

SOCIAL SOLDIERS

The Winona Company and the Beginnings of the Minnesota National Guard

Donald M. Douglas

THE STEAMBOATS "Libby Conger," "Imperial," and "Diamond Jo" were making their last voyages of the 1879 season. The Mississippi River was still open, but heavy ice was forming on Lake Winona. Logging operations had shut down earlier at Beef Slough, which in season employed some 400 men and in a single day sent as many as seven rafts down the Mississippi from the mouth of the Chippewa River. The returns of the local elections had been canvassed and confirmed a Republican victory. Winona, Minnesota, was readying for another winter.¹

The *Winona Daily Republican* devoted some of its local space to the activities of the newly formed board of trade, some to the traffic of the half-dozen railroads then serving the city, some to local entertainments, and in the final paragraph of a regular column called "Local Brevities" noted:

"An effort is about to be made by a number of the young men of this city to organize a military com-

pany. There is an abundance of the right sort of material here, so to speak — enterprising, capable young men who would find in the drill and discipline of such an organization not only an agreeable pastime, but a healthful exercise and substantial knowledge of military tactics. The idea was met with very general favor and the project will probably assume definite shape at a preliminary meeting to be called some time next week."²

The "definite shape" assumed by the project was the Winona Guards, one of the first of that handful of organized militia companies which were revived after the Civil War and provided the foundation for the Minnesota National Guard. The only military legislation in effect at this time for the country as a whole was the old National Militia Act of 1792, which made performance of military duty compulsory for every able-bodied male between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, with certain occupational exceptions. Not only was a citizen soldier not paid, but he had to provide his own musket and other accouterments. No national administrative structure was responsible for the militia. "Having passed the law Congress took no active part in control, direction or development of the militia and provided no funds for its administration," wrote one military historian. Under this

¹ *Winona Daily Republican*, August 21, 28, October 18, 24, 27, 30, November 4, 6, 8, 1879. (All references from this newspaper cited in this article are on p. 3.)

² *Winona Daily Republican*, November 8, 1879 (quote); [Lafayette H. Bunnell], *History of Winona County*, 882 (Chicago, 1883).

THE WINONA GUARDS (left) apparently had a professional photographer take pictures at its second encampment, held at Madison Lake in 1882, since this print and those on page 134 are made from stereopticon slides. It is not clear what the men are doing, but the activities appear — characteristically — quite unmilitary.

Mr. Douglas, an associate professor of history at Wichita State University, received his doctorate in history in 1968 at the University of Kansas. He is a third-generation Winonan and became interested in private military units after finding a photograph of *Die Deutschen Soldaten*, a group of veterans of German wars, pictured in the uniform of the Prussian guard and drawn up for inspection in front of Sugar Loaf Bluff in Winona. Douglas' Prussian great-grandfather was the unit's captain.

system — or lack of it — the companies which were organized “developed into a series of small State armies.”³

In 1858, at the urging of Governor Henry H. Sibley, the first state legislature passed an act that provided for twenty-eight regiments of militia, among other things, and distinguished between the body of men able to bear arms (called simply “the militia”) and the “active militia . . . composed of volunteer companies.” The militia was largely a paper organization, but the act did indicate the realization that military units should be available to back up civil authority.⁴

The onrush of the Civil War spurred Minnesota to form eleven volunteer infantry regiments and other units, but these were disbanded at the close of the conflict. Interest in military units then lay dormant for several years. In 1875 state Adjutant General Henry A. Castle reported:

“Our statutes provide for the organization of the militia under the name of the National Guard, but as such organization is wholly voluntary and almost without inducement, not a single regiment, or even company, has maintained its discipline, and it is now disbanded and extinct, with no signs of a revival.”⁵

There was, however, a revival of the militia nationally in the 1870s — in large part because of labor strife. Volunteer militia units were used as strikebreakers in a number of places, although this apparently was not an important factor in Minnesota. The volunteer groups tended to be somewhat elitist, even in small towns, and the social and recreational aspects, not the military, were emphasized. The Winona Guards was one of the first four units formed in Minnesota in the 1870s. All four survived both the early frivolousness and the earliest test — a fire at the Stillwater prison in 1883 to which the volunteers were called to guard the prisoners — and all four exist to this day.⁶

THE PRELIMINARY meeting of the Winona group was held on November 26, 1879. Commissioned officers, a captain, and two lieutenants were elected, as were four civil officers: president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer.⁷ Minutes of the organizational meeting of what was then called the Winona Militia Company were sent at once to the Minnesota adjutant general in St. Paul. The officers of the company were informed that, on receipt of a certified muster roll, a bond and requisition would be sent to the Winona military organization. The shipment of arms and accouterments to the Winona unit would follow the submission of these documents. The adjutant general’s letter suggested providing the company in Winona with breech-loading .50-caliber Springfield rifles for a company of not more than fifty men. A constitution, bylaws, and a name, the Winona Guards,



GOVERNOR
LUCIUS F
HUBBARD,

who had reached
the rank of brigadier general in the Civil War, encouraged formation of the state volunteer militia.

were adopted for the new organization at a December 8, 1879, meeting, and weekly drills were scheduled at Wickersham Hall to begin the following Monday. The noncommissioned officers for the Winona Guards, six sergeants and eight corporals, were appointed in mid-January, and at that point the company consisted of some fifty men, each of whom had enlisted for a three-year period.⁸

³[Frederich Wilhelm] von Steuben, *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*, Appendix, 1–5 (Boston, 1794); Minnesota, Adjutant General, “A History of the Minnesota National Guard,” mimeographed book, copy in Minnesota Historical Society library, 4, 5 (quotes) (n.p., 1940); William H. Riker, *Soldiers of the States: The Role of the National Guard in American Democracy*, 21–22 (Washington, D.C., 1957).

