



## 2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

# “ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 283

November-December 2020

### On This Date-156 Years Ago)

It is remarkable that the Presidential Election of 1864 happened at all. Abraham Lincoln ran for reelection on the National Union ticket, and George B. McClellan ran as the Democratic candidate. The Kentucky Historical Society has a piece of political ephemera, a Pro-Lincoln Anti-McClellan card, in their collection. McClellan won only two states: New Jersey and Kentucky.

UNCLE SAM. LITTLE MAC.

Now LITTLE MAC, you have of your own choice, ceased to be a WARRIOR, (By joining the "Peace Party.") I will gratify your amiable disposition with a **FREE PASS** ON YOUR FAVORITE **GUNBOAT** UP **SALT RIVER.**

**THE GALENA,**

You have the prerogative of inviting all Turncoat Misguided Politicians, Copperheads, Union Splitters, Sons of Liberty, Traitors, Deserters, Canada Raiders, Escaped Rebel Prisoners, and all who have sympathy with the devoted "Armistice Party" to accompany you

You will have a faithful Pilot, Valandingham who once visited the South.

And a good Captain, Gov. Seymour.

### An Upcoming Event (That is still on!)

#### **November 11, Veterans Day, Winona, MN**

This event is ON!! On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, the park in Winona on the shore of Lake Winona will host its annual Tribute to Veterans. The theme is the 75th anniversary of the end of WWII. Our gun and crew are invited to participate with honor volleys during the ceremony.

There are some changes from last year due to COVID-19. The program has been shortened, there will be no Main Address, and the crowd size limited to fall within the Governor's mandate. CDC guidelines will be followed. John Cain will provide an update on gun trailer departure and anticipated arrival time in Winona for all participants as the date gets closer and the weather predictions a bit closer to accurate.



Veterans Day, 2018

### Next Meeting

**January 30, 2021 11:00am**

The meeting will be held at Red Wing Area Seniors facility located at 240 Harrison Street, STE 2, in Red Wing and will follow CDC guidance for masks and social distancing. Contact Ken Cunningham with questions or agenda items.



# **Battery Profile**

## **John Hovey**

The image of people in the 1800s often staying within a single county for their entire lives certainly does not apply to John. He moved his home at least seven times covering six states and that did not include his Civil War service.

John started out in Bath, New York, being born there on October 31, 1838. Other sources provide varying years of his birth, but never more than a year or two in either direction. A letter John himself wrote in 1910 about the confusion in his age provides the year 1838. By 1858, he had moved to Minnesota and taken up farming in Saratoga, Winona County. It appears John did not come to Minnesota alone. Jerry Hovey was most likely with him. The men were both living in Saratoga in Winona County before the war. They were both born in Bath, New York. It is possible they were cousins since it is known they were not brothers.

The Second Battery was just forming up when John decided to join the Army. He was mustered in on January 28, 1862, the same day Jerry mustered in. The descriptive role showed John to be 5' 9" tall, single, with blue eyes, light hair and a light complexion.

Less than a month later, John came down with the measles. The Battery was still at Fort Snelling, so he was sent to the Fort hospital. John stayed there for at time, but he was still sick when he went back to the Battery. Jerry Hovey was detailed as the company nurse and helped care for John. Jerry seemed to think the severe cold and the living conditions of an old warehouse may have played a part not only in John's illness, but in as many as 15 or 20 others in the Battery who were sick.

Though still not well, John remained with the Battery and went South with them. It wasn't until after they were in Missouri that John was finally well enough to be considered fit for duty. He did spend more time in the hospital at least once during the winter of 1862-63.

John campaigned with the Battery throughout his first term of service and reenlisted as a veteran in the spring of 1864. John was mustered out of the Army on August 16, 1865, at Fort Snelling with the Battery.

On Christmas Eve, 1865, John married Betsey Ann Sergeant in Fairbault, Minnesota. The next years would see their family expand to include three sons and two daughters.

The family moved to Wisconsin in 1869, then to Iowa in 1872. The next stops were several places in Nebraska and Montana, and by 1878, they were living in South Dakota. The last move came in 1902 when they moved to Idaho and settled down in the town of Kooskia.

