



Battle Lines

Newsletter of the Civil War Round Table of Atlanta
Founded 1949

PROMOTING THE SERIOUS STUDY OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

February Meeting

Join us via Zoom

Tuesday, February 9, 7:30 p.m.

Technical Help

Zoom assistance is available.
Email Wood Hughes at
wood.hughes@gmail.com.

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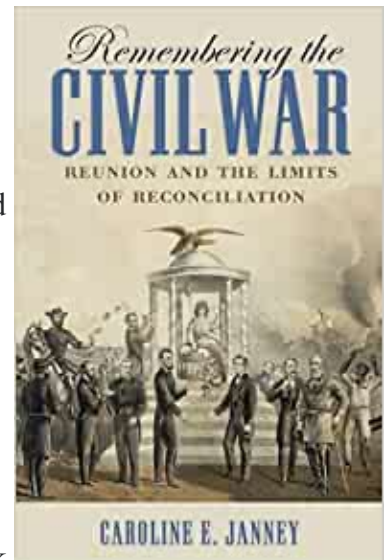
Please see our website:
www.atlantacwrt.org for
links to Harwell Committee
Member Robert Fulgate's
Video Book Reviews.

Remembering the Civil War

President's Message: I hope that everyone who was able to join us on Zoom last month enjoyed as much as I did the incomparable Steve Davis and the presentation he delivered based on his book *Texas Brigadier To the Fall of Atlanta: John Bell Hood*. Steve always provides unique insight with an incredible depth of knowledge. I look forward to his upcoming book on the Southern newspapers of Atlanta.

This month we hear from Caroline Janney who will present a talk based on her book *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation*. The book considers an especially critical topic as we are in the middle of a cultural re-evaluation of the way the Civil War is remembered.

I have been between Civil War books since finishing Wendy Hamand Venet's *Gone but Not Forgotten: Atlantans Commemorate the Civil War*. So I look forward this month to receiving two brand new Civil War books.



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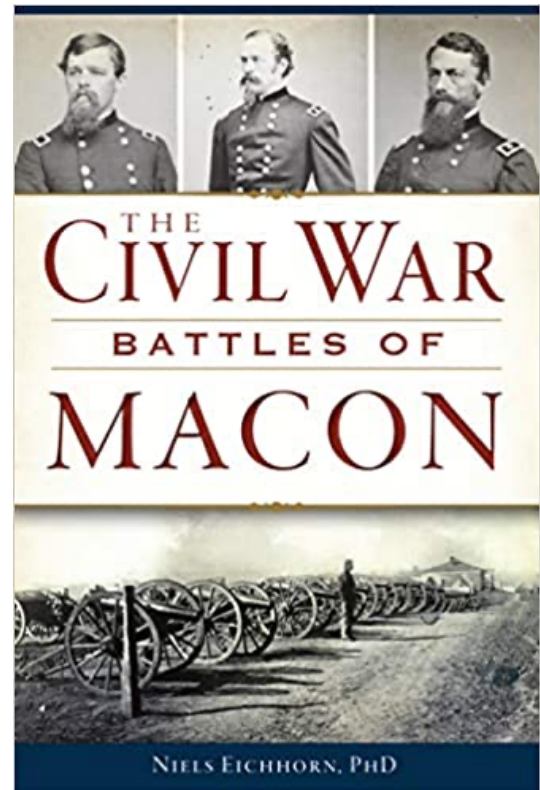
Our speaker Caroline E. Janney is the John L. Nau III Professor in the History of the American Civil War and Director of the John L. Nau III Center for Civil War History at the University of Virginia. Her talk will be based on her 2016 book *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation*. Within it Caroline looks at the Civil War generation, on both sides of the conflict and of all races. Her work demonstrates that as early as 1865, Civil War survivors were purposely shaping what would be remembered. Caroline is also author of the 2012 book, *Burying the Dead But Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause*.

