

Old Baldy Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia

January 14, 2021

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



“South to Freedom: Runaway Slaves to Mexico and the Road to the Civil War”

Join us at 7:15 PM on Thursday, January 14, for an online web conference (no physical meeting). Members will receive **ZOOM** dial-in instructions via email. This month’s topic is **Alice L. Baumgartner** on “**South to Freedom: Runaway**

Slaves to Mexico and the Road to the Civil War”

The Underground Railroad to the North promised salvation to many American slaves before the Civil War. But thousands of people in the south-central United States escaped slavery not by heading north but by crossing the southern border into Mexico, where slavery was abolished in 1837.

Based on research in twenty-seven archives in three countries, *South to Freedom* tells the story of why Mexico abolished slavery and how its increasingly radical antislavery policies fueled the sectional crisis in the United States. As enslaved people escaped across the Rio Grande, and the U.S. government failed to secure their return, slaveholders came to believe that their interests would be best protected outside of the Union. Mexico’s laws also had an impact beyond the borderlands. Southern politicians hoped that annexing Texas and invading Mexico in the 1840s would stop runaways and secure slavery’s future. Instead, the seizure of Alta California and Nuevo México upset the delicate political balance between free and slave states.

As U.S. Congressmen debated the status of slavery in the former Mexican territories, Northern Democrats balked at the prospect of reestablishing slavery where it had been prohibited. Abolition in Mexico thus undermined the norm of admitting slavery in southern territories while prohibiting it in northern ones—a norm that had kept sectionalism at bay since the Missouri Compromise.

Alice L. Baumgartner is assistant professor of history at the

University of Southern California. She received an MPhil in history from Oxford, where she was a Rhodes scholar, and a PhD in history from Yale University. She lives in Los Angeles, California.

Notes from the President...

Welcome to 2021 as we begin the adventure of our 45th year. Hope everyone had a safe, relaxing, enjoyable Holiday Season. Congratulations to our newly re-elected Board, they will (with your assistance) be working to make the Old Baldy experience better for our members and supporters. The 76ers are off to a good start, let's root them on and bring some happiness into our lives, until we can gather again. If you have not done so yet, please submit your 2021 dues to **Frank Barletta** soon. See the announcement in this newsletter for his address.

While the last ten months have been challenging to our organization and our fellow members, the future is brighter. I offer these words that Judy Garland shared in 1944, that I heard several times in last month. **“Someday soon we all will be together, if the fates allow. Until then, we will have to muddle through somehow.”** Fitting words to describe 2020 and the first half of this new year. Thank you for your support and guidance in getting us to 2021. Be sure to read the other announcement from Frank Barletta (besides the dues one) about a new feature we are adding to our Zoom meeting this month for members.

Special thank you to **Bob Russo** for ending our year with his great presentation on The Wounded Knee Massacre. It continues to get positive feedback. It is good to hear Bob and his family have turned a corner on their recent challenges. This month we welcome **Dr. Alice L. Baumgartner** to tell us about runaway slaves escaping to Mexico. Like our July presentation from **Roseann Bacha-Garza**,

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we will be exposed to and learn about a region of the War which we have not previously dwelled. Join us on the 14th for this informative presentation. We have a bonus this month with our rescheduled member night on the 28th. Tune in to hear about the adventures of some of our members.

We want to welcome new member, our California connection, **Gary Kaplan**. He is formally from southern New Jersey and had joined us on Zoom several times last year. Be sure to invite your friends and families to join us on our Zoom broadcasts for our superb presentations. **Don Wiles** is always looking for material for the newsletters. If you have enjoyed a video you have watched while at home, read a good book, have a special Civil War artifact in your collection or ventured to a battlefield to wander around, write a short article and send it to Don. Then we can all share the experience. We are still seeking a few volunteers to interview and write profiles on our fellow members so we all can learn about them.

In addition to the great programs **Dave Gilson** has scheduled for us, we are planning two events for May. The Old Baldy birthday celebration in Fairmont Park will be on the 15th and on the 29th will be the annual laying of the wreath at General Hancock's grave in Norristown. Plan to attend these outdoor events to see other members of our Round Table. Not sure yet how but we will be celebrating our 45th anniversary next January.

Continue to support local businesses during our time apart, we are all in this together. Look forward to seeing your smiling faces on Zoom on Thursday evening..

Rich Jankowski, President

Today in Civil War History

1862 Tuesday, January 14

The North

The president dispatches a letter to Generals Buell and Halleck designed to spur them into action in the west. He states his desire that the Confederacy should be menaced by coordinated attacks, but at widely spaced locations. While this is in principle similar to General McClellan's plans, the president wants action to occur as soon as possible, while the ever-cautious commander of the army wants to wait until what he considers the right moment. "I soon found," he wrote shortly after replacing General Scott, "that the labor of preparation and organization had to be performed [in the west]; transportation, arms, clothing, artillery, discipline, all were wanting."

Western Theater

McClelland takes up a position near Blandville, commanding the Paducah to Columbus road.

1863 Wednesday, January 14

Western Theater

Union troops from New Orleans and under the command of General Godfrey Weitzel attempt to advance up the Bayou

From the Treasure's Quarantine Desk

*Well, it has been a very different kind of year, what can I say? Fortunately, our Round Table has continued to flourish, even though we've had our meetings on **Zoom**. In fact, **our membership has grown**.*

*A big shout out goes to **Rich, our President and head cheerleader**. Also, thanks to **Dave Gilson** for continuing to bring us great speakers with a very diverse range of topics. And to the rest of us, the Old Baldy Members, congratulations and thank you.*

*It has been through our presentation on **Zoom** that we have not only been able to keep our current members engaged, but have reached new viewers and recruited new members*

*We thank all our great members for your support and continued commitment to our success. Your support has made it possible, not only to permit us to bring these **special speakers**, but to continue giving charitable donations to some very special organizations. Some included are **The Memorial Hall Fund, American Battlefield Trust, Gettysburg Foundation and Civil War Trails Foundation**.*

*As the year came to an end, it is time again to show your support with your **2021 Membership Dues**. Though we remain on a strong financial footing, we have been unable to pursue our normal fund-raising activities. Thus, making your dues that much more important this year.*

***On a personal note**, I have always felt that our organization was so much more than just a Round Table. It is a group of people brought together by a common enjoyment of Civil War history, but more importantly, people I love having wonderful conversations with, but also being with them. I miss you all. I await the day when we can meet in person, shake hands, hug and sit down for dinner at the diner .*

Thank you again. Stay safe.

**\$25. regular dues \$35. Family membership
Mail to: Frank Barletta
44 Morning Glory Drive, Marlton, NJ 08053**

Teche into Louisiana. They are supported by the gunboats Calhoun, Diana, Estrella, and Kinsman, but are unable to make much progress in the face of determined Confederate opposition, aided by the gunboat Cotton. However, in the action the Confederate vessel is burned. Union losses are reported at 10 killed (including Flag Officer Buchanan, in command of the gunboats) and 27 wounded. Confederate losses are estimated at 15 dead.

1864 Thursday, January 14

The South

President Davis writes General Johnston, now commanding the Department of the Tennessee, warning that he may

have to provide troops for the defense of Alabama or Mississippi during the spring. But, he continues, Johnston's army must not retreat if pressed by Union forces from Tennessee.

1865 Saturday, January 14

Eastern Theater

The bombardment of Fort Fisher continues during the night and all through today. Many guns are dismantled and the Confederate gunners suffer heavy losses when they try to fire on the approaching Union infantry. Inside the fort, the commander, Colonel William Lamb, and the district commander, Major-General W.H.C. Whiting, telegraph Bragg to attack at night when the fleet cannot support Terry's troops. They receive no reply. Bragg does not stir and a Confederate transport sails into the arms of the Union forces and is captured. She is later fired on and sunk by the CSS Chickamauga, which is lurking in the Cape Fear River.

