85th Anniversary

THE GALLANT THIRD VERMONT REGIMENT

Visitors to Hazen Field will find a boulder and marker on the first camp site of the Third Vermont Regiment, the only one of the 17 Vermont regiments that was mustered in at St. Johnsbury. On the fiftieth anniversary, July 16, 1911, this marker was dedicated in the presence of 64 living members of the gallant Third. The veterans and others present were graciously welcomed by Rev. Dr. Edward T. Fairbanks and the marker was unveiled by Robert L. Stone, a great-grandson of Gov. Erastus Fairbanks who had called the men into the service. Their regimental leader, Col. Thomas O. Stearn of Woodstock spoke briefly, with the address by Gen. F. G. Butterfield of Derby.

The Third Vermont boys had a lesson in patience in waiting at Camp Baxter on the old Fair Grounds nearly two months before they entrained. Floral Hall had been enlarged to contain their bunks, but measles ran through the ranks prostrating one man in every three. But the ladies sent them flowers, delicacies and a beautiful regimental flag. The latter was presented to the regiment on July 4 with hundreds of people besides the boys in drab gray uniforms in the assembly. Incidentally these gray uniforms faded so soon that they were replaced by the regular army blue. There were many St. Johnsbury boys in the regiment. Alonzo H. Newt was a Major, Ass. P. Blunt was an Adjutant, Dr. Henry C. Newell was one of the surgeons and William H. Herrick, so many years leader of the St. Johnsbury Band, served with Charles L. Paddock in the regiment band.

The drummer boy of Company D was Willie Johnson, a 14-year-old St. Johnsbury boy who received distinguished honor early in the war. In a seven days' retreat to Harrison's Landing it was discovered that but one drummer of the entire division had brought his drum with him. That was Willie Johnson. While many strong men threw their drums away and everything but their clothing on their backs Willie clung fealty to his drum and was honored by General Smith to drum for the division parade. When this act of heroism was reported by General Smith to the War Department in Washington Willie was summoned to the National Capital and received from Secretary Stanton the Star Medal of Honor "for his fidelity and pluck." The young man served throughout the duration of the war.

Few regiments in Vermont were in more severe engagements or lost so heavily in killed and wounded. They participated in 28 engagements including such terrible battles as Antietam, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, the Wilderness campaign, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, Petersburg and Winchester. In several of the heaviest encounters they were in the front ranks. No wonder that more than one-third of them died on the field of battle or from wounds and disease. Another third received an honorable discharge for disabilities and wounds.

Throughout their service they were continually commended for their valor. Col. Samuel E. Pingree, afterwards Governor, and Major Thomas Nelson of Ryegate were cited for "gallant and efficient service at Fredericksburg." The record is full of many reports to the War Department of "conspicuous and gallant conduct" of the men in the Third Vermont.

And it was for such sacrifices as the above, that Memorial Exercises were held in all cities and towns in the North yesterday,

"That government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

PASSUMPSIC SAVINGS BANK
ST. JOHNSBURY VT.