The President's Message From Page 1

The first is *The Civil War Battles of Macon* by Niels Eichhorn. I am a Macon native who unfortunately paid too little attention to local Civil War history while there. I look forward to correcting that with this new book. The other book is *Calhoun: American Heretic* by Robert Elder. While not involved in the Civil War, John C. Calhoun was certainly a driving force behind the Southern nationalism leading up to it.

With vaccinations taking place across the state and the country, my hope is that we will be back together in the comfort of the Capital City Club sooner rather than later. I do expect, however, that we will continue to

meet via Zoom through the rest of this campaign season. I hope that everyone will remain safe and healthy. Those members and members' families who have contended with or are struggling with this virus now have my wishes for quick, complete recoveries and a return to full health.



Carlton Mullis

Atlanta CWRT President, 2020-2021

A Timeline Through Atlanta's Civil War Memory

One-hundred-and-fifty-six years after the end of the Civil War, Atlanta's relationship with this defining time in its history remains fraught with conflict. The contrasting commemorations of Confederate Memorial Day, observed by Atlanta descendants of the Confederacy in April, and Emancipation Day, celebrated by Atlanta's black communities in January, date back to right after the War. Disparities of perception and the conflicts arising from them are described within a detailed



Historian Wendy Venet

historical context from Reconstruction to our contemporary times in Wendy Hamand Venet's latest book *Gone But Not Forgotten: Atlantans Commemorate the Civil War*.

Wendy will offer a lecture and power point presentation based on *Gone But Not Forgotten* via Zoom through the Atlanta History Center on Thursday, March 4 at 7:00 p.m. A question and answer session will follow. The lecture is free and open to the public. [https://](https://www.atlantahistorycenter.com/event/wendy-hamand-venet/)

www.atlantahistorycenter.com/event/wendy-hamand-venet/

A specialist in 19th-century history, Wendy's interest in Atlanta's Civil War history stems from her time teaching history at Georgia State University from 1995 to 2019. She says, "GSU's campus falls squarely in the middle of what was once the Civil War city. While walking to and from my

office and classes, I noticed small, weathered plaques on downtown buildings that told me the location of former Confederate offices, the city's leading hotel, and its theater, the Athenaeum. I began to wonder what it was like to live in Atlanta during the Civil War and its aftermath. I edited *Sam Richards's Civil War Diary: A Chronicle of the Atlanta Home Front*, published in 2009, and then wrote *A Changing Wind: Commerce and Conflict in Civil War Atlanta*, published in 2014." *Gone but not Forgotten: Atlantans Commemorate the Civil War* is Wendy's third book on civilian life during and after the War in Atlanta. It came out in October 2019.

Wendy became a member of ACWRT after she presented a talk based on *A Changing Wind* in March of 2015. In *Gone But Not Forgotten*, ACWRT members will be particularly interested in her brief description of the post-World War II Civil War Round Table Movement. Richard Harwell, the Beverly DuBoses, senior and junior, Bell Irvin Wiley and others particularly important to ACWRT are present there and elsewhere in the book as are historical and lineage societies familiar to many of our members. Well written, carefully indexed and referenced, *Gone But Not Forgotten* is an engaging read and a sound review of our very complicated history.

Roll, Jordan, Roll: An Invocation for Our February Meeting

“Let no false nor spiteful word be found upon your tongue.” Our nation would do well to hear those words from the African-American spiritual, “Roll, Jordan, Roll.”

During the War of the Secession, Northern musicologists recognized that if the War did end slavery, then slave culture, including its distinctive music, might quickly vanish or, at least, change dramatically. These scholars travelled across the South gathering and preserving as much information as they could on tunes, lyrics, names of oral sources, and regional variations.

As early as 1862, Lucy McKim Garrison included “Roll, Jordan, Roll” in her collection of songs

from enslaved Americans. Some modern scholars believe that Isaac Watts’ piece, “There is a Land of Pure Delight,” may have inspired its tune. Others hear traditional African influences.

