

## **The Rasch Brothers service in the Civil War**

By Mary Rasch Alt

The Second Michigan Cavalry was organized by the Honorable F.W. Kellogg of Grand Rapids, then a member of congress, authority being given him by the Secretary of War, subject to the approval of the Governor of Michigan. The Regiment was rendezvoused at Grand Rapids, its recruitment being completed October 2, 1861, with 1163 officers and men on its muster rolls.

Alois Rasch joined for duty Sept. 4, 1861 in Warren Co., Michigan for 3 years as "Private" in the Second Michigan Cavalry, Company H. Alois Rasch was born in German and is 21 years of age, five feet six inches high, light complexion, blue eyes, brown hair, and by occupation, when enrolled, a farmer.

He came with them to Grand Rapids, where his older brother, Robert Rasch and his only sister, Frances Jackoboice, lived. After the war, he and his younger brother, Julius Rasch, would return to make Grand Rapids their home, as did another brother, Adolph Rasch, my great-great grandfather.

The Second Infantry was recruited and enlisted for Federal duty under the first proclamation of President Lincoln on April 13, 1861. Julius Rasch, a Private, Company A of the Second Regiment of Michigan Infantry was enlisted by Capt. Louis Dillman of the Second Regiment of Michigan Inf. at Detroit, Michigan on the 25th day of April, 1861, to serve three years. He was born in Olbersdorf in Germany, was 19 years of age, five feet six inches high, light complexion, blue eyes, light hair, and by occupation when enlisted, a clerk.

### **Alois Rasch's service with the Second Michigan Cavalry, Company H**

The Regiment left its rendezvous under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Davis, on Nov. 14, 1861, with orders to report to St. Louis, MO, where on its arrival, was stationed at Benton Barracks. Alois Rasch was "Present" Nov. and Dec. 1861 on the Company Muster Roll.

Soon after their arrival, they were assigned to General Pope's Army, taking part in the operations at and about New Madrid, MO and Island #10, having skirmishes with the Confederates at Point Pleasant, on March 9th, also at Tipton Station the same month. They were actively engaged with the investment of Island #10, which finally led to its surrender. After the capture of the Island, they moved with the army to Farmington, MS, and being in the advance, it encountered the Confederates at Pine Hill, May 2nd, and then at Monterey on the 3rd, followed by Farmington on the 5th. During the Siege of Corinth, they were actively engaged in scouting and picket duty in the surrounding country, accomplishing much hard service.

Alois Rasch was "Present" Jan., Feb, March, April, May June July and Aug., 1862 on the Company Muster Roll. On Aug. 18, 1862 Alois was "Not stated" and absentees were "Unknown".

While at Corinth, Captain P.H. Sheridan, of the U.S. Army, was commissioned Colonel and took command at Pittsburgh Landing, immediately setting out for Boonville, where a spirited fight led to one of the brightest small victories of the war. From there, the Regiment moved into Kentucky via Louisville, in the advance in the movement from that point on Perryville. Arriving in the vicinity of Perryville, the Regiment engaged the confederates, meeting a stubborn resistance, but dislodging the confederates from every cover with their long range repeating rifles. After the battle, the regiment followed the fleeing southerners to Harrodsburg, engaging them there on the 10th, followed by Lancaster on the 12th, then finally at Rocastle River.

Alois Rasch was appointed "Corporal" on Nov. 1, 1862.

Pursuit having been ordered discontinued by General Buell, the Confederates moved through the Cumberland Gap and then into Eastern Tennessee. During November, the 2nd remained in Kentucky, then in December and January, participated in the raid under General Carter into East Tennessee, severing rail lines, communications and supplies. During the 22 days of this hard fought raid, the Regiment was involved in actions at Blountsville, Zolikoffer and Watanga.

Alois Rasch was "Present" Jan. and Feb. 1863 on the Company Muster Roll.

