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Fall	W. R. Brown's Civil War Diary The War Within a War	Page 3
1970		
Volume 7	Ramsey County Medical Society Survives Its First 100 Years	Page 14
Number 2	Forgotten Pioneers . . . X	Page 20
	Book Review: History of A Region And A People	Page 22

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ON THE COVER: A field hospital during the Civil War often was literally that, with the surgeons caring for the wounded behind whatever shelter they could find. In this painting by Heisser, from a panorama of the Battle of Gettysburg, surgeons are at work behind a haystack while the battle rages in the field behind them.

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Long trains of canvas-topped wagons, many of them ambulances, were a familiar sight during the Civil War as they wound their way through countless towns, carrying sick and wounded.

*Smallpox, Malaria--
W. R. Brown's
Civil War Diary*

The War Within A War

BY VIRGINIA BRAINARD KUNZ
JAMES O. WALL, M.D.

Preface

THE diary of William R. Brown is more than just one more Civil War diary. It is an interesting, though somewhat fragmentary, account of a war within a war. He writes not of battles but of the struggle to survive disease which killed more than two-thirds of all those in the Union Army who died during the war.

William R. Brown, who had settled at Newport in 1841, was 46 years old, according to the regimental muster, when he enlisted in Company G of the Sixth Minnesota Infantry Regiment on August 16, 1862, just two days before the outbreak of the Sioux War. Almost from the beginning of his service, he was detailed for hospital duty.

Care of the sick and wounded during the Civil War was primitive, to say the very least. Yet it perhaps was only a little more informal than the medical care available to civilians in an era when there were almost no specific medications available, when there were few drugs (digitalis was one exception) which had proven, scientifically documented effects.

Generally, among the Civil War Regi-

ments, a sick man was cared for in his tent by his friends, with the regimental surgeon or assistant surgeon looking in on him. He either got better or worse; if worse, he eventually would be moved to the regimental hospital — if the regiment had been able to set up a hospital in a tent or a series of tents, a barn, a nearby house or any other available building.

Brown's own experiences touch on three major aspects of the Civil War medical services: hospital duty with a regiment in the field, in a hospital at an established post (Fort Snelling), and with troops occupying a southern city (Helena, Arkansas).

Brown had farmed in the Newport area for more than 20 years before the outbreak of the Civil War. He was Justice of the Peace of Newport, and he also owned land at Kaposia, the site of present-day South St. Paul.

A well-read man and deeply religious, he volunteered as a private in the Sixth Minnesota Regiment, although he was considerably older than the usual Civil War enlisted man. His enlistment came at a time when the war was going badly, indeed, for the Union. In Washington the government had faced the reality of a prolonged struggle and sent out calls for more men. Throughout the summer of 1862, recruitment went on in Minnesota, not only for the Sixth Minnesota, but also for the Seventh, Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Infantry Regiments.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: Dr. James O. Wall, a graduate of the University of Minnesota medical school, is a St. Paul physician with an enduring interest in history. Virginia Brainard Kunz is editor of Ramsey County History and executive secretary of the Ramsey County Historical Society.

None of these regiments, however, was to see service in the South for months. For a year, Minnesota was distracted by demands from its panicky citizens that central and southern Minnesota be garrisoned by troops as protection from further Indian attacks, and that the state's western boundary be protected as well.

It is within this setting that Brown kept the diary which follows. It is used here with the permission of his descendants, his grandnieces and grandnephews.

Brown begins his diary nine months after his enlistment, and after the end of the Minnesota phase of the Sioux War during which the Sixth Regiment had fought at Birch Coulee and the Battle of Wood Lake.

Italic paragraphs have been used within the diary itself to set apart explanatory material — military as well as medical.

* * *

MAY 28, 1863. — Left Fort Snelling, marched 3-1/2 miles to a small lake and camped for the night.

MAY 29th. — Marched 23 miles to a small lake 3 miles above Shakopee, the weather dry and warm.

MAY 30TH. — Sunday. Marched 15 miles and camped 1 mile below Belle Plain at a small creek, the Mike Cummings place. The place is abandoned. We found no settlers above Fort Goodhue, the weather dry and very pleasant for marching.

Fort Goodhue, located in southeastern Nicollet County near Le Sueur, was one of the frontier stockades erected by citizens throughout central and southern Minnesota as protection against Indian attacks.

After the Sioux Outbreak of the preceding fall, entire counties in southern Minnesota lost all their inhabitants, as terrified citizens fled to Minneapolis, St. Paul, and the Mississippi River towns.

WED. JUNE 3RD. — We laid by, waiting for other companies to join us and for our mules to rest. This has been a lovely day. At 4 o'clock P.M. Co.[mpany] H. of the 9th Reg.[iment] Minn.[esota] Vol.[unteers] came up with us from Glencoe. We spent the day repairing and target shooting and visiting the deserted houses. The country is rich and



William R. Brown

most beautiful, the health of the men is excellent. Our party consists of Co. F. of the Minn. 6 [Sixth Regiment] and a battery of two 72# [pound] mountain Howitzers, 20 six mule Teams & wagons loaded with supplies, and Co. H. of the Minn. 9th. Capt. Wilson of Co. F. in command. In the afternoon Co. H. of the 9th Minn. Vol. came up from Glencoe & camped near us on their way to Camp Pope, their captain Baxter left behind sick also. 3 teams came up from Fort Snelling with Quarter Master Cornings supplies bound for Camp Pope, and camped near us. We all had a pleasant time together.

