



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 275

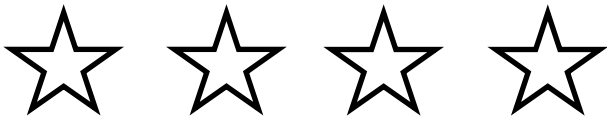
March 2020

On This Date-155 Years Ago)

March 4, 1865

President Abraham Lincoln was sworn into office for his second term. It was an office he would hold for just a few weeks. Lincoln talked about the terrible price paid by both sides in his inaugural address, concluding it with these words many of us know by heart:

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.



March is Women's History Month

There are so many stories about women during the Civil War and we've read many of them. Others are new. The "featured article" in this newsletter is a new study and may turn a few of our ideas on their head. The study, reprinted on pages 3-6 looks, at some of the cherished "roles" women played in the war and what careful analysis of those roles indicates—maybe not what we thought! The original article is fully footnoted and documented, please see the website listed under the title to reach it (or just google the exact title.)

And, just because it would take a long time to make and we all likely have a fair amount of time on our hands at the moment, a recipe for a treat appropriate for camp.

Upcoming Events

While we have a compiled list of possible events for 2020, the current situation with the coronavirus pandemic has put all of life on hold. When we can have our next meeting and elections, plan our calendar or even know the status of events is unknown.

Please stay safe, stay in, follow proper medical advice, and we will get through this. We will be back around our campfire together again!



Next Meeting

Maybe April or May? 11:00am

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



Candied Orange Peel

This is a period recipe, updated on a reenactor's blog. It's pretty putzy, but we all have some time on our hands right now!

Right: A Cyclopaedia of Six Thousand Practical Receipts, Arnold James Cooley, New York, 1856)

To actually make these, I used some modern techniques.

Place the orange peels in a heavy-bottomed saucepan with enough water to cover them generously. Bring the water to a boil. After roughly 30 seconds, drain the boiling

CITRON PEEL, CANDIED. *Prep.* Soak the peels in water, which must be frequently changed, until the bitterness is extracted, then drain and place them in sirup, until they become soft and transparent; the strength of the sirup being kept up by boiling it occasionally with fresh sugar. When they are taken out, they should be drained and placed on a hair sieve to dry, in a dry and warm situation.

Use. Stomachic; much used as a sweetmeat, and by the confectioner and pastry-cook.



water and refill the

pot with cold water. You could also drain the peels into a colander, rinse well with cold water, and return to the pot of cold water. Do this two more times, for a total of 3 times. Not only does this process help remove the bitterness, but it cooks the peel and softens the pith. The period recipe doesn't suggest blanching as part of the process, but just soaking and changing out the water would take a long time.

Remove one piece of peel and place it on a hard surface, such as a cutting board. With the edge of a teaspoon, carefully but firmly scrape out as much of the softened pith as you can. I find I prefer to leave a small layer of the pith, the few times I have been able to

scrape all the way down my candied peel has been more brittle. Repeat until all the peels have been scraped. Discard the pith.

Cut the scraped peels into thin strips. The thickness is your personal preference. I have found I prefer the strips to be fairly thin (1/8"), but there is nothing wrong with thicker peels (1/4"). Don't discard any uneven or small bits - they will candy just as well.

In the empty pot, place 3 c of water and 3 c of white sugar, and heat to dissolve. Add the peel. The sugar should totally cover the peel. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and let simmer for 60 min. There is debate on how long this candying should take, with some sources suggesting just until the peel is tender and other suggesting 90 min, with the sugar syrup being greatly reduced.

Remove the peel from the pot in small batches, using a slotted spoon. Let the sugar syrup drip back into the pot before you move it to the next stage. Set up a drying rack over a baking sheet so the sugar syrup doesn't drip onto your counter or table. You can either put the peel on a plate, transfer it piece by piece to a drying rack and then sprinkle it with sugar, or you can do what I do. I spread a layer of sugar on a plate or small baking pan, put in the peel, then stir the peel with a fork to coat it with the sugar. After the peel is coated with sugar, transfer it piece by piece to the drying rack.

