

Tennessee Valley Civil War Round Table March 2020 Newsletter



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*The TVCWRT is a 501c3 organization that provides a forum for non-partisan study, education, and discussion regarding the American Civil War. It supports the preservation of Civil War battlefields and landmarks. It meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30 pm, the Elks lodge on Franklin Street Huntsville, Al. TVCWRT will **never** sell your email address. Address: P.O. Box 2872 Huntsville, Alabama 35804. Questions/Comments: Newsletter Editor; arleymccormick@comcast.net*



2020 Member Honor Roll

- PATRONS
 - **April Harris**
 - **Emil Posey**
- SUSTAINING MEMBERS
 - **Carol Codori**
 - **Jonathan Creekmore**
- SUPPORTING
 - **Beth Altenkirch**
 - **Terry & Keith Clevenger**
 - **Greg & Stephanie Cousins**
 - **Harry Gatzke**
 - **Alan & Dottie Markell**
 - **Kevin & Judy Rodriguez**
 - **Alan & Diana Ruzicka**
 - **John Scales**

Special Notes:

The News Courier – Athens, Alabama - Saturday February 22, 2020

A friend of the Round Table and all local historians is absent from formation.

BUZZ REMEMBERED

BY JEAN COLE jean@athensnews-courier.com



Richard “Buzz” Estes, longtime Athens business owner and local historian who brought life to the dead through cemetery portrayals, has died.

Estes was a well-known businessman in Limestone County with a third-generation Athens business that was more than 100 years old.

He was also instrumental in organizing the annual Athens Cemetery Stroll and April Walking Tours in Athens’ historic districts. The cemetery stroll consists of local actors who portray their descendants, or those of others, who are buried in

Athens City Cemetery. They dress like them and deliver speeches detailing their histories for the stroll.

Estes, who was first lieutenant commander of the Hobbs Camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, not only helped organize the stroll, he was also an actor, often portraying Civil War characters.

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His business: In 2000, Estes' business — W.E. Estes & Son Inc. — celebrated its 100th year of business in Limestone County. It spent its lifetime located just off The Square in Athens.

Most of the building is now home to H.C. Blake Co., a longtime Huntsville plumbing, heating, air-conditioning and electric business, which bought out Estes & Son in 2014. But, thanks in part to Estes, H.C. Blake Co. agreed to lease part of the building to Art on the Square for an art incubator.

In 2014, Estes told The News Courier the three-generation family business was the oldest business in Limestone County, serving customers in North Alabama and southern Tennessee. He offered a little history about it.

In 1900, Horton Lewis & W.E. Estes opened for business as a dry-goods store and farming supplier. Over the years, the business added V-C Fertilizer, rubber-tire tractors, diesel repair, milking equipment, pumps and refrigeration equipment, boll weevil catchers, seed-cleaning machines, metal grain bins and electric irrigation systems.

By 1959, the business turned to selling, installing and servicing plumbing, electrical and HVAC systems. Buzz Estes joined the business in 1962 following graduation from Vanderbilt University. And in 1972, with Buzz Estes as president and his wife, Doris, as secretary-treasurer, the business incorporated as W.E. Estes & Son Inc.

Friends speak: One of the people who worked closely with Estes, Limestone County Archivist Rebekah Davis, said she grew up with Estes' children and got to know Estes, a history buff, better when she joined the Limestone County Archives. "One of my favorite memories of Buzz was when I sat down on top of a tombstone in my hoop skirt, next to him in his Confederate Gray, while he passed around a bottle of wine to celebrate the completion of another successful Athens City Cemetery Stroll," Davis said. "Sometimes, he had me talk about the Civil War to Confederate veterans," Davis said. "People look at the Sons of Confederate Veterans as a bunch of white guys fighting the Civil War all over again, but they were instrumental in making sure money was donated to the Fort Henderson project. It was a Union fort, and the 110th U.S. Colored Infantry Regiment fought there."

The group donated at least \$2,000 to renovate the Trinity-Fort Henderson Complex, located on 4 acres off Browns ferry Street in Athens.

The three-phased plan calls for renovating and repurposing the former Trinity School, the county's only high school for black students until it closed in 1970 amid desegregation; rebuilding the walls of Fort Henderson, a Union fort built and occupied by the 110th Colored Infantry in 1862-63 during the Civil War; and building a museum to tell the history of each. Trinity School was finished and renamed Pincham- Lincoln Center, now used for community events and as a polling place. The Fort Henderson and museum projects remain.

Davis said most of all, she remembers the many times Estes came to study at the archives.

"He loved history, and he loved this town," she said. "He also loved to call up to the Limestone County Archives to pick on me and April Barron Davis from time to time. He will be missed for sure around these parts."

Dedication: Teresa Todd, president of the Athens- Limestone County Tourism Association, also appreciated Estes' love for history. Estes was on the tourism board for many years, happily serving as chairman-elect, chairman and past-chairman, she said. He also served as a tour guide for the Historical Walking Tours from 2006 to 2018 and the Haunts Walks, and he participated in the Athens Cemetery Stroll and assisted in recruiting actors.

"Buzz was always willing to share his love of Civil War history with me and advise me on many questions I had about the history of Athens and Limestone County," Todd said. "I always had time to sit with my friend and listen to his amazing knowledge on so many subjects. I will miss his impromptu visits that were always welcome at the tourism office."

