

THE DISPATCH

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.

Volume 70 No. 4

650th Meeting

December 2021



If you plan to attend our in-person meeting at the 3 West Club, please call 718.341.9811 no later than December 1st. The cost is \$50 for members and \$60 for guests.

- Guest:
TBD
- Date:
December 8th
- Place:
3West Club
- Time:
6:00 pm



Men and Mounts

Only one book describes the Civil War as seen through the eyes of a horse: *Traveller**, Robert E. Lee's favorite mount. Before he became a famous companion to the commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, Traveller was called Jeff Davis and then Greenbrier. Several notable leaders of the war are closely identified with mounts: some even had two favorites:

Gen. George B. McCellan, *Dan Webster and Kentuck*

Gen. 'Stonewell' Jackson, *Little Sorrel*

Gen. U.S. Grant, *Cincinnati, Jack, Kangaroo and Fox*

Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest, *King Phillip*

Gen. Philip Kearny, *Bayard*

Belle Boyd, *Fleeter*

Gen. Albert S. Johnston, *Fire-Eater*



Gen. George G. Meade, *Baldy*

From: *Civil War Trivia and Fact Book*, by Webb Garrison

**Traveller* by Richard Adams, Hardcover \$14.25, Publisher: Alfred A. Knopf, May 12, 1988, pp269

2021 • MEETING SCHEDULE • 2022

• December 8th •
TBD

• January 12th •
TBD

• February 9th •
TBD

President's Message

December, of course, means the Christmas season, and Christmas was going to occur from 1861 to 1865, Civil War or not!

As author E.B. Long writes about Christmas Eve in 1861 – the first of the war – “many hearts were torn, North and South, and many a soldier on a lonely, inactive post, dreams of home and fireside (that could certainly fit just about any war, from 1776 to today!). In the hard news on this Christmas Eve, Congress took the opportunity to increase the duties on tea, coffee, sugar and molasses – Merry Christmas!

Christmas 1862 saw no holiday respite for the troops, still far from home. General W.T. Sherman's command was operating near Millikens Bend, north the Confederate fortress city of Vicksburg (where his planned assault would fail miserably). There was also Cavalry troops skirmishing at Green's Chapel and Bear Hollow Kentucky (and Warrenton Virginia); plus fighting at Brentwood, Ripley, and Prim's Blacksmith Shop in Tennessee. President and Mrs. Lincoln took the opportunity to visit the wounded being treated at Washington area hospitals.

The third Christmas of the war (1863) saw no rest for the weary, as the fighting went on from coast to coast. There was activity at Ft. Brooke, Florida, Bear Inlet North Carolina, Beverly West Virginia, and Federal troop skirmishing with Indians way out west, near Ft. Gaston, California.

In December 1864, two days after General W.T. Sherman sent his famous message to President Lincoln, exclaiming, “I beg to present to you, as a Christmas gift, the city of Savannah, with 150 heavy guns and plenty of ammunition, and also about 25,000 bales of cotton”, all attention turned to the Federal effort to seize Ft. Fisher and thereby close the port of Wilmington to Confederate blockade runners. A massive bombardment on the fort by the powerful 60 ship Union fleet began on Christmas Eve and continued through Christmas morning. However, even the big guns of the Union ships only did minor damage to the huge, 500 gun fortress. General Benjamin Butler, commander of the Union Army troops, gave counsel to his fears, and, much to the disgust of the other Army and Navy officers alike, canceled the planned ground assault on the fort. This gave General-in-Chief U.S. Grant sufficient cause to finally relieve the politically connected “Spoons” Butler from command, something he had wished to do for many months.

Well, we certainly wish your Christmas is far better than that of the Confederates in Savannah, or General Butler at Wilmington. But, don't forget, prior the celebrating Christmas (but after Hanukkah!), join us for dinner - and a show - at the 3 West Club, on Wednesday, December 8th. Hope to see you (in person!) then.

(Don't forget to call in your reservation by Friday, December 3rd!)

Take Care,

Paul Weiss



THE DISPATCH



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Question of the month:

In what year were conquered banners returned peacefully to the South?

