



Sumter to Appomattox

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

Patron: Professor the Hon Bob Carr

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Please visit our website www.americancivilwar.asn.au

A Message from Our Chairman

Our last meeting included the AGM and, as the new President, I am fortunate to be able to thank the excellent committee members for agreeing to help with the leadership and organisation of this quirky and diverse group with a shared interest in everything related to the American Civil War.

We also had the pleasure of an interesting, amusing and (dare I say it) quirky presentation by Len Traynor. It was an excellent evening with 35+ people taking part.

I am often amazed at the incredible depth, detail and breadth of the knowledge of several members of our group, and Len is a prime example. However, I also enjoy the way that we include and cater for people who share an interest in events that occurred more than 150 years ago on the other side of the world but have spread their time and energy to other life pursuits as well. They therefore do not aspire to being a totally comprehensive walking encyclopedia on the subject, but settle for being a thinner encyclopedia on the highlights and overarching themes, the overall story and the lessons that history has to teach.

John Morrison, our Program Director and one of those (thick, detailed) walking encyclopedias, and our committee expend a good deal of time and energy plotting and scheming in regard to future programs in order to maintain the lively interest of all of our members. I can cope with friends and colleagues in other aspects of my life shaking heads in bemusement because, every now and then, I find someone who wants to join in.

Dan McIntyre

Our Next Meeting

Monday, 18th February, 2019

The Roseville Club

Diplomacy During the Civil War

Critical to the outcome of the Civil War were two significant issues:

1. Foreign Intervention
2. Foreign Recognition of the Confederacy

The threat of recognition posed by Britain or France (or both) to the republic, during or after the Civil War, was so serious that William Seward, Lincoln's Secretary of State, warned both nations that formal recognition of the Confederacy would mean war with the Union.

On two occasions during the war, Britain and France came close to recognizing the Confederacy. Had either intervention succeeded, the Confederacy would have emerged as a separate nation – leaving both it and the greatly weakened Union facing a heightened British presence in Canada and Latin America, as well as the French presence along much of the former U.S. southwestern border.

Recognition was such a dangerous and delicate issue in both Union and Confederate diplomacy that it enveloped most other disputes.

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

Happenings

It Happened in January

HATCHES AND DESPATCHES

January 8, 1821 – James Longstreet, CSA, is born near Edgefield, South Carolina;

January 19, 1807 – Robert E Lee is born in Stratford, Virginia;

January 21, 1824 – Thomas J (Stonewall) Jackson is born in Clarksburg, Virginia;

January 25, 1825 – George Pickett, CSA, is born in Richmond, Virginia;

January 30, 1816 - Nathaniel Banks, USA, is born in Waltham, Massachusetts;

COMMAND AND POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

January 6, 1865 – Grant asks Lincoln to remove Butler from command of the Army of the James;

January 8, 1861 – Secretary of the Interior, Jacob Thompson of Mississippi, the last Southerner in Cabinet, resigns;

January 15, 1862 – The US Senate confirms Edwin M Stanton's appointment as Secretary of War;

January 22, 1864 – Major General William Rosecrans is named Commander of the Federal Department of Missouri;

January 23, 1865 – General Richard Taylor assumes command of the Army of Tennessee which now has fewer than 18 000 troops;

January 25, 1863 – The removal of General Burnside as Commander of the Army of the Potomac;

January 26, 1863 – Joseph Hooker is appointed Commander of the Army of the Potomac;

January 31, 1865 – General Robert E Lee is appointed General-in-Chief of the Confederate Armies;

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS

January 2, 1861 – South Carolina troops seize Fort Johnson in Charleston Harbour;

January 2, 1863 – Confederates defeated at the Battle of Murfreesboro (Stones River), Tennessee;

January 3, 1861 – Georgia state troops seize Fort Pulaski before Federal troops can occupy it;

January 4, 1861 – Alabama takes over the US arsenal at Mount Vernon

January 14, 1861 – Louisiana state troops seize Fort Pike near New Orleans;

January 19, 1865 – Sherman begins his march and destruction of the Carolinas;

January 19, 1862 – Federals push back Confederates in the Battle of Mill Springs (Logan's Cross Roads), Kentucky;

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

January 1, 1863 – President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation takes effect;

January 9, 1861 – Mississippi secedes from the Union;

