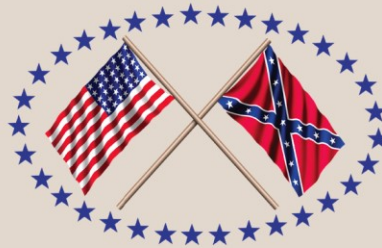


Sumter to Appomattox



American Civil War Round Table of Australia (New South Wales Chapter)

www.americancivilwar.asn.au

Patron: Prof the Hon Bob Carr

Number 104 Jan. - Feb. 2021

President's AGM Report

Dear Friends,

Our American Civil War Round Table Chapter has encountered turbulence since the last AGM, like all people and organisations in the year of COVID 19. However, we are still a viable and vibrant group that has adapted to new circumstances. We have continued to hold well-attended meetings by means of Zoom and now we celebrate our resilience by being able to gather in person once again for our AGM.

However, I am aware that not all of our members find Zoom an inviting experience and that some of our members are not confident to meet in person yet with the virus potentially lurking in ambush. It is my hope for 2021 that we will again be able to gather together with confidence, mingle in our "group of friends" way and indulge in person in our shared pastime as amateur historians with a quirky interest in a war that happened on the other side of the world approximately 160 years ago. It is endlessly fascinating to keep discovering that these events still provide insights relevant to understanding today's world.

I want to acknowledge and thank the excellent committee that has worked together in a wonderful collaboration regardless of the difficulties encountered. The Committee for 2020 has been John Morrison as Program Director and Vice President, Dan Howard as Secretary, Wayne Morrison as Treasurer, Jannette Greenwood as Newsletter Editor, Peter Zacharatos as Membership Facilitator, and Bruce McLennan as Immediate Past President.

The Committee has held five minuted meetings and several additional informal discussions since the last AGM. *cont. p.2*

Our Next Meeting

Monday, February 15, 2021 from 6.30pm

The Roseville Club

TOPIC: Military impressment and exploitation of boys and youths as substitutes in the war's last two years

Presenter: Assoc Professor Frances M Clarke

Frances Clarke received her doctorate from Johns Hopkins University in 2002, then worked for a year as a researcher for the American Historical Association in Washington D.C. In 2003, she took up a lectureship in the University of Sydney's History Department. Since that time, she has taught courses on a range of topics in U.S. history - from the colonial era through to the early twentieth century.

Her research specialties include the history of the American Civil War and Reconstruction era; war, memory, and trauma; the history of childhood; and the social, cultural, and political history of the nineteenth-century U.S. Her first book, *War Stories: Suffering and Sacrifice in the Civil War North* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), jointly won the AHA's biennial Hancock prize for the best first book in any field of history. She subsequently began a series of collaborations with Associate Professor Rebecca Jo Plant (UCSD), first to write about the racial politics of war memory in the interwar U.S. and, more recently, to examine debates over youth enlistment in post-Revolutionary America.

See p.2 for more information on the topic.

cont. from page 1

COVID-19 notwithstanding, we held member meetings on 17 February, 1 June (by Zoom), 3 August (by Zoom), 21 September (by Zoom) and now this AGM on 23 November 2019. The 6 April meeting was cancelled while we were still to figure out how to deal with COVID19.

Six excellent editions of the newsletter have been published since the last AGM. The newsletters can all be found on our website and they record that presentations at the meetings included *The Iron Brigade* (Rod Cooke), *Epidemics* (Infectious Disease) in the Civil War (John Morrison), *The Battle of Brice's Crossroads* (Peter Zacharatos), *War Gaming Chickamauga* (Wayne Morrison), *The Bixby Letter* (John Morrison) and *Women in the Civil War* (Peter Headley).

All these presentations were well-researched, well presented and very interesting. It is excellent that we are taking advantage of the depth of knowledge and ability within our group. Jannette Greenwood has also included many other feature articles and profiles in the newsletter, with Dan Howard and Len Traynor being particularly valuable sources. Jannette, through the newsletters, has made an enormous contribution to keeping our members engaged, even when we were unable to meet in person.

As at the last AGM, the course "*Origins of the American Civil War – How did it come to this?*" developed and delivered at WEA by the Round Table was at the halfway mark. I am pleased to record that it continued to be enthusiastically received and finished in a triumph of positive feedback to an extent that was apparently unusual. It was yet more evidence of the enormous knowledge and capability within the Round Table Chapter.

