

## *Civil War Years, 1860-1865*

The war of the Rebellion interrupted business and personal affairs in Sparta as it did for much of the nation. Like Wisconsin farmers elsewhere, during the War, Sparta's neighboring farmers experienced economic depression due to the declining price of wheat. At a time when prices of goods were going up, purchasing power dropped for most farm families, making it difficult for them to get the bare necessities of life. One elderly Sparta woman commented that "before the War she carried a purse to hold her money and a satchel to hold her goods; but that during the War days she was obliged to carry her money in her satchel and to take her goods home in her purse". [Koehler, 1977: 60; and Barney: 25-26.]

The Civil War setback the growth of Sparta in a more vital way. It drew its healthy men from their labor in the community to fighting and dying in battles. The first company to organize in Sparta was known as Captain Lynn's Company. This company was assigned to the Fourth Regiment, Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Company I. Lynn's Company left Sparta June 6, 1861 with the following officers in command: Captain John W. Lynn, First Lieutenant Levi R. Blake, and Second Lieutenant Ansyl A. West. [Richards: 266.]

Close to 150 men from the village of Sparta responded to the call for arms and formed other companies for the war effort. Spartans served in several key battles, seeing service in the "Minnesota Sioux War, against Quantrell's guerillas, and in Sherman's March to the Sea. Other Spartans served at Vicksburg, Cold Harbor, Spotsylvania Court House and Gettysburg...[and] fifteen of these dies in action or of wounds inflicted in action". Both Captain Lynn and First Lieutenant Blake (later Captain) were killed in action. Lynn was killed on the gunboat Tyler during the siege of Vicksburg, and Blake fell in an attack made on Port Hudson. Ironically, one of the surveyors of the first road north into Sparta was Lieutenant Jefferson Davis (President of the confederate States). [Koehler, 1977: 31; Unknown Newspaper "Sparta, Wisconsin: A Northern Town with a 'Western Feel' of Pines and Bluffs". N.S.: Monroe county Democrat July 20, 1933: Sparta Herald 16 July 1951 and Richards: 266.]