

CAPT. BENJAMIN F. TEETS, a well-known and highly esteemed citizen of Liberty township, Beadle county, South Dakota, is a veteran of the Civil war and bears an honorable record for brave service in the cause of freedom and union, having served with distinction as an officer in the northern army. In the paths of peace he has also won an enviable reputation through the sterling qualities which go to the making of a good citizen.

The Captain was born in Binghamton, Broome county, New York, September 27, 1842, a son of Benjamin and Sarah A. (Van Patten) Teets. The father, a tinner and hardware dealer, went to New York city when our subject was in his fourth year and there engaged in business. The son attended the Grove street grammar school in that city until fourteen years of age when his parents removed to Chicago, Illinois. Soon afterward, however, they bought a farm north of that city, but not making a success of farming, the father sold the place at the end of two years, and taking his family, moved to Stoddard county, Missouri. In 1861, owing to abolition tendencies, they were forced by the guerrillas to leave that state, and they next located in Centralia, Illinois.

At that place, Captain Teets enlisted as a private in Company C, Eleventh Illinois Volunteer Infantry, but after three months in service with that company he secured his discharge and joined Company E, First Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry, at Kenosha, Wisconsin. He was rapidly promoted through the different grades and while serving as lieutenant had command of his company long before he was commissioned captain. This service was under special order of General Starkweather, who after the battle of Chickamauga, commended him by favorable mention to the governor of Wisconsin for promotion to captain. He participated in the battles of Perryville, Stone River, Chickamauga Pittsburg Landing, and was with Sherman on the famous march to the sea. He was seriously wounded at Chickamauga, but as he was soon taken from the hospital and sent home, he was nursed back to health under home care. Being eager to rejoin his company, he returned to the front on crutches. He also received a slight wound at Perryville, and had a close call at Stone River, as his belt was cut off. On the expiration of his term of enlistment, he was mustered out at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, October 8, 1864.

After the war, Captain Teets went to Chicago, where he engaged in business as a contractor and builder until 1874, when he returned to Centralia, Illinois, being interested in the hardware business there until coming to South Dakota in 1882. Selecting the northwest quarter of section 4, Liberty township, Beadle county, he located thereon in the spring of 1883, and has since successfully engaged in agricultural pursuits.

Captain Teets was married, July 12, 1866, to Miss Martha E. Cunningham, who was born in Perry county, Illinois in 1845, and they have become the parents of five children, namely: Harry C., a farmer of Milford township, Beadle county; Mamie L., wife of Don G. Medbury, sheriff of Beadle county; Arthur F., a resident of Sioux City, South Dakota, in the employ of the Illinois Central Railroad; M. Maude, wife of J. C. Milne, of Huron, South Dakota; and Grace, wife of C. M. Cass, a mail clerk of St. Paul, Minnesota.

In political sentiment, Captain Teets was an ardent Republican until the national convention at St. Louis, in 1896, when he bolted and joined the Silver Republican party and was a delegate to the Republican state convention at Aberdeen and two years later attended the Populist convention as a delegate, also at Aberdeen, South Dakota. In 1890 he was elected to represent the twenty-third district in the state legislature, and while a member of the house served on the following committees: ways and means, military affairs, and pairs. He also served as speaker pro tem many times. As a public official, citizen or soldier he has been found true to every duty, and justly merits the esteem in which he is held.