



NEWS

Issue 1: May 2020

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First Minnesota Monument at Gettysburg

WELCOME TO THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE TCCWRT NEWS

Welcome to our new newsletter. The Board has decided that it would be nice to open a new “channel” of communication with our members. Not all our members are on Facebook or follow our website closely. With this newsletter, we can reach more members than with strictly online options. Also, being monthly, the newsletter will allow us to keep communication open year-round. And last but not least, the newsletter allows for longer more in-depth articles to be published – articles that would not fit well into a Facebook post.

2020-2021 SPEAKER SCHEDULE

September 15, 2020 – Douglas Waller

“Lincoln’s Spies: Their Secret War to Save the Union”

October 20, 2020 – David Dixon

“Union General August Willich”

November 17, 2020 – Thomas Arliskas

“General U.S. Grant and the Battle of Belmont”

December 15, 2020 – Brian Steele Willis

“General George Henry Thomas”

January 19, 2021 – John Haymond

“The Infamous Dakota War Trials of 1862”

February 16, 2021 - John Fazio

“Decapitating the Union: Jefferson Davis, Judah Benjamin and the Plot to Assassinate Lincoln”



"Field of Lost Shoes" Battle of New Market

Contact Us

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2020-2021 SPEAKER SCHEDULE

March 16, 2021 – Leslie Goddard

"Gone With The Wind and the Construction of Civil War Memory"

May 18, 2021 – Mike Movius

"The State of the Civil War Round Tables"

FROM THE DUSTY COLLECTION ...

This is the first of a series of short pieces for the monthly newsletter of the Twin Cities Civil War Round Table. Most members know me as having managed Historic Fort Snelling for several decades as well as writing and lecturing on various military history topics. But my passion since grade school has been discovering and researching Civil War artifacts. The little stories those artifacts told were important to the veterans, and hopefully will be of interest to my fellow TCCWRT members.

Hardtack was the staff of life for millions of Civil War soldiers. But dried flour biscuits with their familiar holes were a staple well known to generations of sailors, explorers, soldiers and homesteaders. By the Civil War hard bread manufacture was a huge industry, centered largely in the east to supply the maritime trade. Then, as now, most hard bread was made in factories, the mixing done by belt driven machinery and the biscuits baking on metal conveyor belts moving through massive ovens. But even a frontier bakery in little Traverse Minnesota (just outside St. Peter) boasted sending over 12 tons of hardtack in one steamboat load down to Fort Snelling.¹

Extant examples of Civil War hard bread vary greatly in size and thickness. Apparently, there was no government specification for dimensions. Rather, the bread was purchased and issued by weight. The marching ration for a Federal soldier was one pound of hard bread per day with nine or ten biscuits usually issued, according to John Billings.² The two examples in the article measure 3.75 X 4.25 inches and an estimated 4.5 inches square respectively. Both are approximately 5/8 inch thick.

There was likewise no specification for crate size. *The packages should be thoroughly seasoned, (of wood imparting no taste or odor to the bread,) and reasonably tight. The usual method now adopted is to pack 50 pounds net, in basswood boxes, (sides, top and bottom 1/2 inch, ends 5/8 of an inch,) and of dimensions corresponding with the cutters used, and strapped at each end with light iron or wood. The bread should be packed on its edge compactly, so as not to shake.*³ The cutters were metal dies used to cut and punch the biscuits before baking. Wooden hardtack crates were often stenciled with the maker name and sometimes date of manufacture. They weighed 50 pounds filled. Mountains of hardtack crates and



¹ The Saint Peter Tribune, April 18, 1863.

² Billings, John, Hardtack and Coffee, Boston: G. M. Smith, 1888.

³ Kilburn, C. L., Notes on Preparing Stores for the United States Army, Cincinnati: W. A. Webb Steam Printer and Stationer, 1863.

huge stacks of pork barrels are shown in several Civil War commissary depot photographs. So few of the crates survived wartime soldier campfires that a rare original specimen sold in 2008 for \$18,000!



Hardtack was legendary for its resistance to chewing, and was often soaked before mastication. Period jokes, songs, and even humorous cartes de visite like this example were typical. And a surprising number of original examples have survived nearly 160 years to be found in museums and private collections.

Back in the early 1960s my father and I were given permission to take any small items we found from a Michigan former Grand Army of the Republic post. I remember using my pocketknife to open an old desk, and inside was an original piece of hardtack that joined my growing collection. It still had a tag tied to it reading "Half of Hardtack from late War, Mrs. J. Carris." Captain Jacob Carris of the 9th Michigan Infantry enlisted at age 34 as a sergeant in August 1861, moved to first sergeant in 1862 and regimental commissary sergeant in 1863. That fall he was commissioned first lieutenant in Company K and finished out the war as captain of

Company H in the September 1865. The 9th Michigan's biggest battle was Murfreesboro, and its first colonel was named Duffield – who some of you might remember from Joe Fitzharris' recent excellent regimental history of the 3rd Minnesota. Captain Carris was a cabinetmaker after the war and received an invalid pension.