John opened a hotel in Kooskia and after a few years, opened a livery stable. He lost both to a fire, but rebuilt quickly and continued to run his businesses in "an improved manner" according to a local newspaper account.

In the spring of 1920, John fell ill, but there was little concern over his health. He seemed to be recovering, so much so that he was at his hotel working the night before he died. The cause was listed as heart failure when John died on April 17, 1920. He was laid to rest in Kooskia's City cemetery at the south edge of town.





# Jonathan Cain

Ancestor of our John Cain

From his obituary:

Jonathan Cain was born in Chillicothe, Ross County, Ohio on March 18, 1828, and later moved west to Economy, Wayne County, Indiana. By the time the Civil broke out, he was living and working as a blacksmith in Bear Creek Township, Jay County, Indiana.

He enlisted on 24 August, 1862 in Co. H, 100th Indiana Infantry Regiment with his friend, Lafayette Morgan, and eventually they were stationed at Colliersville, Tennessee, near Memphis. The troops there were cut off from joining Rosecrans' movement East towards Chattanooga because of Confederate operations in the vicinity and became an occupation force until they could join with Grant in Chattanooga.

During this time he and several other men in the regiment sought out a civilian "doctor" where they were treated for some unknown ailment. A few of them died and he became one of the walking wounded until he was discharged on May 26th, 1863, not being able to speak above a whisper. His discharge says he was suffering for five months of a condition called "afillonia hemoftysis" and hectic fever with several stated conditions of the affliction.

He returned home to Bear Creek Township and learned his friend Lafayette Morgan had died on December 27, 1863. His wife, Sarah A. Morgan, married Jonathan on January 8, 1867 and his family included three children.

In 1885, he traveled by train to Winterset, Iowa, to visit his daughter and her husband—who I believe were working with the railroad. No records exist of them in Winterset, but Jonathan caught pneumonia, passed away and was buried in the city cemetery pauper's gravesite on October first. The burial costs were carried by the Pitzer Post of the G.A.R. for twenty-five dollars.

Little more is known about him, however I traveled to Winterset two years ago to search for him at the County museum and after a few hours his name was located in the *Winterset Madisonian and Chronicle*.

I left a donation to the museum of \$25 asking them to pay it forward to the G.A.R. if they made a claim. In addition, I purchased a plot to place a veteran's headstone as close as possible to the pauper's gravesite. Hopefully, if this bug ever leaves, I will return to Winterset for final rites.

PS. Sarah Morgan collected on two pensions during her lifetime. She was doing OK. She is buried in a cemetery in Bear Creek Township, Jay County, Indiana.

# William G. Ritchie

Ancestor of our own Michael Ritchie

William G. Ritchie was born in 1825 in Scotland. He emigrated to America and was living in Muscatine, Iowa, before the war. He enlisted in the 10th Iowa Infantry, Company I, on September 20, 1864.

The 10th Iowa was veteranizing about the time William decided to enlist so it is possible he was recruited to take the place of those men who had decided not to reenlist. He might have enlisted because of a hefty bounty or it is even possible he was drafted to fill that regiment.

William would have reached the regiment at Kingston, Georgia, where they were participating in the operations against Wheeler.

William's regiment marched to the sea with Sherman from November 15th to December 10th when they placed Savannah under siege. From there, the regiment moved north through the Carolinas, seeing action at Fishburn's Plantation, South Edisto River, North Edisto River, Congaree Creek, and Columbia, South Carolina. They continued on into North Carolina, again participating in battles at Lynch's Creek, Cox's Bridge, the battle of Bentonville, and the occupation of Goldboro. They were part of the advance on Raleigh and were at the Bennett's House when Johnston surrendered his army to Sherman on April 26, 1865.

The 10th Iowa went to Washington with the rest of Sherman's army and participated in the Grand Review on May 24th. William was discharged in Washington D.C. on May 29th.

William's life included his marriage to Isabella. Their first child was born after the war in Davenport, Iowa. William's time serving in the Army must have made an impression on him as he named that first son, Sherman.

