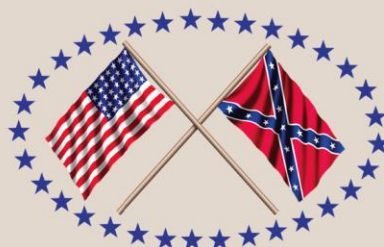


Sumter to Appomattox



American Civil War Round Table of Australia (New South Wales Chapter)
www.americancivilwar.asn.au **Patron: Prof the Hon Bob Carr**

Number 108 Sept – Oct 2021

President's Message

Dear Fellow Civil War Tragicists,

I am absolutely over running meetings via screens as I spend a lot of time doing it, but I have just made the decision, in collusion with Secretary Dan Howard, that we will have to do it again for our 11 October meeting. Depending upon what happens with COVID restrictions, some of you might wish to get together in small groups for the meeting.

We have yet again had to postpone the visit of our Patron Bob Carr until our end of year meeting, currently scheduled for 29 November. I am determined to achieve a face-to-face meeting for our last of the year but there are still uncertainties and difficulties confronting us, notwithstanding whatever changes to restrictions occur from next week. We are thinking about contingency plans should the COVID restrictions in late November cause the Roseville Club to feel they are not able to host our AGM and end of year celebration. We must retain a flexible stance ready to change our plans depending upon prevailing circumstances.

Our decision to revisit our series of presentations made to the WEA course entitled "Origins of the American Civil War – How did it come to this?" again worked well for our August 2021 meeting via Zoom. Thank you to Bruce McLennan for revisiting his Enlightenment presentation. I received positive feedback as to the "revelations and insights" within it.

President's Message cont'd

Thank you again to Jannette Greenwood for an excellent newsletter and a particular thank you to Dan Howard for his article on Thaddeus Lowe, the pioneering balloon man. Very interesting!

Please stay safe and well,

Ian McIntyre

Our Next Meeting

Via Zoom: Monday 11th October at 8pm.
- Join 20 mins early

Topic:

Little Known Aspects of Soldier Life in the Civil War

Presented by Peter Headley

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

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 phone on 0411 745 704 or e-mail: secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au

Our Last Meeting

The Enlightenment – a shift in moral compass

Presented by Bruce A McLennan

Bruce began his presentation with the proposition that: without the Enlightenment and its inherent ideas, the Civil War would not have occurred. This was because of the fundamental cultural shifts in Europe in the 18th century caused by the collisions between the modern world and old feudal world. These collisions led to revolutions in Europe and North America and ultimately further upheavals in the 19th century, including the American Civil War.

Bruce asked the ‘thoroughly modern questions’:

- Does “Freedom” mean I have permission to be selfish and greedy?
- Does “I believe” mean that I don’t need to be open to reason?

Ambiguity around these ideas is illustrated by recent events such as the January 6th Invasion of the Capitol Building and the July 24th Sydney “Freedom March”.



To examine these questions, it is necessary to refer to the 1776 Declaration of Independence and the relevant passage:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

These revolutionary ideas can be traced back to the ideas of the Enlightenment. This period (also known as the Age of Reason) was a philosophical movement in Europe which believed in concepts such as reason, liberty and scientific reasoning. These ideas are credited with being the driving force behind the American and French Revolutions and other movements

such as those related to universal education and the abolition of slavery.

Previous to these ideas, a dominant Feudal system had kept the illiterate population obedient to the ruling class and to Kings who ruled by Divine Right, with further control imposed by threats of damnation.

Ideas related to the Enlightenment are due to a number of individuals:



John Calvin

John Calvin (1509 – 1564) attempted to standardize the theories of Protestantism with the ideas that the scriptures were sovereign, and that God chooses those who will enter Heaven, which conflicts with the Catholic ideas of Priestly intercession. He believed that the rights and freedoms of the ordinary people should be safeguarded and that rulers could be deposed if they opposed God. Various protestant churches influenced by Calvin, including the Dutch church, the English Pilgrims, and the Church of Scotland, spread these ideas throughout the world. One of those he strongly influenced was Scottish thinker and theologian, **John Knox** (abt 1520 – 1572).



