

Civil War Envelopes of Wisconsin

by James R. Miller

Old envelopes and postcards are a source of genealogical information.[1] This paper presents five envelopes (one with a letter) sent to or from Wisconsin during the Civil War with basic genealogical data on the sender and

recipient. As with any source of genealogical information, old envelopes must be studied in combination with other sources before reaching any conclusion.

Wisconsin residents served in the military during the Civil War and surviving envelopes from these years let us glimpse their lives and handwriting.



Figure 1

Mrs. A.E. Patchin of Wyocena, Wisconsin received an envelope marked "From Prisoner of war, Macon G[eorgi]a" and postmarked in Old Point Comfort, Virginia. [Figure 1] A Margaret A. (apparently Mrs. Augustus E.) Patchin is in Wyocena in the 1860 U.S. census.[2] An Augustus E. Patchin served as a sergeant and later first lieutenant with the 10th Wisconsin Infantry.[3] He was captured and was a prisoner of war.[4] The auction catalog listing for this envelope states that it was sent in 1864 from Camp Oglethorpe (a prisoner of war camp for Union officers) in Macon, Georgia, following Augustus E. Patchin's apparent capture at the Battle of Chickamauga in September 1863, in which the 10th Wisconsin participated.[5] He survived the war, and lived in Wyocena until 1902.[6] The envelope, which passed through a Union-Confederate exchange

point at Old Point Comfort,[7] appears to have been sent by a husband to his wife. This envelope and Figures 2 and 4 are from a philatelic auction catalog collection from which Philgen.org has permission to use photographs. [8]



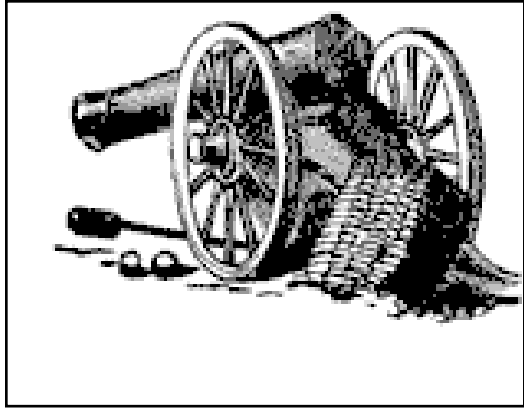


Figure 2

POST CARD POST CARD POST CARD

Mrs. I.R. Baker of Milwaukee, Wisconsin received a “Soldier’s Letter. 10th Regiment. Wisconsin Volunteers.” postmarked in Elizabethtown, Kentucky.[Figure 2] A Betsey (apparently Mrs. Irving) Baker is in Neenah, Wisconsin in the 1860 U.S. census, with Irving Baker shown as a “Lawyer in Mil[waukee?].”[9] An Irving R. Baker served as a private in the 10th Wisconsin Infantry and this regiment was

in Elizabethtown and Bacon Creek, Kentucky from December 1861 until March 1862.[10] Irving R. Baker received a disability discharge in 1864.[11] “B.S. Baker,” a widow, is in Waukesha, Wisconsin in the 1880 U.S. census, and Betsey S. Baker, widow of Irving R. Baker, is in Waukesha in the 1890 Veterans census, where her husband’s cause of death is shown as “Consumption [tuberculosis] in Army.”[12] This envelope, which is illustrated with a U.S. flag,

was probably sent by a husband to his wife. N.E. Anderson of "Co[mpany] C, 40[th] Reg[imen]t, Wis[consin] Vol[unteers]" received an envelope from Deerfield (handwritten in the lower left), Wisconsin.[Figure 3] A "Nils" Anderson is in Deerfield with his family in the 1860 U.S. census.[13] A Nels E. Anderson served as a private in the 40th Wisconsin Infantry, enlisting in Albion, Wisconsin (about ten miles south of Deerfield) in May 1864,

and he survived the war.[14] The envelope may have been sent by a family member who, like Nels, was born in Norway, possibly accounting for the envelope being addressed "via Memphis Ken[tucky]." The regiment, whose service was limited to 100 days, was in or near Memphis, Tennessee from June until September 1864.[15] This envelope was found for sale on eBay® by a vendor from whom Philgen.org has permission to use photographs.[16]



Figure 3

POST CARD



POST CARD



Figure 4

John S. Hobart of Fall River, Wisconsin received an envelope sent by “Capt[ain] M.C. Hobart, Prisoner of War, Savannah Georgia” in 1864. [Figure 4] A J.S. and his apparent son Martin Hobart are in Fountain Prairie (centered three miles northwest of Fall River) in the 1860 U.S. census.[17] A Martin C. Hobart served as a sergeant and later as an officer with the 7th Wisconsin Infantry.[18] He was wounded and

captured at the Battle of the Wilderness in 1864.[19] The auction catalog listing states that this envelope was sent from the prison at Camp Davidson in Savannah, Georgia and passed via a Union-Confederate exchange point at Port Royal, South Carolina.[20] He survived the war. [21] This envelope, which was apparently sent by a son to his father, has both a U.S. stamp and a Confederate States of America stamp showing Jefferson Davis.

