

The Newcomer

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Newton County in the Civil War:

Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the Start of the Civil War

By Kyle D. Conrad

Newton County, Indiana was still in its infancy when the Confederate army fired upon and subsequently captured the federal fort in Charleston, South Carolina's harbor, Fort Sumter. That was April 12 and 13, 1861. Newton County was still for the most part wilderness, with much of the northern portion of the county under water, covered by Beaver Lake.

According to John Ade in his book, *Newton County, 1853-1911*, word of the fall of Fort Sumter was received here on Sunday morning, April 14, 1861 and concerned the citizens of this new county greatly. The following day, President Abraham Lincoln issued his proclamation calling for the enlistment of 75,000 men to take arms and suppress the rebellion. Indiana's quota was set at 7,500 men, and Indiana Governor Oliver P. Morton, on April 16, 1861, called upon Indiana's men to fulfill our state's quota of soldiers. The response was so great that thousands of Indiana's sons were turned away from volunteering to serve in the Union forces.

Even though Newton County was only a year old county at that time, the response by the men and boys of the county was tremendous. In 1860, the county population was 2,360 people. By the end of the war in 1865, the total number of men who served the Union forces from Newton County totaled 249, or 10% of the total population. Of these 249 brave men and boys, 70 would never return home, dying in battle or of illness and disease. Only a handful would ever be returned here for burial. Most remain interred in battlefield or national cemeteries. Many more soldiers died of disease and illness shortly after returning home, their deaths taking place before death records and written histories existed. Only their death dates and young ages inscribed on their gravestones give us any indication that they could have been a delayed casualty of the civil war.

Several regiments were formed in the ensuing years after the start of the war, and both President Lincoln and Governor Morton increased the call for more men as the war progressed and it became apparent it would linger on for years. The following are the regiments that were either organized here or that contained a number of volunteers from Newton County. Much of this information was gleaned from John Ade's 1911 history. Another article in this edition lists those men who never returned home, having given the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

The first organized regiment of troops from Jasper and Newton counties was mustered into service on April 25, 1861 for three months. This regiment was the 9th regiment of infantry. Following their three months of service, this regiment was reorganized into a three year regiment and included 25 men from Newton County. This was Company G. Indiana's 9th was involved with battles at Greenbriar, Shiloh, Corinth, Perryville, Wildcat Mountain, Stone River, Chickamauga, Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge, Franklin and Nashville, as well as all of the battles of the Sherman campaign.

The next area regiment was the 15th Indiana. Several men from Newton County helped to comprise Company H. The 15th was mustered into service in Lafayette on

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Newly Found Photographs of Jennie Conrad and Her Family



The unveiling of the Soldier's Monument at McKinley Park in Brook was held on September 17, 1909. To the right and left you can see stacks of cannon balls, and behind the stack on the right, you can make out the cannon. NCHS collection.

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June 14, 1861 for a term of three years. Battles encountered by this regiment included Greenbrier, Rich Mountain, Shiloh, Corinth, Perryville, Stone River, and Missionary Ridge.

Probably the most notable regiment from Newton County is Company B of the 51st Indiana. Company B was made up entirely here in the county and mostly of Newton County men. The formation of this company included town meetings in every school house in the county with the goal to recruit 100 men. John Ade presided over the first meeting in Kentland. On October 12, 1861 the group met for the final time at the old school house in Brook where its final organization and election of officers occurred. The location of this meeting is now the Brook-Iroquois-Washington Public Library and a bronze tablet in the library commemorates the organization of Co. B, 51st Indiana. The 51st was mustered in to service on December 14, 1861 in Indianapolis. The men of the 51st saw action at Shiloh, Corinth, Franklin, Nashville, and Overton's Hill.

Company E of the 99th Indiana was organized in August of 1862 and mustered into service on October 21st of that year. The 99th saw action at Vicksburg, Missionary Ridge, the Atlanta campaign, and Sherman's march to the sea.

Company A of the 128th Indiana was mustered into service on March 18, 1864 at Michigan City. By May 4, 1864 the 128th had joined forces under General William Tecumseh Sherman and his march to capture Atlanta, Georgia. They engaged in battles at Resaca, Dallas, New Hope Church, Lost Mountain, Kenesaw Mountain, and Jonesboro. Several smaller skirmishes were also encountered during the time of service of the 128th, which was mustered out on April 13, 1866

The remaining regiment that had any substantial men from Newton County was Co. H of the 151st Indiana, a one year regiment. This regiment organized at Indianapolis in March, 1865. It was mustered in March 9 and left the state on the 13th, reporting to Gen. Rousseau at Nashville. It moved to Tullahoma on the 14th and remained there until June 14, when it returned to Nashville, where it remained on garrison and guard duty until it was mustered out on Sept. 19.

At the conclusion of the war, many of these soldiers returned home to Newton County to begin their lives once again. Some remained here while others sought the opportunities that our nation's westward expansion offered. In all, Indiana gave President Lincoln 208,367 men, with

over 24, 416 killed or died. There were 126 infantries, 26 batteries, and 13 cavalry regiments organized throughout the state. The men and boys of Newton County were just

a small part of this total, but the sacrifices that they made had lasting impressions on their lives.

Monuments Dedicated to our Civil War Veterans



There are several war monuments in the county, however, only four are dedicated to the Civil War Veterans from our county. Top photo: Goodland's Foster Park; above, left photo: Courthouse lawn, Kentland; right photo: 51st Memorial Tablet, Brook Library, Brook; upper right: McKinley Park Monument - Brook (page 1) Photos by Beth Bassett.