

Laura (Heckel) Rowe

Third Great Grand Daughter of

George D. Simmons

1842-March 20, 1895

45th Regiment Company D PA

September 23, 1861- February 7, 1865

George D Simmons was born to Fredrick and Sarah (Bodle) Simmons in Howard, Centre County, Pennsylvania; about 10 miles Northeast of Bellefonte in 1842. He was the second born of five children, a sister Mary, and 3 brothers John, Fredrick Jr., and Frank. He grew up on his father's farm in Centre County and on October 28, 1853 he was a member of the Trinity United Methodist Church in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania. He later married Sarah Mariah Liggett, a longtime resident of Beech Creek, Clinton County, Pennsylvania. The marriage took place on April 12, 1860 in Pleasant Gap; about 3 miles south of Bellefonte, by Francis Jodon, justice of the peace of Centre County. George was 18 and Mariah was 17. Although, there was a question on whether the year was 1859 as written in Mariah's bible per her affidavit to her pension papers. There is also a statement from the Prothonotary (clerk of court) that they were indeed married in 1860. They settled in Beech Creek, Pennsylvania in Clinton County not too far from Mariah's parents, Robert and Maria (David) Liggett. Their first child, James Robert was born July 15, 1860.



Sarah Mariah (Liggett) Simmons about 1913



George enlisted on September 23, 1861 as a Private in Company D of the 45th Pennsylvania Regiment Infantry. The 45th Regiment was mustered into the U.S. service for a three year term on October 21, 1861 at Camp Curtin, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania under Captains Austin Curtain and Charles Fryberger. They arrived in Washington D.C. on October 23, 1861 where they were assigned to Howard's Brigade, Casey's division and went into camp on the Bladensburg road. On November 19, 1861, they embarked for Fortress Monroe, where they remained at Camp Hamilton until December 6, 1861. The company then sailed for Port Royal, South Carolina, where they occupied Bay Point, Otter, and Fenwick Islands. Six companies were stationed on North Edisto Island in May 1862, and on June 1, three companies were sent to John's Island. The remainder of the regiment, with the exception of the companies stationed at Bay Point, followed to John's Island and on the 9th, the command sailed for James Island near Charlestown, where it shared in the engagements and then returned to Hilton Head. Here the regiment was reunited and embarked for Fortress Monroe on July 21, encamping on its arrival near Newport

News, Virginia. On August 4, 1862, George was sent to the hospital with diahrea in Newport News, Virginia while his company destroyed railroad property and commissary stores in Acquia Creek, Virginia. From August 18-31 he is listed as sick in Cliffburne U.S.A. General Hospital in Washington, D.C. In his hospital muster rolls dated September/October and November/December 1862, George is listed as a "cook". On December 26, George is reported to be in Lincoln U.S.A. General Hospital in Washington D.C. and was diagnosed with "overaction of the heart". January through April 1863 the muster roll shows George in Mower U.S.A. General Hospital, Ward 36, in Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia and he was then diagnosed with chronic rheumatism. George was hospitalized for a total of 8 1/2 months in 1863. George was listed as "dropped from the rolls" and discharged on April 22, 1863. In June 1863 George was listed on a U.S. Civil War Draft Registration Record as a "laborer". George is again listed in Mower U.S.A General Hospital from May until April 10, 1864 on the hospital muster roll. In June 1864 he was reported "absent" on the muster roll and listed as "missing in action" in Cold Harbor, Virginia. George was captured on June 6, 1864 by Confederate soldiers in Gaines Mill, Virginia and confined to Richmond, Virginia on June 7. On June 8th he was then sent to Andersonville Prison in Georgia and arrived June 11. Mariah gave birth in 1864 to a second son George Jr, which she conceived while George was home on furlough the previous April. George spent the next 4 1/2 months in Andersonville Prison. He had to withstand the hot summer months and deplorable conditions. He was paroled in Savannah, Georgia on November 24, 1864 and admitted back in the hospital in Annapolis, Maryland until early December 1864. He was then given a furlough December 19 for 30 days. He was then sent to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania from muster on January 25, 1865.

The pay for a Private in the Civil War was an average of \$11 a month and was paid the last day of every other month (February, April, June, August, October, and December) after mustering and paid by the inspector general. On December 19, 1864 he was charged \$4.18 against his pay for transported from Annapolis, Maryland to Lock Haven, Pennsylvania (located about 8 miles north of his home in Beech Creek) to be home on furlough. George was then transported back to College Green Barracks in Annapolis, Maryland on January 25, 1865. The charge for transportation and clothing was \$5.88. The clothing consisting of one of each of the following, pants, shirt, drawers, socks and cap. On February 7, 1865 George was individually mustered out due to "expiration of term" and was paid his "bounty" of \$100 per an act of congress from 1861, which paid men to "volunteer".

General Lee surrendered to General Grant on April 9, 1865 at the Appomattox Court House in Appomattox, Virginia. The company muster out roll date was July 17, 1865 in Alexandria, Virginia. Family accounts claim that when George finally arrived home, after being

released from Andersonville, he arrived by covered wagon and looked thin and disheveled. The family did not recognize him. Neither George or Mariah could read or write as George would sign his name with a "D" and Mariah signed her with an "X" followed by the words "his/her mark".

In June 1870 George and Mariah (pregnant) resided in Boggs Township in Centre County, Pennsylvania with three of their children; James Robert (1860), George (1864), and Samuel (1868). The value of his personal estate was \$250.

In June 1880 the family lived in Decatur, Pennsylvania in Clearfield County. George worked in a local coal mine with the three eldest sons (James Robert, George Jr., and Samuel) while Mariah kept house. New members of the family would now include Atwood "Edward" (1870), Mary (1873), Emma (1877), and Harry Frank (1882).

In June 1890 was a census of surviving veterans of the civil war. George is listed as living in Rush Township in Centre County, Pennsylvania.

George suffered for the remainder of his life with chronic diarrhea, rheumatism, and many other ailments, due to his service. He filed for pension from the government on April 13, 1894 due to his being unable to work and provide for his family.



The above plaque that honors the 45th PA Regiment Company D from Centre County at the veteran's memorial in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania.

George died at the age of 53 on March 20, 1895 in Philipsburg, Pennsylvania. Mariah continued to receive a monthly pension in the amount of \$30 for the remainder of her life. She lived another 28 years after George passed until the age of 81 and died May 27, 1923 in Fleming, Pennsylvania (just outside of Lock Haven). Both are buried in Philipsburg Cemetery in Philipsburg, Pennsylvania. There is only a headstone for George but, the sexton of he cemetery noted that Sarah was buried in the cemetery and it is confident she is buried beside George.



Headstone of
George D. Simmons
1842-March 20, 1895
Philipsburg Cemetery
Philipsburg, Pennsylvania