

# Edwin C. Prior, Captain, Co. H, 72<sup>nd</sup> IL Infantry U.S.

1827 Prior was born in Newshoram, Newport County, RI.

\*\*\*Edwin C. Prior was an accomplished actor traveling and performing throughout the Northern theater circuit leading up to the Civil War.\*\*\*

1859 August: Reviewed in the Buffalo Daily Republic *"The character of Camille in the play by the that name, was excellently rendered by Miss St. Clair at the Metropolitan last evening, and Mr. E.C. Prior as Armand Duval, sustained his part in his usual good manner."*<sup>1</sup>

October 15: *The Buffalo Daily Republic*, Buffalo, NY.

**AMUSEMENTS.**

**METROPOLITAN THEATRE**

MANAGER..... THOS. CARR.  
Stage Manager..... JAS. CANOLL.  
Leader of Orchestra..... A. POPPENBERG.  
Treasurer..... ALBERT B. CARR.  
Scenic Artist..... F. STANFIELD.

3d night of the eminent American Tragedian,  
**MR. EDWIN BOOTH,**  
Who is engaged for Five Nights only:

**THIS EVENING, OCT. 5,**

The performance will commence with  
**RICHELIEU.**

Cardinal Richelieu..... Mr. Edwin Booth.  
Count Baradas..... J. Canoll.  
Chevalier de Mauprat..... E. C. Prior.  
De Beringhen..... Harry Jordan.  
Julia de Mortemar..... Annie Senter.

Dance..... Miss Hattie Stanley.

Comic Song by..... W. T. Melville.

To conclude with  
**RASCAL THOMAS.**

Thomas..... Harry Jordan.  
Mr. Dupuis..... D. A. Ryan.  
Mrs. Dupris..... Mrs. H. Jordan.  
Angelica..... Miss S. Lyons.

**CHANGE OF PRICES OF ADMISSION.**—Dress Circle, admitting a gentleman and lady, 75 cents, for every additional lady, 25 cents; Dress Circle, gentleman's tickets, 50 cents; Private Boxes, \$3; Family Circle, 25 cents; Gallery, 25 cents.

**Doors open at 7¼—to commence at 7¾ o'clock.**

**OMNIBUS NOTICE.**—An Omnibus will leave the Theatre every evening for Cold Springs, after the performance, under the direction of Mr C. N. Miller.

<sup>1</sup> The Buffalo Daily Republic, Buffalo, NY, Friday, 19 Aug 1859, pg. 3 (accessed newspapers.com)

<sup>2</sup> The Buffalo Daily Republic, Buffalo, NY, Wednesday, 5 Oct 1859, pg. 2 (accessed newspapers.com)

January 22: *New-York Tribune*, New York City, NY.

**BROADWAY THEATER.** —  
Sole Proprietor, Mr. E. EDDY. Parquet, 25 cents; Dress  
Circle, 50 cents; Family Circle, 25 cents.—THIS EVENING,  
PUTNAM.  
Maj. Putnam.....Mr. McCracky | Violetta.....Mme. Ponisi  
ROBERT EMMET.  
Robert Emmet..Mr. E. C. Prior | Maria.....Miss Alice Grey  
ROBINSON CRUSOE.

1860 April 3: *Cincinnati Daily Press*, Cincinnati, OH.

**NATIONAL THEATER -- SYCAMORE-**  
STREET, between Third and Fourth.—JOHN  
BATES, Proprietor and Manager; W. S. IRWIN, Treas-  
urer; C. T. SMITH, Stage Manager.

THIS EVENING, April 3, and every evening  
during the week, the dramatic spectacle of  
**THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII.**

Arbaces, Mr. Macaulay; Lydon, Mr. Carter; Glau-  
cus, Mr. Pryor; Calenus, Mr. Barrett; Apicides,  
Mr. Merton; Medon, Mr. Allen; Burbo, Mr. Ber-  
nard; Nydia, Miss Wyette; The Sage of Vesuvius,  
Mrs. Laws; Ione, Miss A. Graham.

