



## 2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

### Seneca W. Lent

Seneca's signature on his enlistment papers was his own, but another set of signatures was needed for him to join the Second Minnesota. Seneca was "20 years and 2 months of age," making him not yet of legal age, so his mother needed to give her permission. Her name was signed, "C.L. Fales", so it is believed she remarried after the loss of Seneca's father.

The witness who also signed the enlistment papers was Charles T. Woodbury, brother to the officer who was doing the recruiting. Lieutenant Albert Woodbury was back in Minnesota in the late summer of 1862 on recruiting duty. He was recruiting in his home county where his family was well known and his brother was an easy choice for a witness.

Seneca was helping with the farm in what he called Baldwin in Anoka County on August 26, 1862, when he enlisted. Baldwin was probably a small neighborhood name as it does not appear on any map for Anoka County in 1862 nor any time since. The descriptive roll put Seneca as 5' 6" tall, with blue eyes, dark hair, and a light complexion. He was born on June 1, 1842, in Stillwater, Onedia County, New York. Seneca received a bounty of \$100 for enlisting to serve a term of three years. He was given \$25 upon signing and the balance due at a later date.

Lt. Woodbury went south with 26 new recruits in September, Seneca being one of them. They arrived at the Battery on September 27th at Louisville, Kentucky. Ten days later, the Battery took part in their first major battle at Perryville. Seneca served in the battles at Perryville, Knob Gap, and Stones River before the harsh army life began to take its toll on his health. In July of 1863, Seneca was treated for chronic diarrhea in the convalescent camp near Shelbyville, Tennessee. A month later, on August 17th, Seneca was left sick at the hospital in Winchester, Tennessee. Another month and his name was transferred to the Invalid Corps. He never returned to the Second Minnesota Battery.

Seneca was eventually transferred to the Veteran Reserve Corps where he served from February of 1864 to November 12, 1865 when he was discharged .

When the war was over, Seneca tried living in San Francisco, California, for a while, but he came back to Anoka, Minnesota, where he worked as sawyer in the lumber mill.

On the 4th of July, 1869, Seneca was married to Miss Margaret M. McConnell. She was from Brooklyn, a small community just south across the Mississippi River from Anoka. The couple made their home in the Anoka area until about 1890 when they moved to Sioux City, Iowa. They had one son, Edward.

Sioux City had a GAR Post, the General Hancock Post, and Seneca was an active member. The couple celebrated their Golden Anniversary in 1919 and it was quite the talk of Sioux City.

Seneca died on February 13, 1921. He was laid to rest in the Graceland Park Cemetery in Sioux City. Margaret, or Maggie as she was known, struggled to pay his doctor bills and funeral expenses. The little money she had saved was soon gone. The Pension Department was holding Seneca's last two months of allowance and not acting on her application for a widow's pension. It was a year after Seneca's death that Maggie wrote a letter explaining that she had sent everything asked for by the Pension Department, but she still had no word or even the last of the money owed Seneca. She concluded her letter with, "I don't like to bother you any more than is necessary but I am greatly in need of the money."

The records are not clear if Maggie ever received any help from the Pension Department and that may explain why Seneca's grave was unmarked.

In 2002, the Second Minnesota Battery of Artillery Reenactors discovered Seneca's grave and ordered a veteran's marker from the Veteran's Administration stone to be placed there. The stone setting was paid for by the reenactors as contacts to local veterans groups brought no response.



*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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