



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 285

February 2021

On This Date-160 Years Ago

February was a busy month in the seceded states. Enough states had broken away that it was time for them to organize and form their own government. In Montgomery, Alabama, delegates from each of the seceded states wrote a constitution. It was very similar to the U.S. Constitution, but the federal government of the South was prohibited from enforcing any protective tariffs and it could not subsidize a favored business. Individual state sovereignty was paramount and the right to own slaves was protected.

The Southern Constitution was passed unanimously. A former U.S. senator from Mississippi was tapped to become the president of the new Southern Confederacy. It was a provisional presidency—they planned to have elections to make it official.

Texas seceded in February of 1861, bringing the total of seceded states to seven.

The big argument of the day, both North and South, was the legality of secession. People on both sides of the Mason Dixon were discussing the Constitution, trying to decide if that founding document allowed secession at all. Some insisted it did. They pointed to the Declaration of Independence and the language that said when a government no longer represented the people it governed, those people were obligated to throw it off and serve it no longer.

Others insisted secession was not allowed by the Constitution and the action was illegal, but not worth going to war over. Most people didn't believe the secession issue would really lead to a war. Delegates on both sides were continuing to work for a peaceful solution to the conflict that was brewing between North and South.

Upcoming Events

We don't have many upcoming events for sure, but we can all be on the lookout to see what might be planned for 2021. The virus situation continues to change and there is no way to know what the future holds for events. Bring any information you find to a meeting or forward it to one of the Battery officers.

May 2, 2021 Rochester, MN

One possible event is the Gamehaven Scout Camp on May 2nd, 2021. This event will be held at out the Gamehaven Scout Reservation located on 5015 Simpson Rd. SE, Rochester, MN.

Depending upon what state Covid regulations are at the time, the entirety of the re-enactment program may have to be outside. Their plan for this camporee would be similar to what we did last time: The program would be all day Saturday. The 2nd MN Battery would present 6 stations dealing with various aspects of Civil War life where groups of scouts cycle through every 30 minutes in the morning and afternoon. The Gamehaven Camping Committee would staff an additional 4 stations to covers requirements in the American Heritage merit badge. Each station would be presented 10 times, which would keep group size as small as possible.

Members should have received an email about this event in the past week. Please respond to Daryl Duden with your thoughts on this event.

Next Meeting

February 27, 2021 11:00am

The meeting will be held at Red Wing Area Seniors facility located at 240 Harrison Street, STE 2, in Red Wing and will follow CDC guidance for masks and social distancing. Contact Ken Cunningham with questions or agenda items.



Battery Profile

Halvor Evenson

Halvor was a part of the wave of immigrants who came to America in the mid 1800s looking for a better life and opportunity. He and his wife, Johanna, had been married in Norway in 1860 and came first to Wisconsin, then to Minnesota, where they settled in Fillmore County. Their first child, Olav, was born in January of 1861. By the time Aasne was born in October of 1862, the family had moved to Eureka Township in Dakota County. Their third child, Eivind, was born in August of 1864, just a month before Halvor decided to enlist in the Second Minnesota Battery.

The draft rendezvous was going on in Minnesota that late summer and the bounties promised could be very enticing to a man with little means. Halvor signed the enlistment papers on August 26, 1864, and was mustered in at Fort Snelling on September 10th. The muster sheet said he was 5' 7-1/2" tall, had blue eyes, light hair and a fair complexion. He was a farmer, was 34 years old, and made his mark on the papers rather than signing his name. Whether he really could not write or just could not write in English is unknown.

Halvor's time with the Second Battery was uneventful. He arrived at the camp outside Chattanooga, Tennessee, where the Battery was doing garrison duty. He saw no hard fighting and few long marches. Halvor was discharged at the end of the war with the rest of the men in the Battery on August 16, 1865.

Going home may not have been easy for Halvor. Even though he was only gone one year, his wife and baby Eivind had both died. Halvor took charge of his two remaining children and it is believed he went back to farming. The following spring, Halvor married Gunlaug Pederson. She was another of the immigrants that had all come together from Norway when Halvor came. Her husband had died and left her with their two children. Since Halvor and Gunlaug had known each other in Norway, it was not unreasonable for them to marry.

The couple remained in the Eureka Township area and added another three children to the family. Counting Halvor's children, Gunlaug's children, and the three they had together, there were eight.

Halvor's health may not have been good as he mentioned to others that he should apply for a pension from the "liver disease" he contracted while serving in the Union Army. Halvor never got around to applying. He died on November 3, 1870, and was laid to rest in the East Christiana Norwegian Lutheran Church Cemetery in Eureka Township.

