Old Baldy
Civil War Round Table
of Philadelphia

Kevin M. Hale Award
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May 14, 2020 The Civil War: April 12, 1861 - August 20, 1866

"The Battle of Williamsburg, Forgotten Now and Then"

Drew Gruber

Join us at **7:15 PM** on **Thursday, May 14 on Zoom**. This month's topic is ***"The Battle of Williamsburg, Forgotten Now and Then"***

The Battle of Williamsburg took place on May 5, 1862, in York County, James City County, and Williamsburg, Virginia. It was the first pitched battle of the Peninsula Campaign, in which nearly 41,000 Federals and 32,000 Confederates were engaged, fighting an inconclusive battle that ended with the Confederates continuing their withdrawal. Drew's presentation describes the battle with specific focus on personal stories and the New Jersey brigade, as well as key factors as to why the battlefield has been largely developed and forgotten.

Drew A. Gruber is the Executive Director of Civil War Trails which connects visitors to over 1200 sites across six states. He is also the acting Director for the Williamsburg Battlefield Association and served a three year term on the Board of Historic Resources for the Commonwealth of Virginia. A native of Ocean County New Jersey, he lives today in Williamsburg, Virginia with his wife Kate .

ZOOMcast

Our May roundtable meeting will be a **ZOOMcast** with author Drew Gruber. Drew will discuss *"The Battle of Williamsburg, Forgotten Now and Then"*

If you would like to check connecting to ZOOM in advance, please email me at dgilson404@gmail.com and I will schedule a brief test with you.

"Please join us for a special Zoomcast, 7:00pm on Tuesday, May 26, with John Quarstein on The Battle of Big Bethel. Login details will be emailed to members."

Notes from the President...

As we roll into May, our unique situation of being 'together apart' continues. Hope all are eating well, staying positive and making the best of this new reality. As the weather warms up, get outside for fresh air, sunshine and nature. Thank you to Vice President **Kathy Clark** for keeping us busy with suggested links and activities.

Special thanks to **Dave Gilson** for his effort to provide us with two outstanding presentations last month. We had 45 different folks between both sessions. We expect more people to tune in for **Drew Gruber**'s talk on "The Battle of Williamsburg" on May 14th. Sign in early to chat with your fellow members and guests. This is an important presentation for our Round Table. As you will recall, our Round Table is pursuing getting a Civil War Trails (CWT) marker placed for this Battle. Drew is the Executive Director of CWT and will give us an update on the project during his time with us. Be sure to be on our ZOOM meeting on the 14th.

Last month on our meeting night, Hampton Newsome presented his research on the events in Eastern North Carolina in 1864. He connected the dots with the events that were happening in other regions at that time. On the 29th Ron **Kirkwood** shared more of his book in a presentation on the women who served at the Spangler Farm Corps

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Hospital. It was very well received by all your joined on it. Watch for other events Dave may be scheduling during our time apart. Please provide feedback so we can improve on the sessions. Also let Dave know he is doing a superb job in the variety and content of the presentations we are hosting.

The official Memorial Day event at Montgomery Cemetery has been cancelled. However, Bill and Debbie Holdsworth will be laying a wreath from Old Baldy CWRT at the grave of General Winfield Scott Hancock at noon on May 23rd. Let us know if you want to be present to continue this tradition of our Round Table. As you may have heard already the CWRT Congress meeting our Round Table was hosting in September has been postponed to next year. Discussions continue about a possible on-line event for the date. Stay tuned for more news in the coming months. At the present time our Western Theater Symposium is still scheduled for April 30-May 1, 2021 at Rutgers Camden. Please let Tom and Sean know if you would like to assist with it.

As you read books, attend on-line video presentations and watch history shows, take notes on them, write them up and share them with the membership in a future newsletter. Don is always seeking input from our members and we all want to hear what you have been doing and learning since we last saw you. Support your local business, and continue to use the OBCWRT Amazon Smiles account for your other purchases. ***"Happy Mother's Day to all mothers and grandmothers." Please stay safe.***

Hope to see you all in person soon. In the meantime, join us on-line for our meeting on May 14th.

Rich Jankowski, President

Today in Civil War History

1861 Tuesday, May 14, 1861

The North
President Lincoln decides that Union supporters in Kentucky are to receive every assistance, in spite of the increasingly neutral stance of the state government.

1862 Wednesday, May 14, 1861

Eastern Theater
In the Shenandoah Valley General Jackson concentrates his whole force at Harrisonburg preparatory to striking at one of the widely dispersed Federal units in the area. The smallest and weakest of these is General Banks's weakened command at Strasburg, which Jackson resolves to cut off and eliminate

1863 Thursday, May 14, 1861

Eastern Theater
Hooker, who had won command of the Army of the Potomac by assiduously criticizing his fellow officers, now receives the same treatment. The army's senior commanders jostle to unseat him.

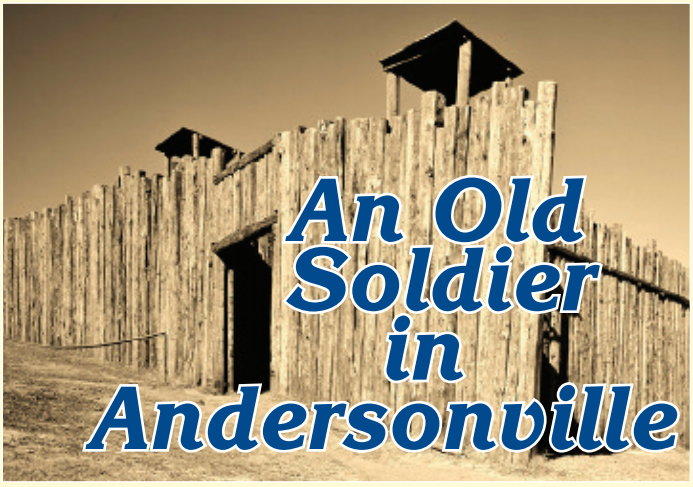
Western Theater
McPherson and Sherman's corps take Jackson. Johnston has just 6000 men to oppose two army corps and he evacuates the town without delay. Grant sleeps the night in the house occupied by Johnston earlier in the day. Europe Commander Sinclair informs Lieutenant North that Bullock's ships will be sent to France for completion. Federal pressure on Great Britain to halt the construction of warships for the Confederacy is succeeding.

1864 Saturday, May 14, 1861

Eastern Theater
The heavy rain continues, flooding the armies' trenches. A planned Union assault is cancelled as the state of the ground slows all preparatory movement. Grant sends Wright's VI Corps after Warren, continuing to shift his weight to the south. Sigel's advance continues, his little army brushing into the Confederate forces at New Market. Breckinridge's Confederate reinforcements reach Lacy Springs, 10 miles away, and hear the sound of cannon as Sigel's men drive back Imboden's small command. Breckinridge marches his men on through the night to arrive behind the Confederate positions west of the village by dawn.

1865 Sunday, May 14, 1861

Western Theater
Minor skirmishes continue to take place in Missouri. The irregular forces of either side have fought a bitter war; even where a Confederate band elected to give up the fight, there was deep reluctance to surrender to similar outfits loyal to the Union. This was not the relatively mannered, regular warfare of the main armies. The "rules of war" had seldom been observed in nearly five years of savage guerrilla warfare.



