

Tennessee Valley Civil War Round Table June 2020 Newsletter



To Inform and Educate Since 1993 Contents

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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



President's Message

Extreme Circumstances Are the Mother of Innovation

Hot air balloons for aerial reconnaissance, mobile telegraph wagons, long-range weapons, Minie bullets, ironclad warships and torpedoes were just a few of the innovations born of the Civil War. Abraham Lincoln was the first to use railroads to move men and supplies close to the battlefield, an innovation that gave the North a large advantage.

Can you imagine seeing for the first time a man in a balloon floating in the sky or watching men and supplies being disgorged from railroad cars? Extreme circumstances are the mother of invention. New technologies bring improvements that may initially be uncomfortable, but are soon adopted as norms. And so it is with the Coronavirus.

Yes, things are beginning to loosen up and people are returning to a closer version of their former lives, but not entirely. Many businesses are still closed, including our meeting place, the Elks Club, thus preventing us from hosting the Round Table. But the Elks decision is just part of the challenge, lots of people are still not comfortable being in gatherings. While missing one or two meetings was tolerable, continuing to put our group on hold is not. It is time to embrace innovation.

For June and most likely July, we will present the Round Table online using Zoom software. This innovation is very easy and quite convenient. While "Zooming" isn't the same as meeting in person, it does have advantages--with Zoom you can enjoy the regular Round Table speaker on your own comfy couch, refreshments in hand, without ever having to leave your house!

Please give our online format a try and let us know what you think. Necessity has also compelled us to shuffle the speaker line-up for the next few months. On Thursday, June 11 at 6:30 p.m., David Breland, Director of Historic Resources and Events for the City of Decatur, President of the Morgan County Historical Society, and a retired judge, will debut our Zoom meeting format with his talk, "Decatur in Civil War Times." Mr. Breland was previously scheduled to speak in July. Instructions for signing on are included in this newsletter and will also be e-mailed and snail-mailed to you.

We hope that we will meet in person by summer's end, but if not, we've adopted an innovation that may just turn out to be an improvement.

April L. Harris
President



Announcements: It is a ZOOM Presentation



Judge David Breland
(ret)

Thursday, June 11, 6:30 p.m. online: David Breland, Director of Historic Resources and Events for the City of Decatur, President of the Morgan County Historical Society, and a retired judge, will debut our Zoom meeting format with his talk, “Decatur in Civil War Times,” His presentation will address how the community existed prior to the Civil War-- its business assets, its transportation prowess and its people. It is the story of opposition to secession, causes for the war through the eyes of the local people, the horrors of war for a town with brief histories of the engagements leading to virtually complete destruction of the town. It is also the story of reconstruction leading once again to beautiful homes, vibrant industries and a booming economy... and significant Civil War history that is still interpreted today.

Mr. Breland was previously schedule to speak in July.

This meeting will be conducted online using Zoom software. Instructions about how to watch are included in this newsletter and will also be sent to you separately via e-mail and snail mail.

How to Join A Zoom Presentation

1. Close to the date, you will receive an e-mail invitation to join the meeting.
2. A few minutes before meeting time, locate that e-mail and click on the “join meeting” link in the message. (Don’t do it far in advance or you will confuse the computer!)
3. If this is your first Zoom, you will be prompted to download the software. Click on the link it displays and it will install itself. If you have Zoomed before, the program will simply open. A box may pop up that asks “Do you want to allow this page to open “zoom us”? Click the “allow” button.
4. If you are asked to enter a meeting code, the number can be found in the e-mail invitation. Simply type it in to the box on your screen (this isn’t always required).
5. That’s it! The meeting will start automatically.
6. We are using a webinar format so while you will see the presenter, he will not be able to see you nor will your image appear on other participants’ screens.

You can listen on your phone without a computer by calling one of the phone numbers listed on the Zoom e-mail invitation. You will be able to hear the presentation, but won’t be able to see images.

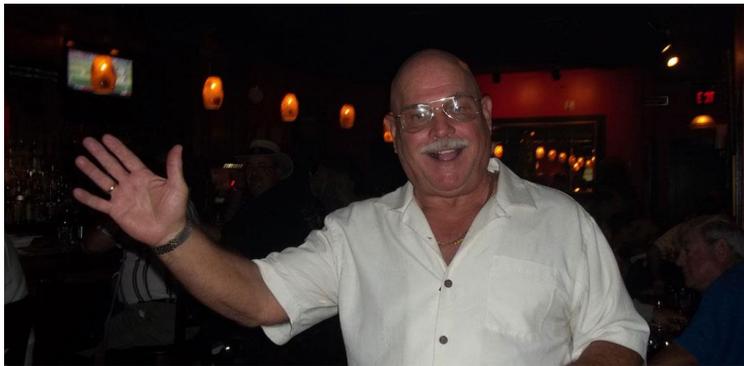


Tips:

It may be easier for you to hear if you plug a set of earphones into your computer. The same applies if you are listening on your smartphone.

