

Oneonta's Civil War Monument: Remember the Fallen

Frank R. Antonucci



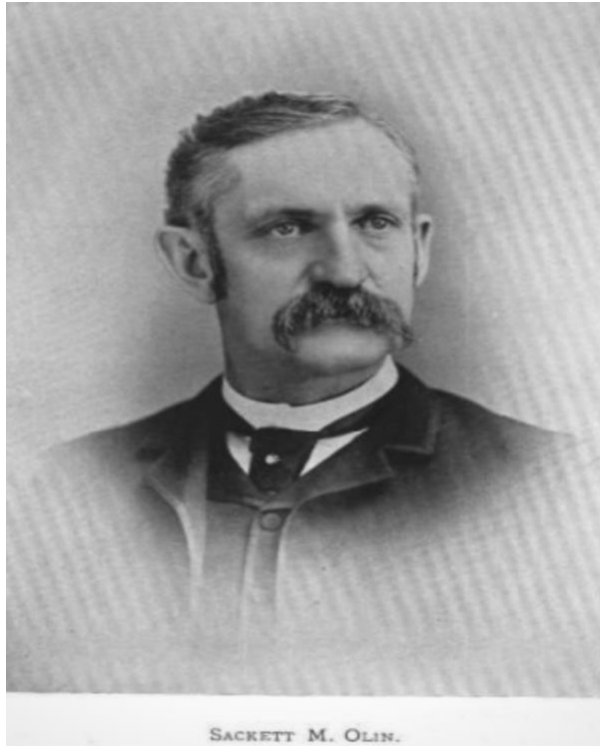
Frank Antonucci, 2023

The Civil War Soldiers' Monument, Riverside Cemetery, Oneonta, New York lists twenty-seven soldiers who gave their lives in preserving the Union. There is an inscription on one side: "Soldiers of Oneonta who lost their lives in defense of their country against the great Rebellion of 1861." The names on the monument are being etched away with time, and many Oneontans are unaware of its existence as Memorial and Veterans Day celebrations are conducted at the Veteran's Memorial Walk in Neahwa Park. The sacrifice and bravery of the men on this Civil War memorial need to be remembered for who they were and how they died.

On May 27, 1870, the Riverside Cemetery Association appropriated \$240 for the foundation of the Soldiers' Monument, and through popular subscription the Soldiers' Monument Association contracted with Steven J. Gile for \$1000 to build the memorial. Gile was a marble cutter from Oneonta who built and erected the 25 ft. cenotaph which was dedicated in January 1871. Steven Gile (1833-1910) is also buried at Riverside Cemetery.

The monument lists some of the twenty-five battles Oneontans fought in: Five Forks, Gettysburg, Antietam, Wilderness, Cold Harbor, Williamsburg, Fair Oaks, and Fisher's Hill.

Captain Sackett Olin of Oneonta organized 121st NY Co **K**, and Captain John S. Kidder of Laurens organized 121st NY Co **I**.



*Biographical Review Otsego County, 1893*¹

Sackett Olin organized Company K of the 121st NY Regiment for only a short time due to severe illness and was discharged on December 27, 1862. He died in 1903, and is buried at Glenwood Cemetery, Oneonta, New York.

¹ the.usgenweb.org/ny/Otsego/index.htm



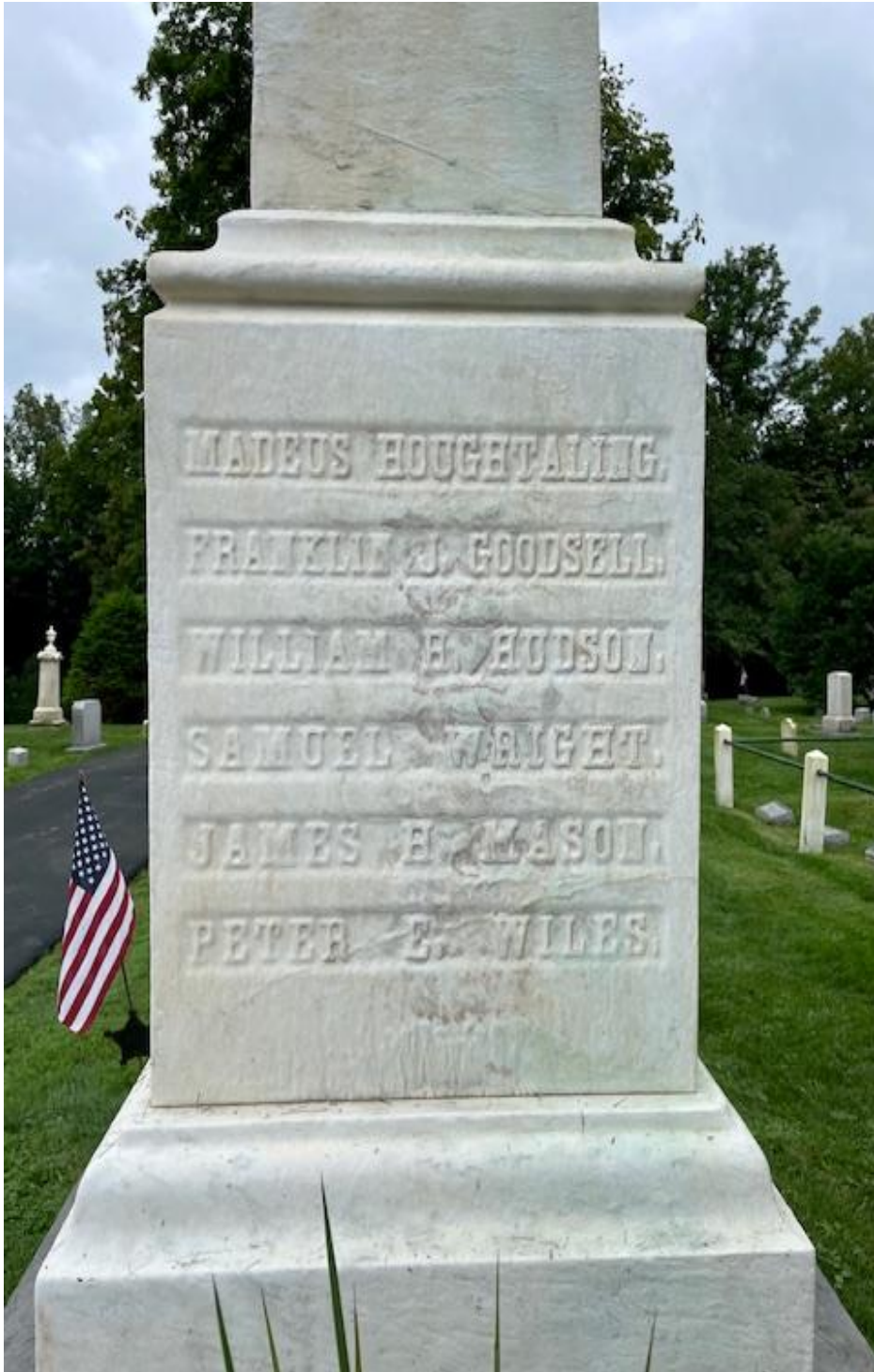
LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN S. KIDDER
Best, *History of the 121st NYS Infantry*, Chicago, 1921²