By Joe Wilson, Member OBCWRT

By all accounts the Confederate prison at Andersonville, Georgia was a vile camp that snuffed out the life of even the hardiest of Union soldiers. Being 52 years old in 1864, a Union soldier advanced in years faced his toughest fight of the Civil War inside the foul stockade in Georgia.

Young men came in droves from the smallest hamlets to the bustling big cities to fight for Uncle Abe's army. The average soldier was 25 years old with the largest age group

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being 18 year olds.

But that didn't stop a weathered old mountain man from the rugged hills of western Virginia from shouldering a musket to fight for the Union. Benjamin Franklin Mayhew stood one year shy of his 50th birthday when he enlisted with the rank of sergeant in Company I of the 10th West Virginia on March 1st, 1862.

Benjamin heeded his country's call despite his advanced age. Patriotism coursed through the veins of the elder Virginian just as it did for his younger comrades of the regiment. Ben could neither read nor write, but his devotion to the Union never waned. Joining him were his two sons, John and Joshua. All three said goodbye to family and left for Piedmont in what was still the western part of Virginia. Statehood for West Virginia still hadn't happened.

Ben left a worried wife and four other children at home. She worried more for the older man than the two younger boys. Army life is hard even for a young soldier still gifted with the vitality of youth. The mountains of western Virginia naturally produced some sturdy men. Ben Mayhew was certainly one of those tough men. Hard marching and campaigning might break a younger city bred soldier before bringing down the hard edged mountain man.

But a harsh Civil War prison camp was another story.

The 10th West Virginia Infantry served in General Benjamin Kelly's Railroad Division protecting the vital B + O Railroad from Confederate raiders determined to sever the line and burn the bridges. Bushwhackers and Confederate cavalry swarmed the mountains of western Virginia where southern sympathies competed with the Union sentiment still loyal to the North. Ambush waited around every crooked trail or rock outcropping in the Hampshire and Hardy counties of present day West Virginia. The Mayhews hailed from Ridgeway not far from New Creek. They knew the area as well as anybody.

A forward outpost at Petersburg in western Virginia anchored the defense of the area making it vulnerable to repeated attacks. Fort Mulligan also served as a jumping off point for raiding Union forces. The fort drew all of its supplies from the main base at New Creek, located directly on a bend of the B+O Railroad. Numerous wagon trains made the dangerous 30 mile trek from New Creek to Fort Mulligan loaded down with payroll, food, ammunition, and artillery shells. All items coveted by the Confederacy. The 10th West Virginia often accompanied the wagon trains to defend against roving bands of Confederate raiders. Most active in the area was McNeil's Rangers.

In December of 1863, a train of 40 wagons left New Creek for the distant fort. Ben and his sons of Company I formed part of the 200 man contingent of guards assigned to protect the wagons. At the same time, a cavalry force of 600 troopers commanded by Confederate General Fitzhugh Lee sought to attack and finally eliminate Fort Mulligan. Most action in the Civil War usually took place in milder weather due to the obvious obstacles presented by wintry conditions.

Soldiers riding with the wagons felt confident that the snow and freezing rain pelting the region would thwart any enemy attempts at raiding in such conditions. Lulled into a false sense of security, the Union guards had few worries on this harsh run. The wagon train proceed with little thought of any hostility. Most expected just another uncomfortable

run before returning to their huts and warm fires at New Creek. Not far off, Confederate horsemen lurked with other ideas.

The Confederate commander's target was Fort Mulligan. Due to the ice and snow blanketing the hills, Lee's artillery and wagons had no chance of making it across the mountains. The artillery had to be abandoned. Without the needed firepower to reduce the fort, the plan was scrapped. Instead, Lee eyed the supply line coming from New Creek.

The unsuspecting guards on the wagon train had no chance. On January 3rd, 1864, the rebel cavalry converged on the wagons from all sides at a junction near Moorefield. The Union troops got off only a few shots. Many of the 200 guard force scampered into the woods to escape. Apparently, the Mayhew boys made their escape. Old man Mayhew wasn't so lucky. The raid captured all 40 wagons and 100 prisoners. Eight of the wagons burned in the attack.

Among the captured were 20 men of Company I, 10th West Virginia, including the elder Benjamin Mayhew. Besides the older Mayhew, a much younger boy in Company I also lost his freedom. A drummer boy only 14 years old standing little more than 4 feet looked out of place among the prisoners. The diminutive Ransom Powell should have been at home engrossed in schoolwork, not facing the horrors of warfare.

Powell later wrote his memoirs in the Frostburg Mining Journal, a local paper in West Virginia. Powell related the surprise attack in the Journal, "Presently they were riding out of their hiding places by the hundreds. Not a sound could I hear except the clanking of swords and rattling of the horses' hooves. The silence was broken as soon as they came within pistol range. In a few minutes all was over."

Both the old soldier and the young recruit faced an uncertain future in the hands of the Confederate prison system. Up till now, and in the foreseeable future, they lived parallel lives. Both shared the same unit, the same assignments, the misfortune of capture, and dumped into the same prison camps. But sadly, the story didn't have the same ending.

After several days in Scott's warehouse in Richmond, Ben and Ransom spent time on Belle Isle in the James River. A month after capture word came down all prisoners were

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to be transferred into the deep south to a new stockade in South West Georgia. Ben and Ransom probably cheered along with the other prisoners at leaving the deprivations on Belle Isle.

Little did any of the captives know that most would leave their bones in Georgia. The freshly built stockade stood only a short walk from the train depot at Anderson Station. Hence, the prison earned the name Andersonville Prison. Here is where the stories of the mountain man and the drummer boy part ways.

Andersonville Prison showed no mercy on either the young or old. All suffered alike. Except Ransom Powell. A guard in the 26th Alabama felt sorry that a mere boy had to suffer the deplorable conditions inside the stockade. So he took his "little Yankee pet" outside the stockade to camp with the regiment. Prisoners called him "little red cap." No such luck came to Sergeant Mayhew, who may have been the oldest prisoner in the stockade.

Ransom enjoyed sipping the clear fresh water in a creek not far from the stockade. A swim on the hot days proved refreshing. Old Ben tried to survive by washing and drinking from a small stream inside the stockade contaminated with fecal matter.

Eugene Forbes, a soldier in a New Jersey regiment, recorded the state of the creek in his diary, "The stream wasn't fit for washing your clothes, let alone drinking from it." Forbes never made it home. But his diary survived. Ransom also enjoyed fresh blueberries found outside the stockade in the woods. Ben Mayhew had to subsist on ground up corn that included the husk and the cob.

Although spared from the stockade, Powell noted the conditions, "The stench inside was horrible. The vermin were crawling everywhere. Just imagine men living in such a place, without having their clothes washed. Thousands gave up in despair. Nearly all my company had died."

Andersonville stands as the absolute worst prison of the Civil War era. Nearly 13,000 Union soldiers perished in the 14 months of the 26 acre prison's existence. Over 10,000 died in the horrific summer of 1864. From the 20 men in Company I, 10th West Virginia, captured in the raid of January 3rd, only drummer boy Ransom Powell survived.

Benjamin F. Mayhew lost his fight against the ravages of starvation and disease in July of 1864. Sergeant Mayhew joined the 12,996 other soldiers in the burial pits. His bones lay beneath a stone marked "unknown soldier" in a cemetery that eventually exceeded the overall acreage of the prison. Being a robust soldier from the Appalachian Mountains proved not enough against the hardships of an inhumane prison camp. Andersonville Prison robbed life from men much younger and hardier than Ben.

