

Miscellaneous Incidents

of
Co "E" 8th Minn Vol Inf.

being
A Sketch of the Droll side of
Army Camp life in Field and
Garrison from actual facts

By
One of who was present.
Monticello Dec 7th 1893

To the Members of Co "E" 8th Minn Vol. Inf.
who were ready to fight or vote. This
Journal though rough in rhyme is in perfect
harmony with our Army fare and camp life
therefore it is respectfully

Inscribed
By Your Friend and Comrade,
A. H. Bertram.

DEFECTIVE PAGE

Preface

Comrades! In presenting to you this Journal, I do so in the kindest feelings. The incidents ^{about to be} brought before you to-day, those that occurred during our stay at the Forts on our Frontier. Isolated as we were from the Society of Our Mothers, Wives and Sisters and the intervals between our regular duty hanging heavy on our hands. It is but natural for any body of men in the prime of life to give loose rein to their spirits, cast off all restraints and go to extremes that we would avoid in private life. And I have tried to avoid any incident that would mar the enjoyment of any Comrade present. All I ask is simply this that this be received in the same spirit in which it was written, purely to advance the enjoyment of these occasions and bring to once more before us the jokes we perpetrated on each other in "times when we were soldiering" and now as old age comes on ~~after~~ ^{years} we have gained wisdom with advancing, having long since dropped all our vices and frivolities we will therefore treat these little incidents as things of the past never to be renewed as far as we are concerned. Therefore With Malice toward none and sought but the greatest of charity and Brotherly Love for Each and every one of You

I am Resp
Your Comrade

Dear Comrades

You remember well.

The year of Sixty Two
When our Bloody War was raging
And our Soldiers but a few
How they met with but repulses
And disaster on each hand
While fighting for the Freedom
Of our Great and Glorious Land
It was then that good old Lincoln
In his wisdom he foresaw
That to end this cruel conflict
Needed Three hundred thousand more
So the order for that number
Was proclaimed on every hand.
And the patriotic spirit
Like a wave rushed through the land.
Then "we" took the Town
In our quiet little Town
As we hastened to the office
To have our names put down.
When we got what men was wanted
And we was'nt very slow.
So in order to be mustered in
We started for below
We arrived at Grim old Snelling
The abode of Rats and mice
While inside the Soldiers quarters
Dwelt Bedbugs too and Lice

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Was there for our dear country
That our first blood was shed.
Not on the Post of duty
But in our humble Bed.
There were vermin there by Legion
By myriads, score on score,
And you could, ^{not} put your finger
On a place that was not sore.
We staid but a few days here.
Till we were mustered in
We got enough of that old place
And were glad to leave again.
We were mustered as a Regiment
The Eighth as you will see.
And according to our Captains rank
Our Company was "E"
The next thing now in order
Is to draw our army suit
Our Fire Arms & equipments.
And prepare ourselves to shoot.
We are ordered now to Ripley
Where we must leave the drills
So we bid "Good bye" to Snelling
And leave it with a will.
We then march to Monticello
Where our Tents are quickly set
The circumstance of which I think
Our Citizens don't forget

We were led to tables groaning
With the might of richest food.
Which we ate with keenest relish
For our fare had not been good
We were grateful for the blessings
Our Mothers had prepared
But the way we showed our gratitude
Looked as though we never cared.
The first night we stole chickens
Which created quite a fuss
But we were not suspected
They never thought was us
So things continued daily
The Boys were out each night
Some came back quite early
Others at broad day light
But they never came back empty
A Turkey, Pig or Sheep.
So we drew most all our rations
While the Farmers were asleep
At last we received orders
To continue on our way
And the People of Monticello
Thanked the Lord that day
We struck our tents next morning
Although we'd rather stay
But we packed our little knapsacks
And westward took our way

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We soon arrived at Ripley
And were ready to report
For we were truly thankful
When we got within the Fort.
Our journey was a tough one
For greenhorns such as we
And that night with eager relish
Took our hard tack and our Tea.
We commenced next day at drilling
And they kept us at it good
And all the rest they gave us
Was time to take our food
We now moved in winter quarters
Large, roomy, clean and neat
For to occupy a Building
To us seemed quite a treat.
That winter we'll remember
I'll never leave our mind
Of the many jokes we used to play.
We used to go it blind
We used to study day times
And do it with all our might.
To try and hatch some deviltry
To perpetrate each night.
Each evening after supper
When our duties all were done
We made our calculations
To have a little fun