George Buchanan

George Buchanan (1506 – 1592), a Scottish humanist and historian, was a most powerful intellectual of the 16th century and senior tutor to James VI of Scotland (later 1 of England). He worked with the church for reform and asserted that the people were always more powerful than their rulers, that they had the right to remove them at will and, in fact, had the sacred right to remove a tyrant, including killing him.

Previous to this, it was believed that unity of religion was necessary for national unity and security and that the restriction of tolerance was necessary for public order. For this reason, religion and political positions were conflated.

Various significant events occurred in the 1600s, principally James VI of Scotland becoming James I of England; the arrival of the Pilgrims in Massachusetts; the execution of Charles I; the English Civil War; the Restoration of Charles II; William and Mary assuming the throne; and in 1707 Acts of Union of England and Scotland.

There is debate about why the Enlightenment took place during this period. Scholars point to the Thirty Years War (1618-48), the Age of Exploration and the responses of ordinary citizens to monarchy and the church. During this period, economies were developing and, with them, the beginnings of industrialisation and urbanisation. The Enlightenment, therefore, grew from a period of social and economic change where ideas from the Dark Ages about hell and damnation began to be challenged.



The Age of Exploration

Thomas Hobbes (1588 – 1679) was a controversial English philosopher whose influential book “Leviathan” expressed the idea that human beings are self-serving and need the control of a political community to prevent a “war of all against all”. He wrote one of the best-known passages in English, which expressed the idea that, were it not for the political community “... the life of man (would be) solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short”.

John Locke (1623 – 1704), an English philosopher and physician, was influential in the founding of the United States with his proposition that a ruler gains authority through the consent of the governed. This idea was based on the ideas of George Buchanan, who opposed tyranny in general. Another of his influences was Thomas Hobbes, although Locke’s view was more optimistic than Hobbes’ regarding the ability of humans to avoid tyranny and to embrace freedom. Locke’s beliefs were part of

the early movement of liberal thinking in US politics which claimed that the natural rights of people included “life, liberty and property”. Inability of the government to protect these rights would lead to the right of citizens to overthrow the government.

Algernon Sydney (1623 – 1683) was a controversial English politician and a contemporary of Locke who opposed the divine right of kings. He believed that the people had the right to overthrow a corrupt government and form another.

Lord Shaftesbury (1671 – 1713), 3rd Earl, was a leader of the Enlightenment and was influenced early by John Locke, who was medical attendant to the young Earl of Shaftesbury. Wishing to refute Hobbes’s egocentric doctrine, Shaftesbury is known for his great principle of Harmony or Balance. His views aligned more with Frances Hutcheson (see below) than those of Hobbes and Locke in that his were more religious and less related to public opinion.



Francis Hutcheson

Frances Hutcheson (1694 – 1746) was an Ulsterman who had spent time in Dublin before accepting the Chair of Moral Philosophy at the University of Glasgow in 1729.

He believed that all humans were born with an innate moral sense which was expressed through feelings and emotions. The greatest of these was love of others. He also believed that humanity’s greatest goal was happiness, expressed in making others happy. With this comes obligations.

Hutcheson influenced a number of other thinkers including **William Robertson**, **Adam Smith** and **David Hume**.

David Hume (1711 – 1776), born in Edinburgh, was hugely influential through his attempts to create a naturalistic science of man. His philosophical system of philosophical empiricism, scepticism and naturalism is still well-known today.

Harry Home (1696 – 1782), later **Lord Kames**, recognised that nature and laws were evolving and that the happiest societies were those where laws and cultures matched. Part of the Scottish Enlightenment, he divided history into four periods, and also contributed to the organising and systematising of knowledge. He had many proteges including **David Hume**, **Adam Smith** and **James Boswell**. It is important to note that Enlightenment ideas found more practical application in Scotland than in other countries and, in fact, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* was first published in Edinburgh in 1768.

Hutcheson, whose ideas of personal liberty went far beyond those of Locke, challenged many ideas related to oppression, including slavery. His ideas not only inspired antislavery abolitionists around the world but also presented the Enlightenment in a new sophisticated way that showed how humans can treat each other with kindness, regard and co-operation. This thought is contained in the saying: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”.



