

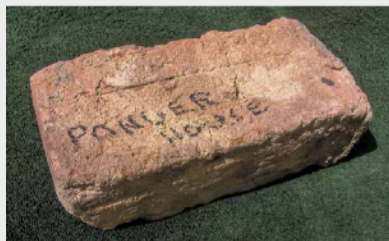


Battle Lines

Newsletter of the Civil War Round Table of Atlanta

Founded 1949

PROMOTING THE SERIOUS STUDY OF THE CIVIL WAR



This brick from the historic Ponder House provoked the interest of Past President John Dietrichs, author of this month's article.

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Relic Yields Historic Discoveries

FOR MORE THAN 70 YEARS, the Atlanta Civil War Round Table has fostered the study of the history of the American Civil War. For the most part, this has focused on Campaigns and Battles, and military and civilian leaders who led the Union

and Confederacy through those troubled times. On occasion, though, it is worth our time and

commitment to expand our sights and look at individuals who lived

through these events as civilians, and simply survived

(or some not) to live in post-war North or South. This is such a story, of a Georgia Plantation family and their slaves, all of whom lived

through the War, in Atlanta, and then survived and even thrived afterwards.

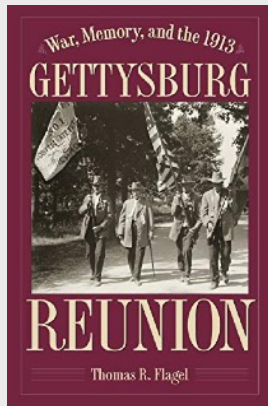
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Civilian Photographer George A. Barnard, who accompanied Sherman's Army, photographed the historic Ponder House, colorized in this image.

John A. Dietrichs, Nov. 20, 2020



Zoom Meeting Next Week

What drew over 55,000 veterans and thousands more to the 50th Reunion of the Battle of Gettysburg, held from June 29–July 4 in 1913? Weather was scorching and the accommodations were crude; worse, the battle was a traumatic memory for the aging veterans of the Union and Confederate forces who gathered. Reconciliation was a theme of reunion speeches but did the gathering bring it? Join us Tuesday, December 8 at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom to hear author Dr. Thomas Flagel Phd discuss his 2019 book, an examination of this legendary reunion. Tom is an associate professor of History at Columbia State Community College in Tennessee. He has worked with many historic preservation groups, including the Civil War Trust and the National Park Service and is noted as a national speaker on war and its culture of memory.

The Ponder House: An Historic Nexus

by John A. Dietrichs

Most of us interested in Civil War history have seen the famous Ponder House photograph taken just outside Atlanta, along the outer fortification line at the southern edge of what is now the Georgia Tech campus and Marietta Street. The elegant and beautiful lines of a two-story plantation mansion remain, but are marred by many artillery shell holes. One section of the second floor wall is blown out and trees felled by shot are around it. The bright white plaster finish is cracked and broken, exposing the brick beneath, and hundreds of bullet holes are obvious in the original black and white photograph, colorized in the famous image



(Shown here on Page 1).

Second Photo of the Ponder House, 100 yards east of Fort Hood.

A second photo, also now colorized, was taken some 100 yards west of the house at Fort Hood, a salient where the east-west fortification line angled south. Sandbags can be seen around the bomb-proof for this observation point; a landscape of *cheveaux des frise* runs to the once magnificent gardens filled with boxwood and fruit trees still visible just north of the house. Two former wooden slave quarters, stripped of their lumber to strengthen the fortification line, stand naked and yet still retain some dignity in the foreground.

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The Ponder House: An Historic Nexus From Page 3

The U.S. Army hired a civilian photographer, George N. Barnard, to photograph fortifications. He was attached to the Corps of Engineers who were mapping and recording the progress and destruction in war's wake. Within days of Atlanta's surrender on September 1, 1864, Barnard was photographing key buildings and streets in Atlanta, recording the conquering army with its horses, supply wagons, tents, and campfires as it went about the daily business of investing the city. Barnard also took three pictures from different vantage points of the ruined, yet once beautiful and stately plantation house of Ephraim and Ellen Ponder. The two images captured as almost no others the War and its impact on civilians in the South, and symbolically, the loss of wealth and a way of life for an entire class of people who had once ruled, and now would be ruled by Northern interests for a generation.

What's in a Brick?

