



The Civil War Post

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Maj. Campbell Brown, Fort Warren Prisoner of War

Fort Warren, Boston Harbor

Built between 1833 and 1861, Fort Warren is located on an island in Boston Harbor several miles from the city of Boston. Depending on the source you believe, the island measures from 23 to 39 to 43 acres, most likely the latter. The fort is shown from a 2010 aerial view in Figure 1, while Figure 2 shows an 1861 view of the entrance.

As a Civil War prison, Fort Warren housed military, political and civilian prisoners including James Murray Mason and John Slidell, Confederate Commissioners to Europe, who were embroiled in an 1861 diplomatic incident known as the Trent Affair, which put at risk war between the United States and the United Kingdom. The highest-ranking prisoner incarcerated at Fort Warren was CSA Vice President Alexander H. Stephens, held there from May to October 1865,¹ as well as Confederate Postmaster General John H. Reagan and numerous Confederate general officers.

The fort was decommissioned in 1947 and acquired by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation for historic preservation and recreation in 1958.²

Figure 3 shows a Fort Warren Prison cover franked with a Scott U.S. No. 65, 3¢ rose, tied by a blue duplex double-circle datestamp of Baltimore, Md., dated “Jul 5 / ‘65.” Up the left side is the prisoner’s docketing “H.S.B. 5th July Recd 7th.” The H.S.B. initials undoubtedly indicate his sister, Harriot (Hattie) Stoddert Brown (1844-1932).



Figure 1: Aerial photo of Fort Warren on Georges Island in Boston Harbor, taken in 2010. Courtesy Doc Searls

There is no examiner’s marking, as the war was already over. During the war, all censor markings there were manuscript, as listed in Harrison, who records only 51 covers from Fort Warren.³ Since the book was published more than 20 years ago, a few more uses have been recorded. Harrison continues to keep an up-to-date census.

On the back flaps of the cover is a boxed Boston “RECEIVED / JUL / PRISONER MAIL,” as shown in Figure 4. The cover bears the address of Maj. Campbell Brown (Prisoner of War), Fort Warren, Mass.

George Campbell Brown, Sr. (1840-93)

Campbell Brown, shown in Figure 5, was a Confederate Army officer who became the stepson of Lt. Gen. Richard Stoddert Ewell (1817-72) on May 25, 1863, when Ewell married Brown’s widowed mother, Lizinka Campbell Brown (1820-72). She was also Ewell’s first cousin and thus second cousin to Campbell Brown as well. Ewell poses in uniform in Figure 6.

Figure 2: Guardhouse and sentry box on the right at the entrance to Fort Warren, circa 1861.



Figure 3: Fort Warren Prison cover addressed to Maj. Campbell Brown from his sister, Hattie.

Lizinka was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, while her father was United States minister to the Court of Tsar Alexander I. Her mother named her for her friend, Russia's Empress Elizabeth Alexeievna. Lizinka was earlier married in 1839 to James Percy Brown, who died in 1844.⁴



After attending the Universities of Nashville and Georgetown, Campbell Brown enlisted as a lieutenant in the Confederate Third Tennessee Infantry Regiment. During General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson's 1862 Valley Campaign, Brown was detailed as an aide to Maj. Gen. Ewell. Wounded in the shoulder at the Battle of Cross Keys, he then served on Gen. Joseph Johnston's staff from 1862-63. Promoted to major, he rejoined Gen. Ewell's staff as Assistant Adjutant General and Inspector General for the Second Corps, Army of Northern Virginia, a bit of casual nepotism that was not uncommon during the war.



Figure 4: Boxed dated receiving handstamp on the back of the POW cover to Brown.

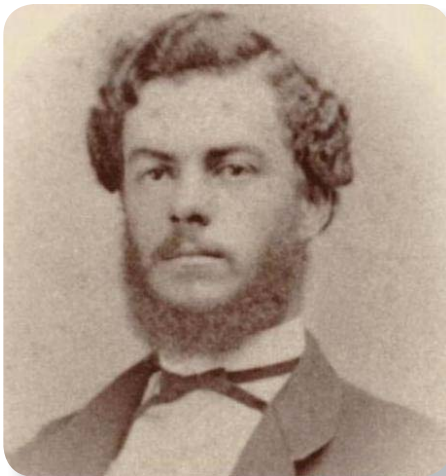


Figure 5: George Campbell Brown, Sr. (1840-93)

From his vantage point as a staff officer in Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, he contributed many valuable observations on the workings of the Army of Northern Virginia.