Soon after the Carter Raid, they proceeded to Louisville, on February 3, 1863, they moved to Nashville. During the months of February and March, they were stationed at Murfreesboro and Franklin, making many important reconnaissances on the surrounding roads, having many skirmishes at Milton, Cainsville and Spring Hill. On the 4th. and 5th of March, they had a severe skirmish with forces under the commands of General Vandorn and Forrest on the Columbia Pike, loosing 1 killed, 4 wounded, with 1 captured. From the 8th to the 12th, they participated in an important reconnaissance, during which the

confederates were driven across the Duck River. March 25th, they had a sharp encounter with rebels under the command of Stearns and Forrest, killing and wounding a large number, while capturing 52 prisoners and a large number of wagons filled with arms, ammunition and supplies, with a loss to the Regiment of 1 killed, 6 wounded and 2 missing.

Alois Rasch was "Present" March, April, May and June 1863 on the Company Muster Roll.

On the 4th of June, while returning to Franklin from Triune, they had a brisk skirmish, with a loss of 2 killed and 3 wounded. Remaining at Triune until the army advanced from Murfreesboro, they were engaged at Rover, then Middletown, and on the 27th, charged the rebels into Shelbyville. On the 2nd of July, it aided in driving the Confederates from Elk River Ford, then on the 3rd, from Cowan.

In the early part of September, they were actively engaged in scouting among the mountains near Chattanooga and northern Georgia. On the 18th, 19th and 20th, they were in the great Battle of Chickamauga, charging the rear of Bragg's army at Fayetteville, capturing 18 men and important information, then ascending the mountains, reported to Rosecrans, then moved to the rear of the battlefield at Crawfish Springs, where they assisted in holding a critical point.

Alois Rasch was "Present" Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. 1863 on the Company Muster Roll.

Leaving Rankin's Ferry, on the Tennessee River on Oct. 3rd, the Regiment participated in the chase of the Confederates of General Wheeler, who were then making raids on the communication lines of the army. They crossed the Cumberland Mountains, marching on the 3rd, 4th and 5th, 103 miles, followed on the 6th, 7th and 8th, 82 miles, all over rough and mountainous terrain, meeting the rebels at Anderson's Cross Roads. The Regiment then encamped at Winchester, at this time they were serving in the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division of the Army of the Cumberland.

In November, the Regiment preceded on a foraging expedition to Fayetteville, securing 400 bushels of wheat, 65 beef cattle, between 500 and 600 sheep and many horses and mules.

Leaving Winchester on the 16th, the Regiment moved, via Shelbyville, Murfreesboro and Milton, to Liberty, thence to Sparta, over the Cumberlands, through Crossville, Kingston and Knoxville, to Strawberry Plains, fording the Holston River. On the 23rd, the Regiment marched, via New Market, to Dandridge, where at daylight on the 24th, they participated in an attack on a superior force. The fight lasting through the day, the Union forces falling back to New Market, the 2nd, losing 2 men killed, 8 wounded, with 10 captured. On the 25th, they camped at Mossey Creek, remaining there until January 14, 1864. On the 17th, they skirmished with the forces of General Longstreet, then moving on Knoxville. Falling back to Knoxville, they participated in attack on the rebels at Pigeon River, from whom they captured 3 pieces of artillery along with 75 prisoners.

Alois Rasch was "Present" January through August 1864 on the Company Muster Roll.

The next roll of Dec. 1864, Alois' last name is spelled Rash. On the 29th of March, 1864, 366 men re-enlisted, being sent home on Veteran Furlough the 14th, for 30 days leave.

"Mustered in Cleveland, Tenn., March 29, 1864. Alois Rasch enlisted at Mossey Creek, Tenn. April 14, 1864 absent with leave Vet on furlough"

On the 3rd of May, the remainder of the Regiment broke camp and moved with Sherman's army on the Georgia Campaign. Marching through Tunnel Hill on the 11th, to Dug Gap, skirmishing there on the 13th, then constructed breastworks at Tipton, but crossed the Coosa River on the next day continuing the advance to Atlanta, reaching Cassville Station on the 20th, forded the Etowah River on the 23rd, reaching Lost Mountain on the 17th. During this advance the 2nd. lost 3 killed, 13 wounded. The Regiment was then sent by rail to Franklin, arriving there on the 10th. of July, where they were joined by the re-enlisted Veterans returning from leave.

