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## Tracing the History of a Civil War Ancestor

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## Tracing the History of a Civil War Ancestor<sup>1</sup>

*George Earl Swift was born in Boston on July 16, 1848. At age 13, George joined the 3<sup>rd</sup> Minn. Reg. at Fort Snelling Minn. and served as a drummer boy throughout the Civil War. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Minn. Reg was captured in the battles of Missionary Ridge and Lookout Mountain, Tenn. After an exchange of prisoners, he was placed in Co. F., 69<sup>th</sup> Ohio, which took part in Sherman's March to the Sea, and was under his command until the close of the war in 1865. He was a professional musician until 1885, when he became a druggist: owned drug stores in Minneapolis and Robbinsdale, until 1915.*

Carrie Swift Craig  
December 1952

My grandmother wrote these intriguing words in her 1952 Christmas present to the family. It provided dates and brief histories of many branches of the family tree. None caught my attention more than this single paragraph about her father, George Swift. I was 10 years old. The story stayed with me for 69 years. Last year, I decided to dig deeper.

I ran into trouble at my first stop. The Minnesota Historical Society had no record of his enlistment. Furthermore, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Minnesota Infantry Regiment did not participate in the Chattanooga campaign battles of Missionary Ridge and Lookout Mountain. A spokesman at a Civil War National Park Battlefield told me that a transfer from a Minnesota regiment to an Ohio regiment would be unheard of – and young George would have been considered a deserter.



Carrie Swift, 1905 graduation  
from the University of Minnesota

My grandmother was no fool. She was 71 years old<sup>2</sup> and still pretty sharp. She had graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1905<sup>3</sup> and was living in Maplewood, New Jersey, where the family had moved in 1926 when her husband came to work as a consulting engineer for a New York patent counsel. She had a kind spirit, and many relatives, including her mother and a sister, who lived in her home near the end of their lives. She had notes and memories, but no internet and no easy access to Civil War records like I did. Some of her words missed the mark.

More research was needed – as academics often say. A key to unlocking the puzzle came from reading a 2019 book about the

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<sup>1</sup> A shorter, less documented version of George Swift's story appears as "[My great-grandfather: A 13-year old in the Civil War.](#)" *Hennepin History*, 2021, 80(3), pp 20-23.

<sup>2</sup> I am 79-years old as I write this. Maybe this is the age when people step back to review their lives and heritage. I have tried to keep the narrative focused on George's journey and have used many footnotes to document sources, less central aspects of George's life, and interesting stories of other family members.

<sup>3</sup> According to the University's Registrar Office, Carrie Swift (Craig): "Entered the University of Minnesota in September 1900 and was enrolled in the College of Science, Literature and the Arts. Earned a Bachelor of Arts in 1905. The BA was awarded on June 1, 1905. A major is not listed." Email of November 15, 2021. Her studies were interrupted by her marriage to my grandfather on April 27, 1903.

Minnesota 3<sup>rd</sup> – Joseph C. Fitzharris’ *The Hardest Lot of Men: The Third Minnesota Infantry in the Civil War*. Fitzharris based much of his work on letters written by men in the regiment. One soldier wrote that “he kept an eye on one of the drummer boys, thirteen-year-old George Stringer, who was, he said, about the size of his own son, Billy.” How many 13-year-old drummers could be named George? A return visit to Grandma Craig’s genealogy documents showed that George’s stepfather was named Stringer.<sup>4</sup>

This fact unlocked many doors. The National Archives and Records Administration provided a copy of George Stringer’s 1891 pension application. It lists his name as George E. Stringer but lists George E. Swift as his “alias.” It lists service in Company F of the Ohio 69<sup>th</sup>. George Stringer and George Swift were the same person! I was finally certain.