Best wishes

Ian McIntyre

23 November 2020

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

Some background on our next topic



Soldiers from the 2nd Rhode Island Infantry Regiment posed with three unidentified African American boys at Camp Brightwood in Washington, D.C. (c. 1861-63).

Wherever Union army camps were established, Black children sought refuge there, sometimes with parents or other relatives, sometimes on their own. These boys are all wearing Union army uniforms - note the turned-up cuffs on the youngest boy's jacket - but they were almost certainly not enlisted or officially on the army payroll. Instead, they had probably been given or purchased the clothes in exchange for working as servants to the officers.

Source: "*Contraband foreground*", stereograph, New York: E. & H. T. Anthony & Co., American and Foreign Stereoscopic Emporium, 501 Broadway, [between 1861 and 1865], Library of Congress.

This publication is the official newsletter of the American Civil War Round Table of Australia (NSW Chapter). All inquiries regarding the newsletter should be addressed to the Secretary of the Chapter by telephone on 0411 745 704 or by e-mail to: secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au

Our Last Meeting

Our last meeting was our AGM and Christmas function.

After the AGM, we were privileged to have two presentations, given by esteemed members, John Morrison and Dan Howard.

The Meaning of the Civil War to today's America

John Morrison



John's presentation contained the following points:

- Lincoln's assassination
- Reconstruction 1863-1877
- Withdrawal of occupation troops from the South in 1877
- Reimposition of white supremacy and Jim Crow Laws (late 19thC/early 20thC
- The Republican "Southern Strategy" (1968 to present day)
- Liberal Democrat "guilt"
- Trump – a symptom, not *the disease*!

“The Civil War Never Ended ... and it can still be lost!” Barbara Fields (1990)

John began his presentation with the comment that the worst thing that happened for the post-war healing of the United States was the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln had encouraged letting the South off more easily at the end of the War because both the North and South had problems. The punitive treatment of the South after the war contributed to issues that are still affecting the States today.

John's slides show the political leanings of the States at different points from 1860 to 2020. The significant point is that the different blocks of states still map in the same way today but with opposite political party positions.

The 1860 Election

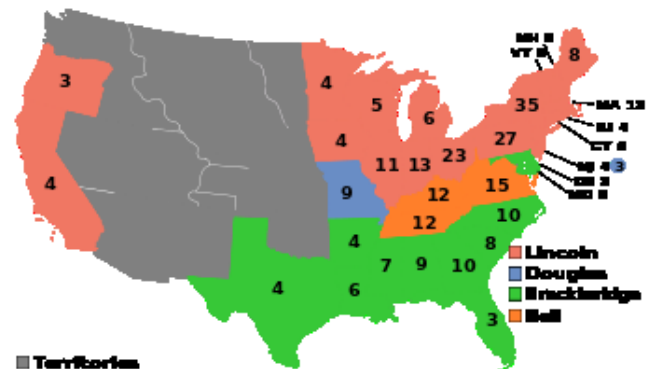
Candidates:

Pink: Abraham Lincoln, Illinois: Republican Party
Orange: John Bell, Tennessee: Constitutional Union Party

Green: John Breckenridge, Kentucky: southern faction of Democratic Party ("Dixiecrats")

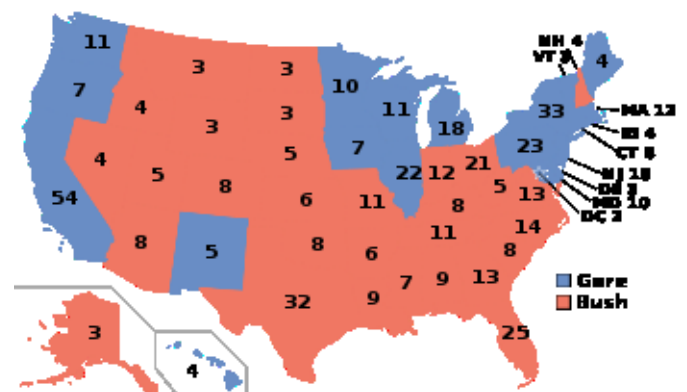
Light blue: Stephen Douglas, Illinois, northern Democrat