Later a second piece of hardtack joined the accumulation. This piece had been neatly entombed in a glass front wooden case by its owner, Private Henry Percy of the 2nd Michigan Infantry. The 18-year-old Percy enlisted in May 1861 and was in the July 18 skirmish at Blackburn's Ford, Virginia and helped cover the Federal retreat from Bull Run a few days later. The next summer the 2nd fought several actions in the Peninsular Campaign and suffered heavy casualties at Williamsburg and Fair Oaks. Its last eastern theater campaign was Fredericksburg before transfer to Kentucky in February 1863. With the 9th Corps it participated in Grant's campaign including the Siege of Vicksburg.

Transferred back to Kentucky and then Tennessee, the 2nd Michigan opposed Longstreet's Army around Knoxville in the fall of 1863. It was there that Henry Percy was wounded in action on November 24, 1863. Of the 150 men of his regiment who charged the rebel works that day, 85 fell killed or wounded. Percy was only partially recovered by the end of January and served with the 17th Michigan until he was discharged for disability in April 1864. The young veteran, now an invalid, applied for and received a pension for a gunshot wound in his right thigh as soon as he got home. He continued to receive \$12 monthly payments until his death in 1922.



The typed label inside the case reads: "Climax, Michigan January 18th, 1913. This piece of hardtack has been in my possession since Nov. 1863. It went through the siege of Knoxville in East Tennessee from Oct. 18 to Nov. 5 1863 when we lived on quarter rations for 19 days. Henry Percy." Most period accounts mention worms and weevils that infested these rations, and sealed inside the case are some original but long deceased specimens which only a true historian could appreciate!

Stephen Osman

THIS MONTH IN CIVIL WAR HISTORY - MAY

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 st - 2 nd | 1863 - Battle of Chancellorsville | 15 th | 1864 - Battle of New Market, Virginia |
| 4 th | 1864 - Battle of the Wilderness begins | 16 th | 1863 - Battle of Champion's Hill |
| 6 th | 1861 - Arkansas secedes | 18 th | 1863 - Siege of Vicksburg begins |
| 10 th | 1863 - "Stonewall" Jackson dies. | 20 th | 1861 - North Carolina secedes |
| 12 th | 1864 - Battle of "Bloody Angle" at Spotsylvania Court House | 23 rd | 1861 - Virginia secedes |
| | | 25 th | 1862 - First Battle of Winchester |

CIVIL WAR BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH - MAY

28th 1818 - Gen. Pierre G. T. Beauregard C.S.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Many thanks to Lana Blumhoefer for the Civil War calender information.

TWO CONFEDERATE CAVALRY OFFICERS THAT LATER BECAME NOTED UNION GENERALS

By Bob Svacina

In the Minneapolis Star Tribune, Minnesota Section, Sunday March 29, 2020, an article by Curt Brown appeared. He writes the paper's history features and I worked with him on the article. It was a painting in the atrium of Burton Hall at the University of Minnesota, above the entrance doorway. The painting is of the HMS Victory at the Battle of Trafalgar October 21, 1805. The ship still exists and is dry-docked in Portsmouth Harbor. To a Brit, this ship is probably the most important icon of the British Empire when England ruled the seas.

Before the COVID-19 shutdown, I was building up momentum to save the painting, but that will have to wait. The painting has hung over the entry door for 28 years, getting a blast of Minnesota weather every time the doors open. It is deteriorating.

The reason I found this painting, which has been hiding in plain sight for nearly thirty years, was my interest in work by Daniel C. French, the sculptor of the President Lincoln statue in the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC. I've kept Chesterwood, French's summer home and studio, now a museum, and Chapin Library, French's archive, informed of his work in the Upper Midwest. French has single works in Wisconsin, Iowa, and Nebraska. Here in Minnesota he has the Golden Quadriga on the capitol building, the allegorical six virtues of government on the façade, just under the quadriga, and the John Sargent Pillsbury memorial on the grassy knoll in front of Burton Hall on the University of Minnesota campus. I was taking pictures of Pillsbury when I wandered into Burton Hall and saw the HMS Victory.



Burton Hall was the first no wood structure on the main campus of the University of Minnesota. It was a library when built, and now is the College of Continuing Education and the Dean's office.



