

# Bugle Call

## ECHOES

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Civil War Round Table

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### Civil War Women: Their Experiences and Legacy

*"How dreadfully sick I am of this war. . . . It commenced when I was thirteen, and I am now seventeen and no prospect yet of its ending. No pleasure, no enjoyment — nothing but rigid economy and hard work — nothing but the stern realities of life. . . . I have seen little of the light-heartedness and exuberant joy that people talk about as the natural heritage of youth. . . . I often wonder if I will ever have my share of fun and happiness."*

These are the words Emma LeConte wrote in her diary on January 28, 1865, less than a month before Sherman's army invaded her home town of Columbia, South Carolina. The air was rife with rumors, none more chilling than the talk that Sherman would show no mercy in South Carolina, the hot-bed of secession.

This is a preview of the October program, "Civil War Women, Their Experience and Legacy," which will be presented at the meeting Oct. 26 in the Remington

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### I've Recently Read . . .

#### Memoir of John Wilkes Booth

By Rick Kubiak

"The Unlocked Book: A Memoir of John Wilkes Booth," by his sister, Asia Booth Clarke. Edited and foreword by Eleanor Farjeon; Published by G.P. Putnam's Sons; Obtained from the Fresno County Central Library's Interlibrary Loan Service.

Asia Booth Clarke wrote a memoir of her brother, John Wilkes Booth, but never lived to see it published. In fact, the hand-written memoir in a "little squat black

book," was kept under lock and key in a safe to prevent it from being destroyed.

In April 1888 during a serious illness and just prior to her death, she wrote to her daughter requesting that her poems and the two locked books be given to her old friend, B. L. Farjeon to publish if he saw fit. The first book was the memoir of Asia Booth Clark, initialed

A.B-C as she liked to footnote her writings. The second contained a variety of newspaper clippings, some personal recollections of her brother, John, by a college schoolmate, a contemporary account of Lincoln's assassination, and accounts of Lincoln's reburial four years later in the family burial plot in Baltimore.

The memoirs were not published during B. L. Farjeon's lifetime. Only after the death of Asia Clark Booth's husband, John S. Clarke, and of John Wilkes Booth's famous actor brother, Edwin Booth, did Farjeon's daughter, Eleanor, edit and publish the books, under the title, "The Unlocked Book."

In the foreword, Eleanor Farjeon wrote, "Today, her account of the brother she loved best can be read with a judgment not possible in the 'sixties or the 'seventies. It was not possible even in the 'nineties . . . Now, my mother too is dead and there can be no one to wince at this document added to American history. Whatever sentiments it may create in those who read it, personal pain can no longer be among them . . . The story of those papers now is told."

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John Wilkes Booth

## Booth (Continued)

John Wilkes Booth, or Wilkes as his sister, Asia, called him, was born on "The Farm" on May 10, 1838,



Asia Booth Clarke

give public burial to a bushel of wild pigeons that had been shot as pests.

In the summer of 1822, Junius purchased a farm 25 miles from Baltimore as a retreat to escape the fast pace of the acting profession. This became the birthplace of

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Change of address? Call Verne Cole, 435-8410 or Wayne Bowen, 291-4885.

three miles from the small village of Belair, Md. He was the ninth of 10 children of Junius Brutus Booth and his wife, Mary Anne. Junius was a "wild genius" of an actor who was intermittently insane. He was profoundly affected by the taking of animal life, and sternly enforced the rule in his household of abstaining from animal food. He once asked a clergyman to help him

his children, and became known as "The Farm." but which actually was a dense woods. Asia described it as being "belted by a thick, unbroken circle of native trees as far as the eye could reach; it was completely isolated, and the chief delight of the owner was that it was so perfectly shut in and away from the world." It was here that John Wilkes and his sister, Asia, spent their youth.

Asia describes the early schooldays of her brothers and herself, and states that "John Wilkes was not quick at acquiring knowledge, he had to plod, progress slowly step by step, but that which he attained, he never lost. He found it far from easy to keep up, with his classmates, but when the monthly review came he had not to re-study like the rest. What he had once learned remained, as he said, 'stamped on the sight of his mind.' for he not only recollected, but saw it, so as to be able to turn to the part of the page immediately."

She wrote: "... his feelings were ardent and impulsive, in a moment of devotion or enthusiasm he would give or grant anything he possessed, while in time of danger his keen eye took in the situation regardless of his own safety, his coolness and self-poise commanded confidence. He was never known to throw off a friend or to slight an acquaintance, the loves of his boyhood were those of his manhood, his affection as retentive as his memory."

In 1852 Wilkes' father, Junius, died leaving his wife and children destitute. Asia states, "His monetary affairs, as far as his children were concerned, were pitiable failures, ..." She describes some of the privations, including a lack of nourishing food, that the family suffered after the Junius' death until each "... went out of the solemn old woods forever."

At the age of 17, in 1855, Wilkes debuted as an actor at the St. Charles Theater in Baltimore. Up to and during the Civil War, he continued to develop his acting skills while touring the South, Midwest and the Northeast.

Asia describes the time, "He could never hope to be as great as father, he never wanted to try to rival Edwin, but he wanted to be loved by the Southern people above all things. He would work to make himself essentially a Southern actor ... He acted continuously, traveled much,

Continued on next page

## Booth (Continued)

and accumulated a great deal of money . . . Success attended all of his undertakings."