To ask a question, type it in the message box that shows on your screen. It can only be seen by the behind-the-scenes person monitoring Zoom who will feed it to the presenter. The speaker will answer verbally.

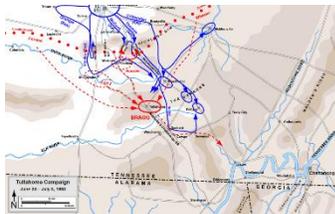
To leave the meeting, simply click the “leave meeting” button in the lower right-hand corner of your screen or hang up your phone.



Nick expresses his thanks and that of his staff for the support that friends and customers have shown over the last couple of months. Nick's is open for business with dining room service. Check out the website for details and reservations.

www.nicksristorante.com

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.



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 \$80 per person (goes up to \$100 for reservations submitted after October 9). This covers speaker, bus, water bottles on bus, and tip for Greg; lunch is

on your own. Coordinator John Scales will provide further details as they develop. Questions or early interest? Call John at 256-337-1444.



Gregg Biggs, our guide and a long friend of the Round Table.

Greg Biggs is a Civil War flags historian and has consulted with a number of museums and authors and has presented flags programs to the Museum of the Confederacy and the National Civil War Museum among others. He has also assisted the Civil War Trust in securing flags for their web site. Greg has lectured across the country on Civil War topics primarily on flags and the Western Theater as well as the Revolutionary War. Greg leads tours for Civil



War groups, individuals, and U.S. Army Staff Rides of the Fort Donelson Campaign, the Tullahoma Campaign, the Atlanta Campaign and where The River Campaigns Began: Cairo, IL to Columbus/Belmont, KY. He is the president of the Clarksville Civil War Roundtable and an officer of the Nashville CWRT.

Blue and Gray Education Society

Can't get enough of Civil War details on your desk top. Take a look at The Blue and Gray Education Society. It is dedicated to the preservation of the heritage of the American Civil War by the study and understanding of its battlefields and other historic sites through the conduct of field study tours and seminars, open discussion of issues relating to the case for preserving sites and artifacts, interpretative projects, and collaborative evaluation and publication of scholarly research and writings. The monthly newsletter, " *Holding the Line* " edited by Barbara Noe Kennedy is published several months to their entire subscription list. If you're interested in giving the Society a try, check them out at <https://www.blueandgrayeducation.org/who-we-are/>.

Was the Action at Fort Pillow, A Massacre?

The action at Fort Pillow on April 12, 1864, is no stranger to controversy. It carries a reputation of a deliberate massacre of black Union troops by Confederates under the command of Nathan Bedford Forrest. Others contend it was no such thing. We have had discussions of this in our regular general meetings and in the Little Round Table.

In Crossfire, the quarterly publication of a sister Round Table "across the pond", the American Civil War Round Table (UK), its editor, Greg Bayne (some may remember him speaking to our RT a few years ago) decided to tackle the controversy once again based on an article included in the latest Crossfire (Spring 2020). He says,

When Tony Daly submitted his Fort Pillow article, I nearly sent it back after the first run through. I disagreed and thought it was factually incorrect. In it he outlines the initial attack and then refutes the "massacre" theory. My understanding of the event is that there was a massacre. So what are my choices? Shout "Fake News" and move on or seek more information? Of course, I chose the latter and in true editorial spirit, I leave the reader with a cliffhanger. Lack of time up to publication has not allowed me sufficient space to dig deep. And by digging I mean further than Wikipedia and the NPS websites. I have the greatest respect for Tony, if he is right or wrong then research will tell, but whatever the outcome I will always



support his right to comment within these pages. I haven't "trod the ground" there nor have I "read the book" so until I am ready to comment I cannot. Time to ask the big-guns for their views. 500 to 1000 words will suffice if you don't mind.

I suggested, and Greg readily accepted, that some of our folks may have valuable opinions on this. I put out a call for opinions, asking for submissions by May 31 that I would share with Greg. I received two responses. They are reproduced below. –Emil L. Posey

Was Fort Pillow a "Massacre" or Not? *By John Scales Former President of the TVCWRT*

To address the question, let's start with some irrefutable facts:

- War crimes were committed by Confederate soldiers at Fort Pillow, specifically the killing of Union soldiers who had surrendered or who were attempting to. This is attested to in several accounts penned by Confederate soldiers, but the number thus killed is unknown. Some of these same accounts also stated some Union soldiers threw down their weapons and surrendered, then picked them up again.
- Of the garrison (variously estimated to be 557 – 605 soldiers, of whom at least 262 were US Colored Troops), 226 men were marched into captivity uninjured or only slightly wounded and 69 severely wounded were released to Union steamboats the next day. A by-name list of prisoners taken exists. Of the identified 295 survivors (several of whom died on the steamboat), around 214 were white, the balance black.
- The engagement started at dawn and continued almost all day, carried through in particular by the efforts of Confederate sharpshooters who were able to suppress most of the fire from within the fort and who killed the commander early in the day.
- The terrain is highly dissected and offered covered and concealed approaches to within distances of 25 to 100 yards, while the defenders had to rise above the parapet, exposed to the sharpshooters, to engage any assaulters.
- The fort was offered a chance to surrender with a promise of humane treatment, but the offer was refused.
- The final assault was a coordinated attack from multiple angles and close range by over 1,200 men, almost all armed not only with rifles and carbines but also revolvers.



