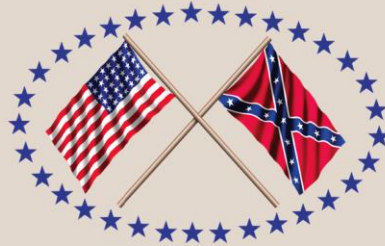


Sumter to Appomattox



American Civil War Round Table of Australia (New South Wales Chapter)

www.americancivilwar.asn.au

Patron: Prof the Hon Bob Carr

President's Message

Dear Round Table members,

We're marching on with 1862 events at our next meeting. We're now into the 2nd half of 1862.

The Committee met last night and again considered the Magpies venue opposite the railway station in Waitara. It seems to be the best solution available to us at present. Please reduce the load on the kitchen by ordering a meal as early as possible. This would minimise any disruption to our planned start time of 7.00 pm. Please also minimise any hassle at the front desk by becoming a Magpies member for \$5.

Past President Bruce often complains of an excessive number of Civil War books in his garage – a big garage! I suspect he might be encountering some domestic pressure as a result. A lot of us have a similar problem but Bruce's is acute. He might have to start parking in the street if we don't take action.

So, we are shamelessly copying the practice of the Military History Society of NSW (sorry Robert) by conducting a door prize raffle of five lots of two books. Please bring a \$5 note for the book raffle at the door. We will draw out five raffle tickets at the end of the meeting.

Several of our members are also members of the Military History Society of NSW. It meets for an interesting series of talks at 10.30 am on the 1st Saturday of each month at the War Memorial in Hyde Park in the auditorium at the level of the Liverpool Street entrance. They focus on Military History generally – not any specific conflict. Some of you might find it's an interesting way to spend a Saturday morning. See you on 18 June!

Ian McIntyre

Number 124 April – May 2024

Our Next Meeting

Tuesday 18th June at 7pm

At our new venue:

The Waitara Magpies Club

11 Alexandria Pde. – directly opposite Waitara Station. There is parking around the station and underneath the Club.

Order a bistro meal well beforehand – round tables in Magpie Room.

Our last meeting left George McClellan at the end of the Seven Days offensive by Robert E Lee. At our next meeting we will discuss the Second Battle of Manassas and the largely forgotten commander of the Union Army of Virginia, John Pope. We'll also look at Corinth, the follow up to Shiloh in the Western Theatre, and the largely forgotten (perhaps unfairly judged) Henry W Halleck.

2nd Manassas – Peter Zacharatos

General John Pope – John Morrison

Corinth – Ian McIntyre

General Henry Halleck – Ian McIntyre

If anyone has another brief (5 min) item they would like to present, please contact John Morrison. As usual, we are keen to hear from our membership so if you have a particular subject, please get in touch with Program Director John Morrison.

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

- In order to minimise delays in food service at the Magpies Club, it is suggested that members order their meals as soon as they can after they arrive from 6 pm. On ordering, you will be given a buzzer that will sound when your meal is ready for you to collect and take into the 'Magpie Room' where our meeting will be held.
- Also we are instigating a **regular BOOK RAFFLE at our meetings.**

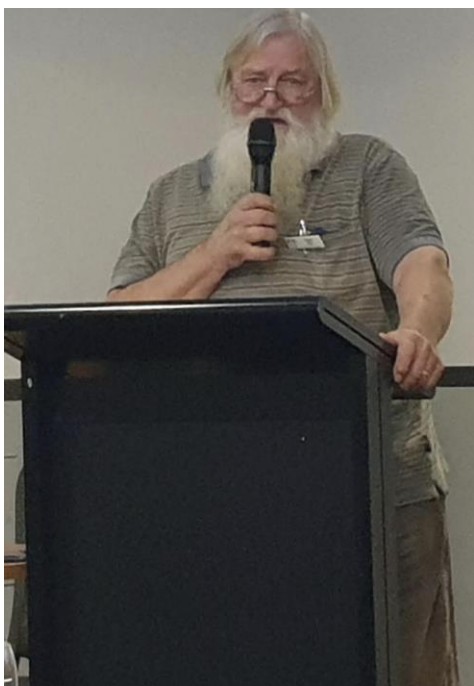
Tickets \$5 each on the night – bring cash please (we do not have a credit card machine). There will be **five prizes**, all quality books on the Civil War from our extensive collection; the winners will be able to choose from the available books in the order in which their winning ticket is drawn.

Our Last Meeting

Our last meeting was held at our new venue, *Magpies* at Waitara, a venue very convenient for those coming by bus or living on the North Shore. The facilities and food were generally considered to be very acceptable by the members.

Hospital Sketches – Louisa May Alcott's Nursing Experiences

Tom Dixen



Tom introduced us to the life of Louisa May Alcott and her connection to the Civil War,

which she described in her book, *Hospital Sketches* (1863).



Tom introduced us to the life of Louisa May Alcott and her connection to the Civil War, which she described in her book, *Hospital Sketches* (1863). Louisa, in November 1862, aged 30, went south and worked as a nurse for six weeks and she bases the experiences of the main character of her book, Tribulation Periwinkle, on her own.



Tom mentioned that he and his friends and their wives enjoy caravanning and trips. On one of these trips, he had an unexpected find of this book in a second-hand book shop in Beechworth, Victoria. This book – a very slight six chapters – really grabs one's attention according to Tom.

A prolific author, best known for her book *Little Women*, Louisa was born in 1832 in Germantown, Pennsylvania, and died in 1888 in Boston. She grew up among many well-known intellectuals of the day including Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Alcott's family were abolitionists, and she was a feminist.

After introducing Louisa, Tom then summarised the contents of each of the six chapters of *Hospital Sketches*, which refer to her trip south. Chapter 1 describes her preparation for the trip after she has decided "Go nurse the soldiers – I will!" She sorts her clothes and announces, "If I never come back, make a bonfire of them".

When she receives her commission, she hears that she is to be placed in a less-desirable hospital. The rest of the chapter deals with her attempts to get a free pass to Washington

through requests to the President of the railway and the State Governor.