Confederate veterans: Many of Estes' friends in the Sons of Confederate Veterans shared memories on social media Friday after hearing of his death.



Jimmy Hill, a current Army of Tennessee councilman, past commander of the Alabama SCV and past commander of the Hobbs camp before Estes took over, had this to say about his friend: “The thing I always remembered about Buzz is if he told you he’d do something, he’d do it. Some people thought he was a little grumpy. He wasn’t. He was really good-natured, but very honest and to-the-point, whether you liked to hear it or not.”

Hill cited Estes’ work on the summer walking tours, his efforts to launch the cemetery stroll and keep it going, and his overall dedication to Athens and Limestone County among his accomplishments.



“He was very civic-minded and on a lot of committees,” Hill said. “He was equally involved before and after the store closed, but perhaps more actively involved after it closed. He was good to work with, and I am going to miss him a lot.”

In this undated file photo (left), Richard “Buzz” Estes prepares to guide one of four historical walking tours offered each Saturday in June. His free tour focused on The Square.

NEWS COURIER FILE PHOTO Copyright (c)2020 The News-Courier, Edition 2/22/2020



“Emma and the General - March 2, 1863” photo by Ron Simmons is actually pointing toward the membership table. Please support the Round Table.

Call to Action! – Join / Renew Now – 28% More to go!!
After March all former members not renewing their membership will be dropped from the roles.

Basic Membership Categories

General member \$30; Student member \$0; Associate member \$0

Premium Membership Categories

Supporting member \$100; Sustaining member \$250; Patron \$500:

See the membership table for benefits.

And for nonmembers

Friend of the Round Table (Any contribution you’re comfortable with.)

Announcements:



Thursday, March 12th join the Round Table and Donna Castellano (pictured at left) for **Walking through Works of History: Huntsville’s Iconic Structures, Before and After the Civil War**; Books and monographs have their place in the interpretation and study of history, but they aren’t the only way to understand our past or present. We’ll take a virtual walking tour to learn how wars, economic booms, or intellectual shifts affected our city. The appearances of Huntsville’s

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antebellum (and postbellum) homes and commercial buildings, help us understand why these structures are literally “works” of local--and even national--history.

As a reforming academic, our speaker’s preferred classrooms are the sidewalks and streets of the Twickenham, Old Town, and Five Points historic districts, or those around our downtown courthouse square. With her, we’ll see the work of history built into structures, centuries and decades ago. Here’s a Gothic Revival style church that survived the Union occupation--and one that didn’t. Here’s a house built by a former soldier who enjoyed his time in Huntsville during the war so much that he returned with his family to stay. Here’s a pristine Greek Revival style bank building dating from Alabama’s statehood era before 1819, serving as a commissary during the war, and still in commercial use.

Join us for a different approach to history: a look at how Huntsville’s architectural features can inform our past and future. And, for those who wish to take an actual stroll, we’ll see some of these same sites on Saturday, March 21, departing at 11am from Harrison Brothers Hardware.

Donna Castellano has spent the past thirty years researching, writing and preserving Alabama history. She holds an M.A. degree in history from the University of Alabama-Huntsville, with a specialization in the antebellum South and a concentration in political science and art history. She began her professional career as Instructor in History at UAH, then found her calling in a community classroom, dedicated to the preservation of Alabama’s material culture. Donna is the Executive Director of the Historic Huntsville Foundation (HHF), a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of our area historic resources. She also serves on the board of *Alabama Heritage*, a history journal published by the University of Alabama. As part of that journal’s state bicentennial content, Donna wrote an in-depth architectural and cultural profile of the Bibb House on Williams Street. Her credits include “Through the Garden Gate: The Gardens of Historic Huntsville,” as well as HHF’s well-received creative series entitled “Color Me Huntsville.” Her current work involves Huntsville’s sites related to the centennial of women’s suffrage, 1919-2019.

A Very Special Basement: Huntsville’s Post-Civil War Treasure

Ed. Note: Our March 12 speaker Donna Castellano, shared this profile in advance of her talk on Huntsville’s historic homes. She welcomes us to Historic Huntsville Foundation’s events, especially Carol Codori’s walking tour on March 21. That tour of the downtown square departs from Harrison Brother’s Hardware at 11am. We can also see the basement from 10am-12noon on that Saturday—well worth a visit!

A trip to the Harrison Brothers basement brings you face to face with Huntsville’s early history. Buildings began to line the streets of Southside Square, originally called Commercial Row, as early as 1810. While the original buildings have been altered through renovations, the brick masonry walls of the original building remain. The foundation of our city is clearly visible in the basement of Harrison Brothers.

In 1897, James B. and Daniel T. Harrison opened a tobacco shop at 124 Southside Square. A few years later, a fire swept down this street and heavily damaged most of the buildings, including the one owned by the Harrisons. The brothers doubled down on their investment in downtown Huntsville. They purchased the adjoining bay (the west side of the store), added a third floor, and thoroughly renovated the building’s façade. Then, they settled in to run their family-owned business for decades.



