

Old Baldy Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia

December 14, 2024

The Civil War: April 12, 1861 - August 20, 1866

“General Membership Meeting, Bi-annual Elections, and Social Night”

Please Note:

"The January and February meetings will be Zoom only. We will not gather at the Rohrer Center, and will also not have a pre-meeting dinner at the diner. Watch for the usual meeting reminders and Zoom links in your email. We will return to the Rohrer Center in March."

Please email
oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net
at least 24 hours prior to
request Zoom access.

Please Note:
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New Officers**
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It has been a great year for OB CWRT! On Thursday December 12th the OBCWRT is conducting our biennial election* of officers (see the slate of candidates in this newsletter), join in some special presentations and recognitions, and enjoy a social evening with friends. The meeting starts at 7 PM at the William G. Rohrer Center located at 1889 Marlton Pike East, Cherry Hill, NJ, 08003 or on Zoom. Share with the leadership your feedback on our Round Table, and suggestions for improving and expanding the organization. Then relax and enjoy your fellow members in celebration of our year and the future.

Round Table members, family, and friends are all invited to our General Membership Meeting to celebrate the end of the year and take a break from the holiday frenzy. Round Table members, family, and friends are invited to discuss the past year, and the election results (No that those elections), congratulate the new Board, share stories, and nibble on delicious treats. Some lucky folks will even walk away with a door prize!

Many of you responded by offering to bring food or drink and help with events. Thank you so much. If you have not committed to bringing something yet, please reply to Paul Prentiss (pprentissfamily@gmail.com) after you receive the general message indicating what is still needed for the event. Looking forward to seeing everyone for cheer, fun, food, and fellowship. Bring a companion to enjoy the evening.

*VOTING "Members" who are active (paid) or emeritus are allowed to vote. As we have members who are not local, "physically present" includes those members participating online at the time of the vote. Nominations for other candidates will be accepted from the floor. Friends, guests, honorary or inactive members who might be present are not eligible to vote.

Notes from the President

As we wind down our forty-eighth year, we look forward to new adventures happening soon. This month we will choose leaders for the next two years to guide our round table toward our Golden anniversary. Review the slate of candidates and consider a floor nomination. There are other opportunities to serve than on the Board as our organization continues to develop and grow. Consult a Board member about the prospects. Thank you to all who

Meeting Notice

Join us at 7:15 PM
on Thursday, December 12,
Free and open to the public. In-person
meeting at Camden County College,
William G. Rohrer Center,
1889 Marlton Pike East, Cherry Hill, NJ
08003, and simulcast on Zoom.

*"Members, and Friends of the
Roundtable who receive our email
communications, will automatically
receive the Zoom link and do not need
to request it"*

Please email
oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net
at least 24 hours prior to request Zoom
access.

OBCWRT Awards



The Society For Women and the Civil War for Service to the Society presented to OBCWRT

Civil War Roundtable Congress The Wallace L. Rueckel Innovation Award presented to OBCWRT (2022)

American Battlefield Trust for 25 Year Service to the Trust presented to OBCWRT

Civil War Roundtable Congress Sustainability Challenge presented to OBCWRT (2023)

Kevin M. Hale Award for best Historical Newsletter in New Jersey (2017, 2022)

contributed to our success in the last two years. Special thanks this year to the Michael A. Cavanaugh Book Award committee, the picnic planning team, the Williamsburg Trails Sign Dedication team, our Advisory Committee, the website transition team, and the outgoing members of the Board.



Dr. Rich Jankowski
President, OBCWRT

Congratulations to Susan and Paul Prentiss on their new grandchild. Best wishes for a speedy recovery to those in the sick ward. Last month we had the treat of a visit from Chuck and Lorie Veit. After a lively conversation at dinner, the presentation was on "Edward B. Hunt's Sea Miner." Chuck explained the "top secret" program to the best he could reconstruct, as records were destroyed. All who attended the meeting were captivated by the fascinating unknown story of a weapon that was very much ahead of its time. This month we are holding our annual social event after the election and some business. Watch for the message from Paul Prentiss about signing up to bring something to the event. The evening will provide an opportunity for members and guests to converse, congratulate fellow members, and discuss the year past and what the future will bring to our round table. As a note of trivia, twenty years ago our December presentation was "Tempest at Ox Hill, The Battle of Chantilly" by David A. Walker.

Check out the upcoming presentations of our Sister Round Table, the Inland Empire CWRT.

We will be placing wreaths on graves at the Beverly National Cemetery at noon on December 14th as part of Wreathes Across America. Visit the WAA website to register to volunteer. The General Meade Birthday Champagne Toast will be at noon on December 31st at Laurel Hill Cemetery. Watch for information about serving as a judge for the regional competition for New Jersey History Day at Rutgers Camden in February. We will be sending out a message about the next Camden County History Alliance magazine. The theme will be "Lost Historic Sites in Camden County." The message will ask if you wish to write an article for the magazine and if you know a business or person wanting to place an advertisement in the magazine.

During the Holiday season, consider a blue Old Baldy bag, a New Jersey Civil War Odyssey book, or a South Jersey Civil War sites map as a gift for someone on your list. Our Round Table has been fortunate to have your support and input to advance to this level.

Enjoy a blessed, joyous, relaxing Holiday Season with family and friends. Safe travels in any adventures and see you on the 12th at the Rohrer Center to celebrate our good fortune.