Descendants of Mayhew contacted Andersonville for more information on his grave. Officials confirmed that he indeed was at Andersonville, but couldn't give an exact date of his death or a number for his grave. They explained it's likely he was buried along with the other 450 unknown soldiers due to the absence of anyone available to identify him.

Ransom Powell made his way back home to his family. Benjamin Mayhew's remains fill a soldier's grave somewhere in the Andersonville National Cemetery. He left behind a wife and six children. One young boy's life was just beginning, another older man's life tragically ended.

Fate brought the teenage drummer boy and the elderly sergeant to Andersonville. Being so young spared the boy from the graveyard. In the end, the mountain man's age worked against him. Old Ben never returned to his beloved mountain home. Instead, his bones still rest in the red clay of Georgia.

The staunch patriotism that gripped Sergeant Benjamin Franklin Mayhew and the many communities populating the Appalachian Mountains never wavered.

That kind of allegiance permeated the picturesque hills in the western region of Virginia long before the Civil War and gave birth to the new State of West Virginia on June 6th, 1863.

Society for Women and the Civil War

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Society for Women and the Civil War (www.SWCW.org) will hold its 21st annual conference at the Hotel Madison and Shenandoah Valley Conference Center, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia, July 24-26, 2020.

This year's theme will be "The Women of the Valley." The keynote speaker will be distinguished author and consultant Jonathan A. Noyalas, Director of the McCormick Civil War Institute, Shenandoah University, Winchester, Virginia.

There will be additional presentations by noted scholars and tours of local sites of interest, emphasizing their roles relevant to the contributions of women during the various Civil War campaigns that took place in the Shenandoah Valley.

The conference is open to non-members.

For more information please visit www.SWCW.org

Women in the Civil War

Elvira "Ella" Gibson: First Woman Chaplain In the Us Army

By Kathy Clark, Member OBCWRT

Elvira "Ella" Gibson was the daughter of Isaac and Nancy (Kimball) Gibson, born May 8, 1821, in Winchendon, MA. Six years later the family moved to Ridge, MA and Elvira became a teacher in the public school system. Elvira was also a writer and lecturer, concentrating on moral issues including abolition. In 1861, Elvira married Rev. John Hobart, appointed as Chaplain of the Wisconsin 8th Volunteer Infantry Regiment. Working with her husband, Elvira helped with the sick and wounded. She wrote "The Soldiers Gift" which was distributed to the troops and the proceeds from the sale of the book went to the Northwest Sanitary Commission. The Commission's agenda was to improve camp conditions and reduce disease, a leading cause of death in the camps.

Elvira "Ella" Gibson

In 1864, Elvira became an ordained minister. Governor Lewis of Wisconsin along with other state officials wanted to appoint Elvira as Chaplain of the 1st Wisconsin Heavy Artillery. President Abraham Lincoln approved the appointment, but Secretary of War Stanton would not approve Elvira's commission because she was a woman. There was not going to be any kind of precedent, according to Stanton, refusing her petition. Elvira challenged Stanton's opinion and worked with various Christian aid services on behalf of the soldiers. She got support from Wisconsin Governor James T. Lewis along with other ministers and members of the Union soldiers. November 22, 1864 she was elected the first woman Chaplain of the 1st Wisconsin Heavy Artillery and continued her duties at her post at Fort Lyon, Alexandria. VA. At the time of the Civil War, Chaplains did not hold formal military rank and even though Elvira was appointed as Chaplain it was not a formal appointment. In Elvira's case she was not recognized as having any type of title because of Stanton's disapproval.

At the end of her service Elvira applied for pay for her work in the Civil War but like many women who served was delayed until an act of Congress was issued in 1869. Elvira received the entire amount of $1210.56 from the US Treasury March 7th, 1876. Elvira received no other compensation for her services other then the 11 years that it took to pay her. Elvira spent some of her pay to causes that were important to her. During her time in service she contracted malaria and this illness disabled her severely.

Elvira divorced in 1868 and moved in with her sister in Barre, MA, continuing to write advocating women's rights. She contributed to the liberal press until her death. Such periodicals like the "The Truth Seeker", "The Boston Investigator", "The Boston Investigator, "The Ironclad Age" and "The Moralist" excepted her work until the early 1890's. Elvira died at the age of 79, two months short of her 80th birthday in Barre, MA. She was cremated, ashes scattered, no funeral was held as to her request. An unknown marker was placed in the Spring, 2013 at a Memorial Day celebration with re-enactors with a tribute to her service in a Barre, MA cemetery.

It was 100 years before the 107th Congress issued Senate Bill 1438 which granted Elvira posthumously the grade of captain in the Chaplain Corps of the US Army. The first female Chaplain as a result of the 2001 bill was Rev. Dianna Pohlman Bell who became Navy Chaplain in 1973. Rev. Alice M. Hinduson, minister in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, became the first woman to officially serve in the US Army Chaplain Corps in July 1974. Alice was sworn in at a ceremony at the US Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) at Fort McPherson, GA serving 13 years.

Interesting Note: The 8th Wisconsin was known as the "Live Eagle Regiment". A Bald Eagle called "Old Abe" became their mascot. "Old Abe" was given to the regiment before the war and was carried into battle with their colored guard. The 8th Wisconsin, known as a hard fighting group of soldiers, participating in Corinth, Vicksburg, Nashville, and the Red River Campaign. "Old Abe" was part of all battles, surviving the war, appearing at election rallies, GAR conventions and veteran reunions. He lived for many years after the war. "Old Abe" lived at the Wisconsin State Capitol until his death. The "Screaming Eagle" insignia was inspired by "Old Abe" for the US Army's 101st Airborne Division.

The Battle of Williamsburg

The Battle of Williamsburg, also known as the Battle of Fort Magruder, took place on May 5, 1862, in York County, James City County, and Williamsburg, Virginia, as part of

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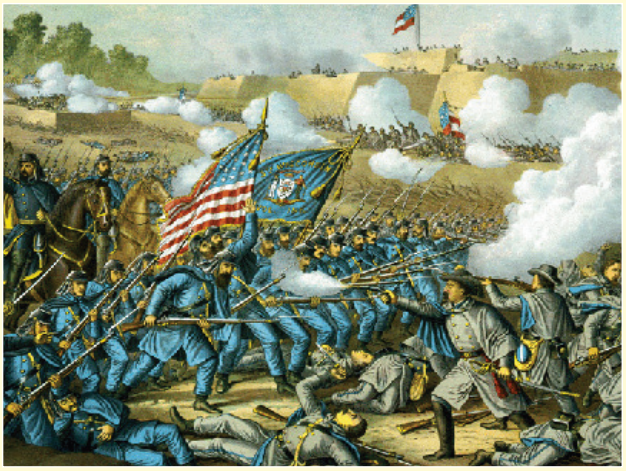
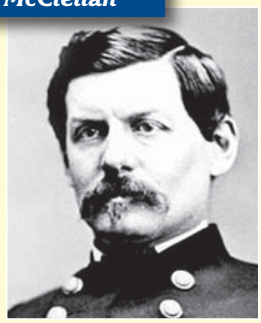
the Peninsula Campaign of the American Civil War. It was the first pitched battle of the Peninsula Campaign, in which nearly 41,000 Federals and 32,000 Confederates were engaged, fighting an inconclusive battle that ended with the Confederates continuing their withdrawal.

