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WISCONSIN INFANTRY. 12th REGT. 1861-1865

CO. E.

RE-UNION OF COMPANY E

12th WIS. INF'Y, AT DELTON WISCONSIN

JUNE 20-22, 1899



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WISCONSIN INFANTRY. 12th regt., 1861-1865.
Co. E.
Re-union of Company E, 12th Wis. Inf'y, at
Delton, Wis., June 20-22, 1899... n.p.c.1899?]
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RE-UNION

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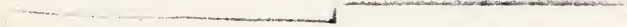
Company E, 12th Wis. Inf'y,

— AT —

DELTON, WIS., JUNE 20-22, 1899.

THE year 1898 was the fiftieth anniversary of Wisconsin's admission into the Union. The state was admitted May 29 of that year, but the State officers were inaugurated June 7. Accordingly plans were made for a general semi-centennial celebration at Madison during the first week in June, 1898. Among other things connected with the occasion there were held various reunions—legislative, teachers', old settlers' and old soldiers'. Our 12th Regiment was represented by a large number of old comrades.

Tents had been pitched in old Camp Randall, and there members of many Wisconsin regiments went into camp on the same ground where more than a third of a century before those regiments were organized and made ready for service. One day the survivors of these regiments, to the number of about 2000, were formed in line in the Capitol Park and marched around the square in much the same way as they used to do when "tenting on the old camp ground". But they took the liberty of leaving the ranks when they chose without asking permission of the officers in command; and they would sing old war songs as they marched, in spite of the order, "Silence in the Ranks!" Every man was given, as a souvenir, a staff made of the old fence at Camp Randall:



A short meeting of the Regimental organization of the Twelfth was held, the old officers being re-elected and the necessary routine business being transacted. The Co. E Association held a pleasant meeting at which there were short talks by some of those present, including Thomas Gillespie, brother of our beloved Captain John Gillespie.

It had long been the desire of several of our comrades to meet in re-union at Delton, where we first met as boys and young men in '61, but where we had never yet come together since the war. Our venerable comrade Freer, then living in the village, was with us, and he urged us to come to Delton for our next Company re-union, assuring us that the good people there would give us a hearty welcome. And so it was decided to meet in Delton in June, 1899. John Ingalls was chosen President for the coming year. More than twenty of Co. E enrolled at Madison at this meeting.

Comrades Ingalls and Swain made all necessary arrangements for the meeting at Delton, and made the date June 20-22, '99. The citizens there—many of them old soldiers—united in making ready for our coming. And when, one by one, we dropped in among them we found them prepared for us; and we received both individually and collectively the most cheerful and hearty greetings. Every possible arrangement had been made for our reception and entertainment. All we had to do was to enter heartily into the enjoyment of the occasion—and we did so.

But there was one thing that saddened, not only the comrades of Company E, but every citizen of Delton. He who had invited us there, and had looked forward with such happy anticipation to our meeting—our beloved Comrade Justus W. Freer—had been summoned to the camp beyond the river. Many tender references were made to "Jud," every one feeling that one of the best and most loyal men of our company had left us, when he died. His aged wife, though feeble, was able to be at our meetings, and she took much pleasure in them; yet a long drawn sigh now and then told us that her thoughts were with our dead friend and

comrade. More than once she said, "O, that Mr. Freer could be here to enjoy all this!"

The old soldiers in Delton form a Picket Post tributary to John Gillespie Post at Kilbourn City. They have a neat hall, the upper room used for their meetings, that below it for the Women's Relief Corps. About fifty feet east of this is a Masonic hall, the upper room being used for meetings, the lower for social gatherings. These halls stand on the south side of the street just where the Rev. Mr. Green, the village preacher, in the name of the people of Delton bade us good-bye when we left there for Camp Randall, October 31, 1861. The space between the two buildings had been roofed over with pine branches and seated for a large audience. This place afforded ample room for the general meetings and all-round visiting; while the Post hall was used for business meetings, and the lower room for a ladies' reception room. The lower room of the Masonic hall had been transformed into a dining room, and here the ladies of the Relief Corps served the best of meals for twenty cents. This commissary department was a well managed affair, and it gave the boys and their families just the best possible opportunity for social intercourse; for men—and perhaps women—are jolliest when they eat. That dining room rang with many a peal of laughter because of the merry jokes and lively pranks the boys are not yet too old to enjoy. It made one think of eating at Newman's or Freer's away back in '61.

