

The Last Civil War Veteran

by Lynne Belluscio

Oscar Geer lived on Myrtle Street. He was 83 when he died in 1928 and he was the last surviving Civil War Veteran in Le Roy. *The Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* had interviewed him just before his death and he shared some of his war experiences.

He was 17 when he enlisted in the 76th New York Volunteers. "Fearing that the war would be over before I could get down south I left Warsaw on foot and started for Le Roy to enlist although the snow was six inches deep. This was in December 1861. I enlisted on the first of January 1862 and we were stationed in the old stone buildings on Church Street part of which are still standing and which were later used as malt houses ... I had my first experience in getting ready for battle (in Alexander, Va.) The orderly came to our tents and said just above a whisper, 'Fall in boys, the enemy is coming.'" "I looked out of my tent and saw the flash of muskets all along the line. My hair stood on end and I was shaking in my shoes, but we were in line in about three minutes with empty guns. Three or four of the boys loaded their guns without orders and wounded some of the boys on the picket line. They paid dearly for the blunder. Others did not make their appearance at all

and were found under their bunks. Some wore their pants wrong side out and others had their cartridge boxes on their shoulders instead of on their right side."

He gives an account of the next battle at Cedar Mountain on August 9 and then Bull Run on August 29. "We got up at 4 o'clock and had orders to get our coffee ready in twenty minutes, but we did not have time to drink it before the bugle sounded to fall in line and in less than half an hour we were being shelled by the enemy. We fought them hard all day and at night fell back to Centerville or rather my regiment did, as I was wounded through the right thigh and was left on the field in the hands of the rebels from Saturday night until Monday morning when we were taken in ambulances over a corduroy road, twelve miles. A number died on the way, not being able to stand the trip.

Later we were taken to a hospital in Washington. While I lay on the field on Sunday, the rebels stripped off my rubber blanket and it was raining hard. They took my haversack, gun, and canteen and a pair of boots I had paid for and left the pair of old shoes with the soles already to drop off and said 'You can never lick us because we were brought up with a gun in our

hands and we have a notion to put a bayonet through you, you son of a gun."

I remained in the hospital five months and then went back to the field and participated in the actions at Mine Run, Nort Arm, Rapahannock, Spotsylvania, the Wilderness and was wounded again at Cold Harbor ... Later I was sent to Washington to guard the criminals connected with the assassination of President Lincoln.

...In spite of the hardships we had some fun. We came across two pet goslings as their owners, two old maids called them. We took the goslings along with us and got a camp kettle one of us keeping the fire going under it while the other kept guard. If we had that goose off the fire once we had it off twenty times. When it was done it was the toughest piece of goose meat I ever tried to eat, but we had some good goose soup and our second lieutenant helped us eat it.

The next day there was a search made for the goose but of course no one knew anything about it. Two or three boys were arrested and locked up for two days charged with stealing the goose, although they did not have anything to do with it, while we were free ... The old maids told the officer of the guard that



whoever stole the geese must have had hard eating for the fowls were their pets and were nine years old. We thought they were 19 years old by the way our jaws had to work while we were eating them." Oscar Geer is one of the several Civil War soldiers buried in Macpelah Cemetery.



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Dean's List

Rachel Elizabeth Smith, a senior criminal justice major from Bergen, NY was named to the dean's list at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford for the fall 2007 semester. To qualify for the dean's list, students must earn at least a 3.5 grade point average. To be eligible for the dean's list, full-time students must have all letter grades and no temporary grades. Additionally, a student cannot have a letter grade lower than a C.