



EDDINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

A History of Elon R. Comins

By Rebecca A. White

Elon Robinson Comins, a Civil War veteran, was born in 1838 and was buried in the Pine Tree Cemetery in Eddington in 1907. Except for his Civil War service, he lived in Eddington his entire life. His story demonstrates the strong family ties and mutual aid that enabled Maine families to survive and thrive through difficult times.

Elon's parents, Charles Comins and Mindwell Taylor, were married in Eddington in 1816, and had ten children: Orpha, Elizabeth, Mary, Sarah, Alden, Margaret, Edwin, Dianthea, Cyrus, and finally Elon. Charles Comins, a veteran of the War of 1812, died in 1840 at the age of 45 when Elon was just two years old. His early life is unknown, but it seems likely that it was one of some financial hardship. It appears that Mindwell never remarried, and lived with relatives or her adult children until her death in 1882. The 1850 US Census lists Mindwell, then aged 51, living with Charles A. Comins, aged 24, listed as a farmer and owner of the home. Elon, now 11, lived there with his mother and two older sisters. One sister, Elizabeth, aged 29, was listed as blind and therefore likely required Mindwell and the family's care. By the 1860 Census, Elon had left home and was working on his uncle John S. Comin's farm nearby. His older brother Cyrus also worked on an uncle's farm to help the family.

On September 10, 1862, at the age of 23, Elon enrolled as a private in Company C in the 22nd Regiment of the Maine Infantry Volunteers. This was a nine-month voluntary enlistment. His regiment officially mustered together in Bangor on October 10, and after only one day of training, left for Washington DC on October 11. For the next two months the regiment was on the move—posting in Virginia, Mississippi, and then New Orleans from December 2-5, 1862. At that point they were attached to Grover's Division, Department of the Gulf, and were stationed in Baton Rouge by January 16, 1863. Elon's regiment participated in

numerous operations over the next few months, including the April 11-20 Teche campaign and the month-long siege of Port Hudson, LA from June 1-July 8. Port Hudson finally surrendered on July 8, 1863, and the 22nd Regiment was ordered home on July 24. Elon was honorably discharged as a Corporal in Bangor on August 14, 1863. It is unclear when he was promoted, but it was likely a field promotion based on merit.

After returning home to Eddington, Elon, now 26, courted Louisa R. Woodbury of Eddington, a 28-year-old local school teacher. They married in Bangor Nov. 7, 1864. On May 31, 1867, the couple became parents to their-only child, Alma. The following year, the family bought the current Leach-Higgins home from Elijah Comins, and moved in. According to the 1870 US Census, the household also included a 29-year-old woman named Angie Hunting. Though no occupation was listed, it is possible that Angie worked as a domestic in the home, or as a helper to Louisa, who died on May 21, 1871 at the age of 35. Louisa may have been ill, and it was also common for women to die in childbirth at this time. After Louisa's death, Elon and 4-year-old Alma apparently continued to live in the same home, though it is possible that Alma went to live with relatives. Elon married for a second time in November 1875 to Susan M. Adams of Eddington. They did not have children together.

The 1880 census reveals that Elon and his family appear to have been reasonably prosperous. According to the Agricultural Survey of that year, Elon owned 45 acres of land and was farming 12 acres of wheat, hay, and potatoes. They also had an orchard of 40 apple trees, and tended 2 horses, 4 cows, and 15 chickens. The survey noted only \$2 in wages paid that year to farm hands, indicating that Elon likely farmed most of those acres himself and had no permanent employees. In 1887, Elon's daughter Alma married John A. Leach of Charleston, Maine. By 1900, if not before, Alma's family of five

