



## 2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

# “ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 273

December 2019

### **On This Date-156 Years Ago**

From the History.Com

#### **Lincoln Pardons his Sister-in-Law**

In December of 1863, President Abraham Lincoln announced a grant of amnesty for Emilie Todd Helm, his wife Mary Lincoln's half sister and the widow of a Confederate general. The pardon was one of the first under Lincoln's Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction, which he had announced less than a week before. The plan was the President's blueprint for the reintegration of the South into the Union. Part of the plan allowed for former Confederates to be granted amnesty if they took an oath to the United States. The option was open to all but the highest officials of the Confederacy.

Emilie Todd Helm was the wife of Benjamin Helm, who, like the Lincolns, was a Kentucky native. The President was said to be an admirer of Helm, a West Point and Harvard graduate. Lincoln had offered Helm a position in the U.S. Army, but Helm opted to join the Confederates instead. Helm led a group of Kentuckians known as the Orphan Brigade, since they could not return to their Union-held native state during the war. Helm was killed at the Battle of Chickamauga in September 1863.

After her husband's death, Helm made her way through Union lines to Washington, D.C. She stayed in the White House and the Lincolns tried to keep her visit a secret.

General Daniel Sickles, who had been wounded at the Battle of Getysburg, Pennsylvania, five months prior, told Lincoln that he should not have a Rebel in his house.

Lincoln replied, "General Sickles, my wife and I are in the habit of choosing our own guests. We do not need from our friends either advice or assistance in the matter."

After Lincoln granted her pardon, Emilie Helm returned to Kentucky.

### **Upcoming Events**

There aren't any! It's December and our reenacting season is over for 2019.

That means it's time to start planning for 2020!! Please be on the look out for events that might be considered for our 2020 season. Anything can be considered at this point, so bring everything you know of so we can add them to the "possibilities list."



#### **News on the Perryville Marker**

At the last meeting, John Cain read a letter from Bryan Bush, the new site manager for the Perryville Battlefield. He has all the information regarding our request to place a marker to the 2nd Minnesota Battery at our proposed site. He suggested a formal dedication could take place on either Memorial Day 2020 or during the annual Perryville reenactment on October 3-4, 2020. John will be requesting a formal approval letter from the Perryville Battlefield and upon receipt, a purchase order for the monument will be sent with an "as negotiated" check for 50% of the purchase price.

More information will be coming about the possibility of a dedication, so keep it in mind as you begin making your plans for 2020.

#### **Next Meeting**

**January 25, 2020 11:00am**

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



# **Christmas in the Confederate White House, 1864**

Varina Davis, wife of Confederate President Jefferson Davis, wrote this article describing how the Davis family spent the Christmas of 1864 in the Confederate White House. It was published in *The New York World*, December 13, 1896.

...Rice, flour, molasses and tiny pieces of meat, most of them sent to the President's wife anonymously to be distributed to the poor, had all be weighed and issued, and the playtime of the family began, but like a clap of thunder out of a clear sky came the information that the orphans at the Episcopalian home had been promised a Christmas tree and the toys, candy and cakes must be provided, as well as one pretty prize for the most orderly girl among the orphans. The kind-hearted confectioner was interviewed by our committee of managers, and he promised a certain amount of his simpler kinds of candy, which he sold easily a dollar and a half a pound, but he drew the line at cornucopias to hold it, or sugared fruits to hang on the tree, and all the other vestiges of Christmas creations which had lain on his hands for years. The ladies dispersed in anxious squads of toy-hunters, and each one turned over the store of her children's treasures for a contribution to the orphans' tree, my little ones rushed over the great house looking up their treasure: eyeless dolls, three-legged horses, tops with the upper peg broken off, rubber tops, monkeys with all the squeak gone silent and all the ruck of children's toys that gather in a nursery closet.

## **Makeshift Toys for the Orphans**

Some small feathered chickens and parrots which nodded their heads in obedience to a weight beneath them were furnished with new tail feathers, lambs minus much of their wool were supplied with a cotton wool substitute, rag dolls were plumped out and recovered with clean cloth, and the young ladies painted their fat faces in bright colors and furnished them with beads for eyes.

But the tug of war was how to get something with which to decorate the orphans' tree. Our man servant, Robert Brown, was much interested and offered to make the prize toy. He contemplated a "sure enough house, with four rooms." His part in the domestic service was delegated to another and he gave himself over in silence and solitude to the labors of the architect.