Some would be playing Euchre.
Others patch their clothes
In fact we used our freedom
And could do just as we choose.
But dancing was our hobby
In our quarters large and neat
We would chase away the hours
With our quickly flying feet.
We would form for a Cotillion
In circles round the hall
The short ones act as Ladies
The Men they must be tall
One night I will remember
As we formed on for a dance
Sam Knidler looked so pleasant
As we caught his smiling glance
While tuning up his instrument
We formed around the hall
All patiently awaiting
To hear the prompter's call
It came at last, the welcome sound
First couple down the middle
No Music! What's the matter
Why some cuss had gnased the fiddle
That stopped our dance that evening
For we were mad as char through
And we'd willingly hung the culprit
If we knew who was who.

But for the lack of evidence
Which was a good excuse
That tormented Fiddle graser
Continued running loose.
One time we made a party
With Company "D" as guest
Who were ordered them to leave us
For a Post still farther west.
We made Doughnuts by the barrel
and Biscuits by the stack
With Oysters three wash boilers full
Pies, cake, but no hardtack
Our preparations were complete
The night at last came round
At the hour set for our visitors
We found them on the ground
We filed around our tables
and each one took his place
Then charged out the provisions
We did "nt wait for grace
Twas the first square meal of victuals.
We'd seen for many a day
So we tended to our eating
And had "nt much to say
When our friends had finished eating
And the tables all were clear
Twas suggested round among us
That we take a little Beer

So we talked the matter over
and concluded on the spot.
To have some Beer at any price
If it only could be got
As our Company was temperance
And never lost our legs
We concluded to be moderate
And bought just thirteen kegs
When we set the Beer to running
And the kegs were all set up
You'd ought to have seen us flying round
Each running with a cup
One cup didn't satisfy us
Nor two, nor three, nor four.
They'd take it at a swallow
And hurry back for more.
But we had a few testotals
That slept up over head
When they thought no one was watching
They quietly slipped in bed.
But they couldn't fool us that way
Some beer might go to loss
If they would "nt drink it willingly
They must take it then by force.
We went up stairs and got them
They begged us let them go
Selt, ^{with} nothing but their shirts on
We hurried them below.

They refused to take it quietly
So we laid them on the floor
And poured the beverage down them
Till they could hold no more
But that scene was the last one
And when "Good Bye" was said
We dismissed our jovial company,
And tumbled into bed

We enjoyed ourselves that winter
There was never lack of sports,
And we'll remember pleasantly
Our sojourn at that Fort.

We are ordered now to Reynesville
And are on the March again
To relieve the 2d Cavalry
That go across the Plains.

We arrive at pleasant quarters
And keep them clean and neat
As we have little duty

Our happiness is complete.
We soon become acquainted
With the Families near the fort,
And the Daughters come quite handy,
Especially to Court

It was here Tim Desmond happened
To have one take his fancy
And would not be contruted
Until he'd married Nancy.

Every evening after Roll Call
We'd climb the old sod wall
We'd go among the settlers
And on their Daughters call
We generally played anchor
Till the Old folks did retire
Then we'd sit together
And gaze into the fire
Things must thus smooth all winter
A change did then appear
There was a screw loose somewhere
To us it was not clear.

We went one night as usual
And rapped upon the door
The Father opened it and said
Don't come here any more.
Why we were quite astonished
Who'd heard the like of that
We never dreamed of such a turn
And felt extremely flat.

We talked the matter over
That night while in our Bunk
And found some Comrade told them
That we were sometimes drunk
That would alone condemn us
Though we wanted to explain
The Old folks appeared stubborn
So we plead our Case in vain

'Tis thus we put the time in
Only something new each day
We had but little duty
And the rest of the time for play
We now hear startling rumors
Of the outbreak of the Sioux
Of the many murdered settlers
And tales of suffering too
How they butchered the defenceless
Nor spared the little child
And gloried in their ferocity
In barbarism wild
We are now expecting Orders
To meet the savage foe
And have all things ⁱⁿ readiness
And anxious all to go
We now receive the mandate
To prepare without delay
And like the "Star of Empire"
Westward we take our way
The "We're Mustard" in as Infantry
But we're ordered now to mount
As we're to fight with Indians
Infantry's no account.
We are ordered to Sault Centre
Where our Regiments in Camp
So we hastily sling our Knapsacks
And prepare us for our tramp