Camp Pope, named for Major General John Pope, commander of the army's Department of the Northwest, was established near Redwood Falls as a rendezvous for military expeditions into the Dakotas and to protect Minnesota's western boundary.

JUNE 4TH. — Breakfasted at 5 and started at 6. Co. F. camped 4 miles below Ft. Ridgely near the "Old Brewery" not far from J. R. Brown "Steam Wagon." Poor thing, it stands on the Prairie. Co. H. came into the Fort & camped. I came to the Fort and stopped with Mr. Greenleaf & A. Wilder of Co. I. of the 9th Reg. Found "Mose" well but Arthur is suffering with rheumatism & has been unable to perform Co.[mpany] duty for some months. The boys were very kind to me. I walked over our old camping ground, everything looked quite natural to me.

FRIDAY 5TH. — Co. H. of the 9th remained today at the Fort to draw their pay. Co. F. came along in good season and we move up towards Camp Pope. Came to the "Tower" Agency Ferry at 12 o'clock. One of our wagons upset on the way this morning and hurt one of the men of Co. F., not very seriously, it is thought. We camped near the Agency for the night, 8 miles below Camp Pope (this place is 12 miles above Ft. Ridgely.) So far the weather has been most delightful and our health good. Nothing has transpired to mar the pleasure & harmony of the company. The land up here is good & the face of the country beautiful but timber is scarce. The scenery in places is most charming. This afternoon we hear the good news that Vicksburgh [Vicksburg] is taken, by Gen. Grant. We hope it is true. We have not yet seen an Indian.

The "old campingground" was where the regiment had camped near Fort Ridgely when forces were being assembled in August of 1862 to put down the Indian uprising. Vicksburg was under siege but did not surrender until July 4. The "agency" was the Lower Sioux Agency located near the present site of Morton on the Minnesota River.

In 1860, Joseph R. Brown, pioneer trader, legislator, and editor, brought to Minnesota its first "tractor," a steam-powered machine which he had helped design. Near Henderson, the "steam wagon" sank into the soft mud of a creek. Pried loose, the machine was abandoned near the Fort Ridgely road and it eventually disintegrated.

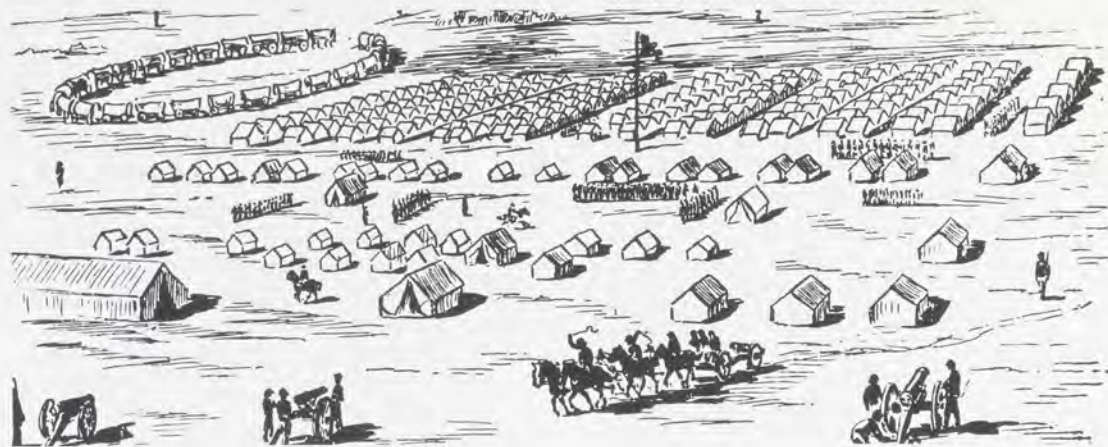
SAT. JUNE 6TH. — Morning cool and pleasant. We started on our march from the Agency at six o'clock for Camp Pope which we reached at about 9-1/2 o'clock. This camp is 9 miles above the Agency and 1

mile from the Red Wood River near the Minnesota River and is the most delightful encampment I have seen. The water here is good & very abundant. The men are in good health & spirits. In the afternoon we had a St. Paul mail. I received a good letter from Mrs. A. W. Hall of St. Paul. Late in the afternoon 3 companies of cavalry came into camp from Fort Ridgely.

SUNDAY JUNE 7TH. — I was ordered to report myself at Fort Ridgely immediately to receive my pay. Started down at 7 o'clock, arrived at the Fort at 12 o'clock and got 4 mo. [months'] pay \$52.00 and returned to camp at 6 o'clock. Very windy, cool and dusty. Saw Greenleaf & Wilder at the Fort in usual health.

