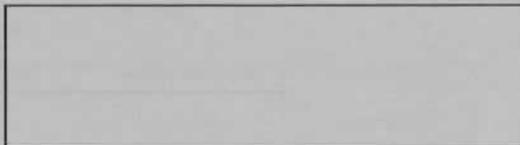


RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Civil War Veterans Resting At Old Village Cemetery (Part 2)

William H. Bigham, 46, enlisted in the Union Army on August 26, 1861. He was among the first 75 recruits to enlist in the 5th Michigan Infantry Regiment Co. I, being formed by Captain John Gilluly of Brighton. The 5th mustered into service on August 27, 1861 for a period of three years. At the time, it was considered unlikely the war would last that long. Since all the recruits came from Livingston County, Company I was known as the *Livingston Company* and the *Livingston Volunteers*.

On September 11, 1861, the Regiment received its regimental flag at Fort Wayne in Detroit and boarded the *Ocean* for Cleveland. They then "... took the cars for Pittsburgh ..." arriving at 9pm on September 12th, where they changed cars arriving in Washington on September 14, 1861. After receiving "... in-different Springfield muskets ...", they bivouacked in Arlington, Virginia. On September 22nd, Co. I advanced several miles nearer the front where they "heard the crack of hostile rifles and the dread whisperings of passing bullets."

Felling timbers and constructing earthworks, the winter was spent in tents in "*Camp Michigan*." April 5, 1862 marked the beginning of the siege of Yorktown; the enemy being defeated after four weeks. Heading to Williamsburg on May 5th, they struggled through rain and mud where the "... thunder of artillery and continual roar of volleys ..." made obvious the war was ahead. Here Captain Gilluly and Co. I lost 26 men killed, wounded and missing.

Bigham participated in the battles of Glendale (June 30, 1862), Malvern Hill (July 1, 1862), Second Manassas (August 30, 1862) and Chantilly (September 1, 1862), among others. He was discharged for disability on September 24, 1862, at which time he returned to Brighton.

William H. Bigham, born in Pennsylvania in 1815, was the eldest of two sons of Robert Bigham Sr., who was born in Ireland in 1789, emigrated to the United States and established himself in

Vermont. It appears Robert Sr., kept heading west as his second son, Robert Jr., was born in Ohio in 1828.

Robert Sr. arrived in the Brighton area in 1833 with his wife, Hannah. Together, they built a two-story log house on the southwest corner of the Grand River Trail and Challis Road. *Call and C*, the original name of their tavern, was later called the *Bigham House*. Many land seekers heading west were glad to see the stopping place, it being the first beyond Power's tavern at Grand River Trail and Spencer Road.

Bigham ("Uncle Robert") is reputed to have helped many pioneers asking information as to the location of good land for settling. He sold farming equipment including plows and ox yokes. At one time, he owned the Eastern House on the north-east corner of Grand River Trail and Main Street.

In the 1870 census, William is living at his father's hotel, and his occupation is a mason. Although 55 years old, he likely found employment in the area. The 1880 census has him living in the household of sister-in-law Malinda (Robert Jr.'s wife), and her family. Malinda appears to be managing the Brighton House for J. C. Case. William H. Bigham died April 26, 1881. His brother, Robert Jr., had died a month earlier. Both are buried in the Old Village Cemetery with their mother, Hannah (born 1792 in Ireland) who died January 13, 1847. Robert Bigham Sr. died in 1876. It is assumed he is buried with the rest of his family.

Compiled by Marieanna Bair from census records; Bill Pless' writings; 1880 History of Livingston County; and Carol McMacken's 'From Settlement to City, Brighton 1832-1945.' Additions, corrections requested. 810-229-6402.



Is your Trail Tales marked *Complimentary Copy*? Then your dues are not up to date. Please renew your membership as we rely on your continued support. Thanks!