

## **January 26, 2006.**

Show and tell.

An After-Action Report by Ron Vaughn.

Sixteen persons were present at our first 2006 meeting. Last year we had 28 people, where were the rest of you? We had a delicious chicken dinner, which Dr. Dave pronounced as one of the best meals that the Ramada Inn has served! The program was our traditional "Show and Tell". Dr. D displayed a "Mystery Box": a collection of battlefield dug-ups in a case, and challenged us to identify the various items. i.e. was the round metallic object a coin, an embalm, a poker chip...? There were many interesting guesses.

Phyllis Mann shared information about Col. Joseph Bailey, who built a dam during the Red River campaign to allow the escape of the U.S. gunboats which couldn't otherwise pass downstream because of low water.

Maj. Gen. Ron Markarian showed the replica of Gen. Stonewall Jackson's sword, that if for sale, as a fund raiser for his veteran;s group.

Since we usually have so many presentations, I had decided to not bring anything, but got roped into explaining the features of Tom Carr's shinny new replica C.W. Colt Navy revolver.

## **February 23, 2006.**

Coins and Currency with Robert Fitzpatrick and Stephen Foster, Jr.:

An After-Action Report by Ron Vaughn.

We had a great turn out of 24 persons to our meeting, Robert Fitzpatrick and Stephen Foster, Jr., brought in 3 large display cases filled with coins and currency from their collections. They displayed and passed around everything from Continental coins and currency, paper fractional money, state printed money, modern currency oddities, and a number of specimens of Confederate money. Many of the CSA bills were printed on one side only, and they were individually signed and hand numbered. I thought the CSA bill picturing a Southern "Lady Liberty" stabbing a US Liberty figure, was interesting.

Today, a well-preserved CSA bill can be worth more than its face value. if only those people who burned "useless" CSA money in 1865 had known! The early cent and 1/2 cent coins were as large as a modern quarter, but in 1858 they started making the smaller Indian head pennies, due to the rise in the price of copper. Today it costs more to producer a penny than it is worth.

## **March 30, 2006**

Lincoln and Civil Liberties with Wayne Scott

An After-Action Report by Ron Vaughn.

The twenty-one person were educated by President Lincoln (aka Wayne Scott), who entered to the strains of Hail to the Chief, with his escort of a Major and a Sergeant. He spoke from a platform trimmed with red, white, and blue bunting, flanked by The U.S. and Presidential Flags.

Dr. Davenport had invited Mr. Lincoln to speak about his handling of Constitutional issues, specifically: the legitimacy of Southern secession, suspension of the Writ of Habeas Corpus, and control of the Press. Mr. Lincoln stated that one "may not agree with my methods - but surely you must realize that my motivations are true and just. I must preserve the Union."

He talked about the actions of previous administrations who tried to deal with the North-South split. He indicated he was like a man in the middle of a herd of stampeding cattle and any way he turned he was bound to step in it? he maintained that the Constitution did not contain any right of secession in word or implication. The Preamble states that the purpose of the Constitution was to "form a more perfect union", and secession is disunion. No state should be able to leave without the consent of the other states.

Dr. Meux (aka Charles Baley) was present in the audience and adamantly disagreed with many of Lincoln's points. As to his suspension of the Writ of Habeas Corpus, in this deadly struggle, where loyalties and beliefs are mixed within states, cities and even families (including his own), with spies "as plentiful as fleas on

a sick hound", the danger is so great that H.C. must be temporarily suspended. Tens of thousands have been slaughtered per battled, but in contrast, only 1500 people have been detained in this manner. Such expedients are necessary for the survival of the United States "this noble experiment in liberty".

As to the press, in the Southern press he is vilified daily, and also in many Northern papers. he believes it is okay to criticize him, but the press should not disclose military plans. the press is not suppressed, Horace Greeley's paper alone has 56 war reporters, and there are many papers with more.