January 10, 1861 – Florida secedes from the Union;

January 11, 1861 – Alabama secedes from the Union;

January 13, 1863 – Federal officials formally authorise the raising of black units for the South Carolina volunteer Infantry;

January 16, 1861 – Arkansas completes a bill calling for a referendum on secession;

January 17, 1861 – The Crittenden Compromise, proposing several amendments to the Constitution in order to save the Union, is "killed" in the US Senate;

January 18, 1862 – The Confederate Territory of Arizona is formed;

January 26, 1861 – Louisiana secedes from the Union;

January 28, 1863 – A mass rally in St Louis ratifies the Emancipation Proclamation;

January 29, 1861 - Kansas is admitted as the 34th state of the Union.

It Happened in February

HATCHES AND DESPATCHES

February 3, 1807 – Joseph E Johnston (CSA) is born at "Cherry Grove", Prince Edward County, Virginia;

February 6, 1833 – JEB Stuart (CSA) is born in Patrick County, Virginia;

February 8, 1820 – William Tecumseh Sherman (USA) is born in Lancaster, Ohio;

February 11, 1812 – Alexander Hamilton Stephens, Vice President of the Confederacy is born in Wilkes (Taliaferro) County, Georgia;

February 12, 1809 – Abraham Lincoln, 16th US President is born in Hardin County, Kentucky.

COMMAND AND POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

February 9, 1861 – the Confederate Provisional Congress elects Jefferson Davis as Provisional President of the Confederacy;

February 9, 1865 – Lee appointed General-in-Chief of Confederate Armies;

February 18, 1861 – Davis is inaugurated as President of the Confederacy;

February 22, 1862 – Davis is sworn in as President of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia.

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS

February 5, 1864 – Sherman's Federals march into Jackson Mississippi en route to Meridian;

February 10, 1862 – The remainder of the "Mosquito" fleet is destroyed at Elizabeth City, NC;

February 14, 1864 – Sherman's Union troops capture Meridian, Mississippi;

February 16, 1862 – Confederates surrender Fort Donelson, Tennessee, to Ulysses S Grant

February 17, 1865 – Columbia, SC, is captured and Charleston, SC, is evacuated;

February 18, 1865 – Charleston, SC, surrenders to Union troops under Brigadier General Alexander Schimmelfennig;

February 24, 1862 – Federal troops under General Nathaniel Banks occupy Harpers Ferry, Virginia;

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

February 1, 1865 – Illinois is the first State to ratify the 13th Amendment, abolishing slavery;

February 4, 1861 – First session of the Provisional Congress of the Confederate States of America is held in Montgomery, Alabama;

February 7, 1865 - Lincoln meets with the Confederate peace commissioners aboard the *River Queen* at Hampton Roads, Virginia;

February 19, 1862 - New Confederate Congress orders the release of 2,000 Federal POWs;

February 20, 1865 – The Confederate House of Representatives authorises use of slaves as soldiers;

February 23, 1861 – Texas voters approve secession by a wide margin;

February 25, 1862 – Federal War Department takes control of all telegraph lines to facilitate military movements;

February 26, 1863 – The Cherokee Indian National Council repeals the ordinance of secession, proclaims for the Union;

February 27, 1864 – Near Americus in Georgia, Federal Prisoners of War begin arriving at the unfinished Camp Sumter (Andersonville) prison camp.

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 of the Chapter by telephone on 0411 745 704 or by e-mail at:

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Our Last meeting

Our Christmas Function

The ACWRTA's Christmas Party was a great success. We began the evening with the Annual General Meeting. The meeting began with rounds of thanks to:

- Frank Noble for his very generous donation of a large number of books on the Civil War, which were purchased with enthusiasm;
- Bruce McLennan for his excellent work as President of our Chapter. Bruce was presented with a bottle of wine by Vice-President, John Morrison;



- Ongoing committee members: John Morrison, Vice-President; Brendan, Treasurer; Dan Howard, and three other committee members;
- Those who have generously contributed to the newsletter over the year;

Incoming President Ian McIntyre was welcomed in his new position.

Our Speaker

We were privileged to have as our speaker our esteemed Life Member, Len Traynor, who incidentally contributes the well-received Snippets to this newsletter.

Len was introduced by John Morrison, who referred to his own interest in uniforms of the Civil War.

