

## The Civil War Days In Sanilac County

The ready response of Sanilac County to the call of the nation at the outbreak of the Civil War is amply attested by the simple fact that not a man within her boundaries had to be drafted for service when conscription was proclaimed. This country's quota of the 600,000 was raised by volunteers before the time appointed for the drawing, and most of Sanilac's volunteers went into service long before conscription was thought of.

Remote from the large affairs of the nation, the people of this community had for years cleared their lands and cultivated their fields in peaceful seclusion. They were undisturbed save for the inevitable struggle against the elements, and their experience with firearms was confined to their non-military conflicts with wild game. Despite the years of warnings, the pioneers were unprepared to comprehend the awful suddenness with which the Civil War was precipitated. But once the unwelcome news of Sumpter was vividly before them, and the bitterness of Bull Run confirmed the magnitude of the struggle about to ensue, they stood ready.

The first military company to be formed was raised by Capt. Israel Huckins and was known as the "Sanilac Wolverines." The name was later changed to the "Sanilac Pioneers," although it was better known as Company D, 10th Michigan Infantry. It required only a few days of canvassing for Capt. Huckins to recruit about 60 of the best citizens. On November 19, 1861, only seven months after the outbreak of the war, the "Wolverines" were ready to step into active service. The company took passage at Lexington on the "Forester" the rendezvous of the parent regiment being Flint.

In January, 1862, the company was filled to its maximum quota with the following officers:

Israel Huckins, Captain.  
H. H. Nims, First Lieutenant.  
G. W. Jenks, Second Lieutenant.  
Richard Teal, First Sergeant.  
Rudolph Papst, Second Sergeant.

C. R. Bunker, Third Sergeant.  
Watson Beach, Fourth Sergeant.  
Henry Wideman, Fifth Sergeant.  
Watson F. Bisbee, First Corporal.  
Robert F. Lewis, Second Corporal.  
C. M. Cross, Third Corporal.  
T. J. Springstead, Fourth Corporal.  
Lemuel House, Fifth Corporal.  
Stephen R. Moore, Sixth Corporal.  
Hugh McCaffery, Seventh Corporal.

Many of these officers were afterwards promoted. The company was mustered into service in February, 1862, and left for Flint for Pittsburgh Landing with the regiment the following April having a full roster of 103 men and officers.

The regiment's initial service included participation in the movements resulting in the evacuation of Corinth. Later it was stationed at Tuscumbia, Ala., and Company D was stationed to guard the Landing at Florence on the Tennessee River. A month later the regiment marched to Nashville with its division under General Palmer. It remained besieged there until the arrival of the Army of the Cumberland under Rosecrans. The regiment remained in Nashville and vicinity until July, 1863. It was a part of Sherman's army through the long series of engagements which finally resulted in the capture of Ala.

The year 1864 was the most disastrous, the regiment losing more than 200 in killed, missing and wounded. After Jonesboro it moved to Athens, Ga., by rail, thence to Florence, in pursuit of Forrest, and returning to Chattanooga, it joined the column in pursuit of Hood into Alabama. Again they were with Sherman, going to Savannah, and were at the battle of Bentonville, where a number of men were lost; but here a disaster was prevented by the determination and bravery of their brigade.

On the 24th of May, 1865, the 10th participated in the grand review at Washington, was mustered out of service July 19 at Louisville, Ky., arrived at Jackson, Mich., on the 22nd, and was there paid off and disbanded on August 1.

When the call for additional volunteers was made in July, 1862, about \$3,000 was raised by the citizens of this county in addition to the bounty paid by the state for enlistments. This, with the pressing need for more soldiers at the front, was the cause of forming another company from this county for the 22nd Michigan Infantry.

The boys for the 22nd were enrolled as Company K, with Alexander G. Galbraith as captain, Henry Breidenback as first lieutenant and John A. Simons as second lieutenant. The recruiting was begun July 15, 1862, was completed August 29, and on September 4 started for Kentucky by way of Cincinnati, with the regiment in command of Col. Moses Wisner, ex-Governor at that time.

Col. Wisner died of typhoid fever at Lexington, Ky., in January, 1863, and the regiment was then placed under the command of Col. LeFavour, serving the Third Brigade, Second Division, Army of Central Kentucky. It remained in Kentucky until April, 1863, having been stationed at Danville, Lexington, Nicholasville, Stanford and other places. After some months of guard duty at Nashville, the regiment became engaged at Chickamauga. Later it was ordered to the south side of Tennessee River to support General Hooker. It did service on the marches through Kentucky, and later went with Sherman to Atlanta. It was mustered out at the close of the war at Nashville and arrived at Detroit on June 30, 1865, where it was paid off and discharged the following month.

