

# THE WASHINGTON VOLUNTEER

Vol. XI, #6 Bulletin of the Puget Sound Civil War Round Table February 1997



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## Thanks

To Pat Brady, Jim Dimond and Fred Wilmoth for filling in at the last moment when our January speaker was forced to postpone her talk due

to illness. For only a day's notice, each gave an interesting talk on an interesting aspect of the Civil war.

## Next Meeting

Thursday February 13, 1997 at the Yankee Dinner. 6 PM Social Hour with dinner at 7 PM. Choice of Swedish Meatballs or Cornish Game Hen. The main entree is served with Caesar Salad, Biscuits, fresh vegetables, potatoes or rice with the chicken along with coffee or tea. Price is \$16.00 a person. Please write your menu choice, name and the name of any guests on the enclosed card and mail it ASAP

## Program

Amy Kinsel's talk on Gettysburg in American Culture and Memory, 1863-1938 will be presented at our February meeting. Ms. Kinsel will cover the memories veterans constructed to explain what happened during the battle and how those memories were shaped by the development of the national battlefield park.

## This Month in the Civil War

Abraham Lincoln was officially chosen 16th President of the United States on February 13, 1861 when the official count of presidential electoral votes took place in Washington, D.C. A year later on February 13th, 1862, the first day's fighting at Fort Donelson took place. Social affairs were the concern of the White House on February 13th, 1863 as the famous midget Gen. Tom Thumb and his bride were

entertained by Mrs. Lincoln. In February 1864 troops under General William T. Sherman participated in the Meridian expedition, where they destroyed 115 miles of railroad line, 61 bridges along with other Confederate facilities in Mississippi. A year later troops under Sherman would capture Columbia, South Carolina, where on February 17th, 1865 large sections of the town would be burnt to the ground. Each side blamed the other for being responsible for this fire.

## NEW BOOKS

February is Black History Month. So it is fitting that two new works illuminate the role Afro-Americans played in the Civil War. The University of Illinois Press has recently published **A Voice of Thunder: The Civil War Letters of George E. Stephens.** Edited by Donald Yacovone. Stephens was a correspondent for the New York *Weekly Anglo-American* before joining the famous 54th Massachusetts Infantry in early 1863. This work reprints Stephens correspondence to the New York black newspaper from 1859 until September 1864. These excellent letters pull no punches, and reflect the struggle Afro-Americans underwent to "fight" in behalf of freedom. Nell Irvin Painter, of Princeton

## HUMORS OF THE CAMP FIRE

Just before the battle of the Wilderness Sergeant Billy Bass received a letter from his wife. She said she heard that there was to be a big battle, and she did so wish to see him before it was fought! When Billy read it he said he would like also to see her before the battle, but he would a great sight rather see her after it was over.

*Confederate War Journal 1893.*

University, has written a new biography of **Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol** published by W. W. Norton & Company. Professor Painter "goes beyond the myths, words and photographs to uncover the life of a complex woman, an ex-slave who became a powerful figure in the abolitionist movement.

#### Raffle and Display table

For our February meeting there will be a special display of rare books and pamphlets relating to Gettysburg 1863 - 1913.

[Postponed from our January meeting] As always we ask for members to contribute to and participate in the monthly raffle as this is an important source for funds for our organization.

#### Preservation News

The Irish Brigade Monument Project Foundation Inc., c/o Jack O'Brien, 11109 Belton St., Upper Marlboro, MD 20774 is seeking funds to erect a monument honoring members of the Irish Brigade. This will be the last monument allowed at the national battlefield park and will be sited near the observation tower at "Bloody Lane". It was here in the September 1862 fighting that the brigade lost 540 members, killed or wounded. The group is trying to raise \$150,000 to purchase and ship granite from Ireland to create a 10 foot high, 6 foot wide and 4 foot deep monument. Two bronze sculptures will adorn the granite. For additional information contact Jack O'Brien at the address given above or call (301) 336-5167

#### HARP OF THE SOUTH

A Sonnet. By "Cora."