Remaining there until the 30th, when they moved out the Murfreesboro Road in pursuit of General Wheeler's Cavalry, engaging them 12 miles outside of Nashville, driving them several miles, then again at Campbellville on the 5th, before returning to Franklin on the 12th. On the 27th, they again marched out to Florence, AL, engaging the forces of General Forrest at Cypress River on the 7th.

Alois' oldest brother, Florian Rasch, would move just north of Florence, AL, after the war, seeking a warmer climate for his wife, Caroline.

The Regiment then moved to Four Mile Creek, AL, where they encamped until the 29th, when the Confederates, led by General Hood, crossed the Tennessee River. For the remainder of the month, the Regiment was engaged checking the rebel advance. On the 30th, they encountered the Confederates at Raccoon Ford, but were obliged to retire. On the 31st, they marched to Sugar Creek, which for the year brought the total, exclusive of patrols, to 1364 miles on the march. Alois Rasch was "present" Nov. and Dec. 1864 on the Company Muster Roll.

On Nov. 1st, they moved towards Shoal Creek, AL, where they were attacked on the 5th, when after a gallant defense, were forced back to Four Mile Creek, sustaining heavy losses.

From the 9th to the 14th, they were in camp doing scouting and picket duty. On the 15th, they broke camp and made a reconnaissance to the right of its position, encamping at Taylor's Springs, remaining there until the 20th, when they marched to Lexington, TN, leaving there on the 21st to Lawrenceburg, where they were attacked on the afternoon of that day, then fell back towards Campbellville and Columbia, skirmishing at both of these points. The 25th, they crossed the Duck River, engaging the rebels then, and on the next two days. On the 28th, they were in line of battle near the Lewisburg Pike. On the 29th, they retired to Spring Hill, there engaged in skirmishing and again at Bethesda Church. On the 30<sup>th</sup>, they were engaged at Franklin, fighting all day, sustaining a loss of 1 killed, 17 wounded and 3 missing.

We have visited the battlefield at Franklin and were thankful the Regiment was located north of the heavy fighting.

The Regiment marched from near Franklin, Dec. 1st, to within a few miles of Nashville, going into the line of battle that night. On the 2nd, they passed through the city, crossing the Cumberland River, going into camp at Edgefield, remaining there until the 12th, when they retraced their route back through Nashville, camping on the Charlotte Pike.

From the book "Eyewitnesses at the Battle of Franklin", "Early in the afternoon of Dec. 1, the day after the battle, Hood sends Lee's Corps north toward Nashville. Stewart's and Cheatham's corps follow the next day."

Remaining in the general area until March 11th, when they crossed the Tennessee River into Alabama, raiding into different towns destroying supplies, all the while skirmishing with Confederates whenever they were encountered. When the war ended they were broken up into detachments and used to garrison Perry, Thomaston, Barnesville, Forsyth and Milledgeville, while two full companies remained to help garrison Macon.

Alois Rasch's records show: Jan. 1865 "Corpl. Prov. Guard Regt. Hdqrs." Feb. 1865- "Prov. Gd." Alois Rasch was "Present" May and June 1865 on the Company Muster Roll. Alois Rasch was "Promoted from Corporal. To Sgt. March 16, 1865"

On the 17th of August, they were mustered out of Federal service, returned to Michigan by rail, arriving at Jackson on the 26th, where they were paid off and disbanded.

"Alois Rasch, Sgt. Co. H 2 Regt. Michigan Cavalry, Macon, GA, Aug. 17, 1865 mustered out. Last paid Feb. 28, 1865, due soldier \$7.86. Bounty paid \$210 due \$190. "Veteran was Corp. From Jan 5, 1865 to March 16, 1865."

