

Memoirs of Edson Dean Washburn

AUTOBIOGRAPHY by Edson Dean Washburn

John Washburn, the grandfather of Edson Dean Washburn, the writer of this sketch, was born in Vermont in 1798 and moved to the wilds of northern New York and settled on a little rocky farm in Wilmington, Essex Co., N. Y. He was married to Jemima Horton.

Of my grandfather I knew nothing except by tradition, and that is that he was industrious and honorable and intensely patriotic, and ran away from home and joined the old Silver Grays (so called) a company of old Revolutionary soldiers (Independent), commanded by Major Sanford. He fought in the battle of Plattsburg in the War of 1812 with England and sometime about 1852 my grandmother got a land warrant for his services in that battle. He died suddenly, falling from his chair, with apoplexy (age 52). My grandmother, Jemima Horton Washburn, I have very vivid and pleasing recollections of. I used to go over to her home $\frac{1}{2}$ miles from where we lived and she would kiss me and make me welcome, and I would pick up apples for her, and potatoes when she dug them. She was religious and had the scriptures at her tongue and was witty, and when aroused was very sarcastic and could quote scripture that would cut to the quick. She was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church as well as all of her children. One of them, Reuben, was a preacher.

My grandmother's family consisted of six children, 4 boys and 2 girls, vis [sic], Sarah Washburn, Allen (farmer), Hope Washburn (farmer), Jesse Washburn (farmer, killed in a runaway with oxen.) John Ward Washburn, my father, a bloomer or ironmaker, but after moving to Minnesota in 1856 he became a farmer. Rachel Washburn Potter, (farmer) and Reuben Washburn, a Methodist preacher.

Of my great-grandfather, Hope Washburn, a soldier of the Revolution, I know nothing more. My grandmother, Asa Lawrence, Scotch descent, tall and slim, active, a farmer. For his first wife, my grandmother, maiden name was Martin. She died when my mother was 11 years old, leaving beside three sons, viz, Henry, Lawrence, Hugh and James Lawrence, the latter was one of the forty-niners who went to California and was murdered for his money. My grandfather Lawrence married twice after his first wife died, and he married the third wife to whom were born Franklin, Andrew and Elizabeth Lawrence.

A brief sketch of the life of Edson Dean Washburn. I was born on the 19th day of January, 1842 in the town Wilmington, Essex Co., N.Y., the fourth son of John Ward and Mehitable Lawrence Washburn, to whom were born 15 children, 10 of whom grew to man and womanhood, viz, Clarinda Washburn McLeod, Mandana Washburn Moore, Orson Monroe Washburn, a soldier in the war of the Rebellion, a member of Company C, 4th Minn. Vol. Inftry. [sic], died in hospital at Corinth, Miss., Aug. 14th, 1862, Elbridge

Fisk Washburn, also a soldier in war of Rebellion; a member of Co. E., 8th Minn. Vol. Infty. [sic], (both clean, honorable men and good soldiers.) Elbridge was killed in the battle at Murfreesboro, Tenn., Dec. 7th, 1864, Lurancy Washburn Blood (now dead), my name comes next in this chronology, Melvin D. Washburn, a bachelor, Charles Albort Washburn, a constable, and when making an arrest was shot and killed on the 19th day of Oct., 1884 and died on the 29th of Oct., 1884 at my home in the town Otsego, Wright Co., Minn.; Elmina Washburn Hoblitt, Frederick Milton Washburn, born in Minnesota. All the others were born in New York.

