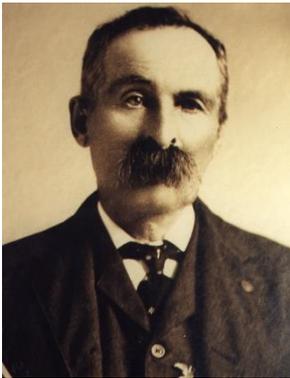




## 2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

### Frederick A. Leathers



Frederick joined the Second Minnesota Battery of Light Artillery on August 11, 1862. He was mustered in by Lieutenant Woodbury for a three year enlistment and was given a \$25 bounty. The men probably knew each other well since Woodbury had many business interests in Fred's home town of St. Francis, Minnesota. Fred was 22 years old when he enlisted, stood 5' 7" tall, had gray eyes, dark hair and a dark complexion. His date of birth was on March 20, 1839, in the state of Maine.

Lieutenant Woodbury took 26 men, including Fred, with him when he went south at the end of his recruiting duty in the summer of 1862. They arrived at the Battery just in time to participate in the battle at Perryville, Kentucky. It was the first major battle for the Battery, not just the new men. Fred was not injured in the fighting and continued to serve as a private.

It was near Murfreesboro, Tennessee, in February of 1863 that Fred got very sick. The "diarrhea and piles" he suffered with were blamed on exposure and the hard life of a soldier. Fred recovered and went back to his duties with the Battery. On December 16, 1863, he was detailed to daily duty as a teamster, a duty he continued for quite some time. In the spring of 1864, the first members of the Battery were eligible to reenlist and earn a veteran's furlough. Fred was not yet close enough to be offered this chance, so he and the other men of the Battery not reenlisting were sent to serve with Battery I, 2nd Illinois Artillery. This detail put Fred in the thickest battles as General Sherman marched toward Atlanta, Georgia, in the summer of 1864. Fred and the other detailed men returned to their Minnesota Battery in October. The Battery did not continue with Sherman on his march to the sea, instead, they went into garrison duty near Chattanooga.

February was not a good month for Fred as he came down with the measles in February of 1865. One comrade in the Battery, Joel Davis, said he saw Fred in the hospital and thought Fred was dead he looked so low. Davis said he never expected Fred to recover and was surprised when Fred returned to duty. Fred may have returned to duty, but several members of the Battery said he was not able to do a full days' work and that his back was very lame at this time. Fred also complained of deafness. Still, he was detailed to the quartermaster on March 4, 1865, and returned to duty with the Battery on March 28. When the war was over, the Second Battery returned to Fort Snelling to be mustered out of the Army. On some records, it appears Fred was not mustered out at the same time as the rest of the men. He may have been discharged a day later, on August 17, 1865.

St. Francis in northern Anoka County was home and Fred went back there to farm. Fred married Abby Tilton and they continued to live in St. Francis. It was probably not the happiest of marriages as Fred took out an ad in the July 30, 1872, Anoka Union. The ad read, *“My wife, Abbie Leathers, having left my bed and board without just cause, I hereby forbid all persons harboring or trusting her on my account, as I shall pay no bills of her contracting after this date.”* The notice concluded with his full name and the date of July 22, 1872. No further clues have been found to explain what happened. Abby died on July 23, 1873.

Fred was married a second time to Hattie Wethern, but she died on March 17, 1896. By this time, Fred was the father of five children, but only two were living, Burt and William.

On November 26, 1897, Fred married Francina Talbot Smith. She was a widow living in the nearby community of Champlin. One of Fred’s Battery comrades, John Talcott, signed the marriage certificate as a witness. The marriage was the third one for both of them, each having been widowed twice before.

Fred was active with the J.S. Cady Post #2 of the GAR in Anoka and kept in contact with several of his comrades from the Battery throughout his life. He was living in Champlin when he died on December 5, 1915. He was laid to rest in the West Oak Grove Cemetery near his first wives and children. The cemetery is just south of St. Francis, the community where Fred lived most of his life.



*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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