But mysteries remained. The pension application (see photo on pg 6) says nothing about service with the Minnesota 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, though we know from Fitzharris’ book that he was with them. How did George become attached to the Minnesota 3<sup>rd</sup>? The Minnesota 3<sup>rd</sup> was not in the battles of Lookout Mountain or Missionary Ridge. Where was the regiment captured? And what kind of prisoner exchange would let George transfer to the Ohio 69<sup>th</sup>?

### **George and the Minnesota 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry**

The Civil War began in April 1861 when the South Carolina militia fired on Fort Sumter. Minnesota Governor Alexander Ramsey was in Washington, DC, and he volunteered Minnesota forces to support the Union. Ultimately, Minnesota supplied eleven infantry regiments to that cause. The Minnesota 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment was mustered into service at Fort Snelling in the fall of 1861 and left for duty in the south in November.

On February 21, 1925, in a story in the *Minneapolis Daily Star* newspaper, George described his enlistment as a 13-year-old. He glosses over multiple details but is clear about his intent and the eventual outcome.<sup>5</sup> Mr. Swift wrote that he lived in St. Paul.<sup>6</sup> “My mother sent me after the cows,” he declared. “That was my evening job and I was getting tired of it. There was much talk of the war among the men and it had come to my ears every day. I had the urge to join the army. Because of my youth, I was not permitted to join a company. But that night I did not return to the cows. I got on a boat which was going downriver instead and I went to Fort Snelling. There I ‘hung around’ the ‘old Minnesota Third,’ and after a few weeks found myself with Sherman’s army marching to the sea.”

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<sup>4</sup> Retracing steps was a recurring theme in this research. A source would provide an answer, so I’d move on. Returning later, I’d see something relevant that I’d missed earlier.

<sup>5</sup> A slightly different version of this appears on a piece of paper Grandma Craig inserted in one copy of her genealogy documents, probably the one she gave my dad. In that version, George was unable to find a lost cow and, fearing the wrath of his stepfather, he crossed the Mississippi and made his way to Fort Snelling. She says his mother visited him several times there before the 3<sup>rd</sup> departed for battle.

<sup>6</sup> The 1866 St. Paul City Directory lists Wm. Stringer, a laborer, living in the Bond, Kinney & Trader’s Addition. His name does not appear in earlier editions of the directory, so we don’t know if this is where young George lived before leaving home. The addition is on low-lying land near the Mississippi River, about 1-mile upstream from downtown, giving George easy access to the river, though Fort Snelling is upriver from that location. An Xcel Energy plant sits on that site today. It would be difficult for him to access a boat going “downriver” to Fort Snelling from any other part of St. Paul, given the steep river bluffs upstream from the fort.

His informal enlistment was not that unusual. Wikipedia says<sup>7</sup> “Although there were usually official age limits, these were often ignored; the youngest boys were sometimes treated as mascots by the adult soldiers. The life of a drummer boy appeared rather glamorous and as a result, boys would sometimes run away from home to enlist.” A 1963 Disney film, *Johnny Shiloh*, based on a real story, tells of a 10-year-old boy who runs away from home to join the Ohio 3<sup>rd</sup> infantry informally as a drummer boy.

### **George is Captured in the First Battle of Murfreesboro**

The story of the Minnesota 3<sup>rd</sup> is well documented in a book entitled *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars, 1861-1865*.<sup>8</sup> Volume I provides the histories and rosters of all Minnesota companies. It proved invaluable in this research – describing both troop movements and emotional responses of the soldiers.

The Third Minnesota Regiment was captured in the First Battle of Murfreesboro, in July 1862, not the battles around Chattanooga that were fought 17 months later. They were part of the multi-regiment, multi-state 23<sup>rd</sup> Brigade protecting the Nashville and Chattanooga (N&C) Railroad that was supplying Union troops moving southward from Nashville.<sup>9</sup>

Those troops were attacked by Confederate forces under cavalry commander Brig. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest.<sup>10</sup> The attack was a surprise, and Union forces were quickly overrun. Former *Minnesota History* editor, Kenneth Carley, stated "their hapless commander ignominiously and unnecessarily surrendered the unit to the wily bluffs of Nathan Bedford Forrest at Murfreesboro."