HARP of the South, awake! A loftier strain  
Than ever yet thy tuneful strings has stirred,  
Awaits the now. The Eastern world has heard  
The thunder of the battle 'cross the main--  
Has seen the young South burst the tyrant's chain,  
And rise to being at a single word--  
The watchword., Liberty--so long transferred  
To the oppressor's mouth. Moons wax and  
wane,  
And still the nations stand with listening ear,  
And still o'er ocean floats the battle-cry.  
Harp of the South, awake, and bid them hear  
The name of Jackson; loud, and clear, and high  
Strike notes exultant o'er the hero's bier,  
Who, though he sleeps in dust, can never die.

*The Songs and Ballads of the Southern People  
1861-1865*

#### On the Net

Among the 1500 Civil War related sites on the internet is The Confederate Network. [ <http://members.tripup.com/~rw/> ] This

site provides links to over 500 different sites. As you bring up the homepage of this site you hear the strains of Dixie and view the Confederate battleflag. Links are divided into 4 major sections, Confederate Heritage Groups [i.e. Sons of Confederate Veterans, etc. ], Reenacting Links, Southern Merchants and 1861-1865. Each group is then divided up into subsections. For example under Southern Merchants one can find books, art, flags & clothing as well as antiques & relics. So if you are interested in affairs south of the Mason-Dixon line, check out The Confederate Network.

#### The Graybeard Regiment

During the Civil War, one Union regiment the 37th Iowa Volunteer Infantry, was largely, and deliberately, composed of old men. It was nicknamed the Graybeard Regiment.

In 1862, the US. War Department authorized the formation of the 37th to show that men past draft age were willing and able to go to war. The unit of 914 men was assembled that December at Camp Strong near Muscatine, Iowa. The oldest man was 80-year-old Pvt. Curtis King. Six men were in their 70s, including 72 year old drummer Nicholas Ramey. Another 136 men were in their 60s. Nearly all of the members of the regiment were over 45.

Required to hike in the mud and sleep in the rain like other soldiers, the Graybeards were spared none of the rigors of army life. They were, however exempted from combat duty, serving instead as guards of military prisons, railroads and arsenals in Missouri, Tennessee, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. Only three men were killed in action, but 145 died of disease and 364 were

discharged because of physical disabilities.

By War's end more than 1,300 of the sons and grandsons of Graybeard members had enlisted. So the regiment accomplished its major purpose to serve as a grand propaganda tool for recruiting.

Thanks to member Harley Crain for submitting the this article which first appeared in Parade, March 28, 1992.

#### Upcoming Programs

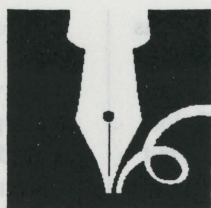
A special reminder that our March meeting will be held on **Wednesday March 12, 1996** when Richard Moe, author of the *Last Full Measure: The Life and Death of the First Minnesota Volunteers* and President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation will speak. This should be an excellent meeting and we urge all members to attend and bring friends.

#### Civil War History

Marc Duvall would like to remind all members that if they wanted to receive the special subscription rate to the excellent *Civil War History* that they need to send to him their \$18 before the next meeting. Marc needs to get the subscription renewed to Kent State University ASAP. Send checks to Marc at 1001 4th Ave Plaza, #3200, Seattle WA 98154

Notices to be placed into the bulletin should be sent to Jeff Rombauer, 22306 255th Ave SE, Maple Valley, WA 98038

# LETTERS HOME: EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS OF THE CIVIL WAR



## CIVIL WAR DIARY OF GEORGE WASHINGTON RICHARDSON OF THE 7TH MINNESOTA REGIMENT.

Written in 1906

The 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10th Regiments Minn. Inf and several battalions of State troops were all enlisted during a short period of time immediately after Pres. Lincoln made the two calls for troops of 300,000 each. Co. D of the 7th in which I served enlisted on the 14 and 15 days of Aug. 1862.

As fast as Companies were organized they were sent to various points along the frontier of the State to protect Settlers from the Sioux Indians who were then killing or taking away every thing they could. That is literally true for they would kill any thing and every thing that was killable if they did not have use for it alive and as to human beings they were not satisfied with merely killing. They would scalp and mutilate their victims either before or after death.

Of the 117 men enlisted at Winowa on the 14 and 15 three were rejected by the examining Surg. 17 were turned over to another Co. and the balance was Co. D of the 7th. We were sent to Ft. Abercrombie Dak. Territory on the Red River of the North, 280 miles NW of St. Paul. On our way we found, by careful searching in some cases pieces enough to makeup the remains of five men and one boy, except one mans head, which was found later after the fire had burned off the grass in a nearby slough, all victims of the noble Red man.