John S. Kidder lead Company I of the 121st Regiment. He was with his regiment throughout the war with a distinguished record. He mustered out in June 1865 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He died in 1905 and is buried at Laurens Cemetery, Laurens, New York.

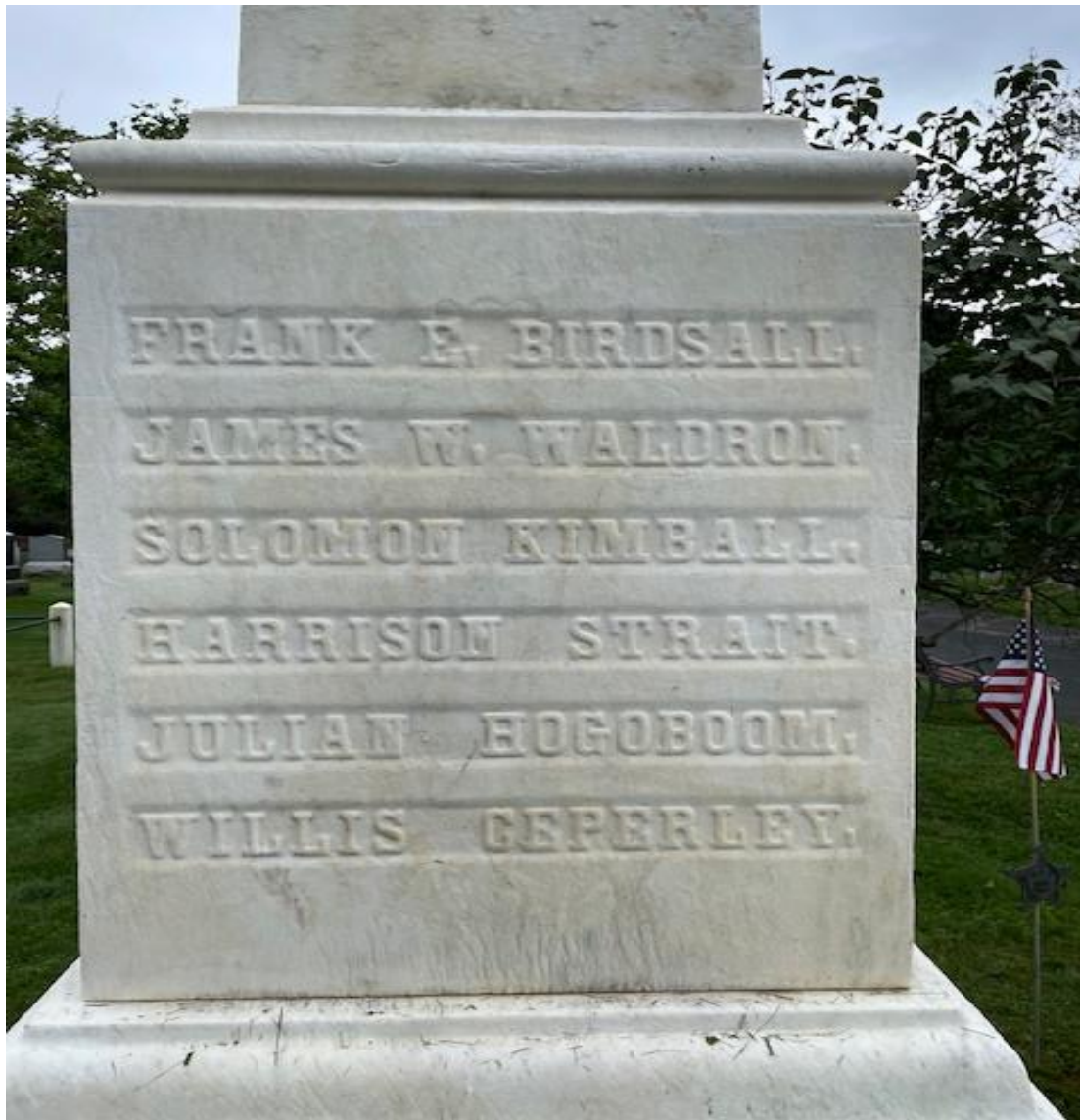
Monument Inscriptions

Of the twenty-seven men engraved on the monument twelve were killed in action, twelve died of disease and five in prison camps; three of