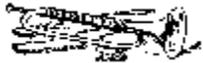


*Arnold Gelhaus served in Co. H 37th WI.
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Franklin Township ó Civil War The Lost Soldiers By Sandy Stiemke



The Sauk County History of 1880 devotes 28 pages to the Civil War 1861-1865. Listed by township are the names of the men who served and the regiment they served with. The township of Franklin roster shows 19 names and 11 units. I failed to find my ancestor Arnold Gelhaus, or the 37th Infantry with which he served, among them. Surely it was just an oversight. But perhaps not!

Our history books have emphasized the patriotic fever that ensued after the battle of Bull Run, July 21, 1861. The day after, Congress voted \$500,000,000 and called for 500,000 volunteers. According to the Sauk County History, "No state was more prompt in sending forward volunteers than was Wisconsin, and no part of Wisconsin responded with greater vigor than Sauk County." By October 17, 1863 the President called for 300,000 volunteers to serve for three years or the war, the quota for Sauk County was 197, Franklin Township's share was 7.

But later in the war it was necessary to enact a draft. Patriotic fever had been replaced by the realization that the war was not going to be over as soon as expected. The Sauk County History states, "On July 18, 1864 the President called for 500,000 volunteers, Franklin's quota being 20. On the 1st of October, Deputy Provost Marshall Philip Cheek, Jr. was compelled to remind the citizens of Sauk County that there was still a deficiency in their quota. "The draft will commence in Sauk County on the 3rd of October, and those drafted will report to

Prairie du Chien on the 19th. Franklin's quota of 14 had not been filled by that time. Accordingly, the draft took place in the towns of LaValle, Woodland, Washington, Bear Creek and Franklin. In some a supplemental draft was necessary owing to quite a number of those enrolled having business and being absent in Canada when the drawing took place.

Perhaps in an effort to deal with the shortage of available young men, some in Franklin Township looked for an alternative. Franklin Township records show that 12 voters from Franklin requested a special meeting to be held wherein the townspeople would vote on whether or not to raise a tax so that volunteers could be paid \$200 each to go to war in place of having to fill a draft. 79 men voted, but the measure was defeated on a vote of 36 for and 43 against. This meeting was held on January 24, 1864.

And so it was that the draft of October 3, 1864 claimed those unable to buy their way out regardless of age and commitments at home.

German immigrant, Arnold Gelhaus, age 43, was one of them. Arnold was the father of five; the youngest, his namesake, was seven months old. Arnold had been a resident and landholder of the Town of Franklin since 1855. He was placed in Company H, 37th Infantry, the majority of whom were draftees. Six of these draftees were from Franklin Township: Joseph Bandel, drafted November 20, 1863, Paul Luther drafted October 3, 1864, and Levi Schoville drafted November 19, 1863. Arnold Gelhaus, George Gasser and Jacob Wintermantel drafted October 29, 1864.

Arnold Gelhaus left Franklin Township never to return. When fellow comrades Paul Luther and Jacob Wintermantel came home they left him behind in a hospital. Initial correspondence with the Government informed his wife Catherine that he had been mustered out July 25, 1865. A later letter from the Adjutant General's office dated April 25, 1866 states that there was "no evidence of death on file." It was

necessary on June 18, 1866, almost a year later, for Paul Luther and (George) Jacob Wintermantel to sign an affidavit stating that they were mustered out about July 15, 1865 and on the 21st day of July 1865 Private Arnold Gelhaus was taken sick and sent to Division Hospital (with chronic diarrhea) and on the 23rd day of July we visited him in the Hospital and on the 26th day of July we left with Regiment for our homes in Wisconsin to be paid and discharged and that said Arnold Gelhaus was left in the Hospital at that time. Given that information, the Government found his Death and Interment record. It appears that while being admitted into Douglas Hospital in Washington D.C., Arnold Gelhaus had become Arnold Gelhouse (and lost his German identity.) Under that name he died and was buried on August 8, 1865.



Arnold was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. But it was not until September of 1992 that any of his descendents were able to locate his grave, and travel there to pay their respects and place flowers on his grave. Joyce Yanke White, great-granddaughter of Arnold Gelhaus who had married and moved to Virginia, was the first family member to see where he was buried. It was an emotional moment for the rest of us back in Wisconsin to finally see the picture she had taken of his grave - located in Section 13, Grave 11909.

August Derleth, great grandson of Arnold Gelhaus spoke of him in "Wisconsin Earth & A Sac Prairie Sampler", when he talks of taking a trip to the Gelhaus homestead and to White Mound Cemetery. "Great-grandmother Catherine Hugobach Gelhaus with her second husband, I stood in brief homage to these two, and that other shadowy third, great-grandfather Gelhaus, whose troubled ghost may be near, though his dust has long since ceased to stir in whatever unknown earth he may lie between here and New Orleans wherever he fell in battle or was lost or slain."

But we are proud that this "lost soldier" Arnold Gelhaus has a place of honor in Arlington National Cemetery. The sacrifices and service of the drafted soldiers of Company H 37th Infantry may have been lost on the writers of the 1880 Sauk County History Books. It has not been lost on their descendents, including myself, great-great granddaughter of Arnold Gelhaus, and great-granddaughter of his namesake Arnold.

If we acknowledge today, though many years later, what our ancestors sacrificed for all of us they are no longer "lost".

