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# Marshfield, July 1898: Marshfield mourns a soldier



Corporal Herman Bartels lies buried in Marshfield's Hillside Cemetery. The engravings on the headstone have been weathered and are difficult to read. (Eric LeJeune photo)

July 26, 2015

Corporal Herman Bartels is laid to rest

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#### Featured Columnist

George Upham pulled his carriage up to Marshfield's Wisconsin Central Station. His face bore the weight of the solemn occasion that lay before him. The shipment was to arrive following a three-day journey from Charleston, S.C., on a Saturday morning in July.

As the cargo was loaded onto his carriage, Upham thought of Cpl. Herman Bartels' visit just a few short months ago. It was 1898, and the Spanish-American War was nearly at an end, but Bartels was still needed by Company A.

The funeral director looked at the box that held Bartels' remains, and he thought of the young and noble man — just 23 years old — that had returned to his duty in the hopes that he would be back in his hometown soon. Deep sadness lay in the fact that his death had not occurred by the valiance of war but from a bout of typhoid fever.

While no church was sure to hold the mass of mourners that would come to see the young man, Upham had arranged for the funeral to be held at the large Adler Opera House. Area women worked tirelessly to decorate the venue, filling the stage with potted plants and freshly cut flowers.

The following Sunday morning it seemed that the whole city had turned out to pay respects to the young man who had given his life. The procession was led from the family residence to the Opera House as the Badger State Band played.

Once inside a local reverend spoke words of comfort to the packed Opera House as a mixed choir sang softly the words, "Rock of ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee; Let the water and the blood, from Thy wounded side which flowed."

The lid was then lifted from the coffin, and a long line of mourners thanked the young man for the life he had given for freedom. Mourners stepping outside were greeted by the euphonious array of bells that rang out from every church in the city.

As drum beats marked the steps of horses and mourners, the city made its way to the cemetery where Bartels' resting place lay prepared. As locals grieved the loss of the corporal, a bugle sounded nearby, signaling the end of the day the young man was laid to rest.

Bartels' resting place sits high on a hill overlooking the city and may be found in Hillside Cemetery.

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