

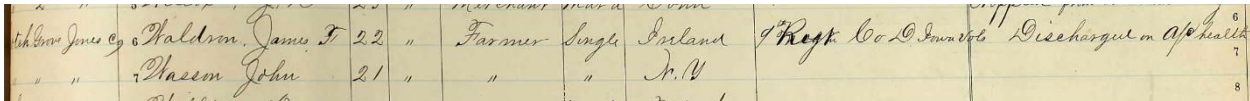


Our Ancestors in the Civil War

Only one of our direct ancestors, Samuel Sawyer, is known to have served in the Civil War, although a handful had a son, brother or brother-in-law who served.

John C. Wasson – Civil War Draft Registration

John C. Wasson, oldest son of our ancestors John and Jemima Wasson, turned 21 in 1863, and registered for the draft that summer, recorded July 23, 1863. There is no record of him actually serving in the war. None of his younger brothers reached the age to serve before the war ended.



Record of John's draft registration, July 23, 1863

James and Duncan McNeil – Civil War Service

James C. McNeil, the son of our ancestors Duncan and Jane McNeil, enlisted in the U.S. Army on August 30, 1861 as a private (one source puts the date of his original enlistment as September 30, 1861). He served in Company L, 2nd New York Cavalry Regiment (a.k.a. the Harris Light Cavalry) starting on October 8, 1861. He was soon diagnosed with heart disease and was hospitalized at College Hospital, Georgetown, in Washington, DC for six months followed by a period of recuperation at home. But he did not recover enough to meet military standards, so he was discharged for disability from his unit at the rank of corporal on November 29, 1862. He repeatedly tried to reenlist, but ended up taking a job in the quartermaster's department for the duration of the war.



James McNeil 82

Jeanne 7 & Marshall 4

1917 Veterans Parade, Negaunee Michigan

James McNeil and two of his grandchildren march in the 1917 Negaunee, Michigan Veterans Parade

James' younger brother Duncan enlisted in the U.S. Army on August 15, 1862 as a private. He served in Company E, 169th New York Infantry Regiment starting on October 6, 1862. His company fought most of its battles in Virginia and North and South Carolina. Duncan was killed at Fort Fisher, North Carolina on January 16, 1865.

- For more about Duncan McNeil in the Civil War, see [Duncan McNeil \(1829-1865\), Civil War Soldier and His Legacy.](#)

Samuel and Eli Sawyer – Civil War Service

Samuel Sawyer, husband of Ellen McNeil Sawyer and one of our ancestors, enlisted in the U.S. Army on August 20, 1862 as a private. He served in Company E, 169th New York Infantry Regiment starting on September 25, 1862. He later served as a corporal in Company C, 10th Volunteer Regiment of Calvary. His company fought mostly in Virginia. He was injured early on and was hospitalized in Washington, DC in 1863. He remained in the hospital in 1865, when he was mustered out of the army on July 19, 1865 in Washington, DC.

A couple dates are worth noting. Ellen gave birth to their son Elwin in July 1863, suggesting that she and Samuel conceived him in October 1862, a month after he started serving in his regiment. Ellen gave birth to their son James Duncan in August 1864, suggesting that she and Samuel conceived him in November 1863 when Samuel was hospitalized in Washington, DC.



Samuel Sawyer's marker notes his military service, Maple Grove Cemetery, Audubon, Iowa

Samuel's brother Eli Sawyer enlisted in the U.S. Army on August 14, 1862 as an 8th corporal. He served in Company K, 24th Iowa Infantry Regiment starting on September 6, 1862. After being disabled with a spinal injury, he was mustered out on November 23, 1863 in Jefferson City, Missouri. His record noted his distinguished service.

Eli had married Ellen Vosburgh in Canada before emigrating to the United States and eventually settling in Jones County, Iowa. Eli and Ellen had six children. In the 1880s, Eli sold their farm and he and Ellen moved to Florida. But things did not go well, and Ellen left him in 1885, returning to Jones County. The following year, Eli married Idella Hall in Georgia when he was 64 and Idella was about 21. They settled in Florida, where they had three children, the youngest just five years old when Eli died at age 85.

