

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

A Message from Our Chairman

Our last meeting dealt with a part of the Western Theatre operations. Our speaker was Rod Cooke and later John Morrison facilitated a discussion around the topic. Rod and John were at Kennesaw Mountain last year as part of the tour arranged by David Cooper. The "round table" discussion could have gone on ever longer! The great topic was made clearer by first-hand experience of our members. Thank you Rod and John. In this newsletter Jannette has again provided a summary of the main points made during Rod's presentation at the last meeting. Thank you Jannette.

Our next meeting "Lawyers at War" Dan Howard will continue where he left off on this topic last year.

Your committee has moved forward with the course content for our WEA course – a number of members have offered to research and write up one page summaries of course modules. Thank you to all those who offered, an enjoyable exercise.

As recently discussed, our meetings now are planned to start promptly at 7.00. To allow for meals to be prepared in time, orders should be placed no later than 6.20pm.

On our **Website** you will always find the date of our next meeting. Our Facebook page is also easily accessed from www.americancivilwar.asn.au

Bruce McLennan

Our Next Meeting

The next meeting of our NSW Chapter of the ACWRTA will held at

**The Roseville Club, 64 Pacific Highway
on Monday 6 August**

Please join us for a bistro-style meal from 6.00pm. To assist with starting our meeting promptly at 7.00, please order your meal before 6.20.

This meeting will involve a presentation and discussion on:

Lawyers at War (Part 2) - Habeas Corpus and the Prize Cases

Abraham Lincoln was highly critical of Chief Justice Taney's decision in *Dred Scott* in a number of speeches, including his famous Copper Union speech in 1860. But Taney had another card up his sleeve (and a chance to get even) when Lincoln's suspension of habeas corpus, in the wake of the Pratt Street Riot in Baltimore, was challenged in the *Merryman Case*. We will examine these events as well as the crucial Prize Cases, also presided over by Taney, which challenged the President's power to blockade the South. Our discussion will raise the very current issue of the extent of the executive's power and the difference that new appointments to the Supreme Court can make.

Happenings

It Happened in August

HATCHES AND DESPATCHES

August 6, 1811 – Judah Philip Benjamin, Attorney General and Secretary of State of the Confederacy is born in St Thomas, British West Indies;

August 27, 1811 – Hannibal Hamlin, US Vice-President under Lincoln is born in Paris Hill Maine;

August 31, 1822 – Fitz-John Porter (USA) is born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire;

COMMAND AND POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

August 1, 1864 – Philip Sheridan is named Commander of the Army of the Shenandoah and charged with ridding the valley of Confederates especially Jubal Early;

August 17, 1862 – JEB Stuart is assigned command of all cavalry of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia;

August 20, 1861 – Major General George B McClellan assumes command of the newly-organised Department and Army of the Potomac.

WANTON KILLING AND DESTRUCTION

August 7, 1861 – The village of Hampton, Va, near Fort Monroe, is burned by Confederate forces;

August 13, 1831 – Nat Turner slave insurrection begins in Southampton County, VA, with 55 whites and about 100 blacks killed;

August 21, 1863 – Confederate guerrillas under command of Quantrill sack Lawrence, Kansas, killing about 150 men and boys and destroying over \$1.5 million in property;

August 25, 1863 – Following Quantrill's raid on Lawrence, Federals force some 20,000 people in Missouri from their homes which are then burned;

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS

August 5, 1864 – Union forces under Admiral David Farragut defeat Confederates at the Battle of Mobile Bay;

August 9, 1862 – The Federal Army of Virginia under John Pope clashes with Stonewall Jackson's corps at the Battle of Cedar Mountain;

August 10, 1861 – Confederate troops are victorious at the Battle of Wilson's Creek, the major battle of the Civil War in Missouri;

August 11, 1862 – In a daring raid, Confederate guerrillas capture Independence, MO.

