

Gen. G.A. Gillmore's line of Earthworks in front of FORT WAGNER, Morris Island SC



By Patricia A. Kaufmann

“The Civil War’s Most Famous Scout” Col. Lewis S. Payne

Multiple historical markers proclaim in detail Col. Lewis S. Payne of North Tonawanda, New York, the “Civil War’s most famous scout.” [Figure 1, Figure 2]

There are many who individuals who served as scouts, spies, and intelligence collectors during the war on both sides of the conflict. Whether Payne is the “most famous scout” is a matter of opinion, but it is certain that residents of North Tonawanda justifiably feel this way. Fans of Allan Pinkerton, Harriet Tubman, and others would assuredly disagree. But Payne was certainly no slouch.

Lewis S. Payne (1819-1898)

Lewis Payne settled down in North Tonawanda in 1836 or 1841, depending on the source cited. He built the first steam-operated sawmill to speed the cutting and trimming of logs into lumber. He started a large wheat-growing farm in 1847 at the corner of what is today Wheatfield Street and Payne Avenue, named after him. [Figure 3]

Aside from his sizable farming and business interests, he dabbled in politics and served as a town supervisor, collector of canal tolls, and as county clerk. His home was depicted by a drawing in 1878. The property was developed for residential use and factory sites starting around 1914. [Figure 4, Figure 5]

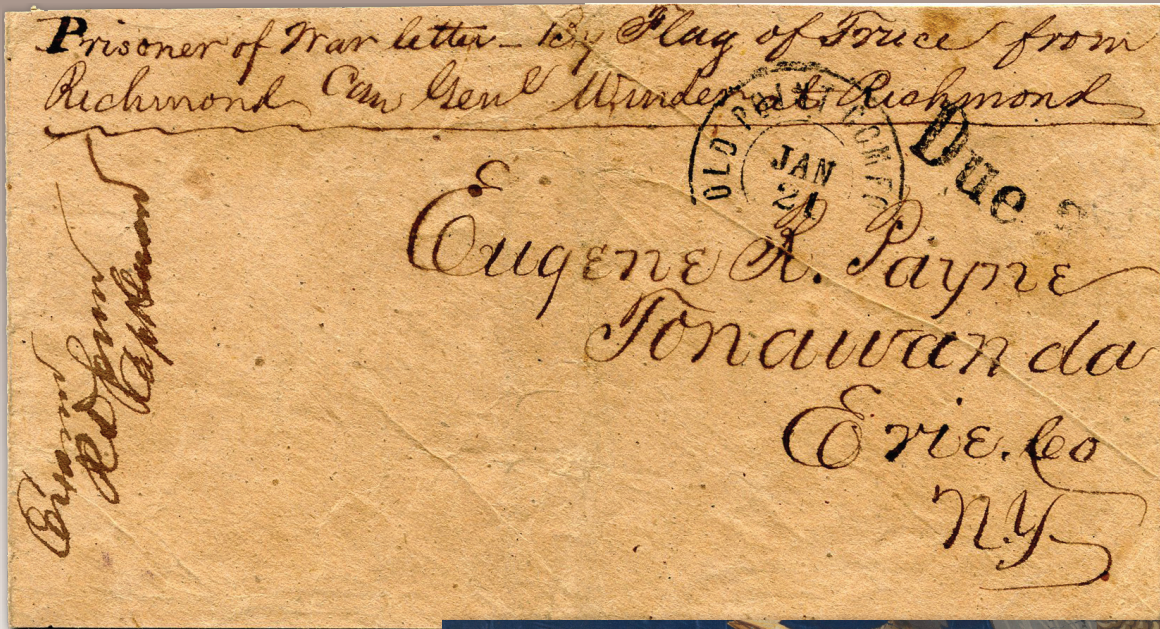


Figure 12. POW cover from Col. Lewis S. Payne to his son in Tonawanda, NY, while prisoner at Richland Jail, Columbia, SC.