- The avenue of retreat was cut off by Confederate soldiers below on the riverbank, soldiers posted so as to prevent reinforcement by a steamboat full of Union soldiers. Some Union soldiers, number unknown, when faced with this ambush, chose to jump into the river, attempting to escape, and drowned.
- 1864 was an election year and the biggest issue was the war. A Congressional Committee composed primarily of pro-war Republicans seeking reelection held widely publicized and totally one-sided hearings. The hearing testimony was printed in 40,000 copies and sent to every election district in an attempt to sway voters, making the whole event a *cause célèbre*.

Around these facts have swirled many interpretations, but it seems clear from the numbers that a higher percentage of black troops were killed or missing. Although the USCT were more vulnerable because they manned cannon at the embrasures and they were credited with fighting more fiercely in Union accounts, it is clear that a significant number must have been executed. There is no evidence that any senior officer ordered this and there is evidence General Chalmers, who unlike the injured Forrest accompanied the assault, ordered his men to cease fire as they overran the fort. The fighting was severe; there were at least 98 Confederate casualties and perhaps more as Bell's Brigade may have not reported their casualties to Chalmers.

So, given these facts, now to determine: what is a massacre? The *Cambridge English Dictionary* says, "an act of killing a lot of people. Example: He ordered the massacre of 2,000 women and children." A corollary indicates the victims should be helpless.

Does the engagement fit the definition? In part yes, although certainly not in whole. Some Confederate soldiers killed surrendering soldiers, disproportionately black soldiers. But certainly, many of the deaths and injuries are attributable to a larger force routing a smaller force and not too far out of line with what often has happened in such cases throughout military history as fleeing soldiers are cut down by pursuing victors.

But, was it a deliberate or premeditated massacre on the part of the Confederate commanders? All the evidence says no. Had that been the intent over half the inhabitants would not have been spared.

John R. Scales is a retired Special Forces Brigadier General, a combat veteran of both Vietnam and Operation Enduring Freedom, and a graduate of the US Army War College's Senior Service College Fellow Program. He is the author of Sherman invades Georgia: Planning the North Georgia Campaign Using a Modern



Perspective, A Reluctant Hero's Footsteps, and The Battles and Campaigns of Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest 1861 to 1865.

Fort Pillow Revisited; by LtCol (ret) Edwin L. Kennedy Jr, TVCWRT Communications Officer

“If Forrest had intended a ‘massacre’ there would have been few, if any survivors.” Edwin Bearss, 2007. As a former Army doctrine writer, I analyze issues using doctrine combined with critical thinking. I try to avoid emotional arguments based on un-critical thinking. Let’s try and consider the battle at Fort Pillow from a military doctrinal, not emotional view.

First, words have meaning. The term “massacre” has a number of visceral connotations. It is laden with emotional baggage. What, in fact, does “massacre” mean? The Cambridge Dictionary states: 1) an act of killing a lot of people; 2) Informal: bad defeat, especially in sport; to kill many people in a short period of time; 3) the killing of a large number of people, esp. people who are not involved in any fighting or *have no way of defending themselves*. They all refer to hundreds of engagements, skirmishes and battles during the war. 3 might be used to classify what happened at Fort Pillow as a “massacre” but it goes against much substantiated evidence. Additionally, factors such as terrain and military doctrine are often over-looked by those who do not understand their importance.

Consider the following from a military standpoint. First, the location of the main action was actually only a small portion of Fort Pillow. It was the “battery” location on top the bluffs. It was enclosed by a stockade and protected by a ditch. The stockade ‘fort’ was dominated by surrounding terrain. This is key. It allowed observation and fires down into the stockade. With the Confederate forces firing into the battery stockade for the better part of the day before the assault, many Union soldiers became casualties. We do know that the initial post commander, Major Booth, was killed by a sharpshooter. It would be likely that a number of others were killed too. We don’t know the exact number of casualties. When the final Confederate assault occurred, the garrison, constricted to a very small area, was assailed on three sides with assaulting forces, thus being caught in a crossfire. It was a “target rich environment”. The casualties likely increased substantially in this situation.

