

2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 199

June 2012

On This Date-150 Years Ago

June, 1862

Frank Flint wrote home to tell of life in the Battery during June of 1862. The George he speaks of is George Russell, also a private in the Battery and Jennie's uncle.

*Camp Clear Creek, Miss.
June 15, 1862*

Dear Jennie,

We have been on the march most of the time since we came here. We are marching toward Hamburg again now. We have been here two days and I don't know when we will leave.

I am sitting on the ground in a little brush tent that George and I made. Geo. is well and is fixing for a grand inspection which will be held tomorrow. I am all ready but blacking my boots and fixing my sword a little. We have to look as nice as possible on such occasions which comes rather hard on me as I am rather inclined to be a little dirty. Supper is ready and I have to go or I won't get any.

I have been to supper and had what we call a pretty good one. We had one biscuit and a cup of tea each. We have had biscuit once before since we left Benton Barracks. We have hard bread, smoked meat and coffee most of the time. This is the wildest country I ever saw. You don't see a house once in a dog's age and when you do see it, it is nothing but a shanty. I have read a good many stories about the beautiful sunny South but haven't seen any of it but the sunny and there is so much of that that it spoils the whole.

We are three miles from Corinth where the Rebels left, I don't know where they are now. We followed them for four days did not see one.

Frank

(The letter was typed as Frank wrote it, grammar, spelling and all. Punctuation was the only thing added.)

Upcoming Events

June 9 Rum River Library, Anoka, MN

4201 6th Ave., Anoka.

Please arrive by 9:00 for set up to be ready for the public at 10:00. This is only a four hour event, 10-2, for the Library's Live at the Library, but even with bad weather, we have seen lots of people at this event! We'll set up the gun, do firing demos, and other "soldierly" things while the ladies of the Battery hold a Soldier's Aid Society meeting and "collection."

Battery Baby Shower June 9!

First babies are always special and we have Battery members who are looking forward to their first baby—and it's a boy! Baby Overby will arrive in August. We'll have a Battery Baby Shower for Stacy and Jay for ALL Battery members following the event on June 9 at the Library. It will be a potluck lunch and Baby Shower at the Anoka County History Center in their meeting room. The History Center is located at 2135 Third Avenue N, Anoka, about two miles from the library site.



Some Unusual Timing

The 2012 Battery calendar has a unusual break in it this summer. Our next scheduled event after the library is not until Boscobel on August 4-5.

Rest up, though, as August is full! Boscobel, Pipestone, Ahlman's are all in August! We have events in September, our trip to Kentucky in October and more on the schedule, so this season is just beginning!

Next Meeting

June 23, 11:00

Maries Family Restaurant in Red Wing.



Battery Profile

Edwin D. Rodgers

Edwin was the only child born to John and Mary Rodgers of Newport, New York. His birth was on January 29, 1831. When Edwin was six, the family moved to Kirkersville, Ohio, where his father continued his trade of making shoes. At the age of 16, Edwin was apprenticed to a blacksmith. After two years, he went to Brighton, New York, to complete his education and then returned to Ohio. Edwin traveled around the upper Midwest, taking jobs as a blacksmith, until he decided to settle down in Freeborn County, Minnesota, in 1857. He was one of the early settlers in the town of Freeborn where he built a blacksmith shop. Edwin also sold agricultural implements in his shop.

On December 27, 1860, Edwin married Helen Scovelle, but it was not to be a long marriage. Helen died less than a year later on September 27, 1861.

According to local history, Edwin "left his anvil" on February 14, 1862, to join the Second Minnesota Battery. The descriptive roll showed him as 30 years old, 5' 9" tall, with blue eyes, light hair and a sandy complexion. Edwin's skills were put to use as his position in the Battery was that of blacksmith.

Keeping the shoes of the nearly 100 horses in the Battery at any given time would have been a steady job. When the Battery was in camp near Iuka, Mississippi in August of 1862, Edwin was shoeing a horse when he was overcome by heat stroke. Other members of the Battery said Edwin became dizzy and blind, so that he had to be carried into a tent for shade. Edwin struggled with the heat stroke and the captain of the Battery, William Hotchkiss, said Edwin never fully recovered from it. Hotchkiss felt he could not longer count on Edwin to be able to do the duty of a blacksmith, so Edwin was promoted to corporal and became an artificer--a military mechanic.

Edwin did recover enough to return to duty and was with the Battery as they participated in the battle at Perryville, Kentucky, on October 8, 1862. Another Battery comrade, Austin Peck, said Edwin volunteered to go to with the two howitzers. The guns were in action near the Miller house where the fighting grew hot for the Battery. Edwin was between the guns when they were fired and the concussion damaged his hearing permanently. One source said Edwin stepped in to take the place of an injured gunner during the fighting, but no official records of any action like that have been found.

