

LAURIE NISJA SHAWHAN

Manitowoc, Wisconsin

Laurie is the Great Granddaughter of

Edward Fitzgerald

Co. E, 45th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry

Edward Fitzgerald was born December 20, 1841 in County Cork and baptized in Ladysmith, Ireland. He was 3 years old when he came to America with his parents, Daniel Fitzgerald and Mary Stafford and an older sister, Catherine. Four more children were born into the family while in Tauton, Massachusetts before they moved to Kossuth, Wisconsin between 1850 and 1860. Edward's father was killed in 1861 while felling a large tree, necessitating Edward to remain home and help his mother with the farm. In 1863 at Cooperstown Church, he married his childhood sweetheart, Hannah Sullivan, a daughter of Timothy Sullivan and Ellenora Hickey.

Witnessing friends and family lose life and limb in the Civil War that engulfed the nation, Edward could delay the inevitable no longer. On February 25, 1865 he enlisted with Co. E, 45th Wisconsin Infantry training at Camp Siegel in Milwaukee and he received \$100 in bounty money.

The battle of Nashville was a resounding success for the Union. Over 4000 Confederate captives were housed in and around Nashville where they were in desperate need of guards. The 45th Regiment, garrisoned in Nashville for guard duty, remained there until mustered out July 17, 1865. Edward paid \$6.00 to bring home his accouterments.

Only three months after returning, tragedy befell Edward when his beloved Hannah passed from his life. His loneliness ended two years later when he married Hannah's cousin, Catherine Sullivan Olcott, herself a widow of the Civil War. Together they raised a boy and a girl from her first marriage and five daughters from their own.

Edward was a proud and handsome man with a light heart and spirit. He taught the children pretty songs in a Boston-Irish brogue. In their declining years, Edward and Catherine moved to the Veterans' Home in King, Wisconsin. Catherine passed away in 1923 and Edward died at the age of 87 on a cold January day in 1929. At his funeral fellow veterans attempted to honor him with a chorus of "Taps", but alas the bugle froze. True to his non-conformist nature, in the cemetery at King, Wisconsin alongside the small Federal gravestones of fellow members of the 45th stands a tall obelisk marked "Fitzgerald, Edward and Catherine".