The Minnesotans had been camped to the northwest of Murfreesboro. The other Union regiments were scattered around the town, making it easy for the Confederates to pick off them off, one by one. The Minnesotans were relatively untouched that day. When the battle started, the Minnesotans moved to higher ground near the original Murfree's large frame house, where they saw a 300-member contingent of the enemy on horseback coming out from the town, but that group fell back as soon as they saw the Minnesotans. Only once did the enemy “venture within musket range of the main line of the Minnesota Third” but they left, “finding they could not move a man in our line.” The Minnesotans were never under fierce attack, but the situation crumbled and the Union command surrendered in mid-afternoon. The Minnesota regiment's purported response was “amazement, regret and grief.” They retired from the field in shame.

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<sup>7</sup> Drummer (military). Wikipedia website accessed November 14, 2021.

<sup>8</sup> The book is available at the Minnesota History Center and various other libraries. It has been scanned and processed so that it can be both viewed and searched online.

<sup>9</sup> Other regiments included the 9<sup>th</sup> Michigan, the 8<sup>th</sup> Kentucky, and the 23<sup>rd</sup> Kentucky. Two cavalries were part of 23<sup>rd</sup> Brigade as well: the 7<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania and the 4<sup>th</sup> Kentucky.

<sup>10</sup> [Nathan Bedford Forrest](#) was a brilliant tactician. He was also a harsh racist. He was responsible for the *Pillow Massacre* (April 1864) where the integrated Union forces, including 300 Blacks, were slaughtered after they had surrendered. After the war, Forrest became the first Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. His statue was removed from the Tennessee state Capitol building in July 2021.

Their commander, and all other officers who voted for surrender that day, were dismissed from service later that year.

I am sure my grandmother did not know the date her father was captured – July 13, 1862. I was born on July 13, 1942 – exactly 80 years after that battle. My family drove to New Jersey alternate summers to visit our grandparents. I hope she saw something in me, some of the spunk she saw in her father. We could have celebrated that day together. (On the downside, his captor, Nathan Bedford Forest, shared that birthday. He too was born on July 13, 1821.)

### **George Joins Company F, Ohio 69<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment**

So how did George transfer from the Minnesota 3<sup>rd</sup> to the Ohio 69<sup>th</sup>? It was not in a prisoner exchange as had been suggested by my grandmother. Critical to this research is an online record of the Ohio troops in the Civil War – the [Ohio Civil War Central](#) website.

But first, I needed to understand more about the alleged “prisoner exchange.” In the early days of the Civil War, captured soldiers were “paroled” rather than being sent to a prison camp, which would have required significant resources to maintain. According to Wikipedia, “A prisoner who was on parole promised not to fight again until his name was ‘exchanged’ for a similar man on the other side. Then, both could rejoin their units. While awaiting exchange, prisoners were briefly confined to permanent camps.”<sup>11</sup> The Minnesotan’s camp was Benton Barracks on the outskirts of St. Louis. Their path started in Nashville, then to Louisville by train and St. Louis by steamboat.

Ohio records of Company F, 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment show young George formally enlisting with them shortly after the Murfreesboro battle. They list George E. Stringer as a 14-year-old musician who entered their service on August 1, 1862 – about three weeks after the Murfreesboro defeat and two weeks after his 14<sup>th</sup> birthday. How was that connection made?

The Ohio 69<sup>th</sup> was in Nashville where it had both garrison and provost-marshal duties for the Union Army.<sup>12</sup> The Minnesotans interacted with those Ohio troops in Nashville, giving young George the opportunity to know them. The history of Minnesota 3<sup>rd</sup> says it camped on the edge of Nashville for several weeks before taking the train to Louisville. During that time, the men were approached by the Ohio command and asked to help with sentry duties. The Minnesota soldiers felt honor-bound to reject the offer, since they had promised not to serve until after an exchange.