The last known record on William was a report that said "Old man Ritchie" portrayed Uncle Sam at a 4th of July parade in Fulda, Minnesota.

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## Highlight Your Ancestors!

Here are the first (and only) two submissions! There is room for YOUR ancestor in the next newsletter!

Many of us have ancestors who served in the Civil War and it has been suggested that it might be fun to include stories and photos of those ancestors. If you would like to share your Civil War ancestor's story, we will start a column in this newsletter.

Send your story and any photos you might have to Vickie and she will add them to the newsletter in the order received. That is, hoping everyone will participate in this plan!

# Endless Stairs---A Quilt for Our Times

From the Blog of Barbara Brackman



Endless Stairs, quilt from about 1900

A simple pattern to consider some complex philosophies of the past.

We are living through difficult times as people try to understand prejudices of the past---prejudices freely expressed by historical figures we respect. We also have to face the history of economic systems that made that bigotry systemic. Of course, none is more controversial, disturbing and contemporary as the question of how to view the American history of slavery.

People unfamiliar with history tend to paint any historic figure with any involvement in slavery with the same brush. Slavery is bad; therefore Ulysses S. Grant whose wife inherited slaves is bad.

This generalization is overkill.

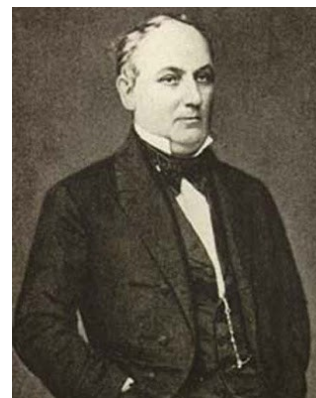
Contempt should be reserved for people who advocated slavery so strongly they defended it with incendiary rhetoric and were willing to go to war over it, for example John Calhoun, Jefferson Davis, James Henry Hammond and Robert Barnwell Rhett.

*"Slavery [is] the greatest of all the great blessings which a kind Providence has bestowed upon our glorious region... As a class, I say it boldly; there is not a happier, more contented race upon the face of the earth." James Henry Hammond, 1836.*

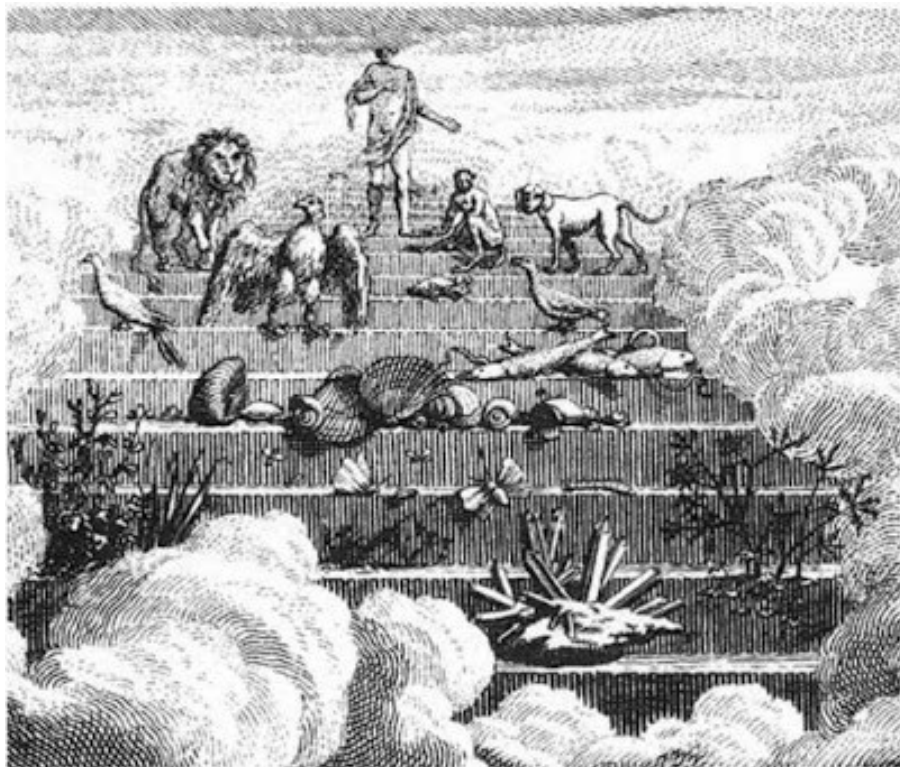


It is also difficult for us to imagine a person living in slavery and not rebelling, but our perspective ignores the extremely important Christian concepts that directed life in Western cultures for centuries.