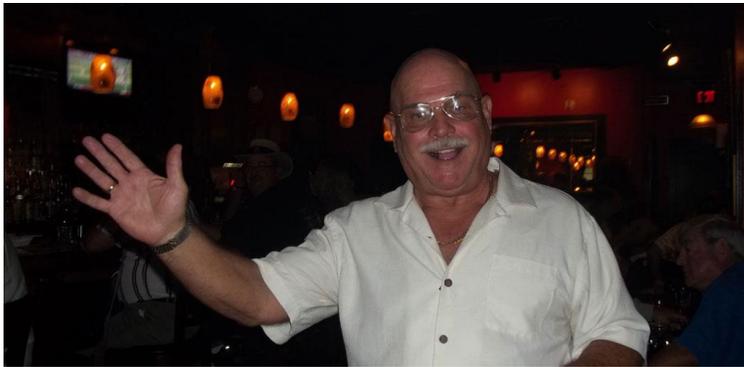
The death of John Harrison in 1983 (a grand nephew of James and Daniel) threatened to bring the legacy of Harrison Brothers to an end, but the Historic Huntsville Foundation negotiated with Harrison heirs to buy the building and operate the store. Today, the Historic Huntsville Foundation continues the Harrison Brothers legacy in Huntsville.

In the early 1980s, the Historic Huntsville Foundation established an architectural warehouse filled with historic salvage materials for folks restoring their historic homes. The items in basement consist of donations from property owners who could no longer use the salvage materials—sinks, doors, windows, even a wooden toilet tank! There are also materials that remain from stocked merchandise and fixtures of the old Harrison Brothers store, including auto parts, massive shelving and a rope-operated freight elevator.

In 2001, the Historic Huntsville Foundation received a Save America's Treasures grant from the National Park Service, and used these funds to stabilize the building's foundation. The basement received its concrete floor at this time. The basement at Harrison Brothers Hardware is not a carefully-curated, pristine space. It's authentically dirty—and wouldn't be changed for the world.

The Historic Huntsville Foundation is a membership based 501(c)3 nonprofit organization; and welcomes the membership and support of all who care about our historic places. Visit the website at www.historichuntsville.org for more information and membership materials!

We thank, Homewood Suites by Hilton, (714 Gallatin Street SW Huntsville) for their support for the Round Table.



Say Hello to Nick, of Nick's Resturante. It remains the #1 steakhouse in Northeast Alabama and has the Best Chef in the Valley as voted in the Planet.



Bill Martin a former board member and master of photography joins those that will enjoy Nick's

March 12 "Don't forget to Dress Out" with the Round Table.

Ladies, check your hoop skirts. Gentlemen, dust off your saber and head gear. The March 12 meeting offers another chance to "dress out" if desired, as we welcome our speaker Donna Castellano addressing "Huntsville's Historic Homes" and guests Patricia and Skip Cleveland.

The Cleveland's are devoted stewards of the early 18th-century "Old Allison Homestead" on Winchester Pike. They are long-time friends of the RT, having attended numerous



Once upon a time the Bells of Huntsville danced the night away. Now, there is another chance to wear those hoops!

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events in their elegant (hand-made-by-Skip) period uniforms and gowns. We've invited them to be recognized as part of the evening's topic on the preservation of local historic homes.

We hope they can attend in period dress, and that you too will take the opportunity to add to the ambience. Why not wear long skirts, uniforms, hats from any military or civilian era, or your medals and jewelry--just for fun.

Need some ideas on how to put together an easy period-esque look? Call Carol Codori, program chair at 256-293-0075.

What's Old, What's New in Downtown Huntsville: A Fun Stroll with Friends, in Partnership with Tennessee Valley Civil War Round Table and Historic Huntsville Foundation

Saturday Morning. March 21, 2020

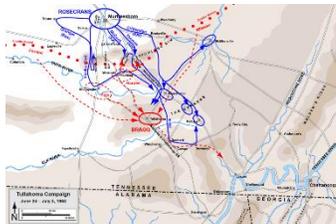
Bring friends to connect as an informal group, rain or shine. Led by Carol Codori, local history buff and downtown resident, we'll stroll, learn, and/or eat at some spots you may not have checked out yet. Park for free on the street. Or use city lots on Greene and Eustis; Jefferson and Eustis; Washington and Clinton; or Jefferson and Holmes. No charge for tour, but your spending will benefit local merchants.

Connect with us for any combination of the following times:

10:30am-11:00: Visit on your own, the bi-monthly opening of the basement at historic Harrison Brothers Hardware. See architectural features from the 1800's, such as stone foundations, handmade brick walls, and a rope-pulled freight elevator. See many items you remember from grandpa's barn or grandma's house—even a wooden toilet tank! Browse upstairs at the local artisan-crafted wares, with time for gift shopping. Store opens at 9:30 and basement opens at 10:00, if you wish to arrive sooner.

11:00am-11:45: Meet Carol in front of Harrison Brothers Hardware. Depart for an easy walk of 30-45 minutes around the Square. We'll be viewing architectural features of iconic buildings, including The First National Bank, the Schiffman Building, and Church of the Nativity. If weather is dry, we'll peer below street level at the 1860s-era "sunken sidewalk," and learn its history on East Side Square. At end of stroll, receive a free "**Finding Huntsville**" booklet as a gift from Historic Huntsville Foundation, as its Alabama Bicentennial education project.

