

THE WASHINGTON VOLUNTEER



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Thanks!!

Once again we had an over flow crowd of over eighty at our April meeting to hear Professor David E. Long speak on Abraham Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation. As Dr. Long pointed out in

his talk, if Lincoln had really wanted to secure his own reelection in 1864, he could have easily abandoned the Emancipation Proclamation. But Lincoln stood by his convictions and promises to the new freemen. We thank Professor Long for making the long flight to Seattle from North Carolina and would look forward to hearing him once again in the future.

Next Meeting

Thursday May 8, 1997 at the Yankee Diner. 6 PM Social Hour with dinner at 7 PM. Choice of Herb Grilled Chicken or Beef Burgundy. 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. If you choose not to mail the card in be sure to call Dio Richardson if you plan to attend. The staff at the Yankee Diner can accommodate our needs if we can provide them with an accurate count of the number of dinners that they can expect to serve.

Program

Long time round table member Jeff Rombauer will speak on "Lost Voices of the Civil War", a discussion on intriguing but little known published narratives on the Civil War.

This Month in the Civil War

Stonewall Jackson achieved his first victory in the 1862 Shenandoah Valley Campaign at McDowell, Virginia on May 8th. Here Jackson's force of some 10,000 Confederates repulsed attacks by a Union force of some 6000 troops under the command of Brig. Gen. Robert C. Schenck. The Federal commander had launched the attacks to stave off Jackson's forces while he withdrew to the Allegheny mountains. Fighting lasted for four hours, with every Union attack being repulsed by the Southern forces. Compared to other Civil War battles, the casualties on both sides were light, with Schenck losing 26 killed, 227 wounded and 3 missing and Jackson 45 killed, and 423 wounded. Jackson pursued the Union forces for 3 additional days, but was unable to reengage the federal troops due to the poor condition of the roads and effective union rear-guard actions.

HUMORS OF THE CAMPFIRE

In the winter of 1863-64 there was great rivalry between an Alabama and a Georgia regiment attached to the same brigade. No matter what one did the colonel of the other tried to excel it. It was during the great Madison Run revivals. One Sunday the Georgia colonel noticed a great commotion in the Alabama regiment. He sent over and found out that thirteen of the Alabamians, the fruit of the meetings, were to be baptized. He sent for his adjutant and then thundered out: "Captain ---, go to work at once and detail fifteen men and have them baptized without delay. These ---- Alabamians can't crow over Georgia."

Confederate War Journal 1893.

NEW BOOKS

Professor Earl J. Hess, who spoke to this group in the fall of 1994, has published his latest work **The Union Soldier in Battle: Enduring the Ordeal of Combat**.

[Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1997, \$29.95]

Drawing upon numerous letters, diaries and memoirs of Union soldiers, Hess has written an excellent study on how Northern troops were able to cope with the challenges and stress of combat. These troops should be viewed as victors rather than victims of the battlefield.

WHY

Capture of Rebel Camp Near Berrysville, Va.,
October 29th, '62.

Twenty millions held at bay!
Why, Northmen, why?
Less than half maintain the day,
Why Northmen, why?
With the sturdy iron will,
With the pluck, the dash, the skill,
With the blood of Bunker Hill,
Why, Northmen, why?

Standing yet are Sumpter's walls--
Why, Northmen, why?
Slumber yet the avenging balls--
Why, Northmen, why?
Charleston left to scoff at ease!
Richmond vaunting as it please!
Traitor taunts on every breeze!
Why, Northmen, why?

Hear our wounded eagle wail!
Why, Statesmen, why?
See our spangled banner trail!
Why, Statesmen, why?
Coward England mocks again!
Courtly Paris shrugs disdain!
Cordial Russia throbs with pain!
Why, Statesmen, why?

By our past, so bright renowned,
On Northmen, on!
By our future, starry-crowned,
On, Northmen, on!
By the South, deceived, misled.
By our hundred thousand dead,
Who for North and South have bled
On, Northmen, on!

N. P. Willis

Reenactments

The Washington Civil War Association will present its 4th annual encampment at Fort Steilacom May 24, 25 & 26. Admission is \$5.00 for ages 13 years and up and \$1.00 for children 12 years and younger. Tours of historical buildings will be held at 10, 12 and 2 P.M. each day, while battle reenactments will take place at 11 am & 3 P.M. each day. Living history demonstrations will also be held. Artillery, cavalry and infantry reenactors will be present. Fort Steilacom is located at 87th Ave SW & Steilacom Blvd. in Tacoma.

