

# Stephen Brown Wing, 9<sup>th</sup> VT Co. E

*When President Lincoln asked the states for troops, Vermont Governor Erastus Fairbanks responded by telegraph: "Vermont will do its full duty."*

*Over 34,000 Vermonters served.*

*Of the 34,000 Vermont soldiers, more than 5000 died - about 1 in 7. The only state with a higher per-capita fatality rate was Michigan.*

## The Weather

A northern soldier who ended up in Virginia had to become accustomed to an unfamiliar weather pattern and had to live almost entirely outdoors. Their wool coats were wrong for Virginia weather.

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*"As we had to have on our woolen coats, and our gun and equipments, you may suppose that it was some warm traveling." - Justice Gale, VT soldier*

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It also rained a lot. The rain created a muddy dilemma: the mud would get stuck up under the boot heel and hinder progress, especially if the order was double-time or quick march. One Vermont soldier sent home a request for "...as good a pair of boots as ever made in Vermont, stub-toed, small heels, sole pared down." In Virginia mud, the smaller the sole of the boot, the better.

My ancestor, Stephen Brown Wing, did not write home and ask for boots. He couldn't. He signed his enlistment papers with his mark, and the 1850 Troy, Orleans Co, VT census reported him as being unable to read and write.



On the day my soldier died, October 27, 1864, the rain started at about 3 am with a light drizzle. As the morning progressed, the rain increased, and turned the road to mud. The wet, woolen coat, the uneven terrain, and the order to march double-time may have contributed to his death, officially due to apoplexy, but “exhaustion upon the march” in the family stories. He was about 43; we aren't certain of his exact birthdate.

Sometimes, soldiers who died in the war were left where they fell, to be buried anonymously by strangers, or to have their clothing, equipment and belongings scavenged by the inadequately provisioned Confederate soldiers. The best way to avoid ending up as one of these unidentifiable dead was to fall in the presence of someone who knew him. This was our case.

When Stephen fell out, a fellow member of 9<sup>th</sup> VT, Co. E - **Charles N. Worboys** - stopped to bury Stephen on the side of the road, according to family history. Another witness was Stephen's nephew, **Seth Burgess Wing**, who was also in Company E.



Charles Worboys (a photo that has been in the family for a long time)



Seth B. Wing (1905)

## After the War

Stephen Brown Wing died intestate. His property was eventually sold at auction in March 1866 - land, house, tools, furnishings.

Nephew Seth went back to Vermont and married Stephen Brown Wing's widow, **Luthera Litchfield Wing**, in May 1866. Seth and Luthera were in Wisconsin before 1870. Seth and Luthera are "Ganny" and "Gamp" in family letters.



Seth and Luthera, with grandson Seth A. Moore

Stephen B. Wing had five children. Ellen and Russell were from his first marriage to Ann Russell Hennessey.

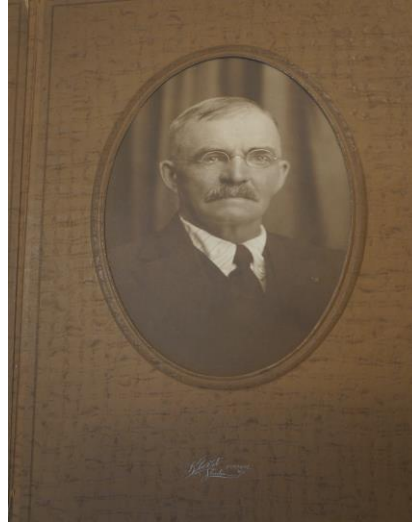
- **Ellen Wing Buckminster** stayed in Vermont and had children.
- **Russell Wing** married but died very young of heart disease and had no children.

Ida, Lillian and Frank migrated to Wisconsin with their mother Luthera and stepfather Seth.

- **Lillian Wing** died in Kilbourn. She was seven when she pulled a pot of hot water onto herself and was scalded to death.
- **Ida Wing** married New York native **Joe Gee**. They farmed in Wyocena on a plot of land right next to brother Frank.