Len, nattily dressed in a waistcoat and fob watch of the period, began with a number of anecdotes related to his own interest in uniforms of the period, including opportunities to examine uniforms hidden away in basements of American museums and libraries which had been donated in the early 20th century. He spoke of finding a burnt match and tiny photos of babies hidden away in pockets of undisturbed jackets. He also noted the extreme slenderness of the original wearers and the fact that these uniforms were made of wool.

Len then offered a number of observations based on his own study of the period, including the fact that the more he learns, the less he knows. The American Civil War battles were of great magnitude and it is impossible to describe all the actions and skirmishes that took place

over 1500 days. This was the greatest war between English-speaking people; it was the last old war and the first new war; it had the greatest testing of weapons using new technology and its consequences directly and indirectly affect everyone today. He spoke of ironclads and of greater equality for women. Other fascinating facts included the fact that instant coffee was first issued in this war and that the trial of the Lincoln conspirators was the first legal proceedings in history to be recorded in shorthand – and this by Pitman himself, its inventor. Another fact: Coca-Cola was developed post-war by an Atlanta chemist, who added soda water to the original formula he purchased from a wound civil war veteran who used cocaine and the syrup of the Kola nut to ease the pain of his war wound.

As well as the tragedy of distrust and division between sides, there was love. The highlight of Len's talk was his story of Mary Humphreys and her husband, Isaac Davis Stamps, an officer of the Army of North Virginia and a relative by marriage of Jefferson Davis. Isaac had asked his wife to bring his body back if he died in battle and bury it underneath a particular tree. When he died at Gettysburg, and she received notice of this, she began a heroic mission to fulfil his wishes. She first travelled from Richmond, Virginia to his grave in the Gettysburg battlefield, a journey of seemingly insurmountable odds. She then supervised the exhumation of his coffin and, over a period of two months, transported it 1500 miles, initially by train as far as she could go, sitting beside it, and then hiring a team of horses for the final journey, finally reburying his body under the tree he had specified at Rosemont Plantation in Mississippi next to his beloved daughter, Sallie. Mary had kept her promise to him.



Snippets

Thanks again to Len Traynor

The vagaries of promotion in the Union Army during the Civil War.

During the four years of conflict many West Point graduates opted for service in the volunteer force as the chances of promotion to higher rank were much better than in the U.S. Regular Army. A classic example of this was Henry Algernon Du Pont who graduated first in the class of 1861. He served with the 5th U.S. Artillery, and by wars end he had reached the rank of Captain.

Yet George Armstrong Custer who graduated at the bottom of the same class in 1861, 34th in a class of 34. Served with the Volunteer force, and within four years had reached the rank of Major General.

Civil War Generals.

Between 1861 and 1865 583 men were generals of various grades in the Union Army consisting of:

1 Lt. General

132 Major Generals

450 Brigadier Generals

Of that number 45 were foreign-born:

Canada 2; France 3; Germany 12; Great Britain 5; Ireland 12; Poland 2; Russia 1; Spain 2; Sweden 1; Switzerland 1; Hungary 2

38 were born in the Southern States:

Florida 3; Georgia 2; Louisiana 1; North Carolina 3; South Carolina 1; Tennessee 6; Virginia 18; Alabama 4

A large number were born in the North:

Connecticut 21; Delaware 5; Illinois 9; Indiana 21; Maine 31; Massachusetts 45; Michigan 4; New Hampshire 13; New Jersey 11; New York 113; Ohio 64; Pennsylvania 66; Rhode Island 6; Vermont 24; Wisconsin 1

Some were born in the border states:

Kentucky 41; Maryland and District of Columbia 20; Missouri 3



Civil War Profile

Thanks to Dan Howard

Prince Camille 'Polecat' de Polignac



Known as 'the Lafayette of the South', Prince Camille Armand de Polignac was a high-born French aristocrat. His grandmother had been Marie-Antoinette's closest friend; his father and his successors were hereditary princes. Polignac studied mathematics and had a passion for music (when in the South, he became a member of the Richmond Musical Society that also noted among its members the first lady of the Confederacy, Varina Davis).

