

2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

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February 2018

On This Date-155 Years Ago

October, 2017—New Book Released

Dennis Gaffney offers a sneak peek into a new book, *The Seven-Day Scholar: The Civil War*, by Dennis Gaffney and Peter Gaffney. Here are last of the 10 things you might not know about America's most devastating domestic conflict. (Continued from last month)

Robert E. Lee's Virginia estate was confiscated by the Union and turned into a cemetery during the war. As war descended on Virginia, Lee and his wife Mary fled their 1,100-acre Virginia estate, known as Arlington, which overlooked Washington, D.C. In 1863, the U.S. government confiscated it for nonpayment of \$92.07 in taxes. Meanwhile, Lincoln gave permission for a cemetery to be built on the property, including a burial vault on the estate's former rose garden. The idea was that, should Lee ever return, he would "have to look at these graves and see the carnage that he had created," according to his biographer Elizabeth Brown Pryor. After the war, the Lees quietly looked into reclaiming Arlington, but took no action before they died. In 1877 their oldest son, George Washington Custis Lee, sued the federal government for confiscating Arlington illegally; the Supreme Court agreed and gave it back to him. But what could the Lee family do with an estate littered with corpses? George Lee sold it back to the government for \$150,000. Over time, 250,000 soldiers would be buried in what is now Arlington National Cemetery.

Privates weren't cannon fodder during the Civil War—generals were. Robert E. Lee's impulse to personally lead a counterattack during the Battle of the Wilderness in May 1864 (his troops held him back) would not have surprised his men if he were a bit lower in rank. That's because many top officers, including generals, literally led their troops into battle, a rare occurrence in modern wars. For this reason, generals were 50 percent more likely to die in combat than privates. At the Battle of Antietam alone, three generals were killed and six wounded—on each side. At the Battle of the Wilderness, Confederate General James Longstreet took a bullet to his shoulder and throat, though he would be one of the lucky few: He returned to command and outlived many generals and privates, dying in 1904, just short of his 83rd birthday.

More men died in the Civil War than any other American conflict, and two-thirds of the dead perished from disease. Approximately 625,000 men died in the Civil War, more Americans than in World War I, World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War combined. If the names of the Civil War dead were arranged like the names on the Vietnam Memorial, it would stretch over 10 times the wall's length. Two percent of the population died, the equivalent of 6 million men today. Rifles were by far the war's deadliest weapons, but deadlier still was disease. In 1861, as armies massed, men once protected from contagion by isolation marched shoulder to shoulder and slept side by side in unventilated tents. Camps became breeding grounds for childhood diseases such as mumps, chicken pox and measles. One million Union soldiers contracted malaria, and epidemics were common.

Events for 2018

We are in the process of looking at events for the 2018 calendar. If you know of events we may want to consider for the 2018 reenacting season, send that information to Ken, Daryl or John ASAP. (Contact info on page 4). A list of potential events was first discussed at the February meeting. No decisions have been made yet, so if there is anything new to consider, get the information asap. The final vote on the 2018 calendar will happen at the meeting in March.



A section of the frieze that surrounds completely the Pension Building in Washington DC.

Next Meeting

February 24, 2018 11:00am

Marie's Underground Dining, Red Wing
Call Ken Cunningham with questions or agenda items. 651 388-2945.



Battery Profile

Charles P. Russell

Charles had a rough start to his military service. He enlisted in St. Paul, Minnesota, on December 22, 1863, agreeing to serve three years. He was 32 years old, married, and they had a three year old son. The descriptive roll said Charles was 5' 7-1/2" tall, with blue eyes, auburn hair, and a sandy complexion. He was a printer at the time he enlisted.

Training at Fort Snelling took up the first two months for Charles before he and others were sent south to join their units on March 6, 1864. Charles only got as far as Winona, Minnesota, when it was decided he was too sick to continue traveling. He was left in the hospital there while the rest continued south. When he was well enough, Charles was provided transportation to the Second Minnesota Battery, thought to be in camp near Chattanooga, Tennessee. By the time Charles arrived, the veterans of the Battery were going home on their veterans furlough, so Charles was ordered to join the non veterans of the Battery. Those men choosing not to reenlist or not yet eligible to reenlist, were assigned to Battery I, Second Illinois Light Artillery. There they served as the army fought its way toward the southern city of Atlanta. During the intense fighting near Kennesaw Mountain, Charles damaged his hearing from all the noise of the guns. Not long after, when the Battery was fighting near Marietta, Georgia, Charles lost more of his hearing. It was a permanent loss as he never regained all of his hearing, though he said some of it did come back after a few days. A loss of hearing was not something the men reported at sick call, so no record other than Charles' memory of his hearing loss was made.