1860 Presidential Election



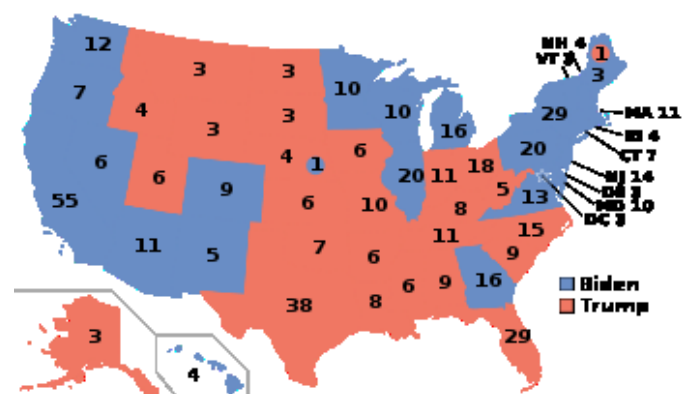
The 2000 Election between Bush and Gore shows how the situation had flipped but states could still be grouped in terms of their political allegiances.

2000 Presidential Election



The 2020 election results show a similar pattern, with the most obvious factor being that the South now votes Republican and the North-East and Western states tend to vote Democrat – the reverse of 1860.

2020 Presidential Election



The following slide shows a range of American bumper stickers that John noticed while travelling in the States and which illustrate the independent-thinking, anti-government attitudes of many Southerners.



So what led to these anti-government attitudes in the South? With the assassination of Lincoln, the restraint he advocated was not forthcoming to the same extent and “Victors’ Vengeance” followed, with an army of occupation until 1877. It was a political decision intended to facilitate the reconstruction of the South and protect the rights of freed slaves, but its presence helped shaped Southern attitudes up until the present.

The ending of the Reconstruction period occurred as a result of the 1876 election (arguably the most disputed election in U.S. history). In order to break the election results deadlock, an informal agreement between southern Democrats and allies of Republican Presidential candidate Rutherford Hayes resulted in Hayes becoming President and the Reconstruction era coming to a close and with it, reduced protections for African Americans. What followed was the Jim Crow movement, the KKK and other means to suppress the rights and voting opportunities of this group.

The Republican “Southern Strategy”, beginning in the 1960s with Goldwater and Nixon, was a deliberate appeal to racist tendencies of the white South. This successfully contributed to realignment of many white, conservative voters who had traditionally voted Democrat. At the same time, both parties developed a Conservative and a Progressive wing, which contributed to a lack of compromise within Congress and to continuing legislation that disadvantaged the African American population.

John then discussed “Liberal Democrat guilt” – the guilt felt that the Democratic party could have been the party of slavery and the continued disenfranchisement of African Americans.

John’s presentation ended with reference back to “Southern Sentiment” as expressed on bumper stickers (“... cause you said I can’t”) and

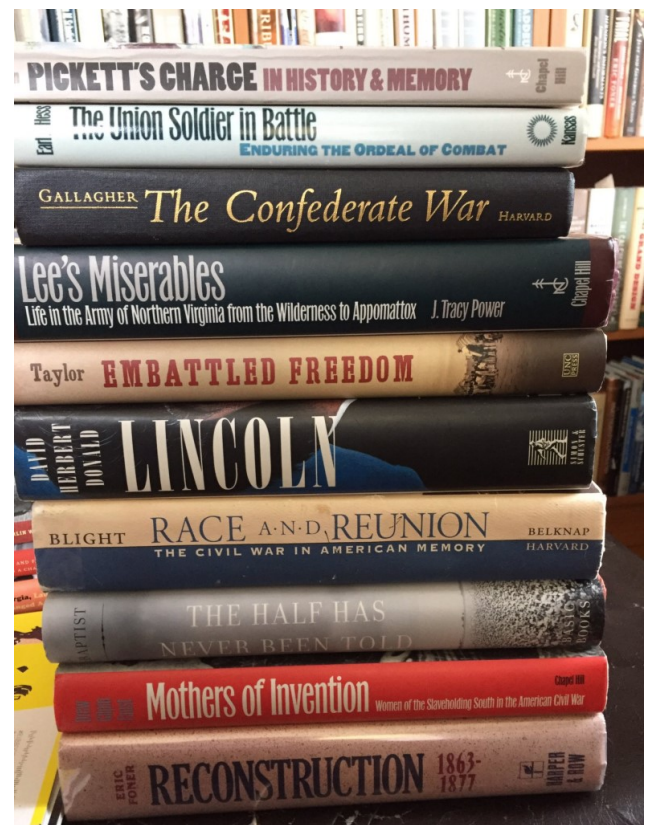
to the words of Barbara Fields – that the Civil War has never really ended and that Trump is a symptom that goes right back to the Civil War.