Chapter 2 describes her trip south in great detail, including observations of fellow passengers and life on the trains while travelling through New York, Jersey City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington and beyond. One example: "Baltimore: big, dirty, shippy, shiftless place; full of goats, geese; coloured people; coal; camp whitens one hillside; cavalry training school; party of English people get in: men with whiskers all trimmed alike to a hair; a fine full way of speaking which is agreeable after our slip-shod American gabble; ... often passed coloured people looking like they were out of a picture book or off the stage, but not at all the sort of people I'd been accustomed to see at the North ..."

Chapter 3 seems to be an accumulation of stories from different days and refers to events happening at the hospital. Some examples: 'They've come!' "Who, the rebels?" "The wounded from Fredericksburg!" Louisa describes herself as a three-day nurse who had already supervised a large ward of 40 and who conceals her uncertainty "under as matronly an aspect as a spinster could assume". She refers to the vile odours of the wounded, 80 kms from the battlefield and several days of travel. The nurses' antidote: lavender water.

She provides one story of a man who lost a leg at Fredericksburg and is due to have his arm amputated. He asks "What a scrimmage there will be on Judgement Day – will we get our bits back? Will my leg have to tramp from Fredericksburg?"

Having "done the human wash, transforming the men from ragamuffins to recumbent heroes", she describes the bountiful rations for those who could eat. After one meal, she learns about the art of dressing wounds and is attached to Dr P., who had been in the Crimea, and who "fell to work with a vigour – cutting, sawing, patching and piecing together. He seemed happier sewing parts of a common soldier together than fixing scratches on a General". After the bodies of "my boys" were put into order, it was time to minister to their minds – writing letters, reading newspapers and answering questions.

In Chapter 4, Louisa describes "A Night" – a time where "her boys" were usually in their best state of mind that their condition would allow. When she started working nights, the nurses were anxious and tired, the men gloomy or sad and conversations had a doleful sound. Louisa, coming from a merry, social New England town, found the atmosphere very difficult and, through

an instinct of self-preservation and wish to serve, caused a rapid change in the ward. As a result, she was gratified to see welcome, smiling faces that were no longer strangers.

Louisa found the environment of the war very oppressive. Windows had been nailed in place and regular requests to headquarters to solve the problem proved fruitless. Orders to attendants came to nothing and her plan to break some panes was ignored.

On night duty, Louisa reached the stage, after one week, where she felt could recognise individuals by their sound. Some patients talked busily and Teddy, a drummer boy, sang sweetly – but never during the day.

Chapter 5, titled "Off Duty" describes earlier experiences and provides details about her room and furniture, the shortage of food if you were not on time, her walks and general observations. She includes a 'black baby story'.

Chapter 6 – 'a Postscript' – answers various enquiries from various sources and includes her opinion of organised religion and observations of Sunday Service practices. Here she also includes a number of sad stories of patients and their families.

Louisa May Alcott returned to Boston after this short period, but the impact of those six weeks has extended to the present. *Hospital Sketches* has been termed 'a discussion paper' and is described as 'showing the development of an emerging nursing profession through the eyes of Louisa May Alcott'. *The Journal of Advanced Nursing*, May 2018 summarises its significance:

Through Alcott's words, we understand the transition of nursing care as a gradual extension of the middle-class woman's domestic role and a progressive definition of nurses' identity. Alcott reveals the delicate balance between women's domestic role and new nursing professional features, which anticipates nursing professionalisation.

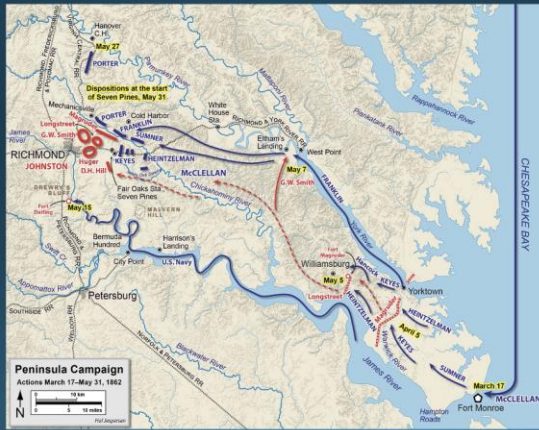
Here is a further way that an individual in the Civil War has had influence down to the present. Tom's introduction and summary of this book is a welcome addition to our continuing discussion of events of 1862.

The Seven Days Battles

John Morrison

John spoke in detail about this important battle, providing a very useful description.

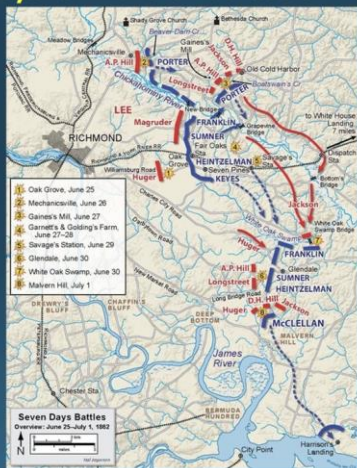
It took more than 3 months for McClellan to reach Richmond



the Confederate capital Richmond, Virginia. That day he had boldly attacked the large Federal army attempting to capture the city. As Johnston calmly sat on his horse that afternoon near Fair Oaks Station receiving reports from officers and listening to bullets as they buzzed by him, he turned to admonish a subordinate for ducking in unmanly fashion. Moments later, a bullet struck his shoulder. Johnston stoically bore the pain, but seconds later shell fragments from a bursting artillery round tore into his chest and leg and knocked him from his mount. In critical condition he was laid in an ambulance and started for the capital.

For Confederate President Jefferson Davis this was a dark time. Not only had another senior army commander been severely wounded, but the fledgling Confederate nation seemed close to death. The war had already lasted more than a year; tens of thousands of men had been killed or maimed on battlefields and the Federals were advancing in great strength from the Atlantic to the Mississippi. Throughout early 1862, Southern armies had suffered enormously costly defeats in Tennessee, on the Mississippi, in the Carolinas, and in the Virginia Tidewater. Now a Federal army of some 120,000 men were less than ten miles from the capital. The Confederacy could not survive if it lost Richmond; the city was both its political and industrial centre.

It took 7 Days for McClellan to lose all he had gained!



Robert E. Lee's Effect on the War

Robert E. Lee makes a spectacular entrance onto the Civil War's main stage and in less than a week, later termed the Seven Days Battles, the Federal war effort is set back almost a year.