the twenty-seven men died from debilitating injuries after the war. The 121st NY Infantry has more men listed than any other regiment with twelve men; five were killed at the Salem Church, Virginia battle on May 3, 1863, where in a devastating daytime assault on the enemy the regiment lost sixty percent of its men in twenty minutes.

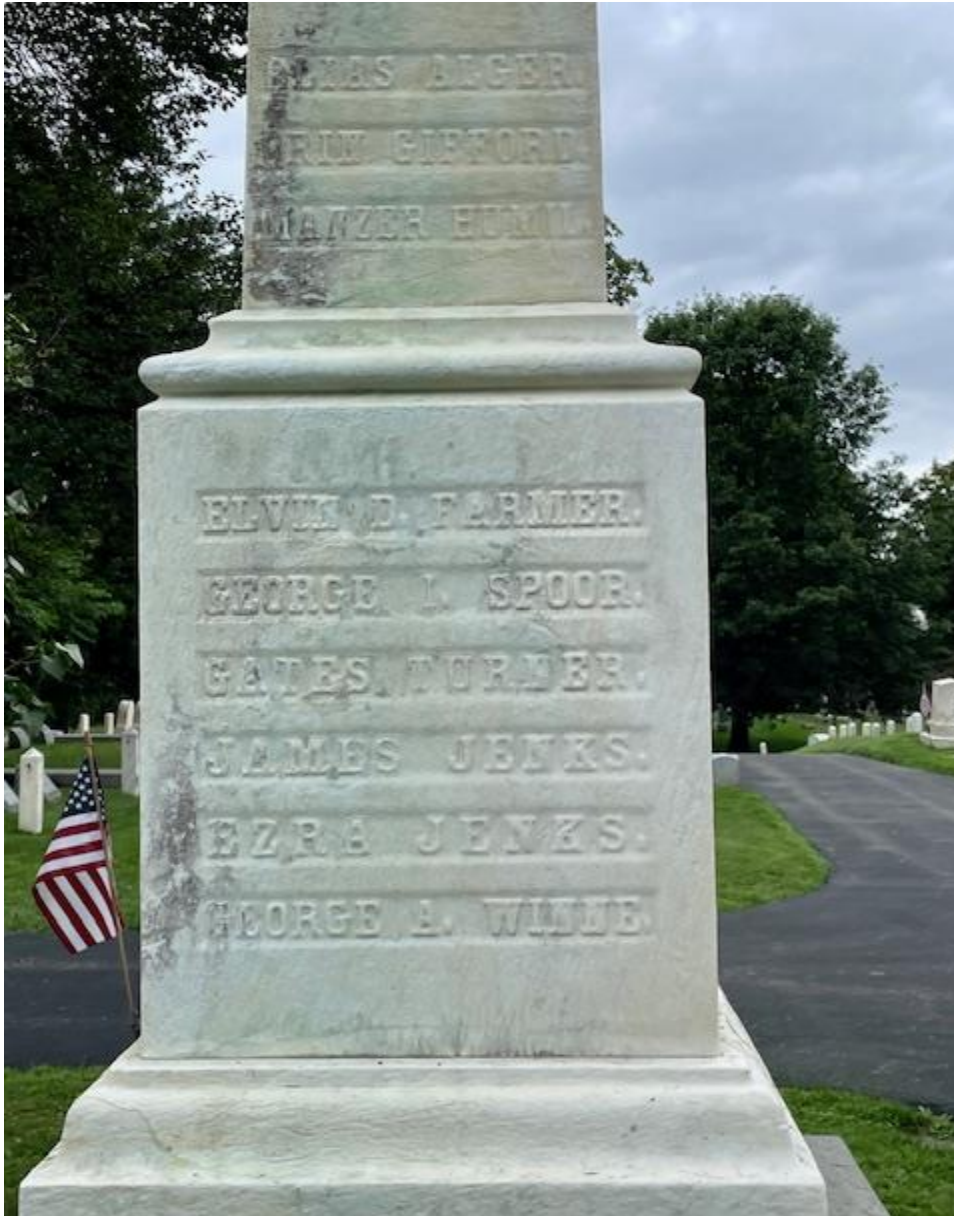
² Isaac O. Best, *History of the 121st New York State Infantry*. Chicago: Lt. Jas. H. Smith, 1921.