Western Theater

General Beauregard takes temporary command of the Army of Tennessee. Lieutenant-General Richard Taylor is named as Hood's successor.

Reinstating Book Raffle

In an attempt, to make our Zoom meeting more like our in-person meetings, the board has proposed having a drawing at the end of each Zoom meeting.

The Raffle will be for the book written by our speaker for that night's meeting. This will also be a thank you to our speaker for making their presentation.

Rules: The name of each 2020 member will be put in a hat. Additionally, those members attending the Zoom meeting will have their names added to the hat (a second chance).

At the conclusion of the meeting, a winning name will be drawn. **Good Luck**

Welcome to the new recruit

Gary Kaplan
California



"Those White Roses"



Almira Fales

Almira Fales was born in Washington. She was the first woman to treat the wounded from the American Civil War. Her husband was employed by the Confederate States of America, and her sons served in the Confederate Army. Almira began her service by storing hospital supplies when South Carolina seceded from the Union in December 1860. In April 1861, Almira began to nurse the wounded although the male nurses and surgeons objected that a hospital

tent was no place for a lady. She also distributed over one hundred fifty thousand dollars worth of supplies. She later served on a nursing ship during McClellan's Seven Days' Battles.

Kate Cummings

Kate was born in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1828, to David and Jesse Cummings. Her family moved to Mobile, Alabama via Montreal, Canada, where her father pursued a position in banking. Inspired by Reverend Benjamin M Miller, Kate began to study medicine. The plain looking Kate with her straight dark hair was a perfect candidate for nursing.

At the beginning of the Civil War, Kate volunteered to work in the Confederate hospitals. Against her father's wishes, Kate went to Mississippi in April 1862. She began nursing at Shiloh and worked in the medical facilities at Okalona and Corinth, Mississippi. After the Battle of Shiloh, Kate wrote:

"The foul air from this mass of human beings at the first made me giddy and sick, but I soon got over it. We have to walk...in blood and water, but we think nothing of it." She moved to Chattanooga's Newsom Hospital in June 1862, where she continued to nurse until July 1863.

In September 1862, Kate became the official hospital supervisor of Confederate medical facilities. She was in charge of dietary needs of the sick and wounded and responsible for sanitary necessities. The actual nursing was left to male physicians and nurses. Kate faced continual chastising for her medical activities. She wrote on one occasion that, "[A] lady's respectability must be at a low ebb when it can be endangered by going into a hospital."

The wealthy ladies of the South condemned Kate's hospital activities. Kate lashed out at the "rich, refined, intellectual, and will I say Christian women who shirked their public



Kate Cummings

responsibility...who admit they were never inside of a hospital and were wholly ignorant of what they should be called upon to do, but I know that what one woman [Florence Nightingale] had done, another could."

Kate served in the hospitals in Dalton, Kingston, Cherokee Springs,

Newman, Americus, and Griffin, Georgia until the end of the war, moving operations as the Confederate troops retreated in the storm called General Sherman. Kate was considered a strong woman with a considerable capacity for administration. She had the fortitude to face the endless stream of wounded, and an amazing capacity for enduring hardship.

Kate kept a diary of her nursing experiences and published them in 1866, in *A Journal of Hospital Life in the Confederate Army of Tennessee*. The diaries were later watered down and reprinted under the title of *Kate: The Journal of a Confederate Nurse*. The original record is a realistic account of the medical facilities and occurrences as well as a testimony to the contributions of such nurses as Mrs. William P. Gilmer, Phoebe Yeates Pember, and Ella King Newsom Trader.

In 1874 Kate moved to Birmingham, Alabama and taught school for the underprivileged white and Negro children. She was also very active in the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the United Confederate Veterans. Kate died of acute gastritis and senility on June 5, 1909, in Mobile, Alabama. She was buried at St. John's Episcopal Cemetery in Mobile.

Abigail Hooper Gibbons

Abigail Hooper was born December 7, 1801, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The third child of ten born to Isaac and Sarah (Tatum) Hooper, she was educated in the Friends' schools. Her family was often impoverished because her father used his meager tailor's salary to assist fugitive slaves. As a child, Abigail helped her mother operate a tea room to supplement the family's income. In 1821, Abigail established a day school in Philadelphia for the Society of Friends. She operated the academy for ten years. In 1831, Abigail moved with her family to New York City and taught in the Quaker schools there.

On February 14, 1833, Abigail became Mrs. James Sloan Gibbons, the wife of a Philadelphia merchant who was a staunch abolitionist. In 1834, the first of their six children was born in New York City. (The last child was born in 1843.)

In 1841, Abigail worked with her father in the New York City prisons, and also helped her husband with fugitive slaves.

Abigail's oldest son died in 1855, while attending Harvard. His death plunged Abigail into a deep state of depression. She began working in the Toombs, New York City's worst prison where indigent and disabled children were incarcerated.

By 1859, Abigail was appointed head of the board of trustees for a German industrial school for indigent German children in New York City.



Abigail Hooper Gibbons

Abigail and her daughter left their prison work to care for the wounded in hospital camps near Washington when the Civil War began. They were joined in the effort by other Quaker women.

Abigail criticized the "ignorant butchery" of the military surgeons. In 1863, one colonel responded to her complaints, calling her the "Protectoress-General of all who get themselves into troubles, and censor of affairs military, religious, and moral, she goes beyond her proper sphere, and might be disposed of."

Abigail was protected by Congressmen and she continued to publicize the problems of military hospitals and their surgeons. In July 1863, a mob looted and pillaged her New York City home during the New York draft riots because of her publicly expressed attitudes.

After the Civil War, Abigail organized a New York branch of the Labor and Aid Society to help war widows and orphans and to secure employment for Union veterans. An unsuccessful endeavor, the organization was disbanded a short time later.

Between 1873 and 1893, Abigail worked at Randall's Island Asylum and Women's Prison to improve conditions for the mentally disabled. In 1890, she successfully orchestrated employment of police matrons in the womens' jails and prisons in New York City. The New York state legislature approved the use of matrons in all state prisons in 1892 as a result of Abigail's campaign.

In January 1893, Abigail died of pneumonia, just three months after her husband. They were buried side by side in the Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn, New York.

Editor's Note: *Nurses were not part of the Armies, There was no Nursing Corps. These were women who went off to contribute their efforts to helping the wounded, dying and ill. They helped in Hospitals, Battlefields and Camps. There are very few records and photographs of these brave women so the accounts are few.*

Some of the past and future stories on nurses are from a book "White Roses... Stories of Civil War Nurses. Authored by Rebecca D. Larson. Available on Amazon. Some stories and Photos are and will be from Old Civil War Books and Magazines, Library of Congress, Private Archives and the Internet.

The Conference on Women and the Civil War Register Now!

Our 21st Conference, The Women of the Shenandoah Valley, will be held July 23 - 25, 2021, in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

**For conference details, <http://www.swcw.org/2021-conference-details.html>
To register for the conference: <http://www.swcw.org/2021-conference-details.html>**

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

“A Frenchman with Meade”

Edited by Lee B. Kennett, CWTI, January, 1972

The incisive letters of Lieutenant Colonel F. V. A. de Chanal, official observer for Napoleon III.

Early in 1864, the French government asked permission to send a military mission to the United States, to visit both war industries and the theatres of operations. The request was carefully considered in Washington, and in April Secretary of State Seward sent word that the visitors would be welcome, but that they would not be able to visit the Army of the Potomac. After further exchanges this restriction was removed. So it was that a small group of French officers arrived at Grant's headquarters in June 1864, remaining there through the months of July and August. Subsequently the visitors toured ordnance factories in New England and traveled as far west as Saint Louis. They collected dozens of fired projectiles and shipped them back to France, they studied the effects of shellfire on the battered armor of the Tennessee; they visited a factory engaged in the machine production of horseshoes at the rate of sixty per minute and found it of “high interest.” The party returned to New York in December 1864 and took ship for France, their mission completed.

