

# Sumter to Appomattox

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

Patron: Professor the Hon Bob Carr

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Please visit our website [www.americancivilwar.asn.au](http://www.americancivilwar.asn.au)

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## A Message from Our Chairman

At the last meeting our member Dan Howard delivered a comprehensive and interesting presentation on "Lawyers at War: Lincoln, Taney and the Supreme Court". On page 4 of this newsletter, we have Jannette Greenwood's insightful report of the most recent engaging meeting, which is really worth reading!

Our next meeting on December 4 will include our AGM. We would be pleased to have new nominations for positions of our association. I urge you to consider nominating. The Christmas function is always a special evening where we can share the end-of-year together. Please advise Brendan that you will be attending.

We are honoured that Dr Frances Clarke, eminent historian at Sydney University, has accepted our invitation to speak after our end-of-year dinner. A profile of Dr Clarke appears on page three of this newsletter. One of her current areas of interest is underage soldiers. It promises to be an interesting evening. As in previous years, other family members are most welcome to attend this end-of-year function.

I urge you all to go to our **Facebook** page and click "Going" to this "Event". By doing this, you will help publicise our event and attract new members.

On our **Website** you will always find the date of our next meeting with our Facebook page being easily accessed from the website at:

[www.americancivilwar.asn.au](http://www.americancivilwar.asn.au)

## Our Next Meeting ...

The next meeting of our NSW Chapter of the ACWRTA will be our End-of-Year/Christmas function to be held at:

**The Roseville Memorial RSL Club  
on Monday, Monday December 4.**

As has become our custom, the dessert for this function will be Christmas Cake, provided by the wife of one of our Committee. Participants are advised to factor in a significant part of their alcoholic intake for the night if they intend to partake of this rich dessert.

We are to have a special guest speaker at this meeting, with **Dr Frances Clarke**, Senior Lecturer, Department of History, University of Sydney, (pictured below), having accepted our invitation to provide an after-dinner address.



The cost for the evening will be **\$45:00 p.p.**, payable to our Treasurer, Brendan O'Connell, at the beginning of the function, although it is necessary for planning purposes to indicate your attendance to him at least one week prior to the event. (Telephone 9449 3720)

*Bruce McLennan*

# It Happened in December

## HATCHES AND DESPATCHES

**December 3, 1826** – George Brinton McClellan is born in Philadelphia;

**December 5, 1839** – George Armstrong Custer is born in New Rumley, Ohio;

**December 6, 1833** – John Singleton Mosby, (CSA), is born in Edgemont, Virginia;

**December 13, 1818** – Mary Todd Lincoln, wife of Abraham Lincoln, is born in Lexington, Kentucky;

**December 19, 1814** – Edwin Stanton, US Secretary of War 1862 - 1868 is born Steubenville, Ohio;

**December 29, 1808** – Andrew Johnson, 17th US President, 1865 – 1868, who succeeded Lincoln, is born in Raleigh, S.C.;

**December 31, 1815** – George Gordon Meade is born in Cadiz, Spain.

## COMMAND AND POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

**December 2, 1863** – General Braxton Bragg turns over command of the Army of Tennessee to Lieutenant General William Hardee at Dalton, Georgia;

**December 4, 1862** – Confederate General Joseph E Johnston assumes command in the West;

**December 14, 1861** – Brigadier General H H Sibley is assigned command of all Confederate forces on the upper Rio Grande and in the New Mexico and Arizona Territories;

**December 15, 1863** – Major General Jubal Early, CSA is assigned to the Shenandoah District.

## NAVAL ACTIONS

**December 1, 1861** – US gunboat Penguin captures the Blockade Runner *Albion* off Nassau and confiscates its cargo;

**December 12, 1862** – On the Yazoo River, Miss., the Federal ironclad Cairo strikes a mine and sinks;

**December 17, 1861** – Federals sink a number of hulks loaded with stones in Savannah Harbour in an effort to halt shipping;

**December 24, 1864** – Federal fleet bombards Fort Fisher, guarding Wilmington, NC, the last Confederate open port;

**December 30, 1862** – The USS Monitor, hero of the battle with the Merrimack, flounders off Cape Hatteras in heavy seas, 16 officers and men are lost.

## BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS

**December 7, 1862** – Confederate raider, John Hunt Morgan, with 1,400 men surprises a Federal garrison at Hartsville, Tenn., taking 1,800 prisoners;

**December 16, 1864** – Battle of Nashville ends as Confederate army commanded by General John B Hood, is almost destroyed by Union troops under General George Thomas;

**December 25, 1864** – Federals land troops to take Fort Fisher, N.C., but the assault fails and they are withdrawn;

**December 26, 1862** – Federals attack a guerrilla camp in Powell County, Kentucky;

**December 28, 1862** – Federal Army of the Frontier pushes back Confederates at Dripping Springs, Arkansas, capturing Van Buren.

## OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

**December 8, 1862** – Lincoln issues Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction, pardoning participants in “the existing rebellion” if they take the oath to the Union;

**December 9, 1863** – Black Federal troops at Fort Jackson, La., mutiny over alleged mistreatment of one white officer of his troops;

**December 10, 1861** – An Act of the Confederate Congress in Richmond admits Kentucky to the Confederacy, thus completing the 13 states;

**December 11, 1861** – Already suffering under the Federal blockade, Charleston, S.C., is struck by a disastrous fire sweeping through its business district;

**December 18, 1865** – The 13th Amendment to the US Constitution abolishing slavery is declared in effect by Secretary of State Seward after approval by 27 states;

**December 20, 1860** – The South Carolina Convention in Charleston passes a formal declaration of secession. The first state to secede;

**December 22, 1864** – General Sherman sends President Lincoln: “I beg to present you, as a Christmas gift, the city of Savannah;

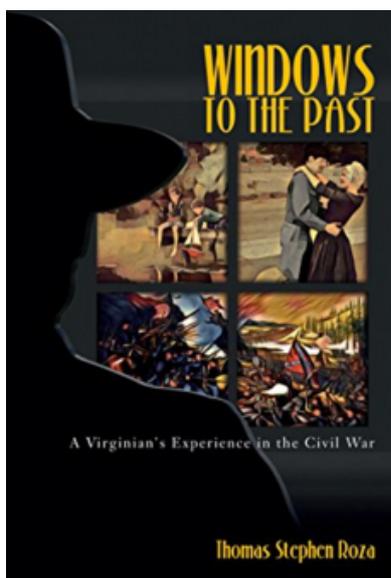
**December 27, 1860** – The US flag is raised over Fort Sumter as South Carolina troops occupy Charleston forts.

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 of the Chapter by telephone on 0411745704 or by e-mail at:  
[secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au](mailto:secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au)

## Book Review ...

Correspondence has been received from a member of a Roundtable in America, **Thomas S Rosa**, notifying us of the self-publication of his book, ***Windows to the Past***. Tom Roza, a member of the South Bay Civil War Roundtable in San Jose, California, has been a lifelong student of the Civil War, researching and studying those intimately involved in America's bloodiest war.

Roza's extensive research into the backgrounds, personalities, and personal philosophies of those who fought in the Civil War has given him keen insight into the human aspect of the war. He has incorporated this knowledge into the story line of "***Windows to the Past: A Virginian's Experience in the Civil War***".



Roza notes that his primary interest is not the battles of the war but the elements of human interest involved.

In his many tours of Civil War battlefields, Roza gained the opportunity to travel back in time and envision the bravery of the men in Blue and Gray (*sic*) who fought so tirelessly for what they believed in.

The book is a heart-warming and historically accurate story of the life and times of a Virginian growing up in the South in the mid-19th Century. It combines family values, love, friendship, and companionship with the harsh realities of a country struggling morally and politically with the controversial topics of slavery and state's rights. It graphically describes the strength, dedication, and courage of the young men who volunteered to become part of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia as they discover the horrors of war while putting their lives on the line for values they believed in.

The book is currently available from Amazon as a paperback for **\$US18:49** (plus postage) or as a Kindle edition through **Amazon.com.au** for **\$AU3:99**.

## Our Guest Speaker for the Next Meeting ...

Our next meeting is our End-of-Year/Christmas function and we have been most fortunate to have **Dr Frances Clarke**. Senior Lecturer, Department of History, University of Sydney, as our guest speaker. Presented below, are some short biographical details of Dr Clarke, which will reinforce our good fortune in having her for our meeting.

After receiving her PhD from Johns Hopkins University in 2002, Dr Clarke worked for a year as a researcher for the American Historical Association in Washington DC before taking up a lectureship in Sydney University's History Department. Since that time, she has taught courses on a range of topics in American history, from the colonial era through to the turn of the twentieth century, as well as courses dealing more broadly with the history of war, gender relations, and Victorianism. In 2005, her teaching was recognised with a Faculty of Arts Teaching Award.



Dr Frances Clarke, BA (Hons), PhD

Dr Clarke's teaching and research areas are strongly interlinked. The latter includes a focus on the American Civil War and Reconstruction, interpretations of war, and, more recently, the history of childhood. Her first monograph, ***War Stories: Suffering and Sacrifice in the Civil War North*** jointly won the AHA's biennial Hancock prize for the best first book in any field of history. She subsequently began several collaborative projects with Rebecca Jo Plant, a specialist on twentieth-century U.S. history. The first project concerned a little-known civil rights protest over the segregation of black gold star mothers in interwar America, which was published in the *Journal of American History* in 2015. The second project concerns the relationship between childhood and militarism in America from the Revolution to the modern era.

