

TUCKER, John S. 1st Lieutenant, Artillery

The National Archives files for Officers contain two hundred thirty-five documents for John S. Tucker, the vast majority of which are invoices and vouchers for receipt of materials. The Treasury note endorsement consists only of a signature, "J. S. Tucker," with no issue date, rank, or title. The endorsement is an excellent match to National Archives documents for the artillery officer of that name at the Richmond Arsenal.

The Quartermaster's Department issued a train ticket to Tucker on December 9th, 1861 for travel on the railroad from Richmond to Bristol, Tennessee.

On April 18th, 1863, Tucker, of Missouri, was assigned as Inspector of the Laboratory Department at the Richmond Arsenal.

John S. Tucker was appointed 1st Lieutenant of Artillery for ordnance duty on October 6th, 1863, taking rank retroactively on May 2nd, 1863.

A letter written in Tucker's own hand on December 16th, 1863 to Capt. J. Wilcox Brown, the Asst. Inspector of Ordnance shows an example of what his job entailed:

"I desire to call your attention to the fact, that there are, as yet, no standard regulations that I have been able to find in reference to the Dimensions, Weights &c of Rifle Projectiles, and as a consequence I am laboring under great disadvantage in the inspection of Projectiles received here, being unable to furnish the contractors with duly authorized Tables by which they may be required to work.

"As the subject is one of great importance, and are too, in some points of which Ord Officers differ greatly among themselves, I think there should be some standards fixed by Authority, by which Contractors and Inspectors may be governed. If possible I should like to be furnished with Tables of Dimensions, Weights &c of all Projectiles not included in the Ordnance Manual."

It is interesting to note that sophisticated statistical quality methods were not adopted in U.S. manufacturing until the 1980s, decades after W. Edwards Deming had formulated the those principles and Japanese manufacturers had taken them to heart (and had taken U.S. market share). It is not at all surprising that Tucker would have dealt with lax quality standards in 1863; his initiative on this subject, however, is noteworthy.

Tucker's appeals for measurement standards appear several times in his file. Although he does not request dimensions with a range based on something like a standard deviation (the current metric for variation and quality), he does seem to understand the need for such a metric when he asked the Colonel commanding the arsenal for "the required dimensions of the Enfield ball for Calibres .57 & .58, .54 & .52, diameter and weight." The dimensions of the balls are listed in their descriptions, but he was really asking, "How far could they deviate from those norms?" This was a sophisticated question.

A. H. Conrow (sp?) wrote a letter on January 5th, 1864 to Secretary of War Seddon, requesting the promotion of Tucker to Captain, citing Tucker as "a young officer of fine capacity and habits." Tucker bought a revolver "for his own use" on January 28th for the sum of \$50.00; it is fanciful to imagine that the Treasury note was used in payment and endorsed in exchange. A comment of February

