

BUGLE CALL ECHOES

APRIL 1999 MEETING

The topic of April's Civil War Round Table meeting is "Yosemite and Sequoia Black Infantry and Cavalry" presented by Shelton Johnson.

Shelton Johnson graduated from the University of Michigan in 1981 with a degree in English literature. After graduation he served in the Peace Corps in Liberia from 1982-83. Upon his return he entered graduate school, majoring in creative writing.

In 1984 Shelton worked as a summer employee in Yellowstone National Park. He loved it so much he never returned to school. Shelton became a permanent Park Ranger/Naturalist in 1991. He is presently serving in Yosemite National Park Valley Interpretations. He is a recipient of the Albright Scholarship doing research in African American Military History in the Presidio, Sequoia and Yosemite National Parks.



3rd US Colored Troops Banner

Who knows but again the old flags, ragged and torn, snapping in the wind, may face each other and flutter, pursuing and pursued, while the cries of victory fill a summer day? And after the battle, then the slain and wounded will arise, and all will meet together under the two flags, all sound and well, and there will be talking and laughter and cheers, and all will say: Did it not seem real? Was it not as in the old days?

Berry Benson, Confederate veteran

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

At the Board Meeting Mike Carter agreed to be Chairman of the Fund Raising event in October. I'm going to do some legwork for him. Give him a call and volunteer your services (322-9474). Be thinking about how you can help. We need items for the auction, so look through your Civil War "stuff" for things to donate. Actually, they don't have to be Civil War things. Be creative--provide a service.

We'll need people to sell raffle tickets. That was an excellent money maker during the last fund raiser. We also want input on battlefield sites that our organization could support. What is your favorite site?

Ken Moats

The April meeting of the SJVCWRT will be held on Thursday, April 29, 1999, at the Ramada Inn on Shaw and Highway 41. A no-host cocktail hour begins at 6 p.m., followed by dinner and the speaker at 7 p.m.

Send your check for \$15 for dinner (\$10 for students under 25) to Gloria Carter, c/o San Joaquin Valley CWRT, PO Box 5695, Fresno, CA 93755, or call her at 322-9474 to notify her you will be attending.

DIRECTORS FOR 1999

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*includes recruiting and membership

BOOK REVIEW

Reviewed by Phyllis Field, Department of History, Ohio University

Gary Gallagher is well known as one of the most prolific and productive military historians of the Confederate military

experience. In this, his 16th book either authored or edited, he brings together thirteen of his essays, eleven of which have been previously published. While such collections often lack thematic unity, this is not the case here. Nearly all of these essays in one way or another are a tempered response to the breakup of the Lost Cause interpretation of Confederate military history.

As Gallagher recounts in "Jubal A. Early, the Lost Cause, and Civil War History: A Persistent Legacy," the thoroughly unreconstructed Early took a great interest in how future generations would view the Confederacy. Over the remainder of his lifetime he interpreted his experiences in the Army of Northern Virginia, praising Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson above all generals, emphasizing the importance of the eastern theater, and tracing southern defeat to overwhelming odds, not the superiority of Yankee generals. He promoted the publication of other similar memoirs in the "Southern Historical Society Papers." While Thomas L. Connelly's

Gary W. Gallagher. Lee and His Generals in War and Memory. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998. xvi + 298 pp. Illustrations, maps, bibliographical references, and index. \$27.95 (cloth), ISBN 0-8071-2286-6.

exposure of Early's questionable motivations in The Marble Man: Robert E. Lee and His Image in American Society (1977) has led to a spate of revisionist writing reevaluating Lee, the primacy of the eastern theater, and southern generalship generally, Gallagher attributes the long persistence of Lost Cause views to key truths within the mythology. In his words, "Robert E. Lee was a gifted soldier who inspired his army to accomplish prodigious feats on the battlefield. The Army of Northern Virginia and other Confederate forces consistently fought at a disadvantage in numbers and of materiel. . . . Many people at the time -- northern, southern, and European -- looked to Virginia as the crucial arena of the war" (pp. 211-12).

The thrust of Gallagher's argument is that the truth lies between the extremes of the Lost Cause and revisionist interpretations. Most of these essays consist of efforts to reconstruct for individual campaigns or generals a happy medium by comparing the Lost Cause memories of participants to primary sources from the war itself. Gallagher's essays are models of clear exposition, and it is easy to follow the reasoning to leads to his judgments, even if at times the primary sources are a bit more ambiguous than he allows.