When the Atlanta campaign was over and the Second Minnesota Battery was back in the South, the Minnesota men returned to their own unit and took up garrison duty at Fort Erwin outside Chattanooga, Tennessee. It was the first time Charles had actually served with the unit he had enlisted in nearly a year before. The last months of the war were less eventful and Charles was discharged with the rest of the Battery at Fort Snelling on August 16, 1865.

Charles gathered up his wife and son and they began a series of moves. They lived in Nebraska, Illinois, and Washington State by 1879, where they stayed until September of 1911 when Charles moved to Idaho. Olive, Charles' wife, never left Washington. She died there in 1879.

Charles was living in the Old Soldiers Home in Boise, Idaho, when he died on November 19, 1918. He was laid to rest at Morris Hill Cemetery in the Silent Camp section reserved for veterans. For reasons unknown, the veterans marker on Charles' grave notes his service as with the First Illinois Light Artillery rather than the Second Minnesota or even the Second Illinois where he served on temporary duty. His obituary and all other records show him as a veteran of the Second Minnesota Battery of Light Artillery.



Potholder Quilt: Any Holder but a Slave Holder

From a quilting blog by Barbara Brackman

California blogger wrote a post about a family hand-me-down: A crazy quilt from Beloit (Wisconsin?) It's a typical crazy quilt from about 1880-1900, but she thought the picture of the freed slaves saying "Good Bye Dixie" indicated it was from the Civil War era, twenty years earlier.

The embroidered image might have been stitched in the 1860s, saved in the later quilt. The image is of a dancing



African-American couple seen from the rear. It looks like Berlin work, what we'd call needlepoint, done with wool over a canvas.

The image of a dancing couple was familiar in the 19th century. They were stitched in front view and rear view in potholders with a pun: "Any holder but A Slave holder" and belongs to the Chicago Historical Society.

The image is seen as an offensive stereotype today, but in the mid-19th century the "humor" of the pun and the figures indicated an antislavery sympathy.

The two in the Chicago museum were accompanied with the history that they were sold at one of Chicago's

Northwestern Sanitary Fairs (1863 & 1865). Scholars Beverly Gordon and Beverly Lemire agree that these punning potholders originated with the fund-raising fairs during the Civil War. This is just the kind of quick needlework with a message that children and women did to support the Union cause.



The Smithsonian owns one that shows how the work was done—counted stitches over a coarsely woven fabric. The background was not filled in on this example.

A child named Lena sent a cross-stitched piece to Frederick Douglass in 1882. The embroidery and his thank-you letter are preserved at the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History at the New-York Historical Society. Lena's caption "Any Holder but a Slave Holder" seems to be a relic of slavery days fifteen years earlier. The piece might have been

made in the 1880s or have been an older souvenir. The dancing couple continued after the Civil War with celebrations of freedom.



The "We's Free" variation, left, seems to have been sold as a commercial embroidery project.

There is paper pattern much like the one at right, which has a date of January 15th, 1865. It may allude to the 13th Amendment: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude..., shall exist within the United States..." The amendment was passed by Congress on January 31, 1865. The piece is probably commemorative, made later. It is unknown what the January 1st, 1864, date of the one pictured above commemorates.



It's interesting that these punched paper pieces have no embroidery in the backgrounds. Back to the quilt at the top of the post: I haven't seen another embroidery with the motto, "Good Bye Dixie." I'd guess it was a late-19th century piece, probably done about the same time as the crazy quilt. Could it allude to the Exoduster migration about 1880 when thousands of former slaves left the South for lands in the Great Plains?