Dr. Rich Jankowski, President

Member Profile - Robert E. Lee Hahn

Kim Weaver
OBCWRT Member

It was October of 1978 and 23-year-old Robert E. Lee Hahn was competing in a sanctioned shooting match in New Jersey. His father had just died, and he was thinking of giving up competitive shooting—it was expensive and Robert's pockets were empty. After the event, on the way to his vehicle, Robert passed the olive-green Army truck that was always parked at the shooting matches. A major approached and asked Robert how he did. "I told him I won and I was out of bullets and money. He asked, 'How would you like to get paid doing this?' And I said, 'Sign me up!'" Sgt. First Class Robert Hahn served 36 years in the U.S Army Reserve, 77th Sustainment Brigade, out of Fort Dix, N.J. He retired in 2015 on his 60th birthday, a day he partially spent on a mission in the then Taliban-controlled Khyber Pass, the main route between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Continued from page 2 - "Member Profile"

Robert was born in 1955 on Long Island, N.Y. and raised in Pitman, N.J., where he began his shooting career at age 12. While attending State University of New York at Farmingdale, he was a member of its competitive shooting team but left the group and school after two years to take a job back home at Oki Data, a manufacturer of printer technology.



Robert E. Lee Hahn

In 1979, Robert enlisted with the 77th as an electrician, but he also worked in supply and transportation. In addition, he repaired firearms and served on many shooting teams for the Army Reserve. Over three decades, Robert distinguished himself as an elite marksman, which earned him one of the most difficult achievements in shooting: the Distinguished Rifleman badge. The skill runs in the family. "My father was a marksman in the Army during the Korean War and my grandfather won the Distinguished Service Cross during World War I. He was with the 77th division, same as me." Robert's grandfather also was from Long Island, and kept diaries during his time in the war. After Robert read them, it took him four years to trace his grandfather's steps, including through the Argonne Forest in northeastern France.

Another influence in Robert's life was the legendary Marine Corps sharpshooter, Gunnery Sgt. Carlos Hathcock, who during his tour in Vietnam would achieve his status as the war's deadliest sniper. "The war was hot and heavy—we already lost two kids from my hometown. I was sure I'd get drafted, and I wanted to know how to shoot. I read about

Hathcock in the papers, and I told my dad I wanted him to teach me how to shoot like him. I said 'If I have to go to Vietnam, I want to do what Carlos does.'" Years later, Robert was competing in a match and realized the guy shooting next to him was Carlos Hathcock. "I didn't recognize him at first. He was physically in bad shape from his injuries during the war. I didn't want to bother him."

Today, Robert runs a shooting academy in Gibbsboro, N.J. for soldiers who want to improve their proficiency. "I feel that I have an obligation to give back. I say I don't help people, people help me."

Robert retired in 2020 as a material planner at Oki Data after 40 years of employment. He now works part-time at his local post office performing routine maintenance. And he loves restoring cars—Jags and Mustangs—and taking them to shows. In 2019, Robert happened upon Old Baldy CWRT at a Mullica Hill event, and was mesmerized by the reenactors. "It fascinates me that they put in so much time to do what they do."

Robert's memberships include the Pitman American Legion, Pitman VFW, and three car clubs.

Today in Civil War History

1861 Thursday, December 12

The Confederacy

Charleston is not the only thing burning on Southern coasts. The success of Union amphibious operations has led owners of coastal plantations to burn their crops to prevent the seizure of cotton by the North.

1862 Friday, December 12

Eastern Theater

A Federal expedition to Goldsboro, North Carolina, commanded by John G. Foster, gets under way.

Trans-Mississippi

A skirmish is reported at Little Bear Creek, Alabama.

1863 Saturday, December 12

Eastern Theater

Anticipating another Union attempt to capture Fort Sumter now most of its guns are silent, the Confederates fortify the interior with sandbags, loopholed for rifles and howitzers. Should the Federal fleet effect a landing, the attackers can be raked from neighboring Confederate batteries and the garrison can fight on from within its casemates. Any troops breaking into the interior of the fort would be shot down from the barricades.

1864 Monday, December 12

Western Theater

General Stoneman leads 4000 Federal cavalry from east Tennessee, heading toward southwest Virginia. The Confederates under Breckinridge have fewer than 1500 troops available as the area has been stripped of men to reinforce Lee's embattled army at Petersburg. Thomas wires Halleck, promising to attack the Confederates before Nashville the moment there is a break in the weather.

"Treason or Tyranny?"

by Charles F. Cooney
July 1979
CWTI

The Great Senate Purge of '62

On March 1, 1861, Jesse D. Bright, the junior Democratic Senator from Indiana, dashed off a brief note:

Washington, March 1, 1861

My dear Sir:

*Allow me to introduce to your acquaintance my friend
Thomas H. Lincoln of Texas. He visits your capital mainly to
dispose of what he regards as a great improvement in fire-arms.
I recommend him to your favorable consideration as a gentleman
of het first respectability, and reliable in every respect.*

*Very truly yours
(sgd) Jesse ID. Bright*

This letter was addressed, "To his Excellency, Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederation of States."

Lincoln, a friend of Bright's for over 20 years, was picked up for treason by Federal troops and of course Bright's letter of introduction became known. In just a few months this brief note entangled the United States Senate in an imbroglio that dragged on for months. The donnybrook began on December 16, 1861, when Republican Senator Morton S. Wilkinson of Minnesota introduced a resolution calling for Bright's expulsion from the Senate. He cited Bright's letter of introduction to Jefferson Davis as "evidence of disloyalty to the United States... calculated to give aid and comfort to the public enemies." The resolution was routinely referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee for consideration.

In less than a month, on January 13, 1862, the committee offered its report on the resolution. They concluded that "they are of the opinion that the facts charged against Mr. Bright are not sufficient to warrant his expulsion from the Senate; and they therefore recommend that the resolution not pass." But that was not enough. Senator Bright, seeking an overwhelming vindication, asked for a vote on the committee report. So, too, did Senator Wilkinson.

