

2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

"ACTION FRONT"

Circular No. 281

September 2020

On This Date-156 Years Ago

Both of these news articles appeared in the September 22, 1864, *St. Cloud Democrat* newspaper. The "Correspondent Dixie" mentioned in the second article is one of the Kinkead brothers, likely Alexander.

PERSONAL.—Gov. Miller arrived in town on Tuesday evening and left again this morning. He will please accept our thanks for a fine steel-engraved portrait of our worthy Governor of Minnesota.

Judge Wilkin, the Democratic Candidate for Judge in the St. Paul district, has been in town for several days past as referee in the case of Lowry vs Lowry.

Lieut. Alex. Kinkead, of the Second Battery, has been assigned to duty as Quartermaster on Gen. Brannon's staff, with headquarters at Chattanooga, Tenn.

CASUALTIES IN THE 2D BATTERY.

Our correspondent, "Dixie," sends us the following list of casualties in the Second Minnesota Battery, in the engagement of August 21st, before Atlanta:

Peter Strieker, killed instantly by a shell.
Olaus Olsen, killed, shot in abdomen.
James Blair, wounded, left hand fractured.
Adolph Apitz, died in field hospital near Atlanta.

We regret that a letter from this correspondent, descriptive of the taking of Atlanta, has failed to reach us.

Events NOT Upcoming

The **Flynn Family Gathering** where our gun was invited in September is canceled. They are looking at rescheduling for next summer.

We have received official word from **Pilot Knob, Missouri**. The event is canceled for 2020. They are hopeful it might happen in 2021.

We now have official confirmation that the event at **Perryville, Kentucky**. It is **CANCELLED**. Discussion at past meetings indicated very little support for attending in 2020 and we removed it from our calendar, but now it is official.

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

November 11, Veterans Day, Winona, MN

As of this writing, the committee is still planning to hold this event on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in the park in Winona on the shore of Lake Winona. The theme is the 75th anniversary of the end of WW11. Our gun and crew is invited to participate with honor volleys during the ceremony. This is a special event for us and we are hopeful that it will be able to go on. At present, the event will meet the guidelines for social distancing by being outside with less than 250 people in attendance. However, as we have all learned very well this year, nothing is certain. Members will be updated as we get closer to the event.

Stay safe, stay hopeful, stay positive!

Next Meeting

September 26, 2020 11:00am

The meeting will be held **OUTSIDE** at Colvill Park in Red Wing and follow CDC guidance for social distancing. Hopefully, we will be in a picnic shelter. Members must **BRING THEIR OWN CHAIRS**. Contact Ken Cunningham with questions or agenda items. 651-388-2945.



Battery Profile

George Sylvester Garver

George S. Garver was born in 1830 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He moved first to Wisconsin where he lived in Pine Bluff and Juneau before he moved to St. Charles, Minnesota, in 1861.

He was single when he enlisted in the Second Minnesota Light Artillery. He was 5' 8" tall, had hazel eyes, black hair and a light complexion. He was a farmer from St. Charles, Winona County, Minnesota. George said the examining surgeon, "stripped him stark naked and given a thorough examination as to his physical condition" prior to being allowed to enlist.

George mustered into the unit on February 20, 1862. He re-enlisted on March 22, 1864, and served with the rank of private until the unit mustered out in August of 1865. During the war, George joined the Bible Class and remained a member for its duration. He was detailed to be a teamster on December 21, 1864, and was entitled to extra pay for this duty. He was often away from the Battery several weeks at a time when he was driving supply wagons. Another Battery member, William Spaulding, noted that George's nickname was "Zollicoffer," though he gave no explanation of why George was known by that name.

Handling the mules and horses of the Battery might well have been considered hazardous duty for George. His first tangle with trouble was when he was thrown from the mule (or horse--accounts differ on which animal it was) and it "trampled him some" according to another member of the Battery. George called the animal a mule and said it had escaped and he was assisting in capturing it when the injuries occurred. The injuries caused him to be excused from duty for a time, but he did not go to the hospital. George treated what he called a "rupture" himself by "bathing the injured place with whiskey". This was in May or June of 1862.

In March of 1863, George was detailed to take the horses out to be pastured. He was bringing them back in, riding one, when they came to a ditch. The horse jumped or stumbled while crossing the ditch and threw George. At first, George thought he had broken his arm, but when he went to a doctor who was with the Battery, the doctor told him it was badly bruised, more trouble than if it had been broken. George used a sling for several weeks.

