



2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

John Handy

John was farming in Utica, Winona County, Minnesota, when he decided to go to Rochester and enlist in September of 1864. His wife, Thankful Johnson, had died earlier that year on February 21. Whether it was a need for the bounty money, patriotism or loneliness that prompted John to enlist is unknown, but he was mustered into the Second Battery on September 2, 1864. He received a bounty of \$33.33 with \$66.67 due. The descriptive role put him at 5' 11" tall, with brown eyes, dark hair and dark complexion. He was born on March 9, 1837 in Ohio.

John did not enlist in the Battery alone. Many men from Winona County served in the Battery, one of them being John Kelley. The Kelly's were friends of the Handy's and attended the funeral of Thankful. John Kelley and John Handy enlisted on the same day, though not at the same place.

The rank John held throughout his year of military service was that of private. He was discharged with the Battery at Fort Snelling on August 16, 1865. John may not have gone back to Winona County. If he did, he did not stay there long as he was living in Martin County, Minnesota, later that same year. On December 9, 1866, John married Harriet Cusick with the Kelley's in attendance at the wedding.

John and Harriet settled down to farm in Martin County. They had four children and kept in touch with the Kelley's as the years went by. Eventually, the Handy's moved west and were living in North Yakima, Washington, when John died from throat cancer on November 7, 1898. His obituary noted that John died not from the cancer, but from not being able to take in enough nourishment to keep him alive.

Harriet applied for a widow's pension and it was granted. The sheriff described her biggest asset, a piece of land John had taken under the Oregon Timber Culture Act. The 160 acres of land was in Morrow County, Oregon, "on which there is about twenty acres in hay, but the crop was so short last year it would not pay for harvesting. This is desert land and until it can be irrigated it is almost useless. The reason there is no taxes."

John was cremated and his ashes were not buried. It is believed the remains were sprinkled in some place John thought special as no grave site has been found.

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.

Updated: 20 June 2020