



2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

Elias Cady McCrory

Elias was born on June 1, 1844, in St. Lawrence, New York. He moved to Minnesota with his family before the 1857 census was taken when they were living and working on a farm in Maple Lake, Wright County. Elias went to St. Paul and enlisted in the Second Battery for one year on August 30, 1864. He was mustered in the very next day as he had gone to Fort Snelling to enlist. He agreed that his name would be credited to Featherstone, county of Goodhue, for filling their draft quota. Elias was paid \$33.33 bounty at the time of enlistment with another \$33.33 owed him. He had hazel eyes, light hair and complexion, and was 5' 1 1" tall. He was 20 years old.

Elias served as a private with the Battery. He was still owed his \$33.33 in bounty money at the time of his discharge on August 16, 1865. His muster out sheet notes that he had drawn \$73.64 in clothing since his enlistment a year earlier. He retained his knapsack, haversack and canteen as per government order.

After his discharge, Elias went back to his family in Wright County where he continued working on the farm. On the 1875 census, Elias was living on a farm in Maple Lake with another person named Adin McCrory. This is likely his older brother, Abel, though the census takers were not kind to the brother's name, misspelling it in a variety of ways through the years.

By 1879, Elias had a different job, he was the rural mail carrier at Monticello, Minnesota, not far from Maple Lake. It was also the year Elias married Nellie White. She was born in England in 1863, making her 19 years younger than Elias. The couple had five children by 1891, four girls and one boy.

Several sources note Elias was both a carpenter and a farmer.

The residents of Maple Lake were working on a road project in June of 1883 and Elias was among them. He was working under the direction of the highway supervisor when he was directed to chop a log. While he was standing on the log, "his foot slipped just as he was bringing down his ax for a blow and the ax striking against a limb was turned aside in a way so that it struck him on the inside of the right foot cutting through the instep so as to nearly cut off the forward part of the foot. That this was swiftly an accident and was due to no fault or misconduct of his neighbors or of his. No one was present at that exact time, but that on his calling for help a number of his neighbors who were also working on the road came to his assistance and took him home. It was over a year after this before he could do any work." Another neighbor told the same story to the Pension Department when Elias applied for a pension, noting that Elias was never really able to walk on that foot properly and could not do more than a quarter of a man's day of work.

Along the way in the process of applying for a pension, Elias' birthdate was written incorrectly. Since many pension increases were date driven or based on age, the Pension Department wanted clarification. Eventually, the very worn family Bible was provided as proof of the correct date for Elias' birth. It was accepted by the examiner as valid since the Bible was noted as "very worn" and showed "no indication of alterations."



Elias did receive a pension and continued to until stomach cancer finally claimed his life on March 27, 1918. A letter from the undertaker in Elias' pension file noted that Elias had been "personally known" by the undertaker, Fred Gee, for more than 15 years. Gee prepared the body and embalmed it before the funeral that was held at the family home.

Elias was buried in Riverside Cemetery in Monticello, Wright County Minnesota.

The *Monticello Times* carried this simple obituary.

Death of Elias McCrory

Elias McCrory died Sunday afternoon last from cancer of the stomach. Mr. McCrory has been a resident of Monticello for a good many years and was a veteran of the civil war. He leaves a wife, two sons and two daughters to mourn his loss. Funeral services were held from the house yesterday afternoon conducted by Rev. G. R. Geer, and was laid to rest in Riverside.

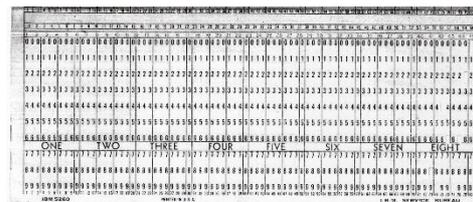
Nellie never remarried, applying for a widow's pension, which she received.

In October of 1952, Elias and Nellie's daughter, Ellen, wrote to the Pension Department. She explained that her mother's health was failing, and it was no longer possible for Ellen to care for Nellie at home. She had moved her mother to "a rest home." The cost for this was \$150 a month and that did not include doctor bills. Ellen explained that the expense was a hardship for her and since her mother would be turning 90 at her next birthday, did she qualify for the additional pension payments authorized by the Act of June 9, 1930, increasing pensions for widows?

The Pension Department answered Ellen, but denied her request for an increase in Nellie's pension. The act increased pensions for widows who were married while their husbands were actively soldiers, not those who became wives after the war was over. Nellie was receiving the maximum amount due her—\$51.60 a month.

Nellie would not have gotten the raise for very long if Ellen's letter had succeeded. Nellie died on December 8, 1952, and was laid to rest beside Elias.

It is interesting to note that Nellie was a Civil War bride, yet some of the last accounting on her pension was handled with an IBM punch card, now preserved in her pension file.



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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