

Tennessee Valley Civil War Round Table April 2020 Newsletter



To Inform and Educate Since 1993 Contents

Presidents Message **page 2**
2020 Member Honor Roll..... **page 3**

Thursday 9, April Membership meeting Canceled

Announcements

Support Nicks..... **page 3**

Exploring Huntsville's Architectural History
..... **page 4**

TVCWRT Field Trip Scheduled: October 31, 2020 the Tullahoma Campaign of 1863 **page 5**

2020 Speaker line up **page 5**

TVCWRT Features

Book Reviews

Caught in the Maelstrom, The Indian Nations in the Civil War 1861-1865,
..... **page 5**

The Petersburg Regiment in the Civil War,
..... **page 9**

Failure In The Saddle: Nathan Bedford Forrest, Joseph Wheeler and the Confederate Cavalry in the Chickamauga Campaign, **page 7**

More on the war

The Shooting War Begins; April 1861 Events and Action *Editor*) **page 9**

Civil War Tutorial

Simplifying Antebellum Politics, by Emil Posey **page 10**

TVCWRT Little Round Table (Discussion and Schedule - 2020 The Vicksburg Campaign
..... **page 16**



President's Message

Waiting for a Sugar Cube

Unfortunately, we are obliged to **cancel our April 9 Round Table meeting** due to the coronavirus. Going forward, we will keep you posted on the status of both the Round Table and Little Round Table meetings, but for the moment, we will abide by our Governor's mandate and do our part to help stop the spread of this sickness by foregoing our gathering.

Pandemics, epidemics and plagues have often changed the course of history, helping armies win victories, hastening the fall of Rome, and rearranging the feudal system of the Middle Ages. In our hemisphere, epidemics of European diseases wiped out so many natives that the Spanish were able to overpower the mighty Inca and Aztec civilizations.

I'm sure many of you remember the polio epidemic that stalked the country every summer until a vaccine was developed in the mid-1950s. I vividly recall the day my parents took my sister and I to get our first dose of the Sabin vaccine. We lined up dressed in our Sunday clothes at the local high school gymnasium for our turns to each eat a vaccine-laden sugar cube. I was thrilled, a sugar cube was something my Mother would never have let me eat otherwise!

Once the polio vaccine was widely available, the disease quickly faded into distant memory and today, is unknown by several generations.

While coronavirus is scary, we forget that during the Civil War, diseases that have since been largely eliminated like yellow fever, cholera, typhoid, and measles, killed thousands of troops. It is estimated that two of every three men who died succumbed to disease. At the Battle of Chancellorsville, 5,000 Confederate troops were unable to take their posts because they were trying to protect against smallpox. President Lincoln himself came down with smallpox in 1863 after delivering his Gettysburg speech. At the time, people were told it was a mild case, but today, historians suspect he almost died and the seriousness of his condition was downplayed to prevent panic.

Necessity brings medical innovation and so it was with Civil War medicine. In the 1860s germ theory was not widely accepted, most physicians didn't wash their hands before touching patients, and many surgeons had never treated a gunshot wound. The war revolutionized American medicine by bringing advances in surgical techniques, wound care, and a system of triage that is still used today.

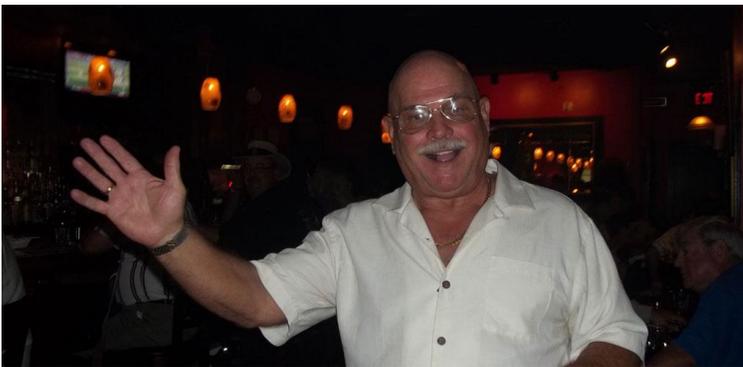
I suspect that the coronavirus will bring lasting changes to our everyday lives in little ways. Things like eliminating self-serve buffets and crammed seating at everything from church to baseball games initially will seem inconvenient, but within a few years will be accepted as the norm. More importantly, I am certain that it will also bring the 2020 equivalent of the sugar cube, another medical innovation in the form of a vaccine that will let us all enjoy monthly Round Table meetings once again. In the meantime, satisfy your Civil War cravings by reading the many excellent articles posted under "education" on our web site, www.tvcwrt.org.



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**

Announcements:



James Foley will get dinner at Nicks when the terror of a Pandemic is over.

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

This is a very challenging time for our nation and community. Many people are out of work or on reduced schedules and struggle to pay the bills. Nearly six years ago Nick began supporting the Round Table and has provided our members with free meal in his upscale well attended restaurant in South Huntsville. Nick's, like so many other restaurants is, for the interim, depending on carryout service to stay afloat and pay the staff. It would be greatly

*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*



appreciated if we pay back to those that have supported us over the years. Please go to <http://www.nicksristorante.com/> to order a carry out or to his go-fund-me page and make a donation: GoFundMe Nick's Ristorante. (the Editor)

Exploring Huntsville's Architectural History

Huntsville's antebellum homes and commercial buildings and their connections to the area's history were the subject of Donna Castellano's Round Table presentation in March. She highlighted Twickenham, Old Town, and the Five Points historic districts and talked about how Huntsville's architectural gems inform the city's past and future. Castellano is executive director of the Historic Huntsville Foundation and invited members to avail themselves of that group's guided and self-guided tours that depart from Harrison Brothers Hardware on the courthouse square.

