



## 2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

### William S. Hale



William joined the Second Minnesota Battery on February 20, 1862, one of the early recruits to the unit. He was probably recruited by a neighbor and friend, Richard Dawley. Dawley served as a lieutenant in the Battery and lived in St. Charles, the closest community to William's home of Saratoga Township.

William was 27 years old, stood 5' 6-3/4" tall, had blue eyes, light hair and a light complexion. He was born in Massachusetts, but had moved to Vermont before arriving in Minnesota in 1856 to take up his trade as a house painter in Saratoga Township, Winona County. He married Mary E. Leach on Christmas Day in 1860.

William was a private with the Battery throughout his service. When members of the Battery began a "Bible Class," William joined. His name stayed on the membership role until his discharge.

While on a march from Perryville, Kentucky, toward Nashville, Tennessee, William had an accident that would haunt him for the rest of his life. William described what happened.

*I contracted the said injury while the Battery was suddenly moving and I had to get a bucket from under the footboard of the caisson. My knee was caught between the stock and wheel. I then was treated by Doctor Russel our Battery Surgeon....He is the only Physician who treated me during the remainder of the service. This accident happened on or about the 4th or 5th day of November 1862. At or near Bowling Green, Kentucky. I never liked to go to the Hospital although the Doctor wanted to send me there because my leg was in a very bad condition and I was afraid they would amputate the same in the Hospital. I went into the ambulance immediately after this occurred and we marched two days I being transported in Ambulance wagon to Camp at Ealyefields junction north of Nashville Tenn were we remained several weeks in Camp. During all that time I was treated by said Doctor Russel he giving me liniments and dressing my wound every day. From there we moved a few miles south of Nashville and there also laid in Camp several weeks. When we left there I was able to go on light duty at my own request but I had to use a cane. I did Camp chores with cook till the time of the Stone river fight where I acted as No. 6 behind the Limberchest. After this fight which lasted about three days, I was relieved from duty and only did light duty as occasion required until we all about 23 in number were discharged at Chattanooga Tenn on the 28th day of March 1865.*

William had chosen not to reenlist and so went home at the end of his three years of service. His discharge came just six days after his wife's death. William returned to Saratoga and on June 25, 1866, he married Julia E. Leach. Together, they had three children, but only the two boys lived to adulthood. William was a charter member of the John Ball Post #45 of the G.A.R. in Winona when it was established in September of 1883. He remained a member of the G.A.R. for the rest of his life.

William was forced to stop painting houses after the war as his knee injury made it impossible for him to stand on a ladder, so he took jobs as a watchman and a janitor. He had not wanted to apply for a pension "as long as I could get along without the same but now where the injury seems to increase from year to year I must try to get the legal support due me by the Government." The pension was granted and William received a 50% disability pension beginning in 1882.

In about 1899, William and Julia left Minnesota and moved to Vallejo, Solano County, California. His health was getting worse and it was believed that a change in climate might help him recover. He was soon classified as an invalid and needed almost constant assistance. For the last four years of his life, William lived at the home of his son in Vallejo, California. William died there on May 21, 1909, at the age of 74 and was laid to rest in the Masonic Cemetery. Julia and two sons survived William.



*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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