The Great Awakening

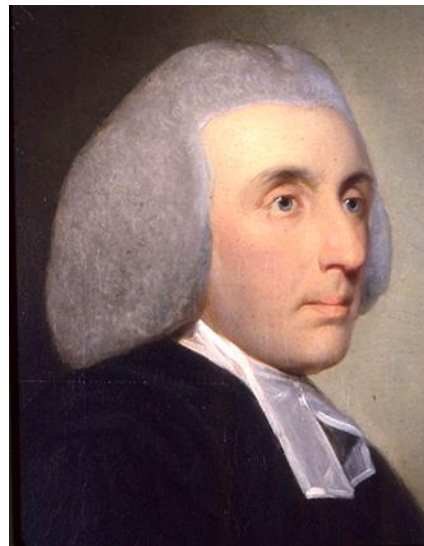
Another change that occurred during this period was what was termed “**the Great Awakening**” in the USA and “**the Evangelical Revival**” in the UK. Leaders of this revival were **John Wesley** (1703-1791) and his brother, **Charles**, who had both travelled as missionaries to Georgia, USA, and who later helped found Methodism, which later promoted the abolition of slavery, prison reform and other causes.

Other Protestant religious denominations inspired by Wesley were established throughout the USA: in New England, churches were mainly based on the Pilgrims’ teaching; in the more tolerant Middle colonies, Quakers, Anglican, Presbyterian, Lutheran and many other protestant churches existed; in the Southern colonies, the Anglican church was established as well as other protestant denominations. It is

interesting to note that the Evangelical Revival was partially a reaction to the Enlightenment, which was considered to be anti-religious.

The purpose of the Evangelical preachers was to stress revival or outpourings of the Holy Spirit and the conversion of sinners. Preachers stressed that these ideas applied to all people “regardless of gender, race and status” and this encouraged free blacks and African slaves to convert. This inclusion was not always welcome and, in fact, caused some denominations to split.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 1778) was born into a Calvinist family which had escaped from France to Geneva. His radical ideas caused his books to be banned and he often had to relocate. He believed that social and cultural progress had led to the moral degradation of humanity and he referred to a hypothetical “state of nature” where humans would have “no moral relations with ... one another”. He believed that different forms of government were the products of differing levels of inequality within their societies. His works “Discourse of Inequality” and “The Social Contract” are cornerstones in modern political and social thought.



William Small

Thomas Jefferson (1743 – 1826) drew on his education in Law and Enlightenment philosophy when he wrote the *Declaration of Independence* (1776) and *A Summary View of the Rights of British America* (1774). At the College of William and Mary, he studied mathematics, natural philosophy and political philosophy with Scottish philosopher **William Small** (1734 – 1775) who exposed him to leading Enlightenment thinkers and also introduced him to the colony’s elite. Small is usually described as Jefferson’s mentor.

Besides Jefferson, presidents James Monroe and John Tyler were educated at William and Mary as well as many other influential figures pivotal to the development of the United States.

John Knox Witherspoon (1723 – 1794), a Scotsman who was to become influential in the development of the American national character, was the only church minister who was a “Founding Father” of the USA. He signed both *The Declaration of Independence* and *The Articles of Confederation*.

James Madison (1751 – 1836), Founding Father and 4th President of the United States, was strongly influenced by Witherspoon when studying at Princeton, including Witherspoon’s ideas connected to the philosophy, values and modes of thinking of the Age of Enlightenment.

What were the ideas of the Enlightenment?

Reason: Rational thought, that is, the ability to reason, was the most legitimate model of thinking according to Enlightenment philosophers. It could help humans escape from ignorance and irrationality and teach human to act reasonably. They believed that this would have an equalizing effect on humans so they advocated universal education and secularized learning.

Scepticism: Enlightenment thinkers encouraged testing of ideas via scientific reasoning rather than relying in blind faith and emotions. They were also sceptical of the divine right of kings and of religious doctrine. The deist movement became popular, that is, God exists but does not intervene on earth. Several of the Founding Fathers were deists, including Thomas Jefferson.

