



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 270

August 2019

On This Date-155 Years Ago

Politics were very much on the minds of the parties in August of 1864. Despite progress in the war, Lincoln and most political pundits were convinced that he would lose his bid for reelection in 1864. The country was war weary and the Democratic Party's nominee, George McClellan, was likely to negotiate a peace treaty with the Confederacy if elected.

Lincoln's colleagues within the Republican Party also had doubts about his reelection. In February 1864 newspapers printed a letter by Senator Samuel C. Pomeroy in which he argued that Lincoln could not win reelection and advocated nominating Salmon P. Chase for president.

By August, the outlook was so grim that Thurlow Weed wrote William H. Seward, "Ten or eleven days since, I told Mr Lincoln that his re-election was an impossibility.... The People are wild for Peace. They are told that the President will only listen to terms of Peace on condition Slavery be 'abandoned.'"

Despite doubts within the Party, Lincoln won the Republican nomination. Nevertheless, he feared he had no chance of winning the election. He also feared that as President, McClellan would negotiate a settlement with the Confederacy that would allow the South to maintain the institution of slavery. On August 23, Lincoln wrote and sealed a memorandum, which he then asked his cabinet to endorse, not knowing the contents. After winning the election in November, Lincoln revealed to his cabinet that the memorandum pledged his cooperation with the president-elect for the sake of the nation.

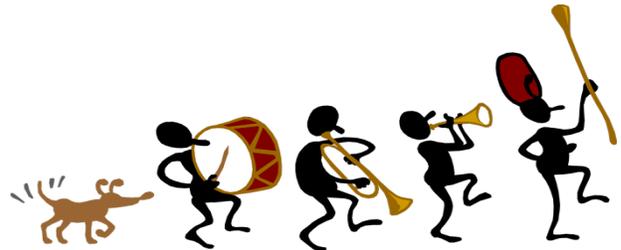
Anticipating McClellan's election, Lincoln also asked Frederick Douglass to draft a plan for helping as many slaves as possible to escape from the South before the November election. Douglass submitted the plan on August 29, 1864, but it was never implemented because Lincoln's prospects for reelection soon improved with the capture of Atlanta and with General John C. Fremont's withdrawal from the presidential campaign.

(From a lesson plan at the Library of Congress on the reelection campaign of Abraham Lincoln)

Upcoming Events

August 4 Red Wing River City Days Parade, Red Wing, MN

Meet at the Goodhue County Historical Society (1166 Oak Street in Red Wing) NO LATER than 11:30 am. Battery members area allowed to park in the museum lot. The float is #45 in the parade and will carry everyone downtown to the staging area. Ice and bottled water will be on the float. Any period correct drdress is great! Please bring a basket or bag to carry stickers and candy to give out. Members who are able will walk beside the float to hand out these goodies. All participants will be taken back to the museum and their cars at the end of the parade.



August 24-25 Ahlman's Shooters Round-up, Morristown, MN

Fort Ahlman Encampment & Firing Demonstration at what is without question the wildest event we attend all year. We'll be firing our gun on a regular schedule so members will have plenty of time to visit the many other activities happening at this event (and eat shaved ice!). Contact Daryl or John for more info and see the website at: <https://www.ahlmans.com/shooters-roundup.html>

Next Meeting

September 7, 2019 11:00am

Marie's Underground Dining, Red Wing
Contact Ken Cunningham with questions or agenda items. 651-388-2945.



Battery Profile

Carlos Dimick

Carlos is a man of many mysteries. The compiled service records of the Second Minnesota Battery contain a single piece of paper for Carlos--the permission slip his father signed allowing Carlos to enlist. There are no enlistment papers, no discharge papers, no muster sheets, yet the morning reports mention Carlos when he reported in to the Battery on February 14, 1862; two details he served on and his return to the Battery following the details. His name is borne on the Battery's muster rolls, but almost nothing appears in his file.