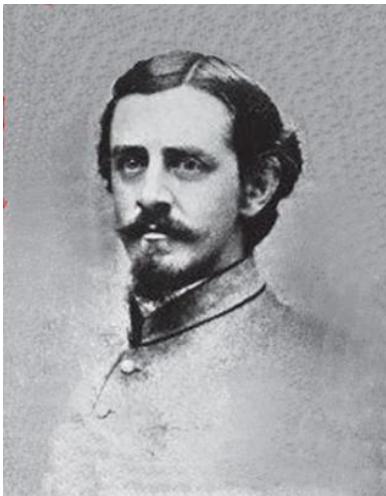
*John S. Pillsbury,
born July 29, 1827, Sutton, New Hampshire, died: October 18, 1901, Minneapolis,
Minnesota*

Roman Bronze Works, Brooklyn, New York, about 1911 or 1912



In the left foreground a workman is finishing a bust of John S. Pillsbury. It would have been a re-casting of the bust portion of the original full statue. To far left is a standing Lincoln. I think this is a copy of Augustus St. Gaudens' standing Lincoln that is in Lincoln Park in Chicago. One copy went to London. It was supposed to be dedicated in 1914 but that didn't happen until 1920. In the far back is an equestrian statue. Using image enhancement, I was able to identify John Breckinridge Castleman, born June 30, 1841, Lexington, Kentucky, died May 23, 1918, Louisville, Kentucky.





CSA Major John B. Castleman

USA Brigadier General John B. Castleman

Our TCCWRT meeting in May of 2019 was: "Kentucky Raiders: The story of Perry Snell", by George Karvel. John Castleman was an officer in Morgan Raiders. He led the Second Kentucky Cavalry on the raid. He also led guerrillas in Missouri, and he was captured in Sullivan, Indiana and sentenced to death as a spy. His execution was stayed by President Abraham Lincoln. Following the war, Castleman was exiled from the United States, and studied medicine in France. He was pardoned by President Andrew Johnson and returned to Kentucky in 1866.

He became the adjutant general of the Kentucky militia in 1883. The unit became the 1st Kentucky Volunteers in the Spanish American War, and Castleman was commissioned a colonel in the U.S. Army. His unit led the invasion of Puerto Rico, and after the fighting was over, he was promoted to brigadier general and he served as military governor of the Puerto Rico.

For 25 years, General Castleman was president of the American Saddlebred Association and in a voluntary role, directed the parks and recreation of Louisville, Kentucky.



Castleman statue in Cherokee Triangle Park, Louisville, Kentucky (Left)



Castleman aboard Carolina (Right)

Unfortunately, his statue has become an issue with the mayor of Louisville and the press. It has become a target for vandalism and removal with an abundance of misinformation. Probably the best look at the humanitarian Castleman came from J. Raymond Harris (a black educator and leader in Louisville at

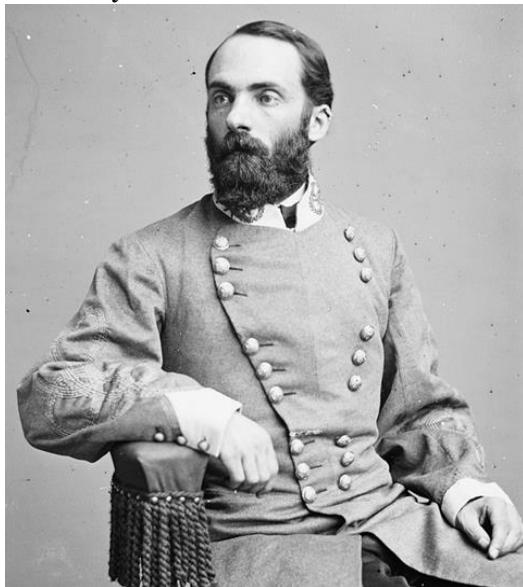
Castleman's time) on the General's death in 1918: "A Negro's tribute to General Castleman" with the opening sentence, "Will you give me space in which to speak of the great sorrow that has come to the colored people in General Castleman's Death"

The other Confederate cavalry officer that became a Union general was Joseph Wheeler born September 10, 1836, in Augusta, Georgia and died January 25, 1906, in New York City, New York.

Wheeler fought in most of the western theater battle/campaigns of the Civil War: Battle of Shiloh, Siege of Corinth, Battle of Stones River, Battle of Chickamauga, Tullahoma Campaign, Battle of Chattanooga, Knoxville Campaign, Battle of Atlanta, Savannah Campaign, and the Carolina Campaign.

During the Spanish America War, he took command of the cavalry in Cuba. Together with retired Major-General Grenville Dodge, who was functioning as the shadow Secretary of War (with President William McKinley's concurrence), the two old Civil War Generals got General Nelson Miles out of the mud in Cuba (rainy season) and focused on Santiago. At Santiago, a Spanish surrender was accomplished. Wheeler was involved in the negotiations. General Wheeler then went to the Philippines and took command of the ground forces.

General Wheeler is the only Confederate States of America combat general that is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.



CSA Lieutenant-General Joseph
(Fighting Joe) Wheeler



USA Major-General Joseph Wheeler (in front)

On the right is Lieutenant-Colonel Theodore Roosevelt

