

USCT Veterans and the Gist Settlement in Highland County Ohio

By the 2006-2007 Research History Class

Washington Senior High School, Washington Court House Ohio

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The Gist Settlements in Brown, Adams, and Highland Counties OH: by Laura **Richards**

Samuel **Gist** lived in Britain and owned approximately 1200 slaves on land in Amherst, Goochland, and Hanover counties, Virginia. When **Gist** died in 1815, he still owned over 500 slaves.

In **Gist's** will, however, he freed his slaves and requested they be removed to free land. Of the more than 500 slaves that **Gist** still owned, 350 of them were freed and placed on settlements throughout Ohio. In 1819, **Gist** Settlement agents purchased over 2000 acres of land in Eagle and Scott townships, Brown County and Adams County. Then in 1831 and 1835 the **Gist** estate purchased 207 acres of land in Fairfield (now Penn) Township, and Highland County. A total of 2506 acres of land were purchased to serve as a home for the newly freed slaves and their descendants. Not only did **Gist** will the freedom of his slaves to private land, but also that his American estates be sold and the profits put in a trust for the slaves and their families forever.

The last of the original **Gist** Settlement lands in descendants' hands is located in Highland County. It happens to be the last established settlement and the smallest. The Highland County settlement was inhabited by 18 families totaling 105 persons in 1840. Between 1840 and 1930 an average of 16 families, or 75 persons occupied the **Gist** Settlement (based on US Census Data, 1840-1930). The settlement had established an active church and school. The **Gist** settlement cemetery is a living document of the past. Although not all headstones are marked, the cemetery holds precious links to the history of the settlement. The Highland County settlement is a mere 200 acres of land today, and faces an uncertain future. (Editor's note: There are ongoing questions about the title to the land and the status of property taxes, lending some degree of uncertainty over the ownership and disposition of the land in the future.)

The Gist Settlement Cemetery in Highland County OH: by Caitie **Hunter**

The **Gist** Settlement Cemetery located in Penn Township, Highland County, is the resting place for historically African-American members of the settlement and their descendants. As the **Gist** Settlement expanded, a cemetery was added to meet the needs of passing members of the community. The cemetery today measures a little over a half acre, approximately 268 feet long by 95 feet wide.

Within these boundaries are 94 headstones of which 70 have legible inscriptions. Of the 70 legible headstones, 14 mark the grave sites of veterans representing wars from the Civil War to Korea. There are seven USCT veterans buried at the **Gist** Cemetery. The earliest known burial is Alexander **Powers** in 1872; however, due to the number of unmarked grave sites and illegible headstones, it is impossible to know precisely every date and person buried in the cemetery. There are 24 illegible markers accounted for.

The **Gist** Settlement was established in the early 1830's. This leads us to believe there are a large number of unmarked grave sites. In Henry **Turner's** Civil War pension file deposition dated 21 June 1911, Reese **Rollins** says the following about Jennie Mitchell **Turner**: "Henry **Turner's** first wife died in the latter part of the sixties (1860's) and was buried in the **Gist** Settlement cemetery."

Jennie Mitchell **Turner** does not have a marked headstone at the cemetery. Ben **Lay** and Alexander **Halestock** are Civil War veterans who have recently been identified as USCT veterans buried in the **Gist** cemetery without headstones. Headstones have been ordered and are expected to be installed in the spring of 2007.

The **Gist** Settlement cemetery continues to be an active cemetery and caters to past and present members living on the **Gist** Settlement land.

(Editor's Note: the Research History Class has prepared biographical sketches of eight Civil War veterans who lived at the **Gist** Settlement, seven of whom are buried there. Veterans of the 55th Massachusetts Infantry and the 5th, 15th, and 27th Regiments, United States Colored Troops, these men were among the first African-Americans to enlist when the United States began accepting African-Americans into the Army in 1863. Their service was notable: four participated in one of the USCT's most significant battles, the battle at Chaffin's Farm in Virginia, otherwise known as New Market Heights or Fort Harrison, in September 1864 during the Petersburg Campaign; two participated in the campaign against Wilmington NC; and one participated in Honey Hill SC as part of Sherman's final Carolinas Campaign. The students' research on the military and post-war lives of these men provide glimpses of their pride in their service, as well as examples of the physical, mental, and economic issues faced both by the veterans and by their families.)

Isaac Day: By Ashley Marine

Isaac A. **Day** was born on 19 January 1841 in Brown County, Ohio. He was the son of Peter and Mary **Day**. Before he enlisted in the army, **Day** and his family lived in Eagle Township in the Brown County **Gist** Settlement in the 1850's and early 1860's. After the war, Isaac moved back to Fincastle in Brown County, Ohio for some time.

