

# Grand Army of the Republic

**JOHN M. CAMPBELL**

2015 will mark the 150th anniversary of the end of America's Civil War. Grinnell Historical Museum volunteers Karen Groves, Ann Igoe, Julie Young and Shane Estes have created biographies of men who were participants in a local project just after World War I to photograph Civil War veterans. The Nina Wayne Grau Studio photographed the Grinnell veterans in 1922. Over 200 Civil War veterans are buried in Hazelwood Cemetery, including most of the veterans photographed in 1922. Here is one of those portraits and biographies:

John M. Campbell, whose gift to Grinnell is now the Campbell Fund which helps local citizens in need, was born Jan. 25, 1846, in the town of Cumberland in the western portion of Virginia which became West Virginia during the Civil War. His parents were Thomas and Rebecca Mayhew Campbell.

Campbell was a young man when the storm of the Civil War swept over the country and, like so many other high-spirited young men, he left his home to wear the blue of the Union Army as a member of Battery D, 1<sup>st</sup> West Virginia Light Artillery.

In an interview in 1930, Campbell told of his first battle at New Market in the Shenandoah Valley. He remembered clearly the boys of the Virginia Military Institute, the school in which "Stonewall" Jackson taught before the war, and their part in that engagement. He says the boys, fighting for the Southern side, were able sharp shooters. He was in the artillery and says that so many of their men were picked off by these juvenile soldiers that the artillery units were forced to retreat.

He also remembered fighting around Staunton, a Confederate depot of supplies. He told of being captured in a mountain pass along with about one hundred other artillerymen and being marched through Lynchburg, Va. He ended up in the notorious Andersonville Prison in Georgia for five months.

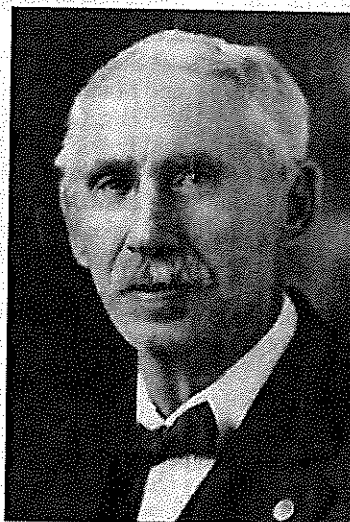
He described some incidents at

Andersonville, including storms, water in the prison and always being hungry as well as trying desperately to keep his boots. He spoke with gratitude of the people of Savannah, Ga., who helped the prisoners when they were freed from prison at the end of the civil war.

Campbell was married to Sarah Castor in Illinois on Dec. 29, 1870,

and they traveled by covered wagon through Grinnell on their way to their new home just west of Newburg. They had three children, Frank who died in infancy, David and Bessie.

Campbell and his family moved to 1802 Sixth Ave. in Grinnell in 1891. He had a brother, Thomas, who had immigrated to Carroll County.



Campbell was active in the Gordon Granger Post of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), an organization of Civil War veterans, and in the Elks lodge in Grinnell. He was a director of Grinnell Savings Bank, now Grinnell State Bank. Sarah Campbell was active in the Woman's Relief Corps, an adjunct to the local GAR.

Campbell died April 6, 1933, at the age of 87 and was buried at Hazelwood Cemetery.

Campbell will forever be known for his gift of five farms to the City of Grinnell with the proceeds of those farms dedicated to helping the "Worthy Poor" of Grinnell. The Campbell children did not have children, and the gift became effective in 1951 when the last Campbell child died.

# Farewell To A Good Friend

4-7-1933  
Funeral Services for John M.  
Campbell Are Held Thursday  
From Methodist Church.

## HE CAME TO IOWA IN A COVERED WAGON

Served In Union Army During  
Civil War and Was a Pris-  
oner In Andersonville,

A life of varied experience and adventure came to its close when John Campbell passed away Tuesday morning at the ripe old age of 87 years. He was a young man when the storm of the Civil War swept over the country and like so many other high spirited young men he left his home to wear the blue of the Union army. He was captured and was one of the thousands of Union prisoners who experienced the horrors of confinement in Andersonville.

