

2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 296

March 2022

On This Date-160 Years Ago

March, 1862

Recruiting continued in the Battery in March of 1862, replacing a couple of men who transferred out to other units and continuing to fill crews for the guns. Lieutenants Dawley and Woodbury were recruiting in their home counties despite Hotchkiss' declaration of being at full strength at the end of February.

That might have been a bit of a stretch on the Captain's part as the morning reports show 23 more men were mustered in before the Battery was formally accepted in the service of the United States on March 21st.

One of the men who was mustered into the Battery on the same day it was accepted was Alfred Townsend. Alfred had not come to Fort Snelling alone, his wife, Sylvia, had accompanied him. She didn't want to wait on the farm where they were living in Rice County, so she went to Captain Hotchkiss and asked to be accepted as a laundress for the Battery. We don't know what that all involved for her, but she was accepted as the laundress on March 22, 1862. She stayed with Alfred at the fort, perhaps taking in washing from the men even before they left for the South.

The men were drilling daily, using guns that were at the fort, and according to reports, they were becoming "proficient" with them.

Upcoming Events

Discussion at the February meeting went over the suggested list of events members had heard about or that we typically attend. A list of events discussed was included in the minutes (sent to all members).

We have compiled a tentative calendar that will be voted on at the March annual meeting.

Also on this agenda will be the election of military officers. Please plan to attend!

Fort Snelling, 1863



This view is the inside of Fort Snelling a year after our Battery boys had gone South, not likely to have changed much since they were there. The photo is from a page on the MPR website, but they did not credit where they got it from, perhaps the Minnesota Historical Society.

Next Meeting

March 26, 2022 11:00am

Red Wing Elks Club, 306 W 4th Street, Red Wing

Contact Ken Cunningham with questions or agenda items. 651-388-2945.



Battery Profile

James P. Jackson

James was a 25 year old machinist living in Ashford, Connecticut, when he married Anna E. Gates on July 9, 1851. He had been born in Hopkinton, Massachusetts, but by 1860, he, Anna, and their two children were living in Minnesota where James was farming.

When the draft rendezvous was held late in the summer of 1864, James decided to enlist. He joined the Second Battery on September 2, and was given one third of his promised \$100 bounty for his agreement to serve one year. His name was credited to the town of Utica, Winona County, for their draft quota. The descriptive roll showed James as 38 years old, 5' 8" tall, with blue eyes, brown hair, and a sandy complexion.

In the spring of 1865, James and other men of the Battery were detailed to Major Church and put to work cutting logs, a duty they probably did not enjoy. James was mustered out at Fort Snelling at the end of the war, went back to Winona County and continued to farm. He and Anna added four more children while living in Minnesota, for a total of six.

The 1890 veterans census showed James and Anna had not left Winona County. They were still farming in the small community of Fremont. Pension records indicated James received a \$12 a month pension. He was a member of the Old Settlers Association.

In the spring of 1892, James and Anna moved to the state of Washington and settled near Seattle.

James was not destined to spend much time in Washington. On December 4, James died from Bright's disease at the Providence Hospital in Seattle. The Winona newspaper printed a notice of his death on December 9, but the paper blamed the climate of Seattle for his death, stating it had "proven very detrimental to his health."



Battery member Brian Tomashek placing a flag on the grave of James Jackson, 2003

The funeral was held at the "undertaking rooms" of Bonney and Stewart with Reverend Hyland officiating. James was laid to rest in the GAR section of the Lakeview Cemetery in Seattle.

The GAR section of Lakeview was separate from the rest of the cemetery. It was eventually forgotten and abandoned. In the 1990s, a group formed called Friends of the GAR. They began the clean up and restoration of the GAR Cemetery and by 2003, had made progress in restoring the stones, grounds, and dignity of the veterans buried there.

Real History or Wishful Thinking?

From The Fashion History Museum Facebook post, [Myth Information - The Fan Code \(fashionhistorymuseum.com\)](http://fashionhistorymuseum.com)

We've all heard it, or at least some version of it, and some of us have even repeated it as real history. Holding your fan a certain way could send a message to a person across the room! Did our ancestors use this "code" to flirt? The Fashion History Museum has done the research and presented a well documented article on just that. It is reprinted here for your education. It goes to show that some of what we "always read" as real history isn't always so accurate!!