Day enlisted for a three-year term on 4 August 1863. He was in Company A, 5th United States Colored Troops. On 29 September 1864, **Day**'s regiment took part in the battle at Chaffin's Farm. The troops, at a disadvantage, charged at the Confederate position. (For more information on the battle at Chaffin's Farm, see section on Woodson D. **Williams** in this article.) Isaac recounted the charge and his injury in a deposition: "...*Wounded in the left thigh bone and was then captured by the rebels and a rebel surgeon then amputated the said left leg above the knee and ... that [Isaac] cannot wear an artificial limb to do him much good ... can do no manual labor that requires him to walk, and, at times, is so pained.*"

The regimental report says: "Missing in action since Sept. 29th 1864. "Supposed Killed." His name is dropped from all the subsequent rolls of said Co. on file in this office."

Four days later he was admitted into a Rebel hospital in Richmond, Virginia. **Day** was then sent to Camp Parole in Annapolis, Maryland. In May of 1865, **Day** was sent to Tripler hospital in Columbus, Ohio where his stump was opened up for the last time. A piece of dead bone was removed. Later that year, on 31 August 1865, **Day** was honorably discharged from the army. He then received his first pension check for \$16 due to his amputation. **Day**'s leg continued to cause him problems long after the war.

Day was married to a woman named Caroline, whom he later divorced for "gross neglect of duty toward said plaintiff and that by reason here as the plaintiff is entitled to a divorce as prayed for." His divorce occurred on 24 January 1893. One month later, **Day** remarried to a woman named Ester Rollins on 23 February 1893. Ester then became **Day**'s provider for the rest of his life.

Day's life was seriously affected by the loss of his leg. He suffered greatly from the after-effects as well as the initial injury. **Day** suffered from sepsis poisoning. The infection from his leg slowly broke down the rest of his body. He alleges, "his wound would produce a yellow puss", which is bad. Yellow puss means the body has an infection that it cannot get rid of. **Day** was suffering from slow septicemia caused by small bone chips in his leg. The bone chips in his leg were constantly causing a slow, steady stream of infection to the body. The septic poisoning led to infections in Isaac's right leg, bladder, heart and eventually brain. After the stump was reopened there was essentially no stopping the infection. Another surgery without antiseptic would have caused far worse damage and a quicker deterioration of the body. Isaac also suffered from "boils, lumps, circulation problems, urinary problems and poor eyesight caused by the septic state of his body." "I take all my time dressing his wounds," his wife, Ester, said on 4 February 1895. Two years before his death Isaac was pensioned at a rate of \$55.00 per month, compared to the \$8.00 he had received 40 years earlier when he received the wound. Also, in his last two years, **Day**'s health began to fail him even more so than before.

Isaac **Day** lived forty miraculous years without his leg. In that time he was a farmer and a Baptist minister, as listed on a physician's form and as remembered by fellow post member William Triplett, "Isaac **Day**...being Chaplain and member of the Cary Johnson G.A.R. (Grand Army of the Republic) Post 404." On 16 February 1905, at 64 years of age, Isaac **Day** died. Pension was denied to Ester because "loss of the left leg was not cause of death." On 13

October 1924 Ester passed away. Isaac and Ester were married seven years and were the parents of six children. Isaac is buried in the **Gist** Settlement Cemetery in Penn Township, Highland County, Ohio.

(Editor's note: The author of this section, Ashley **Marine**, and the Senior Research History Class express their appreciation to Dr. Byron **Stinson**, M.D., of New Holland OH for his assistance in studying and interpreting the medical information in Isaac **Day**'s file. Dr. **Stinson** is a World War II veteran who has studied and published articles on Civil War medicine and the Civil War history of Fayette County OH.)

Charles Good: by Evan **Hill**

Charles **Good** was born in 1843 and was raised in the **Gist** Settlement of Fairfield, Highland County, Ohio. He enlisted at Hillsboro, Ohio at the age of 21 on 28 March 1864. On 24 August 1864 he was mustered into Company E of the 5th USCT. His company was in the heat of the action during the gruesome battle of Chaffin's Farm as a front-line regiment. He was mustered out on the 26th of July 1865. At the age of 28, with wife Sarah **Good**, he was living in Highland County again, until he at some point left for Cleveland in Cuyahoga County, Ohio and was working as a white washer. He died February 5th of the year 1912 from pneumonia. Although Charles **Good** was buried in Cleveland in the Woodland Cemetery, we know that he was well known around the **Gist** Settlement as a former resident and a man who had grown up there.

Nelson Good: By Ashley **Morse**

Nelson **Good** was born on 28 December 1834 in Richmond, Indiana. At the time of his enlistment, he was 5'5" with black eyes, black hair, very dark skin and no birthmarks. When asked if he was a slave his response was, "No sir, never was a slave, was a decendent of the emancipated slaves of Samuel **Gist**."