The lack of military papers fits with much in the rest of his life. Carlos intermittently went by Carlos or Charles, sometimes even Charley. Where he was born is also in question. The military records said Carlos--the name he used during the war--was born Trumbull, Ashtabula County, Ohio, on September 12, 1843. The date works out correctly for the age Carlos told the army. He was 19 when he enlisted and thus underage, the reason for his father's note. The next record of Carlos—but he was then going by Charles—was the 1870 census. He was living with another family in Rush County, Indiana, and working as a hostler. He was still born in Ohio then, but in the 1880 census, Charles has a different birth story. In 1880, he said he was born in Pennsylvania. That same census provides the information that Carlos was married, had a four year old daughter, was working as a railroad conductor, and they were all living with her mother in Hannibal, Missouri. The 1900 census agreed with his 1880 place of birth as being in Pennsylvania and confirmed his date of birth as September of 1843. Six years later when Carlos (he was not using Charles this time) applied for a military pension, he returned to the original place of birth, putting down Ashtabula, Ohio. Where he was really born is anyone's guess.

Wherever Carlos was born, he was living in Albert Lea, Minnesota, with his father and working as a clerk in a store by 1862. The note of permission his father signed was dated February 10, 1862, and Carlos was mustered in on the 14th. Another member of the Battery, Henry Simonds, was the witness who signed the note written by Carlos' father. Carlos had hazel eyes, light hair, light complexion, and stood 5' 6" tall.

The time Carlos spent in the Battery did not bring him much attention in the morning reports. When it came time for the men of the Battery to reenlist, Carlos decided he was not going to sign up again. He and others not wanting to reenlist or not yet eligible were detailed to the Second Illinois Light Artillery, Battery I, where they served in the battles in front of Atlanta before returning to the Second Minnesota on October 16, 1864. Carlos stayed with the Battery until he was detailed a second time, this time to the quartermaster department on December 16, 1864. He stayed there until March 26, returning to the Battery just

in time to be mustered out at the end of his term of service. Carlos was discharged at Knoxville, Tennessee, on March 28, 1865.

It is not clear if Carlos returned to Minnesota. He may not have as by 1870, he was in Indiana. Five years later, on February 25, 1875, he married Belle Hall in Hannibal, Missouri. A baby daughter joined the family in 1876. Elizabeth was the only child they had.

By late in the year of 1880, the couple had moved to Quincy, Illinois, and Charles (the name he was using at this time of his life) was working as a conductor on the railroad. When new the Burlington Station opened in Quincy, Charles was made the depot master.

Age and chronic asthma were bothering Charles, so he applied for a pension in 1906. On the application, he noted he had lost his right thumb, but he did not tell the Pension department how it had happened. The pension was approved and Carlos, the name he applied for the pension under, received \$12 a month.

Failing health forced Charley, as he was called in Quincy, to give up his position as depot master. It took almost year before he felt well enough to return to work and had been back only a couple months when he felt ill on a Thursday afternoon. It was enough to make him go home from work, but he felt better by Friday. On Saturday afternoon, Charley got up from a chair and was walking from one room to another when he fell with an attack of "apoplexy." He was dead almost before anyone knew he had fallen. It was October 26, 1907.

The lengthy obituary in the Quincy newspaper noted Charley had worked on the railroad for over 35 years, that he was a quiet man, but well versed and well spoken on the topics of the day. It said he was a veteran, had enlisted in a Minnesota unit as a young man, had been in many hot battles with valiant conduct, but "was no man to boast of his soldierly achievements." The obituary also stated that Charley had run trains that fell under attack during his time in the army, but no evidence of this is found in any Battery record.

The funeral was held at the house Charley and Belle lived in at 433 North Sixth Street in Quincy, then the remains were sent to Chicago for cremation. What happened to the ashes is unknown as no cemetery records or mortuary records for him have been found.

Belle applied for a widow's pension and was granted it as they had no real estate and their household goods were valued at \$100. She did note that Charles had a life insurance policy with the Burlington Relief Association in the amount of \$1,200, but she had not received it.

The last known of Belle is that she was living with her daughter, Elizabeth. Elizabeth had married a doctor in 1900, but he died in 1917. Elizabeth and Belle then moved to Oklahoma to live with Belle's aged mother for whom Elizabeth was named. No further information has been found.

Lost Cause Mythology

The Washington Post, May 16, 2019

This article appeared in the *Washington Post* in May of 2019 following a series of stories about the removal of Confederate monuments and names on buildings and the struggles in Charlottesville. It provides a different view of how these monuments are understood today and some background on how or why some feel the way they do. A little food for thought...

Why young Southerners still get indoctrinated in the Lost Cause Statues can be torn down. The lies on which they were built are harder to topple.