Gallagher begins the collection with an original essay on Robert E. Lee, countering some of the recent criticisms of Lee's manpower-depleting preference for the offensive. In Gallagher's view Lee's popularity kept the Confederates going long after the military situation was hopeless, but his popularity was in turn connected to his aggressiveness. Lee did not become a southern hero until after his aggressive attacks on McClellan in 1862. The succeeding three essays evaluate Lee at Antietam, Gettysburg, and in the Grant campaign in May 1864. The Antietam essay, a heavily revised version of two previous essays, is a particularly fine assessment of that battle and Lee's successes and failures there. The Gettysburg piece admits that Lee's aggressiveness turned out to be mistaken but in Gallagher's view was still reasonable. The final essay in this section attributes Lee's problems in the spring of 1864 to the depletion of the high command of Confederate officers.

Gallagher devotes seven essays to Lee's subordinates. He sees Stonewall Jackson's legendary status deriving from his perceived personality and tragic death as much as his military record, which contained some nonstellar performances. This contrasts to John B. Magruder whose intemperance and other sins made him a likely scapegoat for Confederate disappointments in the Seven Days. Longstreet's postwar unpopularity likewise led to unfair efforts to downgrade his performance at Second Manassas. Jackson's death at Chancellorsville made A. P. Hill and Richard S. Ewell likely victims of unfair comparisons to Jackson at Gettysburg; Gallagher suggests Lee bears some of the blame for Confederate indecision on the first day of the battle. Jubal Early faced the same problem of comparison to Jackson in the Valley campaign of 1864. The Lost Cause gave Early a way to salvage his honor, however. LaSalle Corbell Pickett, the widow of the general, found another way to reinvent the past, plagiarizing other soldiers' memoirs to write the fictitious letters in Heart of a Soldier (1913), supposedly written by her husband.

In the final two essays Gallagher looks at the longer shadow of the Lost Cause. He finds Ken Burns in the PBS series on the Civil War guilty of succumbing to it in part. But he is most shocked by the willingness of some professional historians to dismiss battlefield preservation because of the association of so many eastern battlefields threatened with nearby economic development with Lost Cause imagery. Gallagher argues passionately that battlefields can be used not just to talk about the battles and generals but issues such as the war's causation, emancipation, women's work, homefront morale, foreign diplomacy, etc. Ironically, these issues rarely surface in his own essays. Gallagher suggests in his preface a need to bring together the interested layperson and professional scholar, the social historian and military historian.

This is easier said than done, however. Excellent writer though he is, most of Gallagher's essays are suited to a professional audience of traditional military historians. Perhaps only an aggressive frontal assault on the issues of race, class, and party division

hidden behind romantic visions of the war can break the deadlock. Perhaps not.

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PRESERVATION

From Olly Keller, a member of the Georgia Civil War Battlefield Commission, comes the following plea: In order to save the Resaca battlefield, Heritage PAC members and round tables should write very brief letters to Governor Roy Barnes, State Capitol, Atlanta, GA 30334. His FAX IS (404) 657-7332. He can also be reached via e-mail at www.ganet.org.

THERE IS NO NEED TO GO INTO THE DETAILS.

All the letter need say is, "Please do all in your power to save the pristine Civil War battlefield at Resaca." The Governor's office is counting the incoming mail to see if there is sufficient citizen input for him to take the steps needed to save the first great battlefield of the 1864 Atlanta Campaign. I believe that descendants of the 150,000 soldiers who fought there, both North and South, would be key players in persuading Governor Barnes to act. Time is of the essence.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The following appeared in the June 18, 1864, edition of the *Washington Daily National Intelligence* under the title, "An Indignant Soldier": *A soldier in hospital in Resaca (Ga.) writes to a Western paper: "I see my name reported in the list of deaths at this hospital. I knew it was a lie as soon as I saw it. Hereafter when you hear of my death, write me and find out if it is so before publishing it. Yours, convalescently, Michael Butler, Company I, 47th Ohio."*

NEWS ITEMS

Wayne and Bonnie Bowen were in town and a few of us had pizza with them. Wayne is very happy with his new life but he does miss the Round Table group. The Bowens just purchased a new home in Ventura, California, and were still in the process of unpacking.

Walt Rodgers Jr. died recently on St. Patrick's Day at age 83. He was a member of our Round Table until he retired to Pebble Beach.

CALIFORNIA IN THE O. R.