*"...his parents could not read or write therefore kept no family record of the births of their children. The claimant herein can only give his age from memory as given to him by his parent that he has a very vivid recollection that when he left his parents home that he was fifteen years of age and that he was employed by a farmer name Cornelious **Dye** near Gettysburg Ohio and that he lived with him about thirteen years. From then he served nine months as Private Co A 15 US Col troops during civil war."*

Nelson enlisted in Urbana, OH on 1 October 1864 and served for one year during the Civil War in the Army's Infantry in 15th USCT, Company A. He was discharged in Washington D.C. on 27 July 1865, and lived the rest of his life in the **Gist** Settlement.

He was married first to Emiline **Good**. After she passed away in 1877, he married Mary **Goins** on 14 February 1881, with the marriage performed by George **Link**.

Nelson's initial application for a pension in early 1908 was denied, because he had no proof that he was 70 years of age. (Editor's Note: The Pension Act of 1907 provided for the first time pension benefits based on age and length of service, rather than disability; at age 70, a qualified recipient could step up to a \$15 per month benefit, from \$12.) Contradictory to his earlier statement, Nelson said that when he was little, his family kept record of his birth in the family Bible. Then one day, the house was set on fire and everything was lost, including the family Bible. So Nelson had only his word to prove how old he was. He started receiving a pension of \$12 on 9 June 1908, so apparently he was not able to satisfy the Pension Office that he was over 70 years of age.

Marital difficulties between Nelson and Mary led to their apparent separation in March 1910, which also became involved in the pension process. Mary attempted several times to apply for half of his pension, but she was always rejected for failure to show proof of his wrong-doings. So, he continued to receive the \$12 pension payment per month.

Perhaps as part of one of her claims, Mary stated in her affidavit on 20 September 1910: (Nelson) "built a plank house, un-plastered, cold, and with stagnant water under the house. He would not work and compelled her to work on the farm for the neighbors to support them until she took very sick and the physicians ordered her removed. He never sent her money or went to see her."

In another affidavit given on the same day (20 September 1910), Inez **Goins** and Anna **Leard** stated: *“We are well and personally acquainted with the above named claimant and soldier have been at their house a great deal, and helped to take care of claimant when she was sick, and know that she did her part as a wife in every respect. She did her work in the house and besides that she would go out and cut corn and other work to support herself and soldier would lay around and do nothing. He has two (pieces) of ground and said ‘Uncle Sam kept him and he did not have to work.’ The floor of the house was on the ground and the water was under the floor, which caused her to get sick.”*

On 22 November 1910 in his affidavit, Nelson stated that *“Mary E. **Good** for a long time prior to March 15, 1910 had neglected her household duties, failed and neglected to cook for said affiant, do his washing and mending, and that on or about March 15, 1910 said Mary E. **Good** without any just cause or excuse left their home and went to Montgomery County, Oh; that all the time of her leaving her home and deserting him she took a large quantity of bed clothes, fruit and other property of said affiant, and that she has harbored women of questionable character against his objections.”* He also stated that he was always a good husband and when she left, he didn't know where she went.

Mary also stated that he did not ever try to get another job or “make anything of himself.” On 9 December 1910, Nelson filed for a divorce. Nelson and Mary each provided two witnesses who could testify that each affidavit was true, but Nelson died before they were actually divorced.

Nelson **Good** died 8 February 1911 and is buried in the **Gist** Settlement.

Alexander Halestock: by Ashley Morse

Alexander **Halestock** was born in Cincinnati, Ohio sometime between 1845 and 1846. At age 9, he was still living in Cincinnati.

Alexander **Halestock** was enrolled in Company F, 27th USCT on 8 August 1864 in New Lexington OH and served one year in the War of Rebellion. He was mustered out (honorably discharged) on 4 September 1865 in Newburn, NC by reason of the expiration of his term of service.

Halestock experienced general disability and loss of sight at White House Landing VA during his service. As he aged, this developed into total blindness of left eye, weakness in right eye, rheumatism, catarrh and general disability. “Doctor told **Halestock** he had a severe cold in his eyes and the surgeon treated his eyes for about two weeks and he was excused from duty.”

Halestock was treated by Dr. **Johnson** upon return home from the war, and filed for pension on 6 August 1881. He received two pensions until 10 March 1894 when he was notified that one of them had to be dropped. From the year 1881 to 1891, his pension rate went from 6 dollars to 16 dollars. For three years, he received 32 dollars a month instead of just 16.

He returned to the settlement in 1894, and lived near Ben **Lay**. Before that, he had lived in Xenia and Urbana from 1865 to 1881.

A few years after his discharge, **Halestock** claimed: “My health has been so poor since then that I can hardly make a half hand on a farm.” He believed his disability was equivalent to that of a loss of hand or foot and that he was permanently incapable of performing any manual labor.