As we leave our pleasant quarters
And loving friends behind
We can't keep ^{back} the memories
That's brought before our mind
Of the many pleasant hours
With the settlers round the Fort
Our life was one of gaiety
One ceaseless round of sport.
We have now the Order: "Forward!"
As we leave we shout and cheer
And on some comrades faces
Might be seen the tell tale tear
But there's no time for sentiment
Or anything of the kind
So we leave our friends to the music
Of the fife we left behind
That night we meet the Regiment
Camped on a little height
While in the dusky gloaming
The Campfires show out bright
Our Band now strikes "Old Dixie"
And plays it loud and long
When the Regt. turn out shouting
Company "E" has got along.
Next day we draw out horses
Horses! did I say
I certainly have more respect
Than insult a horse that way

Our's were mere apologies
Of Gristle, Hide ^{and} Bone
However they're the animals
We're doomed to ride upon
The way we drew our Bone piles
We must admit was fair
Though we didn't care a great deal
Which fell to our share
Each soldier had his number
Each Horse was numbered too
Choose the same number as yourself
Twas all you had to do,
I went and viewed my animal
He was ^a noble steed
With points like some old saw Horse,
And just as little speed,
I scanned the creature over
Viewed him from side to side
And failed in a conclusion
As to which of us should ride
But we finally got mounted
And are on the march again
With wagon trains and cattle
We proceed to cross the plains
Our course is now towards Ridgely
That Grim and Frowning Fort
Where our Battery is in waiting
And we're ordered to report

We then go into camp again
Much to our surprise
We soon find out the reason
That we're waiting for supplies
The supplies are in the distance
And the second Cavalry too
Preceded by their Splendid Band
Have quickly come in view
We're not long in getting ready
And are once more drawn in line
With our Eyes toward the Missouri
We leave our friends behind,
Our March is now monotonous
Tis Plains on every side
As we meet with scarce an incident
Till we cross the Big Divide
We go in camp each evening
Surrounded by our train
Then form in line next morning
And Forward! march again
We now see signs of Buffalo
In the wallows they have made
I should judge from the holes around us
That shovelling was their trade
Hurrah! We see a live one
Stay on our extreme right
But we're told to keep our places
No Buffalo hunt to night

So we wait till Game's more plenty
Their numbers increase each day
And they become less timid -
As we go on our way
One day we just decided
When a drove came in full view
That we'd slip through the Pickets
And try and take a few
A few of us succeeded
And with fortune at our back
We returned in a few hours
With all that we could pack
We surrounded our camp fires
Composed of Buffalo wood
^{and} we cooked those juicy Buffalo steaks
I tell you they were good
No lack of meat hereafter
We lived on the Top shelf
Kind Providence sent them to us
With the Orders: Help yourself.
Twas here that Dr Murphy
Concluded in his mind
To dally out one evening
^{and} see what he could find
So loading his Revolver
And getting on his Horse
He takes a parting snifter
And is quickly on his course

He'd gone but a short distance
At an easy, gentle pace
When he came across a Monster
That met him Face to Face.
They viewed each other over
But the Buffalo could not stay
So the Doctor followed closely
As he rode he popped away -
The race was quite exciting
They traveled side by side
He still continued shooting
Tis a Terrific ride
But see! what means that cloud of dust
^{and} Hark! that awful groan.
Alas! the Horse ^{has} stumbled
The Doctor has been thrown
We rush to his assistance
He lies trampled in the dirt
He's bleeding and unconscious
^{and} very badly hurt
We gather round his fragile form
^{and} with Muskets form a Ring.
We take him in installments
^{and} bear him to the rear
That ends his Buffalo hunting
It ended there and then
He was not as successful
Killing Buffalo as ^{he} knew.

We continue on our westward march
O'er dreary, barren waste
The weather is extremely hot
We can't use too much haste.
We now join General Sully
That Veteran true & tried,
Who as an Indian fighter
Was noted far and wide
We soon reach the Missouri
Which we do with heart felt thanks
And we take a good long resting spell
Upon its verdant banks
Now comrades here I'll leave you
While we listen to some Toasts.
As we wish to entertain you
You're our Guests and we're the Hosts
Our Life in Minnesota
Was of pleasure in the main
Although we had some hardships
We could not well complain
But let us midst our Pleasures
Pause and shed a Tear
For our beloved comrades
That will never meet us here
They have gone from us for ever
God willed that they die so
With the Faces toward Heaven
and their feet toward the foe

Now while at our Re-unions
Their forms cannot be seen
Dear comrades, don't forget them
Let's keep their memories green
When Wars and Strife are over
Where all is peace and Love
May we meet at that Re union
Prepared for all. Adieu,