⁴William W. Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, 2:27 (St. Paul, revised edition, 1961).

⁵Adjutant General, *Report*, 1875, p. 8.

⁶Adjutant General, *Report*, 1881, p. 4; 1883, p. 7–8; Riker, *Soldiers of the States*, 47–59.

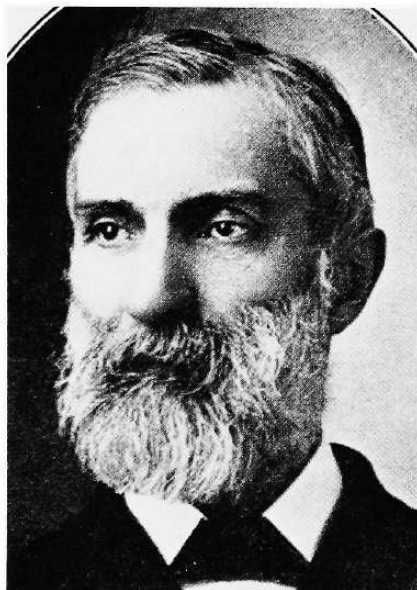
⁷The following men were elected: Alfred Brooks, captain; John J. Kendall, first lieutenant; Manning T. Hackley, second lieutenant; the Reverend W. D. Thomas, chaplain; Ozro B. Gould, president; Frank Prentiss, vice-president; Orrin F. Smith, secretary; W. H. Garlock, treasurer. See *Winona Daily Republican*, November 28, 1879.

⁸*Winona Daily Republican*, December 6, 8, 9, 1879, January 20, 1880, August 14, 1882. The records of the state adjutant general’s office provide little help for the period prior to 1882. Brigadier General Alfred C. Hawley complained that,

OZRO B. GOULD was a founder and the first president of the Winona Guards. He had been a captain in the Civil War and, with Matthew Marvin, was one of two men in the Winona group with military experience.



HENRY A. CASTLE had been a captain in the Civil War.



As state adjutant general (1875–76), he complained in a report that the National Guard was “extinct, with no signs of revival.”

upon becoming adjutant general in June, 1882, he found an office with a backlog of work, with no contingency fund, and with but one copy of the roster of soldiers in Minnesota, “and that in bad condition.” See Adjutant General, *Report*, 1882, p. 5–6.

⁹Winona Daily Republican, May 19, August 17, 1880, August 15, November 15, 1881.

¹⁰Winona Daily Republican, March 22, August 5, 1880, February 6, June 24, 27, 1882.

¹¹Winona Daily Republican, December 3, 1880.

¹²Winona Daily Republican, February 24, March 11, 17, April 29, 1881, June 15, 1882; Minnesota, *Laws*, 1881, p. 147.

After the first flush of organizational enthusiasm, several of the noncommissioned officers dropped out, but by the second year the command structure, commissioned and noncommissioned, had pretty well stabilized. The changes in command which did take place in the spring and summer of 1882 were largely due to promotions rather than to withdrawals.

From the outset the Winona Guards held weekly drills and monthly business meetings. Indoor drills took place at Wickersham Hall until November, 1881, when the unit moved into its new armory, and, weather permitting, held outdoor drills with some regularity. By August, 1880, a drum corps of five men had been organized and four new brass shell drums acquired to outfit the corps.⁹

The Springfield rifles arrived on March 20, 1880, followed in August by receipt of a thousand rounds of ammunition. The .50-caliber Springfield rifles were replaced in February, 1882, with .45-caliber Springfields and new cartridge belts, and a thousand rounds of ammunition followed in June. Some sixty new bayonet scabbards were also furnished the guards.¹⁰ The state of Minnesota provided rifles and some cartridges through the adjutant general's office, but the choice and purchase of uniforms were left to the individual guard units. As early as December, 1880, the Winona Guards announced that it had some \$300 in a fund for uniform purchase. Estimated cost was about \$800 to uniform forty men.¹¹

In February, 1881, the state senate passed a bill appropriating \$300 to each military company in Minnesota having an enrollment of fifty men, and the Winona Guards, qualifying for the full sum, moved at once toward the purchase of uniforms. Sample uniforms were obtained, and the Guards met to make selections. The unit chose a regulation blue coat with pantaloons, buff trimmings on the cuffs and skirt, epaulettes of buff and gold, blue center and brass mountings, white web crossbelts with silver plates and raised monograms “W.G.” on the breastplate and “M.N.G.” on the waist belt, nickel-mounted black morocco bayonet scabbards, morocco cartridge box, and buttons which bore a Minnesota design. At a later meeting the helmet hat — the style that had been recently adopted for the regular army — was chosen to complete the uniform. The new uniforms were received in late April, 1881, but the helmet hats were not purchased until 1882. The cost of the uniforms, however, proved to be closer to \$1,600 than the originally announced \$800, and this pushed the Guards to fund-raising activities.¹²