By late afternoon on 31 May 1862, tens of thousands of battle-grimed, exhausted men near the rural crossroads of Seven Pines, Virginia, had fought for hours - wet to the knees in flooded fields or blinded or blocked by dense thickets. It had been one of the bloodiest, most brutal days in American history to that point - second only to the first day of the Battle of Shiloh in Tennessee, seven weeks earlier.

Late that day, Confederate army commander General Joseph Johnston went forward to survey events. Johnston commanded the Southern field army near Seven Pines, east of



Soldiers rest on the Seven Pines Battlefield in Virginia (Library of Congress)

A desperate Davis turned to his senior Military Adviser who, during 30 years of service in the antebellum army, had earned respect for his demeanour, for his excellence as a soldier and his brilliance as an engineer. Although Robert E. Lee was one of the highest-ranking generals in the Confederacy, he had never commanded a field army. His assignments in the first year of the war had ended inauspiciously. On the night of 31 May 1862, Jefferson Davis placed Robert E. Lee in command of the army, and changed American history forever.

If there is one man in either army, Confederate or Federal, head and shoulders above every other in audacity, it is General Lee! His name might be Audacity. He will take more desperate chances and take them quicker than any other general in this country, North or South; and you will live to see it, too.

Colonel Joseph Ives to Major E. P. Alexander, May 1862

The battle at Seven Pines continued on 1 June and cost the Confederates more than 6,000 men. Lee had his own ideas about how to defeat the North and worried less about winning Seven Pines than conserving men for a new plan. Lee believed Richmond could not be held against the enormous Federal army. There were three options for the Confederate government:

- i. to abandon Richmond,
- ii. to fight a defensive battle for Richmond,
- iii. to attack.

Lee rejected the first two alternatives and convinced Davis and his government to do likewise, urging attack as the best means by which to preserve Richmond. Within three weeks of taking command Lee had developed his plan and made ready to launch it.

On 24 June Lee sent General Order No. 75 detailing his plan to his commanders. Lee's plan required three separate columns to be prepared to march on the same morning. Each column would move on its own road, and each would march – or attack – only if the commander saw an advantage – which depended on the success of the other columns, but if one column did not succeed, another was not required to attack. Lee based his plan on an accurate understanding of the Federal position and its weaknesses. He believed that the size of the Federal army could be used against it. McClellan's army required more than 600 tons of food and supplies each day, and the Union supply line stretched from Northern ports, southward across Chesapeake Bay, up the York and Pamunkey Rivers to White House, Virginia. From there supplies travelled over the Richmond & York River Railroad - McClellan's lifeline. To protect the railroad McClellan divided his army, placing part of it south of the Chickahominy River (the Richmond side) and part of it north of the Chickahominy (the White House side). The Federals' dependence on the railroad made it an obvious target, and their deployment astride the river suggested that Lee might be able to attack and defeat one wing before the other wing could intervene.

There were substantial risks involved, since moving on the railroad and maintaining a defensive force before Richmond would require

Lee to divide his own army. If McClellan saw through the plan and decided to attack the token force of 25,000 men that Lee had left defending the city, the capital might fall and Lee's plan would. Thus, Lee's first offensive revealed what would become his hallmarks: opportunism and a willingness to take risks, and an ability to exploit his enemies weaknesses before they could adequately prepare.

The Seven Days Battles

Date	Battle
25 th June 1862	Oak Grove
26 th June 1862	Mechanicsville
27 th June 1862	Gaines' Mill
27 th - 28 th June 1862	Garnett's and Golding's Farm
29 th June 1862	Savage's Station
30 th June 1862	Glendale
30 th June 1862	White Oak Swamp
1 st July 1862	Malvern Hill

Oak Grove

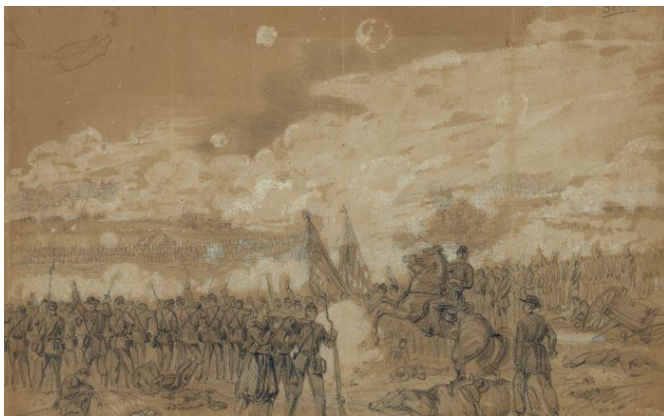
Lee planned to begin his offensive on 26 June, but on 25 June McClellan, correctly guessing that Lee was up to something, launched a pre-emptive attack against the defences of Richmond just west of Seven Pines – in a battle that became known as Oak Grove. After small gains, McClellan withdrew his troops in the evening, confident that he controlled both the battlefield and the campaign. However, by not pressing his attack, McClellan gave Lee the gift of more time to prepare – and Lee wasted none of it.

Mechanicsville

On the morning of 26 June, Lee's columns were either in motion or in position to move. Three Confederate divisions waited south of the Chickahominy River for an opportunity to cross at two bridges. The timing of those crossings depended on the progress of a fourth division, commanded by Stonewall Jackson. Following the Shenandoah Valley Campaign earlier in the month, Jackson's men had hurriedly marched 100 miles eastward to participate in Lee's offensive. Jackson was to march his 18,000 men past the Federal right flank and into the enemy's rear. Lee hoped this would force the Federals to abandon their strong defensive positions on the bluffs above Beaver Dam

Creek. Clearing the bluffs would permit the three Confederate divisions on the south side to cross the river and "sweep down the Chickahominy and endeavour to drive the enemy from his position above New Bridge."

But Jackson did not appear on schedule; as the day passed Lee believed he had lost the element of surprise and – unaware of Jackson's whereabouts – Lee ordered an attack with the three divisions already in position (40,000 men). A.P. Hill's men moved across Meadow Bridges and drove Federal pickets and skirmishers eastward through the village of Mechanicsville. The Federal withdrawal opened Mechanicsville Bridge, and more Confederates streamed across to join the advance. North and west of the village, the Federals had placed artillery and dug gun pits on the brow of a ridge above Beaver Dam Creek. The waist-deep stream ran through a marsh and served as a moat to the Federal position. Jackson did not reach his assigned position until late in the day - well after the Confederate brigades assaulting the Federals at Beaver Dam Creek had suffered several bloody repulses. Lee lost more than 1,500 men in the futile attacks while the Federals suffered only 450 casualties.



