

Richard D Donovan
36th WI Infantry, Company F

Born: 1825 in Ireland

Enlisted: February 26, 1864 from New Holstein, WI

Promotion: Corporal

Mustered Out: July 12, 1865

Wife: Eliza Jane McClain, 1838-1916

1870 WI, Manitowoc County, Manitowoc Rapids Twp:

Richard Donavan, 49, Male, Farmer, RE 4000, PE 661, b Ireland

Jane Donavan, 35, Female, b Canada

Chd: James-13, Margret Donavan-15, Mary-11, Trease-9, George-7,
Alexander-4, Bernard-2, Ceceilia-1/12, all b Wisconsin

Pension Bureau: Richard Donovan, Manitowoc, varicose veins of both legs, awarded \$6 a month pension from November 1882.

1883 Pensioners of Manitowoc County: Donovan, Richard, Manitowoc; varicose veins of both legs, \$6/month from November 1882.

1890 Veterans Schedule, Manitowoc County: Richard Donovan, Pvt 36 F, post office Manitowoc Rapids; Totally blind

Der Nord Westen, September 5, 1895: "A pension has been awarded to Richard Donovan of Town Manitowoc Rapids, who has been blind for years."

Wisconsin Census Enumeration, 1905 June 1, Ex-Soldiers & Sailors Residing in WI:

Donovan, Richard, Corporal,
Co F, 36 WI Inf., Post office Manitowoc

Der Nord Westen, October 21, 1909:
"Richard Donovan, a blind man who lives five miles from here on Calumet Road, recently had the misfortune to fall into an open trapdoor in the cellar of his home and was injured so severely that there is fear for his life."

Died: December 20, 1909

Buried: St Joseph's Cemetery-

Alverno, Manitowoc Rapids, WI

Gravesite: Stone half buried:

"Corpl./? D. Donovan"

Der Nord Westen, 23 December 1909:

"Richard Donovan, old and well-known resident of Town Manitowoc Rapids, who has been blind for 30 years, had the misfortune Thursday last week of falling down the cellar steps and breaking his neck. Death followed soon after. Donovan was 85 years old and leaves his widow, 3 sons and 2 daughters."



"Richard Donovan Of Manitowoc, Wis. Died December Sixteenth, Nineteen Hundred and Nine. Aged Eighty-Five Years Seven Month, and Ten Days. Mr. Donovan is survived by an aged wife and ten children, who mourn the loss of the one they dearly loved. Mr. Donovan was a Volunteer of two Wars. During the Mexican War, he sailed under Captain Armstrong, on board the Frigate, "Savannah," of the Pacific Squadron. After the close of the Mexican War he went to the gold fields of California, and after a stay of short duration in the gold mines, went back to Bantford, Canada, and on the 25th day of November, 1863, he married Eliza Jane McLain, who had been his companion in school days. Mr. and Mrs. Donovan then came back to the United States and purchased a quarter section of land in Manitowoc County, Wisconsin, where they lived happily together for fifty-six years, with the exception of a few sad years, such as those of the Civil War, when Mr. Donovan answered to the call of our much loved and martyred President Lincoln, and enlisted in Company F., 36th Wisconsin Volunteers, and once more took up arms to defend the flag he so dearly loved. After the close of the Civil War, Mr. Donovan was twice chosen as Representative and sent to Madison, Wisconsin, the State Capitol, to represent the people of his district. After his second term, it is sad to say, he became afflicted with total blindness, and was obliged to retire from public life and domesticate himself to private life on the farm. Mr. Donovan was a lover of justice and of good government. He believed in the preservation of peace in time of peace, and he believed in the protection of the Flag and of this great Nation in time of war. He was a sociable entertainer, a loving husband, a tender father and a friendly neighbor. The praise of God was ever on his tongue, and he was often heard to say "God's will be done." Just six years ago, Mr. and Mrs. Donovan celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary. Friends and relatives gathered from both far and near to extend their heartiest congratulations to the aged couple. Again many of the same friends and relatives gathered at Mr. Donovan's home, but this time with sad countenances, to pay their last respects to their aged parent and dead soldier. Mr. Donovan's place of interment is at St. Joseph Cemetery, at Alverno, Wisconsin."