My sister painted mantel shelves, door panels, pictures and frames for the walls, and finished with black grates in which there blazed a roaring fire, which was pronounced marvelously realistic. We all made furniture of twigs and pasteboard, and my mother made pillows, mattresses, sheets and pillow cases for the two little bedrooms.

Christmas Eve a number of young people were invited to come and string apples and popcorn for the trees; a neighbor very deft in domestic arts had tiny candle moulds made and furnished all the candles for the tree. However the puzzle and triumph of all was the construction of a large number of cornucopias. At last someone suggested a conical block of wood, about which the drawing paper could be wound and pasted. In a little book shop a number of small, highly colored pictures cut out and ready to apply were unearthed, and our old confectioner friend, Mr. Piazza, consented, with a broad smile, to give "all the love verses the young people wanted to roll with the candy."

## **A Christmas Eve Party**

About twenty young men and girls gathered around small tables in one of the drawing rooms of the mansion and the cornucopias were begun. The men wrapped the squares of candy, first reading the "sentiments" printed upon them, such as "Roses are red, violets blue, sugar's sweet and so are you," "If you love me as I love you no knife can cut our love in two." The fresh young faces, wreathed in smiles, nodded attention to the reading, while with their small deft hands they gined [?] the cornucopias and pasted on the pictures. Where were the silk tops to come from? Trunks of old things were turned out and snippings of silk and even woolen of bright colors were found to close the tops, and some of the young people twisted sewing silk into cords with which to draw the bags up. The beauty of those home-made things astonished us all, for they looked quite "custom-made," but when the "sure enough house" was revealed to our longing gaze the young people clapped their approbation, while Robert, whose sense of dignity did not permit him to smile, stood the impersonation of successful artist and bowed his thanks for our approval. Then the coveted eggnog was passed around in tiny glass cups and pronounced good. Crisp home-made ginger snaps and snowy lady cake completed the refreshments of Christmas Eve. The children allowed to sit up and be noisy in their way as an indulgence took a sip of eggnog out of my cup, and the eldest boy confided to his father: "Now I just know this is Christmas." In most of the houses in Richmond these same scenes were enacted, certainly in every one of the homes of the managers of the Episcopalian Orphanage. A bowl of eggnog was sent to the servants, and a part of everything they coveted of the dainties.

At last quiet settled on the household and the older members of the family began to stuff stockings with molasses candy, red apples, an orange, small whips plaited by the family with high-colored crackers, worsted reins knitted at home, paper dolls, teetotums made of large horn bottoms and a match which could spin indefinitely, balls of worsted rags wound hard and covered with old kid gloves, a pair of pretty woolen gloves for each, either cut of cloth and embroidered on the back or knitted by some deft hand out of home-spun wool. For the President there were a pair of chamois-skin riding gauntlets exquisitely embroidered on the back with his monogram in red and white silk, made, as the giver wrote, under the guns of Fortress Monroe late at night for fear of discovery. There was a hemstitched linen handkerchief, with a little sketch in indelible ink in one corner; the children had written him little letters, their grandmother having held their hands, the burthen of which compositions was how they loved their dear father. For one of the inmates of the home, who was greatly loved but whose irritable temper was his prominent failing, there was a pretty cravat, the ends of which were embroidered, as was the fashion of the day. The pattern chosen was simple and on it was pinned a card with the word "amiable" to complete the sentence. One of the [missing] received a present of an illuminated copy of Solomon's proverbs found in the same old store from which the pictures came. He studied it for some time and announced: "I have changed my opinion of Solomon, he uttered such unnecessary platitudes -- now why should he have said 'The foolishness of a fool is his folly'?"

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On Christmas morning the children awoke early and came in to see their toys. They were followed by the negro women, who one after another "caught" us by wishing us a merry Christmas before we could say it to them, which gave them a right to a gift. Of course, there was a present for every one, small though it might be, and one who had been born and brought up at our plantation was vocal in her admiration of a gay handkerchief. As she left the room she ejaculated: "Lord knows mistress knows our insides; she jest got the very thing I wanted."