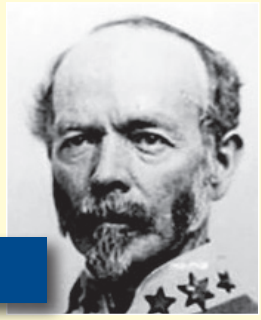


Following up the Confederate retreat from Yorktown, the Union division of Brig. Gen. Joseph Hooker encountered the Confederate rearguard near Williamsburg. Hooker assaulted Fort Magruder, an earthen fortification alongside the Williamsburg Road, but was repulsed. Confederate counterattacks, directed by Maj. Gen. James Longstreet, threatened to overwhelm the Union left flank, until Brig. Gen. Philip Kearny's division arrived to stabilize the Federal position. Brig. Gen. Winfield S. Hancock's brigade then moved to threaten the Confederate left flank, occupying two abandoned redoubts. The Confederates counterattacked unsuccessfully. Hancock's localized success was not exploited. The Confederate army continued its withdrawal during the night in the direction of Richmond, Virginia.

Major General, USA George McClellan



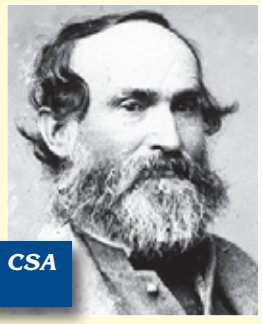
General, CSA Joseph Johnston



Background

When Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston unexpectedly withdrew his forces from the Warwick Line at the Siege of Yorktown the night of May 3, Union Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan was taken by surprise and was unprepared to mount an immediate pursuit. On May 4, he ordered cavalry commander Brig. Gen. George Stoneman to pursue Johnson's rearguard and sent approximately half of his Army of the Potomac along behind Stoneman, under the command of Brig. Gen. Edwin V. Sumner. He also ordered Brig. Gen. William B. Franklin's division to board transport ships on the York River in an attempt to move upstream and land so as to cut off Johnston's retreat. However, it took two days just to board the men and equipment onto the ships, so the maneuver had no effect on the battle of May 5;

Brigadier General, CSA Jubal Early



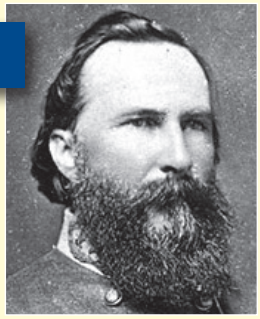
Major General, CSA Daniel Hill

Franklin's division landed and fought in the Battle of Eltham's Landing on May 7.

By May 5, Johnston's army was making slow progress on muddy roads and Stoneman's cavalry was skirmishing with Brig. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart's cavalry, Johnston's rearguard. To give time for the bulk of his army to get free, Johnston detached part of his force to make a stand at a large earthen fortification, Fort Magruder, straddling the Williamsburg Road (from Yorktown), constructed earlier by Brig. Gen. John B. Magruder.

Brigadier General, CSA J.E.B. Stuart

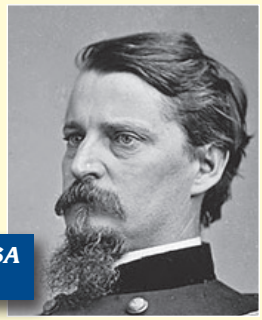
Major General, CSA James Longstreet



Battle

Brig. Gen. Joseph Hooker's 2nd division of the III Corps was the lead infantry in the Union Army advance. It assaulted Fort Magruder and a line of rifle pits and smaller fortifications that extended in an arc south-west from the fort, but was repulsed. Confederate counterattacks, directed by Maj. Gen. James Longstreet, threatened to overwhelm Hooker's division, which had contested the ground alone since the early morning while waiting for the main body of the army to arrive. Hooker had expected Brig. Gen. William F. "Baldy" Smith's 2nd Division of the IV Corps, marching north on the Yorktown Road, to hear the sound of battle and come in on Hooker's right in support. However, Smith had been halted by Sumner more than a mile away from Hooker's position. He had been concerned that the Confederates would leave their fortifications and attack him on the Yorktown Road.

Brigadier General, USA Winfield Hancock



Brigadier General, USA Philip Kearney

Brigadier General, USA Joseph Hooker

Longstreet's men did leave their fortifications, but they attacked Hooker, not Smith or Sumner. The brigade of Brig. Gen. Cadmus M. Wilcox applied strong pressure to Hooker's line. Regimental bands playing Yankee Doodle slowed the

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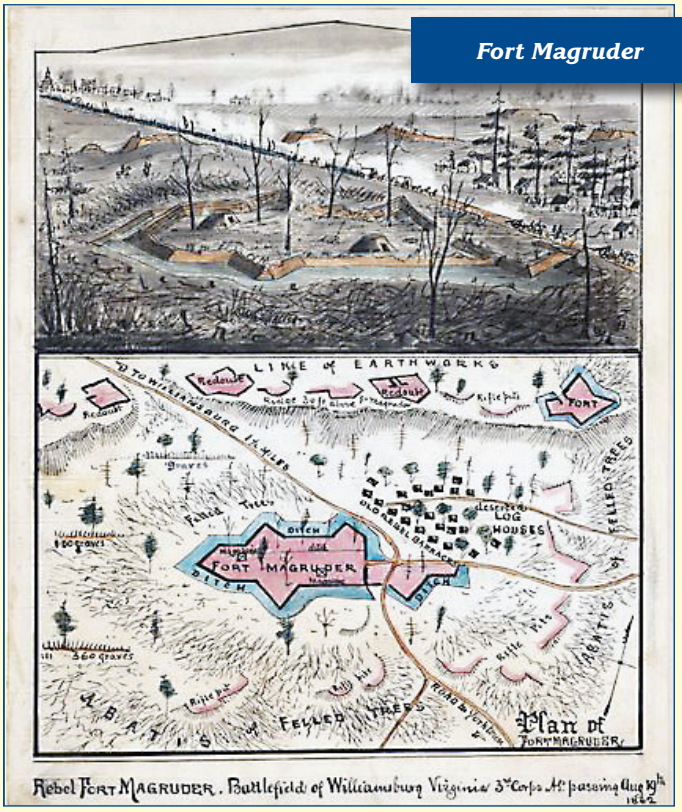
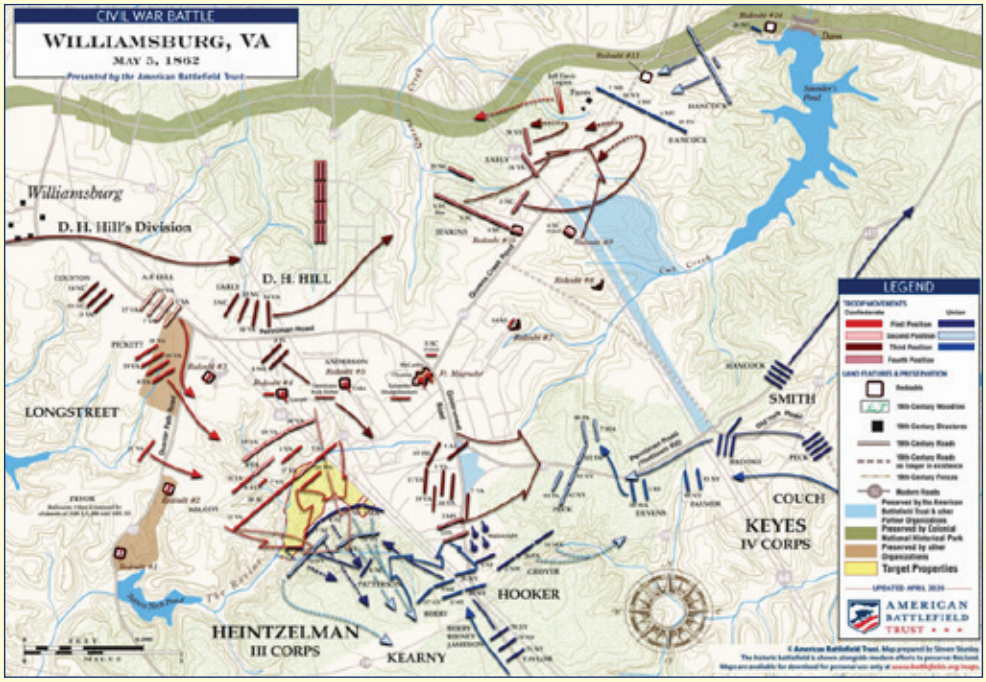