Civil War Events During the Month of December 1863

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 Mine Run Campaign concludes in Virginia</p> <p>3 Siege of Knoxville, Tennessee concludes</p> <p>8 Lincoln issues Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction</p> <p>14 Engagement at Bean's Station, Tennessee</p> | <p>16 Skirmish at Salem, Virginia</p> <p>21 Skirmish at Hunter's Mill, Virginia</p> <p>23 Fight at Culpeper Court House, Virginia</p> |
|--|---|

From: *American Battlefield Trust*

In The Trenches at Petersburg By Earl J. Hess

The third of three volumes by Earl Hess about the role of forts and fortifications in the eastern theater of operations during the Civil War, deals with the final campaign in the east: the "siege" of Petersburg and Richmond. Reading the full set impresses one with Hess' over-arching thesis that the soldiers (and their officers) eschewed fortifications during the early war, entrenching only after experiencing the shock of combat. With few exceptions, (Chancellorsville, Culp's Hill and the Mine Run line) Eastern theater engagements tended to be "open field" encounters except where existing features could be employed as defensive enhancements (think of the stone wall at Fredericksburg on Marye's Heights, the railroad embankment at Second Manassas and Antietam's "Bloody Lane"). Grant's Overland Campaign started with relatively open field engagements in the Wilderness, but trench warfare characterized the Campaign from Spotsylvania through Cold Harbor. The topic of this book is the extensive use of large and complex static fortifications resulting in an entirely new form of warfare in which soldiers' daily lives were, by-and-large, confined to entrenchments. Blockhouses, forts, trenches, ditches, palisades, revetments, covered ways... all were incorporated in complicated networks on both sides of "No Man's Land" from north of the James River, across the Appomattox River, ultimately winding south and west until they reached around Petersburg to Five Forks. The book is a very thorough discussion of the evolution of these systems throughout the Campaigns. This was the first book that really explained to me Grant's strategy for defeating the Army of Northern Virginia once the Army of the Potomac crossed the James River. Describing Grant's strategic evolution culminating in one of "biting and holding one bit

of ground after another", the Army of the Potomac sidled crablike - always to their left - fortifying territorial gains resulting from offensive maneuvers. Eventually, Lee's army was stretched beyond its breaking point, which later resulted in the Union breakthroughs leading to the evacuations of Petersburg and Richmond and, ultimately, the surrender at Appomattox Court House.

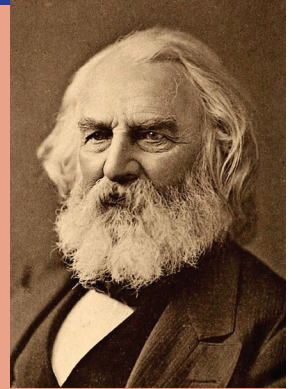
Life in the lines around Petersburg and Richmond is described in the text and, despite only infrequently being exposed to hostile battle lines, sounds awful! The danger of losing life or limb to a sharpshooter's ball or a mortar shell was omnipresent. Conditions were appalling when one considers troops occupied the same trench system for extended periods of time and sanitary practices were not uniformly satisfactory. Hess' trilogy is highly recommended, documenting the evolution of officers' and soldiers' thinking and acceptance of earthworks, breastworks, and - ultimately - fortifications, and covers not just the military activities in the Virginia theater but also discusses the coastal fortifications of the Carolinas and occasionally (albeit briefly) the Atlanta Campaign. The first volume, *Field Armies and Fortifications in the Civil War* includes a very useful glossary defining the various terms the reader will encounter in all three volumes. Unless you're familiar with terms such as parapets, revetments and the like, I suggest having this glossary nearby!

Reviewed by *John Allen*

CHRISTMAS BELLS by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

I heard the bells on Christmas Day
 Their old, familiar carols play,
 And wild and sweet
 The words repeat
 Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
 And thought how, as the day had come,
 The belfries of all Christendom
 Had rolled along
 The unbroken song
 Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
 Till ringing, singing on its way,
 The world revolved from night to day,
 A voice, a chime,
 A chant sublime
 Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
 Then from each black, accursed mouth
 The cannon thundered in the South,
 And with the sound
 The carols drowned
 Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

It was as if an earthquake rent
 The hearth-stones of a continent,
 And made forlorn
 The households born
 Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
 And in despair I bowed my head;
 "There is no peace on earth," I said;
 "For hate is strong,
 And mocks the song
 Of peace on earth, good-will to
 men!"



Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
 "God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
 The Wrong shall fail,
 The Right prevail,
 With peace on earth, good-will to men."

From: *poets.org*

Dues are due

If you haven't already
 done so, please send your
\$50 dues to:

Connors and Sullivan, PPLC
 Attn: CWRTNY Membership
 7408 5th Avenue
 Brooklyn, NY 11209

SUGGESTIONS

The Dispatch welcomes articles,
 book reviews (non-fiction only)
 and suggestions.

Just send them in to our mailing
 address.

Answer:

1905 (President Grover Cleveland had
 approved their return in 1887, but
 indignation among Northerners caused
 him to revoke the order).

New Books on the Civil War

*Voices of the Army of the Potomac:
 Personal Reminiscences of Union
 Veterans*, by Vincent L. Burns, Publisher:
 Casemate, October 29, 2021. pp384.
 \$37.95 Hardcover, Amazon.

*To Rescue the Republic: Ulysses S. Grant,
 the Fragile Union and the Crises of
 1876*, by Bret Baier. Publisher: Custom
 House, October 12, 2021. pp 400. \$17.84
 Hardcover, Amazon

Robert E. Lee: A Life, by Allen C. Guelzo.
 Publisher: Knopf, September, 28, 2021. pp
 608. \$ 25.09, Hardcover, Amazon

The Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

A PROCLAMATION.

WHEREAS, in and by the Constitution of the United States, it is provided that the President “shall have power to grant reprieves and pardons for offences against the United States, except in cases of impeachment;” and

Whereas, a rebellion now exists whereby the loyal state governments of several states have for a long time been subverted, and many persons have committed, and are now guilty of, treason against the United States; and

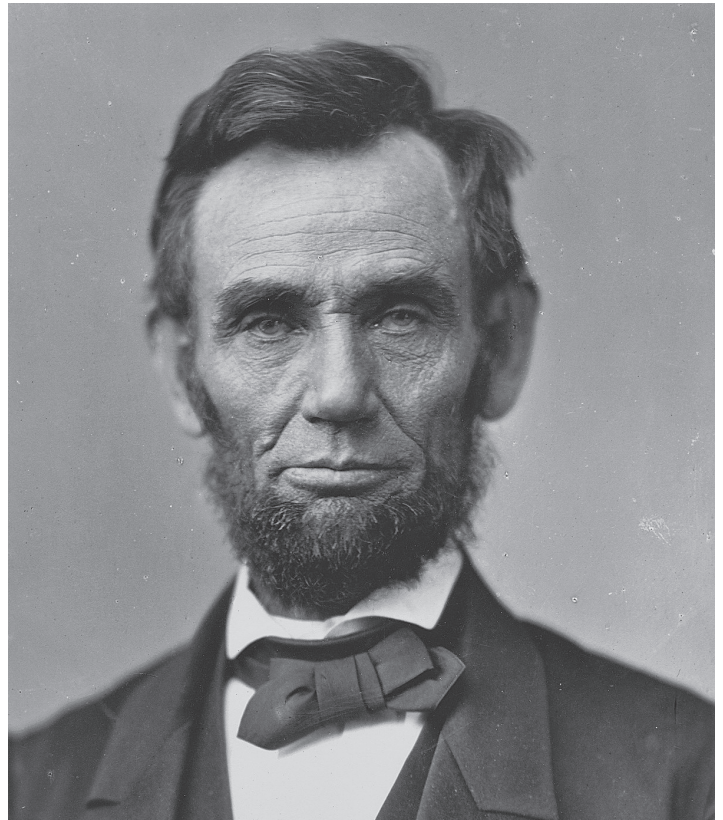
Whereas, with reference to said rebellion and treason, laws have been enacted by congress, declaring forfeitures and confiscation of property and liberation of slaves, all upon terms and conditions therein stated, and also declaring that the President was thereby authorized at any time thereafter, by proclamation, to extend to persons who may have participated in the existing rebellion, in any state or part thereof, pardon and amnesty, with such exceptions and at such times and on such conditions as he may deem expedient for the public welfare; and

