Co. E. 156<sup>th</sup>, Baton Rouge. *Selab Schoonmaker Family Papers (1841-1917)*. MSS Collection. Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, NY.

“In the several engagements before Richmond, the Ellsworth Regiment [44<sup>th</sup>] was in the thickest of the fight, and among the bravest of the brave. Not a man shrank from his post as the thinned ranks of the regiment fully attest.” *New Paltz Times*, July 11, 1862.



Photograph of Dr. Solomon Hasbrouck,  
ca. 1863. *Josiah P. LeFevre Photograph  
Album*. MSS Collection. Huguenot  
Historical Society, New Paltz, NY.

Photograph of Dr. Abraham Eltinge Crispell,  
ca. 1862-1865. *Abraham Eltinge Crispell Family  
Papers and Photographs (1860s - ca. 1900)*. MSS  
Collection. Huguenot Historical Society, New  
Paltz, NY.



P. A. L. Fe



Photograph of Peter LeFevre, 1860s.  
*Josiah P. LeFevre Photograph Album.*  
MSS Collection. Huguenot Historical  
Society, New Paltz, NY.



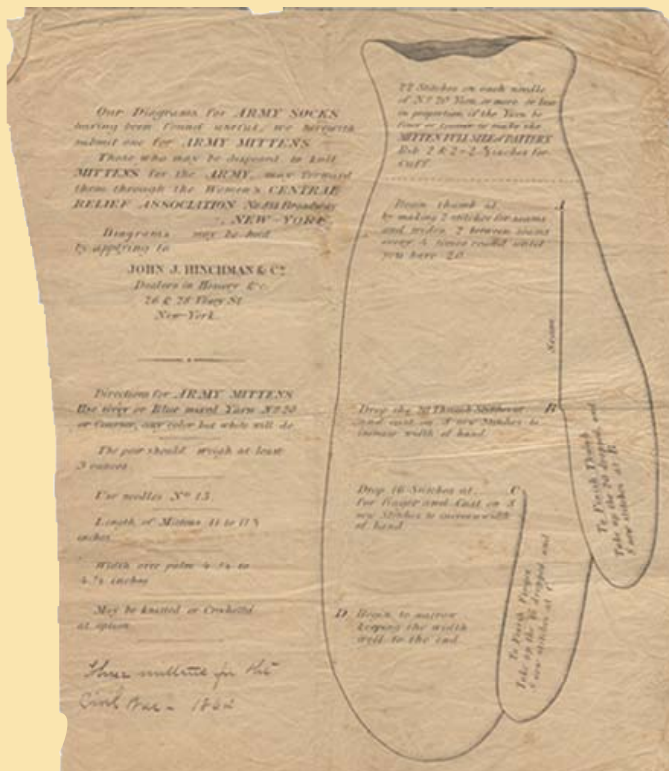
Three photographs of unidentified Civil War soldiers. Photograph Collection. Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, NY.

## **Women and the War Effort**

During the war, New Paltz women of all ages sought to “make war’s horrors a little less horrible” for those who had enlisted. The women formed sophisticated organizations such as the Sanitary Commission, Women of America, Soldiers Aid Society, and the Volunteers Aid Society to help the soldiers. From this veritable army of supporters, the grateful soldiers received letters and items such as mittens, quilts, socks, pillows and cases, mittens, socks, medicine, and food. By war’s end, the women found that their successful efforts had empowered them to become useful and productive members of society. In the following decades, women used these newfound skills to further a variety of charitable, and political, and religious causes.

Women also bore the pain of losing their beloved husbands, sons, and brothers in battle or to illness. While no words can ever convey the despair felt over such losses, items such as the Thanksgiving Diary of Jane LeFevre and the photograph of the battlefield grave of James H. Ayres provide us with grim reminders of the terrible consequences of warfare.

Instructions for sewing mittens and socks promoted relief efforts and helped to ensure the quality of items sent to soldiers. The patterns were typically published in newspapers and magazines and targeted women audiences.