Brown was captured near Farmville, Va., just three days before Lee's surrender at the Battle of Sayler's Creek on April 6, 1865. The battle is also referred to as Sailor's Creek. Prominent historians still debate the proper spelling. It is also identified by a half-dozen lesser-known battle names. Brown was released July 19, 1865, a couple of weeks after this letter was sent.

After the war, Brown served as a farmer, stock breeder and as a state legislator in Tennessee. He managed Ewell Farm for many years, shown in Figure 7.

Brown's extensive writings about the conflict are considered among the best on the Confederate side. Many of his letters were collected and published by the Louisiana State University Press in *Campbell Brown's Civil War with Ewell and the Army of*

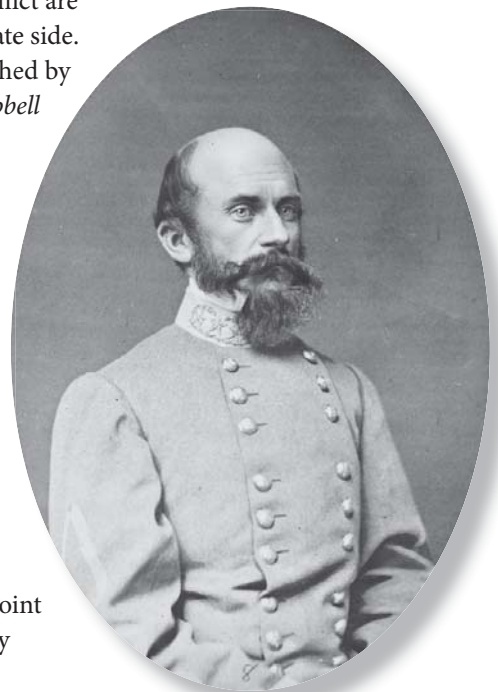


Figure 6. Confederate Lt. Gen. Richard Stoddert Ewell, in uniform.

Both his mother and stepfather, Richard Ewell, died of typhoid-pneumonia within two days of each other in 1872, as noted in her lengthy obituary in a local newspaper.⁵ Figure 8 shows their joint tomb in Nashville City Cemetery.

George Campbell Brown was prone to severe depres-

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Figure 7. Ewell Farm in Spring Hill, Tenn. Courtesy Hal Jespersen

sion and, in 1893, the nation was suffering one of the worse economic crises in the country, which proved too much for him. He committed suicide in Michigan in 1893. He was one of four generations of Brown men who took their own lives, including George Campbell Brown, Jr. who, at age 41, ended his life with a pistol shot to the right temple.⁶ A sad legacy. ☒

Patricia (Trish) Kaufmann, Lincoln, Del., was introduced to postal history in 1965 and quickly became engrossed in research and writing. She became a full-time dealer in 1973, today specializing solely in Confederate States postal history. She enjoys hearing from readers and may be contacted by email at trishkauf@comcast.net.

Endnotes

1. Alexander H. Stephens, *Recollections of Alexander H. Stephens, His Diary Kept When a Prisoner at Fort Warren, Boston Harbour, 1865*, New York: Da Capo Press reprint, 1971, from Doubleday & Co. first edition published in New York 1910; 1971 version edited by Myrta Lockett Avary. Accessed July 12, 2019.
2. Fort Warren, Fort Wiki, [www.fortwiki.com/Fort_Warren_\(2\)](http://www.fortwiki.com/Fort_Warren_(2)), accessed July 11, 2019.
3. Galen D. Harrison, *Prisoners' Mail from the American Civil War*, Thompson-Shore, Dexter, Mich., 1997, pp. 158-159.
4. Lizinka Campbell Ewell, Find A Grave memorial 5618195, www.findagrave.com/memorial/5618195/lizinka-ewell, accessed July 11, 2019.
5. Death of Mrs. General Ewell, *The Columbia Herald*, Columbia, Maury County, Tenn., Friday, Jan. 26, 1872.
6. Fires Bullet Through Brain: Geo. Campbell Brown Commits Suicide in Apartments at Vauxhall, *Lawrence Democrat*, Jan. 30, 1912.



Figure 8. Tomb of Richard Stoddert Ewell and his wife, Lizinka Campbell; they died within 48 hours of each other. Courtesy Find A Grave

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