

ECHOES



Gettysburg, 1995

By Carol Berry

For my birthday last December, my daughter Holly gave me "a trip to any battlefield." Someone in our group jokingly asked if the Civil War had been fought in Hawaii. For my part, there was no question which site to visit: Gettysburg.

Originally we signed up for the tour with Bill Head and Tim Johnson through Fresno State, but when that was canceled, Holly and I arranged our own trip. We would fly into Washington, DC, spend a few days there and then drive to Gettysburg, where we would stay for three days. Our trip to Gettysburg would also allow us side trips to Antietam, Harpers Ferry and Manassas.

The four days in Washington, D.C., were sightseer's heaven. A visit to Arlington National Cemetery gave us an opportunity to tour Robert E. Lee's home, confiscated by the U.S. Government because of his failure to pay taxes on it. At Ford's Theatre, I marveled at the beautiful quilted lining in the coat Lincoln wore the night he was assassinated.

On the Fourth of July, Holly and I sat next to a statue of General Grant and listened to the concert and watched the fireworks. Of the Civil War era personages whose statues grace Statuary Hall at the Capitol, Lew Wallace's was of note since he was from Indiana, my birthplace.

Arriving in Gettysburg the day after the July 4th festivities, Holly and I drove around the park to get an overview, stopping at one point at the North Carolina monument on Confederate Avenue. Looking across the field towards Cemetery Ridge, I thought of the soldiers who crossed that field during Pickett's Charge and I thought of the many who did not return . . . and I realized I was finally at this place that I had previously only heard and read about.

Continued on next page

September Meetings

Evo and Jeremy Bluestein, who have traveled the world exciting audiences with their performances of American folk music, will present a program of Civil War music at the Sept. 27 (Wednesday) dinner meeting of the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table. More on this later.

First, the normal August meeting has been postponed to Saturday, Sept. 2 when members of the CWRT interested in Civil War research will attend a special workshop at California State University, Fresno. The two-hour workshop will be conducted by Zane Clark, reference librarian. Members will meet in the CSUF Library lobby at 10 a.m. There will be no campus parking fees.

A no-host luncheon is scheduled at Carrow's Restaurant, 1484 E. Shaw. Ave., immediately following the workshop. Those who plan to attend are asked to call Bill Head, 683-0279.

The Bluestein brothers of Fresno, who will present the program at the Sept. 27 meeting in the Remington

Continued on Page 4

Gettysburg (Continued)

The 13th Annual Gettysburg Civil War Heritage Days were in progress during our stay. As part of the celebration, an evening lecture series was offered at the local junior high. I attended a talk by Eric Campbell, a National Park Services historical interpreter, about the exploits of the 9th Massachusetts Battery at Gettysburg near the Peach Orchard. Robert E. Lee Krick, an NPS historian in Richmond, spoke on "The Battle of Falling Waters" the following evening. The Battle of Falling Waters on July 14, 1863, resulted in 1,000 Confederate casualties -- including the death of General Johnston Pettigrew. All had survived the battle at Gettysburg.

Also during our Gettysburg stay, we met two volunteer park rangers with whom I became acquainted through a subscription to the newsletter of the Joshua Chamberlain Civil War Round Table in Brunswick, Maine. Both write columns for that newsletter. Nancy Heverly, who lives in Maryland, is a volunteer in the park on weekends, her goal that of becoming a licensed battlefield guide. She made valuable suggestions about what to see, do, buy and avoid while in Gettysburg. Tom Desjardin makes his home in Maine and is working at the park for the summer in conjunction with his Ph.D. His book, "Stand Firm Ye Boys From Maine," is scheduled to be published later in the year. Tom's talk at Little Round

Top about the 20th Maine and the 15th Alabama was excellent.

Tom, Nancy, Holly and I had dinner at the historic Farnsworth House our last evening, where we discussed local history, the movie "Gettysburg" (Tom served as an advisor to Jeff Daniels in his role as Joshua Chamberlain), and Tom's and Nancy's experiences as park rangers. On leaving the Farnsworth, we stopped to look at the bullet holes which pitted the side of the building, perceptible reminders of that three-day battle between Union and Confederate forces in July of 1863.

Our visit to the Manassas battlefield the following afternoon culminated the week. Parking the car at the Stone Bridge, we took the path which runs along the creek. It was a beautiful, peaceful area and the walk gave me an opportunity to think of all that I'd seen on my trip. I wondered, as I had often that week, what it was that drew me to the battlefields, graves and memorial monuments I'd seen. Certainly, there was the historical aspect, but it was something more.

I finally understood that it was a way to honor the men and women who were part of that momentous and defining struggle so many years ago. I realized, too, that I hoped this journey would not be the last one that I would make to those places of so many memories.

Civil War News of the World

In August 1856, a Swedish bank teller cheerfully changed a \$500 Confederate banknote for an enterprising customer, at the same favorable exchange rate commanded by the Federal currency then. His mistake was discovered only when it was much too late.

* * *

There was an Abraham Lincoln on each side during the Civil War. The President, and a Confederate, Private Abraham Lincoln of Company F, 1st Virginia Cavalry, from Jefferson County. He was reported as a deserter in 1864, so the North ended with both.

Years before the war Jesse Grant, father of Ulysses, lived and worked in the home of Owen Brown, whose small son, playing noisily about the frontier homestead, grew up to be John Brown, the Abolitionist martyr who lit the fuse of the war.