Reflections on the Meaning of the Civil War to Today’s American

Dan Howard

Dan began his presentation with the comment that it is impossible to understand America without understanding the Civil War and its far-reaching consequences.

He noted how the War continues to resonate through memorabilia and the more than 60,000 books available on the topic.



There are a number of holidays that have connections to the War and its consequences:

- Juneteenth (19th June)
- Confederate Memorial Day
 - Tennessee – Decoration Day June 3rd (Thomas Jefferson's birthday)
 - South Carolina – May 10th public holiday
 - Mississippi – last Monday in April
 - Alabama – 4th Monday in April – now just a 'state holiday' after 2015 Charleston Church shooting (in Georgia, Confederate Memorial Day and Robert E. Lee's birthday were struck from the official calendar in 2015)
- Martin Luther King Day (18th January)
- President's Day (3rd Monday in February) – this celebrates Washington's birthday but falls close to the birthday of Lincoln

"Rebel Yell" whisky celebrates the famous yell of the Confederate soldiers in the Civil War.



Dan referred to the fact that the American Constitution was only agreed to by the Southern States, with the inclusion of the infamous 'three fifths' clause, that slaves were counted as three fifths of a free person and women did not have the vote, and this set in train the long and tortuous path against racism in America that is still playing out today.



There have been a number of amendments to correct the situation for African Americans:

13th – abolished slavery, ensured equal protection for all (but this was subverted)

14th – granted citizenship and equal civil and legal rights to emancipated slaves

15th – African Americans voting rights

Unfortunately, these new rights were subverted in the south by various 'black codes' (particularly after the Federal occupation of the South ended) and the gradual spread of 'Jim Crow' laws that undermined these rights.

Historians have noted the tension in the late 19th and early 20th centuries between the new rights of African Americans and the desire to accept southerners back into union. According to David Blight, author of *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*, this latter only happened by subverting black rights (e.g. with the *Jim Crow* laws) and led to the North, and indeed the Supreme Court, in tolerating the 'separate but equal' doctrine that existed until the decision in *Brown v The Board of Education* in 1954.

The urge for reconciliation was at the expense of racial integration. For example, there had been no Confederate soldiers buried at Arlington until the early 20th century when section 16 was established. It contains 482 Confederate graves as well as the Confederate Memorial, unveiled in 1914, which has been criticised as glorifying the Southern states.

The sentimentality referred to by Dan can be seen in the many films which celebrate the Old South and the Confederacy such as with *Gone with the Wind*. However more recent films have addressed the deeper issues, such as *Glory*, *Twelve Years a Slave* and *Lincoln*.

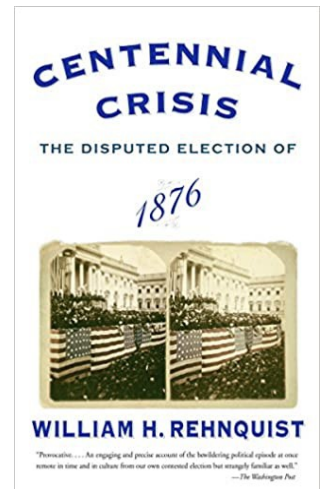
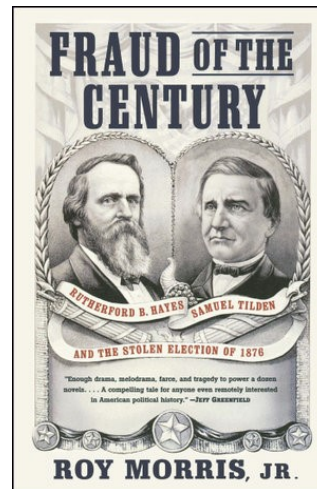




Other films Dan mentioned were *Lincoln* (Daniel Day Lewis) and *Twelve Years a Slave*.

In the context of the 2020 US election, Dan noted the precedent of the disputed, very close 1876 election which Republican R.B. Hayes of Ohio won against Democratic Senator Samuel J. Tilden of New York, despite the latter winning the popular vote (this was the second of five elections in which the popular vote winner did not win the election). His win was achieved through a compromise with the Democrats to end Reconstruction and to withdraw federal troops from the South, which in turn, as discussed, led to *Jim Crow* laws and other means of suppression.