BATTLES /MILITARY ACTIONS cont'd

August 15, 1864 – Federals capture the English-built Confederate cruiser *Georgia* off Lisbon, Portugal;

August 18, 1864 – The Battle of the Weldon Railroad in Virginia begins;

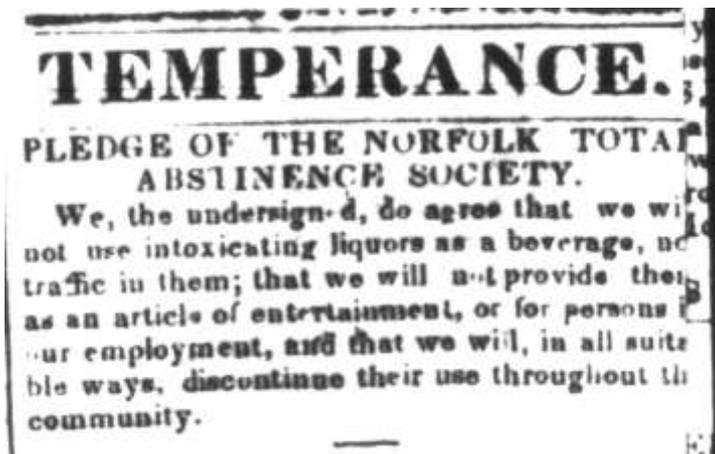
August 22, 1862 - In a raid on Catlett's Station, Virginia, JEB Stuart captures Union General Pope's baggage train, including Pope's papers;

August 26 – 30, 1862 – The Second Bull Run (or Manassas) Campaign ending in a Confederate victory;

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

August 2, 1861 – Federal Congress passes the first national income tax measure calling for 3% of income over \$800:

August 4, 1861 – a meeting is held in New York to combat intemperance in the Federal army;



The temperance movement had begun well before the War, as shown in this 1847 newspaper pledge (American Beacon, March 9, 1847)

August 8, 1863 – In the wake of the Confederate defeat at Gettysburg, Lee offers to resign as Commander of the Army of Northern Virginia. Davis rejects the offer;

August 14, 1861 – Major General John C Fremont declares martial law in St Louis city and county;

August 19, 1861 – Confederate Congress agrees to an alliance with Missouri resulting in Missouri having two state governments, Federal and Confederate;

August 29, 1863 – The Confederate *HL Hunley* sinks in Charleston Harbour, the five-man crew of the submarine are lost.

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A Remarkable Offer Sale of a complete library

More than 500 books on the America Civil War, including a 150-volume set of the official records of both the Union and Confederate military and political commands, published by the US Congress about 30 years after the war. The collection comprises biographies of most of the significant players, whether politicians (Lincoln and members of his Cabinet, or Jefferson and the Confederate Vice-President) as well as all of the leading generals on both sides, particularly, on the Union side, multiple biographies of Grant, Sherman, McClellan, Thomas, and Sheridan, and, on the other, Lee, Jackson, Stuart, Hill and Longstreet, as well as memoirs and biographies of a host of other players and units. Apart from the documentary and photographic archive, there are extensive general histories of the conflict, or parts of it, detailed descriptions of battles, battlefields, and issues of logistics, leadership, strategy, recruitment, morale and politics, including the re-election of Lincoln. There is also an extensive eyewitness history, and images of the war through the eyes of common soldiers, women, slaves and international players and observers. It was the first modern "total" war, perhaps the more interesting because both sides spoke the same language (more or less); generals were well acquainted with each other — indeed were often friends, and the war was so bloody and fratricidal. It has long fascinated Australians, including perhaps oddly, leading members of the Right wing of the NSW Labor Party, who hold regular trivia competitions on obscure aspects of battles, players and strategy and tactics. But it is also of current interest, if because some of the modern divisions in American society have close parallels with (sometimes direct links to) the feeling for the "Lost Cause".



Part of the more than 500 books for sale

The books left and top right are the records of both the US and Confederate governments. It's a 150-volume set. Below right are mainly union side biographies. For further information please contact: president@americancivilwar.asn.au

Civil War Profiles

Thanks to Dan Howard

Alexander Hamilton Stephens



Known as 'Little Aleck', the Georgian who, despite his frail form, was a congressional heavyweight in the ante-bellum period, came within a whisker of being President of the Confederacy instead of Jefferson Davis – given Stephens' track record of determined efforts to maintain the union, what a difference that may have made!

