



# BUGLE CALL ECHOES



Vol. 8 No. 1, February 2000

San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table

*Knowing in part may make a fine tale, but wisdom comes from seeing the whole.*

## **FEBRUARY PROGRAM**

February is Black History Month, and in its observance, the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table will hear Robert Snowden speak on **The Underground Railroad.**

Mr. Snowden is an accomplished actor and singer, having appeared with the San Diego Starlight Theatre in such musicals as "Carmen Jones" and "Finnian's Rainbow." As an actor he has appeared in the controversial "Cat Called Jesus" and played Bigger Thomas in "Native Son" on PBS television. Mr. Snowden is also a playwright; his stage play, "My Living Heritage," is performed annually in San Diego during Black History Month. He has portrayed Frederick Douglass in San Diego and at the Fresno County Historical Society Civil War Reenactment for the last seven years. He has previously given several programs for the SJVCWRT as Frederick Douglass.

## **FEBRUARY 2000 MEETING**

The February meeting of the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table will be held at the Ramada Inn, Highway 41 and Shaw, Fresno, on Thursday, February 24, 2000.

A no-host social hour begins at 6 p.m., with dinner at 7 p.m., followed by the speaker's presentation.

Please call Mike or Gloria Carter at 559/322-9474 to advise them you will be attending the meeting, or send your check for \$15 (\$10 for students under 25) made payable to the SJVCWRT, to PO Box 5695, Fresno, CA 93755.

## **MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE NOW PAYABLE FOR THE YEAR 2000.**

You will find a membership form indicating types of membership in the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table on the last page of this newsletter. If you joined the SJVCWRT in 1999 after September, your dues are good until January of 2001.

## **PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

### **Background of the SJVCWRT**

In response to questions newer members may have about the development and affiliations of the Round Table, the following summary is submitted.

Two Civil War discussion groups in Fresno combined in the early months of 1991 and the name San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table was formally approved. It was agreed that the group would affiliate with the Civil War Round Table Associates (CWRTA). The CWRTA was founded in 1968 to bring together all round tables. They also sponsor educational programs nationwide through symposiums and guided tours. Jerry Russell of Little Rock, Arkansas, is the founder and national chairman of this organization which strives to further the study of the Civil War and to fight for battlefield preservation.

Five dollars of each member's dues is sent annually to a battlefield preservation organization. For the year 1999, \$170 was contributed to HERITAGEPAC, a national lobbying group dedicated to preservation of American battlefields. Donations for 1999 also included: \$300 to Shiloh NMP, \$300 to Vicksburg NMP, \$200 to Rich Mountain Battlefield Civil War Site in Beverly, West Virginia, and a purchase of \$74.95 for the Civil War CD-ROM, A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union

and Confederate Armies, donated to the CSUF Library. Since 1991 our Round Table has contributed over \$9,000 to battlefield preservation.

### **Survey Results**

A survey was sent to all members in November. Twenty-eight survey forms were sent with self-addressed return envelopes; 17 came back. Some people did not respond to every question. Following are the results:

1. *To continue at the Ramada.* 11 Yes, 1 No, 1 Whatever
2. *Too expensive?* 13 No, 3 Yes
3. *Monthly meetings?* 9 Yes, 3 said every other month, 5 said monthly with 2 summer months off
4. *Program ratings.* 6 Excellent, 5 Good, Other responses ranged from Good to Excellent, It varies, Poor, and "Not many of the topics grabbed me."
5. *Are raffles acceptable?* 16 Yes, 1 No
6. *Continue fund raisers?* 13 Yes, 1 No, 1 "Need to talk about it—unsure of purpose."
7. *Right/wrong? or what needs to be improved?*

Favorable comments: Keep up the good work. It's a wonderful evening and hope it continues. Good variety of topics and speakers. The board has been successful in organizing interesting programs. I enjoy it and nearly always have a guest.

To be improved: Attendance, recruitment, more member input in programs.

Suggestions: Ask for ideas and reports to be made by members, e.g., book reviews. Have an open program each year so members can challenge each other's views of events or personalities—in effect, a debate. Need more meeting publicity—Fresno Bee, etc. Need to explain what is being preserved (what Civil War battlefields), what our obligation is. Need more information on the CWRT mission; ditto, explanation of the overall CWRT organization—regional/ (continued on back page)

## **PERSONALITIES OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR**

by Rick Kubiak

Turner Ashby was a Confederate soldier who maintained little of the fame down through the years to the present time that he had possessed during the early stages of the Civil War. The majority of the general public, even those who profess to having a good deal of knowledge about the Civil War, have never heard of Turner Ashby. Yet in the early months of 1862, his fame and exploits were legendary on both the Confederate and Federal sides of the conflict. Upon his death on June 6, 1862, many songs and poems were written about him. Had he



survived a greater portion of the war, it is thought that his reputation would have equaled that of Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee, or Jeb Stuart. And yet, it is not surprising that Ashby did not survive the later years of the Civil War. In fact, what is surprising, more like amazing, is that he survived as long as he did.