Mitten pattern, 1860s. Courtesy of Carla Lesh, Marlborough, New York.



“Worthy of Note – We notice among the contributors to the Soldiers Aid Society of this place a pair of Stockings knit by Mrs. Maria DuBois of Springtown. She is 83 years of age, and says that she is willing to keep her needle at work as long as her eyesight is spared and a soldier is in need.” *New Paltz Times*, Jan 24, 1862.

“Our young ladies are proving, day by day, that the Women of America are just as industrious, just as patriotic as their ancestors of the Revolution. Our Sewing Societies are excellent schools for the learning of the useful accomplishment of knitting and sewing and there are few young ladies about New Paltz who can do neither. Our bachelor friends will please make a note of this.” *New Paltz Times*, Jan. 24, 1862.





MRS. C. J. ACKERT

**Eliza Ackert, newspaper editor**

One extraordinary local woman was Eliza Ackert, who single-handedly ran the New Paltz Times newspaper while her husband soldiered in the South. After the war, Eliza opened a women's fashion store to help supplement her family's income. Eliza also became active in the New Paltz Ladies' Aid Society and the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Her death in 1916 was noted in the New York Times, which dubbed her the "Oldest Woman Editor."

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ESTABLISHED 1860.

## NEW PALTZ TIMES,

CHARLES J. ACKERT, Editor and Proprietor.

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The New Paltz TIMES office and residence.



Dr. David Wurts house, TIMES office, Jacob M. Hasbrouck's store in 1866.

Photographs of Eliza Ackert, the New Paltz Times Office Building, and advertisements for the newspaper and her fashion store. (Eliza Ackert, *History of the New Paltz Times 1860-1909*. Haviland-Heidgerd Historical Collection, Elting Memorial Library, New Paltz, NY)

## **Soldier's Views of the South**

The Huguenot Historical Society preserves over one thousand local documents and objects relating to the Civil War. While official records provide detailed information about each soldier's service, home life, and medical condition, it is the soldiers' letters home that most capture the imagination. The Society owns several hundred such letters written by dozens of local soldiers and officers.

One topic that the soldiers never tired of writing about was the unique physical geography and culture of the South. Many of the New Paltz boys were stationed in Louisiana's Cajun country for the purpose of patrolling the lower Mississippi and its tributaries. The troops saw Cajun country as a strange and exotic world filled with even stranger people. The following quotations help to convey the New Paltz soldiers' fascination with their new surroundings amidst the devastating backdrop of war.

To view online images of landscape and architecture in Louisiana during the late nineteenth century, please visit the website of the LOUISiana Digital Library Collections Online at:

<http://louisdl.louislibraries.org/OMSA/Pages/home.html>

Of particular relevance on this website is the collection of the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, which contains online images of beautiful landscape paintings by William H. Buck (1840-1888), George David Coulon (1822-1904) and others.

“We passed several bayous, which, if they were in the north, would swarm with commerce; they are wide and deep, and ought to be thronged with vessels of light draught, and their shores dotted with villages; but it is not so. You well know the reason – SLAVERY curses the land. Everywhere along the route we saw the works of the damning spirit of the rebels. The track had been torn up, the bridges all burned, and long rows of iron work, wheels, &c., told where the rolling stock of the road had been given to flames. ” Charles J. Ackert, Algiers, Louisiana, published in the *New Paltz Times*, May 1, 1863.

“We are stationed  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile from the village of Culpepper and the tin roofs and steeples glisten before me in the sun of this quiet Sabbath day. The village is as large as Milton and scattered about as much, but it is not like any northern village, the streets are narrow crooked lanes running in every direction, but the houses are large and handsome and a large number [of] them are brick, - adjoining almost every house there is 3 or 4 one story wooden buildings for negro slaves. ...There are a few old men left in the town, but the lady rebels all remain and they walk about the streets with all their gay fixings on perfectly fearless.” John N. Miller, near Culpepper, VA, Sept 27, 1863. *Lewis Coe Bevier Civil War Letters (1862-1922)*. MSS Collection. Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, NY.