The version shown here appeared as the very first song listed in [Slave Songs of the United States](#) (1867) edited by Garrison and two other Northern abolitionists, William Francis Allen and Charles Pickard Ware. You can find their entire collection at the Smithsonian’s digital library: <https://library.si.edu/digital-library/book/slavesongsofunit00alle>

1. ROLL, JORDAN, ROLL.

1. My brudder* sit-tin' on de tree of life, An' he yearde when Jor-dan

Var.

roll ; Roll, Jor-dan, Roll, Jor-dan, Roll, Jor-dan, roll !

O march de an-gel march, O march de an-gel march ; O my

soul a-rise in Heaven, Lord, For to yearde when Jor-dan roll.

2 Little chill'en, learn to fear de Lord,
And let your days be long ;
Roll, Jordan, &c.

3 O, let no false nor spiteful word
Be found upon your tongue ;
Roll, Jordan, &c.

* Parson Fuller, Deacon Henshaw, Brudder Mosey, Massa Linkum, &c.

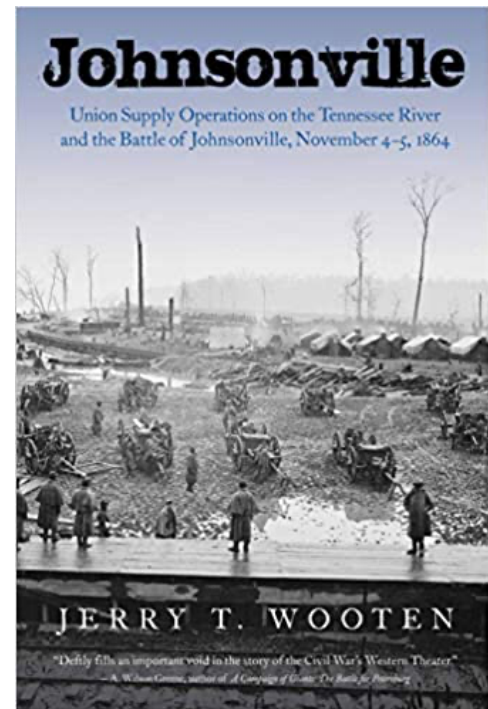
[This spiritual probably extends from South Carolina to Florida, and is one of the best known and noblest of the songs.]

Chaplain Mary-Elizabeth Ellard

Round Table Community: *Conference Zoom Speakers*

The Civil War Round Table Conference has initiated a Wednesday evening speaker series. The programs are offered at 7 p.m. Eastern Standard Time and feature an impressive array of speakers and performers. Pre-registration is required at cwrtingress.org (Click left and then click Speaker Series). Programs have been arranged through March. Donations are accepted though not required. Scheduled for the coming weeks:

February 17, *Johnsonville*: Historian Jerry Wooten will outline the creation and strategic role of the west Tennessee Union supply depot at Johnsonville, describing the depot's use of railroads and logistics, and its defense by U. S. Colored Troops. His presentation covers the emergence of a civilian town around the depot, and the role all of this played in making important Union victories possible. Jerry's 2019 book *Johnsonville: Union Supply Operations on the Tennessee River and the Battle of Johnsonville* also renders a detailed account of the Battle of Johnsonville. The fighting took place on the heels of one of the most audacious campaigns of the war, when Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest led his cavalry through western Tennessee on a 23-day raid. On November 4-5, 1864, Forrest's troops attacked the depot and shelled the city, destroying tons of invaluable supplies. The complex land-water operation nearly wiped out the Johnsonville supply depot, severely disrupted Gen. George Thomas's army in Nashville, and impeded operations against John Bell Hood's Confederate army.