**Dance.....Miss Jenny Hight.**  
To conclude with the drama, in three acts, of  
**FAUSTUS;**  
**OR, THE DEMON OF THE DELL,**  
Mephistophiles, the Demon of the Drachenfels, Mr.  
W. Carter; Faustus, Mr. E. C. Prior; Count  
de Casonova, Mr. Allen; Montolio, Mr. Merton;  
Enrico, Mr. Roberts; Count Orsini, Mr. Barrett;  
Wagner, Mr. Bernard; Brevillo, Mr. C. Henri;  
Lucetta, Mrs. C. Henri; Adine, Miss C. Wyette;  
Rosolia, Miss A. Graham.

November 5: *Chicago Tribune*, Chicago, IL.

**Amusements.**

**McVICKER'S THEATRE.**  
Madison street, between State and Dearborn.

Doors open at 7 o'clock. Performance to com-  
mence at 7 1/2 o'clock. Box Office open from 10 till 1 and  
from 5 till 5 o'clock.

Admission:—Dress Circle, 50 cents; Second Circle, 25  
cents; Private Boxes, \$4.00 and \$6.00.

ENGAGEMENT OF THE  
**Accomplished Young Tragedienne,**  
**MISS ANNETTA INCE.**

On Monday, November 5th, 1860, will be presented  
Knowles' Great Play of  
**THE HUNCHBACK.**

JULIA.....MISS ANNETTA INCE.  
Master Walter, (his first appearance)...Mr. E. C. Prior.  
Fathom.....Mr. McVicker.  
Sir Thomas.....Mr. Myers.  
Helen.....Mrs. Ada Plunkett.

To conclude with the Farce of  
**SAMUEL IN SEARCH OF HIMSELF.**

<sup>3</sup> New-York Tribune, NYC, NY, Saturday, 22 Jan 1859, pg. 2 (accessed newspapers.com)

<sup>4</sup> Cincinnati Daily Press, Cincinnati, OH, Tuesday, 3 Apr 1860, pg.1 (accessed newspapers.com)

<sup>5</sup> Chicago Tribune, Chicago, IL, Monday, 5 Nov 1860, pg. 4 (accessed newspapers.com)

1862 The Chicago City Directory showed Prior as an actor at McVicker's. He would have been quite familiar with fellow actors, Edwin and John Wilkes Booth. Edwin Booth was married to the daughter of the James Hubert McVicker, the theater owner.



McVicker's Theater

January : Appeared in several plays with John Wilkes Booth.

*“During his combat scene with Edwin C. Prior’s Richmond, Booth broke the other player’s heavy state sword. The scene was so lifelike that the Tribune’s critic recorded in the huge notebook ostentatiously displayed in his lap that half the audience thought Booth actually intended to kill the other player.”<sup>7</sup>*

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<sup>6</sup> photo source/wikipedia.com

<sup>7</sup> Alford, Terry, *Fortune’s Fool: The Life of John Wilkes Booth*, Oxford University Press, 2015

**McVICKER'S THEATRE.**  
 Madison street, between State and Dearborn.  
 Doors open at 7 o'clock.....Curtain rises at 7½.

Last night but two of the talented young tragedian  
**JOHN WILKES BOOTH,**  
 Who will appear in his great character of  
**PESCARA,**  
 Which was received with ENTHUSIASTIC AP-  
 PLAUSE, and its repetition called for by the unani-  
 mous acsire of the  
**PRESS AND PUBLIC.**

THURSDAY EVENING, January 30th, will be presented  
 for the second and last time Shild's great play of  
**THE APOSTATE.**  
 Pescara.....Mr. Booth, Hemeys.....Mr. Myers.  
 Malco.....Mr. Prior, Florida.....Miss Hosmer.  
**GRAND DANCE.....Miss JENNIE HIGHT.**  
 To conclude with the Farce of  
**THE BLUE DEVILS.**  
 Megrin.....Mr. Rainford

**FRIDAY, BENEFIT OF MR. BOOTH.**  
 Friday, MACBETH—Macbeth Mr. Booth, Saturday  
 RICHARD III—Gloster Mr. Booth.

**A New Sensation Comedy is in Rehearsal.**

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**McVICKER'S THEATRE,**  
 Madison street, between State and Dearborn.  
 Doors open at 7 o'clock.....Curtain rises at 7½.