Turner Ashby was born on October 23, 1828, in Fauquier County, Virginia. He was a true descendant of the Virginians who fought in the American Revolution and the War of 1812. Like other members of the cavalier society, Ashby's formal schooling was slight. He was tutored by his mother and attended a private school operated by a neighbor, Major Ambler. Not only did Ashby learn to read, write, spell, and do arithmetic, he also learned more practical things that a boy in the country needed. He became an expert horseman and an excellent marksman. In the South where there were many fine horsemen, no one exceeded his fame as an equestrian.

Ashby received no formal military training; and yet upon entering the Civil War, he had a reputation of being an undisputed leader of men. He had organized a company of cavalry and had been elected captain without the benefit of a commission. When John Brown and his followers seized the Federal Arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Ashby assembled his company and crossed the mountains to join with the United States Marines. Although John Brown had already been captured when Ashby and his men arrived at Harpers Ferry, they performed picket and patrol duty. Ashby, mounted on his handsome white stallion, made an impressive figure, one which in less than two years would be familiar to all the people along the upper Potomac and the great Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

Upon the secession of Virginia from the Union, Ashby was engaged in helping picket the Potomac. Later, his command was merged with the 7<sup>th</sup> Virginia Cavalry. Ashby rose from a captain in charge of a company of men to a colonel of a regiment within the period of a few months. During this time, he was engaged mostly in scouting and outpost duty until the spring of 1862. He had taken command of Stonewall Jackson's Shenandoah Valley campaign of 1862. Due to his superb performance during this period of time, he was promoted to Brigadier General on May 23, 1862.

Ashby felt that, to lead his men in battle, he had to be there in the front, sometimes arriving there somewhat prior to his men. Ashby's horse artillery captain, R. Preston Chew, described him thus in *Nine Men in Gray* by Charles L. Dufour, "Ashby was very fond of the roar of artillery and was with us constantly on the battlefield and when we were shelling the enemy. I had seen Ashby under fire in full a hundred battles and skirmishes. He always was without consciousness of danger, cool and self-possessed and ever alert and quick as lightning to take advantage of any mistake of the enemy." When Chew and others of Ashby's command cautioned him about his reckless exposure to enemy fire, he was reported to have said, "An officer should always go to the front

and take risks in order to keep his men up to the mark."

Frank Cunningham, in his *Knight of the Confederacy*, General Turner Ashby, writes of the description of Ashby by Mary Anna Jackson (Stonewall's wife), "...He was as brave and chivalrous a gentlemen as ever drew a sword...He was an invaluable auxiliary to General Jackson in guarding the outposts of his army, his coolness, discretion, and untiring vigilance being as remarkable as his daring and bravery."

If Ashby had displayed any amount of hesitancy under direct enemy fire, this disappeared completely after the murder of his brother, Captain Richard Ashby, on July 3, 1861, by a Federal group of soldiers. He had been shot half a dozen times in an unequal fight and bayoneted through the abdomen. Ashby had been devoted to his younger brother and his grief was extremely painful, yet Ashby found his solace in his work and returned immediately to his duties. His devotion to duty was further demonstrated in the fact that Ashby did not take a day's leave from the army during his whole military career.

A shortcoming of Ashby's came very close to causing a serious conflict with Stonewall Jackson and the loss of Ashby to the Confederate cause. Ashby's method of leading the way into battles often left a large number of his command far behind. They were on slower horses, involved in different skirmishes, or were less interested in being in the heat of battle. His men were sometimes scattered over many miles on picket or patrol duty and were in almost constant action with the enemy, but often were lacking in drill and discipline. Major Kyd Douglas described the situation in *I Rode with Stonewall*. "Ashby's idea of the superior patriotism of the volunteer and that he should not be subjected to very much starch and drill made him a poor disciplinarian and caused the only failures he ever made...His service to the army was invaluable, but had he been as full of discipline as he was of leadership, his success would have been more fruitful and his reputation still greater. Yet it should be

remembered that he had little time for instruction of any kind. From the beginning his only drill ground was the field of battle...He was compelled to organize his troops while on the gallop." Jackson recognized this lack of discipline in Ashby's command and, as a result, issued an order on April 23, 1862, transferring Ashby's cavalry to Brigadier General Taliaferro and Brigadier General Winder and the requirement that Ashby apply for troops from Taliaferro and Winder whenever they were needed. As a result of this order, Ashby was furious with Jackson and stated that, had they been of equal rank, he would have challenged Jackson in spite of their well known devotion to each other. Ashby wrote a letter of resignation and asked that Jackson forward it to the War Department. Ashby had intended to resign from the army and organize an independent command in the lower Shenandoah Valley and his officers declared that they intended to go with him. Within an hour, Jackson revoked his order and restored Ashby to his command and he immediately returned to his rounds on outpost duty.

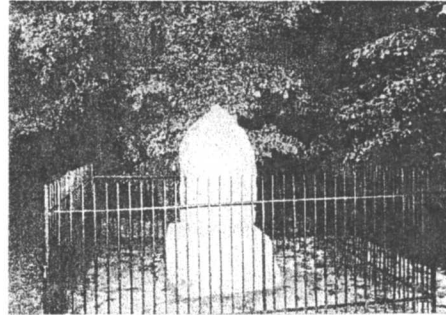
Jackson stated in a letter to General Robert E. Lee on May 5, 1862, "Such is Colonel Ashby's influence over his command that I became satisfied that, if I persisted in my attempt to increase the efficiency of the cavalry, it would produce the contrary effect, as Colonel Ashby's influence, who is very popular with his men, would be thrown against me."