The evening also included recognition of Pat and Skip Cleveland for their long-time support of preservation efforts in our area. Carol Codori, former Round Table president, presented the Cleveland's a copy of "Alabama from Territory to Statehood: An Alabama Heritage Bicentennial Collection."



Carol Codori introducing Skip Cleveland.



The Formal and the Casual: At left is Mark Blevins and Emil Posey



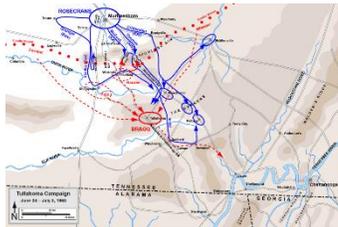
Left to Right; Mark Belvin, Marjorie Reeves, Stephan and Ron Bednarczyk watching Carol Codori, second from left, presenting Skip Cleveland with an Alabama Bicentennial Book.

"If we are to have another contest in the near future of our national existence, I predict that the dividing line will not be Mason and Dixon's but between patriotism and intelligence on the one side, and superstition, ambition and ignorance on the other."

-- Ulysses S. Grant

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





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

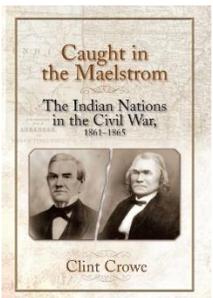
Hold Saturday, October 31, 2020, for our annual field trip. Tentative plans are to depart Huntsville at 7 a.m. on October 31st, travel by bus to Murfreesboro and pick up Greg Biggs, expert guide and friend of the RT. He will lead us to the various key sites of the Tullahoma Campaign of 1863. The route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

TVCWRT Features

Book Reviews



Caught in the Maelstrom, The Indian Nations in the Civil War 1861-1865, by Clint Crowe, Savas Beatie, 2019. *A Tennessee Valley Civil War Round Table review by Arley McCormick*

Dr. Clint Crow captures the essence of a civil war within the Civil War by explaining tribal conflicts that began long before 1861. The Five Civilized Tribes—the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek (Muscogee), and Seminole—were divided internally between a faction that resisted signing treaties with the United States government that gave up land for settlement by the expanding population of the United States and those that supported signing treaties as a means of preserving the tribe and avoiding further confrontations.

He adeptly develops the character of leaders representing all factions and particularly Cherokee's Stand Watie, (the only native American promoted to general in the Confederate

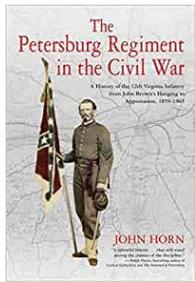


Army and the last general to surrender his command upon the conclusion of hostilities) John Ross, and the Creek, Opothleyahola.

The Civil War west of the Mississippi River, the area designated as the Trans Mississippi Theater, has not generated as much interest by scholars of the Civil War as the Western Theater, the area from the Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi River, or the portion of the country east of the Appalachian Mountains, the Eastern Theater. But, the Trans Mississippi, as Dr. Clint Crowe illustrates, is conflicted with political intrigue, both National and Tribal, personal vendettas, and all the challenges military operations present to a population caught in the path.

Dr. Crowe describes the military and political decisions that impacted upon the ebb and flow, and the losses and success on the battlefield that impacted the population long after the War Between the States ended. The maps and illustrations provide ample support to the battle narratives and leadership assessments. *Caught in the Maelstrom* is an excellent narrative that may entice further study regarding the area of operation known as the Trans Mississippi Theater.

The Petersburg Regiment in the Civil War, A History of the 12th Virginia Infantry from John Brown's Hanging to Appomattox 1859-1865. By John Horn El Dorado Hills: Savas Beatie LLC, 2019, *Reviewed by Emil L. Posey, Tennessee Valley Civil War Round Table*



A rousing good history of one of the iconic regiments of the Civil War, one that ranks up there with the likes of the 20th Maine, the 24th Michigan, and the 15th Alabama, the 12th Virginia Infantry, a.k.a. the “Petersburg” regiment, went the distance, finding itself in most of the key battles in the Eastern theater – Seven Pines, Malvern Hill, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Cold Harbor, and battles around its namesake, Petersburg, to name a few.

Horn traces the regiment’s formation from militia units in and around Petersburg and Richmond – the Petersburg Guard, the Petersburg Grays, the Lafayette Guards, the Huger Grays, the Richmond Grays, among others – in the late 1850s to its activation in July 1861. Filled with photos, drawings, and maps, this history ranges from individual stories to the whole regiment, in the process spanning privates to generals, the brave and the self-serving, and those that lived and those that did not survive. It is filled with cogent insights and nuggets throughout. Take, for example, the regiment’s early brush with Major Thomas Jonathan Jackson, a professor at Virginia Military Institute in Lexington. Looking for an assignment that would best use Major Jackson’s talents, Governor John Letcher considered him for command of the newly forming regiment. The 12th would be a plum assignment, but Jackson’s representation as an officer of “an eccentric and ascetic disposition” preceded him. The regiment’s officers protest so strongly that Governor Letcher assigned him elsewhere. It eventuated that the 12th was assigned to defend Norfolk. One can only imagine how the spring and summer of 1862 in the Valley and on the Peninsula might have been different had Major Jackson received the assignment.