Fighting at the Chickahominy River, 27 June 1862 (Alfred Waud Library of Congress)

Gaines' Mill

But on the morning of the 27th, Lee learned that Jackson's flank march had had its desired effect; McClellan realized he could no longer hold the line at Beaver Dam Creek. Just before dawn the Federals withdrew. Engineers hastily selected a new defensive position three miles to the east on a plateau above a broad, sloping ravine at the bottom of which ran Boatswain's Creek. There, the Federals, some 35,000 men under the command of General Fitz John Porter, built impromptu breastworks of fallen trees and brush. Porter crowned the ravine with scores of artillery pieces and had reason to believe he could hold the strong position until reinforcements arrived from McClellan south of the river.

Having pressed his troops onward in pursuit of the Federals, Lee's plan of march looked the same as the day before. He met briefly with Jackson and instructed him to again march around the Federal right and seize the key crossroads of Old Cold Harbor. Once there he would be within a few miles of the railroad - the primary goal of Lee's offensive - and also in position to threaten the Federals' main escape route across the Chickahominy. While Jackson moved toward the Federal right and rear, Lee would continue with the rest of the army to "sweep down the Chickahominy" to be in position to cooperate with Jackson in the afternoon.

The skirmishing began near Dr. William Gaines's mill and spread eastward as A.P. Hill's Confederates advanced. Lee was at a distinct disadvantage as he groped toward the enemy - since he had no maps and knew little of the terrain. The fighting intensified when Hill's men reached Boatswain's Creek, and Lee could do little but encourage the men while trying to learn what he could of the enemy's position. Hill's men took severe casualties in the early afternoon, but Lee felt confident that all would be well once Jackson reached Old Cold Harbor.

But again, Jackson was delayed! In the absence of maps he had relied upon a guide, who had improperly understood his desires. After marching for a few miles toward New Cold Harbor rather than Old Cold Harbor, Jackson discovered his error, and the guide put the advance on the correct road - but the delay prevented Jackson and his 20,000 men from reaching the battlefield until late afternoon. Lee immediately issued instructions for a general assault from the Confederate right where General James Longstreet's fresh men waited in position, to the left where Jackson might seize the Federal retreat route.

At the climax of the fighting, nearly 95,000 men clashed in combat along a two-mile front and the carnage eclipsed anything witnessed or ever before imagined by the participants. In less than half a day 15,000 men became casualties (9,000 Confederate, 6,000 Federal). In the end, the Confederate assaults overwhelmed Porter's defenders (McClellan had sent only a handful of reinforcements) and forced the Federals from the battlefield.

Gaines's Mill was Robert E. Lee's first battlefield victory, but it also secured the success of his offensive. During the night, the Federals crossed to the south side of the Chickahominy, *thereby abandoning their ability to use the Richmond & York River Railroad!* As a result, McClellan no longer had a supply line

and could make no further move toward capturing Richmond until a new supply line could be established. That same night, McClellan began withdrawing his army southward toward the James River where he hoped he would find both U.S. Navy gunboats and supply ships in plentiful numbers.

Lee had succeeded in dislodging the enormous enemy but did not stop to savor his success; he immediately devised a plan to catch and destroy the fleeing Federals in detail. Jackson would follow directly behind McClellan's army while Longstreet's and A.P. Hill's columns recrossed the Chickahominy upstream, west of the Gaines's Mill battlefield, and attempted to cut off the Federals before they could reach the James.



Alfred Waud sketched the aftermath of the Battle of Gaines' Mill (Library of Congress)

Garnett's and Golding's Farms

Skirmishing broke out at Garnett's and Golding's Farms the next day, south of the Chickahominy, but 28 June was primarily a day of hard marching for the Federals, and for Longstreet's and Hill's men as well. On the 29th, a Sunday, Jackson should have crossed the Chickahominy and advanced on the Federals, but a mix-up in orders left him marking time on the north bank throughout the day.

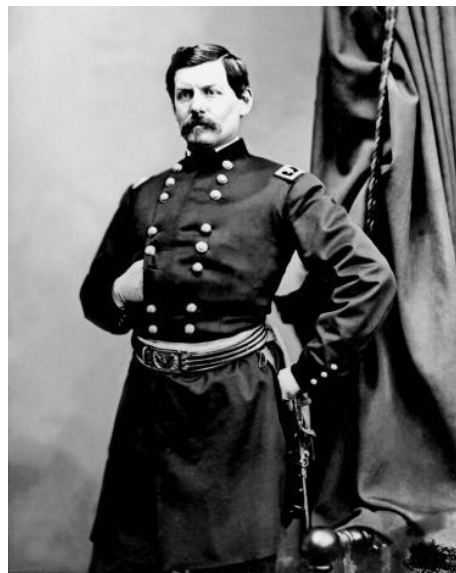
Savage's Station

That same morning, the Northerners concentrated part of their rear guard at Savage's Station, a former supply depot and field hospital complex only a few miles south of Jackson's position. They busied themselves destroying small mountains of supplies and rations until a 14,000-man Confederate column under General John B. Magruder - part of the force Lee had left behind when he had launched his offensive north of the Chickahominy - emerged from the defences of Richmond. Lee sent Magruder forward to cooperate with Jackson in attacking the Federals at Savage's Station. But Lee's staff had sent confusing orders to Jackson, and Magruder's men advanced alone against

approximately 26,000 Federals under General Edwin V Sumner. The fighting at Savage's Station ended quickly, and Sumner was content simply to blunt the advance. After suffering almost 1,000 casualties (to the Confederates' 440), Sumner withdrew through the night across White Oak Swamp, just seven miles from the James River.

Glendale

Meanwhile, the long Federal column continued snaking its way southward over heavily congested and unfamiliar roads. By morning on 30 June, the lead elements had reached Malvern Hill and could see the James. The rear of the army still straddled White Oak Swamp five miles back up the road. Between Malvern Hill and White Oak Swamp McClellan posted another rear-guard force at the key crossroads of Glendale (three main roads came together at Glendale, two of which the Federals needed in order to reach the James; if the Confederates seized the intersection, McClellan's army would be broken in two).