In conclusion, Abraham Lincoln reaffirmed the importance of maintaining the Union. "If we fail - a thousand angels saying I was right will make no difference."

## **April 27, 2006**

Alexander Stephens, VP of the CSA with Zoyd Luce

An After-Action Report by Ron Vaughn.

Twenty persons were present for a most interesting presentation by Zoyd Luce. Zoyd did not focus so much in the minutiae of the subject's life story, but on his ideas. This was what made Zoyd's talk especially enjoyable. The average man on the street cannot name the nation's current Vice-President, let alone the V.P. of the CSA, Alexander H. Stephens. Born in George in 1812, he became a lawyer, served in the state legislature and the U.S. Congress.

He was a friend of Abraham Lincoln, and corresponded with him. Both were interested in the common man. As the war clouds gathered, newly elected president Lincoln, wrote to Stephens, asking him "What can I do to prevent war?" Stephens answered "Nothing - the President has no right to do anything." This is what separated the two men - Stephens believed in personal liberty and local sovereignty. Despite being an advocate of states rights, he preferred peace to secession.

Stephens, Robert Toombs, and Howell Cobb formed a triumvirate to lead the South away from secession. But when George finally seceded, he became a Confederate leader. On April 21, 1861 he gave "The Cornerstone Speech" where he stated that the founding of the CSA was one of the greatest moments in history - the first time a nation was founded upon securing the citizen's right to own slaves. he based his belief in the rightness of slavery on the idea that Negroes were savages who had no souls. His speech was enthusiastically received.

The arguments that secession of the South was prompted by states' rights and economic concerns, only developed after the war. Stephens also helped write the CSA Constitution, which was modeled on that of the USA, but without a Supreme Court, and an emphasis on states' rights. President Davis had the opposite view, that a strong central government was necessary to preserve Southern independence. Thus the two did not get along at all. At meetings, Davis hoped to arrive at decisions, but Stephens wanted to debate principles and philosophy. At the end of the war, Stephens was arrested and imprisoned for six months. After his release he was again elected to the US Congress. In 1867 he wrote a 1400+ page book A Constitutional View of the Late War Between the States."

## **May 25, 2006.**

The Battle of Prairie Grove with Ron Vaughn

An After-Action Report by Ron Vaughn.

The Trans-Mississippi Civil War is scarcely mentioned in print and the battle of Prairie Grove is even less published. There is only one book on the battle - William Shea's War in the West and half the book is devoted to Pea Ridge. Just before my talk, North & South subscribers received an article on Prairie Grove, but it was also written by Mr. Shea. Actually the best source is an article by Scott Sallee in a special issue of Blue and Gray which included many period photos, plus a "General's Tour" with many battlefield photos.

Tom Carr gave me a copy of this magazine in exchange for my promise to visit the battlefield (which I did last summer) and do a talk. During my visit I was able to obtain information to verify that my great grandfather, William K. Vaughn, 13th Missouri State Militia Cavalry was present at the battle.

**M**y presentation was a little different - I asked listeners to imagine it as a Hollywood action movie. The battle had all the elements for such a movie: aggressive young hero-generals (Blunt and Hindman), bumbling superiors who undermined our heroes' efforts, trusty sidekicks for our heroes (Herron and Marmaduke), devious and cunning plans, dramatic cliff-hanger moments, and just when the situation seems hopeless for the Union, the cavalry comes to the rescue! Also, Frank James and Cole Younger were present, a perfect Hollywood subplot.

**C**SA General Hindman had a cunning plan to trap and destroy US general Blunt's isolated division at Cane Hill. It seemed that only a miracle would save Blunt, but US General Herron accomplished such a miracle, by force-marching over 100 miles in 3 1/2 days! Hindman came up with a new cunning plan - slip around Blunt and crush Herron, then turn and destroy Blunt. When the first two regiments were bloodily repulsed, he ordered an attack by two more; he was a fighter, not a tactician. Herron's artillery saved him from being overrun, but the situation was grim as the Confederates massed for an enveloping attack. At this dramatic moment, Blunt arrived in the nick of time on the battlefield! A seesaw fight of attack and counterattack went on until darkness put an end to the struggle. 15% of those engaged had fallen. The battle ended with a parley between the two generals - one a fanatical secessionist and the other a rabid abolitionist. They refused to salute and shake hands with each other!

