

# John Wesley Blunt

John Wesley Blunt was born on May 18, 1840 in Stuyvesant, NY to Henry and Eliza (Burbank) Blunt. His family moved to the Town of Austerlitz when he was a youth; and like most boys of his day, he received little schooling - going to work at an early age on his father's farm.

In October 1861, a train rolled into Chatham and John W. Blunt and his brothers: Rusten, Robert and Joseph, left for Hudson to enlist in the Union forces. He joined Company M, 6th New York Cavalry and as an able leader, he was promoted to sergeant and then Company First Sergeant within a year. He was mustered into officer ranks as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in March, 1863, won his silver bars and in the same year on December 14, 1864 was made Captain with rank from October 21, 1864 - in recognition of his actions at the Battle of Cedar Creek.

The battle of Cedar Creek began at dawn, October 19, 1864, when the Confederate Army surprised the Federal army at Cedar Creek. Maj. Gen. Philip Sheridan arrived to rally his troops, and, in the afternoon, launched a crushing counter attack, which recovered the battlefield. This Union victory broke the back of the Confederate army in the Shenandoah Valley, resulting in 8,575 casualties (US 5,665, CS 2,910).

As a First Lieutenant in Company K, 6th New York Cavalry, John Wesley Blunt was recognized for actions taken on October 19, 1864 at Cedar Creek, Va. thus earning our nation's highest award, the Medal of Honor. His citation reads:

"The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pleasure in presenting the Medal of Honor to First Lieutenant John W. Blunt, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism on 19 October 1864, while serving with Company K, 6th New York Cavalry, in action at Cedar Creek, Virginia. First Lieutenant Blunt voluntarily led a charge across a narrow bridge over the creek, against the lines of the enemy."

Captain Blunt was transferred to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Provisional Cavalry on June 17, 1865, where he made Major (brevet) in the NY Volunteers. He was mustered out with his company, August 9, 1865, at Louisville, Ky.

Captain returned to Chatham and on January 7, 1867, he married Almira Lanphear. They had three children: Roy John, Amy, and Florence. Captain Blunt became a legendary figure at the Chatham Fair, where he served as Grand Marshall in the parades held annually. With his Civil War Comrades, he helped organized Gen. John A. Logan Post GAR that met in the Masonic Hall on Park Row. His nephew, Arthur Blunt, remembered him as a great talker, particularly when reunited with his brothers, Joseph, Rusten and Robert.

John Wesley Blunt died on January 21, 1910 in Chatham, NY and was buried in the Chatham Rural Cemetery. He was 69 years old.