



## 2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

# “ACTION”

Circular No. 180

October 2010

### On This Date-150 Years Ago

#### *Lincoln's 1860 Presidential Campaign*

Although he lost the senatorial election to Douglas, Lincoln won national attention through the campaign and debates. Lincoln's fame spread beyond the borders of his home state as a result of the Lincoln/Douglas debates and as Lincoln's popularity within the Republican Party grew, he was invited to address members of his party throughout the nation.

In September of 1859, Lincoln gave several speeches to Ohio Republicans, and on February 27, 1860, he spoke at Cooper Union in New York City. Lincoln's notes for his speeches articulate Lincoln's policy on slavery, and his positions on popular sovereignty and the Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision.

*"We must not disturb slavery in the states where it exists, because the Constitution, and the peace of the country both forbid us — We must not withhold an efficient fugitive slave law, because the constitution demands it —*

*But we must, by a national policy, prevent the spread of slavery into new territories, or free states, because the constitution does not forbid us, and the general welfare does demand such prevention — We must prevent the revival of the African slave trade, because the constitution does not forbid us, and the general welfare does require the prevention — We must prevent these things being done, by either congresses or courts — The people — the people — are the rightful masters of both Congresses, and courts — not to overthrow the Constitution, but to overthrow the men who pervert it —"*

From "Abraham Lincoln, [September 16-17, 1859] (These were his "Notes for Speech in Kansas and Ohio")," Page 2. The National Archives and Records Administration holds the originals of these records and many can be accessed online at: [www.nara.gov](http://www.nara.gov)

### Upcoming Events

**November 11-14** National Event, Collierville, TN

Those planning to attend are meeting for planning the trip. Watch your email or call John Cain to keep in the loop for planning sessions.

**December 11, 6:00 p.m.** Christmas Dinner  
Norton's in Red Wing

This outing was organized via email in August, so if you did not hear about it, contact Private Ron Graves. ([rgroland@hbc.com](mailto:rgroland@hbc.com) or 651-565-4484)

We have 28 people signed up, so we will be ordering off the menu and keeping individual tabs. Should the number change, we may need to revise what Norton's is able to do for us. Again, should your attendance status change, notify Private Graves ASAP.

The uniform of the day is brushed uniforms or 1860s civilian attire for gentlemen, hoops or 1860s dresses for ladies. (Modern clothing is also acceptable, though period attire is encouraged.)



"Two women trimming a man's hair" drawing by Alfred Waud, 1860-1864.

### Next Meeting

October 23 11:00 a.m.  
Red Wing Public Library  
225 East Avenue, Red Wing  
Call John Cain for more info. 651 388-9250



# Battery Profile

## Giles C. Wiltse

Giles was born in Waynesburg, New York, about 1836. He married Louisa on May 3, 1858, and January of 1862, he was buying land at the St. Peter land office in Minnesota. Giles may not have lived on the land, nor does it appear he kept it for very long. He went to Fort Snelling and enlisted in the Second Battery on November 20, 1862. He received a bounty of \$25 for agreeing to serve three years. He was a carpenter, had hazel eyes, black hair, a dark complexion, and stood 5' 9-1/2" tall.

The Second Battery was campaigning in Tennessee, when Giles caught up to them on March 3, 1863, but Giles would not see much of the campaign. By the middle of August, Giles was given a 20 day furlough to go to Racine, Wisconsin. On the 27th, he was officially transferred to the Veteran Reserve Corps, even though he was not yet back from his furlough. He reported back on the 29th of August, and by September 1, he was transferred to the Invalid Corps.

Giles explained what had happened to him, stating that it was exposure and lying on the ground that caused the chronic diarrhea he was suffering from. He was transferred around some more and ended up at Holt, Indiana, where he remained for about three months, until March 10, 1864. Giles was given orders sending him to Jeffersonville, Indiana, where he was given duty as a nurse and guard at the military hospital there. Giles served at the hospital until his term of service expired and he was discharged on August 22, 1865.

Evidence points to Giles going to Racine, Wisconsin, rather than Minnesota after he was discharged. No further record of him has been found in Minnesota and Giles told the Pension department he went "home" to Racine after he was discharged. Giles was applying for a pension in January of 1866. He said he could not work and had not worked since leaving the service as his health was too poor.