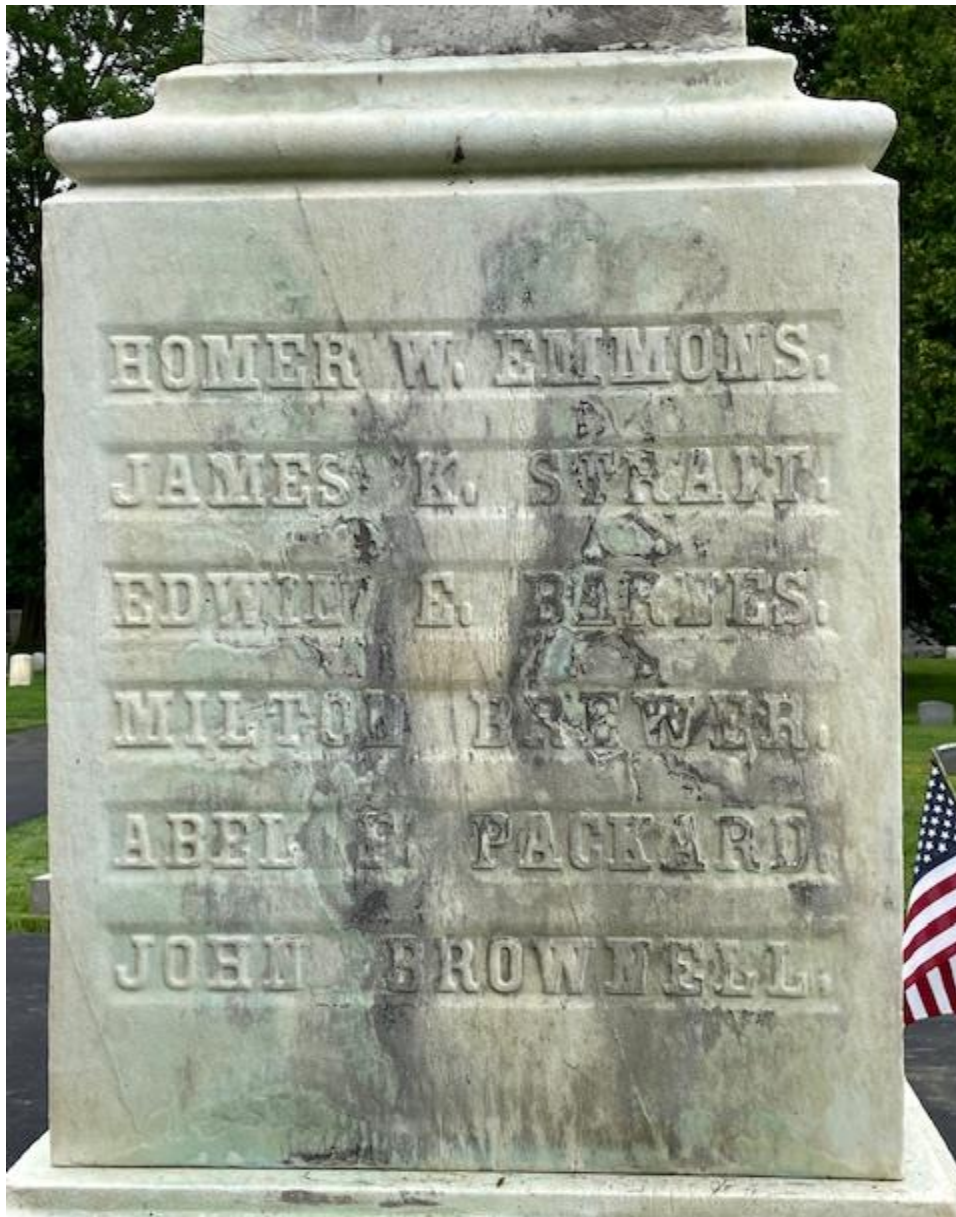
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I have alphabetized the names as they appear on the monument, but I have also indicated, in parenthesis, other names or spellings which showed up in other Civil War records. Some names on the monument were misspelled or middle names used instead of first names. These are the twenty-seven fallen heroes:

1. **Elias Alger**
152nd NY Infantry, Company G

Died of disease (congestion of the brain) on July 19, 1863, at Chesapeake

Hospital, Virginia.

He enlisted for three years on August 28, 1862, as a Private in Oneonta; he was 27 years old, 5' 9" with dark hair and grey eyes, a farmer with a wife and three children. He is buried at Hampton National Cemetery, Virginia.

2. **Edwin E. Barnes** (middle name was Elliot)
121st NY Infantry, Company K

Killed in action at Salem Church battle, Virginia on May 3, 1863.

He enlisted for three years on August 23, 1862, as a Private in Oneonta. He was 36 years old, a carpenter/mechanic by trade, and married with four children. He is buried at Fredericksburg National Cemetery, Virginia.

3. **Frank (Francis) E. Birdsall**
5th NY Heavy Artillery, Company H

Captured at Cedar Creek Battle on October 19, 1864, and he died as a prisoner of chronic diarrhea on November 26, 1864, at Salisbury Prison, North Carolina.

He enlisted in Plymouth on January 4, 1864, for three years as a Private, was a farmer, 20 years old and married. He is buried at Salisbury National Cemetery, North Carolina, in one of eighteen burial trenches where 11,700 U.S. Army soldiers died in the Salisbury Prison from 1864 to 1865.

4. **Milton Brewer**
34th NY Infantry, Company D

Mortally wounded at Fair Oaks, Virginia on May 31, 1862, and died three days later.

He enlisted as a Private in Albany on June 4, 1861, although he was an Oneonta resident. He was 18 years old, a farmer, 5'10" with blue eyes and brown hair. His burial place is unknown.