11:45am—through lunch on own (optional): **Continue strolling** with Carol down Washington, then down Clinton, to see the many new shops. End up at intersection of Jefferson and Holmes, to see new spots in The Avenue block. These include MELT-Huntsville; Mo's BBQ; Moon Bakery; The Purveyor; and Indigo's Boutique. OR get your car and drive to nearby Cyn Shea's Bistro off Church Street, across from the old Railroad Depot, to catch the tail end of jazz brunch, until 1:30pm. **Announcing the Association of Licensed Battlefield Guides (ALBG) 2020 Spring Seminar: "Overlooked & Often Not Visited: Ridges, Farms & Other Battle Sites" May 1-2, 2020.** Registration online: <http://gettysburgfourguides.org/>



TVCWRT Field Trip Scheduled: October 31, 2020 the Tullahoma Campaign of 1863

Hold Saturday, October 31, 2020, for our annual field trip. Tentative plans are to depart Huntsville at 7 a.m. on October 31st, travel by bus to Murfreesboro and pick up Greg Biggs--expert guide and friend of the RT. He will lead us to the various key sites of the Tullahoma Campaign of 1863. The route will primarily be along the back roads actually used but

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will parallel I-24, ending at Sewanee (university of the South). We'll then return to Murfreesboro, drop Greg off by 4, and return home. Cost is \$90 per person (covers speaker, bus, water bottles on bus, and tip for Greg); lunch on your own. Coordinator John Scales will provide further details as they develop. Questions or early interest? Call John at 256-337-1444.

The 2020 TVCWRT Schedule of Speakers

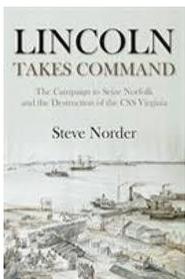
Date/Speaker	Title of Presentation
21-Mar: Saturday 11am TBD	Walking tour of architecture Spring Extra,
9-Apr: Michael Acosta	Fort Fisher, NC the Fall of "Southern Gibraltar"
14-May: Phillip Wirey	James Longstreet: Local Boy Meets Gettysburg, PA
11-Jun: Linda Moss-Mines	Dr. Mary Edwards Walker and the Medal of Honor
9-Jul: Judge (Ret) David Breland ... DeAngelo McDaniel	Stories of Civil War Decatur, AL: How African American. & White Citizens Coped
13-Aug: Curt Fields (US Grant)	Returns to Huntsville: From Early Years to Shiloh
11-Sept: Mauriel Joslyn	Battle of Chickamauga, Before and After
8-Oct: Dakota Cotton	Athens, AL: The Siege and Historic Beaty House
12-Nov: Eric Whittenberg	U.S. Cavalry at Brandy Station, VA

Membership: On 29 February, there are 172 members of the Round Table, 72% of our 2020 goal.

TVCWRT Features

Book Reviews

Lincoln Takes Command – The Campaign to Seize Norfolk and the Destruction of the CSS Virginia, by Steve Norder; A Tennessee Valley Civil War Round Table review: Ricardo Jaramillo



President Abraham Lincoln as a military strategist is articulately documented by Mr. Norder. It is no surprise that President Lincoln was a skillful politician, but his military skills are rarely as well documented as Mr. Norder has been able to accomplish. The day-to-day happenings from May 6 to May 12, 1862, President Lincoln's period of command as annotated in the book, allow the reader to follow and understand the President's rationale for his reasoning behind his orders and guidance provided to his commanders. As Mr. Norder mentions, no other seated President commanded his military forces in the field as did President Lincoln.

Not only does Mr. Norder document this period of Lincoln's command, but he also provides the details leading to Lincoln's seven-day command of all forces. The timeline allows the reader to fully understand the precarious military situation President Lincoln was in that led to his commanding all the Union forces. The state of the Union, as well documented in other writings, illustrates that his military leaders appeared to be stalling rather than take the offense thus causing the war to be prolonged unduly. Mr. Norder's ability to document the war effort leading to President Lincoln taking command provides a dire picture of military affairs and a playable justification for

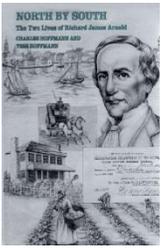


President Lincoln taking command. Mr. Norder also documents that President Lincoln executed his orders as well as if he had had professional military experience (which he had little to none). The book layout provides numerous details not provided in other writings. To obtain these details, Mr. Norder delved into documents written during the time period, including soldiers' and politician diaries, both Confederate and Union archived newspapers, official military documents/orders, personal letters, books pertaining to this time period that were written by participating soldiers, and numerous other sources. Also, Mr. Norder extensively researched archived government documents and numerous internet civil-war related sources. The author portrays a clear picture of the war.

Mr. Norder provides pertinent details of the military leaders and ships of both forces. This allows a deeper understanding of the military leaders' military experience and the relevance to the seven-day command. The ships' information chapter is very useful allowing a better understanding of the ships' history, their capabilities, and weaknesses.

I highly recommend this book for both the novice and well-rounded civil war enthusiast.

North by South, The Two Lives of Richard James Arnold, Charles Hoffmann and Tess Hoffman, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988, *Reviewed by Emil L. Posey, Tennessee Valley Civil War Round Table (December 2019)*



In 1823, Richard James Arnold (1796 – 1873) of Providence, Rhode Island, descendant of a Quaker family involved in the movement to abolish slavery in Rhode Island, married Louisa Gindrat of Bryan County, Georgia. Through her dowry, he acquired a rice and cotton plantation called White Hall – thirteen hundred acres of rice and cotton land and sixty-eight slaves on the Ogeechee River near Savannah. Over the next fifty years, Arnold led two distinct, if never entirely separate lives, building through successive Georgia winters a profitable southern "paradise" rooted in human bondage, then returning each spring to his business interests and extended family in Rhode Island.

