

# George Cory's Light

by Lynne Bellusico

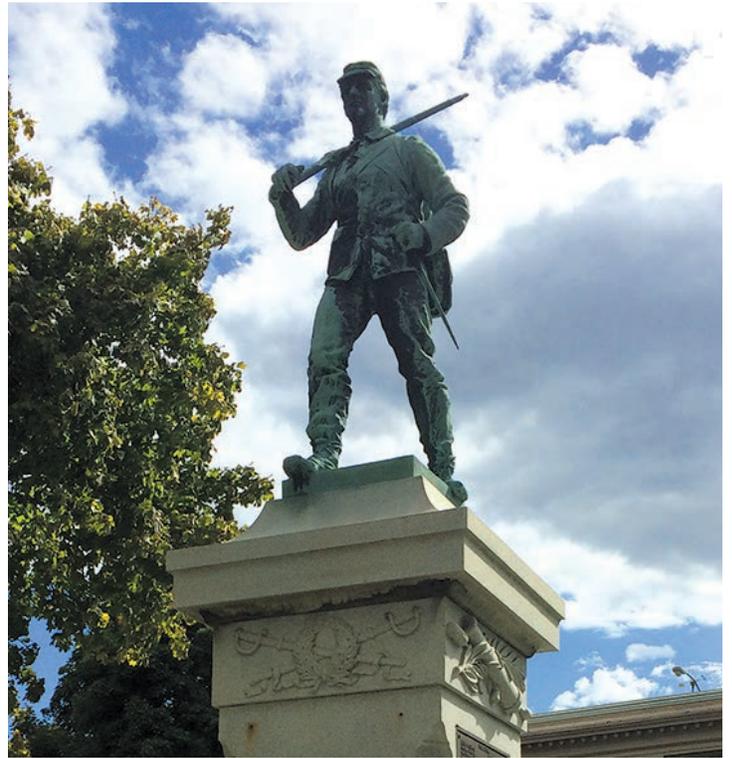
A couple of days before the Oatka Festival, I was told that the firemen had installed a light to shine on the Soldier's Monument on Trigon Park. I had hoped to get an article in the Pennysaver, but the time got ahead of me. They told me that the light was installed in memory of George Cory. I suspect that some of you remember George. He was an electrician in LeRoy. He installed the electrical boxes on Trigon Park when more electricity was needed for the food booths for the Oatka Festival. He was our electrician at LeRoy House for many years. I remember the day I pulled out some very old light bulbs to show him. With a funny grin on his face, he said, "Let's try them." "Isn't that dangerous?" "No, not at all," and he screwed the old bulb into the socket and turned the switch. Sure enough, the light bulb was bright, and I can still see his face when the coils lit up. He was just like a kid, fascinated with that light bulb.

George was a proud member of the LeRoy Excelsior Hook and Ladder Company. He had served as their President. He also served as the Fire Police Captain, and was always first to a fire to set up the safety line. I remember him in his crisp white firemen's shirt, usually directing traffic during the Oatka Festival. George always wanted

to put lights on the Soldier's Monument. But he never had the chance and George died in 2003. But the members of the Excelsior Hook and Ladder Company remembered George's plans for the monument and thought there was no better way to remember George than to install the lights. George's wife, Jane, thought it was a wonderful idea, so on Friday night, July 16, the firemen gathered with Mrs. Cory and George's son, to officially turn on the lights. This fall as it gets darker earlier in the evening, it's easy to see how wonderful the Soldier's Monument looks. I know George is smiling.

The Soldiers' Monument was finally completed in May, 1906 after many years of planning. Although it commemorates soldiers from the Revolution and the War of 1812, it was primarily a project initiated by the members of the Grand Army of the Republic, to commemorate those who had served in the War of the Rebellion, known today as the Civil War. In fact if you read the bronze plaque for the Civil War veterans, it is labeled "War of Rebellion."

The Union soldier is made of bronze and was designed by Rudolph Schwartz. He is 7 feet tall and stands on a 13 foot plinth of Barre granite. The granite is carved with crossed swords and a laurel wreath. Each cor-



ner has a carved canon. On the west side is a canon and palm branch. The east side had a bugle and oak wreath. The south side has a musket and canteen and cartridge box.

As I was reading about the ceremony in 1906, I thought it was appropriate for George Cory, that on the day that the statue was dedicated, the Excelsior Hook and Ladder Company was in attendance and they had invited the members of the Attica Hooks to be their guests. The firemen – many who had served in the Civil War, were part of the

10,000 people who assembled in LeRoy that day.

Like many things that we take for granted in our busy lives, it is easy to overlook the landmarks that are unique to our community. Not just on Memorial Day, with the speeches and the gun salute, but every day, let this monument remind us of those who have fought and preserved our liberty and the American way of life. And thank you to the Hook and Ladder Company, for making this happen.

