

Holland Land Office Museum

Quick Facts

Famous Batavians

CHARLES FRANKLIN RAND

Charles F. Rand was born on January 19, 1839 in Batavia. His father died when he was only four and he lived with his mother at 4 Liberty Street (now a parking lot). At the age of 16 he went to New Orleans and he worked at Picayune, a newspaper. In late 1860 he returned to Batavia. On April 15, 1861 he went to the Eagle Tavern to attend a journalism meeting. While there Major Henry Glowacki, also a Batavian, received and read a telegram from President Lincoln calling for volunteers. Charles Rand was the first to put his name on the list and when the telegraph was sent back to Washington, Rand became the first volunteer to the Union Army.

On May 1 1861 Rand registered in Washington DC as a member of Company K, 12th division New York Volunteers. It was not long before Rand participated in battle. On July 17, 1861 Rand's company crossed the chain bridge into Virginia. His company immediately became involved in the Battle of Bull Run. In one skirmish, his company was given the order to retreat, but instead he moved to join another company and continued to fight throughout the day. While he claims these actions were due to his fear of getting his back full of lead while retreating, the US Government felt it was worthy of the soon to be created Medal of Honor. He was one of the first people to earn this prestigious award. He continued to fight in many battles being wounded several times but never seriously. On June 27, 1862 during the Battle of Gaines Mill, a musket ball changed his luck. The shot shattered his right shoulder and as a result he lost his right shoulder and part of his arm. While recovering from his surgery, but before he could be transferred to a safer location, he was captured by Stonewall Jackson and taken to Richmond. Approximately two weeks later he was released during an exchange of prisoners. He spent some time in Bata-

via recovering, but he wanted to return to the front. However, he was unable to convince any field officer to let him join, so he took his case to the President. Lincoln would not let him rejoin the fighting due to his injury, however, he did see the dedication and spirit of the man, so he was promoted to captain and given a job in the War Department. As a result of this appointment he served as supervising governor in Gilmer Texas from 1867 to 1868. In 1869 he resigned his service to the US army. In 1873 he graduated from Georgetown University as a doctor. He practiced in Washington DC until 1879, when he returned to Batavia to practice. In 1882 his mother died, with nothing else to keep him in Batavia he returned to Washington in 1889. In 1904 his injuries began to bother him to the extent that he gave up his practice. On October 14, 1908, Dr. Charles F. Rand died due to heart disease. On October 17, he was laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery, section one, grave one, an ongoing tribute to the first volunteer.