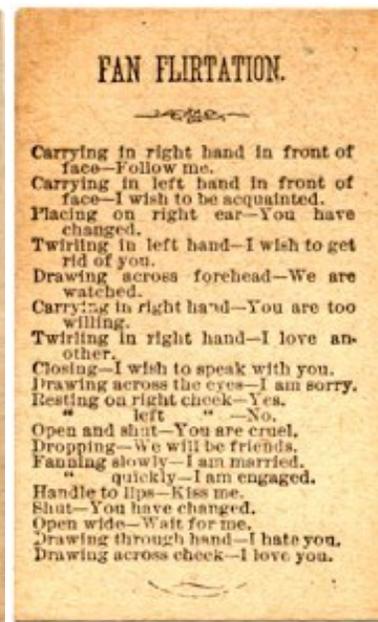
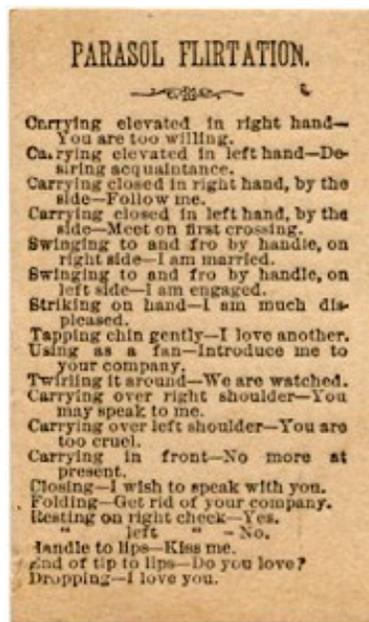
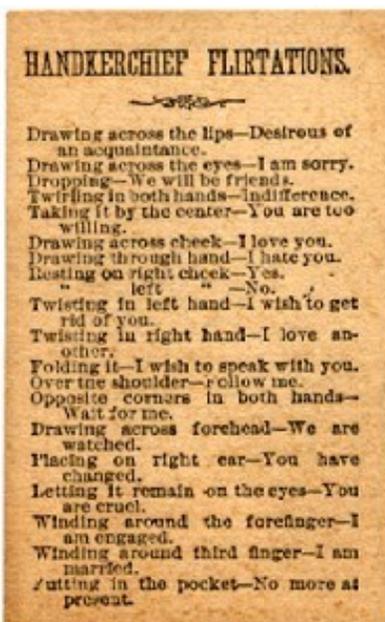
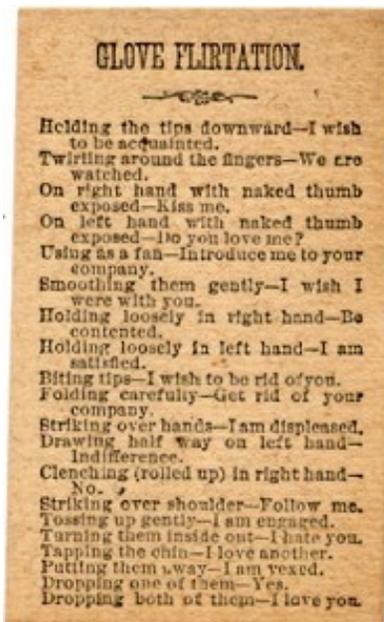
Fans were practical accessories for cooling the face and hiding yawns, and they were used as personal flirtation devices at Victorian social events. However, other than furtive glances from behind a fluttering arc of painted silk and carved ivory, any naval flag-like language code based upon how a fan was opened, closed, held, or pointed is a complete fashion myth.

Fans had been a standard part of 18th century court life, but when the French Revolution took out the elite, the trappings of court life also fell from popularity, including the use of fans. Just as fans were making a comeback, Jean-Pierre Duvellero opened his Parisian fan-making shop in 1827 at 15 Rue de la Paix. By the 1850s

Duvellero was known as one of the best fan makers in Europe. He opened a London branch which he left to his illegitimate son Jules to manage, while the Paris atelier remained under the operation of his legitimate son, Georges.