When dry, place the peel in a closed container and store in a cool, dry place. I have found I prefer candied peel after it ages a while. Of course, it can be eaten as soon as it has dried - and, well, while it is drying. It's hard to resist! There does not seem to be an expiration for candied peel as long as it is stored properly (mold indicating improper storage).

The same process can be used for other citrus peels: lemons, grapefruit, and limes. Limes are almost impossible to scrape out, the skins being so thin that it is easier to simply skip that step. The limes will definitely have a bitter lime bite to them! I would recommend not candying more than one type of peel at a time because the flavors tend to cross in the blanching process.

The orange sugar syrup can be stored in the refrigerator for other uses or you can let it crystalize on shallow pans and use the sugar for other purposes.

The Recipe Summarized

Place orange peels in a large, heavy-bottom sauce pot with enough cold water to cover generously. Bring to a boil. After roughly 30 seconds, drain the peel and rinse with cold water. Repeat the process 2 more times, for a total of 3 blanching cycles.

Leaving the remaining peel in the cold water, carefully scrape the pith from each piece of peel. Discard the pith. Cut the peels into strips of desired thickness.

Place 3 c of water and 3 c of sugar in the same pot. Heat to dissolve the sugar. Add the strips of peel. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and let cook gently for roughly 1 hr.

Place a drying rack in a shallow baking pan.

Using a slotted spoon, remove the peel from the sugar syrup in small batches, letting the syrup drip back into the pot before proceeding. Either spread a shallow layer of sugar on a plate and dredge the peel in small batches, refreshing the sugar as needed and carefully spreading on the drying rack, or spread the peel directly on the rack in a single layer and then sprinkle generously with sugar, turning the peel to get both sides. Let dry. Store in a closed container in a cool, dry place.



Ten Common Myths about Women in the Civil War and How to Dispel Them

By Jane E. Schultz

From the website of the Foreign Policy Research Institute

Myth 1: The most significant role of women during the Civil War was as soldiers-in-cognito.

The stories of the several hundred women passing as soldiers in the ranks are intriguing and suggest the extent to which gender was a more permeable category of identity in the 19th century than we might once have believed. But the more significant group were domestic laborers, the thousands who provided hospital relief services in urban centers, military camps, and the field.

Obviously, more women stayed home producing goods and laboring on their farms than went to war, but the significant group of women who chose this more active military role believed that they were representative American women who could volunteer their institutional and domestic knowledge on behalf of soldiers. Among them were women like Hannah Ropes, active in the abolition movement in Massachusetts, who had been out to “bleeding” Kansas in the 1850s; and Abby Hopper Gibbons, a New York Quaker, who had been involved in numerous philanthropic initiatives for free blacks and later contrabands.

Myth 2: Only several thousand women served as nurses in hospital, camp, and battlefield.

Historians have told us from 1865 on that several thousand women served as nurses in hospital, camp, and battlefield in the Civil War. But this number is artificially low. At the National Archives, I discovered, among other treasures, the Carded Service Records of Union Hospital Attendants. The tabulation of these dusty index cards revealed that more than 21,000 women alone had been on Union payrolls as nurses, cooks, matrons, laundresses, seamstresses, waitresses, and chambermaids.

We have no reason to believe that Confederate women constituted a smaller percentage of the hospital force in the South, which suggests that as many as 10,000 or more women did similar work there. Thousands of Confederate relief workers were slave women, and later contrabands, who found work in Union hospitals from Kentucky down to Louisiana and from Maryland down to Georgia. Among Southerners were also rural white women (the yeomanry), far more numerous than the planter class, who found ready work in military settings in the absence of breadwinners. Altogether this was the mobilization of a lot of women.

Myth 3: White middle-class women constituted the majority of relief workers.

In fact, white middle-class women constituted a minority of relief workers in both North and South. We were under the mistaken impression that they constituted a majority because most of our information about relief work came from books written by white middle-class women, whose literacy and social access made them more visible than other workers. In fact, elites were no more than one-third of the entire group of hospital workers (even fewer in the South).

