



Stratford in the Civil War

by **Stratford Historical Society**

Opinions in Connecticut on the slave issue were diverse, strong and violent.

In the 1860 election Stratford voted solidly for Lincoln and felt the union must be preserved. When Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers for ninety-days, Stratford responded, and its men were part of the Union Army that suffered a crushing defeat at First Bull Run.

That summer, after they returned, the Bridgeport Farmer newspaper ran articles opposing the war and actually exulting in the Bull Run defeat. The ex-soldiers joined a mob that broke into the newspaper office, threw anything they could pick up out the window and smashed the presses.

In May 1862, it became apparent that the nation was in for a long war. President Lincoln called for another Connecticut regiment of 7,145 men. At a meeting at the old town house, it was agreed to pay the volunteers \$150 for volunteering for nine months.

Stratford met the quota for the town.

Stratford men served in more than twenty Connecticut infantry regiments, in a few New York regiments, in the cavalry, the artillery, and the navy.

Gallant soldiers

Also in May 1862, the governor formed the 14th Regiment, among them 1,015 men from Stratford. After the Battle of Antietam, Colonel Dwight Morris of the 14th Regiment said in his report: "The men in my brigade were all new troops, hastily raised, and without drill or experience, and although under fire for the first time, behaved with great gallantry. In front of the last position held by the 14th Connecticut more than 1,000 of the enemy lie slain."

The 14th suffered 21 killed, 28 missing and 88 wounded.

The Connecticut 5th, 17th, 20th, and 27th regiments, all with Stratford men in them, also fought at Gettysburg.

At sea, the Civil War became a blockade effort to prevent the Confederacy from

exporting cotton and importing supplies. It also had an impact on the North's shipping. Confederate raiders on the high seas were destroying union registered ships wherever they found them. From Stratford, Lieutenant William Barrymore commanded many blockade ships for the North.

Celebrated and grieved

On April 3, 1865, Richmond fell. In Stratford the people rang church bells, fired cannon salutes, and flew flags.

The brutal war was nearly over and Stratford played her part. On April 15, 1865 a telegram was received in New York from the War Department in Washington: "Abraham Lincoln died this morning at twenty-two minutes after seven o'clock."

Stratford grieved with the rest of the nation.

Visit the Stratford Historical Society to see Civil War artifacts of Stratford soldiers and learn more about the brave men who fought. For hours see stratford-historicalsociety.org