

Friday

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Civil War's last veteran had ties to the area

Woolson to be honored in Duluth

By Edie Schmierbach
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Local Civil War buffs will be in attendance during public events Saturday in Duluth to honor a man who, when he died in 1956, was the nation's last Union soldier.

Albert Woolson lived to

age 106, or by some accounts, to 109.

"Duluth claims him as one of its own, and it has the right to. But Mankato and St. Peter can also be proud of the fact that Woolson lived in our area before joining the 1st Minnesota Battery of Heavy Artillery," said

Bryce Stenzel, a member of Friends of the Boy in Blue, a Mankato organization that focuses on local connections to war history.

Military honors are slated at 11 a.m. at Park Hill Cemetery, followed by a 1 p.m. wreath-laying ceremony and reception near Woolson's statue at The Depot, 506 W. Michi-

gan St.

An Abraham Lincoln historical portrayer, Stenzel has been asked to recite the Gettysburg Address as part of the ceremony. He will be accompanied by several Friends of the Boy in Blue members who will man an exhibit displaying photos and copies of a

local publication about Mankato's Boy in Blue monument.

Stenzel's research into Woolson found that he was 17 when he signed up Oct. 10, 1864, at a spot near the northeast corner of Lake Elysian in a village that no longer exists.

"Technically, he was underage. He may have lied about his age," Stenzel

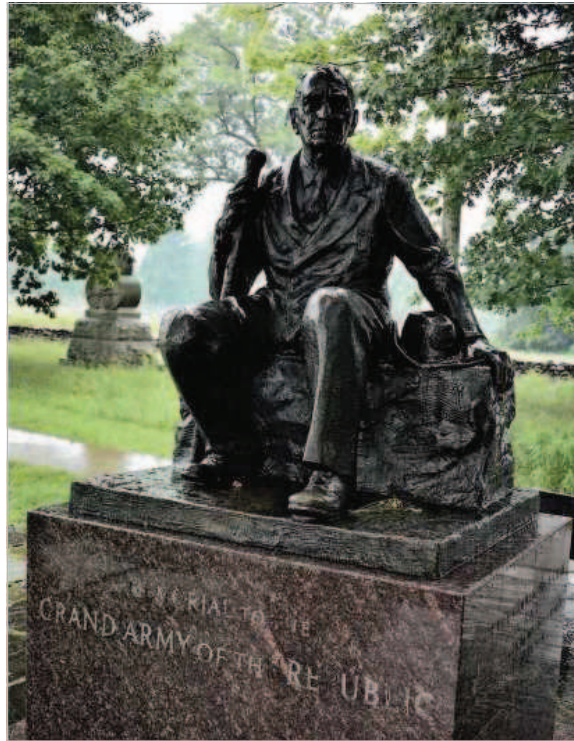
said.

Woolson's records list his being born in Antwerp, New York. His father, who was wounded while serving with the Union Army, was hospitalized in Minnesota. The family moved to the state to be with the father, who died while hospitalized

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PHOTO





Courtesy Bryce Stenzel

This statue on display at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, is the likeness of a Civil War private who enlisted at a spot near Lake Elysian. At the base of Albert Woolson's statue are the words "Memorial to the Grand Army of the Republic." Woolson, the nation's last Union soldier, will be honored Saturday in Duluth.

VET: Moved from area in 1905

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just prior to Albert's enlistment.

He enlisted as a rifleman but served as a drummer and bugler with Company C, 1st Minnesota Heavy Artillery. In late 1864, the regiment was part of the Army of the Cumberland in Tennessee.

He was not a member of the famous 1st Minnesota Infantry ... He never saw battle," said Stenzel, who joked about those facts being behind the Civil War veterans' long life.

Woolson was a private when he was discharged Sept. 27, 1865.

After his military service, he worked as a railroad fireman, a wood turner and a grain miller and at a logging camp. He had lived in Mankato and St. Peter before he moved to Duluth in 1905. He found work in Duluth as

an electrician, at a lumber company and at a washing machine manufacturing company. He retired in 1933 at age 86.

He had eight children, was twice widowed and was a member of the Grand Army of the Republic, which is a Civil War veterans' fraternal organization.

Stenzel said Woolson was recognized as the last veteran of the Civil War, from either side.

A statue in his honor stands at the Gettysburg National Military Park.

That monument is a duplicate of the one in Canal Park in Duluth, Stenzel said.

Saturday's events in Duluth are open to the public; however, local residents may view a tribute to Woolson in Mankato's Lincoln Park. A memorial paver engraved with his name is displayed near the Boy in Blue statue.