

PRIVATE JACOB "JAKE" HEFFNER

Co. D, 36th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry

Cheryl Hoeth's Great Great Grandfather

Jake was born in 1829 in Austria/Germany. In the 1840's he served 4 ½ years in the Prussia/Germany military (serving in 2 wars in Germany) prior to immigrating to the USA in 1857. During that time he suffered a gunshot wound to his leg which bothered him all of his life. In the early 1850s Jake asked his father for his help in leaving Germany for America. He received his father's blessing and \$1,000 to come to America. Following 12 weeks of extremely rough seas on the Ship *Lina*, Jake landed in New York and came west to Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Jake's first work in America was with a man who had a contract to furnish barrel staves for a brewery. With visions of sudden wealth, Jake shaved forty thousand staves and received the princely sum of \$4.00 per month. One of his first acquaintances was a "high binder well versed in the yankee ways". He proceeded to borrow the nest egg of \$1,000 from Jake who in exchange received an old clock and a double barreled muzzle-loading shotgun as security. He ended up with the security and no money. At the same time Jake's employer wanted him to take on a partner in his stave shaving job. Jake realizing that would reduce his pay by half so he decided to move to the big pine timber in northern Wisconsin. After several months, of working in northern Wisconsin he once again concluded that he couldn't make his fortune there. Jake traded his wages for a boat and set afloat on the Wisconsin River at its headwater. Outside of fish that he could catch, he had very little to eat until he tied up his boat at Muscoda several weeks later. Here he traded his boat for a good hearty hot meal. At this point, Jake decided to become a tiller of the soil and took a job on a farm near Montfort.

In 1860 Jake purchased a piece of land in Boaz area (short distance E of Hwy 14 & Co Trunk E intersection). He made a farm out of the wilderness with nothing but the barest of necessities and a team of oxen. Jake made the farm buildings from hewn logs and he relied on his team of oxen to take produce from Boaz to Milwaukee. In Milwaukee Jake traded his produce for supplies he needed back home (150 miles one way trip).

On September 9, 1860 Jake married Josephine Tempelmeyer, daughter of Stephen & Anna Tempelmeyer, in Highland, Wisconsin. Josephine and her parents migrated to America in 1856 from Seytlan, Germany.

February 29, 1864 Jake enlisted in the 36th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry, Company D. Josephine tended the farm and cared for their 4 children while Jake was serving the Union (the 4th child was born soon after Jake enlisted; Josephine had 4 children under the age of 4 to care for at that time).

Wisconsin 36th Infantry was organized at Camp Randall in Madison, Wisconsin and mustered into federal service on March 23, 1864. The Wisconsin 36th Infantry was present for Lee's surrender at Appomattox on April 9, 1865.

Private Jake Heffner was mustered out on June 7, 1865 and he was discharged from the Cedar Point Virginia hospital months after the Civil War was over.

After Jake returned to his family and farm in Wisconsin, Josephine and Jake had 5 additional children (9 total). In 1879 Jake and Josephine moved to Blue River Valley, Wisconsin and then to Muscoda, Wisconsin in 1902. In his earlier years in Muscoda, Jake owned and operated a saloon in the original Blackhawk Supper Club. Jake did not enjoy backing his car out of the garage. To fix that problem, he put a garage door at both ends of his garage so he could drive in one end and out the other end.

Josephine died in 1906 and Jake remarried Ernestine Sailing on July 4, 1908.

In Jake's retirement years, the neighbor children would come and swing with him in his yard while he told them stories about his youth, hunting and fishing. Jake would pick some large strawberries from his garden and the children would eat them while he told them stories.

Jake died in 1928, at the age of 98 (1 year and 2 months before he reached his 100th birthday).

