

JAMES H. LOCKIE: PERSISTENCE PERSONIFIED

by Mark H. Dunkelman

Perhaps no Civil War soldier from Cattaraugus County saw more varied service than James Henry Lockie, who served in an impressive total of four different regiments. Lockie never rose above the rank of private, and he spent a considerable amount of the war years at home, but he also saw some hard service and sustained a serious injury that affected him for the rest of his life. He certainly deserves to be remembered for his plucky perseverance.

He was born in Machias on May 22, 1839, the son of Andrew and Betsey (Johnson) Lockie. During his youth he lived in the towns of Mansfield, Little Valley and Humphrey. When the war broke out, Lockie was working as a blacksmith in Humphrey. He was a tall man, five feet, eleven and a half inches in height, and had a fair complexion, brown hair and blue eyes.

On May 15, 1861, the 22-year-old Lockie enlisted at Allegany to serve two years, and he was mustered in at New York City on June 7 as a private in Co. H of the 37th New York. But in less than two weeks, his first tour of duty ended when he was discharged for disability on June 20 at New York.

Four months later, on October 22, 1861, Lockie enlisted at Cuba to serve three years, and he was mustered in at New York City on November 2 as a private in Co. I of the 6th New York Cavalry, the "Second Ira Harris Guard." On December 1, at Camp Scott on Staten Island, Lockie was struck on the left side of the head by a horseshoe thrown by accident by a comrade of Co. I, Melburn Wilcox (one of five brothers who served in the war, including Isaiah C. Wilcox of Co. H, 154th New York). The blow rendered Lockie unconscious for more than two weeks, and when he came to, he was subject to violent spasmodic fits--a condition that plagued him for the rest of his life. Marvin Older of Franklinville, a

sergeant of Co. I, was detailed as a nurse to watch over Lockie, and recalled years later that Lockie's fits required "the full force of an able bodied man to restrain him from inflicting serious injuries upon his person."

Lockie was sent from Camp Scott to a hospital at York, Pennsylvania, and the trip turned out to be an adventure. He left Staten Island on the barge *Coxacca*, towed by the *Thomas P. Way*. The vessels got no further than Sandy Hook, New Jersey, when the barge drifted onto a sandbar. It took the ships *Cinderella* and *Red Jacket* to tow the barge to Elizabeth. When he finally reached York, Lockie was discharged for disability on January 23, 1862.

Lockie enlisted for the third time on August 28, 1862, at Olean, again for a period of three years. He was mustered in at Jamestown on September 24 as a private in Co. G of the 154th New York. He traveled with the regiment to Virginia, but it wasn't long before reoccurring spasmodic fits landed him in the hospital. In later years, he also claimed to be afflicted with a fever and hemorrhoids. In early November he was sent from the regiment's camp at Fairfax Court House to Findlay Hospital in Washington, and from there he was sent to Philadelphia, where he was treated at various hospitals before being discharged for disability on February 6, 1863.

A year passed before Lockie volunteered for the fourth and final time. It seems likely that his health improved somewhat during the interval. He enlisted on February 29, 1864, at Dunkirk, to serve three years, and was mustered in May 11 at Elmira as a private in Co. D (known as the "Dunkirk Company," composed mainly of western New Yorkers) of the 179th New York. The 179th was assigned to the 9th Corps, and Lockie was present with the regiment at the battles of Cold Harbor and the Crater. At the latter battle, Lockie helped two wounded officers from the field--Maj. J. B. Sloan and Capt. William Bird, who was hit in the kneecap. (Bird was one of four Ellicottville brothers who served in

the war--subjects of a future article.) Lockie later claimed, "I once found a man by the name of Spour wounded in front of Petersburg, and cut the grape shot out of his back with my knife." Private Lockie was not with the 179th when it was mustered out near Alexandria, Virginia, in June 1865. Perhaps his chronic health problems had separated him from the regiment; he was mustered out a month earlier, on May 16, 1865, at New York City.

In the postwar years, Lockie moved frequently, living in Humphrey, Ellicottville, Franklinville, Ischua and West Salamanca, and continuing his trade as a blacksmith when his health permitted. On September 14, 1867, he married Cynthia L. Waite in Olean; the couple had four children: Herman (born 1868), Belle (1870), May (1874) and Ernest (1884). In his pension applications, Lockie claimed he was unable to perform manual labor from the time of his discharge until 1870, and only about a quarter of the time thereafter; that he continued to suffer from hemorrhoids, losing up to a pint of blood in an attack; and that he remained beset by spasmodic fits. Among the doctors who treated him was Henry Van Aernam, former surgeon of the 154th New York. In the spring of 1873, Marvin Older was called to Lockie's residence and found him in the throes of fits similar to those he suffered on Staten Island a dozen years before.

Lockie was a member of Great Valley's Lewis S. Rust Post, No. 357, G.A.R. He died of heart disease on November 14, 1902, at his home in West Salamanca; the *Cattaraugus Republican* described him as "a well known resident" of the village. He and his wife are buried in West Salamanca's Crawford Cemetery. His two sons and daughter Belle survived him in West Salamanca at his death, but unfortunately, no descendants have been located to date. Perhaps a connection with family members will be made someday, and more information will be revealed about James Lockie, a man who was doggedly determined to be a soldier.