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The Flag of Company A, Fifth Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry 1861—1925

Originally published in 1925 by the Manitowoc County Historical Society

PREFACE by Armond Kueter: *Hanging on the east wall of the north entrance to the Manitowoc County Court House is a flag. It is encased in an oak frame, covered with glass and has been in that location for several years now. The history of that flag and the almost unbelievable story of how it got there is the subject of this monograph. A few of the events which surround its recent disappearance and re-appearance are detailed in this preface to complete the chronology.*

The flag has been in the custody of the Manitowoc County Historical Society since 1925 and, for the most part, was housed in the Rahr-West Museum. In 1984, while president of the Society, I received an inquiry from an out-of-town source asking about a unique Civil War flag which the Manitowoc County Historical Society had in its possession and which the people making the inquiry were interested in replicating. Nobody seemed to know the whereabouts of such a flag, and after some searching, it was presumed that it no longer existed. Then, as though it were destined to happen that way, while rummaging through one of the Society's storerooms, the flag was discovered behind a pile of mural boards which had hidden it from view for an unknown number of years. Its history was quickly researched and found to be one of the most interesting and unusual flag stories on record anywhere.

In order to revive the story, the flag was taken to Pinecrest Historical Village on July 13, 1985, for display, and while there became the topic of a program presented to the public by several people interested in Manitowoc County's role in the Civil War. Later that year the flag was moved to the Manitowoc County Court House for permanent display where it has captured the attention of hosts of people from Manitowoc and elsewhere.

The article which follows, "The Flag of Company A, Fifth Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry, 1861-1925," first published by the Society in 1925 and reprinted here, chronicles the amazing story of this flag as recorded in the proceedings on the occasion of the presentation of the flag to the Manitowoc County Historical Society.

EDITOR'S NOTE: A well-known Manitowoc Public School District educator (now retired) and a life member of the Society, Mr. Kueter served as president of the Manitowoc County Historical Society in 1965-1966 and 1983-1986.

THE FLAG OF COMPANY A

Mr. Plumb:

Ladies and Gentlemen:—

The meetings of the Manitowoc County Historical Society have been of two

characters. First; there have been those semi-social gatherings of those interested in some particular topics at which reminiscences have been exchanged and the stories of pioneers recorded. Then there have been those formal occasions wherein the society has performed duties peculiarly appropriate to its character and design. Such a meeting is the one this evening. Sixty-four years after the Manitowoc County Volunteers left for the front, the first company that was raised to take part in the great civil struggle, the last resident survivor gives back to this community and to this society, as custodian, the banner that was originally presented to him and his comrades by the patriotic ladies of the village. Their trust fulfilled, they have placed this flag in our museum as a perpetual memento of patriotism.

It is fitting that a word should be given by those representing the men who have fought in other struggles and it is my pleasure to introduce to you a man who needs no introduction in Manitowoc, who will speak to you on behalf of those who fought in the Great World War, Mr. Lawrence Ledvina.

Mr. Ledvina:

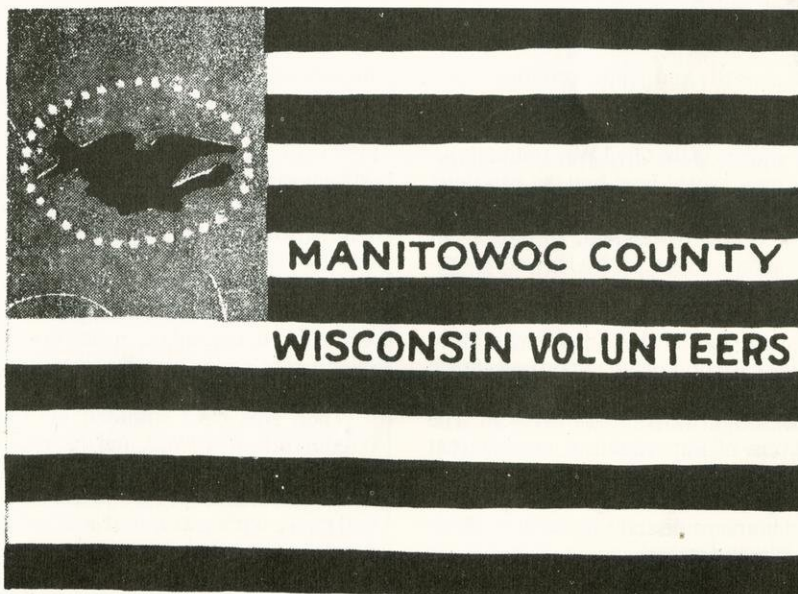
Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am deeply grateful for the privilege conferred upon me by the Manitowoc County Historical Society of representing the veterans of the World War on this occasion, and it is indeed a pleasure to address this splendid gathering of patriotic men and women.

In 1861 the good ladies of the then village of Manitowoc presented to Company A, Fifth Wisconsin Volunteers, a flag which has been treasured and preserved, and this evening we are met to fittingly observe its presentation by its custodian, the Hon. J. S. Anderson, to the Manitowoc County Historical Society, by them to be deposited here for the benefit of the public.

This evening you will listen to the story of that flag and the history of that company and regiment from the lips of one who was a member of that organization and who was intimately and personally associated with it.

This precious fabric represents the symbol of a great cause. In those dark and trying days those good women lovingly fashioned



Displayed prominently in the presentation book was this illustration of The Flag of Company A, printed in red, blue and gold.

Record of the
PROCEEDINGS
 on the Occasion of the
Presentation of the Flag
 of
**Co. A, Fifth Wisconsin Volunteer
 Infantry**
 to the
Manitowoc County Historical Society
 as Custodian for
The Community
 at
Manitowoc, Wisconsin
 on
March 23, A. D., 1925.
 Originally Presented to the Company
 by the Ladies of the Community
 on the 17th day of June, A. D. 1861.

Proceedings of the Presentation of the Flag were recorded in a 5x7 inch book published by the Manitowoc County Historical Society. The book is now out of print. This is a reproduction of one of the introductory pages of the book.

it. It symbolized the love and patriotism of its makers, and into its warp and woof those hands, now stilled, worked the finest sentiments of a woman's heart. It was to those boys a token of good cheer and remembrance as well, and it spurred them onto a greater and nobler realization of duty and obligation.

The soldiers of the Civil War, unlike those of the Great World War, had the privilege of fighting in county and state units. The veterans of the World War, coming from certain communities, with a few exceptions were obliged to serve separate and apart from their fellow neighbors and friends presumably on the theory, among others, that large casualties falling upon units made up of men from single communities would throw the blight too heavily upon them. The separation of individuals from different communities had its disadvantages however, in that there was lacking that inspiration born of home pride and state loyalty which local units and state regiments fostered and encouraged—which so distinguished the various units in that great war.