The mission's findings were embodied in a series of letters which their leader, Lieutenant Colonel Francois-Victor-Adolphe de Chanal, sent to the Duke of Randan, at that time Napoleon III's minister of war. Unfortunately only nine of these letters have survived. They are preserved in the Archives Historiques de l'Arme'e, in Vincennes, France (Me'moires Historiques Series, Carton 768 7). The bulk of what Chanal wrote is of little historical value, being second-hand reports on operations in various theatres of the war. The selections which follow, edited by Lee B. Kennett, are happy exceptions, since they give some views of life in the lines before Petersburg. They also contain a highly favorable portrait of General Benjamin Butler and an eyewitness account of the Battle of the Crater. It should be noted that Chanal's interest in the American conflict did not end with his return to France; indeed, he became something of an authority on it. In 1872 he published a book on the Union Army entitled *L'Armée américaine pendant la guerre de la Secession*, and in the following year he wrote a brief biography of General Meade.

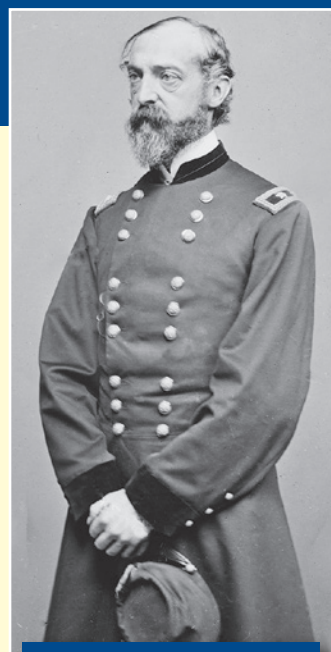
Lines before Petersburg
10 July 1864

Monsieur le Mare'chal:
In my letter of June 26th I
described to you the armies
of General Meade and General
Butler camped before those of

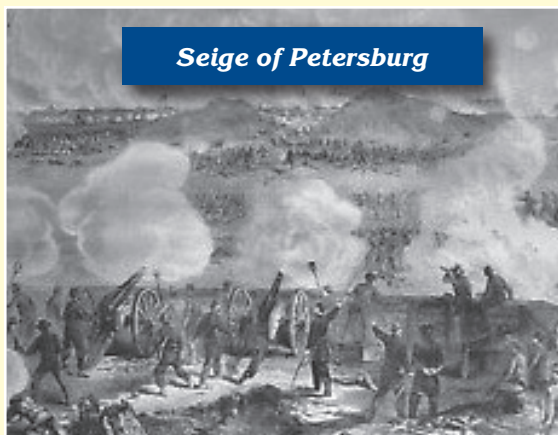
Lee to the south and east of Petersburg, the Federal left resting on the Weldon rail line, and unable for lack of sufficient effectives to place itself on the Appomattox. We are still at General Meade's headquarters, and the situation before Petersburg has not changed, except for the building of some large batteries on both sides, principally 30 pounders and 8-inch mortars. Day and night cannon shots are exchanged, without any sortie from the lines. A lively fusillade awaits anyone who appears on the parapet. This fire has so far occasioned on this side a daily loss of only about a hundred men in the works. We have visited these in order to study all their details.

At the time of our arrival a column of cavalry with some four piece artillery batteries had been sent to the southwest to carry out what is called here a “raid,” a rapid excursion on the enemy's rear. This expedition under the orders of General [James H.] Wilson advanced to Burk's Station, the junction of the Petersburg-Lynchburg and Richmond-Danville rail lines. It succeeded in cutting here some 25 to 30 kilometers of track without any other difficulty than an engagement in which the enemy cavalry was defeated and lost 500 prisoners. But when he returned without informing General Meade of his movements, General Wilson met at Reams' Station, near the stream called Stony Creek, superior forces from whom he escaped, though losing eight of his pieces, his prisoners, and about two thousand fugitive Negroes, who were in part cut up and in part taken back to Petersburg. Nevertheless, the result obtained in the destruction of such a considerable portion of track seemed sufficiently advantageous to consider Wilson's raid a success.

On his side General Lee has revived the maneuver that has constantly succeeded for him since the beginning of the war, menacing Washington in order to force the Federal Army to divide its forces and cover its capital. General Grant, by driving Lee's army to the walls of

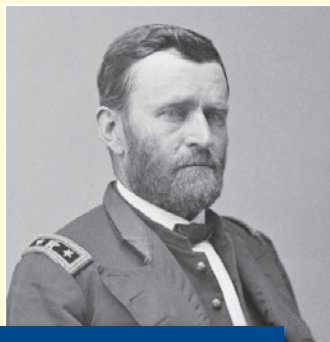


**Major General, USA
George Gordon Meade**



Siege of Petersburg

Richmond, seemed to have placed Washington and Maryland out of danger. But a Confederate column, [Jubal] A. Early's II Corps], leaving General [David] Hunter's army behind it, has gone up by Culpeper to Harper's Ferry, and has crossed the Potomac there. This may have as its purpose to seek provisions for the Confederate Army. As for the strategic result, it does not seem to have been achieved, the forces detached from the Army of the Potomac being inferior to those of which General Lee has been obliged to deprive himself. If the government at Washington defends itself with the troops it has presently in the north, it is to be presumed that General Grant's plan of campaign will be followed without interruption; and that they [the government] will understand that it is necessary to give the army before Petersburg a sufficient superiority to emerge from its positions of readiness.



**General of the Army, USA
Ulysses S. Grant**

I would not wish to conclude this letter, Monsieur le Maréchal, without giving two characteristic episodes which accord well with the knightly spirit which we find here on the staff. Nowhere could the ability of Lee and the bravery of his troops find more sincere admirers.

On July 4th, the day of celebration for the independence of the United States, the bands of the Federal regiments played a popular song, "Hail Columbia." In its entrenchments a regiment of North Carolinians stood up and saluted this national song with three huzzahs.

The old soldiers in Lee's army and that of the Potomac often arrange a truce between the lines and exchange newspapers, etc. The fighting never starts again without a preliminary warning: "Look out, Yankee" - Look out, Reb (rebel)". On July 6th General Crawford, during one of these truces of which he was not informed, went about the lines making some sketches. After he left, a note was thrown into the Federal lines, warning the soldiers that next time they would fire, conformable to orders, on any officer who undertook such a prom The infractions mistakenly committed during these tacit truces are punished by the guilty man's own comrades, who make him walk about in a grotesque manner in view of both lines.

The state of health of the army, now reposing from its fatigues, is remarkably good despite an oppressive heat. It has not rained since May 4th. It is to be feared that [in] the swamp where we are camped, fever will appear with the rain, which is desired none the less.

I am with respect, Monsieur le Maréchal
Excellency's very humble and very obedient
servant.
Chanal

Camp before Petersburg
23 July 1864

. . . Yesterday I passed the day in the camp and the lines of General Butler. Since he is a man who has been called upon to play a role in this country, I thought it advisable to write Your Excellency at some length concerning him. General Butler is a former lawyer from Massachusetts; he is, I believe, along with General [Nathaniel P.] Banks, the only general having an important command who has not graduated from West Point. He is a former Democrat who, they say, voted in the last presidential election for Breckenderige [John G. Breckinridge], the candidate of the South who wished the introduction of slavery into the territories. Since the war he has become a Republican abolitionist. I have never heard the name of Butler mentioned without an un-complimentary epithet, and the most indulgent of the military content themselves with saying that he is a politician, which is not exactly a compliment in the army.