Had Jackson not revoked his order and had Ashby resigned from the Confederate army and started an independent command, history might have recorded a different set of accomplishments for this gallant man, but this was not to be. Less than six weeks after Jackson's revoked order, on June 6, 1862, while fighting a rear guard action a few miles south of Harrisonburg, General Ashby was killed.

R. L. Dabney in *Life and Campaigns of Lieutenant General Thomas J. Jackson* described the scene. "Soon the 58<sup>th</sup> Virginia was hotly engaged and the enemy, the celebrated Ducktail Rifles from Pennsylvania,

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from behind a fence, delivered a withering fire into Ashby's ranks. Ashby rode all over his front, urging and encouraging his men who were recoiling from the blistering barrage. His horse was shot from under him and together they went down. General Ashby, disengaging



Monument Where Ashby Fell  
Harrisonburg, VA  
photo by Gary Tindle

himself from his dying mount jumped to his feet, shouting, 'Charge, men! For God's sake, charge!' He waved his sword in the direction

of the foe and took a couple of steps. And then, a bullet pierced the heart of Turner Ashby and the Beau Sabreur of Stonewall Jackson's little army of the Valley fell dead."

Other sources used:

*Generals in Gray* by Ezra Warner; *Decoying the Yanks, Jackson's Valley Campaign* by Champ Clark (Time-Life Books); *Stonewall Jackson* by G. F. R. Henderson.



Ashby Brothers Gravesite  
Stonewall Cemetery  
Winchester, VA  
photo by Gary Tindle

## **PRESERVATION NEWS**

### St. Basil Elementary School students enlist in Readshaw's Raiders

HARRISBURG, PA Jan. 13 -- They put on blue jeans at St. Basil's Elementary School in Pittsburgh to benefit the "boys in blue" who saved the Union at Gettysburg.

The students raised \$150 in goodwill offerings to be allowed to wear blue jeans for one day instead of school uniforms, according to Principal Sister Marilyn McWilliams. The donation was in response to the "Monument Challenge" of state Rep. Harry Readshaw, D-Allegheny, to schools statewide to raise money to save the Pennsylvania monuments on the Gettysburg battlefield.

Readshaw founded the Pa. Gettysburg Monuments Project nearly three years ago. Thus far, he's raised better than \$120,000 toward the \$750,000 estimated to provide for restoration and endowment for future maintenance of 146 of the 147 Pennsylvania monuments. The remaining monument, the huge Pennsylvania Memorial, is still being examined to determine its restoration needs, which could cost several million dollars.

In addition, Gov. Tom Ridge pledged to put \$500,000 in the next state budget to help save the monuments, which are threatened by the effects of time, weather and millions of visitors to the national park. Readshaw hopes to raise the remaining \$130,000 this year. "Many of us have visited Gettysburg and are truly convinced that this is a magnificent project," wrote Sister Marilyn in a letter to Readshaw that accompanied the donation. "We also wanted to support you to say thanks in a small way for the many things that you have done to help our Carrick/Mt. Oliver community. May God bless you 2,000 times over this year."

Readshaw said that the whole state is blessed more than 2,000 times over by the response of students and educators, such as those at St. Basil, to the challenge to preserve the Pennsylvania Gettysburg monuments, which

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were erected by the veterans who fought in the historic battle.

Readshaw added that others from across the state have contacted him about the challenge and what they can do to help. The Pennsylvania State Education Association has endorsed the Monument Challenge and in a recent newsletter to members urged teachers and schools to get involved.

Additional information about the Pennsylvania Gettysburg Monuments Project can be obtained by calling Readshaw's Harrisburg office at 717-783-0411 or by contacting him by e-mail at [Readshaw@aol.com](mailto:Readshaw@aol.com).

## **STANISLAUS CWA**

A new Civil War round table has been formed in the Central Valley. Calling itself the Stanislaus Civil War Association, the group meets on the third Thursday of each month in Modesto.

Their mission is twofold:

1. To serve the community's educational need concerning the American Civil War through presentations by historians, authors and artists; field trips to Civil War sites; and the exchange of books, papers, and other information.
2. To preserve America's Civil War historical treasures including battlefields, landmarks, relics and cemeteries through fundraising activities and volunteer work.

Fred Bohmfalk of Sacramento will speak to the group in February.

For more information about the SCWA, contact Phil Blake at 209/578-5748, or write him at 812 Parliament Avenue, Modesto, CA 95356.

Dues are \$12 per six month period for member and spouse, and the organization publishes a newsletter called the Stanislaus Civil War Association Bugle Call.

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**NOTES FROM THE THOMAS**  
**JEFFERSON HOUR**

*by Barbara Moats*

At our Share & Tell meeting in January I touched on comments heard on a Thomas Jefferson Hour program 1/24/00, largely devoted to the relationship between Washington and Jefferson (Jefferson was Secretary of State in Washington's cabinet). Clay Jenkinson, a nationally acclaimed humanities scholar, assumes the persona of Thomas Jefferson in a historically accurate portrayal. Not having the time to transcribe the interesting comments I heard regarding the Civil War, at that time, I am presenting them here.