5. **John Brownell (aka Bronnell, Brunnell)**
5th NY Artillery, Company E

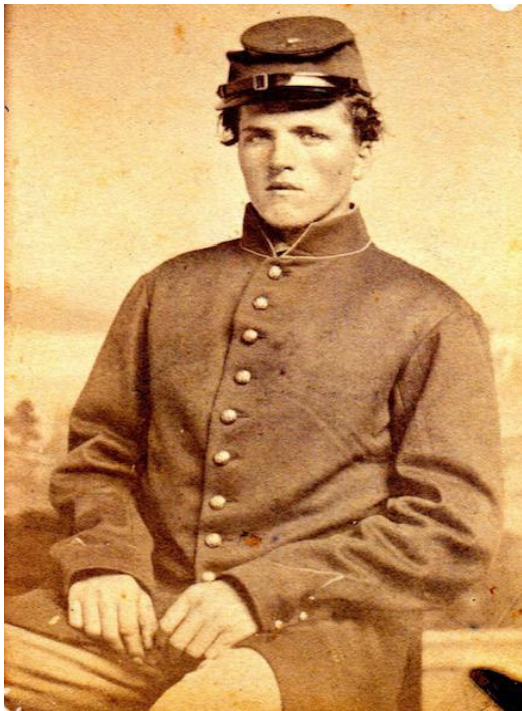
Died of disease at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia on November 3, 1864.

He enlisted at Unadilla as a Private for three years. He was a blacksmith by trade, 44 years old, and married to Mariah. He is listed as an Oneonta resident in 1860 Census, and in the 1865 NY State Census he is listed as deceased with Hartwick, New York, as his residence. His resting place is unknown.

6. **Willis Ceperley (Ciperley)**
121st NY Infantry, Company K

Killed in action at Salem Church Battle on May 3, 1863.

He enlisted in Oneonta on July 28, 1862, for three years as a Private, and he was 18 years old, a farmer, single, 6' tall with blue eyes and brown hair. He is buried at Fredericksburg National Cemetery, Virginia. Ceperley had three brothers (Chauncey, Francis, and Orlando) who served in the 90th NY Regiment and survived the war.



Courtesy of David Ceperley, Ancestry Family Tree

7. **Homer W. (E) Emmons**
121st NY Infantry, Company K

Killed in action at Spotsylvania, Virginia on May 10, 1864.

He enlisted in Oneonta for three years on August 23, 1862, as a Private, and he was 18 years old, a farmer, 5'11" with light hair and grey eyes. His father and mother were Ira and Elizabeth Carson Emmons. He is buried at Fredericksburg National Cemetery, Virginia.

8. **Elvin D. Farmer**
121st NY Infantry, Company K

Killed in action at Salem Church Battle, Virginia, on May 3, 1863.

He enlisted in Oneonta on August 9, 1862, for three years as a Private, and he was 19 years old, 5'8" with light hair and blue eyes. He was a cabinet maker. His body was never recovered from the battlefield, but his name is on a memorial with other family members at Riverside Cemetery; his parents were Josiah and Angeline Farmer. The Oneonta GAR Post #119 was named in his honor.

9. **Orin Gifford**
121st NY Infantry, Company K

Wounded at Salem Church Battle, Virginia on May 3, 1863, and died on May 18, 1863.

He enlisted in Oneonta on August 1, 1862 (with a \$25 bounty), as a Private for three years, and he was 18 years old, a farm hand, 5'8" with dark hair and blue eyes. His remains were burned near the battlefield.

10. **Franklin J. Goodsell**
22nd NY Cavalry

Died of disease (lung congestion) on March 29, 1864, in Washington D.C.

He enlisted on January 5, 1864, in Norwich for three years as a Private. He was 20 years old, a farmer, 5'6" with brown hair and blue eyes. He is buried at Riverside Cemetery, Oneonta, New York.

11. **Julian Hogoboom** (aka Lory, Lary, Levy J)
121st NY Infantry, Company I

Killed in action at Salem Church Battle, Virginia on May 3, 1863.

He enlisted in Oneonta on August 22, 1862, as a Private for three years, and he was 18 years old. The Soldiers' Monument engraving has his middle name, Julian. He is buried at Fredericksburg National Cemetery, Virginia.

12. **Madeus (Amadeus) Houghtaling**
5th Artillery, Company M

Died of wounds at Bolivar, Maryland, on July 30, 1864.

He enlisted at Milford as a Private on January 18, 1864, for three years, and he was 18 years old, a farmer, 5'4" with brown hair and blue eyes. He is buried at Antietam National Cemetery, Sharpsburg, Maryland.

13. **William H. Hudson**
3rd Cavalry, Company G

Died after the war in Laurens, New York, on February 23, 1867, at age of 27.

He enlisted on August 31, 1862, in Oneonta as a Private. He was a tinner, 5'6" with blue eyes and brown hair. He mustered out as a Sergeant on June 7, 1865. He is buried at Riverside Cemetery, Oneonta.

14. **Manzer(Munger) Humil (Hummel)**
121st NY Infantry, Company F

Died of disease at Fredericksburg, Virginia on January 30, 1863. Windmill Point, Virginia is also referenced as place of death.

He enlisted in Maryland, New York, on August 23, 1862, as a Private. He was 21 years old and a farmer.

15. **Ezra (G.) Jenks**
76th NY Infantry

Died in prison at Florence, South Carolina on October 14, 1864. He was captured in Grant's Wilderness Campaign on May 5, 1864.

He enlisted on November 11, 1861, in Oneonta as a Private at age 22, 5'6" with dark hair and blue eyes. He was transferred to Co K, 147th NY Infantry on January 21, 1865, while absent as POW, but he had unknowingly died in October 1864, at Florence, South Carolina as part of the 76th Infantry. He was mustered out as a Sergeant, and he is buried at Florence National Cemetery.