History is a great playground for the imagination, and nothing serves one’s imagination better than eyewitness views and unit stories. Horn takes us on just such a journey — the toils and foibles; successes, failures, and fears; and tragic incompetence and occasional brilliance. It’s all here.

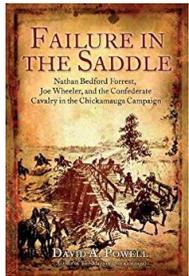


This story finishes with casualty comparisons (appendices) of the 12th Virginia with other Confederate and Union regiments. A quick scan evidences the intensity of the fighting the Petersburg Regiment endured during the war. This is a great read. Enjoy.

As for John Horn, a native of Illinois, he received a B.A. in English and Latin from New College (Sarasota, Florida) in 1973 and a J.D. from Columbia Law School in 1976. He has practiced law in the Chicago area since graduation, occasionally holding local public office. He resides in Oak Forest with his wife and law partner, H. Elizabeth Kelley, a native of Richmond, Virginia. They have three children. He has published articles in *Civil War Times Illustrated* and *America's Civil War*, and his books include The Destruction of the Weldon Railroad (reissued in 2015 in a revised and expanded Sesquicentennial Edition as The Siege of Petersburg: The Battles for the Weldon Railroad, August 1864) and The Petersburg Campaign (1993). With Hampton Newsome, Horn co-edited Civil War Talks: The Further Reminiscences of George S. Bernard & His Fellow Veterans, published by the University Press of Virginia in 2012, which was extensively drawn upon for this regimental history.

Your reviewer is Emil L. Posey, former Vice President of the TVCWRT, now continuing to support as Secretary. 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 and the 1756h Infantry 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.

Failure In The Saddle: Nathan Bedford Forrest, Joseph Wheeler and the Confederate Cavalry in the Chickamauga Campaign, David A. Powell, Savas Beatie LLC, El Dorado Hills, California, 2010.



Failure in the Saddle was reviewed in 2010 by our Round Table authors. If you didn't buy the book it may be interesting to see what our distinguished Communications Officer Ed Kennedy thought of the book a few years ago. (the Editor)

Historian-author, David Powell's thesis is contained in the title of the book. This excellent book leads the reader through the Tullahoma Campaign to the siege of Chattanooga. It focuses on the actions of the Confederate cavalry of General Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee. The events are meticulously covered and Powell's attention-to-factual details is superb. Powell is also the author of the "Maps of Chickamauga", another incredibly detailed piece of work. I have only been able to find two minor, largely inconsequential errors of facts in his books which is extremely impressive, especially with the huge amount of information that he covers.

Powell does a very credible job of establishing the context of the September 1863 Chickamauga campaign. He ends the book with the siege of Chattanooga and surrounding cavalry operations to November 1863. Beginning with Rosecrans' movement out of central Tennessee in June 1863, Powell explains the problems with the cavalry under both Forrest and Wheeler. Wheeler's total failure to follow explicit orders is baffling. The failure of Bragg to relieve him under those circumstances was likely due to the high esteem which Bragg

7

*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*



inexplicably held for him. Forrest, a new corps commander, had problems as well but there are mitigating circumstances. Both commanders suffered from serving in a dysfunctional command climate that produced unclear concepts and contradictory orders.

I find absolutely no fault with the facts in the accounts of the units' actions. Outstanding citations and substantiation are a forté of Powell's. His extensive footnotes are detailed and the bibliographical sources are first-class. However, two former directors of the history department at the US Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas penned outstanding documents regarding Chickamauga. Unfortunately, neither are mentioned in the bibliography.

MAJ Jerry D. Morelock (now, U.S. Army colonel, Ph.D. retired) wrote an award-winning article published in Military Review magazine in 1984. "Ride to the River of Death: Cavalry Operations in the Chickamauga Campaign" (the article won the prestigious Arter-Darby History Writing Award) is an excellent overview of the cavalry organization and leadership in both armies. Morelock gives equal criticism to the cavalries of both armies which allowed the massive "movement to contact" to blindly occur for both sides. Morelock's analysis is that cavalry leaders failed to follow "the doctrine". I believe that Powell could have expanded on this issue much more completely.

"Cavalry at Chickamauga: What Went Wrong?" was missing from the bibliography. MAJ Lawyn Edwards (now, U.S. Army colonel, retired) penned this thesis 30 years ago. Edwards finds some of the same issues that Powell does with the Confederate cavalry. But he also considers issues not addressed by Powell. Edwards' conclusions are somewhat different and he gives much more weight to Bragg's failings than Powell does.

I discern a problem in Powell's interpretations that indicate a confirmation bias. Interpretation of historical events is always a consideration when reading or penning history accounts. In the case of "Failure In The Saddle", it is no different. Interpretations of facts by commission versus the lack of interpretation of facts, by omission, fall within the realm of the author's narrative. In other words, only considering one set of possibilities to support one's thesis is an interpretation by commission. Historians, in order to be fair and impartial, as well as to follow the standards of critical thinking, should legitimately consider both sides of an issue. In other words, only presenting the information that supports one's interpretation of facts and ignoring the other side is biased. While proving one's thesis is the ultimate goal of the historian, it should comprehensively address conflicting interpretations to counter the natural arguments that may arise.