I found General Butler an extremely likeable man, tres fin, very intelligent and informed, and of a remarkable activity. His camp, according to our French ideas, is the



**Major General, USA
Benjamin Franklin Butler**

best kept I have yet seen. He has occupied himself considerably with colored troops. A colored regiment, all of whose soldiers had been slaves, he said, maneuvered before me. The manual of arms was done in precision. I saw no white officer in the regiment save the colonel; the companies and sections are commanded by black non-commissioned officers.

General Butler's lines have been prepared with extraordinary care and lavishness. They have a development of more than ten miles. As for the lunettes, redans, and batteries, I can only compare them to our polygons carefully arranged for a general inspection. Moreover General Butler seems to be well liked by his troops. When he passed before a regiment of the 19th Corps, which had just arrived from New Orleans, and which he had not seen for two years, they spontaneously gave three very moving hurrahs. It is true that someone told me this regiment was the 25th Massachusetts, coming from Mistletoe [Middlesex] County, the home district of General Butler.

6 August 1864

. . . For some time a mine has been under construction from the Federal lines to the enemy ones, at the most favorable point. The mined position was occupied by a battery but dominated by other batteries on the left.

About 450 meters behind the Confederate lines was a crest on which it was thought there were no continuous lines but only a few isolated batteries. The possession of this crest would cause the fall of Petersburg.

It was therefore agreed that on the morning of the 30th the mine would be exploded, and that through the breach made by the explosion would be sent an attack column composed of the 9th Corps, supported by the

13th, which was to throw itself at the crest. If the assault succeeded the 2nd Corps, brought up that night from Road Bottom, and the 5th, which was on the left, were to enter the action. If, on the other hand, some unforeseen obstacle were to stop the attack column, it was to return immediately to its lines, the occupation of those of the enemy not being worth what it would cost to hold them.

Consequently three places in front of the Federal lines were ordered to be cleared that night, in order to send three columns on a brigade front. At 3:30 on the morning of the 30th, the mine was lit. An accident, soon repaired, caused a delay of a half hour. The fuse took 35 minutes to run the length of the gallery. At 4:40 the explosion occurred.

It destroyed four pieces on the left of the battery under which it went off. It swallowed up some infantrymen and created a crater 120 feet long, 60 feet wide, and 80 feet deep.

Immediately all the batteries went into action, those of the enemy as well as the Federal ones; a fact which leads me to believe that less surprise was achieved than was expected.

After about an hour and a half the superiority of the Federal fire silenced the Confederates. It should be noted, however, that the latter did not use the batteries that they had on the crest, undoubtedly so as not to reveal their positions and to save their lire for a more decisive moment.

The success of the artillery was followed by a series of mistakes. The attack columns, instead of using the passages which had been ordered cut for them through the abatis in the line, were obliged to go through a tunnel which only let them pass six men abreast; hence much delay, confusion, and a lack of e'lan. It was six o'clock before they occupied the crater, which they were supposed to have reached a quarter hour after the explosion. This crater was a veritable precipice whose edges served as ramparts for the Confederates, who had recovered from their initial surprise. There was no longer anything to do but to follow the orders given to return to the lines. But General Burnside and the 9th Corps held on to the position trying to entrench there and to extend to the left and to the right, but without success. By noon the position had clearly become untenable. At three o'clock they began an unordered retreat, a retreat

which could not take place until night, and which permitted the enemy to take many prisoners, among them several officers and General Bartell [Brigadier General William F. Bartlett], whose wooden leg was shattered in the action.

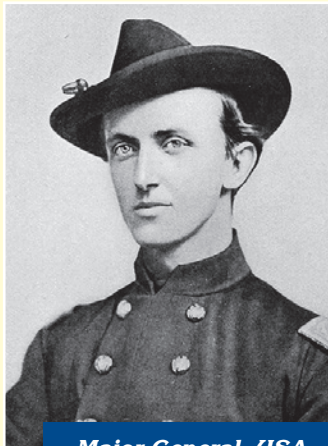
In resume, the affair, which had been planned with great ability, and whose failure would not have led to more than insignificant losses, cost the Federal Army 2,500 men in addition to about a thousand prisoners. Deserters claim the Confederates lost 3,000 men, which seems probable, and 200 prisoners taken when the mine exploded. [Actual Confederate losses were only 1,500.]

General Meade, although allowing us perfect freedom, desired that we accompany him. We did not leave him except at the beginning of the affair, when we took a closer position in order to see better the explosion.

Yesterday, August 5th, at 6:30 in the evening, a little to the right of the same front, the Confederates set off a mine of their own. The explosion took place about 40 meters from the Federal lines. Was this the result of an error or a lodgement which they wished to prepare for themselves? The firing was quite brisk all night on both sides. The Confederates have not left their entrenchments. [While the Confederates did begin a number of countershafts, there is no evidence that they set off a mine of their own. The colonel was probably in error, or perhaps mistook the explosion of a shell for a mine.]



Mine Explosion



**Major General, USA
James Francis Bartlett**

Commodore William D. Porter

by Dana Wegner, CWTI, July 1972

"Like all the Porters," wrote Gideon Welles, "he is a courageous, daring, troublesome, reckless officer."

Perhaps one of the most enigmatic of all Civil War naval personnel was the Union's own William David Porter. His nickname, "Dirty Bill," became common usage from coal heavers to admirals. He gained a reputation as an unabashed liar, profiteer, deadbeat, troublesome complainer, and perhaps one of the most ruthless and unpopular—yet competent—of all Federal naval officers.

Born in New Orleans in 1809, the first known legitimate son of the fiery Commodore David Porter of 1812 fame, William D. Porter spent most of his tumultuous youth with his mother and the myriad of other Porter children, while his father served in the diplomatic and naval service, sailing with William's older foster brother David G. Farragut. As a child he was the most disliked of the Porter children. He played unpleasant pranks on friends and neighbors and reportedly blackmailed both his father and mother regarding their

**Commodore, USA
William David Porter**

infidelities during the commodore's lengthy cruises. He disliked his parents, and was equally unpopular with other members of the family, often being accused of theft. His lying was chronic, but he should not be too harshly condemned for this. "William had, not without reason, the reputation of being very untruthful," Gideon Welles wrote in his diary in 1862, but added that it was "a failing of the Porters." His brothers called him "the Shark."



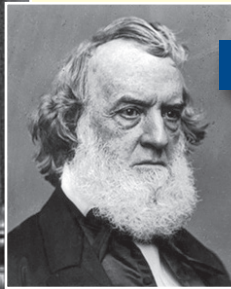
Both he and his younger brother David Dixon would follow in their father's calling. After twice running away from home, William Porter "took in a reef," as he later recalled from the spar deck of his ironclad and, joining the Navy, was commissioned midshipman in 1823 at the age of 14. Later marrying, he lost his first wife while an impoverished lieutenant; but he remarried into a wealthy Virginia family, meanwhile fathering an illegitimate child. When his father learned of the latter, William Porter was disinherited of the entire Porter estate, which then fell to his mother and brother David. This event did nothing to soothe an already fevered sibling rivalry.

Porter did make attempts at more reputable achievements, with mixed results. While attached to the Washington Navy Yard in 1841, he designed an exploding shell which, unfortunately, demonstrated its capabilities a bit prematurely by blowing out the floor and ninety-three windows in the ordnance shop and killing one workman. He made up for this in some measure with a well-designed revision of the archaic lighthouse deployment along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, but all it earned for him was the somehow unmusical title of "Father of the U. S. Coastal Lighthouse system." Service in the Mexican War followed, but Porter's bad credit, ill temper, and chronic paranoia—all of his troubles were perpetrated by his "enemies" seriously marred his career. Once court-martialled for a combination of charges including being absent without leave, tampering with ordnance stores, removing a cartload of cabbages from the Navy Yard without permission, and printing objectionable remarks about a statue, Porter was finally placed on the naval retirement lists in 1855 at the age of 46, a thorough malcontent. Years later he would claim that this, too, was the work of his "enemies."

