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Upcoming Civil War Events

Dec. 5th, Lake County CWRT: Christmas Party
Dec. 5th, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Phil Angelo on “Stealing the General”
Dec. 7th, Northern Illinois CWRT: Father Bob Miller on “Lincoln’s Faith”
Dec. 8th, Kenoshia Civil War Museum: “Victorian Christmas”
Dec. 9th, McHenry County CWRT: “Civil War Trivia Contest and Holiday Party”
Dec. 14th, Kenoshia Civil War Museum: Michael Kutter presents “Investigating the Battlefields”
Dec. 18th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Robert May on “Filibusters and Gen. John Quitman”
Dec. 20th, South Suburban CWRT: Holiday Party
Dec. 21st, Salt Creek CWRT: No meeting

2013 Tour – Antietam, May 1-5

Future Meetings

Regular meetings are held at the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, 350 North Orleans Street, the second Friday of each month, unless otherwise indicated. Jan. 11, 2013: David Powell, “Confederate Cavalry at Chickamauga”
Feb. 8: Mary Abro, “Charles Grovenor, Colonel 18th Ohio”
March 8: Leslie Gouldard, “Mary Chesnut”
April 12: John Fitzpatrick, “Theatre at Gettysburg”
May 10: Ethan Rafuse, “Lee and Gettysburg”
June 14: Timothy B. Smith, “Corinth”

Have a Happy and Safe Holiday Season!!!

Dr. Douglas Wilson
Founder
December 14
716th REGULAR MEETING
Dale Phillips
on “The Red River Campaign”
Friday, December 14
HOLIDAY INN MART PLAZA
350 NORTH ORLEANS STREET
Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.
Dinner at 6:10 p.m.
$47 - Members/Non-members

Call by Wednesday
Dec. 12

In the early spring of 1864, the new overall commander of the Federal forces, General U.S. Grant, was determined to bring the full weight of all his available resources against the Confederates. General George Meade’s Army of the Potomac was to advance on Richmond supported by other Union thrusts up the Shenandoah Valley and James River. General William Sherman’s forces were to advance from Chattanooga toward Atlanta. This left only the Army of the Gulf under General Nathaniel Banks without a clear objective. Most thought it would be the Confederate port of Mobile but instead the army was ordered to advance up the Red River with Shreveport, Louisiana being its primary target. The objectives of the campaign were many. The primary reason was the seizure of masses of cotton needed by northern mills. Another objective was the destruction of the Confederate forces and military support facilities in the upper Red River region. There was the political objective of trying to return as much of Louisiana to the Union fold before the 1864 election.

Dale Phillips’ Dec. 14th presentation will look at the successes and failures of the Red River Campaign. The area’s geography played a key role in the campaign and the route Union forces took, as they advanced from the mouth of the Red River to within 12 miles of Shreveport. The presentation will look at and discuss the mistakes and the results of this very unique campaign.
Previously Unknown John Bell Hood Papers Are Found

By Gregory L. Wade

FRANKLIN, Tenn. — Confederate General John Bell Hood was no stranger to controversy. During his colorful military career, and for historians ever since, he is a controversial and tragic figure. Faulted for the July 1864 loss at Atlanta, a lost opportunity for possible victory at Spring Hill, Tenn., and reckless behavior the following day at the Battle of Franklin, Hood often has been the subject of ridicule and blame for the demise of the Confederacy in the West. Those assessments could change thanks to the recent discovery of a major collection of Hood documents. They include Stonewall Jackson and James Longstreet’s recommendations for Hood’s promotion and war time and postwar correspondence with R.E. Lee, Braxton Bragg, L.T. Wigfall, S.D. Lee, A.P. Stewart, William Bare, P.G.T. Beauregard, Henry Clayton, James Longstreet, G.W. Smith and other senior commanders, as well as William T. Sherman, Jefferson Davis, James Smith and other prominent Civil War characters.

Sam Hood, a student of the Hood’s career and distant relative, says, “The last goes on and on.”

The Hood family’s four general officer commissions and roughly 70 postwar letters from other Civil War notables, Union and Confederate, mostly concerning the controversy with Joseph Johnston, and the work papers from Hood’s memoir, Advance & Retreat.

“At this point I’ve not seen anything in General Hood’s memoir that is not supported by this newly found documentation,” Sam Hood says.

“I have been fighting to right some of the irksome, vicious and vicious myths of General Hood for years,” he says. “The new documents will surely change some of those views.”

While conducting research for an upcoming book, Sam Hood assumed most documents about Hood had been lost or were previously known. Then he learned about hundreds of documents, letters and orders held by a J.B. Hood relative who was not fully cognizant of their historical value. He was invited to review the collection.