### **Julius Rasch's service with the 2nd Regiment Michigan Infantry, Company A**

The companies assigned to the Regiment had been anxiously waiting at their respective locations for acceptance into service and on receipt of the order on the 25th of April to rendezvous at Detroit, with remarkable promptness immediately commenced their movement, all being in camp by the 27th, much to the surprise of the Colonel who had expected that many days would elapse before they would reach camp, as a consequence of which, the quarters they reported to were not prepared for their reception.

While in the process of organization the Regiment was ordered to Fort Wayne, near Detroit, where its recruitment was completed, being mustered into Federal service on May 25, 1861, with 1013 officers and men on its rolls, making them the first of the three year Regiments to be raised in the State. The Regiment moved from Fort Wayne on June 6th, for the field in Virginia, arriving in Washington D.C. on June the 10<sup>th</sup>. A few days later took up quarters at camp Winfield Scott on Washington Heights near the Chain Bridge.

The Regiments first engagement was at Blackburn's Ford on July 18, 1861, with a small loss in wounded, serving in General Tyler's Division, Colonel Richardson being in command of the Brigade and Lt. Colonel Chipman having been appointed a Captain in the regular army, the command of the Regiment devolved upon Major Williams.

The Regiment, although not actually engaged at Bull Run, had the dubious honor, together with the Third Michigan, of covering the retreat of the Union troops from that disastrous field. During the winter, the Regiment lay near Alexandria. In March, under the command of Colonel Orlando M. Poe, Lieutenant of the U.S. Engineer Corp, who had been commissioned a Colonel September 16, 1861, they entered on the Peninsular Campaign of 1862 under the command of General McClellan, serving Berry's

Brigade, Kearny's Division, Heintzelman's Corp, being the Third Brigade, Third Division, Third Corp, taking part in the Siege of Yorktown, participating in the following engagements, Williamsburg, Fair Oaks, Richmond, White Oak Swamp, Charles City Cross Roads, and Malvern Hill.

Its casualties at Williamsburg were 17 killed, 38 wounded and 5 missing. At Williamsburg the Regiment was under the immediate command of Colonel Poe. It was here that Julius Rasch was wounded.

“By satisfactory evidence and accurate examination, it appears that on the 5th day of May, 1862, at the Battle of Williamsburg, Julius Rasch received a gun shot wound transverse the right hip. He is hereby not only incapacitated for military duty, but is one third disabled from obtaining his subsistence from manual labor.

Dated Sept. 13, 1862: Certificate of Disability for Discharge. I certify, that I have carefully examined Julius Rasch and find him incapable of performing the duties of a soldier because of a gunshot wound. He is one third disabled. Discharged, this 13th day of Sept, 1862 at Detroit by order of Lt. Col. Smith.”

When his service in the Civil War was over, Julius Rasch came to Grand Rapids and opened a grocery store at 122 Canal St. (now Monroe) Alois Rasch came and worked for Julius when the war and his service was over. In 1872, Alois was taken in as a partner. With the death of Julius in Feb. 1880, Alois became the sole owner of the “Rasch Brothers” business.

The Michigan Tradesman, dated August 1893, had this to say about Alois Rasch: “Mr. Rasch’s first visit to Grand Rapids was made in 1861, when he came as a recruit to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry, which was organized here. That visit, brief as it was, determined his choice of this city as a place of residence, when the close of the war left him at liberty to settle down. It is needless to say that he has never had occasion to regret his choice. Grand Rapids is to him, what it is to thousands of others, the best city in the best state in the Union.

Mr. Rasch was married (to Mary Anderesch) in 1870 and has a family of 7 children, five boys and two girls. He is an honored member of the German Workingmen’s Aid Association and the Retail Grocers’ Association and enjoys the respect and confidence of all who share his acquaintance.”

