Edwin C. Prior, Captain, Co. H 72nd 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 October 15: The Buffalo Daily Republic, Buffalo, NY.

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

November 5: *Chicago Tribune*, Chicago, IL.
November 7: Chicago Tribune, Chicago, IL.

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.
January 20: “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.” (source: Fortune’s Fool: The Life of John Wilkes Booth. By Terry Alford)

January 22: Chicago Tribune, Chicago, IL.

March 24: Edwin 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.
July 30: E.C. Prior was mentioned in a recruiting article regarding the 72nd IL. Chicago Tribune, Chicago, IL.
1863 December: Posted in Vicksburg, MS.

1864 February 26: Wartime Journal of Frank L. Church.

“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.”

June 28: The Vicksburg Herald, Vicksburg, MS.

November 30: Mortally wounded in the Battle of Franklin. He didn’t die until December 18th.
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 rose 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 Christianlike 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.
1865 November 21: Harriet Prior applied for a widow's military pension