Preservation News

As always members are encouraged to become members of the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites, (APCWS) P.O. Box 1862m, Fredericksburg, VA 22402. This nonprofit group of almost 10,000 members acts to preserve, protect and interpret Civil War sites. Since it was founded in 1987 this group has preserved more than 37 sites in 11 states. If interested contact Dennis E. Frye (540) 371-1860

Upcoming Programs

Members are reminded that for our September 1997 meeting our speaker will be William S. McFeely, Pulitzer prize winning historian and author of **Grant: A Biography**, **Frederick Douglas** and **Yankee Stepfather: General O. O. Howard and the Freedmen.**

New Officers

At our May meeting it will be once again time to elect new Officers. For the 1997-98 meeting year the following members are nominated .

President - Dr. William Trier
Vice- President Sue Crichton
Vice President Programing - Pat Brady
Vice President Bulletin - Jeff Rombauer
Treasurer - Harley Craine
Vice-Treasurer George Hood
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Notices to be placed into the bulletin should be sent to Jeff Rombauer, 22306 255th Ave SE, Maple Valley, WA 98038 or by E-mail at jeff.rombauer@prostar.com

"the simple story of my unimportant life"

Civil War Book Notes



"Some token of myself"

Last fall there appeared in The Seattle Times an article on the "modern phenomena" of ordinary people writing and publishing their autobiographies. But as members of this round table can testify this is certainly not a new tradition. It was not only the officers and politicians on both sides who sought a public forum for their war time recollections. Urged on by family members, friends and battlefield comrades, numerous veterans, both North and South, took pen in hand to pass down their memories of the Civil War. Today we find the results of their efforts in such publications as The National Tribune, The Confederate Veteran, the numerous publications of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, or in various other veteran's periodicals. Listed below are some of the obscure titles which this editor has found in Seattle's antiquarian books stores in which is recorded a veteran's war service.

➤ **Reminiscences of My Life and Times**
by Rev. Telesphore Bronillette. [1935]

Born in Canada in 1841, the Reverend moved along with his parents to Illinois in 1849. He enlisted in the 12th Illinois Cavalry and despite having 4 horses shot out from him during the war, and being wounded several times he survived to become a Presbyterian minister in Chelhalis, Washington and Newburg Oregon. "Truly, war is hell, and it has been a wonder to me how men who profess to believe in the religion of Christ can so lose sight of His teachings as to have the heart to declare war."

➤ **Recollections of a Fire Insurance Man Including his experience in U.S. Navy [Mississippi Squadron] during the**

Civil War. Robert S. Critchell. Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1909.

Bored with civilian life, Critchell secured an appointment as an Acting Master's Mate [despite having no nautical experience at all] on the U.S.S. Silver Cloud in 1863. The author portrays the monotony of life on a tinclad gunboat after the fall of Vicksburg. A highlight of Critchell's recollections is an account of the aftermath of Fort Pillow which he witnessed. After the war he returned to the insurance business.

➤ **The Story of A Strange Career being The Autobiography of a Convict: An Authentic Document.** Edited by Stanley Waterloo. Chicago: Monarch Book Company, Publishers, 1905.

George Thompson was an English sailor living in the United States in 1863. To support his pregnant wife, he enlisted as an ensign in the U.S. Navy and saw service off the South Carolina Coast. He was captured when his landing party was ambushed by Confederate troops and he spent over 300 days in rebel prisons in South Carolina and Richmond. Upon his exchange in the fall of 1864, he was assigned to a vessel in the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron and took part in the naval brigade's assault at Fort Fisher. Following the war he spent most of the rest of his life in and out of prisons as a habitual criminal.

➤ **The Light of Other Days; or, Passing under the Rod.** Elder A. J. Smith. Dayton: United Brethren Publishing House, 1878.

Against his parents wishes, Smith enlisted as a drummer boy in the 104th Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment. But the reality of soldier life was a shock to the young lad, and as he admitted at the Battle of Fair Oaks, his work aiding the wounded "was not exciting enough to inspire courage . . . and I began to desire some place of safety."

Plagued by eye trouble, Smith managed to survive the Peninsula campaign and was sent North to a hospital, where in the fall of 1862 he was discharged from the service due to ill health.

➤ **Seventy-Five Years on the Border.** By James Williams. Kansas City: Press of Standard Printing Co., 1912.

Scattered among the 80 short chapters in this memoir are Williams' recollections of service as a Union militiamen in western Missouri during the Civil War. His account does not paint a very pretty picture as he describes the looting and bushwhacking on both sides. "It is a shameful truth that I am sorry to put on record that many seemingly good Unionists of that period appeared to be more anxious to secure plunder especially good horses or mules as Government contractors were paying big prices for, then they were to face the Confederates, bushwhackers or anything else where there was danger in the locality."

