

JOHN GILLULY, 1824/1862

Of the early settlers to the Brighton Area, many were of a moral caliber, which assumed a responsibility to the community and the young state. Among them was John Gilluly, son of Irish-born parents, Thomas and Ann. John was born in Massachusetts. Research indicates John taught in the Brighton School District in 1845, '46,'57, '59. Earlier, 1852, he'd been appointed as a Livingston County Surveyor. It appears he attended Michigan Normal College (EMU) to become a better teacher and an attorney. After graduation he taught and practiced law in Brighton. He met Alvira Frances Carpenter while both were in Ypsilanti attending college. Alvira was born 1831 in New York.

In referring to early census records we find John and Alvira had several other children besides the one, Caroline, who is buried with them in the Old Village Cemetery. A son, Henry, of whom no later recorded is found, was born in 1848. Three daughters are born; Lucy F., 1855 (married C. A. Withey and moved to Reed City); one married LeBaron (and lived in Fenton), and Caroline, the youngest born 1860 and died March 2, 1886.

Armed with a degree in law, John was elected and served in the 20th Michigan State Legislature, which convened January 5, 1859. Two years later he received his commission as Captain in the U.S. Army. After the rebel south fired on Ft. Sumpter (opening the Civil War) April 12, 1861, President Lincoln requested troops from the states. Following a mass meeting in Howell, April 30, 1861, John recruited Livingston County men to serve in Company I in the 5th Michigan Infantry Regiment. In less than one month this company was raised. After several months' training at Ft. Wayne in Detroit, the troops were mustered into service August 11, 1861. A month later they received their flag and shipped out to Cleveland; then the train to Pittsburg and Washington in September. There they were greeted by both Kingsley Bingham (Senator from Green Oak) and President Lincoln. Knowing all too well they'd soon hear ". . . the crash of hostile rifles, and the dread whispers of passing bullets . ." a fairly comfortable winter was spent in the Capitol. April, 1862, found the Company in battle at Yorktown and Williamsburg, Virginia. July 11, 1862, Gilluly received his Lt. Col. commission. During the summer and fall battles at Fair Oaks, Seven Days Battle, Charles City, Malvern Hill, 2nd Manassas, Chantilly and Fredericksburg were joined. December 13, 1862, while commanding his troops at the Battle of Fredericksburg, Lt. Col. John Gilluly was killed. His comrade, 1st Lt. Hudson Blackman brought John's body home for burial in the Village Cemetery. Twenty-six other local Civil War vets are buried on the hill by the mill pond in Brighton.

The Fowlerville Post of the GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) was named for this valiant man by his comrades. To commemorate the 130th anniversary of John Gilluly's death the George W. Lee Civil War Roundtable placed a new marker by the deteriorating grave marker. A number of other veteran's sites, which either did not have a marker, or it was damaged, are now properly identified due to the recent efforts of John and Janice Field. (Compiled by Marieanna Bair from 1880 History of Livingston County; Wm. Pless' Supplement to the Village Cemetery records; census records; obituaries copied by Milton Charboneau and conversation with George Allen.)