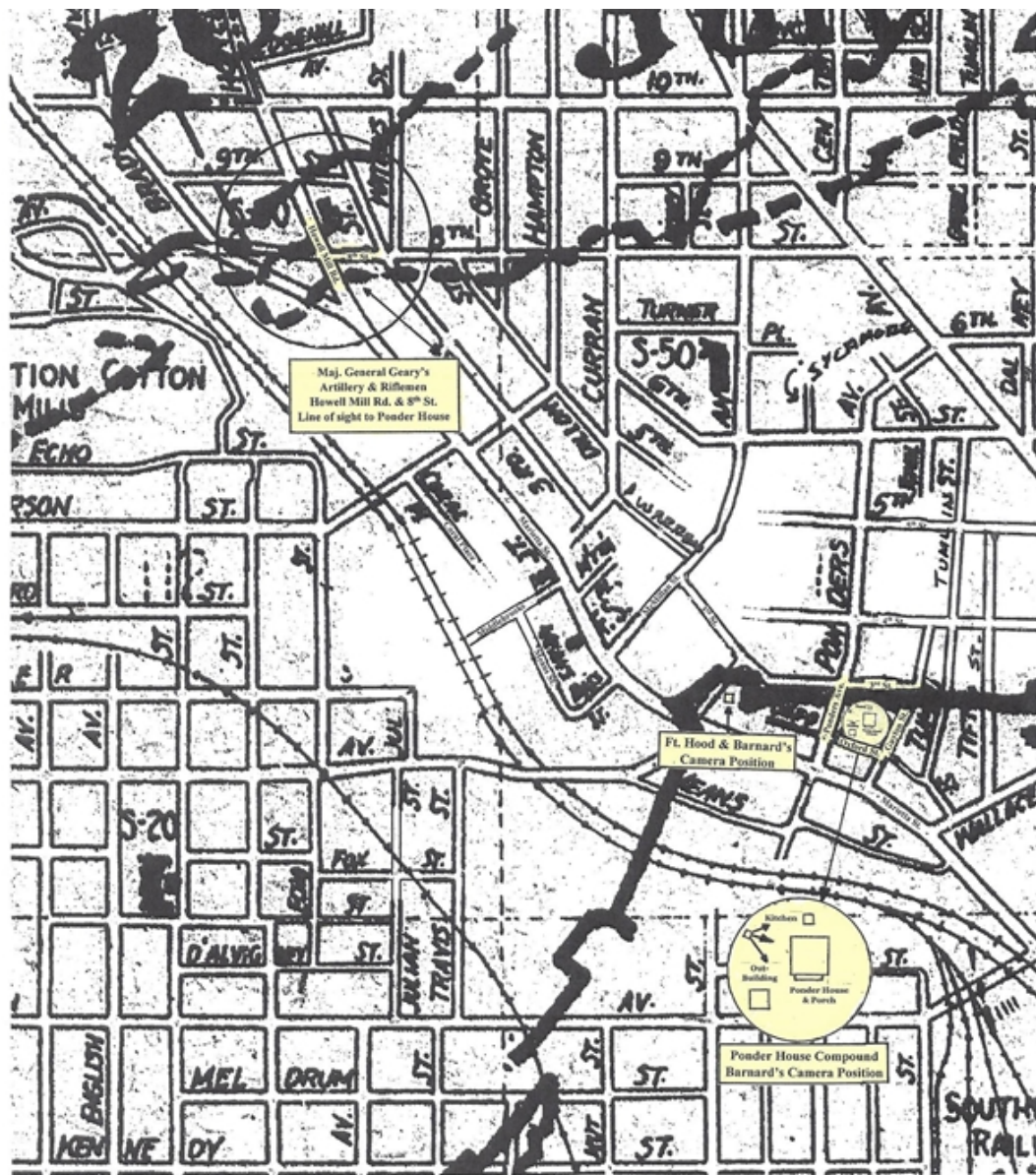
In August 2017, I was made privy to a cache of bricks that had been collected in situ from circa 1938 to circa 1971 by Beverly Means DuBose, Jr., who with his son, Bo, had amassed the single largest and most complete Civil War Collection in private hands by the time of his death in 1986. This collection is now at the Atlanta History Center in Buckhead, just northwest of Atlanta.



It turned out there were some 50 or 60 bricks lying unnoticed in a corner bin when the collection was moved to the Atlanta History Center in the 1990's. My friend Bo found out that I had been collecting a few bricks over the last ten years or so, with all of 12 in my own collection at that time. Would I be interested in digging into this pile of crude, old hand-made bricks hiding in the basement's back room in his folks' house to see what they might be about?

After putting a flashlight on the bricks, we found that many were marked with the location where they had been found. The one that instantly captured my interest and imagination was the one with "Ponder House" scrawled on it in black ink. I held it in my hand and the Barnard images suddenly came to mind, the images I remembered focused like a laser when I realized I was actually touching a piece of the Ponder House!

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Locations Two Photographs Taken by George N. Barnard of the Ponder House, September, 1864
Detail against Wilber Kurtz 1938 Street Map of Atlanta

Source Material: "Map of Atlanta as of 1938 Showing the Field and Fortified Lines of the Confederate Forces, Together With Those of the Federal Armies....Etc." by Wilber G. Kurtz, Atlanta, Ga. August - 1938. The basic map shown here is a small part of his map - areas marked as Numbered Circles for Key (#57, #58 & #60) blocking street data deleted, corrections based on: "Atlanta 1927-1930 Topographic Maps with Open Streets Overlay" - Emory University website. Federal positions shown were a part of the 20th Corps line northwest of Atlanta July 22nd to August 25th, 1864. Batteries aligned along Howell Mill Rd. and 8th St. bombarded downtown Atlanta and the Ponder House. Additions and camera locations based on geometric analysis and visible details of two Barnard photographs taken of the Ponder House compound.
Research by John A. Dietrichs March, 2018

I immediately remembered I had a 1938 street map of Atlanta, overlaid with the movements and landmarks associated with the siege, battles, and capture of the city. The famous artist and Civil War historian Wilber Kurtz had marked this historical gem, with a descriptive legend keyed to sixty circled numbers on the map. Number 57 was "Site of Ephraim G. Ponder House," pointing to a particular block on the map. Now I could find the actual physical spot where the house had been!

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I searched the internet for information about the Ponder House; several sites had some, limited, information. I contacted a friend and colleague of mine in the Civil War Round Table of Atlanta, Charlie Crawford, whom I consider the most knowledgeable living person I know concerning Atlanta's Civil War history, and his comments were very helpful. He said, "Well of course you have seen the description Franklin Garrett had on the Ponder House in his 'Atlanta & Environs,' right?" Well, no, I hadn't. It turned out that three fact-filled pages, 511-513 in Volume I, were just what I needed to continue the search. Garrett says of the Ponder House:

"...if still standing would be bound by the following streets, none of which existed at the time: North, by Third Street, N.W., South, by Oxford Street, N.W., East, by Guyton Street N.W., and West by Ponder Avenue, N.W. In addition to his home, Mr. Ponder erected, contiguous thereto, a number of substantial frame buildings for his slaves, and three large buildings for manufacturing purposes, along the Marietta Road."