Mr. Campbell did not talk a great deal about those stirring experiences of his youth but occasionally he did mention them and a story which appeared in The Herald of Sept. 30, 1930, contained one of the few published accounts of his army experiences.

Every one liked John Campbell. For many years he had made his home in Grinnell, a good citizen and a friendly, pleasant companion. He was a valued member of Gordon Granger Post, G. A. R., whose thinning ranks are still further depleted by the passing of this good comrade, and of the Elks lodge where he was valued as a friend and a brother.

Funeral services were held Thursday afternoon from the Methodist church, conducted by Rev. W. J. Fowler. Pall bearers were Floyd Hatcher, Elmer and Charles Hayes, Walter Neely, Hugh Sanders and Hugh McCleery. Burial was in Hazelwood

January 25, 1846, at New Cumberland, West Virginia. He was the eldest son of Thomas and Rebecca Campbell. When the Civil War broke out, although he lived in a border state where allegiance was divided, he stood firm by the Union and enlisted in Battery D, 1st West Virginia Light Artillery of which he was a member when he was captured. After spending five months in Andersonville he was paroled and returned to the Union army.

He was married to Sarah Castor Dec. 29, 1870. For nearly sixty years they journeyed through life together until their perfect companionship was broken by the death of Mrs. Campbell in December, 1929. The year following their marriage Mr. and Mrs. Campbell came to Iowa and settled on a farm west of Newburg. They come to Iowa in a covered wagon and when they drove into the little settlement of Grinnell they passed the home in which they were later to reside for so long.

In 1891 they came to Grinnell to live and with the exception of two months have resided at the present home on East Sixth Ave. since that time.

Three children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Campbell. One son, Frank, died in infancy. Two children, Bess R. and Lewis D., survive. Mr. Campbell is also survived by two half-brothers, Albert and John Albaugh of Pittsburgh, Pa. Albert Albaugh, who is a claim agent for the Pennsylvania railroad, came from Pittsburgh to attend the funeral as did Mrs. Josephine Kelly, a cousin of Bess and Lewis Campbell, who drove from near Muscatine.

Mr. Campbell had one rule in life which he always followed: "Do as you would be done by." The life which has closed was one of friendship and good deeds and he will be missed by all whose lives have touched his in life's long journey.

## Income From John Campbell Estate Left In Trust For Grinnell's 'Worthy Poor'

With the death of Bessie Rebecca Campbell, the last surviving child of John M. Campbell, colorful Civil War veteran who died on April 4, 1933, the city of Grinnell comes into possession of the net income from a trust established by Mr. Campbell to become effective after the death of his two children, David L. Campbell and Bessie R. Campbell. Miss Campbell was the last survivor. The poor of Grinnell will benefit.

### Five Farms

Mr. Campbell's will, which was admitted to probate in Poweshiek county shortly after his death created the trust which includes the income from five farms, comprising approximately 900 acres of land located in Jasper and Poweshiek counties. In addition there is the family dwelling at 1802 Sixth avenue and some personal property.

### Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries of the trust, according to the will, are to be "the worthy poor of the city of Grinnell." The will directs that the trustee shall pay the income to such persons at such times and in such amounts as shall be determined by the mayor and city council of the city of Grinnell.

### No Publicity

It is recommended that special preference be given to those who may be in need of hospital care or medical attention. It is also provided in the will that under no circumstances shall the names of those receiving assistance under this trust be published.

Under the operation of the trust the procedure will be that the city council and mayor will make recommendations for the payment of amounts to the worthy poor of Grinnell, and the trustee will execute their requests so far as the income from the trust permits.

Carl E. Child has been designated as the trustee.