POST CARD



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Figure 5A

Mrs. Herman L. Cunningham of Monroe, Wisconsin received an envelope postmarked in Nashville, Tennessee in July 1863.[Figure 5A] The envelope has a letter datelined "Camp near Jacinto Miss[issippi], August 1st 1862." [Figure 5B] The different dates in the postmark and dateline suggest that the letter was originally sent in a different envelope. The letter begins "My dear brother Len," and is signed by "Charlie C. Cunningham." [Figure 5C]. The text speaks of tents leaking in the rain and buying local fruit and vegetables while in camp. Herman L. Cunningham served as a private and later as corporal with the 22nd Wisconsin Infantry. [22] Charles C. Cunningham served as a private with the 5th Independent Battery Wisconsin Light Artillery, which was in Jacinto and Ripley, Mississippi from June until August 1862. [23] A Sarah and Edith Cunningham are in Monroe in

the 1870 and 1880 U.S. censuses, and in 1880 Sarah A., a widow, and Edith are shown as mother and daughter. [24] "Sahra A." Cunningham is shown in the 1890 Veterans census as the widow of Herman Cunningham. [25] Herman L. Cunningham is probably the same person shown as Hiram L. Cunningham, a soldier in the 22nd Wisconsin Infantry, who was wounded and died in 1864. [26] An on-line family tree shows that Charles C. and Herman Leonard Cunningham were brothers, and Herman's middle name appears to explain why his brother refers to him as "Len." [27] This envelope and letter, sent by a brother/brother-in-law, were for sale by a philatelic vendor from whom Philgen.org has permission to use photographs. [28]

Notes

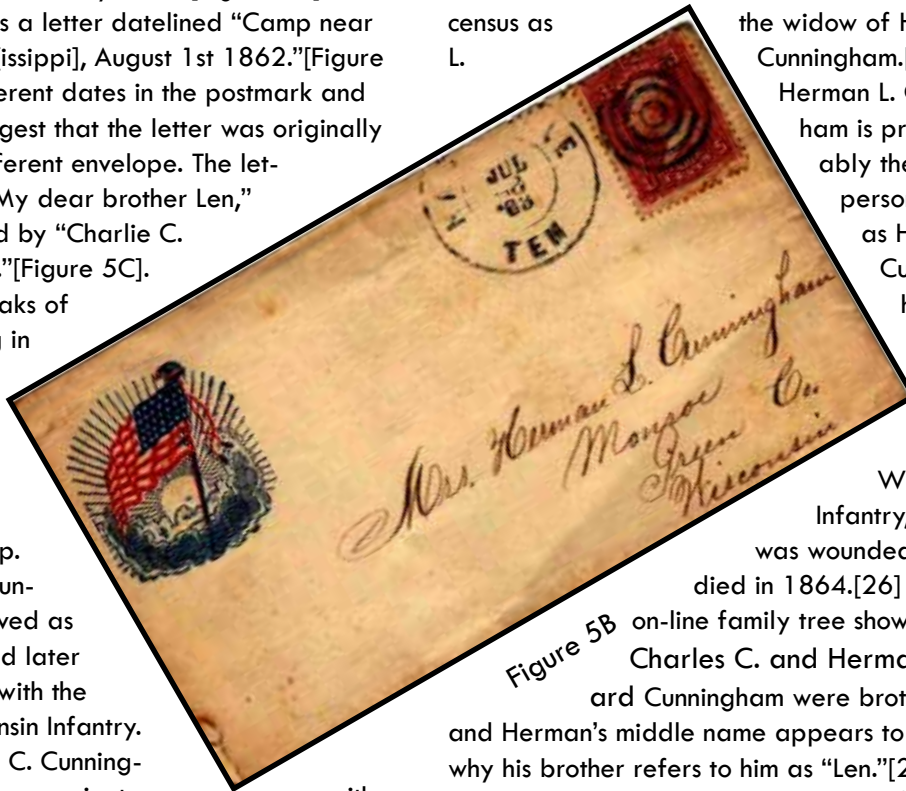


Figure 5B



Figure 5C

POST CARD POST CARD POST CARD

Acknowledgments

This article shows how postal history documents our ancestors' wartime experience. Four other Civil War envelopes were shown in an earlier issue of the Newsletter. [29] Many more envelope and postcard photos involving the military service, political and social interests, work, recreation, and immigrant origins of Wisconsin residents are available. Anyone interested in adding new envelopes and postcards to Philgen.org is encouraged to contact the author.

The author thanks Mary L. Martin Postcards for permission to photograph postcards, the genealogists who have posted online family trees and responded to email and message board queries, and Lisa Birsinger for database and website support.

