



Israel Rickards
Pvt., Co. D, 154th N.Y.



Israel Rickards and (second)
wife Celestia Jane Roy, with
daughters (l to r) Grace, Maudie and Emma.



Israel Rickards — third from left, back row.

Sandy Rice

November 8, 1997

Dear Mark,

Thank you for all the information you sent to me about Israel Rickards!!!! It really inspired me to do more research. First I had my mother write to her cousin, Alma Curtis who is the daughter of Grace who was the daughter of Israel--still second marriage. She looked for pictures and found one of Israel at a reunion Darn--not in uniform!! I made a copy for you and one for me--see enclosed. She identified Israel and Joe Wilcox who turned out to be a relative of my great uncle Charles Gilman. Maybe you can identify more or maybe you already have a copy--anyway there it is.

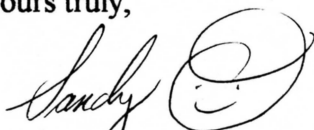
I have also included several pictures of Israel--still no uniform--these are photocopies--If you want "good" pictures--please tell me as it is easy for me to get copies made--already have negatives. I don't know how deeply you go into this.

Then I asked my mother to write down all she could remember about "Grandpa" Rickards-. This is also included. Unfortunately she wasn't interested in the Civil War as a little girl so didn't ask many questions. Also as we have discussed--in the early 1900's the war was way in the past and he probably had other problems to think about. I have given you everything she wrote--when I typed, I tried to put the most relevant stuff at the top. Please use whatever you want and toss the rest.

Thank you also for all the references to the Civil War and the 154th--and the souvenir of the reunion--Maybe someday I can attend. I am going to try to get a copy of your book--if you ever get some extra let me know. And I would like a copy of the form to get his pension records if it is not too much of a bother.

Another interesting observation about your letter. Another relative that I am researching is Sophia Arnold who married William Case from Providence, Rhode Island. I notice that your letter came from 7 Arnold Street--Shows there were Arnolds around there--more inspiration. That's about it for now--if I find anything more I will send it to you--Tell me if you want better copies of the pictures I sent to you.

Yours truly,


Sandy Rice

Israel Rickards
Remembrances of Ruth Wallace Rhodes
September, 1997

My memories about my Grandfather Rickards are childish since I was a child when I knew him well. I now am 90 years old and look back at him as a most lovable and merry old man. He loved children, especially his grandchildren--always had wintergreen candy in his pocket for us. He also ate horehound candy which to us was just awful.

He didn't talk much about the Civil War; it had been quite a while and lots had happened since then. He was active in the GAR. I think he was the leader of the local group. He attended a reunion at Gettysburg--but I don't know which one. We used to have a picture of him there and standing on the front porch in his uniform, but I can't find it now. When he went to the reunion, he brought back some "hardtack" so we children would have an idea of what the soldiers had to eat. I remember him showing us his little finger injured in the war--he said Gettysburg--but that was probably easier for him to say that, than to explain about Rocky Face Ridge. Possibly part of it was amputated, but not all. I remember him saying that he was so excited about the battle and so busy that he didn't realize he was wounded until the end of the day. He would talk about driving a wagon with ammunition. He said that he saw Lincoln once--was very impressed--I think he said he shook his hand--not sure.

I believe the people of Great Valley had a lot of love and respect for him. Most people of the town called him Uncle Is. On his 85th birthday, Great Valley gave him a party. Somewhere, I have a picture of him, sitting on his porch with a huge birthday cake. The made cheese boxes in Great Valley--big round things and I suspect this "cake" may have been one of those boxes.

Grandpa Rickards' home was always open to visitors like visiting ministers or educators. One famous educator, who stayed there was Martha Van Rensselaer. At that time she was superintendent of the area schools. Later she established the Home Economics college at Cornell University. When I entered Cornell, I went to her office and introduced myself. She remembered Israel Rickards and her visit with him. Another educator who lodged at the Rickards house was my father, Henry Wallace, who eventually married Israel's daughter, Emma. She was a student at the high school in Great Valley, where my father was the principal.

Other memories:

He drove a Willys Knight car which had on its hood a little image of a knight. He drove fast for those days and we children would scream, "Go fast around the corners", just to get him going. I have the cuckoo clock that he purchased in 1905. He took my 3 year old brother Lew with him to Salamanca to help get it. This was a big day for Lew and on Grandpa Rickards death, Lew received the clock; which I now have. I also have his shaving mirror.

I always thought he was very funny. One time when he went fishing and had no luck, he brought home a can of salmon. I never saw him angry. However, one day for some reason, a lady was upset with him. Coming out of church she confronted him saying, "Is Rickards, I'd just like to

pull those whiskers of yours!" She was so angry, but grandpa just stuck out his chin and said, "Well give them a jerk for luck."

We used to go to Great Valley for Christmas. When I was very small grandpa would tell me how on Christmas Eve, he would sit in the living room in his shirt-tail (how embarrassing) and when Santa came, he would throw rotten apples at him. He loved to tease.

He was also very kind and sensitive to little children. As a little girl, I really hated oysters. My grandfather, sitting at the table next to me said, "Ruth, every oyster has one little part that is really sweet and I'm going to cut that part from each of my oysters as I eat them, and give it to you. So he did and at the end of the meal he informed me that now I had eaten one whole oyster! He had taught me to like them and I still do. When I graduated from high school in 1924, Grandpa gave me a check for \$5.00--a lot of money to me then.

My mother would tell the story of when she and her two sisters were young, they wanted their ears pierced for ear-rings. Down the road from their farm lived a strange old woman, who told the girls to come some day and she would help them out.. So telling no one, they went and came home with very coarse thread through their ears. Their mother was angry, but Grandpa went to Salamanca the next day and purchased three pairs of gold earrings! He also bought them each a bicycle--They would ride to Salamanca or Ellicottville and then come home on the train.

Israel Rickards attended the Baptist church regularly. His favorite hymn was "When the Roll is called up Yonder, I'll be there." He died of stomach cancer in 1928, just after I had graduated from college. I helped take care of him--turning him in bed--his skin so thin, I feared my fingers would go through.

Another time he teased his grandson. He came to visit us--we were living in Churchville, New York. On the way to our house from the train, he told us he had met a little girl and she said she was my brother's best girl. Well, Lew was upset and afraid of which girl it was. He asked "Was it the one that talks as if she had spit in her mouth?" How that pleased grandpa as he quipped, "Yep, that's the one!"

Somewhere between Salamanca and Great Valley there is an iron bridge which my mother told me my grandfather helped to build.

He bought each daughter a gold watch--my aunt's wound with a key. I still have my mother's. One day his three daughters, Grace, Maude and Emma, left their children, six of us in his care, while they had a day off together. I can see us now in the kitchen. Grandpa had ruled that each child had to pare his own potato for dinner. I was very small and I remember when my potato was pared there wasn't much potato left--but wise old grandpa had amused the children for quite a space of time. We all loved him and anything he suggested was just great.