### **Mrs. Davis's Strange Presents**

For me there were six cakes of delicious soap, made from the grease of ham boiled for a family at Farmville, a skein of exquisitely fine gray linen thread spun at home, a pincushion of some plain brown cotton material made by some poor woman and stuffed with wool from her pet sheep, and a little baby hat plaited by the orphans and presented by the industrious little pair who sewed the straw together. They pushed each other silently to speak, and at last mutely offered the hat, and considered the kiss they gave the sleeping little one ample reward for the industry and far above the fruit with which they were laden. Another present was a fine, delicate little baby frock without an inch of lace or embroidery upon it, but the delicate fabric was set with fairy stitches by the dear invalid neighbor who made it, and it was very precious in my eyes. There were also a few of Swinburne's best songs bound in wall-paper and a chamois needlebook left for me by young Mr. P., now succeeded to his title in England. In it was a Brobdingnagian thimble "for my own finger, you know," said the handsome, cheerful young fellow. After breakfast, at which all the family, great and small, were present, came the walk to St. Paul's Church. We did not use our carriage on Christmas or, if possible to avoid it, on Sunday. The saintly Dr. Minnegerode preached a sermon on Christian love, the introit was sung by a beautiful young society woman and the angels might have joyfully listened. Our chef did wonders with the turkey and roast beef, and drove the children quite out of their propriety by a spun sugar hen, life-size, on a nest full of blanc mange eggs. The mince pie and plum pudding made them feel, as one of the gentlemen laughingly remarked, "like their jackets were buttoned," a strong description of repletion which I have never forgotten. They waited with great impatience and evident dyspeptic symptoms for the crowning amusement of the day, "the children's tree." My eldest boy, a chubby little fellow of seven, came to me several times to whisper: "Do you think I ought to give the orphans my I.D. studs?" When told no, he beamed with the delight of an approving conscience. All throughout the afternoon first one little head and then another popped in at the door to ask: "Isn't it 8 o'clock yet?," burning with impatience to see the "children's tree."

### **Davis Helped Santa Claus**

When at last we reached the basement of St. Paul's Church the tree burst upon their view like the realization of Aladdin's subterranean orchard, and they were awed by its grandeur.

The orphans sat mute with astonishment until the opening hymn and prayer and the last amen had been said, and then they at a signal warily and slowly gathered around the tree to receive from a lovely young girl their allotted present. The different gradations from joy to ecstasy which illuminated their faces was "worth two years of peaceful life" to see. The President became so enthusiastic that he undertook to help in the distribution, but worked such wild confusion giving everything asked for into their outstretched hands, that we called a halt, so he contented himself with unwinding one or two tots from a network of strung popcorn in which they had become entangled and taking off all apples he could when unobserved, and presenting them to the smaller children. When at last the house was given to the "honor girl" she moved her lips without emitting a sound, but held it close to her breast and went off in a corner to look and be glad without witnesses.

"When the lights were fled, the garlands dead, and all but we departed" we also went home to find that Gen. Lee had called in our absence, and many other people. Gen. Lee had left word that he had received a barrel of sweet potatoes for us, which had been sent to him by mistake. He did not discover the mistake until he had taken his share (a dishful) and given the rest to the soldiers! We wished it had been much more for them and him.

### **Officers in a Starvation Dance**

The night closed with a "starvation" party, where there were no refreshments, at a neighboring house. The rooms lighted as well as practicable, some one willing to play dance music on the piano and plenty of young men and girls comprised the entertainment. Sam Weller's soiry [sic, soiree refers to a party or reception held in the evening], consisting of boiled mutton and capers, would have been a royal feast in the Confederacy. The officers, who rode into town with their long cavalry boots pulled well up over their knees, but splashed up their waists, put up their horses and rushed to the places where their dress uniform suits had been left for safekeeping. They very soon emerged, however, in full toggery and entered into the pleasures of their dance with the bright-eyed girls, who many of them were fragile as fairies, but worked like peasants for their home and country. These young people are gray-haired now, but the lessons of self-denial, industry and frugality in which they became past mistresses then, have made of them the most dignified, self-reliant and tender women I have ever known -- all honor to them.

So, in the interchange of the courtesies and charities of life, to which we could not add its comforts and pleasures, passed the last Christmas in the Confederate mansion.



Varina Davis, ca. 1864

# NORTHERN IOWA SANITARY FAIR

From the *Encyclopedia Dubuque*, [www.encyclopediadubuque.org](http://www.encyclopediadubuque.org)

Twice as many men died of disease than of gunshot wounds in the CIVIL WAR. The overall poor hygiene made the typical camp a breeding ground for disease. Surgeons, along with their assistants, worked round the clock, ending up with stacks of amputated limbs up to five feet high. The number of wounded needing attention and the relative lack of water meant that there was no attempt to wash hands or instruments between procedures.

In order to try to end these conditions, the Sanitary Commission tried to educate the army on proper sanitation techniques. The Sanitary Commission's report issued in 1861 was widely distributed and included many guidelines to improve sanitation and reduce disease.