16. **James (B.) Jenks (Jencks)**
121st NY Infantry, Company K

Died on October 24, 1864, on wounds received on October 19, 1864, at the battle of Cedar Creek in Virginia.

He enlisted in Oneonta on August 23, 1862, as a Private at age 19, a farmer, 5'7" with black hair and blue eyes. He was promoted to Color Sergeant, and he is cited for bravery in Best's book on the 121st NY where, although mortally wounded, he picked up his Colors and proceeded to fight.³ His separation date is listed as November 10, 1864, and he is buried at Greenhill Cemetery, Winchester, Virginia.

17. ***Solomon Kimball***
43rd NY Infantry, Company C

Captured at the Wilderness on May 7, 1864, and imprisoned at Andersonville, Georgia. He was then paroled in an exchange, but died three days after arriving at Annapolis, Maryland on December 26, 1864.

³ Best, *History of the 121st New York State Infantry*, 1921.

He enlisted in Oneonta on August 6, 1861, as a Private at age 32, a farmer, 5'8" with light hair and dark eyes. He apparently was hospitalized soon after enlisting as he had left a New York City hospital on September 20, 1861. He reenlisted on September 24, 1863, at Brandy Station, Virginia. He is interred at Annapolis National Cemetery, Annapolis, Maryland.

18. **James H.(W) Mason**
43rd NY Infantry, Company C

Died of typhoid on December 4, 1861, at Georgetown, Washington D.C.

He enlisted in Oneonta on August 8, 1861, as a Private at age 19. He is buried at the Military Asylum Cemetery, Washington, D. C.

19. **Abel F. Packard**
3rd Cavalry, Company G

Died of disease at David's Island, New York, on May 24, 1864.

He enlisted in Oneonta on August 7, 1862, as a Private, a mechanic, 5'10" with brown hair and blue eyes. He was 32 years old, married with one child. He is buried at Riverside Cemetery as Asel E. Packard.

20. **George I. (J) Spoor**
121st NY Infantry, Company K

Died of disease at U.S. General Hospital at Staten Island, New York on July 16, 1863.

He enlisted in Oneonta on August 23, 1862, as a Private at age 19, a farmer, 5'10" in with brown hair and blue eyes. He is buried at Cyprus Hill, Long Island, New York.

21. **Harrison Strait**
76th NY Infantry, Company K

Died at West Oneonta, New York, on August 3, 1865.

He enlisted in Oneonta on November 1, 1861, at age 19, a farmer. There is a headstone at the West Oneonta Cemetery with the name of Harrison Strait on it. The writing on the stone is difficult to read but I believe it reads “died 3 Aug 1865.” Military records of Harrison Smith indicated he was mustered out on December 29, 1863, from Convalescent Camp, Virginia, for disability.⁴ Harrison did file for a disability pension as an invalid in February 1864. He is also listed in an 1865 NY Census with his family, the father being Alvinza Strait (1808 – 1892), who is also buried at the West Oneonta Cemetery, New York.

22. **James K. Strait (Straight)**
121st NY Infantry, Company H

Killed in action at Spotsylvania on May 12, 1864.

He enlisted on March 18, 1864, as a Private in Laurens, although an Oneonta resident, at age 19, a farmer, 5’8” in with brown hair and blue eyes. A \$400 bounty was paid by the Town of Laurens; at this stage of the war substantial bounties were paid for enlisting. He left a widowed mother, and his burial details are unknown.

23. **Gate (A) Turner (alias Rufus Judson)**
100th NY Infantry, Company B

Died at Andersonville prison on August 27, 1864, after being captured at Drewry’s Bluff, Virginia, on May 16, 1864.

He enlisted in Norwich for three years as a Private on September 9, 1863, at age 24, a student, 5’9” with dark hair and blue eyes. He is buried in Otego, New York.

24. **James W. Waldron**
101st NY Infantry, Company F

⁴ Abram P. Smith, *History of the Seventy-Sixth Regiment of New York Volunteers, 1867.*

Killed on an infantry charge with the **40th NY Infantry** at Petersburg, Virginia, on June 18, 1864.

He enlisted in Oneonta on December 8, 1861, as a Private at age 23, a farmer, 6' with light hair and dark eyes. Burial is unknown.

25. **Peter E. Wiles (Wills)**
121st NY Infantry, Company K

Died after the war on May 18, 1867, and is buried at the Plains Cemetery, Oneonta, New York.

Although a Laurens resident, he enlisted in Oneonta on July 30, 1862, for three years at age 40, a farmer, 5'5" with brown hair and blue eyes and married. The Town of Laurens paid him \$82 bounty for enlisting. He mustered out with his company on June 25, 1865, near Hall's Hills, Virginia.

26. **George A. Winne (Alexander, Winne, Winney)**
43rd NY Infantry, Company I

Starved to death at Andersonville prison in May 1864; captured at Drewry's Bluff, Virginia on May 5, 1864.

He enlisted in Oneonta on August 6, 1861, as Private for three years at age 37. He was a farmer and married. He was discharged with a disability on August 4, 1862, but apparently reenlisted in Norwich on September 3, 1863, with the **100th NY Infantry**. He is buried at Andersonville National Cemetery, Georgia.

27. **Samuel (T) Wright**
121st NY Infantry, Company K

Killed in action at Wilderness, Virginia on May 6, 1864.