February 24, *Rufus Dawes—To My Best Girl*: An Indiana native, Steve Magnusen is an engineer by profession and he served the U.S. Army in active reserves for 15 years before leaving the service with the rank of major. His 2020 book *To My Best Girl: Courage, Honor and Love in the Civil War* tells the inspiring love story of Union soldier Rufus Dawes of the 6th Wisconsin Infantry and of his "best girl" Mary Gates.

March 2, *Toward a Fateful Crossroads*: American Battlefield Trust's Education Manager. Dan Davis will deliver a program on the Overland Campaign of May 1864 when the Army of the Potomac under Grant slugged it out with Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia. Stalled along the North Anna River, Grant decided to turn Lee's right flank and head for the Pamunkey River. Lee countered and as May faded into June, the two armies clashed at Haw's Shop, Totopotomoy Creek, Bethesda Church and Matadequin Creek, all the while on a collision course for a dusty road junction east of Richmond.

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Round Table Community: *Conference Zoom Speakers*

March 3, My Image, My War: Join actress and historical interpreter Lee Ann Rose as Mary Todd Lincoln for a special consideration of this first lady's role. Listen to Mary Todd Lincoln as she justifies her decision to decorate the Presidential Mansion, her fights with public opinion about her Southern roots and her reign as First Lady during the Civil War. What does the First Lady have to do to create calm in wartime and be seen as the symbol of the Nation and women at war. And how well did Mrs. Lincoln succeed?



March 10, Ever the Gray Ghost: Historian David Goetz explores Confederate Col. John S. Mosby's role in the Lincoln Conspiracies. Describing the broad and deep Confederate underground system of spies and other clandestine operators, David examines Mosby's role and that of his Rangers within the larger context of the operation.

Goetz then traces how Mosby Ranger Lewis Powell was drawn into clandestine work by the Confederate Secret Service and ultimately introduced to John Wilkes Booth.

March 11, Hurricane from the Heavens: Join the American Battlefield Trust's Education Manager, Dan Davis for an exploration of Cold Harbor. From the Wilderness to Totopotomoy Creek, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and Gen. Robert E. Lee fought and maneuvered each other to the outskirts of Richmond. On May 31, 1864, a cavalry clash erupted near a crossroads east of the Confederate capitol, Cold Harbor. The fighting drew the attention of both commanders and soon both were rushing reinforcements to take control of the junction.

March 17, Faces of Civil War Nurses: Author and columnist Ronald S. Coddington, an antique photo collector who has published four books in his "Faces of the Civil War" series, will talk about the experiences of women of all ages and walks of life who provided care during the war as nurses, aid workers, and vivandières. Using identified tintypes and cartes de visite of women on both sides of the war, many of them never before published, Coddington uncovers the personal histories of each intrepid individual. Following their postwar stories, he also explains how the bonds they formed continued long after the cessation of hostilities.

March 24, 1863 A Year in Review: Historical interpreter Gerald Payn portrays Mr. Enos Foreman, Editor and Proprietor of the Wooster (Ohio) Republican. Foreman will review the significant events of 1863. So, just what does a newsman think the big news stories were? And, how big were those that appeared below the fold? You know some like the Battles of Chancellorsville and Gettysburg and the surrender of Vicksburg. But can you easily recall the first Medal of Honor recipients, why Congress suspended habeas corpus or who sponsored the Conscription Act?