In 1859 President James Buchanan put Porter back on the active duty list, and the outbreak of war in 1861 found him in the Pacific commanding the USS St. Mary's. Now began a precarious interlude for Porter. His wife and two of his three children were living in

the South; and Porter and his brother David being Southern born, with many connections of friendship and kinship to prominent Rebel leaders, were suspect both North and South. Porter's Virginia property was confiscated by Confederate authorities and a controversial letter appeared in the press which cast doubts on his loyalty to the Union.

Gideon Welles



The letter, allegedly written by Porter to his son, who had enlisted with the South, expressed regret at the step, but then advised the boy to do his duty and fight well. When Secretary of the Navy Welles saw it, he immediately ordered Porter to report to Washington. Porter gave a predictable accounting of himself. "He reported to me in great distress," wrote Welles, "disavowed the letter; said it was a forgery, that his son and himself were on bad terms and the letter had been written and published to injure him." His "enemies" had been at it again. (It is true that David Farragut later stated that the letter was a fake, but the whole subject of its authorship is still open to question.) Then, having defended himself, Porter went on to hint rather broadly that his brother David was not to be trusted: His Southern leanings were too pronounced, and he was an intimate friend of Jefferson Davis. Obviously, with no love lost between himself and his brother, Porter hoped to cast suspicion on David and thereby relieve the pressure on himself, possibly with a view to later advancement. Welles, unconvinced of Porter's innocence in the affair of the letter, nevertheless retained him in the service, and "Dirty Bill" offered the final proof of his loyalty by divorcing his Southern wife.

New Era



William Porter was sent west, and on October 4, 1861 was ordered to take command from Commander John Rodgers of the pitifully small timberclad gunboat New Era

at Paducah, Kentucky. Immediately Porter chafed under the restraints of official red tape. His incompleting New Era was not allowed to fire upon the Rebel batteries which he observed being built along the rivers; Porter made his impatience well known to Flag Officer Andrew Hull Foote. The quiet, patient, religious Foote was in every way the antithesis of the boisterous Porter. Foote was soon to claim that Bill Porter, with his fretting and chafing, gave him more trouble than all the rest of his officers combined. Foote, nevertheless, prudently warned Porter of the Navy's tenuous position in the West.

If we had control of matters here, I would act toward the enemy, but we are only a force under orders from the commanding Army officer of the West Fre'mont, and we cannot move except under instruction from that source.

In November 1861 Porter was ordered to bring the former centerwheel ferry, now timberclad gunboat New Era, to St. Louis for renovations and armor plating. Foote gave him eighteen days to refit her and Porter, as he phrased it, "set

Continued from page 8 - "Porter"

up on his own hook" and had her steaming downriver in three days, trailing two work scows loaded with lumber and armor plate. The crew doubled as workmen, and construction was done in an orderly manner from bow to stern in case they should see action before the work was done.

Although he had hoped that a new Pook "turtle" would be named after his father's vessel, the Essex, orders came through that the Eads boats would



New Era Essex

be named after river towns. Consequently, Porter renamed the New Era the Essex and had her former name painted out. The letters "S X" were painted on a shingle and nailed to the

forward mast. Upon arriving at bustling Cairo, Porter was surprised to find his two commandeered barges in high demand by both army and navy. More and more demands came through for them, now known collectively as the "Essex Navy Yard" and his reply was always the same: "Steal your own!"

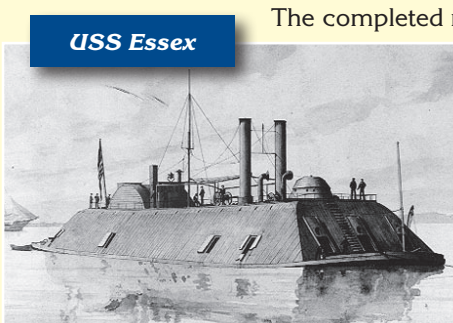
Porter preferred to walk the deck along with the 8 to 12 p.m. watch and the officers were always delighted by his snappy conversation and ribald stories about his salty life at sea. Late one night, a boat load of armed army barges approached the Essex and demanded the two barges under orders of Quartermaster William Kountz. Porter overheard the demands and bounded to the deck in his nightshirt, arousing the number one gun crew on the way. As number one gun was run out, Porter reached the deck screaming, "Bill Kountz be damned!" As the army retreated he yelled after them, "Please give Bill my compliments and go to hell!" "Dirty Bill's" nickname needed no explanation to the army.

On January 11, 1862 Porter, serving under Major General John McClernand's command, engaged three Confederate steamers including the Grampus near Columbus, Kentucky. In a brief, no-hit duel the 159-foot Essex, assisted by a "turtle," forced the Rebel vessels to retire. Porter was appalled at their lack of fight and he began a daily routine calculated to prod them to action. Each morning the ship's carpenter secured a four-foot-long log, bored a hole in it and stuck a small, forked "mast" into the hole. Porter then appeared to provide either some inflammatory remarks on a dirty sheet of paper, or an insulting cartoon to fix on the mast. The paper gauntlets were launched with much fuming on Porter's part in the vain hope that his taunts would spark a fight with the Rebel boats downstream.

Porter supported Foote's drive against Fort Henry on the Tennessee River on February 3, 1862. The Essex at this time was plated with 2 1/2-inch crude iron on her bow, 3/4-inch finer plate around her gundeck, and 1/2-inch boiler plate over her upper deck walls. The ship had only a single stack and bore a rough resemblance to one of the box-like pook turtles. Porter joined the larger Cairo class ironclads and after about twenty minutes and seventy five rounds, the Essex took a 32-pound solid shot through her bow shield. The forward and aft gun crews

had just rotated positions when the ball entered, carrying away the head of Porter's aide. The shot perforated the normally coal-loaded bulkhead forward of the boilers. Whether the bulkhead-bunker was depleted or, through someone's negligence, not filled has never been determined. The shot created an instant inferno forward of the engine room and several of the crew were instantly scalded to death. Those not too badly burned to move ran for the gunports to jump overboard. Despite his claim that he was blown overboard by the blast, it appears that Porter ran to a gunport and was about to jump when two crewmen grasped his 200-pound frame by the belt and talked him into coming back through another gunport. Scalded, blinded, and lying on a mattress, Porter gave orders to have the Essex withdrawn from the battle.

Following his victory at Fort Henry, Foote had the vessel towed up to Cairo to discharge the wounded, and then he sent it with Porter to St. Louis for repairs. Before anyone realized what he was doing, Porter, working from his sickbed, had the Essex torn down to the waterline and prepared for drastic renovations. When Foote found out that Porter intended to drop her boilers into the hold and plate her with high grade armor backed and interspaced with vulcanized rubber, he immediately telegraphed Porter not to spend more than \$20,000 on the job, but it was too late.



USS Essex

The completed new Essex was about 205 feet long, had four new boilers in her hold, twin tractor action center-wheels, expanded officers' quarters, more gun positions, and watertight ram bracing.

Porter's "apartment" over the fantail was well fitted too. She was forty feet longer, twelve feet wider, eleven feet taller, had twice the displacement, and boasted the forbidden rubber mounted armor now patented by Porter at the Navy's expense. Launched in early July of 1862 the new Essex was many months overdue. She steered like a dream but was slow. However, she had greater power than even the flagship Benton. Despite Porter's attempts to conceal his extravagance, her receipts for payment came to \$91,000! Notwithstanding the cost overrun of the Essex, Porter now began work on the Lafayette and the Choctaw: two ominous, vulture-like ironclads, using an ample amount of Porter's patented, interlocking armor plate. All of Porter's gunboats eventually turned into very fine fighting machines, though some iron had to be taken from them to lighten their draught.

