

# CAPT. ADONIRAM JUDSON WHITLOCK (1828-1902)

Sandra LaRoche-Brannin Natowich recently sent me a letter enclosing a clipping regarding the efforts to replace the lost gravestone of her ancestor Captain Adoniram Judson Whitlock a veteran of the American Civil War. She also kindly thanked the Whitlock Family Association for our assistance three years ago in getting her on the right track to learn more about her ancestor, A.J. Whitlock.

The article in *Florida Today* by Rebecca Basu says: “MERRITT ISLAND - While researching her family history, Sandee Natowich found her ancestor’s resting spot at a church cemetery had been vandalized.

She felt as if something was torn from her, and not just the plundered gravestone.

“This was an act of vandalism and opportunity,” said Natowich, a lifelong Merritt Islander. “It struck me that it happened and nobody noticed, and that I had not noticed. No one’s grave should go unmarked. I just felt like it needed to be addressed.”

Natowich began figuring out how she could get a headstone for A.J. Whitlock, her great-great-grandfather and the patriarch of one of the Brevard County’s founding families, without spending thousands of dollars.

It turned out that Whitlock, a Confederate captain during the Civil War, qualified for a free headstone through the Department of Veterans Affairs, which provides free markers for war veterans anywhere in the world.

On Saturday, Natowich and more than 75 relatives came together in their first family reunion at St.Luke’s Episcopal Church. The reunion centered on honoring Whitlock, who settled in Brevard County after the Civil War.

The ceremony drew not only Whitlock’s family but also leaders from the state and district chapters of the United Daughters of the Confederacy as well as members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

Several people in attendance dressed in period costumes for the event. Women wore elegant Civil War-era dresses, while men dressed in Confederate uniforms. The Ceremony was marked with readings, poems and songs.

Judson Whitlock LaRoche, the great-grandson of Whitlock and Natowich’s cousin, came from his home near Macon, Ga., for the honors. He said he was pleased to see Whitlock’s headstone replaced.

“It’s inspiring, really.” LaRoche said.

Natowich proved Whitlock’s veteran status by getting his Confederate pension record from state archives.

She said she was “totally surprised” to find the authentic granite headstone bearing the Southern Cross of Honor, the kind provided for Confederates, arrived within weeks of her application.

Many of Brevard County’s founders, like Whitlock, were ex Confederate soldiers who started arriving

here in 1867, shortly after the Civil War ended, according to local historian Bob Gross.

Whitlock was a postmaster, election poll supervisor, judge and citrus grower. He was community-minded, Natowich said. He died in 1902.

It is unlikely Whitlock's gravestone was targeted because of his Confederate service. Gross and others said they weren't aware of Confederate graves ever being the target of vandalism.

"I believe it was random because there were several other headstones pushed over or broken off," Natowich said. "His original headstone didn't mention he was a Confederate soldier. As far as Confederate-bashing is concerned, you hear people still talking about it, and I guess some people are still fighting the war in their minds. This community is not that way."

Roz Foster, a board member of Brevard County Historical Commission, said unmarked graves of veterans and other citizens continue to be found in graveyards to this day, many of whom were buried about the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Foster took part in a 10-year project to identify more than 100 veteran graves at Historic La-Grange Cemetery in Titusville.

To get a military marker can be a lengthy process, she said.

Saturday's ceremony was conducted with full military honors, including a 21-gun salute. It was the first re-marking ceremony to take place at the church graveyard.

"It really comes down to this: What was almost lost, was found. But every descendent here has a piece of him in them," Natowich said."

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Captain Adoniram Judson Whitlock's obituary in *The Florida Star* November 14, 1902 says he was born in Augusta, Georgia in October 1828 and served throughout the Civil War as a Confederate Soldier, receiving pension in recognition of the wounds he suffered in battle. He and died in Brevard Co., Florida November 6, 1902 and was the son of Isaac W. Whitlock of New York and his wife Eliza Morris. This family is detailed at the end of the WHITLOCK16 chart as likely connected to one of the New York Whitlock families. We have not yet determine who Isaac W. Whitlock's parents were.

(Adoniram Judson Whitlock was likely named after the American Baptist missionary Adoniram Judson (1788-1850) who spent 40 years working in Burma. He translated the Bible into Burmese and established several churches in that country.)

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