Today, the effects of this can be seen in the Black Lives Matter movement and other reactions to ongoing discrimination.



Today, despite the substantial gains in civil rights for African Americans through the Civil Rights Acts and other changes in the law, the longstanding effects of discrimination can still be seen in the Black Lives Matter movement and other reactions to ongoing discrimination



Discussing the 2020 US Presidential election, Dan noted the strong tendency for larger towns and cities to vote Democrat, while the small communities and rural areas tended to vote Republican – an interesting and marked divide.

Dan considered other factors leading to the election of President Trump and its consequences for the 2020 election and the Supreme Court.



This meeting was held before the results of the 2020 Presidential election were known, so discussions of the outcome was speculative. Dan referred to the fact that today's densely-populated cities tend to be Democrat.

Dan finished his talk with a list of topics for discussion and with that came comments from the appreciative audience.

His topics:

- Monuments?
- Black Lives Matter?
- Movies and Literature?
- The 2020 election?
- The Supreme Court?
- Has America's 'original sin' been cleansed away?
- Is America headed for civil war?
- What lessons are there from the Civil War for Australia?

Both presentations at the meeting were stimulating and informative and it will be productive to discuss these points from a newer, updated perspective at our next meeting.

Rick Springfield Civil War song

Musician Rick Springfield was born in Wentworthville NSW in 1949. In 1968 he and his group toured the troops in Vietnam and in 1972 his first studio album *Beginnings* included a Civil War track: "**Hooky Jo**" (3:40). That year he was voted "Most Popular Australian Musician". After he moved to the US, in 1981 he had a number 1 hit in both Australia and USA with "*Jessie's Girl*".

Vale Paul Kensey, RFD, ED.

Members at the meeting were saddened to hear of the passing of our inaugural President of the Roundtable, Paul Kensey, RFD, ED., who died on November 17th.

We would like to acknowledge the very significant role that Paul played in the setting up and ongoing development of the Roundtable and we greatly appreciate this tribute written for the newsletter by our second President John Cook, who also gave the oration at his funeral.

Tribute to Paul Kensey by John Cook

Paul Kensey, the inaugural President of our Roundtable, died on November 17. Paul had a long-term interest in the Civil War, beginning in the 1960s when he was undertaking the Australian Army's examinations in Military History for promotion to Major. It was during that time particular Civil War battles were topics for study and examination.

Visits to both the Eastern and Western battlefields followed as part of his family's overseas holidays and Paul was "hooked" on American History. Paul's wife, Anne, tells the story of their having to "walk the ground" at Gettysburg. Later, Paul extended his interest to visit Montana, where he studied the 1876 battle now known as Custer's Last Stand at the Little Big Horn.

Fast forward to 1998, when Paul, with Brendan O'Connell, began negotiations with Round Table personnel from Victoria and the NSW Chapter of ACWRTA was formed. The first meeting of the Chapter was in The Gaelic Club near Central before moving to The Big House, a hotel in the Rocks Area. Subsequently, we moved to the North Shore, our present venue, the Roseville RSL Club.

Paul's tenure as President of the NSW Chapter spanned 10 years and it was during that time that he led a number Civil War Battlefield Tours, mainly to the Eastern Theatre and provided great leadership to set the Chapter's strong future that it enjoys today.

In recent years Paul did not enjoy good health and had been resident in the BUPA Aged-Care facility at Clemton Park. It was in 2017 that he last attended one of our meetings to hear the Hon Bob Carr reflect on the origin of his interest in the Civil War.

Paul was a widely read scholar of American History and particularly its Civil War. His contribution to ACWRTA (NSW) was most significant and he will be missed by all who have had contact with him.

Tribute to Paul by Peter Zacharatos



Peter Zacharatos with Paul

I was also very upset to hear about Paul's passing. For those who didn't have the pleasure of meeting him, I thought I would share my experience with Paul.

Paul had similar mannerisms to my favourite uncle and it was something that I would often joke with him about. Paul was of course, a more refined and intellectual gentleman. One of my favourite memories was, as a bright-eyed 18-year-old, presenting a paper with the topic of 'What Really Happened at Fort Pillow?' alongside Paul back in 2011. I remember taking a break from my HSC studies and calling up Paul in order to plan out our joint presentation. I was impressed by Paul's knowledge and wisdom. He recommended a number of great books and historians he thought I should read beforehand.

