

## NEWSLETTER

April 2022

Millburn of Old Mill Creek

MAILING ADDRESS  
H.M.C.A., INC.  
P.O. Box 56  
Wadsworth, IL 60083

## Susannah Smith and the Civil War

By Diana Dretske, Curator and Historian

THE 2022  
MEMBERSHIP  
DRIVE HAS  
BEGUN.  
PLEASE RENEW  
YOURS NOW.

During the American Civil War, Susannah “Susie” Smith (1839-1914) rallied behind the Millburn boys, who enlisted to preserve the Union. Her letters to the soldiers and support of aid societies buoyed the spirits of the fighting men.

Susie was the daughter of George E. Smith and Mercy Gwinn Loring of Salem, Massachusetts. The Smiths came to Millburn in 1839 and purchased land north of town on W. Miller Road where they farmed and raised sheep.

In the second summer of the Civil War, Susie’s brother, George E. Smith Jr. (1842-1915), enlisted in Company D with the 96th Illinois. Dozens of men from the area enlisted, including John. K. Pollock, Richard and Alexander Thain, William Bonner Jr., David J. Minto, and George C. Dodge, the grandson of Rev. Wm. B. Dodge of the Millburn Congregational Church.

As the men marched off to the war’s Western Theater, a key to their success was to retain a strong connection to home and to know that their families and neighbors supported them. Susie wrote frequently to her brother George and his tent mates in the 96th Illinois, which brought comfort and eased the hardships of the soldiers’ lives. George wrote to her: “the boys in the tent all said that [your letter] beat all the letters they ever heard and that it ought to be printed.”

After the Union’s victorious Atlanta Campaign (May 7–September 2, 1864), Susie wrote: “Our Boys in Blue grow hopeful as they see

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Left: Susannah “Susie” Smith Minto  
(photo courtesy of Minto Family)



Below: George and Mercy Smith in front of  
their family home on W. Miller Road  
(photo courtesy of Dunn Museum)

# 2021 MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT! PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP AND HELP US RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS FOR 2022.

## HONORARY MEMBERS

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\* INDICATES NEW MEMBER(S)

\*While we work hard to maintain accurate membership records, we apologize in advance for any errors. Please provide a copy of your cancelled check if you feel we have omitted your name here for 2021 in error. Thank you!

## In Memoriam

*We mourn the loss of the following members. They will forever be in our hearts. We extend our sincere condolences to their families.*

**Milt Anderson**  
**Gary Doolittle**  
**Al Maiden**  
**Joan Stewart**

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS:

BETH BAECKLANDT  
JOHN & SANDEE BONNER  
LISA WEST FORNWALD  
JOHN & IRMA HANKEY  
LINDA KELLY  
CARLY KRAFT

## MEMBERSHIP DRIVE 2022

Please fill in this form and mail it with a check payable to  
HMCA, Inc. Thank you!

### Mailing Address:

Historic Millburn Community Association, Inc.  
P.O. Box 56, Wadsworth, IL 60083

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

[We would prefer communicating via e-mail if possible.]

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership Levels

I've (We've) enclosed \$\_\_\_\_\_ to be applied toward:

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual annual dues (\$20)

\_\_\_\_\_ Household annual dues (\$35)

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual lifetime membership\* (\$200)

\_\_\_\_\_ Household lifetime membership\* (\$350)

\_\_\_\_\_ Donation for \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ My company will send a matching gift.

*\*The name(s) of Lifetime Members are engraved on a brass nameplate on our display of lifetime members in the museum.*

### Suggestions:

If you have suggestions for how we might increase our annual membership, please let us know!

**We thank you in advance for your support!**



Your membership  
dues pay for:

- Heat & electricity
- Insurance
- Maintenance
- Communications
- Postage
- Office supplies
- QuickBooks Software
- Bookkeeping
- Website

Martin's General Store Museum, 38757 N. US Highway 45, Old Mill Creek, IL 60046

www.historicmillburn.org | E-Mail: info@historicmillburn.org



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**Susannah Smith and the Civil War**  
By Diana Dretske, Curator and Historian

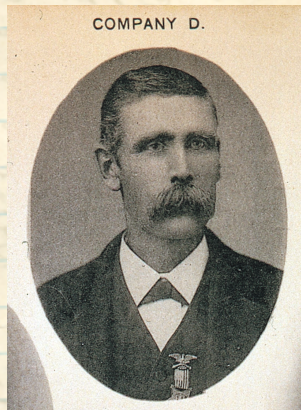
the bright glad sun of peace gleaming through the darkness of this terrible war." The triumph of the campaign renewed hope and lifted Abraham Lincoln to victory in the November election.

Susie bolstered support for the war on the home front as a contributor and "editress" of the pro-Union newsletter the *Millburn Union Casket*, named for the treasures it held inside its pages. This handwritten paper included original poetry and excerpts from soldiers' letters.

When George Smith returned home in 1865, Susie wrote in her diary: "I look across to where my brother sits, he who has fought amid the fiercest battles... [God] has brought him safe through all the trials and dangers." In 1864, George was selected for the newly created Ambulance Corps. According to the Regiment's history, he was known to "go anywhere for a wounded man, and very often at great [personal] risk."

After the war's end, Susie supported the North's hard-won victory by contributing to veterans' aid societies and making quilts for emancipated African Americans.

On May 20, 1869, Susie married David J. Minto, and they settled on the Minto Farm on Deep Lake Road near Loon Lake.



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Visit the HMCA Website  
[www.historicmillburn.org](http://www.historicmillburn.org)

For more on Millburn's role in the Civil War, read Diana Dretske's collective biography of five Union soldiers from Newport Township, *The Bonds of War*, published by SIU Press, and view the Bess Bower Dunn Museum's Minto Collection online at:

<http://www.idaillinois.org/>

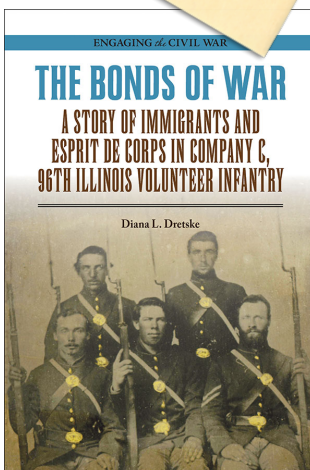
**Martin's Gen'l Store Museum**

**OPEN BY APPOINTMENT**

[info@historicmillburn.org](mailto:info@historicmillburn.org) or

(847) 828-3737

HMCA  
P.O. Box 56  
Wadsworth, IL  
60083



(*The Bonds of War* book cover)