By Daniel L. Fountain

(Daniel L. Fountain is a professor of history at Meredith College in Raleigh, N.C.)

At the age of two, four years before I was baptized, I was inducted into the Children of the Confederacy, the children's auxiliary of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. I have always found the order of those events a poignant example of the importance of the Lost Cause. One faith I was required to choose on my own and declare publicly while the other claimed me before I knew my own name.

White Southerners' belief that Confederate monuments accurately reflect and honor the true history of the South is so widespread that it feels almost congenital, the kind of thing a white Southerner is born knowing. But that belief was spread through generations of coordinated educational efforts, political lobbying and strategic monument-building — all efforts carefully orchestrated by Confederate lineage organizations such as the UDC.

The recent Circuit Court ruling preventing the city of Charlottesville from shrouding or removing Confederate statuary from local parks reminds us how deeply and legally, organizations such as the UDC have implanted the Lost Cause's falsified version of history across the landscapes of the South.

It began with its founding in 1894 when the UDC forcefully advocated for a pro-Confederate interpretation of Southern history that it calls "a truthful history of the War Between the States." Drawn from the region's middle and upper classes, the UDC's founders were educated, well-connected and politically active.

Rallying behind powerful women such as Mildred Lewis Rutherford, the UDC relentlessly lobbied legislatures for public school textbooks that presented a pro-Confederate version of regional history and successfully blacklisted those that were "unjust to the institutions of the South." They paired the educational campaign with an aggressive building spree erecting monuments dedicated to the Confederacy throughout the country (even Montana received a UDC monument) ensuring their take on history would be inescapably stamped upon the landscape.

The fact that their formal organization and public campaigns occurred simultaneously with the rise of Jim Crow, disenfranchisement and lynching of African Americans meant that the UDC's strategic rehabilitation of the Confederacy faced little effective opposition and vigorously reinforced the new racial order. UDC's version of Dixie was only filled with bronze facsimiles of Robert E. Lee and Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson endlessly polished by the effusive praise of public speakers and handpicked textbook authors. Black voices and valiant efforts to defend their families were purposefully ignored.

The end product of their efforts was a public narrative that made generations of white Southerners feel good about their ancestors and self-satisfied that regional conditions were an appropriate and natural outgrowth of an honorable, if ill-fated, Old South. This feel-good fiction was shared openly, sanctified by state and local government via school naming or monument erection, and introduced to each new generation at the earliest possible age.

It was incredibly effective. I should know. I spent my childhood learning at the feet of their enthusiastic disciples and was educated in institutions that reflect their success.

I graduated from Robert E. Lee High School in Jacksonville, Fla., the same institution that produced Lynyrd Skynyrd. I attended the University of Mississippi, home of the Ole Miss Rebels, where I studied slavery and race under noted historian Winthrop Jordan. I am one of millions of white Southerners who have spent their lives fascinated by the legends of Generals Lee and Stonewall Jackson as well as the countless battlefields where they and our ancestors fought.

At Children of the Confederacy meetings, we were taught the UDC's approved version of Confederate history, which emphasized states' rights and constitutional disputes over tariff policy as the reasons that Southern states left the Union. We frequently discussed Jefferson Davis as an unfairly maligned Confederate president, while ignoring his home state of Mississippi's secession proclamation,

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which boldly proclaimed “Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery — the greatest material interest of the world.”

Slavery, if discussed at all, was vehemently denied as having played any role in secession. Race was also avoided. Racial epithets were never used to describe African Americans or any nonwhite people; the meetings were rituals of middle-class propriety where children learned to be proper ladies and gentlemen, contrary to caricatures of white Southerners in popular shows such as “The Beverly Hillbillies,” “Dukes of Hazzard,” or “Deliverance.” Love, not hate, made their lessons stick.

I remained an active member of the Children of the Confederacy into high school, when I grew tired of the formal meetings. But something else unsettled me that I couldn’t reconcile. The schools I attended were always integrated, evenly divided between white and black students from largely working-class backgrounds. But Confederacy meetings were the opposite: all white, decidedly middle to upper-middle class, with an emphasis on the Confederacy’s cultural superiority. I was unable to square the history I learned with the real world I inhabited and the diverse relationships I had formed.

