



2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

Frederick Beebe

Frederick was educated and two letters he wrote provide a fair amount of information about him. Those letters indicate that calling him a character certainly seems within reason and to say he was outspoken is probably to underestimate him.

In 1909, Frederick responded with a long letter to the Pension Department's request for more information on his life. They got quite an earful. The letter Frederick wrote began with the usual niceties, then said (in his own words, spelling, and lack of punctuation):

"I can not understand what my attempt to enlist in 1862 has to do with my actual service in 1864 to 1865 in the 2d Independent Battery Minnesota Light Artillery.

If there is any doubt as to my active service that I have sworn to - please advise me, and oblige.

In reply to your wishes - Beg to say that I have no date no correct recollection as to the No of the Regiment - to the best of my recollection it was 140 and odd - the odd number I do not remember but I was a boy of 16 years of aged - at that time I was visiting General Patrick's family at the NY Agriculture College, which was closed, situated 2 ½ west of Ovid, NY. General Patrick was President of the College before closing - he resigned at the out break of the civil war - the College was closed in 1862. He was serving with the Potomac Army as I understood he was Provo Marshall of the Potomac Army - He was a life friend of My Father - my child hood from 2 years old until 7 years old was past in Cooperstown NY. from 7 years until 9 years old attended School at Buffalo NY--From Nine years old until 14 years old attended Boarding School's at South Coowall(?) and Norfork - a few miles from Winstead & Winchester Conn - in 1860. In 1860- accompanied my Mother to St. Paul Minn - paying a visit to my Sister Emma F. Nelson--wife of Judge R.R. Nelson - U.S. Dist. Court, St. Paul Minnesota - returned back to New York state in the Fall. Mother left me at Utica, NY to attend the Normal School in Utica. While in Ovid - I tried to enlist & join the 140 (odd) Regiment - was requested to get my Mothers Consent. I wrote for it - instead of receiving her permission to do so - received a Telegram announcing her death & for me to return to Cooperstown N. Y. as soon as possible. In the Fall of 1862 my Brother ?.H.B. Beebe came from St. Paul Minn & took me back to my Sister Mrs. E.F. Nelson - who was my guardian soon after wards and she would never give her consent to my enlisting when I did do so - I was enlisted & mustered in by Maj Nelson at St Paul Minn before I informed her. As to my existence from 2 years back to the beginning - My mother told me that she my Brother myself was a board a Man of War at the taking of Vera Cruze Mex - and that my Father died in the City of Mexico in 1848 and that General Patrick aforesaid brought Mother & the family home to Cooperstown N.Y. Again I request that if there is any doubt as to my actual service - as I have sworn please advise to that effect and oblige. That service in 1864 & 1865 changed my life and

threw me in the wrong groove - like many others - it caused me to be restless and a roamer - Thank God it did not cause me to be a Boozer - or Gambler - a Liar or a Thief --

*Very Respectfully Yours
Frederick Beebe*

P.S. No data or papers - regarding my attempted Enlistment 1862 never had any – and do not want any - The above statement per your request is correct - no affidavit will be made in the whole thing appears strange & unnecessary to me -- You salaried men do as you please as to my pension & you will please me. Beebe”

A second letter to the Pension Department spelled out in great detail where Frederick worked, what he did and where he went after the War. He traveled throughout the west, into Canada and Mexico, and lived in no one place for very long. He wrote that he was “alone” during his exploring and roaming, and that he only stayed in a place when he found something “extra good”. That did include a time when he helped with a shipment of “Booze” in the mining camps. He claimed his occupation was a miner.

Muster sheets and descriptive lists provide some facts about Frederick. He was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on April 28, 1846. He had hazel eyes, sandy hair and a light complexion. He stood 5' 8 ½” tall. When he enlisted, he was paid a bounty of \$100.

Forms were probably not Frederick’s favorite pastime, especially forms to receive a pension. In answer to the repetitious nature of the questions about marriage, he wrote, “never was married”. As to if there might be a record of a marriage, he said, “not that I know of” and concluded the form with the answer about children, “None, an old Batch”.



On another pension form, the question asked was if he had ever been married, divorced, or widowed, and to list all wives and/or consorts. Frederick’s answer was, “None of any kind or color”. The next question asked if he had children living or dead, list their names and dates of birth. Frederick’s answer here speaks to his character. “Never kept a Mistress. Never lived with a woman. Socially, as free as a Bird, clean as a whistle” and then signed his name.

Frederick died in the Old Soldiers Home in California on January 9, 1917. The irony is that on his final papers from the Soldiers Home, he is listed as a “widower”. Frederick rests in the Los Angeles National 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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