MONDAY JUNE 8TH. — Remained in camp [Camp Pope] all day, examined the "Order Book" and found I was detailed for extra duty in the Hospital by order of Col. Wm. Crooks. Special Order No. 13, done at Camp Release Oct. 13, 1862 & that I was returned to my Co.[mpany] by order on the 30th of November and on the first of Dec. I was again detailed for special duty in the Hospital by order of Wm. Crooks. Feb. 16, 1863 I was by order of Col. Crooks sent here by my Co.[commander] The company started up to Glencoe Feb. 18th and arrived there on the nineteenth; on the twentieth I was by special order of Col. Averill for Hospital duty at Glencoe under Dr. Daniels and I have not yet been returned to my Company. Received a box from St. Paul containing sundries. Wrote a letter to my sister Margaret also 1 to Bro. [Brother] & sister Frost

Camp Pope, as it was when William R. Brown was there. Sketched by A. P. Connolly for his book, Minnesota Massacre.



of St. Paul and I to Bro. & Sister Patten of St. Paul. In the afternoon I was sent one mile out from camp with I. D. Hill of Co. F. 6 Reg. Minn. Vol. who is sick of smallpox or varioloid. We pitched a small tent on the hill back of the camp & here I shall remain some days with Mr. Hill. I have never before been exposed to the smallpox but as my trust is [in] God in whom I live and have my being, I have no fear of smallpox or of death itself.

William Crooks, superintendent of the St. Paul & Pacific Railroad Company, was named colonel of the Sixth Minnesota Regiment in August, 1862.

The medical term for smallpox is variola. Varioloid is a term meaning "resembling smallpox," or a mild form of smallpox sometimes occurring in persons who have been vaccinated. Smallpox was just one of the diseases (measles and typhoid fever were others) which decimated Civil War regiments that often were made up of men from isolated areas. The contagious nature of smallpox had been recognized for many years and physicians knew isolation was necessary.

TUESDAY JUNE 9TH. — I find that I am one day behind time. It was on Tues. afternoon that I went outside of the camp with Hill & not Monday as I have written it.

WED. JUNE 10TH. — My patient rested pretty well last night and is quite comfortable this morning, the Pox is coming out on his face, arms & legs. The Dr. [Wharton] came out to see him & says he is doing well.

THURS. JUNE 11TH. — Morning clear & warm. My patient is doing well. The pox is coming out on him thick & begins to itch a little, his diet is bread & blackberries but he has but little appetite for anything. I am not well this morning, pain in my head, feel dull & weak. The day has been very warm, about sunset rained a little.

The regimental surgeon was Dr. Alfred Wharton. Dr. Jared W. Daniels was assistant surgeon. The pox erupted on the patient's chest and stomach first, then spread to the arms, legs and face. His diet was of little significance medically.

FRIDAY JUNE 12TH. — Clear and very warm. My patient still seems to be doing well. I feel a little better than I did yesterday.

SAT. JUNE 13TH. — Morning clear & warm. My patient seems to be doing well, the pox all over his arms, legs & some on his body.

I feel tolerably well, had toothache last evening, had my tooth filled with cotton saturated with creosote [creosote] and this morning it is easy. Drs. Wharton & [Jared W.] Daniels have both been to see my patient for the last two days. Today I wrote a letter to my bro.[ther] John Holway and another to Sister Robert Gibbon of St. Paul.

The cotton created a simple plug for his aching tooth. Anything not water-soluble could have been used. However, creosote was known to be an all-purpose anti-bacterial agent, as well as a local anesthetic.

SUNDAY JUNE 14TH. — Morning clear, warm & windy. Patient doing well. My health good, received a letter from Sister Mag, learned that Sister Fannie was in Iowa. First I have heard of the death of Auntie Clarke who lived in Urbana, Ohio. I hope she was ripe for Heaven. In the afternoon I received a letter from Mrs. I. G. Wilder of Shakopee. Received 2 more small pox patients. Was told by Drs. Wharton & Daniels that I would be sent with the men who have the smallpox down to Fort Ridgely & remain there for the present. Wrote a letter to Mrs. Wilder.

On June 16, the Sixth Regiment moved out of Camp Pope as part of General Henry Hastings Sibley's summer expedition against the Sioux in the Dakotas. Brown was staying behind with his patients, and thus was ordered to move them to Fort Ridgely.

MONDAY MORNING JUNE 15TH. — Went down to Fort Ridgeley, got my description list of Capt. Sties. Weather warm and windy. My first patient Hill is quite sick, at 12 o'clock an ambulance wagon came along to remove the Pest Hospital down to Fort Ridgely. We soon struck our tent & were off. I went with Hill, I. W. Beard, & George Cady, Jr., all smallpox patients. We got along well, arrived at the Fort at seven o'clock & camped 1/4 mile south of the Fort in a small tent not half as large as it should be.

TUES. JUNE 16TH. — Morning warm & windy. Patients doing well. The muskitoes nearly devoured us last night. Dr. Miller came down to see the sick & pronounced us doing well, prescribed salts & rhubarb for the boys in small doses and promised us larger quarters & musketoe bars. It has been hot & very uncomfortable all day.