Figure 8. Close-up of the 100th Regiment N.Y. Volunteers designation



Soldiers of the New York Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War.



100th New York Volunteer Infantry, Second Regiment, Eagle Brigade, Third Buffalo Regiment

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, President Lincoln immediately put out a call for 75,000 volunteers. Payne answered the patriotic call and, at his own expense, raised an infantry company of volunteers from around the county, mainly from the Tonawandas and Grand Island.

Illustrated is the first of over forty pages relating to the formation and movements of the One Hundredth Regiment New York Volunteers, raised August 19, 1861. [Figure 6]

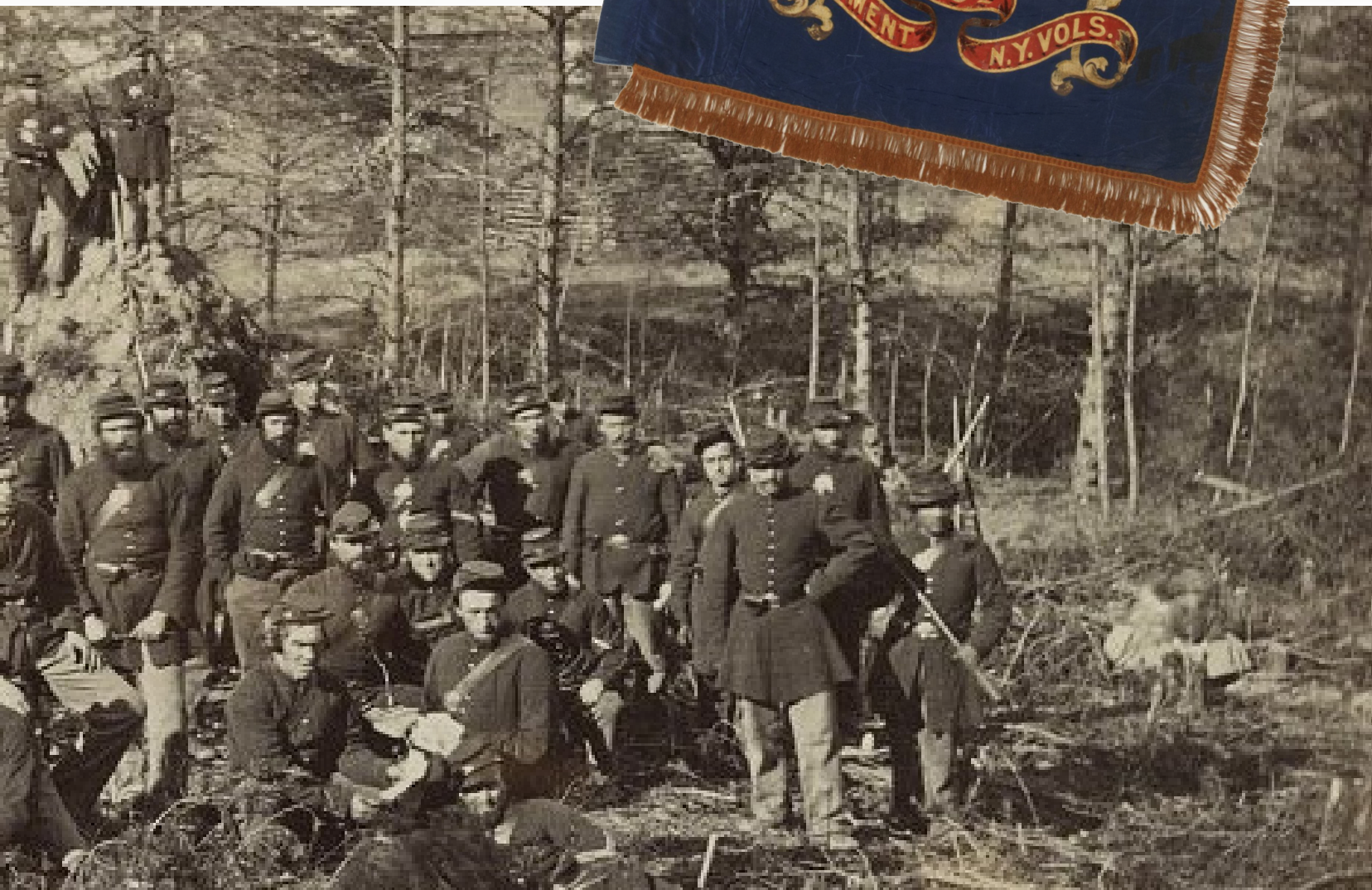
A rare 100th New York Infantry guidon is also shown. Many infantry regiments used flank markers or general guide markers. These were small flags carried by sergeants posted at each end of a regiment in line of battle. They were used to mark the extreme ends of a straight line, with the national and regimental colors marking the center of the line, along which the entire regiment was to form. The difference between flank markers and general guide markers was merely in the means of display. Like the camp colors, flank markers were attached to an eight-foot-pole. General guide markers were mounted on a small staff designed to fit into the bore of the sergeant's musket. [Figures 7-8]

