



2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

James G. Wiley

James was just old enough to serve in the Battery, enlisting on August 30, 1864, at the age of 18. He had been born in Meggs County, Ohio, and came to Minnesota with his parents in 1856. His father took land on the Rum River and they began farming. James lived at home, working with his father until he enlisted.

James was 5' 10-1/2" tall, had blue eyes, brown hair, and a florid complexion. He received one third of his \$100 bounty upon enlistment, the rest due him as he served his one year obligation. James let his name be credited to Leon in Goodhue County for the draft.

The Battery was in camp near Chattanooga, Tennessee, when James and the other new recruits caught up to them in the fall of 1864. It was not an exciting time as the Battery was assigned garrison duty. Scouting missions were the most exciting events the men of the Battery participated in while the war wound down. When the Battery went north to Fort Snelling to be mustered out, James was with them and became a civilian once again in August of 1865. His muster out sheet noted that he was not only due the balance of his bounty money, but that his pay had not been settled since his enlistment a year earlier. James went home with a significant amount of money in his pockets. Home was to his parents' home on the Rum River near Anoka for a time, then he began his own business in Champlin, Minnesota. He started in the lumbering business, but a fire took his sawmill just three years after getting it started. James moved to Fredonia, Kansas, where he worked for about three years before continuing west to Arizona. There, James again went into lumbering and worked at it for ten years. It was while he was in Arizona that he met Ida May. They were married at Prescott, Arizona, in 1877. They had three children before they moved to Palouse City, Washington where James started a mercantile business.

Another ten years went by, Ida died in 1890, and James moved the family to British Columbia, Canada. In 1892, he married Margaret McLeod, a woman from Anoka, Minnesota. He must have gone there for some purpose as the marriage license and wedding both were from Anoka County. Margaret went with James to Canada and was there that James secured a contract with the Leroi Mining Company to haul ore. That only lasted three years as the railroad arrived and he lost the contract for ore hauling, so James opened a feed and grain store. After two years in the feed store, James sold out and moved the family to Stevens County, Washington, where he bought a farm in Echo Valley. By this time, James and Margaret had added three more children to the family. It was 1898. In just a few years, the farm was doing well with 65 acres under cultivation with much of it fenced. James also was raising stock.

James retired from farming in 1922, but they continued to live on the land in Washington. In 1924, James spent six months living in Leavenworth, Kansas. He also spent his winters in Los Angeles, but did go back to Washington during the rest of the year. It is not known if Margaret was with him as in a letter dated 1927, their son wrote that she had been "declared insane a good many years ago."

Old Soldiers Homes were also places James resided in the last years of his life. He was admitted to the Pacific Branch Home on December 2, 1922 and discharged on March 21, 1924. He was readmitted to the Western Branch Home in May of 1925, transferred to the Pacific Branch and then discharged in May of 1926. Once more, James was readmitted to the Pacific Branch on December 3, 1926 and discharged in February, 1927

James died at the Mount Carmel Hospital in Stevens County, Washington, on April 23, 1927. His heart was weak and when he caught the flu, it was more than he could take. He was laid to rest in the Colville Cemetery in Highland, Washington. His grave is marked with a military stone.



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.