



2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

Andrew Main

New York was Andrew's home from the time of his birth in Camillus, Onondago County, on April 28, 1828, until 1858 when he came to Minnesota. His first wife, Sophia West, died on February 26, 1850. They had only been married about a year. In June of 1852, Andrew married Tacy Ann Cole in Syracuse, New York.

Andrew and Tacy began their family and lived in New York until 1858 when Andrew went to Minnesota and took land near St. Charles in Winona County. He sent for Tacy and the family made their home and livelihood by farming. The family grew to include seven children, four boys and three girls. The last three children were born in Minnesota.

The Civil War began and Andrew did not enlist in the initial waves of patriotism that swept the state. He did not join the Army until February 15, 1864, and then he did not go alone. Charles Whitman, also of Winona County, went with him and the two served in the Second Battery together. They were tent mates for part of the time they spent in the Army. The pair probably knew they were joining other neighbors from Winona County already serving in the Battery, John Gibson, Samuel Loudon, and George Garver. One of the Battery's lieutenants, Richard Dawley, was also from St. Charles. These men all knew each other before the war, served together and remained in contact many years after the war was over.

Andrew's records on the descriptive roll of the Second Minnesota Battery state him as 36 years old, 5' 8" tall, with gray eyes, brown hair and a dark complexion. His enlistment was for three years or the duration of the war. This was somewhat unusual for the men who joined the Second Battery as late in the war as Andrew did. Most only enlisted for one year. In exchange for his longer term commitment, Andrew was promised a bounty of \$300. He did not receive any of it at the time he enlisted. Andrew said he was given a very thorough physical when he enlisted, being stripped naked and examined by two or three surgeons.

Andrew hardly made it to the Battery before the men who had reenlisted were sent home on their veteran's furloughs. Andrew and the men who chose not to reenlist or were not yet eligible to veteranize were assigned to Battery I, Second Illinois Artillery. The time with the Illinois Battery was not easy. They were with General Sherman as he marched toward Atlanta. About May, Andrew said they were exposed to the rain and cold, marched through the mud and it was where he began to feel the effects of rheumatism. A few months later, the Battery was at Lost Mountain, Georgia. Andrew was helping to lift a gun when he was hurt, pulling something inside. This injury troubled him for the rest of his life. It was also probably the reason he was then assigned to drive the Battery's mess wagon, duty he did for most of rest of the

summer. While he drove the mess wagon, Andrew said he had no tent mate, but after his driving duty ended, he tented with John Gibson, his neighbor from Winona County.

After the detailed men returned to the Minnesota Battery in October of 1864, Andrew was assigned to be a cook. He did this duty until the Battery was mustered out at the end of the war.

Andrew went back to his farm and family. *The Winona Daily Republican* mentioned Andrew in an article that appeared on July 24, 1869, and it raises a lot of questions. The article stated that Andrew and another man, Orrin Reed, were charged with burglary and larceny. They were called before a judge who “bound them over” for appearance before the District Court judge. Two more men were being held on other charges in the same crime. Two of the men had the charges dropped for lack of evidence and a third man had his charges dismissed and was then “used as a witness in behalf of the State against Andrew Main.” No record found explains what happened with the case or how Andrew came to be involved.

Not long after this article appeared. Andrew gave farming to run a boarding house. The real estate transfer happened in December of 1869 was probably the end of his farming career. Andrew kept the boarding house for about twelve years, then gave it up, too. Tacy died on December 31, 1888, and Andrew was left alone. He ran a popcorn stand for another dozen years in the town of St. Charles.

In 1898, the pension Andrew received for his military service was increased from \$6 a month to \$8 a month, but it was precious little money. In 1901, Andrew filled a lengthy deposition with the pension department, asking for an increase in his pension. He described his illness and injuries suffered previously and added another problem he blamed on the war. He said his hearing was nearly gone and it all started when he was close to a ten pound rifled gun when it was fired near Buzzard’s Roost in Georgia. Andrew said his “ears got bad and broke and run” from the concussion of the

gun. He suffered with a ringing in his ears for weeks after that incident and his hearing just continued to get worse through the years.

Andrew spent the last eight years of his life living with his daughter in St. Charles. He was suffering from Bright’s disease and heart trouble, but still able to get around. His death was described as coming “most unexpectedly.” He had gotten up from the dinner table, went into the next room and sat down in his favorite chair by the fire. He leaned his head down on a table near him and was gone. It was January 21, 1903.

Andrew was laid to rest in the Hillside Cemetery, St. Charles, Winona County, Minnesota.



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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