



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 171

December 2009

Battery Profile

Alexander Baldwin

Alexander joined the Second Battery on August 25, 1864, at Taylors Falls, Minnesota. He wasn't too far from home when he enlisted, his parents were living in Alma, Wisconsin, in 1860. At that time, Alexander lived with them, as did his two sisters. By 1864 when he enlisted, Alex was married and living in Taylors Falls.

For a pledge to serve one year, Alexander was paid a bounty of \$33.33 with a balance due him of \$66.67. Alexander stated his age to be 23 years, born in Colchester, Canada. He had blue eyes, sandy hair, a light complexion and stood 5' 6" tall. He said he was a farmer.

Private Baldwin left little mark on the Battery's roles. He was never detailed to special duty, never promoted or charged with mischief, never requested leave. He simply served out his time and was discharged on August 16, 1865 at Fort Snelling when the Battery was mustered out.

Not much more is recorded about the remainder of his life. His wife was Aurelia Parrish Lovejoy and they were married on November 16, 1862. They had five children and lived on a farm in Amador, Chisago County, Minnesota, until at least 1880. At some point, Alexander went to the state of Washington where he worked in logging. An accident there took his right eye when it was hit by a knob on a branch as he was trimming a fir log.

Alexander went to Wisconsin and was living there in 1894 when he filed for a veteran's pension. His disabilities included the lost eye and describe the other as nearly sightless because of cataracts.

By 1895, Alexander was living in Shell Lake, Wisconsin, and there is no longer any mention of his wife. There is no trace of Alex for the next ten years until he appears on the listing of Soldiers and Sailors living in Wisconsin in 1905. Alex was then living in Oshkosh. He disappears again until the 1910 census. He was living in the Dunn County Asylum in Dunn, Wisconsin. How long Alexander was living there is unknown, but he did not remain there long after the census was taken. Alex died on June 16, 1910. He was laid to rest in the Asylum Cemetery in Red Cedar Township. None of the Asylum graves were ever marked, nor is there any indication of it even being a cemetery.

Upcoming Events

December 5, Civil War Christmas in Coon Rapids

Plan to arrive at 10:00 sharp as we will have only one hour to completely set up and be ready for the public!!

The Coon Rapids City Center is located at 11115 Robinson Drive. From Highway #10, exit at Hanson Blvd. and go south. The first light after the ramp light (less than one block from the exit) is Robinson Drive on your left—TURN LEFT! Right is another street. Follow Robinson Drive about a mile and the City Center is on your left side. Use the far south door for entry.

We will set up our "indoor" camp with the 3/4 scale gun inside Coon Rapids City Hall. We will do gun drill, talk to people, sing carols, and Santa will visit, much like we have done before.

It was suggested that we have a "gift exchange" as we have sometimes done with Santa delivering the gifts. Those wishing to participate in this, please plan to have a gift or letter to exchange. It's a great photo op for the public!

Please bring a period appropriate gift. Suggestions are cookies, wool socks or gloves, jerky, jars of pickles, rock candy, an apron for the ladies, cloth bags, etc. Think about things carried in haversacks and you should have some ideas. A gift should cost about \$5. Wrap it in brown or white paper and write Lady or Soldier if it is something specific. Bring it to the event and give it to Mrs. Wendel. She will get the gifts to Santa.

LADIES!! If you have some hand work to do on anything period, bring it! We can hold a Sanitary Fair work day with everyone doing something for the soldiers/war effort! See the inside of this newsletter for history on these activities.

This is a paid event, so let's have a good turn out!

Please let Mrs. Wendel know if you are coming or not as this will help her in setting up the event prior to the Battery's arrival.

Next Meeting

Saturday, January 23, 11:00 am
John & Hieja Cain
1640 Woodland Drive, Red Wing, MN
651-388-9250



Sanitary Fairs

Sanitary Fairs were fund raising operations taken on by those who wanted to support Civil War armies. Held in both North and South, the fairs were organized primarily by women. Fairs sold items that were donated by the communities in which they were held; the majority of the donors were women. Items sold included baked goods, jams and jellies, needlework, and every other kind of project imaginable. Some fairs offered picnic basket auctions, dances, or competitions with all proceeds going to support wounded soldiers. The following is drawn from a lengthy article that appeared in the *Anoka Star* newspaper, April 30, 1864.

Patriotic Appeal for the Sanitary Fair

The noble mission of this great patriotic festival should be made known to every hamlet in the land, and the success of the fair should be made commensurate with the success of our cause and the greatness of the nation.

Our Government, though providing for its armies with a liberality unprecedented in the history of other countries, is not authorized to supply many comforts which sick and wounded soldiers need.

It is the object of this Mississippi Sanitary Fair to afford this relief. Within in the past three years, the western States have expended more than \$1,000,000 in behalf of our disabled soldiers.

Every recovery is equivalent to a new recruit, and patriotic charity must now contribute with lavish hand to prevent the unnecessary decimation of our armies by exposure and neglect.

The Executive committee hopes to raise \$500,000 by the Mississippi Valley Sanitary Fair. Every saleable production on earth or sea, every work in all the numberless branches of industrial and mechanical art, every article cheap or costly, perishable or enduring, useful or luxurious, literary or aesthetic, native or foreign, which is registered in the inventory of the world's wealth, is earnestly solicited and will be gratefully received at the hall of the Mississippi Valley Sanitary Fair.