Triumphant success of the young and talented Tra-  
 gedian,  
**J. WILKES BOOTH,**  
 Who has been received with UNIVERSAL APPROBA-  
 TION by large audiences. He will appear for THIS  
 NIGHT ONLY as ROMEO.

THURSDAY EVENING, Jan. 23d, will be presented  
 Shakespeare's Tragedy of

**ROMEO AND JULIET.**

Romeo....Mr. Booth, Mercutio.....Mr. Prior.  
 Juliet....Miss J. Hosmer, Peter.....Mr. McVicker.

**GRAND DANCE.....Miss JENNIE HIGHT**  
 To conclude with the brilliant Farce of

**LOVE AND HUNGER.**

John Baxter.....Mr. Myers.  
 Friday—BENEFIT OF MR. BOOTH.

**In answer to the numerous requests for Mr. Booth to appear as HAMLET, the Manager would state that the piece is in preparation, and will be presented next week in a manner worthy the occasion, and equaling in every respect the well-remembered production two years since, with the accomplished J. E. Murdoch.**

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**McVICKER'S THEATRE,**  
 Madison street, between State and Dearborn.  
 Doors open at 7 o'clock.....Curtain rises at 7½.

Triumphant success of the young and talented Tra-  
 gedian,  
**J. WILKES BOOTH,**  
 whose masterly rendition of characters thus far has  
 proved him worthy the high praise bestowed upon him  
 in other cities. Chicago, the Theatrical Metropolis of  
 the West and Surgery of Dramatic Talent, has received  
 him as an artiste worthy of the great name he bears.  
 A large and judicious audience witnessed his delinea-  
 tion of Richard III, and bestowed upon it unqualified  
 approbation. He will appear this evening in the great  
 Tragic character of PESCARA, which, after the death  
 of his father, was lost to the American stage till re-  
 vived by his brother Edwin and himself.

WEDNESDAY EVENING, Jan. 22d, will be pre-  
 sented, for the first time in three years, Shild's power-  
 ful play in five acts, entitled

**THE APOSTATE.**

Pescara.....Mr. Booth, Malco.....Mr. Prior.  
 Hemeys.....Mr. Myers, Florida.....Miss J. Hosmer.  
**GRAND DANCE.....Miss JENNIE HIGHT.**  
 To conclude with the glorious Farce of

**YOUR LIFE'S IN DANGER.**

John Strong.....Mr. McVicker.  
**Thursday, Shakespeare's Tragedy of ROMEO  
 AND JULIET, Romeo, Mr. Booth.**

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<sup>8</sup> Chicago Tribune, Chicago, IL, Thursday, 30 Jan 1862, pg. 4 (accessed newspapers.com)

<sup>9</sup> Chicago Tribune, Chicago, IL, Thursday, 23 Jan 1862, pg. 4 (accessed newspapers.com)

<sup>10</sup> Chicago Tribune, Chicago, IL, Wednesday, 22 Jan 1862, pg. 4 (accessed newspapers.com)



**McVICKER'S THEATRE.**  
 Madison street, between State and Dearborn.  
 Doors open at 7 o'clock.....Curtain rises at 7½.

LAST APPEARANCE, POSITIVELY, of the young and talented tragedian, JOHN WILKES BOOTH, whose entire engagement has been a continued triumph, firmly establishing him with a Chicago audience as a universal favorite. He will bid farewell to his friends this evening—appearing in his masterly delineation of Richard III.

SATURDAY EVENING, February 1st, will be presented Shakespeare's Tragedy of

**RICHARD III.,**  
**Or, The Battle of Bosworth Field.**  
 Duke of Gloster, afterwards Richard III, Mr. Booth; Richmond, Mr. Prior; Queen, Miss Hosmer; Buckingham, Mr. Myers; Lady Anne, Mrs. Myers.

GRAND DANCE.....Miss JENNIE HIGHT.  
 To conclude with the Farce of

**20 MINUTES WITH A TIGER.**  
 Charles Beeswing.....Mr. Myers.

The celebrated Actress and Authoress MATILDA HERON, is engaged and will shortly appear—producing her new and brilliant comedy THE BELLE OF THE SEASON; or, FINDING THE LEVEL, which will be presented with beautiful scenery, splendid appointments, and an excellent cast. An entire new view of Niagara Falls, by J. W. Whytal, with the mist seen rising from the trembling foam.