We had but little trouble with the Indians until we were about 15 miles from the Ft. We did have some scares however.

I don't expect to forget my first night's guard duty not if I live to be an old man. It was at St. Cloud Minn, at that time a little burg of about 150 inhabitants, and about 200 refugees driven from their farms by the Sioux. The last settlers we saw for 13 months.

I was detailed to go on 3rd relief from 11PM to 1AM. (about 40 rods from camp out some little distance from Town, and right among some stumps. Well those stumps got to moving I could see them move and occasionally hear them. I was never accused of having fine silken hair, but at that time I think every hair was the size of a pencil and standing straight up.

I do not know whether it was nearly piety or that scare that caused my hair to turn gray so young. When the relief came at 1 o'clock the Sergt asked me why I didn't kill some of them pigs that were running around. I didn't have much to say. When we got in sight of the timber on the Red River we saw Indians looking at us from different points. Soon we saw quite a body of them 300 probably. Some waving their blankets, some riding toward us and some riding in other directions.

Their actions were as unintelligible to us as the actions of a swarm of bees. We afterward learned that they were using their regular code of signals.

So D was sent forward as skirmishers. There were but two men in the Co. who had ever seen a line of skirmishers. There were but two men in the Co. who had ever seen a line of skirmishers. We kept a fair line but our intervals varied from nothing to twenty feet. Our Capt. and 2d Lieutenant were laboring hard to keep us in the State of Minn. So the Lieut. afterward said.

We must have made a good impression on the Indians for they scurried away over the Prairie just before we got close enough to try our old Harpers ferry muskets.

We went on through the timber, crossed the River and were in D.T. and at the Fort. But oh what a Ft. A line of empty pork barrels, some trenches, some buildings, some fine slab palisade, and the bank of the River constituted the defense.

The Ft. is in a sharp bend of the River. The river making two sides of the Ft. with heavy timber just across the river. Not a good place to hold against even Indians.

We found Co. D of the 5 Minn Infy with 70 men and 70 citizens with some families. Their joy at seeing us was a thing to be remembered. Women cried and some men did too.

They had been harassed by the Reds night and day with loss in killed or wounded nearly every day for some four weeks. The Indians gaining in numbers while they were losing.

The Day we arrived a squad of 20 men had been sent across the River and through the timber to see if we were in sight. They knew we were on the road somewhere as a messenger had told them we had started from Ft. Snelling 17 days previous. Seven of the Squad were lying in the grass dead a few rods from where we passed into the timber. The others got back to the Ft.

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The next AM a detail was sent for the bodies. Such a sight as those maimed and mutilated bodies presented I do not wish to see again. During the next two months we had several brushes with the poor Indian in the timber and on the prairie with but little loss to us and with only a few of their dead falling into our hands but they never got any more scalps from Ft. Abercrombie.

We enclosed ten acres with an eight foot stockade and a bastion at each angle containing a twenty four pound Columbiade and pierced for Infantry.

We stayed there until July 7th 1863 when we joined Sibley's expedition in search of the Indians. We found them July 24 about 60 miles east of the Missouri at Big Mound.

They were not expecting us but were watching the movements of Gen.. Sully who had some troops somewhere on the Missouri above Sioux City. When they saw us some came toward us and were met by our scouts. They said they did not want to fight but wanted to talk with Sibley with whom they were well acquainted.

But the Gen.. did not think it would be good for his General health to go up to the top of the hill where they were. (Presumably on account of the altitude) so Surgeon Weiser of the Rangers went to the top of Big Mound to talk with them.

He had been with them and had doctored them without pay and everyone thought he would be entirely safe but they shot him in a minute after he got there right in sight of the whole command.

The 7th was ordered forward with Bracketts battalion of Cav. It was then just about 12 N and hot we had started that A.M. and was tired and hungry our cooking was done by Co. cooks at that time and all we carried to eat was five hard tacks per man.