Sanitary fairs were civilian-organized bazaars and expositions dedicated to raising funds for the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC) and other charitable relief organizations. Over the course of the Civil War, they became one of the most popular means of fundraising for the Union cause.

Sanitary affairs in Iowa during the Civil War were united under a single head which provided an efficient working system. A letter to the *Muscatine Journal*, however, indicates that there were still some people in the State who were not in sympathy with the arrangement. This letter referred to the Iowa Sanitary Commission as "conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity" and declared that the Commission was "begging" the legislature for \$80,000, of which \$13,000 was to pay the salaries of its agents and officers. The organization of the Fair held on June 21-29, 1864, began in January. Clara Aldrich Cooley, a member of the Dubuque County Committee, asked Iowans to help establish an Iowa Cabinet of Minerals. A similar collection of minerals from Wisconsin had recently sold at the Sanitary Fair in Chicago for \$1,000. A representative from each of the cooperating counties was made a vice-president. The idea of the Fair had not met with universal local approval. On January 17, 1864 the *Dubuque Democratic Herald* had an editorial suggesting that if the women of Dubuque wanted to do something to lessen suffering they could form clubs and visit areas of the city in need. The newspaper also suggested that a Fair held in a city the size of Dubuque had little chance of making much of a difference. The paper even congratulated the women for apparently rejecting the idea. By April 27, 1864, however, the Committee of Catholic Ladies on Fancy Articles were planning a meeting on how they could contribute.

The second annual meeting of the Iowa Sanitary Commission was held at Des Moines on June 1, 1864. Mr. Frederick Ezekiel Bissell became president; Mrs. James Baker of Davenport, recording secretary; Ezekiel Clark of Iowa City was reelected treasurer; and Rev. E. S. Norris of Dubuque was made corresponding secretary and general agent. The first meeting of the board of control of the Commission for 1864 was held at Dubuque on June 22-24, during the Northern Iowa Sanitary Fair. The officers of the local aid societies who were at the Fair attended the meeting of the board in large numbers. Mrs. D. P. Livermore of Chicago, representing the United States Sanitary

Commission was present and told of the condition and sufferings of the Iowa troops, and explained the working of the Commission which she represented. The chief object of the meeting was to arouse an interest among the visitors at the Fair; and according to the report "all present were inspired with renewed determination to work with increased zeal".

Perhaps taking an idea from the previously mentioned editorial, thirty-two counties participated in the Northern Iowa Sanitary Fair. The event was held in the Dubuque City Hall. The first floor offered a series of booths along both sides of the undivided room. Library and floral departments were found on the second floor. The Children's Amusement Department, located on the third floor, was used for the display of battle relics and curiosities.

Refreshments were offered on the first two floors of Turner Hall located nearby. Hardware, agricultural and household implements, and machinery were displayed in an adjoining building erected for the Fair.

The opening of the Fair featured no parades. The Germania Band performed "Hail Columbia," a prayer was offered; and H. A. Wiltse, president of the Fair, made a brief speech in which the donations were formally turned over to the committees. City of Dubuque donations were received from many associations including the Congregational Society, Universalist Society, Young Ladies' Aid Society, Second Presbyterian Society, Methodist Episcopal Society, and the Catholic Society. Mrs. O. P. Shiras donated a garden vase that brought forty dollars. Julius K. Graves donated the gas used for lighting the buildings. Four handmade handkerchiefs, donated by Mrs. John T. Hancock and Mrs. G. B. Grosvenor, brought forty-two dollars.

The Dubuque Fair was a great success.

**GREAT WESTERN  
SANITARY FAIR**  
IN AID OF THE  
CINCINNATI BRANCH, U. S. SANITARY COMMISSION!  
FOR THE BENEFIT OF  
**SICK AND WOUNDED SOLDIERS!**  
OPEN FOR THE RECEPTION OF VISITORS AND SALE OF GOODS,  
Cincinnati, Dec'r 21, 1863,  
AND WILL CLOSE WITH A  
GRAND SOIREE & PROMENADE!  
IN THE  
**LADIES' BAZAAR!**  
JANUARY 4, 1864.  
TICKETS will be sold by all the Railroad and Steamboat Companies at  
**HALF FARE!**  
ONE DAY IN COMPANY WITH ORIGINAL SOCIETY

# Battery Profile

## Lamont Bartholomew

Lamont was the father half of the only father-son pair to serve in the Second Minnesota Battery.

Lamont decided to enlist in the Second Minnesota Battery only a couple weeks after his son, George, enlisted. The army life did not last long for Lamont. He was mustered in on February 20, 1862. He said on his enlistment papers that he was 45 years old, but the 1860 census had his age at 50 years. Perhaps Lamont “fudged” his age a little as he enlisted, however, that would catch up to him.

