

A New York Civil War Veteran from Plattsburgh, NY

Raphael Poissant

by John Richard Fisher - February 2014

Raphael Poissant is the only Poissant I ever found that served in the Civil War. He was killed in action at the battle of the Wilderness, in Virginia. It was a terrible battle for the Union and many lives were lost. Raphael is my 3rd cousin, five times removed. (same as 5 generations removed).

Raphael Poissant.— (Substitute for Felix Brissat), Enlisted at Plattsburg, to serve three years, and mustered in as private, Co. I, August 18, 1863 [age 27 years 5 months and 26 days old]; wounded in action, May 6, 1864, at the Wilderness, Va.; died of his wounds, May 10, 1864 [age 28 yrs, 2 months and 17 days].

"Roster 83rd New York Infantry." *New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center*.

Baptême	1836-02-23
St-Isidore-de-Laprairie	Naissance : 1836-02-23
	Acte du Fonds Drouin : 
POISSAN , RAPHAEL Sujet	sexe m.
POISSAN , ANDRE Père	
LONCTIN , ANGELIQUE Mère	

Jacques Poissant born 1661 in Marennes, France was a Soldier of the Franche Marine and he arrived in Quebec on 11 Nov 1684.

Jacques Poissant & Marguerite Besset
Wed 1698-99 Laprairie, Quebec

Claude Poissant & Marie Josephe Lemieux
Wed 29 Sep 1749 at Laprairie, Quebec

Andre Poissant & Elizabeth Perras
Wed 21 Nov 1791 at St Philippe, Quebec

Andre Poissant & Angelique Longtin
Wed 22 Feb 1819 at St Constant, Quebec

Raphael Poissant

Born 23 Feb 1836 at St Isidore, Laprairie, Quebec

Died 10 May 1864 of wounds at age 28 at the Wilderness, Virginia

6		(5-11-8)		
NAME OF SOLDIER:		Poissant, Raphael		
NAME OF DEPENDENT:		Widow, Minor, Poissant, Angelique		
SERVICE:		I 83 N. Y. Inf.		
DATE OF FILING.	CLASS.	APPLICATION NO.	CERTIFICATE NO.	STATE FROM WHICH FILED.
	Invalid, Widow, Minor,			
1870. May 18	Minor	186.979	164.105	
ATTORNEY:				
J. M. H. 203				

Six years after his death, his mother Angelique received his military pension

Battle of the Wilderness, May 5, 1864



The opening battle of Grant's sustained offensive against the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, known as the Overland Campaign, began in a dense woodland thicket called The Wilderness. On the morning of May 5, 1864, the Union V Corps under Maj. Gen. Gouverneur K. Warren attacked Richard S. Ewell's Corps on the Orange Turnpike. Meanwhile, during the afternoon, A.P. Hill's corps encountered Federals of Getty's Division of the Union VI Corps and Hancock's II Corps on the Plank Road. Fighting

was fierce but inconclusive as both sides attempted to maneuver in the dense woods. Darkness halted the fighting, and both sides rushed forward reinforcements.

At dawn on **May 6**, Hancock attacked along the Plank Road, driving Hill's Corps back in confusion. Longstreet's Corps arrived in time to prevent the collapse of the Confederate right flank. At noon, a devastating Confederate flank attack in Hamilton's Thicket sputtered out when Lt. Gen. James Longstreet was wounded by his own men. The IX Corps (Burnside) moved against the Confederate center, but was repulsed. Union generals James S. Wadsworth and Alexander Hays were killed. Confederate generals John M. Jones, Micah Jenkins, and Leroy A. Stafford were killed. The battle was a tactical draw. Grant, however, did not retreat as had the other Union generals before him. On May 7, the Federals advanced by the left flank toward the crossroads of Spotsylvania Courthouse.

The 83rd NY sustained 115 casualties and 30 deaths at the Wilderness.

A Letter from James Ross, fellow soldier and friend of Raphael Poissant

Culpepper Oct

Feb. 28th 1864

Dear Father:

Between the papers I get, and what my correspondents write me, I manage to get most of the home news but there is so little doing in Plattsburgh at any time that the news is generally very slim. I pity you with your chilblains and cold weather up north at this season. It is so warm here today that it is troublesome wearing a coat, not a morsel of snow ice or frost is any where visible it does not freeze one day in five. We had much colder weather in November and December than we are having now in fact the coldest of the winter was over before Christmas. You would be delighted with this for a winter climate it must be splendid for farmers such work as they do in the fall at home can be done here all winter and it must cost very little to winter stock for cattle pick up half their living all winter. When I think of what weather you may have at home at this season of the year blowing, freezing, drifting snow two feet deep and getting deeper I pity the people who live there. I have just come back from church. The sermon was a military one about The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon. It was a very good one. I like our chaplain better than I did at first most of the Army chaplains are humbugs and I was rather inclined to think at first that he was one but perhaps I judged him harshly. If this good weather lasts we are in for a move before long in some direction. We had a bad scare yesterday and under marching orders today but after all nothing may come of it. Yesterday afternoon the report spread that we were to move. We went to bed but were woke up by a cry in the middle of the night to fall in for rations this is a sure sign of a move and we lay waiting to hear reveille sounded. The wagons kept rumbling past all night an ominous sign. I was very warm and comfortable in my bunk and oh how I hated the idea of moving. This morning we learned that the third and sixth corps have gone forward on a reconnaissance and that the rest of the army has recd. orders to be in readiness to support them if they need support. I hope that our services may not be needed and after all that we won't be routed out of our comfortable camp though to have the army or any portion of it move and our brigade lie still is a wonder indeed. If we can get next month or the best part of it over here we will consider ourselves fortunate for next month is the worst in the year as far as mud and wet are concerned. March over it will be spring and then if they want to move us we won't complain. In connection with the talk of moving I want to tell you about our fortune teller.

We have an oracle in Co." I" named **Raphael Poissant**, a resident of Plattsburgh who is consulted on all critical occasions to know the will of the fates respecting the regiment. He always foretells with accuracy. He has foretold all the moves of the regiment. When we were at Mine Run the colonel consulted him to know what was to befall us and he declared positively that there would be no fight. When we were lying in line of battle expecting surely to be engaged in a few minutes he repeated the assertion that no fight

would occur. He said yesterday that were not to move just yet and I felt comforted accordingly but when I heard the wagons rumbling in the night I feared for once that he would turn out a false prophet. He tells individual fortunes when he is in the mood and he can't be bribed to tell anyone's fortune and never will accept of any compensation. I know of many of his predictions that have turned out true. Men go to consult him about the welfare of their friends at home and he tells them what they want to know. He has invariably said that this regiment would never be in battle and that we have only a few months longer to serve. He now says that we are to see but two more pay days in the army, one in the field and one in Washington and that we are to be back on our farms at home by the 4th of July. So may it be. I don't say that I believe his predictions. I give you his words and you can make what you like of them. I hope that he speaks truth I would like to go home for a while about that time and then if the war is not over I know what soldiering is and how it agrees with me and I can do as I please about coming back. I should like the chance of enlisting in a new regiment though but few such are raised now. A new man in an old regiment has no chance whatever of promotion but an old man in a new regiment has every chance. Neither education nor breeding gives a man promotion in the army but military knowledge or the influence of his friends. Nevertheless it is not an unendurable fate to be a private here.

Private James Ross 83rd NY Infantry.

We know a little about Raphael because of James Ross' letters.



James Ross

June 14, 1841 – May 10, 1864

James Ross also died on the 10th, as did Raphael Poissant, after being wounded.

Company Descriptive Book
Co. B, 97 Reg't, NY Infantry

James Ross, Private, Age: 22. Height: 5 feet, 5 ½ inches.
Complexion: Fair. Eyes: Black. Hair: Black. Born: Canada.
Occupation: Student.

Enlistment: July 7, 1863, Plattsburg, NY, term: 3 years
Remarks: Drafted. Transferred from 83 N.Y. I. June 7, 64 as absent wounded.

Died of wounds received in battle, at Washington, D.C. May 10, 64. Final Statements and inventory of effects sent to Adgt. Gen. June 7, 1865.

Burying the dead after the battle of the Wilderness in Virginia



There were so many casualties, estimated at 11,000, at the Battle of the Wilderness in Virginia that I assume Raphael was buried hastily near the field hospital at the battle site, or he may have been hospitalized and buried at Washington, DC as was James Ross.

1871 Census of St-Isidore, Laprairie, Quebec

58	Poisson	Marie	16	28	"	F. W. C. Bapt.	"	Journalier
	"	Elmire	7	35	"	Catholique	"	-
	"	Marie	16	7	"	F. W. C. Bapt.	"	-
59	Bertrand	Emelie	7	66	"	Catholique	"	-
	"	Lina	7	30	"	"	"	-
69	Poisson	Angelique	7	73	"	F. W. C. Bapt.	"	-
	"	Victoire	7	42	"	"	"	Couturiere
	Juvency	Philibert	16	15	"	"	Coconnais	Journalier

Raphael's parents were not Catholics. They were Free Will Baptists. Note the "F. W. C. Bapt." notation in the 1871 census above.

Raphael's mother Angelique died on 1 March 1874 (4 years after obtaining the military pension of her son) at Sainte-Clotilde, Chateauguay, Quebec and is buried with her husband Andre in the Beechridge Presbyterian Cemetery.

Note that his father Andre had died in 1856, about 7 years before Raphael enlisted for the Civil War.