➤ **Strange, But True: Life and Adventures of Captain Thomas Crapo and Wife.** New Bedford: Capt. Thomas Crapo, Publisher, 1893.

Thomas Crapo was only 19 when the civil war broke out. He had just returned to the United States after spending 4 years on a whaling voyage. He enlisted as a seaman in the Union navy and was stationed on Farragut's flagship the Hartford. He participated in the capture of New Orleans. In the summer of 1862 he transferred to the Army as part of the 1st Louisiana Regiment, Union, seeing action at Port Hudson and the Red River Campaign. After the war, Thomas Crapo returned to the sea, where he eventually became a Captain of his own brig and was lost at sea in the 1890's.

LETTERS HOME: EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS OF THE CIVIL WAR

Orrin D. Holmes was among one of the first to enlist in the Union Army from Massachusetts. His company eventually became part of the 29th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry which saw service in the Army of the Potomac in 1862 and at Vicksburg and East Tennessee in 1863 before returning to the Army of the Potomac in the Spring of 1864. Orrin was killed only 18 days after writing the letter reprinted below, shot through the heart at the Battle of Fort Steadmen, March 25th, 1865, just a few weeks before Lee's surrender.

This letter is one of 116 which his mother, with great care and love, copied into two slim ledger books after the war which are now in the collection of Jeff Rombauer.

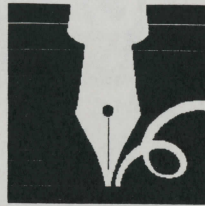
[Near Petersburg Va]

[March 7th 1865]

[Dear Mother]

[I Received you letters a few days ago which I will now answer.] I have not had much time to write lately as I have been busy writing on pay-rolls. Once every 2 months I have to make out the company Muster and pay rolls. It is a splendid morning. We are having cold nights and pleasant days now. Birds are singing this morning as they do in May in Mass. Peepers have been here some time. All is quiet along this lines this A.M., but I suppose during the day some parts of the line will get a ration of shells. One of my Germans¹ has been killed since I wrote [you] last. He was inside his tent eating his supper, when a [rebel] shell burst in camp, a piece going through his tent and striking him top of the head. He had been in this country but a few months and didn't know what State he enlisted in. Sergt. Shannon of my company has been exchanged and we expect he is now in Mass on furlough. All of our regiment that were taken prisoners July 30th have been exchanged - five of them, they are all well. Charles Tillson, [of our Co] who was taken prisoner in Jan. 1864 died last summer at Andersonville Georgia. He leaves a large family in Plymouth. [Mass] Elisha Doten, [of E Co.] left us the 1st of this month for Plymouth discharged his three years having expired. He was not a re-enlisted man.

[There is nothing transpiring now of unusual interest in this Department.] Deserters [continue to



fare come in at the rate of a hundred a night. They don't seem to know any thing about Sherman's whereabouts, as it is kept a secret now in rebel papers. We expect [Sherman] he is gradually working this way. If he succeeds Petersburg and Richmond must go up. The reb[el]s here now are

making their boasts [now] that we shall soon hear of the destruction of Sherman's Army. It would make them feel bad if this destruction should be on the other leg. I trust we shall soon hear what he is up to. I hardly think Grant intends to remain quiet a great while longer. If things begins to look war like [here] again. Extra rounds of cartridges have been issued to all our men. it has been reported here lately that the reb[el]s were massing their forces in front of our corps, preparatory to an attack on our lines, but I hardly think they will assume the offensive here.

[Well we have at last received a dose of green backs we were paid a few days ago up to Jan 1, 64. I am going to run the risk of sending you a fifty-dollar (50.00) in this. Please write on the reception of this so that I can send more. You may break this fifty and take out fifteen for your own use. I suppose if I should lay that kind of money on the shelf three years from date it would be worth more than ... if I should put it in the bank. If you think I had better keep it three years and you can get along without money this time perhaps I can send you time or if you can't till next pay day I will remember I didn't give you any more this time and will make up for it then. I have no more news to write this time.] Orders have just come for each man to have four days rations in his knapsack [haversack]: sixty rounds of cartridges and hold ourselves in readiness for a call at any moment.

[Much obliged for the other two letters, I suppose this will do for all hands this time. I wrote to Mansfield

Hoping this will find you all well

I remain yours

Orrin

If you have letters or diaries from soldiers who fought or served in the Civil War and would like to share it with the round table please submit a transcript to Jeff Rombauer, 22306 255th Ave SE, Maple Valley WA 98038