wiser but not happier club." Apparently the Stone School House Lightnings was a Brodhead team; this foreshadows a long athletic rivalry with our neighbors to the south.

In 1886 the Vindicator reported on a game between Albany and Brodhead. The Brodhead pitcher had hurt his arm before the game, and in the fifth inning had to leave the game. His replacement was wild and the score attests to Brodhead's problems—Albany 25, Brodhead 12.

In 1888 an exciting game between the "Magnolias" and the "Albanys" was reported. The Magnolia catcher had to leave and the Albany catcher then caught for both sides, "of course favoring his own team," and the Albanys won.

A player from this era who made it to the major leagues was Cal Broughton, a left handed catcher.

In 1910 an Albany baseball team challenged the feared "Champions of Southern Wisconsin", the Evansville team. Nate Tilley, the pitcher, picked the team: Ernie Kittleson, catcher; John Littel, first base; Harry Smiley, second; Ivan Town, third; Charlie Atherton, shortstop; Charles "Pacer" Wescott, Roscoe Smout and Warden Francis, outfielders; Harry Croake, substitute. They hired Frank Barton to take the team to Evansville with his horse-drawn omnibus. It was a great day for Albany—they shut out Evansville five to nothing.

Baseball continued to be a popular sport in Albany. In the 1920's and 1930's the Southern Wisconsin League, composed of teams from Albany, Footville, Magnolia, Orfordville, Evansville and Janesville was active. Games were played on a field just west of the present ACPARD diamond, and later on a field at Walt Donovan's place—near where Betty Coole lives today. The Legion Park at the north end of Water Street was the location of a later diamond. Games were played Sunday afternoon, so Sunday morning was the time for serious batting practice in many area cow pastures.

Today's descendant of baseball in Albany, with great community interest and participation, is slow pitch softball. There are over 20 men's teams in three leagues and six women's teams forming one league. In addition to league play, tournaments are held, all under leadership of Denny Ruef.

The Little League program, for boys age eight to twelve, has been led by John Thill for seven years. There are four teams in the league, and a traveling all-star team which plays teams from other towns.

In addition to Little League there is a Teener League team sponsored by the American Legion.

There is softball for girls in the eight to twelve year age group and T-ball for smaller boys.

WAR PARTICIPATION

Albany men have served in all our nation's wars beginning with the Civil War. Among the nearly 80 men from Albany Township who fought in the Civil War were Tom Mack, Preston Jordan, Ed Wessel, Erastus Hoyt, Freeman Roberts, Dr. E. H. Fessenden, J. L. Sherbondy, Billy Larmer, George Barton, Frank Howard, William Murray, James Carver, Harlow Boughton, Richard Glennan, William Way, Henry Brockway, Eugene Warren, and brothers, Abner and George Webb.

The young Civil War soldier pictured here with his fife is Abraham Burt.

In the recorded stories of Wisconsin soldiers in the Civil War is that of Abner Webb who enlisted April 22, 1861, was wounded and mustered out November 27, 1864. This account was told by Captain Gardner, under whom Webb served, to the Milwaukee Sunday Telegraph.

"After regaining our works, we found quite a number of the enemy in and in front of the works. It was there I witnessed an act of heroism by an Albany boy as worthy of record as any act performed during the war.

"Our lines were close together at this time—so close that if you wanted your hat ventilated, all you had to do was to put it on a stick and be careful not to make a mistake and put your head in it."
"There was an open piece of ground about 50 or 75 yards in front of us, where a number of the killed and wounded lay. The day was very hot and there was one man among the wounded who commenced calling for water. I have heard that cry many times before and since, but nothing like that one. We could see him and he would raise himself upon his elbow and call for water with an entreaty and a pathos in his voice that would touch the heart of stone.

"It was maddening. The men all became nervous, and would move uneasily about, trying to keep up conversation but still that cry rang out.

