



2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

John D. Miles (a.k.a. Daniel Sanborn)

Daniel Sanborn was living near Decorah, Iowa, when a citizen by the name of Hank Cleghorn decided to raise a company of men to help the Union put down the Rebellion. Hank assured the men he spoke with that Winnisheik County, Daniel's home county, had made provision for the families of married men who joined up, so Daniel agreed to join the company. He and others who joined were sworn in by a justice of the peace and they set off for Dubuque. Once there, letters from home came. Daniel received one from his wife, Prudence. She had been to see the county auditor and no provision was or would be made for the families of men who enlisted. Since Daniel had not yet been mustered in, he believed he still had the right to withdraw and go home. He and others did just that. It didn't take long for the sheriff to arrive to arrest "deserters," so Daniel left and went north into Minnesota. Once there, he decided to enlist in the Second Minnesota Battery using a false name, that of John D. Miles. His time in the Army was served under the name of Miles, but it was the only time in his life he used a name other than his own. Everywhere else, he was known as Daniel Sanborn.

Daniel had been born in New York state on May 7, 1832. He married Prudence Margaret Smalley in 1851 and they moved to Decorah, Iowa, where seven of their eight children were born. Daniel was a carpenter before the war, described by a comrade in the Battery to be a "big, stout man." He stood 5' 10" tall, had blue eyes, fair hair and complexion.

Daniel's service with the Second Battery began on August 25, 1864, when he was mustered in. By October 20, Daniel, then known as John, was sick and was sent to the hospital in Chattanooga, Tennessee. This was near the station of the Battery that winter. Daniel was then sent to the hospital in Nashville and diagnosed as having typhoid fever, but when the Confederate Army under General Hood threatened Nashville, Daniel was moved to the hospital in Jeffersonville, Indiana. He remained in the hospital until January 9, 1865, when, at his own request, he was returned to the Battery. He was still weak and was excused from duty for a time, having trouble with his back. He used a liniment the Battery doctor gave him and he believed this allowed him to recover at least partially. Daniel described the liniment as a "white liniment" also called "willow liniment". Daniel's bunkmate, Elias Fenstermacher, rubbed the liniment on Daniel's back when it was giving him additional trouble.

In June of 1865, the Battery's captain detailed a group of men to help with the harvest of a colonel living nearby. Daniel noted that he and other Northern boys thought it an odd time to call it harvest, but Daniel drove the horse-rake to rake up the hay. A couple days later, the Battery was ordered to move from near Knoxville to Loudon, Tennessee, by train. The men filled the cars, both inside and on top. While enroute, there was an accident and four or five cars derailed and tipped over. The car Daniel was riding on did not tip, but he and others were afraid it was going to, so they jumped. The leap from the moving train cars injured Daniel's back even more and all the progress he'd managed to make toward healing was gone. In later years, he blamed the train accident for his injuries, believing he would have recovered completely from the typhoid in his back had it not been for the train wreck.

The Battery was mustered out on August 16, 1865, and Daniel went home. He worked for a while for his brother-in-law, then got himself a horse and went into horse trading. He worked another summer in the fanning mills and in 1869, he moved to Long Prairie in Todd County, Minnesota, to begin farming.

Daniel was active in the Long Prairie community. He was a member of the local Grand Army of the Republic Post and was a lifelong member of the Baptist Church. He was serving as their head deacon at the time of his death from kidney disease on June 22, 1914.



Prudence and four of their children preceded Daniel in death. He left four other children, 25 grandchildren, and 28 great-grandchildren to mourn his passing.

He was laid to rest beside Prudence in the Evergreen Cemetery in Long Prairie, but his grave was never marked until the spring of 2002 when members of the Second Minnesota Battery of Light Artillery reenactors ordered and placed a veteran's marker for him. The name put on the stone was not John D. Miles, the one he used in while serving in the Battery, but his real name of Daniel Sanborn.

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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