As the boys came in one after another on Tuesday, the first day, they greeted each other a little more heartily than ever before, for as the years go by the old friendship grows stronger. Then in twos and threes and in larger groups they talked of the old war days and their varied experiences then and since. One who has known them all along could not help noticing that the rollicking fun and loud laughter of other days have, in these later years, softened into a more quiet form of enjoyment. Hearts have grown tender, and tears are near the surface. But the pleasure of re-union is none the less. Several of the comrades brought their wives with them, and some their children. These added not a little

to the general satisfaction of the gathering. Some of the ladies and young folks of Company E have met so often at our re-unions that they, too, are uniting in a comradeship that is second only to that of the old veterans.

All were sad to learn that the wife of Comrade Lorenzo Clement had died quite suddenly, and her funeral was being held on that first day of our reunion. Their home was about two miles east of Delton, and several neighboring members of our company attended the funeral.

During the afternoon one or two of the boys stole away from the crowd and spent an hour in the Delton cemetery to stand reverently before the graves of Comrades Freer and Samuel Burhaus, and then to read the names of many of the old residents of that region as they are engraved on the moss covered marble slabs—some fallen to the ground, and others broken. Others wandered about the village noting the old familiar spots.

We were all delighted to see several members of Company B, of our regiment, who had driven over from Reedsburg to unite with us in our re-union. Many other veterans of Delton and the surrounding country also came to enjoy the occasion with us; and citizens gathered in large numbers to shake hands with the old comrades and with one another, making the meeting a general reunion for that part of the country. All this added to the interest of the occasion. Good martial music was at hand to enliven the crowd and stir up patriotic emotions—even Comrade James Solomon with his big bass drum.

Wednesday forenoon it was found that thirty of Company E were present at headquarters, when it was proposed that Captain Kinney form them in line for drill. The drums beat the call and the boys fell in, but not so promptly as they used to do when the roll was called and absentees were "pricked" for extra duty. Having dressed up in line, and counted off by twos, the captain gave the orders, "Right *face*! Forward *march*!" And then we marched once more down the village street where we first marched thirty-eight years ago.

Some of the old comrades found themselves pretty feeble to keep step to the music, and William Vincent found his crutch in his way; yet, on the whole, we got on pretty well. We found that we could turn a street corner, if there were no cows in the road. The way that Jim Solomon belabored the bass drum was astonishing. His old time energy came back to him for that day.

After marching up and down, and taking notice of the old familiar drill grounds, we formed in line in front of "Freer's Tavern", when Comrade Henry Bennett brought out his camera and photographed the company. He took them first in line, and then as a group standing and sitting on and about the steps. It is the best picture we have had taken, and all should send to Bennett for one or both of them. Whoever looks at one of those pictures can hardly realize that the gray beards and bald heads in it belong to the same smooth-faced, bright young boys who played pranks in front of that old tavern thirty-eight years ago. But time and the work of life bring about great changes. These men are better than those boys of '61. Each one has done something to make the world better, and is himself the better for it.

After the pictures were taken and various reminiscences concerning the place had been rehearsed, the company was reformed and we marched back to dinner.

On Wednesday afternoon at 2 o'clock a business meeting of the Company Association was held in the Post hall, John Ingalls presiding, at which there was a large attendance. Comrade Swain made the report of the publication committee. He said that he had on hand 70 copies of the Company History, and 212 copies of the pamphlet containing the memorial services of Captain Gillespie; and that there was yet due the printers of the pamphlets about \$30. Milton Hildreth got out a dollar and proposed to the boys that we pay the debt at once. Hats were passed and two-thirds enough money was secured. Later contributions provided means to pay all indebtedness and, with pamphlets and books sold there, to leave five dollars in the treasury. This condition of

things made Comrade Swain happy. By unanimous vote, a copy of our history was presented to the Delton Picket Post.