## J. M. Campbell Estate Ultimately 5-19-1933 Goes To Poor

(From the Montezuma Republican)

Wilma I. Rayburn was appointed by Judge Dan Hamilton as executrix and trustee of the estate of John M. Campbell of Grinnell, a civil war veteran. The ruling was made Saturday here in district court. Mr. Campbell, in his will, left his estate to his two children, David and Bessie Campbell, in the form of a life estate. At their death the property, real and personal, will go to the city of Grinnell for use in taking care of the medical necessities for the poor. It is to be under the direction of the mayor and council of Grinnell.

The original will named Grinnell State bank as executor of the estate, but under the application as filed, this was changed to Miss Rayburn.

## John Campbell Tells Of His Experiences In Army And In Andersonville Prison

One of the folks who has read with interest the Herald junior's experiences and reflections on a trip through the Shenandoah Valley last summer is John Campbell. John was all through that country when he was a soldier in the Union Army during the Civil War and these stories have aroused his memories of the old days.

John was in a reminiscent mood the other day and talked quite freely of his war time experiences. He first broke into the game of real fighting at the battle of New Market in the Valley and remembers very clearly the boys of the Virginia Military Institute, the school in which "Stonewall" Jackson taught before the war, and their part in that engagement. He says that the boys were some sharp shooters. He was in the artillery and says that so many of their men were picked off by these juvenile soldiers that they were forced to retire.

John was up and down the Valley quite a little. Staunton, the birthplace of President Wilson is one place that he remembers well. This was quite a Confederate depot of supplies and he says that he saw enough tobacco opened up and destroyed there to pave the streets of Grinnell, always providing that tobacco is good for paving.

His last wartime experience was as a prisoner of war. To see him now, hale and hearty at 85 years of age, it is hard to realize that he was one of the living skeletons who came out of Andersonville. He was captured in a mountain pass over in West Virginia with about one hundred other artillerymen. The Confederates closed in on them as they were passing through a rocky defile and as they could not elevate their guns enough to bring them to bear and had no other weapons to defend themselves they naturally surrendered.

Their captors marched them to Lynchburg, Va., which was also one of the spots on the Frisbie itinerary, and from there by slow progress they came to the famous, or rather infamous stockade at Andersonville. That was in 1864, when the prison was in its most crowded condition. It was a tract of twenty-five to thirty acres, with fairly steep hillsides to the north and south, narrowing down to a draw in the middle through which ran a stream, with a slough at one end. The space occupied by the prisoners was surrounded by a stockade made of logs set on end. Inside the stockade was the famous "dead line," to keep the prisoners away from the fence. It was made of logs driven into the ground so that two or three feet projected above the surface and to the tops of the logs boards were nailed to make a continuous line.

John says that when he first saw the interior of the stockade, he did not see how any more could possibly be accommodated, it was so crowded. All the shelter that many of the prisoners had was furnished by their own shirts which they fastened together as makeshift tents.

The day before John arrived had occurred the famous incident of the hanging of six prisoners by their fellows. The six were men somewhat on the type of the racketeers of the present day. They had practiced robbery until the decent element in the prison would not stand it any longer. They organized, defeated the rougher element in a battle with

clubs and took the leaders prisoners. These six were condemned and were hung. Others were condemned to run the gauntlet, a process in which several of them lost their lives.

John was also there when the famous spring broke out, regarding which so much has been written. There had been a series of very violent storms. The prisoners could see the branches whirled from the trees in the woods surrounding the stockade by the wind and the lightning. One of these storms was so violent that the creek through the stockade overflowed, and some of the stockade was washed away. The Confederates posted artillery to cover the gap, but the prisoners did not attempt to escape. After this storm, they saw a little stream running down the hillside. They tried it and found it was good water. The spring had broken out inside the deadline and several prisoners were shot by guards when they reached over too far in their effort to fill their cups. As a matter of fact, John says, there was always plenty of water but it was of inferior quality and the spring water was prized on that account.

Wirtz, the commandant at Andersonville, has been stigmatized as a brute in human form, was not so bad as he has been painted, according to John. He recalls two instances in particular when he thinks Wirtz did well by the prisoners. One was when he took charge of the six ring leaders who had been captured, guarded them and turned them over to their executioners after they had been condemned by due process of law. The other was in connection with this spring. He sank a barrel in the ground to collect the water and ran it out into the stockade through a wooden trough so that the prisoners could drink without danger of being shot.

