

## Mary Gahan, Veteran of the 148<sup>th</sup>

Mary Gahan was a laundress in the 148<sup>th</sup> NY Infantry during the Civil War. She joined when her husband, Jeremiah “Jerry” Gahan, enlisted on August 28, 1862 in Company H, and stayed with the Regiment until it mustered out in 1865. Jerry Gahan was an “average soldier” who did his job, was never wounded, never promoted, and never disciplined.<sup>1</sup>

Mary’s job was to launder and mend soldier’s clothing. She received a fee for doing this work. She traveled with the Regiment. One person described her efforts this way: “In all the marches of that regiment Mary bore her part as bravely as the strongest soldier of them all....She shared the perils and fatigues of its Virginia Campaigns and was with it at its triumphant return.”<sup>2</sup>

Following the Civil War, Mary and Jerry Gahan lived in Waterloo, NY. She was always present at the regimental reunions “...and the boys will remember the hearty emphasis of her assertions on such occasions that she ‘belonged to the 148<sup>th</sup>.’”<sup>3</sup>

She died of heart disease on July 4, 1881, at the age of 49. Her funeral took place at the St. Mary’s Church in Waterloo. The bearers were all veterans of the 148<sup>th</sup>. Her coffin was draped with the regimental colors.<sup>4</sup> She is buried in St. Mary’s Cemetery in Waterloo.<sup>5</sup>

The Phelps *Advertiser* on July 15, 1881, said this of Mary: “...Her kindness of heart and cheery disposition will cause her to be long remembered by the survivors of the 148<sup>th</sup>, and her death will be regretted in no less degree than that of the other comrades who have gone before; whose names are now inscribed on the last great muster roll.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> George Shadman, *They Marched on Richmond*, p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> *They Marched on Richmond*, p. 206.

<sup>3</sup> Mary Gahan obituary, *Phelps Advertiser*, July 15, 1881

<sup>4</sup> *They Marched on Richmond*, p. 206.

<sup>5</sup> Mary Gahan obituary

<sup>6</sup> Mary Gahan obituary