

Robert Brown Military History

Summary of Robert Brown's History by a family member

Robert's age when he died isn't clear. According to an undated birth record compiled by his sister, Margaret, he was 22; but according to the documents sent to me, he was either 18 or 20, depending on which document you believe.

He is described as 5'8" tall with a light complexion, light hair, and blue eyes. He was a farmer. His home is given as Harrison Corners, Allen County, Indiana. He was unmarried.

Robert enlisted for three years on August 5, 1862 in Fort Wayne. The "Bounty and Prem. Paid" was \$27.00. He was then mustered in on August 29, 1862 in Indianapolis. He subsequently served as a private under the command of Captain Augustus C. Brown (his brother and therefore another great great uncle!) in Company E of the 88th Indiana Infantry.

Robert was wounded at the Battle of Stones River near Murfreesboro, Tenn. One document lists the date as Dec. 31, 1862 and another as Jan. 3, 1863. (I'm inclined to believe the former, as histories list the battle as lasting from Dec. 31 to Jan. 2.) He was then sent to the No. 1 U.S.A. General Hospital in Nashville where he died on Jan. 11. The cause of the death was listed as "amputated leg." (It isn't clear whether he died during or following the amputation.)

He was then buried on Jan. 13 in grave 2569 of College Hill Cemetery, Nashville. His effects were turned over to his brother, the company commander, on March 10 at a camp near Murfreesboro. The effects included a forage cap, great coat, uniform coat, trousers, shoes, and a blanket.

The document sent me end with the disposition of effects. What they do not report is that the body was later disinterred and returned to Indiana. The following is from a letter dated May 30, 1964 from Grandad Brown (Robert's nephew):

"Our Grandfather Henry Brown and a neighbor drove a team of horses and wagon to Murfreesboro and brought home the body of their son our uncle and buried it in Eel River Cemetery. The distance must be about 400 miles and that must have been a trip to remember. It is no wonder that Grandfather Brown died some months later."

Aunt Helen (our great aunt and Robert's niece) speaks of her memories of her grandmother, Elizabeth French Brown (Robert's mother), in a letter to Grandad Brown (her brother) dated Feb. 16, 1965:

"In summer, when our Mother had to be out of doors with garden, chickens, etc., I stayed with Grandmother because she raised the roof when she thought she was alone. She always began by telling me to open the door to her room, and look at that old tin-type picture on the wall - that was herself and Henry on their wedding day. Then bring my little chair, and sit beside her....Then on she went [speaking of family history] until Civil War days - Henry went down into Tenn. to bring back the body of her son - that was as far as she got. She would start crying, and after a while, fall off in sleep."