



Pictures of the Past

Branford in the Civil War

As in the Revolutionary War, Branford responded quickly to the call to arms at the outbreak of the Civil War. The majority of the men joined Company B of the 27th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry (CVI). The 27th CVI was organized at New Haven and Company B consisted of 90 men from Branford, North Branford and Wallingford under the leadership of Capt. Calvin L. Ely.

Capt. Ely was born in Cheshire but settled in Branford in 1840 and married Sarah Beers, a Branford native. He was the first dentist in Branford and built a home and office at 360 Main St., which still stands. After the war he continued his practice until his retirement in 1890. Calvin Ely died in 1905 at the age of 76 and is buried at Center Cemetery.

The 27th CVI was organized in July of 1862 and went directly to camp in Washington, D.C. In less than one year the 27th fought in three major battles - Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville,

Virginia and finally at Gettysburg. Of the 90 men in Company B, 37 were captured at Chancellorsville, five were killed at Fredericksburg and several others died of illness. After Gettysburg the company was mustered out July 27, 1863 but many of the men re-enlisted in other companies.

In 1881 the Branford veterans of the Civil War organized the Mason Rogers Post #7 GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) named for a native of Branford who died from an illness during the war. Dr. Ely would serve as its first commander. The group met bi-weekly at their hall on the second floor of the Hutchinson Block at the corner of Main and Veto streets until they disbanded in 1932.

In 1885 the Mason Rogers Post GAR built a monument between the Congregational Church and the Town Hall which still stands today dedicated to those who served in the Civil War.

- Jane Peterson Bouley



Photo courtesy of the Beers Commemorative Biographical Record of New Haven 1904

Dr. Calvin L. Ely