

Issue 8: December 2020

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First Minnesota Monument at Gettysburg

OUR DECEMBER MEETING – 12/15/2020

“The Rock Fails to Roll:

General George Henry Thomas at Kennesaw Mountain”

Brian Steele Wills

The American Civil War opened avenues for many individuals to emerge as leaders in the conflict. In 1861, Southampton County, Virginia, native George Thomas brought with him a West Point education and extensive earlier service in the field, including active involvement in the Mexican American War. His meticulous manner, reflected in the pre-war nickname, “Old Slow Trot,” also raised questions in the minds of superiors and some colleagues about the degree to which Thomas might be able to contribute to ultimate Union victory. George Henry Thomas overcame his doubters to become one of the Union’s top generals, known best to history as “the Rock of Chickamauga.”

Subsequently, the Virginian in blue took a prominent role in the Atlanta Campaign of 1864, commanding the largest of the three armies assigned to William T. Sherman. Sherman occasionally became exasperated with Thomas’s more cautious approach to campaigning, but often placed him at the center of the movements. It was Thomas who received the order to attempt to break through the Confederate lines of Joseph Johnston at Kennesaw Mountain in June. Nevertheless, he found the work formidable as a result of facing some of the Confederacy’s finest fighters—Patrick Cleburne and Benjamin Franklin Cheatham at the “Dead Angle.” Union success would have to wait before the “Rock” could roll on toward Atlanta.

Brian Steel Wills is the Director of the Center for the Study of the Civil War Era and Professor of History at Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Ga. Dr. Wills is a member of the Georgia Civil War Commission and immediate past President of the Atlanta Civil War Round Table. He is also the author of numerous works relating to the American Civil War

Link to the Zoom Meeting will be emailed to you by Carol.

2020-2021 SPEAKER SCHEDULE

January 19, 2021 – John Haymond

“The Infamous Dakota War Trails of 1862”

February 16, 2021 - John Fazio:

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

March 16, 2021 – Leslie Goddard:

“Gone With The Wind and the Constuction of Civil War Memory”

May 18, 2021 – Mike Movius:

“The State of the Civil War Round Tables”

THIS MONTH IN CIVIL WAR HISTORY – DECEMBER

6 th	1865 – 13 th Amendment is ratified, officially abolishing slavery.
7 th	1862 – Battle of Prairie Grove, Arkansas
8 th	1863 – Lincoln makes proclamation of Amnesty & Reconstruction
12 th	1862 – USS Cairo sinks on Yazoo River, Mississippi
13 th	1862 – Battle of Fredericksburg, Virginia
13 th	1864 – Fort McAllister surrenders, Savannah Georgia.
15 th -16 th	1864 – Battle of Nashville, Tennessee
20 th	1860 – South Carolina secedes from the Union.
31 st	1862 – Second Battle of Murfreesboro, aka, Battle of Stones River, Tennessee

CIVIL WAR BIRTHDAYS – DECEMBER

3 rd	1826 – Gen. George B. McClellan U.S.
5 th	1839 – Gen. George Custer U.S.
6 th	1833 – Col. John S. Mosby C.S.
25 th	1821 – Clara Barton
31 st	1815 – Gen. George Meade U.S.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Thanks again to Lana Blumhoefer for the Civil War calender information.

FROM THE DUSTY COLLECTION ...

A Canteen with a Story

The last thing I need is another Civil War canteen, so this recent purchase was slated for resale. It is a relatively common 1862 improved corrugated pattern designed for dent resistance, and known to today's collectors as a "bullseye." Every Union soldier carried an oblate spheroid tin plated canteen like this,



often covered in insulating cloth and suspended from a leather or cloth sling. But the letters "FD" carved on the pewter spout gave pause.

I asked the elderly collector about this canteen's origin: He had bought it in his home area of northeast Carver County and sometime before he went into service in the mid-1960s.

Civil War relics found back then often came directly out of estates rather than antique shops so perhaps there was a chance to identify the canteen's owner.



The rosters of Minnesota's 24,000+ Civil War soldiers are readily available. Published in the Minnesota Adjutant General's Report of 1866 they were re-published in 1997, now alphabetized, by Mary Bakeman of Park Genealogical Services. There were a few name matches for "FD" but fewer still who had enlisted from the area just south of Lake Minnetonka.