“I felt like the guy who found the Titanic, except for the fact everyone knew the Titanic was out there somewhere, while I had no clue that some of the stuff I found even existed,” he says. Instead, he was “astonished” by what he was shown in boxes stored in a closet. He spent five days photocopying and inventorying.

“I held in my hands documents signed by Jefferson Davis, Longstreet, Johnston, James and Lee.” There was a letter from Federal commander George Thomas to Hood about prisoner exchanges during the December 1864 siege of Nashville. The West Point diploma and U.S. Army officers’ certificates of both Hood and his son Duncan were there.

Letters between General Hood and Richmond bring new light to the Atlanta campaign. Other letters reveal new “witnesses” to the Confederate failure at Spring Hill and an explanation of Patrick Cleburne’s “peculiar demeansor” before and during the Battle of Franklin.

Equally fascinating are the medical journals of Dr. John Darby regarding General Hood’s treatment and recovery from his Chickamauga and Gettysburg wounds.

Before he found the cache Sam Hood had completed most of the manuscript for his point-by-point defense of Hood’s career, John Bell Hood: The Rise, Fall and Resurrection of a Confederate General, set for release next spring by Savas Beatie Publishing.

A dominant theme of the book is that known evidence has been misinterpreted or blatantly misused by many contemporary authors. Hood cites authors Wiley Sword, Thomas Connolly and Stanley Horn, among others, who he believes established and perpetuated Hood as a scapegoat for the Confederacy’s defeat in the West.

Among the changes that are General Hood’s alleged use of pain-killers at Spring Hill on the night that Federals escaped almost certain defeat, and assertions that Hood ordered the frontal attack at Franklin as punishment for his troops.

Sam Hood says the “distortion” of General Hood over the years has been based on inaccurate or incomplete works by earlier writers “who are hesitant to counter prevailing orthodoxies.”

With this new wealth of documentation, he is ready to further his argument that General Hood was a victim of poor scholarship.

Sam Hood is transcribing the papers he hopes to publish an edited volume of them by late next year — in time for the 150th anniversary of Hood’s ascension to command of the Army of Tennessee, the defense of Atlanta, and the Tennessee Campaign — at which time a copy of the collection will be released to a yet-to-be-determined public repository.

From November Civil War News

The 715th meeting of The Civil War Round Table of Chicago featured Tom Clemens on “Antietam As You’ve Never Heard It,” stories from the archives of Ezra Carman. Carman left a massive legacy: architect of the current battlefield layout, author of the tablets which adorn the park, and a 14-color time sequence map of the battle. He also created a 1,800 page manuscript of the campaign, using the Official Records, the “Battles and Leaders” series, and regimental histories. But there remain over 2,000 letters from veterans, a rich and relatively unexplored source on the campaign.

Before Carman became the ‘Historical Expert’ of the 1862 Antietam Campaign, the Battlefield Board took out advertisements soliciting veterans’ memoirs. Respondents such as Rufus Dawes accurately described movements of their units, others did not.

Carman complained to friend John Goodl that “My experience shows that out of one hundred letters written I get replies to about fifty, and not more than five or six are of any value. It takes more trouble to eliminate myth than to get solid fact.”

Clemens, a veteran with the 13th Mississippi, traced the death of comrades and his own condition in the Eastern Woods, noting “unfortunately for his reputation, he never touched a head of rice. He was already being destroyed, deprived of sleep and in pain due to injuries, Lee thought of his aide.

We thank Tom Clemens for bringing Ezra Carman and his work to life, and for his “gems” which enrich our understanding of the Antietam Campaign and those who fought it.

November Meeting

By Mark Matranga

3rd North Carolina, derided brave General Ripley as “a coward or a traitor,” wounded, "unfortunately for his reputation, not fatally." At the end of the battlefield, Adjutant Alexander Cheves Haskell and Gen. Maxcy Gregg mounted horses contrary to orders, and saw the general’s horse killed. Capt. David McIntosh of the Pee Dee Artillery described the movement of his guns, their capture, and eventual recovery. One of his men, Pvt. Napier, wrote McIntosh with more details, offering for his apparent better memory: “...I was but a boy. My mind I guess was flexible and retained these things better. Or perhaps I was worse scared than you and they were firmly fixed by fright.”

The most interesting and poignant tale Clemens relates involves Lee himself, as told by Charles Marshall. When he arrived at the Antietam, a local woman offered Lee coffee. Marshall was asleep, but Lee gave directions “to keep some of it for me when I awake” before crossing the creek into town. Amidst the chaos of a collapsing command, his army in danger of being destroyed, deprived of sleep and in pain due to injuries, Lee thought of his aide.