These same streets were shown on Kurtz's 1938 map with #57 for the Ponder House. I found a website with information by Jack Kittle and a circa 1930 topographical map with footprints of contemporary buildings showing the streets named by Garrett, with Marietta Street just another block south. Center north on the Ponder block was the high point where the mansion would have stood; this high point had no buildings on it at that time. It is my theory that Mr. DuBose walked the area with his friend Wilber Kurtz, and possibly Franklin Garrett, and found the original foundations or at least some remnant bricks lying about on this knoll. Bo has several pictures taken in the 1930s of the three of them on forays to Georgia battlefields. Since Kurtz identified the mansion's location by 1938, this was likely confirmation for Garrett's book as well.



Ponder House (Upper Right) and Ft. Hood (Upper Left) viewed from just south of Marietta Road.

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As it happens, the third period photo taken by Barnard showing the Ponder House was from just south of the Marietta Road, now Marietta Street (Page 5), looking north east over the well-churned mud and dirt road, and offering further confirmation of the mansion's location.

The best starting point to investigate the Ponder family and their history are the three pages in Garrett's book on Atlanta.

The owner's name was Ephraim G. Ponder, originally a slave-dealer from Thomasville, Georgia. Late in life at 45, he married a young beauty named Ellen B. Gregory. Very little detailed information has been found concerning Ellen at this point, but she must have had a strong spirit with an iron will to complement her beauty. She is described as "beautiful, accomplished and wealthy" in her own right before the marriage, and "born about 1825."

Ephraim Ponder was born

November 17, 1808. They married in Sumter County, Georgia, near Americus, on December 8, 1853. Ephraim was 45 years old, and Ellen was about 28. Most women in this time were married by 20 or 22—Ellen might have been considered almost an old maid, but clues in the record indicate she was probably something else, almost a Scarlet O'Hara type figure, strikingly beautiful, spirited, never short of male company, and quite a catch for Ephraim.

Having lived to this point on his plantation, Ephraim built a large, two-story house on property he bought in Thomasville at 324 North Dawson Street for his beautiful new bride, and they settled into married life. This house still stands today.

Ponders' parents and siblings lived on large plantations in the Thomasville area, where cotton, corn, wheat, sugar cane, tobacco, molasses, and sweet potatoes were the primary crops. His property straddled the Florida and Georgia state lines, in Leon County, Florida, and Camden County, Georgia.



The house Ephraim Ponder built in 1854 for his bride Ellen still stands in Thomasville.

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While growing and selling crops from his land, at some point in the mid-1830s, Ephraim entered the slave trade, buying slaves he kept and those he resold for profit. There are numerous surviving legal documents concerning his slave dealings in Alabama, Florida, and Georgia from 1837 to 1855. Ephraim's brother or uncle, James, (the record conflicts on this) lived in Duncansville, Georgia, and owned a slave who made "Negro shoes" that sold locally for one dollar a pair.

Ephraim had become wealthy and politically influential from the slave trade and plantation revenues at the time of his 1853 marriage. By then, he was a City Alderman in Thomasville, a thriving town and the seat of Thomas County. After marriage Ephraim immediately began construction of the Thomasville mansion, and he and Ellen moved into it in 1854.

At some point in 1851 or 1852, Ephraim purchased Festus Flipper, the slave who made "Negro shoes," from his

brother/uncle James for \$1,180. At this time or possibly earlier, he recognized the value of acquiring slaves who were "mechanics," as they were called, rather than simple farmhands. Mechanics included wheelwrights, blacksmiths, carpenters, boot makers, printers, and other skilled workers who could



Festus Flipper, an enslaved 'mechanic,' and his wife Isabella.

make or provide profitable goods and services. He clearly began to search for and buy other slaves with these mechanic skills, and likely had others who trained or were apprenticed into useful trades. By 1858, he had a well-established "Ponder Shop" in Thomasville where the products and services provided by these slaves were sold.

Sometime in 1857, Ephraim decided to move to Atlanta with his household, select slave craftsmen and their families. He bought approximately 27 acres from John J. Thrasher for \$1,460 on November 25, 1857. The property was along the Marietta Road, just outside Atlanta's one mile city limit. He then ordered construction of the mansion, two slave quarters, and three large manufacturing buildings where the slaves could conduct their business and manufacturing activities. While we can opine on the character of Ephraim Ponder the slave dealer, he had instituted a policy with these slaves while still in Thomasville that they would work a set number of hours each day for Ponder, but in their free time they could make products or provide services on their own, sell them, and keep the money for themselves and their families. This was the "task system," a form of slavery that originated

Continued, Page 8

in the southeastern rice fields. This was somewhat unusual for inland slave owners at that time. It allowed participating slaves to learn how to save and handle money. The experience and ability gained in this arrangement helped slaves to successfully negotiate freedom after the War.

It is of special interest that an April 27, 1858 document survives detailing Ponder's assets before moving to Atlanta. Reference is made to the Ponder Shop in Thomasville, and lists by name, age, skill (if any), and "complexion" of all Ponders' slaves at that time. Also included are details of the Atlanta property purchase "...about one and one-half miles from the Atlanta Depot," or the "0" mile marker, downtown. Forty-seven slaves are noted; of these, 14 men were "skilled," 13 men had no skills, nine women without skills, and 11 children. It is not known how many slaves were transferred to Atlanta, but likely all the skilled slaves, their wives and children, and some others made the move. It is possible that the slaves without skills were "house" slaves.

Ephraim and Ellen moved to Atlanta and took possession of the completed mansion and property in 1859. The Atlanta Ponder Shop must have been an immediate success, because by late 1860, "White Business Owners" found competition from Ponder and his slaves most annoying, and demanded official action be taken by Atlanta's town council. A resolution was presented on January 4, 1861, to levy a \$100 tax on all slave craftsmen "...whose owners reside out of said City (limit)," obviously directed at Ponder in particular. Eventually the council tabled the resolution, an indication of the political influence Ponder must have wielded, impressively, after just a short time in Atlanta.

