

EPHRAIM W EDWARDS **1843 – 1919**

Ephraim was born at Garden Terrace, Tunbridge Wells, in the County of Kent, England, on 21 November 1843. He was the eighth child of Elisha Edwards, a carpenter, and Sabina (Damper) Edwards. In 1847, the family emigrated to North America and went to join Elisha's younger brother, Edward, and his family, in Findlay, County Hancock, Ohio. In 1849, both Elisha and Edward died of typhoid. Sabina survived, as did her ten children. After his mother remarried in 1851, William Mungen was appointed as Ephraim's guardian, a position he held until 1857. William Mungen was a prominent citizen of Findlay, who later commanded the 57th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Jacob Hoch became guardian of Ephraim in 1857. By 1860 Ephraim was working as a farm labourer for Samuel Thomas in Big Lick Township. On a nearby farm lived the Huff family and Ephraim became friendly with one of the daughters, Lucinda.

Military Service in the Civil War 1861 - 1865

Ephraim enrolled as a Private in Captain Langworthy's Company, 49th Regiment Ohio Volunteer Infantry, at Findlay, Hancock County, Ohio, on 6th August 1861. He signed on for 3 years' service. He was 18 years old and gave his occupation as 'farmer'. This Company became Co. A, 49 Regt Ohio Volunteer Infantry.

Company A mustered in at Tiffin, Seneca County, Ohio, on 15 August 1861. The Regiment formed up at Camp Noble, near Tiffin, and moved to Camp Dennison at Cincinnati on 10 September, receiving its equipment on 21 September. Under the command of Colonel William H Gibson, the 49th moved to Louisville in Kentucky, part of the journey being by boat.

Ephraim marched south, with the 49th, through Kentucky into Tennessee, where the Regiment had its first engagement with the enemy at Shiloh. The 49th then continued southwards to Corinth, Missouri, taking part in the siege of that town, which it entered on 30 May 1862. It then marched to Battle Creek, Tennessee, and back to Louisville in Kentucky. The 49th returned through Kentucky and Tennessee in the pursuit of Bragg's Rebel Army. "This march was made under terrible sufferings from intense heat, want of water and short rations." On 31 December, Ephraim was captured at the Battle of Stone River at Murfreesboro, Tennessee. He was taken to Richmond, Virginia, and imprisoned there on 15 January 1863. He was exchanged and paroled at City Point, Virginia, on 20 January. He reported to Camp Parole in Maryland on 21 January where it was recorded that he had been 'Absent without leave'! On 10 March, he was sent to Camp Chase, Ohio, arriving there on 13 March. He rejoined his Regiment on 1 May.

Ephraim wrote to Lucinda Huff, on 12 June 1863, from Camp Drake, Murfreesboro, Tennessee. He told her about his journey to rejoin the Regiment, writing that he had left Louisville, Kentucky, at 8 am and arrived in Nashville, Tennessee, at 9 in the evening. He took part in the Battle of Liberty Gap, Tennessee, on 24 June. He became ill and, on 1 July, was sent to hospital in Chattanooga. As he was in hospital, he was unable to take part in the Battle of Chickamauga, in September, where his brother William was seriously wounded in the face whilst serving with the 21st Ohio

Volunteer Infantry. Ephraim left hospital and rejoined his Regiment on 25 November, when it was in the Battle of Mission Ridge, Tennessee. After this battle, the 49th moved with Granger's Corps to the relief of Burnside's forces at Knoxville, Tennessee. It has been written that "This campaign was one of the most severe during the war. The weather was intensely cold, with snow on the ground, the men almost naked, and without shoes, and rations exhausted. The march of the army was literally tracked by bloody foot marks. And yet these brave fellows did not grumble, but were eager to be led against the foe. Marching to Strawberry Plains, and hearing that Burnside had repulsed Longstreet, the National troops returned to Chattanooga. In the midst of this severe campaign the men of the 49th were called upon to re-enlist for the war, to which call a prompt response was given."

Ephraim was re-enlisted, for 3 years, as a Veteran Volunteer at Strawberry Plains, Chattanooga, by Captain Daniel Hartsough on 1 January 1864. He received a bounty of \$60 at the time and was due a further \$340. He appeared on the 'Muster and Descriptive Roll of Veteran Volunteers' of Co A, 49 Regt OVI, dated 27 January, with the description 'Born in the County of Kent, England. Occupation farmer. Age 21 years with auburn hair, grey eyes, a light complexion and 5 ft 8½ in tall.'