During the latter part of the program, listeners can call in and ask Mr. Jefferson questions related to his time period or beyond. One caller asked, "Mr. Jefferson, could you have avoided the Civil War if you had still presided over the nation?"

Mr. Jefferson: "The Civil War was not inevitable but became inevitable because of the failures of my generation. What chances did we have to outlaw slavery? The first came in 1776 when we wrote the Declaration of Independence. My original draft of the Declaration of Independence had an anti-slavery manifesto in it. It's the longest single paragraph in the Declaration of Independence. It says George the III is waging war against human nature by enslaving black Africans. That paragraph was excised from the final draft at the insistence of the Carolinas and Georgia. So to get unanimity on the Declaration of Independence we had to yield to those slave states. That was an opportunity that we should not have lost.

"The second opportunity came in 1784 when I wrote the bill for the government for the western territories. This was the bill that brought in western states on equal footing. One of the hardest problems in America was how you brought in the west without colonizing it and I designed in 1784 a plan for bringing in new states on an equal footing after a very short probationary period without

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subordinating them to the original 13. This was not universally accepted as a plan but it became the basis of your Northwest Ordinance of 1787. Within that bill, the Land Ordinance of 1784, I had a provision which forbade slavery crossing the Appalachian Mountains.

"So slavery would have been confined to Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia. That would have prevented the Civil War. But that provision of the 1784 Ordinance failed to pass by one vote. Even my own Virginia delegation voted against it. I said heaven was silent in this awful moment. Now millions of unborn negroes will be enslaved to men they never offended for want of a single vote in the Congress of the United States. Destiny leans on such moments.

"The third attempt we had was the Constitution of 1787. I was not there. I was in Europe, but slavery was talked about endlessly at the Constitutional Convention and they too postponed it. They could not come to a consensus about what to do about slavery and so the 3/5ths clause and the fugitive slave clauses found their way into that document as compromise measures.

"So every time in my lifetime we had a chance to wrestle this problem to the ground and get it over with, we passed it on to the next generation. And in doing so we inevitably made it worse, deeper, more corrupt than it otherwise would have been; and in 1819 when the Missouri Compromise occurred and now one state was going to come in slave and another state was going to come in free on a geographical line, I said this is the death knell of the nation. It's like hearing a firebell in the night.

"Had I been alive in 1860 I don't know what I would have done, but I can promise you this. I do not respect your 16th president's idea that the Union should be held together with blood. If Arizona wants to secede tomorrow I say farewell. Go thy way, build your republic and come back if you wish, but you have a right to self-government and that includes the right of

secession and that's a sacred right. The Union is a voluntary association.

"So what does this tell you? It tells you this, that slavery is so deep and evil that it could only be eradicated from American life by extra-constitutional means - by a civil war."

#### Statements Regarding George Washington

In a discussion between Clay Jenkinson and Richard Norton Smith, author of *Patriarch, George Washington and The New American Nation*, Smith comments that in his will George Washington makes a political statement right off the bat, saying, "I, George Washington, a citizen of the United States and lately president of the same...;" Smith notes what he did not say: not a citizen of Virginia, not a Southerner, not an aristocrat, but an American. "Washington was a Nationalist, he was a Nationalist all his life and those words in his will were the logical climax of a lifelong evolution."

"The one great concern that he voiced toward the end of his life, to a visitor, was that if the South, in a sense you could say the Jeffersonian agrarians, did not over time come to terms with to peacefully and voluntarily embrace emancipation, that inevitably in the course of time the growth of an industrial free North would bring about civil conflict, perhaps indeed, civil war. That was his one great overriding fear for the future of America." (Richard Norton Smith)

The Thomas Jefferson Hour can be heard Sunday and Monday evenings at 7:00 on Valley Public Radio. Sunday is a repeat of the previous Monday evening program.

#### **FREDERICK DOUGLASS**

*Born February 7, 1817.* American abolitionist, journalist, author, and human rights advocate. "For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder...The feeling of the nation must be quickened; the conscience of the nation must be roused."

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### **ELMWOOD CEMETERY**

Elmwood Cemetery, located in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, has a self-guided tour of the graves of men who served with the Confederacy. This group includes Captain Redmond Burke, Lieutenant Andrew Leopold, Lieutenant Henry Hagan, Lieutenant Colonel William Fitzhugh Lee, Colonel Isaac Scott Tanner, Colonel William Augustine Morgan, Colonel Henry Kyd Douglas, Colonel Isaac Vandeventer Johnson, and Brigadier General William Whedbee Kirkland, the only Civil War general buried at Elmwood.

The most famous of these Civil War burials is Douglas, who wrote the well known and still available *I Rode With Stonewall*.

Douglas was born in Shepherdstown, where his father, the Reverend Robert Douglas, was pastor of Christ Reformed Church. When Henry was about five years old, his family moved to Ferry Hill Place, across the Potomac River (now the location of the headquarters of the C&O Canal National Park).

Douglas joined the Confederate army as a private in Company B, 2<sup>nd</sup> Virginia Infantry, rising to the rank of captain. Subsequently he served as Assistant Inspector General and Assistant Adjutant General on Stonewall Jackson's staff. After Jackson's death, Douglas served as Chief of Staff and Assistant Adjutant General to five Confederate generals. He was commander of the Light Brigade at Appomattox; one of the Light Brigade's claims to fame is being the troops which fired the last shots at Appomattox.