**D**r. Davenport and I reenacted this meeting. The conclusion of my presentation was a dramatic reading by my wife Linda, from a diary description of a local lady searching the battlefield and finding, to her horror, not only her husband, but the bodies of her two brothers.

**T**he battle was a tactical draw, but Hindman's retreat made it a Union strategic victory, giving control of NW Arkansas and securing Missouri. A Confederate victory at Prairie Grove would have poised a threat to Missouri, that would have necessitated withholding troops from Grant's Vicksburg Campaign.

## **June 2006.**

No meeting.

## **July 2006.**

No meeting.

## **August 2006.**

No meeting.

## **September 28, 2006.**

Mary Chesnut with Elizabeth Showalter Muhlenfeld.

An After-Action report by Ron Vaughn

**T**his meeting was a little different, in that the 30 members watched a CSPAN video presentation. If you stayed away from this meeting because you thought a video would be boring, you missed out! What made the event truly memorable, was that the author was interviewed on the site of the Mulberry Plantation, S.C., where Mary Chesnut lived. We were able to view much of the beautiful grounds of the plantation. Dr. Dave fast forwarded through some of the less interesting parts of the video, especially the viewer call-in questions, which he said were mostly inane. If I had been a caller, I would have asked her if she had any relation to Daniel Showalter, the California secessionist politician who shot a Republican and fled to the Confederacy.

**M**ary Boykin Chesnut (1823-1886) is best known today for her first-hand account of the rise and fall of the Confederate States of America. She was a keen observer who kept a diary throughout the War Between the States. A version of her diary were published in 1905 and again in 1949 under the title *Diary from Dixie*. This

tome removed much of what she had written about numerous individuals. In 1982 an unexpurgated version of her journals was republished as Mary Chesnut's Civil War.

**MARY CHESNUT'S RECORD OF THE WAR WAS FAR FROM ORDINARY. HER HUSBAND WAS A MEMBER OF THE CONFEDERATE CONGRESS SO THE FAMILY LIVED IN RICHMOND. MOREOVER, SHE WAS A CLOSE PERSONAL FRIEND OF VARINA DAVIS, FIRST LADY OF THE CONFEDERACY. AS SUCH SHE WAS A MEMBER OF THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ELITE.**

Mary was born in Statesburg, South Carolina, in 1823. Her father was politically prominent having served as a U.S. Senator and as a Governor of the Palmetto State. She attended Madame Talvande's school in Charleston, where, at the age of 14, she met James Chesnut, age 23. They married in 1840 when she was 17. Until 1848 she and James lived with his parents at Mulberry Plantation. This was not a happy time for Mary. She was very much an outsider when it came to running the plantation and she had little to do other than read voraciously. Moreover, she and James were childless, a fact of which she was made painfully aware by her mother-in-law.

**ON THE OTHER HAND, THE FACT THAT SHE WAS NOT BURDENED WITH THE TWIN RESPONSIBILITIES OF RUNNING A PLANTATION AND RAISING A FAMILY ALLOWED HER TO ACCOMPANY HER HUSBAND WHERE EVER HE MIGHT GO. THIS INCLUDED COLUMBIA WHEN HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE STATE LEGISLATURE, WASHINGTON WHEN HE SERVED IN THE US CONGRESS, MONTGOMERY WHEN HE WAS SOUTH CAROLINA DELEGATE TO THE CONFEDERATES STATE'S CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION, AND RICHMOND WHEN HE SERVED IN THE CONFEDERATE CONGRESS AS A REPRESENTATIVE FROM SOUTH CAROLINA. MOREOVER, SINCE MOST LEGISLATORS LEFT THEIR WIVES AND CHILDREN BACK HOME MARY WAS OFTEN CALLED UPON SERVE AS OFFICIAL HOSTESS REGARDLESS OF WHO WAS FOOTING THE BILL FOR THE MANY DINNER PARTIES AT WHICH THE MEN "TALKED SHOP". AS A RESULT SHE KNEW A GREAT NUMBER OF PROMINENT POLITICIANS PERSONALLY.**