Secondly, not only was the stockade dominated by higher ground, the “rear” of the battery defense faced the Mississippi River fronting a precipitous bluff. There was only one way off of the bluff to the river landing below. I have walked the route. I am convinced that defending Union soldiers were severely restricted in their movement to escape. The very narrow and steep path is, “channelizing terrain”. “Channelizing terrain” is a boon to the side that can cause their enemy to use it. It makes shooting those on the channelizing terrain much easier.



Thirdly, in offensive operations, the Army is guided by four simple principles. We teach them to our combat leaders today. They were not cited in doctrine of the 1860s but they were implicitly understood. Forrest, with no formal military schooling, embodied these principles that made him so successful on many battlefields. They are: “Find them” - locate the enemy first; “Fix them” - cause the enemy to not maneuver; fight where you want them; “Fight them” - use the offensive to take the fight to the enemy; and “Finish them” - defeat or destroy the enemy’s force. It is the fourth principle that seems to cause confusion among civilian historians. “Finish” them means that it is not enough to just “defeat” an enemy. Should the enemy refuse to yield and surrender, they must be “destroyed”. Fort Pillow did not surrender. The flag over the post was not struck. The Union soldiers were not surrendering. They opened themselves to being destroyed. This leads to the fourth, most important point.

Fourthly, Forrest was synonymous with “offense”. In our current Army doctrine, the three forms of offensive maneuver are: 1) attack, 2) pursuit and 3) exploitation. Forrest was cavalry, an offensive arm. Forrest believed in the inherent mobility of cavalry to take the fight to the enemy. Speed of movement to keep the enemy off-balance is a characteristic of offensive cavalry operations. Once contact was effected, Forrest believed in quickly moving to discern enemy’s weaknesses and then taking advantage of them (“Get there first with the most men.”). The enemy, once forced from their positions would not be allowed to organize, reform, or reconstitute. This is “pursuit” and “exploitation” ---- two doctrinal terms and forms of offensive maneuver that were hallmarks of Forrest’s operations. *This is exactly what we teach in our military schools today!*

When the soldiers of Fort Pillow retreated, pursuit was the natural consequence. Pursuit: “An offensive operation [task] designed to catch or cut off a hostile force attempting to escape, with the aim of *destroying* it.” (Joint Publication 1-02, Terms and Graphics) Retreating enemy are legitimate targets and can be engaged under international law. It has always been that way and Forrest knew it. “Keep the skeer [scare] on!” ---- Forrest’s favorite admonishment to his subordinates. “When enemy armies are defeated, they retreat. It’s during this phase that the true fruits of victory are achieved from combat, when the enemy is disorganized.” -- General Merrill McPeak, Air Force Magazine, 2008. *Disorganized retreats lead to higher casualties!*

The “massacre” definition states that it consists of the “killing” of a large number of people, especially people who are not involved in any fighting or *have no way of defending themselves.*” The fact is that the Union soldiers were armed and defending themselves. It becomes of matter of interpretation. Many of the Union soldiers surrendered as individuals, not as a unit. Some Federals picked-up arms, resuming fighting after “surrendering”. I have no doubt that there were individual war crimes committed by Confederate soldiers shooting Union soldiers who may have surrendered. War crimes are not necessarily “massacres”



while the converse is true. The fact is that neither the US Army nor the US Congress contemporaneous investigations found Forrest culpable of *ordering* a massacre. None had occurred prior to Pillow. None occurred after. It was not how Forrest operated.

LtCol (ret) Edwin Kennedy is a retired infantry officer who taught in the tactics, history, and leadership departments of the US Army Command and General Staff College for 19 years, active and retired duty. See his earlier article on Fort Pillow at <http://www.armchairgeneral.com/nathan-bedford-forrest-and-the-battle-of-fort-pillow-1864.htm>

TVCWRT Features

The Tennessee Valley Civil War Round Table Civil War Tutorial: On the Web

The Tennessee Valley Civil War Round Table introduces a tutorial for those interested in understanding the origin, conduct, and impact of the American Civil War i.e., officially “the War Between the States.” Our intent is to address key elements relevant to understanding the era that redefined America. For everyone wanting a better understanding of the Civil War, this tutorial is a framework for that understanding and further study.

The American Civil War was a momentous event in our history. It changed America. Discover the causes, the political compromises, the economic impact, the military impact, and the impact of war on the American home.

The TVCWRT Tutorial, a work in process, is divided into nine parts. Each part addresses key elements of friction that impacted the result, politics, economy, military, and people that experienced the turmoil. The tutorial is an overview that will prepare any student of the era for participation in a course in any college or university. For additional information we refer you to our website, <https://www.tvcwrt.org>, under Education.

Part I: The Slide into Disunity; 1776 – 1859 (see it on the website www.tvcwrt.org)

Part II: The Slide into War; 1859 – 1861

Part III: First Encounters; 1861

Part IV: Reality Sets In; 1862

Part V: Turning Points; 1863

Part VI: Victory Is Decided; 1864

Part VII: Combat Ends; 1865

Part VIII: Reshaping the Conflict; 1865 – 1877

Epilogue: The Legacy



For additional reading and resource material, visit the Recommended Reading List, Nooks & Crannies, our newsletters, and our Book Reviews.