With permission from Colonel Parret, he was granted 30 days' furlough and went home on 11 February 1864. In Findlay, on 23 February, he was married to Lucinda Huff by the Reverend Bradford Struble. After returning to his Regiment at Chattanooga, he wrote to Lucinda on 12 April. Later his Regiment was at Cleveland in Tennessee, before moving into Georgia, where it took part in the Battles of Rocky Face, on 9 May, and Resaca, on 14 & 15 May. 49 Regt was part of the 1st Brigade, 2nd Division of the 4th Army Corps, and was still commanded by Colonel W H Gibson. Ephraim found time to write to Lucinda on 22 May, from the camp near Big Shanty, Georgia, mentioning that "he had some fine times....and been called to witness the dying of some of his brave comrades." He was in action again on 25 May at Allatoona Pass. Two days' later he was seriously injured at the Battle of Pickett's Mill, where the Regiment lost

199 men, either killed or wounded. Apparently Ephraim had a silver dollar in his shirt pocket and this stopped the bullet from hitting him in the heart but the deflected bullet tore into his left arm. He lay upon the field for hours before he was rescued and taken to a field hospital, where his left arm was amputated, about 6ins below the shoulder joint, on 29 May. So he lost his arm but saved his life and the dollar! The Chaplain of the 49th, G S Phillips, wrote to Ephraim's wife, Lucinda, on 31 May, telling her of his injury and operation in the battlefield hospital, situated near Dallas, Georgia.

On 9 July, Ephraim was admitted to the Jefferson General Hospital in Jeffersonville, Indiana. He was transferred to Camp Dennison General Hospital at West End, Cincinnati, on 21 July. On 11 October, the Medical Director at the Headquarters Northern Department issued an order to Marvin Lincoln, manufacturer of artificial limbs, to supply Ephraim with an artificial arm. Ephraim was examined by an army

surgeon and declared to have a three-quarter disability but to be suitable for service in the Invalid Corps. He elected to be discharged for disability and was discharged, still a Private, from Camp Dennison on 25 October 1864, by order of General Hooker, and returned home to Findlay. From a letter he wrote to Lucinda, from hospital, on 18 October he had hoped to be discharged earlier. He received a disability pension of \$24 per month. On his military record, Ephraim's name appears on the Company Muster-out Roll at Victoria, Texas, dated 30 November 1865.

Note:

Three of Ephraim's brothers also fought in the Civil War. Elisha was in Co K, 118 Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry; William was in Co B, 21 Regiment, OVI; Charles was in Co F, 21 Regiment, OVI.

After the War

In November 1869, Ephraim, Lucinda and their two children, John and George, left Ohio and settled in Lexington, McLean County, Illinois. The couple had seven more children, the last being born to Lucinda in 1887.

Ephraim spent his first three years in Lexington as a schoolteacher before editing the Lexington Courier for two years. Next he became joint owner of a grocery store, which he ran until 1888. Afterwards he became involved in the real estate and loan business. He often travelled back to Ohio to attend reunions of his old Regiment.

Lucinda died at Lexington on 16 December 1904, aged 58. In 1905, Ephraim married a widow, Arabella Weakley, at Pontiac, Illinois.

Ephraim died at the age of 75, on 7 June 1919, and was buried at Lexington. He was survived by his widow and only three of his children, John (born 1865), Valorus (born 1878) and Charles (born 1881).

Principal sources

1. Internet article on the 49th Ohio Volunteer Infantry based on "Ohio in the War" by Whitelaw Reid, published in 1868, and "Ohio's Silver Tongued Orator: Life and Speeches of General William H Gibson" by David Dwight Bigger, published in 1901.
2. Ephraim's Military and Pension Records held at the US National Archives.
3. Ephraim's letters to Lucinda deposited with the Ohio Historical Society.
4. Marriage register at the County Probate Office in Findlay.
5. Certified copy of Ephraim's Birth Certificate.
6. Letter from Edward Edwards in Findlay, Ohio, to his brothers in Tunbridge Wells, England, dated 12 March 1847.
7. Letter written by Helen Hostler, a granddaughter of Ephraim, in February 1991 to her great nephew Paul Zimmerman.
8. Obituary in the Lexington Courier, dated 12 June 1919.
9. Article entitled "The Buckeye Vanguard" by Richard Mann.
10. "History of Hancock County" published by Warner, Beers and Co., in 1886.