He was born in Ashtabula, Ohio, but his own stories make it hard to know just when. He brought his family to Minnesota prior to the Civil War and settled in the southeastern part of the state. Lamont stood 5' 10 3/4" tall, had hazel eyes, light hair and a light complexion. He was married and had eight—mostly grown--children when he enlisted.

Lamont's age probably didn't help his career in the army as he was discharged for disability after serving just ten months. Two dates are given on his discharge papers--December 25, 1862, and July 14, 1863. Most information indicates the December date is the correct one. His discharge papers stated that there was “no hope of any improvement in his physical ability while in the service, his disability is supposed to have been induced by necessary exposure while on duty. He has always been a good soldier.”

While Captain Hotchkiss said Lamont was always a good soldier, Hotchkiss made a special note on the discharge papers stating, “I believe him to be much older than above represented”. A more detailed description of Lamont's disability said that he was suffering with pneumonia and diarrhea during the previous two months. Lamont returned to Minnesota, his farm and his family.

Lamont and Betsey Leonard had been married in Ohio on December 11, 1834. As best is known, they had eight children. Those four youngest moved to Minnesota with them, though three other adult children already lived near where Lamont and Betsey moved to Blue Earth City, Faribault County, in 1863. Son George and his family also lived nearby for a time.

On December 26, 1865, an article appeared in the Blue Earth City newspaper, *The Advocate*.

*A man named Bartholomew, who resides near the city, about 60 years of age, met with an awful death one day last week. In moving a small frame building he fell before it and was crushed.*

The full story was told in the pension claim filed by Betsey. Lamont was helping to move a frame building that had been used as a barn from southeast of town into the city. The building had been moved about six rods from the original foundation and then stopped. There were two teams of two horses pulling the building, Lamont managing one team. The building started forward again and went only about another rod when shouts rose to stop. The ground over which the building was being moved had been plowed and was very rough, frozen, and covered with snow. Lamont slipped and the moving building crushed him. He was killed instantly.

Lamont's records indicated he died December 20, 1865. He is buried with a military marker in Riverside Cemetery, lot 23, East Grove #2, Blue Earth City, Faribault County, Minnesota. Betsey is buried beside him.



# Recap

## **November 11, Winona, MN Veterans Day**

It was a cold morning in Winona on Veterans Day, with a brisk wind blowing off the lake. The temperature was 14 degrees at 11:00 but it felt much colder. Members of the 2nd Minnesota Battery fell in on their 10 Pdr. Parrott rifle to provide a three round salute to all veterans as part of the ceremony. Although the weather was unseasonable, a large crowd including a bus load of 12th grade students from Winona High School gathered in the parking lot of Veterans Park. After the flag raising ceremony, prayers and a Main Address featuring the story of a WWII paratrooper on D-Day, the Battery fired its three round salute. The thin sheet of ice forming in the sponge bucket did not hamper their execution and the sound of the cannon firing in the crisp morning air was outstanding. Before the ceremony concluded, the audience was introduced to nine members of the Winona High School senior class who plan to enlist in the military. Immediately following the ceremony, members loaded the gun and limber back on the gun trailer for its trip back to Red Wing. Battery members who participated on the gun crew were John Cain, Daryl Duden, Cameron Larson, Ben Norman, Michael Ritchie and Brian Tomashek.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sgt. Duden

## **November 16, Goodhue Gala**



Some of our members were invited to provide living history at the major funding raising event for the Goodhue County Historical Society. The event was very upscale and well done all around with many people circulating around to visit parts of the museum. The goodies provided were very elegant and Battery members were not shy about partaking! The fundraiser was one of the best in the Museum's history and a nice evening for Battery members to share some history.

Daryl with a photo of his father on the Red Wing Police Force.



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

Mr. Cunningham!!!!

**Your Country Needs You!**  
**And so does the Battery!**

**2020 dues are DUE!!** To remain on the active member list, your dues are:

Civilian Member	\$12.00
Military Member	\$12.00
Associate Member	\$ 6.00
Junior Member (14-17)	\$ 6.00
Junior Member (under 14)	Free

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State and Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form and your check to:

Daryl Duden  
1210 West 4th Street  
Red Wing, MN 55066

**UPDATE YOUR MEMBERSHIP RECORDS!**

Cell phone numbers and email address change, so be sure we have your correct information to be included in all the vital communication (especially emergency situations).

Thank you!