

While digging into some family history recently, I discovered still more of my wife Jennie's relatives who served in the Civil War. And these should be of particular interest to the members of this Roundtable. We knew about Jennie's 3x Great-Grandfather Levi Kifer, who served in the 56<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Infantry. What we didn't know (until now) was that Levi's wife Fanny (Jennie's 3x Great-Grandmother) had a brother named Samuel Whitmer (Jennie's 4x Great Uncle), who served in the 155<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment. He was mustered into Company H (one of the units predominantly made up of Clarion County residents) on August 22, 1862. And he was present at Gettysburg. In his bare feet. We'll let him tell the rest of the story in his own words: "On the march to Gettysburg Pa. in July 1863, my feet became so sore that I was scarcely able to walk—during the engagement at Gettysburg commencing July 1, 1863 I was compelled to go in my bare feet not being able to wear shoes—after said battle I was sent by my officers to a place called "Soldiers Rest" in Alexandria Va. —I was not sick and was not treated by a surgeon but just remained there for a short time and recruited up [an archaic phrase, meaning "recuperated"] and was sent from there to my company and regiment." [From his pension application in 1883; see below]. The regimental history of the 155<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania (*Under the Maltese Cross*) includes stories that show that this condition was not unique to Samuel Whitmer. Some men in this condition were not able to participate in the battle. But some did participate in bare feet, and apparently Samuel was one of them. His name is displayed on the plaque for the 155<sup>th</sup> Regiment on the Pennsylvania Monument at Gettysburg; alas, it is spelled wrong, as Samuel "Whitmore." He "recruited up" enough to serve to the end of the war, and was mustered out with his company on June 2, 1865. Perhaps he bumped into his brother-in-law Levi Kifer at Appomattox, since both of their regiments were present there as part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Corps. He and his wife Sarah would raise six children. He died in 1905 and is buried in Callensburg, Clarion County, Pennsylvania, in the same cemetery as Levi and Fanny Kifer.



Sketch from *Under the Maltese Cross*.

GENERAL AFFIDAVIT.

State of Pennsylvania, County of Clarion

In the matter of the Invalid Pension Application to Part 499  
of Samuel Whitman

ON THIS 27<sup>th</sup> day of October A. D. 1887; personally appeared before me a

Samuel Whitman aged \_\_\_\_\_ years, a resident of Elk Township  
in the County of Clarion and State of Pennsylvania

well known to me to be reputable and entitled to credit, and who, being duly sworn, declared in relation to aforesaid case as follows:

On the march to Gettysburg Pa. in July, 1863, my  
(Note.—Affiants should state how they gain a knowledge of the facts to which they testify.)  
feet became so sore that I was scarcely able to walk—  
during the engagement at Gettysburg commencing  
July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1863 I was compelled to go in my bare feet  
not being able to wear shoes—after said battle  
I was sent by my officers to a place called  
"Soldiers Rest" in Alexandria Va.—I was not  
sick and was not treated by a surgeon,  
but just remained there for a short time  
and recovered up and was sent from  
there to my company and regiment

His Post Office address is Valley, Clarion County Pa

He swears to the truth of the contents of this affidavit  
[Signature of Affiant] Samuel Whitman

[Affiant signs by mark, any persons who can write sign here.] [Signature of Affiant.]

But Samuel wasn't the only member of Company H of the 155<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania from Clarion County who is related to Jennie. Joseph Myers Kifer (1838-1919) was one of the many first-cousins of her 3x Great-Grandfather Levi Kifer who served in the Civil War. Joseph Kifer was mustered into Company H on August 22, 1862. His name does not appear on the plaque for the 155<sup>th</sup> Regiment on the Pennsylvania Monument at Gettysburg, so perhaps he was ill during the battle (or was one whose blistered feet kept him from participating). He was later wounded at Petersburg on June 18, 1864, and was

discharged on account of his wounds on May 16, 1865. He would settle in Allegheny City after the war, where he would run a grocery business, and he and his wife Maggie would raise seven children. But according to *Under the Maltese Cross*, he was “still a great sufferer from wounds received in battle.”



Joseph Myers Kifer (sometimes misspelled “Keifer”)

Philip Over (1838-1908), a 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin of Samuel Whitmer and Fanny Kifer, was another of Jennie’s Clarion County relatives who served in Company H of the 155<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania. He was also mustered in on August 22, 1862, was wounded (in the hand) at the Battle of Laurel Hill on May 8, 1864, was promoted to Corporal on September 1, 1864, and was mustered out with the company on June 2, 1865. And he must have been present on Little Round Top, because his name appears on the plaque for the 155<sup>th</sup> Regiment on the Pennsylvania Monument at Gettysburg. Spelled correctly.