



Henry W. Hale

MODEL 1860 LIGHT CAVALRY SABER – HENRY W. HALE

This Civil War dated Model 1860 light cavalry saber is of the type issued to Federal mounted troops during the last year of the war. It was manufactured by Mansfield and Lamb of Rhode Island as one of the 37,500 sabers supplied by the firm to U.S. forces during the war.

The sword has a dual branch brass guard showing honey-gold patina, leather grips and wire wrap in excellent condition. The blade is dated 1864 and stamped U.S. with inspector's mark C.E.W. for inspector Charles E. Wilson with the W being a light strike. The ricasso is marked "MANSFIELD & LAMB / FORESTDALE.R.I." in an oval pattern. The pommel cap is also marked CEW with what is likely a sub inspector's additional mark "W." The 35" blade which shows patina consistent with its age has a double fuller stopped at the ricasso and the original leather washer remains in place. The black leather grip and double wire wrap show very slight wear.

The steel scabbard has a pleasing patina and both 1¼" ring mounts are in place. There is a brazed seam along the entire length of the base of the scabbard where the metal was folded and joined. The drag shows slight flattening from use and has an inspector's mark "GM." Of particular interest, above the top mount on the scabbard is the original inscription "SERGT. / H. W. HALE / 2nd Reg. / Co. H. / Ms. Cav." The inscription is very similar in pattern and accomplishment to a comparable light cavalry saber in this collection which was carried by another 2nd Mass Cavalry trooper, see item #455.

Sergeant Hale's military service was not a typical story. As a 28 year old resident of Detroit, he enlisted and mustered into service with the 3rd Michigan Cavalry late in 1861. He worked his way through the ranks until as a Lieutenant he was court martialed on August 30, 1863 for violation of the 45th Article of War, being intoxicated while on duty. Despite a seemingly eloquent defense, he was cashiered from the service on that date. Three months later Hale reenlisted in Boston, now a Corporal with Company H of the 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry. He seems to have benefited from his earlier experience in the service, as he received promotions to Sergeant and Quartermaster Sergeant and served honorably until the war's conclusion.