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**McVICKER'S THEATRE.**  
 Madison street, between State and Dearborn.  
 Doors open at 7 o'clock.....Curtain rises at 7½.

Last night but three of the talented young tragedian

**JOHN WILKES BOOTH,**  
**OTHELLO FOR THIS NIGHT ONLY.**

WEDNESDAY EVENING, Jan. 29th, will be presented Shakespeare's Tragedy of

**OTHELLO, The Moor of Venice.**

OTHELLO.....Mr. BOOTH  
 Iago.....Mr. Prior; Emilia.....Miss J. Hosmer.  
 Cassio.....Mr. Myers; Desdemona.....Mrs. Myers

GRAND DANCE.....Miss JENNIE HIGHT.  
 To conclude with the Farce of

**TWENTY MINUTES WITH A TIGER.**  
 Charles Beeswing.....Mr. Myers.

SPECIAL NOTICE.—Mr. Booth will appear during the week in the following characters: Thursday, APOCALYPSE—Pescara Mr. Booth. Friday, MACBETH—Macbeth Mr. Booth. Saturday, RICHARD III—Gloster Mr. Booth.

**A New Sensation Comedy is in Rehearsal.**

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June: Prior again appeared with Booth on state at the McVicker's theater in Chicago.

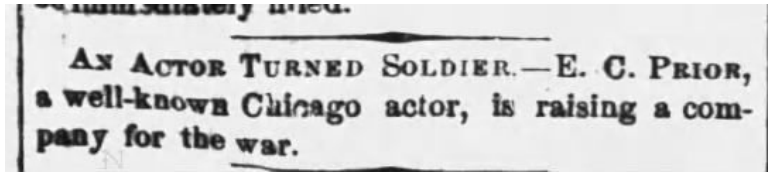
July 16: Enlisted in the U.S. Army in Chicago, IL. His description was as follows. Age: 35, Height: 5'10, Hair: dark, Eyes: dark, Occupation: actor, Marital Status: married.

Captain of his own company, Prior was responsible for recruiting soldiers.

**FIRST COMPANY FOR CHICAGO.—Mr. E. C. Prior, lately the leading actor in McVicker's Theatre, returned from Springfield yesterday with authority from Gov. Yates to enlist a company for the war. He has established his headquarters at 167 State street, where recruits will be received and enrolled immediately in the service. Mr. Prior is a gentleman of decision and energy, who will make a first rate officer. Fall in, and let the ranks be filled without delay.**

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<sup>11</sup> Chicago Tribune, Chicago, IL, Saturday, 1 Feb 1862, pg. 4, (accessed newspapers.com)  
<sup>12</sup> Chicago Tribune, Chicago, IL, Wednesday, 29 Jan 1862, pg. 4 (accessed ancestry.com)  
<sup>13</sup> Chicago Tribune, Chicago, IL, Saturday, 19 Jul 1862, pg. 4 (accessed newspapers.com)



1863 December: Posted in Vicksburg, MS.

1864 February 26: Wartime Journal of Frank L. Church mentioned Capt. Prior.

*“Left Milliken’s Bend about seven o’clock. We arrived in Vicksburg about nine. Tied up below the arsenal. Went on shore with the paymaster. Walked all over the city. Met a great many Chicago friends. Among the number were Jim Whital and **Captain Prior**. We looked through the caves which were very numerous. Picked up a grape shot as a memento. Got very tired and returned on board. Drilled the men in the manual. At 6p.m. went on shore again with the paymaster. Went to the theatre and saw Sharp and Holland from Cairo.”*

November 30: Mortally wounded at the Battle of Franklin. “Capt. E.C. Prior was shot through the right breast before the regiment fell back, while leaning over the breastworks firing his revolver at the rebels crouching on the other side. He could not be removed.”<sup>15</sup> He died on December 18<sup>th</sup> in Franklin. He was removed from his battlefield grave in Franklin and reinterred at the Stones River National Cemetery.

