



2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

Ferdinand Lemay

The Michael Lemay family came to Minnesota from Canada and were living in Eagan in 1857. Michael was a farmer, as were at least two of his sons. Ferdinand was 27 and Louis was 23 in 1864 when the boys decided to enlist. It was probably well that Louis was living with his parents and Ferdinand not far away as both left wives when they went to St. Paul to enlist on August 30, 1864.

Ferdinand had done some moving around before arriving in Minnesota and while on his travels, he married Lucy Wells in Kankakee, Illinois, in 1858. Their first son, Edward, was born in 1859, and George followed in 1861, and Louis came along in 1862. Their fourth child, Samuel, had been born less than three months before Ferdinand enlisted. The family was living on a farm in Eagan not far from Ferdinand's parents when the war called.

Perhaps it was the bounty that called Ferdinand. He received \$33.33 with \$66.67 due for his promise to serve one year in the Army and he had the additional comfort of enlisting with his little brother, Louis.

Ferdinand was 5' 8" tall, had gray eyes, brown hair, and a dark complexion. He had been born in Canada on December 17, 1836. Ferdinand agreed to let his name be credited to St. George in Benton County, Minnesota, for the draft quota, though it is unlikely he ever even visited the place. When Ferdinand signed the enlistment papers, he simply made his mark. Whether he could not read or just could not read in English is not known.

The Battery spent a good deal of its time in garrison duty during the year Ferdinand was a member of it, so he did not see major battles and hard fighting.

At the end of the war, Ferdinand was mustered out with the Battery at Fort Snelling and he had only to cross the river south of the Fort to be nearly home. Ferdinand did not go home empty handed. Government orders let the men keep some articles and Ferdinand took home his knapsack, haversack, and canteen.

By 1865, Fred, as he was also called, was living on a farm with Lucy and the four children. Six more babies were born to them by the end of 1880. At that time, Ferdinand's brother Thomas, was living with them as were Ferdinand's parents. Next door lived another brother, Michael, and just a short distance away was brother, Louis. Next door to Louis was Peter Thompson. Peter joined Second Minnesota Battery just a couple days before the Lemay brothers.

Ferdinand lived in Minnesota for 23 years after the war, then he moved to North Dakota. In 1912, he was living in Bottineau County and he filed for a pension. The physical exam described disease in Ferdinand's eyes, resulting in a loss of over half his sight. It also noted he has lost a leg, though no details were given as to when or

how he might have lost it. The Pension Department accepted his claim and Ferdinand was awarded a pension of \$12 per month; \$6 for his eyes and \$6 for the loss of a limb.

Ferdinand was at the home of his daughter, Julia Lemay Taylor, on September 4, 1922, when he died. She lived in Lethbridge, Canada. Ferdinand was laid to rest in the city cemetery, St. Patrick's, but his grave was never marked with anything permanent until 2007 when the Second Minnesota Reenactors requested and placed a veteran's marker for him.



Researched and compiled by the reenactors of the 2nd 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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