Great conflicts—war—are milestones in a nation's history. Tonight, in retrospect,

the panorama of our country's history for more than sixty years is revealed.

Judge Anderson represents that great body of men, few of whom remain, who answered their country's call when Secession's wave threatened to destroy the very existence of our government. Superintendent Waite represents that other body of men who in 1898 responded to the great cause, not for self-aggrandizement, not for territory or self-glory, but who fought for the highest of altruistic motives, the love of neighbor and the relief of the oppressed.

In a humble way I represent that other great army who in our last great conflict responded to the call of service to establish anew and re-consecrate the great principles upon which the rights of men are founded.

When taps have sounded for the last veteran of the Civil War, and the inhabitants and youth of the community come to this institution of knowledge and learning, they will pause with reverential awe before this precious symbol and in its silken folds and starry field will read again the story of the women who fashioned it and lovingly placed it in strong hands; of the men who bore it and treasured it, and they will again draw

inspiration to higher ideals and nobler deeds. The resting place of this flag will become a resting place for the patriot heart, and in its presence love of country will become a reality and devotion to duty, a sacred obligation.

In conclusion I can only pledge here tonight to the survivors of that great conflict that the men of the World War stand ready to "carry on" in times of peace as they did in time of trouble; that they will ever stand united in defense of the great underlying principles of the government of this free people, and that they will transmit the heritage of their fathers handed down to them—the Constitution and the blessings of our government—unsullied as these come from your hands, and that they forever honor and revere the memory and achievements of the men who so unselfishly met the high test in the service of their God and Country.

Mr. Plumb:

At this time I shall ask Mrs. Frank Eggers to read a poem composed by the man whose generosity made possible the physical restoration of this flag, Mr. H. George Schuette.

The Poem
Our Nation Grand

Our nation grand, our native land,
 By valiant heroes wisely planned;
 We hold each state in honor great,
 And love our law's for freedom's cause;
 Our mountains grand, our mighty land,
 With inland seas and rivers wide,
 With oceans laving East and West,
 And temp'rate clime our land is blest.

CHORUS

We may travel 'round the earth,
 Cross the oceans, East and West,
 Roam in lands of ancient worth,
 But we'll find our land's the best,
 Fairest, greatest on the earth;
 U.S.A. land of our birth;
 There is no other nation grand,
 Like our own free native land.

Our Nation grand, our native land,
 Where flows the Mississippi grand,
 Niag'ra roars, the eagle soars,
 In majesty so fearless free;
 Its Golden Gate, its Floral State,
 Its forests, valleys, prairies broad,
 Its islands fair in tropic clime,
 And cities grandest of all time.

Our Nation grand, our native land,
 Its founders took defiant stand,
 For liberty triumphantly;
 Endless renown our heroes' crown;
 Our Washington, no name, not one,
 The world can claim with equal pride.
 And millions brave who fought, who fell
 For our fair land we love so well.

Our Nation grand, our native land,
 Our thanks to Him, with heart and hand;
 Who gave the pow'r in needful hour,
 To victors brave on land and wave;
 In honor just, our sacred trust,
 We'll ever guard in peace and war;
 Thus our star-spangled banner bright,
 Leads grandly onward toward the light.

Mr. Plumb:

He who speaks in behalf of the Spanish-American War Veterans did not fight with the boys from Manitowoc but his company was of another Wisconsin regiment that marched in the Porto Rican campaign at the side of our Company H. It gives me pleasure to present to you Elmer W. Waite, City Superintendent of Schools.

Mr. Waite:

The flag is a symbol of a national ideal; woven into its fabric is a history of a people; concealed within its folds are the records of the deeds of men, the success of armies, the hopes and prayers of the people of a struggling, growing nation. Its stars may represent the individual parts of a united country; its stripes may represent the thirteen original colonies, but its very fibre is a living page in the history of its people, whose ideals have been humanity and justice, rather than conquest and territory. Outwardly it may be but a piece of wool, or silk, or cotton, made pleasing to the eye by the white of purity, the red of valor and the blue of

constancy. But it is more than this; woven into its very meshes are the sufferings and hardships and the lofty purposes of the men and women of the past. The flag of today is not the flag of yesterday, and the flag of tomorrow is not the flag of today. The men and women of each generation have been constantly working new ideas, new ideals, and new experiences into the flag, making it stand steadfastly for the ideals for which it has a significance that its founders and even its protectors never dreamed of. Time may or may not add more stars to its field of blue, but time will surely add, as the years go by, to the invisible fibres, which make the flag more and constantly more dear to the hearts of the men and women of our country.

The flag was born with the nation itself; it was baptized at Bunker Hill, Valley Forge and Yorktown. It grew to adolescence on the sea and on the land from 1812 to '14; it went through a life and death struggle from '61 to '65 to prevent any of its stars from being torn from its field of blue by hostile hands, emerging triumphant to glories

unspoiled, with every star shining undiminished from its firmament.

In 1898 the flag was again unfurled at the front of marching boys in blue. Again it had been challenged and in the name of freedom, justice and mercy, the challenge was accepted. The hearts of the people of this country had been stirred by the deplorable conditions of the people of Cuba, under the ruthless oppression of the Spanish Government and particularly under the iron hand of General Weyler. The battleship "Maine" had been sent by our government to the harbor in Havana to protect our citizens in Havana. On the night of February 15th, 1898, news was flashed over the wires that the battleship "Maine" had been blown up in the harbor of Havana and 260 of our citizens had gone to the bottom and our flag had been desecrated. This act was laid at the door of the Spanish Government in Cuba. The country was thrown into a state of fevered excitement and Congress and President McKinley were forced to declare war, although the country was very poorly prepared. Many of you remember the results. The President called for volunteers and the quota was more than filled in a few days. Dewey proceeded from Hongkong to Manila Bay and again the flag was to be under a baptism of fire.

When the United States fleet, flying the flag of our Country under the command of Admiral Dewey had successfully met and destroyed the Spanish fleet, the Flag which had come to represent so much, now came to represent still more. The Flag had taken one step farther, and from this time on, came to be recognized by the nations of the world, not as a boy in his 'teens, nor as young man filled with youth and vigor, but as mature man of success, and power, and influence, in the community of nations.