This is where I part ways with Powell on a number of his interpretations, not with his supporting documentation and facts which are of the very highest quality. "Interpretations" of the facts are what historians do in an attempt to logically reason why events occurred. However, I think that Powell demonstrates a bias in his interpretations of the facts by overlooking (intentionally, or not) alternative explanations to events. Cross-referencing "Failure In the Saddle" with another superlative book covering one of the two Confederate cavalry corps commanders at Chickamauga, "The Battles and Campaigns of Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest: 1861-1865" (2017), BrigGen (ret) John Scales discusses logical alternative views to Powell's. Rather than address all the specific issues I have with Powell's multiple analyses; I would highly commend Chapter 6 of BrigGen (ret) John Scales' book as a counterpoise to Powell's explanations. I totally agree with Scales' points addressed largely in his notes. He writes his interpretations as an experienced military veteran and on facts not mentioned by Powell (acts of omission).



Finally, Powell's failure to use the doctrinal language adopted by the military in 1982 is a minor issue that, if addressed, makes the discussions much more clear. The levels of war were enumerated in the Army's Airland Battle doctrine and have since been retained. They are: tactical, operational, and strategic levels. Powell leaps from the tactical to the strategic without consideration of the "operational" which binds the tactical to the strategic level.

Overall, "Failure In The Saddle" is an outstanding book and tremendous reference, notwithstanding my disagreements with some of the author's interpretations. The five appendices are outstanding. The fourth demonstrates intellectual rigor discussing the Bragg-Forrest relationship. I don't fully agree with it but the logic is excellent. The directions and descriptions of the campaign and battle sites around Chickamauga are superlative and very useful for visitors and scholars of the battle. Powell is a first-class historian and this book provides another great resource on the campaign and battle of Chickamauga. I highly recommend it for serious scholars of the campaign and battle.

LTC (ret) Edwin L. Kennedy, Jr., taught in three departments over 19 years at the US Army Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth: history, tactics and command and leadership departments. He has conducted staff rides to Vicksburg and Chickamauga for military units and business organizations to study the campaigns and battles for 25 years.

The Shooting War Begins; April 1861 Events and Action

(The Editor)

The entire country transitions from debate to defense.

President Abraham Lincoln was decisive in the midst of the confusion. He directed Maj Robert Anderson, USA, to hold Fort Sumter, SC and not evacuate as he learned the schooner *Rhonda H. Shannon* was fired upon by Confederate batteries on Morris Island in Charleston, Harbor. Many federal vessels were on the water to support and resupply Fort Sumter including the 2nd expedition on the USS Pawnee out of Hampton Roads, VA. He also sent reinforcements for Fort Pickens, Florida from New York Harbor on the cutter, *Harriet Lane*.

Confederate Secretary of War, Leroy Pope Walker of Huntsville, notified BG Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard, CSA, to order Maj Anderson to evacuate Fort Sumter. On 12 April the "War between the States" unofficially began when BG Beauregard fired artillery into Fort Sumter. On 13 April Maj Anderson surrendered and the next day President Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers to support the Union. On 15 April, at Fort Sumter, Maj Anderson fired a salute to the American flag as a final demonstration of defiance before evacuating the fort and an unintentional explosion killed two and wounded two Union soldiers.

A conflict between US troops, the 6th MA and the 26th PA, in route to Washington, DC occurred when they were met by an angry mob in Baltimore, MD resulting in 40 casualties and the Mayor of Baltimore ordered the burning of several railroad bridges to prevent Union troops from reaching Washington, DC through Baltimore. The Federals destroyed Gosport Naval Yard dry dock at Norfolk, VA. and the USS Merrimac and supplies were burned.

As events appear to be spiraling out of control, upon the direction of President Lincoln, LTG Winfield Scott, USA, announced the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, between



Philadelphia and Washington, DC. And, the 7th NY Infantry arrived in Washington, DC for its defense.

President Lincoln also ordered Federal troops to evacuate the forts in the Indian Territory, leaving the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole, under the jurisdiction of the Confederate States.

Illinois State troops occupied Cairo, IL.

The governors of Missouri, Tennessee, Kentucky and North Carolina refused to support the Presidents' volunteer quota call and Arkansas' Governor Henry R. Rector refused to support Lincoln's request too. In addition, Fort Smith Arkansas was occupied by state troops and supplies seized in other locations in Arkansas.

The Confederate government rapidly moved to control the real estate of the Confederacy as USA troops continued evacuating forts in Texas. Col Earl Van Dorn, CSA, took Col Carlos A. Waite, USA, commanding the Department of Texas, and his staff along with a company of the 8th US Infantry prisoners of war at San Antonio, then paroled them.

The US Arsenal at Liberty, Missouri was seized by state troops. The US Arsenal at Fayetteville, NC and Fort Mason, NC were seized by North Carolina state troops and the US Armory at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, was abandoned and burned by its garrison.

Virginia adopted an ordinance of secession and anti-secessionists met in Monongahela County, VA, to show support for the Union while secessionists from Maryland met in Baltimore.

LTC Robert E. Lee allegedly turned down an appeal from Abraham Lincoln to command union forces and later resigned his commission in the US Army and subsequently, Major General Robert E. Lee, VA Volunteers, was assigned to command military and navy forces in the state of Virginia. MG Joseph E. Johnston, VA Volunteers, was assigned to command the Virginia state forces in and around Richmond, while Col Thomas J. Jackson, VA Volunteers, was assigned to command the Virginia state troops in and around Harper's Ferry, WV.

