



### In Their Own Words

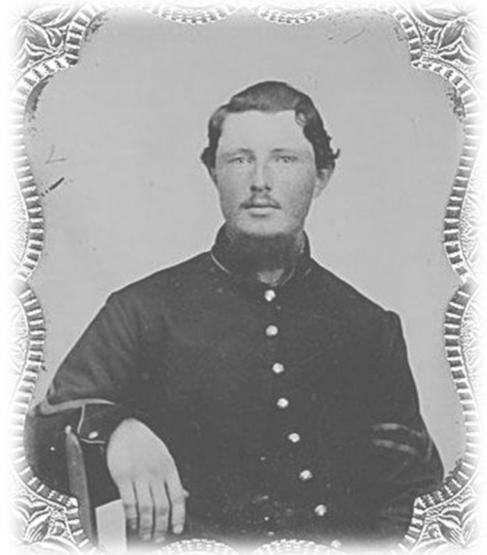
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This Veterans Day, we remember the sacrifices made by those who served in the Armed Forces. While the commemoration was originally established to mark the end of the first World War, we present the story of a Civil War soldier who grew up in southeastern Wisconsin. Eagle Historical Society Board member Mike Rice researched and wrote this tribute to a hometown hero.

### Silas Parsons

Silas Parsons was born in 1840 in Mukwonago to Samos and Sophronia Parsons. They were among the first families to settle in the Eagle area, arriving here in 1836. This area was still called Milwaukee at that time

Silas Parsons and twelve friends joined the 24<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry in August, 1862, to stop the assault in the Union by Confederate forces. In early morning of their second battle at Stones River on December 31, 1862, the right side of the Union Army collapsed as the horde of 10,000 rebels charged the half-dressed Union army. Surely no one could escape this hell! In the heat of battle, the men of the 24<sup>th</sup> were ordered to retreat, but Silas didn't hear the order, later writing,



*"I was so busy loading and firing that I did not hear any order, and the first I knew was left alone -- but determining to have a few more shots got behind a tree 'let them have it', until within about 20 rods, when I broke for another good tree a short distance in the rear where I could give them a few more rounds."*

After a short time, Silas joined up with others who had survived the rebel onslaught and rallied to continue the fight. He writes,

*"In a few minutes the devils rallied again and came on to us, yelling as before. -- We fell back to the fence again, and rallying as before, drove them across the field the second time. -- All this was done in a short time, and the cannon left by our battery still stood there, neither party having time to draw it off. The ground had now been fought over four times, & it was pretty well covered with the dead & wounded of both sides."*

In September of 1863, the two armies lined up for battle at Chickamauga, Georgia. Fighting started early in the morning, and the lines attacked and withdrew. As the armies moved men up and down the line to fend off attacks, an opening developed in the Union line, and the Confederates came crashing through. The 24<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin infantry was among those sent to fill the gap. Marching at the double-quick, they charged the enemy at the top of a hill and drove off the first of them.

The 24<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin was only engaged in the battle for about fifteen minutes when they were overrun, and Silas Parson's body was left on the battlefield with thousands of others. His body was never identified, and his remains are buried among the many "Unknown" graves at the National Cemetery in Nashville.