

# Bowen's independent rifles

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5-19-11

Vol. XXXIII, No. 20

## Bethinking of Olde Orleans

The flag pictured here was presented by Ladies of Ridgeway to Company A before leaving for the Civil War battlefields. In the middle stripe are the words "Bowen's Independent Rifles."

Captain Hezekiah Bowen of Medina resigned as the supervisor of Ridgeway in 1862 to recruit this company in response to President Lincoln's call for more volunteers. This unit was unusual in that each member bought his own gun, a sharp's rifle at the cost of \$40. This requirement limited enlistment to those who were a little more affluent than most.

According to John H. Stevens of Knowlesville who gave up farming temporarily for soldiering, this outfit was often referred to as the "top-buggy company" because the recruits were financially able to take their girl friends out in the latest style of carriage called the "Top-Buggy."

Company A became a part of the 151st Regiment along with two other Orleans County units, Company D of the Albion area and Company G from the Holley area, combined with some Middleport boys. There were also units from Erie County.

A letter published in the Rochester Union, June 28, 1865, said this of the 151st New York volunteers: "Fewer regiments have seen harder and more severe service ... young and gallant men who went forth when the storm was raging fiercest and the waves of rebellion rolled highest ... stationed in the thick of the fight ... well done, noble 151st."

*C.W. Lattin is the Orleans county historian. His column appears every Thursday in The Journal-Register and The Albion-Advertiser.*



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