"Salts" were a purgative. Table salt often was used. Rhubarb, in moderate doses, also acted as a purgative. During the middle of the Nineteenth Century,

the general rule seems to have been, "when in doubt, bleed or purge." It is interesting to note, throughout this portion of the diary, that when his patients seem to be doing well, Brown remarks that his own health is good. When his patients are not doing well, Brown sometimes does not feel well, either.

WED. JUNE 17TH. — Morning clear & warm. Patients doing well, pox drying up on Hill. No Dr. today, no tents yet. Wrote to Sister Mag.

THURS. JUNE 18TH. — Weather dry, cool, pleasant. My health good. Patients doing well.

FRIDAY JUNE 19TH. — Cloudy & cold, looks like rain. Hill & Beard pretty sick. Hill drying up pretty fast. Dr. Bingham called to see the boys. We drew a wall tent, stove ax & spade & water barrel today. I am well. Mail came up from St. Paul but I got no letters or papers.

SATURDAY JUNE 20TH. — Weather cloudy, windy & cold. Put up a stove in our tent. Patients getting along slowly. Gloomy & very unpleasant.

SUNDAY JUNE 21ST. — Weather cool, wind from the northwest. Patients doing well. I have finished a letter to Cousin Emily Coles of Cincinnati & have promised to tell her, in my next what I am doing today viz. nursing small pox patients. In the afternoon Hill appears to be sinking, went for the Doctor, he came & prescribed milk punch which had the effect of reviving him.

MONDAY JUNE 22ND. — Morning cool and pleasant. Hill appears to be a little better than he was last evening. Beard is doing well. Hill had another of his ill turns this afternoon but by the use of stimulants, we revived him again. During the night Hill was altogether out of his mind and insensible to pain.

TUES. JUNE 23RD. — Morning clear & pleasant. At 7-1/2 o'clock I. D. Hill died. I have written to A. & W. W. Hill, his friends in Red Wing, informing them of his death.

Death probably was due to an overwhelming toxicity from the disease. Hill's delirium would suggest this. Smallpox, however, is not painful and insensitivity to pain might suggest that he did not respond to efforts to rouse him.

The milk punch prescribed for Hill probably was a mixture of milk and whiskey or rum. For many years, medi-



A Civil War ambulance wagon photographed on the Bull Run battlefield.

cine held to the traditional feeling that whiskey, since it increased the circulation, could be used as a standard treatment for anything that seemed to set a patient back.

WED. JUNE 24TH. — Weather dry & pleasant. My patients doing well. We buried Hill in the graveyard belonging to this Fort. Yesterday at 4-1/2 P.M. The surgeon ordered his blankets & clothes to be burned up, and also the blankets belonging to the Hospital that had been used on Hill's bed. Deposited Hill's gun & equipment with the Commander of the Post, Col. Marsh, & took of the Ordnance [Ordnance] Seargent a memorandum receipt for the same. The Col. ordered his knapsack, Haversack & canteen to be burned.

THURS. JUNE 25TH. — Weather dry & very warm. I do not feel well this morning. I fear I am taking the smallpox. Was feverish all night.

FRIDAY JUNE 26TH. — Weather clear and pleasant, patients doing well. I am better this morning, I am not taking the smallpox as I feared. Received a letter from my friend A. H. Cathcart of St. Paul. Received by express a box of sundries for the use & benefit of the sick in the "Pest Hospital" under my charge from the Ladies Aide Society of Shakopee. Have not opened it yet.

SATURDAY JUNE 27TH. — Had a fine shower of rain this morning at 5 o'clock, a good shower. I had a toothache all night and still it aches. All day threatening rain. A number of soldiers of the 6th Min. Vol. started from this Post to go to Fort Snelling today.

It was standard procedure to burn a smallpox patient's bedding and clothing. It's possible that Brown's own fever might have been caused by an abscessed tooth.

The headquarters of some companies of the Sixth Regiment, including Brown's Company G, were at this time at Fort Snelling.

SUN. JUNE 28TH. — Morning cool and pleasant. Patients doing well. I feel tolerably well.

MON. JUNE 29TH. — Weather continues good. Patient improving. One of my patients, George Cady, was returned to duty in the Fort. I opened the box of "The Ladies Aide Society" of Shakopee & found [it] all right.

TUES. JUNE 30TH. — I wrote to Miss C. D. G. of Shakopee acknowledging the receipt of the box sent me by the Ladies Aide Society of Shakopee also to Sister E. Johnston & A. H. Cathcart.

WED. JULY 1ST. — Weather continues good. I am well. My patients begin to walk around. The scabs are all dropping off, eat well & have a good appetite.

THURS. JULY 2, 1863. — Weather warm, cloudy & very dry. My patient is getting along well, eats & sleeps well & walks about some. My health is good, have written a letter to my cousin Jennie Clarke and one to Mary Zimmerman.

FRI. JULY 3RD. — Morning clear, cool & very pleasant. Beard, my patient, is about well. The ground is remarkably dry. The river is very low.