***Harwell Committee Review:* Robert Fugate**

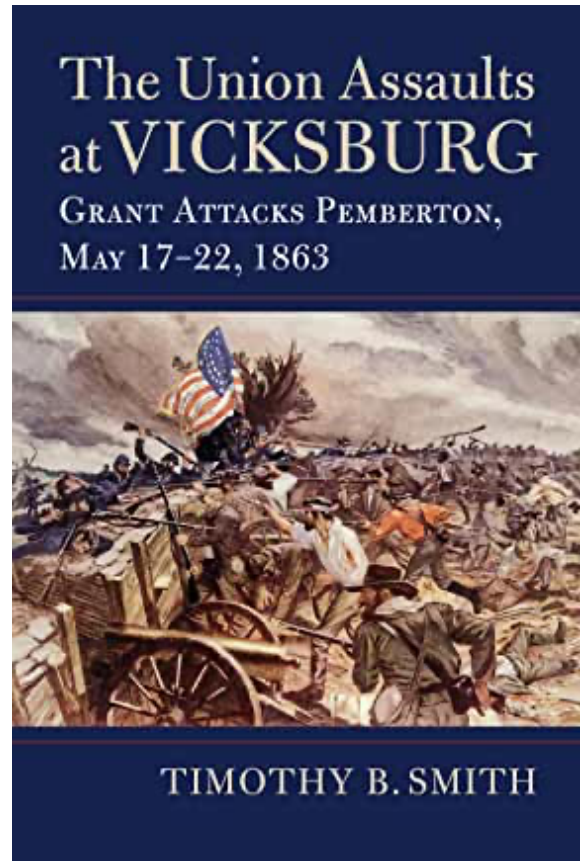
The Union Assaults at Vicksburg, May 17-22, 1863 by Timothy B. Smith

Round Table members may recall that Tim Smith, who has spoken to our group several times, won the Harwell Award in 2015 for his book *Shiloh: Conquer or Perish*. He has also written other highly acclaimed books on the war in the Tennessee-Mississippi corridor, including studies of the Corinth Campaign, the battles for Forts Henry and Donelson, the Battle of Champion Hill, and Grierson's Raid. Tim has become a leading authority on Grant and his activities from 1862-63, and *The Union Assaults at Vicksburg*, under consideration for the Harwell Award for this year, is his latest foray into this space.

As the title indicates, this book provides an in-depth look at Grant's attempts to take Vicksburg by storm in May of 1863, an aspect of the war that has not previously received an intense level of historical focus. In doing so, Smith first describes the evolution of Vicksburg as a fortress and then turns to the Union strategy culminating in Grant's approach to the city by crossing the river to the south and marching inland, separating Pemberton's forces from Johnston's, and then bottling up Pemberton's army there at last by mid-May.

Frontal assaults on strongly fortified defensive positions failed in most cases during the Civil War. Having grown up in Mississippi and visited Vicksburg many times, I have difficulty understanding why Grant would have risked his troops in attacking over such difficult terrain which is highly favorable to defense. Why did Grant attempt what in retrospect seems almost foolish?

Smith points to several factors that explain Grant's rationale. First, there were issues of morale and momentum. Grant's moves throughout the campaign were characterized by supreme confidence

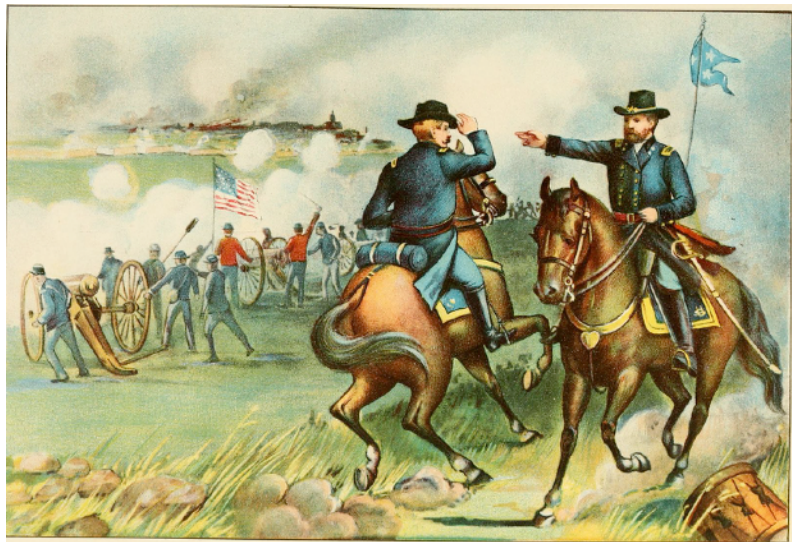


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Harwell Committee Review (From Page 7)