After the war, Douglas was a lawyer in Winchester, Virginia, then moved his practice to Hagerstown, Maryland. He died in 1903. His book, *I Rode With Stonewall*, was published in 1940 by his nephew.

Douglas' is the most visited grave of those in Elmwood Cemetery, according to the self-guided tour brochure.

## C-SPAN PRESIDENTIAL SERIES

by Carol Berry

In March of 1999 C-SPAN began broadcasting its *American Presidents: Life Portraits* series. Each week, ending in December with William Jefferson Clinton, a United States president was profiled. These in-depth views of the nation's chief executives included input from historians, park rangers, family members, and authors, and gave viewers an opportunity to see where the men who became president were born, where they lived, and where they were buried. I was an avid viewer of the series.

The television audience participated in the program by calling in during live broadcasts. Viewers were also encouraged to enter a contest C-SPAN was sponsoring. "Based on what you've learned from C-SPAN's AMERICAN PRESIDENTS: LIFE PORTRAITS series, create a portrait of one of the 42 presidents using words, video, web site design, music or art."

Encouraged by my daughter, who thought the process of entering would be an experience in itself, I began researching Benjamin Harrison as the subject of my entry. I chose to research Harrison for two reasons: although having grown up in Indianapolis--where Benjamin Harrison had his home and where he is buried --I knew very little about him; and, he served in the Civil War.

Benjamin Harrison was born in Ohio, the grandson of William Henry Harrison, our 9th president. When an adult, Benjamin Harrison moved to Indianapolis and started a law practice. At the outbreak of the Civil War, Harrison formed the 70<sup>th</sup> Indiana Volunteer Regiment. This unit first saw action in western Kentucky and Tennessee. In May of 1864, the regiment joined General Sherman's Atlanta Campaign with the Army of the Cumberland.

The 70<sup>th</sup> Indiana participated in most of the Atlanta Campaign battles, including Resaca, Cassville, New Hope Church, Pumpkin Vine Creek, Dallas, Allatoona Hills, Kennesaw Mountain, Pine Mountain, Lost Mountain, Golgotha Church, and the siege of Atlanta. It

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was during this campaign that Harrison was promoted to Brigadier General.

After the capture of Atlanta in the fall of 1864, Harrison returned to Indianapolis to report to Governor Oliver Morton for special duty. The next few weeks were spent campaigning for the job of Indiana's Supreme Court Reporter for himself and for Abraham Lincoln for president. When the November elections were concluded, Harrison returned to army duty and was given command of the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade. The 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade fought against Hood at Nashville. In April 1865 Harrison rejoined the 70<sup>th</sup> Indiana and marched with them in the Grand Review in Washington, DC, on May 24, 1865.

Harrison was elected president of the United States in 1888 and served for one term. He is sometimes referred to as The Sandwich President as his term of office was between the separate terms of Grover Cleveland. While president, Harrison championed providing pensions to Union veterans, and throughout the rest of his life, he attended many Civil War reunions.



The quilted wallhanging I made to honor President Harrison consists of a large redwork portrait of him at the time he was Chief Executive and a photo taken in his Civil War uniform. The quilt is made almost entirely of patriotic fabrics. Interspersed throughout the quilt are printed facts relative to Harrison's life. Making up the remainder of the quilt are four



sawtooth star blocks--my favorite quilt block and one that always reminds me of the U. S. flag--and four pinwheel star blocks.

Although not a grand prize winner in the C-SPAN contest, my entry was awarded a first place, my prize being a 19" color television set. Of the 37 top prize winners (12 grand prizes and 25 first place winners), it was interesting to see which presidents of the United States were represented in the 18-and-over category:

John Adams (1); George Bush (1); Bill Clinton (1); Gerald R. Ford (1); U. S. Grant (1); Warren G. Harding (1); Benjamin Harrison (1); Herbert Hoover (2); Thomas Jefferson (3); Lyndon Johnson (1); John F. Kennedy (2); Abraham Lincoln (7); William McKinley (1); James Monroe (2); James K. Polk (2); Franklin D. Roosevelt (2); Theodore Roosevelt (3); Harry S. Truman (4); George Washington (1)

Being a quilter, I was pleased to note that, of the 37 top prize winning entries, four of them were quilts.

According to C-SPAN, there were approximately 750 entries in the contest.

### **WAR'S TOLL**

At the Beaver Dam Cemetery in Clark County, Mississippi, are the following five headstones:

*In memory of Erastus, third son of Wiley and  
Jane McNeill*

*Born Dec. 18, 1841 - Died Jan. 14, 1862*

A soldier once young, strong and brave who marched fearlessly to his country's cause lies here. Though stout and bold, and vigorous, scorching fevers soon robbed of these and took him in the flower of manhood. To dwell in realms of bliss with Christ the sinner's friend.



*In memory of Wiley, second son of Wiley and  
Jane McNeill*

*Born Jun. 29, 1836 - Died Feb. 7, 1862*

Faithful to the call of his county he went, but disease had unfit him for service severe and laborious; So, to his home he returned and a

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few weeks remained, and then the Lord relieved him of disease and made him a soldier in Heaven.



