

Those old horse pistols

When I was very young I became interested in hearing my Grandfathers tell about their grandfathers serving in the militia of our state. When asking if they had any things military from long ago, these old men's memories went back into the 1800's when all able-bodied males had to belong to a militia unit. When I look back in conversations they would go about like this: "I have one or a pair of horse pistols and a sword Grandpa had in general training." There would be certain days the men of the unit would gather together to do some militia drills. It often seems that old established or wealthier family members would become officers. It cost money to equip as an officer. Most officers were mounted on horses. That is why pistols were called horse pistols. A pair of holsters and pistols were carried just ahead of the saddle. Officers also carried swords.

Occasionally fragments of uniforms still existed in local families however most had surrendered to moths. Note the cost of the "Regimental Suit" on John H. Grame's (now Gramps) list of March 15, 1814. That was in the days of the War of 1812. At that period militia were sometimes required to serve on the northern boundary of the state — usually near Sacketts Harbor. There still was a threat of British invasion.



This pistol and receipt are from the Gramps family of Stone Arabia which had resided there from the early 1700's.

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