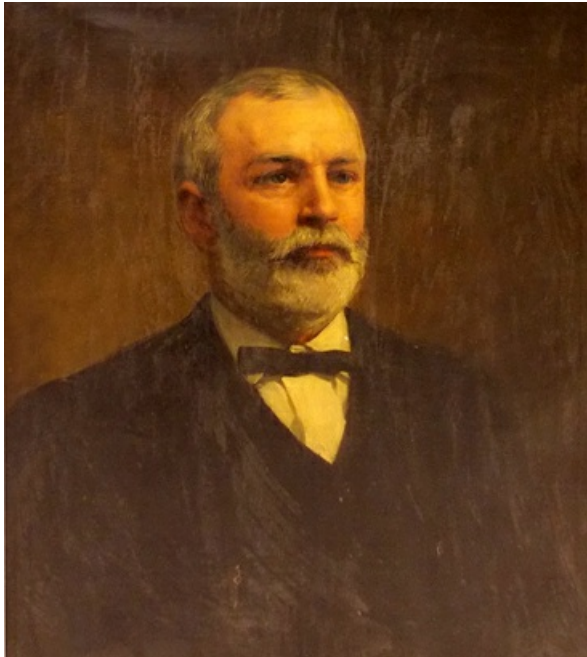


Wheeler, Junius Brutus ^[1]

Wheeler, Junius Brutus

by T. C. Parramore, 1996

21 Feb. 1830–15 July 1886



Portrait of Colonel Junius Brutus Wheeler, 1902, oil on canvas, 30 x 25 inches. By James Carroll Beckwith (1852 - 1917). Image from the West Point Museum Collection, United States Military Academy. Used by permission.

Junius Brutus Wheeler, army officer, textbook author, and professor, was the son of John and Sarah Clifton Wheeler. He was a native of Murfreesboro, where his father was for many years a prosperous merchant and shipowner. After enlisting as a private in the Twelfth Infantry Regiment in May 1847, Wheeler served gallantly in the [Mexican War](#) ^[2] and "was appointed Lieut. by the [President](#) ^[3] for bravery in the field" during the same year. Discharged from the service in 1848, he gained appointment to the military academy at [West Point](#) ^[4] in July 1851 determined, as he told his family, to graduate "with distinction" or "leave his brains there." The former he accomplished in 1855 and was breveted second lieutenant of cavalry that July. An outstanding engineer, he was transferred to the Topographical Engineers in 1856 and promoted to first lieutenant in 1860.

The [secession crisis](#) ^[5] of 1861 tore apart the Wheeler family, leaving Junius's half brother Samuel a major in the Confederate army and his half brother [John Hill Wheeler](#) ^[6] a Disunionist. In a letter to his cousin John W. Moore in North Carolina in February 1861, Lieutenant Wheeler regretted the election of [Abraham Lincoln](#) ^[7] as a minority president but held firm in the belief that the outcome was legitimate and concluded with the declaration: "I am a Union man." He served throughout the [Civil War](#) ^[8] with the [Corps of Engineers](#) ^[9], where he was promoted to captain in 1863 and breveted major in April 1864 for gallant and meritorious service at the Battle of Jenkins's Ferry in Arkansas. He was breveted lieutenant colonel and colonel in March 1865 and promoted to major in 1866. In September 1871 Wheeler was appointed professor of civil and military engineering at West Point. Over the next thirteen years he published a series of textbooks on military topics, including *An Elementary Course of Civil Engineering* ^[10] (1874), *Elements of Field Fortifications* ^[11] (1880), *A Course of Instruction in the Elements of the Art and Science of War* ^[12] (1878), and *A Textbook of Military Engineering* ^[13] (1884). He was retired with the pay of colonel in 1884 and died two years later.

In Washington, D.C., in September 1855 Wheeler married Emily Truxton Beale. They had eight children: Emily Beale, Sarah Clifton, Mary Eliza, Gertrude, Julia, Amy, John, and William Mackall.

References:

William H. Powell, comp., *List of Officers of the Army of the United States from 1779 to 1900* (1900). ^[14]

Albert G. Wheeler, Jr., *History of the Wheeler Family in America* (1914). ^[15]

Wheeler family manuscripts (copy in possession of T. C. Parramore).

Additional Resources:

Wheeler, J. B. (Junius Brutus). *An elementary course of civil engineering for the use of cadets of the United States military academy*. New York, J. Wiley & sons. 1877. <https://archive.org/details/anelementarycou02wheegoog> [10] (accessed March 19, 2014).

Wheeler, J. B. (Junius Brutus). *The elements of field fortifications, for the use of the cadets of the United States Military Academy, at West Point, N. Y.* New York, D. Van Nostrand. 1882. <https://archive.org/details/elementsoffield00wheerich> [11] (accessed March 19, 2014).

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[Junius Brutus Wheeler]. Portrait. Photographs of West Point - William H. Stockbridge, United States Military Academy Library Digital Collections. <http://digital-library.usma.edu/cdm/ref/collection/stockbridge/id/571> [16] (accessed March 19, 2014).

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