

Tillinghast, John Huske ^[1]

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by William S. Powell, 1996

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John Huske Tillinghast, clergyman and Confederate chaplain, was born in Hillsborough, the son of Samuel Willard and Jane Burgin Norwood Tillinghast. His father was a native of Uxbridge, Mass., and his mother was born in Hillsborough. Young Tillinghast attended the [Bingham School](#) ^[2] at The Oaks before studying at [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[3] from 1853 to 1854. Between 1855 and 1857 he was at Hampden-Sydney College, in Virginia, from which he received a bachelor's degree. For brief periods he taught in Professor [Ralph H. Graves](#) ^[4]'s school at Belmont in [Granville County](#) ^[5] and as a private tutor in Spartanburg, S.C. He studied for two years at the Episcopal Theological Seminary, Alexandria, Va., but with the invasion of that state by the Federal army during the [Civil War](#) ^[6] he left and was ordained deacon in [Wilmington](#) ^[7] by Bishop [Thomas Atkinson](#) ^[8] of North Carolina in July 1861, a few days after the first Battle of Manassas. From August 1861 to May 1862 he was in charge of St. Thomas Church, Rutherfordton. His commission as chaplain with the Forty-fourth Regiment, North Carolina Troops, was dated 28 Mar. 1862, the day the regiment was activated; he resigned on 27 Oct. 1863.

Tillinghast received military training at Camp Mangum near Raleigh after which the regiment went to Tarboro and then to Greenville. It saw its first action at Tranter's Creek and was sent to Petersburg, Va., on 5 July 1862. From there it served in southeastern Virginia and eastern North Carolina. In March 1863 Tillinghast participated in the unsuccessful campaign to recapture [New Bern](#) ^[9] and Washington. In the spring the regiment returned to Virginia for service in the vicinity of Richmond and suffered significant losses at Bristoe Station in October.

After leaving the army Tillinghast became assistant rector at Trinity Church, Mobile, Ala., but he returned to North Carolina in 1865 and served churches in Clinton and Salisbury. In 1872–82 he was at two churches in Richland County, S.C., before becoming rector of St. John's Church, Charleston. Later he returned to several churches in Richland County before retiring to Eastover in the diocese of Upper South Carolina where he died.

Tillinghast married Sarah Wilkins; their children were Mildred Lewis, John Wilkins, William Norwood, Jane Norwood, Mary Anderson, and Robina Bingham. At the time of his death at age ninety-seven, the Reverend Mr. Tillinghast was the oldest alumnus of The University of North Carolina, the oldest ex-chaplain of the Confederate army, and the oldest priest in the [Episcopal church](#) ^[10].

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