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<sup>14</sup> The Buffalo Commercial, Buffalo, NY, Monday, 21 Jul 1862, pg. 2 (accessed newspapers.com)

<sup>15</sup> Chicago Tribune, Chicago, IL, Friday, 23 Dec 1864, Pg. 3 (accessed newspapers.com)

Interment in the Stones River Tenn National Cemetery  
To—The Quartermaster General, Washington, D. C.

NAME	RANK	COMPANY	REGIMENT OR VESSEL			DIVISION, IF WORLD WAR SOLDIER
			Number	State	Arm	
Prior Edwin C	Capt	H	72	Ill	Inf	

DATE OF DEATH			DATE OF INTERMENT			GRAVE MARK		REMARKS
Month	Day	Year	Month	Day	Year	Section	Grave No.	Date of discharge and number of Pension Certificate, Disinterments, etc.
Dec	16	1864					3133	Orig bur Franklin Tenn

Shipping point for headstones: .....

3-2850

(See Instructions on Reverse Side)

Superintendent.

1 7 2 8 0 6 5 0 0 1 9

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December 16: *The Vicksburg Herald*, Vicksburg, MS.

<sup>16</sup> U.S. National Cemetery Interment Control Forms, (accessed ancestry.com)

<sup>17</sup> photo source/findagrave.com/user/KGuy



VICKSBURG, MISS.,  
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1864.

**Captain E. C. Prior.**

We have to chronicle the untimely death of Captain E. C. Prior, 72d regiment Illinois infantry, who fell in the battle at Franklin, Tenn., on the evening of the 30th of November while gallantly leading his company.

Captain Edwin C. Prior was born in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, and is the only child of his family. His mother is still living, at the advanced age of ninety-three years. His father died while the Captain was yet a mere boy. Upon his mother's second marriage, the Captain, at the early age of 14 years went to sea, and in a few years arose to command a vessel. During his life at sea he was shipwrecked three times, the last time all of his crew were lost except himself and one other. From this accident he received lasting injuries in his breast, which caused him much physical suffering while living, which he bore with that christian like patience distinguishing strong-minded and resolute men.

Upon his return home from sea, his mother prevailed upon him to join an amateur theatrical society, of which he was an active member for over two years. He then entered upon the stage, and by his talent and firmness of character, he rose rapidly in his profession. He played upon many of the best theatrical boards in the country, and drew forth the applause and admiration of his countrymen. He was engaged at McVicker's Theatre in Chicago, for two years previous to his entering the army, and met with unbounded success. He has spent thirteen years of his life in the theatrical profession.

When the 72d regiment Illinois infantry, the Second Board of Trade regiment, was being made up in Chicago, he raised a company for that regiment and was commissioned Captain. He entered the United States service upon truly patriotic motives, and served with his regiment with distinguished ability.

Soon after the surrender of this city he was placed upon duty in the provost marshal's department here, and remained faithfully in discharge of the duties of his office until the departure of his regiment for the front when he was relieved and took command of his company. By his courteous manner and uprightness of character, he soon won for himself a large circle of warm friends, who will now mourn his loss.

The Captain was a high mason. Bright in the knowledge of Masonry, he was an ardent admirer of and a *practical* adherent to those Masonic principles which so eminently characterize masons among men. No one who applied to him in want or distress, was ever turned away without relief.

Captain Prior fell as the patriot hero loves to fall—in the thickest of the fight doing battle for his country.

P. S. Since the above was put in type we have received news that Captain Prior is not killed, but was severely wounded and a prisoner. We hope the account of his death is untrue, but much regret to hear of his being a wounded prisoner. We shall however retract nothing of what we have said of his life and character, for that much we know to be true and merited.

<sup>18</sup> The Vicksburg Herald, Vicksburg, MS, Friday, 16 Dec 1864, pg. 2 (accessed newspapers.com)



December: Soon after his death the Vicksburg Theatre held a benefit for Capt. E.C. Prior's wife. <sup>19</sup>

1865 November 21: Harriet Prior applied for a widow's military pension

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<sup>19</sup> Vicksburg Herald, Vicksburg, MS, Tuesday, 20 Dec 1864, pg. 2 (accessed newspapers.com)