



## 2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

### Carter Fuller

Carter Fuller was born in Athens, Vermont. He moved to New York and from there to Minnesota to become one of the first to settle near the town of St. Charles in Winona County in 1854. He broke ground to farm this land, building a substantial log house which stood until after his death.

Minnesota was not yet a state and many schemes were afoot to gain wealth from this new land. In 1854, Carter was appointed the chairman of a land-claim society. This society was to guarantee each of its members the right to claim and hold possession of 320 acres of land including 40 acres of timber. The secretary, Joseph Wheeland, soon brought trouble to the society. He sold a portion of his land for a profit, then decided he would "float" onto another piece of land to fill his complement of 320 acres. This land was already claimed by another member and trouble followed. Some members thought that Wheeland should have been above such tricks as he was the secretary and since he was the first to break the by-laws of the society, he should "suffer for it".

While Wheeland was away in Winona on business, the party went to his house, took his wife and children to Carter Fuller's home, removed everything of value and burned down Wheeland's house. They cut down all the timber they could and hauled it away for themselves. They were then discovered and drove off the "spies", but feared Wheeland would set the law on them. They went to Carter's house where they had taken Wheeland's family, and demanded admittance. By this time, Carter was expecting trouble. He prepared a vigorous defense. He had at hand one double-barreled rifle, one single-barreled rifle, one shotgun and a brace of pistols, all well loaded. He refused them admittance. He stood in his door with the rifle in hand and threatened to "shoot the first man who would dare to mount the fence to come" into his enclosure. Talk between the group and Carter continued and finally, a select few men were allowed to come in to talk to Mrs. Wheeland. The gang realized what they had done was wrong and feared the repercussions that might come to them. They wanted to know what it would cost them to make it up to Mrs. Wheeland. When she replied she wanted all the law would give her, they scattered. The law did become involved and Carter was called as a witness in the proceedings. The strong case notwithstanding, most of the men were cleared of the charges against them.

Carter himself was probably involved in the land holdings and probably overextended himself. The County of Winona foreclosed on a piece of property Carter had a mortgage on in 1863. Carter's wife, Catherine, was the one who had to deal with this as Carter was away at war.

When the war broke out, Carter volunteered and joined the Second Battery, even though he was already 43 years old. He was mustered in on "Leap Day", February 29, 1862, and his term of service was to be three years. He was 5' 4-1/4" tall, had gray eyes, brown hair and a light complexion.

Carter was active with the Battery as a farrier in the early months of the war, it being noted on his muster sheet that he had pay due for his extra services. The Army would reclaim that pay in January and February of 1865 in the form of stoppages on his pay for transportation on duty at Hospital #19 at Nashville. It reported that he had been at the hospital since April 27, 1864. Carter's obituary stated he worked in the hospitals tending to sick and wounded soldiers. His final muster sheet at the end of March 1865 showed that he owed the Army \$12.90 for clothing drawn, an additional \$24.09 for transportation, and \$3.27 for camp and garrison equipage. Carter still came out ahead as the muster sheet also showed the Army owed him \$100 in bounty money.



After the war, Carter returned to Catherine in Winona and it would appear he was still investing in land, though not successfully. Another mortgage foreclosure was served on him in March of 1870. He and Catherine owned \$589 on the property when it was sold at a sheriff's auction. The same thing happened to a third piece of property in January of 1871 when they owed \$1,360 that they could not pay. The mortgage had an interest rate of 12% when they took out the loan.

It is not known why, but Carter and Catherine moved to the city of Fairmont in Martin County where they lived until Carter's death in June of 1884. He was buried in the Lakeside Cemetery in Fairmont with a military marker.

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*Researched and compiled by the reenactors of the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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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