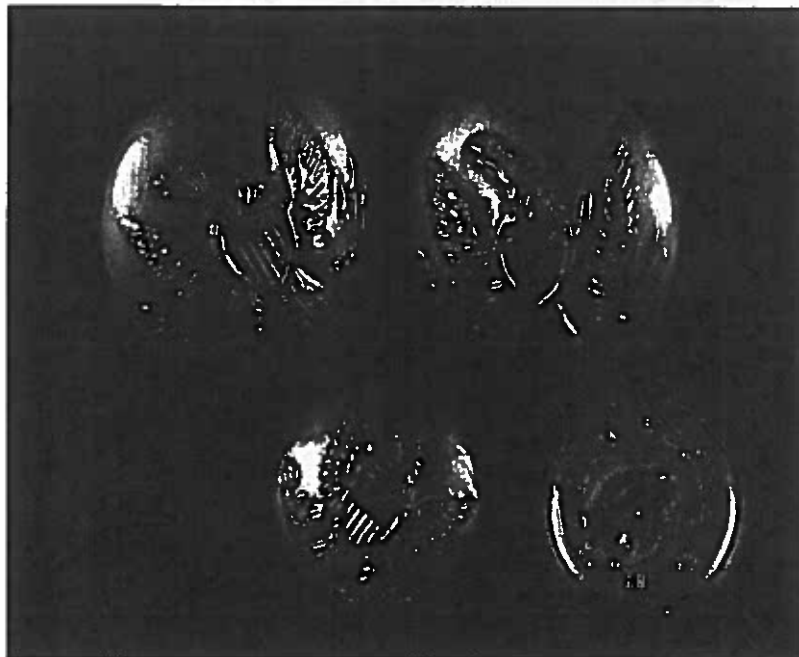
was living in Elon and Susan's home and John was farming the land with Elon. The extended family also included Elon's widowed sister Margaret, now 72 years old.

Susan Comins's died in 1902 at the age of 65, and Elon followed her on December 24, 1907 at the age of 69. The house was willed to Alma, who died in 1917 at the age of 48. Continuing the long family tradition of extended family living together, Elon's fourth grandchild, Verna, stayed at the farm after her marriage to Roscoe Higgins. Verna and Rosco Higgins raised two children there, Harold and Dorothy. Verna Leach Higgins, the granddaughter of Civil War Veteran Elon Comins, died in 1999 at the age of 96.

*This history was compiled using US Census records for 1860-1940 available through Ancestry.com and Abbott Cummings, *Descendants of John Comins* (Boston: Newbury Street Press, 2001). Elon's Civil War history was drawn from Ned Smith's *The 22nd Maine Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War: A History and Roster* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2010). The 1870 purchase of the Leach-Higgins Home was attributed to Verna Leach in the Summer 2016 Eddington Historical Society newsletter.



Elon R. Comins



Buttons from Elon R. Comins uniform

To all whom it may Concern.



Know ye, That Oliver R. Gamins a
 Corporal of Captain George A. Batten
 Company, (Co.) 22^d Regiment of Maine Infantry
 VOLUNTEERS who was enrolled on the 14th day of September
 one thousand eight hundred and 53 to serve three months ~~in~~
 during the war, is hereby **Discharged** from the service of the United States
 this 14th day of August, 1863, at Bangor
Maine by reason of Expiration of Service.
 (No objection to his being re-enlisted is known to exist.)

Said Oliver R. Gamins was born in Bellingham
 in the State of Maine is 23 years of age,
5 feet 9 inches high, D. S. K. complexion, Black eyes,
Brown hair, and by occupation, when enrolled, a Labourer.

Given at Bangor this 14th day of
August, 1863.

J. C. Crossman
 1st Lieut. 2^d Regiment
 Commanding the Post
 Mustering Officer's

Geo. A. Batten
 Capt. Company

This receipt will be erased if not there at once
 or the consequence will be the forfeiture of the soldier's
 redemptive fund of \$1000.00.

U. S. G. No. 121

The Town of Eddington 2016 Wreaths Across America

Morrill Worcester owner of Worcester Wreath made more wreaths than he could sell in 1992. He delivered them to Arlington National Cemetery in Washington,DC.

This week 168 companies delivered 300 loads of wreaths though out our country for WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA. Today in 1200 locations across our country 800,000 wreaths are being placed in cemeteries. This number does include the small towns like Eddington. Our Wreath Dedication Ceremony was directed by Charles B. Knowlen LTC (ret). Prayer by Rev. Roger Tracy and the Marine Corp Color Guard posted the colors with everyone reciting the pledge of alliance to the flag.

Remarks by Charles Knowlen: Today we remember we are one nation with one flag. In our cemeteries lie men and women who gave their lives so that we can live in freedom and without fear. We have paid a big price. Our nation stands as a beacon of liberty and freedom. We remember and thank those who gave their lives to keep us free. We shall not forget! Remember always! Some of you answered the call and served our country. Today we Thank-you.

We are honored to know you . We honor many men and women serving around the world in places we have never heard of. We honor them and their families. President Ronald Reagan said, "FREEDOM IS NEVER MORE THAN ONE GENERATION AWAY FROM EXTINCTION. IT MUST BE FOUGHT FOR AND PROTECTED.OR ONE DAY IN OUR SUNSET YEARS WE WILL BE TELLING OUR CHILDREN AND THEIRS WHAT IT ONCE WAS LIKE IN THE USA WHERE MEN WERE FREE."