and decisiveness, even despite the misgivings of his trusted subordinate Sherman about the campaign's unorthodox nature. Grant was not only self-confident; he put significant store in the capabilities of his men and their leaders (with the exception of corps commander John A. McClernand). And conversely, Grant did not seem to respect the leadership of his opponent Pemberton or the fighting qualities of the Southern troops he faced. In addition, Grant's army had been marching quickly and achieving rapid successes; they had Pemberton's and Johnston's forces off balance, on the run. Therefore, the assaults at Vicksburg were the logical culmination of these events and reflected Grant's belief that he could achieve a quick and stunning victory, much like what had just recently occurred at Champion Hill and the Big Black River Bridge.

Smith also points up another driver in the decision to attack Vicksburg. When Grant moved inland from the Mississippi River at the outset of the operations his army only partly lived off the land. After two weeks detached from ship-borne supplies, his bread and hardtack rations ran out completely in the two to three days prior to investing Vicksburg. His men were hungry, and if Pemberton and Johnston had been able to deny Grant access to the Yazoo River north of Vicksburg, where Grant could establish a new supply base by connecting with the Navy, then Grant's efforts might have been seriously damaged. It was this propensity for risk taking that separated Grant from Sherman at this stage of the war. The Vicksburg assaults may have failed in their immediate results, but they provided cover for the establishment of Grant's supply base at Haynes Bluff. This analysis of Grant's supply issue is a factor that I had not encountered in my previous reading on the subject.



General Ulysses S. Grant with one of his officers at the Battle of Vicksburg from a 1902 elementary school history textbook. (Library of Congress)

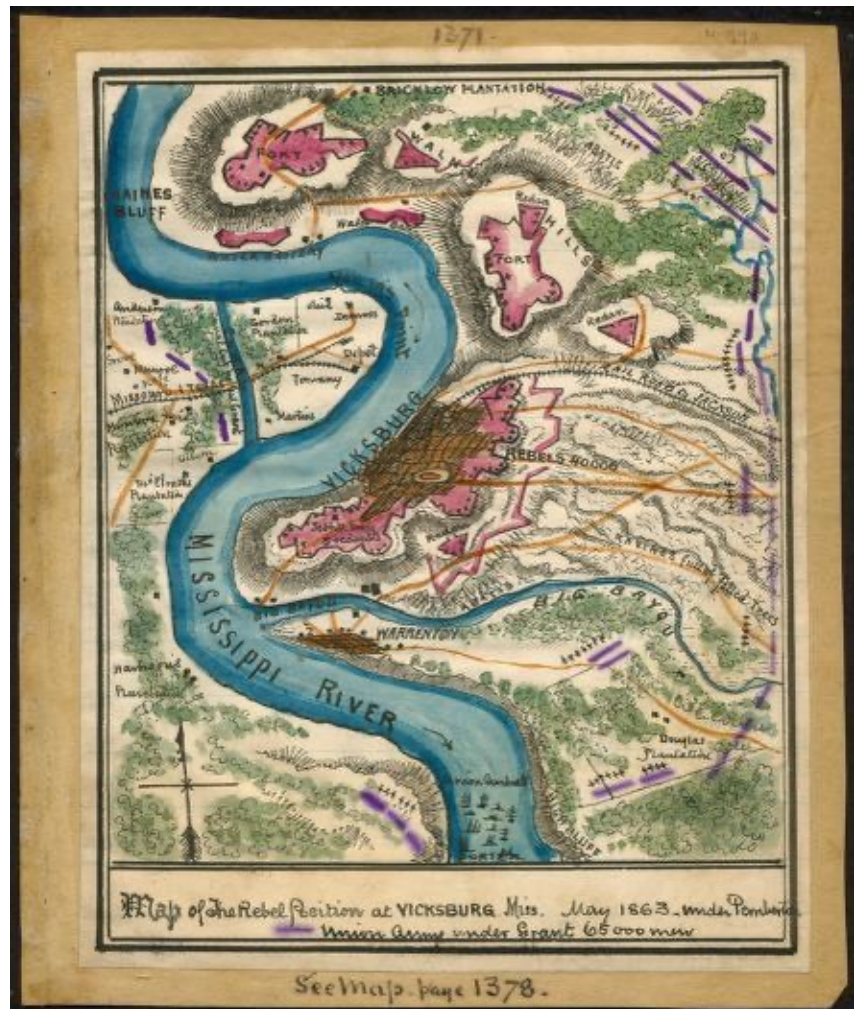
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Harwell Committee Review (From Page 8)

