

Tombstone

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the stone remained unanswered, such as: Who was Sgt. J.F. Kinna that served in the Ohio Cavalry during the Civil War? If not buried in Aberdeen, where was this soldier's grave?

LAUNCHING THE SEARCH

Some Aberdeen-area veterans heard of the stone and felt it would be better to place the stone at the originally intended gravesite. After exhausting local resources, they contacted the State Historical Society-Archives at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre.

At this time, Virginia Hanson and Lori Carpenter became involved in the search. After an extensive search of the State Archives' diverse resources, Kinna's life story began to emerge.

Hanson, the primary researcher, first looked for information about Kinna in WPA cemetery records, where she found out his full name was Jacob Franklin Kinna, and he was buried in Yankton. From there, she went to the society's microfilm newspaper collection and was able to find articles about Kinna's death in 1893.

Hanson also utilized census records, Civil War records and land records to piece together Kinna's story. Carpenter conducted several personal interviews.

"It's one of the more interesting research projects I've been involved with," Hanson said. "There's more to the story than just finding his burial location. Here is a man who is part of our history. This is saving South Dakota history."

The Yankton Community Library also played a key role in solving the mystery.

Wika contacted the Yankton library, seeking more information from the *Press & Dakotan* and other sources, according to senior library assistant Joyce Brunken. The effort also involved the library's Theresa Bosch and Glenda Lanning.

"(Wika) called and knew there was a shooting (involving Kinna) in Yankton," Brunken said. "We found it in the *P&D* on Dec. 23, 1893. (Kinna) was shot, and he

was 48 years old. They buried him, but the tombstone got away."

Kinna served with the Ohio Cavalry, which provided a starting point for finding more information, Brunken said. "On the tombstone is the name of Kinna Joshua, and then they couldn't tell if it was 'j' or 'f,'" she said.

Wika had narrowed the time frame to December 1893, Brunken said.

"We like it when at least they have the date of old papers. Otherwise, it's a lot harder to go through," the librarian said. "And in the very old papers, they don't have that information in certain places, like today when they have the obituaries on one page. Back then, they might have the story between two other stories."

But the Yankton library staff hit paydirt right away, Brunken said. "We found (the shooting) on the front page, and then we found a few days later when he died," she said.

With the location of a specific date for Kinna's death, Bessert sealed the deal by finding the burial site.

"Our records show the burial (of Kinna) in our cemetery, so we were able to verify information that matched (Wika's) records," she said. "Actually, the gentleman from Aberdeen had the majority of research. He sent us a full packet of information that gave the history on (Kinna) and would call us at least once a week to touch base."

Inquiries were also made with Crystal Mensch-Nelson of the Dakota Territorial Museum in Yankton. She provided whatever information was available from the museum.

THE TALE IS TOLD

And now, Kinna's story has fallen into place.

Born in 1840 at Virginia to Catherine and Samuel Kinna, Jacob Franklin Kinna grew to manhood in Maryland. By age 20, Kinna accepted employment as a wagon master at Jackson, Md.

On Oct. 23, 1863, Kinna resided in Ohio where he enlisted into Company C, 12th regiment, Ohio Cavalry division as a corporal for the Union Army. His unit remained at Camp Chase until February 1864.

The company received orders sending them to Nashville on March 31, 1864. During the war,

Kinna and Company C saw action at Mount Sterling, Ky.; Bristol, Tenn., and Dallas, N.C. Kinna's war service ended at Nashville, Tenn., on Nov. 14, 1865.

By 1870, Jacob had married Rebecca. Children born of this union were Charles H. and Clayton, both of whom were born in Indiana.

At age 40, Jacob was a widowed wagon maker at Alvin, Ill.

On Sept. 13, 1881, Louisa McClellan and Jacob received a marriage license at Vermillion County, Ill. Between 1882 and 1890, Kinna made his way from Illinois to Ordway, S.D. From Ordway he traveled to Yankton, where he made his home two miles west of the township.

Although a resident of the Yankton area, Kinna retained membership with Aberdeen's Robert Anderson Post 19 Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) for Civil War veterans.

On Dec. 2, 1893, Kinna sustained a gunshot wound to his shoulder while attempting to evict a trespassing hunter from his property. After the shooting, Kinna acquired an infection known as gripe and died on Dec. 20, 1893.

Burial occurred in an unmarked grave at Yankton Cemetery in block 716, gravesite 25, under the auspices of Phil Kearney Post 7 GAR.

PUTTING TOGETHER THE PIECES

Carpenter, with the state archives office, encourages the public to follow up on any military markers.

"The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs provides headstones and markers for the graves of U.S. veterans anywhere in the world," she said. "If you find an unmet military stone, contact the nearest Veterans Administration Office. As is shown in this instance, the stone may need to mark a soldier's remains."

The Kinna story is an example of the kind of research sources the State Historical Society-Archives has, said Chelle Somers, state archivist.

"The South Dakota State Archives has a diverse collection of information available to the general public as well as researchers," she said. "We have been collecting, preserving and making available manuscript collections, governmental records, photographs, maps and other

archival materials since 1891. If you are searching for a person or subject of interest, the State Archives is here to aid you in a successful outcome."

Questions remaining include how the stone got to Warner from Aberdeen, and why the stone was never taken to Yankton, Hanson said. Those answers, she said, might require further research at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Hanson said the stone was probably ordered by the Aberdeen GAR.

Brunken said the Yankton Community Library maintains a genealogy library, which proved vital in finding information on

Kinna. The library also maintains access to a complete collection of the *Press & Dakotan*.

"Right now, we collect all the *P&D*'s and microfilm them," she said. "We have them microfilmed from the very beginning (of the paper's existence)."

The library staff remains available for research assistance, Brunken said.

"We enjoy looking up (things), and it's always nice when we help people find it," she said.

Bessert said she was glad to help solve the mystery with the help of city records and cemetery sexton Chris Bornitz.

Yankton officials are waiting

for more details on the Sept. 10 military ceremony at Kinna's burial site, Bessert said. She expects to receive more information now that the date has been finalized.

"I think they are quite excited for the marker to be back home," she said. "We will keep in touch. We are trying to accommodate them as well as we can."

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