My earliest recollection of myself and my surroundings is that of a white haired, blue-eyed, undersized little fellow, and when hectored or teased by my older brothers, my mother took my part, and I soon fell in love with her. It was my delight to do something for her that would win a smile or a kiss or commendation from her. We were very poor, and my mother corded, spun and wove our clothes. I can almost hear now the whirr and buzz of the old spinning wheel and the clatter of the shuttles in the old loom as she wove the cloth to keep us warm. She would work till long into the night and sometimes when she thought us asleep or out at play she would kneel by her wheel and pray for her children, that they might be kept clean, and grow to be useful and good men and women. It had it's [sic] influence for I often thought and wished as a boy that I might be as good a Christian as my mother. Though we were very poor, yet my mother kept us clean and patched, with clean clothes for Sunday School or Meeting, though she often had to sit up after we went to bed to wash or fix our clothes for Sunday. In the summertime we went to Sunday School. We were early taught to work on the little stony farm, to help make a living for the family, while Father worked in the forge making iron. My mother made shoes for the girls by taking bedticking [sic] and making fine stitching over the dark stripe with red yarn, then cutting soles from an old boot-leg; would sew them on and when made they looked quite pretty, and made shoes for the girls to wear to church. As the girls grew older they worked out, doing housework, getting the regular wages of 75 cents or \$1.00 per week.

In 1855 my father had caught the Western fever and thought that it offered a better chance for a poor man, and a family that were nearing manhood, to expand, and thought that part of N.Y., was a good place to move from, so he sold the little farm on 70 acres for \$600.00 and started for Kansas. But on the way, owing to the disturbed condition of Kansas, owing to the extension of slavery and the border warfare, he was persuaded to try Minnesota, and took a claim in the town of Otsego, Wright Co., Minn. In Sept., 1856 the family bid farewell to old friends and New York, and started for Minnesota. I was then 14 years of age, active and strong, though small for my age, and the vast stretch of prairie and level ground looked new and grand to me. Our new log house was not yet built when we arrived, father living in a shanty with a bark roof. Our goods were delayed on the way, and we did not get them until the next July 1857. That Fall of 1856 a vast hoard [sic] of grasshoppers settled down on the little patches of potatoes and corn and consumed them and left the settlers with little to live on. They also jumped into all the water holes and drowned and decayed, and when we got water

for house use, we also got legs, wings and heads and other parts of their bodies. When strained and boiled, it did not smell like peaches or strawberries. When I first attempted to drink it I said to brother Orson, "Don't you strain it first?" He said, "Yes." I said, "How?" And he said, "Through your teeth." Then I cried and declared I would not drink it and took a pail and walked to the Mississippi, 2 ½ miles for water that was not full of hoppers. However, I got used to it and used it until snow fell. However, then we had never heard of germs or microbes, consequently they did us no harm.

That first winter was a hard one and we were [sic] put to great straits to keep comfortable with most of our clothing and bedding somewhere between Minnesota and New York. The next spring we, with our oxen commenced with vigor to clear the land and get in a little crop between the stumps. As the crop began to show signs of a good harvest the grasshoppers that had hatched out attacked the growing grain and corn, but by driving them into holes and pitfalls and burning them, we managed to save a part.

In the fall of 1857 the settlers thought it was time to have a school for the children so they got together and built a little log school house in Dist. No. 11, Wright County. I helped build this. It was covered with boards and rough board benches and the first school was of six weeks' duration. The man taught for \$15.00 a month and boarded around. The settlers paid him. The last school that I ever attended in this district was in 1861, a few months in the winter taught by Cornie Hall, a good teacher, taught for \$15.00 a month. She boarded around and wore her brother's boots too, and from the families where she boarded. From the time I was 14 to 20 I worked faithfully on the farm. Our opportunities and privileges were few and for social enjoyment we had to make them ourselves. We thought nothing of going 5 miles with oxen for an evening's social or entertainment. I read all the papers I could get and all the books I could borrow to try and make up in part for the lack of schooling that I was deprived of.