*In memory of Adin, first son of Wiley and Jane  
McNeill*

*Born Sept. 24., 1833 - Died Sept. 20, 1862*

Dear brother, too hard it seemed that just at the close of the struggle in which thou hast striven so bravely and the victory won from the foe, flying balls thy life which promised so well should take but thus it was. And as the sun in silence hid his face and thy enemy in confusion fled, and the den of battle lulled into stillness three shots the body pierced. And ended the life of one of whom we were proud and sent thy spirit to realms of glory.



*In memory of Malcom, fifth son of Wiley and  
Jane McNeill*

*Born Jan. 9, 1946 - Died Sept. 26, 1862*

Anxious a soldier to become and march to the field of battle to fight for his country's rights. In boyhood he hastened to the front, but, ah, to his sick bed-side sad news soon brought a weeping father and mother to witness death lay his cold hand upon him and bear him way to dwell, we trust with Jesus our redeemer in heaven.



*In memory of William, fourth son of Wiley and  
Jane McNeill*

*Born Dec. 17, 1848 - Died May 21, 1864*

When but a youth with rosy cheeks his county's call he answered. Bravely he stood the smoking musketry and marched from the field of battle without the enemy's mark upon him. But alas! when far from a mother's tender care, amid strangers in a strange land. Disease laid his unkind hand upon him. And placed him in a soldier's grave to sleep and rest in the arms of Jesus.

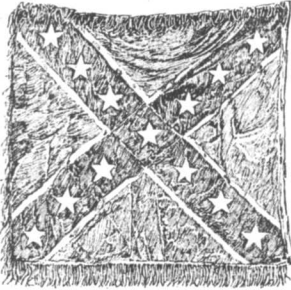


**REENACTMENT CALENDAR**

The Civil War Reenactment Society event schedule for the year has been published.

March 25-26	Mooney Grove
April 29-30	Mariposa
June 24-25	Bartlett Park
August 19-20	Fort Tejon
September 9-10	Hickey Park
October 7-8	Kearney Park
November 11	Veterans Parade

Ron Vaughn, a member of the SJVCWRT, is also a member of the Civil War Reenactment Society. Contact him if you have any questions about the above event schedule.

**CHI 2000****Petersburg To Appomattox with Ed Bearss**

The Confederate Historical Institute will hold its 22d Annual Conference in Petersburg, Va., April 6-9, 2000, at the Ramada Inn.

The theme of the meeting will be "Petersburg To Appomattox With Ed Bearss" and will feature a line-up of speakers and tours of Petersburg NB, Five Forks battlefield, and Sailor's Creek battlefield, with an optional Sunday tour to Appomattox Court House NHP for the 135th anniversary commemoration of Gen. Robert E. Lee's surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia to Union forces under Gen. Ulysses S. Grant.

"Ten years ago our group was present at the 125th anniversary of Lee's Surrender, so we thought it would be appropriate to re-visit that scene on the 135th anniversary," said Jerry L. Russell, founder and national chairman of the Confederate Historical Institute. Russell is a Little Rock, Ark., communications executive

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and also founder and national chairman of Civil War Round Table Associates.

"We are honored to have on our program Gordon Rhea, a noted historian and authority on the 1864 Overland Campaign which led to the end of the Civil War; Chris Calkins and Tracy Chernault, historians at Petersburg NB; Craig Rains, commander of the T.J. Churchill Chapter of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, and descendant of a Petersburg veteran; and Dr. Martin Fishwick of Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va., an authority on Robert E. Lee after the War," Russell said.

"And, of course, the prime attraction at our conferences for the past two decades is the incomparable battlefield tour guide, Edwin C. Bearss, the retired Chief Historian of the National Park Service, and an internationally recognized authority on Civil War military history," Russell said.

Hotel reservations can be made at the Ramada Inn-Petersburg, I-95 & East Washington, Petersburg VA 23803, (804) 733-0730. Delegates to the Confederate Historical Institute Conference will qualify for a rate of \$52.08 per room, single or double, including tax.

For complete information on the meeting schedule, costs, etc., contact CHI at PO Box 7388, Little Rock AR 72217, or send your address to:

*jlrussell@civilwarbuff.com*

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## **SOUTHERN RIGHTS, CONFEDERATE WRONGS**

Mark E. Neely, Jr. *Southern Rights: Political Prisoners and the Myth of Confederate Constitutionalism*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999. vii + 212 pp. Notes and index. \$35.00 (cloth) ISBN 0-8139-1894-4.

