

Sumter to Appomattox

The Official Newsletter of the New South Wales Chapter of
The American Civil War Round Table of Australia

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Please visit our website www.americancivilwar.asn.au

A Message to Members –

In place of the message from Brendan O'Connell, this edition will provide a report on Brendan's great presentation at our last meeting. At this meeting Brendan recounted the story behind his daughter's recent book, *The Ballad of Blind Tom*. This book is the remarkable life story of a Georgia slave, a pianist and autistic savant, who is best described as the "Forrest Gump" of his time.

Brendan certainly lived up to the guarantee given in our last Newsletter that his presentation would be both "something different" and a magnificent "...narration of a little known but enthralling character of the Civil War era". It is a matter of some regret that Brendan's great presentation was part of our "boutique" meeting format that has become the norm for our meetings. These small attendances are placing considerable strains on our financial resources and the viability of our Chapter's operation.

I would urge all members to make an effort to be at our next meeting on July 6 to hear David Smith give a presentation titled "*A Confederate View of Abraham Lincoln*". David's presentation will be followed by a commentary on the presentation by professional historian Bruce Dennett. You may be assured that Father Dave's paper will be provocative, the consequent commentary and discussion lively and it is highly unlikely that a consensus of views will emerge at the meeting.

Finally, the invoice for your subscription for this year was enclosed with the last Newsletter (\$40 for Sydney Metropolitan members, \$30 for all others). If you have yet to pay this subscription, please give it your early attention as this will provide a reliable indicator of the continuing interest in our activities and, as a consequence, the viability of the Chapter as an active and worthwhile group.

I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting in July. It would be great if not only you were to come but you bring a friend.

John Cook

Our Next Meeting

The next regular meeting for 2009 for the NSW Chapter of the ACWRTA will be held at the **Roseville Memorial RSL Club, 64 Pacific Highway, Roseville** will be held on **Monday, July 6**. As is our custom, the meeting will commence with a bistro-style meal from 6pm with the meeting proper to start at 7:15pm.

The meeting will commence with a further attempt at the election of the Executive and Committee and to transact other business as required.

The presentation that will follow this administrative part of the meeting will be given by **Rev David Smith** who will speak on the topic of:

A Confederate View of Abraham Lincoln

For those members who were present at our first meeting this year, you will be aware that Father Dave's sympathies lie firmly in the Confederate camp and it is likely to "stir-up" those members with leanings towards the North.

To "round-off" the evening, the professional historian **Bruce Dennett** will provide a response to Father Dave's presentation. Bruce has spoken to our group previously and all of you will remember him as an outstanding speaker who always challenges his audience to think about the issues and move beyond their "comfort zones". You can be guaranteed that this meeting will be a very special one, warranting more than a "boutique" meeting status.

As part of the documentation of this meeting's proceedings it is proposed to record the Dennett response and provide members with Father Dave's paper and possibly the earlier paper on Lincoln as Commander-in-Chief as a consolidated document.

Members' views on such a proposal are requested and should be conveyed to Brendan O'Connell, our Secretary/Treasurer at PO Box 200, St Ives, NSW, 2076 or e-mail to secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au or by telephone to 0440 3720.

It Happened in June

HATCHES AND DESPATCHES

June 1, 1831 – John Bell Hood (CSA) is born in Owingsville, Bath County, Kentucky;

June 3, 1808 – Confederate President Jefferson Davis is born in Christian County, Kentucky;

June 5, 1864 – On Matagorda Island, Texas, 13 black members of the Union's Corps de Afrique are hanged by Federal military authorities after convictions for mutiny;

June 5, 1864 – Brigadier General William E (Grumble) Jones (CSA) is killed in action in the Shenandoah Valley;

June 14, 1811 – Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is born Litchfield, Conn;

June 14, 1864 – General Leonidas Polk, (CSA) is killed at Pine Mountain, Georgia during the Atlanta Campaign.