Dec 29<sup>th</sup> 1862  
Camp Mansfield La  
Dear Sister  
I now am in  
rebellion I am no longer  
in camp at Vivston I  
stood on guard last night  
with powder and ball in my  
gun here is war rebels live  
we halt a man 2 and if  
he does not stop at that then  
we fire  
we set sail from Key West  
on the 23 instead of to ship  
Island as we thought we would  
we sail up the Mississippi  
river until we come to  
New Orleans there we stop  
at the wharf then called for  
this place it is about 3  
miles above New Orleans the  
bars are from this place

Letter, Lindsay Howell, Camp Mansfield, Louisiana to sister Elizabeth Howell, Highland, NY, Dec. 29, 1863; and photograph, ca. 1863. *John B. Howell Family Papers (1816-1904)*. MSS Collection. Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, NY.

“I now am in rebledom...this is a splendid country...the land is smooth and level ever thing is a growing here Oarnges groin here as plenty as apples up there the only drawback is that it is unhelthay here...wee had a splendid sail up the Mississippi the bank was lined with Oarnges trees full of Oarnges and feilds of sugar cane all green and nise...I have often thought that I would like to see neu Orleans and now my wish is gratified the City is a nice plase and this is a nice Country And I would like to live here if the rebles was not quite as plentiful” Lindsay Howell, Camp Mansfield, Louisiana to sister Esther Howell, Lloyd, NY, Dec. 29, 1862. *John B. Howell Family Papers (1816-1904)*. MSS Collection. Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, NY.

“...dear reader of the TIMES, I wish you could be with us now for a few hours, to take a peep at Old Dame Nature as she appears about our camp. I think it would be an agreeable change for you who are, no doubt, now looking upon snow and ice, and listening to the wailing of the wintry winds, to lift your eyes and see what we soldiers of the 156<sup>th</sup> behold; for gentle, lovely Spring has waved her life-inspiring wand, and the vegetable world has arisen from its slumbers; and is arraying itself in beautiful robes of green. The earth is everywhere carpeted with grass, while spring flowers and the white and red clover, add to its fragrance and beauty...Yet we long for the snows and frosts of our own dear Northern homes, for the glad faces of those we love would lend its bleak scenes a beauty which no southern clime can ever equal.” Charles J. Ackert, Carrollton, published in the *New Paltz Times*, Mar 20, 1863.

## **Veteran's Organizations**

The Civil War was a new type of war. Unlike previous wars, where local communities raised their own military companies, the Civil War units often included men from distant localities. These men developed unique bonds of friendship. Veteran's organizations such as the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), sought to strengthen these friendships. They also provided aid to war veterans, widows, and orphans. At its peak in 1890 the GAR boasted over 400,000 members. Its last member died in 1956 at the age of 109.

The "Eltinge Post 212" chapter of the GAR was established at New Paltz in 1883. Two of the organization's most prominent leaders were Charles J. Ackert and William H. D. Blake. In honor of the dead, they erected a monument at the New Paltz Rural Cemetery and held memorial services on "Decoration Day," the forerunner of Memorial Day.

The Eltinge Post disbanded in 1919, at which time they donated their American Flag and several swords and firearms to the Huguenot Historical, Patriotic and Monumental Society, the predecessor of today's Huguenot Historical Society. Several of these items are on display in this current exhibit.



Yearly encampments, reunions, and directories such as these provided veterans with opportunities to catch up with old friends and recount their wartime experiences.