So the Spanish War boys feel that they have furnished just a wee bit to the living fabric of the flag, which was so ably defended by the soldiers in blue during those long weary years of the Civil War. And the flag that is presented here tonight, will keep alive that spirit of patriotism and valor which has inspired all of our armies in their battles for freedom and justice, and may it inspire this generation and the generations to come, to work happily together, toward the accomplishing of that universal and everlasting peace among nations that the Man of Galilee came to the world to accomplish.

Mr. Plumb:

It is fortunate that the original address delivered on the occasion of the original flag presentation in 1861 to the boys of Co. A Fifth Wisconsin, before they left Manitowoc has been preserved. It was delivered by Mrs. G. B. Collins, the wife of the then president of the village, and it will be read at this time as a part of a contemporary newspaper account by Miss Flora Waldo, the daughter of the man who discovered the flag at the Centennial Exposition in 1876 and had it returned to our community.

PROGRAM

At Library Hall on Second Floor of the Public Library Building at Chicago and North Eighth streets in the city of Manitowoc, Wisconsin, beginning at Eight o'clock P. M., March 23, 1925.

Presiding—Mr. R. G. Plumb, President of Manitowoc County Historical Society.

Vocal Solo—The Star Spangled Banner

Mr. Horace W. Craig, accompanied on the piano by Miss Bertha Klingholz.

Greetings from the Veterans of the World War
Hon. L. W. Ledvina; Late Ensign U. S. N. R. F.

Poem—"Our Nation Grand" by Mr. H. George Schuette—Read by Mrs. Jessica Eggers.

Greetings from the Veterans of the Spanish-American War—Mr. Elmer W. Waite, Superintendent of City Schools; Late Prvt. Co. H. 3rd Regt., Wis. Vol. Inf.

Contemporary newspaper account of the original flag presentation in 1861, including remarks of Mrs. G. B. Collins representing the donors on that occasion.

Read by Miss Flora Waldo.

History of the Flag of Company A.

Hon. J. S. Anderson, sole local survivor of the company.

Acceptance of the Flag on behalf of the Manitowoc County Historical Society

Mr. Harry F. Kelley, Secretary of the Society.

Chorus—America—Audience, led by Mr. Craig.
Miss Klingholz at the piano.

The flag hung on the wall behind the speakers.



First Commander of Co. A, Fifth Wisconsin. In command of the company until April, 1862. Transferred to duty on staff of Gen. Plummer in army of Mississippi. On duty on staff of Gen. Rosecrans, as Asst. Adj. Gen. of the West. Was severely wounded and resigned July 22, 1863. Died at Washington D. C..

Miss Waldo:

Ladies and Gentlemen:

This night, of the re-dedication of this flag, does not seem to belong to the present. It is rather the twilight and evening of a day that is gone.

The old Flag has evoked the Past.

Ever since it was first unrolled before me, I have been living in another time. Scenes enacted before I was born, names long since graven in stone, messages from the dead have been present with me.

And tonight instead of reading to you myself this address to the Boys of the Fifth Wisconsin, I would invoke the spirit of the author; I would that you might see and hear, not myself, but Mrs. Gideon Collins, as she in her patriotic fervor presented this Flag. It was—and is—their Country's emblem, wrought by the hands of the women they loved, consecrated to and by the Volunteer Guards of Manitowoc County.

I will now read from the Manitowoc Pilot of Friday, June 21, 1861:

“Presentation of a Flag
to Manitowoc County Guards

The ceremony of presenting a flag to the *Manitowoc County Guards* took place at 4 o'clock on Monday afternoon in the Park, and was witnessed by a large number of ladies and gentlemen. The ladies of our village took this matter in hand some time since, and it is to their energy and patriotism alone, that the advance guard of Manitowoc soldiers are indebted for the beautiful emblem of our country's glory. The flag is a splendid specimen of handiwork, and is made of the finest silk, trimmed with silver. That it will be prized highly by the Guards, on account of its fair donors, no one will deny.

At the hour above designated, the

Company marched from their rendezvous, and proceeded in good style to the park, where they were received by the ladies and a large body of citizens. They were then drawn into line, two deep, when Mrs. G. B. Collins, who had been designated by the ladies for the purpose, addressed the Guards as follows:

“Gallant Captain, and Manitowoc Guards:

Those feelings of sadness which every true American among us must have at beholding our country undergoing all the horrors of civil war, must be intermingled with those of joy by the knowledge that ever in our midst there is such a gallant band of self-denying men, ready to “buckle on their armor,” and go forth in battle for the right. Confident that just Heaven will hasten the day when equal rights shall be equally enjoyed, we bid you “God Speed,” with our hearts filled to overflowing with the hope that you may at last return laden with honor, and that your proudest boast may be—we fought for our country.

You go, bearing with you this flag—the gift of willing hearts. In the smoke and din of battle, stand by it, because it is the Stars and Stripes—the flag our fathers fought under. Let the remembrance that there will be many silent prayers wafted Heavenward in your behalf, and many an eye be dimmed with grateful tears at the recital of your deeds of bravery, be the means of endearing it to you “an hundred fold.”

One more—may God speed you,
and bring you safely home,
“With freedom's soil
beneath your feet,
And freedom's banner streaming
o'er you.”

Mrs. Collins' address was delivered in such a feeling and appropriate manner, that all present were moved with emotion, and many eyes were dimmed with tears. At its conclusion, President Collins stepped forth and placed the rich gift in the hands of Capt. Clark. It was a moment before he could respond, so deeply was he affected by the beautiful and patriotic address, and turning to his men, called upon them all to swear to stand by that flag, and never see it disgraced. Every member, with uplifted hand, responded “We swear.” Capt. Clark then thanked the ladies of Manitowoc for their kindness, and promised that the flag should be returned to Manitowoc or every member of the Guard should meet a bloody grave—it should never be dishonored while a guard breathed life.

Appropriate remarks were then made by Perry P. Smith, Jere. Crowley, Dr. Preston, Wm. M. Nichols, and after three cheers for the ladies, and three cheers for the Guards, the Company marched to their rendezvous, Ensign Glover bearing with him the prettiest flag which will be seen in his regiment.”

Mr. Plumb:

And now we have reached a point in the program where no introductions are needed.

Ladies and gentlemen, James S. Anderson, Company A, Fifth Wisconsin Volunteers. Judge Anderson:

Mr. Chairman, Comrades of the Civil War, of the Spanish—American War, of the Great World War, and Fellow Citizens.

We are met upon an occasion altogether unusual and unique in character; to return the flag you now see displayed before you, through the Historical Society, to the City of Manitowoc. It was presented almost sixty-four years ago by the Ladies of this City to the first military company raised in Manitowoc County for the Civil War.