With Payne as its captain, the 100th saw action beginning in 1862. Unfortunately, within three months, the company had suffered disastrous losses. Eventually Payne found himself and his remaining regiment

assigned to an observation corps near Charleston. It was at that point that his career as one of the war's most successful scouts began. [Figure 9]

Civil War Scouts

Civil War intelligence gathering did not have today's technological advantages. The only way to gather necessary information was to send out men, at great personal peril, to personally view the scene and then report their findings to their commanders. These men, known as scouts, were utilized by





both the Union and the Confederate forces.

Women and servants were also utilized. One of the most famous examples is Elizabeth Van Lew, who operated an extensive spy ring in Richmond for the Union Army, and former slave Mary Elizabeth Bowser, who worked with Van Lew.

Going behind enemy lines alone or with a small band of men was extremely dangerous. To blend in, scouts would sometimes leave their uniforms behind and dress in civilian clothes or the uniform of the enemy. Being caught this way usually resulted in being classified as a spy, and the sentence was hanging.

Using knowledge gained from his years spent in Western New York along the Niagara River and Erie Canal, Payne's understanding of the nature of waterways and their associated terrain was vital to his reconnaissance expeditions. Behind enemy lines, his patrols quickly established a reputation for fast and accurate reports on the lay of the land, enemy numbers, and positions.

In one incident, Payne was given the task of leading a group into the harbor under cover of darkness and destroying the Confederate steamer *Manigault*, which was involved in supplying Sumter, Moultrie, Battery Wagner and Cummings Point. The resulting flames attracted the attention of Rebel artillerymen on shore, and the battery opened fire on Payne's company. The men were rowing desperately back to the Union shore when a typical military snafu occurred.

Payne's soldiers had undoubtedly felt relief when they rowed out of range of the enemy cannon. Unfortunately, Union guards had not been informed of the Union night raid into the harbor and began to fire on Payne and his men landing on shore—dreaded "friendly fire." It happens today and it happened then. It is a painful reality of warfare.

Payne quickly pulled out his handkerchief and began waving it frantically. The guards were fearful of a Confederate trick but held their fire and approached cautiously. Fortunately, there were no casualties.

Major General Quincy Adams Gillmore, Commander of the Department of the South, gave Payne power to call for all the men he needed and turned over to him the whole picket line of ten miles, extending the length of Folly and Morris islands. Officers who outranked him were chagrined to learn that all reports were to be made to Payne, and not to Gen. Gillmore's headquarters. Capt. Payne and Company D were the advance guard, living in boats in the marshes, between the opposing armies. [Figure 10]

Figure 9. Col. Lewis S. Payne in uniform during the war.