In February, 1861, delegates of the six southern states that had seceded upon Lincoln's election met for a convention in Montgomery, Alabama, to consider their future course and make recommendations back to their respective states. However, the delegates from Georgia (which included Stephens) proposed that they should go further and form a provisional government for twelve months, and, pending democratic elections in twelve months, to elect a President, Vice President, and draw up a provisional constitution. The Georgians argued that events then unfolding in Charleston harbour, where the standoff with Lincoln over Fort Sumter was reaching flashpoint, warranted the urgent formation of a Confederate government. The convention delegates accepted the argument and a provisional constitution was drawn up and a provisional government was formed on 8th February, 1861, to be ratified by the seceding states. Interestingly, the convention agreed that the African slave trade (but not slavery) should remain prohibited.

Stephens, regarded as a moderate who might appeal to the border states and others that had not yet decided to secede, was a hot contender for the Presidency. Jeff Davis of Mississippi, given his illustrious military career in the Mexican War and position as former President Pierce's Secretary of War, was generally considered the best person to be

appointed commander-in-chief of Confederate armies, and had indicated his willingness to so serve. However, when the convention adopted the same provision as was in the US Constitution that the President was also to be commander-in-chief, Davis's election to the presidency was assured. Stephens was elected Vice-President, a position he held for the entire War.



"Liberty Hall", Crawfordville, Georgia, now a museum (with statue), was built by A H Stephens before the War

As an influential congressman before the war, Stephens (a Whig and later an independent aligned with the Democrats) had been a strong advocate in the South for preserving the Union, and as late as November 1860 gave a powerful speech advocating the importance of remaining in the Union for the blessings and prosperity it had given the nation which he metaphorically referred to as a Garden of Eden.

Stephens' political history is interesting. He strongly disapproved of the anti-Catholic and anti-immigration views of the 'Know-Nothing' Party. He was in favour of the annexation of Texas but opposed to the Mexican War; he supported the Compromise of 1850, as well as the extension of slavery into the territories and he played a major role in securing the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. He supported President Buchanan's efforts (which ultimately failed) to have the Lecompton Constitution accepted as the basis of statehood for Kansas. As a delegate to the Georgia Secession Convention in 1861, Stephens voted against secession but asserted the right to secede if the Northern states continued to flout the Fugitive Slave Laws. However, once the provisional government came into existence, he supported its ratification by the Georgia Convention.

Stephens had been orphaned at age 14, but with the help of benefactors he acquired a first-class education. He became a teacher then a highly successful lawyer, acquiring thousands of acres of property and some three dozen slaves, most of whom chose to continue working for him for little remuneration after the war. In 1848, Stephens barely survived a vicious knife attack in which he was stabbed six times by a Georgian Supreme Court

Judge (!), Francis Cone, after they had argued over politics in Atlanta.

As Vice-President, Stephens was critical of Jefferson Davis's policies, particularly his suspension of habeas corpus, his introduction of conscription and his military strategy. Stephens, a good friend of Lincoln when they had both been Whigs in earlier times, yearned for peace and was one of the three Southern commissioners who met with Lincoln at Hampton Roads on 3rd February, 1865 in an attempt to end hostilities.

After the war, Stephens was briefly imprisoned at Boston for five months. He returned to Congress as a congressman for Georgia's 8th District from 1873 until 1882, when he became Governor of Georgia, dying at age 71 only four months after taking office.

Although Stephens was a moderate and had fought hard to maintain the union before secession actually occurred, he is perhaps most remembered for his infamous 'Cornerstone Speech' made in Savannah, Georgia on 21st March, 1861, when the Georgia Secession Convention was considering ratification of the provisional constitution of the Confederacy. He later distanced himself from the views he expressed, and it has been suggested that he was playing to the audience in an effort to secure support for ratification, by trying to appeal to the prejudices of voters. In this extemporaneous speech, Stephens, drawing on writings of J.D.B. De Bow of the *New Orleans Review*, said that the 'cornerstone' of the government of the Confederate States:

"rests upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and normal condition. This, our new government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth. This truth has been slow in the process of its development, like all other truths in the various departments of science."