COMMAND AND POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

June 17, 1862 – Braxton Bragg succeeds General Beauregard as Commander of the Western Department of the Confederate Army

April 22, 1861 – Robert E Lee is named commander of the forces of Virginia;

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS

June 1 – 3, 1864 – Battle of Cold Harbor, Virginia;

June 1, 1862 – Second day of fighting in the Battle of Seven Forks;

June 6, 1862 – The Battle of Memphis, Tennessee;

June 8, 1862 - Confederate forces under "Stonewall Jackson, successfully fight off Federal attacks and achieve victory at the Battle of Cross Keys, Virginia;

June 9, 1863 – Battle of Brandy Station, Virginia, which is the largest cavalry battle ever fought on American soil. In this battle JEB Stuart was surprised by the Union forces commanded by Alfred Pleasanton and narrowly escapes defeat;

June 10, 1861 – Battle of Big Bethel, Virginia, is the first major battle of the Civil War. Although outnumbering the Confederates by more than four to one, the Union attack failed disastrously:

This publication is the official newsletter of the New South Wales Chapter of the American Civil War Round Table of Australia. All inquiries regarding the Newsletter should be addressed to the Secretary/Treasurer of the Chapter by telephone on 9449 3720 or at PO Box 200, St Ives, NSW, 2075 or by e-mail to secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS cont'd

June 12 – 15, 1862 – JEB Stuart's spectacular four-day reconnaissance that develops into a ride around McClellan's army on the Virginia Peninsula;

June 21, 1863 – Heavy skirmishing marks Lee's advance north with engagements at several places in Virginia and in Frederick, Maryland;

June 27, 1864 – Battle of Kennesaw Mountain, Ga, results in a Confederate victory thus temporarily checking Sherman's march on Atlanta.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

June 4, 1862 – Southern planters burn huge stocks of cotton on the Yazoo and the Mississippi to prevent their capture;

June 19, 1862 – President Lincoln signs into law a measure prohibiting slavery in the territories of the United States;

June 20, 1863 – By presidential proclamation West Virginia is admitted to the Union as the 35th State;

June 23, 1861 – Federal balloonist Thaddeus Lowe observes and maps Confederate lines over northern Virginia;

June 25, 1864 – At Petersburg, Federal engineers begin digging a tunnel towards Confederate lines which they hope will enable them to blow apart the Southern earthworks;

June 28, 1863 – Lee diverts Confederate forces from an intended drive to Harrisburg to march them towards Gettysburg;

June 30, 1865 – All 8 alleged Lincoln assassination conspirators are found guilty.

Quotable Civil War Quotes

"See what a lot of land these fellows hold, of which Vicksburg is the key... Let us get Vicksburg and all the country is ours. The War can never be brought to a close until that key is in our pocket"

- Abraham Lincoln

"Never in any battle I had witnessed was there such a discharge of musketry ... The first thing I saw was General Rosecrans crossing himself – he was a very devout Catholic. "Hello!" I said to myself, "if the general is crossing himself, we are in a desperate situation."

- Charles H Dana, U.S. Assistant Secretary of War, Chickamauga, 1862

A Great Bookstore Found!

During a recent visit to Byron Bay, one of our members found a great bookstore with an extensive collection of Civil War titles. Trading mainly in second-hand books, there were literally hundreds of Civil War titles, all in great condition. Douglas Southall Freeman's Pulitzer Prize (1935) winning four-volume biography of Lee was there as were multiple copies of McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom* together with a whole range of books released in the last couple of years. The details of this bookstore are:

Icon Books

Shop1/109 Jonson Street
Byron Bay
(opposite Woolworths & cinema)

Telephone: 6680 3455

e-mail: iconbooks@bigpond.com

It is appreciated that Byron Bay is a long way from Sydney but any of our members travelling through Byron Bay on holiday should pay a visit to the store. The prices are more than reasonable and the range of titles is more than a match for anything we have in Sydney or Melbourne. Your purchases will be limited only by how much room you have in your baggage. It is understood, also, that arrangements can be made to order and have titles sent by mail.