Whereas, the congressional declaration for limited and conditional pardon accords with well-established judicial exposition of the pardoning power; and

Whereas, with reference to said rebellion, the President of the United States has issued several proclamations, with provisions in regard to the liberation of slaves; and

Whereas, it is now desired by some persons heretofore engaged in said rebellion to resume their allegiance to the United States, and to reinaugurate loyal state governments within and for their respective states: Therefore—

I, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, President of the United States, do proclaim, declare, and make known to all persons who have, directly or by implication, participated in the existing rebellion, except as



hereinafter excepted, that a full pardon is hereby granted to them and each of them, with restoration of all rights of property, except as to slaves, and in property cases where rights of third parties shall have intervened, and upon the condition that every such person shall take and subscribe an oath, and thenceforward keep and maintain said oath inviolate; and which oath shall be registered for permanent preservation, and shall be of the tenor and effect following, to wit:—

“I, _____, do solemnly swear, in presence of Almighty God, that I will henceforth faithfully support, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Union of the States thereunder; and that I will, in like manner, abide by and faithfully support all acts of congress passed during the existing rebellion with reference to slaves, so long and so far

as not repealed, modified, or held void by congress, or by decision of the supreme court; and that I will, in like manner, abide by and faithfully support all proclamations of the President made during the existing rebellion having reference to slaves, so long and so far as not modified or declared void by decision of the supreme court. So help me God.”

The persons excepted from the benefits of the foregoing provisions are all who are, or shall have been, civil or diplomatic officers or agents of the so-called Confederate government; all who have left judicial stations under the United States to aid the rebellion; all who are, or shall have been, military or naval officers of said so-called Confederate government above the rank of colonel in the army or of lieutenant in the navy; all who left seats in the United States congress to aid the rebellion; all who resigned commissions in the army or navy of the United States and afterwards aided the rebellion; and all who have engaged in any way in treating colored persons, or white persons in charge of such, otherwise than lawfully as prisoners of war, and which persons may have been found in the United States service as soldiers, seamen, or in any other capacity.

And I do further proclaim, declare, and make known that whenever, in any of the States of Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, and North Carolina, a number of persons, not less than one tenth in number of the votes cast in such state at the presidential election of the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty, each having taken the oath aforesaid, and not having since violated it, and being a qualified voter by the election law of the state existing immediately before the so-called act of secession, and excluding all others, shall reestablish a state government which shall be republican, and in nowise contravening said oath, such shall be recognized as the true government of the state, and the state shall receive thereunder the benefits of the constitutional provision which declares that “the United States shall guaranty to every state in this Union a republican form of government, and shall protect each of them against invasion; and on application of the legislature, or the executive, (when the legislature cannot be convened,) against domestic violence.”

And I do further proclaim, declare, and make known that any provision which may be adopted by such

state government in relation to the freed people of such state, which shall recognize and declare their permanent freedom, provide for their education, and which may yet be consistent as a temporary arrangement with their present condition as a laboring, landless, and homeless class, will not be objected to by the National Executive.

And it is suggested as not improper that, in constructing a loyal state government in any state, the name of the state, the boundary, the subdivisions, the constitution, and the general code of laws, as before the rebellion, be maintained, subject only to the modifications made necessary by the conditions hereinbefore stated, and such others, if any, not contravening said conditions, and which may be deemed expedient by those framing the new state government.

To avoid misunderstanding, it may be proper to say that this proclamation, so far as it relates to state governments, has no reference to states wherein loyal state governments have all the while been maintained. And, for the same reason, it may be proper to further say, that whether members sent to congress from any state shall be admitted to seats constitutionally rests exclusively with the respective houses, and not to any extent with the Executive. And still further, that this proclamation is intended to present the people of the states wherein the national authority has been suspended, and loyal state governments have been subverted, a mode in and by which the national authority and loyal state governments may be reestablished within said states, or in any of them; and while the mode presented is the best the Executive can suggest, with his present impressions, it must not be understood that no other possible mode would be acceptable.

Given under my hand at the city of Washington the eighth day of December, A.D. one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the eighty-eighth.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

By the President:

WILLIAM H. SEWARD, *Secretary of State.*

From: *freedom.umd.edu*