

ISCHUA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A TRIBUTE TO MARVIN OLDER -- TEACHER AND VETERAN

Marvin Older was born in Middletown, Delaware on August 22nd, 1810. He was one of 16 children born to William and Hannah Older. The family moved to Otisco in Onondaga County where they remained for 3 years. Marvin used to say that during that time in his life nothing notable happened "except that I invariably stood at the head of my class in district school, from the fact that there were but two in the class, and one of them at least was lamentably underwitted, which of course was the other fellow."

In 1818 the family relocated to the town of Farmersville to the place known for years as Older Hill. At that time there was only one school in the county. Mr. Older was a cooper, and the shop became Marvin's school room. His library consisted of The Bible, a psalm book, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Young's *Hervey's Meditations*, Young's *Night Thoughts* and an old dictionary with some rules of grammar. He also had a book of geography, one of arithmetic, a spelling book, Aesop's Fables, *Robinson Crusoe* and *Charlotte Templeton*. He had a desire for learning and home study became his passion. He used a barrel head for a slate and a piece of coal for a pencil.

From the age of 13 to 15 Marvin attended classes in a log schoolhouse. One of his teachers was Pardon T. Jewell. This helped make him a polished scholar and in 1828, at the age of 18 he became a teacher, a profession he followed over a period of 40 years. In his old age he found that his closest and most faithful friends were the pupils he had once taught.

On July 17th, 1836 Marvin married Diantha Reynolds, who had been born February 23, 1816. They had 4 sons and 6 daughters. The first son died in infancy.

On October 24th, 1861 at the age of 51 Marvin Older enlisted in Company I of the 6th New York Volunteers Cavalry during the Civil War. After a brief period of camp drill his regiment was sent to the front in the summer of 1862 and he was under the command of General Sheridan and Custer. He was made a clerk in the quartermaster's and commissary's department and although he was relieved from ordinary duties of the rank and file, nevertheless participated in the Battles of South Mountain, Antietam, and Fredericksburg.

April 30th, 1863 his squad suddenly found itself surrounded by Confederate forces on the way to the Battle at Chancellorsville. Of this adventure Marvin says: "To stay and fight would be sheer madness; to tamely submit would be cowardice and the only way was to hew a road with the sabre in a desperate charge. The latter alternative was adopted; some succeeded and reached the main body, and some fell in the encounter. I was among the latter, and when I had, after a severe effort collected the scattered fragments of what little intellect I once possessed, I found myself half buried in mud, with my head sadly battered by a sabre stroke and a dead horse across my legs. I drew myself from beneath my dead horse and crawled to a little mound beneath some dwarf pines and communed with myself in sober, almost dead earnest. There was nothing to disturb or vary my gloomy forebodings except the groans of the wounded, the twinges of acute pain, the moaning of the chill night wind, and the heavy rumble of artillery trains on the distant pikes enroute for the bloody scenes of the coming morrow. I had dragged from my saddle 2 blankets, an overcoat, and a haversack of provisions, but of these, as soon as it was light, the vandal hounds relieved me.

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We were then taken to some farm buildings hard by, and suffered to sun ourselves and nurse our wrath on the south side of an old out house. Toward night we were taken to the Spotsylvania Court House and our wounds dressed. And the next day, I with 2 others who were unable to walk, was loaded into a dump-cart drawn by a dilapidated mule, and started on our triumphal march to the City of Richmond. After much fatigue, many delays, privations and starvation, we arrived at our destination, and were at once escorted to that historic watering place Belle Isle, and subsequently to that fashionable resort, the Hotel de Libby where we were treated to rebel hospitality by way of the naked floor for a bed, the grimy old roof for a covering, graybacks for entertainment, mule soup for refreshment and river water for a beverage.

But all things have an end, and so did my imprisonment. I was returned on parole by way of Petersburg, City Point, James River, Fortress Monroe, and Annapolis to convalescent camp near the City of Washington, where we arrived in July 1863. I was immediately detailed as a clerk in the ordnance department, and for merit was promoted to the first rank of the office, and the order of the detail was made permanent by the endorsement of the Secretary of War, in which position I remained until the close of term of my enlistment. I returned to my family a poor, battered, time-worn veteran of the war."

Sadly, two of his sons did not survive the War. Robert E. was killed near Petersburg, Virginia on June 18th, 1864. William M. was wounded and captured in the valley of the Shenandoah and died of starvation in Andersonville, Georgia on August 22nd, 1864. His remaining son Wallis M. lived in Franklinville and died December 24th, 1878. Five of his daughters became teachers.

Marvin Older labored in the field of education, and held official positions. He taught in common schools and is said to have been the head of polite literary circles. For 10 years he held the chairmanship of the Regents' Board of Examiners in Ten Broeck Free Academy. His services to his community and profession were always deemed indispensable. Marvin Older passed away on March 8th, 1897 in Franklinville, New York.

Submitted by: Maggie Fredrickson, Village of Franklinville Historian, who compiled the data from many different sources.