Skirmishes with Indians on Van Dusen's Creek, near the Mad River, CA were reported and BG Edwin Vose Sumner, USA, assumed command of the Department of the Pacific, relieving Col Albert Sidney Johnston, 2nd US Cavalry, a Brevet BG, USA, who resigned to join the Confederacy.

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, Emil provides Cliff Notes version that summarizes the Antebellum era.

Simplifying Antebellum Politics, by Emil Posey

Cultural divisions between the North and South have their roots in American history. The original colonies were founded by groups with different religions, ethnicities, dialects, politics, and artistic traditions. This was exacerbated by subsequent immigration as well, and together they drove different value sets. Various explanations have been offered to explain

10

*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*



what drove the difference between the two regions: the presence of slavery; the primacy of agriculture in the South vis-à-vis manufacturing in the North; defeat in war (the Civil War); an inborn conservatism; unique ethnic origins; and even the weather. One thing is clear: From the very beginning, the nation's politics have been shaped by regional differences.

Southern and Northern economies initially were both based on agriculture, but in the antebellum period they separated into two distinct economic sectors – the South staying predominantly agricultural and the North industrializing. They had a history of being politically separated. Both initially favored small, weak central government with heavy reliance on states' rights and prerogatives, but that began to change in the North with improved transportation systems – canals and railroads – and the expectation that the government (state and federal) would back investors with bonds and other financial incentives. There are even today differences in identity, language (dialect and accents), values, and so on. From an anthropological point of view that would be enough to categorize Southerners and Northerners as different cultures.

From Colonial times to the founding of our nation and on through our antebellum period, there was nothing smooth in our national politics and domestic relations. The nation was on a path that precious few seemed to foresee and fewer still to understand – a critical, formative path that defines us still. There were several attempts to reduce the tempo (compromises), but the nation relentlessly stayed on this path. It was a path to the future by way of civil strife, civil war, suffering, and, for many people and locales, ruin. It was a path to understand and reconcile sectional interpretations of the meaning of the Constitution amid a clash of cultures. It was a complicated, swirling, entangled journey that made us who we are today.

From the War of Independence emerged thirteen sovereign and independent States. To carry on that war, they had formed a league, or confederation, the articles of which were still obligatory upon them. This was codified in the Articles of Confederation, our first constitution, lasting from 1781 until 1789. But that national governance structure was flawed in that it established a weak central government, placed most powers in the hands of the states, was unable to enforce national laws, and, therefore, had little power over the various states. Our very name, *United States*, was emblematic of this weakness. Having gained independence from Great Britain, the thirteen colonies viewed themselves as sovereign nations. That was what “state” meant: “Groups of people which have acquired international recognition as an independent country and which have a population, a common language, and a defined and distinct territory.”⁴ Their “union” was not intended to surrender self-control to a central government; rather, it was a marriage of convenience – a *confederation*. They had rid themselves of one abusive, overly powerful central government; they did not want another.

Our confederation could not sustain itself; its economy faltered, and it could not resolve the issues facing a nascent and growing country. Ineffective, this model led to the formation of “a more perfect union” under our present Constitution — the United States of America 2.0, so to speak.

The new constitution was “more perfect,” yes, but it, too, had flaws. Several compromises were needed just to keep Southern states in the Constitutional Convention and to subsequently ratify it.



- **The Great Compromise** – Under the Articles of Confederation, the national government had only one branch, the Confederation Congress, in which each state, regardless of population or size, had an equal vote. Under this compromise, Congress would be bicameral consisting of a Senate that would be based on equal representation for each state and a House of Representatives that would be based on population.
- **The Three-Fifths Compromise** – The Constitutional Convention also grappled with how slaves would be counted for purposes of both representation and taxation. A compromise provided that every five slaves would be counted as three *in terms of representation*. This was not a statement on the intrinsic worth or humanness of individual slaves (that was a completely different issue), but rather a method of apportionment for Representatives.
- **The Electoral College** – Rather than election of a national executive (president) based on direct voting of the citizens, election would be carried out by a group of electors drawn from, and roughly proportional to the population of, each state (including slaves).
- **The Commerce Compromise** – Northern states wanted import tariffs on finished products to protect against foreign competition and encourage the South to buy goods made in the North, export tariffs on raw goods to increase revenue flowing into the United States, and federal regulation over trade. Southern states feared such tariffs would hurt their trade and wanted states to have the power to regulate trade. This compromise provided that tariffs would only be allowed on imports (none on exports for at least 20 years). Also, while international and interstate commerce would be regulated by the federal government, all commerce legislation would need a two-thirds majority in the Senate to be passed. Intrastate trade would be regulated by the individual states.
- **The Slave Trade Compromise** – The issue of slavery was divisive during the Constitutional Convention. Those who opposed slavery in the Northern states wanted to bring an end to the importation and sale of slaves. This was in direct opposition to the Southern states, which felt that slavery was vital to their economy and did not want the government interfering in the slave trade. South Carolina and Georgia threatened to secede if slavery were banned altogether. In this compromise, Northern states, believing slavery was a dying institution anyway, agreed to wait until 1808 before Congress would be able to ban the slave trade in the US. It also allowed the federal government to levy a tax on the importation of slaves, at \$10 for each slave, although it could not be levied for at least ten years.

These compromises generally were in the South's favor – a view not lost on the rest of the new nation – as advocates of a new Constitution sought Southern approval and ultimate ratification.