Mules caused more trouble for George when the Battery was camped at Stringer's Farm near Chattanooga in July of 1864. He had taken the convalescing horses out to graze when he saw that one of them had its feet tangled in a halter. As he was trying to untangle the horse, the animal reared up and its knee hit George in the mouth, knocking out four teeth. Once again, George did not seek treatment from a doctor as the surgeon he talked to about the teeth said they were too loose to ever do him any good and nothing would change that. The teeth fell out.

George remained with the Battery until it was mustered out on August 16, 1865 at Fort Snelling. He went back to St. Charles and his farm. In 1867, he went east and stayed near Lancaster, Pennsylvania for about a year and a half when he returned to his farm in St. Charles where he stayed for the rest of his life. That life got a bit more exciting in the spring of 1877 when George and his family returned home from church one Sunday. They found that "some miscreant" entered their home and stolen "a small amount of pocket money belonging to his children and several valuable papers." George and his wife, Harriet, had three children; two girls and a boy. Harriet died in 1892 and George remarried Mary Ellsbury on April 21, 1895.

On August 24, 1903, George passed away while he was living at the Soldiers Home in St. Paul. His body was returned to St. Charles and was buried in the Hillside Cemetery with both a family stone and a traditional white Veteran's Administration stone.

While researching to update George's file, contact was made with his descendants who have generously provided a copy of his photograph!



Brands of the Civil War

Civil War Trust, January 14, 2020

Sure, you know that household names like DuPont, American Express and Brooks Brothers have been around forever – but did you know that each of these companies played an active part in the American Civil War? All three brands had complex interests and allegiances. All three lent support to the Union in America's greatest conflict. Here's a head-tilting story about each, courtesy of research by James M. Schmidt.

Two Confederate Diplomats and a Chemist Businessman Cross the Atlantic



DuPont Powder Mill, Hagley Museum, on Brandywine River.
Library of Congress

If you're familiar with the Trent Affair, you probably know that President Abraham Lincoln defused this potentially explosive situation by releasing the two diplomats who'd been captured en route to ask Britain and France to support the Confederacy. In so doing, the Union avoided entering into war with Britain and its powerful navy. What you may not know is how close that situation brought the Union to losing their ability to make gunpowder in the bargain.

Three days before the *RMS Trent* was intercepted, Lammot du Pont— grandson of E. I. du Pont, founder of the chemical company that still exists today— set sail for Europe. Officially representing his family's business, du Pont was also engaged as a confidential Union agent charged with securing 3 million pounds of saltpeter, a key component of the gunpowder his family produced. Du Pont was well on his way to accomplishing his mission when word of the Trent Affair reached England. His shipment was put on hold as the British government considered a retaliatory ban on exports.

Du Pont sailed back to the U.S. with an update on his mission, which helped persuade Lincoln to meet England's demands. Crossing the pond once more, du Pont's next move was to threaten to "begin 'dumping' his stores on the market at a loss." Strings were pulled to avoid this disruption of the market, and the Union got their saltpeter.

Absentee Voting, Courtesy of American Express

The year was 1864, and well over a million Americans roamed far from home – including several hundred thousand New Yorkers. It was up to New York's secretary of state, Chauncey Depew, to make it possible for those distant soldiers— many of them in enemy territory— to vote. After losing time to red tape as he attempted to locate the many units on the field, Depew finally left Washington "with a list and location of every organization of New York troops." Depew then "summoned the officers of the express companies of that day," who told him it wouldn't be possible to deliver the ballots in time for the soldiers to vote in the upcoming election. Luckily, Depew had one more card up his sleeve. He reached out to John Butterfield, the co-founder of American Express and father of Union General Daniel Butterfield, who came out of retirement to make the impossible possible. Undertaking "to arrange through the various express companies, by his own direct super-intendence, to secure the safe delivery in time to every company," Butterfield gave hundreds of thousands of soldiers a voice in their democracy.

Brooks Brothers Clothing

Brooks Brothers, already a household name at the time of the Civil War, presented President Lincoln with a one-of-a-kind Greatcoat "made of wool finer than cashmere" to commemorate his second inauguration. Lined with an elaborate, hand-stitched design featuring stars, stripes, and a bald eagle, the coat was a favorite of Lincoln's for special occasions. He was wearing it at Ford's Theatre on the fateful April night that would be his last, less than a week after Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House.

In the aftermath of her husband's assassination, Mary Todd Lincoln gave the clothes he wore that night to White House doorkeeper Alphonso Donn. According to Schmidt, "Donn cherished the garments and refused many offers to buy the clothes, including a \$20,000 offer from P.T. Barnum." Amazingly, Lincoln's clothes remained with the Donns for over a century, though family members tried several times to sell them. In one of these attempts, a "mysterious stranger" paid "a few thousand dollars" to purchase the clothes at auction and return them to their reluctant yet conscientious custodians.

