In 1872, seven years after the end of the Civil War, E. B. Morgan commissioned a bronze tablet engraved with the names of the thirty-seven Ledyard soldiers who died in battle or in the hospital. This tablet was mounted on the north interior wall of the Aurora Presbyterian Church, now known as the United Ministry, where it still remains. The Dedication Address was given by Francis M. Finch, Esq., Trustee of Cornell University.

Let the past speak for itself.
Ithiel Winters, 1st NY Independent Battery. First known as “Kennedy’s” the battery was later reorganized as “Cowan’s.” The unit saw action at Gettysburg, the Wilderness, Petersburg and many other battles in VA. Ithiel survived the war.

John Waite, 75th NY Volunteers
Fought in the fierce battle at
Port Hudson LA, near
Vicksburg on the Mississippi.
He survived the war.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

It seems very long to us since these men died; and yet we are mistaken: it is not long. Some one has justly said that Time is both kind and cruel. It has washed out the blood stains; it has dried the tears; it has made the graves green, and the vacant places familiar and accustomed. So far, Time is kind.
Elisha Winters, 19th Reg’t, NY Infantry; 3rd NY Light Artillery. Survived the war, as did brother Ithiel; brother John did not.

But with the rapid and busy flight of the years comes, in some sort, forgetfulness; or, rather, new grafted memories that shade and dwarf the old. The scarred trunks of the Wilderness; the seamed batteries of Vicksburg; the grand march to the sea; the murder of our good President; have faded into a dim twilight; have softened away into shadow; have drifted far behind in the wake of our voyage over the sea of active life. And with them in some degree have grown dim our memories of the dead.

John S. Winters, 111th NY Volunteers. Wounded at Gettysburg, July 1863; returned to his regiment and to battle. He died in hospital in 1864.

“I am going to my regiment now ...I can’t stand much yet but I dont feel right laying around idle & I shall do the best I can.” John S. Winters to E. B. Morgan, August 1863.
Henry Gifford, a student at Cayuga Lake Academy; 111th NY Vols. Spotted a snipers’ nest at Gettysburg, thus saving many in his unit. Taken prisoner at New Berne, NC, and died in Andersonville Prison.

Henry Vaughn, Schoolteacher. 1st Independent Battery. Survived the war.

One—two—thirty-seven of them; dead from this town alone; by the slow sapping and wasting of disease; by the cannon shot; by the bullet; by the bloody bayonet thrust; starved perhaps in the brutal prison pen; dead for their country; dead for us; and yet we, in ten short years or less, almost forgetting, almost losing their very names! So far, Time, indeed, is cruel.
Thomas Peckham, 19th Reg’t NY Volunteers. Survived the war.

Poor boys! No man knows how frequent and how bitter were their longings! The bronzed officer who passed them in review saw only so many rifles, so many bayonets, so much force, so many tons of solid blow with which to strike an enemy in the face, but we at home, all of us at home, knew them as men; with the loves, and the wants, and the longings, and the virtues, and vices of men.

John Vanderip, 1st NY Indep. Battery, ”Kennedy’s”. Re-enlisted in 1st NY Battery. Killed in the battle of Cedar Creek, 1864.
It was often said during the war—I heard it many times—that the men of the ranks were hirelings; that they were bought for the battle; that they fought for a price; that they put their patriotism on the market; that they were fit food for powder. It was a terrible untruth! We who remained at home gave them liberal bounties, and they accepted them. They had fathers and mothers, wives and children, brothers and sisters to leave behind. For these, very largely, the money was taken, and with them it was left. It paid off a corroding mortgage here; it bought a little cottage there; it assured decent comfort to the old father; gave a snug home to wife and children; and not a soldier when he marched knew that he would return to enjoy one dollar of it.

Richard Tierney, born in Ireland, was at age 44 one of the oldest volunteers in the 19th NY Vols. He wrote to E. B. Morgan, “Mr. Morgan, sir, it seems they arnt a going to pay the County bounty here...Otherwise I wont go.” Morgan took care of the difficulty; Richard was wounded at Drewry’s Bluff VA and died after a month in hospital.

James Benedict of the 75th Reg’t wrote to E. B. Morgan that his family had not received the bounty because his name had been omitted from the list of volunteers: “I am the boy formerly living at John DeShong’s. You no doubt remember seeing me...Please pay the money to my mother.” He was killed near Port Hudson LA. His mother, a widow with three small children, wrote to Morgan, “He was my whole dependence.”

