

Sumter to Appomattox

The Official Newsletter of the New South Wales Chapter of
The American Civil War Round Table of Australia

No. 55, April - May 2011

Please visit our website www.americancivilwar.asn.au

A Message from the Chairman –

I was absolutely delighted with our initial meeting for this year, both from the quality of the presentations from Paul Kensey, Peter Zacharatus and Bruce Dennett and the great attendance of 28 members and guests. Particularly pleasing were the number of people who joined us for the first time and the return after long absences of Jennifer Kirkby and Ian Boys. If this is a guide to what we can expect from all of this year's meetings, the Chapter has more than a bright future!

I was particularly impressed with the way that Peter presented his case and he was certainly not intimidated by either Bruce or Paul. It was fitting that Paul was able to make a presentation to Peter at the conclusion of the meeting in recognition of his performance on the night and his commitment to the Chapter since joining the group. Thank you Paul for your generosity in making this presentation. It is interesting to note, also, that nobody attending this meeting took me up on the offer to refund their money for dinner if they were dissatisfied with the night's proceedings!

A significant part of our last Newsletter (No.54) presented some biographical details and a review of a book authored by well-known psychiatrist and amateur Civil War historian, Thomas P Lowry. Since that time, however, there has been a major scandal involving allegations that Lowry forged a date on a Civil War document thereby making the document of greater historical significance. To provide members with an update on what has transpired with respect to this case, the last page of this Newsletter is devoted to the allegations made and the impact it has had on Lowry's reputation. Included as part of this are a number of links that set out both sides of the story. It makes fascinating reading!

I look to 2011 to be another successful year for our Chapter of the ACWRTA and ask that members seek to support our activities with their presence at our meetings and input to our Committee on any initiatives that will make our activities more interesting and relevant to your needs.

John Cook

Our Next Meeting

The regular meeting for 2011 will be held at our normal venue - **Roseville Memorial RSL Club, 64 Pacific Highway, Roseville** on **Monday, May 16**. As is our normal custom for our gatherings, the meeting will commence with a bistro-style meal from 6pm with the meeting proper to start at 7:30pm.

This meeting has been organised to meet the interests of those members having leanings towards the Confederate cause and, in particular, to their great commander, Robert E Lee. David Smith is to give a presentation titled:

The Letters of General Robert E Lee

Father Dave has been researching Lee's writings over the past few months and has come up with some interesting perspectives of the Confederate's "Marble Man".

Please make a special effort to come to this meeting and, if possible, bring a guest. You may be assured that the effort will be well worthwhile.

Ideas for Future Meetings in 2011

Members that might have ideas about the format and/or topics for presentation and discussion at our future meetings for the year, are invited to contact our Program Director, Bruce McLennan. We are certainly open to new ideas to keep the standard of our meetings at the level they have achieved in recent times.

In particular, your attention is drawn to the request for speakers, presented later in this Newsletter. Bruce will welcome any volunteers in this regard!

It Happened in May

Hatches and Dispatches

May 10, 1863 - Thomas J (Stonewall) Jackson dies at Guinea Station, Virginia, aged 39 years;

May 11, 1864 - JEB Stuart is mortally wounded at the Battle of Yellow Tavern, Virginia;

May 23, 1824 - Ambrose Burnside (USA) is born in Liberty, Indiana;

May 28, 1818 - Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard (CSA) is born in St Bernard, Louisiana;

Command Changes

May 2, 1863 - JEB Stuart assumes command of the Confederate cavalry after "Stonewall" Jackson is mortally wounded at Chancellorsville;

Battles

May 1, 1863 - Battle of Port Gibson, MS, which begins Grant's Vicksburg Campaign;

May 1 - 4, 1863 - Battle of Chancellorsville, that results in stunning Confederate victory for Lee's Army of Northern Virginia;

May 5, 1864 - Battle of the Wilderness begins;

May 8, 1864 - Fighting begins at Spotsylvania Court House, Virginia;

May 12, 1864 - Battle of Bloody Angle, Spotsylvania;

May 12, 1865 - The last land battle between large forces resulting in a Confederate victory takes place at Palmito Ranch, Texas;

May 16, 1863 - Battle of Champion Hill, Mississippi;

May 17, 1863 - Battle of Big Black River Bridge, MS;

May 18, 1863 - Siege of Vicksburg, MS, begins;

May 19, 1863 - Grant launches his first unsuccessful attack against the besieged Vicksburg;

May 23 - 26, 1864 - Battle of North Anna, Virginia;

May 25, 1862 - Jackson attacks the Federals in the First Battle of Winchester, VA and captures the town two days later;

May 27, 1862 - Battle of Slash Church (Hanover Court House);

May 31, 1862 - Battle of Seven Pines (Fair Oaks) where General Joseph Johnston (CSA) is severely wounded.