Giles was probably right as he died from disease on January 29, 1867. He was buried in the Memorial Cemetery in Caladonia, near Racine, Wisconsin. A veterans stone marks his grave.

The next chapter of Giles life centered on his pension. Louisa applied for a widow's pension, but a very tangled story began to emerge as she tried to get Giles' pension money.

The story Louisa told the pension examiner was that after Giles died, she met a man named Barclay in Chicago. He was good to her and after knowing him about six weeks, they decided to get married. They first tried to get married in Chicago, but without a license, the minister would not marry them. They went to Wisconsin as there, they did not need a license. The two were married and rented an apartment in Chicago. Barclay gave Louisa money to set up the house and run it. After living there for about two weeks, Barclay confessed to Louisa that he was already married, but that he would claim Louisa where ever she went because she could not prove he had another wife still living. They lived there together for two years when one day, Louisa said she made his lunch for him to take to work and when he left, he never came back. She received two letters from him, but she destroyed them as they said he had gone back to his first wife in St. Louis.

Louisa then met Abram Porter, a newspaper editor. She said she told him about the mess with Barclay, but Porter said she did not have to worry about it. He said Louisa could marry him without any kind of legal change to the marriage with Barclay because Louisa was not his legal wife. Louisa accepted that had said she married Porter.

Porter said that together, he and Louisa bought a newspaper called *The Budget*. She "worked well with us at the commencement," but shortly after a Mr. Joseph Sisson arrived in town, Porter said Louisa "disappeared from the office day and night." He went on to tell, in the newspaper, of how Louisa had been "arrested at No. 138 Webster Avenue (being found in the bedroom of one Sisson, at half-past twelve o'clock at night, in an undress uniform.)" Porter went on to complain about Louisa claiming the newspaper as hers and proceeding to "run it into the ground." This appeared in a newspaper called *The Surprise* on October 8, 1880. It was run by Abram Porter.

A letter from a law office in Chicago was addressed to Louisa in August of 1882 and took up the case Louisa had brought them. They were able to get the marriage between Louisa and Abram Porter annulled. She was to get a copy of the decree, but if Abram wanted a copy, he would have to pay for it. The estimated cost was \$3 or \$3.50. It also appeared that Louisa would get to keep the newspaper she was then running, *The Budget*.

Porter took another shot at Louisa in the December 3, *Surprise*. Under his editorial masthead, he wrote, "It must be very edifying to the readers of *The Budget*, a weekly newspaper printed at 102 Madison street, to know that Mrs. Wiltse, alias Barclay, alias Porter, (we might say Sisson,) still continues in the firm; and further, that she is anticipating immediate pension money from the United States government, notwithstanding the numerous husbands she has had to dispose of in order to gain the coveted object. If she would explain that little affair at 136 and 79 Webster, say nothing about the present time, probably Mrs. Joseph Sisson, of Kenosha, would feel like pulling her false hair out."

(Continued on next page)

## (Battery Profile, Con't)

Louisa wrote a letter to a Mr. Dudley in the Pension Office trying to explain what she had been through. She said she was writing him because she had heard some people in the pension offices in Chicago saying that it was only with money and influence that one could get a pension. Louisa had neither. She told him of her distress and how Porter had kicked her and locked her out of the house in the middle of the night. She insisted she had never been with any of the men except when she thought she was rightfully married to them. She also described a time when she learned that she was "charged with living a life of wantonness, of prostitution!" She went on to tell of the severe illness she had never recovered from. She said the cause of the illness was "excessive worry--but I do hope to become better soon or die."

The letter did not do much for Louisa as a statement from the Pension Department dated November 20, 1883, informed her that she was ineligible for a pension from Giles because of "evidence that she had remarried one Barclay and cohabited in adulterous relations with one Fuller."

The last piece in Louisa's troubled file is a long and rambling letter to a Doctor McNeil. Louisa began by telling him of the doctor who took care of her during her illness, then went on to write, "I have no desire to have my sanity questioned. It is enough to have my friends know that at times I am muddled and to feel the pain and inconsistencies of it myself." Louisa complained about her loss of pension for "a single act of indiscretion twenty years ago" and she wanted to set the facts straight. Straight was something she did not manage to get. Her letter talked about an arrest for murder, but that she could not be convicted because it was self defense. She said Porter drove her away because she was afraid to stay with him and went to the Home for the Friendless. After telling her story to the matron there, Louisa stayed one night. After that was when Porter published something in the newspaper that "so grieved" her.