GAR reunion postcard, 1913. Lewis Coe Bevier Civil War Letters (1862-1922) MSS Collection Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, NY

# GRAND ARMY



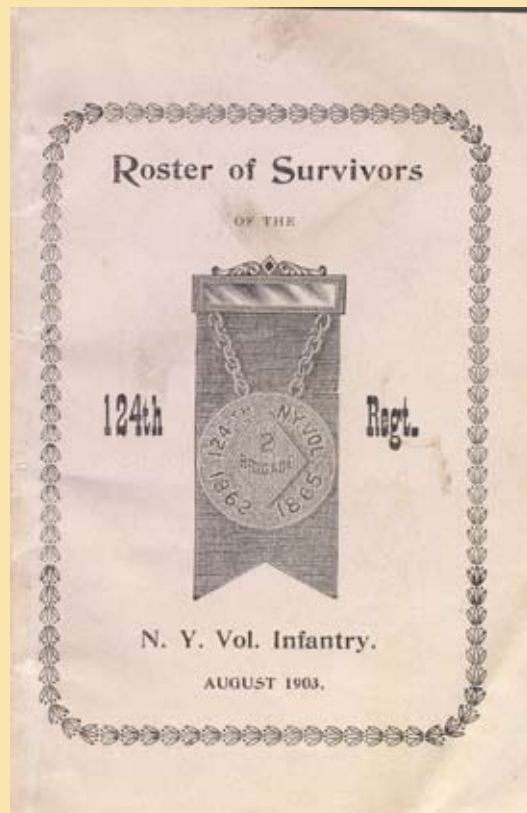
## of the REPUBLIC forty-fifth National Encampment



AUGUST 21-26 -1911  
ROCHESTER, N.Y.

Cover of GAR Forty-Fifth National Encampment pamphlet, 1911. *New Paltz Chapter of the GAR "Eltinge Post 212" Records (1861-1923)*. MSS Collection. Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, NY.

Cover of pamphlet, Roster of Survivors, 124<sup>th</sup> Regiment of New York Volunteer Infantry, 1903. *New Paltz Chapter of the GAR "Eltinge Post 212" Records (1861-1923)*. MSS Collection. Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, NY.



# CATCH THE STEP AS WE DID IN DAYS OF OLD.

C. A. MURCH.

(Men's Voices.)

WALTER HOWE JONES.

*Moderate march time rhythmically.*



1. Comrades, hark! the drums are beat - ing, And I hear th
2. How the calves and tur-keys scampered And the mut-to
3. Comrades, come! we'll march to-geth - er As we did in



notes are tell-ing Of "The girl I left be - hind." Tho't  
Bil - ly's ar - my Of the boys in blue appeared: As we m  
to a country Where our leader's gone be - fore; I



## RALLYING SONG

—OF THE—  
**TENTH LEGION, N. Y. S. V.**

BY A. D. DUBOIS.

I.

We have come from the mountains—  
We have come from the mountains  
We have come from the mountains  
Of the old Empire State.  
With the Stars and Stripes above us,  
And the prayers of those who love us,  
Every single soldier of us  
Is prepared for any fate.

II.

We have left our cheerful quarters  
By the Hudson's smiling waters,  
And our wives and sons and daughters,  
For the fierce and bloody fight.  
But they need not deplore us,  
With the foe encamped before us,  
For the God who watches o'er us  
Will himself protect the right.

The postwar sentiments of the veterans were expressed in songs such as these composed by GAR members. *New Paltz Chapter of the GAR "Eltinge Post 212" Records (1861-1923).* MSS Collection. Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, NY.

SOUTHERN DIVISION.

*A. C. W.* Ex'r.

*CV* No. *582, 524* Department of the Interior,  
*Jacob Wynkoop*  
*Co. K 20 Reg't W S CV*  
BUREAU OF PENSIONS,  
Washington, D. C., *Mar 23, 1901*

SIR: To aid this Bureau in preventing any one falsely personating you, or otherwise committing fraud in your name, or on account of your service, you are required to answer fully the questions enumerated below.

You will please return this circular under cover of the inclosed envelope which requires no postage.  
Very respectfully,

*Jacob Wynkoop*  
*New Paltz*  
*New Paltz, N.Y.*

*A. C. W.*  
Commissioner.