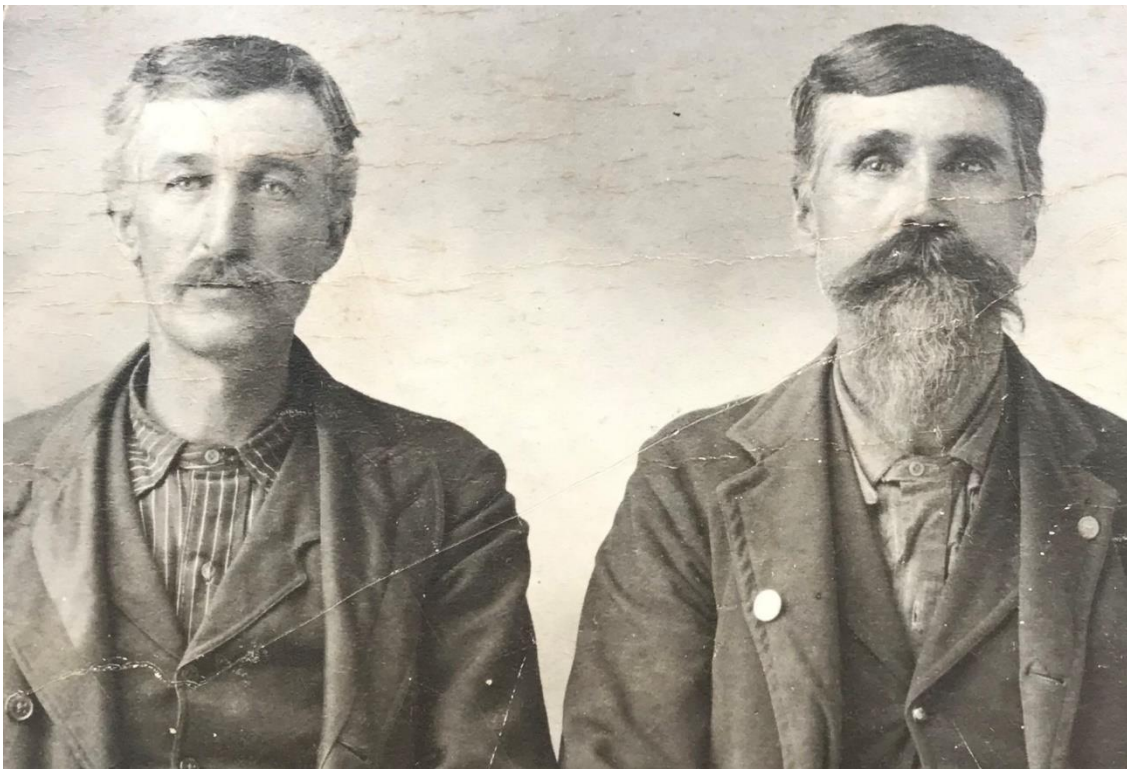


Ida Wing Gee



Joe Gee

- **Frank Ennis Wing**, my ancestor, was only three years old when his father died in the war. Seth was the only father he really knew.



Frank Ennis Wing and Seth Burgess Wing



Stephen, Seth, and Luthera's family, Thanksgiving 1901:



I like to think Stephen B. Wing is looking down on them all gathered here. Seth is center, with Luthera to his left and Joe Gee to his right. Stephen's daughter Ida and son Frank are the seated adults all the way to your right. We are fortunate to have this photo in the family because we also have the names for everyone pictured.

Descendant Barbara Weaver Pahlow was able to contact a descendant of fellow 9<sup>th</sup> VT soldier Charles Worboys to try and confirm the burial story. The descendant confirmed that they heard the same story in their family. One Worboys descendant in Vermont ended up marrying a Wing descendant.

Reference for statistics quoted: "vtdigger.org: Then Again" (series of blog posts)