It was so old, so tattered, with rags and shreds, that it seemed about to resolve into dust. The sole thought of the few survivors of those who first marched under its folds was how to dispose of its remains in decency and honor.

It hangs before you renovated and renewed, to serve as an object lesson in patriotism and self sacrifice, for this and other generations to come. This is largely due to the insistence of Miss Flora Waldo, who urged its care and preservation, and the generosity of Mr. George Schuette who defrayed the expense of the expert work upon it.

Immediately upon the outbreak of the war and the call of President Lincoln for the volunteer troops to enforce the laws of the United States, Manitowoc Village began organizing a military company. Within three days more than a hundred men were enrolled. There was no possible chance for the company to go out with the first quota called, but the state authorities urged the counties to hold the men together as it was certain they would be needed soon.

The state legislature was called in special session and passed a law which authorized the Governor to organize, train and keep in camp as state militia three regiments constantly during the war. Under this authority the first company raised in Manitowoc was enrolled and organized as state militia and took the name of “Manitowoc County Guards.”



JAMES S. ANDERSON

Member of Co. A, Fifth Wisconsin from organization at first call of President Lincoln until mustered out after the battle of Fort Stevens in July 1864. Picture taken in 1861, age 19.

The Company held together, elected a complete set of officers: Captain, Temple Clark; 1st Lieut., Joseph Rankin; 2nd Lieut., Horace M. Walker. Five Sergeants and eight Corporals were also elected.

We met daily for drill, in evolutions only as we had no arms, in the park now known as Union Park. One afternoon as we were engaged in our daily exercises we saw approaching a large number of ladies marching by twos. At the head of the procession in the hands of one of them was a beautiful silk banner. Red and white stripes with a blue field filled with golden stars, and in letters of gold, the legend: "*Manitowoc County Volunteers*" on its side. As they approached Captain Clark formed the Company in two ranks facing each other and the ladies marched into the space thus formed and halted.

Mrs. Gideon Collins, wife of the then President of the village of Manitowoc, in a beautiful address filled with patriotic sentiment, presented the flag to the Company on behalf of the ladies of Manitowoc.

Her voice trembled with emotion as she urged the men of the Company to stand by the Country in its hour of trouble and to follow the flag wherever it might lead.

You have listened to the reading of that address.

Captain Clark received the flag and made a very earnest and patriotic, but rather extravagant reply.

The flag was of itself a beautiful thing. Its making was the handiwork of the ladies, some of whom had sons, brothers, or lovers in the Company ranks. There was an incident concerning its making which ought to be preserved. When the money to purchase the material was raised, a committee of the ladies went to Chicago to buy it. The red and blue silks were obtained, but though the stores of Chicago were searched for days, no plain white silks were to be obtained. All flag material had been bought up.

In this dilemma a young lady who expected soon to be a bride, brought out the white silk purchased to be her bridal garment and laid it on the altar of patriotism. It was used in default of stronger and heavier material. One condition of the gift was that the name of the giver should not be made known.

As the flag was originally made there was a heavy fringe of silver cord all around the edges. The entire banner was made in the city, a young German being found who had a knowledge of such work, to paint and gild the golden stars and inscriptions.

With this presentation the war history of the flag began. We carried it daily in our march through the village for drill.

At last came the long expected order to go into camp and the 23rd day of June, 1861, about 3 o'clock P.M., the Company with the flag at its head marched through cheering crowds, from our temporary armory at Dusold's Hall to the pier at the foot of Buffalo Street and embarked on the Goodrich steamer Comet, for Camp Randall, Madison, via Milwaukee. Practically the

entire population of the county gathered to witness our departure. The pier was jammed with people and the bluffs above the pier were lined with spectators. I have no heart to speak of that leave-taking. There was a short halt for a last handshake or a parting kiss as we stood in the ranks on the pier, and the men were ordered to file on board. One fact was notable; there were few partings between husbands and wives that day, for of the 105 men who followed the flag, only 5 were married. We were the "Boys", the "boys" of Manitowoc County. Sergeant Willard Rickaby carried the flag to the upper deck and most of the Company clustered around him.

The lines were cast off, the wheels of the steamer began to move. There was a great shout, which echoed and repeated from the pier to the bluffs, Good bye: God bless you, boys! Good luck to you! Mingled with the German Ade! Ade! Auf Wiedersehn! Lebe wohl! We were all somewhat saddened by the parting scenes through which we had passed. There was one group of about fifteen boys, who had just reached the age of 18 years and over, so they could go, who were chums and school mates at the High School, who gathered in a group and began singing softly the words of a Sunday school hymn. I do not think it is used now, but one couplet has remained with me ever since that night.

*Like mist on the mountains,
Like ships on the sea,
So swiftly the years
Of our pilgrimage flee."*

They sang other songs, it did them good; their spirits rose and then someone started an old sailors "Chanty" song, that used to be sung on the lake schooners, with a rollicking chorus:

*"Oh fare-you-well, my own Mary-Ann
And its fare-you-well for a while,
For the ship is ready and the wind blows free
And I am bound for the sea, Mary-Ann."*

Soon the shades of the evening shut down and shore and boat faded from sight. The "Boys" and the flag had started out together to make history.

We reached Milwaukee about dawn. In the early morning we fell in and with the flag at our head marched to the old Kirby Hotel for breakfast. After breakfast we waited for an hour or two, when we again formed company and marched to the old St. Paul Railway depot on the south side and climbed aboard a train for Camp Randall, Madison.

We had been assigned as Co. A. Fifth Wisconsin Regiment, and when we arrived at Madison we found the two Milwaukee Companies, B & C had preceded us and were present to escort us into camp.

Here we occupied some barracks that had been vacated about a week before by men of the 3rd and 4th Wisconsin who had gone to the front.

Two or three companies came in every day, and the 5th Wisconsin Regiment was an accomplished fact. We were furnished with tents and instructed how to pitch them.



FIRST LIEUT. AARON GIBSON

Last Commander of Co. A. Fifth Wisconsin. Capt. Walker was killed in action at Rappahannock Station. Capt. Wilson S. Goodwin succeeded him and from Capt. Goodwin's resignation April 19, 1864, Lieut. Gibson was in command until the muster out. He was wounded in action three times, the last time desperately at Spottsylvania Court House, but recovered and died in March, 1916, at Los Angeles, California. Picture taken in 1863.

Our camp was laid out in true military order, a company in each street, with officers' tents at the head. We erected a flag pole about 25 feet in front of each captain's tent. Every one of the ten companies had a flag similar to ours, presented by the folks at home and the ten flags displayed above the new white tents made a fine effect. On company drills, the Colonel, Amasa Cobb, allowed the companies to take out their flags for a time.