A substantial portion of the effort of the Winona Guards in its early years was devoted to fund-raising in the form of theatrical entertainments. Two plays, “Our Heroes,” which used the full company of men and was at least in part a military exhibition, and a more dramatic



WORK (above left) and play (below left) at the Winona Guards camp at Madison Lake in 1882

effort, "The Stranger," were presented during 1880. Each showed a modest profit, and at the end of the year, the Guards could report a balance of \$300 in the uniform fund, all debts having been paid.¹³

In the spring of 1881 the Winona Guards planned a series of three entertainments. In March the outfit produced a play and also sponsored an evening of dramatic and humorous readings. The third entertainment was to have been the Guards' fair, but this was postponed until autumn in anticipation of the completion of the armory. Finally held October 19, 20, and 21, 1881, the fair proved to be the most extensive of the unit's fund-raising events. For two weeks before the fair a number of women's committees of the community busied themselves preparing for it, planning flowers, refreshments, and fancy tables, and soliciting items to be sold or raffled off. The fair featured a New England-style dinner, served by young women costumed in Puritan-style dress, and separate tables of oysters and other delicacies. A bazaar offered fancy goods for sale, and amusements included a fish pond, a post office, and a Punch-and-Judy show. An elegant gold-headed cane went to the most popular candidate for sheriff, two barrels of flour were the prizes in a lottery, and a doll was given to the handsomest baby. Evening entertainment included a manual of arms contest pitting a team of tall men of the company against its short men. A musical program also was featured. The entire affair was given extensive coverage by the *Winona Daily Republican*, and the efforts of literally dozens of community women were recognized in print.¹⁴

At the end of 1881, the Guard unit could report itself free from debt, having expended nearly \$4,000 in the course of its first two years. In the spring of 1882, the members essayed only one fund-raising event, and this was more modest than previous ones. The Guards presented a concert in March featuring a local quartet and individual instrumental solos.¹⁵

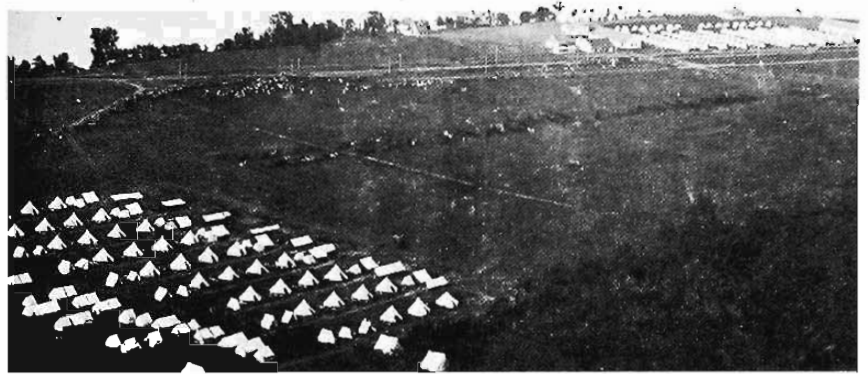
In addition to the fund-raising activities, the Winona Guards enjoyed, as a unit, an active social life. Members celebrated the close of their first year with a formal reception and ball held at Ely Hall, November 24, 1880. Attendance was by invitation, some 500 having been issued. Following the reception of guests, the Guards gave

¹³*Winona Daily Republican*, April 28, 29, 30, May 1, 3, 10, November 12, 13, 15, December 8, 1880.

¹⁴*Winona Daily Republican*, March 12, 14, 18, 19, 21, October 5, 11, 13, 20, 21, 22, 1881.

¹⁵*Winona Daily Republican*, December 8, 1881, March 18, 20, 22, 1882.

THIS BIRD'S-EYE VIEW of Camp Lakeview near Lake City was probably taken in the 1890s. This site, near Lake Pepin, became the regular Minnesota National Guard encampment ground in 1891 and remained so for many years.



a drill exhibition, their president, Ozro B. Gould, delivered a welcome speech, and the remainder of the evening was devoted to dancing. Another military hop was given at Ely Hall on May 13, 1881, to which the La Crosse Light Guards, an independent military company from that nearby Wisconsin city, was invited. The evening opened with a manual of arms, followed by a drill exhibition and dancing. The second annual reception of the Winona Guards took place in the new armory on November 23, 1881. Again, a number of the La Crosse Light Guards were there as guests, and again the program included manual of arms and drill exhibitions, speeches of welcome, and a dance.¹⁶

The obvious popularity of the dances prompted the Guards, before the end of November, to embark upon a series of six dance parties, to be held at two-week intervals, at the new armory. Two were put on in each of the next three months, and on April 11, following the Lenten season, the Guards gave a full-dress military ball at the armory. The Guards participated in the Winona fire department's annual parade day and banquet as guests of the firemen in 1881 and again in 1882 and joined in Decoration Day activities in both of those years.¹⁷

