

James S. Alban

No tour of the Plover Cemetery would be completed without the tragic story of Colonel James Alban. This Ohio born man came to the Plover area in 1844. During this time Plover consisted of a few cabins and little else. Alban, a lawyer, became a pillar of the growing community and was elected county judge and state senator.



He was also an ardent abolitionist who was commissioned as a Union Colonel in the fall of 1861. He led the 18th Regiment which included a company of men largely from Portage County (Company E). They began training in February 1862 but were hindered by deep snow and did not receive in-depth training. In late March, they began a journey to St. Louis to begin more training but when they arrived they were instead put upon boats to Pittsburgh Landing. The morning after arrival confederate troops attacked the unprepared left flank of the Union Army which included the 18th Regiment. The bloodiest battle to that date in history had begun...the Battle of Shiloh.

Company E, took heavy casualties; almost 40 percent were killed, wounded or taken prisoner. Their colonel, Alban, was also killed by a musket ball through the chest while "gallantly encouraging his boys in the Hornets' nest." On April 23rd, a Stevens Point newspaper published the following, "We were loath to believe the telegraphic report; and even now, it is hard to realize the appalling fact." The city was distraught at the loss of one of their most prominent citizens.