*The library in "Liberty Hall" where, from 1868 to 1870, A H Stephens wrote the book "**Constitutional View of the Late War between the States**".*

Snippets

Thanks to Len Traynor

Statistics: Armies North and South

The Union Army during the Civil War consisted mainly of volunteer units of which there were
Infantry: 2144 Regiments and 666 Battalions
Cavalry: 272 Regiments
Artillery: 432 Batteries of Light Artillery; 61 Regiments of Heavy Artillery
Engineers: 13 Regiments of Field Engineers
United States Regular Army: 6 Regiments of Cavalry and 18 Regiments of Infantry. Although small compared to the Volunteer forces it still played a very important part in the war to suppress the Rebellion.

Confederate Army was completely a volunteer force which consisted of the following:

Infantry: 62 Regiments
Cavalry: 137 Regiments
Artillery: 16 Regiments of heavy artillery and 227 separate batteries of Light Artillery
The Confederacy had no Regular Army but the Volunteer force, although my smaller than their opponents, certainly gave a good account of themselves over four years of conflict.

Nearly every civilized nation on earth was represented in the ranks of the blue and grey. In the Union Army alone there were:

175,000 **Germans**

150,000 **Irish**

50,000 **British**

50,000 **Canadians**

Soldiers born in other countries numbered about 75,000 including a small number of Australians.

Enlistment records indicate that the pre-war occupations of these soldiers were many and varied and included:

48% who were **farmers**

24% **mechanics**

16% **labourers**

5% **commercial pursuits**

4% **miscellaneous**

5% **professionals** (doctors, lawyers etc.)

More statistics in the next newsletter.

Report on our last meeting: Kennesaw Mountain 27th June 1864

Our members John Morrison and Rod Cooke co-presented this meeting's talk, building on information gained when, with a group of ACWRTA members, they recently took part in a tour of the Western Campaign, taking in Kennesaw Mountain, the most visited of all US Civil War battlefields.

Rod and John introduced the background to this battle with a video and short Q & A and then described the battle using slides and maps. They introduced the Commanders: Johnston, who usually

adopted a defensive position, Sherman, who preferred flanking marches to frontal attacks, and Hood.



Rod Cooke presenting

There were a number of military operations in 1864, designed to bring the Confederacy "to its knees". Sherman's mission in the Atlanta Campaign was to defeat Johnson's army, capture Atlanta and strike through Georgia and the Confederate heartland, destroying infrastructure in the process. However, the plan could not be carried out because of Johnston's entrenched position on Kennesaw Mountain at Kolb's Farm, where attack and counterattack on 22nd June were thwarted, leading to heavy casualties. In this encounter, though the victor, Sherman's strategy of flanking manoeuvres had not worked. On June 27th, Sherman chose a frontal attack to try to overrun Johnston's army, initially gaining some success, but sustained heavy losses – more than 3,000 – compared with Confederate casualties of 1,000.

The aftermath of this battle saw, on 18th July, Johnston sacked and replaced by Hood, a more aggressive Commander, who attacked rather than defended entrenched positions. Sherman was able to go around Hood's Army and, on 2nd September, Union troops entered and occupied Atlanta. Then, on 8th November, Lincoln was re-elected (a key issue according to the presenters) and on 15th November, Sherman commenced his "March to the Sea".

The Atlanta Campaign was a strategically important event, possibly more than the Eastern Overland Campaign, but was at the cost of 32,000 Union casualties (4,500 killed; 23,000 wounded and 4,500 missing or captured) and 35,000 Confederate casualties (3,000 killed, 19,000 wounded and 13,000 missing or captured). Overall, Confederate losses were proportionally much higher than Union losses (50% compared with 25%), with the Confederate Army of the Tennessee reduced to 30,000 compared with the 80,000 of Sherman's Union army.

The video and clear and detailed presentation were an excellent opportunity for the members to learn more about this significant battle.