Major General George B. McClellan (*National Archives*)

Lee, too, recognized the importance of Glendale, and by the morning of the 30th his entire army was concentrating on it from three directions. The strong column of Longstreet's and A.P. Hill's combined forces, almost 20,000 men, waited in position on the Long Bridge Road southwest of the intersection. General Benjamin Huger led 9,000 Confederates south-eastward on the Charles City Road, and Jackson, with his own division as well as General D.H. Hill's - a total of more than 20,000 men - pressed southward from Savage's Station. Despite delays, miscommunications, and missed opportunities, Lee had managed to place his army in position to deal the Federals a crippling blow with the potential to destroy a portion of McClellan's army.

White Oak Swamp

Unfortunately for Lee, all did not go well. Well-sited and well-served Federal artillery hindered Jackson's advance at White Oak Swamp; strangely "Stonewall" made no vigorous effort to force a crossing. The artillerymen exchanged fire all day across White Oak Swamp, but there was very little infantry activity. To the west, on the Charles City Road, Federal artillery likewise stopped Huger's column well short of Glendale. All that remained of Lee's three-pronged pincer movement was the combined column of Longstreet and Hill on the Long Bridge Road. Lee and President Jefferson Davis surveyed the fighting, and both came under hot artillery fire. Lee directed Longstreet to attack about four p.m. For almost six hours, well after dark, Longstreet and Hill sent their men forward. Portions of the Federal line collapsed early, but reinforcements were rapidly moved up to blunt the Confederate advance. When the firing stopped, the Confederates had lost 3,600 men trying to take the crossroads and the Federals had lost 2,700 men defending it. Ultimately, the Northerners retained a tenuous hold on their position, and the army passed safely on to Malvern Hill and the James.

McClellan devoted most of three full corps, about 56,000 men, to defending Glendale while the rest of the army continued southward, but, surprisingly, McClellan himself did not remain to conduct the all-important defence, but rode southward to locate a safe haven for the army on the James.

Lee was frustrated by the lost opportunity at Glendale. Almost 70,000 Confederates had been available within a few miles of Glendale, but poor communication and a lack of vigor among the column commanders meant that some 49,000 Southern soldiers never made it into the fight. Lee believed he had one more chance and urged his generals forward on the morning of Tuesday, 1 July. Again, they found the Federals in defensive array, this time on the imposing heights of Malvern Hill.

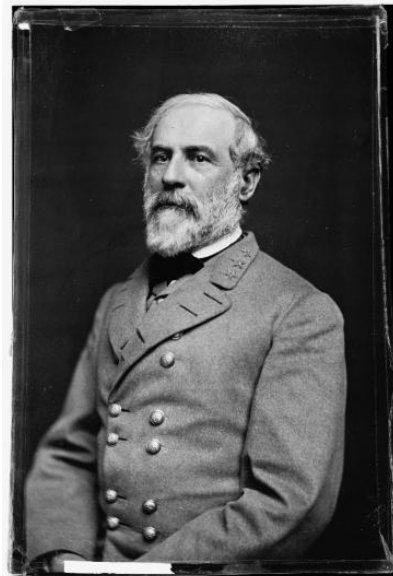
Malvern Hill

Shaped like a large horseshoe, its open-end facing northward - toward the Confederates, Malvern Hill featured extremely steep, wooded slopes on its southern and western sides. The northern slope of the hill hardly sloped at all and was covered by a broad, open wheat field. Federal officers posted artillery in thick masses on the top of the hill virtually daring the Southerners to attack. Lee and Longstreet examined the position and believed that they might breach the obviously strong Union line by

converging artillery fire followed by a prompt and very strong infantry assault.

Again, miscommunication and poor timing doomed the Confederate plan. The Federal guns overwhelmed the Confederate artillery, and the Confederate infantry, though well led and gallant, fell to pieces, mowed down by the peerless Union artillery. It is a testimony to the valor of the Southern infantry that they inflicted nearly 3,000 casualties under such disadvantageous circumstances. The Federals had every advantage at Malvern hill and culled 5,000 more men from the ranks of Lee's army.

"It was not war, it was murder." wrote Confederate General D.H. Hill, whose brigades took heavy casualties.



Robert E. Lee (*Library of Congress*)

The Seven Days - Casualties

Union Forces		Confederate forces	
Killed	1734	Killed	3494
Wounded	8066	Wounded	15758
Captured/MIA	6055	Captured/MIA	952
TOTAL	15,855	TOTAL	20,204

End of the Campaign

Lee's late June offensive would ever afterward be known as the Seven Days Battles - although in many ways it was a single, continuous 7-day battle. It involved the largest armies deployed up to that point - 200,000, and mostly they were poorly managed. In its way, it was as shocking to Americans in 1862 as Pearl Harbor in 1941, or the terrorist attacks in 2001. It had produced unimaginable carnage - the bloodiest week in American history, producing more than 34,000

casualties (19,000 Confederate, 15,000 Union), second only to Gettysburg.

The reversal of fortune in the Seven Days Battles was the first great turning point in the war. For almost a year the Union juggernaut had been rolling seemingly irresistibly toward victory and had rolled to the very threshold of Richmond. Americans (and others) who read newspapers developed expectations. The New York Times opined that the war would be over by Independence Day.

But events in June 1862 proved that all the Confederate cause had lacked was a military leader of superior ability. Robert E. Lee did not seek the reins of control, but his experience, sound counsel, and impressive bearing led Jefferson Davis to give him command of the Confederacy's most important army. Within a month, Lee and his men had reversed the expectations of millions by routing the largest army the United States had ever put in the field.

The Seven Days remain an important event in U.S. history, because they gave new life to the Confederacy. Lee's rejuvenation of the Confederate cause crushed Union morale. Although the Union Army of the Potomac was safe, protected by Union gunboats, it was immobilized at Harrison's Landing, where it suffered terribly from heat, humidity, and disease. It was withdrawn by President Lincoln in August 1862. Richmond was safe until 1864.