Fort Magruder

Cub's Creek at the point where it was dammed to form the Jones' Mill pond, began bombarding Longstreet's left flank around noon. Maj. Gen. D. H. Hill, commanding Longstreet's reserve force, had previously detached a brigade under Brig. Gen. Jubal Early and posted them on the grounds of the College of William and Mary. Hearing the sounds of Union artillery, Early and Hill hurried in that direction. Splitting his command, Early led two of his four regiments (the 24th and 38th Virginia Infantry) through the woods without performing adequate reconnaissance and found that they emerged not on the enemy's flank, but directly in front of Hancock's guns, which occupied two abandoned redoubts. He personally led the 24th Virginia Infantry on a futile assault and was wounded by a bullet through the shoulder.

Hancock had been ordered repeatedly by Sumner to withdraw his command back to Cub Creek, but he used the Confederate attack as an excuse to hold his ground. As the 24th Virginia charged, D.H. Hill emerged from the woods leading one of Early's other regiments, the 5th North Carolina. He ordered an attack before realizing the difficulty of his situation—Hancock's 3,400 infantrymen and eight artillery pieces significantly outnumbered the two attacking Confederate regiments, fewer than 1,200 men with no artillery support. He called off the assault after it had begun, but Hancock ordered a counterattack. The North Carolinians suffered 302 casualties, the Virginians 508. Union losses were about 100. After the battle, the counterattack received significant publicity as a major, gallant bayonet charge and McClellan's description of Hancock's "superb" performance gave him the nickname, "Hancock the Superb.



At about 2:00 p.m., Brig. Gen. John J. Peck's brigade of Brig. Gen. Darius N. Couch's 1st Division of the IV Corps arrived to support and extend the right of Hooker's line, which had, by this stage, been pushed back from the cleared ground in front of Fort Magruder into the abatis and heavy wood about 600 – 1,000 yards (910 m) from the Confederate fortifications. The morale of Hooker's troops had been affected terribly by the loss of Captain Charles H. Webber's Battery "H" of the 1st U.S. Light Artillery and Captain Walter M. Bramhall's 6th Battery of the New York Light Artillery. Peck's arrival on the field and his brigade's recovery of Bramhall's battery came at a critical moment for Hooker's division, which was on the verge of retreat.

retreating troops as they passed by, allowing them to rally long enough to be aided by the arrival of Brig. Gen. Philip Kearny's 3rd Division of the III Corps at about 2:30 p.m. Kearny ostentatiously rode his horse out in front of his picket lines to reconnoiter and urged his men forward by flashing his saber with his only arm. The Confederates were pushed off the Lee's Mill Road and back into the woods and the abatis of their defensive positions. There, sharp firefights occurred until late in the afternoon.

While Hooker continued to confront the Confederate forces in front of Fort Magruder, Brig. Gen. Winfield S. Hancock's 1st Brigade of Baldy Smith's division, which had marched a few miles to the Federal right and crossed

Aftermath

The Northern press portrayed the battle as a victory for the Federal army. McClellan miscategorized it as a "brilliant victory" over superior forces. However, the defense of Williamsburg was seen by the South as a means of delaying the Federals, which allowed the bulk of the Confederate army to continue its withdrawal toward Richmond. Confederate casualties, including the cavalry skirmishing on May 4, were 1,682. Union casualties were 2,283.

Internet/Wikipedia

A Relic of The Lost Cause

The Great Seal Of The Confederacy

By John Hollister, CWT, March 1982

One of the least known and most fascinating stories to come out of the Civil War had nothing to do with battles, campaigns, grand strategy, victories, or defeats. It involved a silver engraving about four inches in diameter that became one of the most highly prized artifacts in Richmond, Virginia's Museum of the Confederacy, the Great Seal of the Confederate States of America. How it was designed, engraved, lost for almost fifty years, found again, and finally given to the Richmond institution constitutes a story replete with mystery, intrigue, danger, and even humor.

The early history of the seal was prosaic enough. In February 1861 a bill was introduced in the House of Representatives of the Confederate Provisional Congress to create a seal emblematic of the new nation's sovereignty. But more than two years passed before the Congress approved "Joint Resolution No. 4," providing for an official seal and sent it on to President Jefferson Davis for his signature on April 30, 1863.

JOINT RESOLUTION No. 4

The Congress of the Confederate States of America do enact, That the seal of the Confederate States shall consist of a device representing an equestrian portrait of Washington (after the statue which surmounts his monument in the Capitol Square at Richmond), surrounded with a wreath composed of the principal agricultural products of the Confederacy, (cotton, tobacco, sugar cane, corn, wheat and rice), and having around its margin the words "The Confederate States of America, twenty-second February, eighteen hundred and sixty-two" with the following motto: "Deo Vindice."

The conversion of the words of the joint resolution into a state seal was entrusted to Judah P. Benjamin, Secretary of State. Since the South had no engraver capable of producing a seal of the high quality desired, Benjamin directed the Confederate commissioner in London, James M. Mason, to arrange to have it produced in that city.

It is interesting to note that nowhere in the official record leading up to the adoption of "Joint Resolution No. 4" was there any explanation for the use of the portrait of Washington in the seal's design. To the Confederate authorities at the time, none was needed. Washington, as a Virginian, was the great and popular hero of the South. By placing his portrait on the seal and using his birth date, February 22, as the official founding date of the Confederacy, the Southern leaders accomplished the dual purpose of paying tribute to the South's favorite son and depriving the United States of its greatest national figure. The motto "Deo Vindice" (With God as Defender) revealed their conviction that their cause was a just one.