JULY 4, 1863. — Morning clear, warm and fine. The men of the Fort firing crackers, guns, cannon all the morning. Miss Mary Greenleaf arrived at this place from Shakopee last evening. Met with some United Brethren up here today, the first I have met with. I shall attend some of their meetings & learn more of them.

Brown's continual references to the weather are characteristic of many Civil War diaries and these references are more than idle notations. For men living out-of-doors, in the field, weather was of the utmost importance.

Brown's religious faith comes through in his diary notations. He was a Methodist, a founder of St. Paul's Market Street Church, and his references to "Brother" and "Sister" usually are to fellow church members.

JULY 5TH. — This is the Lords Day. Warm



William Crooks

& clear. I am well. My patient is now well, has gone up to see the boys at the Fort. I hope to spend my next Sabbath in St. Paul. Yesterday two men of the Battery were very badly hurt by having their hands blown off by premature explosion of the cartridge in two of the canons. I wrote a letter to Mrs. George Scotten of St. Paul. At 2 o'clock P.M. heard Rev. Smert preach a sermon.

MONDAY JULY 6TH. — Morning warm & still, the musketoes very thick. My patient has orders to repair to his quarters and I shall remove my tent back to the Q. M. D.

TUESDAY JULY 7TH. — Morning clear and warm. The day has been very warm. My patient has returned to his quarters and have broken up & vacated the Pest Hospital. Received two letters, one from Mrs. L. G. Wilder & one from Rev. Mr. N. Adams.

WED. JULY 8TH. — Weather exceedingly warm. The atmosphere is filled with smoke as though the prairies were burning. We hear that the prairies are on fire. I am now waiting for transportation to Ft. Snelling.

THURS. JULY 9TH. — The weather very warm. The sun is obscured by a dense smoke that fills the atmosphere. Today we hear good news from the south. General Lees army has been routed at Gettysburgh. Glorious news!

FRIDAY JULY 10TH. — Day warm & remarkably smoky. The atmosphere is filled with smoke. Indians say the swamp Turf is on fire above here which makes so much smoke. Glorious news came by mail from our armies south. Vicsburgh taken. Lees army defeated at Gettysburgh, Pa. A victory won at Helena, Arkansas. Glory to God!

SAT. JULY 11TH. — Weather changed. Very cool, smoky. Considerable wind from the north.

SUN. JULY 12TH. — Weather continues very dry. The air very smoky, but cool and pleasant. I am well. Heard two sermons preached.

MON. JULY 13TH. — Morning quite cool, saw quite a frost on the grass and weeds on the low ground.

TUES. JULY 14TH. — Dry, smoky. Cool & windy. I am well.

WED. JULY 15TH. — Weather dry, smoky & cool. Paymaster came & payed us 2 mo. pay.

THURS. JULY 16TH. — Weather pleasant, dry smoky. I have written a letter to Aunt Jane Clarke. This evening we hear further news from our armies for which I praise God & give Him the Glory.

FRI. JULY 17TH. — Morning pleasant, has the appearance of rain. The Colonel promises me transportation to Fort Snelling tomorrow.

SAT. JULY 18TH. — Took stage and came to St. Peter, had a pleasant trip. Put up at "The North Western Hotel", called on Dr. T. S. Williamson Family and stayed over night with them. Had a pleasant visit at Dr. Williamsons. The Dr. is at Rock Island with Indians that are in prison.

SUNDAY JULY 19TH. — Saw Col. [Alexander] Wilkin, heard Rev. Mr. Kerr preach. Weather cloudy, some rain. Got transportation to go to St. Paul in Burbanks stage, had a good time & pleasant time at Dr. Williamsons.

Some of the Sioux who were captured after the Battle of Wood Lake in 1862 were later imprisoned for a time at Rock Island, Illinois. Missionaries like Dr. Williamson stayed with them there.

Colonel Wilkin commanded the Ninth Minnesota Infantry Regiment.

MON. JULY 20TH. — Took stage early in the morning for St. Paul, had good company & a good time coming down. Dined at Belle Plain, got to Shakopee at 5 P.M. and arrived at St. Paul at 10 o'clock. I stayed over night with [Brother] Zimmerman, found all well.

TUES. JULY 21ST. — Remained at St. Paul today. Found my friends well, found no letters or papers here.

WED. JULY 22ND. — Reported to Commander of Fort Snelling, got leave of absence for two days, returned to St. Paul, visited

Carvers Cave, attended Prayer Meeting at Market Street Church, found them quite dead but with little faith in the Church.

THURS. JULY 23RD. — Presented my application through Lieut. G. W. Prescott, together with a recommendation from Lt. Col Marsh of the 9th Reg. & approved by Col. Wilkin of the 9th to Col. [Stephen A.] Miller for a furlough and failed to get one.

FRI. JULY 24TH. — Received from Col. Miller an order to report myself to Com. [mander] of Fort Snelling for duty as nurse in Hospital. Came to Fort and was put on duty as nurse in 1st ward. Received per mail from Fort Abercromby Special Order #108 by which I was detailed at Camp Pope as nurse to take charge of small Pox patients & remain with them till they are convalescent, then to report myself to Fort Snelling for further orders. One man died in my ward today, John Sullivan, of typhoid fever. His brother took him over to Mendota to inter him on "Consecrated Ground." The poor man has been delirious for over a week.

