

Samuel D. Phillips

Born

28 January 1845
Butler County, Ohio¹

Served

Civil War, Company B, 29th Illinois Volunteer Infantry
and
Western Frontier Indian Campaign, Private, Company H, 2nd U.S. Cavalry

Entered Service in the Civil War

1 September 1861
Company B, 29th Illinois Volunteer Infantry
Cairo, Illinois

Honorably Discharged for Disability

3 April 1862
Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee

Re-enlisted

23 September 1876
Private, Company H, 2nd U.S. Cavalry.
St. Louis, Missouri

Action Place

Muddy Creek, Montana
Action Date: May 7, 1877

Honorably Discharged for Disability

22 May 1879
Fort Assiniboine, Montana²

Died

12 November 1915
Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota³

Early Years

Samuel D. Phillips was born 28 January 1845 on a farm in Butler County Ohio to parents John Phillips and Elizabeth McClain.

In 1850, the Phillips family was living in Morgan Township, Butler County, Ohio. John Phillips was a farmer who owned land valued at \$3,000. The family was large. There were eight children including 6-year-old Samuel. Also living with the family was Elizabeth's brother, William McClain.⁴ John Phillips died in October 1859. In 1860, Samuel age 15, was living with his widowed mother and three older siblings in Butler County, Illinois.⁵

¹ State of Minnesota, death certificate no. 23005 (1915), Samuel D. Phillips; Division of Vital Statistics, St. Paul.

² Military information from pension application and certificate. Samuel D. Phillips, (Private, Co. H, 2nd U.S. Cavalry), veterans invalid pension, application no. 1,126,695, certificate no. 1,033,933, claims folder no. C-2,543,800; Record Group 15; Department of Veterans Affairs; National Archives, Washington, D.C

³ State of Minnesota, death certificate no. 23005, Samuel D. Phillips.

⁴ 1850 U. S. census, Butler County, Ohio, population schedule, Morgan Township, p. 484B (stamped), dwelling 1553, family 1704, John Phillips; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 14 June 2016); citing NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 663.

⁵ 1860 U.S. census, Butler County, Ohio, mortality schedule 3, p. 1, line 9, John Philips; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 14 June 2016); citing NARA microfilm publication T1159, roll 29.

The War Years

Civil War (1861-1862)

On 1 September 1861, 16-year-old Samuel enlisted during the Civil War in Company B, 29th Illinois Volunteer Infantry at Cairo, Illinois.⁶ On 3 April 1862, after serving for seven months and three days, Samuel was honorably discharged for medical reasons at Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee. The medical record in Samuel's disability pension revealed that from 27 December 1861 to 23 February 1862 he was treated for pneumonia, diarrhea and typhoid fever.⁷ It is interesting to note that the Battle of Shiloh, also known as the Battle of Pittsburg Landing, was fought April 6-7, 1862. 17-year-old Samuel just missed fighting in this two-day battle that resulted in more than 23,000 casualties. It was the bloodiest battle in American history at that time.

Samuel returned to civilian life and farming for fourteen years and lived in Indiana, Ohio and Illinois.⁸

Western Frontier Indian Campaign (1876-1879)

Samuel reenlisted on 23 September 1876 at St. Louis Missouri as a private in Company H, 2nd U.S. Cavalry, also known as the "Montana Battalion". A few months later, on 7 May 1877, Private Samuel D. Phillips was engaged in a battle "with hostile Sioux" for which he received the Congressional Medal of Honor for bravery.⁹

The following excerpt from the regimental *History of the Second United States Cavalry, Part 6: 1865 to 1898, Back to the Frontier* tells the story of this battle and how Samuel won the Medal of Honor.¹⁰

