



2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

Otis Hunter

Otis was living in Utica, Winona County, Minnesota, on January 28, 1862, when he decided to enlist in the Second Minnesota Battery. He was living in Utica, Nebraska, when he died on September 10, 1899. Otis left no record to tell why he might have favored a town named Utica, but the coincidence is striking.

Otis was born in Worcester, Massachusetts. By 1860, he was living in Utica, Minnesota, listed in the house hold of Doctor Andrew Vanderlyno. He was single, stood 5' 7-1/2" tall, had gray eyes, with light hair and a light complexion. He was working as a carpenter.

Otis had some financial difficulties in early January as notice appeared in the Winona newspaper of a sheriff's sale for defaulting on a mortgage. Otis owned the property with two other men, Gleason and Holbrook. They owned \$172.10 when the land went up for the sale.

Winona County provided a significant number of men to the Second Battery due to the recruiting efforts of Richard Dawley, who would serve as a lieutenant in the Battery. Otis was one of the Winona County men who were mustered in on January 28, 1862.

The Battery trained, went south to be equipped with guns and horses, and began an active campaign. Otis was with them, but two days before the first big battle the Battery would be involved in, Otis was sent to the hospital at Louisville, Kentucky. He remained there until the 31st of December when he was given a disability discharge for "General Anascara" according to the surgeon who signed the discharge.

Otis went back to Minnesota, but he was not ready to give up the Army. On December 14, 1863, Otis joined the Second Minnesota Cavalry, Company H, agreeing to serve for three years or the duration of the war. He received a bounty of \$25 and a "premium" of \$2 at his enlistment. In the Second Cavalry, Otis served as waggoneer until his discharge on April 28, 1866. Only once was he away from his unit and that was for a special detail, not illness. At his discharge in 1866, he was owed \$18.12 in back pay and \$75 in bounty money that had been held. He also owed \$8 for equipment he had either lost or kept. Otis never held any rank higher than private.

In 1867, Otis was living in Faribault County. On November 1st, he married Aryan Gray of Winona.

No records tell when or why Otis and Aryan left Minnesota. In 1890, Otis filed for an invalid pension, stating his home as Utica, Steward County, Nebraska. At the time, he listed only his cavalry service. Nine years later, Aryan applied for a widow's pension as Otis had passed away on September 10, 1899. She buried him in the Utica Village Cemetery with a veteran's marker noting his Cavalry service.

Aryan was, according to a pension deposition, "wholly dependent on Charity for her support and the necessaries of life." The only property the couple had owned was a small house on a lot in the village, valued at not more than \$300. An estimate of her household goods placed them at a value of less than \$25.00.



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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