



Photos contributed

Camp Grant Base Hospital (Source: National Archives).

Colored Soldier Dies.
 Private Manning Hall, a well known colored man from Navassa, died at the base hospital at Camp Grant, Illinois, Thursday, July 11, according to advices received here yesterday.



The inscription on Manning Hall's headstone shows: MANNING HALL of Company 161 Depot Brigade. Born at Navassa, NC, Dec. 3, 1889. Died July 11, 1918. Erected by his wife Lillie Hall.

Notice of death published in the Wilmington Morning Star.

WWI Profile: Manning Hall 1887-1918

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 SPECIAL TO THE BEACON

Manning Hall was born and raised in Brunswick County. The 1900 Census shows him living with his family in Northwest. In 1910, he was living with his sister's family, Katherine Davis, next door to his parents and siblings. Many of them worked at the Navassa Guano Factory.

His 1917 Draft Registration shows he was single, living in Leland, and working at the Virginia Carolina Chemical Company in Navassa, the company which bought the Guano Factory. The area has been declared a Superfund Site due to the level of contamination from these and similar industries.

On Jan. 3, 1918, Manning married Lillie Myers. Manning was ordered to report to duty on April 26, 1918. He was sent to Camp Grant in Illinois for training. He was placed in the 161 Depot Brigade, one of the many training and receiving formations for new draftees.

Less than three months later, on July 11, 1918, Manning died of tuberculosis peritonitis.

One might wonder why a man with tuberculosis would be admitted into the Army. Another Brunswick County WWI veteran, Cecil Smith Pierce, also died of tuberculosis while serving in WWI. His profile will be posted soon.

When the U.S. entered the Great War and began amassing a large army, medical screening boards across the country discovered that American men were not as strong and healthy as they had assumed. Thirty percent were found to be physically unfit, with many of them having tuberculosis.

The Army Medical Department's investigations into tuberculosis were based on four incorrect assumptions: 1) A "little tuberculosis" was a good thing as it provided some immunity; 2) tuberculosis wasn't very contagious; 3) military life would not increase the incidence of tuberculosis but actually help those infected because of the healthy lifestyle the men would follow; and 4) false positives were more harmful to the Army than admitting infected men.

The challenge was not to exclude so many men as to impair the nation's ability to amass an army. If we should say that all signs of tuberculosis should lead to rejection, we would have no army at all [Source: Good Tuberculosis Men, listed below].

Manning likely spent much of his time in the hospital at Camp Grant. The camp general instructed everyone at

Camp Grant to treat all soldiers alike irrespective of color. The hospital was not segregated, nor was the dining hall or exchange. No instances of racial friction were reported as having occurred between patients in the hospital.

In the spring of 1918, general instructions were received from the Surgeon General to classify the patients in hospitals in accordance with their race and to place them in separate wards. The orders were not obeyed at Camp Grant [Source: Military Hospitals in the US, Base Hospital, Camp Grant, Ill.].

Six patients died in July, 1918 at the base hospital, the month of Pvt. Hall's death. The largest number of deaths in one month (1,024) was in October 1918, during the influenza pandemic.

A notice of his death was published in The Wilmington Morning Star, July 13, 1918, p.6.

Manning Hall's remains were returned from Camp Grant and he was laid to rest in Mt. Calvary Cemetery in Navassa (Leland address). Some Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range members visited the cemetery recently to find Manning Hall's headstone, in hopes that he was laid to rest with other members of his family. The headstone was located (pictured above) and they paid their respects. His wife Lillie remarried but at age 25, died of what was likely a tuberculosis-related illness. According to her death certificate, she was laid to rest in the same cemetery. No headstone was found.

Manning Hall's name is engraved on the WWI monument located beside the rifle range memorial in Caswell Beach, N.C.

Sources:
 Byerly, Carol R. (2013) "Good Tuberculosis Men: The Army Medical Department's Struggle with Tuberculosis." Fort Sam Huston, TX: Office of The Surgeon General Borden Institute.

If you would like to help us honor Manning Hall or another Brunswick County WWI veteran, go to www.caswellriflerange.com or email ftcaswellriflerange@gmail.com for more information.

Another Roll Calling event will be held Saturday, April 6, at the rifle range starting at 11 a.m. A future event will be held Saturday, May 4, at the Caswell Beach Public Facility Building from 4:30 to 9 p.m. to raise funds to publish a book of the Brunswick County men and women that served in WWI and to continue restoration on the rifle

range memorial. It will be a dinner, derby and dance with music by Trilog. Call 278-7584 for information.