But George could switch to the Ohio group, because he was not affected by the soldiers’ constraints. Moreover, the Ohio 69<sup>th</sup>, Company F, needed a new drummer.<sup>13</sup> Its original drummer was injured and leaving - Philip Diefenbach, age 24, was formally discharged in

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<sup>11</sup> [American Civil War prison camps](#). Accessed November 14, 2021.

<sup>12</sup> The 69<sup>th</sup> had that duty from June 20 to late December 1862, according to [Ohio Civil War Central](#) website.

<sup>13</sup> Drummers were essential on the Civil War battlefield. Commanders used them as a way of signaling orders to soldiers in the field. Different beats signaled different actions. According to Wikipedia, drums were gradually replaced by bugles in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Nashville on August 2, 1862, based on a “Surgeon’s certificate of disability.” Young George E. Stringer, his replacement, had been enlisted one day earlier.

Why would George *want* to leave a Minnesota group that was homeward bound? Maybe going home did not sound good to the boy who was tired of the cow-tending chores awaiting him. Perhaps he was disappointed with the Minnesota 3<sup>rd</sup> and wanted to connect with a more successful regiment. Maybe he wanted the formal enlistment offered by the Ohio 69<sup>th</sup>. He could not know what lay ahead for the Ohio regiment. Maybe he just wanted more adventure. In any case, he got the adventure.

### The Ohio 69<sup>th</sup> in the Civil War

George spent the next three years with the Ohio 69<sup>th</sup>, experiencing many of the highlights of the Civil War. Five months after joining the 69<sup>th</sup> brought him back for a more successful Second Battle of Murfreesboro, the [Battle of Stones River](#) (December 31, 1862, to January 2, 1863). Nearly a year later the 69<sup>th</sup> was part of winning the [Battle of Missionary Ridge](#) (November 25, 1863). Grandma was right about her father being at that battle. He had probably mentioned it and she remembered enough to include it in her history.

| Names                | Rank      | Age | Date of Entering the Service | Period of Service | Remarks  |
|----------------------|-----------|-----|------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Jared P. Miller      | Corporal  | 39  | Oct. 14, 1861                | 3 yrs.            | Mustered out Dec. 21, 1864, at Savannah, Ga., on expiration of term of service.  |
| William Ritchey      | ..do.     | 35  | Sept. 15, 1861               | 3 yrs.            | Mustered out Dec. 21, 1864, at Savannah, Ga., on expiration of term of service.  |
| John Tenker          | ..do.     | 35  | Oct. 16, 1861                | 3 yrs.            | Appointed Corporal March 1, 1862; killed June 8, 1862, in action at Pumpkin Vine Creek, Ga.; veteran.                                    |
| James W. Havens      | ..do.     | 45  | Dec. 9, 1861                 | 3 yrs.            | Discharged May 30, 1863, at Louisville, Ky., on expiration of term of service.   |
| John Schmittman      | ..do.     | 31  | Oct. 27, 1861                | 3 yrs.            | Died Dec. 14, 1862, at Chattanooga, Tenn.; Appointed Corporal March 1, 1862; killed Sept. 1, 1862, in battle of Jonesboro, Ga.; veteran. |
| John J. Summons      | ..do.     | 39  | Nov. 14, 1861                | 3 yrs.            | Appointed Corporal March 5, 1862; killed March 25, 1862, in battle of Stones River, Tenn.; veteran.                                      |
| Alexander House      | ..do.     | 39  | ..do.                        | 3 yrs.            | Appointed Corporal Jan. 3, 1862; mustered as with company July 21, 1863.   |
| Daniel Spangler      | ..do.     | 30  | Feb. 23, 1862                | 3 yrs.            | Appointed Corporal May 21, 1862; mustered as with company July 21, 1863.   |
| George W. Brown      | ..do.     | 16  | Feb. 24, 1862                | 3 yrs.            | Appointed Corporal May 21, 1862; mustered as with company July 21, 1863.   |
| Philip Diefenbach    | Musketier | 23  | Oct. 14, 1861                | 3 yrs.            | Discharged Aug. 5, 1862, at Nashville, Tenn., on expiration of term of service.  |
| George H. Stringer   | ..do.     | 14  | Aug. 7, 1862                 | 3 yrs.            | Mustered out with company July 21, 1863.   |
| Archibald Gantzer G. | Private   | 27  | Feb. 26, 1862                | 3 yrs.            | Mustered out with company July 21, 1863.   |
| Isaac Honey          | ..do.     | 15  | Jan. 2, 1862                 | 3 yrs.            | Mustered out with company July 21, 1863.   |
| Harold Moore         | ..do.     | 18  | Dec. 27, 1861                | 3 yrs.            | Absent for wounds received March 13, 1862.   |