So I never challenged the fairness of black students attending a school named after Robert E. Lee. I had been taught he was a man who had no love for slavery, demonstrated genius and bravery and sought an honorable peace in defeat. I couldn’t imagine who would be ashamed or uncomfortable at attending a school honoring such a man.

In college, the trusted church members who had led my Children of the Confederacy chapter and Confederate education since infancy were replaced by professionally trained historians. Their new lessons drew upon scholarly literature and original documents such as Mississippi’s secession statement that I had never seen before. I had professors, some wielding exquisite southern accents, who demonstrated the overwhelming documentary evidence that there was no war without slavery and that its perpetuation was, as Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens proclaimed, “the cornerstone” of the Southern Confederacy.

Such new truths were reinforced by my own undergraduate research, countless conversations with fellow history majors, a roommate from Ohio, fraternity brothers from across the nation and a Chicago-born girl who became the love of my life. At times, the contradictions between what I was taught as a child and what I discovered as a college student left me with intellectual whiplash and feeling saddened or even betrayed. But facing such compelling factual ammunition, the Lost Cause lost its power over me.

Which is why the current debate remains personal and vitriolic. Who do you believe when confronted with conflicting interpretations: the people who tucked you into bed at night and taught you right from wrong or those who tell you in classrooms that such lessons are inaccurate at best and, at worst, deliberate lies concocted to deny African Americans freedom and preserve white supremacy? What does that say about the people you love?

For many, that’s a chasm they cannot cross. It should not be surprising that many flinch or outright resist rejecting lessons learned from loved ones in favor of accepting painful historical truths.

This was the genius behind the UDC’s efforts. By targeting the region’s middle- to upper-class children, they ensured an army of future teachers and leaders would carry forward and defend their message for decades to come. Embedding their version of Confederate history into the sacred spaces of Southern society (the home, cemeteries, churches, city squares, street names, colleges and schools) made erasing it physically difficult and personally painful.

As Charlottesville’s recent history demonstrates, not all defenders of the Confederate commemorative landscape are unaware of the white supremacist intentions of those who erected monuments. Torch-bearing mobs chanting “Jews will not replace us!” are clear about their motives. Others, however, have taken positions in support of Confederate monuments because of honestly believed, long-held views learned at home, church and school. As a result, the long overdue conversation we must have will force people to reassess core aspects of their identity.

While I do not believe society ought to continue to celebrate a false understanding of history, I do understand some people’s persistence in clinging to the Lost Cause. For many, it came as mother’s milk.

Editor’s note:

It is the intent of your editor to provide this viewpoint for discussion or individual thought, not to take a stand, nor cause arguments or conflicts. It simply stuck me as having some background many people do not know about the Lost Cause Mythology and how it might have an impact on the thoughts or actions of people today on both sides of the Mason-Dixon.

Recap

July 20-21 Olmstead County Living History Fair & Reenactment, Rochester, MN



This event had it all—blistering heat with a feels like index of 106 for setting up on Friday, followed by waves of severe thunderstorms and pounding rain on Saturday. Everything after morning formation was canceled. Sunday started off cool, but the sky was blue and we packed in as much as we could of both days' events.

The battlefield looked great with breastworks and defensive lines. We put both our 10 lb Parrott and the Howtizer on the field both on the Union side for the fight. Miss Becky and her helpers ran the Delphic Oracle while Mrs. Wendel and



her helpers staffed the 1860s cabin on the grounds. Saturday lunchtime—in the O tent as it was the only place dry enough—we presented Miss Laura with a “ladies quilt” in honor of her 21st birthday. On Sunday, we were also graced with the presence of a dignitary, “Senator Sheldon” of Red Wing (aka Ken C.) Despite the best efforts of Mother Nature,



we still had a great time and this well run event!

July 27 Prospect House Museum, Battle Lake, MN.

As if to make up for the bad treatment the prior weekend, Mother Nature gave us an almost perfect day for this event! Beautiful blue skies, a slight breeze and temps in the “normal” range for a change! It may have helped bring out visitors as some 220 people were counted as attending throughout the day. Visitors tended to stay to talk and ask questions more than we have experienced before at this site. It was a good day of sharing history! We set up three learning stations—John with his flags and artifacts, Mandy with her Apothecary, and Vickie with the



role of quilts in the war—in addition to the gun. Firing was strictly controlled and timed. For each of the three firings, a volunteer from the site ran out to stop traffic on the road below. We had a good crew and a great day!



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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