Following trials at St. Louis, Porter took his Essex south to bolster the combined fleets of his brother Farragut and Commander C. H. Davis now located south and north of Vicksburg. An embarrassed Porter limped into Davis' position with the bottom plate blown out of the Essex's port boiler and she lay dead on the bank when the Rebel ram Arkansas careened out of the Yazoo River on July 15 and enflamed the surprised Federal forces.

Porter, believing his ship to be "shot-proof" following re-

pairs, was the first to volunteer to "get" the ram, vowing to make her his prize. On the morning of July 22, he took the Essex down for the attack. Coming under the batteries at Vicksburg, he ignored their hail-like fire and steamed forward at ram speed. The Essex's power plus the current, brought the 1,000-ton ship up to an estimated fifteen miles per hour. Porter ran from deck to deck patting backs, telling jokes, cheering, and cursing. He preferred an exposed position on the spar deck but when the shells became too thick he went below. With the Essex coming down like an enraged bull, the Arkansas pulled her ram back away from the bank and aimed it at the oncoming ironclad. Porter cut hard to avoid the ram and slid up on the river bank. Barely six yards from the Arkansas, he had his gunners fire a number of special loads at her, even shells filled with glass marbles, but Porter eventually returned to his favorite incendiary shells thrown from his nine 10-inch pieces. Gun crews were blackened by the smoke from each other's guns and Porter could clearly hear the cries of the wounded on board both vessels. According to some sources,

he ordered away a boarding party which actually mounted the ram but, finding her locked up tight, returned to their guns on the Essex. The Mississippi was white with the churning of



CSS Arkansas

the ironclad's centerwheels as he tried to back her off the bank. He finally succeeded in bringing her into mid-stream, apparently expecting some help from Farragut located just south of his position. Finally, lacking assistance and unable to remain stationary off the Arkansas, the infuriated Porter was obliged to steam south through the remainder of Vicksburg's shore batteries, to join Farragut's fleet.

Porter was infuriated at Farragut's lack of assistance. The admiral now demanded that his kinsman remain south of Davis and north of himself to stop the Arkansas if she should try to come down to Port Hudson or Baton Rouge. He left an admittedly apprehensive Porter alone with two small gunboats and some coal to patrol the waters between Vicksburg and Baton Rouge. Being senior officer of this small division, Porter took the opportunity to boost his ego by signing his correspondence "W. D. Porter, Commanding U. S. Naval Forces South of Vicksburg." His younger brother, David Dixon Porter, could now sign his correspondence "Acting Rear Admiral": a jump of three grades to a position over his older brother as commander of the newly formed Mississippi Squadron. "Dirty Bill" began to feel that he was "not being used right" in the West.

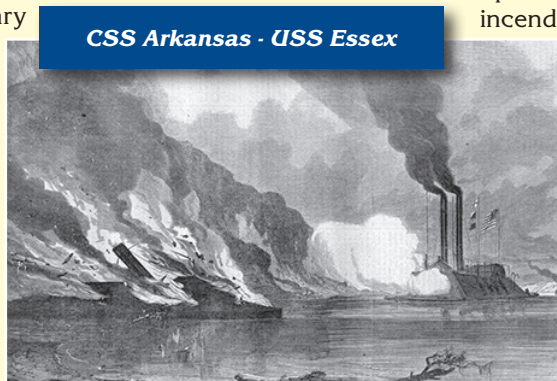
The Essex finally met the Arkansas again when the Rebel ram steamed down to assist a Confederate division that was attacking Baton Rouge on August 5th. The day before Porter had bragged that "After I get my breakfast tomorrow, I will go up and destroy her"; but now the enemy had come to him. The ram was having engine problems when

Porter opened on her at a distance. As he beat closer, he loaded with incendiaries. Soon the ram was seen to be afire; and shortly afterward its magazine exploded, destroying it. Porter claimed that the Essex's fire started the blaze. "I steamed up the river and at 10 a.m. attacked the rebel ram Arkansas and blew her up," he wrote Farragut. The evening after the engagement, he told his story to Major General Benjamin F. Butler in New Orleans who, at the same time, received a report from a Confederate civilian who had been on board the ram and reported that she was intentionally destroyed by her own crew. "I knew Porter and his reputation," Butler later recalled. He accepted the Confederate's version of the affair.

Controversy with Farragut followed. At first believing his foster brother's claims to credit for the ram's destruction, the admiral soon had a more correct account of the action. It did not help that Porter sent a disparaging letter to Welles over Farragut's head, when regulations required that such a report should have been sent to the admiral. In it, "Dirty Bill" blamed his inability to destroy the Arkansas on July 22 to the failure of the admiral to cooperate, also charging Davis. The letter backfired on him, though, and soon afterward Farragut could write with some satisfaction: "Now I suppose you never read a bigger lie than his account of that fight."

For his part, Porter remained bitter, harboring a never-ending grudge against "that Gallient Hossifer Rear Admiral Pharigoot of Uncle Psalms Navey." Lying off Baton Rouge until late August 1862, Porter returned to Bayou Sara, a small river town where he had deposited some of his precious coal reserves which had run the Vicksburg gauntlet some weeks before. He found the Federal gunboat, Sumter, placed there to guard the fuel, abandoned and on fire. His shore party was fired upon by local guerrillas and Porter

opened on the homes near the levees with incendiary shells. Returning some days later, another shore party dispatched to steal some ice was also fired upon, so he levelled the entire town. Later he shelled Natchez to "teach them a severe lesson."



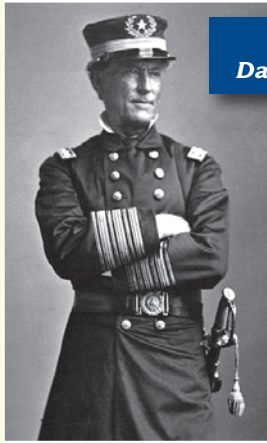
CSS Arkansas - USS Essex

For the next few weeks Porter steamed between Vicksburg and Port Hudson, shelling Vicksburg and intimidating Natchez. He finally found a fight at Port Hudson. Facing batteries there for about an hour and a half, and passing

as close as thirty yards, he expended his ammunition and tested the resistive powers of the Essex to the maximum. Returning to New Orleans for ammunition, he found the rank of commodore awaiting him.

The Navy had twice passed over Porter for promotion during the last year, most recently on August 10, 1862. Welles had been very sorry about it for, despite the officer's bad reputation, the Secretary of the Navy liked him more than he did his brother. David Porter, thought Welles, "had less heart than William." However, Assistant Secretary Gustavus V. Fox disliked both Porters passionately, and helped bar their way to promotion. On August 20, Welles took the case to President Lincoln. "Go ahead," said the President, "give Porter a Commodore's appointment, and I will stand by you, come what may."

Porter's new rank, however, did nothing to ease the contro-



**Rear Admiral, USA
David Glasgow Farragut**

versy in which he was always

embroiled. On September 12, when he saw Porter's ill-advised and condemnatory report of the July 22 affair at Vicksburg, Commodore C. H. Davis wrote to Welles preferring charges against "Dirty Bill" for deliberate misrepresentation of the facts, as well as for "calumniating" Farragut. Meanwhile, Farragut sent the Department his own defense and, while not going as far as Davis,

implied serious misconduct on Porter's part. The new commodore was also alienating the Army, engaging in an exchange of letters with Butler in which he accused the general of deliberately injuring his character by not admitting that his "destruction" of the Arkansas was responsible for saving Butler's army. It was probably over this, as well as other grievances, that Porter wrote Secretary of War Stanton "an inexcusable letter" in which he abused the military and showed more than the usual disrespectfulness. Stanton refused even to notice the letter, sending it over to Welles.