"Paradise" is how Frederick Law Olmsted described it after a brief visit in 1853. A "veritable Garden of Eden," it was a place where "the institution of slavery could be observed at its best as a system of labor" and Arnold "a paradigm of the paternalistic slave master" – a description that will ring socially heretical in the minds of many today.

Arnold faced a fateful decision with the acquisition of White Hall in 1823. He could neither sell it nor run it profitably. The crop that year was hardly enough to sustain the place, parts of it were already heavily mortgaged, and the remaining cultivatable land was not enough for the large work force of slave he now owned. Either he would have to buy more land or sell off some one-quarter of the slaves. It "made more business sense to buy additional land at a low price than to sell part of his capital assets in the form of slaves at a time when slaves were worth less on the market."

Arnold's decision to not only keep the plantation but to enlarge it was a departure from the anti-slavery meme of the Arnold family in Rhode Island, but over the ensuing 50 years he balanced family and business responsibilities and sensibilities between Rhode Island and Georgia, dividing his time every year until the advent of war between the two. By 1860, Arnold was the largest landowner in Bryan County, with over 15,000 acres and 195 slaves.

Organized around a surviving plantation journal kept during two winters and one spring, *North by South* encompasses Arnold's career as a rice and cotton planter and his increasingly difficult social and moral disguises that enabled him to move freely through two cultures. Well written and full of rich detail, the book's greatest usefulness is enabling us to see the intricate tapestry of Antebellum America, not just the South, but the whole of the country. We can get so used to seeing political maps of the nation in 1861 divided into states, with the Confederacy depicted in one color and the North in another – clean, crisp delineation – that it's easy to forget that every state, along with the North and South in general, were intricately intertwined socially, culturally, and



economically. *North by South* is a valuable example for everyone wanting to better understand these relationships. Enjoy!

Charles Hoffmann was a professor emeritus of English at the University of Rhode Island. He is the author of individual books on the novelists Ford Madox Ford, Henry James and Joyce Cary, and coauthor, with Tess Hoffmann, of *Brotherly Love: Murder and the Politics of Prejudice in Nineteenth-Century Rhode Island*.

Your reviewer is Emil L. Posey, former Vice President of the TVCWRT, now continuing to support by being part of the Stage Crew. His work history spans almost 45 years of military and civilian service to our country. He retired from NASA/George C. Marshall Space Flight Center on December 27, 2014. He has a bachelor's degree in Political Science from Hood College, Frederick, Maryland; is a former president of the Huntsville chapter of the National Contract Management Association, and is a life member of the Special Forces Association. He is also a member of Elks Lodge 1648 (Huntsville, AL) and the Tennessee Valley Genealogical Society. He is a dedicated bibliophile and a (very) armchair political analyst and military enthusiast.

The Road to a Shooting War; March 1861

(The Editor)

In February 1861 representatives of the first eight Southern states that seceded from the Union announced the formation of the Confederate States of America (CSA) from its capital at Montgomery, Alabama. Jefferson Davis was president.

On March 4th Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated becoming the 16th President of the United States and it was a busy month for the Union and the Confederacy.

A Confederate Army needed leadership and Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard and Samuel Cooper were appointed Brigadier Generals in the Confederate Army. Braxton Bragg was also appointed a Brigadier General and designated to command all troops in Florida. The CSA took charge at Charleston, SC as the Union was evacuating troops from Texas and closing forts. Col Earl Van Dorn, CSA, rushed to Texas to recruit the Union troops to the Confederate cause.

The Arizona Territory convention, held at Mesilla, voted to leave the Union, meanwhile, in Arkansas Convention, held at Little Rock, attendees voted against seceding, 39-35, but agreed to another vote later in the year and the CSA seized the supply ship, USS Isabella, at Mobile, AL. I was on its way to Pensacola, FL.

Senator John J. Crittenden, of KY, attended a Peace Convention and presented a Constitutional amendment to the United States Congress that would protect slavery. The amendment was defeated and the Convention terminated clearly signaling that there would be no compromise. Yet, the Confederacy sent envoys Martin J. Crawford, John Forsyth, and A.B. Brown, to Washington to meet with the new Federal government. Abraham Lincoln refused to meet with them fearing it would give credibility to the newly formed Confederate States of America.

The United States Congress created the Dakota and Nevada territories while Indians were creating problems on the Kootenay River in the Washington Territory. The US War Department assigned Col William W. Loring, USA, to command the Department of New Mexico (Territory) and Brigadier General Edwin Vose Sumner to command of the Department of the Pacific.

In Missouri, Captain Nathaniel Lyon, 2d US Infantry, was assigned to command of the Saint Louis Arsenal. He possessed orders to arm the loyal citizens and execute the laws of the United States while Lincoln quietly decided to supply Fort Sumter, SC in lieu of an evacuation and two more vessels left New York Harbor for Fort Sumter, including the US steamer, USS Baltic.

Consistent with the President's policy regarding slavery, Union Soldiers were returning slaves to their masters.

What would March 1861 bring?