Part II; American Society Americans Stumble into Civil War

By Arley McCormick

In June 1859 communities in the North and South were preparing to celebrate July 4th. Few residents were unaware of the debates and political compromises regarding the existence and expansion of slavery. There was no avoiding the abolitionist attacks and fire eater rhetoric calling for secession yet few believed war would become reality.

In the 40 years prior to war, the Southern cotton economy grew each year along with the public debate regarding slavery. Journalists, writers, and politicians built their constituencies by opposing or defending the issue. The South controlled the world cotton economy and it reached its greatest worth by 1860 and the national government was well aware of the potential financial impact of secession.

Historians have written thousands of pages explaining the differences between the people living in the North and the South. But the differences may be exaggerated. Two hundred and fifty years before the Civil War the majority of the colonists

were from England, Scotland, and Ireland and mostly protestant. They were led by aristocrats with charters issued by the King and those charters gave the leaders the authority to sell land. Climate and soil conditions in the South supported agriculture and the shorter growing season in the North suited the staples of corn, wheat, and vegetables better than tobacco, sugar cane, and cotton.

Initially, most residents were engaged in subsistence farming but as the population expanded a merchant class grew. The colonies, vassals of European governments, sold raw material and in return bought their finished products. As the population expanded cottage industries began to include limited manufacturing. Manufacturing on American soil increased inter-colony trade and over time decreased the dependency on European sources. But cottage industries could not provide all the goods to sustain the population.



As other nationalities came to take advantage of cheap land, they influenced the culture. Religious freedom initially beckoned colonists yet a growing population became less tolerant of established religions. Shakers, Mormons, Quakers, and other concepts emerged and they added topics including women's suffrage, abstaining from the use of alcohol, workers unions, and, of course, abolition. All topics of discussion in the South as well.

The family unit was similar in both the North and the South and they enjoyed similar recreation, i.e., board games like chess, checkers, and backgammon. Horse racing and gambling were favorite pastimes. They played a variety of card games of which poker was one and they gambled with dice. These acceptable pastimes also provoked less tolerance than others. After 1820 the political activity began to affect households directly and the tenor defined regional differences.

The age of enlightenment along with industrialization ushered change. In the North the concept of a Southern aristocratic planter, beautiful southern belles, poor white trash, faithful household slaves, and superstitious field hands became the foundation for books and song. The agricultural society sustained by the plantation class, Protestantism, elite, respect for women, the importance of name, codes of honor to defend one's character, a polite demeanor, were all characterizations that defined Southern life.

In the South, northerners were perceived as living to work rather than working to live. They were crusty, arrogant, disrespectful, and overtly opinionated. The southerner could not shake the plantation class conceptualized by the Northerners, possibly because much of the perceptions were true. The slower pace in the South helped sustain the more aristocratic way of life, pursuits such as fox hunting, yacht racing, billiards, theatergoing, and other forms of recreation popular in the North were not accessible to most of the southern residents. And those considered white trash or yeoman i.e. the working class that owned few or no slaves, depended on the cotton barons for their lively hood.

While Northern emigrants were piling into cities where a growing base of industrialization, entertainment, and religious interpretation was taking hold the conditions were in place to provide New England and the West with material success even for counties that depended upon agriculture. The development of a capitalist economy drove changing attitudes while agricultural insulated southerners.

Yet similarities continued. Baseball was played in many northern cities. The first intercollegiate game was played in 1859 and other sporting events that frequently encouraged North and South competition were thoroughbred racing, foot racing, bowling, and billiards. Bare-knuckle prizefighting was a big draw. In the South planters organized and



wagered on boxing matches between slaves and in the North the sport was dominated by ethnic contests between Irish Catholic immigrants and American-born Protestants. And in some universities, particularly in the North, gymnastics was introduced and men and women were encouraged to participate.

Politics and national events could not be avoided, particularly after John Brown was hanged in December of 1859. Everyone knew of the border dispute in Kansas and the anti-slavery sentiment. With John Brown's arrival, defeat, and hanging the national focus took a turn. The change manifested in a clear separation within the Democratic party, churches, and a southern focus to ensure Abraham Lincoln was not elected president. Shouting from Southern fire eaters advocating secession never ceased. All across the South many of those deemed sympathetic or loyal to the Federal government faced rage, brutality, and oral insults.

In the North the separation of the Democrats into Southern and Northern branches and the growth of the more radical Republican party boosted a perception of the impending crisis. Yet the radical abolitionist movement was not unanimous in the North. The most opposed were the laborer's in industrial centers who feared they would lose their jobs to 4 million Africans migrating North who would work for far less. Northern politicians sympathetic to the South would earn

a title; Copperhead. The Copperheads would become a source of descent against Lincoln's policies and the Northern effort to defeat the Confederacy.