Other Significant Events

May 4, 1865 - Lincoln is buried in Springfield, Illinois;

May 9, 1865 - The trial of the 8 accused Lincoln assassination conspirators begins;

March 4, 1865 - Lincoln is inaugurated for a second term as President;

May 10, 1865 - Jefferson Davis is captured near Irwinville, Georgia;

May 16, 1861 - Tennessee is officially admitted to the Confederacy

May 20, 1861 - North Carolina becomes the 11 th state to join the Confederacy whilst Kentucky issues a proclamation of neutrality;

May 29, 1865 - President Johnson grants amnesty and pardon to all who participated in "the existing rebellion", with a few exceptions.

A Balanced View of Lincoln?

These comments are reprinted from an earlier Newsletter and are an assessment of the causes of the Civil War and of Lincoln. The comments were sent to us by Jenny Holder, one of our members from South Australia, and purport to be the views of a person with training in Law and Political Science. Jenny's comment on the statement is particularly interesting when she says " ... each to their own opinion...there is, after all, freedom of speech ': One gets the feeling that Jenny does not agree with what is said.

" ... The American Civil War was about many issues, economic and political, yet slavery seems to overshadow all of them in any discussion about the causes of the war. It was a very brutal and foolish war that need not have occurred except for the pig-headedness of Lincoln and the Northern abolitionists. It was, also, an illegal war on the part of the Union; there is not a single word in the Constitution that prohibits secession, nor authorizes the use of military force to prevent a state from seceding. Lincoln and the Northern Unionists were pursuing a war of aggression against the southern States, pure and simple. Of course, that is always ignored in any discussion of the war and in all the history courses I have taken."

What do you think of what is asserted here in this statement about the War and Lincoln's part in it?

Unfortunately, no responses to the views expressed here were received from our members despite or, maybe because, we stated that all responses to these views will be printed in subsequent issues of our Newsletter. How someone having a go at responding to this?

2011 Executive and Committee

As a result of the "elections" held at our Christmas function in November 2010, the following members of our Chapter will comprise the Executive and Committee for 2011:

Chairman ... John Cook
Secretary/Treasurer ... Brendan O'Connell
Program Director ... Bruce McLennan

Committee Members (7)

David Hain
Robin Haines
Angus Hordern
Geoff Kay
Tony Kovacevic
Maureen Morris
Peter Zacharatos (Jnr)

Congratulations to each of these members for their election and their willingness to serve for the Chapter. These Committee members should note that it might be necessary this year to schedule our Committee meetings differently to accommodate the HSC study program of Peter Zacharatos. I'm sure all of the Committee will understand the benefits we will gain from Peter's contribution will be more than worth this adjustment.

Annual Subscriptions

Our Secretary/Treasurer, Brendan O'Connell, has advised that the 2011 annual subscription for the NSW Chapter of ACWRTA is now overdue. The current rates are:

\$40 pa for members living in the Sydney Metropolitan Area, which includes a \$10 venue hire charge;

\$30 pa for all other members.

As has been our policy in previous years, payment of this subscription covers all members of the one family.

Members who have not received an account for this annual subscription or who have yet to pay the amount are asked to respond with payment to:

Brendan O'Connell
Secretary/Treasurer,
ACWRTA (NSW Chapter)
PO Box 200,
St Ives 2075,

This will facilitate the smooth and efficient conduct of our Chapter's activities for the coming year.

This publication is the official newsletter of the New South Wales Chapter of the American Civil War Round Table of Australia. All inquiries regarding the Newsletter should be addressed to the Secretary/Treasurer of the Chapter by telephone on 9449 3720 or at PO Box 200, St Ives, NSW, 2075 or by e-mail to secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au

A Picture Tells a Thousand Words...

In the photograph below, we see the "young" and the "old" of our Chapter, with Paul Kensey making the presentation to Peter Zacharatos following their presentations at the last meeting in March. As noted previously in this Newsletter in the Chairman's message to members, it was fitting that a presentation to Peter was made in recognition of his performance on the night and his commitment to the Chapter since joining the group.



Well done Peter and we hope to enjoy many more of your presentations in the future.

We Need a Speaker!

Bruce McLennan as our new Program Director is looking for a speaker for our July/August and the October regular meetings. The choice of topic is left to you but should focus on some aspects of the history leading up to the American Civil War, the War itself and/or its aftermath.

Any member wishing to volunteer for this task should contact Bruce as soon as possible on his mobile or telephone at 0416 231 939 or 9400 9898.

Some Memorable Quotes...

"See what a lot of land these fellows hold, of which Vicksburg is the key ... Let us get Vicksburg and all the country is ours. The War can never be brought to a close until that key is in our pocket"

- Abraham Lincoln

"The fate of the Confederacy was sealed when Vicksburg fell. Much hard fighting was to be done afterwards and many precious lives were to be sacrificed; but the morale was with the supporters of the Union ever after"

- General Ulysses S Grant

Thomas P Lowry – You be the Judge

In our last Newsletter we presented some biographical details of psychiatrist and amateur Civil War historian Thomas P Lowry and a provided a review of one of his popular books.



