

Ben Harrison Camp Set to Install and Dedicate Plaque at Gosport Cemetery

For over two years the Ben Harrison Camp has embarked on a project to appropriately mark the final resting place of soldiers who died while at Camp Hughes located in Gosport Indiana. Camp Hughes was a Civil War training camp for the 59th Indiana and was located one-half mile southwest of Gosport on the White River and named for former Indiana Congressman James Hughes. Camp Hughes was in existence from September 1861 to February 13, 1862 when the 59th left Camp Hughes bound for New Albany, Indiana and active duty. Camp Hughes was the only known Civil War camp ever established in Owen County.



Research indicated that 12 men died while at Camp Hughes and that at least 8 men were buried in graves marked “unknown” at the Gosport Cemetery. The 59th Indiana soldiers who died while at Camp Hughes apparently contracted measles and died between late January and February 1862. It is unclear today why these men were buried in graves marked “UNKNOWN 59th IND INF,” as the microfilmed 59th Indiana Correspondence File at the Indiana State

Archives lists 8 names that were reported to have been “buried by their regiment in the Gosport Cemetery.” The Ben Harrison Camp made arrangements for a plaque to be struck with the names of all 12 men who died while at Camp Hughes. The plaque will be attached to a large granite marker already in place over the 8 “unknown” graves. This block of rough grey granite was placed over the graves in October 1923. According to an article in the *Gosport Reporter* of October 25, 1923, L. R. Gray placed the large granite stone there with the intention of having the marker either lettered or a bronze tablet attached. The granite stone is currently lettered with the following: IN MEMORIAM Died in Camp Hughes –1861-2. It is unclear whether they ever intended to list on this marker the individual names of the 59th soldiers who died while in camp.

On Saturday, May 10th, starting at 9:00 AM EDT, the Ben Harrison Camp will be installing the new plaque on front of the granite marker and will also be cleaning and resetting the surrounding military stones. The official dedication will take place on Monday, May 26th, 2008 at 11:00 AM EDT. The camp would like to extend an invitation to all to attend the dedication on May 26th. The Ben Harrison Camp would like to thank the Department of Indiana for their kind monetary donation to this project. For more information please contact Tim Beckman of the Ben Harrison Camp at the following e-mail address: timbeckman@gmail.com or call 317-353-6322.