

# COL. HANS C. HEG

COL. HANS C. HEG - A True Citizen and a Brave Soldier and Patriot.

Last month the flag preservation project was introduced in the NYTT with some general facts and information. Those of us who have become interested in Col. Heg's part in the Civil War have become acquainted with him and his background which help us to understand his vital role in the 15th Wisconsin Volunteers.

In the spring of 1840 Evan Heg, his wife and their four children left their native country of Norway and came to Muskego in Racine county. Hans C. Heg was then a boy of eleven years of age. His father soon became the acknowledged leader of the colony by virtue of his character as well as his financial standing. The Heg home became the "Mecca of hundreds of Norwegians in search of homes in Wisconsin and the west.

Hans C. Heg grew to manhood in Racine county and during the California gold rush, he with three companions went to California making the trip by ox team. His father died in 1851 and he then returned to the town of Norway and assumed the duties of the farm. Soon after his return he was married to Miss Gunhild Einong, a daughter of one of the emigrants of 1843.

Hans C. Heg, like his father, became a leader in the community. He was elected supervisor of the town of Norway and also justice of the peace. In 1854 his influence and popularity had grown and he was elected chairman of the county board and also a member of the county poor farm commission.

He quit farming in 1859 and moved to the village of Waterford. His stay there was comparatively short. He was then elected warden of the state prison and moved to Waupun. He made a fine record as warden and many improvements were made during the years he held his commission. He believed prisons were established not simply for the punishment of offenders, but "to reclaim the wandering and to save the lost." He said, "Nothing will arouse the virtuous aspiration of a fallen man so powerfully as the conviction that it still lies in his power to regain the right he has forfeited and that he can be respected by society as a fellowman."

When the crisis was reached between the North and the South, he resigned as warden of the state prison and returned to Waterford to help organize the 15th Wisconsin regiment.

Next month will feature the recruiting of the 15th Wisconsin as well as facts about the battles and the death of Col. Heg.

Our Norwegian forefathers played a gallant and near-legendary role in the Civil War. Gathered into the 15th Wisconsin Volunteers, a regiment organized, trained and led into battle by Colonel Hans Christian Heg, their campaign record was exemplary.

Heg himself, killed at the Battle of Chicamauga, was a son of Even Heg who came from Norway in 1840 and founded the first Norwegian language newspaper in the United States. President Abraham Lincoln and Colonel Heg are the only two men memorialized in life-size statues in Madison. Heg's statue is situated on the capitol grounds.