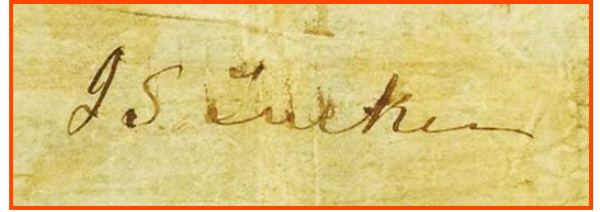
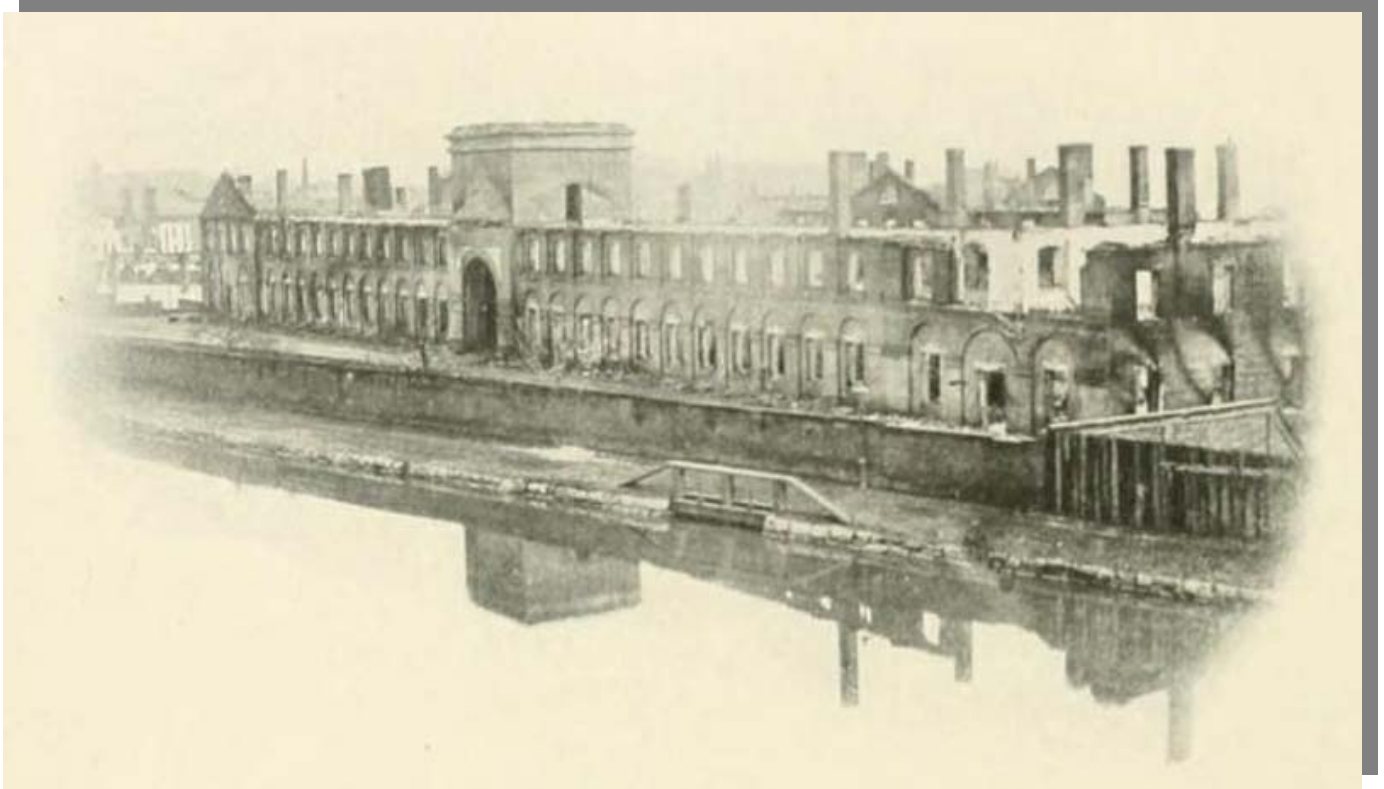


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images: Aidala

6th on the cover of another such letter stated that Tucker had “lost an arm in the service.” Tucker was appointed Captain on February 23rd, 1864, and took rank four days earlier on February 19th.

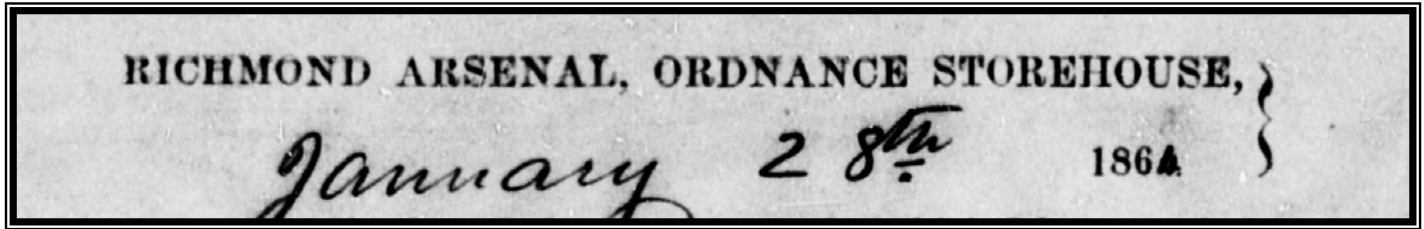
No documents describe what happened to Tucker after the fall of Richmond in April 1865. There are no documents of his capture or parole. There are a few documents for a man of the same name, a “rebel citizen” and school teacher from Pocahontas County, Virginia, who was captured and released on oath in late 1863, a time frame for which we have documents locating the artillery officer in Richmond. The documents for the citizen are found in the Officer’s files and Miscellaneous files and should not be confused with the files for the military officer.

McNeil

The Richmond Arsenal after it was burned during the evacuation of Richmond, April 2nd, 1865.

Image: By Unknown - The Photographic History of The Civil War in Ten Volumes: Volume Five, Forts and Artillery. The Review of Reviews Co., New York. 1911. p. 307., Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=9750157>



J. S. Tucker's
signatures from the
National Archives.

Signed on
December 16th,
1863, at Richmond
Arsenal, as "Lt. &
Insp. of
Lab(ora)t(ory)."

A photograph of a handwritten signature on lined paper. The signature reads "J. S. Tucker" on the first line and "Lt. & Insp. of Lab(ory)." on the second line.

Signed on June
11th, 1864, at
Richmond Arsenal,
as "Capt Arty, in
ch(ar)g(e) Arty
Store, Rich. Ars."

A photograph of a handwritten signature on lined paper. The signature reads "J. S. Tucker" on the first line, "Capt Arty" on the second line, and "in ch(arge) Arty Store Rich. Ars." on the third line.

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