He enlisted in Oneonta on August 11, 1862, as Private for three years at age 35. Burial is unknown.

There are other Oneonta men who died in the war but are not on the Soldiers' Monument; their names appear in New York, U.S., Registers of Officers and Enlisted Men Mustered into Federal Service, 1861-1865 and/or New York, U.S. Town Clerks' Registers of Men Who Served in the Civil War, ca 1861-1865.

To appear on this list for a particular town, like Oneonta, the heading for the record reads "*Deaths of Officers and Enlisted Men, which have occurred while in the military or naval service of the United States, or from wounds or disease acquired in said service since April 1861, reported by the families to which the deceased belonged when at home.*"

1. **Samuel G. Snedeker (Snediker, Snidecker)**
121st NY Infantry, Company I

Killed in action at Spotsylvania, Virginia, on May 10, 1864.

He enlisted on August 8, 1862, at Laurens, New York, as a Private, age 25 and a farmer; married, 5'4" with brown hair and blue eyes. He received a bounty of \$41. His burial place is on the Spotsylvania battlefield. He is listed as Snediker for Laurens Town records and "History of Otsego County."⁵

2. **Lambert Collier**
16th NY Heavy Artillery, Company A

Died of disease on March 10, 1865, at Point of Rocks, Maryland, three days after arriving from Andersonville prison.

He enlisted on January 2, 1864, at Otsego, New York, as a Private at age 23. He was a farmer, 5'11", brown hair and hazel eyes. Collier has a gravestone at City Point National Cemetery at Hopewell City, Virginia with the correct date of death as March 10, 1865. He is buried at Cooperstown Junction Cemetery, New York, with the wrong date of death engraved as February 16, 1863. His father, Isaac Collier, lived in Oneonta in the 1880 Census, so that may be the reason Lambert is listed in some Oneonta records.

⁵ Hurd D. Hamilton, *History of Otsego County, New York*, Philadelphia: Everts and Fariss, 1878.

3. Anson (Anderson) Moore
10th NY Infantry

Died near Petersburg battlefield, Virginia, on October 25, 1864.

He enlisted as a Private on August 23, at Norwich, New York, for one year at age 18; he received a bounty of \$450 where he was a substitute for a Robinson Miles. He was a farmer from Milford, New York, and is listed in the Milford veteran records (“History of Otsego County”) His burial place is unknown.

4. Nathan Young
76th NY Infantry Company K

Died of disease (chronic diarrhea) on March 24, 1863, near Washington, D.C.

He enlisted as a Private on December 4, 1861, Oneonta, New York, at age 50, from Milford, a farmer, and married to Lavina with two children. Before his death he had been discharged for disability on March 22, 1863, near Pratts Point, Virginia. His burial place is at U.S. Soldiers and Airmen’s Home National Cemetery, Washington, D.C.

5. Erastus Fritts
121st NY Infantry Company K

Killed in action, May 12, 1864, at Spotsylvania, Virginia.

He enlisted, August 9, 1862, at Oneonta to serve three years as a private at age 21. He was a farm laborer from Franklin, NY, 5’8” with gray eyes and brown hair, his parents were Henry and Marilla Fritts and he had five siblings. During his service he was promoted to Corporal. His burial details are unknown.

6. **Richard Shepherd**
76th NY Infantry Company K

Killed in action on August 29, 1862, at Bull Run, Virginia.

He enlisted at Oneonta to serve three years at age 34, but unsure of his Otsego County residence. Burial is unknown.

7. **George Skinner**
43rd NY Infantry Company C

Died of disease on August 3, 1862, at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

He enlisted August 6, 1861, at Oneonta for three years at age 28 as a Private; unsure of his Otsego County residence. He is buried at Philadelphia National Cemetery, Pennsylvania.

8. **Ebenezer Wright**
76th NY Infantry Company K

Died of wounds received in action, September 14, 1862, at South Mountain, Maryland.

Enlisted December 20, 1861, at Oneonta for three years at age 45 and married to Elizabeth Wright. Unsure of his Otsego County residence, and his burial details are unknown.

Other Civil War veterans who survived the war are also buried at the Riverside Cemetery. Many Decoration days were held at the cemetery to commemorate the sacrifice and bravery of the men who died in the war, and for those that served and passed away many years later. The **7 italicized** names are from the records of the *Personal War Sketches, Record of Burial from Elvin D. Farmer Post No. 119*.⁶ The remaining veterans are from on-line searching of the Riverside Cemetery records and gravestones; this list may not be complete. Their date of death, rank, and

⁶ Personal War Sketches, 1897-1927, Elvin D. Farmer Post No. 119 (Oneonta, NY).

regiment are listed if found on documents:

1. Alfred Babcock, October 5, 1868, US Service
2. Samuel Babcock, KIA August 21, 1864, 121st NY Reg Co I
3. Dewitt C. Barnes, May 31, 1931, Pvt, 3rd NY Cav Co C
4. Libeous A. Baxter, August 16, 1885, 9th NY Reg Co A
5. Robert Beach, March 7, 1885, Pvt, 43rd Wis Vol Co C
6. Wilber Bradley, August 15, 1920, Pvt, 144th NY Regiment
7. Alexander Brewer, July 28, 1906, Pvt, 3rd NY Cav
8. Lewis Y. Burrows, November 18, 1902, 144th NY Reg Co A
9. *Charles H. Butts*, March 1, 1885, Pvt, 144th NY Reg Co I
10. Chauncey Ceperley, April 11, 1912, Pvt, 90th NY Reg Co B