Colonel Miller commanded the Seventh Regiment. "Consecrated ground" refers to the Roman Catholic cemetery at Mendota.

SUN. AUG. 24TH. — Nothing worth recording has transpired for some time. I am in tolerable health, am confined to my duty.

FORT SNELLING, FEB. 18, 1864. — I was relieved from duty as nurse in Ward #1, Hospital at Fort Snelling and made Hospital Commissary at this Post which place I have held since about the 1st of December last. I have made application to the War Department for the command as Captain of a negro company, my captian recommended me to Col. Crooks & Col. Crooks recommended me to Gen. H. H. Sibley.

MARCH 22, 1864. — I am well. Some time since Gen. Sibley gave me a recommendation to the War Dept. for a commission as Capt. of a Co. in a negro reg. I don't care much about the appointment. I now rather wish I had not made the application.

APR. 26, 1864. — I am well, have been quite well during the past winter. Our Reg. [iment, the] 6th Minn. is ordered down onto the Potomac, no marching orders yet. Don't know when we will have [them]. I would rather remain here, provided I can keep my place (hospital commissary at this Post). But I would rather go down to the Potomac than go out on the Plains after the Indians.



Camp Buford, the Sixth Minnesota Infantry Regiment's encampment at Helena, Arkansas.

I have lately written to my friends all around & now I am ready to go anywhere the Lord may direct. I recognize the hand of God in everything. No harm comes to any of his children. My trust is in God and His Son, Jesus Christ, My Lord & Savior, Glory & honor & Power be unto His Name, now & forever, Amen.

The weather this spring is cool & dry, the rivers low. I have not yet been down the river before the Board to pass examination touching my qualifications to receive a commission in a Negro Reg. I have almost given up the idea of appearing before the Board at all. I am conscious I am not "Posted." I would not Pass Muster. I am not entirely satisfied with my present state of mind, religiously I have no feeling at all. I am not aware that I have backslidden. I am still endeavoring to Trust in Christ & Him only. I know he is the Savior of all men but especially of them who Believe. My heart is set to walk by Faith in God, oh Lord, my God, help me.

MAY 26, 1864. — Sent a letter to my cousin Emily Coles of Cincinnati. Am well, weather fair & pleasant. Dr. Daniels & Farley left this Post yesterday on the Expedition. I am now reading James on Christian Progress. I am very much pleased with it. I have just read "The Patriarchal Age" by George Smith, a most excellent work. My Trust is still with the Lord Christ.

* * *

Here Brown begins his description of the Sixth Minnesota's journey by boat and by "the cars" to Helena, Arkansas.

JUNE 15, 1864. — 6th Reg. Min. Vol. left St. Paul yesterday evening at eleven o'clock on the Steamer Enterprise for the south. We reached Prescott at the mouth of Lake St.

Croix at 4 o'clock in the morning. We left Prescott at 8 o'clock on board the Steamer War Eagle. Weather cool & pleasant, reached Red Wing at 2 o'clock P.M. Passed Lake City 5 o'clock. Passed Wabashaw at sundown, landed & lay to until morning.

JUNE 16, 1864. — Reached Winona at 9 o'clock A.M. Passed Trans. below. Weather dry & pleasant. Scenery on Lake Pepin magnificent, grand & lovely. The Lake unusually low this year. My health good. I was put [on] guard duty at 12 o'clock yesterday and relieved at 12 o'clock today. Reached La Crosse at about 4 o'clock yesterday P.M. & Prairie Du Chien at 10.

JUNE 17TH. — Reached Dunleith at 7 o'clock this morning. I mailed a letter to A. H. Cathcart at this place. Here we take the cars for Cairo. Put two days rations in our haversacks, hard tack & pork. Landed at Dunleith at seven o'clock in the morning & started in the cars at about 10 for Cairo, reached Freeport at about 4 P.M. This part of the country appears to be suffering very much for want of rain, grain short & sickly looking. Country well settled, large farms.

The grass in places is burning, fences burning up. Young orchards all along the way, farm houses generally good. The ladies cheer us on all along the road. Freeport is quite a good size & thrifty place. The crops here are as backward as in Minn. At 5 P.M. we reached Dixon one hundred & five miles from Dunleith, a handsome little city situated on a handsome river. The surrounding country is beautiful. The crops here look better than they did farther north. At 7 P.M. we reached Hamburg, quite a large town, but it is situated on low land. I think it can't

be healthy. The country through here is low & flat. I do not like it.

JUNE 18TH. — Saturday. Run all night & made 228 miles by daylight. Country continues flat. Water near the surface. Here & there I see an orchard with large trees. This whole country is suffering from long drought. Crops not much in advance of Min.[nesota]. Here we occasionally see living hedges, they look very beautiful. At 7 o'clock we reached Decatur, a handsome little town. Here we saw a large shop for manufacturing agricultural implements. The weather cool & pleasant. The Ladies have cheered us all along the route. Here we see large peach orchards, not many cherries. We now see Sasafraz, shell bark, hickory mulberry & Sycamore trees. We reached Centralia at 3 o'clock P.M. a most beautiful place but this whole country is suffering for want of rain.

