

# ❖ PARDON'S PROGENY II ❖

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## ONE OF MR. LINCOLN'S FORTS AND THE MYSTERY OF THE BURIAL OF CAPT. OTIS H. TILLINGHAST

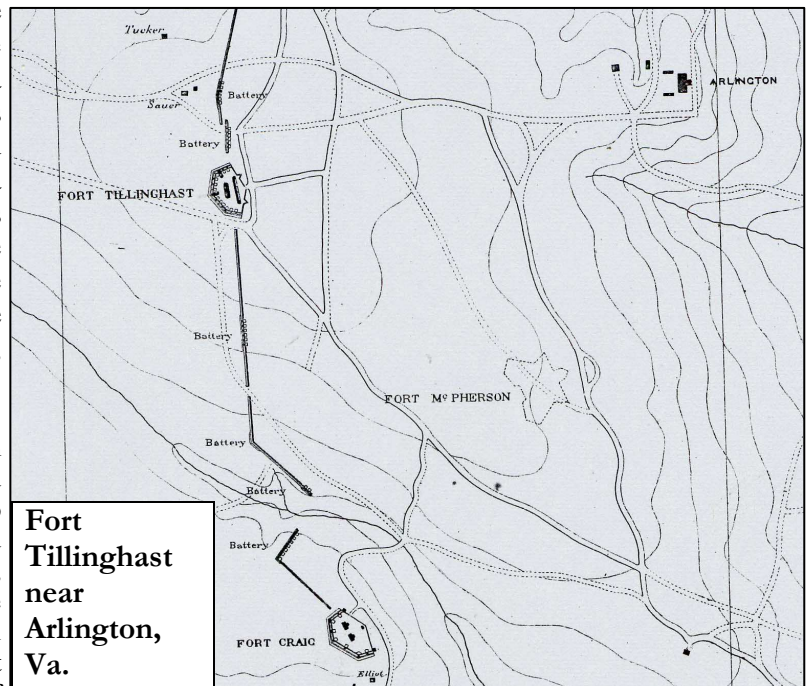
By  
**Kent Watkins**

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*My ancestral line from the original Pardon Tillinghast, a founder of Providence, R.I.: Pardon, Pardon, Philip, Benjamin (see p. 359, Wayne Tillinghast), Henry (p. 362 WT; p. 103, Rose Tillinghast), Thomas (p. 363 WT), Mary Maria Tillinghast, m. Isaac Wilson Parker, E.W. Parker, Elberta Parker (my mother)*

Stories, stories, and more stories: they wrap themselves around one another like the strands of a double helix. This is the story of one of possibly three Fort Tillinghasts in the country, the one established as part of the Defense of Washington, D.C. during the Civil War on the Arlington Heights of Va., Line (see map R.). It was not a large fort, and was in fact called a 'mere' lunette.\* It was hastily built, upgraded, and later maintained, as part of a cluster of many such forts and batteries after the surprising defeat of the Union army at the first battle of Bull Run (Manassas), July 21, 1861.

\*The word, lunette, comes from 'small crescent moon-shaped object.' Its application to fortifications is described further in the section entitled, Building Fort Tillinghast. The topographic but biological looking map is from "A Report on the Defenses of Washington," by Brevet Maj. Gen. J.G. Barnard, 1871, Plate 15.



**Fort  
Tillinghast  
near  
Arlington,  
Va.**

At that battle, one of my ancestors, Captain Otis Hammond Tillinghast, lost his life at the age of 38. The timing was such and also perhaps the bravery, that he was honored by the naming of one of these forts erected shortly afterward. Many soldiers passed through Fort Tillinghast and its informal Camp Tillinghast beside it, some never to return and a few who wrote about it.

I recently made several visits to Fort Ward, in Alexandria, Virginia, to conduct some research on Tillinghast, both the fort and the person. I was told by the curator there (it is one of the few local forts still standing in some form) that I was the first they knew who was writing a

family history of an individual fort! With all the books and articles written about the Civil War, this is a puzzling and interesting fact. Perhaps, we can expect the name of Tillinghast to be better known as a result, and also perhaps provide a model for others to write about the many other forts, both from a family standpoint and a historical one.

First let's talk about the man whose name is affixed to the eponymous fort we shall later describe. His life story is mostly unknown to date, but little by little, with about 200 man-hours of labor, I have been able to piece some of it together from a number of disparate sources – his hometown; the U.S. Military Academy and its alumni documents; Civil War memoirs and records, genealogy pedigrees, military historians and researchers, books, and newspapers. *Still, after un-hiding all that was hidden, it ends in a mystery of sorts.*

### ***Part 1: Captain Tillinghast, the Person***

Otis Hammond Tillinghast was born Mar. 6, 1823, in Homer, Cortland Co., N.Y.; that much we know from his pension record.\* His parents were John A. Tillinghast and Experience Storrs. His pedigree is listed in the table below. Todd Lawrence, who keeps track of our current genealogy (kudos to him), says that I am related to Otis, 3<sup>rd</sup> cousin, thrice removed. So, that gives me a sense of kinship right off the bat.

\*Certificate No. 91986. This and other basic information are contained in Rose Tillinghast's *The Tillinghast Family, 1560-1971*, self-published, 1972, p. 89. Emails, Todd Lawrence, May 5-June 16, 2009, supplemented this.

#### Otis H. Tillinghast Lineage, with the assistance of Todd Lawrence

- 1) Pardon Tillinghast & Lydia Masters Taber
- 2) Pardon Tillinghast & Mary Keech
- 3) Philip Tillinghast & Alice Thomas
- 4) Pardon Tillinghast & Ruth Fry – brother of Benjamin, my ancestor
- 5) Daniel Tillinghast (b. 5 Jun 1756, in E. Greenwich, Kent, R.I., m. Mary Weaver (2<sup>nd</sup>) 26 Oct 1788; d. Morrisville, Eaton, NY, 22 Mar 1839.
- 6) John A. (b. 5 Dec 1795; m. Experience Storrs; both died at 38 y.o., 22 Sept 1834 and 19 Jan 1836.
- 7) Otis Hammond Tillinghast (b. 6 Mar. 1823; m. Elizabeth F. Wyman, 19 Jul 1858; d. Jul 23 1861.

Thus, Otis is my 3<sup>rd</sup> cousin, thrice removed

Perhaps my ancestors knew this branch in Cortland Co., if John were living there briefly, which the Homer birth of Otis seems to indicate. John may have come from Connecticut to Homer around 1820, according to one account.\*

\*J.G. Shea, *A Child's History of the United States*, Vol. II, New York: McMenamy, Hess & Co., 1875, pp. 228-232. Actually, this title was used by several authors, apparently, in textbooks demanded by different school systems. Shea was mostly a Catholic historian and his papers are at Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. However, he had many interests and wrote prolifically. Further research revealed that he probably penned this essay previously in a chapter of another book, *The Fallen Brave*, written in 1861.

Otis was in the middle of the five children:

- John Storrs (b. 19 May 1819; m. Mary J. Fox; he was a jeweler; d. 3 Apr 1888); only child, a son John Horatio, d. 21 Apr 1850, age, 6 year, 4 m.;
- Delia (b. 28 Dec 1820; never married, a seamstress, who lived with Albert P.; d. 15 Sept 1858 in Chicago but buried in Morrisville);
- Otis
- Eunice E. (b. 12 Feb 1825; m. William J. Shepard, 5 Jul 1844, d. 1 May 1893); a son, Charles M. Shepard, born abt. 1861 in Chicago;
- Albert P. (b. Erieville, NY, 13 Sept 1827); m. Sasseneth L. Wood, 6 Dec 1849, (b. 28 Mar 1827; d. 31 Jan 1905); occupation, farmer; one infant son, d. 2 Apr 1854.\*

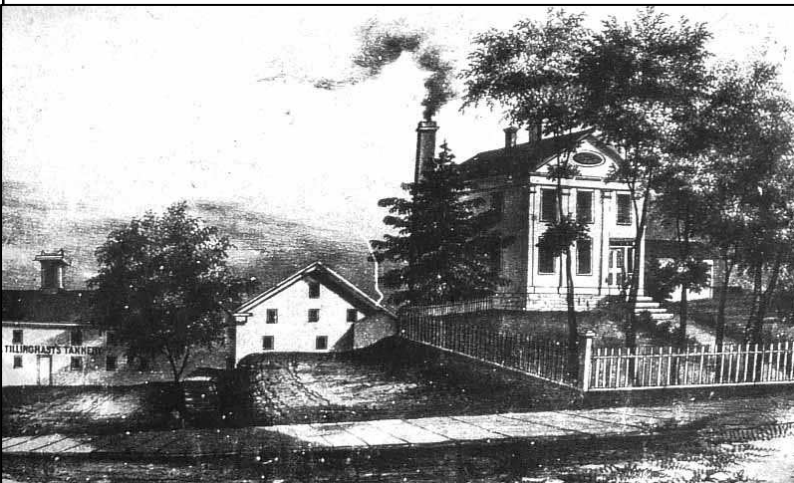
\*This information was found in a collateral family tree, entered by Gail, [sully1558@comcast.net](mailto:sully1558@comcast.net), who noted her source as <http://genforum.genealogy.com/tillinghast/messages/46.html>. Other clarifying records were from Todd Lawrence, emails; and a copy of the Tillinghast burials in Morrisville, NY, Rural Cemetery on Cedar St., with the information on the monuments and markers sent to me by Sue Greenhagen, town historian.

The name of Otis may have come from the Storrs side of the family as an Otis Storrs was a general store owner in Eaton, and that may have been Experience Storrs' father.

When Otis was eleven, his father died; and two years later, his mother also passed. So, it is not surprising that he is noted by Rose T. as living with his uncle as parent-guardian, Bradley Tillinghast, in the Village of Eaton(ship), Madison County, N.Y.\* He attended local schools, and according to Shea "his first choice of a profession for life, if we may judge by the manifestations of his inclinations [what is Shea's source?], was for the practice of medicine."

\*Bradley was born 8 Mar 1807, in Mansfield, Ct., his parents having moved there from Exeter, R.I. In Exeter, Daniel and Mary probably had seven of their eight children (Deborah, Mary, John, Antipas, Clark, Eunice, and Ruth), with perhaps only Bradley born in Ct. He died on 21 Dec 1885. His wife, Rebecca Smith, was born on 22 May 1809; d. 17 Oct 1896. They had four daughters: Mary Eliza (b. 27 May 1832, d. 15 Sept 1858), Julia Ann, (b. 4 Nov 1834, d. 1 Apr 1853); Adelaide (Addie) Sophie (b. 2 Jun 1843-unk.); and Eunice B. (b. 30 Mar 1845, d. 24 Aug 1848). It appears that none married, mostly due to early deaths. Also, a son, George C. or S., (b. 11 Dec 1836- unk.), who married Attie A. Darrow (b. 20 Jan 1836). To them was born Lilliam (Lillie) B. (May 1875); and possibly Clark W. (b. 27 Jun 1871); George J. (b. 25 Jan 1864, d. 11 May 1869); and Otis B. (b. 18 Apr 1861, d. 16 May 1869). Todd and I are still working this out to our satisfaction, but that is the current map.

Uncle Bradley, the youngest son of Daniel, and John's brother, was engaged in the tanning and supposedly finished shoe business, having first bought an ashery building (see l. of his house)\* in 1830 from his brother, Clark, who had started it in 1814 (and later moved to Chicago, with his wife, Ann). Both Bradley and John are in two references serving as either President or a Member of the Board of Trustees of Morrisville\*, an incorporated village of the Town(ship) of Eaton, which is sometimes confusing in the records. This is actually John S., Otis's brother.



\*An ashery is a factory that converts hardwood ashes into lye, potash, or pearlash. Asheries were common in newly-settled areas of North America during the late 18th century and much of the 19th century, when excess wood was available as settlers cleared their land for farming. In this case, Clark Tillinghast (and Dr. Isaac Hovey) had purchased a former tannery and used it as an ashery. When Bradley bought the building, he just retro-fitted it to a tannery for boot and shoe manufacturer and store. John Smith (ed.), *History of Eaton, NY, from Our County and Its People: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Madison County, New York*, The Boston History Co., 1899, on [www.history.rays-place.com/ny/eaton.html](http://www.history.rays-place.com/ny/eaton.html)

\*Ibid. Here, only Bradley is shown as a member of the Board and John is not mentioned. However, in another chapter (XIII – Progress of Improvement in Towns – Eaton), another writer says that Bradley became the second President, after serving as a Member, and 1858-59, John Tillinghast was President.

Despite the loss of his parents, and whatever the circumstances of Otis's tutelage in Eaton Township, it paid off in the form of an acceptance into the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, no small achievement. He entered it on July 1, 1843, at the age of 20 years and 3 months, according to the West Point Registry Board, (cited in Rose T's records).