For some time Comrade Swain had desired that our company organization admit the wives and sons and daughters of the comrades to membership, and that the society be made permanent by making all direct descendants of every member of Co. E, members of the association by right of birth. The comrades, at this meeting, discussed this matter at length, and unanimously adopted this new plan of organization. A committee consisting of Comrades Rood, Bennett, Kinney, Sexton and Arthur Coleman, and Mrs. Capt. Gillespie and Mrs. Darrow was appointed to draft a plan of organization and to report the same at this meeting

The following officers for the ensuing year were then elected:

President—John G. Ingalls.

First Vice President—Edwin Robinson.

Second Vice President—Mrs. H. H. Bennett.

Recording Secretary—Nathaniel Darrow.

Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer—S. G. Swain.

Historian—H. W. Rood.

After the adjournment of this meeting, at the request of some of the people present, the company was again formed, and, following the martial band, marched through some of the principal streets of the village.

At four o'clock the assemblage was called to order under the arbor of pine boughs, when Comrade Chauncey Richardson offered prayer and the audience joined in singing "America." Thomas Gillespie, being called upon, in behalf of the citizens of Delton, extended to the members of the company a most cordial welcome. He referred to the days when first they came together there, to their services during the war, to their honorable career as citizens in all the years since the war, and to the debt of gratitude the country owed to them. He said that Delton had, with good reason, always been proud of the company, and now everybody in the community was glad and happy to welcome them back to the old drill ground where they began their soldier life.

Our comrade, the Hon. Michael Griffin responded to this address of welcome. He thanked the good people of the village for their generous hospitality and hearty good-will. He reviewed our life in the army, beginning among the quiet scenes of Delton, then leading out to the camp, the march, the rifle pits, the field of battle and all else that goes to make up the experience of soldiers in active service. He told of visiting Vicksburg, of finding in the great national cemetery there the grave of our young comrade, Harlan Squires, whom we buried during the siege on the hillside near our camp. He told, also, of a visit to Atlanta, and of finding the battle ground where we fought on the 21st and 22nd of July, 1864, and of the great changes in the appearance of things there. He said that the late war with Spain had done very much to fill up the chasm between the North and the South, for the men of both sections had fought side by side in Cuba, Porto Rico and the Phillipines, and all alike are bearing The White Man's Burden.

Comrade Griffin urged the members of Company E to renewed devotion to their flag and their country in all that constitutes practical patriotism and good citizenship; and he charged them to teach these things in the best way to their children and their children's children—in this quiet way still serving their country.

Comrade Griffin commonly has full possession of his feelings, but more than once during his earnest and eloquent address his tender emotions gained the mastery over him, and his voice became tremulous as he spoke of those ties that unite us to our old comrades—the living and the dead. The rapt attention of all in the large audience before him showed their intense interest in all he said.

Under the direction of Miss Elsie Hulbert, of Delton, a class of boys and girls sang a marching song; after which Mrs. J. W. Bullis read a paper written by Charles Freeman, of Menomonie, Wis., entitled, "Delton During the War". It was full of reminiscence, both humorous and pathetic, and very interesting to those who were acquainted in Delton during those days.

Comrade Rood spoke upon the subject, "Our Comrades Gone Before." He read the names of our dead—fifty-five in all—and gave expressions to some thoughts suggested to him by each name. The interest of the audience in this Roll of Honor was plainly manifested by the tears in the eyes of many as this name and that awakened tender and loving recollections of those manly men who once bore them. Such tears are manly, womanly; they are the token of that love which unites all true hearts in the bonds of human brotherhood.*

Here the president ordered an adjournment till evening, the supper hour having arrived.

At eight o'clock a large company gathered in the hall adjacent to the dining room and engaged in a patriotic song service, led by Miss Elsie Hulbert at the organ. This was one of the most enjoyable features of the re-union. Everybody sang, and with spirit. Some concerts are tame by the side of one like this; they mean far less.

At nine o'clock the program of the afternoon was continued. Comrade Swain read some letters from the boys who could not be present, and an interesting paper giving an account of the whereabouts of many others and various facts concerning each one, that have come to him through his large correspondence with members of the company.

Also, a letter was read from Harvey Clay, now of Fitzgerald, Georgia, who lived near Delton in the days of the war, in which he said many pleasant things concerning the company and its members.