1. Where were you born? Answer. *New Paltz Ulster Co. N.Y.*
2. Where did you enlist? Answer. *Kingston Ulster Co. N.Y.*
3. Where had you lived before you enlisted? Answer. *New Paltz Ulster Co. N.Y.*
4. What was your occupation? Answer. *Carpenter*
5. Were you a slave? If so state the names of all former owners, and particularly the name of your owner at the date of your discharge.
6. Where were you discharged?
7. Where have you lived since your discharge?  
*New Paltz*
8. What is your present occupation? Answer. *not able to work for pay*
9. What is your height? *5* feet, *4 1/2* inches. The color of your skin? *Brown*

Detail from Jacob Wynkoop Pension Record, 1901 (National Archives, Washington D. C.). The GAR used its influence to ensure that the Federal Government fulfilled its promise to provide pensions to deserving veterans such as Jacob Wynkoop, a respected Black veteran from New Paltz



Monuments to fallen soldiers and gravestones of veterans provide important reminders about the impact of the Civil War on the New Paltz Community. The Monument depicted here was erected in the New Paltz Rural Cemetery in 1871.



Gravestone of Peter Eltinge (1841-1877) of the 156<sup>th</sup> Regiment of New York Volunteers. New Paltz Rural Cemetery.



Grave of James H. Ayres  
Nov 4 5-2d Ill Ill

## The Soldiers Grave

These dear dark eyes are closed forevermore  
Not all a mother's prayer, his life could save  
He sleeps upon a far off southern shore  
And southern winds sweep gently over his grave.

He sleeps, the Stars and Stripes upon his breast  
Above the brave heart that has ceased to beat.  
So loved, so early lost, there let him rest,  
Unharm'd by winter's cold or summer's heat.

Photograph of James H. Ayer's battlefield grave and letter informing his mother of his death. *Ayres Family Letters (1847-1871)*. MSS Collection. Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, NY.

“this war is a terrible affair it is the largest rebellion that has been enunciated yet on the face of the earth it will take a tremendous long time to settle it makes our streets desolate it takes our young men by thousands to never return again it also makes mourning in thousands of families.” Adolphus Benedict, New York to “cousin Stake,” Lloyd Sept 9, 1862. *Ayres Family Letters (1847-1871)*. MSS Collection. Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, NY.

“I saw the battle field it was a hard looking sight dead bodies laying around in every direction...I think the war will soon be over I hope so at any rate I am getting tired of it for my part I wish I was where I was three years ago to day I think I should stay there I would like to see you again...tell Alexander not to enlist.” James H. Ayres, Camp Benton, St. Louis, Feb. 9, 1862. *Ayres Family Letters (1847-1871)*. MSS Collection. Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, NY.

“this war will be a lesson to A great many boys me for one included if I get out of this alive I will know better another time.” James H. Ayres, March 26, 1862. *Ayres Family Letters (1847-1871)*. MSS Collection. Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, NY.

## **In Memory of my fallen comrades**

Rest on, my comrades brave and true  
Neath the fostering folds of the star[r]ly blue  
You have wovm your cause at a terrible price  
Your dear heart's blood was the sacrifice.