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1. Reprints of articles on philatelic genealogy that use old envelopes and postcards as a genealogical source are viewable on Philgen.org (<http://philgen.org>, look in the Main Menu for a list that begins with American Ancestors).
2. 1860 U.S. census, Wyocena, Columbia County, Wisconsin, p. 157 (written), National Archives and Records Administration [hereafter NARA] series M653, roll 1,401. Viewed on Ancestry.com.
3. National Park Service [hereafter NPS], Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System [hereafter CWSSS], (<http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/soldiers.cfm>, accessed 17 December 2010), Soldiers, Augustus E. Patchin, 10th Wisconsin Infantry.
4. Historical Data Systems, compiler, "U.S. Civil War Soldier Records and Profiles [hereafter USCWSRP]," Augustus E. Patchin, served Wisconsin. Viewed on Ancestry.com.
5. Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries [hereafter Robert A. Siegel] (<http://www.siegelauctions.com/>, accessed 18 December 2010), click on Power Search, enter 988 as Sale # and 129 as Lot #.
6. "Staton Family Tree," owner sunsetangel228, (source citations are primarily U.S. censuses). Viewed on Ancestry.com.
7. Robert A. Siegel, click on "Past Sales," scroll to "Sale Listings," select Sale 988, select "View the catalog as a pdf file," p. 89.
8. Robert A. Siegel. Civil War postal history is featured in the catalogs for Sales 795, 801, 815, 822, 823, 834, 840, 841, 845, 850, 860, 870, 874, 875, 907, 933, 950, 954, 966, 980, 981, 988, and 1,002.
9. 1860 U.S. census, Neenah, Winnebago County, Wisconsin, p. 80 (written), NARA series M653, roll 1,437. Viewed on Ancestry.com.
10. NPS, CWSSS, Soldiers, Irving R. Baker, 10th Wisconsin Infantry. NPS, CWSSS, Regiments, 10th Wisconsin Infantry.
11. Historical Data Systems, compiler, "American Civil War Soldiers," Irving Baker, served Wisconsin. Viewed on Ancestry.com.
12. 1880 U.S. census, Waukesha Village, Waukesha County, Wisconsin, Enumeration District [hereafter ED] 271, p. 1 (written), NARA series T9, roll 1,451. 1890 U.S. census, Veterans Schedules, Waukesha, Waukesha County, Wisconsin, ED 92, p. 3, NARA series M123, roll 112. Viewed on Ancestry.com. Wikipedia, "Tuberculosis" (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuberculosis>, accessed 21 December 2010).
13. 1860 U.S. census, Deerfield, Dane County, Wisconsin, p. 66 (written), NARA series M653, roll 1,403. Viewed on Ancestry.com.
14. USCWSRP, Nels E. Anderson, served Wisconsin. Viewed on Ancestry.com.
15. NPS, CWSSS, Regiments, 40th Wisconsin Infantry.
16. Craig L. Martin, munchstamps (an eBay® vendor).
17. 1860 U.S. census, Fountain Prairie, Columbia County, Wisconsin, p. 121 (written), NARA series M653, roll 1,401. Viewed on Ancestry.com.
18. NPS, CWSSS, Soldiers, Martin C. Hobart, 7th Wisconsin Infantry.
19. "Second Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry," Table of Contents, The Seventh Wisconsin at the Front, Roster, Company B (<http://www.secondwi.com/index.htm>, accessed 21 December 2010).
20. Robert A. Siegel, Sale 988, Lot 208.
21. 1890 U.S. census, Veterans Schedules, Fountain Prairie, Columbia County, Wisconsin, ED 58, p. 2, NARA series M123, roll 114. Viewed on Ancestry.com.
22. NPS, CWSSS, Soldiers, Herman L. Cunningham, 22nd Wisconsin Infantry.
23. NPS, CWSSS, Soldiers, Charles C. Cunningham, 5th Independent Battery Wisconsin Light Artillery.
24. 1870 U.S. census, Monroe, Green County, Wisconsin, p. 5 (written), NARA series M593, roll 1,715. 1880 U.S. census, Monroe, Green County, Wisconsin, ED 141, p. 1 (written), NARA series T9, roll 1,428. Viewed on Ancestry.com.
25. 1890 U.S. census, Veterans Schedules, Monroe, Green County, Wisconsin, ED 107, p. 2, NARA series M123, roll 113. Viewed on Ancestry.com.
26. Historical Data Systems, compiler, "American Civil War Soldiers," Hiram Cunningham, served Wisconsin; and USCWSRP, Hiram L. Cunningham, served Wisconsin. Viewed on Ancestry.com. NPS, CWSSS, Soldiers, does not have a Hiram Cunningham, 22nd Wisconsin Infantry.
27. "Schiever/Shauger/Moors Family Tree," owner Jeryl77, (source citations include U.S. censuses, U.S. passport applications, Social Security Death Index). Viewed on Ancestry.com.
28. world-postal-history.com (<http://www.world-postal-history.com/>, accessed 21 December 2010).
29. James R. Miller, "Philatelic Genealogy in Wisconsin: An Introduction," Wisconsin State Genealogical Society Newsletter 56:2 (April 2010): 103–112, Figures 10-13.