Luckily a special census of Civil War veterans and their widows was taken in 1890. And while much of the general 1890 Census later burned, the veteran's portion mostly survived. An index was published in 1985 which lists veterans and their county of residence in 1890, though not their unit which could include non-Minnesota outfits. But recently the subscription web site www.fold3.com as well as the free with registration web site www.familysearch.org has made scans of the manuscript enumeration pages available. Working through these for eastern Carver County communities I found only one likely match: Frederick Dutoit of Chaska.

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35	327	433	In Fort Snelling 8)	Sergt A	4	Min	27	31	Dec	1861	21	Oct	1863	9	10	35
36	"	"	In Fort Snelling 8)	Luit C	1	Min	11	Oct	1861	1	July	1863	8	9	36	

Born in New York in 1845, Dutoit and his parents and siblings were living in Chaska when he joined Company A of the Fourth Minnesota Infantry in September 1861 – age 16. Two years later and a veteran of several battles including Vicksburg, Fred was a sergeant. He reenlisted when the Fourth veteranized the next spring, enjoyed a furlough at home but then remained at Fort Snelling as a drillmaster. When the First Minnesota Heavy Artillery was organized that fall, Dutoit was commissioned second lieutenant of Company C. The new regiment was commanded by Colonel William Colvill, still a semi-invalid from serious wounds received in the First Minnesota Infantry's July 2, 1863 charge at Gettysburg. Company C, cross trained as infantry, manned heavy guns in the defenses around Chattanooga Tennessee for the last year of the war.



Frederick Dutoit returned home in the summer of 1865 and the next year purchased the Valley Weekly Herald newspaper in Chaska which his family owned for the next century. He served as sheriff and in a variety of other public positions and was active in the Grand Army of the Republic. Today his Chaska house is on the National Register of Historic Sites. Fred died there in 1922. His son Frederick, Jr. passed in 1963 – just about the same time our collector friend picked up that canteen which helps confirm our speculative research.



But there is more to the story. Among the members of Company C was a young musician named Albert Woolson (left)

who had managed to outlive every other Civil War soldier, north or south, when he died in 1956.

A careful look at an 1865 photo (above) of a Company C gun crew taken outside Chattanooga is interesting.

The one officer depicted, lower right, wears what appears to be second lieutenant shoulder straps with no bars inside the rectangular frame.

Could this be the teenaged Lieutenant Dutoit in his jaunty slouch hat?

(A ca. 1890 photo of him is also shown.)



We do, however, know the name of the other teenager, hand on hip, standing just behind him and next to the man touching the cannon.

It is none other than Musician Albert Woolson.

TCCWRT MEMBER LEIGH COUNTRYMAN DIES AT AGE 91

Leigh Countryman, Round Table member since 2000, passed away on November 15, 2020 at the age of 91. Leigh served in the Korean War and was a survivor of the Chosin Reservoir Battle of 1950. Leigh was buried with Military Honors at Fort Snelling National Cemetery. Memorials preferred to St. Anne's Episcopal Church, Sunfish Lake, MN or DAV (Disabled American Veterans). Guestbook and video tribute available at willwerscheid.com.

TCCWRT MEMBER RICH MILLER DIES

TCCWRT lost a good friend with the passing of Rich Miller of Bloomington on Oct 31, 2020. Rich greatly enjoyed the round table meetings and he will be missed by all that knew him. His keen mind and sharp wit always made for an enjoyable evening. His grandfather had quite an active role in the Civil War as noted in the "Ancestors" section of the TCCWRT website.

Contributed by Rod Myers

JOIN OUR FACEBOOK GROUP!

Are you on Facebook? If so, please consider joining our Civil War Round Table - Twin Cities Group. On our Group page you will find posts shared from some of the best Civil War history organizations in the county including the American Battlefield Trust, Civil War Chronicles and Emerging Civil War. As a

group member you can post and share any Civil War related items (photos, stories, questions) you wish. If you are already on Facebook, make sure you the search for our group and ask to be a member.

CONTACT US:

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Can you contribute to a future newsletter? Writers are wanted to submit Civil War related articles to this newsletter.

Please submit your drafts to Bruce Cooper: earlofbruce@hotmail.com