Unusually, Polignac served in three major conflicts of the 19th century. He commanded troops as a second lieutenant in the French army during the Crimean War. In 1859, Polignac travelled to Central America to study geography, political economy and botany, and then travelled to the United States, where he happened to find himself when the Civil War broke out. Polignac decided to offer his services to the Confederate Army and served for a time on the staffs of both Braxton Bragg and Polignac's friend P.G.T. Beauregard, seeing action at the Siege of Corinth (1862) and at the Battle of Richmond, Kentucky. He became the highest-ranking foreigner to serve in the Confederate Army, rising to the rank of Major General and commanding a division of rough Louisianan and Texan troops (who nicknamed him 'Polecat' – Texan slang a skunk - because they had trouble pronouncing his name!). He brought to those troops much needed discipline and leadership, and most importantly, combat success in the battles of Mansfield and Pleasant Hill during the Red River campaign.

In March 1865, Polignac travelled on behalf of the Confederacy at the behest of his department commander, General E Kirby-Smith, to seek support from Napoleon III of France for the Southern cause, but by the time he arrived it was too late, as Lee had already surrendered at Appomattox on 9th April. Polignac never returned to the United States. Polignac settled at his wealthy estate in France, and also continued his travels and studies in Central America. Later, as a Brigadier General, he commanded a division in the Franco-Prussian War (1870 – 71).

Polignac was a skilful and courageous soldier who led from the front. Brandishing his sword at in a surprise attack in 1864 on a Federal post at Vidalia, Louisiana, he shouted to his men "Follow me! Follow me! You call me polecat, I will show you whether I am polecat or Polignac!" He earned the deep respect of his men and was fondly remembered by those who served under him. Twice married and father to four children (all princes or princesses), Polignac died in 1913 in Paris at the age of 81, the last surviving Major General of the Confederate Army.

For further reading see the article by Donald Barnhart, 'Frontier Royalty' in *America's Civil War Magazine*, September 2018 p 26; Jeff Kinard, *Lafayette of the South*, Texas A & M University, (2001).

Civil War Profile

Thanks to John Morrison

Lincoln and Jewish Americans during the Civil War

American Jews during the Civil War era were a tiny and often oppressed minority of the population: 150,000 out of about 32 million (0.5% of the population). The US did boast vibrant centers of Jewish life in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and New Orleans. Overall, some 6,000 Jews served in the American military and included twelve generals, 6 Medal of Honor winners, many surgeons and others.

Northern Jews remained loyal to the Union, Southern Jews mainly to the Confederacy and to slavery.

Jews filled no major roles in the administration; however, Judah P. Benjamin became Secretary of State of the Confederacy. His elevation did not eliminate bigotry and one county in Georgia was consumed by an uprising aimed at driving out Jews.

In the supposedly enlightened North, in New York (the same city where the "Jews' Hospital, today known as Cedar Sinai Medical Center, changed its policy in order to treat wounded soldiers of all faiths), draft rioters attacked and pillaged Jewish stores just a few days after the Battle of Gettysburg.

Against this backdrop of discrimination stood a modern Abraham - Lincoln. He was about 30 years old when he first met a fellow Illinois lawyer, Jewish Abraham Jonas, who became an enthusiastic political supporter, and "one of my most valued friends." Lincoln subsequently appointed him a postmaster and paroled Jonas's son, a captured Rebel, to visit his father on his deathbed, stating that "the sins of the son ought not to be visited on the loyal father".

Amongst Jews Lincoln counted as friends and allies were i) Julius Hammerslough, a Springfield merchant who attended his inauguration and later helped raise funds to build his tomb, ii) Henry Rice, a clothing retailer, and iii) photographer Samuel Alschuler, who took the first ever photograph of Lincoln with a beard.

Bavarian-born Chicago merchant Abraham Kohn, president of Congregation Anshe Maariv (Men of the West), was a staunch Republican supporter. Just before Lincoln left Illinois for the White House, he sent the president-elect a flag emblazoned with Hebrew writing from Deuteronomy 31: "Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid neither be thou dismayed for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." A few days later Lincoln gave a farewell speech to his neighbors offering words clearly inspired by Kohn - he declared his trust in a God who can "go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good." Later witnesses remembered seeing Kohn's flag on display at the White House.