Valentine's Day

From the website: <https://americancivilwarvoice.org/2014/02/11/valentines-day-civil-war-style/>

"...This is the day on which those charming little missives, called Valentines, cross and inter-cross at every street and turning. The weary and all forespent twopenny postman sinks below a load of delicate embarrassments, not his own." From: *Valentine's Day in Essays of Elia* by Charles Lamb, 1860.

Valentine's Day was a well-established holiday by the 1860's, dating back to, it is attributed, the ancient Roman fertility festival of Lupercalia, and to St. Valentine who, it is said, sent the first valentine to the girl who had visited him in prison, signed "From Your Valentine." However, it is clear that by the 1860s the religious aspect of the day had been put aside. George Tillotson (1863) writes in *The Boy's Yearly Book*: "...St. Valentine's Day now bears witness to the fact that a partial return to the pagan form has since been found agreeable. St. Valentine, personally, had nothing to do with the celebration of this day."

The first written valentines were sent in the 1400s and continued to be popular as they are today. Poetry was composed. Cards and tokens were handmade with love and care for that special someone. But in 1848, inspired by an English valentine card she had received, the "Mother of Valentine", Ester A. Howland, daughter of a book and stationery manufacturer, began selling valentines produced using an all-female assembly line (long before Henry Ford's) in her home.

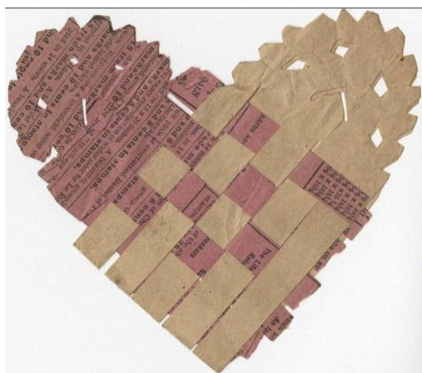
Made of glued bits of lace, ribbon, and cutouts of printed pictures, the cards were still essentially handmade. She introduced a number of innovations that remain popular to this day including pop ups, shadow boxes, and contrasting colors behind the lace, and one that is only now again available with Internet cards – the ability to insert the verse of your choice in the card. Venders were provided with 131 verses for the purchaser to glue inside the cover of they had picked.

She named her company the New England Valentine Company [stamped NEVco], and it is estimated she earned an incredible \$25,000 to \$75,000 a year from the business which lasted to 1888 when she sold out to her competitor.

An 1850 Howland card

Valentine cards were especially important during the Civil War when husbands and wives, and young lovers were separated not only by miles but by the fear they would never see each other again.

An 1850 Howland card



Cards made by Howland and her competitors were sent by those who could afford them and had access to stores. However, out in the field many soldiers made their own cards using what materials that they had. In 1862, Confederate soldier Robert King made this basket-weave folded card for his wife from scrounged paper. Opened up, it showed two crying lovers. It was a particularly sad foretelling of his death.

Soldiers also made folded cards like a Puzzle Purse by folding in the corners to make a paper pouch in which they would insert a trinket or lock of hair for their loved ones.

Directions for making a Puzzle Purse can be found on the internet. You can make one for a special someone this Valentine's Day.



<http://www.origami-resource-center.com/valentine-puzzle-purses.html>
<http://home.kendra.com/victorianrituals/Victor/val.htm>

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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Dues are Due!

Please find a membership renewal form on page 5 of this newsletter. Your 2018 dues are due now.

The organizational officers of the Battery are requesting that you please fill out the form completely. We need to have an accurate and up to date contact list for all members in case of last minute changes in meetings or events or if there is an emergency. Cell phones and emails change fairly frequently, so be sure your contact information is accurate.

Your Country Needs You!
And so does the Battery!

2018 dues are DUE !! To remain on the active member list, your dues are:

Civilian Member	\$12.00
Military Member	\$12.00
Associate Member	\$ 6.00
Junior Member (14-17)	\$ 6.00
Junior Member (under 14)	Free

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City, State and Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

e-mail address: _____

Please send this form and your check to:

Daryl Duden
1210 West 4th Street
Red Wing, MN 55066

Please do fill out the form completely and return it with your dues as email addresses and cell numbers change. We need an accurate contact list in case of last minute event changes or emergencies.

Thank you!