We are certainly honoured to have a speaker of Dr Clarke's standing at our meeting and it is hoped that our attendance at this End-Of-Year function will reflect the interest that Dr Clarke's presentation will bring.

## The American Civil War – Now and Then ...

Jenny Holder, our longstanding member from South Australia and a regular and valuable source of items for our Newsletter, has provided a most interesting link that shows a number of Civil War sites as they were during the War and as they are today. Each set of images has a short oral commentary with it that makes this resource even more interesting. The link to these images is:

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/ng-interactive/2015/jun/22/american-civil-war-photography-interactive>

Perusal of this of this link is strongly recommended and thank you Jenny for again providing interesting material for our Newsletter.

## A Report of Our September Meeting

A very well attended meeting of the ACWRT was privileged to hear a very engaging and informative presentation by **Dan Howard SC** on the lead-up to the American Civil War from a judicial point of view. Dan is a practising barrister in Sydney and an American by birth. The meeting was also privileged to have the presence of a number of Dan's legal colleagues.

He began his presentation with a short description of his own personal interest in the Civil War. His direct ancestor, **Ebenezer McMurray**, served in the 185<sup>th</sup> Ohio Volunteers, and he has strong memories of the well-loved African-American members of the household in his childhood home in Cleveland, Ohio. He also remembers family holidays in which he was exposed to southern segregation at the rest rooms of service stations and his family's response to this.



Ebenezer McMurray

Dan's emphasis was on the legal and constitutional issues leading up to 1861. His main theory on the causes of the Civil War was that there was gross failure of two of the three separations of power and this made war inevitable. His contention is that the two Presidents immediately preceding Lincoln were the worst in US history, namely, Pierce and Buchanan. At the same time the Supreme Court had surrendered principles to politics and these two events created the inevitability of war. These events occurred at a time when the nation needed the wisdom and leadership of both the Presidency and Supreme Court.

Dan covered a number of aspects of the lead-up to the war, beginning with what he termed a "lightning re-cap of the history of slavery" from 1619 onwards, including notable rulings such as Somerset's Case (1772), and 'The Zong' (1783) which were well known to Lincoln and to Chief Justice Taney. Dan also referred to the significant influence upon Lincoln of Blackstone's 'Commentaries on the Laws of England', which contained important passages condemning slavery and also regarding the limited circumstances in which the writ of Habeas Corpus could be suspended. Regarding the Presidency, Dan spoke of President Buchanan's deviousness, his inability to read the mood of the north, his support of electoral fraud in Kansas and the abandonment of his own responsibility to the Supreme Court, as well as his improper communications with judges to influence the outcome in the Dred Scott Case in favour of Southern interests.

In relation to the Constitution, Dan contends that the seeds of civil war were planted in 1787 with the Constitutional Convention and the new Constitution in 1789. A fatal compromise was caused by the Southern States' insistence on the inclusion of three clauses: the 3/5ths rule, that is, that slaves were to be counted as 3/5ths of a person for the purposes of calculating entitlement to slave state seats in the Congress (the complex Electoral College voting system was, in part, designed to accommodate this); the Fugitive Slave Clause; and the Slave Importation Clause. These three clauses ensured the continuation of slavery and equal Southern Political Power.

The balance between Northern and Southern States had become an issue as the United States expanded westward – fulfilling its 'Manifest Destiny', after the acquisition of the Northwest Territory as a result of the Treaty of Paris (1783), and additional lands from the Louisiana Purchase (1803) and the treaty with Mexico after the Mexican War (1848). The numerous compromises including the 1820 Missouri Compromise, and Clay's Compromise of 1850 would only defer resolution of the underlying flaws in the Constitution.

Against this backdrop, Dan introduced Roger Brooke Taney (1777 – 1864), a Maryland Catholic who, in his earlier legal career had acted for free slaves and had freed his own, but whose racism and support of southern states' rights became more entrenched as he aged. In 1835, President Andrew Jackson appointed him Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. It was in this capacity that he led the Taney Court, which considered a number of cases including 'The Amistad' (1841), leading to the notoriously politically motivated Dred Scott case – in which Buchanan had improperly intervened - and the consequences that followed.

Dan's presentation was detailed and absorbing and left everyone wanting more. It was generally agreed that there should be a follow-up in which the involvement of Lincoln should be more closely examined especially just before and during the Civil War itself.

*(Our thanks to Jannette Greenwood for this informative summary of Dan's presentation)*