One of the Ponder slaves was Festus Flipper, who had been acquired in 1851 or 1852, and was a skilled carriage trimmer and shoemaker (leather worker). Festus and his wife, Isabella, had a son Henry Ossian Flipper in 1856. Henry wrote his autobiography many years after the war in which he commented that all was not peace and harmony at the Ponder estate:

"The mistress of this fortunate household, far from discharging the duties and functions of her station, left them unnoticed and devoted her whole attention to illegitimate pleasures. The outraged husband appointed a guardian and returned broken hearted to the bosom of his own family, where he devoted himself till death to agricultural pursuits."



The prominent son of Festus and Isabella Flipper: Henry Ossian Flipper (circa 1930). He frankly recorded the troubles within the Ponder household in an autobiography.

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In October 1861 Ephraim filed for divorce in Fulton County Superior Court. Among many allegations made in this petition were that his wife had committed adultery as long ago as 1854, only one year into their marriage, with “divers” (many) men; that she was a continual drunkard; that she had threatened her husband with a pistol; and that she used abusive language and treated him with the utmost disrespect. We might wonder if Ephraim left Thomasville for Atlanta with the hope of reforming his wife’s ways, but to no avail. Again, according to the petition, the joint property included the mansion and grounds, valued at \$10,000, and slaves, valued at \$45,000. The divorce was not granted until June 21, 1871.

Ephraim left Atlanta, presumably in 1861 or 1862, and lived out his life in Thomasville until his death August 19, 1874. He is buried in Laurel Hill Cemetery in Thomasville. Meanwhile, Ellen continued to live in the mansion, run the household, and presumably the Ponder Shop.

As already indicated, both Ephraim and Ellen were complicated human beings who certainly had their dark sides. However, it is known that in 1864, Ellen allowed or encouraged one of her slaves, John F. Quarles, a wheelwright and man with some education, to teach the younger slave children to read and write. This was a blatant violation of Georgia law, and punishable by imprisonment for the adults involved. Ironically, a Confederate reprint of Webster’s “Bluebook Speller” was used in these classes.

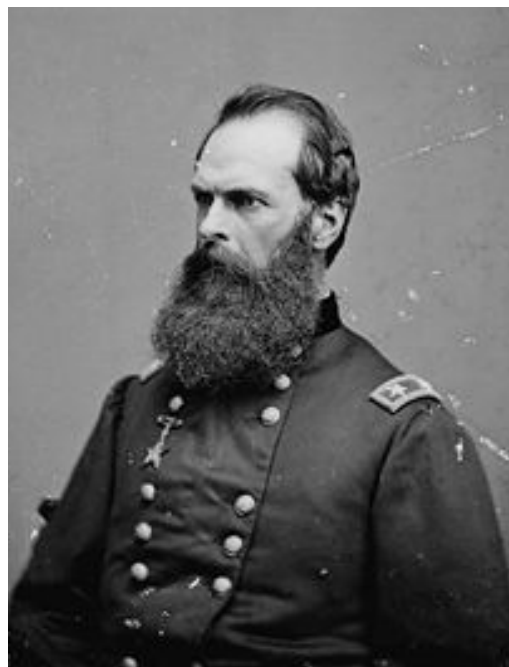


Ephraim Ponder’s grave in Thomasville (above, foreground); His name is inscribed on the grave (left). Photos: John Dietrichs.

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As the Atlanta Campaign began in north Georgia in early spring of 1864, wounded soldiers began to trickle into Atlanta by train, requiring hospital care and time to recover. Hospitals and homes throughout Atlanta were filled, and by May some 19,000 wounded soldiers were being treated in the greater Atlanta area. It is known that the Ponder House and its outlying buildings had at least a 200 bed unit for temporary housing of patients awaiting evacuation via the railroads to points south and east. For this reason, and the proximity of Union troops, Ellen Ponder and some of her house slaves evacuated to Macon, and later that summer to Fort Valley, Georgia, leaving Festus Flipper in charge of the estate.

Shortly after the Battle of Atlanta on July 22 and before the Battle of Ezra Church on July 28, troops and artillery of the 20th Union Corps built trenches and batteries along the high ground at Howell Mill Road at 8th Street. From this vantage point, the siege of Atlanta began, raining shells on the downtown area. As the Ponder House, just inside the Confederate defense line, was also on high ground, there was a line of sight from the house to the siege line, and Confederate marksmen took up positions on the roof and second story to harass the Union lines. Taking offense at this, Brigadier General John Geary, Commanding the 2nd Division of the 20th Union Army Corps (under General Hooker), with two light batteries and several larger siege guns, leveled them at the Ponder House, and the fate of the house was sealed. It lay desolate and in ruins through the balance of the War until a divorce was granted to the Ponders in 1871. The house was then razed and the property sold at auction to various individuals. It is claimed that over a ton of shot and shell were recovered from the house ruins.



Brigadier General John Geary leveled his guns at the Ponder House where Confederate marksmen harassed Union lines from positions on the roof and second story.

Mysteries Begging for Research Remain

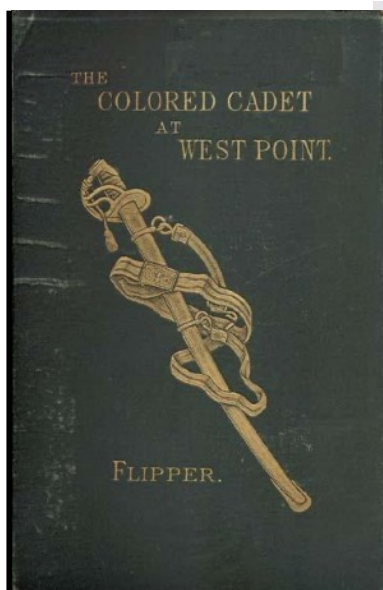
More research needs to be done on Ellen Ponder's life after she fled Atlanta – for the moment, the trail dies after she evacuated to Fort Valley. There were 65 Ponder slaves in Atlanta at the time of the surrender to Sherman's forces. Their stories also deserve more study.