This also may attest to the Tillinghast family prominence in the township (an Esq. title after Bradley's name, e.g.), as the cadetship was apparently obtained for him by the member of the Congress from the district in which the

family resided, A.L. Foster. There were only 38 graduating members in his class (today, in comparison, almost 4,500 undergraduates attend and nearly a thousand finish in each class) and when he graduated, he was numbered #1,343th in all Academy's history since 1802.\*

\*This is his so-called Cullum number, named after Brevet Major General George W. Cullum (Class of 1833), who, in 1850, began the monumental work of chronicling the biographies of every graduate. The numbering sequence is by year, by class, and by rank in the class. Class rank was a composite of academics, demerits or lack of them, and military performance. *Biographical Register of Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy*, New York: James Miller, 1879, Vol. II (digitized by Google), pp. 187-188.

A student behind him by one year, John Tidball, later wrote in his memoirs\* that he had to wait two years to attend because there was already someone else from his Congressional District attending West Point, so he used the time to 'bone up' for the entrance exam. Perhaps that was the case with Otis, who might have spent that waiting time with his Uncle Bradley preparing a more thorough education base. Today, there are even 'finishing' or prep academies that do the same thing, and in fact, there was one adjacent to the Academy even in those days – Z.J.D. Kinsley's Mathematical and Preparatory School.

\*Eugene C. Tidball, "A Subaltern's First Experiences in the Old Army," in *Civil War History*, Vol. 45, Issue 3, 1999, p. 197. Orlando B. Willcox, a classmate with Tillinghast, recounts in his memoirs, *Forgotten Valor* (Kent State University, 1999), how he traveled to Washington to lobby for his appointment, using all his Michigan family contacts through Senator Woodbridge. Woodbridge advised him to see President Tyler immediately as there was a falling out between him and the Michigan delegation at present. Tyler saw him, and promised his support. Then, he saw General Alexander Macomb at his mansion, now the University Club – again a letter of introduction from a friend of his family. Through that means, he was introduced to General Totten, who was in charge of all the cadet appointments. Totten told him to see Cong. Howard immediately, as he was the key nominator. The Congressman wanted someone else, so he wrote a formal but non-binding letter to Totten. Totten got around him by putting an endorsement on top that changed the tone to positive, and thus Howard's favorite candidate had to wait another year.

#### - Tillinghast's Years at West Point (Via the Eyes of Willcox) -

We do not have any letters, journals, or memoirs from Otis concerning this period, and only one letter (which will surface later) survives from any in his short life. So, we will draw upon a 'shadow' parallel life as written later by General Willcox, also of the Class of 1847.\*

\*See previous footnote. These entries and memoir would not have been available, if his papers hadn't resurfaced in an attic trunk in Washington, D.C. a few years ago, and Robert Garth Scott had not taken the time to edit them.

I will try to summarize this recounting by Willcox, giving mostly the structure of those four years that Tillinghast would have experienced, in the main, as well. It appears that he and Willcox did not run around in the same circles – the latter did not mention Tillinghast at all during this period at USMA, even though there were only 38 graduating in his class – and we cannot know of the feelings Otis was experiencing as we do of Willcox's documented struggles with loneliness, fears of not succeeding, and other personality traits. Still, there are spaces that both occupied in the daily and seasonal routines of the Academy.

Willcox arrived on June 12, 1843, and probably Tillinghast did also, because they had to orientate and then start the summer encampment before the formal school year began. Plebes are no different than any freshmen starting in a men's college and as they were marched toward the library, passing by the way of "the old antediluvian North and South Barracks...some spruce cadets eyed us queerly, as if we had come in strange garments."\* They were ushered into an office where "a clerk with an Irish accent, Mr. O'Maher (Tim) received our names and residences and entered them in a descriptive book. Then the soldier said, 'About face,' and marched us up to the commander, a tall, impulsive captain who brusquely said, 'South Barracks, Company D,' and thus labeled and consigned, we entered our quarters. It was a seven-by-nine room with two little iron bedsteads, wash stands and chairs, and lockers for our under-clothing and future uniforms. As for our present 'cits clothes,' they were destined to be soon returned to civil life, on the backs of fellows who had failed in their examinations and the furlough men."

\*Willcox/Scott, op. cit. p. 51. All other quotes in this section are from the same source.

That first evening, they were called out at parade rest on the 'plain' and saw their first dress parade, "hearing a fine band, and listening to the echoes of the sunset gun rolling up from Fort Putnam to Cro'Nest and over the hills and far away...As the last sounds die away with the vesper cannon, the line breaks, the companies wheel off, the band strikes up anew, and with a quick light-hearted step, the young soldiers march back. It is one of the prettiest movements known, that wheeling into an apparent maze and quickly unfolding into order and vanishing like visions of the northern lights in the heavens.

"Then, it was supertime, study time for the examination (arithmetic, geography, etc.) until tattoo and taps, when lights went out. The next morning was first call for reveille to fall out for roll call and begin the second day.

"After study and recitation hours, the 'plebes' were drilled by themselves and not assigned to companies until going into camp – by which time it became known who had passed examinations." The rest were 'found' and sent home. Otis stayed.

During his four years, Otis underwent a curriculum that emphasized engineering and military tactics/strategy, under the so-called Thayer learning model. But, these were advanced courses. Before that, there were ethics, French, philosophy, mathematics, and physics. There were also fencing, riding, and dancing lessons. Athletics had not yet been established.

"Each class was arranged in sections of about equal numbers, sufficient to hear the members of each section recite within the hour's time presented for each head. Each section came under one or another of the full professors; the assistants were lieutenants of the army, on temporary detail." Some professors lectured, but mostly they just listened silently to the students and graded. The semi-annual examinations served to weed out the class further. Privates became corporals in the second year, and sergeants in the third.

Cadets were also taught to be gentlemen, which meant balls, hops, camp-songs, and strolls along Flirtation Walk with their dates. Drinking was done at Benny Havens, an eating and drinking establishment. Holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas/ New Year's were spent at the Academy. Chapel was compulsory.

Willcox felt that the third ('44) and fourth levels ('43) above them never got along with their class, but the Class of 1845 did bond. These included Bee and Burnside, old friends, who were fated as Generals to open the first battle of Bull Run opposite each other. When Bee was fatally wounded there, he was mourned by his classmates equally. Other future generals were also in the Class of 1847. They included two Confederates (A.P. Hill and Henry Heth) plus Unionists Willcox, Charles Griffin, Romeyn Ayres, John Gibbon and James Fry.

At the close of their second term in 1845, Otis's class was finally allowed to have a furlough in NYC and then go home for two months. One wonders how he appeared in his cadet uniform to others on the streets of Morrisville!

When Tillinghast graduated at the end of June, 1847, the Mexican War had already been in high gear and everyone wanted to go there, because of the possibility of quicker advancement and an actual experience. Otis held a class rank of 13<sup>th</sup> out of the 38, so he had held his own, although this alone would not correlate with future success, as many found. He was commissioned a *brevet* second lieutenant and assigned to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Artillery Regiment. "Brevet" was an 'honorary' title since he got lower pay for another rank. Most of the graduates had this title, probably to save money from the standpoint of Congress.\* The first nine in his class received the full rank of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt., so that may have been the budget cap for positions appropriated by Congress for that class.

\* It was a controversial procedure, and constantly debated and decried, but the practice continued on through the Civil War, and beyond, even when the numbers of officers increased exponentially. The problem was that Congress did not want to provide enough funds that would need to be appropriated for the positions or the promotions. An example given by Eugene Tidball was of a Captain Merchant who graduated from West Point in 1814, and who had been in the Army for 35 years before he was promoted from Captain to Major.

The local newspaper added information to the Tillinghast-designated regiment, saying that he was assigned to Company “E” of the 3<sup>rd</sup> regiment, and that Col. Gates, the commanding officer of the regiment, was now Governor of Tampico, Mex. The writer added that the regiment is “probably with Gen. Scott at or near the City of Mexico.”

\*Madison (NY) *Observer*, Sept. 1, 1847, under ‘Corrections.’

### - Otis Heads to Mexico, and Sends a Letter from His Garrison at Saltillo –

So, Tillinghast got his wish, like many others in his class, to be sent to Mexico, but by the time he left (the last week of August, 1847), the war was basically over, and the negotiations were well underway. The ‘hidden’ war between the Southwest Indian tribes and their deadly incursions into northern Mexico had unwittingly helped the Americans win their war with Mexico, but the Indians did not stop just because the other two combatants decided to.\*

\*See a little-known salient of the Mexican War, as written by Brian DeLay, “Independent Indians and the U.S.-Mexican War” from *The Historical Review*, Vol. 112, Issue 1.

At any rate, Lt. Tillinghast was assigned in the fall of 1847 to the encampment near the town of Saltillo, Mexico, where the defining battle of Buena Vista had ‘made moot any distinguishment’ [Shea] for him. On August 20, 1847, he had been able to drop his brevet title and earn wages as a real 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant. He also transferred to the 1<sup>st</sup> Artillery Regiment.

During that time, we are fortunate that he sent a letter, dated Jan. 8, 1848, presumably to a family member who allowed the *Madison Observer* to print it in its entirety, except for the recipient’s name. It is the only letter or writing that has been found to date and it is very surprising in its tone and rendering. But, since it’s a unique offering, let’s provide all in his own words.

\*“Letter from Lieut. Tillinghast,” *Madison, NY Observer*, Feb. 29, 1848. This and all other articles from the local papers around Morrisville/ Eaton Township, are by courtesy of Sue Greenhagen, Historian, Town of Eaton, and Technical Services Librarian, Suny College of Agriculture & Technology, at Morrisville, NY. She also provided pertinent photos, cemetery information, pension records, and other markers that added immeasurably to my knowledge base.

“There is no news to tell you from this quarter. The same old story, laying in camp with nothing to do in the line of our profession, so we have recourse in other things to kill time. For myself, I never was in better health and spirits, and find more to amuse myself with here than in any other place I was ever in.

“The weather in this vicinity is very singular, the driest that you can conceive of, and not a green or living vegetable to be seen. The days are hot, hot, hot; the nights cold, very cold. We are five miles from Saltillo, just a fine ride. I am in my saddle nearly every day, either on duty, or going to town or somewhere else. I am just getting to talk Spanish a little, and the amusement I have with the Mexicans is by no means scarce. We have all styles of beauty and all kinds of society among the Mexicans, “from lilly white to sooty,” and from gentlemen to the most degraded and vulgar rabble that can be found on earth, or in those lower regions where the gent-with-horns reigns.”

With his New England Protestant ancestry, he had a hostile reaction to the religious ceremonies he encountered.

“I went to town, last Sunday morning, to church. And what a *circus* I saw! The Chinese Junk in New-York is nothing to compare with it in the way of curiosities. The building is most gorgeous in pictures, images, gilding and trinkets, but the architecture is in rude taste. The whole population go in and kneel on the floor, so thick that no one can get out except by “rotation,” and at the proper times the performance commences – such hellish superstitions and humbuggerly can’t be equaled in the world. It almost sickened me of all kinds of religious ceremonies.”

He then moves on to the internal discipline issues facing the Regular Army officers who have graduated from the Academy. He describes a scene in very dramatic terms, with a twist at the end.

“We have had some hard scenes in our camp during the past week. On Monday the men were drawn up in line of battle, to

witness the execution of a soldier. The man was marched out to the tune of a dead march on muffled drums. He walked with a firm step and steady nerves, and sat down on his coffin, facing the guard which was about to shoot him. His eyes were not bandaged, and when the muskets were leveled at him, he straightened himself up with perfect coolness and looked them in the face until the command “fire!” He died like a hero. He was shot for threatening the life of an officer.”

A more personal experience comes along soon, which he handles in a different way from the anecdote he just recounted.

“Two days after, in the very face of this example, one of the men in our company came at me with a spade, with evident intentions of splitting my head. I had my saber, and contented myself with parrying his blows until he was arrested by a third person. I was applauded by many of the older officers for my forbearance in not running the fellow through on the spot, while by others, I was censured for the same. I tell you it is a hard matter for three company officers to keep a hundred men in subjection, especially such men as we have for regulars, the veriest bullies in the world. Nothing but the harshest measures will do it. A very common kind of punishment in our company is to tie them up to the wheel of a field-piece and let them stand there all night. Next day they are as quiet as lambs. We have had one standing on a barrel every other hour for the past week. With a little more practice, I think he will make a tight-rope dancer.”

He next wonders wistfully about the present military situation in his area.