Reference: The Chronological Tracing of the American Civil War per the Official Records of the War of the Rebellion, by Ronald A. Mosocco, 1995, James River Publications, Williamsburg, Virginia.

The Tennessee Valley Civil War Round Table Civil War Online Tutorial.

Under the heading of Nooks & Crannies (under the Education tab on our website), Emil Posey addressed the political issues that stimulated sectional rivalries during the Antebellum period leading to the Civil War. In this issue, Arley McCormick addresses the American society response that accompanied the political debate as the country descended into war. All the articles published to date will be placed on our website to encourage interest and study of the Civil War era.

The Slippery Slope to War

Building a democracy is hard.

A significant event at a specific date satisfies to define when war starts. The challenge is accurately defining the reason. Reasonable people didn't wake up one morning and decide to start the "War Between the States." As the historian Stephen E. Ambrose once wrote, "if it weren't for the African, we would not have had a Civil War." Or words to that effect. Let's begin there.

Slavery is an institution that preceded the colonization of North America by centuries. Every continent, save Antarctica perhaps, embraced an aspect of slavery. In North America, Native American tribes were known to enslave members of other tribes and in 1619 Africans were introduced to the colonies. Initially, they worked as domestic servants and laborers and were recognizable and a part of the Colonial culture in both the northern and southern colonies.

Hector St. Jean de Crèvecoeur, a French writer that migrated to Colonial North America and married a local woman, recorded his perspective on North America's colonies. His thoughts would be considered utopian today. He minimized the divide between the rich and the poor, paid tribute to mild government, respect for the law, uniformity in living conditions, peaceful cohabitation among all the nationalities originating from Europe, and cheered the opportunity to prosper through your own labor. He spoke nothing regarding the Africans' condition.

Society is a description of how human relationships are formed, maintained and survive in a group. Its place in the academic world evolved as a discipline in the 18th Century when a combination of seemingly disconnected events occurred; the philosophy of Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and industrialization.

North American society was an amalgamation of European cultures that developed through a combination of shared experience, belief in a common set of unobtrusive laws, and a need for collective defense, initially against the Native Americans but also the French, English, and Spanish. An identity evolved based upon living independent of unwanted authority, earning your own way, and helping your neighbor. An individual's worth was based upon character, skill, and work ethic, not a rank or an economic station in life.

The noble character of the American society described by Hector St. Jean de Crèvecoeur reads well for a liberal experiment but the new society also incorporated all of the aspects of human behavior considered normal at the time. It propelled those with a higher economic station toward governing in some capacity or at least influencing those around them and the African slave was not considered; he had no voice, no vote, and could only be counted as present.

The generations that experienced the American life style found less and less comfort or faith in the King, any King, until politically it became us, the Americans, against them, the King, his agents and American born supporters of the King; Tories. The American political perspective was divided into two basic categories; one perspective believing in a strong central government and the other



believed each colony/state needed minimal interference from a central government (supports the argument regarding “states’ rights”). Organized political parties did not exist and the first government was a Confederation of the willing harboring little interest in paying for a strong central government.

The authors of the Constitution accommodate slavery to achieve the objective of forming a government.

The constitution was adopted by authors that accommodated and/or agreed to disagree without influence from an organized political entity. They were fearful of such factions i.e., political parties, believing they would wield too much influence over governance. But, as

the limitations of a Confederation of States began to materialize, political organizations formed and their influence grew. Men gravitated toward a Federalist camp, supporting a strong central government, or a Jeffersonian camp of Democratic-Republicans, delegating governance, as a right, to each state.

The American perspective was influenced by a number of factors. Religion was one and the Enlightenment Age (age of reason) another. The Great Awakening (religious revitalization of the 1730’s and 40’s) was well established at the start of the Revolution. The largest denominations were Congregationalists, Anglicans (after the Revolution were known as Episcopalians), and Quakers. But by 1800, Evangelical Methodism and Baptists grew more quickly. And, the core ideas associated with the Enlightenment Age including reason, knowledge, and freedom were equally swaying the thought of many Americans. Enlightenment shaped their minds and the Great Awakening shaped their hearts. These concepts were well established in the thought of educated men by the time of the revolution and grew more passionate as the industrial revolution offered more free time to wage earners.

The contrasting political perspectives respected and valued the rights of each state.

It wasn’t till 1820 that American music began to gain an identity. European composers continued to draw listeners but in the remote communities’ almost from the day the first colonist landed, unique dialects were developing and over several generations the style of music would too.

Home school dominated the agricultural areas and formal education grew in larger communities that could support a school. Universities began to emerge on the East Coast, in West Kentucky, and in growing successful river towns after 1800. Many languages were spoken, but English was dominate and other nationalities often anglicized their names to fit in and forced their children to learn and speak English.

Along with the Age of Enlightenment came abolitionism. The movement began in Europe, migrated to the colonial America and began to influence states to act. Portugal abolished the slave trade in 1761 but the slave traders moved their operations to other countries. France abolished slavery in 1794. Each northern state, over time, abolished slavery by 1805 yet, some adopted laws that allowed Africans to move through the state but not reside in the state.

Anti-slavery laws did not impede the Boston and New York bankers or Northern industrialists to stop loaning money to the Southern plantation owners or invest in ships that supported the slave trade, even after the British abolished the slave trade in 1807 and finally slavery in her colonies in 1833.