During the next several weeks thirty-five different senators arose to speak

concerning the resolution. Those in favor of expelling Bright argued that by addressing Davis as President of the Confederacy, he acknowledged the legitimacy of the Confederate Government-and of course they dropped veiled references to Bright's sympathies with the Confederacy because he was a



Kentucky slaveholder as well as an Indiana Senator. In addition, they claimed that on March 1, 1861, the war was obviously inevitable, and that sending to the Confederates a man who had an improvement in firearms constituted the basest treason.

Bright's defenders pointed out that there was no war on March 1, 1861, and cited the conciliatory gestures in Lincoln's first inaugural. The form of address in the letter they dismissed as mere courtesy. More darkly they hinted of a Republican plot to rid the Senate of Democrats.

On February 5, 1862, the debate ended and the resolution came to a vote; Bright's defense-a forthright

charge of a Republican attempt at tyranny-came just before the vote. Nevertheless, after the clerk had called the roll, the resolution passed by a margin of 32 to 14; the voting had followed strictly partisan lines.

In the wake of Bright's expulsion, Democrats feared the worst. Democratic Senator James A. Bayard confided to his son:

The case is a monstrous one, but will be followed by others. Starke [Democratic Senator-elect Benjamin Stark of Oregon] will be rejected, and it would not surprise me if Powell was attacked. . . . God help a country with such an admin. and such a legislature.

Bayard's fears turned out to be groundless. While Senator Wilkinson pursued with zeal allegations of disloyalty on the part of Senator-elect Stark, he failed and partisan attacks eventually subsided.

As for Senator Bright, he returned to private life with the singular distinction of being the only senator from a non-slave state to be expelled from the Senate during the Civil War for treason.

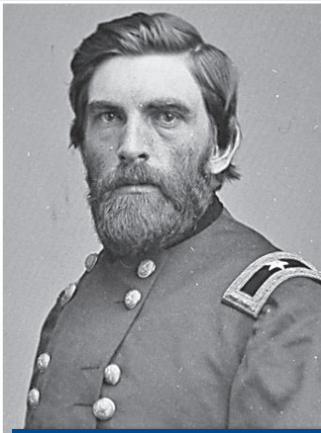
Intelligence in the Civil War

*A series of Articles from a
Publication of the
Central Intelligence Agency*

Black Dispatches

Union officers got so many valuable pieces of intelligence from slaves that the reports were put in a special category: "Black Dispatches." Runaway slaves, many of them conscripted to work on Confederate fortifications, gave the Union Army a continually flowing stream of intelligence. So did slaves who volunteered to be stay-in-place agents.

Tens of thousands of ex-slaves fought and died for the Union in military units. Less known is the work of other African-Americans who risked their lives in secret, gathering intelligence or while entering enemy territory as scouts. Brigadier General Grenville M. Dodge mentioned how he used black scouts during a search for Confederate troops in Tennessee: "Two negroes led our cavalry to them, guiding them around their pickets. No white man had the pluck to do it."



**Brigadier General, USA
Grenville M. Dodge**

Throughout the official records of the war, there are frequent references to bits of intelligence coming from "contrabands." The term tracks back to a demand for runaway slaves from a Virginia slaveowner who cited the Fugitive Slave Law when he learned that his slaves had fled to Union territory. Responding, Major General Benjamin Butler said that since secession, Virginia had not been under federal law. Butler referred to the slaves as "contraband of war," and the term caught on.

In a typical report: "Three contrabands came in from Fort Johnson yesterday. They were officers' servants, and report, from conversation of the officers there, that north and northwest faces of Fort Sumter are nearly as badly breached as the gorge wall, and that many of our projectiles passed through both walls, and that the fort contains no serviceable guns."

George Scott escaped from a plantation near Yorktown and headed for Fort Monroe, at the mouth of the James River on the tip of the Virginia peninsula. On the way, he noted two large fortifications. To gather more intelligence, Scott joined a Union officer on scouting missions. On one such mission, Scott was the target of a Confederate picket, whose bullet missed Scott's body, but put a hole in his jacket. Another slave worked on the defenses of Leesburg. He escaped, bringing with him his detailed observations about the deployment of 5,000 Confederate troops. Many other slaves provided similar information about Confederate plans and maneuvers.

While Allan Pinkerton was serving as Major General George D. McClellan's intelligence chief, the private detective ordered a careful debriefing of runaway slaves, some of whom he personally recruited to go back as agents. One of Pinkerton's black agents was John Scobell of Mississippi, who had been



John Scobell

educated and freed by his owner. Scobell used the cover of servant to two other Pinkerton agents, Timothy Webster and Carrie Lawton, when they operated in Richmond. Scobell also posed as a cook and a laborer on his trips south, where he often signed up black couriers for the Union at secret meetings of the Legal League, an underground slave organization.

Another black spy for Pinkerton was W. H. Ringgold, a free man who had been forced to work on a Virginia riverboat that was moving Confederate troops and supplies. After about six months, he and the other crewmen were allowed to return to the North.

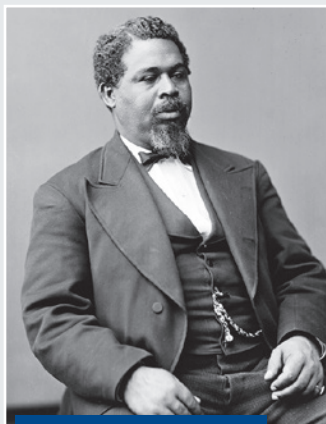
Debriefed by Pinkerton, Ringgold told all he knew about Confederate fortifications on the Virginia peninsula. When McClellan began his peninsula campaign in March 1862, the best intelligence he had was from Ringgold.

The Union Navy also profited from Black Dispatches. Robert Smalls, a free African-American who was a harbor pilot knowledgeable about Fernandina, Florida, noticed that Confederates were preparing to destroy the harbor as they withdrew. He realized that Fernandina would provide the Union with a good port for blockade ships patrolling Charleston.