Evaluation

Because of its striking reorientation of the strategic situation during the summer of 1862, as well as the long-term consequences of Lee's generalship regarding morale, the possibility of emancipation and the duration of the war, the Seven Days' Campaign belongs in the front rank of Civil War turning points. Prof Gary Gallagher

There were a number of decisive changes -

1. Robert E. Lee became the new Confederate Hero, supplanting Stonewall Jackson (whose poor performance during the Seven Days was probably due to exhaustion following the Valley Campaign).
2. Upon his return to Richmond, Lee purged several generals
3. Assuming Richmond was safe, Lee began an offensive - that led to Second Manassas, Maryland (Antietam) - and the Emancipation Proclamation.
4. But the Confederacy had a "rush of blood to the head" - and began to believe they could win the war by "offense"!

5. George B. McClellan was criticized for his campaign conduct (but would be called by Lincoln to face Lee again at Antietam)
6. Henry W. Halleck named new Union general in chief.

General John C. Frémont 1813-1891

Bob Carr



Patron Bob Carr with John Morrison

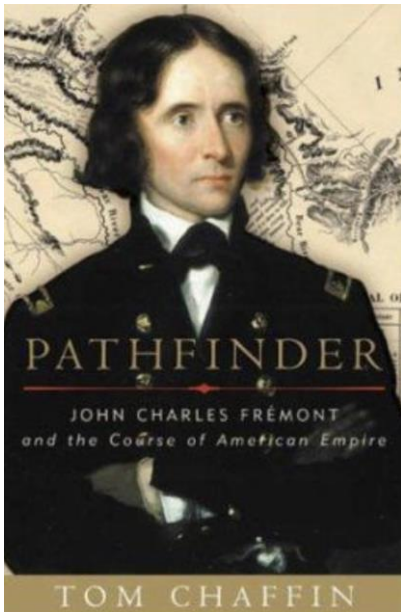


Patron Bob Carr provided an insightful talk on the life of 'ups and downs' of John Frémont as well as discussing the very significant 1856 Presidential election in which changes in the political parties led to the situation that still exists today.

John Charles Frémont was born in 1813 and grew up in Georgia and lived to 1891. His life can be described as one of early success and fame but flaws in his later decisions put him at

odds with President Lincoln and caused him difficulties in later life.

Frémont's personality was very interesting although he was flawed. He had gained wide attention with his famous expeditions in the west between 1842-1846 where he was known as *The Pathfinder*.



These expeditions involved great bravery, hardship - and even cannibalism - when going over the Rockies. He was an exceptional explorer, using a scientific approach, and the data he collected was equal to that of Lewis and Clark's. His first three expeditions elevated him to dizzying heights, although the fourth was a disaster.



First three Frémont expeditions.

After this period, he had a role in the Mexican War, commanding the California Battalion and helping to secure California for the Union, going on to become the first senator for California upon its admission into the Union. Democratic pro-slavery opponents of Frémont, called the Chivs, strongly opposed Frémont's re-election

in 1852 and he was unable to get enough votes for re-election to the Senate.

Republican leaders Nathaniel P. Banks, Henry Wilson and John Bigelow were able to get Frémont to join their political party and, in 1856, he ran in the presidential election against James Buchanan and Millard Fillmore. He was nicknamed "The Pathfinder" and was a celebrity candidate in some ways comparable to JFK – both being the same age when they ran for the position and both representing a generational shift.

John Frémont is significant because he was the first candidate to run for the newly minted Republican Party, with the slogan *Free Speech! Free Soil! Free Men! Fremont! And Victory!*

The 1856 election revealed the political divide that was emerging in the nation. The Republican Party was the first to have clear-cut views on slavery. Prior to 1856, the Whigs and Democrats had both had slavery and anti-slavery wings, related to their conscience wings and slavery wings. There was also a grouping termed the "Barnhouse Democrats", an anti-slavery wing of the Democrats. The existing parties were cracking under the pressure of anti-slavery feeling as well as resentment about how "slave power" had got its way due to Whig and Democrat Presidents being aligned to the South – in 1848 there had been the Free Soil Party, representing the anti-slavery wings of the two main parties.

In the 1856 Presidential Election, the Republicans won 11 states, but failed to win the states of Illinois, Indiana, Pennsylvania and New Jersey – then battlefield states, currently swing states. Some voters went to the Democratic candidate who became President – James Buchanan (President 1857-1861) but it was the presence on the Ballot of Millard Fillmore, representing the 'Know Nothing' Party, that deprived the Republican Frémont of victory. However, there was a growing feeling that there might be sympathy for an anti-slavery movement, paving the way for the 1860 election.

In the book titled "They Also Ran", Irving Stone gives an account of those who ran for the presidency and lost. With each candidate, Stone asks "Would he have been a better president?" He states that no one would have made a worse president than James Buchanan, who had beaten Frémont in 1856! Frémont played a significant role in the colossal realignment of the American political parties in the 1856 election. The retirement of the Whigs made way for the entirely new Republican party, which led to the creation of the two-party

system that exists to this day and represents a very stable system which has resisted significant change.

Presidential candidate	Party	Home state	Count	Percentage	Electoral vote
James Buchanan	Democratic	Pennsylvania	1,836,072	45.28%	174
John C. Frémont	Republican	California	1,342,345	33.11%	114
Millard Fillmore	American	New York	873,053	21.53%	8
Other			3,177	0.08%	—
Total			4,054,647	100%	296
Needed to win					149

Source (Popular Vote): Leip, David. "1856 Presidential Election Results". *Dar*. Elections. Retrieved July 27, 2005. Source (Electoral Vote): "Electoral College |

The Republicans won in 1860 with the election of Abraham Lincoln. At the centre of the Republican Party campaign was the idea of *free rather than slave labour, and this led to the Civil War!*

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Lincoln wanted to appoint Frémont minister to France, taking advantage of his French ancestry and the popularity in Europe of his anti-slavery positions. However, Secretary of State William Seward objected to Frémont's radicalism and the appointment was not made. Instead, Lincoln appointed him a Major General of Volunteers and appointed him head of Department of The West.

From the start he antagonised people, particularly Americans of German descent, who were a major part of the population. The main problem was his antagonising of President Lincoln with his premature dash for emancipation. On 30th August 1861, without notifying the President, he issued a proclamation putting Missouri under martial law, declaring that civilians taken in arms against would be subject to court martial and execution, that the property of those who aided secessionists would be confiscated, and that the slaves of all rebels were immediately emancipated. This did not suit Lincoln, who was attempting to retain support in the border states. Lincoln, in fact, read about this emancipation declaration in the newspapers! Lincoln recognized that it was too early to talk about emancipation. He antagonised others, including the prominent and highly influential Blair family. Additionally, there were problems and scandals with contractors.

