

## **Dedication Address of Memorial Day 2013 on occasion of installation of Cranford Civil War Monument**



Today, the Cranford Historical Society dedicates in Memorial Park a new monument to Cranford's Civil War veterans.

It is fitting this be done today, when we are in the middle of the 150th anniversary of what many historians call the Second American Revolution. It is also especially appropriate that this dedication be done on Memorial Day, a day of remembrance that has its roots in the Civil War. Although the Township of Cranford did not exist at the time of the Civil War, two Union veterans were among Cranford's founding fathers who successfully petitioned Trenton in 1871 for our town's independence.

Our first township committee had a Union officer among its members. Two Union veterans served as mayors of Cranford. A returning Union veteran was our first town justice, who would serve in that position for 50 years, a record unlikely to be broken. Other Union veterans founded churches in town. Some veterans developed our land, while others farmed it. We even had a Confederate engineering colonel living in town after the war while he designed the pedestal and foundation for the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor, and his two sons attended Rutgers College.

In little more than a month, it will be the 150th anniversary of the battle of Gettysburg. One of Cranford's residents was there behind the stone wall on Cemetery Ridge repulsing Pickett's Charge. Cranford residents were also at Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and numerous other battles in the history books. A Cranford resident raised the first Union colors to fly over Atlanta upon that city's fall to the federal army. And Cranford residents were at Appomattox Court House when Robert E. Lee finally surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant.

In all, we had about 80 of our townsmen who played a role in the Civil War. Cranford residents served in the infantry, artillery, cavalry and medical corps of the Union Army. They served on ships in the Union navy. We even had Union County's only known Civil War Marine.

It is our hope and intention that this new monument will stand as a reminder to present and future generations of the contributions our Civil War veterans made to Cranford and the nation.

Trustees of the Cranford Historical Society are distributing this morning a dedication book with the names of Cranford's Civil War veterans. We also have with us today Company D of the Second Rhode Island Volunteers, re-enactors who serve as a living memorial to those who fought to preserve the Union.