At the presentation itself, Paul spoke with a depth of knowledge and wit that I've seldom seen matched. At the time, the 'Fort Pillow' presentation was the largest meeting ever attended. It was truly a great experience to present with Paul and it is something that I will treasure for the rest of my life.

Paul made a huge contribution to our organisation.

Could you know someone who might like to join us?

Please suggest to friends - or even people you come across - that you could bring them along to one of our meetings.

CIVIL WAR PROFILE – Richard GATLING (1818 – 1903)

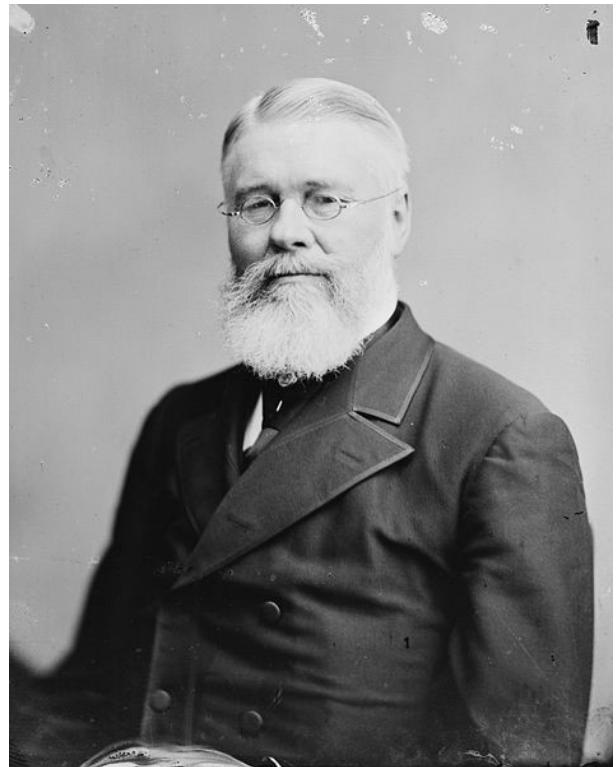


Photo of Gatling by Matthew Brady, c1885

There is a certain irony in the fact that Richard Gatling was inspired to make the first truly effective 'machine gun' for humanitarian reasons. In a letter to a friend that he wrote in 1877 (now in the Library of Congress), Gatling, who had a medical degree said:

"In 1861, during the opening events of the (Civil) War I witnessed almost daily the departure of troops to the front and the return of the wounded, sick and dead. Most of the latter lost their lives, not in battle, but by sickness and exposure incident to the service. It occurred to me that if I could invent a machine – a gun – which could by its rapidity of fire, enable one man to do as much battle duty as a hundred, that it would, to a great extent, supersede the necessity of large armies, and consequently, exposure to battle and disease be greatly diminished."

An honourable belief, but rather wishful thinking – if one carries this reasoning to its logical conclusion, it is readily apparent that, whilst it might save lives in the ranks of the possessor of the weapon, it would devastate many more lives in the ranks of the army on the receiving end!

Gatling was born on a remote farm in north-eastern North Carolina, not far from the borders of Virginia and Tennessee where he received a sporadic education but learned a great deal from his father who, in addition to running the farm, was a self-taught blacksmith, carpenter and 'tinkerer' who had patented inventions for cotton thinner and a cotton seed planter.

Gatling in time obtained a medical degree from Ohio Medical College in 1850, but never practised, instead working a variety of jobs including as a schoolteacher, dry goods store merchant and self-employed businessman. But, taking after his father, he was also an inventor during the booming expansion of early machine making in America, born of the relative shortage of labour and the break from colonial rule that had stifled homegrown manufacturing. In time this led to what became known as the American system of manufacturing – mass production of uniformly made parts that could be assembled without the need for individual artisans working on individual products one at a time, as had long been the traditional manner of making firearms.

The introduction of breech loading firearms and self-contained cartridges by the middle of the 19th century set the stage for the development of Henry and Spencer rifles of the 1860's which were early examples of guns that took advantage of these developments and which could, by working a lever, expel a spent cartridge from and insert a new cartridge into the gun's breech, cocked and ready to fire when the trigger was pulled. It was only a matter of time before the act of firing from a cartridge feeder was added to the mechanical sequence of automatically operating a firearm, leading to contraptions that were early precursors of the machine gun. Probably the first such gun was the 'Union Repeating Gun' also known as the Agar Coffee Mill gun (see photo below) tested by the US Ordnance Department in 1861. Although it could fire 100 rounds per minute, it had only one barrel and soon became overheated, turning red then white hot and becoming close to melting and dangerous to use.