Commissioner Mason arranged for famous London sculptor John H. Foley to prepare the design, which was then

engraved in silver by Joseph S. Wyon, engraver of Great Britain's official seals. The bill of the engraver revealed a total cost for the seal, press, and materials to be 122 pounds and 10 shillings, or about $700 at the then current rate of exchange. Then after inspecting the seal and press, Mason directed Lieutenant R.T. Chapman, a Confederate naval intelligence officer, to take personal charge of the seal, travel via Halifax and Bermuda, and deliver it to Secretary Benjamin in Richmond. On July 9, 1864, he took passage on the Africa at Liverpool for Halifax, the end of the first leg of his journey. The seal press and seal materials had been shipped separately and were in the Africa's hold. Lieutenant Chapman's voyage to Halifax and from there to Bermuda on another ship, the Alpha, was uneventful.

Upon arrival in Bermuda, Chapman sought the Confederate consul there, a Mr. Bourne, for the purpose of arranging passage on one of the swift blockade runners operating out of St. George, the principal port. Fearing the possibility of capture by the blockading Union fleet, Chapman decided to leave the heavy iron seal press with Bourne and boarded a blockade runner with the seal in his pocket, prepared to toss it into the sea if threatened with capture. But he successfully made the final dash to Wilmington, North Carolina, and thereafter, completed his mission by delivering the seal to Secretary Benjamin in Richmond. How- ever, without the seal press the new seal could not be used.* This necessitated the continued use of the provisional seal until the government ceased to exist.

When, in March 1865, it became apparent that the Northern juggernaut would overwhelm General Robert E. Lee's decimated and grievously overextended Army of Northern Vir-

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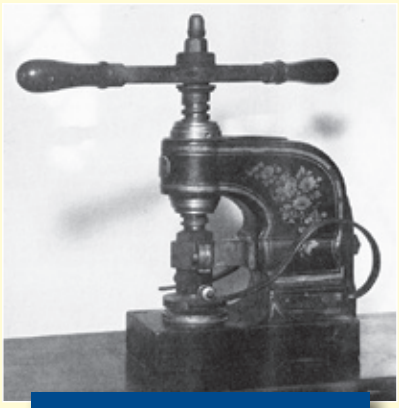
ginia and that Richmond would soon have to be evacuated, Secretary Benjamin began the transfer of state papers to Danville, Virginia, where they were secreted in the Danville Female College. On March 28, William J. Bromwell, a State Department clerk, was directed by Benjamin to take the remaining papers to Charlotte, North Carolina, stopping en route in Danville to pick up the papers previously stored there. Bromwell did this and reported to Benjamin, giving him their location.



Bermudian Sir John Cox's Confederate seal press. The Rebels' press has remained on the island since 1864.

With the end of the war, the dissolution of the Confederate Government, and Benjamin's flight to England, Bromwell took personal possession of all boxes of papers with the idea of selling them, preferably to the United States Government. Logically, he took all the boxes of papers to the Washington area where he concealed them in a barn. And Bromwell soon moved to Washington himself and entered the employ of an antebellum acquaintance, lawyer John T. Pickett. To him he soon confided that he had the Confederate state papers and wished to sell them. The two then agreed Pickett would act as Bromwell's attorney in the sales effort, protecting the latter's identity, and insuring proceeds of any sale would be divided between them.

In 1868 Pickett approached U.S. Secretary of State William H. Seward offering, on behalf of a person whose identity he refused to divulge, to sell the papers to the U.S. Government for $500,000. Seward indicated some interest in acquiring them but not for such an astronomical sum. Moreover, he would require, in the event of a final agreement on price, that the papers be inspected in Washington to determine their authenticity. Pickett was ready for that one. He claimed that the papers were in Hamilton, Ontario, and would not be sent to Washington until a deal for their purchase had been struck. With matters between them at an impasse Pickett withdrew his offer. The next year, 1869, the U.S. Government reopened negotiations with a new offer to purchase the papers, but for an uncertain amount. This offer was rejected by Pickett. He later offered to sell them to several Southerners for $25,000, but could find no takers.

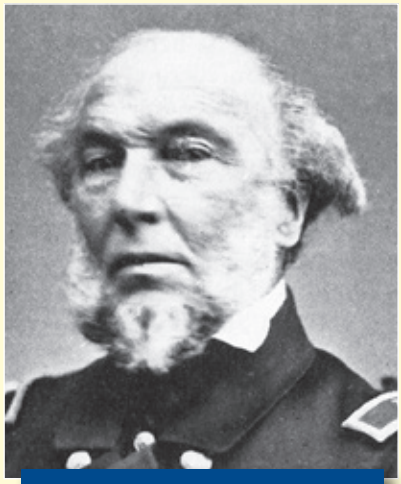
Finally, in 1871 Congress appropriated $75,000 to buy the papers and Secretary Seward agreed to have them inspected in Canada. He appointed naval lieutenant Thomas O. Selfridge to accompany Pickett to Canada to make the inspection, and, upon authentication, to deliver the papers to the government in Washington. But the papers had never left the barn near Washington until Pickett and Selfridge boarded the same train for Hamilton, Ontario, with a hidden load of stationery in tow.

What caused the U.S. Government to become seriously interested in acquiring the Confederate state papers? Very simply stated, it was self interest. As the postwar years rolled on, more and more Southerners, claiming wartime loyalty to the Union, began filing claims against the federal government for loss or damage to their property as a consequence of military action by Northern forces. In evaluating such claims the Confederate state papers would be of enormous -help; hence the offer was made to Pickett.

Upon arrival in Hamilton, Selfridge duly inspected the papers and confirmed that they were the state papers of the Confederate Government. They were then shipped back to Washington where, on July 3, 1872, they were delivered to the U.S. Government, and Pickett was handed a check for $75,000. What was not delivered to the government was the Great Seal of the Confederate States of America. It had been given to Selfridge by Pickett as a token of his appreciation for the officer's services.

Since Selfridge acquired the seal under circumstances that might prove embarrassing to both him and Pickett if they were to become public, the two agreed Selfridge's possession of it should forever remain a secret. And it almost did.

When the sale of the papers by Pickett be-came known, it raised such a storm of criticism in the South that Pickett felt impelled to make some gesture to mollify his critics. Putting his fertile imagination to work, he came up with the idea of having replicas of the seal made to be sold, as he put it, "for the relief of as many as possible of the needy and afflicted of the south." All the project needed was the loan of the seal from Selfridge to have replicas made. And Selfridge was glad to accommodate his friend. Pickett took it to an electrotyper in New York named Samuel H. Black, to whom he gave an order for 1,000 replicas, conditional upon Black giving his Masonic oath never to reveal the ownership or whereabouts of the seal. The oath was given and it was kept. The replicas made by Black were gold, silver, and bronze plated and were sold for five and seven dollars each, depending upon the case selected by the purchaser. But neither the number sold nor the amount raised for the South's "needy and afflicted" is known.



Thomas O. Selfridge, keeper of the seal. When he first acquired the Great Seal he was thirty-six years old; he managed to hold on to it for forty years.

Because of rejection by his Southern friends, Bromwell became despondent and turned to alcohol for relief. Finding none, he undertook, at Pickett's urging, a tour of Europe in the fall of 1872. This landed him in London, where he died in 1875, dispirited, alone, and broke. Then Pickett succumbed in 1884 and took to his grave the secret of the owner of the Great Seal of the Confederacy.