George Stringer's Ohio enlistment record. For enlarged version, [go to pg 9](#).



George Stringer in his Union Army uniform

In May 1864, the Ohio 69<sup>th</sup> joined General William Tecumseh Sherman on his march to Atlanta, capturing the city in August of that year. The regiment then completed Sherman’s “[March to the Sea](#)”, with victory in Savannah (December 1864) followed by the [Carolinas Campaign](#), which ended with surrender of Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston to Sherman in late April 1865; Robert E. Lee had surrendered at Appomattox, Virginia, several weeks earlier. Union victory in place, the 69<sup>th</sup> marched to Washington, DC, to participate in the [Grand Review of the Armies](#), May 23-24, celebrating the Union victory. The event was overseen by President Andrew Johnson because Lincoln had been assassinated one month earlier, on April 14, 1865.

Young George Stringer was “Mustered out June 5, 1865, at Washington D.C., by order of the War Department” six weeks short of his 17<sup>th</sup> birthday.<sup>14</sup> George had served nearly four years with the Union Army.

George Stringer's pension application

|  |                       |                                 |                                 |                                     |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| NAME OF SOLDIER: <i>Stringer George E.</i> |                       |                                 |                                 |                                     |
| NAME OF DEPENDENT: <i>Widow</i>            |                       |                                 |                                 |                                     |
| NAME OF DEPENDENT: <i>Minor</i>            |                       |                                 |                                 |                                     |
| SERVICE: <i>69 Ohio Inf</i>                |                       |                                 |                                 |                                     |
| DATE OF FILING: <i>Nov 14</i>              | CLASS: <i>Invalid</i> | APPLICATION NO.: <i>1072024</i> | CERTIFICATE NO.: <i>1137789</i> | STATE FROM WHICH FILED: <i>Miss</i> |
| ATTORNEY: <i>Gray &amp; Pulliam</i>        |                       |                                 |                                 |                                     |
| REMARKS: <i>C242/40</i>                    |                       |                                 |                                 |                                     |

<sup>14</sup> The rest of the regiment mustered out as a group in Louisville on July 17, 1865.

## Epilogue

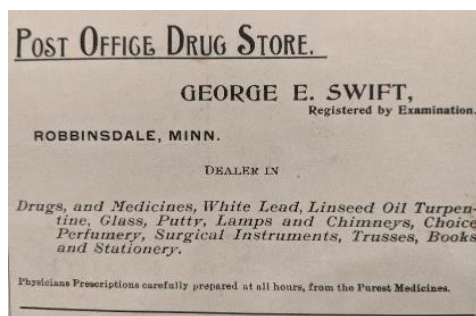


George Swift Drug Store, 1889

George Swift returned to Minnesota after the war. He married Carrie Axtell<sup>15</sup> in April 1880. My grandmother was born the next year, followed by two more girls and a boy.<sup>16</sup> George was a professional musician for many years.<sup>17</sup> He passed the pharmacist examination in 1885 while he was working for O.K. Skinner & Co., as a druggist.<sup>18</sup>

A few years later, according to the Robbinsdale Historical Society, George opened a drug store on 4157 West Broadway Avenue in 1889.