Ceperley Family Trees, Ancestry.com

11. Francis Ceperley, December 12, 1915, Pvt, 90th NY Reg Co B
12. Appolos J. Cook, August 25, 1914, Pvt, 46th NY Co A
13. John D. Cummings, May 11, 1905, 10th NY Cav Co K
14. John S. Driggs, 1880, 1st NY Eng'rs Co C
15. Edgar S. Driggs, May 28, 1911, Pvt, 1st Eng Co A
16. Pembroke S. Dunham, May 29, 1914, Pvt, 3rd NY Cav

17. Clinton E. Ford, September 25, 1935, Pvt, 44th NY Co G



Courtesy of David Schumann

18. Reuben L. Fox, 1909, 1st Lt., 22nd NY Cav

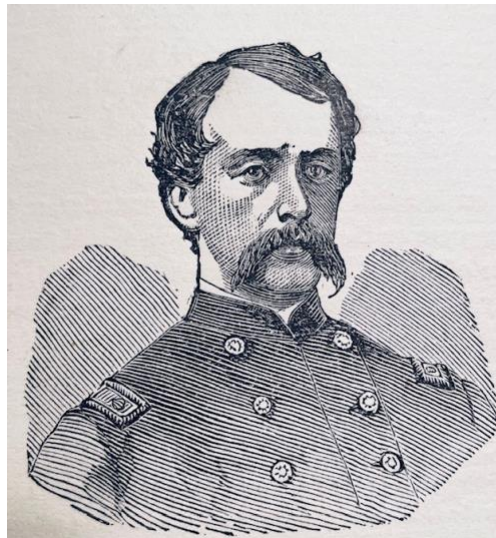


suscat, FindaGrave.com

Husband of Mary Aurelia Osborn Fox. Gifted A. O. Fox Hospital to Oneonta in her memory.

19. James A Gifford, 1927, Pvt, 152nd NY Co K
20. *Albert Graves*, no DOD, Pvt, 43rd NY Reg Co C
21. *Nathan Graves*, June 28, 1886, Pvt, Invalid Corps Co B
22. Nathan Hemstreet, December 7, 1897, Sgt, 76th NY Reg Co K
23. George Ingalls, 1894, Pvt, 3rd NY Cav Co G
24. Lewis Ingalls, February 2, 1901, Pvt, 3rd Cav Co G
25. *Malcomb G. Keenan*, March 30, 1886, 3rd NY Cavalry Co D
26. David S. Lansing, March 7, 1885, Pvt, 203rd Penn Vol Co I
27. *Gilbert S. Mallory*, February 27, 1879, Sgt, 152nd NY Infantry Co G
28. Thomas Maynard, May 1, 1890, Pvt, 5th VT Reg Co E
29. William Mickel, Pvt, February 7, 1890, 121st NY Reg Co K
30. Homer Parish, 1915, US Service
31. Leonard Pratt, 1872, Pvt, 15th NY Reg Co C
32. Jay Delos Pruyn, 1914, Pvt, 20th ILL Inf Co K
33. Chas. H. Thompson, April 30, 1883, Pvt, 162nd NY Co G
34. Abner Walling, March 6, 1925, 144th NY Reg Co I
35. The Watkins brothers of landscape photographer Carlton Watkins:

- A. Charles A. Watkins, August 22, 1889, Lt. Col, 76th NY Co K



Smith, *History of the 76th NY*⁷

- B. George Q Watkins, October 29, 1919, 2nd Lt, 3rd NY Cav Co B

⁷ New York, Town Clerks' Registers of Men Who Served in the Civil War. Ca 1861 – 1865.

- C. Albert P Watkins, August 1, 1865, Pvt, 3rd NY Artillery
36. *Jacob F. Weidman*, April 4, 1889, Pvt, 144th NY Reg Co H
37. *Henry Wickham*, October 19, 1881, Sgt, 3rd NY Cavalry Co
38. John W Winn (Wain), 1883, Pvt, 76th NY Inf Co K

Local and National Civil War Statistics:

- About 160 [Oneonta](#) men served with about 30 deaths. Oneonta's population was about 2,158 from *History of Otsego County*.⁸
- 2,500 men from [Otsego County](#) served, and 1500 of them served in the 121st or 152nd NY. There were nearly 400 deaths (384 from Charles Shaw compilation).⁹ Otsego County population was about 47,000 in 1875.
- 465,000 soldiers from [New York](#) served and over 39,000 died. 50% of men under 30 served via enlistment or draft.
- There were nearly three million soldiers who served in Civil War. 2.1 million from the north, and 880,000 from the south. The population of the country was about 30 million.
- Over 620,000 died during the war, and two out of three were from diseases like typhoid, diphtheria, diarrhea, and consumption. That translated to 2.5% of the population, and to show how devastating that was, in today's figures that would be 7 million dead.
- Animals also served, suffered, and died in the Civil War. Nearly three million horses and mules were needed for the cavalry, to move artillery, the wounded and supply wagons, and nearly half died from bullets, shells, and exhaustion.

⁸ Hamilton, *History of Otsego County, New York* (Philadelphia: Everts and Fariss, 1878).

⁹ the.usgenweb.org/ny/Otsego/index.htm

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17. U.S. Burial Registers, Military Posts and National Cemeteries, 1862-1960
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21. *The Biographical Review, Otsego County* 1893, p162
22. the.usgenweb.org/ny/Otsego/index.htm