Putnam County, Indiana is a good example of changing public attitudes in the Western yeoman class as, similarly, Boston's financial leaders were balancing change in the Northeastern states regarding abolition. Putnam County, originally dominated by the Whig party, supported a legal ban on blacks living in the county. It was consistent with other counties in Southern Indiana. Prejudice also included Mexicans and Catholics but the attitudes were changing with the encouragement of the Federal government for migration West after the enactment of the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

Arguably, 1859 is the year when political compromises began to find fewer sympathetic ears. John Brown's revolt failed but he was the catalyst that brought Civil War to the nation. The staunch abolitionist, inspired discontent in Kansas and in his final insult brought it to Harpers Ferry. His solution for the slavery dilemma was war and he conspired with other abolitionists and financiers to instigate a slave rebellion.

Slave revolts always increased fear throughout the South, not only for the slave holding aristocracy but for the yeoman southerner. When John Brown led his army of 18 men to the Harper's Ferry, Virginia armory intending to march through Virginia



freeing slaves, his efforts attracted the participation of only a hand full of slaves. And, Virginia responded with overwhelming military and judicial force. He was hanged on December 2nd, 1859.

John Brown's raid on the eve of an election year changed reality for many. The raid shocked the South and Southern newspapers painted the abolitionist brush on every northerner. Across the South, swift legal action was taken to minimize the risk of slave rebellions. The Republican Party was blamed and Abraham Lincoln was their leader. The moderate voices in the South were drowned out by fear and in the North hostility toward the South gripped the masses. It was a year when the politicians could no longer depend upon the compromises that supported the South's slave culture.

Sentiment north of the Tennessee River changed too. Slaves were a part of Indiana life since the French arrived in the 1700's. Many white settlers didn't want slaves because they were black and by 1840 there were three slaves in the state. Residents supported Africa colonization as a method of ending slavery and most supported Indiana's law prohibiting blacks from migrating to Indiana even while it was largely ignored and unenforced. At the same time, they aided runaway slaves escaping to Canada. It was common knowledge that black families didn't want to immigrate to Africa yet by 1860 only 1 family remained in the county.

Putnam county depended upon agriculture and as a result supported railroad expansion and canals as a means to get their produce to market. The railroad was principally responsible for the increased availability of capital as bank loan policy became more favorable to farmers. And the county population grew because of national emigration. As a result, residents were being influenced by the temperance and women's rights discussions both topics indorsed by the growing Republican Party and largely ignored by the dyeing Whigs and Know-nothings parties.

Lincoln was a moderate candidate that appealed to the western states and those states were needed to elect a Republican president. Republicans claimed no interest in Black Rights which fit into the "Hoosiers claim to be fighting for Southern Rights". Presidential candidates seldom personally campaigned in favor of allowing their party representatives in each state to build the voter base and Indiana Republicans did not disappoint and neither did other Northern rural county leaders. They decorated wagons, organized speeches, and scheduled parades to keep the voting public entertained and excited.

Abraham Lincoln was elected president on November 6, 1860. Driven possibly by fear rather than reality, the list of states seceding from the Union grew quickly beginning with South Carolina on December 20, 1860, and Mississippi



followed on, January 9, 1861, Alabama, January 11, Florida, January 10, Georgia, January 19, Texas, February 1, and Louisiana, February 4.

Southern bravado supporting secession began to blind the population to a more realistic impact of war. In early April Louis Wigfall of Texas lingered on the Senate floor a month after Texas seceded. His remarks inspiring cheers and jeers from the gallery. *"The federal government is dead. The only question is whether we will give it a decent, peaceable, Protestant burial."* He also predicted if war came Southern armies would march on Boston. Other Southerners of seceded state gravely departed their posts bidding farewell to old friends.

On February 4th the Confederate government was officially formed in Montgomery Alabama with Jefferson Davis, a plantation owner and Senator from Mississippi as President and Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee seceded after Fort Sumpter surrendered in April, 1861.

The majority of southerners read or heard of the emotional debate regarding slavery and tariffs but mail and money hit home. The Confederate Post Office was established on February 21, 1861 and the United States Post Office Department continued to handle the mail of the seceded states for the first few weeks of the war. But, by June 1 the Confederate Postal Service took over collection and delivery and

rather than attaching postage, letters and parcels were stamped paid. And most importantly, Confederate paper money was issued in March 1861. The Confederate dollar, referred to as "Greyback" was in circulation by April and the money was accepted as a medium of exchange with high purchasing power and it was not tied to a gold or silver standard.

The rhetoric for war grew even before Lincoln was elected President. The inflated bravado in the North and South portrayed a gloriously short war. Each believed they would quickly dispose of the other and either restore the Union or free themselves from the yoke of Union dominance.