When literate, well-connected women entered the service, they were called nurses; the working class and those who lacked literacy were given jobs as cooks, laundresses, matrons, waitresses, seamstresses, and chambermaids. Almost none of the black women who made up 11 percent of the total were called nurses, whereas virtually all of the Catholic sisters involved in relief work—perhaps as many as one-fifth of the total—were hired as nurses. We can only guess at the demographics in the Confederate hospital system because many hospital records were burned when Richmond fell in 1865, but it is likely that 20 percent of the female workforce consisted of slaves hired out by their owners. Regardless of section, we can be sure that middle-class women were in a minority of at least 2:1.

Myth 4: Women were motivated by patriotism to serve in relief capacities.

What prompted women to serve? Myth #4 holds that women were motivated by patriotism, which in turn was linked to their Christianity; that they saw war service as work for the Lord and an arena for saving souls. If we look only at those middle-class narratives, at the triumphal narrative of hospital work, we might well conclude that women went to war for altruistic reasons, that working for the armies was tantamount to working for the state, and that they sought to embody the patriotism of the soldier through their work for the state.

While much was said publicly about their wish to serve their respective sections, almost nothing was said about the wages that most hospital workers received (between \$6 and 12 per month). Elite women volunteered for this work because they were able to, and they made it a point to differentiate themselves socially from those women who accepted wages. The many thousands of non-elites did not have the luxury of volunteering. The vast majority sought a wage to sustain themselves and their families in their men’s absence, or because they were widows seeking respectable employment. Some joined their husbands’ regiments and brought their children because they could not survive at home, and runaway slaves often attached themselves to military camps to gain their freedom.

Myth 5: Cooking, cleaning, and laundering jobs differed appreciably from nursing jobs.

Though nurses were given responsibilities related to their literacy skills, which sometimes amounted to administrative authority, the domestic nature of their work differed little from that of cooks, laundresses, et al. Even the doyennes of Philadelphia society stooped to mop floors, wash clothes, ride cattle-style in boxcars, and tote cauldrons and washtubs where wagons were scarce.

The relationship between job title and duties helps us better understand the class and racial demographics of the larger group of workers. Nurses were expected to read and write for patients, to help prepare and deliver food and medicine, to change bed linen, to wash their charges, to keep their surroundings clean, and occasionally to assist in medical procedures. Regardless of their job title, workers in the field performed most of these duties and then some, even helping to take care of livestock and cleaning rifles. Susie King Taylor, a 14-year-old slave who escaped from the Sea Islands to Fort Pulaski (Georgia) in 1862, was called a regimental laundress, but did all of these jobs, including nursing typhoid patients and doing the wash.

Where work was difficult, like at the Cavalry Corps field hospital near Washington, 12 of the 15 workers were African-American laundresses; the three white women were all hired as nurses. Nearly half of the cooks and laundresses hired by the Union army were African-Americans, and they were prevalent in Baltimore and Nashville hospitals (but not in Philadelphia, where the city hospitals hired only white women).

In large urban hospitals, like Washington's Armory Square or Richmond's Chimborazo, we do find greater differentiation in assigned tasks, but it is a misconception—especially when hospitals were inundated with wounded after battles—that the domestic work of nurses was different in substance from that of cooks and laundresses. Clearly job title was predicated on class and racial status. This would set in motion a system of valuing that had enormous impact on the pensioning of hospital workers in the 1890s.

Myth 6: The organization of the U.S. Sanitary Commission (USSC) centralized Union relief efforts.

Early in 1861 several well-to-do New York women brought local ladies' aid societies together in the Women's Central Relief Association. Well-connected men (some of them the women's husbands) observed their example and met to plan the USSC, which would provide the link between homefront products and the Union Army medical department. The USSC was formed to deliver food and relief supplies to soldiers in the field, but its professed centralization was never realized. It became a clearinghouse for thousands of ladies' aid societies, but the philanthropic New Yorkers who assumed its leadership took credit for its operations at the expense of the women producing the goods.

The Confederacy had no centralized benevolent umbrella, but individual states opened hospitals near the fighting, which were administered by state governments. Juliet Opie Hopkins, for example, the wife of the governor of Alabama, administered a hospital in Virginia during the first two years of the war. Ella Newsom, a 22-year-old widow from Mississippi, sunk all her wealth into establishing hospitals in Memphis and Bowling Green.