I remember the birth of the Republican Party and the agitation of the slavery question which culminated in the great Civil War. In the winter of 1861 I went up to Dist. No. 1 in Monticello Twp. to school for one month, worked for my board. I then first met a black-eyed, black-haired girl by the name of Amelia Wells, who had good sense enough not to wear the immense great hoop skirts that prevailed at that time, meeting her in a little 10 x 12 school house. I speak of this now because of its bearing and influence on the Washburn family later on. From 1856 to 1860 the slavery question was the all-absorbing question in the nation and after the election of Abraham Lincoln to the Presidency, the Southern States began to secede. In April 1861 they fired on Ft. Sumpter and took it, and the great Civil War was upon us, but very few thought it would last more than the 3 or 6 months. Lincoln called for 78,000 for three months. Most of those who enlisted thought they were going to have a summer outing or picnic, but the Battle of Bull Run taught them differently. Then came the call for 500,000 men, and my oldest brother, Orson, enlisted. He was a bright, active, cheerful and witty and intensely patriotic boy. In the fall of 1860 at a Camp meeting in Otsego, he, with myself, were converted and joined the Methodist Church. How little we thought then that in less than two years he,

so active and strong, would be laid at rest in a soldier's grave. In the summer of 1862 hard battles had been fought, the glint and glitter of the first year had disappeared and stern and relentless war was upon us. McClelland had been defeated and driven back on Washington. Then came the call for 600,000 more men and from all over the land came the response, "We are coming, father Abraham, 600,000 more." I was now 20 years of age and during all of my waking moments, while working in the fields, duty called and said, "Go." I looked at the question from all sides and debated in my own mind whether I had the courage and physical strength to endure a soldier's life, but I made the decision that I would go and that I would be a model soldier so far as I could, that I would never use intoxicating liquors or play cards (and I kept it) and that I would never be late at roll call or any duty that I would be called on to do; and that if my legs did not run off with me I would stand up and fight. I went to the house from the corn field and told my mother of my decision and she put her hand on my head and sent me with her blessing, say, "Go, my boy, and fight manfully for God and your country."

So on 14th day of Aug., 1862, in Monticello, I with 40 others put our name down for enlistment and the next day started with teams for Ft. Snelling where we were examined and mustered in as soldiers in the service of the U.S. for 3 years or during the war. We were assigned to Co. E, 8th Minn. Vol. Inftry [sic]. We next drew our uniforms and put them on and they were either fit or misfit, but we imagined ourselves soldiers, though we lacked experience. (We got that later on.)

Just about this time the great Sioux massacre occurred and Indian war broke out along the frontier of Minnesota. Some were killed and thousands driven from their homes and some from the state never to return again. We in our Co. were ordered back to Monticello to quiet the people and perfect our drill. I did not enlist with the idea that I was going to a picnic or summer outing or that I would have maple syrup and pancakes for breakfast, so what I got, whether of hardship, food or treatment, that was better than I had expected. It was clear gain and taking it all through, it was better than I had pictured. We enlisted to go south and fight Rebels, but the Sioux war assumed such proportions that it needed a strong force to whip them and keep them from depopulating the state. So our Regt., the 8th Minnesota, was chosen for this duty and they were sent in October 1862 to Fort Ripley on the Mississippi River where we remained the first winter doing guard duty and trying to eat the horrid sour bread that was furnished us. In May 1863 we were ordered to Paynesville, where we remained one year. We were kept busy building sod forts, scouting for Indians and keeping communications open along the then frontier. Our Regiment lost two men this summer killed by Indians, Capt. Cody and Sgt. Edwards of Co. A., and the desolation wrought along the frontiers by a raid of Indians was fearful to witness.

On the 6th of May 1864 we were ordered to Sauk Center, there to be mounted for the Indian Expedition under Brig. Gen. Alfred Sully. After we were mounted on our little mustangs, 16 May 1864, we took up our march across the country to Ft. Ridgley on the Minn. River, arrived June 1st where we joined the rested of the 2nd Brigade composed of the following groups, 8th Minn. Vol. Inftry. [sic], mounted, 6 Cos. 2nd Minn. Vol