It can be argued that Frémont had a dismal record as leader of the Western Department in

the Civil War, but he did make two sound decisions. One was his taking of the Mississippi – using his distinctive approach – and the second was the elevation of Ulysses S. Grant, paving the way for Grant's brilliant Mississippi Delta campaign. And his instincts, although premature, were correct with regards to slavery.

Everything went wrong in Frémont's subsequent career. After brief service in the Mountain Department in 1862, Frémont resided in New York, and retired from the army in 1864. He was nominated for president in 1864 by the Radical Democracy Party, a breakaway faction of abolitionist Republicans but withdrew before the election. After the Civil War, he lost much of his wealth in the unsuccessful Pacific Railroad in 1866, and he lost more in the Panic of 1873. Even though he had a property in California which contained gold, he managed to go bankrupt.

Frémont served as Governor of the Arizona Territory from 1878 to 1881. After his resignation as governor, he retired from politics and died destitute in New York City in 1890.

CIVIL WAR PROFILE – Charles Sumner (1811 – 1874)

With thanks to Dan Howard



Charles Sumner was born in Boston and grew up in Beacon Hill. His parents were rather austere and emotionally distant; they had been born poor, but his father in time attended Harvard and became a moderately successful lawyer, and an abolitionist who also held the then radical belief that there should be no miscegenation laws. He was able to send

Charles to the Boston Latin School, where his classmates included Wendell Phillips (later a famous abolitionist). Charles then attended Harvard law school where he was a protégé of the famous American constitutional jurist, Joseph Storey, who provided some financial assistance for Charles to travel to Europe in 1837, where he travelled widely for three years.

Charles studied at the Sorbonne where he was impressed by the fact that black students were treated as equals by other students. He became fluent in French, Spanish, German and Italian. He visited England, where being an American was something of a novelty, and he so charmed London society that he became acquainted with many leading lawyers, statesmen, intellectuals, and aristocrats, including Sir Robert Peel, Lord John Russell, Lord Brougham, William Wordsworth, and Thomas Babington Macaulay. He was such a hit in England that he received no fewer than three invitations to Queen Victoria's coronation! Thomas Carlyle was not so impressed, finding him vain and full of wind.

Charles was well educated and refined. He was 6'4" tall, handsome, had a large frame and a compelling speaking voice, all of which gave him a powerful presence. One historian described Sumner's social campaign in Britain as "more brilliant...than was ever achieved by any of his countrymen before."

Sumner returned to Boston in 1840 at the age of 29, and commenced legal practice, while also lecturing at Harvard and writing academic articles and editing law journals. It was only a matter of time before he emerged as one of Massachusetts' leading advocates against slavery. He was also opposed to the Mexican War and voiced his concerns that any new territories acquired would increase the expansion of slavery westward. He joined the Whigs and then helped to organise the Free Soil Party in the state, and in time he was chosen as a Senator for Massachusetts, a position that he held from 1851 until his death in 1874.

In 1852, Sumner made a powerful speech challenging the constitutional validity of the *Fugitive Slave Act*, which was one of the pillars underpinning the Missouri Compromise of 1850. He was seen by many as an abolitionist whose radical approach could undermine the long, hard work of compromise that had managed, up to this time, to hold the Union together.

Sumner was an early member of the Republican Party, formed in 1854 by anti-slavery activists, including many Whigs and

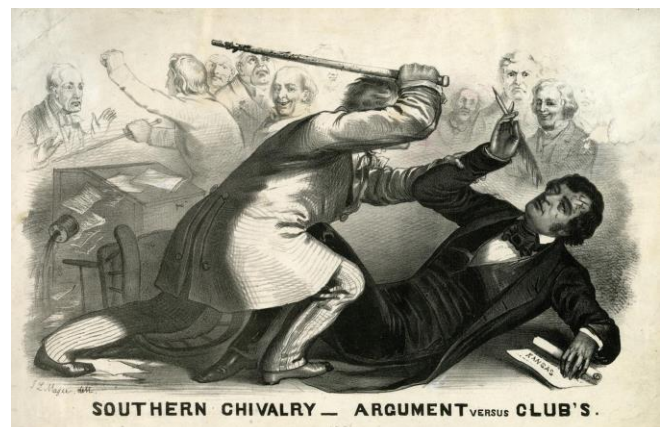
Free Soil party members, who opposed the *Kansas-Nebraska Act's* potential for expansion of slavery to the Western Territories.

It was as a Republican senator that Sumner made his famous and lengthy '*Crime Against Kansas*' speech in the Senate. The speech had been much anticipated, and the Senate chamber and gallery were full to capacity. He began his speech thus:

"Mr President, you are now called to redress a great transgression. Seldom in the history of nations has such a question been presented...A crime has been committed, which is without example in the records of the past...It is the rape of a virgin territory, compelling it to the hateful embrace of slavery."

Unfortunately, with his high-handed and somewhat arrogant manner, later in his speech Sumner made mocking, demeaning, even vicious, personal attacks on pro-slavery Southern senators Butler (South Carolina) and Mason (Virginia), as well as Stephen Douglas (Illinois) who were supporters of the Kansas – Nebraska Act.

This led to the infamous attack, two days later, by Preston Brooks, a cousin of Butler, who assaulted Sumner violently into unconsciousness in the Senate chamber with a thick, gold headed, gutta-percha cane, until the cane snapped, whereupon he continued to beat the unconscious Sumner with the remaining shaft of the cane. Attempts to stop Brooks were prevented by Brooks' fellow South Carolina congressman Laurence Keitt, who threatened would-be rescuers by brandishing his own cane.



Sumner was severely injured, and although his outward wounds were stitched and mostly recovered quickly, he had also suffered a significant head injury and internal damage to his spine. He also clearly suffered severe PTSD (an unknown diagnosis at the time).

This violent incident, in the beating heart of the seat of government in Washington, increased exponentially the polarisation and sectionalism between the North and the South, to a point close to that of no return.

Astonishingly, the Senate – itself very polarised - failed to bring any charges against Brooks, on the grounds that, as a member of Congress, any disciplining of him was a matter for that house. Brooks was charged through the normal criminal process with assault but was bailed the same day in the amount of \$500, and he was ultimately merely fined \$300.