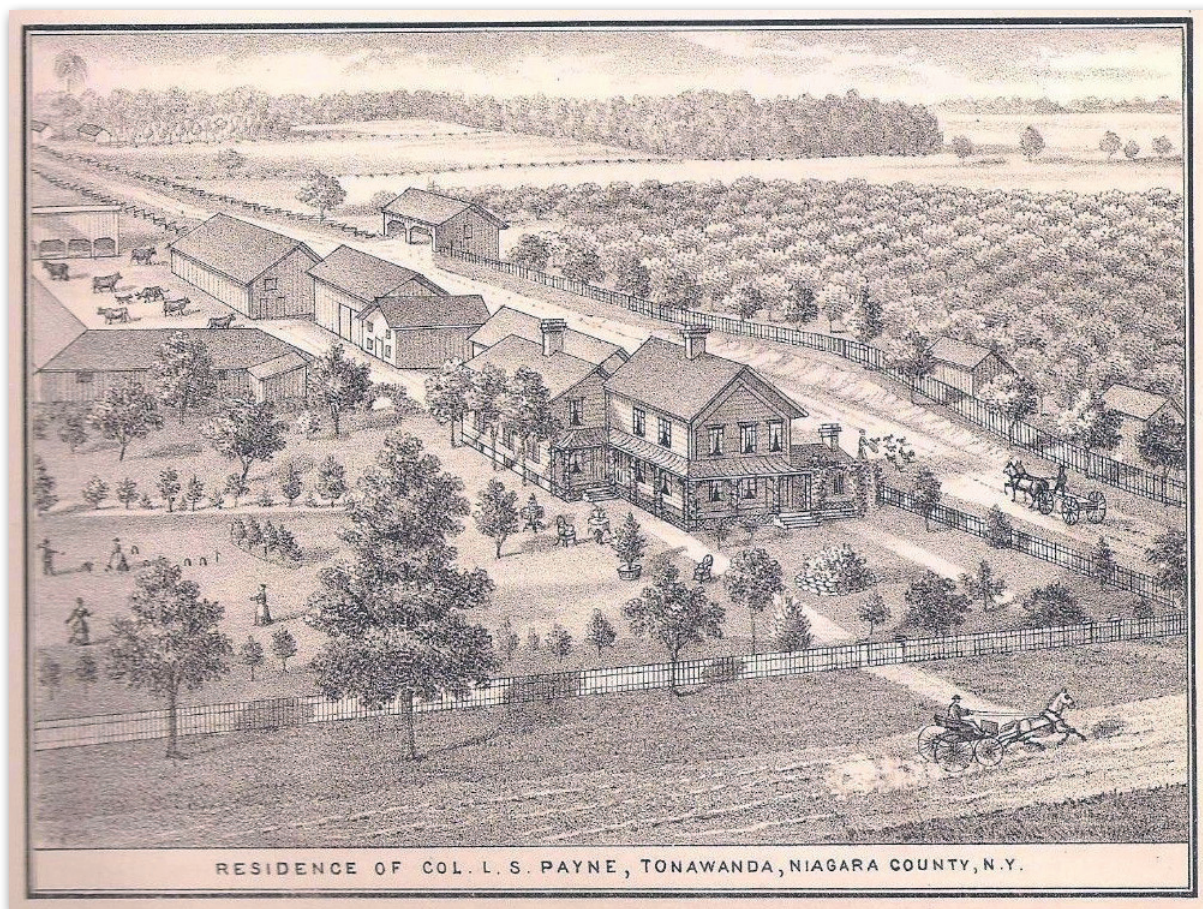


Figure 4. Sketch of the residence of Col. Payne in Tonawanda 1878 showing Wheatfield Street in the foreground, looking north up Payne Avenue.

