

[Stebbins, George Washington]

Military Rites for G. Stebbins, Civil War Vet.

George Washington Stebbins, oldest life-long resident of Homer Village and one of the four remaining members of the original 1,200 who fought for the Union cause in the Civil War under the banners of the 125th New York Volunteer Regiment, was buried yesterday, Thursday afternoon, with military honors in the Stebbins plot in Greenwood cemetery. Mr. Stebbins died Tuesday.

There was a service at the Stebbins home at 10 William street, conducted by the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the services at the grave were conducted by the members of the Burns-McAuliffe Post of the American Legion. Many Homer fans, to whom the figure of a short, stocky and cocky little veteran had been a familiar figure for many years, attended the rites. The floral tributes were numerous. The Rev. G. H. Ulrich, pastor of the Universalist church, Cortland, officiated.

Mr. Stebbins passed quietly at 10:30 P.M. Monday night. Mr. Arthur J. Stebbins, his son, with whom he has lived for many years, was at his bedside. The veteran suffered a slight spell later diagnosed as a heart attack while he was returning from the barbershop "shave day" to Mr. Stebbins which meant that he must make a pilgrimage to the barber and get slicked up for the weekly Sunday ride he took with his son and Mrs. Arthur Stebbins.

He was stricken on James Street and sat down on the porch of C. C. Stevens. A telephone call summoned Art, who took his father home. Dr. Brahman advised a rest. Mr. Stebbins thereafter was much of the time in bed.

Mr. Stebbins was born in Homer Dec. 9th, 1845, one of the five children of Almus and Palmyra Stebbins. His father owned a large brewery located on what became known as Brewery Hill, which land he also owned. He was working for his father as a wagon driver when the call to arms came and he enlisted in Company E, 185th New York Volunteers on Sept. 3, 1864. The recruiting officer here had headquarters in the rooms over where Pratt's Shoe Store now is located.

He went through many battles and skirmishes and was finally wounded in the left leg by gunshot. He used to tell the story of being left on the battlefield for dead for many hours. He was subsequently rescued and mustered out with his company May 30th, 1865, at the close of the war. One of his favorite stories was that of his shaking hands with Abraham Lincoln the very day the immortal President was assassinated. Lincoln visited the hospital where Stebbins was

[Stebbins, George Washington]

recovering from his wounds, the story went, and as he was leaving he grasped Stebbins hand among others, and the Homer boy watched him go down the road.

Two years after the close of the war, Mr. Stebbins with Hole Pierce, Bert Stedman and others threw in his lot with W. H. Brockway who was starting a wagon shop in a building back of what is now Frank Baker's home in James St. He remained with the Brockway establishment as foreman of the woodworking shop until the plant was moved to Cortland and after a year's work down there he retired. That was nineteen years ago.

He was married July 15, 1868 to Sarah E. Hoyt, of Homer. They had five children, all of whom have passed on except Arthur J. Stebbins. Mrs. George Stebbins died five years ago. He is survived by three granddaughters: Mrs. Robert M. Perkins, of S. Otselic; Mrs. Harold Merrill, of Narbeth, Pa., and Mrs. DeVer Peek, of Homer, and eight great-grandchildren, besides his son.

Mr. Stebbins had many things to live for. He took a keen delight in baseball and rarely missed a game. He was much interested in the Homer Town Team. He rarely missed a band concert on The Green. His one ambition was to live to the "ninety mark".

In his early days, he was a lover of fine horses and during those more graceful times was rarely without a good horse. He kept one of his carriages, the one Brockway built especially for him, until the end. It still stands in his barn. He was very proud of the apple trees at the back of the house which he set out many years ago and he delighted to show them to visitors. Only last Sunday while he was supposed to be resting he wandered into the back yard and his family found him there under the apple trees.

On August 8th, he made his last pilgrimage to the reunion of his regiment held at the Onondaga Hotel in Syracuse. There were only four left. Last year there were eleven. Now there are three.

The Cortland Democrat, Cortland NY, Fri. 1 Feb 1929

Transcribed on 16 Nov 2023 by Karen E. Dau of East Rochester, NY