John said that he did not suffer so greatly in Andersonville except that he was always hungry. Meals were negligible. He was young and strong, only eighteen years old, and his artilleryman's uniform furnished him adequate clothing. However, he had to slash his boots to keep the Confederates from taking them. Boots were much in demand among the southern soldiery. He says that the guards, mostly boys and old men, were rough and cruel, their attitude being a marked contrast to the real fighters with whom he came in contact.

Throughout most of the South, he said, prisoners met little sympathy, but were regarded as curiosities.

From Andersonville he was taken with others to a prison at Macon, Ga., of the same type as Andersonville, but as Sheridan's army approached on its March to the Sea they were taken to Savannah. John speaks with gratitude of the treatment given the prisoners by the Savannah people who gave them something to eat and allowed them wood for their fires. At Savannah he was examined by surgeons and passed on account of sickness, and he said that it was a happy day when at last he boarded a Union transport bound for God's country. He had been a prisoner five months.

The fact that the Herald man had visited so much of the country over which he marched and fought opened the gateway for these reminiscences. John wasn't talking for publication and The Herald hopes that he will pardon this violation of his confidence. Oct. 1, 1930

## Judge Dismisses Case Against Campbell 'Worthy Poor' Estate

### Nephews Contest Campbell Will Benefiting 'Grinnell Worthy Poor'

Who is "the worthy poor of Grinnell?"

This is the key legal question raised in an unusual suit contesting the will of John M. Campbell of Grinnell filed in district court Wednesday at Montezuma by two nephews, John M. Campbell of San Bernardino, Calif., and Charles F. Campbell of Churdan.

Named as defendants in the petition are Carl E. Child of Grinnell, trustee of the estate, and the mayor and city council of Grinnell.

#### Children Dead

The will of John M. Campbell, who died in 1933, was made in 1931, providing that a life estate be given to his two children, Bessie R. and David L., and that income from the estate be used for relief of the "worthy poor"

of this city.

Both of the children are now dead, the daughter having passed away in October, 1951.

#### Charge Term Indefinite

Plaintiffs claim that it is impossible to determine who is intended in the term "worthy poor of Grinnell" as used in the will and for that reason ask the court for a judgment declaring the will null and void and declaring them the sole and rightful heirs at law, entitled to all benefits of the estate.

The nephews also charge in their petition that Campbell, when he made the will at the age of 33, was unduly influenced by two close associates.

Two Carroll attorneys are representing the plaintiffs.

Judge J. G. Patterson in district court Saturday dismissed the suit contesting the will of John M. Campbell of Grinnell who provided that income from the estate be used for relief of the "worthy poor" of this city.

Dismissal was ruled by the court after a motion asking that action was filed by the defendants—Carl E. Child, trustee of the estate, and the mayor and city council of Grinnell.

#### Defendants' Motion

As attorney for the defendants, John F. Bierman in the motion for dismissal claimed that plaintiffs were not proper parties to bring suit in that they had no rightful interest in deceased's estate. The motion also contended that the city was a proper entity to select the "worthy poor" beneficiaries.

Nephews of the deceased, John M. Campbell of San Bernardino, Calif., and Charles F. Campbell of Churdan brought suit this fall seeking a judgment declaring the will null and void and making them sole and rightful heirs at law. They claimed that it is impossible to determine who is intended by the term "worthy poor."

#### Died In 1933

The will of John M. Campbell, who died in 1933, provided that a life estate be given to his two children, Bessie R. and David L., and that income from the estate later be used for relief of the "worthy poor" of this city.

Both of the children are now dead, the daughter having passed away in October, 1951.

Income from five farms in the trust left by the deceased will now accumulate as an estate for the city's "worthy poor" persons to receive benefit to be determined by the mayor and council on the basis of individual merit. The will pointed out medical and hospital expenses for deserving needy as one of the uses for the funds.