“Rumors are afloat here that Generals Bustamente and Urrea are raising troops in the States adjacent to this, to attack us and amuse us for a few hours, but nobody believes it. We give the Mexicans credit for very little sense, still we think they know too much to give us another fandango on this same old field. One thing is pretty certain, let them attack us with whatever army they may, they will get worse whipt than they were before. We can raise as many troops here in two days’ time as Old Zack [Zachary Taylor] had, all one year older in the service, and most of them have the experience of one battle fought on the same ground. I suppose there is not use of my boasting of what can be done here, as they will certainly not come.”

Although most American historians have noted that the public back home treated the Battle of Buena Vista as a turning point in the War, it was still a very close call as to who the winner was and if the Indians had not caused the Northern States of Mexico to send but few volunteers to the battle, it might have been a different outcome.

Tillinghast starts to conclude his letter with a mixture of impatience, wit, celebration, and cold reality by saying that,

“We are all waiting very impatiently for orders to push on somewhere – we don’t care where, so we move and get sight of an armed Mexican. The wolves and dogs have just commenced (10 p.m.) their nightly serenade. Such howling I presume you never heard. We have the same music every night about this time – a regular concert, given gratis by Messrs. Wolves, Dogs, and Asses.

“You [remember, he is writing to one of his family, it appears] must not be surprised if you do not find much connection or sense in this letter, for I have been all the afternoon and evening at a dinner-party in the Virginia camp, celebrating the 8<sup>th</sup> of January [Gen. Andrew Jackson’s defeat of the British at New Orleans?], and I think I am doing well in getting home in a condition to write at all.

“A young man of the Texan Rangers is to be hung by the neck in town tomorrow, for shooting an unarmed Mexican. I am afraid if we lie much longer doing nothing, our men will get unmanageable.”

“I am in remarkable good health, and think I am fifteen pounds heavier than I ever was before. In fact, I don’t suppose you would recognize me, in my improved conditions, and with my enormous whiskers and moustache. Gen. Wool is, you must know, in Monterey, else my pride (my beard, I mean) would fall a victim to his *barberous* [!] orders. I called on him as I came up, but as I had not reported for duty, he could not do what probably his inclinations prompted – that is, order me, in his usual peremptory way, ‘to cut them off immediately, and report to him after it.’”

And with that bit of jocular wit, Lt. Tillinghast gives us an insight into his thinking and feelings. Oh, to wish that we could uncover more of his letters!

**- Brazos, Texas, Next -**

Cullum notes that he served 'in garrison' at Brazos next. This probably was the Brazos Island Military Depot site, near Brownsville, Tex. During the summer of 1846, General Zachary Taylor had established a supply depot and troop encampment site on the northern end of this island. Today, as in 1846, Brazos Island is a desolate expanse separated by the narrow Brazos Santiago Pass – a body of water that permits access to the Laguna Madre and Port Isabel. Through the summer of 1846, several volunteer regiments were camped here, before moving on to camps along the Rio Grande. The supply depot served the army throughout the Mexican War and for many years afterwards.\*

\*<http://www.dmwv.org/mexwar/mwsites/cameron.htm>



Tidball's memoir is helpful also because he was sent to Ft. Brown at Brownsville, a year after Tillinghast graduated (Tidball was the class of 1848). Apparently, Tillinghast was back in Texas at this point, because that is where Tidball reported to Sherman's battery, at Ft. Brown. He arrived just in time to be told that the company was breaking up camp and heading north.

Tidball mentions Tillinghast being part of the group on board the ship *Rhode Island*, in New Orleans, "which, being towed to the mouth of the river, spread her canvas and shaped her course for New York." Since the memoir was written after the Civil War, he appended Tillinghast's name, with "killed at Bull Run." There was no mention of friendship or camaraderie, however. Interestingly, Tidball (l.) was also at Bull Run.

**Tidball**

Apparently, Tidball's battery group only paused a bit in New York before proceeding to Fort Trumbull, Ct., but Tillinghast was given other orders to stay in New York, at Fort Columbus on Governor's Island. Prior to this naming, it had been Fort Jay, and it returned to that in the 1900s, when the politics changed back again. We don't know the exact dates of his stay there, as Cullum mostly gives only the yearly period (1848-49) and they overlap with the previous and next citation always. For part of 1849, Cullum has him conducting recruits to 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry; in garrison at Ft. Hamilton, NY, 1849-50, and at Ft. McHenry, [Baltimore] Md., 1850-51. During this time, Tillinghast is promoted to First Lieutenant, on Feb. 22, 1851, still with the 1<sup>st</sup> Artillery.

**- From the Mexican Boundary Commission to the Seminole Indians, 1851-57 -**

Shea places Tillinghast, in 1848, as being "associated with the Mexican Boundary Commission, organized after the peace of Guadalupe Hidalgo, to run the boundary between the United States and Mexico, his acquaintance with the country rendering his aid extremely valuable." Maybe so, but his time-frame is wrong. Cullum is exact this time, Apr. 10, 1851, to June 15, 1852.

Here Shea becomes a bit elliptical explaining what happened at the Commission. "Difficulties of various kinds grew up between the members of the commission, and Captain Tillinghast, in the difficult position in which he was placed, acted in such a manner as to receive the approval of the War Department."\*

\*There were bitter fights among the factions favoring greater annexation of Mexican territory and those feeling that the treaty was the treaty, to put it most succinctly.

When he left the Commission, Shea says he was for a time stationed at Old Point Comfort, Virginia [a.k.a. Ft. Monroe]. Cullum's sequences and assignments seem more precise. In 1853, he associates Capt. Tillinghast with the efforts against the Seminole Indians. From 1853-54, he is on Recruiting service; in garrison at Ft. Monroe, Va., 1854-56; and back in Florida in 1856-57, having been appointed Regimental Quartermaster in June of '56..

He served as Quartermaster, 1<sup>st</sup> Artillery regiment, to June 5, 1860, spending part of three years (1857-60) at Fort Moultrie, in Charleston harbor, almost up to the "commencement of the insurrection," Shea notes. Here he



probably re-met some of his Academy colleagues.

### - Marriage in 1858 -



Otis Tillinghast

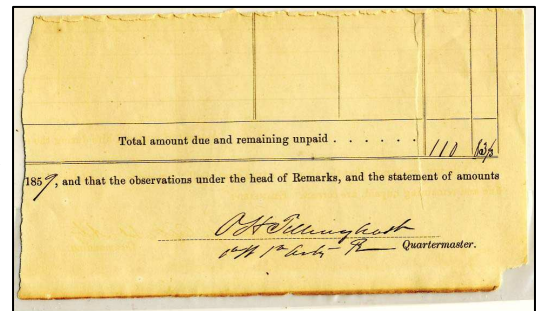
During this period at Fort Moultrie, he married Elizabeth F. Wyman, daughter of Oliver C. Esq., and Helen Wyman, of Boston.\* We don't know anything about the courtship, how Otis might have met Elizabeth, who was 25 years old at her wedding (Otis was 34), what she looked like, etc. The marriage took place in Boston on July 19, 1858, and the officiator was Rev. Horatio Southgate. The only known photo of Otis (see left) is in civilian clothes, no age or date provided, but it would seem to be around the time of his marriage. He was described by Shea, without reference, as "of dark complexion, medium size and height, of fine stature and personal appearance."

\*Registry of Marriages, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, City of Boston, Suffolk Co., Feb. 15, 1867. I had originally identified his father-in-law with a similar name as a Republican State Assemblyman from Rodman, Jefferson Co., New York, based on a *New York Times* article, Jan. 2, 1871. Jefferson County is in the northwestern tier of counties, near where the St. Lawrence River flows into Lake Ontario. Watertown is its principal town. The Tillinghasts of Cortland and Herkimer counties resided not too far away. But, one clue was that a Wyman genealogy page disputes Rose T. with regard to this Oliver's wife – instead, his wife was named Mary Buell. Todd Lawrence also supported the Boston hypothesis, based on his Wyman records, before the certificate showed up.

We don't know if his new wife accompanied him back to South Carolina or whether she stayed in Boston. It seemed a strange coupling, where he was constantly 'on the road,' but military wives are used to this, I guess. The photo below shows his only known signature, where he had signed something in 1859.\*

\* Furnished by Sue Greenhagen, op. cit.

Perhaps she came with him when he was next summoned to Baltimore sometime in 1860, where, Shea says, "in addition to his duties as Quartermaster of the regiment, he acted as Adjutant until May 13, 1861, when he was promoted to a captaincy in the Quartermaster's Department and attached to the staff of Major-General Mansfield's command, the military department of Washington [May 4-30. This reflected a most urgent build-up in starting the hostilities of the Civil War, and Lincoln and the Republican Congress were pressing Gen. Winfield Scott to start the war and end it quickly by attacking the Confederates near Centreville, Va., and proceed after that to Richmond to capture the capital of the South.]\*



\*Read Margaret Leech's *Reveille in Washington, 1860-1865*, to get a window into this strong energy field.

Shea continues almost defensively, "In July, [May 31, 1861, according to Cullum], however, he was assigned to duty as Chief Quartermaster to General McDowell's army [Department of Northeast-Virginia], a position no less honorable than responsible [than staying with the higher headquarters of Mansfield]. For the position, however, he possessed peculiar qualities, and his fitness for the office had been tested by his accurate and provident discharge of its duties on a less extended scale. So far as his important department was concerned, he labored assiduously for the successful issue of the campaign, and when the action came, displayed courage, coolness, and patriotism."

### - The First Large-scale Engagement, Bull Run (Manassas) –

Shea argues that Tillinghast’s “duties as quartermaster did not require him in the heat of the combat, but while the great drama of battle was enacting, he could not be a mere spectator. Every inch a soldier, he offered to his country the experience and skill which he had acquired at her hands; and in her service, if need be, his life. Attaching himself to the first brigade of the second division, commanded by Colonel [Andrew] Porter\*, he was, to use the words of that officer, ‘ever present when his services were required, carrying orders, serving with the batteries, rallying the troops, and finally was mortally wounded’ at the commencement of the retreat.”

\*The brigade consisted of three regiments - the 8<sup>th</sup> NY State Militia, the 14<sup>th</sup> N.Y. State Militia (the so-called 14<sup>th</sup> Brooklyn - Sue Greenhagen says this was technically the 84<sup>th</sup> N.Y. Volunteer Infantry) and the 27<sup>th</sup> N.Y. Volunteers; a regular battalion of U.S. infantry; one company Second Dragoons; a battalion of Marines; two companies, First Cavalry; four companies of Palmer’s Second Cavalry; and Griffin’s Battery D, 5<sup>th</sup> U.S. Artillery. Total strength was 3,700. Porter’s Report, July 25, 1861, to Captain J.B. Fry, Assistant Adjutant-General, upon returning to Arlington, Va. (U.S. War Department, *Official Record*, Series I, Vol. 2, Chapter IX), p. 383.

Reading between the lines of other communiqués in the Official Records volumes, we may fathom Tillinghast’s pattern as he segued from a Quartermaster role to one of “reverting to his old familiar role with the Artillery.” This is from General McDowell’s report after the battle and it almost sounds as if he is providing the clue to Otis’s behavior that last week in his life.\*

\*Report of Brig. Gen. Irvin McDowell, Aug, 4, 1861, Vol. II, O.R., <http://www.civilwararchive.com>, p. 324.

McDowell goes on to refer to “Tillinghast’s role as assistant quartermaster, who discharged *alone* [my italics] the important and burdensome duties of his department with the Army, and who was mortally wounded whilst acting with the artillery, to which he formerly belonged, and in which *he was deeply interested* [italics mine].”

So, was Otis a fish out of water with regard to carrying out quartermaster duties and felt much more at home with the artillery culture? It appears so. And the quartermaster duties were growing exceedingly frustrating. McDowell seemed fully aware that Tillinghast was itching to get back in the saddle, literally, and join in the fight, not sitting behind the lines dispensing supplies. Three-quarters of his class that were stationed in the East were engaged in the front lines, and he was still working in a support role.

This was clearly the case just before Bull Run, as the enormous buildup of troops demanded an equal effort to feed, clothe, and supply them with ammunition. McDowell had originally planned the battle operation for July 8, 1861, but transportation glitches and shortages created more than a week’s delay. Even when the orders went out for the massive march to Centreville, he had to delay the battle time from Saturday to Sunday. This supply problem also cost him, by his reporting, nearly 10,000 of his best troops who insisted on leaving as their 3-months volunteer agreement was up.\*

\*Jim Burgess, Museum Specialist, National Park Service, Manassas National Battlefield Park, takes exception to McDowell’s statement, saying that the 4<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Infantry regiment was the only unit to leave prior to the battle on the 21<sup>st</sup>. “This would have been less than one thousand men.” Email, July 17, 2009. McDowell, however, adds in the 8<sup>th</sup> NY Militia Volunteer Artillery, plus, “in the next few days, day by day I should have lost ten thousand of the best armed, drilled, officered, and disciplined troops in the Army.” McDowell, op. cit.