In March 1862, Smalls rowed out to a Union warship and reported what he had seen. The fleet, waiting to attack Fernandina, moved swiftly before the damage was done and captured the port. In another instance, Smalls loaded his family and other African-American sailors aboard a Confederate patrol ship in Charleston, calmly gave the correct countersigns to Confederate signals as he sailed her out of the harbor, and surrendered her to a Union blockade ship. He and the crew were rewarded with half the value of the captured ship.

Mary Touvestre, a freed slave, worked as a housekeeper for one of the Confederate engineers who were repairing the U.S. Navy's Merrimac. The steam-powered frigate had been partially burned on April 21, 1861, when Federal forces abandoned the Gosport Navy Yard. Rebuilt as an ironclad, she was renamed the C.S.S. Virginia. Touvestre overheard the engineers talking about the ship and realized its significance as a weapon against the Northern blockade. Traveling at great risk with a stolen set of plans, she made her way to Washington and got an audience with officials in the Department of the Navy.

Surprised by the momentum of the Confederate project, the officials speeded up the building of the Union ironclad, the Monitor. Some historians believe that if the former slave had not carried her warning to Washington,



Robert Smalls

the Virginia might have had several unchallenged weeks for a rampage against vulnerable Union ships, thwarting the blockade long enough for the arrival of desperately needed supplies from Europe.

Harriet Tubman, one of the nation's most famous African-Americans, was also one of the war's most daring and effective spies. She is renowned as a conductor of the Underground Railroad. Her espionage work, like that of many black spies, is far less known. But her exploits, centered along the South Carolina coast, are well documented, mostly because they were military operations.

Early in 1863, after she had spent nearly a year caring for refugee slaves, Union officers in South Carolina decided that she would be more valuable as a covert operative. She was asked to assemble a small reconnaissance unit of ex-slaves who knew the region and could gather timely intelligence. She found nine men, some of them riverboat pilots who knew every inch of the waterways threading through the coastal lowlands. One of her tasks was the finding of "torpedoes," as remotely-detonated mines were called then, placed along the waterways patrolled by Union river craft.

Her spying and scouting evolved into a kind of special forces operation under Colonel James Montgomery. A fervent believer in guerrilla warfare, Montgomery was a veteran of antislavery border fighting in Kansas. Like Tubman, he had met and admired firebrand abolitionist John Brown.

In July 1863, Tubman became Montgomery's second-in-command during a night raid up the Combahee River, near Beaufort, South Carolina. The Union gunboats, carrying some 300 black troops, slipped up the river, eluding torpedoes that Tubman's men had spotted. Undetected, the raiders swarmed ashore, destroyed a Confederate supply depot, torched homes and warehouses, and rounded up more than 750 rice plantation slaves.

"The enemy," said a Confederate report on the raid, "seems to have been well posted as to the character and capacity of our troops ... and to have been well guided by persons thoroughly acquainted with the river and country." Unwittingly, the report was praising the work of slaves working for Tubman.

Reporting on the raid to Secretary of War Stanton, Brigadier General Rufus Saxton said, "This is the only military command in American history wherein a woman, black or white, led the raid, and under whose inspiration it was originated and conducted." Tubman's spies added to the heroic chronicles of the Black Dispatches. "This source of information," said one historian, "represented the single most prolific and productive category of intelligence obtained and acted on by Union forces throughout the Civil War."

One of the boldest—and least known—Northern spies of the war was a free African-American who went under cover as a slave in what appears to have been a plan to place her in the official residence of Confederate President Jefferson Davis.

The residence, called the Richmond White House, served as the Davis home and the President's executive office. While he conducted Confederacy business there, he would not have seen his slaves as a threat to security. Official papers did not have to be given special protection when slaves were around because, by law, slaves had to be illiterate.

Elizabeth Van Lew well knew this law, and, while running her spy ring in Richmond, realized the espionage value of a slave who was secretly able to read and write. Van Lew had a perfect candidate for such an agent-in-place role: Mary Elizabeth Bowser.

The wealthy Van Lew family, which had 21 slaves in 1850, had only two by 1860—both of them elderly women. Yet, Virginia and Richmond archives show that the Van Lews had not gone through the legal procedures for the freeing of slaves. Freedom meant exile. Under Virginia law, freed slaves had to leave Virginia within a year after winning their freedom. Only by ignoring that law could Van Lew carry out the audacious placement of an agent in the Richmond White House.

Elizabeth Van Lew and her widowed mother Eliza raised the eyebrows of their



Mary Touvestre



Mary Elizabeth Bowser



Elizabeth Van Lew

social acquaintances in Richmond in 1846 by having a slave baptized as Mary Jane Richards in St. John's Episcopal Church, revered as the site where Patrick Henry said, "Give me liberty or give me death." Later, Elizabeth sent Mary Jane off to Philadelphia for an education. In 1855, Mary Jane sailed to Liberia, the African nation founded by Americans as a colony for ex-slaves.

On March 5, 1860, a ship bearing Mary Jane Richards arrived in Baltimore. She went on to Richmond—an illegal act for a freed slave. Five months later, she was arrested for "perambulating the streets and claiming to be a free person of color...." She was briefly jailed and released after Elizabeth Van Lew paid a \$10 fine and claimed that Mary Jane was still a slave. This declaration would give her perfect cover as an agent. Mary Jane Richards married and became Mary Elizabeth Bowser. It is under that name that she enters Civil War espionage history.

Information about her is scanty. One good source is Thomas McNiven, who posed as a baker while making daily rounds as a Van Lew agent in Richmond. From him, down the years, came the report that she "had a photographic mind" and "Everything she saw on the Rebel President's Desk, she could repeat word for word."