Soon we were furnished with a very fine set of Regimental Colors and the company flags thenceforth were confined solely to their place on the flag poles.

By this time it began to be understood that U.S. Army Regulations did not recognize the existence of any such thing as a company flag or company names such as "Manitowoc Guards," "Milwaukee Zouaves," or "Beaver Dam Rifles," that company names were A, B, C, etc., and the Regimental flag the limit. Here was a quandary. When the flag was presented to us, Captain Clark among other extravagant things, promised we would carry the flag to the field, where it would be in the very front of the battle.

So the plan was formulated that when we left, the flag was to be taken from the staff, carried in the captain's satchel, and when we were about to go into a fight someone would wind the flag around his body and thus redeem our pledge to the home people.

On July 21, 1861, while we were engaged in Battalion drill, two telegrams were received from Washington, at intervals, which Col. Cobb read to the Regiment. The first announced that the long expected battle of *Bull Run* had begun, that the federal troops

were driving the rebel forces before them, and that there was every prospect of a glorious victory. The second stated that the Union forces were overwhelmed by rebel reinforcements and were retreating to Washington, and ordered Col. Cobb to bring his Regiment to Washington at the earliest possible moment. We had received our uniforms, knapsacks and personal equipment, but no arms. The Colonel issued orders forthwith for officers and soldiers to pack and send home all superfluous clothing and other property and be ready to move at a moment's notice. All absentees were called in by telegraph and on July 23, 1861, immediately after the 7 o'clock breakfast, we struck and packed our tents, hauled them by teams to some freight cars and loaded them. Our last act was to haul down the company flag from its staff and pack it in the captain's valise. That was the last time the flag was ever displayed in connection with the company.

A long train of passenger cars in two sections backed down, on a siding opposite the camp and we climbed on. Everything was complete, even to a car for the horses

of the mounted officers, and at about 10 o'clock we were on our way, just about 40 hours after receiving the order. It was quick work for a green regiment, but characteristic of its commander. We started for the war without arms, without ammunition and without rations for the journey. There was no trouble about this latter omission for at every station we passed crowds of people were gathered and baskets of sandwiches, cakes and pies were thrust through the car windows. We reached Chicago just as the sun was going down, and headed by our magnificent band marched across the city to the depot terminus of some eastern railway. A special train was waiting which we boarded and within an hour we were again on our way, under orders to reach Harrisburg, Pa., where we would receive arms. There we arrived early next morning and camped for about a week, but no arms appeared, and we received orders to go on to Baltimore, where the Sixth Massachusettes had been attacked by a mob not long before, and where we went into camp for about 10 days, and then went to Washington. We did not much relish parading and roaming around in rebel

territory without arms of any kind, except for a single company. In Washington we joined the 2nd Wisconsin and camped on Kalorama Heights. Here at last we received the long promised arms, old muskets, and ammunition of the Mexican War type, as dangerous at one end as at the other, but we were glad to get anything. In due time we crossed the Potomac and went into Virginia. There we entered upon a period of building forts, drilling, scouting, and picketing. Later we received our new arms, Austrian rifles, a very fine and effective weapon.

But what about the Flag?

Well, the Flag was always with us; always out of sight. At Drainsville the Pennsylvania Reserves got into a sharp skirmish. We were rushed to their assistance. The flag was along. At Lewinsville we met a large force of Rebel reconnoitering and were under a heavy artillery fire for a little while. The flag was along.

The Spring Campaign of 1862 opened and the Army of the Potomac moved to Fortress Monroe and operated up the York peninsula. As we advanced the sharp little



Photograph of nine of the then survivors of Co. A, Fifth Wisconsin, taken July 3, 1913, on the battlefield of Gettysburg, on the semi-centennial of the battle. Reader's left to right: John Valentine, Joseph L. Cox, Francis Stirn, Julius Enert, Willard H. Rickaby, J. S. Anderson, John Gilbert, William H. Davison, William C. Crocker.

The then survivors not able to be present: Lieut. Aaron Gibson, John Mill, Almeron Stillwell, Benjamin F. H. Luce, Julius Jackson, Charles Weidner, Levi Croissant (last named took the place in the ranks of his brother George who died.)

battle of Lees Mill was fought. The flag was along in a haversack and was certainly under a heavy fire of artillery and also rifle fire. On May 4th the Rebels retreated from Yorktown. We pursued all day, and the next day the Battle of Williamsburg was fought. The fight was a hot one. The Fifth Wisconsin was at the crucial point, did brilliant work and Hancock's brigade carried off the laurels that day. Co. A had what the German soldiers call its first "*blood bath*." We lost 3 men killed, and 6 were wounded.

The flag was with us all through that campaign. There had been changes in command in the meantime. Lieutenant Joseph Rankin resigned before we left Manitowoc. Lieutenant Walker took his place, and Peter Scherfius became 2nd Lieutenant. Three or four days before the Battle of Williamsburg Captain Temple Clark left the company. He had been appointed as staff officer to General Plummer in the west and ordered to his new duties.

This left Lieutenant Walker in command of the company and he decided the company had done enough to keep its promise to take the flag into battle. He packed the flag in his satchel and sent it to the rear, to be returned when the campaign ended.

The fact is that the whole affair of carrying the flag into battle under such circumstances was Don Quixotic, and due to a foolish streak of sentimentalism on the part of Captain Clark. But he is not alone to be blamed, for we all shared in it.

FOURTEEN YEARS PASSED AWAY

Peace had returned to the land and the Nation was holding a great International Exposition at Philadelphia in honor of its Centennial year. Among other citizens who visited the exposition was Hon. W. W. Waldo, County Judge of Manitowoc County. To the surprise of everyone cognizant of the facts, he returned bringing with him the identical flag which had been presented to Co. A, 5th Wisconsin, 15 years before. He had found it on display in the Wisconsin Building, and it was given to him by Col. Elisha Starr, the Wisconsin Commissioner of the Exposition, upon the agreement that it was to be returned to the city authorities of Manitowoc. With the flag was a communication which I will read.

Trenton New Jersey,
May 24th, 1876.

To the Volunteer Soldiers of the Union of Manitowoc County, Wisconsin.