John **Elder** and Wiley **Dolby** were both member of **Halestock**'s Regimen (27th USCT) and both had vivid memories of their friend. John **Elder** stated: “...Caused by exposure and living on the damp and marshy ground, and the dense smoke from the pine fires in camp affected his eyes and caused total blindness to left eye.” He also claimed that he had known **Halestock** for over 30 years and that prior to enlistment **Halestock** was physically sound.

Wiley **Dolby** claimed: “...we were out one day to shoot off our guns and he was holding his gun too high and that the Capt. told him not to shoot; he would kill someone over yonder. I never seen him on duty after that.” This suggests that his eyesight was so bad that he could not see where he was pointing his gun.

In a deposition that **Halestock** wrote in 1897, he discussed his experience in the Weldon railroad expedition. (See biography of Ben **Lay**.)

Alexander **Halestock** died in the fall of 1897 and is buried in the **Gist** Settlement Cemetery.

Benjamin Lay: By Evan **Hill**

According to Benjamin **Lay**, he was born March 4th of the year 1840 in Sugar Tree Ridge of Highland County OH to father Jefferson **Lay**. In the 1850 census, he was not shown to be living with his family, though. Rather, at the age of eight, he is shown to be in a home with a 70 year old Francis **Howdy** (or **Gowdy**) and 16 year old Gracy **Toler** in Brown County. There was some dispute over Benjamin **Lay**'s date of birth while he had been filing for pensions and, as many other people of that era, especially those of color, he had lacked documentation of his birth. No documentation had ever been recovered; it would have been inconsequential to the actual acquisition of his pension, as he claimed he had acquired physical ailments during his service by which he attained the pension

A black male farmer of about 24, **Lay** enlisted as a volunteer at Hillsboro, Ohio with friend John **Rickman** who said in an affidavit to attest to **Lay**'s disability, "We both went into the service together [the] same day from Hillsboro, Ohio, and as I knew him prior to our enlistment, I naturally formed a strong friendship and intimacy while in the army." He then was enrolled at Camp Delaware Ohio. In a physical examination in 1898, **Lay** is recorded as an average-sized man at 5'4" and 127 lbs. at 58 years old.

Lay served in Company F of the 27th U.S. Colored Infantry during the Civil War. Probably the most profound experience during **Lay**'s time in the service was his company's participation in the Weldon Railroad expedition in Virginia. Bunkmate and friend Alexander **Halestock** said this about the raid: "*I served in same company and regiment, and was with said Lay, when we were on what was called the Weldon Rail Road expedition in fall of 1864, in Va., we had to undergo a great deal of exposure and hardships, and it was while we were thus engaged that said Lay contracted his 'Rheumatism.'* Lots of nights we had to be engaged, in tearing out iron nails on rail road, for quite awhile, and part of time, we had no tents, and I bunked with **Lay** while we were on this raid and also that Winter, he was off of duty after this on account of his Rheumatic trouble."

Lay's boyhood friend, Martin **Thomas**, said they had known each other "since [they] were boys" and that they were "raised up together." He recorded the company's events on the Weldon Railroad: "...we had no tents when we were out there, as our tents were left behind and the weather was rough, and we got defeated, and had to fall back, we had piled up our knap sacks, and did not see them until next day..."

Lay's company, then, not only participated in the destruction of the Confederate railroad, but had also been engaged in battle. Martin **Thomas** explained the events concerning the Weldon Railroad expedition and the unit's subsequent assignment to North Carolina:

"...Lay was exposed to a good many hardships, and we kept on that fall, and when we left the R.R. we came back to Dutch Gap, or Fort Harrison, Va. We had a heap of ups & downs, and left our tents there, and went over to N.C. and we had a hard time that Winter without our tents, just staid right out in the field like hogs."

Although Martin's two accounts are difficult to interpret chronologically, the most reasonable chronology of the events is that in the fall of 1864, they essentially "commuted" from Fort Harrison to work on destroying the Weldon railroad. This meant leaving their tents behind in Petersburg, and probably taking with them only their knapsacks with a blanket. The weather was especially rough, with cold and rain tormenting the soldiers while they worked fervently to destroy the Confederate supply route, while also fighting Confederate forces trying to protect the railroad. After one of their battles along the railroad, Martin recalled that they had to fall back and in their haste, could not retrieve their knapsacks until the next day, depriving them of even their minimal cover that night. Then, after the destruction of the route and a Union victory, the regiment had gone back to Petersburg, and soon left for North Carolina. For one reason or another, Lay and his comrades were also without tents in North Carolina, as recalled in Martin **Thomas**' statement. They had to continue to endure the harsh, cold weather. This exposure is what Lay said initiated his rheumatism.

Lay said he "*contracted 'Rheumatism' by reason of exposure and hardships, in said service; We had no tents while on the Weldon R.R. expedition; and as resulting effect of the Rheumatism—he has 'disease of heart' which he has*

felt—more or less since date of discharge, as well as ‘Rheumatism...’

