

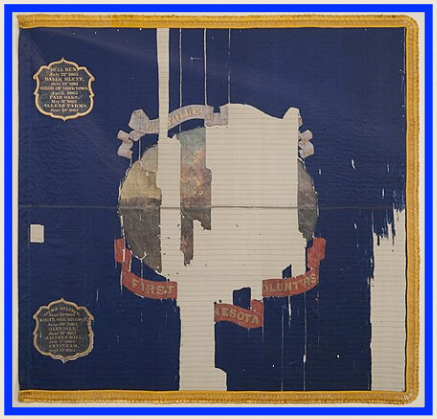

The Regimental Banner of the First Minnesota Volunteer Infantry Regiment consists of one layer of blue silk with a gold fringe border and the unofficial Minnesota state seal painted in the center with the Minnesota state motto over it in gold pigment. Beneath the seal is a painted red ribbon reading "FIRST MINNESOTA VOLUNTEERS." Two gold shields list the battles fought by the First Minnesota before April of 1863.

On right is a plain brass First Minnesota Volunteer Infantry badge worn on the kepia, or cap with a flat circular top, and a peak, or visor.



George Buchanan Clarke, Sr., was born in 1841 in Rochester, Pennsylvania, son of Hamilton Fred Clarke (1807-1882) and Sarah Jane Walker Clarke (1816-1896). By 1860, George was living in Eagle Creek, Minnesota.

George enlisted as a private on May 17, 1861, in Shakopee. He was mustered into Company A, First Minnesota Infantry. The First Minnesota Infantry Regiment was a Union infantry regiment active during the American Civil War. The First Minnesota participated in the battles of First Bull Run, Antietam, and Gettysburg. The regiment's most famous action occurred on the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg when Major General Winfield Scott Hancock ordered the First Minnesota to charge into a brigade of 1200 Confederate soldiers. This action blunted the Confederate attack and helped preserve the Union's precarious position on Cemetery Ridge.

He was 23 years old, stood 5' 8-3/4" tall, had a florid complexion, light hair, and blue eyes. George was a dutiful soldier, who was present at all the battles in which the regiment was involved. At the Battle of Antietam, George became separated from his company and was captured. He was released during a prisoner exchange, which meant that all men involved could go back to their respective units, according to American Civil War Research Database.

George survived the battles of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and the desperate charge at Gettysburg, but was not so fortunate at Bristow Station. During this time George was wounded by a bullet that penetrated his left hip. He was helped off the field and spent the next two months in Grosvenor Hospital in Virginia.

George returned home that winter and was one of only 58 veterans to re-enlist in May when the First Minnesota Infantry was mustered out and the new First Minnesota Infantry Battalion was formed.

At the Battle of Petersburg, the battalion found itself in an advanced position, in trenches directly in front of the Confederate Army. They were waiting for other units of the V Corps to support them. For some reason the support never came, and the Confederates attacked where there was a gap in the line, cutting off the battalion. Some, like George, tried to make a stand but it was no use and they were soon captured.

George, along with twenty other men from the battalion, was soon carted off to prison for what would be the most trying time of their military duty. He was a POW for eight months. He was confined in Richmond on June 24, and then sent to Andersonville Prison in Lynchburg, Virginia, on June 29. Later he was sent to prison in Florence, South Carolina. Upon his release, he was sent to the hospital in Annapolis, Maryland. He was there for about five weeks before being sent to a hospital in Baltimore.

When he was discharged, George returned to the battalion and was promoted to sergeant. Frank Houston recalled later that Clarke "looked like a



Monument to the First Minnesota Infantry Regiment at Gettysburg Battlefield, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, located on Cemetery Ridge, off South Hancock Avenue.

ghost of the man, who was captured in June 1864, and that he complained of having no teeth and always felt exhausted."

George was discharged at Jeffersonville, Indiana, on July 14, 1865.

Fifteen years later, George married Cora Viola Low (1860-1909), daughter of Benjamin Evans Low (1826-1904) and Laura J. Gould Low (1826-1890) in Des Moines River Township in Murray County, Minnesota. They had three children: Hamilton Fred (1882-1950); Sumner Lowe (1884-1987); and George Buchanan, Jr. (1886-1941).

George Buchanan Clarke, Sr., was in poor health and spent his last months at the Old Soldiers' Home in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This was before the Soldiers' Home was built in Minneapolis. He died of "softening of the brain" caused by his sickness on March 16, 1887. He was 46 years old.

George was buried at Valley Cemetery in Shakopee.



Contributor Nancy E. Gertner noted that his widow, Cora Viola Low Clarke, married her widow neighbor, John Mitchell, two years after George died, and Cora and John had six more children. Cora died January 15, 1909, in Des Moines River Township.

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George Buchanan Clarke

1841-1887

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