

# Chauncey B. Horton

Civil War Veteran

Corporal, Co. G, 54th MA Infantry U.S.C.T.

Corporal Horton was a member of perhaps the most well-known of all the troops; The 54th Massachusetts Infantry. The 54th MA Infantry was the first Northern black volunteer regiment enlisted to fight in the Civil War, organized in March of 1863. The stellar combat record of the 54th led to the general recruitment of African-Americans as soldiers.

Chauncey Horton was born c. 1843 in New Jersey. Residing a great portion of his life in Sussex County, Mr. Horton worked as a Boatman on the Morris Canal and a Farmer. Enlisting at Newton, New Jersey April 9, 1863, he was attached to Co. G. On July 18, 1863 the Assault on Ft. Wagner by the 54th began and they captured the rifle pits surrounding the fort. Reduced to hand-to-hand combat, Col. Robert Gould Shaw and many of the 54th were killed. The Confederates buried Shaw and his men in a mass grave, thinking to insult the Union by having a white officer buried with black men. This grave back-fired, as decomposition fouled the Confederate water supply, forcing them to abandon Ft. Wagner. Efforts to exhume Col. Shaw and return his remains to Boston was refused by the Colonel's parents. His father sent instructions to the officers of his son's regiment, writing, "We would not have his body removed from where it lies surrounded by his brave & devoted soldiers, if we could accomplish it by a word. Please to bear this in mind & also, let it be known, so that, even in case there should be an opportunity, his remains may not be disturbed." Private Horton survived Ft. Wagner and was promoted Corporal. **Mr. Horton had health difficulties after the war and spent the last 10 years of his life as a resident of "Greystone", where he died June 11, 1895.** Corporal Chauncey B. Horton is buried in Evergreen Cemetery, Morristown.

*Information about Col. Horton was provided by Jan Williams, Cultural and Historical Specialist, County of Morris (NJ)*