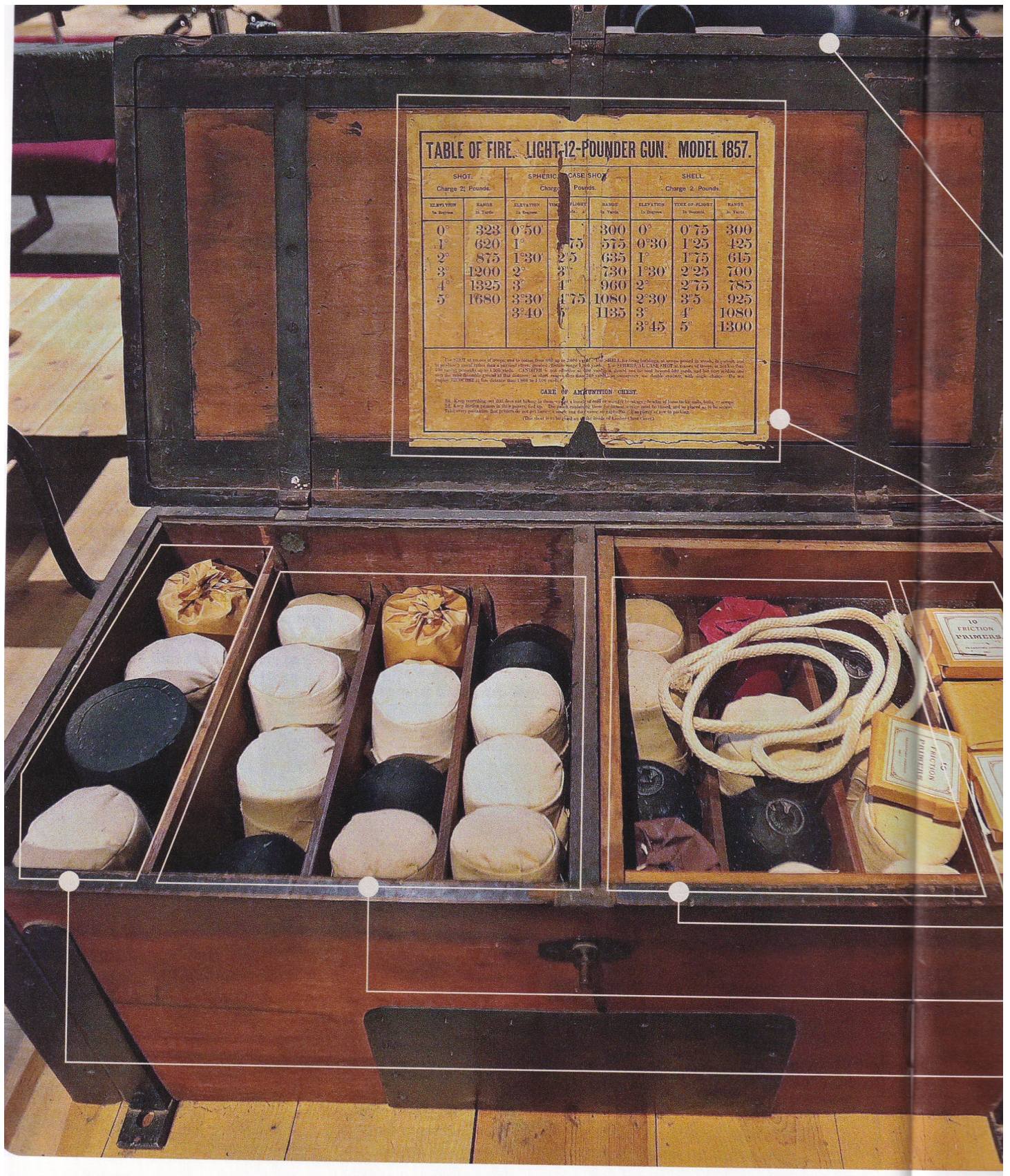
Finally, in 1967, Iowa congressman Fred Schwengel arranged for a private gift from American trucking interests to secure the garments and compensate Donn's descendants for their safekeeping. The greatcoat was cleaned, restored and exhibited at a reopened Ford's Theatre, where it remains to this day.



Lining of Lincoln's Brooks Brothers Greatcoat
Library of Congress

Looking Inside a Limber Chest

You will need to line this page up with the next one as the original article and photo was spread over the two in America's Civil War. It appeared in the July 2020 issue. While the article did not include the author's name, it did have initials that correspond to Dana B. Shoaf, one of the people listed as a contributing editor of the magazine. Thanks to Becky and Michael for the article.