"Soon I saw a member of my company spring to his feet, hasten to the rear and fill his canteen from the spring, come back and take off his accoutrements. I asked him what he was going to do. He replied, 'Captain, I can't stand it any longer. I am going to take that man a drink if they shoot the H-- out of me.' I called the men into line, and as we sprang over the works, we opened fire on the enemy over his head, but they did not seem to pay much attention to us, but directed their fire to the unarmed runner. He reached the wounded man, and throwing himself on the ground beside him, raised his canteen to the lips of the sufferer and let him drink of God's own beverage, so precious to a man at such a time.

Local fifi and drum corps shown practicing during Civil War. At far left is Alf Eldred. Boy with drum, fifth from left, may have been Will Brown. Boy with fifë, eighth from left, was Stephen Eldred, and boy with drum, ninth from left, may have been Fred Atherton. Boy on far right may have been son of George Carle, evangelist and temperance organizer. There were two boys' bands prior to Civil War.

"After breasting himself a moment and placing his canteen in the hands of the wounded man, he started on his return trip. The bullets of the enemy fairly rained around him, though they could plainly see what he had done. But through the storm of lead he sprang over the works untouched. With a cheery smile on his face he said, 'Well, I gave him a drink in spite of them.'"

That soldier, Abner Webb, remained active to within a few months of his death. The heroic deed was witnessed by Billy Larmer, another Albany boy who, because he was in New Orleans when war was declared, fought on the side of the Confederacy.

Mrs. Wayne Peckham, whose grandfather George Webb also fought in the Civil War, is the grand niece of Abner Webb. Two brothers, Frank and Myron Cowing, raised near Albany, served in Custer's company during the Civil War. However, unbeknownst to one another, they were each assigned to special duty which took them out of the camp. Myron came up with a detachment of men, saw the field strewn with dead and felt certain his brother must be among them. Because personal belongings had been stolen and bodies were mutilated, identification was impossible. Myron wrote to his family, say-
ing he thought his brother had been killed. Frank, too, wrote the same message about Myron. The family knew both were alive, but they had given no addresses and so could not be enlightened about the grim mistake. Each brother left the army thinking the other dead and took up army land in the west. They settled only a few score miles apart, still not knowing one another’s whereabouts. Myron’s neighbor, who came to buy horses from Frank, was struck with Frank’s likeness to the neighbor at home. The story was unraveled, Frank accompanied the man back to his home and the brothers were finally reunited.

Another hero of the Civil War was Erastus Hoyt, who enlisted in Company F, 31st Regiment, Wisconsin Volunteers in 1862. In the line of duty he contracted the dread disease, chronic diarrhea, which resulted in his death. He is buried beside his comrades in the village cemetery. Erastus Hoyt Post, No. 69, G. A. R. was named after this young soldier. First officers of that post were Captain Thomas Flint, Commander; Captain C. W. Burns, S. V. C.; Captain J. F. Annis, J. V. C.; F. F. Carle, Adjutant; John Gillett, Quartermaster; N. B. Murrey, Officer of the Day; Peter Benson, Officer of the Guard; and S. F. Smith, Sergeant-major. Excerpts from two letters now in possession of Mrs. Arlie (Mickey) Fehrney, granddaughter of J. L. Sherbondy who was also the grandfather of Mrs. Raymond (Charlene) Haddinger, are reproduced here. The first is a letter from Edward McBride, Mount Pleasant, Green County, 5th Battery, to his friend, John L. Sherbondy.

May 23, 1863 - “The First East Tennessee and Fourth Regulars butchered them (Rebels) with their sabers before they had time to drop themselves. Now, this cutting up unarmed men looks hard, but the boys haven’t forgotten how those same devils shot down our men at Stone River after they had surrendered to them. Boys burned up all their guns and camp equipage. Brought off 500 horses and 200 of their men. They took a good many more but couldn’t hold them for their infantry came on to them and surrounded the Fourth Regulars and they cut their way out with the saber. It was a bold dash and a hot fight before they got through. My best wishes, E. McBride.”