This bookstore has been a real "find" and members are encouraged to use its facilities and services.

Freedom House Museum

Every day, hundreds of motorists drive by the attractive but ordinary-looking three story building at 1315 Duke Street, Alexandria, Virginia, just a few miles from the United States Capitol, oblivious to the fact that for approximately 30 years preceding the Civil War the building was the site of one of the most prosperous, yet horrific, business enterprises in the entire country—the domestic slave trade. With the recent opening of the Freedom House Museum at the site, the public now has the opportunity to learn about what took place there long ago.

In the 1820's, there was a tremendous increase in the need for slaves in the fast-growing areas in the south-western part of the United States. to plant, pick, and process cotton. This demand could not be met through an increase in the number of slaves due to births exceeding deaths, or through the importation of slaves from Africa, since the transatlantic slave trade had been made illegal in 1808, and violation of the law became punishable by death in 1820. During this period, however, there was a notable decrease in the demand for slave labour in the Mid-Atlantic region because of the decline in the profitability of tobacco farming. Eventually, the prices paid for slaves in the south-west reached a level that was significantly higher than the prices in the Mid-Atlantic region.

These circumstances inevitably led to the flourishing of the domestic slave trade. It is estimated that during the eighty years prior to the Civil War, more than one million enslaved people were sold by their owners to slave traders who resold the slaves to third parties.

From 1828 until the outbreak of the Civil War, the entire city block which today is within walking distance of Old Town Alexandria, was the business office and "slave pen" for a succession of domestic slave trade operators. In the period 1828-1836, more than 10,000 enslaved men, women, and children passed through the Alexandria slave pen on their way to an unknown fate in the Deep South. As a result of their fortuitous timing and business skill, Franklin and Armfield made profits of as much as \$1 million and \$500,000 (in pre-Civil War dollars), respectively, in their slave trading business.

Armfield, who lived at the site, acquired slaves from slave owners throughout the Virginia/Maryland area by placing advertisements in newspapers soliciting slave owners to bring slaves for sale to their Alexandria site for purchase, and by using an extensive team of purchasing agents throughout Virginia and Maryland. Once Armfield had purchased slaves, they were kept in the Alexandria slave pen until arrangements could be made to send them to Franklin in New Orleans, or Natchez, Mississippi, who sold them to local buyers. The slaves were sent to Franklin either by sailing on one of the ships which the partnership owned and used for this purpose, or by walking 1,000 miles overland in slave groups (or "coffles"). The domestic slave trade not only uprooted slave families and moved them hundreds of miles to a distant part of the country, it routinely resulted in the separation of families, tearing husbands from wives, and separating parents from their children. An additional horror of the slave trade was the sale of some female slaves ("Fancy Girls") for purposes of sexual exploitation.

Franklin and Armfield sold their business in 1836 and the location passed through the hands of other slave traders. On May 24, 1861, at the beginning of the Civil War, Union troops crossed the Potomac River, took control of Alexandria and freed the remaining slaves. The site was then used to house disorderly Union soldiers, ex-slaves escaping to the north, and Confederate prisoners. In the century after the Civil War, the site was used at various times as a hospital, boarding house, apartment building, and private residence.

In 1978, the building was designated a National Historic Landmark, and in the mid-1980's the structure was analysed by professional archeologists and substantially renovated. In 1985, the site was officially dedicated to Lewis Henry Bailey, who had passed through the site as a slave. After he became free, Bailey walked back to Alexandria where he located his mother, became a minister, and established several churches and schools in the Alexandria area, some of which survive to this day.

(continued overleaf)

The Northern Virginia Urban League (NOVUL) purchased the building in 1996 and now uses the structure for its on-going operations, providing scholarships, leadership training, financial management skills, and other services to the community. NOVUL opened the Freedom House Museum on February 12, 2008 (President Lincoln's birthday), in commemoration of the thousands of enslaved people who passed through here on their way to unknown and tragic futures. The Museum tells the story of the site, and explains the economic, historic, and moral aspects of the slave trade business.