Jefferson Davis' widow, Varina, responding to an inquiry in 1905, denied that the Richmond White House had harbored a spy. "I had no 'educated negro' in my household," she wrote. She did not mention that her coachman, William A. Jackson, had crossed into Union lines, bringing with him military conversations that he had overheard. In a letter from Major General Irvin McDowell to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, "Jeff Davis' coachman" is cited as the source of information about Confederate deployments. A butler who served Jefferson Davis also made his way to Union lines.

Although McDowell and other Union generals could attest to the value of the Black Dispatches, the best endorsement came from General Robert E. Lee. "The chief source of information to the enemy," he wrote, "is through our negroes."

The Conductor Becomes a Spy

Harriet Ross was born into slavery in Maryland in 1819 or 1820. She was whipped when she was a small child, and, when she was 15 years old, was struck on the head by a scale weight hurled at a slave she was helping escape. The injury produced a lifelong suffering from headaches and seizures. When she was 25 years old, she married John Tubman, a free African-American. About four years later, when her master died, she feared that she and her kin would be sold and scattered. So she began to think about escaping. Her husband declined to go with her, as did her brothers.

The courage and skill she used in her escape she would later use again as a spy for the Union.

Harriet Tubman fled to the North on the Underground Railroad, the network of abolitionists who helped slaves make their way to freedom. After freeing herself, she returned to Maryland, became a conductor on the railroad, and brought out members of her family. She made a score of dangerous trips, helping some 300 slaves reach the North. With each trip, she taught herself the ways of covert work behind enemy lines.

In 1857, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Dred Scott, a black man who had moved from a free state to a slave state, had no right to sue for his freedom because African-Americans could not be citizens; the court also ruled that Congress did not have the power to prohibit slavery in the territories. The decision emboldened slaveholders and put Tubman in even more jeopardy. But, in that same year, she slipped into Maryland and conducted her elderly parents to freedom.

Because of fugitive slave laws, escapees could find ultimate freedom only in Canada. Tubman went frequently to the main underground terminal in Canada, St. Catharines, Ontario. There she met John Brown, who told her of his plans for an armed raid on Harpers Ferry. She later said that if she had not been ill at the time, she would have joined in the raid.



Harriet Tubman

Tubman went to war in May 1861, joining a Union force dispatched to her native Maryland, which was a hotbed of Southern sympathizers. There, she knew, her knowledge of the land would be helpful to Union troops. Later, she served in the Union's Fort Monroe in Virginia. But it would be at her next duty post, in South Carolina, that she would become a full-fledged undercover operative.

In the spring of 1862, Tubman sailed from New York City to Beaufort, South Carolina, the operations center for Union forces that held the southeastern coast of South Carolina. She was sent to the region at the suggestion of Massachusetts Governor John Andrew, who believed that "she would be a valuable person to operate within the enemy's lines in procuring information & scouts."

The Union-held area was a magnet for slaves fleeing to freedom. Tubman helped to clothe and feed them while also setting up agent networks and conferring with Union officers, including Colonel James Montgomery. He made her his second-in-command for the night raid up the Combahee River that freed more than 750 plantation slaves.

After the war, Harriet Tubman lived on a small farm in Auburn, New York. Years before, William A. Seward, then an anti-slavery senator from New York—later to be Lincoln's Secretary of State—had sold her the property and arranged for a mortgage. She continued to help ex-slaves and black veterans and supported the crusade for women's suffrage. In 1869, two years after the death of John Tubman, she married Nelson Davis, an ex-slave whom she had met when he was a Union soldier.

Citing her work for the Union Army, especially the Combahee River raid, she petitioned for a pension. A member of Congress who had been a Union general backed her claim, noting "her services in the various capacities of nurse, scout, and spy." But not until 1890, two years after the death of Davis, did she receive a pension of eight dollars a month. By then, she was in poverty, and neighbors were providing her with food. Nine years later, her monthly pension was raised to twenty dollars.

In 1903, she donated the farm to a church group on the condition that the home be maintained as a refuge for "aged and indigent colored people" and that she be allowed to live in the house for the rest of her life. In 1913, the woman known in the Union Army as "the General" died and was buried with military honors.

Intelligence Overseas

At the beginning of the war, when the Union announced a blockade of Southern ports, leaders of the Confederacy believed that the blockade could be broken by pressure from Britain and France. The plan was to withhold cotton from the textile mills of those nations, forcing them to aid the Confederacy by convincing the Union to lift the blockade. But the French and British textile mills had huge stockpiles of cotton and did not face an immediate shortage from the Southern embargo.

North and South turned to diplomacy to advance their interests. Slavery was abhorred in both France and Britain. Neither nation could openly support the Confederacy. But, strategically, both nations liked the idea of a United States weakened by a crack-up of the Union. And Britain especially did not side with the North because of the hostile policy of Secretary of State William H. Seward, who threatened to declare war on the British if they intervened.

The South wanted Britain and France to recognize the sovereignty of the Confederate States of America. Union diplomats hoped to keep Britain from recognizing or intervening in any way. More than diplomacy was involved. Confederate and Union agents in Britain and France were fighting a secret war over the South's clandestine operations aimed at buying arms and building warships.