During the years following the war many stories were circulated in the South concerning the fate of the seal. One was reported in the Southern Historical Society Papers: When Bromwell and his wife left Richmond just before the evacuation of the city

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by the Confederate Government, Mrs. Bromwell had the seal concealed in her dress. To the SHSP people it seemed likely the seal was placed with the state papers and traveled with them. Then a highly fanciful story surfaced at a Confederate reunion in Richmond in 1907. This story had it that President Davis' coachman, James Jones, had been entrusted with the seal by the president and had buried it somewhere in Richmond. Still another story said Pickett, after having electrotypes of the seal made, presented the original to Colonel William E. Earle of Washington, who in turn, presented it to the state of South Carolina. It was later shown that what South Carolina had was an electrotype. Trinity College, Cambridge, England, also had a seal which was thought to be the original until an official inquiry showed that it, too, was an electrotype.

These rumors, and many others, persisted until a retired justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court, Walter A. Montgomery, went to Washington in 1910 to study the Confederate papers in the Library of Congress with a view to writing a history of the civil administration of the Confederate Government. In the course of his study Montgomery was struck by the mass of detail concerning the seal, and he became curious about the mysterious disappearance of the greatest relic of the Lost Cause. Delving into the correspondence between Pickett and Selfridge (which the government had acquired subsequent to the purchase of the papers), the judge found irrefutable evidence that the seal was in Selfridge's possession.

Montgomery reconstructed the seal's travels: It was included with the state papers, and when Bromwell took possession of them after the war he pocketed the seal; the precise moment when Pickett gave the seal to Selfridge was unclear, but probably occurred shortly after Selfridge's agreement that the papers he inspected in Hamilton were the Confederate state papers; no doubt Pickett was in an ebullient mood as he looked forward to the receipt of the government check and, possibly buoyed by "something from the bar," decided to reward Selfridge by giving him the seal.

In an effort to get Selfridge to release the seal, Montgomery, in an article in the Richmond Times-Dispatch October 15, 1911, claimed Self-ridge, now retired and living on a farm near Washington, possessed the artifact. But the old sailor either did not know of Montgomery's charge, or decided to ignore it. In any event, he did not respond and there the matter rested.

Another student of the Confederate documents, by then known as the Pickett Papers, was Gaillard Hunt, chief of the manuscript division of the Library of Congress. In 1912, working independently of Montgomery, Hunt painstakingly analyzed the papers and correspondence and arrived at the same conclusion Montgomery had: retired Admiral Thomas O. Selfridge had received the seal from John T. Pickett in 1872 and, without doubt, was still in possession of it. Hunt was determined to make Selfridge give up his prize and he had a strategy that he was sure would work.

He informed Selfridge of his intention to publish the full details of his findings pertaining to the seal unless he surrendered it. Faced with all the unpleasant consequences that would surely flow from such a revelation of how he had clandestinely, and perhaps illegally, acquired the Great Seal of the Confederacy, the admiral caved in. He admitted he had the seal and would surrender it, but only on condition that he be paid $3,000. Hunt, anxious to conclude the matter, accepted Selfridge's demand and set out to raise the money. He found an effective fund raiser in Lawrence Washington, chief of the congressional reference division of the Library of Congress and a collateral descendant of the first U.S. president. Washing- ton had no trouble in finding three well-to-do, public-spirited Richmond citizens to donate $1,000 each for the purchase of the seal. They were Eppa Hunt, Jr., William H. White, and Thomas P. Bryan. The only stipulations on their donations were that the seal's authenticity be established and that all concerned agree that the seal should be presented to a public institution in Richmond. To accomplish the former, J .S. Bryan and Granville Gray, both of Richmond, were engaged to take the seal to London and submit it to the Wyon firm for certification. Allen G. Wyon, a nephew of Joseph S. Wyon who had engraved the seal in 1864, made a technical comparison with a wax impression made from the seal at the time of the engraving and unhesitatingly certified that it was the original seal engraved by his uncle.

The stipulation that the seal be given to a public institution in Richmond presented no problem and was readily agreed to. Upon the return of the emissaries from London, the Great Seal of the Confederate States of America was presented to the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond. And it remains there today, on view to thousands who visit the museum annually in search of a greater knowledge and understanding of a momentous period in American history.

*The fate of the seal press is a story quite apart from that of the seal itself. Consul Bourne retained possession of it until his death in 1867 when it was sold at public auction. The purchaser of the strange looking piece of painted and decorated iron was a Bermudian named John Samuel Darrell who cleaned it up and placed it on display in his home. Upon Darrell's death in 1924, ownership passed to his daughter Violet, who, in turn bequeathed it to its present owner, Sir John Cox of Hamilton, Bermuda.

April 9th Meeting

"The Fight for the Old North State: The Civil War in North Carolina, January-May"

Presentation by Hampton Newsome. ZOOMcast

By Kathy Clark, Member OBCWRT

By 1864 the Confederate forces needed supplies and men as the Civil War was looking more and more like a Union victory. The troops on the Union and Confederate side were both in New Bern, North Carolina. The Confederate forces were there to try to get New Bern back out of Union control and back into Confederate hands. New Bern was important to the Confederate troops because the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad along with the Wilmington

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and Weldon Railroad in Goldsboro kept the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia supplied throughout the war. They knew if New Bern fell into Federal hands the supply chain would be broken.

The first battle of New Bern took place on March 14, 1862. Brigadier General Ambrose Burnside led his North Carolina Expedition with the US Army Coast Division along with the ships from the North American Blockade Squadron. Burnside's troops were confronted by poorly trained forces of North Carolina soldiers and militia. Even though the Confederates fought hard they were no match for the Union forces. As a result, the entire Confederate forces retreated, and New Bern came under Federal control.

The second battle of New Bern was February 1-3, 1864. Confederate forces wanted to attack New Bern again to get the area back into their hands. Lee and troops relied on the railroad and the river trade that was part of this area for supplies. This attack was given to Major General George Pickett. Pickett's plan was to divide his forces into three columns then his troops would be able to attack the town from three different directions. The troops on the North Bank of the Neuse River were to capture Fort Anderson, the troops on the South Bank were to capture Union works and continue into the town of Kinston. The Union forces with many men able to fight, were in Morehead City capturing gunboats on the Neuse River. As the third Confederate division was coming from Kinston, Pickett realized he did not have enough men to make three columns and was not able to get any extra help. Pickett reluctantly returned to Kinston and abandon the operation. Before abandoning this fight, Confederate forces were able to capture and destroy the Union gunboat Underwriter and the Union base at Newport Barracks.

During this time that New Bern was under Union army there were many free blacks and slaves coming to New Bern as refuge. The Union troops were always looking for new recruits and many of the refugees wanted to fight for the Union. This was a time for Colored Troops to unite and form their own fighting force. This is how the first US Colored Regiments were formed. They were the 1st NC Colored Volunteers and later became the 35th U.S. Colored Troops. They fought with the Union army until the end of the war.

By May,1864, the Confederate troops were commanded by Major General Robert Hoke. He wanted to attack not only by land but also by sea. Wanting to use the Confederate ironclad Albemarle and Neuse for the sea attack was hard to accomplish for the Albemarle was still in the process of being built in a corn field nearby. It certainly was not ready to be put into the river. Despite that disadvantage the gunboats started down the river anyway. On May 4-5, Hoke's forces were able to attack the Union outposts on the North and South banks of the Trent River and cut off the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad. Hoke went to the Union commander, General Palmer, wanting him to surrender New Bern to the Confederate forces but General Palmer refused. Hoke was counting on his naval support, but it failed to materialize. The Neuse ran aground a short distance from Kinston and the Albemarle was attacked by Union gunboats and was severely damaged in Albemarle sound on May 5th. The Albemarle went back to Plymouth for repairs.