When he received his promotion in New Orleans, Porter also found a summons to New York, and he left in mid-September, arriving the same day that Stanton gave Welles his "abusive" letter. The Secretary of the Navy immediately wrote Porter that "So disrespectful a letter has the appearance of a premeditated design not only to interrupt



Mound City Naval Station

correspondence, but necessary business relations, and can not be permitted to pass without an expression

by the Department of decided reproof and censure." At the same time, he informed Porter that, because of Davis' and Farragut's charges, as well as other matters, the Arkansas "affair would be investigated before a naval board. "I have been compelled to reprove him and to send him before the Retiring Board," Welles wrote in his diary.

The 53-year-old Porter saw no more active service, spending the next several months sitting on boards and commissions in Washington and New York. Then, in early 1864, he was struck by an unspecified sickness which left him rapidly declining. From his deathbed in New York he sent west his desire that the crews of his ships, the Essex, Choctaw, and Lafayette, each donate \$30 per crew to purchase three photographs recently taken of him by Mathew Brady. Impecunious as usual, and suffering from his usual bad credit, poor Porter could not afford them himself. Finally, on May 1, 1864 he died, angry, disappointed, convinced that his career had been thwarted by his ever-present "enemies." Perhaps the best estimate of "Dirty Bill" came from one who had befriended him in spite of his faults, Gideon Welles. "Like all the Porters," the secretary wrote in his diary, "he is a courageous, daring, troublesome, reckless officer."

Wounded Knee: The Massacre That Ended The Indian Wars

Presentation by Bob Russo **December 10 Meeting**

By Kathy Clark, Member OBCWRT

The history of the Indian and white settlers' wars began around 1830. White settlers were expanding their horizons and taking all their possessions and going West. They wanted to acquire a plot of land for homesteading and were not concerned that they were on Indian territory for that land. The tribal nations fought back with violent resistance. At the same time the US Government signed treaties and then broke the treaties always expecting the Sioux and Lakota tribes to understand.

In 1851 the Fort Laramie Treaty was issued which established 60 million acres for the Great Sioux reservation and created government agencies for each tribe. The US Government wanted the tribe to stay on their reservation and stop attacking white settlers. As a result, food rations, education, and other necessities would be given to the tribes. The government's interest in the land was not only settlements but also natu-



Bob Russo

ral resources that were on the reservation itself. Again, the US Government came into the reservation and took additional acres as a result

the land mass went from 60 million acres to 21.7 million acres by 1877. Life on the reservation was difficult for the Lakota people. They were told to abandon their religion, clothing, their language, and their own food supply. Government rations were not something the Indian people wanted. By 1889-90 the tribe was on the brink of starvation.

Here is a glimpse of the timeline between the Indian tribes

and the US Government that led up to the massacre at Wounded Knee. August 14, 1854 in the Nebraska territory (Wyoming) the Grattan Massacre began. Retaliation resulted in the Battle of Blue Water Creek September 23, 1855 commanded by General William S. Harney and his company of 6000 troops. Killed were nearly 100 Lakota's half of which were women and children. The troops also took 70 prisoners.

When gold was found in the Rockies, over 700,000 people traveled west right through protected lands. At the same time the US soldiers started destroying herds of buffalo which the Indian tribes used for food, clothing, and other necessities of life. By November 29, 1864, the Civil War was raging in the East and West and at that time 675 US volunteers attacked a village of 750 Cheyenne and Apache Indians at Sand Creek (Colorado). Troops killed at least 150 Cheyenne and Apaches, mostly women, children, and the elderly.

December 21, 1866 Captain William Fetterman was caught in an ambush with the Native Americans as revenge for the Sand Creek Massacre. Treaties continued to be made and broken with the Indian tribes. Under the leadership of Red Cloud and Crazy Horse they attacked Fort Phil Kearney. Colonel Fetterman and 80 troops went after Crazy Horse and his warriors riding straight into an ambush. None of the troops survived. There were 81 American troops killed by Lakota on Crow grounds. With the treaty of Fort Laramie of 1868 was to guarantee the Lakota and Sioux ownership of their land. The treaty only provided land for the Indian reservation with all other tribal lands surrendered back to the US.

That was not the end of Indian/US relationships deteriorating. June 25-26, 1876 saw the Battle of Little Big Horn ending with George A. Custer and 210 men of the US Cavalry were killed. Congress demanded the Native Americans surrender any rights to all lands except their reservation. The tribes were not immune to measles, whopping cough, influenzas all brought to the tribes by white settlers that became part of the Indians health issues.



Ghost Dancers

Between 1888-1890 the tribes began "Ghost Dances". Conditions on the reservation were deteriorated to the point the Native Americans needed something to give

them hope. The origins of the dance came about through a dream by Jack Wilson during a solar eclipse on January 1, 1889. Jack saw himself taken to the spirit world and saw all Native Americans in the sky as the earth was opening to swallowing the white people. Thus, the land was transformed so Native Americans could come back to earth, living in peace. By dancing continually in a round-dance the dream would become a reality and were all welcomed to enjoy the new Earth. If the Indians put on their special shirts, they thought they would be protected from the white man's bullets.

By 1890 the dancing was out of control, fearing the white soldiers would attack the tribes, President Benjamin Harrison, on November 13, 1890 sent troops to help the Tribal Police stop the dances. Colonel Edwin Sumner, Jr. of the 8th US Cavalry saw what was happening and ordered Sitting Bull arrested to force him to stop the dances. Sitting Bull was killed. December 29, 1890 at Wounded Knee Creek Colonel James Forsyth and the US 7th Cavalry came onto the reservation to gather up all the horses. When he told all Native Americans to give up their guns, they protested even though the troops surrounded the camp. They all had their shirts on and thought they were protected from the white man's bullets, but that protection would never be realized. An open attack began by the soldiers killing 270-300 Native Americans, 170-200 women and children, along with 25 soldiers all thrown into a mass grave and buried.

Through all the years of negotiation with the Native American Indian tribes there was never an opportunity for the tribes to get their land back. Even today there is still 1.3 billion dollars as of 2011 which was to be given back to the people but was never taken. The land was their valued possession and that was never offered to the people. As was stated in the newspaper of the time, "A more ripe and rank case of dishonorable dealings will never in all probability in history."

A heartfelt "Thank You" Bob for your excellent presentation which showed the abuse, the corruption along with the prejudice that is part of the Native American history by US soldiers and agency personnel. We cannot know all the facts, but Bob laid out a timeline of Indian wars culminating at Wounded Knee. We welcomed his PowerPoint talk and wonderful photos of the battles and areas that Bob visited. This is a sad part of our American history. We know history is not fair some of the time but wish the US would have dealt with this issue in a more human way. Time after time we see how the story really is played out in the history books. Bob, you brought the true story to our roundtable and very much appreciate your work and tireless effort to bring history to our members.

"The Northwest Conspiracy"

by D. Alexander Brown, CWTI, May 1971

One of the most misunderstood episodes of the war centered around a plot that never came off to free Confederate prisoners in the North, and foment revolt.

For both the Union and Confederacy, 1864 was unquestionably the darkest year of the Civil War.

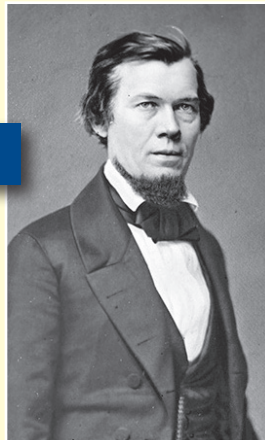
The North was war-weary, frustrated because its bloody victories seemed to change nothing, while at the same time across the Nation Democrats and Republicans were engaged in a bitter Presidential campaign that brought long-simmering internal dissensions to the surface. The South was facing military disaster: Sherman was marching to the sea; Grant was closing in on Richmond. The Confed-

eracy had exhausted its sources of military manpower, and the Union refused to exchange any of the thousands of Rebel soldiers held in Northern prison camps.