Significantly, this notion of centralized benevolence tended to lessen women's authority to oversee the transportation and distribution of supplies. In the North, men became the USSC's decision-makers, and the model of scientific efficiency they embraced augmented their authority. Women like Iowa's Annie Turner Wittenmyer resisted surrendering her state's aid societies to the Commission for fear of losing their administrative autonomy.

Similarly, when in 1862 the Confederate government formally organized its medical department, it closed individual state hospitals and built the pavilion-style Chimborazo and what would become the forerunner of mobile army surgical hospitals, or "flying" hospitals attached to armies in the field. The results were similar: the centralized structures had no place for women administrators.

Harriet Eaton, the widow of a Portland minister who traveled to Virginia to nurse Maine soldiers, noted in her diary that it was nearly impossible for USSC boxes to reach regiments in the field, and that it was only through the efforts of local and state relief organizations—individuals lumbering around the countryside in wagons—that sick men left behind in huts could be tracked. Thus we begin to see state and regional organizations popping up a year after the USSC was founded, and their employees expressing thinly veiled contempt for the pretensions of the USSC.

Other organizations with a national emphasis also became competitors, like the US Christian Commission and the Western and Northwestern Sanitary Commissions in St. Louis and Chicago, which did not recognize the USSC as a parent organization. Thus, despite intentions to centralize, the organization of relief services could not finally be centralized.

Myth 7: Wartime relief work demonstrated a model of women and men working together harmoniously.

The postwar memorialization of relief work, a process under way during a period of sectional reconciliation in the 1880s and '90s, represented women as accommodating, subservient, and self-sacrificial. But primary sources indicate that conflict between relief workers and surgeons was common and harmony rare. Nurses were shocked that men of their own elite status paid them little heed concerning soldiers' needs, and they became as dismissive of the African-American and working women in their midst as surgeons were of them.

Though relief workers praised many surgeons for their dedication, sympathy, and endurance, they were not reluctant to criticize when propriety was transgressed. Hannah Ropes had a surgeon at Union Hotel arrested

for graft—selling food and clothing meant for hospital patients on the side for a profit. This exempted Ropes from the trust of the entire medical staff and probably hastened her death from typhoid a month later. Phoebe Pember, a widowed nurse at Chimborazo, struggled continually to keep surgeons out of the medicinal liquor cabinet and complained that they were too often AWOL when new shipments of misery arrived on the premises. As self-appointed guardians of soldiers' well-being, nurses leveraged morality, and surgeons chafed at their self-righteousness and scrutiny. Surgeons wished to help only those who appeared likely to survive, whereas nurses regarded triage protocols as heartless and too often faulty. There is a favorite motif in the triumphal narrative of the nurse who saves a soldier that all others had given up for dead.

Union surgeon general's records feature letters from surgeons asking that so-called troublemakers be dismissed. When surgeon John Brinton arrived at Mound City, IL (he was an elite Easterner who felt that he had been banished to Siberia), he expressed displeasure with the women that Army Nursing Superintendent Dorothea Dix had sent him: "Can you fancy half a dozen or a dozen old hags, for that is what they were, each one clamoring for her little wants?" Another complained to Surgeon General William Hammond that even "dilapidated" nurses were harassing vulnerable soldiers: "My Dear General," he wrote, "in behalf of modesty do I beseech you to issue an order prohibiting Feminine Nurses throwing themselves into the Arms of Sick & wounded Soldiers." Whether he was really concerned about this or merely wanted to get these moral watchdogs out of the way, we cannot know. But it is clear that morality plays were invoked both to "protect" nubile women from lusty soldiers and, evidently, to protect the bedridden from the advances of "shriveled up old maids."

The relations among women in military hospitals were fraught as well. Feminist scholars initially found bonds of sisterhood among relief workers, relying too heavily perhaps on the words of Katharine Wormeley, the daughter of an admiral, who was a great advocate for the USSC. She spoke of her partners on board hospital transports during the Peninsular Campaign as "efficient, wise, active as cats, merry, light-hearted, and thoroughbred." These accolades were heaped upon women of Wormeley's own social milieu, like the wife of George Templeton Strong, a pillar of New York society. When they had the opportunity, women like Wormeley sought to direct the work of social inferiors, even if those "inferiors" were as well educated as they.

