James K. Merrifield, Corporal, Co. C, 88th IL Infantry, U.S.

1844 August 20: Merrifield was born to John and Jane Widener Merrifield in Hyde Park, PA.

1850 August 29: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in Providence, Luzerne County, PA showed 6-year-old James living with his parents. His father, John, is a merchant.

***At some point between 1850 and 1857 Merrifield mother, Jane, died and his father remarried.***

1860 August 25: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in Grand Bend, Susquehanna County, PA showed 15-year-old James living with his father, John, a physician and his step mother Charlotte.

1862 August 8: Enlisted in the U.S. Army in Manlius, Bureau County, IL. He was just shy of 18 years old. He mustered into Co. D of the 88th IL Infantry.

1864 November 30: Fought at the Battle of Franklin.


1870 June 27: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in Great Bend, Susquehanna County, PA showed James’ wife Rhoda living with her parents. It is entirely possible he isn’t listed as he is a conductor on the railroad and gone.

1880 June 7: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in Lexington, Lafayette County, Missouri showed James, a railroad conductor, and Rhoda living with their son.
1896  
April 3: The Winston County Journal, Louisville, MS.

April 9: Chillicothe Gazette, Chillicothe, OH.

“A medal of honor has been awarded James K. Merrifield, late corporal, company C, Eighty-eighth Illinois infantry, for gallantry in action at the battle of Franklin, Tenn., November 30, 1864. Mr. Merrifield captured two battle flags from the enemy and returned with them to the union lines.”

1900  
April 9: The Sedalia Democrat, Sedalia, MO.

“Thirty years ago yesterday Conductor James K. Merrifield, the veteran of the Missouri Pacific, ran his first train into Sedalia, the division at the time extending from Jefferson City to Holden.”

June 11: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in St. Louis, St Louis County, MO showed James, a railroad conductor, and Rhoda living as boarders with a Winkoop family.

1908  
June 17: Sedalia Weekly Democrat, Sedalia, MO

“His real name was James K. Merrifield and he hailed from the coziest little Eden in the state of New York—Hyde Park. He had no need to go railroading, but he took a fancy to the life, just as the writer once took a fancy for the sea, which he followed for many a happy year.

He got the name Tornado Jim from no violence of temperament, for a more quiet, gentlemanly man never took up tickets in a car, albeit he had plenty of true courage when it came in need. His train on Lexington Branch of the Missouri Pacific railway was completely blown from the track and wrecked in a
fearful tornado a number of years ago, and since he has always been known as Tornado Jim.”

1909 August 4: Mower County Transcript, Lansing, MN.
1910  April 21: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in St. Louis, St. Louis County, MO showed James, a rail road conductor, living with his wife Rhoda.

1916  September 7: James Merrifield died of a cerebral hemorrhage and was buried at Valhalla Cemetery.

         (photo source: http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WM8C3_Corporal_James_K_Merrifield_St_Louis_MO)

A short biographical sketch of James’ son Walter, filled with information about James’ life.

“Walter E. Merrifield. A citizen whose sterling worth and integrity, as aligned with exceptional business ability, have won for him the important and responsible position of superintendent of the Illinois division of the St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern Railway Company, is Walter E. Merrifield, who maintains his business headquarters and residence at Chester, Illinois. Mr. Merrifield was born at Great Bend, Pennsylvania, on the 9th of November, 1867, and he grew to manhood under the influence of a railroad atmosphere. His father Conductor James K. Merrifield, who runs a Missouri Pacific passenger train between St. Louis and Kansas City, has spent forty-two years in the service, beginning at Scranton, Pennsylvania, soon after the close of the war coming to the Mississippi valley country. Conductor Merrifield was born in the old Keystone state of the Union in 1844, and at the outbreak of the Civil war he was in Illinois, where he enlisted as a soldier in the Eighty-eighth Illinois Volunteer Infantry, in La Salle county. He was with Sherman’s army that divided the Confederacy with its Atlanta campaign and then returned with Schofield in pursuit of General Hood and fought the battles of Franklin and Nashville, two of the momentous engagements of the war. Returning to his home in Pennsylvania after the close of hostilities, Mr. Merrifield, Sr., entered the field of railroad work, as already stated, and he was married at Great Bend, that state, to Miss Rhoda Crandall. He settled in the city of St. Louis, Missouri, many years ago, and as a Republican made the race in 1890 for railroad commissioner as the nominee of his party. Missouri had not then turned its back upon the Democratic party and the whole ticket met defeat.”