The Robbinsdale store included the local Post Office, making him the village's postmaster. An ad read, "the Swift girls will deliver your order," which meant my grandmother and her sisters were busy. In 1893, he installed the village's first telephone, hailed by the local people as "something the village has long needed and will be useful in case of fire or



Ad from *Picturesque*, Robbinsdale, 1894

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<sup>15</sup> Carrie Axtell graduated from Minneapolis High School in 1877. That class had only 11 students: seven girls and four boys. One of the boys was Thomas S. Roberts, who later authored *Birds of Minnesota* and helped found the Bell Museum of Natural History. Her [1877 graduating class photo](#) is in the Digital Collections of the Hennepin County Library, donated by me. She married George Swift three years later, on April 27, 1880. Both mother and daughter were named Carrie, which can lead to some confusion. Similarly, George's son was named George Earl Swift. The connections continued with my grandmother inserting the names Swift and Axtell as the middle name for my father, Robert Swift Craig, and uncle, Richard Axtell Craig.

<sup>16</sup> My grandmother was born at home on the corner of Hoag and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, about one-half mile northwest of present-day Target Field. The 2-block long Hoag Avenue is now gone, covered by Metro Transit's Heywood Garage.

<sup>17</sup> Minneapolis City Directories of the period typically list him as "musician." It's hard to think of a drummer making a living for 20 years, but George played other instruments. The 1882-83 directory lists him as clarionetist [*sic*]. Robbinsdale records say he "played a mean saxophone." We know he had some other jobs along the way: the 1873-74 city directory lists him as an "Asst. operator" at the W.H. Jacoby photographic studio. Perhaps this studio is where George's photo on page 5 was taken. He would have been 25 years old.

<sup>18</sup> The state of Minnesota Board of Pharmacy was created in 1885. The Board was responsible for examining and registering qualified candidates. Before that time, pharmacy was a trade where skills were learned by apprenticing with a practicing pharmacist. Experienced pharmacists were granted their license, but apprentices like George were required to pass an examination. The College of Pharmacy at the University of Minnesota wasn't established until 1892.

The O.K Skinner drug store was at 1121 Washington Ave. N., the current site of the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority. Two years later, the city directory shows George working and living at that same address, probably in an apartment above the store.

sickness.”<sup>19</sup> George added a Minneapolis store in 1896 at the northeast corner of Broadway and Bryant Avenues. He retired in 1915.



29<sup>th</sup> Reunion  
of the 69<sup>th</sup> Reg't

Throughout his life George Swift stayed connected to his Civil War experience and comrades. In October 1908, he traveled to Hamilton, Ohio, to participate in the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion of the 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment. Twenty years later, he reflected fondly on his experience with that group, saying sometimes a soldier carried “the drum of a tired boy and on one or two occasions carried the boy himself for short distances when it just seemed he couldn’t go on” (*Minneapolis Journal*, February 27, 1929).

George also connected to several local veteran groups, including the George N. Morgan Post of the GAR, Grand Army of the Republic. He was one of the founding members of the Morgan Post Drum Corps that led the Minnesota contingent in the 1902 Grand Parade of the GAR in Washington, DC, and performed at the Gettysburg reunion of the Blue and Gray in 1913. The 10-member corps was organized in 1883 and consisted entirely of musicians who had served in the Civil War.<sup>20</sup> George carried on another 30+ years and was the last surviving member.



Members of the Morgan Post, Grand Army of the Republic Fife and Drum Corps, were guests at a reception in their honor, 1925. Fourth from left: George E. Swift

A look at the 1902 roster of the Drum Corp showed George was not unique.<sup>21</sup> Their average age at enlistment was 16 years, with an average service time of 3 years, 10 months. And three of the 10 had served with multiple regiments. George and two others listed multiple placements; probably, none of them formally enlisted with their initial unit.