After that battle, Edwin was almost deaf, but he continued to serve in the Battery as an artificer until more health problems began. Captain Hotchkiss called it "jaundice and general disability" and said he frequently needed to send Edwin to sick call.

Edwin was discharged for disability at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, on April 2, 1863. Included in the reasons for discharging him were "chronic diarrhea contracted at Columbus, Mississippi on July 9th 1862 from bad food, water and exposure."

Back in Minnesota, Edwin went back to his implement selling and blacksmithing. In 1864, Edwin married a second time. His bride was Rosa Bromwich, a young English born immigrant. The couple had seven children, but the twin of one child died after only a few minutes of life. In Freeborn County, Edwin held several public offices and was elected to the State Legislature, serving two terms. One of his accomplishments was to serve on a Roads and Bridges Committee and he helped pass a new set of road laws for Minnesota.

In about 1877, Edwin moved the family to Wells where he continued his blacksmithing business until 1882. At that time, Edwin and Rosa sold their shop and house and moved to Minneapolis.

Rosa had only lived in Minneapolis for two years when she died just before Christmas in 1884. Edwin and the children stayed in Minneapolis for a few years, but in 1887, they moved to Michigan. This move was because Edwin had married a third time to a widow by the name of Julia Case. She also had four children, though hers, like Edwin's, were mostly grown by the time they married.

Julia had land from her first husband in Michigan and it was to this land that they moved in 1887. The following summer, Edwin found himself preparing yet another funeral for a family member. This time it was his 18 year old son who drowned while swimming at a nearby lake. Edwin buried two wives and two sons.

Edwin was a member of the Grand Army of the Republic and had been elected to the state legislature on the Republican ticket, but had since changed parties to the Prohibitionist Party. Both he and Julia were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church and Edwin was a Class Leader in of the society nearest his home. He also had served as the superintendent of the Sunday School.

Heart trouble took Edwin from his earthly toils on September 4, 1902. He was laid to rest in the Lacey Cemetery in Calhoun County, Michigan. It is interesting that Julia sued Edwin's estate for \$200, saying it was owed her from an agreement made before Edwin's death. What the agreement may have been is unknown, but the courts did give her the \$200. According to records, she had a house with a mortgage, some land, and a savings account of \$500. Her total income for a year did not reach \$85 according to the application she filed as Edwin's widow.

Edwin kept a diary for several years, both before the war and after he was serving. We are fortunate enough to have a copy of the known diaries. The war-time year is 1862 and, unfortunately, Edwin used a pencil when he wrote in this little book. The copy is not the best as a result, but most of what he wrote can still be read. One page is a drawing of a cannon with the major parts labeled. Might this be Edwin's notes to help him when he first joined the Battery?



Fractional Currency

(Information gathered from various web sites)

The Civil War Era was an extremely trying time on all Americans of the day. The upheaval of war caused hoarding of everyday staples and supplies including coin money. In response to the lack of circulating coins, the Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase, proposed the printing of fractional currency which, after President Lincoln signed it into law on July 17, 1862, started to be produced in August. The production and use of the paper coinage did not end until February of 1876. The notes varied in design and technical skill throughout the five issues produced based on the talent of the engravers and subsequent skills of the counterfeiters.

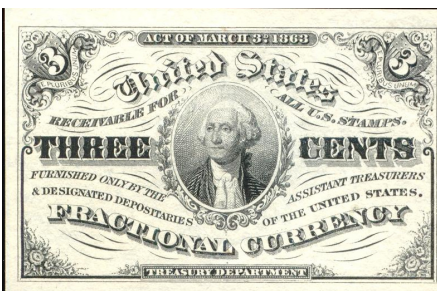
First Issue

The first issue had 5¢, 10¢, 25¢ and 50¢ denominations and was known as "postage currency". This issue of currency was produced until May of 1863. The 5¢ note features Thomas Jefferson and the 10¢ has George Washington. The 25¢ bill has 5 portraits from the 5¢ and 5 of the 10¢ portraits for the 50¢.



Second Issue

Congress authorized the second issue in March 1863 and production started in October. Production ended in February 1867. The same denominations were used, however, George Washington was featured on all of the second issue denominations. A gilded oval was added to frame the portrait to make it more difficult to counterfeit. The oval was bronze colored and actually contained bronze dust. The reverse sides of the bills are colored differently for each denomination. The 5¢ uses brown, 10¢ is light to dark green, 25¢ has shades of purple and shades of red for the 50¢.



Third Issue

The third issue of fractional currency was printed from December 1864 to August 1869 and was the only issue to include the 3¢ note. Signatures of Register and Treasurer also appeared in this issue for the first time. High fiber paper with the reverses printed in different colors also distinguish the 5¢ denominations. The 3¢ and 10¢ notes have George Washington, 25¢ shows William Pitt Fessenden who was the Secretary of the Treasury from 1864 to 1865. The 50¢ bill has the creator of fractional currency, General William F. Spinner who was also the U.S. Treasurer under Lincoln.