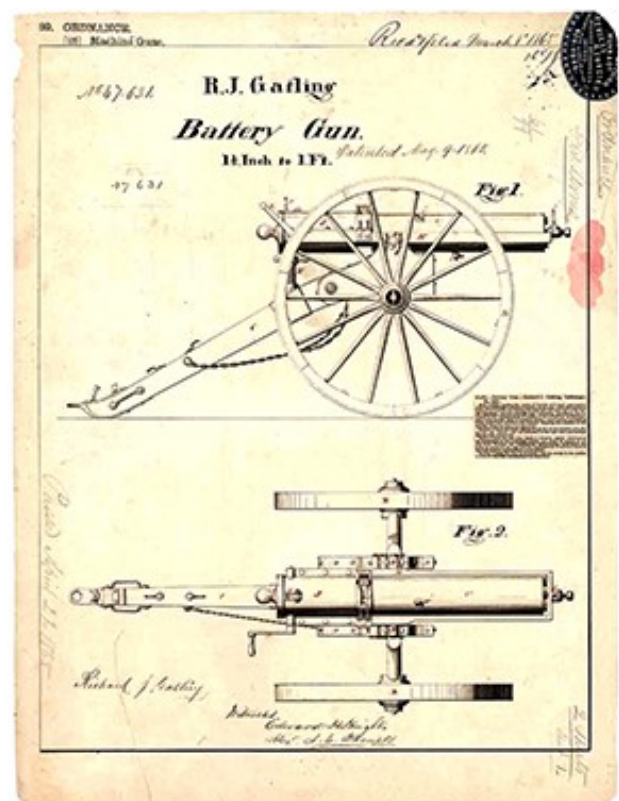
In 1862, Gatling patented his 'Machine Gun' US Patent number 36,836 of 1862. It was a vast improvement on the Agar gun. It had multiple barrels so was much less likely to overheat, and if the firing mechanism on any barrel became faulty, the other barrels would still work. The first of these guns was made in Indianapolis and Gatling there demonstrated the gun to high ranking officers. It was shown to fire accurately at 150 rounds per minute and could fire for long periods of time without any evidence of overheating.

Gatling continued to modify and improve the gun. In 1863 Major General Horatio Wright wrote to the Chief of Ordnance, Brigadier General James W Ripley, that the gun was admirably suited to transport steamers on the western rivers.

Successful tests were held at the Navy Yard at Washington DC and it was recommended that the rifling of the barrels be improved, which Gatling did, and it was then tested again so successfully that Admiral Dahlgren, head of Navy Ordnance, gave permission for fleet commanders to order the gun. Unfortunately, Gatling was not at the time able to manufacture these quickly enough or in sufficient numbers, and few were actually supplied.

Gatling further refined his gun in 1865 to improve its effectiveness handling metallic cartridges. He even patented – but never actually used - a water cooling device to prevent overheating (a development later used on the deadly Maxim Gun).

Unfortunately for Gatling, and perhaps for the Union Army, General Ripley, who had been born in 1794, was stubbornly opposed to supporting repeating firearms which, in his antediluvian views, gave rise to a waste of ammunition – a view that had also delayed the deployment of Henry and Spencer rifles. Ripley told Gatling to his face that he 'would have nothing to do with him.'



Patent of Gatling's 1865 model gun

Undeterred, Gatling wrote directly to President Lincoln to plead the case for his gun, stating in his letter that his gun was far superior to the Coffee Mill gun:

“[My gun] is regarded by all who have seen it operate, as the most effective implement of warfare invented during the war...it is just the thing needed to aid in crushing the present rebellion”.

Alas, Lincoln did not give in to Gatling's urgings, perhaps worrying about Gatling's Southern roots, and there was a 'whispering campaign' by Gatling's competitors that he was a 'Copperhead' and a member of a southern sympathising group known as the 'Order of American Knights', which has never been substantiated; had this been true, why on earth would he be seeking to make such a powerful weapon available to the North?