Mrs. J. W. Bullis gave a recitation entitled, "The Camp-fire."

Mr. George Keyes, of Delton, being called upon, spoke of the deep interest the people in the village have in all that pertains to the soldiers, especially to its own Company E.

*Thoughtlessly the name of Thomas Allen—"Old Tom"—was omitted. He is buried in the Kilbourn cemetery. If any name is mentioned for faithful, conscientious service, Thomas Allen's should be.

Everybody in Delton is patriotic. He heartily thanked the company for coming back for this re-union.

Edwin Robinson spoke of life in the hospital, especially at Quincy, Ill., where he was left with the measles when the regiment was on its way to Weston, Missouri, in January, 1862.

A heavy rain storm came and caused a quick adjournment, cutting Edwin's interesting talk short.

On Thursday morning at 10 o'clock the program and business of the re-union was resumed, the meeting opening with a song—"Marching through Georgia"—led by Miss Hulbert.

Mrs. Nora Darrow read a poem written for the occasion—"When the E Boys Meet."

A letter was read from Comrade Ferdinand Truell, 2523 Q St., Omaha, Nebraska, also one from Dr. Seeley, of Fulton, Ill.; after which Comrade Ingalls gave a pleasing account of a recent visit to parts of the state of Kentucky, telling of the away-back conditions of things there even at the present day.

Miss Nancy Walker, of Delton, gave a pleasing recitation, "The Bridge of Guns."

The committee on plan for permanent organization presented a report, which was adopted as a report of progress. The committee was instructed to incorporate the plan proposed by them in a formal constitution to be acted upon at the next annual meeting.

The main features of the plan for reorganization are as follows:

The society is to be called the Company E Association of the Twelfth Wisconsin Infantry in the Civil War of 1861-65; the object being to perpetuate the memories of our service and associations during the war, and to instil into its members the principles of practical patriotism; the membership to include every member of Company E, his wife and all his *direct* descendants *for all time*.

A meeting of the association is to be held every year, when, besides the re-union feature, there shall be presented a literary and musical program along the lines of the principles for which the association stands. Reports of these meetings are to be published and sent to the members.

All active members shall be fifteen years of age or older. An annual register is to be kept of those attending the meetings. During the coming year the names of members obtainable are to be registered, the same to be secured by the publication committee. A committee on obituaries is to be appointed annually to make proper report concerning the death of members.

The committee on publication was instructed by vote to find and record, so far as possible, the time of death and place of burial of all our dead comrades.

The committee on resolutions made the following report, which was unanimously adopted:

WHEREAS, Our Company E have just enjoyed in this quiet, homelike, little village of Delton, the place of our organization and rendezvous thirty-eight years ago, another of our happy, joyous re-unions, which seems to us now the very best of all; and

WHEREAS, The good people of Delton and its vicinity have made such thoughtful and complete preparations for our coming and sojourn with them as have caused us to feel thoroughly and comfortably at home with them during the past three days; and have thus made our re-union a most happy success; therefore be it

Resolved, That the heartfelt thanks of every member of our association are due, and are hereby extended, to the good people of this community for their hearty, cheerful welcome; for their open-handed and generous hospitality; and for the courteous treatment they have united in extending to us in every way possible since we have been with them.

Resolved, That our thanks be extended to our comrades, the members of Company B of our regiment, and to all other

comrades who have joined with us in this re-union and helped to make it pleasant in every detail.

Resolved, That, under our renewed and larger organization with our wives and children as members with us, we go to our various homes with a reconsecrated loyalty to, and love for, Company E and for every principle which we here, thirty-eight years ago, enlisted to defend; and that we here pledge ourselves to teach in our daily lives, both by precept and example that love of home and country which is the only true basis of all practical patriotism.

Resolved, That these resolutions be entered in full upon our journal, and that copies be sent the papers in Kilbourn, Baraboo, Mauston and Reedsburg for publication.

C. W. Fosbinder, }
 W. H. Harrison, } Committee.
 H. W. Rood, }

It was decided that the meeting for 1900 be held at Kilbourn City, the date and arrangements to be made by the officers.

The meeting then adjourned as it had begun—with prayer by Comrade Chauncey Richardson.