Religious tolerance: Though sceptical of religious institutions, many Enlightenment thinkers believed in freedom of worship despite wishing to restrict the political power of organized religion.

Progress: Because of the great progress in earlier centuries, including the Scientific Revolution and worldwide exploration, Enlightenment thinkers believed the human condition was improving over time. Their ideas became tied to politics, economic policies and scientific reasoning.

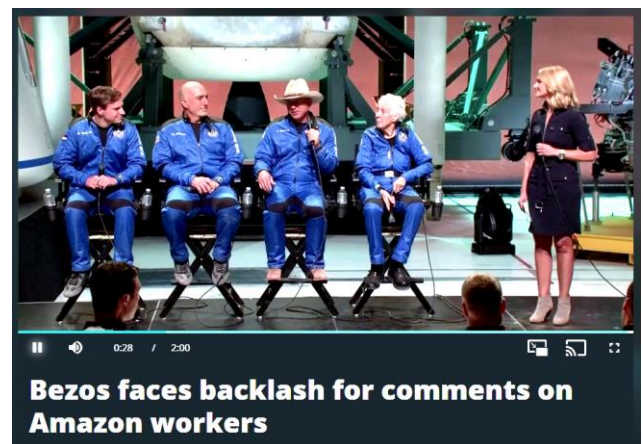
Empiricism vs. Rationalism: Empiricists, who were associated with British Enlightenment philosophers, argued that all human knowledge comes through the senses and sensory experiences. Rationalists, primarily located in continental Europe, argued that senses were untrustworthy, and knowledge came from the mind.

Liberty: The emphasis on personal liberty is related to the Enlightenment’s tolerance of religion. The concept of Liberty holds that God and/or nature give all humans basic rights and that they should be free to act without oppressive restriction. This idea is often summarized as the Sovereignty and Dignity of the individual.

We listened to *Alle menschen werden brüder*: The Ode to Joy, written by Schiller and set to music by Beethoven, refers to the idea that “All men shall become brothers”.

Influence of the Enlightenment on America: The Enlightenment was crucial to aspects of colonial America such as politics, government and religion. Many of the core ideas of the Enlightenment can be seen in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, for example, freedom from oppression, the dignity and sovereignty of the individual, natural rights, and new ways of thinking about the structure of government.

The French succinctly summarise the aims of their Revolution as: Freedom (*liberté*), Equality (*égalité*), and Brotherhood (*fraternité*). The Civil War was ostensibly based on the principle of treating other humans as brothers. However, the Battle Cry of “Freedom” seems to have eclipsed the other two limbs, resulting in an incomplete implementation of the Enlightenment. How many songs do you know “Battle Cry of Equality”, or Battle Cry of Brotherhood”?



Bruce referred to the irony of Amazon founder, Jeff Bezos, thanking his workers for financing his trip into space, which had occurred on the day of our meeting. He finished his well-received presentation with the question: “Has America really achieved liberty and equality?”.

Civil War Profile

Thanks to Dan Howard

Carl Sagan (1934 – 1996) & Ann Druyan (1949 –)



Image sourced at carlsagan.com

For this issue of our Newsletter, our Civil War Profile offers something of an unusual twist of 'time travel' by linking Carl Sagan and his wife Ann Druyan to the famous Gettysburg Battlefield.

The late Carl Sagan was a renowned astronomer and Professor of Physical Sciences and Planetary Studies at Cornell University. His wife, Ann Druyan, is a science communicator, writer and producer. They worked together on the seminal 1980 documentary series '*Cosmos*' that Sagan presented.

Each quarter century the Peace Memorial at the Gettysburg National Cemetery is re-dedicated and a renowned speaker is invited to give the re-dedication speech. Past speakers have included presidents Wilson, FDR and Eisenhower. On the 125th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg on 3rd July, 1988, the speaker was Carl Sagan, who delivered a profoundly important and powerful speech that he and Druyan had written, warning of the dangers of nuclear war and offering a striking interpretation of the significance of Gettysburg to the modern age. Here we extract significant portions of the address. [The full version is reproduced in W Safire, *Lend Me Your Ears – Great Speeches in History* (2004, Norton & Co, New York) at p 739].

