

Wolcott K. Baird, Jr. did not find life in the service much different than his life outside of it.

Wolcott was born in Goshen, Vermont on September 23, 1841. ^[1] His parents were Wolcott K. Baird, Sr. and Mary Ann Olmstead Baird. ^[2] Eight year old Junior had five siblings in 1850: Mary Ann, 17; Hannah, 15; Edward, 13; Francis, 3 and a newborn brother named Charles who hadn't seen his first birthday yet in 1850. He and his immediate family lived on a farm in Chittenden, Vermont. Wolcott, Sr.'s farm was valued at \$1300 in 1850, a modest sum for the times. ^[3]

At the time of the next Federal Census, the nineteen year old Wolcott, Jr. and family had lost one male and one female member. However, the farm in Chittenden was now worth \$3500. In addition to an increase in value of the property, the Baird's had also gained a new resident - Lydia Olmstead, Mary Ann's seventy-eight year old mother, lived with them. ^[4]

In 1861, while many young men from Vermont were putting on blue uniforms and leaving home for the first time in their lives, Wolcott, Jr. decided to get married. The wedding day was August 15, 1861 and was held in Sherburne, Vermont. The bride was sixteen year old Malissa Durkee from Crown Point, New York. ^[5] Malissa was born April 1, 1844. Her full name was Caroline Melissa "Malissa" Durkee Baird. ^[6] The newly weds continued to live in Chittenden. Two years later, as the Civil War dragged on, Congress passed a conscription act and draft registrations were done throughout the Union states. Every Congressional District had to list all the eligible men of draft age. In May/June of 1863, Goshen's was done. In it was listed a "...Beard, Wolcott Jr., 21, of Goshen, married (and a) lumberman...." by trade. ^[7] It was not long after that that Wolcott, willingly or otherwise, was in front of a recruiter with pen in hand.

His enlistment papers said he was twenty-two years old and born in Goshen. He was listed as standing five feet ten inches tall with a dark complexion, black eyes and hair. He earned a livelihood as a teamster and was married. He was enlisted by the Selectmen of

Goshen and inducted into the Army on December 3, 1863 in Rutland, Vermont. Wolcott was assigned to Company B, Ninth Reg't Vermont Infantry on enlistment. ^[8] On December 30, 1863, Private Baird was mustered-in at Brattleboro, Vermont. January 22, 1864 the recruit was "forwarded", probably to New Haven, Connecticut. He was paid \$25 and owed \$242 more in bounty. He also qualified for an additional \$35 from the "commutation fund." And, very strange for the Government, was given one month's pay (\$13) in advance plus a \$2 premium. ^[9]

Prior to Wolcott joining the Ninth at the beginning of 1864, the Regiment had seen little action in the Civil War. That was primarily due to the fact that it surrendered to General Jackson's forces at Harper's Ferry in 1863 before the Battle of Antietam and spent eight months paroled at Camp Douglas near Chicago until a prisoner exchange was arranged. Once released from Camp Douglas, the Regiment was assigned to guard and fatigue duty mostly until the fall of 1864. It then was engaged in action around Petersburg and Richmond. By the end of its service in December of 1865, forty-four of its ranks had been killed in action and two hundred eighty-one had died of various diseases. ^[10] As for Wolcott, nothing of much significance seemed to happen with him throughout 1864. He was just "present" for muster roll. It wasn't until March/April, 1865 that that routine was broken. Since "April 7, '65" Private Baird was on duty as a wagoner. For May and June, 1865, he was "detached" as a "teamster". ^[11] June was a busy month for Wolcott. On the thirteenth of the month, he was transferred from Company B to C, but remained with the Ninth. ^[12] He was on duty as a teamster with his Regiment until his discharge at Portsmouth, Virginia on December 1, 1865. ^[13]

Once Wolcott was free of the army, he went back to his wife and farm in Goshen. By 1870, he and his wife, Melissa, had two little girls - Lucy, age 6 and Abbie, age 2. Wolcott's farm was valued at \$3000 and his personal property at another \$1500 in that census year. During the next ten years, he and his wife had four more children: Lewis, Carleton, Arvill and Althia. ^[14]

In October, 1890, Wolcott filed for a pension which was granted. He was still a relatively young man. However, apparently he was not a well man. On either the tenth of June or the first of July, 1899, depending on which set of records you are looking at, Wolcott died of heart disease. ^[15]

Two or three months after his death, Wolcott's widow, Malissa, filed for a widow's pension which she received until her death in 1912. ^[16]

NOTES

1. Vermont in the Civil War/Cemeteries/Vermont/Goshen/Goshen Cemetery/Baird, Wolcott, Jr./Vitals and Ancestry.com, U.S., Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current under Wolcott Baird.
2. Ancestry.com, U.S., Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current under Wolcott Baird and Ancestry.com, 1850 and 1860 U.S. Federal Census under Wolcott Baird and Wolcot Bard.
3. Ibid., 1850 U.S. Federal Census under Wolcott Baird.
4. Ibid., 1860 U.S. Federal Census under Wolcot Bard.
5. Op cit., Vermont, Vital Records, 1720-1908 under Malissa Durkee.
6. www. findagrave.com, Find A Grave Memorial under Caroline Melissa "Malissa" Durkee Baird and Ancestry.com, Vermont, Vital Records, 1909-2008 under Carolin M. Baird.
7. Ancestry.com, U.S., Civil War Draft Registrations Records, 1863-1865 for Wolcott Baird.
8. Fold3.com, Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Vermont, pp. 3, 20-21, images 311569137, ...204 and ...209. Herein after referred to as Compiled Service Records...
9. Ibid., Compiled Service Records..., p. 4, image 311569141.
10. Civil War Journal: The Battles, edited by William C. Davis, Brian C. Pohanka and Don Troiani, Rutledge Hill Press, Nashville, 1998, p.55.
11. Ibid., Compiled Service Records..., p. 13-14, images 311569181 and ...185.
12. Op cit., Compiled Service Records, p. 10, image 311569169.
13. Op cit., Compiled Service Records..., pp. 17-18, images 311569195 and ...197.
14. Ancestry.com, 1870 and 1880 U.S. Federal Census under Wolcott Baird.
15. Ibid., Vermont, Vital Records under Wolcott Baird; Vermont in the Civil War/ Cemeteries/Vermont/Goshen/Goshen Cemetery/Baird, Wolcott, Jr./Vitals; Ancestry.com, U.S., Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current under Wolcott Baird.
16. Op cit., U.S., Civil War Pension Index: General Index to Pension Files, 1861-1934 for Wolcott Baird and Ancestry.com, Vermont, Death Records, 1909-2008 under Carolin M. Baird.