



## 2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

### Leon Faille

Leon stated his birth to have been in “East Canada”, July 23, 1832. He came to Minnesota and by 1862, decided to enlist in the Second Battery. He was mustered in on January 16th to serve three years. He was single, had black eyes, dark hair and a dark complexion. He stood 5’ 6-1/2” tall. His occupation was that of a laborer.

Private Faille handled a team of horses in the Battery and was with the unit when they were on a march in Mississippi. According to another man in the Battery, the heat was intense and he described what happened to Leon. “I saw Leon Fail laying by the roadside. He had been sun struck as I suppose. At least he was taken suddenly sick and was moaning with pain Complaining about a pain in his head. At the same time making inquiry and some request about his horses. He was pale and had a wilde look in his eyes”. Another man in the Battery said he’d heard about Leon falling out on the march and knew only that Leon had reported for sick call because of “sun stroke”. It was the middle of September in 1862.

No record of the treatment Leon received has been found, but he must have recovered enough to return to duty as he was with the Battery at the battle of Perryville on October 8th in Kentucky. Leon continued to serve through the battle at Stones River where he “came out of the first hard days fight with one horse, the other was either killed or wounded.”

Hot weather seemed to be hard on Leon as he was sent to the hospital on June 24, 1863, to be treated for sun stroke. He returned to the Battery and finished serving his three years. He received in his discharge on March 28, 1864.

Leon remained in Minnesota. On January 29, 1866, he was in St. Cloud, Minnesota, and there married Nancy Jane DeBord. They had known each other for about six months. Together, they had five children beginning with Leon Junior in 1867 to Earnest in 1881. The family was living in Douglas County near Osakis.

The problems Leon had with sun stroke in the army continued to haunt him. Nancy described what happened, “especially in hot weather”.

*The first thing that I knew of ailing him was misery or pain in the region of his heart. He could hardly get his breath at times--he would have such a pain in his side and breast. The he would have a pain in his head; he would become very faint and would oftentimes be sick and vomit. He would have spells of this kind from the time I married him....He would have spells of “downheartedness”—he would be blue. He would have spells of anger. In 1868 he beat an ox to death with a pitchfork handle when in anger. He would not let anyone skin the ox.*

*When in his natural condition, he was a good hearted man--very kind.*

*He would complain of pain in his head, just over his eye. He would often say: "There is that old pain again in the same place." He claimed he had had a pain in the same place ever since he was sun struck.*

Eventually, the "downheartedness" or the anger became too much and Leon was sent to the "asylum for the insane at St. Peter", Minnesota. Leon died there on February 10, 1885. His body was returned to Osakis where he was buried in the Lakeside Cemetery.



When Nancy applied for a widow's pension, she supplied much information about her marriage and the children Leon left. The pension was granted, but in 1917, she petitioned for an increase in the pension amount. The Pension Department wrote her back a letter asking for proof of her age. Nancy's reply was that the only place she had any documentation of her age was in the family Bible. The Pension Department then sent another letter, telling her to mail them the Bible and if it did indeed confirm her age and did not appear to have been altered, they would favorably consider her application for increase. Further correspondence in the pension file indicates that Nancy did mail the family Bible to the Pension Building in Washington. It was eventually returned to her along with the increase in pension rate.

Nancy died in 1925 and was laid to rest beside Leon in Lakeside Cemetery.

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*Researched and compiled by the reenactors of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Minnesota Battery of Light Artillery. Visit our website at <http://www.2mnbattery.org> for more information about our soldiers and our organization.*

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