This flag was captured by men of the 8th Regiment, Penna. Reserves at the battle of Cold Harbor, Gaines Mill, the 2nd of the seven days battles, of the 7th of June 1862, from men of the Confederate Regiment in their front. It was placed in my possession by one of the men who participated in taking it from the enemy, during the night after the battle, and has been with me ever since. I have always had it in mind to return it to the County from which it came, and when it was no doubt the work and gift of fair hands and affectionate hearts, to the brave

men, their sons, husbands, and lovers who left their homes to battle for it. I now feel a personal gratification that I have retained it until this Centennial year of Independence, when all the great nations of the earth have come to rejoice with us in our prosperity, and learn of us something of the many blessings and privileges which have been secured to all humanity, under the banner of the Stars.

Very truly and respectfully Yours & c.

S. D. Oliphant, Late Lieut. Col.
8th Regt. Reserve Vol. Corps.

Judge Waldo deposited the flag and letter with the Board of Aldermen of the city with this Communication.

To the Hon. the Mayor, and the Board of Aldermen of the City of Manitowoc.

Gents,

Enclosed herewith you will please find a communication from S. D. Oliphant, Late Lieut. Col. 8th Regiment Pennsylvania Reserve Corps, which fully explains itself. It came into my possession a few days since through the courtesy of the Hon. Elisha Starr, the very efficient obliging superintendent of the Wisconsin Centennial building at Philadelphia, with the request that the flag therein mentioned should be delivered "To the parties to whom it belonged", and as I know of no person, or persons who can have more interest in the matter than the City of Manitowoc, I have the honor to deliver the same to your Hon. Board for safe keeping, until such time as it shall be claimed by the Company to which it belonged, and for such further action as you may think proper.

Have the honor to subscribe myself, etc.

Yours very truly,
W. W. Waldo

Manitowoc, Wis.,
August 21st, 1876.

On September 5, 1876 the City took action upon the matter. A committee of three Aldermen, C. H. Schmidt, Peter Johnston and J. Langworthy, were appointed to take charge of the Flag and hold it "subject to the call of those interested", and tendered thanks to Col. Oliphant, Col. Elisha Starr and Judge Waldo as follows:

City Council Room,
Manitowoc, Sept. 5, 1876.

State of Wisconsin
City of Manitowoc.

Hon. W. W. Waldo

Dear Sir:

We, the Mayor and Clerk of the City of Manitowoc, hereby duly acknowledge the receipt of the flag of Company A of the 5th Regiment, Wis. Vol. Inf. recaptured from the enemy by the 8th Penna. Reserve Corps, and kindly delivered by you to the Board of Aldermen of this city. We also, being instructed by a unanimous vote of said Board of Aldermen, have the honor tendering their thanks to Colonel S. D. Oliphant of

the 8th Penna. Res. Corps, and to the Hon. Elisha Starr, State Superintendent of the Centennial Exposition, for safe keeping and returning said flag, and respectfully request you to forward the foregoing receipt and vote of thanks to the Gentlemen above named.

Heartily joining the Board of Aldermen in this expression, we respectfully remain

Yours truly,

A. D. Jones, Mayor

(City Seal) A. M. Richter, City Clerk.

A true copy

Attest W. W. Waldo.

I had not been without interest in the matter and at once made claim for the Flag on behalf of the surviving members of the Company. It was delivered to me without question. I at once addressed a letter to Col. Oliphant, requesting information in regard to it, a copy of which I retained and now read:

Manitowoc, Wis. Sept. 5th, 1876.
S. D. Oliphant, Esqr.
Clerk of U.S. Circuit Court,
Trenton, N.J.

Dear Sir,

A short time ago Hon. W. W. Waldo returned from Philadelphia bringing with him from the Wisconsin Headquarters the flag borne by Co. A 5th Wis. Vols. on their departure to the War.

I, as one of the old Company, was soon informed of the fact and was greatly astonished to learn that the flag was still in existence. It was supposed to have been destroyed along with the personal effects of the Capt. and other baggage at the time the rebels captured White House Landing. It was with no ordinary emotion I looked at that flag so strangely and unexpectedly returned to the place whence it came. It brought back to my mind so vividly the early scenes and associations of the war,—the drilling in the village park—the scene of its presentation to us—on behalf of mothers, sisters and friends—by one long since dead—the cunning stitches by fair hands, many of them folded to eternal rest, the parting on a sunny sabbath evening—as we marched away, many to death, all to hunger, hardship and privation, that I could not keep down a foolish choking in my throat and a womanish moisture from my eyes.

You have been a soldier and can enter into a soldier's feeling at those times when the memory of the old days comes like a flood. Those who have never shared the danger and privation of "the tented field" never can.

I thought that you and those associated with you in the capture and preservation and return of this banner to us might perhaps be interested in knowing something of the flag you rescued from the rebel hands and of the "boys" who bore it from the shores of Lake Michigan to the Swamps of Chickahominy. On the 21st day of April, 1861, immediately after the news of the bombardment of Fort Sumpter was received,

the organization of a Company for service in the war was begun. In a short time it was filled and assigned to a position as Co. "A" 5th Wis. Vols., having previously adopted the name you saw inscribed on the flag.

The flag was made by the ladies of this now city and presented to us on their behalf by Mrs. G. Collins, wife of the president of the village in a patriotic, spirited and affecting address, a few days before our departure to join our Regiment.

We reached the front a few days after the first battle of Bull Run and remained with the Army of the Potomac until the close of the war. I remembered well the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps with their "Bucktail" Regiment and on one occasion when we formed one Gen. Hancock's Brigade and where near Lewinsville, Va., we came up to their support on a run at the short and sharp battle (?) of Drainsville. The company served with their Regiment all through the varied campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, and the "5th Wisconsin and the 6th Maine" are not unknown in the history of that army.

I have a record of the status of the Company at the time they were mustered out on the expiration date of their term of service. It there appears that of the original 104 men 32 were killed in battle or died of wounds or disease; 41 had been wounded, some of them several times. In fact deducting from the whole number of those on detached service or duties not calling them into battle with the Company, only *four* came though unscathed.

Now I presume you want to know how we came to lose that flag.

After the Battle of Williamsburg when our Brigade (Hancock's) made their brilliant charge we rested a few days to gather up and recruit our strength *a la McClellan*. In the meantime our baggage or a portion of it had been sent to the wharf at Yorktown to be forwarded to White House Landing by steamer. It, or part of it, became lost or miscarried and with that lost in transit was the valise of our Captain in which was folded the flag. He had promised to carry the flag into battle with us and as Companies were not allowed to carry flags we redeemed our promise by folding it up and then buttoned in the bosom of one of the officers it was carried more than once where the bullets flew thick and fast. In this way it was carried up to the time of the Battle of Williamsburg when no battle being expected, it was sent in the valise to White House Landing. It must have been found by the Rebels in some of the cars or near some of the supply depots on the R. R. between White House Landing and Savage's Station. Its capture in this way brought them no credit such as its recapture by your gallant Pennsylvanians. And we are glad that to men of your state are we indebted for the performance of the sacred duty devolved from on us of wresting that flag from further desecration by disloyal hands. We cheerfully acknowledge the debt and we (for I

speak for the survivors of the Co. now here) authorize you to thank the surviving members of your Regiment in any way you deem best.