Most fascinating – and influential – of Lincoln's Jewish acquaintances was Isachar Zacharie, his Jewish chiropodist. In 1862, Lincoln heard that Zacharie could boast of having had feet of Clay, Henry Clay that is, Lincoln's personal and political hero. The President sent for him to see if he could alleviate his aching corns. Zacharie worked wonders. As the President said "Dr. Zacharie has operated on my feet with great success and considerable addition to my comfort". Not everyone who met the chiropodist was able to overcome prejudice. One general assessed Zacharie "the lowest and vulgarest form of Jew Peddlars." However, Lincoln was not swayed by such prejudice. He retained Zacharie as a physician, and also found other ways for him to serve the Union as unofficial envoy to Jewish communities in the South with an eye toward rebuilding their ties to the Union.

Zacharie worked hard for Lincoln's re-election in 1864, writing that "The Israelites [sic] with but few exceptions they will vote for you. I understand them well.... I have secured good and trustworthy men to attend to them on Election day. My men have been all the week seeing that their masses are properly [sic] registered—so that all will be right". This predictably aroused a stir in many quarters, including among Jewish voters, until Lincoln ordered an aide to write a letter assuring Jewish leaders that no one had ever pledged the Jewish vote to the President, and he had offered no inducements to secure it. No doubt Zacharie was rather full of himself but despite this, Lincoln saw something in him. Lincoln was an excellent judge of character and Zacharie did serve him beneficially, not just medically.

In his dealings with the Jewish community, Lincoln was to face two great Challenges:

1. Appointment of a Jewish chaplain in the armed services.

Federal law required that all chaplains be "regularly ordained ministers of some Christian denomination." Michael Allen, a rabbinical student elected chaplain of a largely Jewish regiment, was pressured by the Army to quit. The commander, Colonel Freedman, promptly named a New York rabbi Arnold Fischel to take his place but he was also turned down – the law required all chaplains to be Christians.

Frustrated Jewish leaders went public, asking Lincoln to recognize "the principle of religious liberty . . . the constitutional rights of the Jewish community, and the

welfare of Jewish volunteers" who were dying in battle without access to spiritual support. Lincoln pledged, "I shall try to have a new law broad enough to cover what is desired by you on behalf of the Israelites." The following summer, the law was amended to include all "regularly ordained ministers of some denomination" ("Christian" was expunged). That September, Lincoln named Rabbi Jacob Frankel of Philadelphia the first Jewish chaplain in American military history.

2. Ulysses S Grant, General Order Number 11

After his triumph at the Battle of Shiloh, General Grant inexplicably began imagining Jews were infiltrating his encampments en-masse - speculating, profiteering, and conducting other wicked business unchecked. In July 1862 he ordered his commanders to inspect all visitors' baggage and confiscate contraband, noting, "Jews should receive special attention". On 17 December 1862, Grant issued his infamous General Orders Number 11, declaring in part:

The Jews, as a class violating every regulation of trade ... are hereby expelled from the department within 24 hours. ... Post commanders will see that all of this class of people be ... required to leave, and any one returning after such notification will be arrested and held in confinement.

Predictably this order provoked a severe reaction from Jewish leaders and many of Grant's supporters - including his great champion Illinois Congressman Elihu Washburne. Some went directly to the President, who might easily have ignored the outcry (for fear of humiliating his most valuable military asset). To his credit, he did not excuse or cover up. When a delegation of elders visited Lincoln, he told them, "I don't like to see a class or nationality condemned on account of a few sinners". Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise recalled "The President fully convinced us that he knew of no distinction between Jews and Gentiles and that he feels none against any nationality and especially against Israelites".

This was the only occasion in which Lincoln ever overruled Grant. Lincoln made sure that General Orders Number 11 was rescinded a few weeks after its publication. Whether this inspired Jews to vote as a bloc for Lincoln's re-election the following fall is impossible to know, but the positive impact on Lincoln's reputation was incontestable.

Lincoln was assassinated on 15 April 1865 (Good Friday). Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, who had once called Lincoln a "primitive", now praised "the spirit and principles of the man." At Temple throughout the North, mourners' Kaddish was recited for the first time in memory of a non-Jew. Even in the South, Jewish leaders acknowledged a special bond between Lincoln and the Jews and a special sorrow at his loss. This was attributed mainly to Lincoln's many acts of compassion and justice, but perhaps also to the fact that his religious beliefs seemed so universal. As Lincoln stated

"When I do good I feel good, and when I do bad I feel bad, and that's my religion".