Amy Morris Bradley, a schoolteacher and the eighth child of a shoemaker from rural Maine, resented "the Aristocracy of the Commission" because they expected her to flush the decks on a James River transport of unmentionable effluvia. However, aboard the Knickerbocker after the Seven Days battles in 1862, when Bradley encountered staterooms piled high with soiled linen, she hired "four girls (colored)" to sort out the mess, so obviously she was looking for women of lower rank to attend to the chores that she herself wished to avoid.

As to racial dynamics, while abolitionists like Esther Hill Hawks of New Hampshire attempted to shield black women in the Sea Islands from sexual assault by Union officers, other northern whites invoked the language of slavery, referring to servants as "my contraband" and making plans "to carry [them] home" to New England after the war, as if they were material possessions. Louisa May Alcott noted in *Hospital Sketches* (1863) the prejudice of coworkers who wouldn't touch black children for fear of contamination, but she also labeled "colored" laundresses a "swarm." This "othering" of blacks was all too conventional at the time. Whenever female relief workers could exploit social or racial others, they did so. This was the dark side of sisterhood.

Myth 8: As a battlefield nurse, Clara Barton was exceptional.

In fact, Clara Barton, spinster, teacher, and Patent Office clerk, was a brilliant self-promoter. Hundreds of women spent more time than she in strenuous relief work, and scores of them in battlefield roles. Barton's work was not unique, but her postwar lecture tour billed her as the Civil War nurse whom all would remember in perpetuity. She spoke poetically about her bond with the common soldier: "Under the guns our love grew up. Under the sod it shall remain." Veterans loved her.

Barton served in field hospitals at 2nd Bull Run and Antietam, managing to preempt the USSC's slower supply wagons. She received tips from the Quartermaster General that allowed her to mobilize precisely at the right moment. Beyond these two battles, however, Barton gained little traction, and she refused to align herself with the USSC.

Barton had no corner on intense battlefield experience. Scores of others found themselves under fire. Juliet Opie Hopkins took two balls to the leg during Seven Pines; others described the sounds of bombardments as they helped field surgeons with the wounded. Nor was her service protracted. Vermont's Harriet Patience Dame served as a field nurse for more than four years without a furlough and was under fire with her regiment more than 20 times. Many others could make similar claims, but were too modest to do so. Barton's war work only looked exceptional in retrospect, when it became the training ground for her lifetime of philanthropic service.

Myth 9: All female relief workers were eligible for military pensions and most applied for them.

From 1865-92, ex-Union Army nurses lobbied legislators for a pension bill. While legendary nurses like Harriet Patience Dame and Mary Ann Bickerdyke were pensioned by special acts of Congress in the 1870s and '80s, they believed that a standardized pension would offer more complete access to aged and needy women. The passage of the 1892 nurses' pension act was both in concert with the grand expansion of pension benefits available to nearly all relatives of soldiers and signified that their war labors were comparable to those of soldiers.

But when they gained access to a \$12 monthly pension in 1892, fewer than 10 percent of those who had earned wartime wages as relief workers applied for them and fewer still were granted pensions. First, eligibility did not extend to Confederates. Second, the legislation stipulated that only those who could prove more than six months of service as nurses were eligible. Anyone who had entered the service with the job title of cook, matron, or laundress was out of the running, even though these were arguably the women most in need of monthly income. Not only were women in non-nursing categories paid less during the war based on a hospital administrator's concept of their inferior social status, but they were penalized again a generation after the war when ex-nurses agitated on their own behalf by setting themselves apart from other relief workers.

Even after pension requirements eased, making it possible for women in other job categories to demonstrate that they had done work equivalent to nursing, finding witnesses to corroborate their claims by "competent authority" often became an insurmountable obstacle. Those with the poorest literacy skills had the greatest trouble persuading pension examiners that they met the requirements. Here again was evidence that limited social access constituted a punishment that kept on "giving," while nursing victors could claim the spoils.

Myth 10: After the Civil War, relief workers sought further nursing opportunities as nurse training schools opened in the 1870s.

