

COMPANY K

Anishinaabe

Civil War Warriors

Thousands of Michiganders fought for the

Union Army during the American Civil War, but one group of soldiers in particular stood out: Company K of the First Michigan Sharpshooters.

Company K was made up of 139 enlisted Anishinaabe men and one officer from Michigan's

lower and upper peninsulas.


Company K tried to muster at the start of Civil War, but were

denied. The US Government thought that Native Americans

were barbaric, blood thirsty,

and couldn't be controlled

during war.



FYI- The Union Army fought to abolish (end) slavery. The Confederate Army fought to keep African people enslaved. Chi-Miigwech to Company K for fighting for justice!

"Company K was the largest, all Indian regiment in the Union Army during the Civil War.

Ojibway and Odawa men from all over Michigan made up Company K. A number of

Odawa from Harbor Springs, Cross Village and Petoskey joined, including a chief from Petoskey, Daniel Mukewenah.

Company K fought in some of the worst battles of the Civil War. Some even were captured

and sent to the infamous Andersonville confederate prison camp. Company K

fought bravely and proved their valor but not all the men

survived. Several Odawa from Company K are buried in Cross Village, Harbor Springs and Mackinac Island,"

-Eric Hemenway

Director of LTBB Archives



Members of Company K rest under a tree in 1864. On May 9, 1864, the First MI Sharpshooters, including Company K, were heavily engaged at the River, and casualties were evacuated to Fredericksburg.



By 1863, as the Union forces suffered many losses, so it Army reversed its stance and decided to allow Native Americans to enter the armed forces. The Anishinaabe in the First Michigan Sharpshooters were much better marksmen than their white comrades and used unconventional tactics they had earned from their ancestors. Company K would then go on and fight in several major battles for the United States.

References LTBB Archives Director Eric Hemenway , & The story of Company K: Native Americans from Michigan who saw tough action in the Civil War Biography compiled by LTBB Youth Services Cultural Outreach Specialist Amy Hinmon.