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Flipper Family Members Gained Prominence After the War

The Ponder slaves in Atlanta were given three benefits by their owners that most slaves never had. First, Ephraim acquired or was responsible for training many slaves in tradecraft that allowed them a degree of independence and self-reliance during their captivity. He also by chance prepared them for freedom after the War with skills immediately useful and needed by society at large. Secondly, Ephraim Ponder allowed these slaves to create or offer goods and services to the local community on their own time, and to keep the rewards (money) they earned and use it as they would. Finally,

Ellen Ponder allowed slave children to receive an early education, which again prepared them for freedom and allowed them to progress and advance in the post-war society beyond most of their contemporaries.



Lt. Henry Ossian Flipper, the first Black man to graduate from West Point (Right). His Memoir *The Colored Cadet at West Point*, published 1878. (Pictured Above).



Many members of the Flipper family became famous in their own right after the War. The eldest son of Festus and Isabella, Henry Ossian Flipper, became the most famous of the Flipper clan. He was the first Black man to graduate from the US Military Academy at West Point. Lt. Henry Ossian Flipper achieved many other firsts, and will deserve his own article at another time.

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Former Ponder Slaves Who Became Prominent Post-War:

- Festus Flipper – Started and owned a successful shoe shop at 42 Decatur Street, making and repairing boots and shoes. He and wife Isabella were parents to many accomplished sons.
- Wife, Isabella Flipper – Isabella cooked for Union officers starting in the Spring of 1865, and later Isabella and Festus' home became the first restaurant in Atlanta open to the public after the war.
- Son: Lt. Henry Ossian Flipper (March 21, 1856-April 26, 1940)— Due to his early education begun at the Ponder House, Henry Ossian Flipper thrived. He was a good student and attended Atlanta University during the Reconstruction Period. Georgia Representative James C. Freeman was key in his appointment to West Point, where in 1877 he became the first Black to graduate. Superintendent Major General John Schofield gave him a special tribute at his graduation for enduring racist treatment and trials during his time at West Point. He was later assigned to the 10th Cavalry, where he led one of the four all Black Buffalo Soldier Regiments. He was the first Black man to command regular troops in the U.S. Army. He wrote an autobiography *The Colored Cadet at West Point*, published in 1878. He then went on to great



Above: Bishop Joseph S. Flipper. From the Flipper Library, Allen University, Columbia, South Carolina: allenuniversity.libguides.com

success in civilian life, and is now buried in the Old Magnolia Cemetery in Thomasville, Georgia.

- Son: Bishop Joseph S. Flipper – Became a nationally known leader in the African American Episcopal Church, and President of Morris Brown College in Atlanta. He founded the Flipper Temple AME Church, which stands to this day with his name.
 - Son: Dr. Carl Flipper – Became a Professor at Savannah State College.
 - Son, Festus Flipper, Jr. – Was a successful businessman and civic leader in Thomasville, GA.
 - Son: Dr. Emory Flipper – One of the early Black physicians in South Georgia and Jacksonville, Florida.
- John F. Quarles – Wheelwright and teacher of the Ponder slave children. Went on to graduate from Westminster College in New Wilmington, PA, founded in 1852 and related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). He was the first Black man to pass the Georgia Bar and practice law in Georgia.

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Atlanta 1864: A photo attributed to Barnard shows a captured Confederate battery on the northern defensive line manned by Union troops.

Abraham Lincoln wrote the following after winning a second term as President:

“Human nature will not change. In any future great national trial, compared with the men of this, we shall have as weak and as strong, as silly and as wise, as bad and as good. Let us therefore study the incidents in this (Great War) as philosophy to learn wisdom from, and none of them as wrongs to be avenged.” **Abraham Lincoln, November 10, 1864**

This seems to point the way for The Atlanta Civil War Round Table in its approach to the study of this defining period in American History.

Immediate Past Atlanta Civil War Round Table President John Dietrichs adapted this essay for Battle Lines from his article “The Atlanta Ponder House Story,” which appeared in the Civil War News in December of 2018. In the time since, John has delivered a number of talks on the Ponder House, which is a developing story as he continues his search for answers to lingering questions.

Renewing Atlanta Round Table's Educational Role

Immediate Past Atlanta Civil War Round Table President, John Dietrichs contributes this month's article as the Round Table renews its commitment to the study of the Civil War for these times of Pandemic. The aim is to steadily offer materials of historic value to members in the pages of ***Battle Lines***. This month we also feature a book review and links of interest.

A native of Atlanta, John graduated from Lovett High School which is located at the exact spot on the Chattahoochee at Pace's Ferry where Confederate Cavalry General Joe Wheeler held up Sherman's crossing of the river in 1864. John graduated from Southwestern at Memphis (now Rhodes College) in Memphis, Tennessee in 1971 with a bachelor's degree in Economics. Immediately afterwards he joined the United States Air Force where he spent four and one-half years stateside, managing flight line maintenance of radar and navigational equipment on various aircraft. Since 1980 he has been involved in the environmental field, specializing in asbestos issues and working with hospitals, nuclear power plants, the Department of Defense, large national and multi-national companies, and other clients. For over 20 years, John taught environmental subjects at Georgia Tech and The Environmental Institute in Kennesaw. He has been President of his own environmental consulting company, SafeTech Consulting, Inc., started in 1984, and is now semi-retired.

John bought his first Civil War cannonball (from Kennesaw) at age 11, and now has three rooms and many nooks and crannies in his house filled with Military relics ranging from the late 1500s to the late 1980s, and a large library of historical and reference books. His love of history is an avocation, and collecting and the study of related history takes up much of his spare time. He is a Colonel in the Old Guard of the Gate City Guard of Atlanta, having been Commandant in 2014 and 2016.