Alexander **Halestock** explained the nature of Benjamin **Lay**’s problem, saying “...and also that Winter, he was off of duty after this on account of the Rheumatic trouble. My recollection is that said **Lay** went often to Dr (??) for medical treatment for the Rheumatism; but I have no recollection of his being in the hospital; he would get the medicine and apply it himself.”

A fellow soldier of **Lay**’s regiment, Isaiah **Ross** also noted that “...he (**Lay**) was unable for duty on account of it; was off of duty at time with him, in the quarters.” **Lay** complained in many physician affidavits of pain in his shoulders, knees, legs, and back. However, the only body part affirmatively diagnosed with rheumatism was his left shoulder.

Lay’s service lasted a total of one year, one month, and three days, and he was honorably discharged 4 September 1865 at Smithfield, North Carolina. He was married to Phoeba Jane **Turner** 25 October 1866 in New Lexington, Ohio by Judge Peter **Kelly**. He had four children named George (born 1876), Clementine (born 1868), Stanley (born 1891), and Florence **Lay** (born 1886). He started filing pension applications in 1889 and continued until 1916.

He returned to farming, yet as a statement by employer Josiah **Newly** evinces, had an extremely difficult time from his rheumatism: “...we are well and personally acquainted with claimant—having known him for past 5 or 6 yrs, that he lived on affiant’s farm, and worked some, at times for affiant, that claimant is incapacitated from the performance of manual labor...complains of ‘Rheumatism and disease of heart,’ and he is disabled to such an extent as to render him unable to earn a support,... “That I as neighbor, know the above facts from personal knowledge and personal observation, would rate him about ¼ hand.” **Lay** was able, on claims such as this, to attain a pension based on his sickness, receiving his pension starting at \$12 per month on 1 August 1890 and eventually, through pension acts and increased disability, receiving \$35 per month starting 4 June 1920. It was in this year that Benjamin **Lay** died of senility on August 10 and was buried in the **Gist** Settlement.

Harrison Pearl: by Evan **Hill**

Harrison **Pearl** was born near Maysville, Kentucky in Mason County as a slave under his master Joseph Firman; the date of his birth was unknown, as was common with many slaves. In 1863, around the age of 21, Harrison left for Ohio to enlist in the United States service. Sister-in-law, Malinda Curtis, said that **Pearl** left and settled in the “colored settlement” before enlisting: “Said soldier came to what is known as the Colored Settlement near New Vienna Ohio from which place he went to Hillsboro and enlisted... When he was discharged he settled at or near New Vienna, where he has resided until his death.”

Pearl enlisted in Hillsboro 11 June 1863. He enlisted with friends Samuel **January**, Edmond **Williams**, and Andrew **Essex** at the age of 21. He was a private in Company K of the 55th Massachusetts. The most significant time of **Pearl**’s military experience was his participation in the Battle of Honey Hill, South Carolina. **Pearl** later “[claimed] a pension for a G.S.W (gun shot wound) in left arm above the elbow and a G.S.W. of left hand, received at Honey Hill, Va during the Siege of Richmond Va. He cannot state the date, and deafness of his left ear caused by the explosion of cannon at Honey Hill Va...That when he got shot they were making a charge on the Fort at honey Va. that was struck by a ball in the left arm above the elbow and struck by a shell in his left hand injuring the three fore fingers, and all except his little finger...That the next day after he was shot he commenced to get deaf, and said to the boys he could not hear and they said it was caused by the cannon...That he did not go in any hospital and his wounds were just wrapped up by the Doctor ...That he remained with the company all the time after he was carried off of the field. Randall **Goins** and Samuel **January** took him off of the field.. does not remember any other comrades who saw the wounds at the time.”

As a former slave and uneducated man, it seems **Pearl** had confused the geography of Honey Hill, and had mistakenly said that it was in Virginia instead of South Carolina. But he had admitted to possibly forgetting where they were at during the battle. Unfortunately, this ignorance was really indicative of the racial dichotomy that was ever so present, even in the Union army. This seems to be evidenced throughout **Pearl**’s arduous attempts to get confirmation of his injury from his officers and their lack of memory of his injury. In particular, Charles **Soule** (**Pearl**’s captain) seemed to lack memory or care of **Pearl**’s injury.

Comrade Samuel **January** said “That he was a comrade of Harrison **Pearl** and knows that while in line of duty at Honey Hill S.C, about last of November 1864, he got a gunshot wound above elbow of left arm and middle finger on left hand.”

Friend Randall **Goins** writes about **Pearl**'s injury: “**Pearl** was wounded in left arm, and middle finger of left hand, I was with him in same battle at same time and I know it by experience that he was there—after he got shot—**Pearl** went back to the rear, and stopped at old meeting-house—fixed up for a hospital, moved back that same night to the river to cover, or under the cover of the gun-boats, the rebels were crowding on us. My recollection is that after they took all of the boys wounded, which were in that old church, back that night, to the river, that they left him with the rest of the wounded in some old private house—for treatment—I never noticed **Pearl** as being deaf until after that fight—and went to hospital and could hardly talk to **Pearl**—he was so deaf. I came home with **Pearl** and he was still partially deaf—just like he is today.”