IT WOULD appear, at least in its early years, that the Winona Guards was far more a social organization than a military one. The time spent in social and fund-raising activities must have weighed rather heavily against that remaining for drills at the weekly meetings. The first encampments of the Winona Guards proved no exception. In late summer, 1880, the Guards decided to go into camp, and on August 23 some twenty or thirty

members, including the drum corps, left for Pickwick, a few miles downriver from Winona. They took with them a cook and a general handy man, and, using privately owned tents, set up camp. Except for about three hours each day set aside for drill and some rifle practice, the camp seems to have been designed more for recreation than military training. Each evening entertainment was provided by members of the company, and each evening people from Pickwick called at the camp bringing gifts of food and enjoying the performance. Reports sent back to Winona were spiced with playful allusions to stolen apples and admonitions to the local farmers to lock up their hen houses. Baseball and football were played, and a minstrel entertainment was organized to be presented for the Pickwick visitors. On their last night in camp, the men were "treated" to a severe thunderstorm, which drove them from their tents to seek refuge from the heavy rain in the Pickwick schoolhouse, which had been opened for that purpose. They broke camp the following day and arrived home on the midnight train.¹⁸

The 1881 summer camp was more extensively prepared for, but it was not much more military than the first. In May, several members of the Guards visited Madison Lake, near Mankato, to select suitable grounds for an encampment, and by late June they had completed arrangements for going into camp there on July 11. The advance squad left on July 9, and on July 11 Captain Alfred Brooks, twenty-eight men, and four attendants departed. They took with them a cook, an assistant cook, a handy man, and a barber and had at their disposal a special car provided by the Winona and St. Peter Railroad. Upon arrival in Mankato, the men were handsomely entertained with a speech of welcome and social festivities. Bathing, boating, and fishing in Lake Madison and socializing in Mankato seem to have been the features of this particular camp. Very little was said by the unit's correspondent about anything resembling military activity. It was not until 1882 that the summer

¹⁶Winona Daily Republican, November 20, 23, 24, 28, 1880, May 6, 11, 12, 14, November 21, 22, 23, 25, 1881.

¹⁷Winona Daily Republican, November 29, 30, December 8, 24, 1881, January 7, 19, February 2, 18, April 11, 1882.

¹⁸Winona Daily Republican, August 14, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 1880.



"AT EASE" may have been the most frequently given command during the early years of the Minnesota National Guard, judging by accounts and photographs such as this.

encampment began to take on an air of military training, and by that time the camp was no longer a local outing but a gathering of the Minnesota National Guard, with companies from Minneapolis, St. Paul, New Ulm, and Faribault also participating.¹⁹

The modern Minnesota National Guard, which met in that first encampment in 1882, had its origins in a private military company called the Governor's Guards, formed in New Ulm in 1875. This was followed by the formation of a second company in Faribault in 1877, and in 1879 two more private military companies appeared, one of them being the Winona Guards. By January, 1880, there were four companies: the Governor's Guards with forty-two men, the Minneapolis Light Infantry with fifty-two men, the Faribault Guards, and the Winona Guards, each with fifty-three men. The total was 200 men of all ranks. Early in February a fifth unit, the Minneapolis Zouaves, was organized, and all five groups sent representatives to a meeting held in late March at Faribault. A State Militia Association was formed at the Faribault meeting, officers were elected, a committee was appointed to draft a memorial to Congress on a militia bill to replace the 1792 Militia Act, and another committee was appointed to secure an appropriation from the state legislature for the militia.²⁰

A second meeting of the State Militia Association was held at St. Paul in January, 1881, and the newly organized St. Paul Guards was the host unit. At that meeting members chose a committee to draft a bill to be presented to the state legislature, an act passed much as submitted on February 28, 1881. This bill established

the organization of the guard under the governor ("commander-in-chief") and adjutant general and set forth provisions by which each unit was governed. Each company elected its officers (subject to approval by the governor), drew up a constitution, and wrote its bylaws; it could levy fines, dues, and punishments, and bring complaints in a court of law against members for neglect of duty, disobedience, and insubordination. Basic guidelines such as command structure, the number of men in each unit, and frequency of drills and encampments were established. Payment by the state of \$7.00 for each active member per year, but not to exceed \$300 total for each unit, was authorized to be used for uniforms, arms, armory, horses, and other necessities.²¹

The third annual meeting of what had come to be called the Minnesota National Guard Association was held in New Ulm on January 18, 1882. By then, the



THE "NOISY FOUR" is the way the sign reads on this quartet's tent. The drum near the man on the right may help explain the sobriquet. The picture was probably taken about 1886.

¹⁹Winona Daily Republican, May 25, June 22, July 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 26, 1881.

²⁰Adjutant General, Report, 1880, p. 4; Winona Daily Republican, January 23, April 2, 1880. State officers elected were Joseph Bobleter, New Ulm, president; James Hunter, Faribault, vice-president; G.H. Palmer, Faribault, secretary; and Alfred A. Ames, Minneapolis, treasurer. Winona was represented on these two committees by John J. Kendall and Ed. S. Gregory.

²¹Winona Daily Republican, January 22, 1881; Minnesota, Laws, 1881, p. 145-149. Winona was represented on the legislative committee by Alfred Brooks and John J. Kendall.

