

CAPT. CHARLES W. READ.

The Paul Jones of the Southern Confederacy Passes Away.

His Death at Meridian After a Long and Painful Illness.



Captain Charles W. Read, Confederate States Navy.

MERIDIAN, Miss., Jan. 25.—[Special.]—Captain Chas. W. Read died here this morning at 2 o'clock, from an attack of la grippe, upon which pneumonia supervened.

He came here some two months ago to be treated for Bright's disease by Dr. C. A. Rice, superintendent of the East Mississippi Insane Asylum, and was under his treatment up to the time of his death. When he came here his case had been given up as hopeless and for some time little or no improvement was noticeable; but finally he began to improve and a week ago he was not only able to leave his room, but was strong enough to ascend and descend the flights of stairs without any assistance, and his heart was buoyant with the thought that within a few weeks more he would be able to return to his post of duty at New Orleans.

But at that time he was taken with la grippe which then prevailed, and upon this attack pneumonia supervened; his former condition had left him too feeble to withstand the attack and he finally succumbed.

It was the desire of his wife that his remains should be interred in New Orleans under the auspices of the military organizations of that city, as it was his home, but up to a late hour this afternoon no definite response having been received from New Orleans, she decided to have the interment here.

Upon the receipt of this decision, Walshall Camp No. 1 of Confederate Veterans held a meeting and decided to take charge of the obsequies and bury the deceased under the auspices of the camp.

At this meeting Captain W. H. Hardy, Captain Geo. S. Covert, Colonel J. E. McIntosh, Mr. B. V. White, Mr. Jno. D. McInnis, Mr. Geo. P. Shedd, Dr. C. A. Rice and Mr. G. M. Horst were appointed pallbearers.

The funeral will take place to-morrow afternoon at Rose Hill cemetery from the First Baptist church.

A Thrilling Biography.

The news of the death of Captain Charles W. Read will be read with regret by many. The brave soldier who passed away was honored all over the broad land for his valor, and beloved by his friends for his loyalty, his modesty and the many good qualities that distinguished his noble character.

Some two months ago the Pleiades published a lengthy history of Captain Read's career during the war. His deeds of daring read almost like chapters of a romance. Captain Read never repeated them, although gladly furnishing data about any particular event when applied to by a friend. The record is found in history, and northern chronicles record him as much praise as the writers of the south. He was the naval hero of the war, and the late Captain Sam P. Blane, a learned leader of the local bar, fitly styled him the John Paul Jones of the confederacy.

Captain Read was born in Yazoo county, Miss., in 1830. He had a love for the sea from early boyhood, and sought and obtained an appointment to Annapolis. There he graduated and was made a cadet on the Powhatan. As soon as the news of the secession was received the ship started for New York. Young Read resigned on the way, left the ship when it landed, and came south to report to President Davis and Secretary Mallory. He just reached his majority when he donned the uniform of a confederate lieutenant and was assigned for duty on the steamer *Mellus* at New Orleans. He took part in the naval battle preceding the fall of the city, and fought with noteworthy gallantry.

Lieutenant Read then joined the *Arkansas*, the celebrated ram, which had a short, bloody and brilliant life on the Mississippi, commanding the stern guns in all her actions. After a brief spell of sickness at Jackson, Miss., he was ordered to the steamer *Florida*, at Mobile. On the 16th of January, 1863, she made her escape to sea through the blockading fleet, and commenced a long list of captures. One of these captures was the brig *Clarence*, which Captain Read obtained permission to board with a crew and set out on a privateering cruise. From the *Clarence*, Read and his crew transferred themselves to the *Tacony*, the *Archer*, and other vessels, played havoc with northern ships that came their way, and made a bold stroke by going into the guarded harbor at Portland, Maine, and carrying off the revenue cutter *Calib* Cushing. The daring confederates were finally captured and sent to Fort Warren. There Captain Read assisted in organizing and carrying out a plan to escape, lay all night on wet ground after the elements placed the rescuing boat out of reach, was prodded with the bayonets of passing sentries, and coolly walked back to the fort when daylight made further concealment impossible.

The heroic young officer was exchanged, and appeared at Richmond for more duty. At the latter place he organized several forlorn hopes to destroy Grant's base of supplies, open the James river to the southern fleet and give Lee an opportunity to break the lines fast closing around the confederate capital. Read displayed a desperate daring in this series of actions almost beyond belief. The last forlorn attempt, by a land expedition, was frustrated by treachery, and the little band of men engaged in the march had to trace its way through the woods at night and ford the Appomattox river when it was covered with ice. Seventy-four of the hundred men who took part in the plan remained in the Richmond hospitals long after the evacuation of the city.

Captain Read closed his war career with the wonderful run of the ram *Webb*, from Alexandria, on Red river, almost to the mouth of the river. The boat was specially prepared for the trip, and in April, 1865, she passed through the federal fleets along the Mississippi and had almost passed New Orleans when her identity was discovered and chase given. The *Webb* gave her pursuers a glorious race, and twenty-five miles below the city Captain Read slowed up to allow the *Hollyhock*, which had distanced the others, to advance. Just then the masts of the Richmond were seen over the point ahead. Read thought it was a trap, and prepared to fight the formidable Richmond, when a flat was discovered between. The *Webb* would have to go around and pass under the enemy's broadside. Read knew what that was and so ordered his own ship run ashore, and each man was told to shift for himself. The cavalry had been sent down from New Orleans and surrounded the sailors, and the latter returned to their boats, preferring to fall into the hands of the navy. The *Webb's* crew surrendered to New York. General Kirby Smith's surrender gave them all their freedom, Captain Read among them.

Since the war Captain Read continued to follow the sea as a profession, and took up his residence in New Orleans. For a number of years he commanded the *City of Dallas* of the Royal Mail Line, engaged in the fruit business between this port and British Honduras. The gallant sailor was happily married to Miss Carter of Meridian, Miss., and his home was brightened by several lovely children. His life took him often away from home, but it seemed as if he had found snug harbor at last when Governor Nichols, recognizing the veteran's worth, appointed him one of the harbor-masters of the port. But the Great Commander had already decided to call the brave sailor home to his reward. He was stricken with disease just as he was about to enter upon a season of rest in the bosom of his loving family. The character of the man asserted itself to the last. He looked fate hopefully in the face, and after the doctors said there was no help he quietly remarked to the writer at their last interview that he would obtain a leave of absence from the governor, go up to the Mississippi hills for a month, and return in condition to resume his duties. Captain Read did not get well, only

to be stricken down by a more relentless foe, and the fearless commander's ship of life went down in the ocean of eternity.

A fearless soldier, a stainless man, a devoted husband and father, a faithful friend and a loyal citizen—it is no wonder that a legion of true hearts all over the south mourn his passing away.