There was also a version of the 50¢ note with a reclining Lady Justice with her scale. On the 5¢ cent note. The portrait was suppose to be Lewis and Clark, but somehow Spencer Clark appears. Spencer Clark was the head of the National Currency bureau at the time and must have confused Lewis and Clark for himself? After this "error," congress passed a law making it illegal for a living person to be put on any legal tender.



Fourth Issue

The fourth issue introduced the 15¢ note and continued with the 10¢, 25¢ and 50¢ bills. The 3¢ and 5¢ bills were not included in the fourth issue which ran from July of 1869 to February 1875. New engravers made this issue very, very well. Lady Liberty is featured on the 10¢ note, Columbia is featured on the 15¢ and George Washington is hanging out on the 25¢. Lincoln, having been assassinated in 1865, is on the 50¢ bill, but for only 6 months of production. E.M. Stanton, Secretary of War under Lincoln, finished out the run.



Fifth and Final Issue

The fifth printed only 3 denominations, the 10¢, 25¢ and 50¢ bills. The war was over and coins were beginning to be circulated again. These three denominations printed from February 1874 until February 1876 and then faded into history. William Meredith served under Zachary Taylor as Treasurer and was put on the 10¢ note. William Crawford served under both James Madison and James Monroe and is on the 25¢ note. Robert J. Walker, Treasury Secretary in the Polk Administration, finished out the 50¢ note.

Recap

April 17, 2012 – Bluff View Elementary, Lake City MN

Four members of the 2nd Minnesota Battery spoke to 5th grade students in two 1½ hour sessions at a school we have been regularly visiting since 1991. Sgt Duden spoke of Minnesota's involvement in the Civil War, the 2nd Minnesota Battery and soldier's uniforms & equipment, Pvt Graves provided examples of historical events that preceded the conflict, Mrs Graves discussed a number of women who played influential roles during the conflict; nurses, spies, authors & soldiers and Cpl Bruce demonstrated some of the weapons used during the Civil War and gave a physical examination to one student in each session to show how easy it was to become a soldier in this conflict. Once again, the question & answer period following each session indicated these students have discussed the Civil War extensively in their class rooms and were well prepared for our visit.



May 7, Calvin Christian School, Edina

This school is always fun to visit and this year was no exception. The weather cooperated and we had a good crew to staff the five stations. The laundress had a funeral to attend, so that station was a scramble to fill, but Miss Katie and Bugler Bill were the heroes! There was no laundry at that station, but Bill shared his wealth of knowledge about bugle calls and miss Katie talked with students about the Sanitary Commission and soldier's Aid Society!



May 11, Eagle Point Elementary, Oakdale

For once, the weather at this school was good! We've had notoriously bad weather at Eagle Point, but not this year! We were outside and had a great time with students. There were enough Battery members that every station had two people sharing with the kids. While this makes us all think fast and stay on our toes to make our material fit into the time we have, it does make for an easier day on individuals.

May 24 Oakdale Elementary, Oakdale MN

Our weather luck didn't hold for the last school of the year. In fact, we had another first. We've had rain, snow, and hot sunshine while we've been at school, but this was the first time the gun crew had gotten hailed on! The monsoon rains that had been coming down all night and into the morning forced all the stations inside except the gun. Sgt. Duden and Privates



The Second Minnesota Light Artillery Battery is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of Civil War history by living it.

Membership is \$12 per year. Non-member newsletter subscription rate is \$6.00 per year.

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Crowder, Wendel, Arnoldy, and Golden were outside with the kids when the hail started coming down! We had two flies set up for shelter, but the hail was still bouncing. Again, we had a great group of members for this school—the most ever!

May 28 , Memorial Day, Red Wing

Following a weekend of threatening weather, clear skies greeted the estimated crowd of 500 who attended the Red Wing Memorial Day Observance. The 2nd Minnesota Battery's Jim Rosasco, a WWII veteran of the U.S. Army Air Corps, was the Honorary Grand Marshall for the event. Our Bruce Arnoldy, U.S. Army Vietnam veteran, read Logan's Proclamation. The main address for the ceremony was provided by the Adjutant General of Minnesota, Maj. Gen. Richard C. Nash. A portion of the ceremony each year is reading the names of our departed comrades. This year, the names of fifty-two veterans from Red Wing who had departed since last Memorial Day were read. 1st Lt John J. Cain commanded a full gun crew to fire the three round salute with our Parrott Rifle. Battery members participating in the gun crew were John Watkins, Philip Watkins, John Crozier, Ben Norman, Neil Bruce, Briar Golden, Bruce Arnoldy and Daryl Duden. Adding a wonderful back drop to the ceremony were B.J. Norman, Brenda Crozier and Ardee Rosasco dressed in their finest Civil War attire.