Allen Light Guards and the Emmet Light Artillery, both of St. Paul, had been organized and were participating in the state association, and the convention reported a full representation from all companies. The convention recommended the formation of the state guard into two battalions, one comprising the St. Paul and Minneapolis companies, the other the New Ulm, Faribault, and Winona companies. It recommended further that a state encampment be held in the latter part of July or early August. A committee was appointed to draft a new militia law to be offered to the legislative session, and the old officers were re-elected.²²

The committee for the formation of battalion units and the calling of a state encampment met with Governor Lucius F. Hubbard on January 28, 1882, and was successful in its endeavors. In early February, by order of the governor, several companies comprising the National Guard of the state of Minnesota were divided into two organizations, designated the First and Second Battalions, Minnesota National Guard. The First Battalion was composed of the Minneapolis Light Infantry, the Minneapolis Zouaves, the St. Paul Guards, and the Allen Light Guards of St. Paul. The Second Battalion was

composed of the Governor's Guards of New Ulm, the Faribault Guards, and the Winona Guards. (The Emmet Light Infantry was organized separately outside the regimental structure — as was the later St. Paul Cavalry.)²³

The officers of the member units of the Second Battalion met at Owatonna on March 2, 1882, for the purpose of electing battalion officers. Captain Joseph Bobleter of New Ulm was elected major, Lieutenant John J. Kendall of Winona was elected adjutant-lieutenant, Lieutenant J. J. Van Saun of Faribault, quartermaster and commissary, and Doctor Charles Berry of New Ulm, assistant surgeon. A committee was appointed to meet with the First Battalion about the time and place for the first annual encampment, and subsequently Major Bobleter assigned the companies composing the battalion to the following ranks: Company A, Governor's Guards; Company B, Faribault Guards; and Company C, Winona Guards.²⁴

Governor Hubbard issued a general order in July, 1882, calling for the encampment of the organized militia of the state at White Bear Lake, near St. Paul. The encampment was to begin on July 10 and conclude on July 15, 1882. Simultaneously, the appointment of Major Gould of Winona as commandant of the encampment was announced by the governor. The militia men were to receive two dollars per day from the state while at camp, and transportation was to be furnished. Pursuant to orders issued by Major Bobleter, a detail of the Winona Guards left Winona on July 7 to make preparations for the encampment. The rest of the company, Captain Brooks, Lieutenants Hackley and Gregory, and about thirty-two men left on the morning of July 10. It was, as the *Winona Daily Republican* properly labeled it, "an event in the history of Winona and the State — this being the first military organization that ever left the city for a State encampment, and this being the first encampment ever held in the State."²⁵

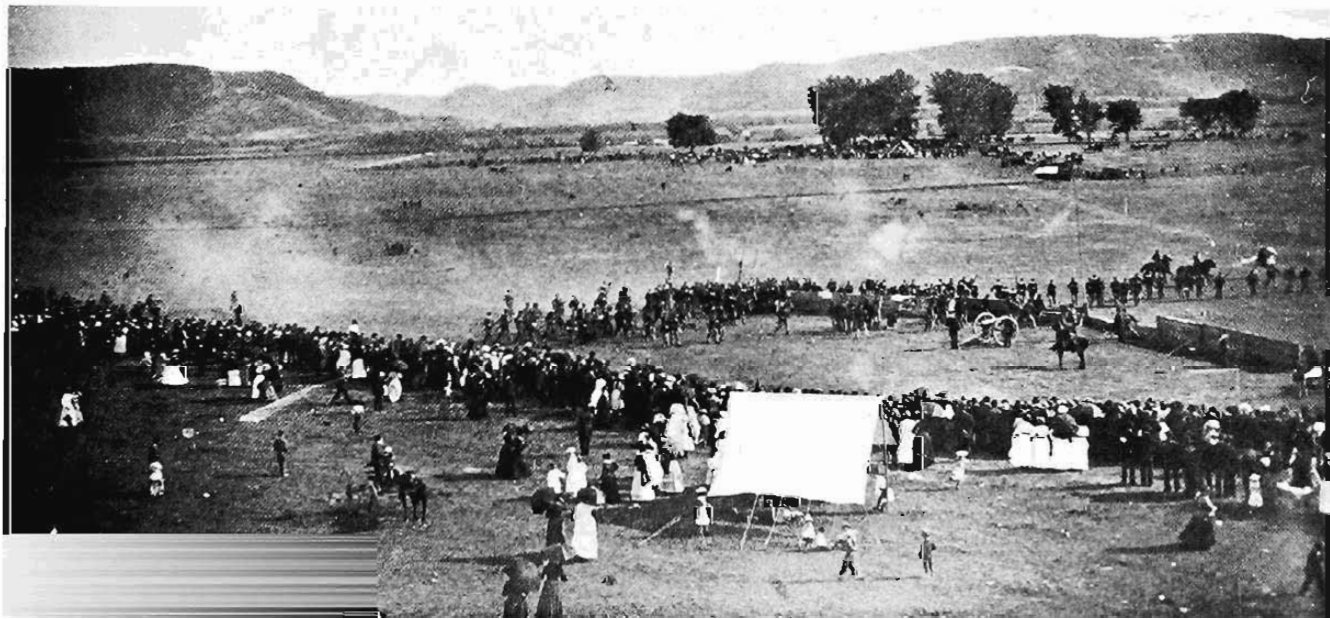
²²*Winona Daily Republican*, January 5, 20, 1882. Winona was represented on the committee by Brooks, Kendall, and Manning T. Hackley.

