

Henry Wilson Tracy 1829-1870

Senior Warden Rocky Mountain Lodge No.205, 1859

By George F. Winters, Historian



Henry Wilson Tracy was born July 31, 1829, at St. Louis, Missouri to parents Edward Tracy Esq. (1782-1852) and Mary Ann "Nellie" Nelson (1800-1849). He has five siblings: Augustus Early Tracy (1832–1877), William Thomas Tracy (1836–1839), Alfred Ripley Tracy (1838–1857), William Thomas Tracy (1840–1896), Eliza Ripley Tracy (1844–1925)¹.

From an early age, Tracy worked as a merchant, operated a wagon train, and transported mail and supplies for Miller, Russel & Co. Between 1849 and 1851, the H. W. Tracy and Company store was located on Third Street in St Paul Minnesota. The store sold dry goods, clothing, hardware, fancy goods and Queensware². In the 1850 Census, he is listed as a merchant living in St. Paul³. He sold his interest in the store to Charles F. Tracy in November 1851⁴.

Henry Wilson Tracy, received his Masonic Degrees in Old St. Paul Lodge #3 (Ohio Registry) in Saint Paul Minnesota during 1851⁵. He withdrew from the Lodge in 1856⁶.

A short notice appeared in the Minnesota Democrat on January 7, 1852; “Celebration of St. John’s Day 1851 – Pursuant to a notice published in the several papers of the city, a large number of the Masons of St. Paul, convened in the Central House, to celebrate in an informal manner, St. John’s Day...” H. W. Tracy Esq. is listed as a participant.

He affiliated with Polar Star Lodge No. 79 during 1856 in Missouri and remained a member until he submitted a Demit in 1858⁷. About this time Tracy along with Miller, Russel & Co, start moving supplies west to Utah Territory under protection of the Utah expedition.

¹ https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/43284373/person/13883706580/facts?_phsrc=gQm1582&_phstart=successSource visited 7/18/2019

² Ancestry.com, H.W. Tracy Advertisement, https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/43284373/person/13883706580/media/4634633b-7fd6-4d34-9367-3c3c01a8e354?_phsrc=dtU680&_phstart=successSource visited 8/25/2021

³ 1850 Federal Census, St Paul, Ramsey County, 15 September 1850, Ancestry, https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/8054/images/4195937-00080?usePUB=true&_phsrc=sfh162&usePUBJs=true&pId=3326777 visited 8/25/2021

⁴ St. Paul Weekly, 8 May 1852, Ancestry.com, https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/20080310/person/19539939186/media/ff182848-200a-4fbd-aa96-0c137ace4a58?_phsrc=dtU682&_phstart=successSource visited 8/25/2021

⁵ Correspondence from the Assistant Grand Secretary, Grand Lodge of Minnesota 9/3/2021

⁶ IBID

⁷ Grand Lodge of Missouri, conversation with Historian Samuel Thomas on August 25, 2021

Late in 1858, Henry W. Tracy was one of the signers on the petition to form a Lodge at Camp Floyd and noted Master Mason (M.M.) next to his signature. When the dispensation dated March 6, 1859, arrived at Camp Floyd, Brother Henry W. Tracy is listed as the first Senior Warden. Grand Secretary S. H. Goodwin mentions Tracy is a member of Miller, Russel & Co., merchants at the Camp⁸.

At the outbreak of the “War of Northern Aggression”, so called by the southerners, Tracy along with Miller, Russel & Co., left Camp Floyd and traveled first to New Mexico and then home to Missouri for a short time.

Late in 1861, the following appeared in a local Missouri paper, “Excitement at the Planters’ House. – Considerable excitement was occasioned in and around the Planters’ House, Saturday evening, about ½ o’clock, by a disturbance in the bar-room under the hotel. Mr. Henry Tracy, a well known citizen of St. Louis, while engaged in drinking and conversation at the bar in company with a number of citizens and military officers, took offence at a remark made by a gentlemen present, and unceremoniously dealt him a terrible blow with his fist, laying him on the floor insensible, and it is stated, fracturing his skull. A more general disturbance seemed about to ensue, when two or three United States officers approached Tracy to arrest him. Springing back, he unsheathed a large knife and declared that he would not be taken alive. After this demonstration of Tracy, the anxiety of the officers to take him into custody seemed very considerably to diminish. He left the bar-room without being attended or pursued by the officers⁹...”

On May 3, 1862, Trusten W. Polk, U. S. Senator of Missouri, and a friend of General Sterling Price, writes to Jefferson Davis recommending Henry W. Tracy for the appointment as Quarter Master of the C.S. Army¹⁰.