But we pressed on as fast as we could go. We could see their families 3 or 4 miles ahead and going as fast as they could but the fighting would come for us over a hill or around a hill sometimes one side, sometimes the other, sometimes in front and sometimes in the rear and sometimes from 2 or 3 directions at once. They would come as near as they dared, always on the dead run their bodies almost out of sight by the side of their ponies, deliver their volley then wheel one half each way and away they would go making two beautiful curves. Too pretty to shoot at. They appeared to be as well drilled as any cavalry could be in their way.

We met them sometimes when they did not expect us by our rushing up a hill or otherwise but I never saw any particular disorder and I never heard or saw a command given except by signal from some hill top which of course could not help a body of charging cavalry.

Their fighting on foot was equally as mysterious to me. Tired and hungry as I was I was much interest in their tactics. Of course we all knew they were trying to gain time for their families by stopping us but we kept them very busy until dusk when we stopped at a lake now called dead buffalo lake where we got some much needed water that we thought not very good but wet. Col. Marshall sent a squad of Cav. back to Gen.. Sibley asking him to send forward rations and ammunition. The Gen.. sent him a preemptory order to bring his command back to camp immediately. Ours not to reason why ours but to do or die so of course we went back arriving at 7:30 AM, making 37 miles since 5 o'clock the morning before with only 4 hardtack to eat during that time. Our cooking was done by Co. cooks so we did not carry much in our haversacks.

All that day (July 25) we laid in camp because the Cav. was tired. That gave Lo Indians a good start and we didn't see their families again which was probably Sibley's intention but the menfolks were with us frequently. On the 26th the whole command camped where we had got water two days before. We found a very dead buffalo in the water near where we had filled our canteens. Some said naughty words not necessary for this article. The next AM we were up and started early. The Indians did not sleep late that AM for our Rear guard was not out of camp when we were attacked on all sides at once. That was the biggest fight of the whole expedition and the biggest the Sioux had ever had up to that time in point of numbers at least for we had the whole Sioux tribe except a few that were off on detached service such as stealing horses and watching Gen.. Sully and soforth.

I suppose the hill over which we contended is now called Sibley Butte. There was no artillery, no parts of artillery left there and in fact but very little used owing to the peculiar face of the country and our nearness to the enemy at such times as the Artillery could have acted.

The reds had wagons, carts and other things which they had taken from farms, also a stage coach and other vehicles taken from Burbanks stage Co. Such things together with many things of their own were abandoned by them every day. There were tons of dried buffalo meat, quantities of pemican, thousands of buffalo robes, and other hides all piled nicely to keep dry until they could return for them.

Everything was left untouched by us. We drove them or they went across the Missouri River near where Bismarck is now located. On the evening of Aug. 7 at dress parade the Gen. congratulated us in a G. O. saying we had met the enemy and had driven them across the Mo. R. never to return but before we had all unharnessed a volley was fired into our camp which wounded a man and killed a mule. It was thought by all who knew the facts and said openly by some papers that if Col. Marshall had command of that Expedition the Sioux trouble would have been

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ended before they got across the River. As it was you know how it continued for so many years.

At that time they were not as well armed as we were but later on they were better armed than our soldiers were. We started on our return Aug. 2 via Ft. Abercrombie. Thence to Ft. Snelling Minn. arriving Sept. 7 making in all a 930 mile march in 61 days and had some trouble besides. We had drank all the alkali we needed and was willing to go South for a change which we did after a short week at home.

Oct. 7th, 1863 we were ordered to go on board the "War Eagle" one of the best Upper River boats to go to St. Louis. For some reason not generally known we were unloaded at Dubuque Iowa and put into cars arriving in Chicago next P.M. thence to St. Louis on the Ill. Central. There we did guard duty with an occasional chance to go on detail to take prisoners or deserters to various places. Sometime in December a detail was sent to Macon Co. Ill. to arrest some deserters and other lawless men that were making trouble for the few loyal residents of that vicinity.

One very enthusiastic man barricaded himself in a little old loghouse. He would not be arrested on any terms but shot through between the logs and we shot through the window and door. The Lieut. in command reported results to the authorities.

On our way back to St. Louis we stopped at Springfield for a Train from Chicago. Saw the Capitol and President Lincoln's house and talked with Mr. Hemdon the Presidents law partner. April 20 following we were sent to Paduca Kentucky. There we found our first organized whites to contend with. Gen. Forest thought he had charge of that part of the world and did not want any of our help. He came to Town the 17th of May I think. With the help of a Negro Battery stationed there we induced him to go south.