[Excerpted from "The Civil War: Strange & Fascinating Facts," by Burke Davis.]

The San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table officers for 1995 are:



President John Taylor
Vice President Bill Head
Secretary Barbara Moats
Treasurer Wayne Bowen

Other board members
are Linda Clague, Tim Johnson, Verne Cole,
newsletter editor; Rick Kubiak, historian; and the immediate past president, Charles Jorgensen.

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

Creating A New Nation

"A Government Of Our Own: The Making of the Confederacy," by William C. Davis

Reviewed by Charles Jorgensen

Jack Davis has done it again. Another fine book by the author of over 25 Civil War books. In my opinion this is one of his finest efforts. He vividly brings to life the individuals who came together, Feb. 4, 1861, in Montgomery to make "A Government Of Our Own."

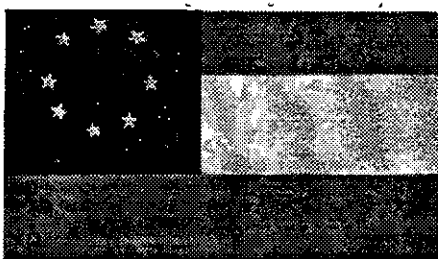
His book covers the vital four months that saw: 1) An agreement as to what form of government the South would have, 2) An election of a provisional president, 3) A creation of a provisional constitution, and 4) The creation of the framework of all facets of the new government.

By the end of May, when Congress adjourned, all the new departments were functioning. The War Department, State Department, Treasury Department, Attorney General, Postal Service quickly swung into action. A particularly amusing incident was how the Treasury Department got started. Christopher Memminger, appointed, but not yet confirmed as Secretary of the Treasury, had published the office hours of his new department as 9 a.m to 3 p.m starting the next day.

He then sent off his secretary to find the government building and set up an office. The young man did just that and got the keys to the old Montgomery Insurance building, opened it up and claimed the first floor for the treasury. A slave was commandeered to sweep, a desk and chair were borrowed, and the treasury was ready at 9 a.m.

Davis paints a vivid picture of Montgomery in 1861. It was a small town, 4,341 white citizens and 4,502 slaves but one of the wealthiest cities in the south per capita. The town had been the state capital since 1846.

On March 4, 1861, the Provisional Congress of the Confederacy, adopted this Flag with two red bars separated by a white bar and a circle of white stars in a field of blue. It was flown over the capitol for the first time that day.



Dues Reminder

Annual dues, which include a subscription to the newsletter, are \$25, of which \$5 goes to battlefield preservation. Newsletter subscriptions are \$10. All dues became payable in January. Those who had paid at other times in the past may have their dues prorated this year if they desire. Checks should be made out to CWRT and mailed to P.O. Box 5695, Fresno, CA 93755.

His description of the town even covers such details as the fact that the town had two Washington Streets which did not connect.

Into this community came the cream of the South: "Little Aleck" Stephens, Robert Toombs (whose drinking at local parties may have cost him the presidency), Howell Cobb, William Lowndes Yancey, James Chestnut, Robert Barnwell Rhett Sr., Lawrence Keitt, Thomas Cobb and many others.

The political twists and turns leading up to Jefferson Davis being offered the presidency makes fascinating reading. This book makes Davis more understandable and, at least to me, a sympathetic individual.

Many interesting facts are covered in this book, such as Stephens' statement that the new Constitution "made African inequality and subordination, and the equality of white men, the chief cornerstone of the Southern Republic". "Little Aleck" would spend the rest of his life trying to back away from his under cutting of the high moral tone others were trying to set.

For readers who want to delve further into this period, Davis includes 98 pages of footnotes and a 17 page bibliography.

When Chilly McIntosh and M. Tidman, chiefs of the Creek nation, arrived in Montgomery on May 30, after having been invited by the Confederate Government to negotiate treaties, "they stepped off a train expecting to find the throbbing nerve center of the Confederacy. Instead they found only sleepy, slightly dazed, and still somewhat resentful Montgomery." In the rush to move to Richmond nobody had thought to tell their hopeful allies that they had moved.

I enjoyed the book and recommend it.

September Meetings (continued)

restaurant at Clovis and Kings Canyon Avenues, are masters of many instruments including fiddle, banjo, guitar, autoharp, button accordion, and mandolin. They switch from one to another with skill and spontaneity.

They grew up in a musical family and for many years performed in a string band with their siblings and father, folklorist Gene Bluestein. They have a rich repertoire of songs of the Civil War era when many a campfire resounded with the dolorous notes of homesick and frightened young men, while the songs back home were being sung in an atmosphere of sadness for the absence of sons, brothers, husbands and fathers. Yet there also were lilting songs of joy mostly for the coming end of the war, no matter how far away that might have been.

The meeting will begin with no-host cocktails at 6:30 p.m. followed by dinner and the Bluesteins. Reservations are encouraged. Checks for \$15 for each dinner should be made out to the CWRT, P.O. Box 5695, Fresno, CA. 93755. Seating will not be guaranteed without a reservation

11th Annual West Coast Civil War Conference

Sponsored by
Civil War Round Table Associates

Hosted by
The Inland Empire CWRT

"Lincoln, Davis
& Their Generals"

Redlands, Calif.
Nov. 10-12, 1995

For information

Dong McCue,
The Lincoln Shrine,
125 W. Vine St.,
Redlands, CA 95373

San Joaquin Valley
Civil War Round Table
P.O. Box 5695
Fresno, CA 93755

