

In response to the article in the Arsenal Newsletter I have two ancestors' that I can trace to the Civil War. On my Mother's side my Great Grandfather Private Jonathan Steele and on my fathers' side my Grandfather, George McClellan.

PRIVATE JONATHAN STEELE

Private Jonathan Steele was born January 27, 1845 in Perry Township, Armstrong County, PA. He enlisted in the Union Army at Brady's Bend, PA March 21, 1864. The enlistment was to serve three years. He was assigned to Company "C", 139th Pennsylvania Infantry. Wounded at Spotsylvania Court House, VA May 12, 1864. Report was to the effect "Gunshot wound through the right hand, ball striking the first finger cutting it off and up between the first and second finger and "popping out on the back of the hand". He was rushed (we think via train) and admitted to the Emery General Hospital, District of Columbia May 14, 1864. Treated at Saterlee General Hospital, West Philadelphia, PA from May 16, 1864 until September or October 1864. Amputation of the right index finger. Returned to duty October 24, 1864 Company "C" 93rd Regiment, PA Infantry. Discharged from active duty June 27, 1865 in Harrisburg. On November 13, 1857 he was declared partially disabled and placed on the invalid pension roll of the U.S. Army. (I was able to secure a copy of his file which lists various correspondence until his death May 18, 1926 in Petrolia, PA) My mother and father knew him quite well. He married his Armstrong County sweetheart Mary Forringer in Bradys Bend August 9, 1866. They had nine children of which my grandmother Wilda was the next to the last to be born January 21, 1880. The family always said that though wounded he was healthy in many other ways. (One interesting note- When I visited the Spotsylvania Court House Battlefield several years ago, I mentioned to the Park Ranger that my great grandfather had been wounded there. We later walked the Battlefield and found the location of the 139th during the May 12th battle. We lay down on the ground and envisioned the fighting. The Ranger indicated that we were within 30 yards of where Private Steele was wounded. In fact he is certain that it was sharp shooters from South Carolina shooting down on the 139th that caused the gun shot wound.

GEORGE MC CLELLAN HAYS

In grade school I often wondered why my grandpa Hays, who liven in Chicora, PA, had such a strange middle name "McClellan". The George I could understand, but why another family name as a middle name. I never got a good answer so forgot about it until I became interested in the Civil War. Then it dawned on me one day - he was born November 4, 1862 at the height of the Civil War. It became apparent that the family, at a moment of strong fervor, in support of Lincoln and the Union, decided to name their new son in honor of the General George McClellan. I wish the general would have lived up to their expectations.

Regards,
Rich Hays