The pension application Halvor never filed for was filed for Gunlaug. She was desperately poor and had to depend on the help of neighbors for them to get by. The County Poor Fund also stepped in for a time to help the family. It is no small wonder that Halvor's grave was not marked with a stone as Gunlaug already had her hands more than full. One more child died in 1873 and was buried near Halvor. Gunlaug took the remaining children and moved to North Dakota where she lived out the rest of her life. For a time, it was said she had a "French lover" with whom she lived and had a child with, but never married. She may well have been desperate for help raising her family.

Even though she moved to North Dakota, Gunlaug was not alone. There were a good many Norwegians who were living there, many from Minnesota and the communities Gunlaug had lived in before moving. There were also several men who had served in the Second Battery with Halvor living near her new home and it was one of these men, Kittel Torgerson, who signed the pension papers for Gunlaug to continue getting her widow's pension. What eventually happened to her is unknown.

In 2006, members of the Second Minnesota Battery of Reenactors placed and dedicated a veterans marker for Halvor.

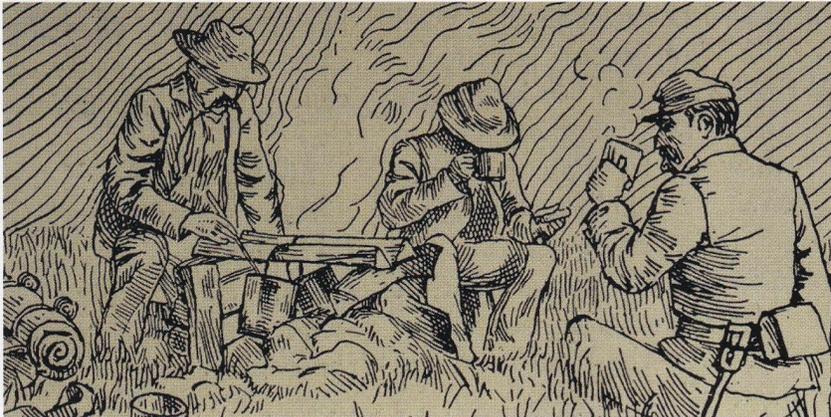


Coffee



“[C]offee accomplished more toward suppressing the rebellion than any other one article, unless it be gunpowder itself.... [I]t gave strength to the weary and heavy laden, and courage to the despondent and sick at heart.”

—FENWICK HEDLEY, 32ND ILLINOIS INFANTRY, IN HIS MEMOIRS



“Our coffee has arrived. We have eaten nothing since yesterday, are streaming with perspiration, and the coffee is very hot; yet how delicious, how delightful it is to taste it. Within a fort of dead men, and sitting over human blood and brains, yet all calmly sip their coffee.”

—JAMES H. CLARK, 115TH NEW YORK INFANTRY, ON A PAUSE DURING FIGHTING AT PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA, IN HIS DIARY, JULY 30, 1864

“It was coffee at meals and between meals; and men going on guard or coming off guard drank it at all hours of the night, and to-day the old soldiers who can stand it are the hardest coffee-drinkers in the community, through the schooling which they received in the service.”

—MASSACHUSETTS ARTILLERIST JOHN D. BILLINGS, IN HIS MEMOIRS

SOURCES: MARCHING THROUGH GEORGIA (1884); HARDTACK AND COFFEE (1888); A TEXAN IN SEARCH OF A FIGHT (1901); THE IRON HEARTED REGIMENT (1865); OBSERVATIONS OF AN ILLINOIS BOY IN BATTLE, CAMP AND PRISONS (1910).

“I found a considerable quantity of coffee thrown out on the ground, and have picked up enough to last me some days. I drank a pint this morning, and wished you were here to share it with me. It excites me almost as much as whiskey.”

—JOHN C. WEST, 4TH TEXAS INFANTRY, ON WHAT HE AND HIS COMRADES FOUND IN AN ABANDONED UNION ARMY CAMP IN LENOIR STATION, TENNESSEE, IN A LETTER TO HIS WIFE, NOVEMBER 21, 1863

“They and their ‘women folks’ seemed half crazy for ‘Yankee coffee.’ They would swap anything except their muskets for it. A pound of Yankee coffee was the most acceptable present one of them could send back home to his mother or sweetheart. It was not often that one of them had the self-denial to do this. He wanted it too badly himself.”