*Reviewed for H-CIVWAR by Brian Dirck <dirck@anderson.edu>, Asst. Professor of American History, Anderson University.*

It is impossible to read Mark Neely's *Southern Rights: Political Prisoners and the Myth of Confederate Constitutionalism* without thinking of his earlier book *The Fate of Liberty: Abraham Lincoln and Civil Liberties*, which won the 1992 Pulitzer prize in history. In *The Fate of Liberty* Neely examined the court and prison records of Americans arrested in the North for various anti-government activities to determine whether Lincoln's rather dark reputation for suppressing political dissent was justified. He found that it was not, and in so doing he was rightly praised for his meticulous research and careful, balanced arguments. In *Southern Rights*, Neely's purpose is different, but his methods are much the same. Whereas in *The Fate of Liberty* he wished to determine whether or not Lincoln deserved blame for the state of civil liberties in the North, in *Southern Rights* he tried to discover whether Jefferson Davis and the Confederate government rate the generally positive treatment afforded them by Confederate apologists--and many scholars--for their record in preserving Southerners' civil liberties. "Most interpretations assume that restrictions of constitutional liberty went decidedly against the grain of the white people of the South," Neely wrote. "Despite their other disagreements, on that point the historians have reached a tacit consensus" (p. 7).

Neely challenged this consensus by examining the available arrest records, court opinions, and other documents related to Confederate wartime arrests of civilians; in other words, he applied basically the same methodology that worked so well in *Fate of Liberty*. Focusing particularly on cases involving suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, declarations of

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martial law, draft evasion, and other expressions of dissent, he found that the Confederate record was not much different from that of the Union. Confederate authorities, Neely argues, used much the same pragmatic, flexible approach characteristic of the Lincoln administration. "Though Confederate measures taken for internal security, when noticed at all, have been assumed to be necessary, and, if anything, too mild, there is evidence of political repression," Neely wrote (p. 132). People in the Confederacy were arrested for their political beliefs, jailed without benefit of the writ of habeas corpus, and subjected to the sometimes not-very-tender mercies of martial law and military rule.

Given the South's self-proclaimed role as a champion of individual rights, one might have expected an outcry of protests or at the very least a robust conversation about civil liberties among Southern politicians, lawyers, and newspapermen. But Neely argues that this was not the case. Most white Southerners quietly acquiesced in the suspension of the writ, declarations of martial law, and other such measures. Neely identified a "longing for order in the South, released by independence from the North and quite at odds with region's fabled desire for liberty or 'southern rights'" (p. 34).

He was struck by the contrast with the North, where Lincoln's various attempts to curb antiwar protests triggered a boisterous debate about civil liberties in wartime. "It seems remarkable that there are no celebrated cases challenging the power of the Confederate government to interfere with the daily lives of its citizens," he wrote. "Confederate history does not have its equivalent of Ex parte Merryman or of General Andrew Jackson's fine for contempt" (p. 62). The Confederacy was no different from the North; it wanted to win the war. "Southern society was, at bottom, American and much the same as Northern society. It consisted of people who valued both liberty and order. They did not bridle more than normally at restrictive measures taken by the government to fight a war for national existence" (p. 79).

At its heart, *Southern Rights* is about what Neely perceives as an overweening Confederate streak of hypocrisy; the very title of his book is a statement of irony. Neely is impatient with what he characterizes as the "strident" and "noisy" posturing of Confederates on matters of civil liberties and individual rights. He is also deeply distressed by a tendency among Confederate historians to take Southerners' declarations of libertarianism at face value. "Antebellum politicians exaggerated sensitivity about southern rights as a means of combating northern power," Neely wrote, "but historians should not exaggerate as well" (p. 79).

There is merit in this argument, and in the book as a whole. Professor Neely should be commended for pursuing this subject matter in the first place. Many scholars of Confederate history, and certainly the lay public, would much prefer to discuss battlefields and generals. Even the admirable recent trend in the field towards studies of social and cultural topics tends to neglect matters of law and constitutionalism. There is also a real paucity of primary source materials available, and these are of a generally fragmentary nature. Arrest records for Confederate political prisoners, for example, are scattered throughout various archive collections, often with no index or other finding aids. Confederate legal and constitutional history is a neglected topic for a very good reason, and Neely should be commended for exhibiting the patience and resourcefulness necessary to pursue this evidence.

In doing so, Neely shed light on some very dark and musty corners of Confederate history. He wrote a brilliant little chapter on the relationship between the prohibition of alcohol and martial law in the Confederacy. He introduced the reader to the almost completely unknown office of "habeas corpus commissioners," quasi-legal government officials who acted as "the War Department's shadow courts" (p. 80).

Neely also examined the careers of some obscure but fascinating individuals like Thomas C. Hindman, the irascible military

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governor of Arkansas who unabashedly proclaimed the need to take harsh measures against Southern dissenters, and North Carolina judge Richmond M. Pearson, who employed some very interesting legal arguments to block conscription in his state. It is also to Neely's credit that he does not shirk from pointing out what should have been obvious to any historian of the Confederacy, but which has been strangely overlooked: that the issue of civil liberties in the Confederacy should be seen as one involving black as well as white Americans.

Neely points out that the vaunted Confederate concern for individual rights was a concern for white rights only. African-Americans didn't much enter the Confederate field of vision on this point. It is high time that Confederate history reconceptualize itself as a field involving black and white subjects alike, and Neely's work should help. These are all valuable contributions to the literature on the Confederacy. Nevertheless, *Southern Rights* does possess shortcomings. I suspect they are shortcomings produced by the book's close proximity to the methods and questions prevalent in *The Fate of Liberty*. Neely applied almost exactly the same questions to the Confederacy that he asked of Lincoln and the North, questions about martial law, suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, enforcement of conscription statutes, and arrest of civilian political prisoners. In doing so, however, he failed to examine some aspects of the Confederate experience that actually were quite different -- not better -- from those in the North. The widespread Confederate military practice of property impressment, for example, was a burning issue of personal rights vs. government power, yet Neely didn't address this subject. Neely also rarely mentions sequestration -- the confiscation of Yankee-owned property in the South -- a practice that took up the lion's share of the Confederate federal court system's time and resources throughout the war.