B T. D.

More of their story . . by granddaughter, Esther Kohout Guse, age 80, March 1990: These are stories my mother told me about Grandma Donovan's life. Eliza Jane McClain was born in Canada in 1838. The Donovan family must have been friends of the McClain's as they went to see the new baby girl born to the McClain's in 1838. My grandfather, Richard Donovan, was about 10 years old at the time. He looked at the baby and said he was going to marry her when she grew up. This did happen to come true. He married her at age 15, in Canada. He must have been 25 years old. That was in 1853. They drove a horse and wagon around Lake Superior coming to Wisconsin. My grandfather purchased a 166-acre parcel of land in Manitowoc County. Now the road where the farm is located is known as Brunner Road. Aunt Maggie, (Margaret) was born in 1855. My grandmother was afraid to set the baby outside for fear the bears would steal her, as they did the pigs.

I am ahead of myself. When my grandparents were married, they were given a dapple gray horse for a wedding present. In Wisconsin people came from miles away to see the horse, as they were still using oxen to work the fields. I guess that would be like getting a new car these days. Grandma had to help fill bullets with gunpowder in case of an Indian attack. That never happened. Once when grandma was working in the garden, a large Indian wrapped in a red blanket stepped out of the woods. My grandma was scared, but she asked him if he was hungry, and she fed him and gave him a cup of milk to drink. He told her he was lost, but didn't hurt her in any way. Grandma had to spin her own yarn for mittens and stockings. She would knit a big wash basket full of these articles, and taken them to Schuette Bros. department store to sell for groceries. The customers had their names listed for her articles, and they would wait till she brought them in.

When the Civil War came, my grandfather went to war, and my grandmother was left to take care of things on the farm. After the war, my grandparents started raising a family again. Some children were born before the war, and all told, they

had 13 children. My mother was the baby of the family. She had sisters who were married and had children older than my mother. My grandparents were going to a funeral, and they told their children not to be looking out of the window when the funeral went by. The house was close to the road, and when the funeral passed by, all of the kids were sitting up on the roof, obedient, but still kids at heart. My grandmother was like a midwife to all the neighboring women, and one lady didn't know what she was going to do when my grandmother died. The lady had 18 children, and if I remember right, grandma delivered 15 of them. Grandma did another nice thing for her neighbors. When one would die, she would go and fix them up for burial. They didn't go to an undertaker because they couldn't afford it.

Before my mother was born, my grandfather went blind. I imagine it was cataracts. Before he lost his sight, he had served several terms in the legislature in Madison. He died, after falling down the basement steps at the Farm. So, my grandmother and the boys had to run the farm for 27 years. Grandpa died in 1909.

My grandmother made all their clothes by hand, for she didn't have a sewing machine. However, my mother's baptismal dress was made on a machine. As far as I know, the dress may still be used in the Peter Trainor family, by daughter Rose, and now her family.

It is hard to remember everything. I remember if the children broke dishes, they hid them under the pig house. Grandma would get upset, and Grandpa would say, "Ma'am, the children must be paid for." He always called her "Ma'am."

Mamma said Grandma told her children when they got married, that it was better to have 10 on your pillow than one on your conscience. Mamma had a bicycle, and when she didn't use it anymore she forgot about the pump she used to blow up the tires. She had kept it in a hollow in an oak tree, in the front yard, on the farm. The tree is still standing, and someday someone may find the pump inside. Mamma talked about a pet lamb she had. The kitchen had a back door. The lamb would come in and go into the pantry and out the front door of the kitchen. I guess she had the run of the house."