June 20 we were sent by boat to Memphis Tenn. Assigned to the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Division of the 16th Army Corps, Maj.

Gen. A. J. Smith commanding. Our duties were destroying Bridges, Railroads, etc., keeping Mr. Forest busy. We fought the battle of Tupelo July 13-14-15 in which our Co. lost 7 men killed.

We returned to Memphis on very short rations and long walks. Short rations and long walks were Smith's pride. Every man of us liked him in times of danger and hated him the rest of the time.

Of course many things happened that Summer but this will be to long any way can wind it up. About the 19th of Sept. we were put on a boat and sent down the Mississippi to the White River then up to Duvals Bluff, Ark thence across country to Little Rock about 40 mile due West across the most beautiful Prairie that I ever saw. From there we went North and East to Cape Girardeau Mo 340 miles in 19 days on 10 days rations through a miserable poor country, so poor that foraging was almost a crime.

our last raid before leaving Memphis. He was sent home. We never saw [him] again. And I might tell a good joke on myself! At Duvalls Bluff I bought a pie a "Congress pie" well my third made me so sick that I have never wanted any more Congress pie. I was sick a week or more but marched every day. I was on the Colors guard that made it easier for me. At Cape Girardeau we were put on the Steamer Magenta the largest fastest and grandest Boat on the Mississippi River at that time. Here we learned that we were expected to get ahead of Gen. Price and his Cavalry who was on a raid through Missouri for horses and other plunder. We were too slow on foot and so they put on the boat.

On this ride the most pathetic thing I ever witnessed happened. We stopped at a Town in Ill I have forgotten the name and never knew why we stopped but there was lots of things happened that we didn't know why. We saw three men Soldiers evidently come onto the boat carrying another Soldier on a cot. They set the cot down and hurried away one of them said good bye Dan or so we understood it.

We were getting our Noon lunch and didn't pay much attention to the man only to notice he was a very sick man but we had seen several sick men. Before we got through eating I saw a fly walk right across his eye I went to him he was dead. We told the Officers and Doctors. Our Dr. Ames said "No Dr had sent him aboard the boat" He was carried up on the Levee at St. Louis with his blanket over his face. Who knows who he was or where his friends were. Perhaps some man of the 6th Minn. could tell where he was buried as the 6th Minn. Infantry was doing patrol duty there at that time. We hurried up the Missouri River to Jefferson City by boat than on foot to Sedalia, Lexington, St. Joe, Kansas City across the River into Kansas just in time to learn that

Price had abandoned a great part of his train and was making good time South. We were allowed a days rest at Paola Kansas. Then back across to Warrensburg, Mo. Then to Sedalia in a cold snowstorm all day we went into camp about a mile from Town and was told by Col. Marshal that the orders were "not to touch fences nor hay or anything belonging to Citizens" We camped near a splendid ten rail fence with haystacks not too far away. We did have beautiful fires, fine beds all sheltered from the storm that lasted nearly all night.

I think that was 30th of Oct. 1864. Next morning ailing ones were put on cars and sent to Jefferson Barracks St. Louis. We followed on foot. Forded the Osage River cold as Ice water on Election day Nov. 5. Voted for Mr. Lincoln 2nd term. Then on to Jefferson Barracks where we rested until about the 24. Then by boat to Nashville Tenn. Arriving there Nov. 30 we heard the Battle of Franklin being fought 15 miles away. We fortified, and enjoyed the snow and rain until Dec. 15 when we began the battle of Nashville which lasted two days. And then the chase to drive Mr. Hood and his boys away off South and they appeared to be willing to go.

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On the 27th of Dec. we reached Pulaski and gave up the chase. Rations were not plentiful and foraging very poor because the Johnnies had taken about all that was takeable. They knew how to forage all right only they were a little careless being in their own homes in some cases. On one occasion a party of our men surprised a party of Rebs having a fine home made dinner all sitting around a table with Ladies helping them. As soon as our men could control their surprise they secured the guns that were standing around and told the Jonnies to "go on" then finished up what was left without being helped. From Pulaski we went to East Port Miss. Jan 6 1865. Rations were very scarce all through that Jan. It was said some men were so heartless as to steal corn from the mules. We stayed at East Port just one month then went to New Orleans arriving there Feb. 21 going into camp on Gen. Jacksons old Battlefield near the Jackson Monument.