We do know, from one report, that Tillinghast was still involved with quartermaster duties as of Wednesday, July 17, 1861, because he is mentioned by Lt. James Curtis as having “received [on the morning of the 17<sup>th</sup> July] from Capt. O.H. Tillinghast, A.Q.M., U.S.A., fifty more wagons. Of these I loaded forty-nine the same day.”\* Many problems ensued along the road via Falls Church, Vienna, Fairfax Courthouse, Germantown, and the Centreville Road. It was there, now Thursday evening, July 18, which Curtis caught up with the rear of the marching Army with his train of 64 wagons and herd of 65 beef cattle. Again he invoked our ancestor, saying that “I camped, under the instruction of Captain Tillinghast, alongside the road.”

\*O.R., op. cit., pp. 340-341.

- **Tillinghast's Possible Movements in Battle, Attached to Col. Porter's Brigade –**

Col. Porter's Report (see previous footnote) allows us to imagine what Otis did that last day of his life. Porter reports that, like the traffic jams of today, his troops were delayed considerably in marching from the D.C. area to Centreville, Va., five miles or so from the battlefield. So, he did not arrive there until 4:30 a.m. on Sunday, July 21, the day of the battle. Overall, this march probably took about 3 or 4 days, from Arlington or Alexandria through Fairfax Station to Centreville. Perhaps that is when Tillinghast probably made the fateful 'switch' and joined the Griffin Battery.

When the troops began to swing into their ordered positions (part of the major flanking movement strategized by McDowell)\*, further delays were caused first by Tyler's leading division not being able to clear the Cub Run Bridge in a timely manner, and then by Burnside's brigade placed ahead of Porter's, as everyone tried to maneuver through woods and roads that turned out to be only paths, Stone Bridge being heavily defended. So, what was supposed to have been accomplished by dawn did not happen until 9:30 in the morning.

\*The plan was to feint at the Stone Bridge with most of Tyler's division, and move most of the troops of Hunter's and Heintzelman's divisions northward and ford near Sudley's church, where the water was not so deep, thus flanking Beauregard's main Confederate body and cutting him off from the South. After the planned surrender by the Confederates, the Union troops could then proceed to take Richmond, the capitol of the Confederacy. Although McDowell did not think his troops were ready for this, the Republican Congress, the media, President Lincoln and Secretary of War Seward were pressing for a quick victory and end of the war. It was not to be, given the many mistakes that were made that day, on both sides, but ultimately the tiredness of the federals from their wide flanking and the new reinforcements from the West for the Confederates slightly won the day. After that, the North settled down for the long run, with longer volunteer agreements and grinding down the opposition through sheer numbers, if not technology.

Having forded the creek, Porter continues, "from the heights on this side of the run, a vast column of the enemy could be plainly described, at the distance of a mile or more on our left, moving rapidly towards our line of march in front. Some disposition of skirmishers was then directed to be made at the head of the Column by the division commander [Col. Hunter at that time; later he was wounded and Porter assumed this position as well]...the column moved forward...and in about thirty minutes emerged from the timber, when the rattle of musketry and occasional crash of round shot through the leaves and branches of the trees in our vicinity betokened the opening of battle."

Porter commences to describe the deployment of his units, from the artillery to the marines to the infantry, "with the cavalry in rear of the right." Initially, the Confederates in front of him gave way. But, after a few minutes, "the rebels came flying from the woods towards the right, and the Twenty-seventh volunteers regiment completed their rout by charging directly upon their center in the face of a scorching fire, while the Fourteenth and Eighth moved down the [Warrenton] turnpike to cut off the retiring foe, and to support the Twenty-seventh, which had lost its gallant colonel, but was standing the brunt of the action, with its ranks thinning in the dreadful fire."

The rebels were apparently taking their toll on Porter's units, although he referred to it only indirectly ("staff officers could be seen galloping rapidly in every direction, endeavoring to rally the broken Eighth...the Fourteenth, though it had broken", etc.). However, Griffin's artillery battery had taken up a new position,\* backed by the Fourteenth, and the rebels retreated.

\*This is easier said than done, since a six-horse team had to pull a carriage (limber) that towed the actual cannon or howitzer and the men had to hook up and separate each time they moved (limber and unlimber), in addition to the loading and firing procedures. If they were not covered by infantry or marines, and they frequently were not, the result could be and was at Bull Run, vulnerable or fatal.

Porter proceeds to the next stage of the battle (he was part of the main maneuvers) and describes the varying degrees of coherence each of his units presently had, viz., "the Twenty-seventh was resting in the edge of the woods, covered by a hill, upon which lay the Eleventh and Fifth Massachusetts, occasionally delivering a scattering fire. The Fourteenth [Brooklyn] was moving to the right flank. The Eighth had lost its organization. The marines were moving up in fine style in rear of the Fourteenth, and Captain Arnold was occupying a height on the middle ground with his

battery.”

Yet, Porter seemed confident at that point of relative lull in the fighting. “The prestige of success had thus far attended the efforts of our inexperienced, but gallant, troops. The lines of the enemy had been forcibly shifted nearly a mile to their left and rear. The flags of eight regiments, though borne somewhat wearily, now pointed towards the hill [Henry] from which disordered masses of rebels had been seen hastily retiring.”

But, it was only at mid-point, the next stage being the placing of Porter’s artillery (Griffin) and Heintzelman’s Ricketts’ battery on top of Henry Hill. Capt. Griffin also reveals in his subsequent report, “*I would also mention Captain Tillinghast, A.Q.M., who gallantly served with the battery, pointing a piece and rendering valuable assistance,*” confirming where and what he was doing for part of the battle.”\* (Italics mine)

\*Report of Capt. Charles Griffin, Fifth U.S. Artillery, July 23, 1861, O.R., Chapter IX, p. 394.

During this time, a horrible (and frequent) mistake was made as to the identity of a regiment (due to confusion generated by the uniform markings) and the fight began to shift. Porter states, “the marines gave way in disorder; the Fourteenth on the right and the column on the left hesitatingly retired...soon the slopes behind us were swarming with our retreating and disorganized forces, whilst riderless horses and artillery teams ran furiously through the flying crowd.

“All further efforts were futile; the words, gestures, and threats of our officers were thrown away upon men who had lost all presence of mind and only longed for absence of body. Some of our noblest and best officers lost their lives in trying to rally them.” Capt. Tillinghast was among them and Porter recognized him, “Captain Tillinghast, A.Q.M., who was ever present where his services were needed, *carrying orders, rallying troops, and serving with the batteries,* and finally, I have to state with the deepest sorrow, was mortally wounded.” (Italics mine)

#### - Back to Shea’s Account -

These and the next words of Shea sound as if they had been taken from a dispatch to promote Tillinghast for the future fort’s naming, although he does not give his source. “He had done his duty nobly in the gallant advance of the army across Bull Run, and when the causeless panic ensued, used every effort to restore the presence of mind of men who were madly rushing in flight before an enemy who had never made a stand against them, unless with fearful odds of numbers or position on their side.”

Thus, “while endeavoring to stem the tide [he was on horseback], he was mortally wounded, an ounce ball passing directly through the lower part of his body. On receiving his wound, he rode up to Captain [Richard] Butt, of the Fourteenth [Brooklyn] New York Volunteers\*, and asked for assistance as calmly and as cheerfully as though nothing had occurred.

\*Butt wouldn’t have been hard to spot, as the Brooklyn group wore distinctive uniforms, including bright red pantaloons.



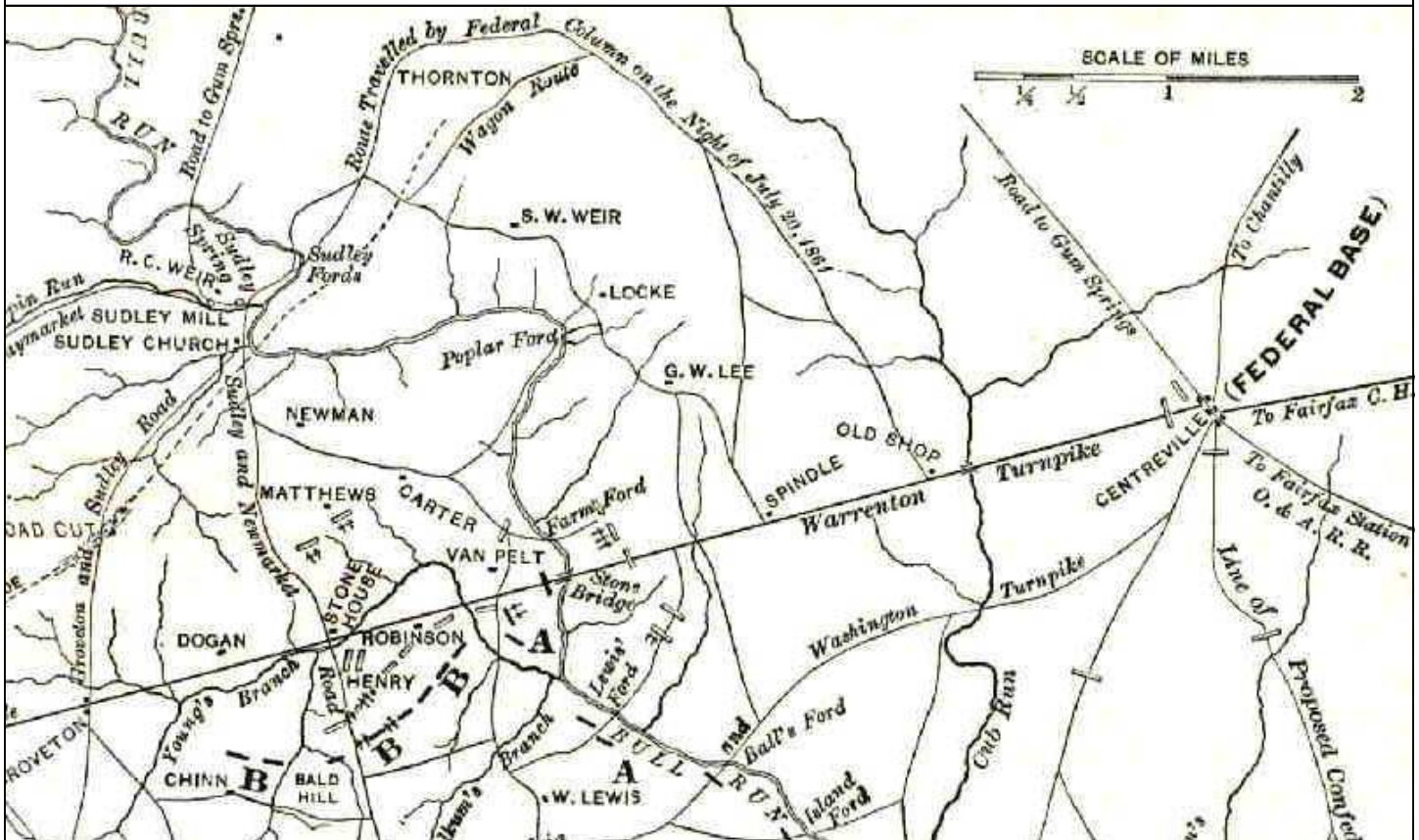
Spindle House

“Dr. Wilson, after examining his wound, which he saw to be of a fatal character, assisted him into an ambulance, and ordered him to be immediately transported to Centreville. He was at his own request, conveyed to the nearest house, occupied by a Mrs. Spindel [Spindle]\* (see at left., taken by George N. Barnard, 1862, LoC archives).

There he fell into the hands of the enemy, and received every attention from Doctors Allen, McGregor, and Swift, surgeons in the American army, then also prisoners.\*

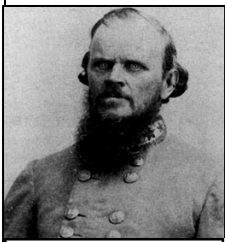
\*He was lucky, in a way, that there were doctors nearby and that there was an ambulance. Since this was the first ‘major’ battle of the war, the state of medical assistance was still quite disorganized and treatment primitive. Many wounded were either killed by their adversaries or left to suffer and die on the ground.

The map below indicates this house, with the word, "Spindle" at the center right dot above the Warrenton turnpike label, the heavy line going from the lower left-hand corner to the center right to Centreville. The Stone Bridge



is at the intersection of Bull Run and Warrenton Turnpike, now Highway 29 or Lee Highway.

Shea continues, "But his wound was mortal, and after lingering till ten o'clock on Wednesday morning [Aug. 24 – this is at variance with other accounts, including the official one, which states it was Aug. 23], he expired without a murmur or a groan. On being removed to the house, he had asked that his wife should be sent for, but this was impossible, and he was deprived of that last consolation of his dying moments. Just before he died, he was recognized by an old classmate and friend, General [then Col. Nathan] Evans of the rebel army,\* who had his remains properly interred, and the spot marked so that his family might remove his body."



