



2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

Israel R. Babcock

Israel was one of the men detailed to the Second Minnesota Battery to help fill its ranks during the winter of 1863-1864. His service to the Union began when he enlisted in the 34th Illinois Infantry, Company A in 1861 from his hometown of Nelson in Lee County, Illinois. Israel was a farmer, had been born in Courtland County, New York, and told the recruiting agents he was 18 years old. He had hazel eyes, black hair, and a light complexion. He stood 5' 8" tall.

On November 21, 1863, Israel and some of his comrades from the 34th Illinois were detailed to serve as artillery men with the Second Minnesota Battery. Israel stayed with the artillery until January 7, 1864, when he went back to his own unit. This was necessary as the men of the 34th were being asked to reenlist. Those that did were given a 30 day furlough and a bounty of \$100. Israel did sign up to serve another three years or the duration of the war. He got his bounty and his furlough.

The veterans of the 34th returned to the south after their furlough and were back on the line by March 7th. Israel was with them until he was reported as "absent sick" on May 20. A card from Jefferson General Hospital notes he had been suffering with chronic diarrhea and was dated July, 1864.

Israel's health improved and he went back to his duties with the infantry. In January and February of 1865, he was on detached service at the headquarters post at Louisville, Kentucky. He was discharged at Louisville, Kentucky, on July 12, 1865.

Before army life, Israel was the seventh child born to Benjamin and Catherine Babcock. In 1850, the family was living in Truxton, New York. His father was a day laborer and there was one more child added to the family by 1860.

When Israel filed for his pension in 1909, he filled out the forms that provide more details about his life. He said he was born on January 15, 1847—meaning he "misremembered" his age when he enlisted, being only 15. This might be related to the very poor spelling, punctuation, and handwriting used when Israel filed his pension paperwork. It appears likely his formal education was minimal. He was a farmer when he enlisted and he returned to farming after the war.

Israel married Clara C. Hale a month after he was discharged from the army. The wedding was on August 9, 1865, and took place in Alligan(?), Michigan. The couple had two children, Arthur in 1866 and Ernest in 1879. A third son, Clarence was born in 1870, but died the next year. By 1880, Israel's brother was living with the family in Coloma, Illinois, and both worked for an agricultural implement manufacturing company.

In 1912, Israel filed additional pension papers that put his mailing address as Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada. According to the 1911 Canadian Census, he moved there in 1900. The 1920

US census shows Israel living in Erie, Illinois, with Clara and a much younger woman named Katherine Perkins who is listed as the head of household. It is not known who she is or how she may be connected to the Babcocks.

Clara died in December of 1924 in Erie, Illinois. Israel was living there at that time, but at the time of his death in 1926, he was living in Clinton, Iowa. It was there on September 7, 1926, that Israel died from a "general decline." He was 79 years old. Israel's body was returned to Erie, Illinois, to be buried beside Clara in the Erie Cemetery.

Researched and compiled by the reenactors of the 2nd Minnesota Battery of Light Artillery. Visit our website at <http://www.2mnbattery.org> for more information about our soldiers and our organization

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