After Eli died, both Ellen and Idella applied for his soldier widow's pension benefits. It turned out that Eli and Ellen had never gotten divorced, so legally Ellen was his widow. Idella contested Ellen's claim, saying that word had reached Florida that Ellen had died, so Eli had been presenting himself as a widower when he met and married Idella.

From the court proceedings regarding Eli Sawyer's marital status:

"Before me a County Judge in and for said County personally appeared John Johnson who first being duly sworn deposes and says that he is a citizen of Jefferson County, State of Florida that he was intimately acquainted with Eli Sawyer for three years prior to the year AD 1886, and that the said Eli Sawyer was at that time recognized as a married man. Deponent says further that the wife of said Eli Sawyer left the State of Florida about _____ in the year AD 1885 to visit either in the State of Iowa or Illinois and that she had not been away from the state of Florida more than three months until it was currently reported in the community in which they lived that she had died. Deponent says further that the said Eli Sawyer lived and was recognized as a widower after the reported death of his wife until about December AD 1886 when he was married to Idella Hall."

NAME OF SOLDIER:		Sawyer, Eli			(3-H-3)
NAME OF DEPENDENT:		Widow, Sawyer, Ellen E.			
		Minor, @Widow Sawyer, Idella			
SERVICE:		K 24 3d Inf			
DATE OF FILING.	CLASS.	APPLICATION NO.	CERTIFICATE NO.	STATE FROM WHICH FILED.	
1873 May 26	Invalid,	183963	132725		
1909 Apr 28	Widow,	919172	698398		
	Minor,				
1901 July 3	@Widow	899576			

First wife Ellen and second wife Idella both claim widow's benefits as Eli Sawyer's widow.

Charles B. Gridley – Civil War Service

Charles B. Gridley, then-future husband of Mary Wasson Gridley, daughter of our ancestors John and Jemima Wasson, enlisted in the U.S. Army on August 19, 1861 as a private. He served in Company D, 9th Iowa Infantry Regiment starting September 2, 1861. He fought in 33 battles as well as numerous skirmishes during the war. Charles was promoted to full corporal on April 29, 1863, and then to full sergeant on October 1, 1864. He was mustered out on July 18, 1865 in Louisville, Kentucky.

Relic of Civil War In Wyoming Library

BY MRS. ED KOOL

WYOMING—A Civil War relic, a portion of a tree peppered with large pieces of shrapnel and grape-

shot, has been placed on display in Roche Memorial library here. Imbedded in one side is a large cannon ball.

A Union soldier, Charles Gridley, brought the tree limb home from battle. He enlisted in August of 1861 at the age of 19 and was a soldier with the 9th infantry, company "D". In 1865 he was mustered out in Louisville, Ky.

From a book, "A Roster of Iowa Soldiers in the War of the Rebellion" it is found that the 9th infantry fought under General Hood across Alabama and joined General Sherman on his march to Savannah, Ga., and to the sea. It is mere assumption that young Gridley actually marched through Georgia and Alabama, as no such actual record could be found.

His daughter, Mrs. Cecil (Nettie) Wherry died last year and the relic was found among her possessions at a sale.

The relic has been placed in a corner of the library where it has captured the interest of young and old alike. For anyone even remotely interested in Civil War lore, it starts the imagination into wondering just what significance this tree portion had to a young soldier that he lugged such an un-gainly souvenir home from the war.

Charles Gridley's Civil War souvenir was donated to the Wyoming library, Monticello Express, February 13, 1958

Civil War Relic Prompts "Whys" At Wyoming

By Mrs. Ed Kooi.

Gazette Correspondent.

WYOMING — The "why" of a Civil war relic on display at Roche Memorial library is a puzzle to many Wyoming citizens.

The relic, a portion of a tree peppered with large pieces of shrapnel, grapeshot and with a cannonball deeply imbedded in one side, was brought back to Iowa by Charles Gridley, a Union soldier.

Saved Life.

But just why he chose to bring this rather ungainly souvenir home is a matter of conjecture—one main school of thought credits the limb with perhaps saving his life.

