



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 189

August 2011

On This Date-150 Years Ago

A Timeline look at August of 1861

- 1 Tennessee votes to adopt the Constitution of the Confederate States of America.
- 3 Off the coast of Virginia, a Union naval officer ascends in a tethered balloon to look at Confederate controlled Hampton Roads. It is the first balloon ascent from a ship in naval history.
- 5 Abraham Lincoln approves a wide variety of bills passed during a special session of Congress including a new issue of bonds, a tariff increase, and the first direct income and real estate tax.
- 10 Battle of Wilson's Creek (aka Battle of Springfield) Brigadier General Nathaniel Lyon [US] is killed in the Confederate victory.
- 15 General George McClellan assumes command of the Army of the Potomac.
- 17 George Thomas is appointed brigadier general of volunteers, Army of the Cumberland.
- 26 King Kamehameha IV proclaimed the neutrality of the Hawaiian Islands during the Civil War.
- 26 General Benjamin Butler leads a successful amphibious landing on Cape Hatteras.
- 28 Ulysses S. Grant is given command of federal forces in Southern Illinois and Southeastern Missouri.
- 30 John C. Fremont declares martial law in Missouri and frees the slaves of Missouri Confederates.
- 31 Confederate officers Samuel Cooper, Robert E. Lee, Albert Sidney Johnston, Joseph E. Johnston and P. G. T. Beauregard are promoted to full general.

Upcoming Events

August 6- 7 Boscobel, WI

This event is always a summer favorite with hundreds of reenactors, good battle scenarios, the pie social, lots of sutlers and this year, our ladies have a special role! The ladies of the Battery are in charge of the “cave dwellers” of Vicksburg for the Saturday scenario! Much of this FIVE PAGE newsletter is devoted to information on Vicksburg.

Sunday's battle scenario will feature Spotsylvania, VA.

If you have not yet responded your attendance (yes or no), please do so ASAP to John Cain or Daryl Duden—contact info on last page.) See the Boscobel website for more info: <http://www.musketsandmemories.net/>

August 27- 28 Ahlmans, Morristown, MN

This is one of the most unique encampment/demonstrations! The Battery takes over the reconstructed fort at the Ahlman's gun shop grounds and provides demonstrations of our cannon throughout the weekend. This is just one station among many some 5,000+ visitors travel through. Other stations include tank guns, tommy guns, paintball games, shot guns, various rifle specialties, and much more on this Shooters Roundup weekend. Their website is: <http://www.ahlmans.com/events.html>

Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place during the event at Ahlman's, August 27-28.



Battery Profile

James G. Wiley

James was just old enough to serve in the Battery, enlisting on August 30, 1864, at the age of 18. He had been born in Meggs County, Ohio, and came to Minnesota with his parents in 1856. His father took land on the Rum River and they began farming. James lived at home, working with his father until he enlisted.

James was 5' 10-1/2" tall, had blue eyes, brown hair, and a florid complexion. He received one third of his \$100 bounty upon enlistment, the rest due him as he served his one year obligation. James let his name be credited to Leon in Goodhue County for the draft.

The Battery was in camp near Chattanooga, Tennessee, when James and the other new recruits caught up to them in the fall of 1864. It was not an exciting time as the Battery was assigned garrison duty. Scouting missions were the most exciting events the men of the Battery participated in while the war wound down. When the Battery went north to Fort Snelling to be mustered out, James was with them and became a civilian once again in August of 1865. His muster out sheet noted that he was not only due the balance of his bounty money, but that his pay had not been settled since his enlistment a year earlier. James went home with a significant amount of money in his pockets.

Home was to his parents' home on the Rum River near Anoka for a time, then he began his own business in Champlin, Minnesota. He started in the lumbering business, but a fire took his sawmill just three years after getting it started. James moved to Fredonia, Kansas, where he worked for about three years before continuing west to Arizona. There, James again went into lumbering and worked at it for ten years. It was while he was in Arizona that he met Ida May. They were married at Prescott, Arizona, in 1877. They had three children before they moved to Palouse City, Washington, where he started a mercantile business.