The language of flowers, a code for certain blooms corresponding with particular messages or emotions, was a popular fad at this time and often printed up in little booklets. Jules Duvellero adapted this idea as an advertising gimmick for his London fan shop. He printed up leaflets that identified a number of fan movements that he claimed had meaning and had been in use for centuries. Some of the codes were: 'Follow Me' (carrying the fan in front of face), 'You Have Changed' (placing the fan on the right ear), 'We are Watched' (drawing the fan across the forehead), 'I am Married' (fanning slowly), 'I Love You' (drawing the fan across the cheek)...

The language of the fan became the inspiration for a number of similar clothing codes, including the language of the handkerchief, parasol, and gloves, none of which were ever anything more than a gimmick. The idea of a clothing code resurfaced in the gay community in the 1970s, with coloured hankies worn in different manners to indicate sexual preferences – but even that was a short-lived, and not widely understood, code that was more decorative than informative.



Food Shortages and Bread Riots

From: [Food Shortages and Bread Riots | Tunnel Hill Heritage Center and Museum \(civilwarroadtunnel.com\)](http://civilwarroadtunnel.com)

The majority of Southerners, soldiers and civilians, experienced severe shortages of food early in the Civil War. Keeping the army fed was a large obstacle for the leaders, but keeping the people fed at home was even more difficult. This was because most of the farming men were in the armed forces and many of the farm lands became battlefields. Where there might be a good crop of vegetables in one location, there was seldom any method of getting that food to people who were hungry elsewhere.



North Georgia seemed to have enough food until the fighting was nearby in 1862-63. The situation grew bleak more than 40,000 men encamped in the valleys around Dalton waiting for spring fighting to begin again. Much of the hunger was because any available food went to the fighting men. Many of the population were hungry to the very point of starvation. Some people fled the region due to the fighting and lack of food only to find that there was no food to be found anywhere in Georgia.

As time progressed in the war, vegetable seed became almost impossible to find. And meat was very rare. It was said that during prayers for daily bread, there was usually added, "and a little meat too, O Lord." The lack of salt was probably the most serious shortage because it was needed to preserve the small amounts of meat that were available. Many pounds of meat spoiled as the Union army captured or flooded the salt mines. The blockades at the ports prevented salt from being obtained and then transported.

By the fall of 1864, people had resorted to eating rats, frogs, crow, snakes, and even cats and dogs. The most expensive but somewhat available meat later in the war was mule meat. Beverages were also scarce with coffee being the most sorely missed, this shortage occurred early in the war as the blockade took effect. Leaves of blackberries, raspberries, huckleberries, and many others were used as tea substitutes. Alcoholic beverages were tremendously missed and the few that were available were very dangerous to drink. Moonshiners were very successful with products made from corn and grain. They also used other things like sweet potatoes, or rice. These beverages were described as "unpalatable" and "vile," but were able to get the job done! Desperate times call for desperate measures.

In some areas across the South, the lack of food led to what is now called the "Southern bread riots". The Southern bread riots were led mostly by women in March and April 1863. The most infamous one occurred on April 2, 1863, in the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia. It was organized and instigated by Mary Jackson, a peddler and mother of a soldier, and Martha Fergusen. The women began a riot when Governor Letcher refused to discuss the food shortage with them. They looted shops, stole carts and broke into storage lockers. Chanting "bread or blood!", the women seized a wagon of beef bound for a hospital, and 500 pounds of bacon from a warehouse. Food wasn't the only item stolen—jewelry shops and milliners were victimized as well. Soon Governor Letcher was on the scene, as well as Jefferson Davis himself, who tried



to appease the women by offering them his last loaf of bread. The Militia arrived quickly to restore order, but not before tens of thousands of dollars' worth of items were stolen. Jackson, Fergusen and a few other women were rounded up and placed in jail, but released within weeks. The reason? Overcrowded jails couldn't afford to feed all the prisoners. The bread riots of 1863 highlighted how desperate the situation had become on the home front. They also showed the slow but steady demoralization that profoundly affected the Confederate cause.

On a more upbeat note, some decided that "starvation parties" were necessary. These were simple gatherings that had fellowship with friends and water. Often there would be a fiddler who played music for dancing. There were no refreshments, but guests might bring a family recipe to read and share with the group. Mary Chestnut wrote in her diary that while this failed to fill your appetite, it was "good for the digestion". Even after the Civil War ended, hunger and lack of resources plagued the South for many years. Many people became resourceful with what they had, and this also led to the lowly peanut becoming one of Georgia's top plants.

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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