A young woman of Newburyport, Mass., has sent to Mr. Lincoln a pair of woolen socks, on the bottom on each of which is knitted the secession flag, and near the top the stars and stripes, so that when worn by the President he will always have the flag of rebellion under his feet.

Anoka Star, April 2, 1864

Contributions of clothing, and comforts, as well as money, are needed.

The Commission requests, that on Thanksgiving Day collections be taken in all the Churches of the Land, for this labor of love. Let not Anoka be behind other towns in this good work. Of course the day will be observed by our Churches. Let all go in obedience to the request of the President, and go prepared to do something for the soldiers.

Anoka Star, November 21, 1863

Christian Commission

Report on a lecture given by Rev. Wells at the Methodist Hall.

A contribution was taken up and about \$50 given by way of appreciation of the good work. We must not forget, however, that we have another work to do by way of manifesting our appreciation of, and regard for, our armies in the field. I allude to the duty we owe to the families of our absent heroes. Let there be a full meeting of citizens at the Methodist Hall on Tuesday evening next to consider this matter. Let the mothers, wives and daughters be present, and let the fathers, husbands and sons be there, prepared to do as circumstances may develop the necessary of doing.

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The Sanitary Commission

The Sanitary Commission was a volunteer organization formed during the Civil War to raise funds and supplies for the armies of the North. The Sanitary Commission also provided oversight of the sanitary conditions of military hospitals. Clara Barton, Dorothea Dix and Fredrick Law Olmstead were all involved with the Sanitary Commission.

Quilts were of special importance—both for sale at Sanitary Fairs to raise money and to keep soldiers warm. Sanitary Commission quilts were to be made of scrap fabrics in simple patterns so they would not take as long to make. Strip quilts were in fashion at the time and the wide sashing helped the quilts sew up even faster. The recommended bedroll size was 48 x 84 inches. Advertising in 1861 noted that quilts should be “8 feet long, 4 feet wide, of cheap, dark prints wadded with cotton.”

It was estimated the Sanitary Commission sent 250,000 quilts through their official channels, each stamped on the back with their name. Only four are known to exist today. Countless other women took the Sanitary Commission’s advice for making quilts to send to the soldiers of their own families and communities.

The Christian Commission

The Christian Commission came into existence late in 1861, organized by concerned clergymen and leaders of the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association). They formed the commission with the mission of promoting the spiritual and temporal welfare of soldiers and sailors. The commission gathered funds from public donations of both goods and money. Their duties were to hold regular worship services in the field for the soldiers and to distribute necessary articles as best they could.

The Commission was best known for the religious tracts and Bibles they handed out to the soldiers. It is estimated that, during its existence, the Commission passed out 328,879 Bibles, 6,818,994 religious newspapers and tracts, and sent 1,079 representatives, called delegates, into the field.

The Christian Commission delegates often moved with the armies, but when the army was in camp, the Commission offered lending libraries of books for the soldiers to use to improve themselves by reading. Near larger hospitals, the Commission set up facilities called “diet kitchens.” Each diet kitchen was managed by two or three women and they prepared special foods for wounded or sick soldiers not able to eat the regular hospital food. There were 157 women employed by the Christian Commission during the war.

Other tasks the Christian Commission took on were helping bury the dead, assisting the wounded to hospitals, distributing limited medical supplies, clothing, and small items such as soap, ink, and sewing kits to medical officials and individual soldiers.

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Anoka Star, April 30, 1864

Not just in the North

Southern women also made quilts and blankets to support the Confederate troops. Due to the high price of fabric and severe shortages in the South, southern women cut up heirloom quilts to make quilts and used carpet, drapes and linings from their dresses to make blankets and quilts for their soldiers. Later in the war, Southern women spun cotton and made homespun fabric for quilts and clothing. Diaries tell about the roughness of the homespun fibers, making clothing from bed ticking, and anything they could salvage. Cost and lack of availability forced women to resort to using newspaper as quilt batting.

Southern women also made special quilts to be sold to raise money to buy gunboats for the south. Many of these quilts were appliquéd. Some of these quilts were purchased and given back to the owner so they could be resold. These women became known as the "Gunboat Ladies". Through their volunteer efforts and hard work they were able to purchase three gunboats. A gunboat quilt is on display in the Birmingham Museum of Art.

Recap

For once, all the wool one could muster was welcome as 24 members of the Battery turned out to provide color at the opening of the Northstar Rail Grand Opening event at the Anoka Station on November 14.

The Battery received high praise for their knowledge and interpretation from the event organizers who asked Mrs.

Wendel to express their deepest thanks for participating in the historic event!



Which part of that mule did you get on that bun, Sergeant?!

The buglers announced the arrival of the train!

Private and Mrs. Crozier with an oddly dressed trained bear at the target Field Station.



Everybody wanted their picture taken with the reenactors!!



Private Lee Wendel and his lady, Pamela.



Miss Mandy by the Northstar engine.

The Second Minnesota Light Artillery Battery is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of Civil War history by living it.

Membership is \$12 per year. Non-member newsletter subscription rate is \$6.00 per year.

For information on the Battery, please contact:

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