Evans

\*Evans was known to be quite the eccentric, and a practicing alcoholic of great proportions. However, in the case of Bull Run, he played a key role in first providing a false impression to a far superior force facing him at Stone Bridge, and then taking the surprised offense against the main body of federals who were trying to turn the flank of the whole reb army. His holding action against 10 times the force that he had gave him legitimate bragging rights (which he did, of course) the rest of his life as to how he stopped the Union army almost single-handedly.

Another unsourced, undated article, probably from the local paper in Madison Co., but found preserved in a scrapbook and given to the library there, adds key additional evidence, some corroborative of the Shea account and other statements more contradictory.

It stated that a "Lieut. McLear also of the 14<sup>th</sup> [Brooklyn] N.Y.S.V. kindly accompanied him with the ambulance for some two hours [this time-length and location may indicate that he could have taken him back via Sudley Ford, the way the troops, Tillinghast included, had traveled earlier that morning] until they arrived at Cub Run bridge, which is less than two miles from Centreville. Here the army became so dense and pressing in its retreat, under

the enemy's fire, that they were unable to cross it; and while Lieut. McLear was aiding a wounded brother, the ambulance, it is said, by some cause got broken. So great was the mess that Lieut. McLear could not get back to Capt. Tillinghast."

Cub Run (see on map above, where it crosses the Warrenton Turnpike), is east of the Spindle house. So, maybe they re-traced their steps westward past the "old shop" at the corner of the return route from the north, and proceeded a short distance to the Spindle house. Why they didn't stop at the Sudley church at the beginning of the two hour step re-tracing – which structure was being used as a major federal infirmary – was because it had been overrun by the victorious rebels at that point. And its chaotic condition was a place to die in, not try to survive.

The Madison Co. *Observer* continued, "That is the best information we have of him, excepting we notice in a Southern paper 'That a member of the Palmetto Guard [4<sup>th</sup> S.C.] writes to the Charleston *Mercury* that Gen. [Col.] Evans found among the prisoners Major Tillinghast, long known in Charleston, who had been his classmate; at the instant of recognition: Major T. was at the point of death and died soon after.'

"We have no doubt that the above refers to Capt. T. and that he was taken prisoner and carried back to Manassas, and died as stated, as Dr. Magruder, who saw him soon after he was placed in the ambulance, is convinced from his appearance he could not have survived but a short time."

\*Madison Co. *Observer*?, undated, c.1861. Magruder, deputy to the Chief Medical Officer, is yet another doctor, now five or six in all, who tended to Tillinghast in one way or another. There seemed to be no shortage of doctors, although there were hundreds of dead and wounded, so the ratio may still have been too ineffectual, and no structure, supplies, or training. The doctors were also taken prisoners and could only watch helplessly..

Shea continues his quasi-eulogy, "His wife, thus deprived of ministering at his dying couch, was Miss Elizabeth F. Wyman, daughter of O.C. Wyman, Esq., of Boston, and a woman of most estimable character...All those who knew him, bore testimony to his merits, and wherever he went, he gained the friendship of those with whom he came in contact. A classmate described him as being 'gentle as a woman, but noble and brave when occasion demanded.' He was a thorough soldier, loving his profession with glowing enthusiasm, full of faithful devotedness to the government of the United States.

"His last letter [It seems obvious from this and many other clues that he was given access to considerable records and interviews, either in person or by letter] to his wife foreshadowed his death, and seemed a solemn parting from one he loved. His conversations with fellow officers seemed to show that he anticipated meeting his death in the coming engagement, and when he received the fatal wound, he replied to an officer who asked him whether he was much hurt, 'Yes, but is as I expected.'"

### - Other Accounts of His Death and Their Dramatic Differences -

Two more soldier accounts, one deepening the plot, the other providing a possible validation of Shea's account, are of especial interest to our subject. The first was contained in a book by General Gilbert Moxley Sorrel, called *Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer*.\* He was formerly Lieutenant-Colonel and Chief of Staff of Longstreet's 1<sup>st</sup> Army Corps and in that capacity was at Bull Run.

\*Neale Publishing Co., New York and Washington, 1905, p. 41.

It seems that the day after the battle, he came across the body of Captain Tillinghast..... well, let him tell us his story:



Sorrel

"This is odd. The *day after the battle* I came across *the body* of Captain Tillinghast at the Federal field infirmary near *the stone bridge*.\* The year previous I had been much in Baltimore at the Maryland Club and had there played billiards with Tillinghast, then a captain of Artillery, U.S.A., and an agreeable acquaintance; consequently there could be no mistake when I recognized his body. The *Federal surgeon also identifying him*, I set about giving him decent burial, and managed it finally by the help of some men of Bartow's Savannah Company [A, 22<sup>nd</sup> Georgia Heavy Artillery Battalion, part of Bartow's 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> infantry divisions; Col. Bartow himself was

killed also] who knew me (*italics the present writer's*).

\* Originally built of native sandstone in 1825, the turnpike bridge over Bull Run became an important landmark in the Civil War battles at Manassas.

Sorrel thus says several things in this paragraph. First, he found him already dead the day after the battle, not that he was wounded and survived a day or two. Secondly, he was found near a federal field infirmary near Stone Bridge. This could have been the Spindle house, as it wasn't far from the bridge. Thirdly, Sorrel uses a third party to confirm his identification of the body, although no name, unfortunately. And it is a company from Georgia, not South Carolina that is involved in helping with the burial.

“The ground was baked hard and we could not make the grave deep, but it was enough; and with my own hands, I carved his name on the bark of a tree, under which the soldier found his last bivouac – “Otis H. Tillinghast.” This merits a trip to Manassas to look for the tree!\*

\*I did take that trip, on June 6, 2009. I went to the National Park Service visitors' center on Henry Hill at the Manassas National Battlefield, walked or drove much of the battlefield area, took photos, and tried to find the 'witness' tree. It became abundantly clear that the reality would not satisfy the romantic notion of finding a single tree among the thousands that were there, even if the bark hadn't grown over the name, the tree felled in the battle a year later, fire, storm, or whatever reason. Moreover, Burgess cautioned me and I had observed on my second trip (July) the ones that have been developed, so a search for such a tree would be fruitless.

“Some time after, a blockade-runner, passing the lines took a letter from me to my cousin, Robert Fisher, in Baltimore, a friend also of Tillinghast. It was on other matters, but I let him know that Tillinghast's body had been recognized on the field, had received decent burial, and the spot marked. I described the location [It would be nice to find this letter, like a treasure map] and then the matter passed out of my mind.\*

\*The letter he sent to his cousin might have helped, but I doubt that it will ever surface. The cousin might have been Robert Alexander Fisher, a sugar and coffee trader from a prominent family in that business. He died at 49, in 1881. None of his papers have come to light.

“After peace came I was with Fisher in Baltimore and learned from him that my letter had been received and the information as to Captain Tillinghast considerably conveyed to his family. Fisher was answered soon after with thanks. ‘But there was some mistake, Captain Tillinghast was buried by his old classmate Samuel Jones, a Confederate brigadier-general [see photo, left, not a classmate, but he had returned as an assistant professor while Otis was a student, and at Bull Run was a colonel and chief of artillery in a different part of the field] and his body later removed to the family vault.’ Astonishing! If they got a body from a spot not where I had laid him they got the wrong husband. Sam Jones quite likely saw Tillinghast, but he had no hand in our burial of him. Stranger things, however, have happened.”



**Samuel Jones**

So, with such vivid prose, General Sorrel described the bizarre circumstances of Otis Tillinghast's burial(s), re-interment of possibly the wrong 'husband' and shipment back to his wife, Elizabeth, and/or the rest of his family in Madison Co., NY.

### - A Third Version -

*To add to the mystery*, we have another piece of information, albeit shorter, from another source, this one from his classmate, Willcox. Then-Col. Willcox, 1<sup>st</sup> Michigan Infantry and head of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Division, makes the following statement about Tillinghast and after the battle outside Manassas, Va., while he (Willcox) is lying prisoner in a house (Frank Lewis house, a.k.a. 'Portici') on the battlefield, two miles from the Spindle house in the other versions.

“Col. Evans (now Gen'l Evans of Leesburg and Confederate Army) also came in with Capt. Tillinghast's watch, which he *thought of* depositing with me for Mrs. Tillinghast...Tillinghast being one of my classmates & Evans

was in the next class below.”\*

\*Op. cit., *Forgotten Valor*, p. 298. Burgess points out that, “this does not say that Evans actually deposited the watch with Willcox, only that he thought of doing so.” Email to KW, op. cit.

Now what can we make of that cryptic comment? Did Col. Evans take the watch off Tillinghast himself, as otherwise, how would he have known whose property it was? Was Col. Evans part of the burial party or did he chance upon the body before Sorrel did and thought it prudent to lift the valuable before it was taken by others? Did the watch make its way back to Elizabeth and/or Tillinghast’s family? Is it still in existence? And most of all, did this incident play a part in the seeming mix-up of identifying the body? And overall, how could three persons claim to have recognized him and buried him???

These are questions to ponder and pursue at a later date, but if anyone else comes up with some conclusive answers or ideas, please forward them to me! DNA testing comes to mind...

### - Other News Reports of His Death -

The New York *Times* had a short report of his wounding, but not his death. It said, “From the latest news in the City we hear of casualties among the following officers of the regulars: Capt. B.[sic] H. Tillinghast, of the famous First Artillery – Slemmer’s and Anderson’s regiment – is severely wounded. This was one of the best commandants we had. He is a New-Yorker, a graduate of West Point, and entered the service as a Second Lieutenant in the Third Artillery, in 1851[sic].”

\*“Military and Naval Movements,” New York *Times*, July 24, 1861, p. 8.

On July 25, 1861, the local newspaper had reported that on Tues., July 23, “the relatives of Capt. O.H. Tillinghast, U.S.A., who holds an important post in Gen. McDowell’s staff, received a telegraphic dispatch from New York, stating that he had been killed in one of the early engagements at Bull’s Run. As we find no confirmation of the dispatch in the intelligence, from Washington, we trust there is no foundation in fact for the telegram.”\*

\*“Local and County Matters,” Madison *Observer*, July 25, 1861.

By August, 1, however, the paper reported that, “contrary to our hopes last week, we are compelled today to announce the death of Capt. Tillinghast of the U.S. Army, who was killed while gallantly leading a charge against the enemy at Bull Run in the engagement of Sunday the 21<sup>st</sup> [well, not exactly, it was more an attempt to keep the volunteer federals from deserting the field]. We learn that he was wounded by a rifle shot through the body, and lived about two hours after [most reports gave him two days]. He was left behind on the retreat of our army, and his friends have been unable to obtain his body, although efforts for that purpose have been made.”\*

\**Madison Observer*, Aug. 1, 1861.

The obituary continued. “Capt. Tillinghast was a native of this town, son of the late John Tillinghast, Esq.\* and at the time of his death was about 38 years of age.” Details of his life and career continued that were already covered elsewhere and generally was consistent with them. It concluded with several paragraphs of eulogy on his character and nature.

\*This term continues to be elusive. In Britain, it was a formal title, part of the gentry or gentleman, beneath a knight, an actual squire. In the U.S., it took on the form of a gentleman who stood somewhat socially above the lower classes, probably the middling classes. Now, it has been co-opted by lawyers, but is also used as a synonym for Mr. His wife’s father also had this sobriquet appended to his name, even though he was ‘just’ an appraiser in the Customs House of Boston. Any inputs on this would be appreciated.

The Boston *Transcript* had a short notice that also contained the vital statistics for Tillinghast and noted that “he married about three years since a daughter of our townsman, Oliver C. Wyman, Esq.”\*



\*See previous footnote on this term/title. One rather bizarre news dispatch that involved Tillinghast came from the Washington correspondent of the Baltimore *Clipper* and added to a rumor mill that made it so difficult to separate the wheat from the chaff as to what happened to cause the panic at Manassas. "Apropos, of Bull Run, it has been stated there is ground to believe that the stampede and panic was originated by persons in the pay of the Confederates, and that some of these have recently gone to Dixie to get their reward. I have it in my power to say that the first order given to the teamsters to retreat came from one who ought to have had no authority for such a thing. He was a forage-master and came up reporting that Capt. Tillinghast was mortally wounded, and the wagon train must retreat. This was said aloud in the hearing of the teamsters, and produced an immediate alarm and stampede. Had the order been given by a proper officer in the proper way, every team could have been quietly got off, and not a dollar's worth of public property need have been sacrificed." So Tillinghast's alleged death was now responsible for the precipitous retreat of the Federals! Watertown, NY, *Reformer*, Aug. 13, 1862.