With Lincoln president and Southern states removing themselves from the Union, Lincoln was bolstered by the knowledge that the people of the South were not unanimously supporting the new Southern Confederacy. The states of the new Confederacy were protesting against secession. In South Tennessee, a movement to form a new state of Nickajack composed of the Northeast corner of Alabama, Northwest corner of Georgia, and Southern Tennessee was aggressive. Residents of East Tennessee protested against secession and, what became, West Virginia were protesting against Virginia; counties in Mississippi and Alabama rejected their state governments session. Each incident implied a lack of unity and a willingness of the population to support the Union. It no doubt



influenced Lincoln's guidance to his generals regarding how to prosecute a war.

Over 40 years of debate and political compromises was now made moot by an aggressive abolitionist, John Brown, and an unlikely candidate, Abraham Lincoln, the first Republican President that Southern leaders did not trust. Each household would feel the pain over the next few years.



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The Transition to War Continues: June 1861;

President Lincoln struggled to retain support from the border states and took advantage of Pro-Union sentiments in Missouri, Tennessee, Virginia, and Maryland. June was another month that both the Union and the Confederacy expanded their ranks with General Officers and adjusted department boundaries. The growing militaries spared in Missouri, Tennessee, Maryland, Virginia, and Florida. The first Confederate officer was killed in action and the Union's implementation of the Anaconda plan demonstrated results yet the Confederates were willing to test and beat the blockade. A Union amphibious operation failed but in other instances gunships and schooners proved useful. The names of Union General Officers McClellan, Butler, and Lyon appeared frequently in dispatches and papers as well as Confederate Colonel Magruder and General Johnston.

Political:

June began with a surprising report that Stephen Arnold Douglas, 'The Little Giant' and Democratic candidate for the US Presidency against Republican, Abraham Lincoln, died at the age of forty-eight at Springfield, IL.

Political activity in the border states was aggressive as the Missouri Governor Claiborne Jackson put out a call for 50,000 volunteers to enlist in the Confederacy and repel the ongoing Federal attempts to conquer the state.

The State of Tennessee reported the general election favored secession from the Union by a 2 to 1 vote. It confirmed the course of action already taken by the State Legislature, led by Governor Isham Harris, although eastern Tennessee remained staunchly Pro-Union.

Tennessee's Pro-Union faction met in Greenville, TN, to pledge allegiance to the United States as Pro-Unionists of Virginia protested by meeting in Wheeling, VA and electing Francis Henry Pierpont as the provisional governor of the, potentially, new state of West Virginia.

Col. Harvey Brown, USA. Commanding Fort Pickens, FL reported to the War Department that he would not return fugitive slaves to their masters unless he is ordered to do so as Maj. Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks, USA was directed to "quietly seize" the Baltimore MD, Police Commissioners. Subsequently, Mr. George P. Kane, Marshal of the Police of Baltimore, MD, was arrested.

President Abraham Lincoln slipped away from his office to watch the new hot air balloon invention of Professor Thaddeus S. C. Sowe. He was considering its potential as a military observation platform.

United States General Officer Appointments

- Stephen Augustus Hurlbut, Brig. Gen.
- Frederic West Lander, Brig. Gen.

Confederate General Officer Appointments

- Robert Edward Lee, full General
- Leonidas Polk, Maj. Gen.
- Earl Van Dorn, Brig. Gen.
- Bernard Elliott Bee, Brig. Gen.



- Richard Stoddert Ewell, Brig. Gen.
- William Joseph Hardee, Brig. Gen
- Theophilus Hunter Holms, Brig. Gen.
- Benjamin Huger, Brig. Gen.
- Thomas Jonathan “Stonewall” Jackson, Brig. Gen.
- David Rumph Jones, Brig. Gen.
- James “Old Pete” Longstreet, Brig. Gen.
- John Bankhead Magruder, Brig. Gen.
- John Clifford Pemberton, Brig. Gen.
- Henry Hopkins Sibley, Brig. Gen.
- Edmund Kirby Smith, Brig. Gen.
- Henry Alexander Wise, Brig. Gen.

Changes in Districts and Commands:

The Confederate military response to events included juggling commanders and commissioning general officers. Brig. Gen. Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard, CSA, replaced Brig. Gen. Milledge Luke Bonham, CSA, in the command of the “Alexandria Line,” (also referred to as the “Department of Alexandria,” also known as the “Potomac Department”, afterwards known as the “Army of the Potomac”. Brig. Gen. Henry Alexander Wise, the ex-governor of Virginia, was ordered to command the CSA troops in the Kanawha Valley, WV.

The Virginia state troops were transferred to the Confederate States of America by Virginia Governor, John Letcher and Brig. Gen. Robert S. Garnett, CSA, was assigned to command of troops in Northwestern VA, after a June 3rd incident at Philippi, VA.

