

Brother vs. Brother

by Tracy Tomaselli

Richard Fowler and Polly Hart had six sons - all served in the American Civil War, five for the Union and one for the Confederacy.

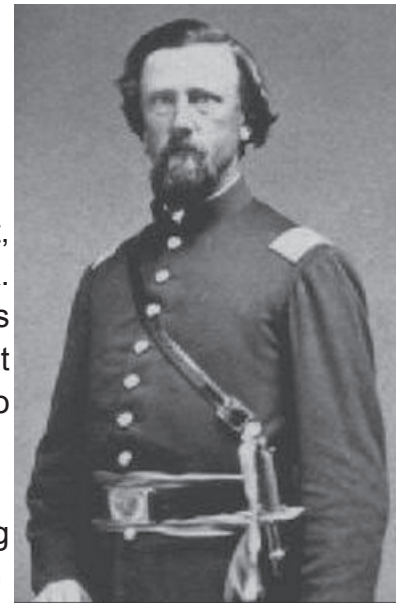


Their eldest, **Richard Hart Fowler**, born November 26, 1817, Guilford, Connecticut, was a cabinet maker who at the start of the war lived in New Haven with his wife and two children, Ella and Garwood. He enlisted as a First Sergeant, Co. A, 27th C.V.I., a nine months regiment. On December 13, 1862, at the Battle of Fredericksburg, Virginia, the regiment was ordered to cross an open plain and take the Confederate fortifications on Marye's Heights. Shells from the enemy artillery and musket fire from the Confederates who were massed behind a stonewall in a sunken road at the base of the Heights assaulted the 27th Connecticut with murderous fire. By nightfall, one-third of the regiment lay dead or wounded on the field or in the hospital. Richard Fowler was severely wounded in his leg and taken to a field hospital, where he died the next day due to amputation. He is buried in Evergreen Cemetery, New Haven, Connecticut.

Henry Thomas Fowler, born November 13, 1819, Guilford, Connecticut, was 42 years old when he enlisted on October 2, 1861 in New York City as Lieutenant Colonel of the 63rd Regiment NY volunteers. He was court martialed for failing to follow orders to advance during the Battle of Poindexter's Farm, July 1, 1862, Malvern Hill, Virginia. This was later revoked. At the Battle of Antietam, September 17, 1862, he was wounded four times, losing his arm. He was honorably discharged on July 4, 1863, and given government employment in Washington, D.C. He died on January 19, 1877 and is buried in Alderbrook Cemetery, Guilford, Connecticut.

Henry Thomas Fowler

Douglass Merwin Fowler, born January 26, 1826, Guilford, Connecticut, was a locksmith (1850) who at the start of the war (1861) lived in Norwalk. He joined the 3rd C.V.I., a three months regiment, and then served as Captain in the 8th C.V.I. until its muster out in February, 1862. On August 28, 1862 he became Captain of Co. A, 17th C.V.I., and was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel.



On July 1, 1863, Douglass Fowler, astride his beautiful white horse - setting an example of bravery for his troops - led the 17th C.V.I. to a rise now known as "Barlow's Knoll" north of the town of Gettysburg. Joking with his men, as deadly iron from Confederate artillery shrieked frantically by, he encouraged his soldiers to "Dodge the big ones Boys". In only moments, his men were horrified as a shell fragment slammed into Colonel Fowler's head, decapitating him instantly.



George Hart Fowler, born August 29, 1828, Guilford, Connecticut, enlisted on May 1, 1861, as a musician in the New York 1st Infantry. He was discharged on September 23, 1862 when the bands were disbanded. He returned to Guilford, married Sarah L. (Bradley) Cruttenden, and became a house painter. He died on April 6, 1910, and is buried in Alderbrook Cemetery, Guilford, Connecticut.

Edward Fowler, the youngest son, was born September 29, 1841, Guilford, Connecticut. He enlisted on July 21, 1862, as a Private in Company I, 14th C.V.I. After the Battle of Antietam (Maryland), the regiment marched to Bolivar Heights, near Harper's Ferry, Virginia and was placed on picket and special duty. Edward became sick on November 17, 1862. He was discharged (due to disability) on February 12, 1863. In 1913, he was admitted to the U.S. Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers in Johnson City, Tennessee. He died on May 5, 1924, and is buried in the Hampton National Cemetery, Hampton, Virginia.



Charles Fowler, the third son of Richard Fowler and Polly Hart, was born on February 29, 1824, Guilford, Connecticut. He went to sea at the young age of fourteen. Charles moved to Galveston, Texas in 1847, where he was Captain of the brig. Mary. He returned to Connecticut (1850) and married Mary Jane Booth of Stratford, Connecticut. By 1858, he returned to Galveston, Texas, and at the commencement of the hostilities between the states he entered the naval branch of the Confederate service. He was captured at the engagement of Sabine Pass, and sent north to Fort Lafayette (NY harbor) and Fort Warren (Boston harbor) before being paroled. After the war, he returned to Galveston and was made Captain of one of the Morgan line of steamers, a position which he held for twenty-five years. He died on March 17, 1891, Galveston, Texas and is buried in the Trinity Episcopal Cemetery in Galveston.

1. findagrave.com
2. genealogybank.com
3. Gettysburg. Stephen W. Sears, Houghton Mifflin, 2003
4. <http://www.brotherswar.com/Gettysburg-1j.htm> The 17th Connecticut Infantry
5. <http://www.civilwarintheeast.com/People/F/FowlerD.php>
6. Town Vital Records, Guilford, Connecticut
7. U.S. Census Records