John, an artillery collector, poses with a smoothbore cannon at Ft. Pulaski in Savannah

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The President's Corner: Our Meetings Continue

All,

We will now resume our meetings in the Zoom format on **Tuesday, December 8** at 7:30 pm with Thomas R Flagel on the 1913 Gettysburg Reunion and his book *War, Memory, and the 1913 Gettysburg Reunion*.



I have heard back from most all of the remaining speakers and their willingness and availability to speak to us on a Zoom meeting platform.

Our 2021 meetings are:

January 12 with Stephen D Davis on John Bell Hood and his book *Texas Brigadier to the Fall of*

Atlanta: John Bell Hood;

February 9 with Caroline Janney on War and Remembrance and her book *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation;*

March 9 with Sandy Prindle on John Wilkes Booth and the Lincoln Assassination and his book *Booth's Confederate Connections;*

April 13 with Matt Hulbert on How Civil War Bushwhackers Became Gunslingers in the American West and his book *The Ghosts of Guerrilla Memory;*

May 11 with Cory Pfarr on James Longstreet and his book *Longstreet at Gettysburg: A Critical Reassessment;*

June 8 with Stewart Bennett, who will speak about his new book on the Battle of Atlanta.

If anyone has any concerns or needs regarding how to participate in our future Zoom meetings (and I know I certainly do!) please reach out to me or any member of your Executive Board for assistance.

Also a reminder to please pay your annual dues so that we are able to continue to have these types of meetings.

Please stay as safe and healthy as possible,

Carlton Mullis



An Educational Group

Architect Grant Moseley, Atlanta Round Table President (2018-2019), led our group to the benefit of 501c3 charitable status during his term. For this, ACWRT is classified as an educational organization. To lead us to a better understanding of what this entails. Grant recommends this article:

<https://smallbusiness.chron.com/501c3-educational-organization-60098.html>

He will offer further insights in upcoming issues of *Battle Lines*.

Come Zoom With Us for Meetings



<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362193-Joining-a-meeting>

The Atlanta Civil War Round Table now has a Zoom account. You will receive an email invitation to join us for the December 8 meeting via Zoom. Many of us have become familiar with Zoom as the COVID-19 Pandemic has endured over eight-plus months this year. President Carlton Mullis suggests calling him or a member of the board if assistance with this new technology is necessary. You can also email member wood.hughes@gmail.com. There are many resources available online for learning to how to use Zoom, including the link above.

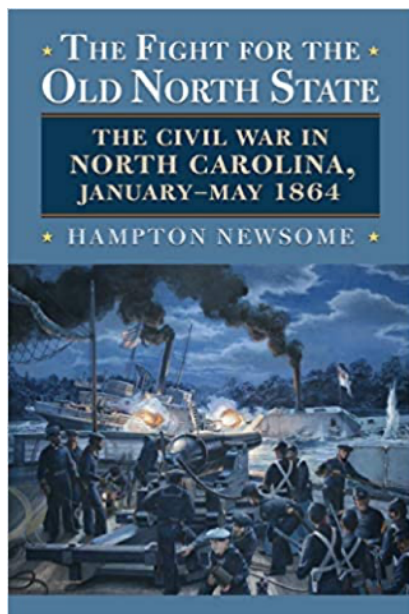
The folks at Zoom must feel
like a parish priest from rural Indiana
who gets up one morning
to find that he is Pope.
Mary-Elizabeth Ellard,
Atlanta Civil War Round Table Chaplain

If you haven't tried Zoom, you'll be pleasantly surprised to find a host of applications for this popular meeting format. As of press time, a few of our scheduled speakers have not confirmed Zoom availability but we will keep you apprised of any scheduling changes. Our meeting for

November was cancelled in the wake of Hurricane Zeta. Now that the hurricane season has done its best to thwart technology, we feel assured that our meetings will continue without interference and look forward to seeing you when we meet again next week.

Worth Reading: 2020's Harwell Award Winner

Nationally recognized as a mark of excellence for Civil War books, the Atlanta Civil War Round Table's Richard Barksdale Harwell Book Award is deeply significant to all serious students of the Civil War. Named in memory of our founding



Hampton Newsom, author of 2020's Harwell Book Award winner, was to be our November speaker but technical difficulties in the wake of hurricane Zeta intervened. This allows us all more time to read his worthy book.

Library, Emory University, Bowdoin College and Georgia Southern and as curator of rare books at the University of Georgia. Harwell also wrote and edited books throughout his career. His focus on the Civil War began when he helped Margaret Mitchell research *Gone With the Wind*. Eventually he held the largest private collection ever assembled of that novel's editions and memorabilia. Douglas Southall Freeman, biographer of Robert E. Lee and George Washington, chose Harwell to condense his multi-volume works on the two military leaders.

president, Civil War scholar, editor and author Richard Barksdale Harwell after his death in March of 1988, the Harwell Book Award is determined by a committee of Round Table readers each year. The current chairman is Gary Barnes. The committee looks for the best book published on a Civil War subject for the preceding calendar year.