"By April 1877, most of the cavalry Regiments of the United States was engaged in warfare with several small bands of Indians. The Cheyenne surrendered in December. Although Sitting Bull escaped into Canada, Crazy Horse surrendered in April of 1878. This left only a chief named Lame Deer and his warriors on soil claimed by the U.S. government, but the U.S. Cavalry, including the "Montana Battalion" of the Second Cavalry, was in pursuit. Marching day and night with only short breaks, the cavalrymen reached the area of an Indian encampment near Little Muddy Creek, Montana, on 6 May. At 0100 hours, 7 May 1877, after only a few hours' rest, the troopers broke camp and marched for the remainder of the night. At dawn they surprised Lame Deer's warriors. Company H charged through the village and stampeded the horses, and then the other cavalry troops charged, thoroughly routing the Indians. The village was one of the richest Indian encampments ever captured. The soldiers found many artifacts of Custer's Seventh Cavalry, including uniforms, guidons [cavalry unit pennants], and weapons. At the height of the battle, Private William Leonard became isolated from his command and defended himself for over two hours against the Indians from a position behind a rock before he was rescued. For gallantry in action, Privates William Leonard of L Troop and Samuel D. Phillips of H Troop were awarded the Medal of Honor."

Samuel was injured twice while in serving with the Second Cavalry at Fort Ellis Montana. On 4 April 1878 his hand was cut by circular saw and on 1 July 1878 his wrist was broken when he was thrown from a mule.

The following year on 22 May 1879, he was honorably discharged for disability at Fort Assiniboine, Montana.

⁶ Samuel D. Phillips, (Private, Co. H, 2nd U.S. Cavalry), veterans invalid pension, application no. 1,126,695, certificate no. 1,033,933, claims folder no. C-2,543,800; Record Group 15; Department of Veterans Affairs; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Company H, Second US Cavalry: Regimental History – Angelfire* (<http://www.angelfire.com/va3/dragoons/History.htm>) : accessed 5 July 2016), "Part 6: 1865 to 1898, Back to the Frontier."

The Post War Years (1879-1915)

13 June 1891, 46-year-old Samuel Phillips married 48-year-old widow Margaret Jane Murphy in Madison, Wisconsin. It was Samuel's first marriage and Margaret's third. She was twice a widow. Margaret and Samuel had no children.¹¹ By 1900 the couple was living at 973 Hudson Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota and Samuel was working as a janitor.¹²

Private Samuel Phillips filed for a disability pension on 15 August 1892. He reported a fracture of right wrist, injury to ring finger left hand, heart trouble, asthma, deafness left ear, rheumatism and general debility.¹³ His pension was finally granted on 19 May 1899 at a rate of \$6 a month. His pension was increased several times over the intervening years and he was receiving \$22.50 a month at the time of his death in 1915.

A photograph of Samuel was not found but a pension form dated 30 March 1915, when he was 70, described him as "5' 4", dark eyes, grey hair with a florid [ruddy] complexion, weighing 180 pounds, with a right wrist that was enlarged and bent." An earlier pension form reported his hair was black.

The couple remained in St. Paul for the rest of their lives. Margaret preceded Samuel in death on 18 January 1914. She was 71 years old.¹⁴ Samuel D. Phillips died 12 November 1915 at the age of 70.¹⁵ Samuel and Margaret are buried side by side in block 46, lot 57, at St. Paul's Historic Oakland Cemetery.¹⁶



Compiled by Shirleen Ann Hoffman
Lake Minnetonka Chapter DAR

¹¹ Samuel D. Phillips, (Private, Co. H, 2nd U.S. Cavalry), veterans invalid pension, application no. 1,126,695, certificate no. 1,033,933.

¹² 1900 U.S. census, Ramsey County, Minnesota, population schedule, St. Paul, ward 2, ED 77, sheet 17-A (penned), dwelling 288, family 342, Samuel D. Phillips; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 5 July 2016); citing NARA microfilm publication T623, roll 783.

¹³ Samuel D. Phillips, (Private, Co. H, 2nd U.S. Cavalry), veterans invalid pension, application no. 1,126,695, certificate no. 1,033,933.

¹⁴ State of Minnesota, death certificate no. 21282 (1914), Margaret Jane Phillips; Division of Vital Statistics, St. Paul.

¹⁵ State of Minnesota, death certificate no. 23005, Samuel D. Phillips.

¹⁶ Oakland Cemetery Association Office (St. Paul, Minnesota), Interment Record, Samuel D. Phillips and wife Margaret Phillips; copy of records provided by staff to author.