*"[Our] foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race is his natural and normal condition." Savannah Republican newspaper, March, 1861.*



James Henry Hammond of South Carolina



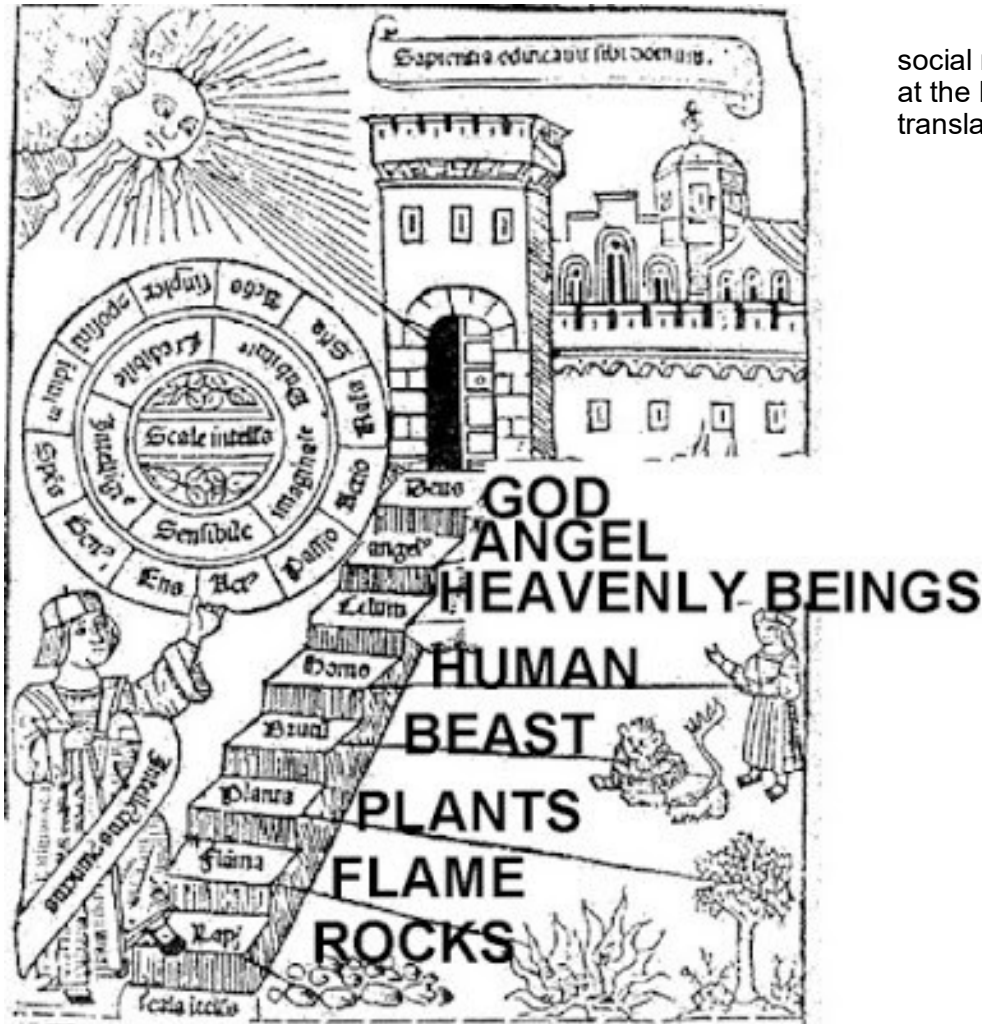
Life was based on hierarchies. Before the Enlightenment, the age of Rational Thought and Revolution, Western people had consistent ways of thinking about society, people and their relations to each other.

