



BLUE AND GRAY DISPATCH

Honoring Hans Christian Heg

Norman Dasinger, Jr., December 7, 2020
blueandgrayeducation.org

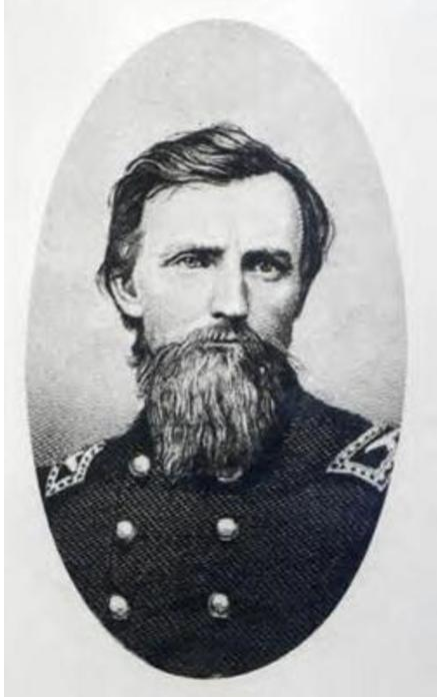


Col. Hans Heg at Chickamauga, by Herbjørn Gausta (1854-1924) in 1915 | public domain

“Of bronze, heroic size, [and] represents the warrior standing with bared head, looking gravely into the distance,” wrote the *Wisconsin Magazine* in December 1926. The publication was describing the Hans Heg monument that was dedicated on the Wisconsin State House grounds on October 17, 1926.

Col, Hans Heg was the highest ranking Scandinavian immigrant killed in the Civil War. He was mortally wounded at the battle of Chickamauga, Georgia, on September 19, 1863 leading a Federal infantry brigade.

In 1926, Paul Fjelde completed three cast bronze statues of Heg. One stands in Leir, Norway, Heg's hometown. One was placed in Racine County, Wisconsin, near the Heg family home and where he recruited the 15th Wisconsin Infantry, and the third at the Wisconsin State Capitol in Madison.



Col. Hans Heg | public domain

In February 1920, Norwegian-Americans began a drive to raise \$25,000 for a statue honoring Heg. Originally planned for a cemetery in Racine, permission was instead granted for it to be placed at the state capitol. Sculptor Fjelde was a Minneapolis native, but his father had been a sculptor in Norway. His father's brother, Dr. Herman O. Fjelde, was the chairman of the committee for the Lincoln monument that stands in Oslo, Norway. Paul was an instructor of sculpture at the National Academy Museum and School of Fine Arts. His works also include the bronze portrait of Orville Wright in the Hall of Fame for Great Americans, on the grounds of Bronx Community College in the Bronx, New York City.

On the day of dedication, over one thousand spectators listened as Mayor Albert Schmedeman spoke, along with Norwegian Consul General Olaf Bernts. It is interesting to note that Schmedeman had once been the U.S. minister to Norway and accepted the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of President Woodrow Wilson in 1919. Also included in the ceremony was Heg's daughter. She assisted in the unveiling, along with four

veterans of the 15th Wisconsin Infantry and a few members of the Norwegian cabinet and national legislature.

On June 23, 2020, a group of protesters used a towing vehicle to pull the statue down. It was beheaded and thrown into Lake Monona.



Col. Hans Heg monument at Wisconsin State Capitol in 2009 | public domain



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