Cavalry, Capt. Jones, 3 Minn. Battery, 6 lb. guns composed 2 brigade, 45 Indian scouts with 93 6 -mule teams and 12 ambulances with 30 days rations consisting of hard tack, pork, coffee, and beans. June 6th 1864 took up our long march over the then wilds of Dakota to the Minn. Coteau to the James River at the foot of the Missouri Coteau and reached the Missouri River on the 30th day of June, 1864, 332 miles, where we joined the 1st brigade under Gen. Sully who had come up the Missouri, and so well had it been timed that we got there on the same day. Gen. Sully reviewed us and said that with this force he could whip all Hell and the Sioux Nation. We did later whip the Sioux Nation, but Hell is not conquered yet, doubtless owing to the fact that Gen. Sully died soon from the effects of Bad Whiskey. On the 4th July, Ft. Rice was founded on the Missouri River (afterward called Ft. Abraham Lincoln.)

We left Ft. Rice July 19, marching northwest to Heart River, 110 miles; at this point the main train with 125 Idaho wagons drawn by oxen with men, women and children who had followed us from Minn. were corralled and all invalids. I was among this number. My ankles had swollen and become exceedingly painful so I could not walk, owing to lack of sleep and great fatigue. For 6 days and nights I slept nearly all the time. The rest of the command took 6 days rations in light wagons and struck north to Knife River where on the 28th and 29th of July they fought the battle of Tabehakuty [sic] or Kill Deer [sic] Mountain, whipping the Sioux nation, taking their camp with tons of beautiful buffalo robes and burning them, inflicting such punishment that they never recovered from it. I have always regretted that I was laid by at this time for I missed one fight that my Regiment was in. On the return of the Regiment I was recovered and feeling fine. We resumed our march west along Heart River and on the 5th of August came in sight of the Bad Lands of the Little Missouri. The Bad Lands here are 20 miles wide and the wildest country imaginable. I will not try to describe them here for whoever desires can go and see them for no one will ever steal them or carry them away. This country from Heart River is filled with coal, often cropping out at the surface.

We immediately commenced our descent into the Bad Lands, winding in and out and around the hills, our train some 3 miles long, resembling a huge serpent as it crawled along. While we soldiers marched on either flank and rear. When we reached the Little Missouri the Indians in force again disputed our progress, appearing on the hills all around us, firing upon us. We could not have encountered them in a worse place for us or better place for them to attack, and for a part of two days we fought and drove them as we dug our way out of this desolate country. The 3rd day we got through onto the table land and commenced a rapid march for the Yellowstone River. Our rations were cut down and the grasshoppers had eaten all the grass down to the roots and the water was of the worst alkali; the mules and horses suffering terribly, and some had to be shot.

We reached the Yellowstone on the 12 of August and our spirits rose as we got good water and renewed our supply of hardtack for we had barely one day rations when we got there. The boats were a welcome sight to us. We crossed the Yellowstone on boats

and on the 14th resumed our march down the Yellowstone to Ft. Union and by the 20th we had crossed the Missouri. It was now one month since we left Ft. Rice and we had traveled 460 miles over a most difficult country, fought two battles with the Indians, opened up for all time a vast country, almost an Empire.

We are now ready to return to Minn. The homeward trip was without particular interest save the hard, monotonous marching, but was relieved [sic] at a point between Ft. Union and Ft. Berthold when we struck a vast herd of Buffalo, doubtless there were 500,000 of them going north for the winter. There was no lack of meat in camp then!

We arrived at Ft. Snelling Sept. 26, bronned [sic], tough and hearty, feeling that we had done well, having traveled 1,50 [sic] miles, since the 16th of May and conquered [sic] the Sioux and drove them far beyond the borders of Minnesota and opened up the Dakotas and Montana to settlement.

We found orders awaiting us at Snelling to turn our horses and equipment and report at Nashville, Tenn., forthwith. But the boys thought that after what they had done they were entitled to a few days at home as most of them lived within 50 miles of Snelling and being unable to get furloughs, the 2nd night all but 200 took french [sic] leave and went home. I remained in camp and the next day the Capt. told me seeing that I had not run away that we would send me home to bring back those who had; consequently I got home to see my mother for 4 days.