Fifty-one thousand human beings were killed or wounded here, ancestors of some of us, brothers of us all. This was the first full-fledged example of an industrialized war, with machine-made arms and railroad transport of men and materiel. This was the first hint of an age yet to

come, our age; an intimation of what technology bent to the purposes of war might be capable. The new Spencer repeating rifle was used here. In May 1863, reconnaissance balloon of the Army of the Potomac detected movement of Confederate troops across the Rappahannock River, the beginning of the campaign that led to the Battle of Gettysburg. That balloon was a precursor of air forces and strategic bombing and reconnaissance satellites.

A few hundred artillery pieces were deployed in the three-day battle of Gettysburg. What could they do? What was the war like then? ... Ballistic projectiles, launched from the cannons that you can see all over this Gettysburg Memorial, had a range, at best, of a few miles. The amount of explosive in the most formidable of them was some twenty pounds, roughly one-hundredth of a ton of TNT. It was enough to kill a few people.

But the most powerful chemical explosives used eighty years later, in World War II, were the blockbusters, so-called because they could destroy a city block. Dropped from aircraft, after a journey of hundreds of miles, each carried about ten tons of TNT, a thousand times more than the most powerful weapon at the Battle of Gettysburg. A blockbuster could kill a few dozen people.

At the very end of World War II, the United States used the first atomic bombs to annihilate two Japanese cities. Each of those weapons had the equivalent power of about ten thousand tons of TNT, enough to kill a few hundred thousand people. One bomb.

A few years later the United States and the Soviet Union developed the first thermonuclear weapons, the first hydrogen bombs. Some of them had an explosive yield equivalent to ten million tons of TNT; enough to kill a few million people. One bomb. Strategic nuclear weapons can now be launched to any place on the planet. Everywhere on earth is a potential battlefield now.

Each of these technological triumphs advanced the art of mass murder by a factor of a thousand. From Gettysburg to the blockbuster, a thousand times more explosive energy; from the blockbuster to the atomic bomb, a thousand times more; and from the atomic bomb to the hydrogen bomb, a thousand times still more. A thousand times a thousand, times a thousand is a billion; in less than one century, our most fearful weapon has become a billion times more deadly. But we have not become a billion times wiser in the generations that stretch from Gettysburg to us.

The souls that perished here would find the carnage of which we are now capable unspeakable. Today, the United States and the Soviet Union have booby-trapped our planet with almost sixty thousand nuclear weapons. Sixty thousand nuclear weapons! Even a small fraction of the strategic arsenals could without question annihilate the two contending superpowers, probably destroy the global civilization, and possibly render the human species extinct. No nation, no man should have such power. We distribute these instruments of apocalypse all over our fragile world, and justify it on the grounds that it has made us safe. We have made a fool's bargain.

The 51,000 casualties here at Gettysburg represented one-third of the Confederate army and one-quarter of the Union army. All those who died, with one or two exceptions, were soldiers...But in the global thermonuclear war, almost all the casualties will be civilians, men, women, and children, including vast numbers of citizens of nations that had no part in the quarrel that led to the war, nations far removed from the northern mid-latitude "target zone." ...Everyone on earth is now at risk ...

Two months before Gettysburg, on May 3, 1863, there was a Confederate triumph, the Battle of Chancellorsville. On the moonlit evening following the victory, General Stonewall Jackson and his staff, returning to the Confederate lines, were mistaken for Union cavalry. Jackson was shot twice in error by his own men. He died of his wounds.

We make mistakes. We kill our own.

This is the century of Hitler and Stalin, evidence—if any were needed—that madmen can seize the reins of power of modern industrial states. If we are content in a world with nearly sixty thousand nuclear weapons, we are betting our lives on the proposition that no present or future leaders, military or civilian—of the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, France, China, Israel, India, Pakistan, South Africa, and whatever other nuclear powers there will be—will ever stray from the strictest standards of prudence. We are gambling on their sanity and sobriety even in times of great personal and national crisis, all of them, for all times to come. I say this is asking too much of us. Because we make mistakes. We kill our own.