To stave off defeat, Confederate leaders searched for some means of forcing Sherman to turn back north from Atlanta, anything which might prolong the war until aid could be secured from Britain or another foreign country. In a move of desperation, the Confederate high command on March 16 ordered Captain Thomas Henry Hines to make his way through the Union lines to Canada. While en route, Hines was to confer with Northerners known to be friendly to the Confederate cause and to encourage them to organize and prepare themselves to "give such aid as circumstances may allow." In Canada, Hines's mission was to assemble all Confederate soldiers who had escaped there and employ them "in any fair and appropriate enterprises of war against our enemies." Six weeks later this venture was considerably enlarged when President Jefferson Davis sent Jacob Thompson and Clement Clay to Canada with several hundred thousand dollars to finance the organization and arming of Confederate sympathizers in the North. Captain Hines would now report to Thompson, and would be responsible for military operations directed principally toward the freeing of Confederates in prison camps. Money was also to be spent in influencing the Northern press, sabotaging supply bases, blowing up steamboats and railroad trains, and upon various other schemes.



**Camp Douglas
Confederate Prisoners
of War**



Jacob Thompson

Out of this came a vague plan to attack prison camps in Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, free thousands of Confederate prisoners of war, supply them with arms and horses, and then sweep across the Northwest, seizing arsenals and gathering recruits from among local sympathizers. The ultimate objective was to overthrow the state governments and form a Northwestern Confederacy. If this failed, the army would cross the Ohio and Mississippi rivers and link up with Confederate cavalry forces.

Tom Hines, who was to direct this fantastic operation, had served in Brigadier General John Hunt Morgan's famed 2d Kentucky Cavalry Regiment. During the summer of 1863 he was an advance scout for Morgan's raid into Indiana and Ohio, and after he and Morgan were captured, it was Hines who engineered their astounding escape from the Ohio state penitentiary at Columbus. In 1864 Hines was a lithe young man of 25, with black, curly hair, a thin moustache curving over a determined mouth, cold blue eyes set wide apart. In Canada he found several of his old comrades who had also escaped from prisons. One of them, 23-year-old, John Castleman, had enlisted Hines into Morgan's regiment, and Hines immediately made Castleman

his partner with equal rank in the leadership of the conspiracy.

Hines and Castleman could not, of course, carry out their great plan without assistance

from sympathizers in the Northwestern states. The most promising sources of aid seemed to be state and local organizations which early in the war were known as Knights of the Golden Circle, but which had been reorganized as the Sons of Liberty. The membership of these organizations was made up largely of Democratic party supporters, especially those who had family or commercial ties with the South, and of men who opposed the war for one reason or another, who disliked Lincoln and his policies, or who were simply attracted to the romantic mysteries of secret societies with their elaborate hand-grips, signs, and passwords. Supporters of Lincoln and the Republican party called them Copperheads or Butternuts.

As the organizations were secret, the memberships were also secret; estimates of the total in the Northwestern states ranged from a few thousand to half a million. When Jacob Thompson was told that 340,000 members of the Sons of Liberty were ready for action against the Union, he was realistic enough to reduce the number by half. Recent historians have concluded that the number of militant anti-war Democrats in Illinois and Indiana was probably not more than 35,000, and much fewer than that in the other states.

Opposition to the draft was especially strong in southern counties of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. Groups of war opponents invaded draft offices and destroyed the records. The more militant ones physically attacked enrolling officers. They formed secret committees to aid draft resisters in escaping to Canada, and made strong efforts to persuade soldiers to desert and also flee to Canada. They devised propaganda campaigns to convince soldiers that the war was meaningless and could never be won. Even as far north as Syracuse, New York, draft protesters scrawled graffiti on walls and carried placards with legends such as these:

WE WILL NOT BE CONSCRIPTED IN A WAR FOR THE EMANCIPATION OF SLAVERY. CRUSH THE TYRANT LINCOLN BEFORE HE CRUSHES YOU.

In January 1863, Colonel Henry B. Carrington, mustering officer for Indiana, reported 2,600 deserters and stragglers arrested around Indianapolis within a very few weeks. Union military officials such as Carrington, as well as a number of Republican politicians, attempted to link the Sons of Liberty and other Democratic organizations with all these activities.

The national hero of the anti-war Democrats was Clement L. Vallandigham, a Congressman from Ohio. Vallandigham bitterly opposed the war, charging that it was being fought for the benefit of Eastern capitalists and to the detriment of the Northwest. He called for a cease-fire and the beginning of peace talks while both armies were being gradually with-

drawn from the battlefields. In 1863 he charged the Lincoln Administration with destroying civil liberties and the Constitution. After delivering an especially vigorous speech in Ohio in May 1863, Vallandigham was arrested by military authorities and sentenced to prison. Lincoln commuted the sentence to banishment to the Confederacy. Not wishing to be identified with the Confederate cause, Vallandigham made his way to Canada. During February 1864, officials of the Sons of Liberty visited him in Windsor, Ontario, and persuaded him to become Supreme Commander.

Clement Vallandigham



an attack upon the Republican party, accusing it of fostering a dangerous secret society known as the "Loyal Union League." He charged that the men who controlled the League were spreading rumors that the Sons of Liberty was a treasonable organization. Vallandigham insisted that the latter served only as a counter movement to the Union League, that there was no conspiracy against the government except to overthrow the Lincoln Administration in November, not by force but through the ballot box.

Early in June, Jacob Thompson and Tom Hines met with Vallandigham and several officials of the Sons of Liberty. One of the latter, a Chicagoan, told Hines that he had "two regiments organized, armed and eager for uprising." How much of the Confederate conspirators' plans was known to Vallandigham probably will never be known. Vallandigham refused to take any of Thompson's money, but during these meetings the Democratic leader announced that he would return to Ohio in a few days, fully expecting to be arrested by Federal authorities. The Confederates were delighted, of course; if an arrest were made, Vallandigham could become a martyr, creating a situation which might lead to a general uprising of his followers in the Northwest.

Vallandigham's surprise appearance on June 15 at the Ohio state Democratic convention in Hamilton caused quite a sensation. He made one of his impassioned speeches, virtually daring the Lincoln Administration to arrest him again, but at the same time warning his followers not to begin any act of violence or disorder. Then he launched into

If the Confederate conspirators were counting on an arrest to start an uprising, they were acutely disappointed. The Federal Government did not entirely ignore the exile's return; agents followed him everywhere making notes of his remarks, but he was left free to travel and speak as he pleased.

Hines and Thompson meanwhile continued their negotiations with Sons of Liberty leaders. As the national Democratic convention to nominate a candidate for President was scheduled for July 20 in Chicago, the plotters decided that date and place would be propitious for the start of an uprising. Before a detailed plan could be worked out, however, the Democratic party postponed its convention to August 29.

- Continued in next (February) issue -

**Kevin M. Hale Award
for
best Historical Newsletter
in New Jersey**

Schedule of Old Baldy CWRT Speakers and Activities for 2021

**January 14, 2021 – Thursday
Dr. Alice L. Baumgartner
"South to Freedom: Runaway Slaves
to Mexico and the Road to the Civil War"**

**January 28, 2021 – Thursday
"Member Sharing Night"**

**February 11, 2021 – Thursday
Dr. Lorien Foote
"The Yankee Plague: Escaped Union Prisoners
and the Collapse of the Confederacy"**

**March 11, 2021 – Thursday
Christopher Klein
"When the Irish Invaded Canada: The Incredible True
Story of the Civil War Veterans Who Fought
for Ireland's Freedom"**

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