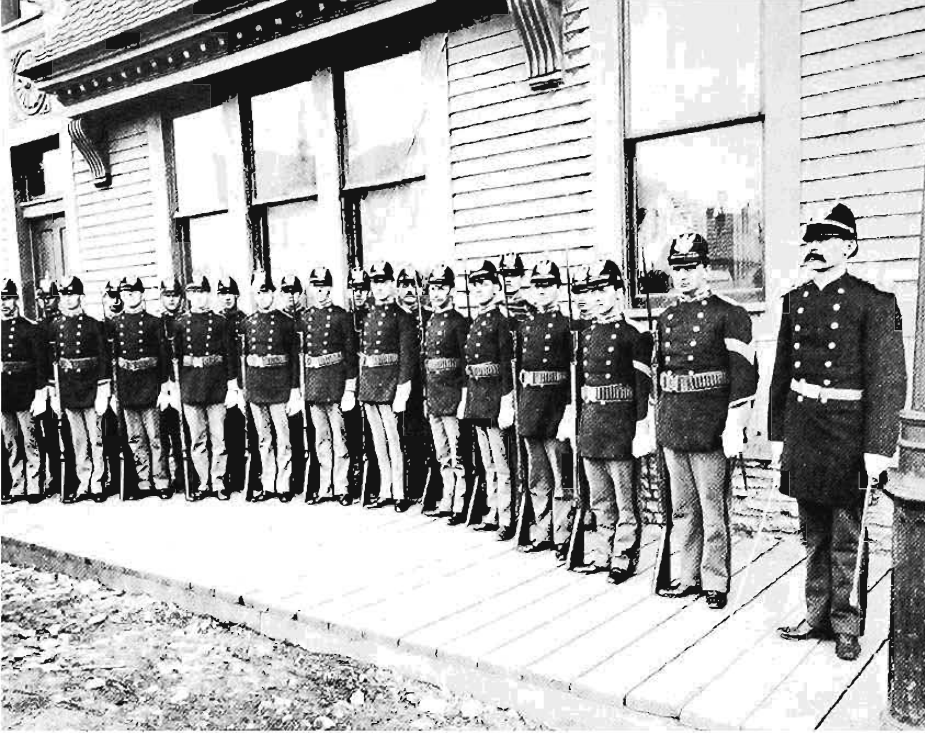
²³Adjutant General, *Report*, 1882, p. 6-12; *Winona Daily Republican*, February 18, 1882.

²⁴*Winona Daily Republican*, March 2, 3, 13, 1882.

²⁵*Winona Daily Republican*, June 9, 28, July 1, 7, 10 (quote), 1882. The July 10 issue also published "a full list of officers and men of the Winona Guards who have gone to camp: Adjutant Kendall. Captain Brooks. Lieutenants Hackley and Gregory. Sergeants Smith, Monsland and Wright. Corporals Bank, Muir, Brooks, Maybury and Fockens. Privates Bunskey, Rotoome, Doud, Goldsbough [sic], Hillyer, Lalor, Lord, Mallory, Morrison, Roberts, G. W. Stevens, Swart, Wirth, Worthington, and Rhineberger. Drummers — Drum Major Schwegel, Tenney and Drew. Fifer, Jeffrey. Bugler, Burmeister. Cadets, Ewald and Worthington."

VISITORS FLOCKED to the National Guard encampment held at Winona in 1884 to watch the military drills, inspections, dress parades, and sham battles.





MEMBERS of the Minnesota National Guard, resplendent in full-dress uniform, posed for their picture about 1885. Nothing else — not the place, company, regiment, or occasion — is known about the picture.

It was apparently a working camp with company and battalion drill, battalion review, brigade drill and review, competitive drill in the manual of arms, and a review by Governor Hubbard and officers from Fort Snelling. Guard was mounted throughout the entire encampment, and the men were regularly tested by their officers. "An officer would go up to a guard and ask him to let him see his gun and upon complying with the request he was immediately arrested and confined in the guardhouse," according to an account in the July 13 *Winona Daily Republican*. A heavy windstorm struck the camp on July 11, accompanied by some rain, but those few tents that were blown down were soon up again and camp carried on. All was not discomfort and work, however. Passes were issued for men to visit St. Paul and Minneapolis. An open-air concert given near the campsite on July 13 was attended by a number of men, as was the dance that followed, and some of the men slipped off to attend a concert at a nearby hotel the following night.²⁶

The Second Battalion, with the exception of the Winona Guards, broke camp and left for home on Saturday. The Winona unit remained until Sunday with the First Battalion and the Emmet Light Artillery. On July 17 the Winona Guards returned home, having been cited for their proficiency both by Colonel John Gibbon, a regular army officer stationed at Fort Snelling, and the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*. As the *Winona Daily Republican* put it: "The Guards returned alive and in the best of spirits at half past six last evening and were received with a warm welcome from their friends." They were now a working part of the first Minnesota National Guard.²⁷