Although a body had not been yet recovered, a funeral commemoration was held about three months later at the Congregational Church in Morrisville. The local paper reported, "A considerable body of military, in uniform, were present, among which were Gen. Petrie and Staff, the members of the Morrisville Artillery, and the volunteers in Bates's Battery from this vicinity, who were at home on furlough." Rev. Hammond gave the discourse.\*

\*Madison *Observer*, Oct. 10, 1861.

### - His Final Resting Place -

On April 18, 1862, nearly a year later, a Washington, D.C. newspaper reported that "Capt. Tillinghast, who fell at the battle of Bull Run, had his remains recovered and left here for the residence of his family in Morrisville, N.Y. on Sun. last, under charge of his bro A.P. Tillinghast, his bro-in-law, Mr. Wyman & Mr. Storrs of Brooklyn."\*

\**National Intelligencer*, Newspaper Abstracts, Special Edition, by Joan Marie Dixon, Heritage Books, 2001.

The local newspaper provided a more extensive account of the re-interment. It spoke of the waiting by the family until the battlefield at Manassas was clear of fighting. The information the family received of his death was that he was "captured by the enemy near Centreville and taken back about three miles to a private house, where he survived some three days." It identified the source as Dr. W.H. Allen of Me., one of the captured surgeons noted before and said that he had "superintended his burial, and who gave his friends minute particulars of the location of the grave."\* So, this would 'appear' to be the final arbiter on who buried the real Capt. Tillinghast.

\*"Re-Interment of Capt. O.H. Tillinghast, U.S.A.," Madison *Observer*, Apr. 17, 1862.

Based on this, Tillinghast's brother, Albert P. (he never seems to have gone anywhere without the 'P'), left Morrisville on Sat., April 5, 1862, for Washington, D.C. Accompanying him, were Charles and Augustus Storrs of New York, and James D. Wyman of Boston, relatives of the deceased.

In Washington, Albert P. "received the cordial co-operation of the military authorities, General Wadsworth, the Provost Marshal, being intimately acquainted with Capt. T., having been associated with him on Gen. McDowell's staff."

On Friday, April 11, "having been furnished with an escort of cavalry and the necessary ambulances, etc., Mr. Tillinghast proceeded to Centreville, 3 miles south-west of which place he found the grave of his brother, whose remains were disinterred and brought to Washington, and appropriately laid out and placed in coffins [sic] under the directions of the authorities."

\*Having this escort would appear to be out of the norm and attest to some 'pull' by the regular soldierly elite towards their fallen comrades.

Again, the recognition issue was brought out, given the previous controversy perhaps as to who was buried where, as the article writer declared, "The body was in a remarkable state of preservation, the features being readily recognized by his former acquaintances." So, Sorrel, for all his drama, was wrong? It would appear so. His "federal infirmary" reference, where he allegedly saw Tillinghast's body, does not resemble the Spindle house. What then was

he referring to?

The Unionists took over Sudbury church on the battlefield for a while until the Rebs re-took it that early evening. And Centreville was the center for federal wounded, but Sorrel would not have been there.

On Monday, Apr. 14, the party left for Morrisville, with the widow, Elizabeth, apparently having joined them in D.C. They were back home the following day, leaving the coffin at the residence of the oldest brother, John S. Tillinghast, Jr.

The funeral ceremony occurred the next day, at the Rural Cemetery on Cedar St., Morrisville, NY. Rev. Mr. Hammond offered a prayer, at John's residence, and then "a procession was formed, with Capt. Cox's Madison Artillery Company acting as an escort, followed by Gen. Petrie and his staff. The coffin was borne by a detachment of the Morrisville Artillery, and following the mourners was a long line of citizens of the village and vicinity. The procession moved to the music of our Martial Band, accompanied by discharges of artillery [how was this done, one wonders]."

When they all arrived at the cemetery, Gen. Bentley gave a few appropriate remarks and volleys of musketry were fired over the grave, after which the procession returned to John's house and broke up.

Although one account had him placed in the 'family vault', there was actually a rather high monument marker established later among the other 27 Tillinghasts residing in the Morrisville cemetery. His sister, Delia, was placed with him and is also listed on the marker. The words about him read, "O.H. Tillinghast, Captain in the Regular U.S.A. Mortally Wounded, July 21, 1861; Died July 23, 1861, Aged 38 Years." His birth date is not given on that face, the age being stark enough.

### -The Watch Reappears -

Remember the watch that in Willcox's account, Col. Evans brought in from the field and thought about giving it to Willcox so that it could be returned to the family? Well, on July 26, 1865, the local paper had an article that stated, "We were shown the other day a touching memento of the terrible civil war through which our country has just passed – it being the shattered remains of the gold watch, worn by Capt. O.H. Tillinghast, U.S.A., at the time he was mortally wounded in the first Bull Run battle (July 1861), and against which the minie ball spent its force after it had accomplished its fatal mission. Some idea of the momentum of the deadly missile can be gained from the fact that it had already passed through the body of Capt. T. before it reached the watch, which it so indented and shattered as to destroy it for the purpose of a time-keeper. This watch, with other articles, was returned some months since to the widow of Capt. T., through the courtesy of officers in the Confederate army, to whom Capt. T. was personally known, and by whom he was justly esteemed as a man and a soldier."

\*\*"A Relic of the War," Madison *Observer*, July 26, 1865. The minie ball was a lead conical bullet, with a hollow base, fired from a rifle-musket that had tremendous muzzle velocity (approx. 950fps), great range and accuracy, and had the capacity for rapid firing (3 rounds/minute), causing terrible wounds on those struck in battle. The bullet had been perfected in this country by James Henry Burton of the Harpers Ferry Armory from the original French model designed by Capt. Claude Minie of the French Army. My thanks to Jim Burgess for this definition.

Indeed, the paper had previously reported on Mar. 30, 1864, that "the effects of the late Capt. O.H. Tillinghast, U.S.A., which were in his possession at the time he was fatally wounded upon the Bull Run battlefield, have recently been returned to Mrs. T., at Boston. They were sent from Richmond, Va., by private hands, through the courtesy of Gen. Samuel Jones, of the Confederate Army, who in former years was the warm personal friend of Capt. Tillinghast. Among the articles returned was Capt. T's coat, pierced with the hole made by the fatal missile – in one of the pockets of which were some grasses plucked from his grave in September, 1861, by Gen. Jones. *His watch, also, entirely shattered by the death-dealing bullet.* In a small portmonnaie was found a five dollar gold piece and a silver half dollar and five cent piece. In addition to these articles were his pocket-knife, tablets, class-ring, and a few papers" [emphasis

is mine].\* It is highly likely that the widow sent these mementos to the family, which is why the writer of the first news story was able to see the watch first-hand.

\*\*Effects of the Late Capt. O.H. Tillinghast,"Madison *Observer*, Mar. 30, 1864. A portmonnaie is a purse.

How were all of the Tillinghast effects in the possession of Gen. Jones? Did Evans give the watch to him and not to Willcox? It seems more likely. Were his other effects passed on to Jones through the surgeons or much later? The Spindle house was taken over by the Confederates and was Jones in the vicinity then? Again, likely. Further research is needed.

### - What Happened to Widow Elizabeth? -

His wife, Elizabeth, who apparently had stayed in Boston with her parents, on Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>, 1866, filed a statement\*, notarized by Henry Crocker, to declare that she was the widow of Capt. Tillinghast, who "died near Centreville July 23<sup>rd</sup> [1861]. Once filed and accepted, she could obtain the benefit of an Act of Congress passed July 14, 1862, providing for pensions.

She also attested that she had remained a widow ever since and that she had not aided or abetted in the Rebellion. Her Post Office address given was in care of her father, O.C. Wyman, U.S. Appraiser's Office, Boston, Mass. On December 1, 1866, the Assistant Clerk of the Supreme Court for Suffolk County stamped the seal on it.

\*Claim for Widow's Pension, Declaration filed with the Suffolk Co., Mass., Supreme Judicial Court, Dec. 1, 1866.

Her pension was later terminated when re-married July 27<sup>th</sup>, 1869, in Boston, to George F. Emery. He had been a paymaster in the U.S. Army from 1861 for three years, but nothing more is known about him. In her declaration (Nov. 14, 1901) of a widow for restoration of pension, she gave her address as 395 Warren St., Roxbury, Mass., and said that Emery had died Apr. 14, 1886. Elizabeth was 69 by this time. Margaret G. Wyman (a sister perhaps?) and Robert T. Babson attested.

\* Emery, Elizabeth Wyman Tillinghast. *Declaration of a Widow for Restoration of Pension*, Notarized Statement, Nov. 14, 1901.

### - G.A.R. Post #548 -

About 25 years after the war, a Grand Army Post was organized by Col. Stafford of Oneida, New York. The Madison, NY, *Observer* sent a reporter to cover the installation of officers and the banquet at the Exchange Hotel. During the course of the speeches, Mr. H.B. Coman "responded to the last toast, 'The Name We Bear.' Mr. Coman's remarks were very able and eloquent and called forth several rounds of applause, especially his allusion to the illness of General Grant. Mr. Coman concluded his remarks with a comprehensive sketch of the services and life of Mr. Tillinghast during the war." Wish we had copies of his notes! Otis's brother, A.P. Tillinghast, was there and presented the Post with a "large and handsome Bible."

\*\*G.A.R. Post #548," Morrisville *Observer*, Apr. 22, 1885, cited in [www.localhistory.morrisville.edu.html](http://www.localhistory.morrisville.edu.html).

A couple of other postings, undated and unsourced, told of a resolution adopted on May 23, 1896, by the post stated, "Whereas, Mrs. Albert P. Tillinghast of Morrisville, has presented to the Grand Army Post, No. 548, the Portrait of Captain Otis H. Tillinghast, whose name the Post now bears, therefore be it resolved" that thanks be tendered to Mrs. Tillinghast, etc. At about that same time, there was a march of the Post to the Memorial Services at the Baptist church, Sunday evening, at which they displayed a handsome new parade flag, which was recently purchased by them. It is not clear what the memorial service was.

\*["Portrait of Capt. Otis H. Tillinghast"], unk. Source, undated, c. May, 1896.

The local Morrisville historian, Sue Greenhagen, told me that the post eventually closed down as the Civil War

veterans died away and that the memorabilia and any records of Otis are unknown now. I plan to place an advertisement in the newspaper there and see if anyone responds to the inquiry for knowledge of such artifacts.

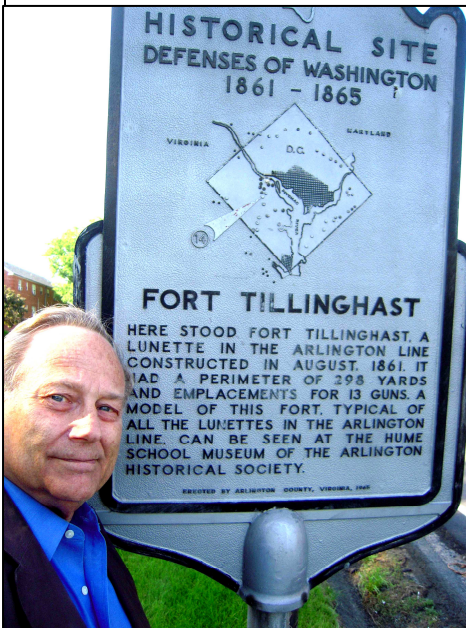
## ***Part 2: Fort Tillinghast, Its Origins, Construction, and Denizens***

Having exhausted our knowledge about the man Otis Tillinghast himself, let us move on to the fort that was named after him. I will also recount the ‘adventures’ I had in tracing the steps of discovery about it. Each of the objects of my search knew where they were, of course, it was just that I did not, and that is a forensic subject unto itself. Part of the fun, in fact most of it, is the journey itself, as the poet Cavafy figured out a century ago.\*

\*In his poem, Ithaca, he ends it with the famous words, “Keep Ithaca always in your mind. Arriving there is what you're destined for. But don't hurry the journey at all. Better if it lasts for years, so you're old by the time you reach the island, wealthy with all you've gained on the way, not expecting Ithaca to make you rich. Ithaca gave you the marvelous journey. Without her you wouldn't have set out. She has nothing left to give you now. And if you find her poor, Ithaca won't have fooled you. Wise as you will have become, so full of experience, you'll have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.”

Several years ago, I was googling Tillinghast indiscriminately and printing out items on every person who answered by that name, thinking perhaps that I would follow up on several that sounded interesting. I soon chose a

primary suspect, Mary E. Tillinghast, a famous decorator and stained glass window designer of the Gilded Age and have spent the last four years or so pursuing her life and works. I reported on this work in progress in a previous Pardon's Progeny. Hopefully, the first draft of the book will be published on the internet by next year, but no guarantee!