The industrial revolution, particularly the cotton gin, propelled cotton from a crop for domestic use to a commodity demanded by the textile mills of the world, in particular, the Northeast, England, and France. The demand spawned Alabama fever (the great land migration to the area south to the Mississippi river referred to as the Southwest Territory) and the creation of several southern states.

While the cotton industry was creating wealth for the South, the north and west, i.e., Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and on the great lakes and St. Lawrence River were creating a demand for labor to support industrialization. Emigrants from Europe flowed, particularly into the north. The Germans



wanted to farm in the west. Boston almost became an Irish city and the Irish brought a perspective on liberalism that made Bostonian bankers cringe.

Boston may be the one Northern city that reflects, more than any other, the conflicts abolitionism would bring to the country. Boston was rich and a portion of that wealth was based upon the slave trade and financing the Southern slave holders. They didn't want to give up that profit stream. Yet the population was shouting against slavery and also their own labor condition, wages, and living conditions.

The slavery related issues occupied the attention of more and more. The congressmen of the North and South, feeling the pressure building, began debating the issues and passing legislation that they thought found middle ground yet created unanticipated issues that would challenge their ability to sustain a middle ground.

The national political debate from the creation of the Union until the 1820's was noted, but did not disrupt the daily life of a resident, north or south. However, during this decade, the ground for compromise began to resemble a path to the edge of hell. It is arguably the period, more than any other, the discord on the South's "peculiar institution" began to register in the hearth room of most citizens. But, as the citizens of the North and South began the decade they were not discouraged. Perhaps, partially because the South and the Western states had an unofficial coalition that often blocked the East and Northeastern states from passing legislation, placing unnecessary export and import taxes on the South and West that only benefited the infrastructure needs of the North and East. President James Monroe, the same president that signed the legislation accepting Alabama into the union, may have initiated the ever-increasing spiral to Civil War by signing the Missouri Compromise. The Compromise was intended to preserve a balance of power in the Senate (twelve free states and twelve slave states) by admitting Maine as a free state in return for admitting Missouri as a slave state, but there were unintended consequences.

Another event occurred in 1828 that impacted the South more than anywhere else. The Democratic - Republican Party organized by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison before the turn of the century broke apart leaving a dominant Democratic Party in the South. The republican portion of the party faded for a time with many aligning with the Whigs, also not a competitive political party. The result was no competing voice representing alternative views to the people of the South, with the exception of the Reconstruction period, for over 100 years. Non-slave holding property owners and others often opposed the positions of the Democratic Party, but cotton dictated most decisions.

There are social events that bring people together for fun and comradery that can often bridge gaps of political misunderstandings. Sports, books, music, plays, and parlor games are a few. In the south, horse racing was a big draw. Bare knuckles boxing was a huge draw both north and south. Cock fighting was too. Turkey shoots were popular sport, but there was nothing on a national level. Since the population throughout the country was semi-literate, books didn't pull people in different circles together, but rather pushed them apart.

In May of 1828, the nation's congress passed the Tariff of Abomination. The tariff was intended to support the industrialization of the North at the expense of the South. The tariff of 1831, designed to minimize the impact of the 1828 tariff, didn't satisfy the South. The tariff legislation punctuated the argument supporting economy as a reason for the Civil War.

Not necessarily the first but certainly the most notable legislation that links an economic incentive and argument for Southern Independence. "The Tariff of Abomination"

The average citizen in the south recognized a change after the Nat Turner Rebellion in 1831. Previously, each township had formed a volunteer force to patrol their community. Upon catching an offending citizen, they were authorized to impose corporal punishment, i.e., whipping or placing people in stocks on the town square. Escaped slaves could be punished and then returned to their



owners. After the Rebellion patrols became larger, more frequent and operated with less discretion. Fear drove the change.

News of an Underground Railroad that supported the escape of slaves placed increased pressure on communities. The Underground Railroad was a clandestine organization without membership or a leader. Its ad hoc structure was only known through word of mouth by those brave enough to trust the information. History has given credit to the Underground Railroad for aiding the escape of thousands of slaves.

Westward expansion increased the number of newspapers in the country. Vicksburg the “Gibraltar of the South” had three newspapers supported by a population of less than 5,000 people. In the earliest days of the republic, newspapers reported the local news and national issues with each choosing a perspective that their readers supported. As slavery and abolitionism collided, newspaper publishers chose their side and not surprisingly publishers in the South defended states’ rights, the cotton industry, and predatory excise fees, justified slavery and the North promoted abolitionism, condemned the Southern institution of slavery, promoted a variety of alternatives including the *Society for the Colonization of Free People of Color of America*, (an organization that supported sending free blacks back to Africa).

Yet, even as the debate consumed the newspaper columns, most citizens both North and South worked and did not become passionately involved in the debate. As they worked to feed and clothe their family, went to church on Sunday, and visited with neighbors. At local establishments they noted the topics of the day, developed opinions and positions but, in general, left it to the politicians to decide. Even as the zealots both North and South became more aggressive, Southern Fire eaters became known widely. However, as the national debate raged, Southern states were excited and dedicated to the principles of the constitution. They proudly waved the national flag, and celebrated when they earned statehood, such as in 1845 when the last two Southern states joined the union; Florida and Texas.

