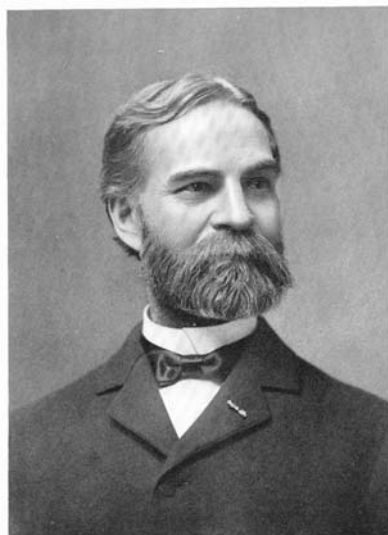


George Washington Brush (1842-1927)

Congressional Medal of Honor Recipient, Dentist & Physician



Geo. W. Brush

Only one individual from Huntington has ever been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor—George Washington Brush, who received the award in recognition of his gallantry during a Civil War battle.

Brush was born in 1842 in the family home on Sweet Hollow Road in West Hills. As a child, he attended the Huntington Academy and helped his father on the family farm. When he was 16 or 17, he left Huntington for Brooklyn where he found work in a dry goods store earning \$2 per week (the equivalent of almost \$40).

Within two years, the Civil War broke out and Brush was among the first to volunteer to serve in the Union Army. He joined the 48th Regiment of New York, Company A on August 13, 1861 as a private. The 48th Regiment saw extensive action, including the capture of Forts Walker and Beauregard. On June 6, 1863, Brush was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant of the 34th United States Colored Troops, which was active in Florida.

His promotions continued. He became a 1st Lieutenant in 1864 and a captain in 1865.

During a battle at Ashepoo River, S.C. in 1864, Brush “voluntarily commanded a boat crew, which went to the rescue of a large number of Union soldiers on board the stranded steamer Boston, and with great gallantry succeeded in conveying them to shore, being exposed during the entire time to heavy fire from a Confederate battery.” His actions that day would be recognized 33 years later when he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Just before the end of the war, he returned to Brooklyn to marry his childhood sweetheart. After the wedding, he returned to his station in Florida and his wife was to join him later. However, the ship his wife travelled on encountered a hurricane off the coast of North Carolina and all on board were lost. Devasted by his loss, Brush resigned from the military and returned to Brooklyn, where he studied dentistry under his father-in-law.

In 1868, he married his deceased wife’s younger sister. After a few years as a dentist, he attended the Long Island College Hospital. After his graduation in 1876, he established a successful medical practice in Brooklyn. Dr. Brush remained in Brooklyn becoming an active member of his church and in veterans organizations. He was also active in civic affairs, including the Brooklyn Transit Conference, the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce (which he helped organize), and the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences. In 1895, he was elected to the New York State Assembly. From 1896 to 1900, he served in the State Senate.

Dr. Brush died in Brooklyn on November 16, 1927. He is buried in the Huntington Rural Cemetery.

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