The second letter is from John L. Sherbondy to his “Dear Wife,” dated April 2, 1865 at Rolla, Missouri. (Mr. Sherbondy had been working on the fort as a carpenter and had been detached from the drum corps.

These five Civil War veterans seated in front of John Whalen’s store are, (left to right) Tom Mack, Preston Jordan, Ed Wessel, Freeman Roberts and Abner Webb. The gentleman inside the store is Bert Draper.
to help out. He was a very fine fifer and no doubt a fife major. Fifes and drums were used to move the army giving such signals as charge, retreat, and playing marching tunes and funeral dirges.) "The Drum Major would not put up with it. He was not going to have his best fifer detached. He went yesterday to the Colonel and Major and he told them to have the papers made out at the adjutant's quarters and have me detached right back into the Drum Corps. So the Major told me last night I belong to the Drum Corps and always would. He would show the Captain that he could not help himself. I don't care much. I could put in my time on the Fort about as easy as any other way. Yours truly, J. L. Sherbondy.

The grandson of Squire Perry was the only Albany boy to serve in the Spanish American War. When he returned home from the war, the Albany Vindicator of September 15, 1898, carried this item: "The soldiers of the First Wisconsin were welcomed home on Saturday. Charles Wheeler was the only Albany boy who enlisted and a great demonstration was made in his honor. The martial band, a large number of the 'boys of '61' and citizens met him at the depot and escorted him to his home on the west side, which had been lavishly decorated with the national colors. Charles had been quite sick with typhoid or malarial fever, but he expected to be around again the next few days."

Approximately 75 men from Albany and the surrounding area served their country in World War I. Of these men, three gave their lives—Thomas McDermott died by accident and Walter Lewis and Herbert Jones died of disease. Many others were wounded and some were victims of the flu epidemic.

The first man from Albany to enlist was William Ruechlow; first man to set foot in France was John Litel. Private Thomas McDermott, age 26, son of Mr. and Mrs. John McDermott, who lived on a farm five miles north of the village, became the fourth man from Green County to lose his life in World War I. He entered the service in October, 1917, at Camp Grant, Illinois and trained at Camp Grant and Camp McArthur, Texas. Thomas left the United States for France in February, 1918. It was June 1 when his parents received the news that Thomas had died as the result of pistol shot wounds. A memorial service was held in the Opera House on the following evening. Father McDermott of Evansville and Reverend F. J. Jordan of Marshfield addressed the crowd who gathered for the memorial service. The hall was filled to capacity with friends and neighbors who came to express their sympathy for the bereaved family. On May 6, 1902, the American Legion Post in Albany was named McDermott Post No. 144 in honor of Thomas McDermott.

The Great War had a profound effect on the little village of Albany, in effect bringing the outside world to it as had not been done before. The editor of the paper at that time, O. G. Briggs, filled the Vindicator with war related news stories.

On Friday evening, April 6, 1917, a huge loyalty meeting was held at the Opera House, sponsored by the Sons of Veterans, Wisconsin Division and the Albany W. R. C. A parade with music by the Cornet Band, color bearers Henry Knapp and Richard Hedden, veterans of the Civil War, members of Co. H., school children and citizens marched through the village. The following resolution was read and adopted unanimously by the audience and sent to the president.

"The citizens of Albany, Wisconsin, assembled in mass meeting, assure you of their loyalty at this and all times. As Americans, faithful to American ideals of justice, liberty and humanity, we pledge you our support in our effort for democracy and service of humanity. We pray that in all things you may be conscious of divine guidance and that you will speedily see the desire of your heart for the American people and peace throughout the world. Albany is loyal to the core."