These issues were important because much of what constituted a Confederate conversation concerning personal rights and government

interference involved matters like sequestration and impressment, matters which have no direct counterpart in the legal history of the North. This might also have caused Neely to moderate his conclusion that the South had no real conversation about civil liberties. In fact, impressment cases raised serious concerns about individual rights in the South. And the Confederacy may well have had its version of *Ex parte Merryman* in a sequestration case called *James Louis Petigru vs. The Confederate States of America*, in which a South Carolina Unionist challenged the Confederate national government's right to conduct sequestration investigations which impinged upon Confederates' personal rights. Both impressment and sequestration involved property rights, and it is plausible to suggest that this question of property constituted a conversation about civil liberties which, while differing from the North's debate over habeas corpus and martial law, was in its way quite robust.

I also wondered if Professor Neely was quite fair in his analysis of Jefferson Davis. He is annoyed with invidious comparisons between Lincoln and Davis where civil liberties are concerned, taking special umbrage with the suggestion by many historians that Davis was more reluctant to suspend the writ and declare martial law because of "habitual and consistent constitutional principles" that Lincoln lacked. On the contrary, Neely argued, Davis was willing to repress political dissent when he thought circumstances warranted such action. "Lincoln was no 'dictator,'" Neely wrote, "and Jefferson Davis was no 'constitutionalist'" (p. 172).

Perhaps unwittingly, Neely is actually rehabilitating Davis's reputation here, for the Confederate president has often been criticized for being so stiff and formal in his constitutional scruples that he lacked the necessary flexibility to meet Confederate war needs. Neely suggests that the opposite is true. But I think Neely presses this point a bit too far. He cuts Lincoln a great deal of slack, suggesting that, when Lincoln quickly moved to suspend the writ of habeas corpus in Kentucky

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and Maryland in 1861, he "recognized the realities of power." On the other hand, he suggests that Davis rather cynically "opted for a pose of dedication to civil liberty as a way of attracting these states to his side" (p. 154).

Perhaps this made sense as good political strategy for Davis; but why should we assume it was a "pose"? Perhaps Davis pursued a policy here that was, at least to his mind, both pragmatic and principled. Maybe he really believed himself to be both a defender of constitutional liberty and a flexible political leader. Lincoln scholars--Neely among them--have long suggested (and rightly so) that it is wrong to draw too cynical a distinction between principle and practical politics where Lincoln is concerned. Should it be less so for Davis?

Neely is impatient with the hypocrisy, in Confederates themselves and in much of Confederate history, which suggests an unusual anxiety for civil liberties in a Confederate nation which he believes was in fact all too comfortable with wartime violations of those liberties. On the whole this is laudable; it encourages scholars of Confederate history to press beyond the well-worn shibboleths of Lost Cause mythology.

If such an approach can also strike a blow at the abominable history perpetrated (often all too successfully) by modern neo-Confederates, so much the better. Yet I wonder if those of us who write Civil War history might be better served by a more balanced, charitable point of view, suggesting that each side was afflicted not with hypocrisy, but with unresolved internal contradictions and tensions on a whole host of issues, including the proper balance between liberty and order. To this end, Professor Neely's *Southern Rights* is a useful beginning, a starting point for a conversation we should be having about the intellectual underpinnings of the Confederacy, and the Union as well.

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**PROGRAM SCHEDULE FOR 2000**

**BUGLE CALL ECHOES**

Date	Speaker	Topic
January 27, 2000	Membership	<i>Show and Tell</i>
February 24, 2000	Robert Snowden/ Black History Month	<i>The Underground Railroad</i>
March 30, 2000	Cathy Rehart/ Women's History Month	"A Twist of Fate"
April 27, 2000	Fred Bohmfalk	<i>William Sherman: His Early Years</i>
May 25, 2000	Ken Bruce	<i>McClellan and the Seven Days Before Richmond</i>
June 29, 2000	Wayne Bowen	<i>Ella Carroll's Role in the Civil War</i>
July 27, 2000	Phil Avila	<i>Brush Strokes of War: A Slide Presentation of Civil War Art</i>
August 31, 2000	Todd Holmes	TBA
September 28, 2000	Vern Crow	<i>The Lost Opportunities at Chickamauga</i>
October 26, 2000	Jeff Hummel/Fund Raiser	TBA
November 30, 2000	Dave Davenport	TBA
December 2000	No meeting	

**President's Corner (continued)**

national. Send meeting reminders to people who have missed meetings. Work harder on recruitment. Would like to have a downtown luncheon meeting occasionally (note: meetings of the round table used to be strictly luncheons at the Downtown Club). Need new, younger board members. Need new and some younger board members. I'd like the talks to be groundbreaking. If fund-raising is burdensome, perhaps we should concentrate on education and sharing of information.

*Ken Moats  
 President*

**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 or Newsletter

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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 towards preservation.