Sanilac also contributed a company to the 6th Michigan Cavalry. The captain of this company was Wesley Armstrong; first lieutenant, Edward Potter; second lieutenants, William Creevy and George S. West. After the war this regiment was ordered to Wyoming on an expedition against the Indians. The county also was represented by a limited number of men in the 24th Infantry, the 8th and 14th.

At Davisville (now Crosswell) and at Lexington companies were afterwards formed for the purpose of military drill in order to be able to take the field at a moment's notice. The Davisville company met on Saturday afternoons in a field one

and one-half miles east of the town, and the Lexington company met every evening at Hyke's Hall.

When the conscription was proclaimed, William S. Mills was appointed Commissioner of this County, and Walter P. Brown, surgeon. There were only about 40 men to be drafted, for the county's quota for the 600,000 was 238 and the number of men already enlisted at the time exceeded 200. The required number was raised by vol[unteers.]

Mr. Hall was 93 years of age on June 18. Having been brought to this country at the age of six months by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ira Hall, he was living two miles south of Davisville, on the farm now owned by John Jones, at the outbreak of the war. He enlisted promptly in the company becoming formed for the 22nd Michigan Infantry, and in the spring of 1862 found himself doing service as a private in the Army of the Cumberland.

During the fighting at Cold Harbor a bayonet was thrust through his hand, but the wound soon healed and he lost no time from service. He saw action next at Kenesaw Mountain, Tenn., where a force of Confederate troops was driven from an

important position. On a foraging expedition in Tennessee, Mr. Hall and two companions were fired upon by sharpshooters and a buckshot lodged in his thigh.

Following the fighting at Cedar Creek, General Nathaniel Lyon was fatally shot by a Confederate sharpshooter. Mr. Hall was at the scene and helped lift the General down from his horse.

The most strenuous fighting in his experience, Mr. Hall told the *Jeffersonian*, was at Chickamauga. This battle lasted for about three hours. It was during this fighting that his brother, William Hall, received a rifle ball in the foot which tore off a portion of his heel.

Mr. Hall marched with Sherman's army through Georgia and later northward through South Carolina and West Virginia. His company was disbanded in Detroit.

Shortly after the close of the war Mr. Hall's father took the contract for laying the plank road between Davisville and Lexington for the lumbering firm of Moss & Mills. He and his brother assisted the elder Hall in this work. The planks used were hemlock, two inches thick and 16 feet long. This road was used for many years by the firm in hauling its products to the private dock at Lexington.

Following several years of work in the lumbering operations of the county, Mr. Hall engaged in farming, living successively in several different places in the vicinity of Crosswell. He moved into town 25 years ago. He is unusually active for his years and is seldom ill. He lives several blocks from the center of town, but thinks nothing of setting out on the walk by himself.

"There are not many of us old fellows left," he said when asked to recall some of his comrades. "I can't think of any living today, now that John Douglas is dead. Let me see, there was Jim Dowling, Sam and Eli Utley, Abe Skelly, Bob Hunter, Ben Moore, Will and John Moore, John Osborn, Elmore Putney, John Walker, Allen Worden, Dolphus S. Davis.

"Then there was Joe Squires. He came through the war all right, but shot himself accidentally shortly afterwards. He was hunting a deer one day and tripped somehow and shot himself. His body was located in the woods by his dog after a searching party had failed.

"Walter Niles received a rifle ball, during the war, which penetrated his stomach and came out of his back. He recovered from this and returned to Buel Township, cleared up 160 acres of land and worked it until his death about six years ago.["]

The women of Sanilac County were equally as prompt as the men in realizing the need for their service. Shortly after the outbreak of the war a Soldiers' Relief Society was formed at Lexington and a Soldiers' Aid Society was organized at Port Sanilac. The members at once set about to do all that women's hands could accomplish for the soldiers' needs, and many were the boxes of clothing - comforters, sheets, blankets, shirts, sox, bandages, handkerchiefs, magazines, newspapers, and things to eat that were sent by those women to the hospitals and camps.

For many years after the return of the soldiers from the field, the Civil War was a topic of daily conversation among the residents of Sanilac County. The disastrous effects of the great national crisis were felt for practically a generation. The veterans were justly looked upon with wide admiration. The G. A. R. post at Lexington was one of the most active in this part of the state, and every Memorial Day the Boys in Blue donned their uniforms and paid homage to their fallen comrades with fitting ceremony at the cemeteries.

It is now 68 years since the close of the war. The past decade has taken a heavy toll from the list of white-haired veterans. All those of Lexington have passed on and Crosswell can point to only one, Charles Hall, who, with the exception of his two and one-half years in the army, has lived all his life in Crosswell and vicinity.

*The Jeffersonian*, Friday, November 10, 1933 - (Found in a scrapbook at the Depot Museum in Crosswell.)