Henry Steele, 1st NY Indep. Battery. Survived the war.
George W. Salisbury and George S. Bentley, both 111th NY Vols. Both survived the war. Salisbury later kept a store in Aurora.

Sgt. Johnson McDowell, 111th NY Vols., enlisted as a student at Cayuga Lake Academy. He lost a leg at Gettysburg but survived the war. After the war he worked as a druggist in Salisbury’s store; he died in a farm accident.
Sgt. Richard Reamer, 75th Reg’t. NY Vols. Survived the war.

Sgt. Marvin Waite 75th Reg’t. NY Vols. Sergeant of Co. D Survived the war.

Among the freedmen who served was David A. Baker. He enlisted in 1863, but tuberculosis prevented him from seeing action. He returned home to die.

John C. Griger, also African-American, served on the gunboat USS Kanawha. He survived the war.

This is the place!—on this eastern shore of the lake; on this border line between land and water; between art and nature; between the work of man and the diviner work of God. Here for the last time, as we halt these soldier shadows upon the verge of the unseen world, at the very parting of the veil, can we see them form in line to receive our sad salute, and then disappear into the misty tents of eternity. Halt!—Soldiers of the Union! those for whom you fought salute you: those for whom you died salute you: a freed and enfranchised race salutes you: Liberty, with the stain washed from her brow, salutes you: a flag, untorn, undimmed, salutes you: a nation, grateful, thankful, sad, salutes you! Soldiers, adieu!
1st Lt. George Smith, a cousin of E. B. Morgan, was second in command of Co. K of the 111th NY Vols. His men thought very highly of him. Survived the war.

Horace Smith was George Smith’s younger brother. Like several others in his unit, the 111th NY Vols., he enlisted as a student at Cayuga Lake Academy. He was the namesake of another cousin who was a plantation owner in Louisiana. He died five weeks after Gettysburg.

The dead of the battle!—only these remained. Only the dead, and the welcome peace won by their patient courage. The vast armies have disappeared. In long, jubilant columns they marched homeward through the Capital, and then vanished from our sight. The soldier melted into the citizen; the war-horse that plunged into the battle dragged the sober plough, or paced contentedly the quiet pasture; the torn flags became housed and sacred relics; and the very cannon grew silent in rust and rest.
Theodore Eager, 111th NY Vols. He survived the war.

The West brothers, James, 19, and George, 17, enlisted in the 3rd NY Artillery. Serving together, they were captured together near New Berne NC. Both brothers died in Andersonville Prison.

Let every soldier's grave be sacred, and grow beautiful under the June blossoms strewn by loving hands. Let every soldier's name be rescued from oblivion, and saved upon monument or tablet for the respect and love of after ages. Let this memorial last as long as the walls which uphold it; as the ceaseless voice of the waves that sing to it their lulling song in the calm, and shout their war-cry in the storm.

Thomas Sherman, 1st NY Indep. Battery. He survived the war.
And may this memorial prove, like that costlier one, raised by a nation’s gratitude at Gettysburg, for every soldier whose name it bears, the lasting preserver of his fame.

Peter Quackenbush, Jr, who enlisted along with his father in the 111th, left a $300 bond with E. B. Morgan, payable to his mother in the event of his death. Peter Jr. died in Andersonville, Peter Sr. in hospital.

George Chidester, 1st NY Indep. Battery.
He survived the war.

Thomas Gray, 111th NY Vols.
He survived the war.
Many of the veterans of the 111th returned to Gettysburg in 1891 for the dedication of the regimental monument (right), and returned, fewer each time, for successive anniversaries of the battle, especially the fiftieth in 1913.

The hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the battle of Gettysburg is this year, July 1-3.

Francis Finch is remembered today as the author of “The Blue and the Gray,” which concludes with the familiar lines

Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day,
Love and tears for the Blue,
Tears and love for the Gray.

Please take a few minutes around Memorial Day to visit Oak Glen, St. Patrick’s and the rural cemeteries.

The Village Historian, Linda Schwab, thanks Town Historian Judy Furness for very helpful discussions and credits Ed Rossman for the photo of the memorial tablet. You can see Judy’s fascinating Civil War display at this year’s Aurorafest, July 13th; watch the “Southern Cayuga Tribune” for the next in the series on local African-Americans in the Civil War.