

Lieutenant Will Frisbie

By: John Edmonds

Lieutenant Will Frisbie joined the 19th, Wisconsin Volunteers Company "C" in the month of July, 1861 at Racine, Wisconsin. His regiment first engaged in the active campaign of Virginia. It was deployed principally in the region of the York River and Yorktown, then in the Norfolk area. They then fought in the siege of Suffolk and later on the James River. At the siege of Bermuda Hundred, the regiment lost heavily. And at the surrender of Lee they were at Richmond. They were mustered out of service in the month of May, 1865. Lieutenant Frisbie enlisted as a sergeant and was promoted to second lieutenant in 1862 and first lieutenant in 1863. He was mustered out with great honors and returned to Wisconsin.

Will (or William Russell Frisbie) was born in Banford, New Haven, Connecticut in 1831 from the union of Charles and Lucinda Frisbie. Will was educated in Connecticut and got his license as a pharmacist before the family moved to Wisconsin. He practiced pharmacy in Wisconsin only briefly when the Civil War started and enlisted in 1862.

Part of the time the unit Will fought on was involved with men from the California 100 and battalion and I assume he became interested in California from speaking with these soldiers. At any rate, in 1871



The pioneer drug store was about in the middle of the picture on the left side of the street, Main Street looking south. Picture circa 1890.

he, with his first wife, traveled to San Diego several years after the War. He practiced pharmacy there for a short period of time before he made his way north to Livermore in Alameda County where he set up shop again where again he opened an apothecary shop. 8 years later, now in Redwood City he set up shop again. The Times and Gazette Newspaper noted on April 19, 1879: "Will Frisbie, Postmaster, coroner, public

administrator and popular druggist, has bought out the well known Pioneer Drug

Store, on Main street, opposite The Times and Gazette office, and will in future conduct there and his old establishment at the post office on Bridge Street.”

By the looks of things Will must have come to Redwood City considerably earlier than 1879 as he had become the postmaster, coroner and public administrator, the latter two elected positions.

Angelina and Will Frisbie gave birth to a son on March 3rd 1873 and Angelina passed away on December 2nd 1882. One year later, November 29th 1883 Will married Mrs. Lester P. Cooley. Angelina is buried in plot 189 in Union Cemetery.

Will Frisbie joined the Redwood City chapter of the Grand Army of The Republic and met with them regularly at the congregational Church at the corner of Jefferson and Middlefield Road. Will’s new wife became very much involved with the Grand Army as she became very supportive and drafted many other women of Redwood City and throughout Southern San Mateo County into the new organization, the Women’s Relief Association. This became first, a state wide association then a nationwide association and Geraldine became president of the whole shebang. But Geraldine and Will did not have much time together because he passed away on May 3rd 1885.



*Geraldine Cooley
Frisbie*

Geraldine Frisbie had a large vault built in Union Cemetery where she placed her first Husband, Lester P. Cooley, and when William Frisbie died she had a nice monument placed inside the fence that surrounded the plot. When Geraldine died she was placed in the vault with her first husband. This is plot #176 almost at the corner of Central and Western roads in the cemetery. The two children Angis (1882) and Sadie (1880) were buried in plot #189.

The Times and Gazette reported on June 5th 1886 in a lengthy article about Decoration Day at Union Cemetery, “After marching out of the Congregational Church and being photographed by J. E. Van Court, the Grand Army of The



Republic marched through town and down to Union Cemetery. They were followed by numerous vehicles and hundreds on foot. The first thing they did upon reaching the cemetery was to go to the grave of Lieutenant Will Frisbie.” Thus showing the honor and respect the community felt toward this wonderful man.

Will Frisbie’s marker in front of the vault which contains his second wife and Geraldine’s first husband, Lester Cooley.