They were also hosts to it. The 1883 Minnesota National Guard convention was held in Winona,²⁸ and,

following the encampment of that year, Winona offered to provide the site for the 1884 encampment. However, the Minnesota National Guard had grown. The Second Regiment, which had fielded four companies in mid-summer of 1883, had grown to ten companies by the summer of 1884, and the First Regiment had experienced a like increase. The state of Minnesota simply did not own enough tents to house an encampment of over 1,200 men. The governor tried to borrow tents from neighboring states, but without success, so separate battalion encampments were decided upon, one in the first half of July, one in the last. The First Regiment chose the latter part of the month and a campsite near Minneapolis. The Second Regiment accepted Winona's invitation.²⁹

The preparations that followed were little short of prodigious. The Winona board of trade, the city council, and the Winona Guards set up a joint committee that arranged the extension of streetcar lines and water mains to the campsite which was just on the edge of town. The Guards oversaw the construction of a grandstand with a

²⁶ *Winona Daily Republican*, July 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 1882.

²⁷ *Winona Daily Republican*, July 17 (quote), 18, 1882.

²⁸ *Winona Daily Republican*, January 17, 1883. The association elected the following officers: Joseph Bobleter, New Ulm, president; James Hunter, Faribault, vice-president; John J. Kendall, Winona, secretary; Joseph Eckstein, New Ulm, treasurer. A. N. Bentley had been the first choice for president, but he declined the office.

²⁹ Adjutant General's Report, 1884, p. 13-16; *Winona Daily Republican*, February 15, March 21, May 12, 1884. The 1884 adjutant general's biennial report used the term regiment rather than battalion for the first time, apparently in recognition of the growth of the Minnesota Guard both in number and in sophistication of military organization and techniques.

seating capacity of 1,200. Other committees arranged for hotel accommodations for visitors, a caterer for the officers' mess, horses for the officers, and extra police for the period of the encampment. A subcommittee on transportation secured special reduced fares on all the railroads leading into Winona. A thousand large posters advertising the event were circulated, and the railroads helped publicize the event with two-column page-length advertisements of excursion fares and schedules. More than \$1,000 was raised by subscription to help defray the costs of the encampment, and additional funds were secured by offering the sutler's privilege for bids. Although it did not come out until later, another franchise was sold, this one to a group of gamblers who set up shop on the edge of camp outside the city limits, and were therefore beyond the reach of city laws.³⁰

The 1884 encampment of the Second Regiment was

³⁰Winona Daily Republican, May 21, 26, June 5, 10, 24, July 14, 1884.

³¹Winona Daily Republican, July 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 1884.

³²Adjutant General, "History of the Minnesota National Guard," 9 (quote); Minnesota, Laws, 1883, p. 97-105.

³³Adjutant General, "History of the Minnesota National Guard," 8-9; Adjutant General, Report, 1884, p. 17-19, 20-21, 49; 1886, p. 107; Winona Daily Republican, June 7, 30, August 7, 14, 1883, February 28, March 7, 13, May 12, November 13, 18, 19, 20, 21, December 16, 20, 1884; "Proceedings of the Third Annual Convention of the Minnesota National Guard Association," New Ulm, 1882, typed copy in the division of archives and manuscripts, Minnesota Historical Society.

THE "SOCIAL SIDE of soldiering" is the inscription on the back of this photograph. The occasion was a Sunday afternoon card party during the state encampment in July, 1901. The volunteers may have been growing gradually more professional, but the air of frivolity was still much in evidence.



far more a military pageant than a military training exercise. The campgrounds were open to the public from 7:00 A.M. until 10:00 P.M. each day. Grandstand seats were sold for regimental drill in the mornings and for dress parade and band concerts in the evenings. Estimates of the number of visitors to the camp ranged from just under 30,000 to over 45,000 for the week. The culmination of the encampment was a grand governor's reception and ball on Friday and a sham battle (the price of seats in the grandstand went up from ten cents to a quarter for this) on Saturday afternoon.³¹

But times were changing, and so was the Minnesota National Guard. The "epochal" Military Code of 1883 was enacted, "the first official recognition of the potential value of an organized militia [as] necessary to the peace and tranquillity of the State." The statute provided for two regiments of infantry and one battery of field artillery (an amendment appropriated \$2,500 to carry this out), an enlistment period of five years, an annual inspection, an annual encampment of seven days for which each officer and enlisted man was to be paid \$1.50 a day, less 50 cents for subsistence if furnished by the state, an annual allowance of \$7.00 to each organization for each man, the appointment of a commission to recommend a standard uniform to be adopted by all units, and an annual appropriation of \$12,000.³²

Reorganization was rapidly accomplished. More and more units were formed and equipped, although much of the equipment was still being furnished by the men or through funds raised by their efforts. In 1883 Governor Hubbard requested a regular army officer to observe and report on the annual encampments. The next year the state inspector general began regular annual inspections. The sometimes gaudy attire of an earlier day gave way to standard dark blue uniforms. The admission of a company to the Minnesota National Guard required prior inspection by the adjutant general or his representative. Increased emphasis was placed on rifle practice, and much concern was expressed over encampments.³³ The state of Minnesota was beginning to get serious about its military forces.