Illustrated is a sketch of Gen. Gillmore's line of earthworks in front of Fort Wagner on Morris Island, Charleston, S.C., in July 1863. The map depicts the siege of Fort Wagner, Morris Island, Charleston Harbor, S.C. Details include the locations of swamps, marshes, and sand ridges, as well as the elaborate earthworks and trenches constructed by Union troops under Gen. Q. A. Gillmore as they prepared to lay siege to the fort. The sketch is in the 1861-65 diary of Robert Knox Sneden (1832-1918). [Figure 11]

Sneden's diary / memoir was prepared after the war and bound in seven individual volumes. In the memoir, Sneden relates his service in the 40th New York Infantry Regiment and as a topographical engineer in the Third Corps, Army of the Potomac. Sneden was captured by John Singleton Mosby in November 1863. The diary chronicles his life as a prisoner of war, including seven months at Andersonville Prison, together with wonderful watercolor drawings and maps scattered throughout to illustrate his narrative. The diary is held by the Virginia Historical Society, but images are available through the Library of Congress.

Intrepid Payne Wounded and Captured

Payne also summarized his daily activities in a valuable wartime diary, as well as participation of the 100th Regiment in campaigns at Cole's Island, Folly Island, and Morris Island, SC. The diary is preserved at the New York State Library Manuscripts and Special Collections.

On the night of August 3, 1863, Payne and several of his men were captured by Confederate forces while on patrol.

Wounded by a musket ball to the head during the engagement, he was sent to Queen Street Hospital in Charleston and, upon recovery, was imprisoned in Richland Jail at Columbia, SC. During his imprisonment, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel.

Richland Jail, Columbia, South Carolina

The illustrated outgoing prisoner of war cover is addressed to Eugene R. Payne, Tonawanda, New York. The cover bears an Old Point Comfort, Va. double-circle datestamp and is franked with a "Due 3" postage due handstamp. At left is the manuscript censor marking, "Examd, R.C. Senn, Capt. Guard. Southern prisons all used manuscript censor markings, unlike some of the handstamped examined markings found on Northern POW covers.

At the top of the cover is the mandated prisoner information, "Prisoner of War letter By Flag of Truce from Richmond Care Genl Winder at Richmond." This is a scarce use from Richland Jail; only 39 covers are recorded in Harrison. [Figure 12]

In some accounts, the prison is referred to as the Jailhouse Prison or Richland County Jail, but it is generally known as Richland Jail. Many of the prisoners were Union Navy officers captured in and around Charleston Harbor. Others were Union sympathizers, called "Tories," as well as Confederate deserters. Some inmates were just common criminals.

Union officers were housed within the cells of the jail and the non-commissioned officers and enlisted men were kept in tents on the grounds of the Jail. By the end of the war, Union

INQUIRIES RELATING TO THE FORMATION AND MOVEMENTS
OF
REGIMENTS, COMPANIES, OR BATTERIES
OF NEW-YORK VOLUNTEERS,

SUBMITTED BY THE BUREAU OF MILITARY RECORD.

[This Blank when filled, should be returned by mail or otherwise, to COL. LOCKWOOD L. DOTT, Chief of Bureau of Military Record, 173 State Street, Albany N. Y.]

Number of Organization: *One hundredth Regiment New York Volunteers.*
 Synonyms (If known by any name other than number or letter state what):
Second Regiment "Eagle Brigade"

Arm of service (whether Infantry, Cavalry or Artillery): *Infantry*
 Order for raising. Number — Date *19 August 1861.*

Authorization to raise, by whom granted, whether by Governor of New-York, or by the President or the Secretary of War: *Secretary of War approved by Governor Morgan.*
 Authorization to raise, to whom given: *Gen. Gustavus A. Scroggs, of N.Y.S. Militia*
 Was it raised for a particular Brigade or for any special service? If so, state facts: *It was raised for the Eagle Brigade. This Brigade was commenced by Gen. Scroggs under direct authority of the War Department with the design to raise four regiments, namely: one in Buffalo by Col. Brown; one in Sing Sing by Col. Scroggs; one in New York by Col. Daniel Ullman, and one in King's County by Col. Beecher.*

Place where formed: *Buffalo, N.Y. The Governor directs that a branch depot be there established. See Copy of order herewith.*
 Name of Camp: *Camp Morgan, in honor of the Governor.*
 Name of Commandant of Post where formed: *Gen. G. A. Scroggs*
 Location and description of Camp or Barracks, where formed:

[Give the name of the owner of the property, the uses to which previously applied, distance from some well known point in village, & there have been taken Photographic or other views, please give such references as might enable us to procure copies.]