Robert Rasch, the older brother, was involved in a number of businesses in Grand Rapids, as well as in other parts of the United States. It is recorded that he was a partner with Henry Fiebig, with Fiebig & Rasch, a wagon shop on Canal St., between Bridge and Hastings. Robert owned a blacksmith shop with Frank Brechting, our great-great uncle on my maternal side of the family (Rasch being my paternal side).

In 1878, Robert Rasch opened the Rasch Hotel, on the northwest corner of Canal and Bridge. Two years later, he sold it and the named was changed to The Clarendon Hotel, then The Charlevoix, The Rowe Hotel, and now is the location of the Olds Manor, on what is now, Michigan St. and Monroe Ave.

Another business was located on the northwest corner of Canal and East Bridge. Joseph Jackoboice owned that business which would later be called the Monarch Road Machinery Company and now is the Monarch Hydraulics, Inc. He manufactured steam engines, sawmill machinery and general mill work. As our cousin, George A. Jackoboice, once wrote, “The Rasch House and my grandfather were linked by more than a shared business location. In 1859, Joseph Jackoboice and Frances Rasch (the Rasch brothers only sister) were married.

“The family of Joseph and Frances Jackoboice prospered at their residence on Broadway Ave., NW, where later the convent of St. Mary’s Church would be built. The Jackoboices were charter members and communicants of this pioneer Catholic parish.”

Adolph Rasch, who was younger than Robert and Frances, but older than Alois and Julius, came to the Grand Rapids area looking for farmland. He found it in Wright Township. Then, returned to the Rasch family farm in Centerline seeking a wife. At a dance, he met Anna Mary Kaltz. In 1865, they married and moved to Wright Township. They lived in a log house on what is now called Dickenson St. (previously Rasch Road). Four sons and two daughters were raised their large, wood-framed house that still stands today.

There were eight boys in the Rasch family and one girl, Frances. Their father, Florian Rasch had lost both of his wives before coming to America.

Adolph had come to America at the age of 16, with his sister, Frances, then aged 21, and settled with the family in Centerline, Warren County. It has been said that when Robert came from Prussia, he was very successful in his business dealings and financed the rest of his family over, as he could afford it.

We are very grateful to our ancestors, who first of all had faith in their Heavenly Father. They cared to make a better life for their families. They decided to come to America and worked very hard to make their communities strong and prosperous.

My information came from the National Archives, the "Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War", a Michigan Civil War site online by Don & Lois Harvey, "Monarch Road Machinery Company" by George A. Jackoboice, for the Grand River Valley Review, Fall-Winter 1981, conversations with Helen Jackoboice, Elizabeth Marsh, Philip Rasch, Nan Schichtel, Patricia Cederholm, Charlene Rasch and Cindy Smith.

Relatives and others from our area that served in the Civil War:

We find it interesting how many signed up for the Michigan 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, Co. "C"

Jacob Lothschutz, from Grand Rapids, age 22

John Bosma, from Polkton Township, age 23

Dan Cole, from Berlin (now Marne), age 25

William Finkler, from Grand Rapids, age 23

Anthony Host, from Grand Rapids, age 20

John Omlor, from Chester Township, age 25

Charles Wells, from Tallmadge Township, age 16

Winsor Wells, from Tallmadge Township, age 22

First Michigan Light Artillery, Battery "K"

Joseph Omlor, from Grand Rapids, age 19

15<sup>th</sup> Michigan Infantry, Co. C

Theobald Umlor, Jr., from Wright Township

14<sup>th</sup> Michigan Infantry, Co. B

Philip Host, from Ypsilanti, age 30

8<sup>th</sup> Michigan Infantry

Henry Dietrich, from Adrian, aged 24

7<sup>th</sup> Michigan Infantry, Co. H

Mathias Kaltz, Wayne Co., age 44

64<sup>th</sup> Ohio Infantry, Co. C

Jacob Shiffler, from Michigan