

Researching the Draper Family was my first genealogy project, and I was surprised to realize how much their story was intertwined with that of other Eagle residents in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

When Francis Draper arrived in Eagle around 1838, the family consisted of Francis 31, wife Hannah 27, and sons, John Adam age 5 and Merritt age one. The family moved to Eagle from New York, reportedly with Jonathan Betts, in an ox-drawn covered wagon. Merritt was born in Illinois in 1837, during their journey. It is not known if Eagle was their destination, but promises of cheap farm land encouraged many east coast families to make the move west. At that time, Indians still lived in the area, wolves were plentiful, and there was no "Village" or "Eagle Center" yet. The area was so remote that any supplies were obtained by traveling to Waukesha or Milwaukee, which may have taken days.

Their first land purchase was for 80 acres from Eliphalet Cramer, a major land owner in Eagle, on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1839. Their first home was a log cabin, but later they built a large cream brick home, which is still standing at Betts and Draper Roads. Because Francis Draper Jr. states he was born in the log cabin in 1842, and the current house is designated on an 1859 plat map, it's estimated the Draper home is between 162 and 179 years old.

Not much is known about the family's day to day life. They farmed 200 acres east and west of Betts Road. Eagle Assessment Records in the 1870's, show they had horses, cattle, sheep and lambs, swine, wagons-carriages and sleighs. They probably raised corn, oats, and/or rye, the most popular crops in Eagle at that time. The 1850 Federal census states the real estate value as \$2500. Besides farming, Francis was also a town assessor, a member of the Eagle Lodge No. 39 I.O.O.F. (Independent Order of Odd Fellows), and was a delegate along with Henry A. Hinkley to the Convention of Democratic Whigs to the Whig County Convention in Prairieville in 1841.

Try, though to imagine the life of Hannah Draper! Only in her 20's, she began her journey from New York with a young son and gave birth to another son along the way. From 1838 to 1840, she maintained a household of the four Drapers and friend Jonathan Betts, all in one log cabin! She cooked over a hearth and fireplace, sewed and mended clothing, obtained water from a nearby stream, assisted her husband with farm chores and tended to the children. She is mentioned in her 1880 obituary as one of Eagles first settlers, "...and many were the privations and hardships to be endured, but this estimable, motherly woman and devoted wife, uncomplainingly endured the privations of a pioneer life and finally had the satisfaction of seeing herself and family in possession of a comfortable property and home."

Francis and Hannah had many children, as was the custom in the 1800's! Census data showed only 9 children, but Francis Jr.'s obituary mentioned 10 children. The hunt was on to find a "10<sup>th</sup> sibling". These are their stories.

John Adam, was born in 1833 in New York. He married Helen M. Weston from Troy, Walworth County and had a daughter Alma Jennie, in 1859. John entered the Civil War in August 1862, but died of dysentery in September 1863. Interestingly, instead of living with her mother, Helen, Alma Jennie then went to live with her grandparents, Francis and Hannah. Also of interest, the 1880 census lists "Jennie" Draper, age 21 and her son, James B. Draper, age 2, living with her uncle Thomas Seldon Draper until she marries.

As mentioned before, second child Merritt, was born in 1837 on the journey to Eagle. He married Susan Miranda Snover, a neighbor from the area near Hwy LO and South Street. Sadly, Merritt entered the Civil War in February 1865, but died in August, after only six months of service! In 1871, his widow Susan remarried, to John Weston, brother of her sister-in-law, John Adams wife Helen. (Susan's father John was a farmer, master carpenter, and eventually became a Waukesha County Probate Judge!)

The third child, Ann Eliza, was the first girl and first Draper child born in Eagle, in 1839. She married Richard Pierson (Pirson) of Eagle and moved to the Town of Lafayette to farm by 1870. Eliza Ann died in 1905.

The fourth child, Hannah A., was born in 1841. In 1860, she married William Burnap, whose family lived near Shearer Road and Hwy LO. A Civil War draft document shows William living in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1863. A Civil War pension document shows a "widow's" claim for Hannah in 1865. No children were ever listed, and no other information can be found about her.

Francis Jr., the fifth child, is the only child who remained in Eagle and, therefore, the most well-documented Draper. Born in 1842 in the log cabin, he lived with his parents and attended Ward School #3, (now seen on Old World Wisconsin property on Hwy 67 and is the oldest remaining school in Waukesha County), until the fourth grade. He worked on the family farm until he entered the Civil War in 1862. Discharged in 1865, he is documented as a private but was often referred to in later years as "Colonel Draper". He became a farmer on his family's property, and was very active in Eagle Town matters, politics - serving as a Town Chairman and Village President, and a member of military posts. Francis married Laurell DeWitt from Troy, Jefferson County, in 1879, but they divorced in 1887. Only four months later, he married Almira Salsbury (Salisbury) Medway, daughter of John Salisbury and Kesiah (Lake), both Eagle pioneers. Francis and Almira had one child, Lila. Lila became an active Eagle resident, serving as postmaster, becoming interested in politics, and cared for her father until his death.

Lila, husband Edward Burton, and Francis Jr., lived in the village on Jericho Street, now Main Street. Francis Jr., a double amputee by age 86, died in July 1941 at the age of 99. He was Waukesha County's oldest Civil War veteran and one of two remaining in the county at the time.

The sixth child and fourth son was Napoleon Boneparte, born in 1844. He entered the Civil War in October 1861 and mustered out in November 1864. He married Felicia Dawson, daughter of Davis and Amelia, from Eagle. They move to Kansas around 1873, and he died there in 1925. It was a thrill to have researched Napoleon, because I was able to connect with his Great-Great-Grandson, Jason Draper, in Kansas!

The seventh child and fifth son, was Thomas Seldon, born in 1845. He entered the Civil War at age 16 and mustered out in 1865. He married Susan Smith. The 1880 census mentions him as a carpenter. Thomas and Susan's family moved to Cumberland in 1885 and to the State of Washington around 1895. A 1914 pension article mentions him being granted a pay increase to \$30.00 a month! He is blind in his right eye and partially blind in his left. He died in 1916.

The eighth child and third daughter, Almira, was born in 1847, but died in 1863 at only 16 years old. She is buried in Oak Grove Cemetery on Hwy 67 with other members of the Draper family.

The ninth child and fourth daughter, Olive, was born in 1849. She married East Troy resident William Gillard in 1868. By 1870, they moved to White River, Michigan. They had five children and were farmers. Their lineage can be traced for the next four generations to family still living in Michigan.

The tenth child, Elsia May is the most mysterious! She is not listed on ANY census, so I was surprised when I read Francis Jr's obituary that there were 10 Draper children! It wasn't until I had discovered names listed for the Draper family plot in Oak Grove Cemetery and other documents that I found her name! She died August 8, 1870, "2yr. 11 days old", meaning she was born July 1868. If correct, mother Hannah was 58 years old at the time of birth. Seems improbable.....but not impossible!

There is MUCH more Draper information than listed here. A more comprehensive Draper Family history will be given to the Eagle Historical Society when completed.