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA,
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,
Sacramento, March 11, 1861.**

**Brig. Gen. ALBERT S. JOHNSTON, U.S. Army,
Commanding Pacific Division:**

SIR: I have received numerous petitions from citizens of the counties of Humboldt and Mendocino representing that the Coast Range from Mendocino to Humboldt and Trinity has been rendered valueless from the continued outrages of the Indians to the stock-growers of that region, and asking that they may have protection for their property. I have heretofore had occasion to make representations to the late General Clarke of depredations committed upon the property of citizens of California by hostile Indians, and it affords me pleasure to state that prompt measures were taken by that officer to redress the grievances complained of. It would seem that the citizens inhabiting the Coast Range from Mendocino to Humboldt and Trinity Counties feel justified in asking that a corps of volunteers should be called out by the State to effectually redress the great outrages committed by the Indians, and as I conceive it to be my plain duty to first ask if you can send a force sufficient to afford protection to the lives and property of our citizens in that region, and would be justified in calling for volunteers only in the event that you were unable to render the protection demanded, I trust that you will at your earliest convenience so inform me.

Respectfully, &c.,

JOHN G. DOWNEY.

**HEADQUARTERS
DEPARTMENT OF THE PACIFIC,
San Francisco, March 12, the.**

**His Excellency JOHN G. DOWNEY,
Governor of California, Sacramento, Cal.:**

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's letter of the 11th instant on the subject of the depredations of the Indians in the Coast Range, from Mendocino to Humboldt and Trinity, and asking if a sufficient force can be sent to afford protection to the lives and property of the citizens of

that region. I beg leave to observe that three companies have been permanently stationed in that region for the protection of the population, viz, one at Humboldt, one at Camp Bragg, and another at Fort Gaston. Since the perpetration of the outrages complained of detachments have been sent out from Humboldt, embracing the whole company, to range as far as the scattered condition of the people will admit in front of the settlements for their protection and the chastisement of predatory Indians. A detachment of the company stationed at Camp Bragg has been some time at the Round Valley Reservation, and I will to-day order the remainder of the company in two parties into the field, and also the company at Fort Gaston, divided in parties of suitable strength, to commence ranging with the same object and with like instructions. This force of about 200 men will be kept actively employed as long as the circumstances may make it necessary, and as it is not likely that these detachments will not be sufficiently strong to cope with any Indians they may meet with, it is hoped by me that the force will prove sufficient for the object. At this time there is no other force available, without withdrawing it from positions whose security at present would seem to demand its presence. In a short time, if the circumstances should then demand it, I hope to be able to send additional force.

With great respect, your obedient servant,

**A. S. JOHNSTON,
Colonel Second Cavalry and Brevet
Brigadier-General.**

MAINE EVENTS

The Pejepscot Historical Society of Brunswick, Maine, announces *Chamberlain Days, 1999*. During the events scheduled from August 11-14 are tours of the Joshua L. Chamberlain Museum (located in Chamberlain's home), lectures, and walking tours. For more information, call 207/729-6606.

Also in connection with Brunswick: Fred Bohmfalk, president of the Sacramento CWRT, and previous speaker at two of our round table meetings, will be speaking to the JLCCWRT at the April meeting on Joshua Chamberlain and Patrick Cleburne.

WHY DID THEY FIGHT?

by D. E. Mayfield

One of the most difficult questions about the war and one that the historians can never completely answer is what motivated young men north and south to volunteer their lives. (The first troops on both sides were all volunteers, not draftees. The South instituted conscription in the spring of 1862; the North, soon after.)

At the beginning there was a high sense of adventure. Accounts of the first Virginia troops moving through Winchester to Harper's Ferry give a picture of young men--and many were very young---who might be off on a picnic or on the way to a sporting event. It didn't seem to occur to them that they might be maimed or killed. They wanted to get in on the "fun" and were afraid the war might end before they made it to the fight. Something of the same spirit must have prevailed in the North for one Union soldier wrote home of army life, "It sure beats clerking." It was exciting, and it gave men who had never been out of their county a chance to see some of the world. (Does the Navy still use this idea as a recruiting slogan?) Mark Twain's account of his very brief career as a southern soldier conveys the carefree and careless atmosphere of idealism that quickly degenerated into the horror from which he decided to escape. If you have never read Twain's account, you might find it valuable. The truths of the whole war are crammed into a very small capsule.

Not even those in high places expected the war to last for years. His truer foresight led to Sherman's being branded insane. There were three month volunteers in the Union forces. Some of them just marched away right before 1st Bull Run because their term of enlistment had ended. Confederates enlisted for a year, but since it was a well known fact that one southern boy with a hand tied behind his back could whip umteen Yankee clerks, they left in the spring of 1861 fully expecting to be home before harvest.