But, anyway, I did come across three forts with the name of Tillinghast that fascinated me – the one highlighted now held particular interest because it was only a few miles away from my residence in Maryland. It also had a historical marker that I could find easily and was near the Officer's Club at Fort Myer, of which I am a member. Another one was in South Carolina, also involving the Civil War, and dedicated to the training of ‘Negro’ soldiers; and apparently, according to the Ft. Ward staff, there is one on the West Coast, but I haven't located that yet.

So, I drove over to the area behind Ft. Myer, along Arlington Blvd. or Highway 50, and found the marker by the side of the busily trafficked road. It is just below the turn-off to Pershing Drive, near a Days Inn motel and next to the Washington and Jefferson apartments' leasing office. The actual site area is listed in a guide to the Civil War Defenses of Washington as 205 Wayne St. (just behind me in the photo on left) and that is one of the W&J apartment buildings.\*

\**Mr. Lincoln's Forts*, Cooling and Owen, p. 100.

One has to imagine that the U.S. government ‘confiscated’ or perhaps leased these 70 acres temporarily from a printer by the name of Columbus Alexander. Alexander, whose real estate was valued at \$100,000, lived in the District of Columbia with his wife Rebecca and six sons, aged 7-18. According to the Historic Resources Study (HRS), Civil War Defenses of Washington, “The property taken over for Fort Tillinghast and accessory buildings included a two-story frame dwelling, large barn, water well, corn crib, large fowl house, smoke house, two fields of oats, one field of corn, and 200 fruit trees. In addition, the Army later cut down 50 acres of wood.”\*

\*“The Civil War Defenses of Washington, National Park Service, 2004. It cited the following footnote for evidence of the ownership: National Archives and Records Administration, Archives I, Record Group 29, Records of the Bureau of the Census, Microcopy 653, Eighth Census of the United States, 1860 [hereafter referred to as M653], Roll 102, 2nd Ward, p. 451; RG92, Entry 225, Consolidated Correspondence File, "Defenses of Washington, DC," Box 484.

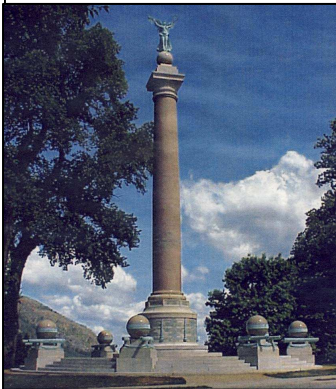
The sign is one of the historical site markers erected by Arlington County, Virginia, in 1965, as part of a centennial program. It shows a relief of the original square of Washington, D.C., including the part of what is now Virginia, given back in 1840, and the forts that were erected throughout the area. There is a 'zero-in' arrow that shows which one is Fort Tillinghast.

The text reads as follows: "Here stood Fort Tillinghast, a lunette in the Arlington line constructed in August, 1861. It had a perimeter of 298 yards and emplacements for 13 guns. A model of this fort, typical of all the lunettes in the Arlington line, can be seen at the Hume School Museum of the Arlington Historical Society."

The marker is painted what I would call battle-ship gray and is made of heavy metal, probably cast aluminum, that has stood the test of time well. The raised letters are painted in black and they also are quite legible, with very little erosion. In the following paragraphs, we shall discuss more the background and mechanics of the details of this marker and some of the variations that have occurred and why.

### - Origin of the Fort Tillinghast Naming -

On September 30, 1861, General McClellan signed General Order 12 to the Army of the Potomac, with paragraph XI "Names of Fortifications near Washington, General Order No. 18\* naming the 32 forts that were being built for the defense of Washington, D.C. Fort Tillinghast, named after Otis Tillinghast, was one of them.\*



West Point Monument bears Tillinghast name

\*"Names of Fortifications near Washington, General Order No. 18, "New York Times, Oct. 6, 1861, p. 8.

We have not found any documentation behind this naming. Presumably, someone who knew Otis Tillinghast, either a colleague or his commanding general, might have written up a citation regarding his brave death. We don't know why his 'braveness' was singled out more than anyone else's at the Battle of Bull Run, but that is more often than not, the 'luck of the draw', friends in high places, timing, eyewitnesses, etc. (See I., monument at West Point, with his name among others.)

### - Fort Tillinghast as Part of the Evolution of the Defenses of Washington -

Although McDowell has started the efforts to plan for the defense of Washington, he would later be subjected to much scapegoat criticism for the Bull Run disaster, and so he was replaced by General McClellan. Gen. 'Stonewall' Jackson said that if he had ten thousand fresh troops available to him after Bull Run, he would have been able to take Washington, D.C. Luckily, he did not, so during that short window of 30 days when the exhausted Confederate Army rested near Manassas, only 30 miles away, an equally exhausted Union Army licked its wounds and in addition, were dispirited and disorganized.

McClellan transformed all this during that brief period and for another sixty days. He found the wherewithal to organize materials, labor, and plans for building the 32 forts, and when he was done, with the President's order, also had recruited the troops – nearly 170,000 in all – to garrison them and form the underpinnings of the Army of the Potomac. By the following January, he would have nearly 220,000, a regiment a day arriving and first held on the Maryland side until they could be organized and drilled, and then sent over to the forts in D.C. and on the Virginia side. As soldiers were needed on the front, these numbers were pared down drastically.

### - Building Fort Tillinghast -

While there are no specific records of the original construction of Fort Tillinghast, we do have quite a bit of information to draw upon as to the general nature of such a fort. First, we know that Fort Tillinghast was a lunette, constructed in 1861. A lunette, in civil war terms, is "a 2 or 3 sided field fort, its rear open to interior lines."\* For those

who want the etymology, it comes from the Old French diminutive, *lunette*, for a crescent moon-shaped object. Sometimes it is defined as a fortification with two projecting faces and two parallel flanks. The actual structure is far more detailed, see below. Unless, otherwise indicated, I will fall back mostly on that excellent Historic Resource Study (HRS), commissioned by National Park Service.

\*[www.civilwarhome.com/terms](http://www.civilwarhome.com/terms)

The Army Engineers planned, designed and erected the fortifications for the Defense of Washington, D.C., as they did all over the country, but this was their most ambitious undertaking. Major John G. Barnard, Corps of Engineers, was assigned to the Department of Washington; on April 28, 1861, at which point, he was attached to headquarters (General McClellan arrived soon after) as chief engineer. Barnard took McClellan's concepts and planned, designed and oversaw their construction.

At first, the Regular Army Engineer troops, and then their volunteer counterparts, assisted in the construction of the Defenses of Washington and in training others to do the same. These included Fort Reno and nearby bastions. The HRS cites Army Engineer Wesley Brainerd, who wrote "We constructed a fort. The work was done by the Companies, relieving each other by day and night as in case of actual hostilities with an enemy in front" and "we occasionally took trips across the river for practice in the art of making Fascines [and] Gabions."

\**Fascine* – a bundle of sticks or twigs used to reinforce earthworks, trench walls, or lunettes, a field substitute for a sandbag or cotton bale, the most preferred reinforcing materials. Usually buried in the earth interior of a wall, a fascine had a bristling top that would often protrude above hastily built field fortifications and give the impressions of being a defensive feature like an abatis. An *abatis* is an arrangement of felled trees, with the branches facing outward from the defending position to impede the charging enemy. A *gabion* is a cylindrical wicker basket several feet high, filled with dirt and stones, used to reinforce fieldworks. Ibid.

Captain Henry E. Wrigley, commander of the Independent Company, Pennsylvania Volunteer Engineers, requested that his unit be detailed for service upon the entrenchments, endorsed by Barnard, and, among other accomplishments, "they erected a small battery and infantry parapet\* to connect Fort Cass with Fort Tillinghast and supervised a party of 600 men constructing fortifications between Forts Richardson and Cass. Unfortunately, both the Regular Army Engineer Battalion and the volunteer engineer units then left the Washington, D.C. area for the field." [HRS]

\*A bastion, according to Wikipedia, "is a structure projecting outward from the main enclosure of a fortification situated in both corners of a straight wall (termed curtain), facilitating active defense against assaulting troops. It allows the defenders of the fort to cover adjacent bastions and curtains with defensive fire, thus allowing the forward cannon to concentrate on oncoming targets." Parapet is a wall on top of a rampart, a steeply sloped earthen embankment that shielded riflemen or artillery crews from enemy fire. Op. cit., "Definitions of Civil War Terms."

So, what did the military do with lack of engineering personnel in their ranks? Why outsource, of course, as now. They hired civilian engineers to staff their offices, and also brought in drafters, surveyors, and clerks. Carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, teamsters, foreman laborers, choppers, and laborers were the other side of the workforce. As more men joined the army itself, the engineers were forced to run advertisements to keep their workforce filled, and to increase the hourly rates to compete. Then, selective drafts caused further depletion and demanded exemptions, but only after the initial fortifications were built.

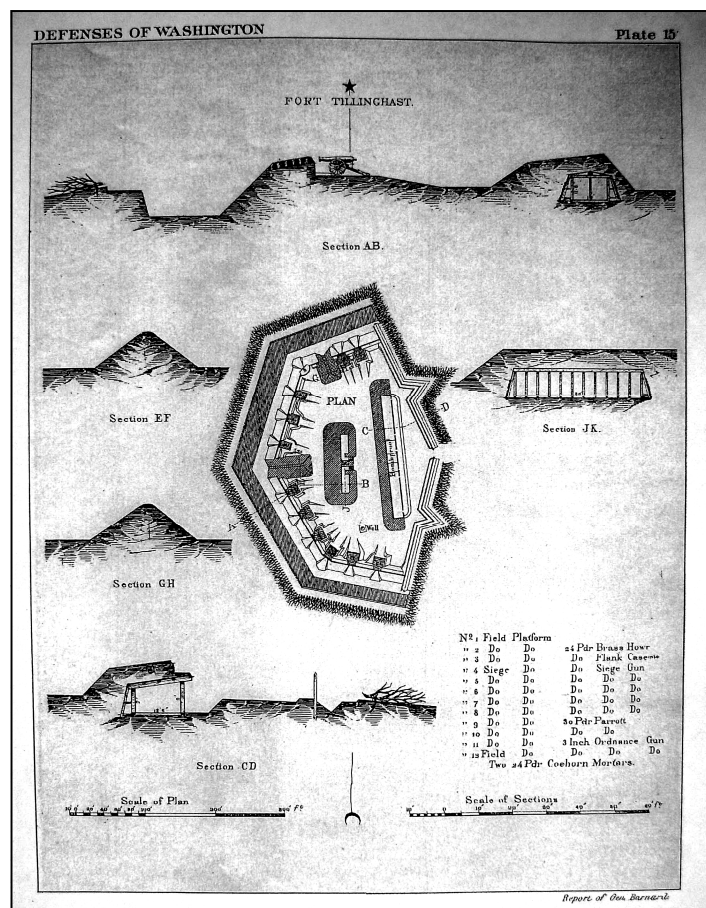
Fugitive slaves, called 'contrabands', were soon included in the workforce, because returning them meant they would just be made to build fortifications for the Confederates. But, for the most part, as the labor supply shifted to recruitment, the greatest amount of the labor on the fortifications was performed by troops stationed in the defenses of Washington and the Department of Washington, including infantry, artillery and cavalry.

Those soldiers provided documentation on how many hours they had to devote to the construction of the forts versus their drill time. One general account is provided by the Ninth New York Heavy Artillery Regiment of the construction of the fortifications: "As fort-building was so prominent a part of the regiment's work, the following description, sent home by a participant, is not amiss: "The forts are simply earthworks enclosing from one or two acres of land. They are made by digging a ditch or moat, fifteen feet wide by from ten to twelve feet deep, throwing the earth

up to form an embankment inside the ditch. This bank is made hard by pounding it as it is thrown up; through the embrasures, guns are run out; on the outside are abatis which hinder the approach of man or horse; within are magazines and bombproofs, also barracks to be used in case of attack; it requires three reliefs to work the heavy guns; all the forts are connected by rifle-pits; entrance-gates are on the side towards Washington; the heavy stockades surrounding are pierced by loopholes." [HRS]

This would seem to describe a smaller fort like Tillinghast quite well. The actual engineering plan, provided by Barnard in his report, for Fort Tillinghast was given me by Wally Owen, one of the staff members at Fort Ward, and the co-author of Mr. Lincoln's Forts (see accompanying graphic below).

As you can see at a glance, the general design of the fort (see the center of the picture) or stockaded gorges, Barnard called them, is indeed in the general shape of a crescent or lunette, two sides with two front angles and two in the back defending the curtain walls. See the entrance to the back on the right side of the structure. Next, look at the dotted line, CD, or rather, DC, reading the legend from right to bastions left, as one would do if an attacker.