Federal versus State rights

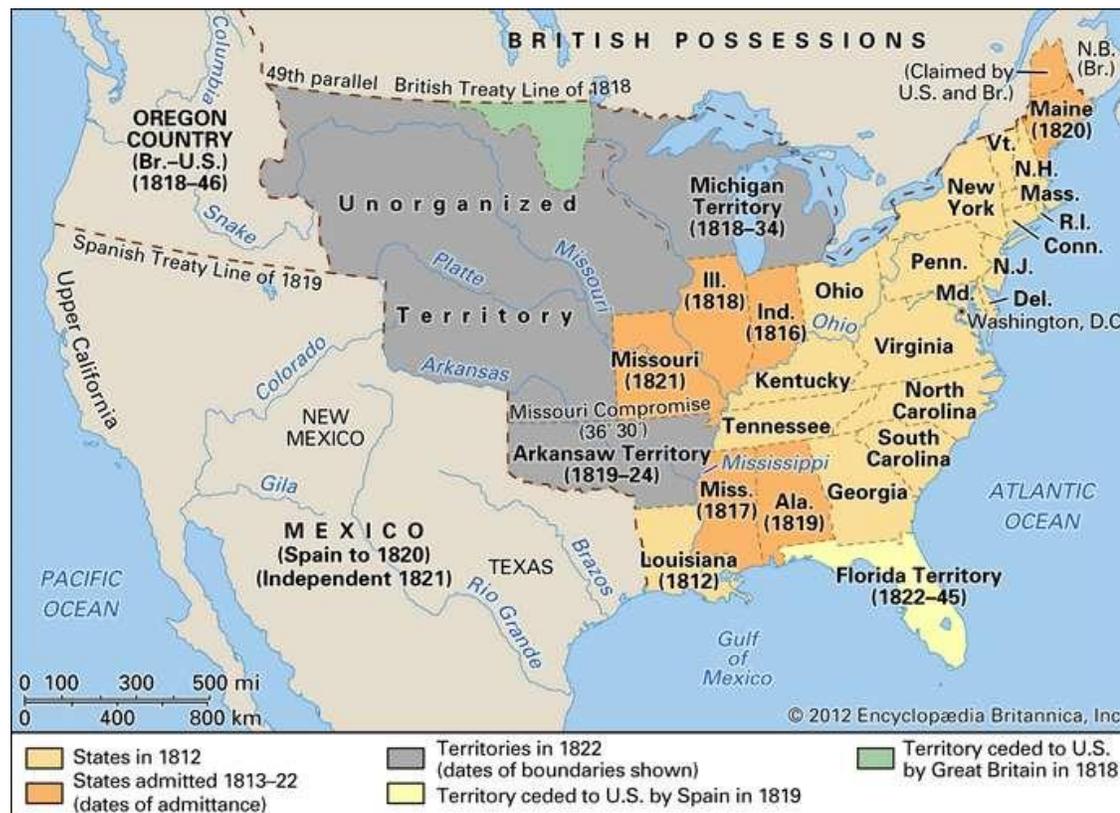
From the first days of the Republic, the central issue was the degree of sovereignty held by the individual states vis-à-vis the federal government and the basis for and meaning of *the Union* as a unifying political entity. As H. W. Brands observed, “The founders had left deliberately vague where the boundary lay between state and national authority; similarly, blurred was who would determine the boundary and how it would be enforced. They knew that any explicit answer might wreck their experiment in self-government before it got fairly started; they left to their heirs to find a solution the country could live with.” The Constitutional Convention broadened the powers of the federal government, but only after considerable disagreement among the delegates as to how extensive the powers of the federal government should be. While the sovereignty of states was preserved in some respects, specific provisions were included limiting their powers.

The power to secede

The crystalizing issue in the sectional turmoil was whether the states individually had the discretionary right to leave (to secede from) the Union. Exacerbating all of this was the occasional federal law and policy that would benefit one section of the country at the expense of another. The states’ rights controversy (focusing on secession) was the political underpinning of the North-South dispute – a power struggle to see which part of the country

would have control.

The nation continued to expand westward following the War of 1812. The period of President James Monroe’s administration (1817 – 1825) has been labeled the Era of Good Feelings reflecting a sense of national purpose and unity among Americans, but it was a mixed blessing. Eastern conservatives sought to keep land prices high;



speculative interests opposed a policy that would be advantageous to poor squatters; politicians feared a change in the sectional balance of power; and businessmen were wary of a new section with interests unlike their own. Throughout, Americans expressed scorn for those in other sections, tending to blame economic hardships on other hostile or malevolent interests.



During this period, the economy expanded and matured at a remarkable rate with the West specializing in the production of grains and pork. This permitted the older sections to specialize in other crops. New processes of manufacture, particularly in textiles, not only accelerated an “industrial revolution” in the Northeast but also, by drastically enlarging the Northern market for raw materials, helped account for a boom in Southern cotton production. Slavery, on which the cotton economy relied, became a “positive good” rather than the “necessary evil.” Industrial workers organized the country’s first trade unions and even workingmen’s political parties. While some manufacturing sprouted in the South, its economy was agrarian based, composed of small yeomen farms and large plantations that relied on slave labor. Corresponding trends occurred in transportation and banking.

Slavery expansion issues

These changes saw the dispute between northeastern and southern states grow to critical mass, with no issue epitomizing this more than the expansion of slavery into new states and federal territories. Slavery was the underpinning – the backdrop – of sectional conflict and every national domestic issue from 1820 to 1860, and, ultimately, the Civil War. Physical crises and political clashes abounded, all resulting from, contributing to, and worsening sectional disputes.