—HENRY HARRISON EBY, 7TH ILLINOIS CAVALRY, ON THE INTEREST CONFEDERATE PICKETS HAD IN OBTAINING COFFEE FROM EBY’S COMRADES, IN HIS MEMOIRS



The Tombstone House in Petersburg

From: The Tombstone House – Petersburg, Virginia - Atlas Obscura

This house in Virginia is a wonderful example of waste not, want not. Or is it waste not, haunt-not? Only the owners would know.

Though it may look like a typical stone house, its foundation has macabre origins. The building was constructed in 1934 from the bottom half of government-issued marble tombstones that previously topped the graves of Union soldiers in Poplar Lawn Cemetery.

The soldiers all died in the siege of Petersburg, which lasted for nine months at the end of the Civil War. They were eventually buried at Poplar Lawn Cemetery. After their original wooden grave markers rotted away, the government installed

upright marble headstones to take their place.

However, during the Great Depression, maintaining the cemetery and the headstones suffered because of scant funding. The city decided to cut the tombstones in half and lay the top halves, which were engraved with the soldiers' details, on the ground so they no longer stood erect. These makeshift flat graves saved money on mowing and maintenance costs.

The bottom halves of 2,200 slain tombstones were then sold for the princely sum of \$45. Their new owner, Oswald Young, used them to build his house, chimney, and walkway. Must be nice and cool (ghoul?) in the summer, but it may not be the most inviting door to knock on during Halloween.



Philadelphia's Great Central Fair



The Great Central Fair ran from June 7 to June 28, 1864, in Logan Circle Park in Philadelphia. It was inspired by past sanitary fairs that happened throughout the United States to raise funds for the United States Sanitary Commission,

The main exhibit building was 200,000 square feet in size. It was designed by Samuel Honeyman Kneass and William Stickland. There was Union Street, which was 540 feet long and ran down the middle of the fair. Inside the main building were "departments" with different themes. Themes included the neighboring states of New

Jersey and Delaware, themes about corn and sewing, a restaurant and parlor, as well as weaponry, fine art, curiosities, transportation and children's subjects.

On June 16, Abraham Lincoln and his family visited the fair. He donated 48 copies of the Emancipation Proclamation at \$10 a book. They were all autographed by Lincoln. The festival raised over \$1 million.

Henrig Duellman

Ancestor of our own Brian Tomashek

Henrig Duellman was born in Prussia on June 24, 1836. He immigrated to the United States in July of 1856 arriving in New York. He moved to Bellvue, Iowa where in October of 1859 he applied for citizenship. He married Wilhelmina Bodeker on September 3, 1862. She was born April 4, 1838 in Ottenhausen by Steinheim, Westfalen, Germany.

In 1864 Henrig enlisted in Company A of the 2nd Iowa Infantry. During his service, according to stories he later related to his grandchildren, his company removed their clothing, placed them atop their bayonets (to keep them dry) and proceeded to cross a river. Upon reaching the other side they encountered the enemy and were thus forced to fight in the nude.



Henrig was injured in combat, the injury to his left ankle, which caused him to walk with a slight limp for the rest of his life. Henrig's unit was a part of General Sherman's campaign through Georgia and as the story goes, because of Henrig's injury, he was assigned by General Sherman to be his cook. Henrig held this position for the rest of the war.

Henrig and Wilhelmina would eventually end up in Buffalo County, Wisconsin farming in Eagle Valley and eventually retiring to Fountain City. They celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on September 3, 1912.

On April 1, 1913 Wilhelmina entered Eternal Rest after succumbing to burns she received when her skirts caught fire while she was burning grass in the yard. Henrig entered Eternal Rest on February 26, 1914. They had 11 children, the youngest being Adolph Henry who was born June 14, 1883. He would marry Anna Frie. They

would have 11 children. The sixth child born was Elisabeth Mary. She married James Tomashek. They would have 4 children, the first born was Joseph. He would marry Dorothy Laska and they would have 2 children. The first born was Brian. THATS ME!

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>

Highlight Your Ancestors!

Here is another submissions! There is room for YOUR ancestor in the next newsletter!

Many of us have ancestors who served in the Civil War and it has been suggested that it might be fun to include stories and photos of those ancestors. If you would like to share your Civil War ancestor's story, we will start a column in this newsletter.

Send your story and any photos you might have to Vickie and she will add them to the newsletter in the order received. That is, hoping everyone will participate in this plan!

Your Country Needs You!
And so does the Battery!

2021 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 vital communications
(especially emergency situations).

Thank you!