At the Government Fort.

Volunteering, when begun: *On September 18th 1861.*
 Volunteering, when ended: *On March 7, 1862.*
 Branch Camps and Recruiting Stations:

Name of first Commander: *Colonel James M. Brown.*

BOUNTIES PAID.

| | rate per man \$ | Number of men thus paid. |
|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| By the United States, | | |
| By the State of New-York, | | do do |
| By the County of | | do do |
| By the City of | | do do |
| By Town of | | do do |
| By Associations, | | do do |
| By Individuals, | | do do |

No bounties were paid to the men on the organization of the regiment. In the fall of 1862 after the some months in the field a bounty of \$50. each was paid by the state to 288 recruits sent to the

Figure 6. First page of history inquiry re 100th Regiment New York Volunteers.



Figure 10. Union Major General Quincy Adams Gillmore.

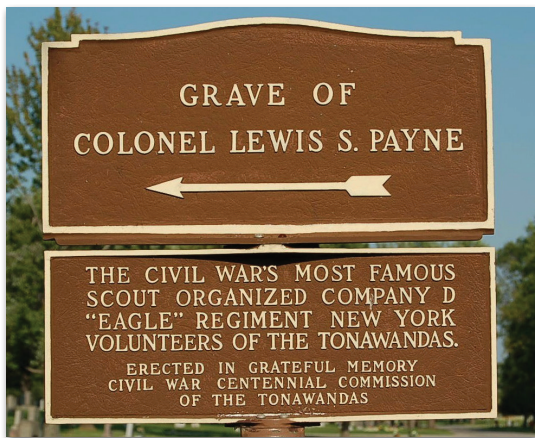


Figure 1. Road sign in Elmlawn Memorial Park, pointing the way to Col. Payne's grave.

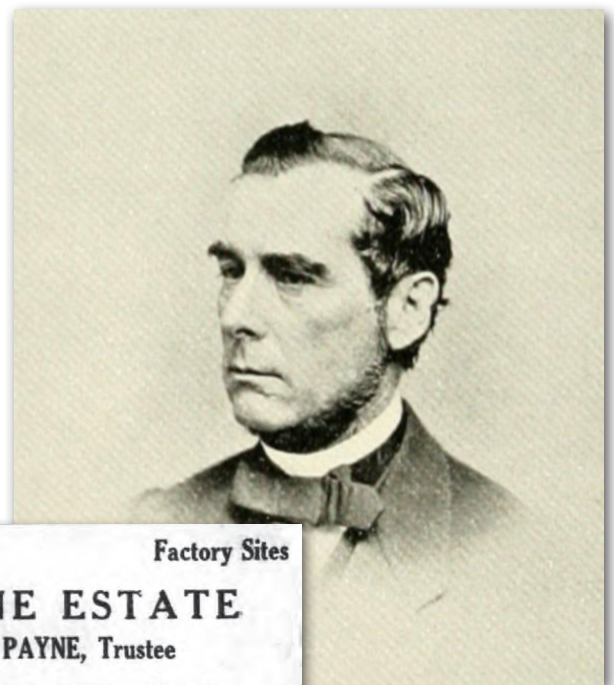


Figure 3. Lewis S. Payne.