The relic lay unnoticed until this year when it was found during a household sale of items belonging to the late Nettie Gridley Wherry, Gridley's daughter. The limb was purchased by the library board and has been placed on permanent display. A suitable plaque has been ordered. Mrs. Wherry died last year.

Charles Gridley enlisted in 1861 at the age of 19 in the 2nd company from Jones county. He served in the 9th infantry, company D. A Jones county history tells of the patriotic farewell given the volunteers, including speeches, prayers and presentation of battle flags. They also got a nick name—"Greyhounds".

Familiar Battle.

The 9th participated in battles which are familiar to those who follow Civil war history: Pea Ridge, 1862; Chickasaw Bayou, 1862; Vicksburg, 1863, and Claysville, where several of the 9th were captured and sent to the infamous Andersonville prison. During the campaign 32 of the 9th were killed and 82 wounded.

He was mustered out at Louisville, Ky., in 1865, a sergeant. He was not wounded during the war. He returned home, bringing the tree limb with him.

Mrs. Wherry's son, Charles, lives in Des Moines and is believed to have a series of letters written by Gridley during the war.

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—Photo by Mrs. Ed Kooi

ATTRACTING MANY CURIOUS glances at the Roche Memorial library in Wyoming is this portion of a tree imbedded with a cannon ball, shrapnel, and grapeshot, a relic of the Civil war. The branch was a souvenir brought back to East Iowa by Charles Gridley, a Union soldier.

Charles Gridley's Civil War souvenir at the Wyoming library, Cedar Rapids Gazette, February 16, 1958; in 2024, this relic was not on display in the library, but it might be found in Wyoming's history museum.

John G. Krouse – Civil War Service

John G. Krouse, then-future husband of Jane Wasson Krouse, daughter of our ancestors John and Jemima Wasson, enlisted in the U.S. Army on November 26, 1862 at age 16 as a bugler. He served in Company B, 14th Iowa Infantry Regiment starting December 18, 1862, but he was discharged just a couple months later on February 14, 1863 in Davenport, Iowa, I assume due to his age. Later that year, he re-enlisted in the U.S. Army, serving in Company K, 9th Iowa Cavalry starting October 30, 1863 for the duration of the war. He was mustered out on February 3, 1866 in Little Rock, Arkansas.



John G. Krouse in his uniform

David and James Black – Civil War Service

David Black, son of David and Janet Wason Black and nephew of our ancestors John and Jemima Wasson, enlisted in the U.S. Army on November 11, 1862 as a private. He served in Company D, 24th New York Infantry Regiment starting November 11, 1862. David reportedly deserted.

Name:	Black David	Rank 24 th I. R.	Co	Amboy N.Y.	S. David	Deserted.
Residence:	Amboy	Inf	Co			
Time and Place of Birth:	18	Bottoms	Private		Labour	

The [New York Town Clerks' Registers of Men who Served in the Civil War](#) shows that David Black deserted.

David's younger brother James enlisted in the U.S. Army on December 22, 1863 as a private. He served in Company G of the 24th New York Cavalry starting January 7, 1864. James was promoted to corporal on March 3, 1865. He was wounded in action near Dinwiddie Court House, Virginia towards the end of the Richmond-Petersburg Campaign on March 31, 1865. He was mustered out on June 3, 1865 in Rochester, New York.

Franz Hoffman – Civil War Service

Franz Hoffman, son of our ancestors Christian and Barbara Hoffman, was drafted into the U.S. Army on October 12, 1864. He served in Company D, 6th Wisconsin Infantry Regiment starting December 10, 1864. He was mustered out on July 14, 1865, likely in Louisville, Kentucky.

Frederick Ottomar Krueger – Possible Civil War Service

Frederick Krueger, one of our ancestors, was listed as a shoemaker and bootmaker in the Milwaukee City Directory from 1858 to 1870 except for the years 1864 and 1865. Given the timing, and it is possible that he served in the Civil War during those years, although I have not yet found a record of that.

Prepared by Mark David Wasson
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