

Andrew John Kelley

Born

2 Sep 1845, Lima, Lagrange, Indiana

Entered Service

12 Aug 1862

Ypsilanti, Washtenaw, Michigan

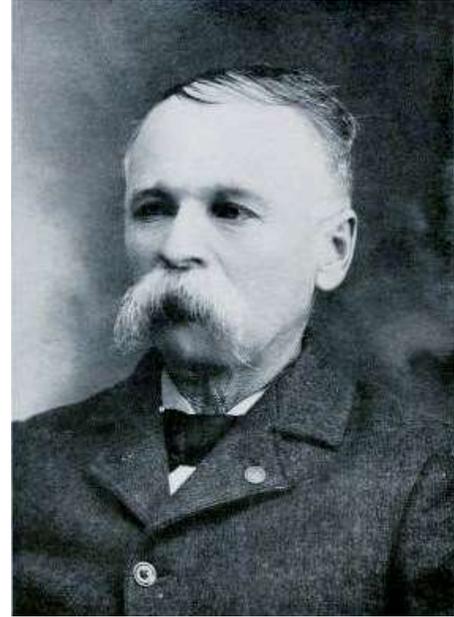
Company E

17th Michigan Infantry

Civil War

Died

4 Jun 1918, Crookston, Polk, Minnesota



Early Years

Andrew John Kelley was born 2 Sep 1845 in Lima, Lagrange Co., Indiana, the youngest child of John Andrew and Maria (Baker) Kelley. By 1850, Maria and four of her children were living next door to Andrew Baker in Adrian, Lenawee Co., Michigan without John Kelley.ⁱ

On 12 Aug 1862, a month before his seventeenth birthday, Andrew enlisted as a Private in Company E, 17th Michigan Infantry at Ypsilanti, Michigan.ⁱⁱ

The War Years

During the summer of 1862, the state of Michigan began recruiting men to fill the ranks of the newly established Seventeenth Michigan Volunteer Infantry. On August 11, 1862, Company "E," of the 17th Michigan was mustered into service in Ypsilanti, Michigan. A majority of men that joined the ranks of Company "E" were students at Michigan State Normal School, now known as Eastern Michigan University. Due to the large number of students in the ranks, Company "E" acquired the nickname the "Normal Company."ⁱⁱⁱ



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Not even a week after Andrew enlisted, the Regiment departed Michigan for Washington, DC, taking steamboats from Detroit to Cleveland, then boarding a train to Washington. Once there, they were assigned to the 1st Brigade, 1st Division, of the 9th Corp under the command of General Ambrose Burnside. They joined the Maryland Campaign under the command of General George McClellan.^{iv}

Less than two weeks after leaving the state of Michigan, the Regiment was hotly contested at the battle of South Mountain on September 14th, 1862. During this battle, the 17th Michigan gallantly charged Confederate forces that had taken up a defensive position along a stone wall. The charge by the 17th routed the Confederate and the Regiment acquired the nickname the “Stonewall Regiment.” The aftermath of the battle resulted in twenty-seven (27) men killed and one hundred and fourteen (114) wounded...On September 17th, 1862, the Regiment was engaged at Antietam, sustaining a further loss of 18 killed and 87 wounded. After this battle, which is still known as the single bloodiest day in American warfare with a combined loss on both sides of 23,000 men killed, wounded or missing, the Regiment left with its command and returned to Virginia.^v

The 17th Michigan fought in the siege of Vicksburg, Mississippi in June 1863, and in the assault on Jackson, Mississippi in July 1863.^{vi}

In October 1863, the Regiment was assigned to the Army of Tennessee. On October 14th, 1863, the Regiment, then attached to the 3rd Brigade, of the 1st Division, or [sic] the 9th Corp, marched from Knoxville to Loudon, Tennessee, to oppose the advance of Confederate General James Longstreet, then moving on to Knoxville. It lay under its arms during the night, and on the following morning commenced falling back, closely followed by the Confederates. It continued to retreat, acting as a rear guard for the rest of the Corp. While crossing Turkey Creek, Longstreet’s men attacked in force, causing a severe engagement to occur. In this action, the Regiment lost 7 men killed, 19 wounded, and 10 missing. During the retreat to Knoxville, and during the Siege of Fort Saunders, the men suffered greatly, especially while being besieged from the want of proper and sufficient rations.^{vii}

The regiment fought in many more battles, including at the Battle of the Wilderness and the battle of Spotsylvania Court House. In May of 1864 they were designated as an engineer troop and spent the remainder of the war building and reconstructing fortifications. Andrew Kelley was promoted to Full Sergeant on 1 May 1865, and was mustered out of service with the rest of the Michigan 17th on 3 Jun 1865.^{viii}

The Post War Years

Upon his return to Michigan, Andrew took up farming. On 23 Mar 1869 in Burr Oak, he married Ella A. Fleming, and for a short time worked as a guard at the prison in Jackson before returning to farming. The couple moved to a homestead in Crookston, Polk Co., Minnesota in 1873. They had seven children: Herbert, Edwin, Clara, Mabel, Maude, Lulu, and Leonard.

[Kelley] eventually built a nice house, which was the only one on the prairie between Crookston and the Red Lake agency. Indians would often visit his place for food, and they were always civil. One time, the Native Americans “borrowed” Kelley’s ax, but he went after them to retrieve his much-needed possession.

Kelley served as city clerk since the town of Crookston was organized. Kelley was the first Sunday school superintendent in Crookston, presiding over a Union Church Sunday school, which he started in 1874.^{ix}

On 17 Apr 1900, Andrew J. Kelley was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions at Knoxville, Tennessee on 20 Nov 1863. The citation reads:

Andrew John Kelley

Having voluntarily accompanied a small party to destroy buildings within the enemy's lines whence sharpshooters had been firing, disregarded an order to retire, remained and completed the firing of the buildings, thus insuring their total destruction; this at the imminent risk of his life from the fire of the advancing enemy.^x

Andrew John Kelley died on 4 Jun 1918 in Crookston. His wife Ella died in 1925. They are buried in Oakdale Cemetery.

**Compiled by Leslie Hartz Sprott
Anthony Wayne Chapter**



Photos courtesy of Don Morfe 17 Jul 2004.



Andrew John Kelley

NOTES

ⁱ1850 US Census.

ⁱⁱ*US, Civil War Soldier Records and Profiles, 1861-1865*, Ancestry.com

ⁱⁱⁱ*The 17th Michigan Volunteer Infantry Company E Inc. "The Stonewall Regiment"*, Unit History.

^{iv}Ibid.

^vIbid.

^{vi}Ibid.

^{vii}Ibid.

^{viii}Ibid.

^{ix}*Legendary Locals of Crookston*, p. 28.

^xCongressional Medal of Honor Society official website.

SOURCES

Congressional Medal of Honor Society official website. <http://www.cmohs.org/recipient-detail/736/kelley-andrew-j.php>

Gray, Kristina Torkelson, *Legendary Locals of Crookston*, Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, South Carolina, 2014.

United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1900. M432, 1009 rolls.