Today we remember and honor the fallen and must teach our children the history and value of freedom. The wreaths will be placed on the monument. The Honor Guard will present arms as each wreath is layed.

Charles Knowlen honored over 90,000 men and women from all branches who were POWS/MIAS. Donald MacKenzie honored the Army. Scott Baillargeon honored the Marine Corps. Dick Tuck honored the Navy. Michael Dougherty honored the Air Force. Donna Nash honored the Coast Guard. Michael Shepherd honored the Merchant Marines. Chris Watson honored EMT's and Police Officers. Eight wreaths were placed at each cemetery in Eddington. New display boards have been made. THANKS!



Remembering by Pam Dorr

Our country stands united
Though war has reared its head,
And many soldiers suffered wounds
And many came home dead.

In the early 1900's
World War I came our way.
Its outcome is expressed in the words of
Lieutenant John McCrae:
"In Flander's fields the poppies grow
Between the crosses row on row."

In the early 1940's
After D-Day and its dead,
Of Hitler and World War II
General W.S.T. Stacy said:
"But always there's the memory
OF THE THUNDER OF THE GUNS."

In the early 50's and the Korean War
Frank Gross's word would run:
"It's a long cold walk to freedom.
To the calm of the morning sun."

In the 60's and 70's in Vietnam
So many stood brave and tall,
But many came home with wounded
hearts And some were but a name on a
wall. Words of Edwin Stan do ring:
"War!... What is it good for?
Absolutely nothing.

In the 90's the Gulf War soldiers
Tried to free Kuwait.
They fought against the Iraqi troops
And bravely faced their fate.
Julie Gold wrote a song;
Bette Midler sang it well.
A tribute to brave men brought home; An
anthem to those who fell:
"From a distance you look like my friend,
Even though we are at war.
From a distance I just cannot comprehend
What all this fighting is for."
Words have kept the wars alive;
They've been a helpful guide
To remind us of the men and women Who
fought and lived and died,

And all those who still continue the fight,
To keep this country free,
A place of peace and harmony
For folks like you and me.

On November 11th of every year
We can express in our own way.
The pride we have in those who fight and serve

President's Message by Margaret Dougherty

The Eddington Historical Society hosted three fundraisers this year. The Mother- Daughter Tea Party was at Comins hall on May 22nd. Violinist Rachel Proulx played while tea was poured by Debbie Collenburg and Theresa Peppard. Tea cakes, mini squares and cookies were served. Donna Nash directed a candy bar activity and an Eddington Challenge Trivia game was played by everyone. Our guest performer was award winning dancer Ella from the great city of Brewer. She performed exotic Hawaiian dancing. Pictures of the Tea Party are in the 2017 calendar.

The summer raffle fundraiser tickets were drawn at the Eddington Town Picnic. Thank-you to all the donors for your support. The following donors offered gifts-

Eddington Town Store
A & J Auto Repair
Kay Mitchell
Sylvia Decker

Clifton Country Store
Peavey Manufacturing
Lou Higgins

Dunkin Donuts
Tulley Hill Logging
Pam Dorr

Children's Fun Day was held at Comins Hall on October 8th. Many games were enjoyed in the hall. Outdoor activities included face painting, sack race, cake walk, 3 legged race, and throw a pie in Dana's face. Thank-you to Dana Kearns for participating. We had a fantastic day!

The Eddington Historical Society's display case in the Eddington Town Office has new exhibits. Check out Dr. Leonard H. Ford's record book of births he attended in Eddington and surrounding towns between 1922 and 1928. There are old glass milk bottles, China plates, old tins and more to see.

The Eddington Historical Society meets at the Town Office on the second Monday of each month at 6:30pm. I hope you will join us at our meetings. There are 2017 Eddington Historical Society calendars for sale at the Town Office and the Eddington Town Store(\$12). Calendars make great gifts.



MEETINGS

Meetings are held the second Monday of each month at 6:30 PM at the Town Office. You should check with the Town Office to confirm the meeting is being held.

Dues are \$10/year or \$50 for a life membership. Officers are:

Margaret Dougherty, President

Rebecca White, Secretary

Lou Higgins, Treasurer

Sylvia Decker, Vice President

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

ON THE COVER: THIS MONTH'S
VETERAN: ELON COMINS

PICTURES FROM COVER STORY 2

DISCHARGE LETTER 3

THE TOWN OF EDDINGTON 2016
WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA 4

POEM BY PAM DORR 5

ADVERTISING PAGE 6

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE 7