Kings inherited a divine right to rule; the rest of creation was born into an endless stair of rank---the Great Chain of Being. Nobility lorded it over the gentry, gentry over the workman, the workman over his wife. Every creature fit into a social order. Lions headed the animal kingdom; dogs were higher on the scale than cats; brunettes more attractive than redheads, white Europeans closer to God than darker peoples. Christian theology made it easy to understand.

Scala Naturae by Charles Bonnet, 1781



In this ancient explanation of the social network, God was at the top, rocks at the bottom. (The added labels were translated for our benefit.)



Shakespeare was making a simple comment on the beliefs and attitudes of his day when he wrote the *Taming of the Shrew* and included these lines: "Such duty as the subject owes the prince. Even such a woman oweth to her husband..."

Laws, custom and religion taught all their place and trained them to be content with their fate. Women easily accepted they were subservient and inferior to men. Slaves in every Western culture were beneath their masters. Questioning the system required a liberalism in thinking that was beyond most people.

It's all very unpleasant to consider but change does not occur without unpleasantness. One might want to ponder philosophies as one cuts rectangles and pieces for an Endless Stair quilt.



A German allegory of the medieval feudal order.



# ***A Christmas Story from the American Battlefield Trust***



The following is a story from the Civil War published in *Harper's Weekly* in 1886 by Reverend John Paxton, a veteran from the 140<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry. Paxton's account takes place on Christmas Day, just after the Union failure at the Battle of Fredericksburg, while performing the often-miserable duty of watch patrol. While on patrol, Paxton and his comrades come upon a group of Confederate soldiers standing across the Rappahannock River, and instead of fighting, the two sides show each other signs of Christmas cheer.

This would not be the last so-called "Christmas Truce" between the North and the South, and such truces would not be contained to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The famous Truce on Christmas Day between British, French and German soldiers during WWI is one example. It should also be noted that all of these truces were entirely unofficial: soldiers that exchanged gifts on one day would fire on each other the next. But these stories can give us a lesson about the importance of empathy to one's enemies, and Peace and Goodwill towards Man.

## ***Christmas on the Rappahannock***

By Rev. John R. Paxton, D.D.

"Gentlemen, the chair of the Professor of the Mathematics is vacant in this college; permit me to introduce to you Captain Fraser." Rah! rah! rah! and away we went and enlisted – to go to Richmond. It took us three years to get there. No wonder; there were so many Longstreets to make our way through; so many Hills to climb; so many Stonewalls to batter down; so many Picketts to clear out of the way. It was as hard as a road to travel as the steep and stony one to heaven.

No preaching, sir! Can't you forget the shop? Don't you know that you have squeezed yourself into that faded jacket, and are squirming, with a flushed face and short breaths, behind that sword belt, which had caused a rebellion in media res?

I started for Richmond in July, 1862, a lad eighteen years old, a junior in college, and chafing to be at it, – to double quick it after John Brown's soul, which, since it did not require a knapsack or three days' rations or a canteen or a halt during the night for sleep, was always marching on. On the night before Christmas, 1862, I was a dejected young patriot, wishing I hadn't done it, shivering in the open weather a mile back of the Rappahannock, on the reserve picket and exposed to a wet snowstorm. There was not a stick of wood within five miles of us; all cut down, down, even the roots of trees, and burned up. We lay down on our rubber blankets, pulled our woolen blankets over us, spooned it as close as we could to get to steal warmth from our comrades and tried not to cry.

Next morning the snow lay heavy and deep, and the men, when I wakened and looked about me, reminded me of a church graveyard in winter. "Fall in for picket duty. There, come, Moore, McMeaus, Paxton, Perrine, Pollock, fall in." We fell in, of course, No breakfast; chilled to the marrow; snow a foot deep. We tightened our belts on our empty stomachs, seized our rifles and marched to the river to take our six hours on duty.