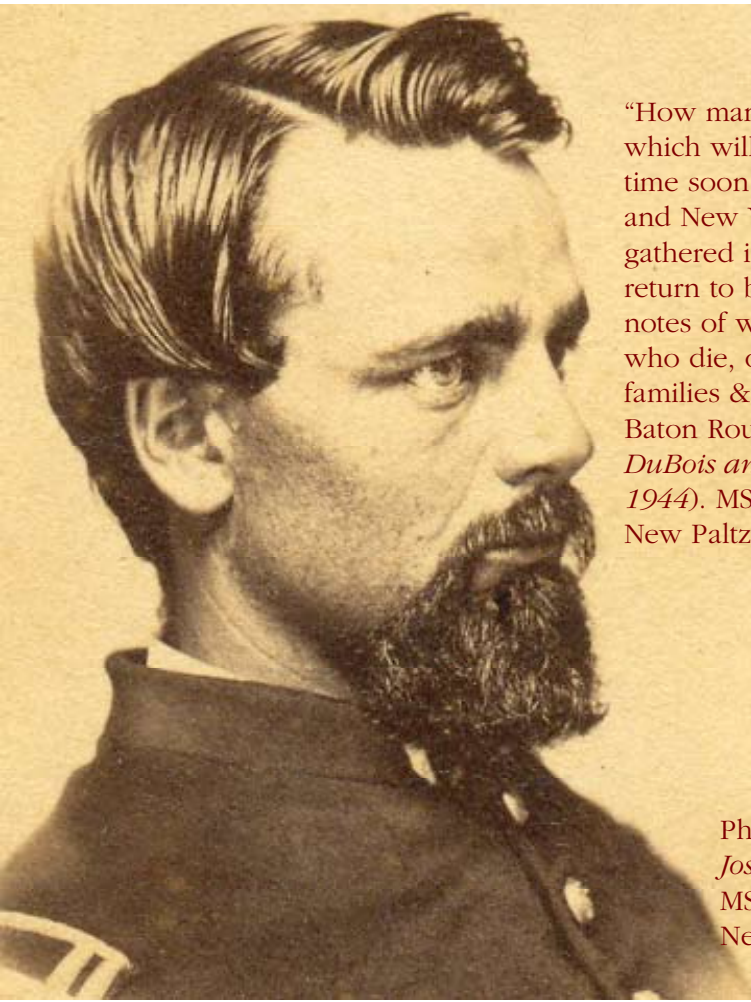
When the shrieking fife and turbulent drum  
Proclaimed to the world that war had come  
You forsook your home to don the blue  
In your country's cause to die or do.

When Davis with his rebel crew  
Hauled down the flag so dear to you  
You caught the standard from his hand  
To plant it firm on sea and land.

'Twas you, my comrades true and brave  
Who struck the shackles from the slave  
Five million freemen bless the land  
That ransomed this, their native land.

This day the graves we decorate  
Of those who met a warrior's fate  
We'll strew sweet flowers, white and red  
O'er the grassy mounds were sleep our dead;  
Nourish them well with tears and dew  
Neath heav'n's canopy of azure blue.

Poem, "In Memory of my fallen comrades," composed by Richard Abijah Schoonmaker, 147<sup>th</sup> New York Volunteers for Decoration Day (Memorial Day) ca. 1870. *Richard Abijah Schoonmaker Papers (1891)*. MSS Collection. Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, NY.



“How many a family circle had its vacant Seats, which will never more be filled! O may the glad time soon come, when, as each thanksgiving and New Year rolls round, families may again be gathered in unbroken circles and the absent ones return to be called away no more, by the bugle notes of war! We in the army do not miss those who die, or are killed, one tenth as much as their families & friends do at home.” Johannes LeFevre, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Dec 12, 1863. *Solomon DuBois and Rachel Elting Family Papers (1812-1944)*. MSS Collection. Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, NY.

Photograph of Johannes LeFevre. *Peter and Josiah P. LeFevre Family Papers 1703-1905*). MSS Collection. Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, NY.

“1864 Nov 24 Thanksgiving Day appointed by the President, Abram Lincoln. .... There are here for dinner, Father, Mother, Auntie, Isaac, Moses, Simon, myself. Peter and Ralph are at Mumn, Terreborne Parish, Louisiana. Johannes is dead. His place at the Thanksgiving reunions will be forever vacant. He died at Winchester, VA Wednesday Nov 20. He was buried last Friday.” Jane LeFevre, *Memoranda of Thanksgivings in the Family 1864-1907*, Haviland-Heidgerd Historical Collection, Elting Memorial Library, New Paltz, NY



Photograph of Jane LeFevre, 1860s. *Josiah P. LeFevre Photograph Album*. MSS Collection. Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, NY.

**“Thank God war is hell, lest we grow too fond of it”  
General Robert E. Lee**

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Eric Roth, Archivist/Librarian, Huguenot Historical Society  
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