

Major Robert Edwin "R. E." Rodgers, son of **Senator James Rodgers** and **Eleanor J.**, was born on 20 Jul 1829 in Hanging Rock, Lawrence, Ohio,¹ died on 10 Apr 1872 in Ironton, Lawrence, Ohio¹ at age 42, and was buried in Woodland Cemetery, Upper, Lawrence, Ohio.²

General Notes:

Robert Edwin "R. E." Rodgers worked as a river trader, as a bank teller in Ironton, Ohio, and briefly as a wholesale grocer in Cincinnati. He and his wife, Clara R. Allison, had four children. They resided on the "Rodgers Block" of Ironton (2nd and Railroad Streets) on the bank of the Ohio River, where several Rodgers families lived in close proximity.

R.E. Rodgers was involved in the early organization of Ironton in 1849, and in 1854 he helped found Christ Episcopal Church in Ironton and served on its vestry. In 1852 R.E. Rodgers and his brother Henry C. Rodgers built a grain mill on Front Street between Lawrence and Buckhorn, which was sold several times before becoming Goldcamp Mill in 1887.

During the Civil War, R.E. Rodgers joined the 18th Ohio Infantry commanded by his brother Henry, where he was listed as a Private and chaplain. On September 3, 1861 he joined Company C of the 4th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry as Captain and was promoted February 26, 1863 to Major. He was later promoted to Colonel but left his regiment before receiving his commission. R.E. Rodgers participated in several major campaigns, and was once taken prisoner by the Confederates. R.E. Rodgers was discharged April 19, 1864, after three years of heroic service. He contracted tuberculosis ("consumption" as they called it then) during the war. He never recovered and died six years later at the age of forty-two.

Noted events in his life were:

- Residence: 1850, Upper, Lawrence, Ohio.³
- Founded Church: From the Christ Episcopal Church of Ironton website, 1854.⁴

On May 15, 1854, when Ironton itself was only five years old, 45 faithful men and women banded together to form Christ Episcopal Church, Ironton, Ohio, of the Diocese of Ohio. That same day, the following were elected as the first vestry of Christ Church: Mr. J. Allen Rickey, Senior Warden; Mr. George Jackson, Junior Warden; Mr. John George; Mr. J.S. Churchill; Mr. Enos Childs; Mr. R. Edwin Rodgers; Mr. Anvil James; Mr. C.B. Egerton, Secretary.

The first church, seating 125, was built in 1855 for the sum of \$700. It was a small frame building where the present Parish House is today.

- Occupation: river trader, 1860, Ironton, Lawrence, Ohio.⁵
- Military Service: Civil War (Cavalry), From 1861 to 1864. R.E. Rodgers saw a great deal of action as a cavalryman, since the cavalry frequently went behind enemy lines to spy on enemy camps, destroy railroad tracks, and find supplies and food. One close call came on May 1, 1862, when Colonel Kennett received word that Company G, commanded by R.E. Rodgers' brother, Major Henry Rodgers, at the time, was captured by Confederate troops in Athens, Georgia. One hundred and fifty men from the 4th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry rushed to Athens, and on May 2 they defeated the Confederate troops and rescued the prisoners, including Henry and R.E. Rodgers.

The 4th OVC called themselves "The Invincibles" and were widely celebrated as one of the fiercest and most capable regiments in the Civil War. R.E. Rodgers was a soldier and commander in many important battles, and was wounded twice. He suffered from chronic diarrhea for six months and during his last months of service he recuperated in a Nashville Union Army hospital before returning home to Ohio.

- Occupation: retired grocer, 1870, Ironton, Lawrence, Ohio. • Obituary:⁸ From the Ironton Register:

Major R. E. Rodgers, whose death occurred on the 10th inst., was born at Union Furnace, Lawrence county, July 20, 1829. He was the last of a family consisting of eleven, nearly all of whom died of lung disease. He was among the first to respond to the call of

the Government at the breaking of the rebellion, having entered three months service as a private in the 18th Ohio Infantry. At the expiration of the three months, he returned home and immediately proceeded to raise a company of cavalry; was chosen Captain, and entered three years' service in the Fourth Ohio Cavalry. Sometime after entering the service, he was promoted to the rank of Major, and resigned on account of poor health, one month before the expiration of his three years. Last Summer, he visited Minnesota, with the hope of regaining health, but returned home later in the Fall, to die. His closing days were submissive, hopeful. The same courteous bearing was evinced in the sick chamber as characterized him in the days of health. He spoke often with regret of his previous life; was trustful, childlike and patient. His precious text which he loved to see and hear above all others up to the last, was Isaiah 41:10: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea I will withhold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."