In spite of this lightness of spirit, my guess is that the soldiers of the last century were at least as well informed or misinformed about national politics as the average citizen of today. (Not having TV was

probably a blessing.) Many could not read, but every community had some that could. Wouldn't group reading and discussion of the newspaper have been a regular Saturday afternoon diversion at the local store? Certainly during the war the troops kept abreast of the news, even trading newspapers across the lines to find out how the war was going according to the enemy's point of view. Those who could read, read to those who couldn't.

James McPherson has done a monumental sifting through thousands of CW letters and diaries, and his conclusion is that soldiers on both sides had a pretty clear, idealistic concept of why they were fighting. His research is somewhat flawed, as he admits, because surviving written material disproportionately represents the upper ranks. There were a lot more privates than majors, and we don't know enough about how the privates felt. Also, it seems likely that letters which expressed discontent or doubt were less likely to be preserved by families. Still, after accepting these limitations, it is hard for a reader of McPherson's work not to agree with him that soldiers on both sides did indeed know why they were fighting. It was for their visions of what their country was and should be. It just happened that the visions were somewhat different.

Of course there were complications and individual variations. Not everyone in the North was economically secure, and the prospect of a regular salary drew some volunteers. Sure, wages and the hope for citizenship attracted new immigrants who correctly estimated their economic chances to be better in the North than in the South. It has been said that southern soldiers were misled by scare propaganda from the aristocratic slave owners. After the introduction of the draft in 1862 those plodding in the ranks sometimes complained that it was a rich man's war and a poor man's fight. But northern soldiers too were exposed to a constant stream of propaganda, especially as abolitionist sentiment grew. The entire northern population was given horror stories about conditions in the southern prisons until men and women who were not monsters advocated taking revenge for atrocities against their sons in southern prisons by withholding available supplies from Confederate captives. There was a vast

difference between the sides in the resources available for prisoner care, but this difference was not realized by the general northern population, and neither their government nor their newspapers saw fit to educate them to the facts.

It is sometimes claimed that southern soldiers were fighting for states rights. I seriously doubt that an understanding of states rights, at least in the modern sense, strongly motivated very many in the ranks. They were, however, genuinely concerned, rightly or wrongly, with what they believed were threatened individual rights.

It is all very complex without touching on slavery.

Personally, I believe that northerners volunteered out of a strong sense of patriotism coupled with an intuitive understanding of the need for unity in pushing westward to settle all that wonderful land stretching to the Pacific. Many might also have been propagandized to a strong prejudice against their southern fellows about whom they were basically ignorant. The better informed among them while not scorning southerners personally may still have deplored the less democratic structure of southern society.

Southerners volunteered out of the same sense of patriotism coupled with a fear of hostile invasion. They too entertained strong prejudice born of ignorance and fanned by propaganda, and if many Northerners derided their social and political systems, they thought as badly of the northern economic system. Southerners valued the independence of owning their own farms--with or without slave labor, as the case might be. They did not want to be the employees of others even if that would bring greater financial rewards.

So perhaps the war resulted from irreconcilable economic issues---an old agricultural society versus a budding industrial one. True, the Union army did include many farmers from the western states who did not think or plan in the industrial fashion, but some of these suggested, not entirely in jest, that they wouldn't mind joining up with the Confederates to fight against New Englanders.

Whatever led the youth of the nation into war, what kept them there when the casualties mounted and what stopped the entire Confederate force from deserting after every man had to realize their cause was lost must be explained in terms of bonding and buddies. I leave it to those who have experienced prolonged combat to comment on that.

D. E. Mayfield is a resident of Virginia. His article was originally posted on the Civil War mailing list.

LEGION OF VALOR PROJECT

The Legion of Valor Museum of Fresno has asked the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table to develop and act as curator of an American Civil War section in the museum. If we accept the challenge, we need the support and cooperation of all our members. The museum requires that all articles displayed must be authentic. Currently, we have about a dozen to contribute. We need our membership to respond by donating items of the Civil War era to the collection.

Because we have elected to act as curator of the display, all items donated will be on a permanent loan basis and can be retrieved by the donor on request. Needed are such items as diaries, letters, medals, firearms, photos, sabers, battle flags, etc.

The Legion of Valor is an association of those whose valor has been recognized by award of our nation's two highest decorations: The Medal of Honor of the Navy, Army or Air Force; or The Army Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, or Air Force Cross. Organized on April 23, 1890, The Legion of Valor is the nation's senior organization of veterans. It was chartered by public law 224, an Act of Congress, and approved by the President on August 4, 1955.