The more military mien of the Minnesota National Guard soon would be reflected in Company C, Second Battalion. The Winona Guards had been organized from a group of younger men, mostly bachelors, with no prior military experience. Only two of the founding members had served in the military — Ozro B. Gould, who served as its president, and Vice-President Matthew Marvin, both of whom had volunteered in the Civil War. A survey of the members for whom biographical data is readily available shows that all of the leading figures of the original Winona Guards were either businessmen, lawyers, entrepreneurs, or the sons of businessmen, lawyers, and entrepreneurs, who owned shares in at least twenty-one different local banks and business firms. Ten had held

THE ORIGINAL COMPANY OF WINONA GUARDS
(as gleaned from the columns
of the *Winona Daily Republican*)

_____ Bank	F. Lalor
George W. Bohn	_____ Lord
Gus Brigger	Thomas McKenzie
George H. Brink	George Mallory
Alfred Brooks	Matthew Marvin
H. J. Chamberlain	Jeff N. Maybury
George W. Doud	P. H. Mead
W. M. Drew	_____ Monsland
Cornelius Fockens	[John?] W. Morrison
W. H. Garlock	Alex. M. Muir
Frank Gilmens	Adelbert Porter
C. K. Goldsborough	Francis F. Prentiss
Milo G. Coss	Eben M. Roberts
Ozro B. Could	R. J. Rogan
Harry Greer	H. H. Smith
Ed. S. Gregory	Orrin F. Smith
Manning T. Hackley	W. A. Stevens
W. L. Hackley	W. B. Stone
F. E. Higgins	James A. Tawney
George J. Hillyer	W. D. Thomas
John R. Hollowell	C. C. Wade
R[oscoe?] Horton	A. Wirth
C. A. Jeffrey	W. T. Wright
John J. Kendall	Frank Youmans
William H. Laird	

local public office at one time or another. At least nine were Masons, and all those for whom religious affiliation could be ascertained were Protestants. The volunteer units of the late nineteenth century generally maintained some social pretensions and saw themselves as being comprised of the "best young men in the city, socially and professionally." Winona was no exception.³⁴

During the six years that followed the organization of the company, a number of the leading young figures drifted away as, one by one, they fell from bachelorhood into the ranks of the benedicts, and marital ardor replaced the martial ardor of an earlier day. The amateur theatricals grew fewer, dwindling to only one in 1884 in connection with the encampment fund-raising effort. The dances ceased, and December of that year brought with it the laconic announcement that "The Guards have decided not to hold their annual reception this year." By 1886 the inspector general's annual inspection found the company "poorly instructed and not at all proficient in manual of arms or school of the company. Officers do not study the tactics, or post themselves in their duties, otherwise this company should present a better appearance under arms or in drill. Officers are gentlemanly and intelligent, but careless about their duties. Arms showed neglect and were not up to the standard for cleanliness; records in fair condition; military courtesy lacking."³⁵

There was to be a revitalization of the unit, beginning

in the winter of 1886-87 with the infusion of new blood into the company. By 1888 the roster of the enlisted men contained not one name from the original group, and these new names were not those of the business and entrepreneurial families. Nor was it different in the ranks of the commissioned officers. The unit's first captain, Alfred Brooks, moved on to regimental office, as did First Lieutenant John J. Kendall, but both of these men resigned their commissions in June, 1885. The company's original second lieutenant, Manning T. Hackley, became captain in 1883, but he had resigned by November, 1884. President Gould, who also served on the governor's staff, resigned his commission in December, 1885.³⁶

But the transformation of the volunteer militia into a professional military force was yet to come. The Spanish-American War in 1898 forced attention on the general military unpreparedness of the United States. In 1903 "the first important constructive step from the standpoint of the National Guard" was taken with the passage of the Dick Act. It distinguished between the organized militia to be known as the National Guard of the state and a remainder known as reserve militia, offered federal pay for militia training, provided regular army inspectors and instructors, and organized, armed, and equipped local units according to federal standards. In 1908 amendments to the Dick Act removed the restriction that limited service to nine months and allowed the use of these troops outside the continental United States. In addition to the Dick Act, World War I accelerated the conversion of the National Guard from its role as a primarily recreational organization to "a highly organized, well trained military force, filling a definite place in the national plan of defense."³⁷

By 1917 the "social soldiers" of Winona had departed, but they had created an ongoing, organized, volunteer militia company whose existence continues to this day. They and their counterparts in New Ulm, Faribault, Minneapolis, and St. Paul had provided the foundation for the modern Minnesota National Guard.

³⁴ Bunnell, *History of Winona County*; Franklyn Curtiss-Wedge, *History of Winona County, Minnesota*, vols. 1 and 2, (Chicago, 1913) (biographical sketches throughout all three books); Riker, *Soldiers of the States*, 57-58 (quote).

³⁵ *Winona Daily Republican*, December 16, 1884 (first quote); Adjutant General, *Report*, 1886, p. 34 (second quote).

³⁶ Adjutant General, *Report*, 1888, p. 117-118.

³⁷ Adjutant General, "History of the Minnesota National Guard," 13, 19 (quotes); United States, *Statutes at Large*, 32, part 1, 775-780; James Truslow Adams, ed., *Dictionary of American History*, 3:403, 4:59 (New York, 1940).

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