It was not long after that Hoke received orders to abandon his attack on New Bern. It seemed that Union forces under Grant were on their way to Richmond and vicinity. Hoke sent his troops by rail to Virginia with the understanding that various Union forces had begun offensives against and near Richmond. Some troops returned to Petersburg. The Confederate success was in getting supplies for their troops. After all the forces were on their way to Richmond, Pickett was reassigned to Department Commander in Petersburg. As a result of all these battles for Confederate control of New Bern they were not successful and New Bern stayed in Union command until the end of the war.

As a side note to this battle was a US Congressman, Henry Marchmore Shaw who was one of the few former Congressmen killed in combat during the Civil War. Shaw was born in Newport, RI in November 20, 1819. He went on to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania in 1838 as a doctor and practiced in Indiantown, North Carolina. Shaw was later elected as a Democrat to the 33rd Congress by a narrow margin. He was unsuccessful in re-election to the 34th/ reelected to the 35th/ but again was unsuccessful to the 36th Congress. He wanted the state of North Carolina to secede from the Union and when they did, he went to the Confederate side. Shaw decided to enlist as a Confederate Colonial in the Confederate army. Shaw fought at the Battle of Roanoke island in January 1862 against General Ambrose Burnside leading New England Federal forces with 60 ships and over 13,000 men. Shaw and his men put up a valiant fight but were overwhelmed by the Federal forces and surrendered. Shaw was taken prisoner but then released. At this time, he reorganized his troops into the 8th North Carolina Regiment and led his regiment into battle in Charleston, Wilmington and Petersburg. After a small battle at Batchelder Creek, near New Bern, Shaw was getting his troops ready to attack when he was shot off his horse and killed on February 1, 1864. He is buried in a cemetery in Shawboro, North Carolina.

Doing a Zoom presentation is a unique way to see and participate in our Old Baldy Roundtable Meeting while we are indoors and staying safe. We thank Hampton for bringing this interesting topic on the Battle of New Bern in North Carolina to our attention. The Battle of New Bern has again brought another part of Civil War history to our members which is not as well-known as other battles. It was interesting to see and hear Hampton's information. His book "The Fight for the Old North State: The Civil War in North Carolina, January-May 1864" will continue to tell the story of North Carolina's Civil War events in the state.

On-Line Activities to Help Make Life a Little Easier While We are Trying to Keep Healthy and Safe

Spring suggestions from Cherry Hill Public Library. Information: www.chplnj.org Civil War Congress online lectures. April 21 at 7pm: John C. Fazio on "Decapitating the Union". April 23 at 7pm: Alex Rossini on "Six Days in September". April 27 at 7pm: Eric Wittenberg on "Sherman's Carolinas Campaign". April 29 at 7pm: Ed Lowe on "Longstreet's East Tennessee Campaign". Information" www.cwrtcongress.org/lectures.html to view the lecture series and register to attend. The lectures are presented on Zoom. Instructions are on the website.

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Camden County College online mini courses for Spring, 2020. Go to: www.camdence.edu/civiccenter to see the catalogue and register online. There is no limit to the amount of people that can attend so everyone who would like to participate can do so. The registration form is also online and must fill it out and email it back to the college. They are not excepting any mail-in forms.

There is a link for Vicksburg on FaceBook on flags used in the battle of Vicksburg. Civil War Lessons at Home at https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php? This will takw you to the site to see Ranger John and his flag demonstration.

LIVE with John V. Quarstein from the Mariner's Museum and Park on YouTube. Upcoming presentations begin with Friday, May 1 at 2pm: Siege of Yorktown. Friday, May 15 at 2pm: Fort Fisher: The Gibraltar of the South. Friday, May 29 at 2pm: CSS Albemarle. For more details and links to each lecture visit www.MarinersMuseum.org/live. Lecture videos are free. There will be a Q and A after John's presentation.

Gratz Summer 2020 Courses! World War II Episodes of the Conflict with instructor Herb Kaufman from May 11-May 14 (4 sessions). Time is 10am-noon: fee $125. Four Surprising Aspects of World War II beginning May 11 with A Tiger Jumped Through the Window: The History of Pearl Harbor. Second session is Hollywood and the Movies of World War II (1940-1945). Third session is A Bridge too Far: The Largest Airborne Assault Most Tragic Failure of World War II. Fourth session is The Radiance of a Thousand Suns: The History of the Creation of the Atomic Bomb. To register: www.gratz.edu (Click) continuing and professional education and then (click) Gratz Scholars. This is a zoom production.

Free Lecture Series #3. Go to www.CWRTCOngress.org/lectures.html. Registration is required.

Thursday, May 7: Flames Beyond Gettysburg
by Scott Mingus
Monday, May 11: In Memory of Self and Comrades
by Michael Shaffer
Wednesday, May 13: Three Views of Gettysburg
by Bruce Mowday
Tuesday, May 19: Did Forrest Make a Difference?
By John Scales
Thursday, May 21: Black Experience in Civil War Georgia
by David Dixon
Monday, May 25: The War Outside the Window
by Jan Croon
Wednesday, May 27: Hinsonville's Heroes
by Cheryl Renee Grooch
Thursday, May 28: Self Liberation or Survival
by David Dixon

Open House Program at the Grand Army of the Republic Museum and Library, May 3, 2020 is postponed until December 6, 2020. The next program will be June 7, 2020 with speaker Ed McLaughlin. His presentation is "On a Cemetery Hidden in Plain View-The Colored Soldiers Buried at Philadelphia National Cemetery". Free and Open to the Public! Historic Ruan House, 4278 Grissom Street, Philadelphia, PA 19124. Information: 215-289-6484 or email www.garmuslib.org

WEB Site: http://oldbaldycwrt.org
Email: oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net
Face Book: Old Baldy Civil War Round Table

World War II: Episodes of the Conflict

Herb Kaufman
May 11 – May 14 (4 sessions)
10:00 am – 12:00 pm
$125
Explore four surprising aspects of World War II.

- **A Tiger Jumped Through the Window: The History of the Attack on Pearl Harbor**
- **Hollywood and the Movies of World War II (1940 – 1945)**
- **A Bridge Too Far: The Largest Airborne Assault and Most Tragic Failure of WWII**
- **The Radiance of a Thousand Suns: The History of the Creation of the Atomic Bomb**

To register:
www.gratz.edu
(click) Continuing and Professional Education
(click) Gratz Scholars

Schedule of Old Baldy CWRT Speakers and Activities for 2020

May 14, 2020 – Thursday
Drew A. Gruber
"The Battle of Williamsburg"
(ZOOMcast)

June 11, 2020 – Thursday
Robert Jorgensen
"The Federal Bridge Crossing at Fredericksburg"
(ZOOMcast)

July 9, 2020 – Thursday
Member Sharing Night II

August 13, 2020 – Thursday
Kevin M. Levin
"Searching for Black Confederates, The Civil War's Most Persistent Myth"

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

Old Baldy Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia
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Room 101 Forum, Civic Hall, Atrium

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