

William Andrews Clark

1828-1916

Civil War Medal of Honor Recipient



William Clark stands on the left

Birth Date & Location:	July 24, 1828, Pennsylvania
Entered Service:	Date & Location: July 15, 1861 2d Minnesota Volunteer Infantry
Recruited:	Shelbyville, MN
Branch:	Army
Conflict:	Civil War
Death:	January 9, 1916, Nicollet County MN

Early Years:

William Andrews Clark was born in Pennsylvania. By time the Civil War started, William had moved to Shelbyville, MN. When William Clark enlisted in 1861, Shelbyville, MN, was at the height of its days as a town. As the railroad moved thru Shelby Township (named after Shelbyville, Indiana) the townsfolk moved 2 miles north to form the town of Amboy. By 1881, Shelbyville was completely deserted.

The War Years

William enlisted with Company H, 2d Minnesota Volunteer Infantry Regiment, on July 15, 1861. On Dec 17, 1863, he re-enlisted and continued to fight for the Minnesota 2d until he was discharged as a Sergeant on July 1, 1865, with the rest of his company.

William's recommendation for The Medal of Honor was for his part in the defense of a wagon train near Nolensville, Tennessee, on February 15, 1863. He was one of 16 men who repelled the attack of the 125th Calvary (confederate), and saved the wagon train.

The following excerpt is from the book *The Heritage of Blue Earth County* by Julie Hiller Schrader.

"On Sunday morning, February 15, 1863, fifteen men of Company H, 2nd Minnesota Infantry were detailed as guards on twenty-one supply wagons sent out to obtain forage, First Sergeant Livolo Holmes, Corporal William A. Clark, Privates Joseph Burger and Milton Hannawere among the blue Earth County soldiers who went along on the relatively normal assignment. The main mission was to fill the wagons with corn and return to camp. They were near Nolensville, Tennessee and about nine miles from Triune. While on the road to their destination, they met a negro who warned them that they had better go back at once, as a large detachment of Rebel cavalry had sized them up through field glasses from a neighboring hill and would attack them.

The orders were to get the forage and so they proceeded, but by a different route. This took them about a half mile to the left of a large plantation, where they commenced to load the wagons with corn and other supplies. In the meantime, two companies of the 1st. Alabama Cavalry had followed them to the plantation. The cavalry had come down the main entrance road into the plantation, which had a high split rail fence on both sides; this lane was only 16 ft. wide. The Rebels charged down upon them firing their carbines and yelling, "Surrender, you damned Yanks!"

The men of the 2nd Minnesota stood at the end of the lane and fired into the horses and due to the narrowness of the lane, succeeded in stampeding them. Each soldier only had forty cartridges with him. They loaded, aimed and fired repeatedly until the Rebels withdrew. When the Minnesota boys counted their ammunition up afterwards they found that they had averaged thirty two shots per soldier. A Confederate Captain, two Lieutenants and twelve enlisted men were killed; fifteen prisoners and forty horses were taken back to camp. The only casualties suffered by the Yanks were three slight wounds, including 16 yr. old Joseph Burger. All of the men who participated in this brave defense were awarded Medals of Honor; President Lincoln even heard the news of this small, but glorious victory which was printed in many northern newspapers. All the soldiers received letters from the War Department similar to this one which was sent to Lovilo Holmes, dated July 30, 1863. "Lovilo N. Holmes, Esq., Sir-you are hereby notified that by direction of the President and under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved March 3, 1863 providing for the presentation of Medals of Honor to such officers, non-commissioned officers and privates as have most distinguished themselves in action, a Congressional Medal of Honor has this day been presented to you for most distinguished gallantry in action....Respectfully, R.A. Alger, Secretary of War"

William was awarded the Medal of Honor on September 11, 1887, over 24 years after he bravely faced the 125th Calvary.

Post War Years:

After being discharged from the army, William married Lorana Keene (1826-1908) in 1866. They had 2 children: a son William G Clark (1867-1937) and a daughter Minnie Clarrie (Clark) Dalh (1877-1947). While William G never married, Minnie married Albin Dahl and had 11 children. William and his family lived in the Nicollet Co area of Minnesota near Kerns.

William died January 9, 1916, and was buried in Hebron Cemetery, Nicollet Co, MN. The following is his obituary:

W. A. Clark CALLED BY DEATH

Early resident of Blue Earth County and Long Resident of Nicollet County passed away.

W.A. Clark one of the early settlers of Nicollet county, and a veteran of the civil war, passed away at his home near Kerns yesterday afternoon at 5:30 from the effects of complications brought on by advancing years.

The Deceased was born in Pennsylvania July 24, 1828, and moved to Indiana in 1855, and thence to Minnesota. Later in 1855, taking up the second claim pre-empted in Shelby Township, this country.

At the outbreak of the Civil War he enlisted in Company H, second Minnesota volunteers, and served throughout the war with distinction. At the battle of Nashville, Tennessee, he received a medal for bravery on the field of battle.

He returned to Nicollet county in 1866, when he was united in marriage to Miss Lorana Keene, and in 1869 he moved to Nicollet county, where he made his home near Kerns up to the time of his death.

The deceased is survived by his son William Clark, who lives on the farm at Kerns, and two brothers living in Indiana.

The funeral will be held from the Kerns church Wednesday afternoon a 2 0" clock and burial will take place in the Hebron cemetery.



Sources

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