Tracy enters into Confederate service on June 25, 1862, and commissioned Major upon entry¹¹. About this time, Tracy wrote the Grand Secretary of Missouri from Washington Arkansas requesting a duplicate demit, the original being lost in New Mexico¹².

On the Muster dated December 31st, 1863 Major H.W. Tracy is listed present for November and December in General Sterling Price’s Division, District of Arkansas at Camp Bragg¹³ located

⁸ FREEMASONRY IN UTAH Rocky Mountain Lodge No. 205 A.F.&A.M, S. H. Goodwin, 1934, page 39.

⁹ Daily Missouri Democrat, December 11, 1861, https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/43284373/person/13883706580/media/9575a7e2-576d-4d73-a0ab-d34ea081edd9?_phsrc=sfh147&_phstart=successSource visited 3/3/2020.

¹⁰ Ancestry.com, <https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/43284373/person/13883706580/media/951e4f52-227d-4c35-918c-188b4bd642a2> visited 8/26/2021

¹¹ Ancestry, https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/collection/1030/tree/43284373/person/13883706580/media/9d7ace2a-e8fa-460a-818c-6e891d52ac34?_phsrc=sfh125&usePUBJs=true visited 3/1/2020

¹² FREEMASONRY IN UTAH Rocky Mountain Lodge No. 205 A.F.&A.M, S. H. Goodwin, 1934, page 39.

¹³ Muster Roll dated 12/31/1863, Camp Bragg, Ancestry.com, <https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/43284373/person/13883706580/media/9d7ace2a-e8fa-460a-818c-6e891d52ac34> visited 8/26/2021

about 20 miles south of Camden. He served as Quarter Master, a position he was well qualified for, due to his years as a merchant dealing with the military before the civil war.

The Grand Master of Arkansas issued a dispensation to “Brother McCown in Colonel Dawson’s regiment on December 23rd, 1863, to form Camp Bragg Lodge¹⁴. The Lodge is one of only four to file a return and listed 21 members. It is not known at this time if Brother Tracy was one of those members.

On the Muster Roll dated February 29, 1864, for the period of January, Major Tracy is listed as present at Camp Sumter.

Later in 1864, Confederate General Edmund Kirby-Smith, in command of the Western Louisiana campaign, ordered General Sterling Price in Arkansas to send all of his infantry to Shreveport. Confederate forces in the Indian Territory were to join Price in the endeavor. With a force of five thousand, Price reached Shreveport on March 24. Kirby-Smith detained the division and divided it into two smaller ones. He hesitated to send the men south to fight Union General Nathaniel P. Banks, who he believed outnumbered the Confederate forces. Price marched back into Arkansas to oppose General Frederick Steele's Camden Expedition but was defeated at the Battle of Prairie D'Ane and the Battle of Jenkin's Ferry. The unit is disbanded.

With the assistance of the Grand Librarian of Arkansas,¹⁵ we learned the Brother Tracy did not apply for affiliation with any of the Arkansas Lodges during the time he was in the state.

In 1865, he marries Isadora Nevarre Cannon/Sholars (1842-1921). On 27 February 1866 it is reported the H.W. Tracy and wife arrive at the St. Charles Hotel in New Orleans Louisiana, from Washington Arkansas¹⁶.

His death is reported In the November 1870 edition of the Missouri Republican¹⁷, “In New Orleans, La, on Sunday Nov. 20, of Yellow Fever, Major Henry W. Tracy, fourth son of the late Edward Tracy of this city.”

Henry W. Tracy is buried at Old Washington (aka Presbyterian) Cemetery, Hempstead County, Arkansas¹⁸.

¹⁴ Transactions of the Missouri Lodge of Research Volume No. 21, 1964, “Sword and Trowel, The Story of Traveling and Military Lodges. Compiled by John Black Vrooman and Allen E Roberts, pages 47-48.

¹⁵ Phone Conversation, 7/27/2021, with the Arkansas Grand Librarian, R.W. Brother Andy Miller, who reviewed all the annual Lodge returns 1860-1866 and found no listing for Henry Williams Tracy.

¹⁶ New Orleans Daily Crescent, New Orleans, La. : J.O. Nixon, 1866-1869. <https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/20080310/person/19539939186/media/9c21091e-a3ba-43b2-9186-45ec884cd1de> visited 3/3/2020.

¹⁷ Ancestry.com, <https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/43284373/person/13883706580/media/5b660c13-8d98-4f9f-b42d-e001a09c902d> visited 8/26/2021

¹⁸ Arkansas Gravestones, <https://arkansasgravestones.org/view.php?id=75811> visited 3/3/2020