Political Parties

As the nation and issues and interests grew and expanded, so did the number and scope of its political parties. Today’s Republican and Democratic parties began to take shape, and slavery and secession dominated the political and economic landscape.

National politics became more polarized as the decades rolled by. Compromises to address Southern concerns and achieve ratification had to be made in Philadelphia in 1787 to get agreement on a new Constitution to replace the Articles of Confederation, yet there still were disagreements as to meaning and intent – disagreements stemming from and exacerbated by the growing cultural divide between North and South. Slavery as an institution and its expansion into federal territories and new states as they were admitted was becoming ever more sensitive. Political parties were forming, splitting, and reforming. Congress was often chaotic. There would be efforts to reduce friction and to resolve the various issues as best they could be resolved, but passions soared and resolve hardened. The nation lurched towards a storm cloud growing on the horizon.

Legislative Compromises

Splitting of political lines and the formation of alliances, driven in part by the question of whether new states would be free states or slave, drove the North-South balance of power in Congress. Numerous compromises were made in this regard: The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 (prior to our Constitution, but it carried forward), the Missouri Compromise of 1820, Texas Annexation (1845), the Wilmot Proviso (1846), the Compromise of 1850, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854.

Tariffs were another contentious issue, in particular the Tariff of 1828, which led to the Nullification Crisis wherein South Carolina, long a political hotbed, challenged federal authority and declared the tariff null and void. Ardent political negotiations and maneuvering got the nation past the immediate crisis, but it was only a patch.



There were the Fugitive Slave Acts of 1793 and 1850 and slavery-based Supreme Court cases such as *United States v. Schooner Amistad* (1841), *Prigg v. Pennsylvania* (1842), and *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857). These settled immediate legal actions, but only exacerbated animosities.

The fear of slave rebellion abounded in the South. There were several, the most notable being the Nat Turner rebellion of 1831. Fears were heightened by John Brown's Raid on Harper's Ferry in 1859.

Political passions grew unrestrainedly. In the South, there was growing momentum for secession epitomized by the so called Fire-Eaters. These were pro-slavery Southern Democrats led by the likes of Robert Barnwell Rhett of South Carolina and William Lowndes Yancey of Alabama. Their opposite number in the North in terms of enflamed fervor were the abolitionists. Championed by the the likes of William Lloyd Garrison and former slave Frederick Douglass, they advocated immediate, unconditional, and total abolition of slavery in the nation (as opposed to anti-slavery activists such as Abraham Lincoln that called for the gradual ending of slavery).

Abraham Lincoln's election (1860)

The sectional conflict came to head in 1860 with Republican Abraham Lincoln winning the election to become the sixteenth president of the United States. In the South, his election was taken as the signal for secession, and on December 20 South Carolina became the first state to withdraw from the Union. Promptly, the other states of the lower South followed. Feeble efforts on the part of Buchanan's administration to check secession failed, and one by one most of the federal forts in the Southern states were taken over by secessionists. Neither extreme Southerners, intent upon secession, nor Republicans, intent upon reaping the rewards of their hard-won election victory, were really interested in compromise. On February 4, 1861—a month before Lincoln could be inaugurated in Washington—six Southern states (South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana) sent representatives to Montgomery, Alabama, to set up a new independent government. Delegates from Texas soon joined them. With Jefferson Davis of Mississippi at its head, the Confederate States of America came into being.

* * * * *

At its core, the Civil War was occasioned by failure to peaceably resolve the conflict of notions as to the degree to which the individual states had sovereignty (autonomy) versus the control needed for an effective national government – states versus national rights.

To those that advocated states' rights, the Constitution was a compact. The states were sovereign when they united and had retained their sovereignty even while creating another sovereign power. As such, the federal government was bound to acquiesce in a solemn decision of a state acting in its sovereign capacity. Southern belief in the sovereignty of states cannot be overemphasized. Those favoring secession believed they not only were justified in dissolving the compact under which they lived but in fact were upholding the spirit of the Constitution in doing so because the North had used its political power to the disadvantage of the South.

The national rights advocates held that the Constitution was in no sense a mere compact between the states but an instrument whereby the people of the United States established a strong centralized government and endowed it with ample powers to enforce its rights. If a

15

*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*



state were to resist the enforcement of national law, it was revolution if it succeeded and rebellion if it failed. Upon these ideas the conflicts surrounding states' rights, slavery, territorial expansion, nullification, and secession were based.

The failure to resolve this dispute peaceably led to the wrenching national experience of Civil War, the impact of which is still being felt today.

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

The Vicksburg Campaign

The LRT will begin a deep dive into the Vicksburg Campaign in May but it is not too early to start your research.

The US Army Center of Military History lists the Vicksburg Campaign as 29 March - 4 July 1863. The Center lists operations against Vicksburg in December of 1862 through January 1863 as separate from the Campaign.

This month we will address the operations of December 1862 and January 1863. The principle combatant Generals are LTG John G. Pemberton (CSA), MG Earl Van Dorn (CSA) and MG William T. Sherman (USA). In 1862, major operations began in the Western Theater with the principal objective; gain control of the Mississippi. To do that it was necessary to reduce Vicksburg and Port Hudson. Admiral Farragut made an attempt as early as May 1862. Ulysses S. Grant was in charge by October 1862 and began with 45,000 men organized into three corps. General Grant modified his plans as events on the ground dictated. After the events of December 1862 and January 1863 he received two more corps', bringing his total strength to 75,000.