The ground was very low and wet. Gen. E.R.S. Canby said he would not allow us nearer the City. He said to Smith "your men would take every thing they could get their hands on." Yes they took 16 canon in one day at Nashville said Smith. We we got a good dry camp near Town. Attend Operas Theaters and enjoyed things generally for a week then went to Dauphen Island at the entrance to Mobile Bay. Had a fine time for 2 weeks wading for oysters. Sharks and Alligators were the only troubles we had. Mch 18 we were taken to the East side and landed at the mouth of Fish River. Stayed there about a week waiting for troops to come to assist in taking Mobile and surrounding forts. Mch 25 we started on for Spanish Fort. That day we were attacked by a Cavalry force coming up on our left. Col. Marshal was wounded at that time. The next day we reached the Fort and began the siege that lasted 14 days. The 14 days in trenches sometimes muddy and sometime so dry that we suffered for water but all the time continual roar of artillery and other guns.

On the morning of Apr. 10 we charged and took the Fort. On the 11th we took Fort Blakely. On that day we got word that Lee had surrendered and the war was over. On Apr. 13 we were started for Montgomery. I never knew why but we went arriving on the 25th 12 days of hard marching. For what? Went into camp 6 miles North of Town. I had the great honor of carrying the first U.S. through that City that had been seen since 1861. Our Reg. was in the advance that day and the Color Sergeant was sick that day. My good luck. We stayed at Montgomery until the 10th of May. Then by boat to Selma Ala. Selma was a city in ruins. Wilson's Cavalry had found it a very busy place turning out arms and ammunition in great quantities. They left nothing that could be used against the Union. July 20th we were put aboard a freight train and started for home leaving several too sick to travel.

We had every thing disagreeable to contend with, first R. Roads were out of repair some bridges gone. Then Boats were busy carrying other troops etc. but we finally arrived at Winona

discharged on the 16th. We then went to our homes and to our various occupations not asking extra favors or bonuses or anything but we were satisfied that we had accomplished what we went into the service of our country for and that was to save it from being destroyed by a lot of Rebels that no good reason to Rebel.

While at Selma a few of us saw what a very few men had seen, i.e. men that were borne in Africa and brought to the U.S. as slaves. They were on a Plantation some 20 miles West of Selma, 7 of a cargo brought over in 1858. Some sold in Brazil some in Cuba and a few brought up the Alabama River where the boat was burned. They had been chased by U.S. and British ships all the way from Africa but was able to dodge their pursuers to the last. The Slaves were a hard looking lot much worse than those born in the U.S.

Our regiment served 1 yr. and nine months for 13 dollars per month. the balance of the 3 years we received 15 dollars per month in the meantime at home men were getting 18.00 to 30.00 per month.

Our thanks to member Lin Russell for submitting George Richardson's recollections. Some spelling and punctuation were corrected for clarity. If you are interesting in reading more about the 7th Minnesota and the campaigns it participated in then the following works are recommended. A brief history and roster of the 7th Minnesota can be found in Volume I of Minnesota in the Civil and Indiana Wars 1861-1865. St. Paul: Pioneer Press Company, 1891. Pp. 347 - 385.

A recent history of the Sioux outbreak of 1862 is Over the Earth I Come: The Great Sioux Uprising of 1862 by Duane Schultz. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992. On the Tupelo campaign see Forrest at Brices's Cross Roads and in North Mississippi in 1864 by Edwin C. Bearss. Dayton: Press of Morningside Bookshop, 1979. Howard N. Monnett's Action Before Westport 1864 Kansas City: Westport Historical Society 1964. covers the story of Price's Raid into Missouri and its aftermath. The most recent work on Nashville is Wiley Sword's Embrace an Angry Wind. New York: Harper Collins, 1992. Mobile Bay and the Mobile Campaign by Chester G. Hearn. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1993 is the most recent study on one of the last major campaigns of the war. Finally for Wilson's raid see Yankee Blitzkrieg: Wilson's Raid through Alabama and Georgia by James Pickett Jones. Athens: University of Georgia Press 1976.