Another ten years went by, Ida died in 1890, and James moved the family to British Columbia, Canada. In 1892, he married Margaret McLeod, a woman from Anoka, Minnesota. He must have gone there for some purpose as the marriage license and wedding both were from Anoka County.

Margaret went with James to Canada and was there when James secured a contract with the Leroi Mining Company to haul ore. That only lasted three years as the railroad arrived and he lost the contract for ore hauling, so James opened a feed and grain store. After two years in the feed store, James sold out and moved the family to Stevens County, Washington, where he bought a farm in Echo Valley. By this time, James and Margaret had added three more children to the family. It was 1898. In just a few years, the farm was doing well with 65 acres under cultivation and much of it fenced. James also was raising stock.

James retired from farming in 1922, but they continued to live on the land in Washington. In 1924, James spent six months living in Leavenworth, Kansas. He also spent his winters in Los Angeles, but did go back to Washington during the rest of the year. It is not known if Margaret was with him as in a letter dated 1927, their son wrote that she had been "declared insane a good many years ago."



Old Soldiers Homes were also places James resided in the last years of his life. He was admitted to the Pacific Branch Home on December 2, 1922 and discharged on March 21, 1924. He was readmitted to the Western Branch Home in May of 1925, transferred to the Pacific Branch and then discharged in May of 1926. Once more, James was readmitted to the Pacific Branch on December 3, 1926 and discharged in February, 1927.

James died at the Mount Carmel Hospital in Stevens County, Washington, on April 23, 1927. His heart was weak and when he caught the flu, it was more than he could take. He was laid to rest in the Colville Cemetery in Highland, Washington. His grave is marked with a military stone.

Cave Life in Vicksburg (aka Boscobel!)

The Second Battery ladies have been invited to live in the caves of Vicksburg on Saturday at Boscobel, be featured on the camp tours, and be an integral part of the battle! Since we are expected to be in first person, a little background is a good idea.

During the 47 day siege, Union gunboats lobbed over 22,000 shells into the town and army artillery fire was even heavier. As the barrages continued, suitable (or safe) housing in Vicksburg was scarce. A ridge, located between the main town and the rebel defense line, provided citizenry with makeshift homes for the duration. Over 500 caves were dug into the yellow clay hills of Vicksburg. None remain today.

There are many good books to read about the cave life of the residents of Vicksburg, Mississippi, during the siege by the Union Army. One of the best resources for an easy overview is the Time Life series, volume 12, *War on the Mississippi, Grant Takes Vicksburg*. Another good booklet for cave life stories is called *Yankee Bullets, Rebel Rations*. It is a series of essays by people who lived in the caves.

For other reading, there are several good websites and you can read Mary Webster Loughborough's book, *My Life in a Vicksburg Cave* online at Project Gutenberg. (copy and past the link) <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/35700>

Other links for more info on Vicksburg and the caves:

http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/civil_war_series/24/sec9.htm

<http://mshistory.k12.ms.us/articles/215/vicksburg-during-the-civil-war-1862-1863>

<http://friendsofaymond.org/articles/cave-life.htm>

<http://www.nps.gov/vick/planyourvisit/cave.htm>

<http://berry.myweb.uga.edu/teaching/civilwar/docs/vicksburg.pdf>

A good thumbnail history of the military campaign and siege:

<http://www.sonofthesouth.net/leefoundation/siege-vicksburg.htm>

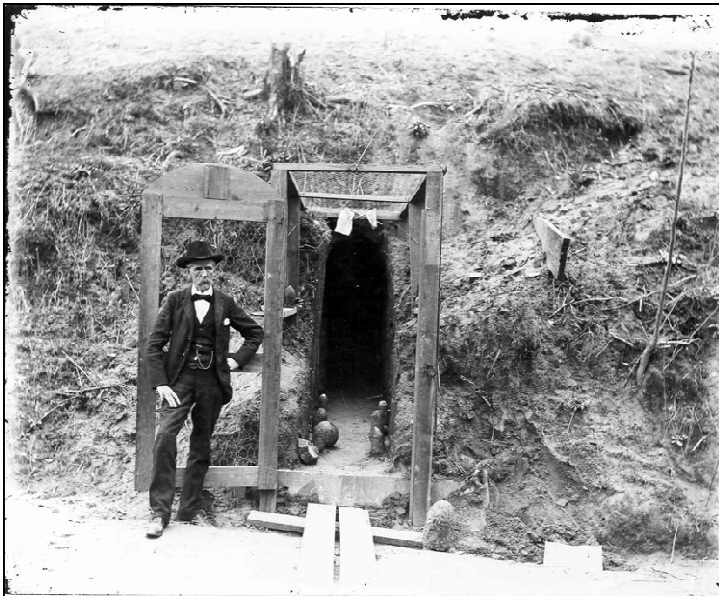


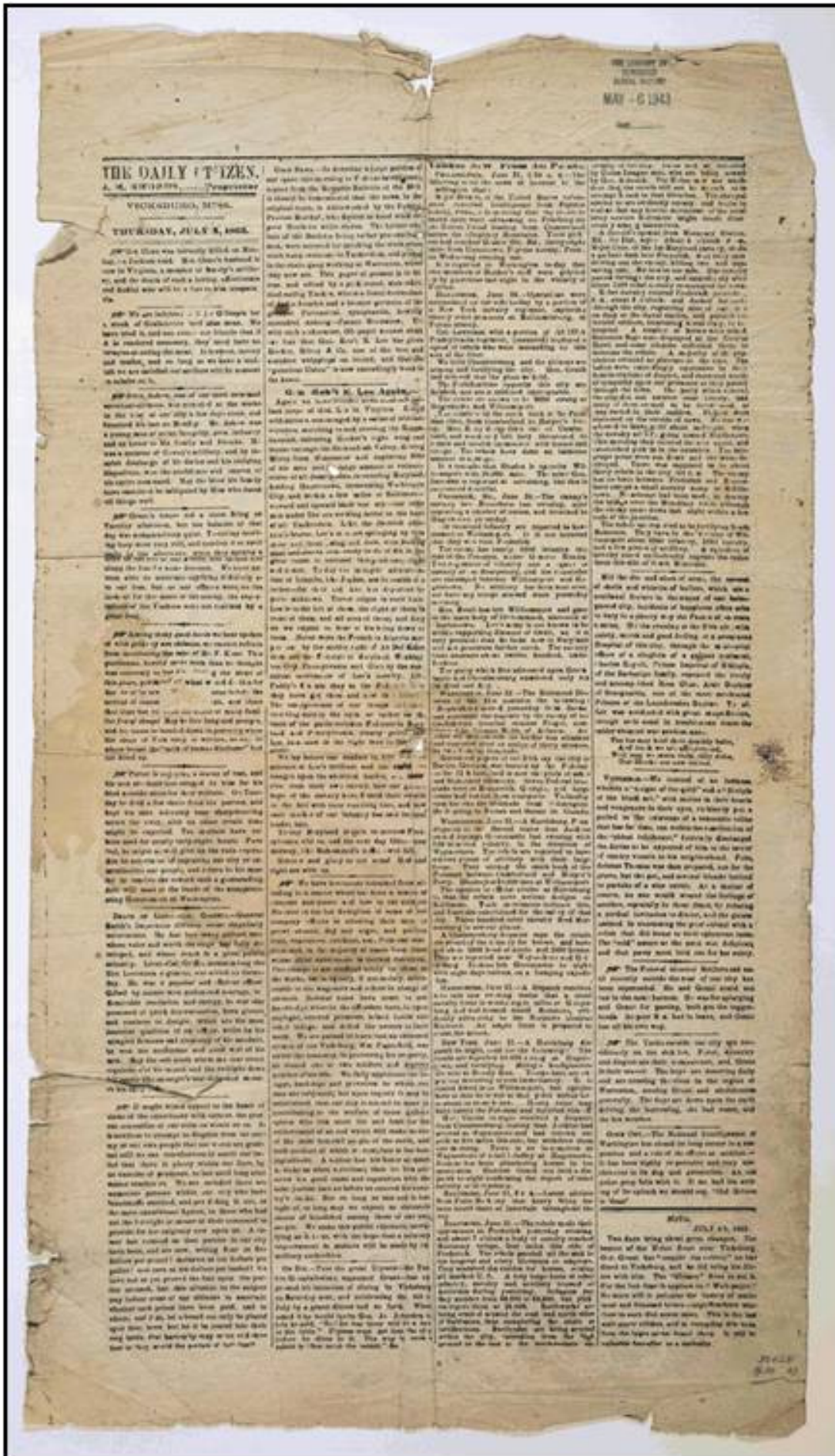
A post siege image of one of the hills of Vicksburg.