CAIRO, ILL. JUNE 19TH. — We reached this city at 12 o'clock last evening. This morning we marched out 2 miles into the woods and lay until 5 P.M. then marched back to the wharf to embark for Memphis. This is a business place but a dirty stinking hole. People look pale & sallow. Oh, what bustle & hurry, it beats all. The air is very unhealthy, the very air stinks. Soldiers pay 10 & 15 cents for one glass Lemonade. I see that one man is a small part of this world. We find the weather warm & oppressive, water very bad, oh, for a drink of Minnesota water. I had time to write 3 letters & mail them here. One to R. Russell, St. Paul, one to Waldegg, Fort Snelling & one to Mrs. Maggie Church, Newport, Minn. Here we pay a Dime for a pound of ice. The people here just fleece the poor soldiers.

ON BOARD THE EMPRESS, JUNE 20TH. — We embarked [on] this boat at 11 o'clock A.M. today for Memphis. We passed Columbus, Ky. at 4 P.M. Saw a great many canons and a large quantity of balls on shore. A part of the Min[nesota] 10th Reg. is stationed at Columbus. Saw one Iron clad gunboat. The people down this way give us no welcome. Passed Hickman, Ky. about 5 o'clock P.M. Everything seems to be going to ruin down here, houses deserted & delapidated fences mostly gone. Very little land cultivated. We had a fine shower of rain about noon today. We passed Island #10 at 7 P.M. The Island is small, stands pretty high above water & admirably chosen to obstruct navigation as it stands in a short

bend of the river. The soldiers quarters are still standing but the fortifications are pretty much gone.

JUNE 21ST. — Morning clear & pleasant. Steamer lay by a part of last night. Here we all loaded our guns and prepared for action as guerilla parties often fire into passing boats. We are all in good spirits and healthy. At 11 A.M. we passed by Fort Pillow, saw the earth works, the guns are all removed, nothing remarkable in the appearance of the place. At seven P.M. we arrived at the city of Memphis. From the river the city makes a fine appearance, it is compact & the buildings are good, many splendid. Here we see ironclad gunboats & mortars. The river at this point is large. At present this is a place of great business. The country along the river above this place is almost deserted. We lay at this place all night, the Min. 7th [Regiment] came in about 12 o'clock last night. They with other troops start out about 30 miles to give Forest a fight.

Island Number Ten was a Confederate stronghold, a strategically-located island in a bend of the Mississippi above Memphis. It was captured by Union men in the spring of 1863. Fort Pillow, a Confederate stronghold outside of Memphis, also was now in Union hands. The country Brown describes had been heavily fought over for more than two years.

General Nathan Bedford Forrest was the famed Confederate cavalry officer and one of the military geniuses of the war.

JUNE 22ND. — The steamer lay over last night on account of storms & darkness. We arrived at Helena, Ark., the place of our destination at 6 A.M. & we immediately disembarked & formed in line in the street & came to a parade rest & remained until 7 o'clock, A.M. In the meantime we strolled around on the streets sightseeing. Here are found the China tree, the catalpa, cucumber, osage oranges & other southern trees. We received no shouts of welcome from the citizens here but a spirit of gloom & dejection rested on their faces. We could feel we were not among our friends. The faces of the people were pale & sallow, showing the effects of the climate. At a little after 9 A.M. we were marched a little way above town & encamped on the river bank, a very bad camping place, a wet swampy piece of ground in our rear and our camp is low & muddy in wet weather & liable to overflow in high

water, with no shade trees to protect us from the blazing heat of the sun. We have issued to us a shelter tent to each man which is a light piece of cotton cloth 7 ft. by 4 ft. wide. This is all a man has to shelter him from sun & rain. We use the [Mississippi] River water which is very disagreeable & unhealthy. Here our prospect is good for much sickness & suffering. May the Lord have mercy on us.

JUNE 24TH. — This afternoon most of our Reg.[iment] & a reg. of Cavalry & 2 sections of a Battery were ordered off on an expedition down the Miss. River on steamboats & up the Arkansaw & White Rivers to drive off or catch a band of Rebels but on our arrival at the mouth of the White River we learned that Gen. Mamaduke was a few miles further up & had Batteries of heavy guns & as we were not in a condition to attack him we turned about & came back to camp after an absence of two days. The water of the Ark. River was exceedingly bad & disagreeable to drink. We took some 4 or 5 men prisoners. We found the women very strong secessionists.

We made one small expedition into the State of Miss. in search of cotton & found 25 bales. I conversed with some intelligent and respectable southern Ladies & they were all without exception strong Secesh, one of them admitting that the South took a wrong step when they went out of the Union and that they should have remained in and contended for & if necessary fought for their "Constitutional" Rights. But as they had now withdrawn from it and declared themselves Independent they would fight if necessary as long as they had a man to fight. They would never come back into the Union, no, never. They had always hated the Northern people & were glad to separate from them on any terms.

