



2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

Jacob U. Freed

Jacob was one of the rare men of the Battery in that he left a fairly detailed first person account of his life, reporting it to the pension examiner in 1879. The details are precise, indicating he may have kept some kind of journal or diary, though nothing of the sort has been found to date.

It was in April of 1858 when Jacob arrived in St. Paul. He was a carpenter and worked as a carpenter in both Minneapolis and St. Paul until September of 1860 when he moved to "his farm" in Buffalo, Minnesota. Since he called the farm "his," it likely means he purchased the farm. There he stayed, working as a farmer until he enlisted with the Second Minnesota Battery in January of 1862. He made special note of enlisting with Battery under the command of Captain Hotchkiss. Since Hotchkiss was also from Wright County, perhaps the men knew each other.

The descriptive roll of the Battery states Jacob was born in Berks County, Pennsylvania, in about 1824, so Jacob was 40 when he enlisted. He had hazel eyes, brown hair and light complexion, and stood 5' 4 ½" tall. He was single when he enlisted and records indicate he never married.

The Battery went South and Jacob said it was near Jacinto, Mississippi, that he came down with chronic diarrhea. He was under "almost constant treatment for it." Then, while "on the retreat to Nashville, Tennessee, about December 31, 1862," Jacob was thrown from the caisson and was injured on his left side. While Jacob didn't describe the injury, he said it "disqualified" him for further duty.

It is not clear where he was from January of 1863 to July of that year when he was sent to the Convalescent Camp at Murfreesboro, Tennessee. He was treated there until September when he was transferred to the Veteran Reserve Corps, Company G, 8th Regiment. He went to Elmira, New York, and then to Rock Island, Illinois. It was at Rock Island that the injury to his side began to get worse, so bad that the regimental surgeon had Jacob under an almost constant treatment of "Crotan oil." Eventually, he was sent to Chicago, Illinois, and the Soldiers' Home before being formally discharged from the service. His discharge was not for disability, it was because Jacob had reached the end of his term of service on March 24, 1865.

Jacob did not stay in the Soldiers' Home, he left and went back to Philadelphia, his home town according to his enlistment records. He listed several different addresses where he lived in the city, noting that he was always being treated for the "wound in his side" and the chronic diarrhea. On the 1880 census, Jacob was living with his sister. Throughout these moves, Jacob supplied the name and address of the attending doctors as he moved from one part of town to another. He admitted to treating it himself sometimes when it was not as bad,

but the injury to his side prevented him from doing manual labor. He also complained that it was made much worse when he “takes cold.”

The pension was filed in 1879, but records are not clear if he received any part of it before 1886.

Despite all of the health challenges Jacob faced, he must have done alright for himself, but his life after the Army was not something Jacob left many records about. Under the “occupation” box on his death certificate, Jacob was called a “retired gentleman.” His obituary—all five lines of it—said he was a “retired coal merchant” and that he had been ill for two days with “gastritis.” The rest of the obituary said he was 93 year old bachelor and gave his last address. The death certificate confirms the newspaper obituary by listing the cause of death as “acute indigestion” and “senile debility.”

A second newspaper article gave Jacob’s age at death of 92 years, but final authority rests with the death certificate. It stated Jacob’s age at the time of his death on April 6, 1905, as 93 years, 11 months and 25 days.

Jacob was laid to rest in the West Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



Jacob’s story does not quite end there. He left an estate valued at \$58,000. He did have a will which seems to indicate the estate was to go to a Mrs. Inez Freed (a sister-in-law?), but the courts revoked that decision in favor of a nephew of Inez Freed. What happened to the estate is not known.



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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