Two 1863 drawings of cave life.

A Vicksburg man by one of the last remaining caves, ca.1890.





One of the famous "wallpaper" editions of the Vicksburg newspaper. Above is the back side of the paper. Below—the menu one of Vicksburg's hotels printed during the siege.

- SOUP
- Mule Tail
- BOILED
- Mule Bacon with Poke Greens
- Mule Ham Canvassed
- ROASTS
- Mule Sirloin
- Mule Rump Stuffed with Rice
- VEGETABLES
- Peas and Rice
- ENTREES
- Mule Head Stuffed Ala Mode
- Mule Beef Jerked Ala Mexicana
- Mule Ears Fricasseed Ala Gotch
- Mule Hide Stewed New Style Laid On
- Mule Spare Ribs Plain
- Mule Liver Hashed
- SIDE DISHES
- Mule Salad
- Mule Hoof Soused
- JELLIES
- Mule Foot
- PASTRY
- Pea Meal Pudding Blackberry Sause
- Cotton Seed Pies
- China Berry Tarts
- DESERT
- White Oak Acorns
- Beech Nuts
- Blackberry Leaf Tea
- Genuine Confederate Coffee

Recap

June 11 Encampment & Quilting Bee, St. Francis, MN

For the first time in several years, the weather at this event was perfect! Sunshine and no rain! It brought out more people than we've seen visit us in the park in several years, making it a wonderful day.



June 24- 26 Reenactment, Wasioja, MN

Wow, talk about a reenactor friendly event!

The organizers took incredible care of us with an over-abundance of rations, super-clean porta-potties, and well-run battle scenarios. Friday and Sunday had wonderful weather with a deluge of rain on Saturday, but we had a wonderful time. The Second Battery fielded both our guns with full crews going both blue and gray for various battles. Corporal Graves also received his stripes. A new feature of camp was "Movie Night in the O Tent" (see right) when everything was muddy and camps were closed on Saturday night. It was not even just our boys who watched the movie, they soon had visitors from other camps join them! The ladies provided the popcorn! Thanks to Private Wendel and his super-duper toy for the movie.

Miss Becky and the young ladies of the camp had a great time making clover crowns and the rain at least came with a beautiful rainbow over the camps. This was an outstanding event and great fun was had by all, even if we did get really wet on Saturday!



Bugler Bill, what did you do on Saturday night?!!



Huzzah to the organizers for a well done event!



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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<http://www.2mnbattery.org>

July 9- 10 Reenactment, Seminole Valley



This was a smaller event, but nicely done. Miss Katie and Miss Becky managed the camp while our gun crew played in gray one day and blue the other, allowing them to be on the winning side both days! The

afterhours event of the weekend included skyping Miss Mandy in Hawaii, much to her delight! Private Wendel brought out his computer equipment and video called Miss Mandy allowing her to see and chat with everyone in camp. This was a first—a mix of the 21st century with the 19th century!