It has long been held that the collective experience of wartime medicine led to a demand for more stringent medical licensing and for a professional class of nurses. But when the first professional nursing schools appeared in Boston, New York, and New Haven in the 1870s, Civil War hospital workers were seldom among them. Though the war launched movements to improve the quality of medical and nursing care, surprisingly few women went to work to reform health care. Some became pillars of late 19th-century reform movements (suffrage, racial uplift, philanthropy), but a large majority returned to prewar occupations as agricultural, industrial, and domestic workers or retired to private life.

Women whom Amy Morris Bradley had considered among "the Aristocracy" of the USSC—Louisa Schuyler and Abby Woolsey—were instrumental in calling for a nurse training school at Bellevue Hospital in New York as early as 1873. But the students they had in mind were not those who had performed relief services during the war: They sought young, white, middle-class urbanites, taking the lead of Florence Nightingale, who had pioneered nurse training programs in the 1860s in the aftermath of the Crimean War.

Some wartime relief workers, like the widowed Mary Phinney von Olnhausen and Rebecca Pomroy, went to work as superintendents of orphanages and other charitable institutions, where wartime lessons could be implemented. But few of those who needed wages ended up in nursing schools. This was partly due to the advanced age by the 1870s-80s of relief workers, few of whom were still in their twenties. Nurses also connected their wartime occupation with misery, and they did not seek more misery—even though peacetime nursing offered less trying opportunities.

There may also have been a kind of Rosie-the-Riveter effect, where women were coached subliminally to return to domestic shelter, though of course this was not an option for the tens of thousands of widows the war had made. Also, there was no ready channel into which postwar nurses could be placed, given the seven-year lag between the end of the war and the opening of training schools.

Perhaps more significant is that training schools institutionalized the subordination of students by not paying them for their labor on the wards. This would have precluded working women who needed to bring in household income. The working class found industrial and agricultural labor more lucrative. The devaluing of domestic work that had been set in motion during the war was also a deterrent to women, who saw nursing as a professional form of subordination.

Very few used the war as a springboard to social activism, though Mary Livermore is a notable exception: Livermore's experience organizing domestic services for the Northwest Sanitary Commission prompted her engagement in the woman suffrage movement, both at the state and national levels.[]

We are left with no clear sense that the war advanced women's autonomous interests. The success of the pension bill acknowledged that women were members of the polity; but that so few availed themselves of it suggests that most were unaware of it. To be sure, individual actors found the war transformative. As Livermore intoned, the war was a great class leveler when it came to hospital workers and the men they cared for. And we see women's continued reverence for soldiers in the memorial initiatives in which they enthusiastically took part for the rest of the century—camp reunions, cemetery dedications, and history curriculum in schools.

That said, there is little evidence of a galvanic shift in women's lives after the war. Many happily traded the public forum for private life, as was true of many men as well. What seems to emerge out of four years of war is a wish to return to domestic life and to assuage the psychic wounding that was inevitably the result of the conflict.

Battery Profile

George L. Rule

George was a late comer to the Second Battery, enlisting during the draft rendezvous in the summer of 1864. He went to Winona to enlist and allowed his name to be credited to the city of Winona for the draft quota. Where he actually lived and worked as a farmer is unknown. He was paid a bounty of \$33.33 up front and the balance of \$66.67 owed him. The descriptive roll showed George to have been born in Madrid, New York, in 1840. He was 23 years old, stood 6' 2" tall, had blue eyes, brown hair, and a light complexion. He enlisted on August 19, 1864. After enlisting in Winona, George was sent to Rochester where he was mustered into the service that same day. By September 10, George was at Fort Snelling and then sent south to join the Battery in garrison duty outside of Chattanooga, Tennessee.

The last year of the war was fairly quiet for the Battery and George never saw the kind of combat the battery went through at Perryville or Chickamauga. Scouting and garrison duty were the Battery's main functions during 1864 and 1865.

The Battery was sent back to Fort Snelling in July of 1865 and mustered out on August 16th. George decided to take the Government's offer of allowing men to keep some of their army equipment and took his knapsack, haversack, and canteen with him when he left to become a civilian again. He returned to the southern part of the state and was living in Pleasant Hill, Winona County, in 1870.