Eventually, a bitterly divided Congress did vote on a motion to expel Brooks from the House, which passed 121 to 95 votes, but failed to reach the requisite two-thirds majority required for expulsion. All but one of the southern congressmen had voted against expulsion, revealing the ominous extremes that sectionalism had by then reached.

The same division of opinion was revealed in press and public opinion between the north and the south. Brooks was hailed as a hero of the South, and was gifted numerous canes from benefactors and supporters, one of which had a gold head with the inscription 'Hit him again!' The *Richmond Enquirer* editorialised that 'Sumner should be caned every day'.

Conversely, Sumner was lionised in the North as a martyr against the slave power, and he drew massive crowds of support wherever he went, and the various Republican factions in his home state legislature rallied, in common cause, around Sumner and his stance against slavery, to the extent that they ensured his re-election to the Senate, despite his years' long convalescence and inability to attend the Senate. Indeed, Sumner's empty seat in the Senate chamber became a constant symbol of the anti-slavery movement, and more than a million copies of his 'Crime against Kansas' Speech were distributed.

Unable to concentrate and attend to his work in the Senate, Sumner was advised by his physician to travel to Europe to restore his health, away from the rigours of politics. He did so for three years – years that included Buchanan's inauguration, the Dredd Scott decision, John Brown's raid, and the Lincoln-Douglas debates. Sumner himself took consolation that, despite his enforced absence from the Senate, "to every sincere lover of civilisation his vacant chair was a perpetual speech".

When the Civil War began, Sumner was among the radical Republicans who advocated for the

immediate abolition of slavery. With other radical senators such as Benjamin Wade and Zachariah Chandler, Sumner would visit Lincoln at the White House. He was a favourite of Mary Lincoln, and often, with Lincoln's approval, escorted her to the theatre and other events when the President was indisposed by his enormous workload.

In 1861, Sumner was chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and he was prominent in helping to de-escalate the potential international powder keg presented by the seizure, on the high seas, of two Confederate diplomats in the fraught *Trent Affair*. He attended a cabinet meeting at Lincoln's invitation, where he read out letters from prominent British politicians whom he had come to know well during his travels that urged the release and return of the diplomats - one of whom was the same former Senator Mason whom Sumner had insulted in his Crime against Kansas speech.

Sumner was a champion of emancipation, and of enlisting blacks in the Union Army. He was also a proponent for the establishment of the Freedmen's Bureau, and during the reconstruction, was a strong advocate for equality of blacks and for according them full civil rights.

The following excerpt from Wikipedia provides a good summary of Sumner's often controversial radical abolitionism:

In May 1861, Sumner counselled Lincoln to make emancipation the war's primary objective. He believed that military necessity would eventually force Lincoln's hand and that emancipation would give the Union higher moral standing, which would keep Britain from entering the Civil War on the Confederacy's side. In October 1861, at the Massachusetts Republican Convention in Worcester, Sumner openly expressed his belief that slavery was the war's sole cause, and that the Union government's primary objective was to end it. Sumner argued that Lincoln could command the Union Army to emancipate slaves under colour of martial law. In the conservative press, Sumner's speech was denounced as incendiary. Conservative Massachusetts newspapers editorialized that he was mentally ill and a "candidate for the insane asylum", but the Radicals fully endorsed Sumner's speech, and he continued to advance his argument publicly. As an intermediate measure, the Radicals passed two Confiscation Acts in 1861 and 1862 that allowed the military to emancipate confiscated slaves whom the Confederate military had impressed into service.

On January 1, 1863, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, abolishing slavery in all Confederate territory. The Thirteenth Amendment subsequently abolished the practice of chattel slavery.

Sumner was a strong supporter of the United States receiving large reparations from Britain in the CSS *Alabama Claims*, notwithstanding that this weakened his previously considerable support in Great Britain.

During Grant's administration, Sumner opposed American imperialism and Grant's attempt, by treaty, to annex the Dominican Republic. He also wanted reconstruction to proceed at a faster pace than Grant was willing to permit. In time, Sumner broke with the administration and, in 1872, joined the Liberal Republican Party.

After a long and fiery 23-year career in the Senate, Sumner died of a heart attack at his Washington home. Among his pallbearers were his friends Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Sumner had been a bachelor for most of his life. He married Alice Hooper in 1866, but the marriage was unhappy, and he obtained a divorce on the grounds of her desertion in 1873.

This brief profile cannot do complete justice to the life and career of this extraordinarily gifted and principled, yet self-righteous and prickly, statesman whose radicalism was very controversial for his times. Much of what he stood for has either come to pass, or can be seen as prescient, and recent biographies have resurrected Sumner's legacy in a favourable light. See for example David Herbert's two volume biography of Sumner – '*Charles Sumner and the coming of the Civil War*' and '*Charles Sumner and the Rights of Man*'. Herbert writes in his preface to the latter volume:

The principal antislavery spokesman in the United States Senate, Sumner in the early years of the war prodded Abraham Lincoln to emancipate the slaves. Once that was done, he insisted that the President protect the freedmen in their liberty. In the postwar period, Sumner worked unceasingly to guarantee the political and civil rights of Negroes in the South and to eliminate racial discrimination throughout the United States. Equally important, though less familiar, was Sumner's role in the direction of American diplomacy from 1861 to 1871. As Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, he often exercised influence as great as that of the Secretary of State. Devoted to international peace, Sumner countered William H Seward's belligerent propensities

and, through his wide and powerful circle of correspondents abroad, discouraged European powers from meddling in the American conflict. After the war Sumner blocked the ill-advised plans of Andrew Johnson and Ulysses S Grant for annexing territory in the Caribbean, but he was instrumental in persuading the Senate to approve the purchase of Alaska...Sumner had a comprehensive and systematic political philosophy, which was based on the simple premise that all men are created equal. He felt that the role of government was to secure to all its citizens equal rights, without regard to race or colour or sex or national origin or religion.

Not a bad legacy when considered in the light of twenty-first century, contemporary political thought!



Sumner's statue in Harvard Yard

This publication is the official newsletter of the American Civil War Round Table of Australia (NSW Chapter). All enquiries regarding the newsletter should be addressed to the Secretary of the Chapter by phone on 0411 745 707 or email: secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au