The book covers Grant's key officers and analyzes their leadership of the assaults. None of the three corps commanders put in a stellar performance. Sherman seemed not to believe the attacks would succeed and broke off early to limit casualties. McPherson is depicted as a man who was too quickly promoted above the level of his capabilities and somewhat disconnected from the operations of a portion of his troops. McClelland, the political outsider among this otherwise professional senior officer group, seemed to believe the attacks could succeed but misrepresented his partial success in the attempt, probably in order to make Grant or others look bad, all of which backfired on McClelland and led to his subsequent removal from command.

While Smith discusses the high command, his book is more of an account of the soldier's perspective, and he covers his subject from bottom to top, consulting many primary accounts and sprinkling the narrative with quotes that provide the reader with a you-were-there sense. One private from the 127th

Illinois recalled that his division commander Frank Blair allowed the attacking columns to take a canteen and ammunition but no haversack; when asked why, he replied "you can go without your dinners; you'll be inside the walls of Vicksburg or in hell for supper."



Map of the Confederate Fortifications at Vicksburg, May 1863; Robert Knox Sneden (Library of Congress).

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Harwell Committee Review (From Page 10)

A Confederate in the defensive works recalled feeling like “a rat in a hole with a dozen terriers scratching and barking around him.” The reader comes away with a definite feeling for what it was like to attack through the Vicksburg ravines or to lie in wait in its trenches.

After discussing the failure of the Union attacks due to the defensive strength of the works and the recovery of the fighting spirit of Pemberton’s army, Smith concludes the book with remarks

of a speculative nature. Had Grant succeeded in his attacks and carried Vicksburg by storm in May, Smith believes that Jefferson Davis would likely not have allowed an invasion of the North by Lee’s army – and there would have been no Gettysburg.



The rough territory of Vicksburg is shown in this photo of the Shirley House, May 1863. The house survived the Siege and is the only wartime structure inside present-day Vicksburg National Military Park. (Library of Congress)

Readers looking for a detailed picture of Pemberton’s activities and those of his officers and men may be a bit disappointed. While the Confederate side is certainly well covered, the focus is on Grant’s army. One wonders whether this is due to the preponderance of source material on the Union side, a predilection on the author’s part for Grant and his troops, or a combination.

In summary, *The Union Assaults at Vicksburg* is a thorough and interesting, well-written narrative of events in mid-May 1863. Tim Smith brings new information and insight to the reader and does so while putting that reader in the shoes of the participants. Interested readers can look forward to a continuation of the narrative with the pending publication in June of *The Siege of Vicksburg*, where Smith takes the campaign to its climax and conclusion.

Atlanta Civil War Round Table Tours

ACWRT activities are alive and well! We have multiple tours scheduled for this Spring.

Due to small group sizes, we must limit these tours to current ACWRT members.

Each tour will be COVID-careful and limited to ten participants, who will provide their own transportation (no bus, sorry), bag lunch, and water, and will closely adhere to CDC guidelines for masking and social distancing. There will be no fee but we will offer links to websites for online donations to help local preservation efforts. We know you will be generous.

Each tour will take place no matter the weather. So please be prepared if you register. Barring an ice storm we will step out lively.