First, there is the abatis to get through (brush, pointed sticks, etc.), then a ditch, then the wall where riflemen would be perching on the ramparts. On the opposite side, AB, coming from the west or south as a more natural attack from Centreville, Bailey's Crossroads, Chain Bridge, or Hunting Creek (if the attackers made it through all those forts), there was the same outer works (felled trees, pointed sticks, moats or ditches, AND the mounted cannons, howitzers, and riflemen combined).

To protect themselves from shells and sharpshooters, the defenders would have constructed a bombproof (see the vertical oblong object that line CD crosses), an earthen work with wooden supports. The two magazines and/or filling rooms would be located behind the cannons (see the smaller shape that line AB crosses). The fort would not have used the original well, but followed the digging specifications standard for

all the forts. Probably, the original well on the farm served a good purpose for the camp outside.

### - Ordinance at Fort Tillinghast -

What was the armament that Fort Tillinghast was specified to have? Accounts differ. Cooling and Owen state that “the fort’s perimeter was 298 yards (envisage three folded football fields) and had emplacements for 12 guns. [Check out the figure above and it is consistent.] These were: four 24-pounder guns; one 24-pounder howitzer, four 30-pounder Parrotts, two 20-pounder Parrotts, and two 24-pounder Coehorn mortars.”

Let’s start with 24-pounder *smooth-bore* guns. First, the nomenclature. Prior to the Civil War, according to one account, “artillerists in most western countries had settled on a standard method of naming cannon, based on the weight of the solid shot used with the piece. Since shot was spherical and typically made of iron, this weight corresponded with the bore size of the piece. Any cannon with a 3.67 inch bore would use a shot weighing six pounds, and would be known as a six-pounder; a cannon with a 4.62 inch bore would be a 12-pounder. So, the 24-pounder would have a 5.82 inch bore, and also be muzzle loaded, as is standard for this material.

Now for the Parrotts, named after their designer, Robert Parker Parrott. This model reflected the advent of the *rifled* cannon\*. Typical rifled ammunition is not a sphere but a cylinder with a pointed nose. Because the rifle bolt can vary in length, there was no longer any direct correlation between the gun’s bore size and the weight of its solid shot. Despite this, the military continued in their naming conventions.

\*Rifling technology improved upon the smooth-bore in that the spin imparted to the projectile by forcing it into spiral grooves in the bore of the gun made it fly straighter, farther, and with more power on impact. The problem was with the use of bronze as an ordnance material and its vulnerability to rifling – it was too soft. Cast iron was raised as a possibility, but it took a while to ‘take’ because of some spectacular explosions. Parrott was the first to reinforce cast iron forward of the breech and manufacture at the right price with the requisite quality control. Not too many years later, semi-steel (puddle wrought iron) and steel ordnance took over.



So, the 20-pounder Parrott, which Fort Tillinghast had, was a 3.67 inch rifle, compared to the 3.67 smooth-bore, which was a 6-pounder. It had a tube length of 89 inches, weighed 1750 pounds, was made of cast iron, with a reinforcing band of wrought iron covering the breech and reinforce. It had a range of 2100 yards (at 5 degrees of elevation). The 30-pounder Parrott (see left), of 1861 vintage, had a nominal length of 126 inches; rifling was 5-groove, right-hand twist. It weighed 4,200 pounds.

Early versions had muzzle swell, later versions did not. Known survivors: 198 Howitzers are shorter-barreled cannon with a chamber at the base of the bore, designed to take a smaller charge. Their range is shorter and the trajectory of the projectile shows more arc. The 24-pounder howitzer specified for Fort Tillinghast had a tube length of 65 inches, weighted 1318 pounds, a bore diameter of 5.82 inches, made of bronze, and had a range of 1325 yards.

The Coehorn mortar (24 pounder at Fort Tillinghast) was bronze, could be carried by 2 to 4 men, a prime advantage over other mortars. Its total length, 16.32 inches; weight, 164 pounds; total production, 279; known survivors, 100. There were no 3-inch ordnance rifles yet in the inventory, but these would soon become the favorite with artillerists in both armies.

\*I am indebted to [www.cwartillery.org](http://www.cwartillery.org) for an introduction to this ordnance so that I could transform into my own understanding and write the section above.

## Part 3: First-Hand Soldier Accounts about Camp or Fort Tillinghast

When I questioned Wally Owen, the curator at Fort Ward in the City of Alexandria, about the looseness in origin noted in the letters - some said Camp Tillinghast and some said Fort Tillinghast - he replied that he went strictly by the military orders that assigned a unit to garrison (occupy) the fort. The camps were frequently occupied throughout the war by transient infantry populations, and usually he did not count them as being ‘connected’ to the fort.



He was willing to review any evidence I could present (and did) that would show that some of those residing at the nearby camp also were 'intimately' involved with the fort's mission and supported it while they were 'parked' there.

Originally, he listed in the book, *Mr. Lincoln's Forts*, detachments from the following 'garrison' troops (frequently, the regiment or whatever level of organization was split among various adjoining forts and camps):

- 16<sup>th</sup> Maine Infantry, one company, September 1862
- 1<sup>st</sup> Massachusetts Heavy Artillery, Co. M, September 1862
- 4<sup>th</sup> New York Heavy Artillery, Co. C, July 1864-August 1864
- 145<sup>th</sup> Ohio National Guard, Co. I, June 1864
- 138<sup>th</sup> Ohio National Guard, Co. A,D,F,I, June 1864

He said that he since found some others outfits that he would include in the next edition, and he handed me a paper that showed that the following had been added:

- 12<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry, Cos. B, I, November 1861-January 1862
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Wisconsin Infantry, Cos. E, G, December 1861-February 1862
- 12<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry, Co. I, February 1862-March 21, 1862
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Connecticut Infantry, June 1861-construction on rifle pits
- 1<sup>st</sup> Massachusetts Heavy Artillery, Co. K, March 1864-April 1864
- 5<sup>th</sup> Independent Battery, New York Light Artillery, May 1864-July 1864
- 145<sup>th</sup> Ohio National Guard, Co. I, June 1864
- 1<sup>st</sup> Maryland Light Artillery, Battery D, June 7, 1864-August 15, 1864
- 10<sup>th</sup> New York Heavy Artillery, Co. C, D, October 1864-November 1864
- 1<sup>st</sup> New York Light Artillery, Battery F, November 1864-May 1865
- 2<sup>nd</sup> New York Heavy Artillery, Co. B,C, May 1865-June 1865

One of the soldiers left behind a drawing of Fort Tillinghast, archived now at the U.S. Army Military History Institute in Carlisle, Pa. (see below). It also showed the permanent buildings adjacent to it. These would probably be only for the troops garrisoning the fort directly, while the "camp" consisted of tents and wooden huts stretching out and surrounding the locus point. The fort is behind the barracks (see flag), and faces west. Modern-day Arlington Blvd. (where you see the barracks, perhaps) would not have existed, as we indicated earlier in describing the war's contemporary road map.



It wasn't long before correspondents, both journalists and the soldiers themselves, were reporting back to their home newspapers. Less than two weeks after the general order, a "private letter from a member of the Randall Guards, in the Wisconsin Second Regiment, received last evening, by Lieut. Meredith, says,

'Our present camp is just in the rear of Fort Tillinghast, a very handsome little fort, about four or five miles south-west of Washington, on Arlington Heights. The country around here is covered with camps in all directions. We received orders last evening to pack our knapsacks, fill our canteens, put one day's rations in our haversacks, and be ready to march at ten minutes' notice. Several members of the company are suffering somewhat from severe colds.'

\*"The Second Regiment", Madison, Wis., *Daily State Journal*, Oct. 18, 1861, p. 2 The haversack would be carried on the left hip and contain coffee, foodstuffs, etc., while the knapsack would be carried on the back and contain clothing and other such items.

Another letter, written two days later, from someone else in the same Wisconsin 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, provides a wealth of information about how the camp and fort interacted, the typology of troop organization, and a glimpse of the evening routine. It also provides an insight into the evaluation of the troops toward their leadership.

Oct. 20, 1861, Co. D, 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, Wis. Volunteers, *Camp Tillinghast* "I take this opportunity to write a few lines as all my tent-mates are on guard and it will fill up my time until tattoo. Our regiment is as yet encamped at Fort Tillinghast, where we have been for the last three weeks; the boys are all in good spirits and health, or mostly so, a few are sick as there will always be in any regiment. The Sixth and Seventh are encamped close by us. They are getting used to the soldiering business, and seem to like it first-rate.

"Our regiment, the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> regiments, and the Indiana 19<sup>th</sup> regiment, constitute King's Brigade, belonging to General McDowell's Division. We are getting well prepared for a winter campaign, warm clothes, overcoats, etc. We have one drill each day with knapsacks on our backs, packed with everything we carry on a march with us, to get us hardened to the march. It goes hard with the boys to get used to it, but I think it will prove beneficial in the end.

"Our Field Officers, Col. E. O'Connor, Lieutenant Col. Fairchilds, and Maj. Allen, are highly respected by the men, some of them have been tried, and we know by our own experience that they will be with us every time.\*

\*In the 7<sup>th</sup> regiment, all was not so well. Seven line officers tendered their resignations unless the colonel leading them did not resign. They found his Prussian training too overbearing.

"The whole brigade is drilled every other day, sometimes every day, by General King. We have also been drilled a few times by General McDowell, who gives us the praise of being one of the best drilled regiments in his command. We were with him at Bull Run and he is pleased to have us again.

"I receive the Gazette real regular, and it is a welcome visitor and no mistake. The drummer has just beat the call for tattoo and I must close for the cry will be 'lights out' in a few minutes. With respect to all friends, I remain, Your friend, J.H.\*

\*The Janesville, Wis., *Daily Gazette*, Nov. 2, 1861, p. 2.

There are many other letters depicting life at Camp or Ft. Tillinghast, but these will appear in a longer version of this article, as a trade-off for some of the family history, which some readers may not care to spend much time on.

#### **Part 4: Conclusion: Otis H. Tillinghast and Civil War Memories Live On – At My Local Haunts**

Yesterday, I went to Ft. Myer Officers Club tennis courts to practice with the team. As I drove through the gates of the fort and climbed the heights of Arlington, off to my right were the thousands of graves of Arlington Cemetery and just over the crest, Arlington House of Lee fame and where General McDowell prepared for the battle of Bull Run. At the top, one could see the monuments of Washington and I imagined the partially finished Capitol and Washington Monument, now in full splendor.

I imagined the rest of the city as it would have looked to the thousands of soldiers sprawled out on the present post, but nearly 150 years ago and how the engineers must have worried about the Confederates occupying that land with artillery that could reach across the river from Virginia. I parked my car on the grounds of Fort Whipple, which backed up Fort Tillinghast, just west several blocks of Camp Tillinghast's tents, huts, and barracks.

When I finished the tennis practice, I drove back down from the Heights of Arlington, past the Iwo Jima Memorial of a later war, and across the Key Bridge where I could see the remains of the Aqueduct Bridge that covered over the canal crossing so that troops and carts and horses could make their way to the battlefields of Virginia. I drove through Georgetown where more troops were quartered and then I was on Pennsylvania Avenue, which saw so many events of the war preparations and emotions' ups and downs. I went by the Willard Hotel, now restored to post-Civil War elegance, and which saw so much of the politicians, including Lincoln; the officers in the bars, and the soldiers marching and returning from Bull Run in fear and shame. Finally, I reached my destination, a theater on 14<sup>th</sup> St. that evening, and started to live in yet another world. But, each trip I make around and through the city and its environs is always a palimpsest of memories, and the Civil War seen through the eyes of our ancestor Otis Tillinghast now is another layer of experience to enjoy!



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Kent Watkins grew up in Sioux City, Ia., and now resides in NYC and Bethesda, Md. (come visit Fort Tillinghast and stay at my apt.!) He earned his B.A. from the College of William & Mary; a Master's in Public Administration from Harvard University; and an Advanced Diploma in English Local History from Oxford University. He is completing his dissertation for the Ph.D. – hopefully. Kent served in the U.S. Army, leaving as a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant, and now belongs to the Ft. Myer Officers' Club, which is adjacent to Fort Tillinghast. He worked for various Members of Congress in the House and the Senate, as well as a short stint at the White House. He was Chief of Staff for a Secretary of HUD; Vice-president of a Westinghouse subsidiary; a partner in a national urban planning consulting firm; and for many years has had his own consulting firm. He has written many articles and reports, taught as an adjunct professor, served on many boards, plays tennis tournaments, is an avid photographer, and a proud father/grandfather.

*Editor's note: Thank you Kent for this well researched  
historical article.*

*You bring our family to life and give them dignity.*

***Greta T. Tyler, editor***