

## Manuel C. Causten

( - 31 Mar 1878)

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*National Intelligencer, Mar. 22, 1861*

Military – The following are the commissioned officers of the Sixth Regiment Militia District of Columbia:

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Second Lieutenants -- . . . Manuel C. Causten . . .

*Evening Star, June 5, 1861, p. 3*

Private T.C. Caustin, Capt. Owen's Company, (President's Mounted Guard,) D.C. Volunteers whose wife lives near Seneca, Maryland, twenty-two miles above Georgetown, went to visit her night before last, and was taken prisoner by secession troops, who crossed from the Virginia shore in a boat. Where he was taken to is unknown, but it is supposed he was carried to Manassas Junction, where the Confederates have a considerable force. His company are in a great rage, and suspect Caustin is a victim to treachery. The Mounted Guard took an active part in the late advance on Virginia and the occupation of Alexandria by the Federal forces, having been selected by reason of their familiarity with the different localities on that side the river, and the Confederates have offered a reward of five hundred dollars for any member thereof taken dead or alive, it is said.

*The Evening Star, June 7, 1861*

### **The Prisoner**

The last heard of Dr. M.C. Causten, of Capt. Owens' Mounted Guard, who was captured by the secessionists near the Point of Rocks, he was at Manassas Junction--probably en route to Richmond to be imprisoned.

*The Evening Star, July 1, 1861*

### **Letter from Mr. Causten Somewhere in Dixie**

The following letter, received in this city from Mr. Causten, of the President's Mounted Guard, has no locale mentioned, and otherwise appears to have been written under the supervision of his captors:

June 9, 1861

My Dear Father:

You will be much surprised, no doubt, to learn that I have been taken prisoner by the southern forces, and with no prospect for the present of joining you all gain in the old and happy family circle, in which I was wont to spend so many pleasant hours. I was taken on the first of this month, near Darnestown, in Montgomery county, Md. I have been treated very kindly by every one ever since I have been a prisoner, but as to what disposal may be made of me and my fellow prisoners will, I dare say, depend entirely upon the action of the Federal Government.

I do not suppose that it will be possible to negotiate an exchange of prisoners until after the United States Congress has taken such steps as it may think proper with regard to the Confederacy. If, however, such exchange can be made, nothing would be more gratifying to we poor fellows here in confinement. I am enabled to write this hasty scrawl through the kindness of Col. Strange, who has treated us all with the kindness and humanity of a Christian and a soldier. I enclose herewith a note

from my three fellow-prisoners, which they, as well as myself, would be much obliged should you deliver it.

With much love to all of the girls, I remain, dear father, your affectionate son,  
Manuel C. Causten

*The Evening Star, June 5, 1861*

Private M.C. Causten, Capt. Owen's Company, (President's Mounted Guard,) D.C. Volunteers, whose wife lives near Seneca, Maryland, twenty-two miles above Georgetown, went to visit her night before last, and was taken prisoner by secession troops, who crossed from the Virginia shore in a boat. Where he was taken to is unknown, but it is supposed he was carried to Manassas Junction, where the Confederates have a considerable force. His company are in a great rage, and suspect Causten is a victim to treachery. The Mounted Guard took an active part in the late advance on Virginia and the occupation of Alexandria by the Federal forces, having been selected by reason of their familiarity with the different localities on that side the river, and the Confederates have offered a reward of five hundred dollars for any member thereof taken dead or alive, it is said.

**Causten.** On Sunday, March 31, 1878, Manuel C. Causten, aged 35 years. Funeral from his late residence, No. 65 1st street, Georgetown, Tuesday, April 2 at 3 o'clock p.m. Friends of the family are respectfully invited to attend.

*The Evening Star, April 1, 1878*

#### **Death of Dr. M.C. Causten**

Dr. Manuel C. Causten, well-known throughout the District of Columbia, died yesterday afternoon at No. 65 1st street, in the 37th year of his age. The deceased was a son of the late James H. Causten, who for so many years was the agent here in the presentation of the French spoliation claims. The deceased married young. At the commencement of the late war he was a member of the President's Mounted Guard a cavalry company then under the command of the late Col. S.W. Owen and entered on the three months campaign. Going to see some of his relatives near the Great Falls, some one betrayed him and he was captured by a small band of confederates. He was taken to Richmond and held as a prisoner for over a year. On being exchanged, and when he recovered his health, he was commissioned by President Lincoln as a lieutenant in the regular infantry and was soon promoted to a captaincy, but in the second battle of Bull Run he was again captured and taken prisoner, and for over a year he was in Richmond as a prisoner of war, and was then sent to the Salisbury, N.C. prison for exchange. On again being exchanged, having spent in four years over two years as a prisoner, he resigned his commission. For several years he was one of the firm of Ritchie and Causten, druggists, here, but for some time past he has been a clerk in the Second Auditor's office. Mr. Causten was a man of fine education, being the master of several foreign languages. He was very popular among his acquaintances. He was a Past Master of George C. Whiting Lodge, No. 2, F.A.A.M.; a member of Potomac R.A. Chapter, No. 8; Potomac Commandery, No. 3, K.T., and also of Harmony Lodge, Knights of Pythias. He leaves a wife and three children. His funeral will take place tomorrow afternoon, and his remains will be interred at the Congressional cemetery.