The Museum is a visual delight, and uses colour, spacing, lines of site, and a variety of modalities and other sophisticated and creative design techniques to give character and charm to each presentation. The presentations are candid, but not shocking, and are deliberately designed to education and appeal to visitors ages 8 and above.

The motto of the Freedom House Museum is "Legacy of Triumph, and Foundation for the Future." Although the Museum commemorates the sorrow and suffering of the enslaved, visitors leave the building with smiles in their hearts, and spirits uplifted. Thoughtful visitors will note the rich irony that at the place where for 30 years prior to the Civil War there was so much sorrow and suffering, the past 30 years has brought recognition, renovation, and rebirth. The building which was at one time used by slave traders to control, humiliate, and torment its victims, is now used by NOVUL to liberate, uplift, and empower members of the community.

Source: Smithsonian Associates Civil War Newsletter Vol 9, No. 4, April 2008

(Our thanks go to Mr. Lawrence Cohn for this article. Mr. Cohn, who is a partner in the Washington law firm of Cohn & Marks, traces his interest in history and the Civil War to early childhood where he was stunned to learn that he lived in an area where slavery was once an acceptable practice. He was surprised, also, when he moved to Alexandria, Virginia to find that relics and reminders of this terrible era of our history still exist. This was the genesis of his commitment to become involved with the Freedom House Museum and to teach the public about the tragic events that occurred just up the road from George Washington's Mt. Vernon home and in the shadow of the United States Capitol - 1315 Duke Street.)

It Happened in July

HATCHES AND DESPATCHES

July 5, 1801 – David Glasgow Farragut, the first person in US history to hold the rank of Admiral is born in Knoxville, Tennessee;

July 13, 1821 – Nathan Bedford Forrest is born in Chapel Hill, Tennessee;

July 31, 1839 – William Clarke Quantrill the Confederate guerrilla and outlaw is born in Canal Dover, Tennessee;

COMMAND CHANGES

July 17, 1864 – Jefferson Davis relieves Joseph E Johnston of the Confederate Army and Department of Tennessee and replaces him with John Bell Hood;

July 18, 1863 – Major General John G Foster assumes command of the Department of Virginia and North Carolina;

July 23, 1862 – Major General Henry Halleck assumes command of the armies of the United States;

July 27, 1861 – Major General George B McClellan assumes command of the Federal Division of the Potomac.

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS

July 1 – 3, 1863 – The Battle of Gettysburg ending in a significant Confederate defeat;

July 4, 1863 – Vicksburg surrenders to Union forces under Grant, thus giving the Union control of the Mississippi River;

July 8, 1863 – Confederate forces unconditionally surrender Port Hudson, La., the last Confederate garrison on the Mississippi River;

July 9, 1864 – The Battle of Monocacy, Maryland, where 7000 Federals under General Lew Wallace delay Jubal Early's 15000 Confederates approaching Washington;

July 10, 1863 – Federal Forces land on Morris Island near Charleston, S. C., and begin the siege of Fort Wagner that will last until September;

July 11, 1864 – Confederates under Jubal Early reach the suburbs of Washington;

July 12, 1864 – Federal reinforcements arrive in Washington and Early begins to withdraw;

July 21, 1861 – Union General Irvin McDowell is defeated at the First Battle of Bull Run, Manassas;

July 24, 1864 – Confederate forces under Jubal Early inflict heavy casualties at the Second Battle of Kernstown, Virginia;

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

July 11, 1864 – Eleven "Raiders" are hanged at Andersonville by fellow prisoners;

July 11, 1864 – Standing on the fortifications at Fort Stephens, Lincoln is fired on by Jubal Early's Confederates;

July 13, 1863 – Three days of draft riots begin in New York;