



2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

Jerry A. Hovey

Jerry? Jera? Jery? All of these spellings of Jerry's name appear in his records, even those in his own handwriting. What the proper spelling of his name may be is unclear, so the spelling used here is simply an arbitrary choice.

He was born in Bath, New York, on February 28, 1831. He came to Minnesota and settled in Saratoga, Winona County, where he took up his occupation as a painter. Jerry had blue eyes, brown hair and a light complexion. He was 31 years old, 5' 5" tall and single.

Jerry was probably not alone when he came to Minnesota. John Hovey was most likely with him. The men were both living in Saratoga in Winona County before the war. They were both born in Bath, New York, eight years apart. It is probable they were cousins since it is known they were not brothers.

Jerry enlisted in the Battery on Christmas Day, 1861. He was not mustered in until the 28th of January 28, 1862, the same day as John.

Army life agreed with Jerry as his name never appeared on the roster of the sick or hospitalized. When his first three years were up, Jerry reenlisted and served until the end of the war.

It was while coming to St. Paul to be mustered out that Jerry was injured. The Battery was riding on a barge up the Mississippi River coming home at the end of July, 1865. Jerry was detailed to help care for Ole Erickson, a Battery comrade who had broken his leg in a train derailment. Jerry was going down into the hold to check on Ole when he swung down, slipped and fell. His right wrist was twisted in the fall and the outer bone broken along with tendons and ligaments badly sprained. Jerry's wrist was treated at Fort Snelling by the post doctor, a man the men knew. It was Gustav Rosenk, the man who had acted as the Battery's doctor during the early months of the war.

Jerry went home with William Kimber, another Battery comrade, when the men were given two weeks furlough. The furlough before discharge was necessary because not enough money was on hand to pay the men their back pay before discharging them.

On August 16, 1865, the Battery was mustered out and Private Hovey became Mr. Hovey. He went back to his painting business in Winona County until 1877 when he moved to South Dakota. In the 1890 Veteran's Census, both Jerry and John were living in Oelriches, South Dakota. John moved on and Jerry remained in South Dakota for the rest of his life.

Almost. In 1890, Jerry applied for admittance to the South Dakota Old Soldiers Home in Hot Springs. He was admitted on December 1st that year. In exchange for his admittance, Jerry agreed that he would do the work expected of him at the home, and that he did not own any property. He said he was "not quite" destitute, and was not receiving a pension. Even though he had been admitted, Jerry did not stay at the Soldiers Home. He was discharged, then

readmitted on December 1, 1896. He stayed for a year and a half before leaving again. This time, he was gone for three years before he applied to be readmitted. Records state he was dropped from the rolls for a while, then readmitted in July of 1904. Jerry left the Home three years later and was readmitted four months later. Why all this coming and going was not recorded, but it can be speculated that Jerry may have had a reoccurring illness that made it necessary for him to have care at times, but at other times, was able to take care of himself.

In 1912, pension application papers for Jerry were filed and he began receiving a pension of \$30 a month.



Sometime after this is when Jerry went visiting in Tennessee and New York. He was gone from the state of South Dakota for about a year and a half. When he went back to South Dakota and wanted to be readmitted to the Soldiers Home at Hot Springs, his admittance was refused on the grounds that he was no longer a resident of the state. Several letters between lawyers finally reached the conclusion that since Jerry had never given up his thought of South Dakota as his home, and he had never voted in any other state, they would accept that he was a resident of South Dakota. Jerry was readmitted for the last time.

He died on September 3, 1914. He had never married and was laid to rest in the State Veteran's Home Cemetery in Hot Springs.

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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