The national museum is located at 2425 Fresno St., Fresno, CA. The museum is open Monday-Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Admission is free. If you want to participate in this project, please call Bill Head, 559/434-4253, or Tim Johnson, 559/431-4832. All items submitted will be credited to the donor.

AMERICAN BATTLEFIELD PROTECTION PLAN

The American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) promotes the preservation of significant historic battlefields associated with wars on American soil. The goals of the program are

- 1) to protect battlefields and sites associated with armed conflicts that influenced the course of our history,
- 2) to encourage and assist all Americans in planning for the preservation, management, and interpretation of these sites, and
- 3) to raise awareness of the importance of preserving battlefields and related sites for future generations. The ABPP focuses primarily on land use, cultural resource and site management planning, and public education.

STATS

Seventy-one of the nation's most significant Civil War battlefields have been lost. Another 50 require urgent preservation or will be lost by the year 2000.

Since 1990, the ABPP has awarded approximately \$4.4 million for 191 preservation and enhancement projects at more than 100 historic battle sites in 21 states and the District of Columbia.

The ABPP awards an average of \$22,000 for individual battlefield preservation and enhancement projects. Most partners contribute matching funds or in-kind services.

The following description of the battle at Resaca was taken from the ABPP web site.

THE BATTLE OF RESACA

The Battle of Resaca, part of the Atlanta Campaign, occurred on May 13-15, 1864. Principal Union Commander was Major General William T. Sherman; the Confederates were led by General Joseph E. Johnston.

Forces Engaged: Military Division of the Mississippi [US]; Army of Tennessee [CS]

Estimated Casualties: 5,547 total (US 2,747; CS 2,800)

Description: Gen. Joseph E. Johnston had withdrawn from Rocky Face Ridge to the hills around Resaca. On the 13th, the Union troops tested the Rebel lines to pinpoint their whereabouts. The next day full scale fighting occurred, and the Union troops were generally repulsed except on the Rebel right flank where Sherman did not fully exploit his advantage.

On the 15th, the battle continued with no advantage to either side until Sherman sent a force across the Oostanula River, at Lay's Ferry, towards Johnston's railroad supply line. Unable to halt this Union movement, Johnston was forced to retire.

Result(s): Inconclusive
CWSAC Reference #: GA008
Preservation Priority: II.3 (Class C)

LEARN MORE ABOUT ABPP

Write: American Battlefield Protection Program, Heritage Preservation Services, National Park Service, 1849 C Street NW, NC330, Washington, DC 20240.

Call: Tanya Gossett at (202) 343-3449; fax (202) 343-3921, e-mail: hps-info@nps.gov.



PROGRAM SCHEDULE FOR 1999

The programs for the remainder of the year are listed below. Be sure to mark your calendars so as not to miss any of the speakers we have lined up:

Date	Speaker	Topic
January 29, 1999	Nathan Boyer	<i>Civil War Prison Camps</i>
February 25	Dr. Allen Carden	<i>Abraham Lincoln</i>
March 25	John Peterson	<i>Gouverneur Warren</i>
April 29	Shelton Johnson	<i>Yosemite and Sequoia Black Infantry and Cavalry</i>
May 27	TBA	
June 24 - Backyard potluck at the Moats'	Carol Berry	<i>A Woman's War: The Homefront</i>
July 29	Jack Leathers	<i>Texans in the Confederacy</i>
August 26	Dr. Helen Trimpi	<i>Harvard Confederates</i>
September 30	Tom Goodrich	<i>First Civil War--Bleeding Kansas</i>
October 28 (note date change)	Dr. Leon Litwack	<i>Reconstruction</i>
November 18	Mike Carter	<i>States' Rights and Secession</i>
December	No regular meeting	

WEST COAST CIVIL WAR CONFERENCE

May 14-16, 1999, at the Harris Ranch, Highway 198 and I-5 near Coalinga
Faculty includes Robert K. Krick, Craig Symonds, Donald Elder, Jeffery Hummel and Ted Savas

Symposium Fees \$145

For room reservations: Call the Harris Ranch at 800-942-2333

More information: Contact Bill Head (559) 434-4253 or Tim Johnson (559) 431-4832).

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please begin/renew my membership in the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table. My membership category is checked below:

_____ Individual \$25 _____ Family \$35 _____ \$10 Student/Newsletter

Name _____

Address _____

Clip this membership form and send it with your check to the SJVCWRT, PO Box 5695, Fresno, CA 93755.

The membership year is from January to December. Five dollars of each membership goes to preservation.