Born in 1915 in Washington, Georgia, Richard Harwell was raised in Atlanta where he obtained bachelor and post-graduate library science degrees at Emory. He served in World War II as the youngest commander of a Navy minesweeper. A college librarian and historian, Harwell worked at Duke University, Smith College, the Virginia State



2020 Harwell Winner

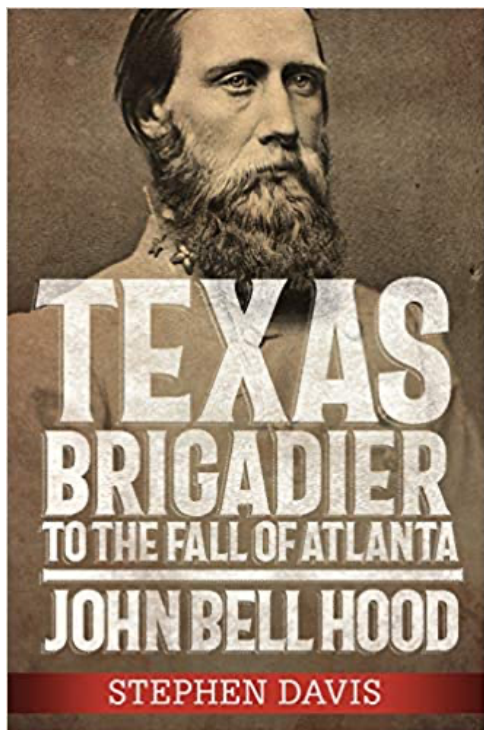
Hampton Newsom, winner of our latest Harwell Award for his *The Fight for the Old North State: The Civil War in North Carolina, January-May 1864* will be our speaker as soon as he can be rescheduled. North Carolina's story in the final months of the war is often overlooked. Newsom explains how the military events that ended the war affected social transformations and politics there. Besides opening up new historical perspectives, "*Fight for the Old North State* is deeply researched and noted and an enjoyable read," according to Harwell Committee Chair Gary Barnes.

Harwell Committee Review: *Stephen Davis' John Bell Hood*

Texas Brigadier to the Fall of Atlanta: John Bell Hood by Stephen Davis

Fellow Atlanta Civil War Round Table Members:

As you know, each year the Richard Barksdale Harwell Committee reviews a list of newly published books in the field of Civil War history to select a winner.



As part of the club's ongoing service to our members, the Harwell Committee will be providing more information to you – letting you know the list of books we're reading this year, for instance, as well as giving you periodic reports on books that we've read.

Today I'd like to give you my thoughts on *Texas Brigadier to the Fall of Atlanta: John Bell Hood* by Stephen Davis.

This book was published in 2019 and received serious consideration for last year's Harwell Award; however, this is the first volume of a two-volume set. The second has recently been released, and we are reading it as part of this year's Harwell process.

Now for the book...

Generals of the Civil War era aspired to Napoleonic greatness. But the military career of John Bell Hood, indeed his entire life, is more of a Shakespearean tragedy, with Hood's excessive ambition being his fatal flaw. In this book, Steve Davis analyzes Hood as a general and in so doing, shows us how Hood the man explains the failures of Hood the general.

The demands of war bring to the forefront Hood's character and personality. We see him rise from lieutenant to lieutenant general in less than three years, so that by the age of 31 Hood commanded the second most important army in the Confederacy. Hood aspired to a noble, heroic public persona, and he embodied these qualities in the minds of most observers up to early 1864, as he rose from company officer up to corps command in a rapid series of steps. Thereafter, with the higher demands placed on a senior officer, Hood began to display other, less admirable qualities.

The bulk of the book relates to his period with the Army of Tennessee as corps commander under Joseph E. Johnston, then as army commander until the fall of Atlanta.

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This book is exhaustively researched. There has been a lot of important new information published on Hood in the last ten years, and Davis consults that – but he also incorporates new primary sources that were not previously used anywhere

Along the way we get illuminating quotes from Hood and his contemporaries on every page; for example, we read of Gen. W.H.T. Walker writing to his wife only two days before his death in the Battle of Atlanta: quote - “Hood has gone up like a rocket; it is to be hoped he will not come down like a stick; He is brave - whether he has the capacity to command armies time will develop.”

Some of the highlights of the book for me include the personal and professional relationships that Hood maintained. They tell a lot about him and are revealing about Davis’s theme of Hood’s ambition. We read of how others reacted to that ambition – for instance, Robert E. Lee’s carefully worded compliments about Hood that made clear Lee did not consider him ready or qualified for high command.

Also, we learn of the rumor that Hood would replace Jeb Stuart as cavalry commander after Gettysburg (Hood aspired to higher command – an infantry corps) and we see the comments of Wade Hampton that Hood was being promoted before he was ready

In fact, the impression we receive is that Hood was promoted before he could really learn to grow and develop as a complete officer at each level he attained.



John Bell Hood, circa 1864. Hood was often injured in battle. At the Battle of Chickamauga on September 20, 1863 a wound to his right leg necessitated its amputation. (Photo Texas State Historical Association)

Continued, Page 20

And Hood's constant ambition to rise to the next level finally pushed him to being a Civil War example of the Peter Principle – where a successful person continues to rise to the level of his incompetence, and then fails.

One example of the insight the author brings is where he compares Hood's Battle of Atlanta to Lee's Chancellorsville, since Hood envisioned his battle as being modeled on Chancellorsville with a flank march and attack.

Steve Davis writes a very balanced analysis of Hood's generalship – giving both credit and criticism where warranted. In this book the theme of Hood's excessive ambition carrying him beyond his capabilities will be completed in Volume 2, released in 2020, where Hood and the Army of Tennessee come to grief at Franklin and Nashville.

In conclusion, I found this book very enjoyable and informative. The writing is lively, the insights are numerous, and you get the feeling that the author is perfectly at home in the period. He skillfully consults sources as varied as

official reports and documents, contemporary newspaper articles, the perspectives of infantry privates, and the gossip chain of people in Hood's office corps and social circles. I highly recommend it to you, and I think that the two volumes should really be read together as one continuous work in order to really grasp the theme of excessive ambition and how it plays out in Hood's epic career and tragic life.

Thank you! Stay safe and enjoy your continuing Civil War reading!