It seems that **Pearl**, although injured, continued to fight through the battle. Although many of the depositions of his friends seem to indicate this, John Hicks, a fellow soldier, seems to recall a different reason as to how **Pearl**'s finger came to be shot off: “That since hearing clmt. statement read, remembers that clmt. did shoot his finger off while cleaning his gun and the boys said he did it to keep out the fight at Lusty near Lake City. He was not far from Jacksonville Fla. Clmt. said he thought his gun was empty. He affiant remembers it now just as well as though it was yesterday.” (Editor's note: Hicks seems to be referring to the battle at Olustee, Florida, fought on 20 February 1864, in which six companies of the 55th Massachusetts were involved. No losses were recorded by the unit that day. If Hicks' statement is accurate, there is no indication that Pearl suffered a serious injury, or that it caused him to miss the Honey Hill engagement nine months later.)

Although Hicks seems to be certain, he earlier had no recollection of **Pearl** at all. Not only that, but many of **Pearl**'s comrades also attested to **Pearl**'s injury on the battlefield. Among those men was Warren **Babbitt**, a doctor for the regiment during the battle: “Yes, I remember of treating **Pearl**, but whether it was for a rheumatic trouble I cannot tell. I treated so many and relying upon memory alone I can't be positive for what I treated him...I remember that after the battle of Honey Hill S.C. I assisted in attending the wounded in the Regimental Hospital, Dr. **Brown** being in charge and I remember dressing **Pearl**'s wounds but I cannot remember what the wounds were...I think they were severe wounds, but I cannot remember what they were...I was at the battle. We gave him known treatment in the woods and then sent them on to the Brigade Hospital which was in a church.”

The date of his injury in the Battle of Honey Hill was 30 November 1864. It was 29 August 1865 when **Pearl** was finally discharged. The next recorded event in his life is his marriage to Charity Good ten years later on November 14. In another ten years in 1885, he had his first child, a little girl named Elise, and then had a boy in 1890 named Benjamin. His employer in his post-war days wrote in an affidavit: “...he first knew the clmt. Harrison **Pearl** when he clmt. worked for him in the stable at Hillsborough, Ohio about 1873 and until he moved here in 1880 or 1881 clmt. worked for him at times but not steady. Clmt. was a good hand except his hearing. he was quite deaf and it was a great inconvenience to talk to him. His disability was mainly his deafness, but he did complain at times of a wound somewhere about him and said he could not stand it to carry much...They paid clmt. about ½ wages. He could not be left alone about the stable because people could not make him hear, and he was at least ½ disabled.”

It is obvious that **Pearl**'s injury affected his post-war life. His ability to provide for his family and himself was greatly hindered, which is possibly the largest reason he was able to procure a pension. Perhaps the difficulty of life led **Pearl** to start drinking, or at least increase his consumption. It was for this reason that he was appointed a guardian over his money, labeling **Pearl** in one document a “drunkard.” George **Conrad** was made guardian to watch over their expenditures, much to the dismay of the family.

However unfortunate **Pearl**'s life might have been, his story is one that merits our sympathy. For he was an oppressed man who escaped from slavery, only to be oppressed by a terrible war experience and its ensuing injuries, not only to his body, but certainly also to his pride and his family. **Pearl** died of old age on 18 March 1915, and is buried at the **Gist** Settlement Cemetery.

Henry Turner: by Ashley Morse

Henry **Turner** was born in 1844 in Fairfield, Highland County, most likely at the **Gist** Settlement. He enlisted in

the 5th USCI, Company E, on 24 August 1864 and served as a private. He was wounded on 29 September 1864 at the battle of New Market Heights and was in the hospital for 5 or 6 months. He was honorably discharged on 22 August 1865 in Newburn, NC due to a gunshot wound to his left foot, described in his own words in a statement given on 21 February 1879: *“I received a gun shot wound in my ankle, of left foot; near the instep the ball passing entirely through. Said wound was received at the battle of Chaffin farm VA on or about the 29th day of September 1864. I was treated in hospital at Rhode Island in Portsmouth for five or six months.”*

After being discharged, **Turner** moved to the **Gist** Settlement, New Vienna, Highland County, OH with his wife Jennie. Jennie and Henry were married in the **Gist** Settlement. He started farming for a living but as years passed, the farming became tougher and tougher on his foot and his body. “I can not stand to walk day after day- and as I have to make my living by farming, my injured ankle is a great source of pain. Whenever I do anything like a steady days work plowing- my back seems to sympathize and be affected from or with the injury in (his) ankle.”