*The Washington Post, April 2, 1878, p. 4*

Dr. Manuel C. Causten, whose death at his residence in Georgetown has been noted, was a gentleman well known for his scholarly attainments and genial disposition. He was a son of the late James H. Causten, and served as a Captain in the regular army for four years during the late war. At the time of his death he was a clerk in the second auditor's office. He leaves a wife and three children. He will be buried this afternoon in the Congressional burying ground.

*The Washington Post, April 3, 1878, p. 4*

#### **The Last of Earth**

The funeral of the late Dr. M.C. Causten took place yesterday from his residence in Georgetown. The Rev. J.J. Joyce, of St. John's church, read the Episcopal burial service. Dr. Loockerman read the Knight Templars' service at the house. The Masonic choir rendered the anthems "How dark the road we go," the "Lord's Prayer" and "Abide with Me," in a very impressive manner. Potomac commandery No. 3, K.T., Potomac chapter No. 8, George C. Whiting lodge No. 22, F.A.A.M., delegations of Hermione lodge No. 12, K. of P., and Knights of Honor were in attendance. The remains were encased in a handsome black cloth casket trimmed with silver designs of the fraternities of which he was an honored member. The lid was covered with crosses, wreaths, a broken column, and attested the love which surrounding friends had felt for him. The pallbearers were Messrs. R.T. Smith, J.H. Ball, S.C. Palmer, F.W. Storeb, H.C. Harmon, Dr. P.T. Keene, Dr. William Pettis and Charles Beck. The funeral cortege proceeded to the Congressional burying ground, where the Masonic funeral service was read by Mr. F. Turkenton, of George C. Whiting lodge. A large circle of friends were in attendance at the sad rites.

*The Evening Star, April 6, 1878*

#### **The Late Manuel C. Causten**

National Lodge, No. 642, Knights of Honor, of which this gentleman was a member, at its meeting on Thursday evening, adopted suitable resolutions in respect to his memory. Mr. Causten was a charter member of National Lodge which was instituted in Washington in May 1877. He had paid in a total of twenty dollars and his family receives the sum of two thousand dollars. The order of the Knights of Honor now numbers in the United States forty thousand members, and is paying to the families of deceased members an annual sum of nearly half a million dollars.

#### **Carlton Fletcher, Glover Park History Project**

James H. Causten was a lawyer who had a country house, Weston, on the road from Georgetown to Tenleytown; the drive was at Fulton Street NW and Wisconsin Avenue, the house stood near intersection of 36th and Massachusetts Avenue. At the outset of the Civil War, Causten's son Manuel — called Tom — enlisted in a regiment of the District of Columbia Militia, the President's Mounted Guards. Tom Causten had recently married Isadora Homiller. When Causten and his bride went to visit her sister at Seneca Mills, Causten's new brother-in-law, Benjamin Jackson Cross, guided a small Confederate party from across the river to his house, with the result that Private Causten became the first Union prisoner of the war (June 1, 1861).

Causten received his commission as a lieutenant in the 19th US Infantry while he was still in enemy hands, which permitted his exchange for a Confederate officer of equal rank, and in June of 1862 he came home. From July, 1862 to June, 1863, while convalescing, Lt. Causten served as a recruiter, after which he rejoined his regiment. In September, 1863 he was captured at Chickamauga. (His obituary says Second Bull Run, but this is probably an error.)

During this time the Union's Signal Camp of Instruction had been established on the heights overlooking Georgetown, across the road from his father's country house. Lieutenant Benjamin F. Fisher, a Pennsylvanian detailed to the Signal Corps, was one of those who came to consider Weston a home away from home. Fisher became engaged to Tom's sister Alice in April 1862, and went to the front. Fisher was captured in near Chancellorsville in 1863, and sent to Libby Prison in Richmond, where he was soon joined by Lt. Causten, his future brother-in-law.

When 109 prisoners tunneled out of Libby in 1864, Fisher and Causten escaped together. Causten couldn't continue, and gave himself up while Fisher was sleeping. Fisher evaded searchers for eleven days, and found his way to Union lines. He got a promotion and thirty days leave, and promptly married Alice.

Causten was sent to prison in Macon, Georgia, and Columbia, South Carolina. He returned to Washington from his third imprisonment in December, 1864, and resigned his commission in February, 1865, due to illness contracted while a prisoner of war.

After the war Causten held a post in the Treasury. Although he was only 37 when he died, his obituary (Evening Star, April 1, 1878) is silent regarding the cause of death.

Sources:

Papers of Benjamin Franklin Fisher,  
Carlisle Military History Institute

Official Records of the War of the Rebellion:

Ser. I, Vol. 30, pp. 314, 323

Ser. II, Vol. 2, p.172

Ser. II, Vol. 3, p.856