It was Christmas Day, 1862. "And so this is war," my old me said to himself while he paced in the snow his two hours on the river's brink. "And I am out here to shoot that lean, lank, coughing, cadaverous-looking butternut fellow over the river. So this is war; this is being a soldier; this is the genuine article; this is H. Greely's 'On to Richmond.' Well, I wish he were here in my place, running to keep warm, pounding his arms and breast to make the chilled blood circulate. So this is war, tramping up and down this river my fifty yards with wet feet, empty stomach, swollen nose."

*Continued on page 7*

Alas, when lying under the trees in the college campus last June, war meant to me martial music, gorgeous brigadiers in blue and gold, tall young men in line, shining in brass. War meant to me tumultuous memories of Bunker Hill, Caesar's Tenth Legion, the Charge of the Six Hundred, – anything but this. Pshaw, I wish I were home. Let me see. Home? God's country. A tear? Yes, it is a tear. What are they doing at home? This is Christmas Day. Home? Well, stockings on the wall, candy, turkey, fun, merry Christmas, and the face of the girl I left behind. Another tear? Yes, I couldn't help it. I was only eighteen, and there was such a contrast between Christmas, 1862, on the Rappahannock and other Christmases. Yes, there was a girl, too, – such sweet eyes, such long lashes, such a low tender voice.

"Come, move quicker. Who goes there?" Shift the rifle from one aching shoulder to the other.

"Hello, Johnny, what are you up to?" The river was narrow, but deep and swift. It was a wet cold, not a freezing cold. There was no ice, too swift for that.

"Yank, with no overcoat, shoes full of holes, nothing to eat but parched corn and tabacco, and with this durned Yankee snow a foot deep, there's nothin' left, nothin' but to get up a cough by way of protestin' against this infernal ill treatment of the body. We uns, Yank, all have a cough over here, and there's no sayin' which will run us to hole first, the cough or your bullets."

The snow still fell, the keen wind, raw and fierce, cut to the bone. It was God's worst weather, in God's forlornest, bleakest spot of ground, that Christmas Day of '62 on the Rappahannock, a half-mile below the town of Fredericksburg. But come, pick up your prostrate pluck, you shivering private. Surely there is enough dampness around without your adding to it your tears.

"Let's laugh, boys."

"Hello, Johnny."

"Hello, yourself, Yank."

"Merry Christmas, Johnny."

"Same to you, Yank."

"Say, Johnny, got anything to trade?"

"Say, Johnny, got anything to trade?"

"Parched corn and tabacco, – the size of our Christmas, Yank."

"All right; you shall have some of our coffee and sugar and pork. Boys, find the boats."

Such boats! I see the children sailing them on small lakes in our Central park. Some Yankee, desperately hungry for tobacco, invented them for trading with the Johnnies. They were hid away under the backs of the river for successive relays of pickets.

We got out the boats. An old handkerchief answered for a sail. We loaded them with coffee, sugar, pork, and set the sail and watched them slowly creep to the other shore. And the Johnnies? To see them crowd the bank and push and scramble to be the first to seize the boats, going into the water and stretching out their long arms. Then, when they pulled the boats ashore, and stood in a group over the cargo, and to hear their exclamations, "Hurrah for hog." "Say, that's not roasted rye, but genuine coffee. Smell it, you'uns." "And sugar, too!"

***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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Then they divided the consignment. They laughed and shouted, "Reckon you'uns been good to we'uns this Christmas Day, Yanks." Then they put parched corn, tobacco, ripe persimmons, into the boats and sent them back to us. And we chewed the parched corn, smoked real Virginia leaf, ate persimmons, which if they weren't very filling at least contracted our stomachs to the size of our Christmas dinner. And so the day passed. We shouted, "Merry Christmas, Johnny." They shouted, "Same to you, Yank." And we forgot the biting wind, the chilling cold; we forgot those men over there were our enemies, whom it might be our duty to shoot before evening. We had bridged the river, spanned the bloody chasm. We were brothers, not goes, waving salutations of good-will in the name of the Babe of Bethlehem, on Christmas Day in '62. At the very front of the opposing armies, the Christ Child struck a truce of us, broke down the wall of partition, became our peace. We exchanged gifts. We shouted greetings back and forth. We kept Christmas and our hearts were lighter of it, and our shivering bodes were not quite so cold.