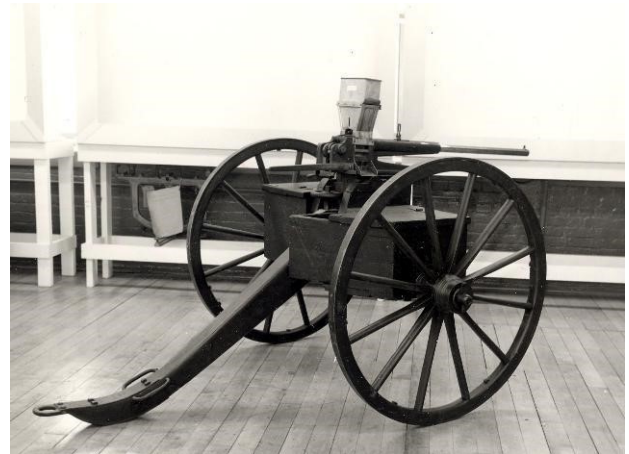
It is unclear how many Gatling guns, if any, were ever deployed in the Civil War. Some unconfirmed sources have asserted that Major General Benjamin Butler had personally purchased a dozen guns at \$1,000 each, and Gatling asserted that the general had used his guns in the siege of Petersburg, but other authorities suggest that there are not corroborated accounts of the Gatling gun being used in any Civil War combat. Admiral Porter did purchase some Gatling guns for use on some of his Navy gunboats in the Western theatre, but there is no record of their use in combat.

One can only speculate what a difference a more enlightened embrace of the Gatling gun may have made to the Civil War. From the crossbow to the atomic bomb, much of military history has been made by the victories wrought by revolutionary break-through advances in weaponry. The carnage of trench warfare in the First World War was due in no small part to the availability of maxim and other machine guns to all the warring parties. Had the Union embraced the Gatling gun, and developed mature strategies for how best to use it, it is arguable that the Union could have had a monopoly on the weapon in the field, and that this could have had a major impact on shortening the war.

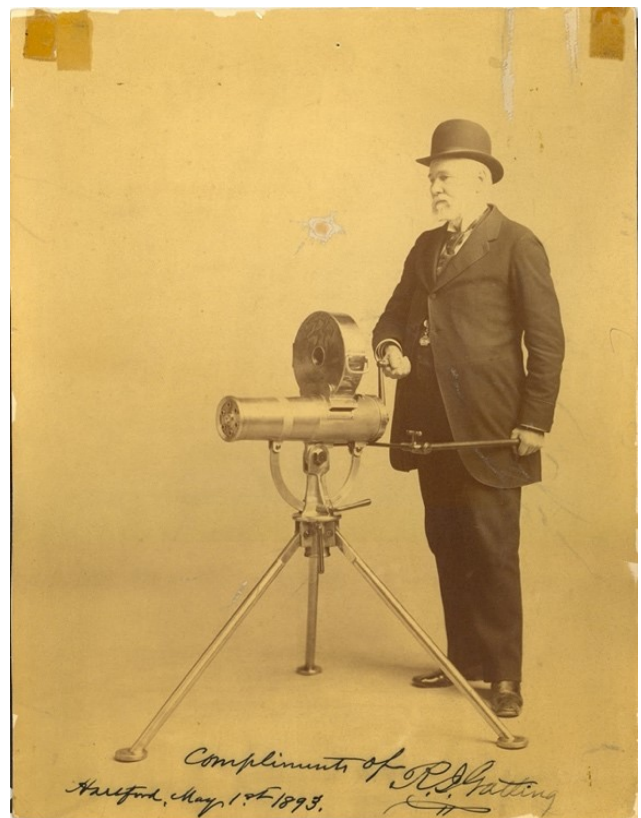
It was not until 1866 that the US government finally began to purchase Gatling guns. In 1870, Gatling sold his patents to the Colt, but remained president of the Gatling Gun Company until 1897 when it was fully absorbed by Colt. There were many subsequent improvements to and models of the Gatling gun, and they were successfully adopted and used by many nations and saw service across the globe. It was not until 1911

that the Gatling gun was declared obsolete by the US Army.

Gatling prospered and patented many other inventions, but his gun is the best known. He was married in 1854 to Jemima Sanders, and he died in 1903 in New York, whilst visiting his daughter there. Gatling was elected the first president of the American Association of Inventors and Manufacturers in 1891 and served in that position for six years.



An Agar 'Union Repeating Gun' or 'Coffee Mill' gun



Gatling in 1893 with a later version of his gun

Further reading: P Smithurst 'The Gatling Gun' (via Amazon.com.au); J. Morelock, 'Dr Gatling's Wonder Weapon' in American Civil War magazine, March 2019.

The author acknowledges these sources in preparing this article.