Turner started filing applications for a pension on 19 March 1870. His pension rate started out at 6 dollars a month but he kept filing saying that 6 dollars was not enough to support him and his wife. The rate eventually moved to 8 dollars and by the time he died in 1911, he was receiving 12 dollars. His last application for increase (to 12 dollars) included statements that he had also developed pain in his back, kidney disease, increased disability of the heart and rheumatism. All of this was verified by Dr. George R. **Conrad** who said in one of the early applications for pension: “The lateral ligaments are thickened and impaired in their movements and become inflamed and painful with use; Disabling him to a degree equivalent to the loss of a foot, in the performance of manual labor.”

Henry **Turner** died on 3 May 1911 in the **Gist** Settlement where he is buried. His wife Jennie continued receiving a pension as his widow until her death.

Woodson D. Williams: by Evan **Hill**

Woodson D. **Williams** was born about 1838 in Highland County. He grew up in Fairfield within that county and eventually came to enlist as a mulatto, blue-eyed 25-year-old laborer 21 September 1863 at Delaware, Ohio. Alexander **Fuller**, a comrade in **Williams**' regiment, said that **Williams** was “tolerably dark, but not as black as some of our people.” He was mustered into Company E in the 5th USCT. He stayed in the regiment for two years.

Not much is known of his military experience, although he was involved in one of the USCT's most significant battles: the battle at Chaffin's Farm, otherwise known as New Market Heights or Fort Harrison. Lieutenant Colonel **Shurtleff** of the 5th USCT recorded: “Shells from the rebel battery were poured in upon us but the fire of [Union] infantry was withheld. As soon as the whole brigade was uncovered the order was given to ‘double quick’ and we started on a slow run, with arms at a right shoulder shift, the burnished steel bayonets gleaming in the bright sun.” Lieutenant **Scroggs** said that although the regiment had to cross dense forestry while being fired upon, they “pressed forward bravely following their colors.”

Colonel **Draper** of the 5th said: “Within twenty or thirty yards of the rebel line we found a swamp which broke the charge as the men had to wade the run or stream and reform on the bank. At this juncture, too, the men generally commenced firing, which made so much confusion that it was impossible to make the orders understood.” And **Shurtleff** continued that it was there that their “progress was arrested and the most murderous fire that I witnessed during the war, opened on us.”

It was at this point that **Williams** was most likely shot and injured. Fellow soldiers Charles **Good** and Henry **Turner**, also from the **Gist** Settlement, gave their testimony of **Williams**' injury. They stated that they were “with the regiment and present with the said Woodson **Williams** and saw him when wounded at Chafer's farm VA from rebels through the right thigh just above the knee joint in action on the 29th day of September A.D. 1864.”

Williams was recorded to have been enrolled into the military hospital on that day. Although he was often not able to serve with the company due to his wound, he stayed in as a corporal until his discharge 20 September 1865. Although he was shot in the thigh, the entirety of his back became lopsided and **Williams** suffered the pangs of that one shot. Not only did it affect his shoulders and spine, but also his eyes. He wrote in a pension file that the “wound [was] becoming more painful, threatened paralysis and loss of liver.” He later also filed for another pension increase, saying that “...my wound hurts me all the time, very soer [sore] and stiffer effects the side and cause a

hurting in my arm and shoulder and get as high as the eye at time. Therefore I beg you please give me more. And I also appoint myself as my attorney.”

Upon his return from the war, **Williams** proved to be completely incapable of earning a sufficient living due to the injury. An employer named N.A. **Davis** recorded **Williams**’ struggle: *“Often noticed said Claimant was affected with one of his sides--his leg would apparently give down on him and he would fall down--without any apparent reason. One time in particular said claimant was on his way to feed the “pigs” with a bucket of feed and all at once his leg or side give down on him and he tumbled down--spilling the feed all over him--affiant rushed up to him thinking he had hurt himself badly--but he explained that his leg or side had given down him again--in fact he had apparently lost all control over it.”*

Williams’ first wife, named Eliza, had **Williams**’ only child, Laura, born 1866, the year of Eliza’s death. It is possible that she might have died during childbirth, although there is no confirmation of that, nor of the date of her marriage to **Williams**.

As **Williams** was drawing his pension, a woman named Jamima **Kelly** started filing for his pension saying that **Williams** (who she mistakenly took to be “William Woodson”) had died near her house in West Jefferson. He, a single man, had supposedly come to her home saying, “Sister, I have come home to die” only three weeks after his discharge. Alexander **Fuller**, a man purportedly from the same regiment as **Williams**, had unequivocally agreed with this statement and that he had helped bring **Williams** there to that home. **Kelly**, **Fuller**, and Reverend **Young**—Jamima’s pastor—all adhered to those facts. Reverend **Young** had allegedly obtained a discharge sheet for a man named “William Woodson” and was instrumental in getting him to her home.