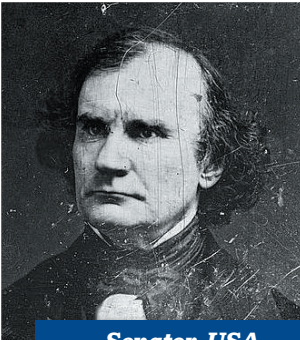
The North's blockade of Southern ports had inspired the Confederacy's



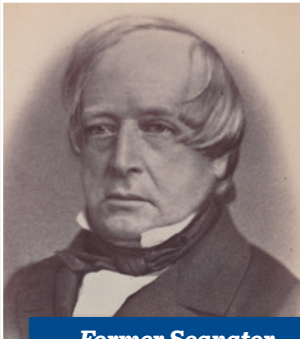
Harriet Tubman



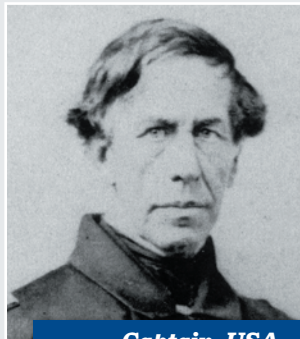
**Secretary of State, USA
William H. Seward**



**Senator, USA
James M. Mason**



**Former Senator
John Slidell**



**Captain, USA
Charles Wilkes**



**Trent Affair
USS San Jacinto**

diplomatic efforts in London and Paris. Southern strategists realized that the Confederacy could not survive on whatever just happened to trickle into the South from swift ships whose bold captains slipped through the blockade. The South decided that to break the blockade, the Confederacy needed to build a navy that could attack the Union warships, sink Northern merchantmen, and protect friendly commercial ships running guns and other supplies to the South.

Lacking adequate shipyards, Confederate officials sent agents to Britain and France to arrange for the shipbuilding and the arms purchases. Covert operations were needed because British law prohibited the arming of private ships in British yards. In the fall of 1861, the Confederacy's Department of State launched the plan on a diplomatic level by naming two representatives: former U.S. Senator James M. Mason of Virginia was to go to Britain and former Senator John Slidell of Louisiana to France. Officially, the two envoys were empowered to negotiate treaties with their respective countries. Their clandestine mission was the obtaining of warships and arms.

Mason and Slidell were put on a ship that got through the blockade at Charleston and sailed via Nassau to Havana. The two new diplomats had no notion of security. A Cuban newspaper published their itinerary. This bit of open-source intelligence was read in another Cuban port by Captain Charles Wilkes, the commanding officer of the U.S.S. San Jacinto.

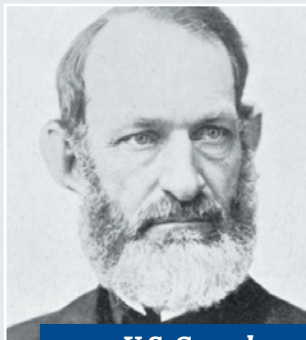
Mason and Slidell sailed from Havana on board the Trent, a British mail packet. The San Jacinto lay in wait and stopped the Trent with a shot across her bow. After a tense standoff, Wilkes snatched Mason and Slidell off the Trent, put them aboard the San Jacinto, and triumphantly sailed to Boston, where the two envoys were imprisoned. Britain reacted violently, ordering 10,000 troops to Canada, ostensibly for its protection against the United States. The crisis ended when the Lincoln administration convinced the British that Wilkes had acted on his own. Mason and Slidell were soon on their way across the Atlantic again.

Mason, though aware of covert Confederate activity in England, restricted himself to diplomacy. Slidell, however, became involved in setting up illicit arms deals and hiring propaganda agents for a campaign to counteract European sentiments against slavery and the Confederacy. One agent found seven "writers on the daily London press" who were willing to accept what was discreetly called "partial employment." Besides the payoffs, the journalists got Havana cigars and American whiskey. An agent in France had a \$25,000 "secret service fund" to be used to sponsor newspaper articles that "may be useful in enlightening public opinion."

The propaganda fund paid for the publishing of 125,000 copies of a pro-slavery tract by "the Clergy of the Confederate States of America." Some copies were stitched into religious publications, one of which was strongly against slavery. Propaganda agents also produced placards showing the Confederate and British flags intertwined and placed them in "every available space in the streets of London." Henry Hotze, a former U.S. Foreign Service officer, was an undercover Confederate operative who wrote pro-South articles for British newspapers and founded *Index*, A Weekly Journal of Politics, Literature, and News, which appeared to be a British publication. Hotze hired British journalists and syndicated their pro-Confederate articles to dozens of British and European publications—and to Northern newspapers. Hotze's journal kept publishing until five months after the war ended.

Hotze mingled with key British politicians, including William Gladstone, Chancellor of the Exchequer, who made pro-Confederacy speeches. Hotze also worked with other Confederate agents to stage a peace rally calling for the ending of the war on Southern terms.

The Confederate secret service, which ran the Secret Line courier service between Union territory and Richmond, extended the service to reach England and France. The courier service was set up by George N. Sanders, a former journalist and political operator with connections in the North, the South, and Europe. Union agents, aware of Sanders' sympathies, kept eliminate him under surveillance. A surveillance report notes his landing in Liverpool "in a



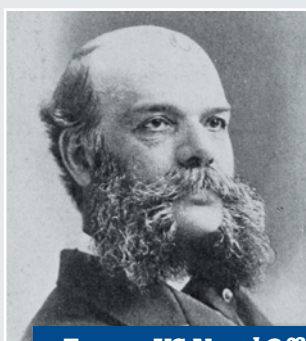
**U.S. Consul
Thomas Haines Dudley**



**Minister
Henry Shelton Sanford**



**U.S. Consul
Freeman Harlow Morse**



**Former US Naval Officer
James Dunwoody Bulloch**

great hurry" and describes him as "a man of small stature with black whiskers under his chin" who "no doubt is a bearer of dispatches from the insurgents."

Records of the Secret Service Fund refer to the extended Secret Line as the "Postal Route to Richmond." The route ran from England to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and then to coastal pickup points on Chesapeake Bay, where Secret Line couriers were given the dispatches and got them to the Confederate capital. Agents in Europe used a special cipher for such correspondence.