<sup>19</sup> He was active in the Robbinsdale community, being an early Justice of the Peace, village treasurer, and director of the Robbinsdale Military Band. In 1908, he petitioned the Minnesota Railroad Commission and submitted testimony in support of better service from the local depot. He was also active in a range of Masonic connections, including the Zurah Temple of the Shrine, Zion commandery, Scottish Rite, and Daylight lodge. He was past master of both the Plymouth and Compass lodges (*Minneapolis Journal* obituary, June 22, 1936).

<sup>20</sup> There were 10 members of this group. Roster of the George N. Morgan post, no. 4, Carter, H. D. (1903). Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), Department of Minnesota, Minneapolis (publisher not identified)

<sup>21</sup> *Minneapolis Tribune*, October 2, 1902. Two men, in addition to George, show enlistments in multiple regiments. George served the Third Minnesota and Sixty-ninth Ohio. Calvin R. Fix, drum major, served with the Fourth and Eleventh Minnesota. DeWitt C. Handy, bass drummer, served with the Ninth Minnesota and Thirty-seventh Wisconsin. Like George, these men may have joined their first unit looking for adventure, then actually *enlisted* in a subsequent unit to formalize their service.



A side story tells us more about George Swift, the man. The title of that 1929 *Minneapolis Journal* story was “Civil War Veteran Drills Girl to Play Drums for Washburn Junior Band.”



From the *Minneapolis Journal*, 1929

George Swift was 80 years old, retired, and living in Minneapolis – the 4800 block of Third Avenue South. He had been 13 years old when he learned to play the drums for the Minnesota 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry. In the newspaper story he is teaching 12-year-old neighbor, Mary Campbell, to play the drums. Under his tutelage she is in the school band, the “only girl drummer in any school in the city and one of the few anywhere.” The story says he also expanded her percussion skills to include the xylophone and bells. The 1934 Washburn yearbook shows her still a member of the school orchestra at graduation five years later. According to the story, Mary Campbell was just one of George Swift’s many pupils, a group that also included the drum corps at the Ballentine VFW Post and several individual players.

George Earl Swift started fast, and he never slowed down. He died on June 22, 1936, a few weeks short of his 88<sup>th</sup> birthday. He is interred at the Crystal Lake Cemetery in Minneapolis, not far from his old Robbinsdale home and drug store.<sup>22</sup>



George E. Swift Family  
The author's grandmother, Carrie Swift (Craig), is on the far left.

<sup>22</sup> George lies in Section 21, Lot 359, Space 10. The ashes of his wife Carrie (d. Nov 1941) and daughters Ida (aka Nancy, d. Sept 1937) and Mary (d. May 1944) are in adjacent spaces 10B, 11, and 11B.