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Carmen, a veteran with the 13th New Jersey, was interested in where a unit fought and against whom. His manuscript reflects this ap- proach. But Clemens concentrated on the trove of veterans’ letters. One, from Elijah White, 35th Vir- ginia Cavalry, details the fighting of the Potomac and a night ride with Gen. Jackson, who remained entirely silent throughout. Col. Sam Pittman, who received ’Lost Order’ 191, was keen on who de- livered the order and the time of receipt. He took exception to ac- counts of Lt. Col. Colgrove whose troops found the order, and Gen. Kimball, who claimed to have de- livered it to Gen. McClellan. Pit- man opined that “a strange mist must have clouded Kimball’s mem- ory” on the subject.

Another interesting story came from Gen. Alpheus Williams who expressed skepticism that Gen. Samuel Crawford was wounded rallying his regiment. Carman suggested Crawford remained in the rear, “safely ensconced behind a ledge of rocks, where nothing could touch him.”

William Henry Halstead, 26th New York, related conditions in the East Woods, where “some of the senior staff became demoralized” by shell. In fact, Gen. William Christian had deserted his brigade. Carman, “soft pedals” Christmas’s apparent cowardice, said Clemens, probably because he was sympathetic to the fighting man.

Louis Reed, 12th Massachusetts, detailed the fighting in the eastern portion of the Cornfield, noting the death of comrades and his own wounding, as well as geographical features – the Roulette buildings and the Dunker Church. James Dinkins, 18th Mississippi, traced his unit’s route to the battlefield and its placement in the West Woods. Col. William DeRosset, 3rd North Carolina, derided bri- gade commander Gen. Ripley as “a coward or a traitor,” wounded, “unfortunately for his reputation, not fatally.”

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81st Annual Holiday Party

Friday, December 14 at 5:30 p.m.

Holiday Inn Mart Plaza
350 North Orleans Street

Call by Wednesday, Dec. 12

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Additional announcements:

- holiday inn mart plaza: michael kutzer presents “investigating the battlefields”
- december 7th, northern illinois cwrt: leslie gould, “mary chesnut”
- december 8th, kankakee valley cwrt: bjorn skaptesen of the abraham lincoln book store
- december 5th, lake county cwrt: david powell, “confederate cavalry at chickamauga”
- december 8th, kankakee valley cwrt: amy greenberg, “a wicked war”
- december 10th, madison county cwrt: ethan reese, “the red river campaign”
- december 15th, lake county cwrt: timothy b. smith, “there is no fail here”
- december 15th, northern illinois cwrt: erhan rafuse, “lee and gettysburg”
- december 14th, kenosha civil war museum: michael kutzer presents “investigating the battlefields”
- december 18th, lincoln-davis cwrt: robert may on “fields of the antietam and gen. john quitman”
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Have a Happy and Safe Holiday Season!!!
1st: Lincoln addressed the 37th Congress in the capital and once again announced his intention of abolishing slavery within the United States.

7th: A battle fought at Prairie Grove, Arkansas, left 167 Union soldiers dead, 798 wounded and 183 missing. The Confederates lost 300 killed, 800 wounded and 250 missing. The Confederate army retreats after the battle.

7th: Confederate Gen. John Hunt Morgan and his raiders capture the Union army garrison at Hartsville, Tennessee.

10th: The U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill to create the state of West Virginia.

13th: Union army General Ambrose Burnside started his attack against Fredericksburg. However, the delay in doing so allowed Lee’s men time to dig themselves into well-fortified positions both in the town and in the hills that surrounded it. All attacks were repulsed. An attack on Confederate troops dug in on Marye’s Heights led to many Unionist deaths.

14th: Burnside wanted to repeat the assault on Fredericksburg but was persuaded otherwise by his commanders in the field. The Army of the Potomac later withdraws across the Rappahannock River.

14th: Union victory at the Battle of Kinston, North Carolina.

17th: General Grant’s reputation was tainted when he issued General Order Number 11, which expelled Jews from his department because “they are a class violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department.”

20th: A Confederate cavalry force under Gen. Earl Van Dorn attacked a major Union supply base at Holly Springs, Mississippi. Over $1 million in supplies was seized along with 1000 prisoners. Such a loss of supplies meant that Grant had to postpone his attack on Vicksburg.

23rd: Jefferson Davis names General Ben Butler, formerly in charge of New Orleans, an outlaw and an enemy of Mankind. Davis stated that Butler would be hanged if the Confederates captured him.


31st: Lincoln met Burnside to discuss what went wrong at Fredericksburg. The ironclad ‘Monitor’ sank in a storm.

31st: Battle of Stones River (Murfreesboro) in Tennessee starts.

31st: Battle of Parkers Crossroads in Tennessee

(over)
Christmas During the Civil War
How it was depicted at the time; taken from Harpers Weekly.
Illustrations by Winslow Homer and Thomas Nast.