... The real triumph of Gettysburg was not, I think, in 1863 but in 1913, when the surviving veterans, the remnants of the adversary forces, the Blue and the Gray, met in celebration and solemn memorial. It had been the war that set brother against brother, and when the time came to remember, on the fiftieth anniversary of the

battle, the survivors fell, sobbing, into one another's arms. They could not help themselves.

It is time now for us to emulate them, NATO and the Warsaw Pact, Israelis and Palestinians, whites and blacks, Americans and Iranians, the developed and the underdeveloped worlds. We need more than anniversary sentimentalism and holiday piety and patriotism.

Where necessary, we must confront and challenge the conventional wisdom. It is time to learn from those who fell here. Our challenge is to reconcile, not after the carnage and the mass murder, but instead of the carnage and the mass murder.

It is time to act.

Call for short talks

Our short ten-minute presentations on a particular battle or person have been a great success in revealing the depth of talent within our group.

Remember that we are a group of friends and a friendly audience. I know there are several amongst us who have not yet broken cover but who would be interesting and insightful presenters.

Please do not hesitate to volunteer to myself or John Morrison on a topic of your choice, be it short or long.

Ian McIntyre

An Interesting Interview

While not connected to the Civil War, this interview with Sir Peter Cosgrave by our member Angus Hordern will be of interest to members:

<https://lifeontheline.podbean.com/e/117-sir-peter-cosgrove/>



Dear Honest Abe,

What were you thinking when you appointed General Joseph Hooker to replace General Burnside as commander of the Army of the Potomac?

... Curious

Dear Curious,

Well you may ask with the benefit of hindsight! I confess that I had my reservations, but I had a limited pool of talent to choose from. Perhaps I can best answer your question by setting out the text of the letter dated 26 January, 1863 that I wrote General Hooker on his appointment. This is what I said:

"To Major General Joseph Hooker General:— I have placed you at the head of the Army of the Potomac. Of course I have done this upon what appear to me to be sufficient reasons. And yet I think it best for you to know that there are some things in regard to which, I am not quite satisfied with you. I believe you to be a brave and a skillful soldier, which, of course, I like. I also believe you do not mix politics with your profession, in which you are right. You have confidence in yourself, which is a valuable, if not an indispensable quality. You are ambitious, which, within reasonable bounds, does good rather than harm. But I think that during Gen. Burnside's command of the Army, you have taken counsel of your ambition, and thwarted him as much as you could, in which you did a great wrong to the country, and to a most meritorious and honorable brother officer. I have heard, in such way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the Army and the Government needed a Dictator. Of course it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals who gain successes, can set up dictators. What I now ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship. The government will support you to

the utmost of its ability, which is neither more nor less than it has done and will do for all commanders. I much fear that the spirit which you have aided to infuse into the Army, of criticizing their Commander, and withholding confidence from him, will now turn upon you. I shall assist you as far as I can, to put it down. Neither you, nor Napoleon, if he were alive again, could get any good out of an army, while such a spirit prevails in it. And now, beware of rashness. Beware of rashness, but with energy, and sleepless vigilance, go forward, and give us victories."

So Curious, I hope that helps you to understand where I was coming from. All the best.

Honest Abe

Spotsylvania campaign observed

Gen. Grant's aide Horace Porter wrote on the last heavy fighting of the campaign - at the "Bloody Angle" -

"... probably the most desperate engagement in the history of human warfare. ... The opposing flags were, in places, thrust against each other, and muskets were fired with muzzle against muzzle. Skulls were crushed with clubbed muskets [held by the barrels], and men stabbed to death with swords and bayonets thrust between logs in the parapet which separated the combatants. Wild cheers, savage yells, and frantic shrieks rose above the sighing of the wind and pattering of the rain, and formed a demoniacal accompaniment to the booming of guns as they hurled their missiles of death into contending ranks. Even the darkness of night and the pitiless storm failed to stop the fierce contest, and the deadly strife did not cease till after midnight."