In 1861, as the newly formed Iowa Agricultural College and Model Farm was preparing the campus, the United States was preparing for one of its most pivotal wars. The Confederate States had failed to gain control of Charleston Bay's Fort Sumter by demand, and on April 12th they opened fire on the Fort. Abraham Lincoln gave the request for men to volunteer to the Union during this troubling time. Lincoln expected the volunteers to be done in three months, and the United States to be whole once again. Even though their help and labor was needed at the new college, the Farm House's first family, the Fitchpatricks, let their two eldest sons volunteer. Joseph, 20, and William, 18, both traveled from the college farm to Boone to enlist on May 21, 1861. On June 8, a stage coach stopped at the Fitchpatricks barn to pick up the volunteer soldiers from the college farm, as well as the surrounding farms. They were enlisted into Company E of the 3rd Iowa Infantry. Unfortunately, the war did not end in three months. Joseph was taken prisoner on April 6, 1862 after a battle in Shiloh, Tennessee. After his release he continued fighting with the Union, being promoted twice in 1863. Unfortunately, Joseph was taken as a prisoner of war again, on July 22, 1863. This did not stop him, after his release he reenlisted that December. His brother William also reenlisted in December of 1863 after his promotion to Third Corporal that past summer. Also in 1863, younger brother John enlisted into the 8th Iowa Calvary Company I, shortly after his eighteenth birthday. When the war finally ended, all three Fitchpatrick boys returned safely to Iowa to settle down.