Organized Iron

» **Captain Lewis Heckman's battery** was armed with bronze 12-pounder Napoleon smoothbore cannons, formally called Light 12-Pounder Guns, Model 1857. Each cannon was towed by a limber, on which sat an ammunition chest that organized the gun's ordnance. The standard load for each chest was 32 rounds, and the 1859 manual *Instructions for Field Artillery*, written by U.S. Army officers William French, William Barry, and Henry Hunt, explicitly described what types of rounds were to be carried in the chest and how they were to be organized. Some battery commanders precisely described the specific amounts and types of ammunition they fired in their after-action reports, but Heckman did not do so in his short July 28, 1863, report of the Battle of Gettysburg. He simply stated that his four Napoleons "expended 113 rounds of ammunition, mostly canister," in his battery's desperate effort to hold off surging Confederate attacks. That means his men exhausted nearly all the rounds they had in their ammunition chests and likely had to have canister rounds brought up from the caissons, basically wagons with more ammunition chests, that were kept in the rear. The image at left illustrates how ammunition was stored in a chest based on information in *Instructions for Field Artillery*. —D.B.S.

• **Spark Deflector** The top of the ammunition chest's lid was covered in sheet copper to prevent sparks from igniting the rounds. During action, two men from the gun crew, numbered 6 and 7, were posted at the chest. Number 7 opened and closed the lid, while Number 6 selected rounds according to the Gunner's directions, and handed them to a man designated Number 5 to run them up to the cannon.

• **User's Guide** Every chest had a "Table of Fire" pasted under the lid, which contained instructions for cutting fuzes for the correct range and also how to care for the chest. It admonished, "beware of loose tacks, nails, bolts, or scraps" that could create sparks. The quoted material below is from the Table of Fire.

• **Storage Unit** Each chest also had an implement tray, seen here with its bottom removed for display purposes, that held 48 friction primers and various other accoutrements and implements needed by the crew. The tray could be lifted out and moved from side to side to access rounds underneath.

• **Shotgun Blasts** The far-right slot in the chest held four canister rounds effective up to 500 yards; here they are hidden under packs of friction primers. Double charges of canister, tin cans filled with iron balls to devastate infantry, could be fired if the powder bag was detached from the second round. With only four rounds of canister, Heckman would have certainly needed more brought up from the rear.

• **Deadly Shrapnel** These divisions contained 12 case shots, explosive rounds filled with musket balls to increase potency, and to be used against troops from 500 to 1,500 yards.

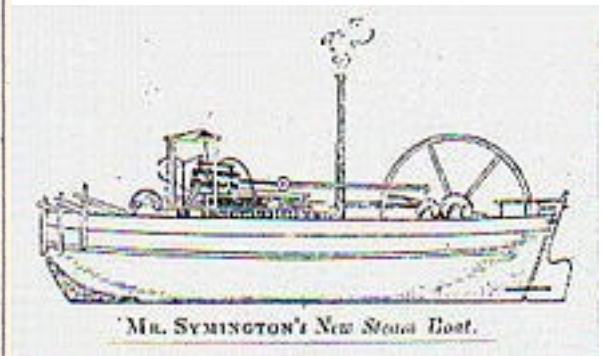
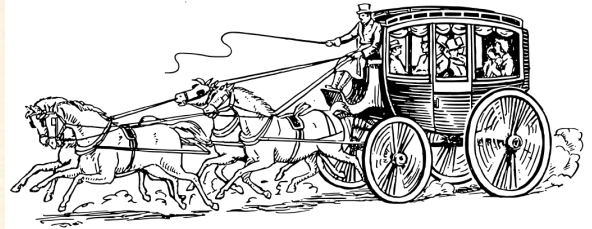
• **Wrecking Balls** These slots held 12 solid shot, used to fire "at masses of troops... from 600 up to 2,000 yards." All the projectiles in the chest were "fixed," meaning they were already attached to bags containing 2 to 2.5 pounds of gunpowder.

• **Big Bangs** Four explosive shells stored in this division were considered better at producing a "moral, rather than a physical effect." Their greatest range was 1,500 yards.



Getting From “Here to There”

This map shows the “scheduled” travel times in the US in 1830. While earlier than our favored time period, it is quite interesting to see how long to took to get from point A to point B. Railroads would have shortened the times (but I’m still looking for that map...)



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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Highlight Your Ancestors!

Many of us have ancestors who served in the Civil War and it has been suggested (thank you, Michael R.) 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 you will all participate in this plan!

We all seem to have “extra” time on our hands right now due to many things being canceled because of the virus, so this will be a great way to organize those notes on your ancestor, maybe do a little more research, and leave a wonderful story for your descendants.

If you have a photo of your ancestor, include one of you in your period clothing, too. It would be fun to see if there is any “family resemblance!”