The letter rambled on for two long pages about her vow of chastity, the truth of her story, and how hard it was for her to remember, but that she needed to write it all down quick while she still did remember. She was afraid she would forget it all the next day.

Exactly who was at fault, what the truth might be, or whatever became of Louisa is unknown.

## Proof at last!!

For years, Mrs. Wendel has been convinced ladies of the 1860s who worked wore their work dresses shorter, about ankle high, but she has never been able to find definitive proof other than a photo of slave women. At last, she has the proof she knew had to be out there somewhere!

Mrs. Wendel has acquired a bound volume of the 1859 *Godey's Lady's Book* (a friend found it at an auction) and in the July issue, there is the proof! The book itself is in poor condition with a broken binding and loose pages, but the information is still there, just as it appeared to women of 1859!!

With the book in such condition, Mrs. Wendel has no reservations about plopping it on her scanner and sharing the incredible period correct, first hand information it contains! Watch for more in the coming issued of *Action Front!*



# Recap

August 7-8

## Reenactment at Boscobel, WI



As always, this event is one of the biggest we attend all year with great fun, good battle scenarios, and good friends. We presented a special birthday gift to long time Battery friend, Del Tedrick, ate pie and celebrated at the dance. Then came Sunday morning when the monsoon struck. Reports varied, but it is certain there were some three inches of rain in a matter of minutes. Rivers rushed down the hill and flooded the sutler area with several feet of water. Incredibly, the rain stopped, the water drained away, and the battle was able to go on! Though wet, we did have a great time at what has become one of our favorite events.



August 14-15

## Reenactment, Pipestone, MN



Members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Minnesota Battery travelled to the Western border of Minnesota to participate in the Civil War reenactment at the Hiawatha Pageant Grounds in Pipestone. Event staff members, stationed next to our camp, were very happy with the large crowd that was in attendance both days. In addition to battle scenarios on Saturday and Sunday, the battery also provided a gun drill demonstration that, this year, included firing. Battery members present included John Cain, Daryl Duden, Jay & Stacy Overby, John & Brenda Crozier, John & Elizabeth Watkins with Conner & Joseph, Tim & Amanda Watkins and new member Teresa Bergdale aka "Patience". It was a pleasure to have Amanda Watkins parents & siblings among the spectators and accept our invitation to join us in camp.

August 28-29

## Ahlman's, Morristown, MN



As advertised, this event at Ahlman's Gun Shop, is always exciting. This year, with our firing schedule adjusted to four times each day, battery members had an opportunity to visit other venues. The attendance both days of the event was outstanding. The weather was hot, and battery members found relief with frequent trips to the shaved ice vendor. After each gun demonstration, battery members lined up for Peach, Cherry, Apple, Watermelon, Grape, Tutti-frutti, Blue Raspberry, Red Raspberry, Strawberry, Pina-colada, Cola, Root Beer or one of the other sixty flavors offered. Sgt Duden indicated there must be a "buy seven get the eight free policy" because following the last firing on Sunday every battery member received free shaved ice. Battery members participating at Fort Ahlman included John Cain, Daryl Duden, Bart Hoekstra, Ben Norman, Jay & Stacy Overby, Michael Ritchie & Becky Loader, John & Brenda Crozier, Bruce Arnoldy, Briar



Golden, Teresa Bergdale and another new member Ruth Mickelson.

## September 11 Red Wing, MN

## Encampment at Anderson Center—



The Anderson Center in Red Wing was host to the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration of Minnesota Children's Authors and Illustrators. Because Patricia Bauer, author of the Civil War children's book "B is for Battle Cry", was among the authors signing books, event organizers invited the 2<sup>nd</sup> Minnesota Battery to participate. A Civil War encampment with learning stations and gun firing

demonstrations were among the many venues offered. Battery members participating included John Cain, Daryl Duden, Bill Crowder, Bart Hoekstra, John & Brenda Crozier, Neil & Rose Bruce, Michael Ritchie & Becky Loader, Bruce Arnoldy, Briar Golden, Tim & Amanda Watkins, John & Conner Watkins and Jim & Ardee Rosasco.



**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.

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