After dinner was over the boys began to say good-bye—the hardest part of all. More than one shook hands hastily, saying, “May the Lord bless you, Comrade”, and hurried away to hide the tears that would not stay back. Not a few of the “Boys of '61” are coming close to the allotted age of man, and they feel a bit of uncertainty about being at the next re-union.

And now the story of the gathering at Delton has been told. Much more might be said of it, but no one can tell in words all about it. Beneath all that the eyes could see and the ears hear there was that which could only be felt—the spirit of the re-union—the communion of heart with heart, soul with soul. In this deeper, truer sense, our absent comrades, both living and dead, were with us. Their names were spoken many times—some of them reverently.

OBITUARY.

Since our last reunion, at Madison, three of our beloved comrades have died. The first to go was

JUSTUS W. FREER.

He began to fail in the early spring of '98. He appeared quite feeble at Madison in the following June. It cost him no small effort to go to Madison on that occasion, but he feared that he would not live till another re-union, and he was anxious to see his old comrades once more.

While in the army his back was hurt, and it never got well. As he grew old it gave him much trouble and led to stomach and kidney diseases. As the end drew near he suffered very much, but he was patient, though it was hard work for him to give up his bodily activity. His death came calm and peaceful, November 6, 1898, at 77 years of age.

A large number of old soldiers attended his funeral, several of Company E being present. Brief services at the M. E. church were conducted by the Rev. Mr. Mills, after which the comrades took charge of the exercises in accordance with the G. A. R. ritual. Nathaniel Darrow, C. W. Fosbinder, A. T. Hutchinson, W. H. Dunham, Orson Wright and Alvaro N. Griffin bore the body of our dead comrade to the grave in the cemetery near Delton.

LIEUTENANT LEWIS T. LINNELL.

Lieutenant Linnell had not been in very good health for years. He was taken quite sick in December, 1897. His trouble was asthmatic, and he had great difficulty in breathing. But all remedies for asthma failed to relieve him. During the following February he went to Chicago, where his son, Dr. B. M. Linnell, had the best physicians of the city investigate the case. They all told him that the arteries and valves of the heart were hardening, and that his condition was serious; yet that, with great care and entire freedom from anxiety, he might live several years.

Still he kept failing, and in May he was again taken to Chicago. Though he suffered terribly, he came to be a little stronger, and after he went home he was able to ride to the

cemetery on Memorial Day. From this time on till Feb 2, 1899, he was able to go to his bank every pleasant day.

At this time he took cold, and this caused congestion of the lungs. Then came some financial troubles and the failure of the bank. The anxiety caused by these misfortunes brought on the old sickness. He gradually failed after this. He was not able to lie down, but sat during all his last illness in a Morris chair, sleeping by leaning forward and resting against the arms of his chair.

Lieutenant Linnell greatly desired to live, to be active in the world. He was interested in business, in public affairs, and in religious work, being a member of the Presbyterian church.

On the second of April he seemed to be dying. But he aroused and said that he had had so sweet a vision of light and brightness that it had taken away from him an involuntary fear of death that had always held possession of him. He seemed ready after this for the summons, and sent messages of love to his many friends. He gave words of counsel and advice to his family and—waited. On Sunday, April 9, when his people thought him sleeping, he roused up, looked about him and lay back in his chair—dead

His funeral was held on the following Tuesday at his church home, the choir singing the hymns he had many times repeated during his last illness.—“To-day the Savior Calls”, and “Behold a Stranger at the Door.”

The members of the Cobden G. A. R. Post were the honorary pall-bearers, and they laid the body of their dead comrade and ours away to rest in the beautiful cemetery near his home, Cobden, Ill. He was 60 years old.

Life's warfare well ended,
 The victory won,
 Another dear comrade
 Has gone to his rest.
 All service well rendered,
 Each duty well done,
 He has found his reward
 In the land of the blest.

WILLIAM ROLISON.

Comrade William Rolison died at the home of his daughter, near Mauston, Nov. 20, 1898, at the age of 75 years. He was buried in Oakwood cemetery, near Mauston. Our comrades there performed for him all kindly offices in his sickness and burial.

REGISTER OF THOSE PRESENT.