The South had to invent a European intelligence presence. The North possessed a ready-made, though amateur, intelligence network in the form of U.S. ambassadors and consuls. Thomas Haines Dudley, the U.S. consul in Liverpool, ran the network in Britain. He had a natural talent for espionage. A Quaker, Dudley once disguised himself as a slave trader in a scheme to purchase back fugitive slaves kidnapped in the North. Working with Dudley were Henry Shelton Sanford, minister to Belgium, and Freeman Harlow Morse, U. S. consul in London. Sanford believed in sabotage and rigorous intelligence gathering. Sanford paid more attention to Confederates in Britain than to matters in Belgium. Like Dudley, Sanford engaged British detectives as agents and saw no reason not to gather information "through a pretty mistress or a spying landlord." Sanford bribed factory clerks to tell him what Confederate purchasing agents were paying for ordered supplies. "I go on the doctrine that in war as in love everything is fair that will lead to success," Sanford wrote.

Fearing that Sanford's rash approach would produce another U.S.-British crisis, the Lincoln administration reined him in. In a message that praised him for his "active and intelligence services for detecting traitorous proceedings," he was ordered to turn over those duties to Morse and go back to being just a minister to Belgium.

Morse hired a former detective of the London police, who set up surveillance posts in London and Liverpool and got daily reports from his detectives. Among other actions, they bribed postal workers to obtain the addresses on letters sent and received by Confederate agents. The Union detectives also managed to intercept Confederate telegrams.

The chief target of surveillance was James Dunwoody Bulloch, a former U.S. Navy officer (and three-year-old Theodore Roosevelt's uncle). Bulloch had launched the Confederate shipbuilding operation in June 1861 when he found a Liverpool shipyard whose owner agreed to build a ship to Bulloch's specifications. As he later explained, "The contract was made with me as a private person, nothing whatever being said about the ultimate destination of the ship...." Bulloch named her the *Oreto* and sent her off to Nassau with a Confederate captain and crew.

The U.S. consul in Nassau, apparently tipped off by American agents in England, went into court to charge that the ship was a Confederate warship, in violation of British law. The court ruled that no law was broken because the *Oreto* was unarmed.

She then sailed to a coral isle some 75 miles south of Nassau. There she rendezvoused with an arms-filled ship dispatched by Bulloch. Quickly armed and renamed the *Florida*, she set sail. After a delay caused by an outbreak of yellow fever aboard, she headed for Mobile, Alabama. Because of a bungled installation, her guns could not fire when she initially encountered Union warships. She got away, though badly damaged. Once repaired, the *Florida* survived to ravage Union shipping. In the two years before she was captured, she seized or destroyed more than 30 American ships.

Dudley was determined to keep Bulloch's next ship from going to sea. The ship, known in the yard simply as "290," was nearly ready to sail in July 1862 when Bulloch's agents realized that Dudley had gathered enough intelligence to go to court with a legal claim against the shipyard for violating British neutrality laws.

Bulloch hastily arranged what appeared to be a leisurely sail down the River Mersey, complete with several women and men seemingly out for the day.

Suddenly, a tugboat appeared alongside the ship, the passengers were disembarked, and the 290 became the cruiser Alabama, bound for the Azores, where she would take on guns, ammunition, and supplies.

Bulloch appeared to have outwitted Dudley. But Bulloch did not know that Dudley had planted an agent on the Alabama. The agent, paymaster Clarence Yonge, left the ship in Jamaica, returned to England, and added his knowledge to Dudley's legal case against the clandestine Confederate operations. In an affidavit, Yonge noted that the shipyard had equipped the supposedly commercial ship with sockets in her decks and other fixtures for guns, along with powder tins, and accommodations for a 100-man crew.

The Alabama was the Confederate's most successful raider. She captured or destroyed more than 60 ships with a total value of nearly \$6 million before a Union warship ended her career. While she was destroying the U.S. commercial fleet, Dudley was using his evidence to deprive the Confederacy of two additional warships ordered by Bulloch. Dudley argued that the ships—two ironclads with metal underwater rams jutting from their hulls to rip holes in a foe's wooden hull—were obviously warships. And he warned that if British officials allowed them to go to sea, the decision would be considered an act of war against the United States.

Dudley was awaiting the British decision when he received a report from the U.S. consul in Cardiff, Wales: a French ship had arrived in Cardiff carrying men who carelessly talked about being crewmen for the rams, as the warships were called. The consul noted that the men boarded a train for Liverpool. Surveillance of the Liverpool shipyard showed that one of the ironclads was almost completed; a Frenchman, not Bulloch, claimed ownership. In October 1863, as a ram was about to sail, the British government seized both rams; the British government later bought them.

The State Department's intelligence work in Europe produced another coup in June 1864 when the U.S. minister to France learned that the Alabama was in Cherbourg for repairs. The minister passed the information in a telegram to the captain of the U.S.S. Kearsarge, which was in a Dutch port. The Kearsarge sailed to Cherbourg, stood off outside the territorial limit, and waited for the Alabama. In a two-hour battle watched by 15,000 spectators ashore and at sea, the guns of the Kearsarge sank the Alabama.

By then, there was little hope that either France or Britain would recognize the Confederacy. In February 1864, reporting to the Confederate Secretary of the Navy, Bulloch had written, "The spies of the United States are numerous, active, and unscrupulous. They invade the privacy of families, tamper with the confidential clerks of merchants, and have succeeded in converting a portion of the police of this Kingdom into secret agents of the United States...." There was, he said, "no hope of getting the ships out."