I observed a great amount of ignorance among them in relation to the progress of the war. One of the Ladies admitted that much & said she had not seen a newspaper for six months. I found all their large plantations in ruins & grown with weeds. They were raising small fields of corn for home consumption. I saw but very little cotton growing. The people appeared to be very destitute of clothing & every other manufactured article. I am quite sure that the war bears very heavy upon them. The negroes have nearly all left their masters. I saw only a few old negro women on the plantation.

On this expedition I found the weather to be most intolerably hot & oppressive. When I got back to camp I was sick & had to take some medicine. I kept about in a half sick condition & on the first of July I was detailed as nurse for the Hospital. I went in & tried to work but was taken immediately with Typhoid Fever & lay in the Hospital with it, taking medicine, until the 19th of July & then I was removed to the Post Hospital where I had a cooler place. There I commenced to mend slowly but soon after I got over the typhoid Fever I took the Intermittent Fever & had it a long time. After I got over that I got so I could walk around a little, I was taken with fever and ague. I had that a few days then I was in a very debilitated & feeble condition and in a few days was taken with Chronic Diarrhea which hung unto me for several weeks.

* * *

The outbreak of malaria that decimated the Sixth Regiment was one of the tragedies of the Civil War, for Minnesota troops. Brown has graphically described conditions at Helena, and the wet, swampy campgrounds on low, mosquito-infested ground.

Within a week, 111 men of the regiment were sick, and Brown was again assigned to hospital duty. By the end of July, 462 men out of the 954 who had arrived at Helena, were on the sick rolls — including Brown himself. By the end of September, 654 were sick. Seldom were more than 200 men fit for duty and, at one time, only 26 were able to report for roll call. In all, according to regimental records, 121 men died, most of them from malaria.

Among the sick was the regiment's surgeon, Dr. Alfred Wharton, who was forced to resign from military service. Among the dead was Dr. Augustus O. Potter, assistant surgeon.

Charles W. Johnson, a private in Company D who later wrote the history of the regiment for *Minnesota in the Civil War and Indian War*, has left a vivid picture of this dedicated physician, who was typical of many others who tried so hard to ease the suffering of the men in their care:

Dr. Potter, Johnson wrote, was "literally overwhelmed with work, night and day." He "could be seen going through the camp, with his shirt sleeves rolled up, bottles and powders in both hands, attending to the urgent calls upon him."

The calls upon him, upon the other doctors, and upon those who worked with them, like William R. Brown, often had to do with a complexity of diseases. Brown has recorded his own experience. He first became ill with typhoid fever — one of the great scourges of the Civil War armies — probably from the camp's supply of drinking water. The medicine he mentions was not specific, but was symptomatic only — aimed at easing the intense discomfort of his illness.

Brown next "took the Intermittent Fever," followed by fever and ague. It is probable that he was suffering from two different types of malaria, distinguished by the length of time between crises, or attacks. The chronic diarrhea, which certainly seems to have been Brown's last, bitter cup, may have been a specific complication of malaria, or yet another infection from impure water. His debilitated and feeble condition was a natural result of overwhelming illness and such complications as the anemia malaria produces.

It is a tribute to the hardiness of this pioneer Minnesota farmer, and perhaps, also, a case of sheer luck, that he survived the war. He was mustered out August 19, 1865; he returned to Newport, married again (his first wife had died sometime during the Civil War years), took up his civilian pursuits and died in 1879 at the age of 63.



Dr. Jared W. Daniels

A Civil War hospital, similar to the base hospital of today.





Photo by Henry Hall

THE GIBBS HOUSE

Headquarters of the Ramsey County Historical Society, 2097 Larpenteur Avenue West, St. Paul, Minnesota.

THE Ramsey County Historical Society was founded in 1949. During the following years the Society, believing that a sense of history is of great importance in giving a new, mobile generation a knowledge of its roots in the past, acquired the 100-year-old farm home which had belonged to Heman R. Gibbs. The Society restored the Gibbs House and in 1954 opened it to the public as a museum which would depict the way of life of an early Minnesota settler.

In 1958, the Society erected a barn behind the farm house which is maintained as an agricultural museum to display the tools and other implements used by the men who broke up the prairie soil and farmed with horse and oxen. In 1966, the Society moved to its museum property a one-room rural schoolhouse, dating from the 1870's. The white frame school came from near Milan, Minnesota. Now restored to the period of the late 1890's, the school actually is used for classes and meetings. In the basement beneath the school building, the Society has its office, library and collections. In 1968, the Society acquired from the University of Minnesota the use of the white barn adjoining the Society's property. Here is housed a collection of carriages and sleighs which once belonged to James J. Hill.

Today, in addition to maintaining the Gibbs property, the Ramsey County Historical Society is active in the preservation of historic sites in Ramsey county, conducts tours, prepares pamphlets and other publications, organizes demonstrations of pioneer crafts and maintains a Speakers' Bureau for schools and organizations. It is the Society's hope that through its work the rich heritage of the sturdy men and women who were the pioneers of Ramsey County will be preserved for future generations.