Grant's plan for the Vicksburg Campaign in 1863 included XV Army Corps under MG William T. Sherman demonstrating north of Vicksburg late in March, and another two corps', the XIII Army Corps under MG's John A. McClernand and the XVII Army Corps under James B. McPherson, making a wide swing southward on the west side of the Mississippi River and then back to the river at Bruinsburg, about 30 miles below Vicksburg. Sherman's corps followed the same route, joining Grant early in May. Flag Officer David D. Porter sailed his river fleet down the river on 16-17 April, survived a heavy bombardment as he passed Vicksburg, and ferried Grant's troops across the river on 30 April. They were joined by the IX Corps Commanded by MG John G. Parke. MG Steven A. Hurlbut's XVI Corps was an enabler holding the line from Memphis to Corinth and resourcing faints to focus LTG Pemberton (CSA) on Northern Mississippi rather than events in the south. MG Hurlbut was replaced by MG Cadwallader C. Washburn later in the campaign.

Vicksburg was defended by 30,000 Confederates under LTG John G. Pemberton. Other Confederate forces under MG Joseph E. Johnston were concentrated in the vicinity of Jackson, MS, 40 miles east of Vicksburg. Grant's plan was to interpose his army between Pemberton and Johnston and fend off Johnston while taking Vicksburg. Grant fought his way northeastward taking Raymond on 12 May and driving Confederate forces out of Jackson on 14 May. While Sherman's corps contained Johnston, Grant advanced on Vicksburg, winning engagements at Champion's Hill (16 May) and Black River Bridge (17 May), and driving Pemberton's forces into the city. Assaults on 18 and 22 May failed to breach Vicksburg's defenses. The Federals thereupon settled down to a siege, which ended with Pemberton's surrender on 4 July 1863. Pemberton's 29,396 officers and enlisted men were granted parole under the terms of the surrender. Federal losses during the campaign were about 3,500; Confederate losses were more than 8,000 killed, wounded, and missing.



While Grant was laying siege to Vicksburg, a 15,000-man force under MG Nathaniel P. Banks (who had replaced MG Benjamin F. Butler) moved north from New Orleans and attacked Port Hudson, which fell on 8 July 1863, thusly, the Mississippi River came under Union control and the Confederacy cut in two.

On 23 April the Little Round Table will launch our study of the Vicksburg Campaign beginning with General Van Dorn's successful raid on Holly Springs and MG Sherman's defeat at Chickasaw Bayou, north of Vicksburg, in December 1862. We end the night with the Confederate defeat at Arkansas Post in early January 1863. The discussion will be led by Arley McCormick.

Through the course of our study there are questions regarding the campaign that beg to be addressed and consideration regarding facts i.e., depending what author you read the number of combatant's may differ. Several things may impact the number of combatants on the field. It may not be universally understood but never-the-less noteworthy that official sources estimate up to 25% of the armies were incapacitated because of disease. Plus, nearly all numbers related to the strength of units are rounded to 000s. The present for duty strength is seldom specified but it is understood that troop strength is calculated almost daily and those counts are not necessarily recorded when in contact with the enemy.

Questions to Ponder:

- Was Vicksburg a political objective or a military objective?
- What risk did Vicksburg present to the Union?
- What would be the impact if Vicksburg were lost to Confederacy?
- What would be the impact if Vicksburg remained an active Confederate fort?
- Was there a better choice to Command Vicksburg than LTG John Clifford Pemberton?
- What was the scope of LTG Pemberton's responsibility and how well was he supported?
- How well did LTG Pemberton do in organizing and defending Vicksburg?
- What was General Joseph E. Johnston's role and how well did he play it?
- What impacted the defense and the Confederacy's support of Vicksburg?
- Was Vicksburg abandoned by the Confederacy?
- In its entirety Grant employed complex maneuvers in the campaign, taking a lot of time. Why?
- What Confederate general contributed the most to the successful defense of Vicksburg?
- What Confederate General stole away and abandoned Vicksburg?
- What innovative technology was implemented during the Vicksburg Campaign that affected future wars?

March LRT was canceled and will be rescheduled - Trading with The Enemy; Led by Jeff Ewing

April 23 - Vicksburg Campaign 1- delayed till May 28.

May 28 - Vicksburg Campaign 1 - Holly Springs to Chickasaw Bayou to Arkansas Post; Led by Arley McCormick

June 25 - Vicksburg Campaign 2 - Bayou and Canal Operations; Led by Fred Forst

July 23 - Vicksburg Campaign 3 - Porter Moves South - Grand Gulf - Snyder's Bluff; Led by Kent Wright

August 27 - Vicksburg Campaign 4 - Grierson's Raid; Led by Arley McCormick

September 24 - Vicksburg Campaign 5 - Port Gibson to Jackson; Led by Jeff Ewing



October 22 - Vicksburg Campaign 6 - Champion Hill and Big Black; Led by John Allen

December 10 - Vicksburg Campaign 7 - Siege Operations; Led by Emil Posey

TBD - Armistead and Garnet - Parallel Lives; Led by Emil Posey

The TVCWRT Management Team

OFFICERS (Elected)

- *April Harris, President*
- *John Mason, Vice President*
- *Emil Posey, Secretary*
- *(vacant) Treasurer*

BOARD MEMBERS (Appointed)

- *Carol Codori, Programs Officer*
- *Johnathan Creekmore, Technology Officer*
- *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, 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*