Brig. Gen. Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard, CSA was placed in the Command of all the Confederate forces in the Virginia counties of Prince William, Fairfax, and Loudoun.

The Union altered the Department Structure by transferring the State of Missouri to the Department of the Ohio, commanded at the time by Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan, USA.

Colonel Edward Richard Sprigg Canby, 19th US Infantry, USA, reported that Colonel Loring, USA, abandoned his post; the Union Department of New Mexico Territory to serve the Confederacy. Colonel Canby was subsequently placed in charge of affairs in the Federal Department of the New Mexico territory.

Military:

The frequency of skirmishes and altercations between the belligerents continued at Arlington Mills and Fairfax Court-House, VA. One of the first Confederate casualties Capt. John Q. Marr, CSA, was killed.

At Philippi, VA, Col G. A. Porterfield, CSA was routed and Maj. Gen. George B McClellan, USA received credit for the victory without being involved. Apparently, Pro-Union men used the lack of Confederate forces in the area to launch an assault against secessionists.

The Chatham Grays, a VA Confederate Cavalry unit conducted a reconnaissance from Yorktown to Newport News, VA, startling the Union troops in the area.

Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler, USA, initiated an engagement at Big Bethel, or Bethel Church, VA, 8 miles from Newport News, VA, and was defeated by Col. John Bankhead Magruder, CSA. General Butler quickly retreated to Fortress Monroe, Hampton, VA.

One of the first expeditions initiated by the Union Army referred to as the Rockville, MD, Expedition, led by Col Charles Stone of the 4th US Infantry, traversed the area from Washington, D.C. to Edwards’ Ferry, on the Potomac River, MD. There was also



skirmishing at New Creek, VA, and an incident on the Rappahannock River, 12 miles below Urbana, VA.

Col. Lew Wallace, USA 11th Inf, reported skirmishing at Romney, VA, as another Federal expedition near Seneca Mills, MD, under Brig. Gen. Charles P. Stone, USA, skirmished with Confederate forces and eventually occupied Edwards' and Conrad's ferries, Potomac River, MD. Stone was skirmishing at Vienna, VA with Col Maxey Greg, CSA. 1st S. C. at the time Col. Lew Wallace, skirmished at Righter, Frankfort and on Patterson Creek, or Kelley's Island, WV.

Harpers Ferry, VA, was evacuated by Brig. Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, CSA, after receiving word that Federal troops from the west were advancing on his position under the command of Maj. Gen. George McClellan, USA and Gen. Robert Patterson, USA was approaching from the north. General Johnston withdrew to the vicinity of Winchester, VA.

Meanwhile, Brig. Gen. Nathaniel Lyon, USA engaged Confederate forces at Boonville, MO, and defeated Pro-South Governor Claiborne Jackson. The action resulted in securing the Missouri River for the Union and placing the state capitol, Jefferson City, under Union control. Yet skirmishing continued in Missouri at Camp Cole between Missouri Militia and Pro-Union Home Guards and at Jackson, MO.

Altercations were not restricted to land forces. The *USS Niagara* captured the Confederate schooner, *Aid*, off the coast of Mobile, AL, and the Federal Steamer, *Harriet Lane* attacked Pig Point Batteries, near Hampton, VA, on the James River. An attack on Mathias Point, VA. York River, by Federal gun boats, *Pawnee* and *Freeborn*, were repelled as they attempt to land Union forces. But, the Federal blockade ship, *USS Massachusetts*, captured 4 blockade runners in the Gulf of Mexico.

The Confederates had some success. They captured the side-wheeler, *St. Nicholas*, near Baltimore, MD, and in an aggressive pursuit of the *CSS Sumter*, the *USS Brooklyn* ultimately failed to capture the Confederate warship as it slipped past the Union blockade at the mouth of the Mississippi River, near New Orleans, LA and headed into the open seas of the Gulf of Mexico.

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

The Vicksburg Campaign (Standby for further guidance!)

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 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 Mississippi 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, 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 was cut in two.

On 28 May, pandemic permitting, 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, e.g. 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 nevertheless 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?

June 25 - (**Assuming time, location identified, and sufficient participation**) Vicksburg Campaign 1 - Holly Springs, Chickasaw Bayou, and Arkansas Post; Led by Arley McCormick

July 23 - Vicksburg Campaign 2 - Bayou and Canal Operations; Led by Fred Forst

August 27 - Vicksburg Campaign 3 - Porter Moves South - Grand Gulf - Snyder's Bluff; Led by Kent Wright

September 24 - Vicksburg Campaign 4 - Grierson's Raid; Led by Arley McCormick

October 22 - Vicksburg Campaign 5 - Port Gibson to Jackson; Led by Jeff Ewing

December 10 - Vicksburg Campaign 6 - Champion Hill and Big Black; Led by John Allen
- Vicksburg Campaign 7 - Siege Operations; Led by Emil Posey

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

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