The local Defense Council met on June 8 and planned a grand and glorious celebration for July 4. Committees were appointed and work started early to ensure a successful day. The parade on July 4 was impressive with several floats, the Monroe Guards and other attractions. First prize for wagon float was won by the Worth While Girls of the Baptist Church; first prize for auto float was awarded to the Red Cross ambulance; first prize for pony rig to Lilah Hein; for individual costume, Everett Peckham, Bert Pryce, Louis Moore and Ted Luce. The baseball game in the afternoon ended in a win for Footville. Dancing in the Opera House closed the eventful day.

On May 24 and 25, 45 men and women of Albany joined the Red Cross at meetings held in the Village Hall. The Community Center in the basement of the Methodist Church was offered and accepted as a work room where ladies were to meet two days of each week. By June 21, the Red Cross drive had gained 200 members and was still increasing. To meet their quota for national Red Cross work, $353.90 in funds had been raised. Enrollment figures reached 300. The Red Cross ladies of Albany made hospital sheets, draw sheets, pillow cases, towels, linen washcloths, knitted washcloths, tray cloths, handkerchiefs, hospital bed shirts, shoulder capes, knitted mufflers, water bottle covers, fracture pillows, ward slippers, and comfort kits. Each time a call was sent out, Albany far exceeded its goals. A total of 448 families was solicited and $660.30 was raised, a surplus of $160.30 over quota. Green County was the first county in the state to go over the top in this drive. Final figures showed that Albany village
and township subscribed $750, or 150 percent of its allotment.

In the purchase of Liberty Bonds, too, Albany exceeded its quota. In the first sale 16 subscribers purchased $25,150 worth of bonds; second campaign 379 people bought $45,000 worth; third, $36,000; fourth, $84,000. On November 14, 1918, the entire front page of the Vindicator was given to news of the armistice. “The glad news,” it read, “was received here at four o’clock Monday morning by a telephone message to Arthur Fleek from his nephew, Howard Eldred, Elgin, Illinois. About five o’clock the message was sent out from the telephone office, and immediately the bells and whistles announced the glad tidings and the celebration began.” People came to town by the thousands to help celebrate; all day long the whistles and bells aided in keeping up the enthusiasm. There was a parade at 7:30 in the evening and a large bonfire (there had also been a large bonfire on the preceding Thursday on the occasion of the “false armistice”). Speakers at a program in the Opera House were Mrs. S. J. Morgan, Miss Emma Croake, E. P. Atherton, O. G. Briggs, Reverend D. A. Ramey, Reverend G. N. Foster, and music was provided by the Albany Cornet Band.

Soon after the “day that will live in infamy, “many Albany young men enlisted and left to fight a war that lasted until August, 1945. Among these men, two from the Albany area lost their lives—Charles Gordon Steindorf, 21, son of Mr. and Mrs. Emil Steindorf of Albany; and George F. Culles, son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Culles, rural Albany and Brodhead.

Gordon was a second lieutenant in the Army Air Force, pilot of a B-17. He was reported missing in action on November 25, 1944, evidently on his first mission, for he had been in England for pre-combat training and on November 24 had written his parents that he had yet to go on his first mission. He was killed on November 25 in Muschwitz, Germany. Before entering the service, he was a student in pharmacy at the University of Wisconsin. He received his wings at La Junta, Colorado, in April, 1944. His wife was the former Laura Shelby of Evansville. Lieutenant Steindorf received the Purple Heart for wounds received in the action that resulted in his death.

Private Culles served in Hawaii, New Guinea, the Phillippines, Luzon, and Ryukyu. He was killed in action of February 23, 1945. His decorations included the Asiatic-Pacific ribbon and the Purple Heart. George’s wife was Doreen Jones, the daughter of Dave Jones and the sister of Mrs. Roy (Norma) Jones Blumer, rural Albany.

In the Korean conflict of the early 50’s Albany was fortunate not to lose any men in action; however, AC2 Gerald William Rhyner, 19, son of Casper and Ada Smith Rhyner, rural Albany, was killed in a truck accident enroute to Mather Air Force Base in California. A graduate of Albany High School, Gerald enlisted in the Air Force and was killed in September, 1953.