On Oct. 5th, 1864, the Regiment marched from Ft. Snelling to St. Paul and took a boat for the South. Our accommodations were the worst possible. The Regiment of 1,000 men crowded on a small, wheezy [sic] steamer with a barge on either side, loosely covered with canvas. As it rained the cover leaked and the mud nearly one inch deep over the floor, no place to sit down or lie down except in that mud. Nothing to eat but Hardtack and river water, but we had the one privilege of every American soldier, (i.e., grumble). The third day we reached LaCrosse [sic], Wis., and then took cars for Chicago where we were transferred to box cars, 40 in a car. These cars had just been carrying cattle and were upholstered as high as the cattle came. The [next few words are illegible]. They had been shoveled out but no straw put in [illegible] bench around the side served as a seat and when we lay down (as a car is only 8 ft. wide) we stuck our heads under the bench and loped [sic] our legs halfway and so dovetailed in; and when we turned over the Sgt. hollered, "Spoon!" and we all turned at once.

I will state in passing that these cars did not smell like roses and they ran off the track once but fortunately none of us "cattle" were killed. Near New Albany Indiana, we got off the cars and waited for daylight and then marched 3 miles to that town where we prepared to make some hot coffee for breakfast. But we were told that we would soon cross the river over into Louisville, Ky. and then would be hot coffee served us. e kicked out our fires and waited. After a time we crossed, but where was the hot coffee? All the hot things I saw was the secessionists.

We marched through the streets of Louisville hollering, "Hot coffee!" and at 10 o'clock we got down toward Bowling Green and made our own hot coffee. This was a small sample of soldiering in 1864.

The next day we took flat cars for Nashville where we arrived at midnight of Oct. 14, 1864 in a rainstorm and it had rained every day but one since we left St. Paul. The next day we again at 8 a.m. boarded the flat cars and commenced crawling toward Murfreesboro, Tenn. where we arrived at midnight – 30 miles. While in camp here I was appointed Corporal; not much of an office but better than a private in the rear rank and paid \$2.00 per month more pay. But with gold at a premium of \$2.50 and greenback at 36 cents on the dollar, we could not indulge in very many of the luxuries of life.

Our duty was to help keep communications open between Chattanooga and Nashville. On the 4th of December, 1864, our Regiment had its first introduction to rebel bullets at Overalls Creek. One of the Regt. wounded. I now found that I could stand up and face a rebel battery as coolly [sic] as I did Indian's guns and arrows. During this time for three weeks we were on 1/3 ration of hardtack; no coffee, not even salt for our porridge that we made in a big kettle. We first went out in the country and foraged the corn while one-half stood guard, the other half picked corn. Then we ground it in a little mill that stood on Store [sic] River. We had no way of sifting the meal so we put it in the kettle with water and what rose to the top we skimmed off. But with no salt nor meat for seasoning, not many of us grew fat or good natured, for somebody had blundered. Trains were going at all hours of the day and night from Nashville empty to Chattanooga, loading with soldiers and back to Nashville, preparing for the great battle of Franklin soon to be fought.

There were plenty of rations at both these points. The exposure of sleeping on the cold, damp ground and this corn cob diet brought on some severe intestinal troubles from which I suffered for some time. Gen. Bates division of the rebel army with Gen. Forest [sic] kept us Cavalry well hedged in. But on the 7th of December, 1864, our two brigades under General Millroy, numbering about 2,800 marched out on the Winslow Pike, some 2 or 3 miles from Fort Rosecrans, where our battery was soon engaged with the Rebel battery. We lay concealed in a corn field between the two while they threw shells over us. This continued for about 2 hours when our battery spent her ammunition and retired for more back at the fort.

