



Pvt. Edward P. Hinkley

Co. G

Edward P. Hinkley was born in China, St. Claire County, Michigan, on December 29th, 1839, and at the age of six months, his parents moved to the Town of Eagle, Waukesha County, where he attended school, and where he worked on his father's farm. In the fall of 1840 his father built a log house in section 10 in the Town of Eagle.

Later in life, Edward wrote down his memories from childhood:

"About the first I recollect is seeing father draw wood on the hand sled. The next I recall was the indians coming to trade with mother. They came several times to trade. The second year father bought a yoke of cattle. I think I was three years old when they bought corn of some folks in Illinois."

Edward's earliest recollections include trading with indians and a major wildfire.

The settlers had to look out for fires. Edward recalled, "I recall once when a neighbor came running over to tell mother that there was a fire on the marsh that was coming as fast as a horse could run. Mother asked if he could help her but he said he had all he could do. My father was away. Mother threw me onto the bed, and then got a rake and raked a path around the house and stacks so that when the fire came she had pails of water ready, but it did not come to us but went on a half mile to where an Englishman lived who had a new board stable that burned. I remember the smoke. The Englishman thought the world was burning up. As it was almost night I said I was hungry and mother said I better be hungry a little while than for a long while."

"The cooking was done with a large kettle that hung on the fire, a long handled spider, a bake-kettle to set in front of the fire with three legs about three inches long; a cover to put on top of the bake-kettle with legs around the top to put coals on. The fireplace answered for light. The bake-kettle was for baking bread and meat. Afterwards we got a reflector to bake with, made of tin, to set in front of the fire. While we had a fireplace the potatoes were frequently baked in the ashes. Besides the regular victuals, mother made cookies, fried cakes and pumpkin pies, and as there were no apples then we used onions instead. There were peaches one to two years before with seedlings at 16 cents a dozen. Of course we had rutabagas, melons and tomatoes."

"One warm day I was cradling grain and the next two younger sisters were raking the bundles. Across the road the men were sitting in the shade. One of them came over and wanted to know how we stood the heat so I told him we drank cold water. They said they drank 'firewater.'"

When Edward was eight years old his father built a barn and a frame addition to the log house. When they first arrived in 1840, the family had one neighbor about half a mile away. Others settlers arrived soon afterwards.

It was in 1855 that Edward's father got ready to build a house. He got some lumber and windows and sills but he died on August 18, leaving their mother with 7 children and the house not finished. Edward was the eldest child and his father's death cut off his schooling until the next winter.

Continuing his reminiscing, Edward wrote, "About 1860 we dug a cellar for the house and built a cellar the next year. Got stones for the house the next year burned lime and got the house up to part way of the lower windows."

Edward enlisted in the service in the Civil War at the age of 22 years in answer to President Lincoln's call for 600,000 men. He enlisted as a private in the 28th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry, Company G, under Captain Elihu Enos.

Private Hinkley participated in a skirmish in Tennessee, met the Confederates at Union City and took part in the Battle at Helena, Arkansas on July 4th, 1863. At Little Rock, where his regiment did some fighting, he was left behind and stayed at Pine Bluff. The regiment participated in a fight on the Saline River, where two members of his regiment were killed.

They were 13 days and nights under fire from Spanish Fort in Alabama, the confederates finally vacating it and proceeding to Blakeley, which was the fortification defending Mobile. The regiment went directly into Mobile with Generals Steele and Thomas. The regiment was part of a skirmish 5 miles out of Mobile at Whistler's Station, then chased confederate Gen. Dick Taylor along the Tombigee River in Alabama. Taylor didn't know at the time that Lee had surrendered.

The 28th Wisconsin was placed on the boat "Continental", and expected to go up the Mississippi River to be mustered out, but instead the boat went to Brownsville, Texas on a mission to capture Mexico's Maximillian. The regiment was later discharged at Brownsville.

Pvt. Hinkley returned home to Waukesha, where his mother lived with two of her sons, who had remained home. His next younger brother, Albert, had also served in the 46th Infantry.

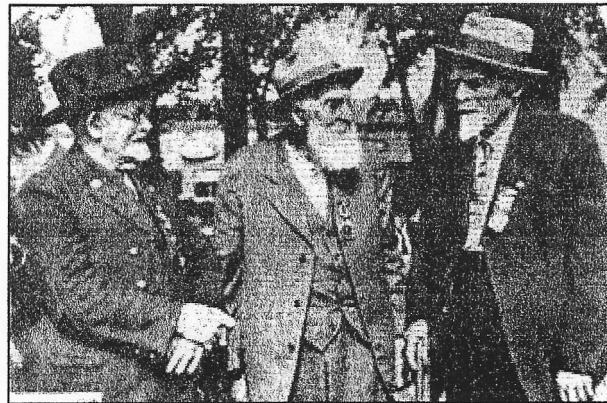
Hinkley stayed for 10 months on the family farm, where a new home, begun at the start of the war, now housed his family. He then moved to an adjoining farm of 80 acres, which he owned, and in 1884, he went to Cedarville, MO, where he farmed for 4 years. He then returned to Waukesha where he stayed until 1893, when he moved to North Prairie and lived in the village.

Hinkley was married in 1871, to Miss Celina Audiss, and to this union were born 7 children:

1. Herbert Arthur, who was in charge of sawmills in the south, and who was a salesman for engines in Wisconsin after that.
2. Percival, Arkansas (now buried next to his parents at the North Prairie cemetery);
3. Mrs. Myrtle West, Mukwonago, Waukesha County;
4. Harry G., North Dakota;
5. Ernest of Merrill;
6. Mrs. Pearl West of Mukwonago, and
7. William of Waukesha.

Edward Hinkley operated a sorghum mill during the first world war at North Prairie. In 1918, Celina Hinkley died, and the following year he moved to Lincoln County, to live with his son Ernest, in the town of Merrill. Edward owned 75 acres adjoining the 75 acre farm of his son's, lived in a small home on his farm.

Edward Hinkley died in 1937 at the age of 98. He was buried next to his wife at the North Prairie cemetery. Only two other members of Company G lived past his death, but both were younger than he.



Edward Hinkley reminiscing with other veterans

The story of Edward Hinkley was generously shared by his great-grandson, David Hinkley, who lives today not far from the family's pioneer homestead in Eagle, Wis. David honors the memory of his great-grandfather through his membership in MG John Gibbon Camp #4, Dept. of Wisconsin, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.

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