When the conflict ended in 1865 Mary and hundreds of thousands of other southerners tried to pick up the pieces of their shattered lives. It was extremely difficult to do so. Eventually she and a freed slave operated an egg and butter business that provided them with an income. She also began to rework her diaries with the intention of publishing her first-hand account of the war but she died in 1886 at the age of 63 before doing so. The diaries were then put away by a family friend until donated to the South Carolina State Archives at the turn of the century.

**ACCORDING TO DR. MUHLENFELD, MARY C. IS INTERESTING TO MODERN READERS, BECAUSE OF HER BEHIND-THE-SCENES KNOWLEDGE OF THE CSA GOVERNMENT AND HER MANY "IRREVERENT" VIEWS AND COMMENTS ABOUT SOUTHERN LEADERS, SLAVERY, AND FEMINISM. IF YOU WISH TO VIEW THE PROGRAM, YOU MAY CONTACT DR. DAVE TO BORROW THE VIDEO, AND WATCH IN THE PRIVACY OF YOUR OWN HOME.**

**AN ADDED FEATURE OF THE MEETING WAS A BRIEF PRESENTATION BY WAYNE SCOTT, ABOUT HIS RECENT TRIP TO ILLINOIS - INCLUDING THE LINCOLN HOME AND MUSEUM. HE APPEARED AT THE MUSEUM IN HIS LINCOLN RE-ENACTMENT OUTFIT, AND STARTLED SOME VISITORS WHO MISTOOK HIM FOR A WAX FIGURE! THE HIGHLIGHT OF HIS RESEARCH AT THE MUSEUM WAS TO FIND THAT ONE OF HIS ANCESTORS AND LINCOLN'S FATHER WERE COUSINS, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT (I CAN'T ALWAYS TAKE NOTES FAST ENOUGH TO GET IT STRAIGHT!)**

**BE SURE NOT TO MISS THE NEXT MEETING, WHEN WE WILL HAVE A NO DOUBT ROUSING LECTURE BY JIM STANBERY.**

**OCTOBER 26, 2006.**

**WAR ON THE WATERS WITH JIM STANBERY.**

AN AFTER-ACTION REPORT BY RON VAUGHN

WE ARE ALL FAMILIAR WITH THE CLASH OF THE IRONCLADS VIRGINIA AND MONITOR AT HAMPTON ROADS BUT THIS WAS BUT ONE OF MANY HUNDREDS OF BATTLES BETWEEN UNION AND CONFEDERATE WARSHIPS. ALL OF THESE TOOK PLACE AS THE UNION ATTEMPTED TO DEPRIVE THE CONFEDERACY OF IMPORTED GOODS, TO ADVANCE INTO THE HEART OF THE CONFEDERACY ALONG RIVERS SUCH AS THE TENNESSEE, THE CUMBERLAND, AND THE MISSISSIPPI, AND TO CONTROL COASTAL AREAS.

THE CSA, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAD TO CREATE A NAVY ALMOST FROM SCRATCH, ATTEMPT TO BREAK THE UNION BLOCKADE, AND TO CRIPPLE THE UNION WAR EFFORT BY ENGAGING IN "PIRACY" [EUPHEMISTICALLY REFERRED TO AS COMMERCE RAIDING BY THOSE WHO LAUD THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ALABAMA, FLORIDA, AND SHENANDOAH.

## **NOVEMBER 2006.**

NO MEETING.

## **DECEMBER 2006**

NO MEETING.