Figure 13. Gravestone of Lewis S. Payne, Elmlawn Memorial Park, Tonawanda, New York

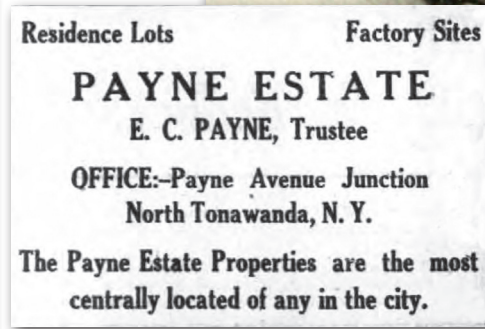


Figure 5. Newspaper ad for Payne Estate Properties, 1914.

prisoners were segregated by rank into different prisons. It was thought that, by separating officers and enlisted men, escapes could be reduced.

Each side in the Civil War had trouble attracting volunteers as the war dragged on and, because they were running out of space and supplies to hold and care for prisoners, periodic exchanges of prisoners were agreed upon. On February 14, 1865, Payne was sent to Wilmington, NC, and returned to the North during such a prisoner exchange on March 5, 1865.

Prisoners were held at Richland Jail as early as January 1, 1862. The commandant at that time was Captain Shiver. Early prisoners were well treated, occasionally even taken out to dine in the finest restaurants. But that did not last. Captain Rufus D. Senn was placed in charge of the Columbia prisons and his methods were much more businesslike. Union General William T. Sherman entered Columbia on February 17, 1865, and released the Union officers still imprisoned at Richland Jail only days after Payne left.

Epilogue

Payne is buried in Elmlawn Memorial Park in Kenmore, New York, on Delaware Avenue just north of Sheridan Drive in the Town of Tonawanda. The Richland Jail prisoner of war cover is addressed to Col. Payne's son, Eugene Robert Payne (1844-1916) who is buried in Williamsport, Pa. His mother was Mary Taber Payne (1819-1907), who was buried aside her husband at Elmlawn. They were married in 1840 and had six children, another of whom was Edward C. Payne (1856-1939), trustee of Payne Estate Properties. Edward is also buried at Elmlawn. [Figure 13]

There are an unending number of places and things named in honor of Col. Payne. Predictably, one is the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Department of New York,

Col. Lewis Payne Camp 89, N. Tonawanda, NY.

Payne was prominently mentioned in an 1867 edition of Harper's Weekly, in an article entitled, "Heroic Deeds of Heroic Men." When captured in 1863, newspaper articles on both sides of the conflict recognized his capture as the loss of an admired and valuable asset to the Union.

Endnotes

¹North Tonawanda Museum, <http://www.nthistorymuseum.org/> Accessed July 1, 2018.

²Payne Estate, NTHistory.com. <http://www.nthistory.com/collections/show/96/> Accessed June 30, 2018.

³North Tonawanda Extra, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/NorthTonawandaExtra/local/x880611521/Lewis-S-Payne-Civil-War-scout-from-NT/print/> Accessed July 1, 2018.

⁴Flank Markers/Guidons, Civil War Talk. <https://civilwartalk.com/threads/flank-markers-guidons.138931/> Accessed July 1, 2018.

⁵Bob Kostoff, "Civil War Leaves Mark on Tonawanda's Pioneer Years," Niagara Falls Reporter, June 27, 2006. <http://www.niagarafallsreporter.com/kostoff113.html/> Accessed June 30, 2018.

⁶100th Infantry Regiment, Civil War, Second Regiment, Eagle Brigade, Third Buffalo Regiment, New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center. <https://dmna.ny.gov/historic/reghist/civil/infantry/100thInf/100thInfMain.htm/> Accessed June 30, 2018.

⁷Galen D. Harrison, Prisoners' Mail from the American Civil War. Self-published, 1997 with financing courtesy of the Gerald T. Stewart Memorial Fund of the Confederate Stamp Alliance.

⁸Columbia Prisoner of War Camp, <https://www.mycivilwar.com/pow/sc-columbia.html/> Accessed July 1, 2018.