George was living with the Besaw family--a farm family with five children. George himself had married Sarah Hasselgrove on December 4, 1868, and by 1870, they had a baby daughter named Charlotte. It is not known if there was a family connection between the two families or if they just were all living under the same roof for some other reason.

The *Winona Daily Republican* newspaper carried an article George was probably not proud of on September 27, 1870. It said he had been sentenced to the State Prison for one year and six months for larceny.

Ten years later, many changes had gone on in George's life. He was still farming, but Sarah and Charlotte were no longer with George. Instead, he had a different wife, Louise. What happened to Sarah and Charlotte is not known. It is possible George remarried a widow with a child as the daughter listed as living with George and Louise is named Mathilda, born in Prussia, and was 18 years old. The family was living on a farm in Columbus Township, Anoka County, Minnesota.

George was not very good at leaving records about his life and another 30 years went by before any further information is known about George. The 1910 census showed him living in the 6th Ward of St. Paul, Minnesota. His occupation was noted as an electrician for the telephone company. There is a bit of confusion in this information as Mathilda is listed as George's wife rather than the daughter (perhaps step?) she was 30 years earlier. What the real story is may never be known as within two years, George went to live in the Old Soldiers Home in Minneapolis and passed away on March 29, 1912. He was laid to rest in the Soldiers section of Lakewood Cemetery in Minneapolis.



A Letter from the Fort

The following letter was written by a man in another company while both he and the Second Battery were at Fort Snelling in early 1862.

Fort Snelling
March the 20th, 1862

Dear brother,

... I wish you had been here yesterday. There was a grand review of the soldiers here yesterday. There was ten companies of the Fourth Regt. and seven of the 5th Regt. and 2d Battery making in the aggregate about fifteen hundred men. The battery fired the cannon 5 times. You better believe it made an awful noise. After that came the Governor and his Staff. We didn't march very well on review. The reason was because there was three bands of musick. The Fifth Regt. Band was a playing and they throwed us all out of step, but the fun of the thing was to see the Governor get throwed off of his horse. He was riding down the front of Brigade and they fired the cannon and the Governor's horse sent him to the ground. One of the news boys was near the gun and when he saw the Governor fall from his horse he said to the artillerist "there you've played h-ll – you've shot the Governor." There was two boats up from St. Paul with passengers on the Jeanette Roberts and the Alhambra, 5 or 6 thousand persons here. I never seen so many people before, wagons and buggies was no end to them....

*B. C. Hoffman,
Co. H, 4th Regiment Minnesota Volunteers*

A Vocabulary Lesson

From the History Channel

It is not often that we have an exact date when a "new" word hits our patterns of speech, but in this case, we do! On March 23, 1839, the use of "OK" enters our national vernacular when the initials "O.K." are first published in *The Boston Morning Post*. Meant as an abbreviation for "oll korrekt," a popular slang misspelling of "all correct" at the time, OK steadily growing in popular usage.

During the late 1830s, it was a favorite practice among younger, educated circles to misspell words intentionally, then abbreviate them and use them as slang when talking to one another. Just as teenagers today have their own slang based on distortions of common words, such as "kewl" for "cool" or "DZ" for "these," the "in crowd" of the 1830s had a whole host of slang terms they abbreviated. Popular abbreviations included "KY" for "No use" ("know yuse"), "KG" for "No go" ("Know go"), and "OW" for all right ("oll wright").

Of all the abbreviations used during that time, OK was propelled into the limelight when it was printed in the *Boston Morning Post* as part of a joke. Its popularity exploded when it was picked up by contemporary politicians. When the incumbent president Martin Van Buren was up for reelection, his Democratic supporters organized a band of thugs to influence voters. This group was formally called the "O.K. Club," which referred both to Van Buren's nickname "Old Kinderhook" (based on his hometown of Kinderhook, New York). The "O.K. Club," which referred both to Van Buren's nickname "Old Kinderhook" (based on his hometown of Kinderhook, New York), and to the term recently made popular in the papers. At the same time, the opposing Whig Party made use of "OK" to denigrate Van Buren's political mentor Andrew Jackson. According to the Whigs, Jackson invented the abbreviation "OK" to cover up his own misspelling of "all correct."

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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