This flag will now be properly cared for and with a statement of its history attached to it deposited either in the archives of the county or with the State Historical Society—as may be deemed best.

On the 16th of the present month there will be a reunion of the survivors of the Company for the first time since the close of the war. May I ask you to write to us a letter to be read at that time giving all the particulars you know respecting the flag, what Rebel soldiers had it, how it was taken and any facts which you may judge to be of interest within your knowledge. You may be assured that at that time you and your brave regiment will be remembered kindly and the threads of memory will bind heart to heart and State to State in renewed loyalty to our common country.

I am Very Truly Yours,
J. S. Anderson.

Almost by return mail I received an answer which I now read:

Trenton, New Jersey,
Sept. 12, 1876.

J. S. Anderson, Esq.

My Dear Sir:

I have and thank you for your kind favor of the 5th inst. recd. last evening. I was deeply interested in, and am greatly obliged to you for the full details of the first part of the history of the "Manitowoc Flag" and am very happy to have been instrumental in returning it to where it so properly belongs.

All the time it was in my possession, it was my purpose to avail myself of some good and reliable opportunity of sending it home—and as the centennial drew on, I concluded to avail myself of some means of connecting it with the Exposition, and seeing the flag of your state waving over the Wisconsin House—the idea was at once suggested, to place it on deposit there, feeling assured that it would thus securely and certainly reach its destination. I can add but little to its history, as to its coming into my possession, other than what is stated in my letter of transmittal. I learned sometime after the battle of Gaines Mill that a Louisiana Regiment commanded by Col. Relict Baneau was in our front during the battle, at the time your flag was recaptured. It was taken from one of the men of that regiment in hand to hand encounter. I remember his person very well but don't now recall his name. He was a member of Company "E"—one of "John Duncan's lambs," as they were sometimes called—a company recruited from the rolling mills and iron foundries of Pittsburg—many of them English and Welsh—it was the heaviest company in our Brigade—possibly the very heaviest in the "Army of the Potomac"—and was as fine a body of men as could be mustered. At the organization of the Regiment Capt.

John Duncan became its Major. ... I think I asked him why he did not bring the man in as prisoner. He said he had enough to do to get the flag." He bro't the flag to me on the field—I could make no other disposition of the flag other than to tie it around me. Soon after this we were driven back—and when I recovered my horses the next day—I put it in one of my pistol holsters—where it remained until I got to my baggage about eight days afterwards at Harrison's Landing—I then placed it with my personal baggage—and its been with me ever since, until I placed it in the Wisconsin House at the Exposition. I fear this will not reach you in time for the reunion of your company mentioned in your letter. If it does please present my congratulations to your comrades—with—as long as we are on the subject of flags—the sentiment—The Star Spangled Banner—Long may it wave over the tomb of Jef. Davis—and the Southern Confederacy.

With thanks, and kindest regards I am yours very truly and respectfully,

L. D. Oliphant
Late. Leut. Col. 8th Regt.
Penna Reserves.

Thus the old flag came home. It has been in possession ever since. It made its first public re-appearance on Memorial Day 1881, at the head of the newly organized Horace M. Walker Post-G. A. R. It headed the Manitowoc County Contingent Veterans in the great National Encampment parade of the G. A. R. in 1882, and on many other occasions it has been prominent.

It has been spread upon the coffin of every one of the old Company who has died in Manitowoc and vicinity. The last was the late Francis Stirn.

I have in my office a copy of the last muster of the old Company "A," as we started for home in July 1864. It had one Lieutenant and 32 men left from the wastage of war.

The most of them were wounded, gathered from the hospitals, hardly fit for travel, but anxious to be home.

The company had been in twenty-six general engagements, every battle of the army of the Potomac, up to time of departure, excepting only the first Bull Run.

Today, so far as I know, three live in Manitowoc County, John Gilbert of Valders, John Mill of Centerville and myself, two at city of Milwaukee, Joseph L. Cox and William Crocker, one at Los Angeles, California, Julius Enert and one at Seattle, Washington, Levi Croissant. That is all.

"I have had friends, comrades, companions: Some they have died

and some have gone from me;

All have departed,

The old familiar faces"

Mr. Plumb:

Answer to such an address is indeed difficult to make. The duty however shall devolve upon the representative of the city,

its attorney, and of the society, its secretary. Mr. Harry F. Kelly.

Mr. Kelly:

It would be folly for me to attempt now to add to this occasion by extended remarks. I am sure all here would want to leave undisturbed the atmosphere of the heroic sixties magically drawn back from the past by these exercises. It would approach profanation now to do anything that might affect the profound feeling manifest as a result of the inspired recital of Judge Anderson.

How marvelous it seems, and how fortunate for these ceremonies, to have this fellow townsman of ours, who marched away with his comrades sixty-four years ago and went through twenty-six general engagements, including Antietam, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, the Wilderness and Cold Harbor, still with us; with his keen mind unimpaired by time, and his photographic memory and his well known power of exact, fluent expression as active as they were in his middle years.

It should cause us joy to have not only this flag but also a group still among us, (we fondly hope for a long time) of those who offered their lives "that the nation might live."

This old flag typifies that overpowering love of the American union of states that sent a host of youthful warriors down to die that there might be "not a single stripe erased or polluted, not a single star obscured."

This priceless piece of silk represents the countless, free spirit of America in no less degree than does any revered relic of the struggle for independence or of the war for preservation of the union. It might well be, it will be, our local independence bell.

The Manitowoc County Historical Society, for itself and for the people of Manitowoc County, thank those who brought about its restoration and preservation. It is accepted with a lively sense of appreciation of its sacred character. It is received with pride of possession and with solemn assurances that its care shall always be a trust; that it may remain, while time leaves it recognizable, a well-spring of patriotic impulses and a constant reminder for emulation when the nation's need shall come; and that, as was said of a hair from the head of Caesar, it may be handed down a rich legacy unto our issue.

Mr. Plumb:

This, ladies and gentlemen, concludes the program of the evening. May we all rise and sing "America"?