Robert Fugate

Member, Richard Barksdale Harwell Book Award Committee

Harwell Committee '21 Contenders

Stephen Davis: *Into Tennessee & Failure: John Bell Hood*

Kenneth Noe: *The Howling Storm : Weather, Climate and the American Civil War*

Stephen M. Hood: *Patriots Twice : Former Confederates and the Building of America after the Civil War*

Timothy B. Smith: *The Union Assaults at Vicksburg, May 17 - 22, 1863*

Gary W. Gallagher : *The Enduring Civil War: Reflections on the Great American Crisis*

Donald s Frazier: *Tempest Over Texas : The Fall and Winter Campaigns of 1863 - 1864.*

Keeping Up Online Before Our Spring Tour

The pandemic still stands in the way of most live visits and lectures. We *are* now offering Zoom meetings and plan a spring tour of Chickamauga. In the meantime, there are a host of opportunities for keeping up online. Please see our site <http://www.civilwarroundtableofatlanta.org>, our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/gould.hagler.9/posts/3719092411448178> and other sites of interest:

National Park Service

<https://www.nps.gov/index.htm>

American Battlefiled Trust

<https://www.battlefields.org>

Atlanta History Center

<https://www.facebook.com/AtlantaHistoryCenter>

Oakland Cemetery

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=oakland%20cemetery>

Georgia Battlefields Association

<https://www.facebook.com/georgiabattlefields>

<http://www.georgiabattlefields.org/home.aspx>

Southern Museum of Civil War & Locomotive History

<https://www.facebook.com/southernmuseum>

Civil War Round Table of Cobb County

<https://www.facebook.com/cwrtcc>

Civil War in Georgia Through Photography

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1128799070602406>

Battle of Resaca

<https://www.facebook.com/battleofresaca>

The Longstreet Society

<https://www.facebook.com/TheLongstreetSociety>

Chickamauga & Chattanooga Civil War Round Table

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/329344228425502>

National Museum of Civil War Medicine

<https://www.facebook.com/CivilWarMed/>

The Center for Civil War Photography

<https://www.facebook.com/civilwarphotography>

Marietta Confederate Cemetery Foundation

<http://www.mariettaconfederatecemetery.org>

Marietta National Cemetery

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Marietta%20National%20Cemetery/113571515319691/>

Center for the Study of the Civil War Era at Kennesaw State University

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=center%20for%20the%20study%20of%20the%20civil%20war%20era%20at%20kennesaw%20state%20university>

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Garry Adelman's Civil War Page

<https://www.facebook.com/Garry-Adelmans-Civil-War-Page-178968718823848>



Park Historian Jim Ogden leads a tour at the Chickamauga battlefield. ([nps.gov](https://www.nps.gov))

Spring Tour - Chickamauga

ACWRT has scheduled Saturday April 17 for a day with Chickamauga Park Historian Jim Ogden on the Chickamauga battlefield. Group size will be limited to less than a dozen and we'll be masked and in separate vehicles (no bus this trip). Be on the lookout for further details.

O COME, let us sing unto the LORD; let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving; and show ourselves glad in him with psalms.

For the LORD is a great God; and a great King above all gods.

In his hand are all the corners of the earth; and the strength of the hills is his also.

The sea is his, and he made it; and his hands prepared the dry land.

O come, let us worship and fall down, and kneel before the LORD our Maker.

For he is the Lord our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness; let the whole earth stand in awe of him.

For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth' and with righteousness to judge the world: and the people with his truth.

From Selections from the Book of Common Prayer for Missionary and Temporary Services
Pub.: E.P. Dutton and Co., Boston, 1863

A Pastoral Note:

We are saddened to announce the passing of ACWRT member, Jackson McHenry. Jackson attended Georgia Tech for two years before moving to Ohio with his family. He graduated from Case Western Reserve, and later attended Georgia State where he received a master's in literature. He went on to become an early member of the computer industry which kept him much on the move.

The ACWRT extends its condolences to his widow, Patricia, and to all his family and friends.



Our Chaplain, Dr. Mary-Elizabeth Ellard is an Atlanta veterinarian with a special interest in the history of horses and mules of the Civil War.

Chaplain Mary-Elizabeth Ellard

'Jingle Bells:' The Civil War Story



Many believe that James L. Pierpont, son of an Abolitionist-Unitarian family from Massachusetts, penned the song 'Jingle Bells' while he served as organist and music director at a Unitarian Church in Savannah. His brother Rev. John Pierpont Jr. was minister there. Pierpont was thinking of winter sleighing as a boy up north when he wrote the holiday song. A rascally lad, Pierpont ran away to sea at 14 and served for a while in the Navy. As an adult, he again left Massachusetts for the adventure of the California Gold Rush of 1849. A widower when his brother's job brought him to Savannah, Pierpont married Eliza Jane Purse, daughter of Savannah Mayor Thomas Purse, in 1857. When war came, Pierpont remained in Savannah and joined a local Confederate unit, the Lamar Rangers, which became part of the 5th Georgia Cavalry. He served as a clerk and wrote songs for the Confederacy while his father Rev. John Pierpont Sr. worked as a Union chaplain. The younger Pierpont, loyal to the South post-war, lived out the rest of his life here. **Photo of Savannah Historic Marker and Text—Carol Willey**

Northern and Southern Claims Diverge

As we venture further into the 21st Century, many questions of the Civil War, important and trivial, remain unsolved. The town of Medford, Massachusetts for instance, counters Savannah with its own 'Jingle Bells' origin story. From the plaque erected by the Medford Historical Society:

'Jingle Bells' Composed Here

On this site stood the Simpson Tavern, where in 1850 James Pierpont (1822-1893) wrote the song 'Jingle Bells' in the presence of Mrs. Otis Waterman, who later verified that the song was written here. Pierpont had the song copyrighted in 1857 while living in Georgia. 'Jingle Bells' tells of the sleigh races held on Salem Street in the early 1800s. MEDFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY 1983

Atlanta Civil War Round Table

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Mary-Elizabeth Ellard	First Vice President
Loran Crabtree	Second Vice President
Tim Whalen	Secretary/ Treasurer
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At Large Executive Committee Second Year:

Bill Dodd; Tom Prior

At Large Executive Committee First Year:

John Miller; Robert Fugate