| Names.                   | Rank.    | Age. | Date of Entering the Service. | Period of Service. | Remarks.  |
|--------------------------|----------|------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Jared P. Miller .....    | Corporal | 19   | Oct. 14, 1861                 | 3 yrs.             | Mustered out Dec. 31, 1864, at Savannah, Ga., on expiration of term of service.                       |
| William Richey .....     | do       | 23   | Sept. 15, 1861                | 3 yrs.             | Mustered out Dec. 31, 1864, at Savannah, Ga., on expiration of term of service.                       |
| John Tucker .....        | do       | 35   | Oct. 16, 1861                 | 3 yrs.             | Appointed Corporal March 5, 1864; killed June 5, 1864, in action at Pumpkin Vine Creek, Ga.; veteran. |
| Jeese W. Havens .....    | do       | 45   | Dec. 9, 1861                  | 3 yrs.             | Discharged May 30, 1863, at Louisville, Ky., on Surgeon's certificate of disability.                  |
| John Schmidtman .....    | do       | 21   | Oct. 21, 1861                 | 3 yrs.             | Died Dec. 14, 1863, at Chattanooga, Tenn.   |
| John J. Simmons .....    | do       | 19   | Nov. 18, 1861                 | 3 yrs.             | Appointed Corporal March 5, 1864; killed Sept. 1, 1864, in battle of Jonesboro, Ga.; veteran.         |
| Alexander House .....    | do       | 19   | .....                         | 3 yrs.             | Appointed Corporal March 5, 1864; killed March 19, 1865, in battle of Bentonville, N. C.; veteran.    |
| Daniel Spangler .....    | do       | 30   | Feb. 22, 1864                 | 3 yrs.             | Appointed Corporal Jan. 3, 1865; mustered out with company July 17, 1865.                             |
| George W. Brown .....    | do       | 18   | Feb. 26, 1864                 | 3 yrs.             | Appointed Corporal May 11, 1865; mustered out with company July 17, 1865.                             |
| Philip Diefenbach .....  | Musician | 23   | Oct. 14, 1861                 | 3 yrs.             | Discharged Aug. 2, 1862, at Nashville, Tenn., on Surgeon's certificate of disability.                 |
| George E. Stringer ..... | do       | 14   | Aug. 1, 1862                  | 3 yrs.             | Mustered out June 5, 1865, at Washington D. C., by order of War Department.                           |
| Archart, Gasner G. ....  | Private  | 27   | Feb. 26, 1864                 | 3 yrs.             | Mustered out with company July 17, 1865.  |
| Baker, Henry .....       | do       | 18   | Jan. 3, 1864                  | 3 yrs.             | Mustered out with company July 17, 1865.  |
| Benton, Henry M. ....    | do       | 18   | Dec. 21, 1863                 | 3 yrs.             | Absent for wounds received March 19, 1865, in battle of Bentonville, N. C.; no further record found.  |
| Bisbee, William .....    | do       | 26   | Nov. 5, 1861                  | 3 yrs.             | Mustered out with company July 17, 1865; vet  |

George Stringer's Ohio Enlistment Record

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## Sources

- Carrie Swift Craig Family Genealogy, 1952
- Fitzharris, Joseph C., *The Hardest Lot of Men: The Third Minnesota Infantry in the Civil War*, University of Oklahoma Press, 2019
- Stones River National Battlefield (phone)
- Minnesota History Center (consultation/visit)
- National Archives and Records Administration pension files
- State Infantry records:
  - a) [Ohio Civil War Central](#) website
  - b) *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars, 1861-1865*, prepared and published under the supervision of the Minnesota Board of Commissioners, printed by the Pioneer Press Company, St. Paul, Minn., 1890
- *Star Tribune* newspaper archive
- Local Archives:
  - c) Hennepin County Library Special Collections
  - d) Robbinsdale Historical Society
  - e) [St. Paul Public Library City Directory](#) website
- Roster for the George N. Morgan post, no. 4, Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), Department of Minnesota, 1903
- Crystal Lake Cemetery, Minneapolis, MN (office visit by the author)

### **Information on Images**

Page 1: Photo of Carrie Swift (Craig), from the author's collection

Page 5: Photo of George Stringer's enlistment record, from the Ohio Civil War Central website

Photo of George Stringer, from the author's collection

Photo of George Stringer's pension application, from the National Archives and Records Administration

Page 6: Photo of the drugstore of George Swift, from the Robbinsdale Historical Society

Photo of an ad for the drugstore of George Swift, Robbinsdale Historical Society

Page 7: Photo of a ribbon for the 29<sup>th</sup> Reunion of the 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment, from the author's collection

Photo of the GAR Drum Corps, from the Hennepin County Library

Page 8: Photo of Mary Campbell and George Swift, from the Hennepin County Library

Photo of the George Swift family, from the author's collection