ADDENDUM

The following is a copy of the legends upon two of the cards in the case with the old flag, noticeable in the color reproduction of a photograph of the flag and case in the front of this booklet. The matter on the other card appears in substance in this booklet.

Roster at First Muster into U.S. Service, July 11, 1861. Madison Wis.

Co. A, Fifth Wis. Vol. Inf. Organized at Manitowoc, Wisconsin.

Temple Clark, Captain

Horace M. Walker Peter Scherfius
First Lieutenant Second Lieutenant

ENLISTED MEN

Adams, Martin V. Malcomber, James
Allen, Joseph R. Mallet, John
Anderson, James S. McCafferty, Thomas

Beth, Joseph
Biehlie, Joseph
Borchardt, Frederick W.
Brannagan, James
Buboltz, Daniel
Buboltz, Ferdinand
Burbridge, Albert

Clark, Samuel B.
Cochems, Jacob
Cochems, John
Cox, Joseph L.
Cox, William H.
Crocker, William C.
Croissant, George H.

Davison, William H.
Davis, Charles
Dexter, Samuel
Diack, Archibald W.
Dukelow, Richard

Eddy, David C.
Eddy, Thomas J.
Emerson, Ezekiel
Engle, George B.
Esslinger, Charles G.
Estes, Edwin
Enert, Julius

Galvin, Martin
Gilbert, John
Gibson, Aaron
Glover, John W.
Goodwin, Joseph
Goodwin, Willson S.
Greenman, Frank

Havlicek, Franz
Heinrich, George
Hermann, Gottlieb
Hersman, Stephen J.
Hubbard, Alfred H.
Hubbard, Howard A.
Hughes, Hezekiah

Jackson, Hezekiah
Jackson, Julius

Keiser, Frank

LaCount, Louis
Langness, Frederick
Leonard, James H.
Leyder, Peter
Leykom, John R.
Lindeman, Guido
Luce, Benjamin F. H.

Meistness, Jacob
Mendlik, Rudolph
Mikesh, John L.
Mill, John
Mullins, Morris

Nelson, Ole
Netter, Andrew J.
Niemand, Charles
Ninneman, Gottlieb

O'Camb, William
Olcott, Thomas
Oleson, Ole
O'Neill, Hugh

Payne, Albert J.
Perry, Stewart W.
Pizzala, Charles
Poser, Frederick

Rath, Charles
Rickaby, Willard
Riley, Abraham
Ruediger, Theodore
Roehr, Henry

Salsman, Frederick W.
Schindler, Edward
Schoenfeldt, Joseph
Schmoker, John
Sommer, Albert J.
Staehlie, John
Steele, Albert B.
Stirn, Francis
Stich, Henry
Stich, John
Stillwell, Almeron N.
Stringman, William
Stroff, Joseph
Swope, Leander

Thureau, John
Turpin, William

Van Brocklin, Ezekiel
Valentine, John

Wagener, Arnold
Wagener, Thomas
Weidner, Charles
Whelan, James H.
Woodcock, David

Total Commissioned
Officers 3
Enlisted Men 101
104

Battles of 5th Wisconsin Regiment

In 1861 there were
several heavy skirmishes.
No battles.

1862
Lees Mills, Va., April 16

Williamsburg, May 5th
Chickahominy, May 24th
Fair Oaks, May 31-June 1
Goldens Farm, June 28
Savage Station, June 29

White Oak Swamp, June 30
Malvern Hill, July 1
Second Manassas, Aug. 30
Crampton's Gap, Md., Sept. 14
Antietam, Md., Sept. 17-19
Fredericksburg, Va., Dec. 13-15

1863

Chancellorsville, May 1-2
Marye's Heights, May 3
Salem Church, May 3-4
Franklins Crossing, June 5
Brandy Station, June 9
Gettysburg, Pa., July 1-4
Funkstown Md., July 12
Rappahannock Station, Va., Nov. 7
Mine Run, Nov 25-28

1864

Wilderness, May 5-7
Spottsylvania, C. H., May 8-18
Cold Harbor, June 1-12
Petersburg, June 16-17
Fort Stevens, D. C. July 12
(Regiment Reorganized)
Winchester, Sept. 19
Fishers Hill, Sept. 22
Cedar Creek, Oct 19

1865

Petersburg Lines, April 2
Sailors Creek, April 7
Regiment mustered out of service June 20, 1865, at the end of the war, at Madison, Wis.

Last Muster

Last Muster of Original Company, (A 5th Wis. Vol. Inf.)
Madison, Wis., July 27, 1864 on expiration of Enlistment
(Capt. Horace M. Walker) Commissioned Officer killed

Discharged during service as disabled,
wounds, disease, etc 35
Killed in battle and died of wounds 22
Died of disease 9
Absent in Rebel prisons 3
Wounded in Hospital 2
Total Losses 72
30 men were mustered out of the service 30
of these only 12 were reported for duty the
remainder being wounded gathered from
Washington hospitals to come home. These
were all that remained of the Company after
three years of service, two being transferred
to Navy. 102

About two weeks after there appeared in the Manitowoc newspapers accounts of the flag presentation ceremonies on March 23rd, 1925, Judge Anderson received a long letter from Julius Enert, residing at Los Angeles, California. He related his recollections of the manner in which the flag was lost and expressed the hope that it would be made more clear to the public that the flag had not been taken from the company in action by the enemy.

Among other things he wrote: "One thing I am sure of and that is the flag was never taken in any of the battles our regiment was engaged in... The regiment was never driven back by any rebels in our entire service. Not that our regiment was any better than any of the other regiments, but only one of the instances and fortunes of battles... I don't remember of having seen the flag after Captain Clark left us but I do remember of having seen it in camp after we crossed the Potomac into Virginia... The more I think about the flag being lost the more I feel sure that during a raid at night on wagons that carried the officers' baggage of the regiment while the change was being made from the Wilderness to Cold Harbor this rebel got hold of the flag and lost it again."

Commenting on the letter of Mr. Enert,



The Flag of Company A as it is presently displayed in the north entrance hallway of the Manitowoc County Courthouse.

Judge Anderson said: "It was a well established fact that the wagons that carried the officers' baggage were lost during the movement from the Chickahominy to Harrison's Landing. Comrade Enert's recollection agrees with mine as to the fact, but he confuses the time with the second battle at Gaines Mill. It was under the first battle Gen. McClellan, 1862, that the loss of the flag occurred. Gaines Mill and Cold Harbor were fought over three different times: in 1862, 1864 and 1865, besides a calvary battle in 1863."

MANITOWOC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 574
Manitowoc, WI 54221-0574