

[White, Alvin]

COLONEL ALVIN WHITE

The tragic circumstances of the death of Colonel ALVIN WHITE aggravate the sorrow which the loss of such a man would cause throughout our community. From the midst of health and usefulness, he fell without warning into the cold current which sooner or later engulfs us all. He was known to so many, and so well esteemed by all, that the tidings of his fatal accident came like a personal affliction into many circles.

Colonel WHITE was born in Goshen, Mass., April 6, 1803, and had the advantages of a good education. The earliest account we have of him in Utica is in 1835, when he was a clerk with Jones & Barnum, in the fancy goods trade. He was afterwards at different times, in business as a grocer, but will be best remembered as landlord of the Mansion House from 1841 to 1845, and then of the Central hotel for a dozen years or more. More recently he has been connected with the clothing trade.

The whig victory of 1840 made Colonel WHITE weighmaster on the Erie canal. He was under sheriff by appointment of Sheriff DANFORTH, after the war, for a brief period was inspector in the custom house; and again assistant assessor of internal revenue here under assessor HALLEY.

Colonel WHITE always had strong taste for military affairs. He became the third captain of the Utica Citizens' Corps, and also commanded the Light Guards in the prime of that organization. When therefore the dark days of 1862 came upon us, he had not only patriotism to offer, but military training to contribute to his country's support. When at that public meeting in Utica, in 1862, Colonel WHITE was the first to volunteer, his years and his gray hair added eloquence to his words, and his example insured [ensured] the prompt raising of the regiment which became the 117th of New York, the famous Fourth Oneida. ALVIN WHITE was mustered in as captain of Company A, and was promptly promoted to be lieutenant colonel, under General W. R. PEASE, who as colonel had directed the work of organization. After General PEASE'S health failed, the command of the regiment devolved upon Colonel WHITE: his commission as colonel dates May 1, (18??). At Drewry's Bluff on the Bermuda line, at Cold Harbor, at the capture of Petersburg Heights, and in the siege of that city, he commanded the regiment. He was a good disciplinarian, thoroughly considerate of his men, but expecting every man to do his duty. He was personally brave, and hardly understood the absence of courage in others. He had none of the arts of scheming for promotion, but devoted himself to performing his duty as a soldier as well as he could. And those who knew his record, find no stain upon it. At Drewry's Bluff, he was wounded on the left shoulder. In July, 1864, the exposure of the field

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and the trenches affected his health, and he was compelled to resign his commission and come home. He was then nearly three score years of age, and yet he left the service with regret and only because failing health forced him to do so. The last assemblage he attended was the reunion of his own 117th, last Monday evening, and when, long after midnight, he started homeward, his quick, elastic step, for the walk of two miles in sleet and snow, neither indicated seventy-two years of age, nor the nearness of the angel of death.

Upon its organization Colonel WHITE became steward Faxton Hospital, a position for which he was admirably fitted, by his kindness of heart as well as his experience in hotel-keeping.¹ He has justified this appointment by his management, and in his death the hospital suffers a loss hard to repair. In his religious connections the deceased was a Universalist, and for many years has been one of the leaders in that church. His wife [Nancy Greenman White] died last spring. Mrs. GEORGE PEARSON is his sister. The daughters who survive him are Mrs. J. B. [Fannie] RICE of Utica [and] Mrs. NICHOLS of Brooklyn.

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¹ He came to his death by falling through an elevator shaft while attempting to make a repair.