March 27: we will join Charlie Crawford for his highly regarded walking tour of Confederate lines on

what would later become the campus of Georgia Tech. Charlie has a wealth of well crafted handouts that will bring to life the wonderful Ponder House essay by John Dietrichs from December's ACWRT *Battle Lines*. Sign up here for this exciting kickoff to our 2021 tours:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C084CADAB22A31-tour>

Whether or not you participate in this tour, please generously support preservation efforts by the Georgia Battlefields Association at this link:

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

ACWRT's Charlie Crawford will lead a Ponder House tour in March. Past President John Dietrich wrote of the Ponder house in December's *Battle Lines*.

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Atlanta Civil War Round Table Tours

April 17: We will join the preeminent northwest Georgia historian Jim Ogden for a day at Chickamauga. His tour will focus on examining the numerous monuments within the battlefield park, along with important historical artifacts and weapons in the Visitor's Center.

May 15 will find us in Jonesboro as we venture on with Bill Dodd. Bill has spent decades studying this turning point of the Atlanta campaign and is a delightful resource for our Round Table.

June 12 we will be led by Sarah Kelehear, Interpretive Ranger at Sweetwater Creek State Park, to learn more about the New Manchester Mill.

Fall Tour: Please look forward to more information about a Kennesaw tour in the Fall as we anticipate more members being vaccinated, thus improving our ability to better mitigate health risks associated with COVID. By the time this newsletter reaches you, Jane and I may have already received our second vaccine dose. We hope you get yours soon.



New Manchester Mill Ruins: Constructed in 1849 to produce clothing and other materials, this water-powered mill was later used to make uniforms for the Confederate Army during the Civil War. General Sherman's troops burned the mill in 1964. Now the site of the ruins is a state park. The park recently won an award for historic preservation. Photo: Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, <https://www.georgiatrust.org/preservation-awards/sweetwater-state-park-mill-ruins/>

John Miller Atlanta Civil War Round Table Executive Committee



Harwell Committee's Robert Fugate

New Book Reviews

Battle Lines is now publishing regular book reviews. Two have come from the Richard Barksdale Harwell Award Committee and one from Executive Committee Member John Miller. Bob Fugate contributed a review of *Texas Brigadier to the Fall of Atlanta* in December, Pages 18-20, and this issue's review of *The Union Assaults on Vicksburg*, Pages 7-10. Bob has also recorded video reviews. For Bob's video reviews and Gould Hagler's story detailing on our new program of book reviews, please see ACWRT's website: www.atlantacwrt.org. John's review of *In The Waves* was featured in January, Pages 7-8.

Booth's Confederate Connections

Join us Tuesday, March 9 at 7:30 p.m. for a program with retired judge and author Sandy Prindle based on his 2019 book, *Booth's Confederate Connections*, which explores the theory that John Wilkes Booth was part of a complex conspiracy led by Confederate Secretary of State Judah Benjamin in response to the Dahlgren Affair. Documents detailing a plot against the Confederacy were alleged to have been discovered on the corpse of Union Army Lt. Col. Ulric Dahlgren's body after a failed raid on Richmond. These were widely published in the South. Sandy's theory is that in response Confederates were involved in a plot to kidnap Lincoln. Following 24 years on the bench in Ft. Worth, Texas, Sandy is now focused on writing. He is also the author of three novels in the legal thriller and espionage vein. *Booth's Confederate Connections* won the endorsement of Kirkus Reviews and many others.

Atlanta Civil War Round Table

Officers and Executive Committee 2020-2021

Carlton Mullis	President
Mary-Elizabeth Ellard	First Vice President
Loran Crabtree	Second Vice President
Tim Whalen	Secretary/ Treasurer
John Dietrichs	Immediate Past President

At Large Executive Committee Second Year:

Bill Dodd; Tom Prior

At Large Executive Committee First Year:

John Miller; Robert Fugate