Although these three claimed to be witnesses to those alleged facts, the records of **Williams**’ life indicate that they are fallacious. **Williams** was married, the discharge sheet (according to the pension examiner) did not exist, and in the year 1894 **Williams** was “confined in the Insane Asylum at Athens, Ohio as an insane person.” **Williams**’ first pension application was made 20 November 1865 and his last recorded application was from 30 July 1890, although **Kelly** believed him to be dead in 1865, the premise upon which she started filing in May of 1892. Her delay in her declaration is possibly indicative of the contrived and constructed nature of the claim. The pension examiner said of them: “I found the claimant Jamima **Kelly** and the two original affiants in the case to be very ignorant stupid negroes whose statements when analyzed indicate either honest ignorance or very subtle dishonesty.”

Contrary to **Kelly**’s claims, **Williams** was in the Athens insane asylum and would die there in the year 1909. The institutional racism as shown above may have contributed to **Williams**’ drinking habits, along with the early death of his wife and his war experiences. He was referred to as a “drunkard,” the reason most likely for his placement in the asylum. Although **Williams** may have suffered some personal problems, he also left behind a legacy. Woodson **Williams** of Company E of the 5th USCT signed as a charter member of the Carey **Johnson** Post #404 G.A.R. on 8 January 1884. He was the only black charter member. After his death he was buried in the **Gist** Settlement Cemetery.

Sources:

Government Documents, United States:

Census for 1840, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1890 (Supplemental Veterans Census), 1900, 1910.

Pension Files: Nelson **Good**, Isaac **Day**, Alexander **Hailstock**, Ben **Lay**, Harrison **Pearl**, Henry **Turner**, Woodson **Williams**. National Archives, Washington DC.

Government Documents, Ohio:

Graves Registration Cards: Isaac **Day**, Nelson **Good**, Ben **Lay**.

Muster-in roll, 5th Regiment, USCT, 1863, Ohio Adjutant General’s Dept., State Archives Series 2141, Ohio Historical Society Archives/Libraries.

Books:

The Gist Settlement Book (The Brown County Books) by Paul **Young**, Brown County Genealogical Society, Georgetown, Ohio, 1997.

The History of Brown County, Ohio by W.H. Beers & Co., Chicago, 1883.

Highland Pioneer Sketches and Family Genealogies by Elsie Johnson **Ayres**, H.K. Skinner & Son, Springfield, Ohio, 1971.

Cemetery Inscriptions of Highland County, Ohio by David N. **McBride** and Jane N. **McBride**, 1954.

Newspapers:

Dayton (Ohio) Journal Herald: 29 November 1968.

Other:

Land Records for the **Gist** Settlements in Ohio, Adams, Brown, Erie, and Highland Counties, unpublished manuscript by Mary Ann **Olding**, 4 November 1999.

G.A.R. Records, Ohio Historical Society manuscript collection (MSS715), Post #404, Carey **Johnson** Post, New Vienna (Ohio) Records: Charter (1884) and membership list (1917).

Collected **Gist** Settlement Cemetery Data, Washington Senior High School, Research History Class (2006-2007), Washington Court House OH, November 2006.

Personal interviews with Dr. Byron **Stinson**, M.D., New Holland OH, at Washington Senior High School, Washington Court House OH.

Personal interviews with Mary Ann **Olding** and use of her collection of maps and her research data on the Gist Settlements by Research History Class, Washington Senior High School, Washington Court House OH.

Personal interviews with May Belle **Jones** and use of her collection of newspaper articles on the Gist Settlements by Research History Class, Washington Senior High School, Washington Court House OH.

Photographs:

- Woodson Williams: photo from his pension file, showing his drooped right shoulder.

- Woodson Williams' grave marker, with the unit designated as "Company E, 5 C.O.V.I.", or 5th Colored Ohio Volunteer Infantry. The 5th USCT was initially recruited as an Ohio unit, the 127th OVI, the first completely African-American unit formed in Ohio.

- Nelson Good's grave marker, Company A, 15th USCI.

- Harrison Pearl's hand, a sketch from his pension file showing the effects of the gunshot wound received at Honey Hill SC on 30 November 1864.

-Harrison Pearl's grave marker, Company K, 55th Massachusetts Infantry.

- Henry Turner's grave marker, Company E, 5th USCI.

-Isaac Day's grave marker, Company A, 5th USCI.

- Map (to scale) of Veterans Burial Locations in Gist Settlement Cemetery, prepared by Senior Research History Class.

- Gist Settlement Historical Marker.

- Student working at the grave marker of Woodson Williams.

- Students taking dimensions of a grave marker.

- Student taking measurements for development of cemetery database and map. No map existed previously.

- Gist Settlement Cemetery.

- Unloading a new VA marker for Benjamin Lay's unmarked grave.