1. Captain Alpheus F. Kinney and father, Estelline, S. Dak.
2. Lieutenant Michael Griffin, Eau Claire, Wis.
3. Sergeant Chauncey Richardson, Spencer, Wis.
4. Edwin Robinson and wife, New Lisbon, Wis.
5. John G. Ingalls and son Stewart, Oak Park, Ill.
6. S. Glyde Swain, Winona, Minn.
7. Almond T. Hutchinson, Mauston, Wis.
8. Charles W. Fosbinder, Mauston, Wis.
9. William L. Watson, Norrie, Wis.
10. James M. Solomon, Packwaukee, Wis.
11. Daniel Gillespie, wife and four children, Spencer, Iowa.
12. Aiken J. Sexton and daughter, Mrs. Markham, Chicago, Ill.
13. Lorenzo D. Clement, Delton, Wis.
14. Alvaro N. Griffin, Kilbourn City, Wis.
15. William H. Dunham, wife and daughter, Kilbourn City, Wis.
16. John W. Bullis and wife, Delton Wis.
17. Charles Briggs, Baraboo, Wis.
18. Hosea W. Rood, Shawano, Wis.
19. William A. Vincent, Kilbourn City, Wis.
20. Nathaniel Darrow, wife and son Bobby, Reedsburg, Wis.
21. William H. Harrison and wife, Baraboo, Wis.
22. William Van Hoozen, daughter and her husband and child.
23. Milton M. Hildreth, La Crosse, Wis.
24. Seneca Briggs and wife, Kilbourn City, Wis.
25. Douglas Vaughn, Kilbourn City, Wis.
26. Charles L. Coleman, Baraboo, Wis.
27. Arthur Coleman and wife, Reedsburg, Wis.
28. George Lawsha, Reedsburg, Wis.
29. James Camp, Baraboo, Wis.
30. George Adams and son and his wife and daughter, Delton, Wis.
31. Henry Marston, wife and son Floyd, Kilbourn City, Wis.
32. Henry H. Bennett and wife, Kilbourn City, Wis.
33. William L. Moshier, Mauston, Wis.
34. John Griffin, wife and son Bryant, Lyndon Station, Wis.
35. Mrs. Captain John Gillespie, Kilbourn City, Wis.
36. Mrs. J. W. Freer, Delton, Wis.

MRS. NORA DARROW'S POEM.

WHEN THE "E" BOYS MEET.

To this town, where they enlisted,
More than thirty years ago,
In the war that they called "Civil,"
Came the boys who're with you now ;
Some one here can surely tell you
Where they drilled and their camps were set,
And how proud they were of soldiers
When the "E" boys met.

After all the weary marches,
And the guns are laid away,
And the swords are honored trophies,
Hanging on the walls to-day,
Come the boys once more together,
Once again upon the same street,
And you're prouder of the veterans
When the "E" boys meet.

If you listen you can hear them,
Telling tales of field and camp,
As they gather at a Camp Fire,
Sheltered now from cold and damp,
And I think you'll find the circle
Of their friendship is complete,
And you'll never after wonder
Why the "E" boys meet.

But we know that men forever
Do not face the shot and shell,
And the years of peace behind us
Have their victories, as well,
And in spite of wounds and sickness,
Foes who often bring defeat,
We are prouder of our citizens,
When the "E" boys meet.

So, we honor you, not only
For brave soldiers, that you were,
But, through all the years of labor,
That you are the men you are.
So, as manhood counts in living,
Let me once again repeat,
That we all are prouder of you,
When the "E" boys meet.

* ADDENDA. *

The following was sent to the printer after the foregoing was in print, and could not be inserted where it should have appeared, on page 9 :

Comrade Darrow read a paper entitled, "A Night on Picket," in which he detailed vividly various incidents connected with the front line at Atlanta in the summer of 1864.

Comrade C. K. Richardson gave a most interesting account of the last march he ever made with the boys. It was in the campaign in Northern Mississippi, in the winter of 1862-3, especially the return march from Water Valley to Holly Springs, after the latter place had been taken by Van Dorn, and we were without other food than corn during two days. The effect upon Comrade Richardson's health was such as to unfit him for further service. He was, soon after this, sent to the hospital, where he later received his discharge.

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