



2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

Mark M. Kenney

When asked for his date of birth, Mark could provide the day, but not the date. He knew he had been born on Ash Wednesday, 1842, in Washington County, Pennsylvania. Mark never learned to write, so the exact date of his birth beyond Ash Wednesday was probably not important to him. It was, however, important to the Pension Department when Mark applied for a pension. A note in Mark's file gives the process the Pension Department went through. *See Worlds Almanac page 34 for Easter Sunday in the 1842, which was March 27--And 40 days prior thereto, excluding Sundays, show the date of birth to have been Ash Wednesday, Feby. 9 -- 1842.* That note was dated September 24, 1917.

This was an additional application, probably for an increase as he had been awarded a pension of \$6 a month in 1882 for a gun shot wound in his left hand. It seems fitting for Mark to have filed for a pension and subsequent increases as he did serve twice.

Mark was just 19 years old when he enlisted in Company I, First Minnesota Infantry on May 23, 1861. He served as a private during the three years he was with the First Infantry. The descriptive roll showed him as 5' 5-1/2" tall, with hazel eyes, brown hair, and a dark complexion. He was a farmer.

The First Minnesota Infantry was engaged in the first battle of the Civil War at Manassas Junction, Virginia, in July. The battle of Bull Run was a Union disaster and Mark was a victim of that chaos. During the fighting, he was wounded in the left hand and captured by the Confederates. Mark was taken to Richmond, Virginia and held in a Confederate Prison. Mark told the pension examiner what happened. The examiner wrote, "While a prisoner of War was taken with the Mumps which Settled in his testicles & from effects of which he had suffered ever Since. Also about Same time contracted Rheumatism through cold & exposure of prison life, Being now unable to do manual labor 1/3 the time on account of said Disabilities."

It was noted that Mark received treatment while he was in prison, but what that treatment may have been was unrecorded.

Mark was sent back to the First Minnesota in January of 1862, but placed in a "skeleton regiment" until he was paroled in October and could rejoin the First as a full member. Mark was given a furlough as a result of his capture and did not begin duty with the First until his return.

On May 27, 1863, Mark was on detached duty with Company A of the 4th U.S. Artillery. He remained with them for at least a month before he was sent back to the First Infantry. He was not present with the First Infantry at the Battle of Gettysburg, an absence that may have saved his life considering the casualties the First Minnesota suffered in that battle. When, or if, he rejoined the First Infantry is unclear as records

indicate Mark was in Minnesota in the spring of 1864. He married Almeda Souls in Hyde Park, Wabasha County, on March 7. Two months later, May 5, Mark was mustered out of the First Infantry. He was charged 41 cents for the loss of his canteen.

Three months after his discharge, Kenney enlisted as a veteran at Lake City, Minnesota. He was entitled to \$100 bounty and agreed to have his name credited to Lake City for the draft quota. He enlisted for one year in the Second Battery on August 25, 1864. He again made his mark on the enlistment form, unable to write. He was then 22 years old and still claimed his occupation as a farmer, but this time he was married.

From Lake City, Mark was sent to Fort Snelling where he was mustered in on September 5, 1864. It is unclear what happened next as Mark was listed as a deserter on the 24th of September. Charges were filed, but the record showed Mark had returned by September 28th. Mark went south and, on November 26, 1864, he arrived at the Battery. He was carried on their rolls with the notation that he had come from the Draft Rendezvous at Fort Snelling and was under charge for desertion. The Adjutant General's records note that he was restored to duty on January 19, 1865, with no record of consequences for whatever indiscretion Mark may have made.

The final months of the war were quiet for Mark and he was mustered out of the Army with the Battery on August 16, 1865. Mark went to Hammond, Minnesota, where he and Almeda had one son. Mark continued to farm until about 1887 when he applied for additional pension money as he could no longer work the land. He moved to Minneapolis and entered the Veteran's Home. At some point, Mark's wife left him and they were divorced. She remarried, but Mark never did.

By 1912, Mark had moved to the Veterans Home in Danville, Illinois. When or why is unclear. He was still making his mark on papers, so he had not learned to read and write.

Mark died from heart related problems on February 13, 1924, while living at the National Home in Danville, Illinois. He was buried in the National Cemetery in Danville with a marker that reads. "Co. I, 1 Minn. Inf."



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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