Thomas P Lowry

Since that time, Lowry has been investigated for altering an Abraham Lincoln Presidential pardon that is part of the permanent records of the U.S. National Archives. The pardon was for Patrick Murphy, a Civil War soldier in the Union Army who was court-martialled for desertion. Lowry admitted to changing the date of Murphy's pardon, written in Lincoln's hand, from April 14, 1864, to April 14, 1865, the day John Wilkes Booth assassinated Lincoln at Ford's Theatre in Washington, DC. Having changed the year from 1864 to 1865, Lowry was then able to claim that this pardon was of significant historical relevance because it could be considered one of, if not the final, official act by President Lincoln before his assassination.

Subsequently, Lowry recanted his alleged confession claiming it was made under severe duress and full details of his present position are presented in the following links:

<http://tomlowry.wordpress.com>
<http://www.AccusersSmitten.com>
<http://www.ValidDatabase.com>

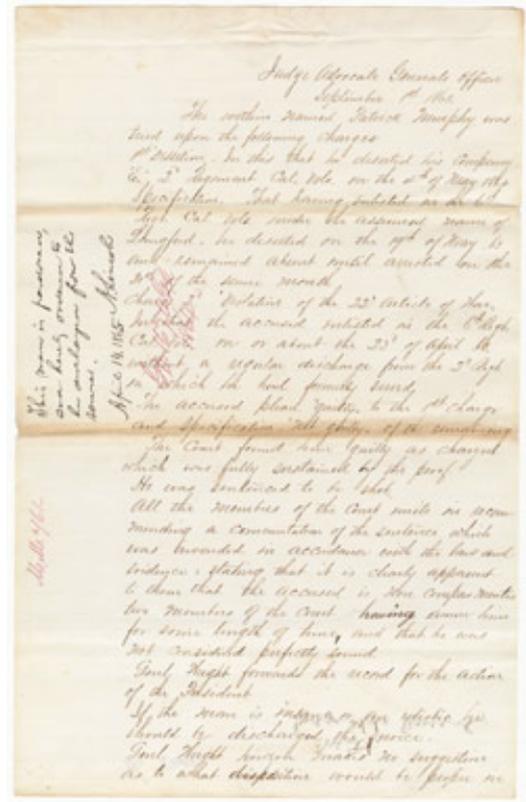
The National Archives has published their account of the Lowry case, which may be accessed by the following link:

<http://www.archives.gov/press/pressreleases/2011/nr11-57.html>

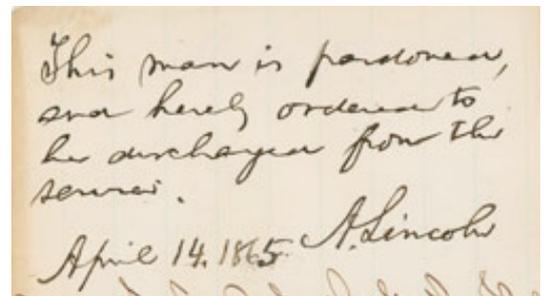
As will be seen from the National Archives press-release, the Department of Justice has ruled that Lowry cannot be prosecuted because the statute of limitations has expired, but the National Archives has banned him permanently from all its facilities and research rooms.

The National Archives has released some images relating to his case and these are presented in the adjoining column. One must wonder why it is not possible with modern technology to ascertain beyond reasonable doubt if there is a forgery and when this would have occurred. At present, there is Lowry's admission, which he says was made under duress and has since recanted. If Lowry's comments are to be believed, it is of considerable concern that, in this case, the processes of natural justice may not have been followed.

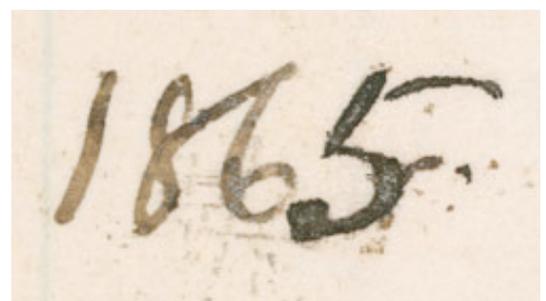
National Archives' Images...



President Lincoln pardon for Patrick Murphy, a Civil War soldier in the Union Army who was court-martialled for desertion. Records of the Judge Advocate General (Army) National Archives. [ARC Identifier: 1839980](https://www.archives.gov/press/pressreleases/2011/nr11-57.html)



Close up of altered date and Abraham Lincoln "A. Lincoln" signature from a President Lincoln pardon for Patrick Murphy, a Civil War soldier in the Union Army.



Close up of the altered date: Records of the Judge Advocate General (Army) National Archives.

It appears that some change to the date may have been made, but the question remains of when was it made and was it Thomas Lowry who made it?

You be the Judge!