Two young men lost their lives in the “police action” in Vietnam. Private First Class Kris Blumer, 19, son of Mrs. Virginia Blumer and the late Fred Blumer, became
Albany's first casualty in Vietnam. Kris enlisted in the army in June, 1968, and left in the following November for Vietnam. In May, 1969, his mother received word that Kris had been injured, suffering injuries that the authorities reported as not being too serious. Complications after surgery resulted in his death on November 25, 1969. A full military burial held at the Albany High School gymnasium was accorded Kris. Reverend Oscar Stanke officiated, stating in part, "Gratitude for this young man's life, an appreciation for his life that was not lived in vain..."

In recognition of his sacrifice, Kris was awarded these medals posthumously: Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal, and the Bronze Star, with this citation: "On May 15, 1969, Pfc. Blumer was serving as a rifleman with his unit on a counterinsurgency operation north of Fire Support Base Lorraine. As the friendly force proceeded through an enemy base camp, it was suddenly subjected to an intense automatic weapons and small arms fusillade from an undetermined size insurgent unit. Observing several wounded comrades lying in an exposed area, Pfc. Blumer crawled forward through the hostile barrage to offer assistance to his fellow soldiers. Seriously wounded by the insurgents’ fire, he dauntlessly continued to place suppressive fire on the aggressors with devastating effect and allowed the remainder of the platoon to rescue the wounded men. While continuing his staunch resistance, Pfc. Blumer was critically wounded." From the government of the Republic of Vietnam Kris was awarded the Military Merit Award and the Gallantry Cross with Palm.

Surviving Kris are his mother and sisters, Mrs. Ellen Rothenbach, Pleasanton, Texas; Mrs. Judy Sepsy, Milwaukee; Mrs. Renee Porterfield, Brodhead; Mrs. Becky Dick, Madison; and brothers Karl and Kim of Albany.

The second young man to lose his life for his country in Vietnam was Kenneth Lee Keller. Kenneth was the son of Mr. and Mrs. George Keller. The family had moved to Albany from Browntown in 1951. Kenneth graduated from Albany High School in 1967 and entered the army in June of 1969. In November, 1969, he went to Vietnam. Kenneth, known to his buddies in Indo China as "Toby," was killed on May 25, 1970, when a mine he was placing for the night protection of his unit was struck by lightning. Three of his buddies were killed in the same mishap.

Presented posthumously to his parents were the Bronze Star with a citation "for distinguishing himself by outstanding meritorious service in connection with ground operations against a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, November 27, 1969, to May 25, 1970, in that he was quick to grasp the implications of new problems with which he was faced as a result of the ever changing situations inherent in a counterinsurgency operation and to find ways and means to solve these problems.

"The energetic application of his extensive knowledge has materially contributed to the efforts of the United States mission to the Republic of Vietnam to assist that country in ridding itself of the communist threat to its freedom. His initiative, zeal, sound judgments and devotion to duty have been in the highest tradition of the United States Army and reflect credit on himself, his unit, and the military service."

Other awards include the Air Medal for more than 25 aerial missions over hostile territory, Army Commendation Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign and National Defense and Good Conduct Medal.

Full military funeral rites for SP Keller were held June 7, 1970, in the Albany High School gymnasium. A burial detachment from Fort Sheridan, Illinois, conducted the military rites in Hillcrest Cemetery.

Kenneth was survived by his parents, five sisters, Mrs. Robert (Sandy) Rhyner, Monroe; Mrs. Walter (Kathy) Mueller, Albany; Mrs. Jon (Margaret) Kauk, Albany; Mrs. Marlin (Karla) Neild, Albany; and Mrs. Larry (Hazel) Ommott, Albany. Two months after Kenneth died, his brother Keith was killed in an automobile accident. Mrs Keller, too, has passed away.