We silently slipped out of the corn and swung around to the right, some 2 miles on the double [sic] quick. As we came near their left flank, we were in an open cotton field, exposed to a most galling fire of shell and musketry. A number of the Regt. went down among whom was our gallant Lient.[sic]- Col. Rodgers, wounded from the effects he never fully recovered and died a few years later. When we got to within 30 or 40 rods of the Rebel works, we were ordered to lay down to get our [illegible] cotton field with heads down hill. Here for 10 minutes we were exposed to as terrific a musketry fire as soldiers ever met. It was here that brother Elbridge was instantly killed as was also Elliott Poncher and 12 others wounded. We saw that to lay there exposed as we were,

was to be shot down like cattle, and with one impulse we arose and with fixed bayonets we charged their works. When we reached the shelter of the woods, we slipped from tree to tree whooping like Indians. (We were called the Indian Regt.) We pored [sic] in a most deadly shower of Minne [sic] bullets.

This they could not stand and soon broke and ran and we after them. I had the satisfaction of capturing 3 Rebels from behind a log, sending them to the rear where someone who had sulked in the first of the fight took them in to the Fort and claimed the honor of capturing them. (Such is fame.) With our Battery far in the Rear and no Calvery [sic] we found that could not overtake them and we returned to the Fort with 250 prisoners and one battle flag. We rejoiced over the victory, but were saddened by the thought of the death of 14 brave boys and 200 wounded.

The next day I went and found my brother, and he with 11 others were buried in one large grave. The next 10 days were watchful, anxious ones while the battle of Nashville was being fought. We could hear the guns though 30 miles away. Of the four chums who tented together, I this time was left alone in the tent, my brother killed, Dallas wounded, Ambler sick and both in hospital. I had to seek new chums. After the defeat of Hood at Nashville, our corps, the 23rd, under Gen. Schofield, were ordered across Tenn. to Clifton on the Tenn. River. The march was uneventful mostly. Before reaching Columbia, we passed through some beautiful country that had not been foraged over, which enabled me to get a few apples and potatoes. That greatly helped my bowel trouble. By this time I was weak and reduced in flesh so I could not march but a short distance without resting. Though I carried my gun and did regular duty.

Toward the last of January, 1865, the boats arrived and we went on board and down the Tenn. River and up the Ohio to near Louisville when the ice got so thick we could not go farther by boat. Then we took cars for Washington. We suffered now with cold as we had thrown our overcoats away in Tennessee, it was so hot. We were crowded 40 in a boxcar with a little stove in the center and no ventilation except as we opened the side door. That seemed to let in a large part of the cold air of Pennsylvania and Ohio. This gave us severe colds which sent many to the hospital.

We arrived in Washington, marched down Pennsylvania Avenue, and across the Potomac on the long bridge, and out into Arlington Heights. Here we camped for 3 weeks, within sight of the national capital, that three weeks was the most disagreeable in all of my army service. In the month of February we were freezing and thawing and coughing without wood enough to properly cook our food and none to warm us. All things come to an end sometimes and we were rejoiced when orders came to take passage on the Old Ariel in Chesapeake Bay and out into the Atlantic and around Cape Hatteras. This was my first sight of Old Ocean and I should have enjoyed the trip if I could have had proper food, but with the hardtack and fat-boiled salt pork, and no chance to make coffee, we simply lounged around on hurricane deck and enjoyed a touch of seasickness as best we could. We had plenty of fresh air on the upper deck while the other two Regiments had the middle deck and hold.

When we arrived in Wilmington, North Carolina, Fort Fisher was taken and we missed that sport. We did not disembark but returned to New Berne, North Carolina, where we disembarked and marched inland towards Goldsborough, N. C. We all now saw that the Southern Confederacy was tottering to fall. Sherman was swing around from his march to the sea and General Johnson of the Rebel army made his last stand at Kingston, N.C. Our Regiment was ordered on to the picket line. Then it was countermanded and we were sent to guard the ammunition train, which we did. During this battle. This led us out of the fight and the other fellows caught the bullets. We soon took up our march via Wheat-Swamp church to Raleigh. While there the news of the assassination [sic] of President Lincoln reached us and cast an unspeakable gloom and sadness over us. I remember that the Press and people of Raleigh implored us to keep cool and not to think that they, the people of the South, were in any way responsible for it; that they deplored the killing quite as much as we did.