Books in the North shaped opinions with narratives that challenged the southern rhetoric that exploited the inhumanity related to the institution. *American Slavery As It Is*, published in 1839 by Theodore Weld, challenged the arguments that a slaves life was a better alternative to their homeland because they were clothed, fed, and generally lived without the fear of torment and suffering. Harriet Beecher Stowe published *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in 1852 and had never visited the South but she listened to the stories told by run-away slaves. Her fictional account of Uncle Tom further galvanized the abolitionists and sympathy for the slave in the North.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act was passed in 1854. It allowed people in the territories of Kansas and Nebraska to decide for themselves whether or not to allow slavery within their borders. It was intended as a compromise between advocates against the expansion of slavery and those seeking to end slavery, but it led to a bitter struggle to create a slave state in Kansas that would be sensationalized by the press and further fuel outrageous acts by the opposing sides. One major impact; it influenced the abolitionist John Brown and made him a household name. In the South, children would be threatened that John Brown would get them if they didn’t mind their parents.

In 1857 it would appear no compromise could be made and a southerner inadvertently added fuel to the debate. *The Impending Crisis of the South*, 1857, was written by Hinton Rowan Helper of North Carolina. He was an opponent of slavery and wrote the book that argued the white slave holding southerner was holding back industrialization because of slavery and it was in the best interest of the white population to stop it.

Any time the economy downturns it was defined as a panic in 1800 terms, the national, state, and local debates became more real as residents, North and South, were affected or afraid of being affected. The panics (economic depressions) of 1819, the first boom to bust depression in American history and again in 1837 effected the citizens.

With all the political animosity that had leached into the minds of citizens over the previous 57 years more Americans began to believe a conflict was not avoidable.



References:

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- *Civil War Boston by Thomas H. O' Connor, 1997 Northeastern University Press, Boston*
- *A Diary from Dixie, Mary Boykin Chesnut, originally published 1905*
- *A Disease in the Public Mind, a New Understanding of Why We fought the Civil War, by Thomas Fleming, 2013 Da Capo Press, New York*

TVCWRT Little Round Table (LRT) Discussion and Schedule - 2020

March 26, - Trading with The Enemy; Led by Jeff Ewing

April 23, - Vicksburg Campaign 1- Holly Springs to Chickasaw Bayou to Arkansas Post; Led by Arley McCormick

May 28, - Vicksburg Campaign 2 - Bayou and Canal Operations; Led by Fred Forst

June 25, - Vicksburg Campaign 3 - Porter Moves South – Grand Gulf - Snyder's Bluff; Led by Kent Wright

July 23, - Vicksburg Campaign 4 - Grierson's Raid; Led by Arley McCormick

August 27, - Vicksburg Campaign 5 - Port Gibson to Jackson; Led by Jeff Ewing

September 24, - Vicksburg Campaign 6 - Champion Hill and Big Black; Led by John Allen

October 22, - Vicksburg Campaign 7 - Siege Operations; Led by Emil Posey

December 10, - Armistead and Garnet - Parallel Lives; Led by Emil Posey

Thanks! Mr. Mallock



April Harris, President of the Round Table presents the Bicentennial Coin to Dan Mallock for his very timely message.

Mr. Mallock's presentation regarding the relationship between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson created a lot of interest and a great deal of enthusiasm as the attendance was the largest, we have experienced in quite some time. Many thanks!



Nearly 90 attendees enjoying Danial Mallock's presentation.

Quotes from Abraham Lincoln

- "It has been my experience that folks who have no vices have very few virtues."
- "Most folks are about as happy as they make their minds up to be."
- "No man has a good enough memory to be a successful liar."
- "Human action can be modified to some extent, but human nature cannot be changed."
- "Love is the chain to lock a child to its parent."

The TVCWRT is a 501c3 organization that provides a forum for non-partisan study, education, and discussion regarding the American Civil War. It supports the preservation of Civil War battlefields and landmarks. It meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30 pm, the Elks lodge on Franklin Street Huntsville, AL. TVCWRT will **never** sell your email address. Address: P.O. Box 2872 Huntsville, Alabama 35804. Questions/Comments: Newsletter Editor; arleymccormick@comcast.net



The TVCWRT Management Team

OFFICERS (Elected)

- April Harris, President
- John Mason, Former President and now Vice President
- Emil Posey, Former Vice President and now Secretary and acting Sergeant at Arms,
- (vacant) Treasurer

BOARD MEMBERS (Appointed)

- Carol Codori, Former President, Programs Officer
- Johnathan Creekmore, Technology Manager
- Robert Hennessee, Preservation Officer
- Edwin "Ed" Kennedy, Communications Officer
- Arley McCormick, Newsletter Editor
- Kevin Rodriguez, Membership Officer
- (Vacant), Sergeant at Arms

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

- Debra Morgan

COMMITTEE CHAIRS (Appointed)

- Jeffry Ewing, Little Round Table Coordinator
- Art Helms, Lead Greeter
- John Scales, Former President, and now Field Trip Coordinator

GRAY BEARDS

- John A. Allen, Former President and Founder of the Little Round Table
- Mark Hubbs, Former Preservation Officer and Co-founder
- Kent Wright, Former Programs Officer

STAGE CREW

- Edwin "Ed" Kennedy, Master of the Screen and General Roustabout,
- Mike Sosebee, First Master of the Sound System
- Lin Turner, Second Master of the Sound System
- Brad Tuten, Master Projectionist