She wrote that "all information contained to criticisms, letters, playbills and theatrical records has been lost in the general destruction of papers and effects belonging to Wilkes Booth. All written or printed material found in our possession, everything that bore his name was given up, . . . not a vestige remains of aught that belongs to him . . ."

During the Civil War, Wilkes developed a fierce loyalty to the South's cause. He expressed himself bitterly against the North, but he acted in the North and traveled among Northerners indiscriminately.

Asia quoted her brother as saying, "The time will come, whether conquered or conqueror, when the arrogant North will groan at not being able to swear they fought the South man for man. If the North conquer us it will be by numbers only, not by native grit, not pluck and not by devotion."

She wrote that she then commented, "if the North conquers us, we are of the North." She said he then rejoined, "Not I, not I. So help me holy God; my soul, my life and possessions are for the South."

Wilkes did not enter military service but thought himself more valuable in other ways. "I have only an arm to give: my brains are worth twenty men, my money worth a hundred. I have free pass everywhere, my profession, my name is my passport, my knowledge of drugs is valuable, my beloved precious money -- oh, never beloved till now! -- is the means, one of the means, by which I serve the South."

Asia wrote: "I know now that my hero was a spy, a blockade-runner, a rebel! I set the terrible words before my eyes, and knew that one meant death. I knew that was today what he was from childhood, an ardent lover of the South and her policy, an upholder of Southern principles. . . . I knew that if he had twenty lives they would be sacrificed freely for that cause. He was a man so single in his devotion, so unswerving in his principles, that he would yield everything for the cause he espoused.

Of the aftermath of Lincoln's assassination, she wrote: "The rest is horror . . . In time the blow fell on us, a loving united and devoted family; and in times an enraged and furious Government did us such a bitter wrong, and some justice . . . It was like the days of the Bastille in France. Arrests were made suddenly and in the dead of night. No reason or warning given, only let anyone breathe a doubt of the most innocent person and arrest followed swift, and that incarceration meant to wait the law's leisure, innocent or guilty . . . Above all his kind love to me, I thanked him most that he left me nothing. Had he done so, it would have put a whip in my Foe's hand, to torture my remaining life."

Edwin Booth wrote to his sister, Asia: "Think no more of him as your brother; he is dead to us now, as he soon must be to all the world, but imagine the boy you loved to be in that better part of his spirit, in another world."

Asia wrote of Wilkes' devotion to his lost cause: "When he lay dying fast, outside the barn at Bowling Green, the last words he uttered, between great gasps for breath, were his last will and testament; so firmly did he believe in what he had done that he declared with his departing strength, 'Tell my mother I died for my country!'"

## October Program (continued)

restaurant on Clovis Avenue south of Kings Canyon Avenue. The meeting will begin with a social period at 6 :30 p.m. followed by dinner at 7 and the program.

Those presenting the program will wear Civil War era costumes. They are Carol Berry, Robbie Cranch, Marti Fry, Barbara Moats and Delores Torres.

Reservations are encouraged. Checks for \$15 for each dinner should be made out to SJVCWRT, P.O. Box 5695, Fresno CA 93755. Seating will not be guaranteed without a reservation.

The quote at the beginning of this article is from "The Diary of Emma LeConte, When The World Ended," edited by Earl Schenck Miers, University of Nebraska Press, c1957 Oxford University Press.

# Prisoner Exchange

By Carol Berry

In August 1862, an exchange of Federal and Confederate prisoners of war occurred at Vicksburg, Miss. A table of equivalents, devised under the direction of General John A. Dix of the Union and General Daniel H. Hill of the Confederacy, determined the rate of exchange:

When the actual exchange took place, the soldiers being exchanged stood in two lines, the Union men facing north, the Confederates facing south. Two captains, one from each army, stood facing each other; 10 feet beyond them, two more captains, one from each army, stood facing each other.

The Federal prisoners passed between one set of captains; the Confederate prisoners passed between the other two captains. As each man walked between the officers, each captain touched the prisoner lightly on the shoulder, counting out loud. When the number 50 was reached, the counting started over. After the exchange, the soldiers were given a physical examination and returned to their outfits, assigned to a new one, furloughed,

or discharged. A man was not eligible for exchange if his name did not appear on both the Confederate and Federal rosters. If a prisoner enlisted under a false name which he thereafter forgot or his name was inadvertently deleted from the rolls, he ran the risk of being classified a guerilla prisoner. Guerilla prisoners were neither recognized by the two governments nor subject to exchange.

## Exchange For An Officer of Equal Rank, Or

Commander in Chief or Admiral,	60	privates or common seamen
Flag Officer or Major General	40	privates or common seamen
Commodore or Brigadier General	20	privates or common seamen
Navy Captain or Colonel	15	privates or common seamen
Commander or Lieut. Colonel	10	privates or common seamen
Lt. Commander or Major	8	privates or common seamen
Navy Lieut. or Army Captain	6	privates or common seamen
Master's Mate or Army Lieut. or Ensign	4	privates or common seamen
Midshipman, Navy Warrant Officer, Master of Merchant Vessel or Commander of Privateer	3	privates or common seamen
All Petty Officers or Noncoms	2	privates or common seamen

Source: Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, 1940: Camp Morton 1861-1865, Indianapolis Prison Camp - Winslow/Moore General John A. Dix of the Union and General Daniel H. Hill of the Confederacy, determined the rate of exchange:

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