We were next ordered to Greensboro, North Carolina. On this march we heard of the surrender of General Lee. I shall never forget the occasion. Our Brigade was marching in the rear that day. About 10 a.m. we heard cheering away up at the front; faintly at first, louder as it drew nearer. When the bearer of the news came in sight the troops opened to the right and left and gave the lone horseman the middle of the pike. He, with hat in hand as he came to the head of each regiment, raised his hat and said, "Lee has surrendered with all of his army." Then went up cheer upon cheer. The front of the column halted by a tar kiln until the rear column came up, then the men went wild with joy and caught their officers and bore them aloft over their heads, shouting and cheering and singing, "John Brown's Body Lies A-mouldering in the Ground." Someone set fire to the tar kiln of thousands of barrels of tar and tons of resin which soon melted and ran down the hill into the river, the fire following until the whole surface of the river was aflame - - a literal river of fire.

After this jollification we resumed our march at 3:30 p.m., supposing we would march a few miles and camp for the night. But to our surprise and chagrin we were put to our best gait and only halted for camp at midnight, and then our regiment ordered out on picket. (This is military.) We pushed on through Greensboro to Charlotte, N.C. where we remained until the 25th of July, doing little but watch the poor dejected rebel soldiers as they wended their way home after making heroic sacrifices and fighting desperately for a bad cause, only to be beaten and return penniless, ragged and disheartened to their desolate homes. But such is war. We often divided ourhardtack and coffee with them and sometimes took their corn meal in exchange as that was all they had to eat.

We received our discharge from the army here and started north to our dear old Minnesota homes and the loved ones who had bid us good-bye in Sept. before. We had our organization until we reached St. Paul, August 1st, 1865, where we were welcomed by the Governor and banqueted by the ladies of St. Paul at the Capital and thanked for our little part in that great war that resulted in the freedom of 4,000,000 of slaves, saving the Union undivided and the Flag unsullied.

While here at Charlotte, N.C. during the hot days of summer my old complaint of dysentery trouble returned and I was much reduced in flesh and strength, but would not give up and kept on until we got to St. Paul, though able to walk but a few rods at a time. When I got to my sister's, Mrs. Mooers in Minneapolis, intending to stop over night and go home the next day. But the next day my hitherto faithful legs that hadn't run away with me in battle refused to carry me home in peace to see my mother. So for 4 weeks I lay there, a pretty sick boy with pulse at 104. But with wholesome food and good nursing I recovered after 4 weeks so I could get home though at the time my feet were so heavy that I could scarcely get them over a chalk mark and I tipped the scale at 92 lbs. But I was home again after 3 years of soldiering with no regrets for the past, and with bright hopes for the future I began to look for a farm and a home of my own. When I enlisted I told my mother that if I had my health I would lay by \$100 a year and I sent my money to my mother, and she had saved it. Now I had \$412 to commence life with, and I bought a pair of oxen. On the 13th of May 1866 I was married to the dark-eyed girl of whom I spoke (Amelia Wells) who has been a good and faithful wife ever since. We commenced living in a small way in a log house on a farm 3 miles from where I now live. My life on the farm has been in the main uneventful. I have always taken a lively interest in the church, attending regular services and Sunday School, though living 5 miles away, and taking my children when they were young, and when they grew older they did not depart from this custom or habit. Now that they have homes of their own it is the joy and satisfaction of my life to know that these homes are Christian homes and that they all of them stand for the best in the communities where they reside. I have always taken an interest in town, county, state and national affairs. . . casting my first ballot for that good and great man, Abraham Lincoln. . .

Memoirs of Edson Dean Washbun

written at Monticello, Minnesota

October and November 1907

At age of 65