The Nomination Committee submits the following slate of nominations

President - Paul Prentiss

Vice President – Calvin Kinsel

Secretary – Anita Schwartz

Treasurer - TBD

Member of the Board – James Heenehan

Member of the Board – Alex Glisson

Member of the Board – Barney Yetter

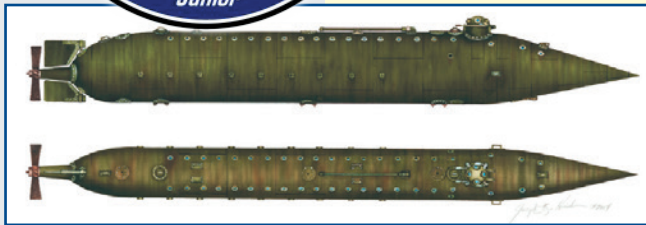
**Respectfully Submitted The Old Baldy CWRT nomination committee
Frank Barletta - Calvin Kinsel - Tom Scurria**



Join the Hunt for the Alligator Junior

The prototype Civil War submarine abandoned in Rancocas Creek.

www.navyandmarine.org



The Original Alligator Submarine

The Alligator's prototype, dubbed "Alligator Junior", is now the subject of an effort to pinpoint her location and hopefully, to begin recovery. Junior, it is believed, sits buried in the muddy bank of the Rancocas Creek in Riverside, NJ, close to the former site of de Villeroi's boatyard. Locals claim parts of her were visible into the early 1960s.

The next step toward identification and eventual recovery requires large-scale aerial magnetometer scans. This is the point we are at today; raising funds to pay for this work. To find this craft would be an incredible boon to the understanding of period technology and the earliest days of submarine warfare. If you would like to support this project, to find the first submarine in which the U.S. Navy took interest, please visit www.navyandmarine.org

Look for Progress Update

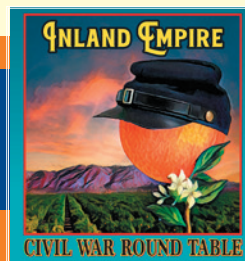
Wreaths Across America



Each December on National Wreaths Across America Day, our mission to Remember, Honor and Teach is carried out by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery, as well as over 4,600 additional locations in all 50 U.S. states, at sea, and abroad. Help us by sponsoring Veterans Remembrance Wreaths or by joining us on December 14, 2024 at a participating location near you ...

www.wreathscrossamerica.org

Our Sister Round Table Inland Empire Upcoming events



Wednesday, December 11 7:00 – 8:00pm,
Professor Jim Pula's "Overlooked and Underappreciated. Dan Butterfield."

Monday, December 16 6:15 – 7:30pm
Carole Adrienne, author and documentary filmmaker: Civil War Medicine, based on her upcoming documentary film series and book Healing a Divided Nation: How the American Civil War Revolutionized Western Medicine

For Zoom links, and regional Round Table program times & locations, go to: inlandempirecwr.org and socalcwr.org.



The Cruiser Olympia won fame in the Spanish-American War and served as a flagship in WWI



Independence Hall

HOMECOMING 250

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2025

To kickoff America's celebration of its 250 years of independence, Homecoming 250 Navy Marine Corps will honor the men and women who gained and continue to defend our independence. Through our efforts, the Secretary of the Navy has announced that the Navy and Marine Corps should celebrate their 250th birthdays in their birthplace, Philadelphia, PA, and Camden, NJ. Homecoming 250 will salute their 250 years of distinguished service by hosting spectacular events, ceremonies, parades, aerial demonstrations, exhibitions, and educational programs featuring historic buildings, ships, museums, and waterfront sites on both sides of the Delaware River.



COMING HOME TO THE BIRTHPLACE

No better place to celebrate the Navy and Marines' 250th!

THE NAVY & MARINES...

- Were created in Independence Hall and organized at Tun Tavern
- Commissioned their first ships and officers here
- Launched their first missions from the Delaware River
- Relaunched the Navy and Marines at Congress Hall
- Built the first Naval Shipyard and supplied innovative ships for over 200 years



US Navy ROTC Midshipmen, 2021



"The President's Own" United States Marine Band

Dues Renewal...

The 2025 Membership Dues are now being collected. Dues remain the same, \$25.00 Individual Membership and \$35.00 Family Membership.

Remember they can now be paid online. Just visit our Web Page, click on, "Membership" on the top bar, which will take you to the next page. Choose a payment method, visa, etc., and click "Buy Now". This will take you to the submission page, complete form and click on, "Pay Now". Done

As always, if you prefer to pay by check, bring it to any meeting or send to: 16 Heather Drive, Marlton, NJ, 08053.

Should you have any questions, please contact Paul at 609-732-3930 or theprentissfamily@verizon.net



**FOB Welcomes
New Member s**

**Evan Glisson
Hammonton, NJ
Mark Klayman
Marlton, NJ**



Mark Klayman



Evan Glisson

**Upcoming Events that the Old Baldy
CWRT is Participating In...**

**Wreaths Across America
December 14, Beverly National Cemetery
To sign up to lay wreathes please use
<https://www.wreathsasscrossamerica.org/>**

Meade's Birthday at Laurel Hill

WEB Site: <http://oldbaldycwrt.org>

Email: oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net

FaceBook: Old Baldy Civil War Round Table

**Schedule of Old Baldy CWRT
Speakers and Activities
for 2025**

January 9, 2025 - Thursday

James Pula

**“Union General Daniel Butterfield:
A Civil War Biography”**

February 13, 2025 - Thursday

Kelly Hancock

“The Art of Surviving: Belle Isle and Beyond”

March 13, 2025 - Thursday

Phil Roycraft

**“The Plot to Perpetuate Slavery: How George McClellan,
Southern Spies and a Confidence Man Nearly Derailed
Emancipation”**

Questions to

Dave Gilson - 856-323-6484 - dgilson404@gmail.com

Old Baldy Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia

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William G. Rohrer Center

1889 Marlton Pike East

Cherry Hill, NJ

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Founded January 1977

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